

URBAN INSTITUTE 2100 M STREET, NW. WASHINGTON D.C. 20037

[Date]

Dear [Name of Program Director],

Your home visiting program was highly recommended to us because of the interesting work you are doing on father engagement. We are writing to invite you to be one of five programs to participate in a new research study titled *Home Visiting: Approaches to Father Engagement and Fathers' Experiences*. The study is being conducted by the Urban Institute, a private, non-profit social policy research organization in Washington, DC. The study is sponsored by the federal Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation in the Administration for Children and Families.

The purpose of the study is to explore: 1) the strategies that selected home visiting programs use to effectively engage fathers in home visiting services; 2) the perspectives and experiences of staff in these programs; 3) the experiences and views of fathers and mothers who have participated in the selected programs; and 4) lessons for other programs that are interested in more fully engaging fathers with young children in their services and activities.

If you agree to participate, we would like to schedule an on-site visit in the next couple of months to meet with you, program supervisors, and home visitors as well as some participating fathers and mothers. Our research team is prepared to coordinate as much of the scheduling and logistics as possible to reduce the burden on you and your staff. We can discuss the details by phone at a later date.

While your program's participation in this study is completely voluntary, we hope you will agree to participate so that we can learn from your unique experience and share with other program directors interested in engaging fathers in their programs. The information you provide during the site visit will be kept private, meaning the name of your program and names of participating staff and clients will not be revealed to anyone outside the research team. We also want to emphasize that the study is not evaluating your program but rather it is designed to gather information about your programs' approaches and experiences engaging fathers. The information collected will help inform other program leaders as well as future policy, research, training and technical assistance efforts.

For your reference, attached is a copy of the project summary that may be shared with your staff. Someone from our research team will contact you by phone in the next week to answer any questions you may have and to discuss the possibility of your program's participation in this new study. In the meantime, if you want to contact us, please feel free to respond to this e-mail message or call Heather Sandstrom at (202) 261-5833. Thank you for your cooperation, and we look forward to speaking with you soon.

Best Regards,

Elizabeth Peters & Heather Sandstrom
Co-Principal Investigators

This information collection is voluntary and will be used to learn how home visiting programs engage fathers. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB number for this collection is 0970-XXXX and expires XX/XX/XXXX.

Project Overview

Home Visiting: Approaches to Father Engagement and Fathers' Experiences, 2013-2015

In Fall 2013, the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE) awarded the Urban Institute a two-year contract to conduct an exploratory study that documents: 1) the strategies that selected home visiting programs use to effectively engage fathers in home visiting services; 2) the perspectives and experiences of staff in these programs; 3) the experiences and views of fathers and mothers who have participated in the selected programs; and 4) lessons for other programs that are interested in more fully engaging fathers with young children in their services and activities.

The study will include site visits to five selected home visiting programs that vary in their service delivery models, the populations they serve, and geographic location. Data will be collected through small group and one-on-one interviews with program directors, supervisors, home visitors, and participating fathers and mothers.

The study will address the following research questions:

1. What methods and approaches do program staff use to encourage father engagement?
2. What supports—including program philosophies/models of family engagement, specialized training, and program resources—are most useful to staff recruiting, engaging, and serving fathers in their programs?
3. Which program recruitment and engagement strategies work better for different types of fathers (e.g., residential/non-residential; married, cohabiting, un-partnered, partnered with someone other than the child's mother; first-time or experienced fathers; teen/young fathers, fathers of different racial/ethnic backgrounds), and why? What types of fathers are harder to engage, and why?
4. What are the experiences of fathers in these programs and what are their motivations for participating?
5. What are the benefits of program participation for fathers, mothers, and their children, according to parents and program staff?
6. What role do mothers play in facilitating, preventing or discouraging father engagement in home visits?

Study results are expected in 2015. The findings will be disseminated in a final report that presents key findings that address the research questions and a research brief drawing on key themes in the final report. Findings will not identify individual home visiting program sites, but will identify the national home visiting models being implemented.

The Federal Project Officer and point of contact is Lauren Supplee (lauren.supplee@acf.hhs.gov).

