

Commentary on HMRF nFORM Survey Changes

Below is a summary of concerns and recommendations about the nFORM survey changes.

Community Fathers Surveys

- New cover page is much more detailed and includes a lengthy amount of text compared to the cover page in 2020. This is less user-friendly. Fathers will likely not read all of the information. We have concerns that it might deter some fathers from wanting to consent and complete the surveys. The 2020 cover page had 3 simple notes which was more straight-forward and less burdensome to clients. The brief points emphasized clearly that:
 1. participation is voluntary
 2. we hope you answer...but you may skip any questions
 3. answers will be kept private
- About the Program
 - o E2. There are a list of options for the reason they chose to enroll in the program, but they can only select one option. This does not give us a comprehensive picture of why someone came to the program. Allowing fathers to choose two options would at least account for (1) wanting to join; (2) being court-ordered to join, which could be a common situation – maybe a father is being coerced but also maybe he is also looking for a helpful program for himself.
- Demographic Characteristics
 - o A4. What is your current foster care status?
 - This question is worded strangely
 - Additionally, this seems burdensome and unnecessary
 - o C8 - removed responses from the previous round of surveys re:
 - do not have documentation for legal employment (e.g., birth cert) & have substance use or mental health challenges.
 - This provides important information about the populations we serve.
- Economic Stability
 - o Question about participant earnings has been omitted from entrance and exit surveys. This question is important to tracking change in earnings over the course of the program. Its omission is a concern.
 - o Question about whether participant has health insurance/Medicaid was also omitted
 - o Additional important questions were also omitted:
 - Whether participant has updated resume,
 - Checking account,
 - Savings account

- o Section does not ask about not working due to receiving disability benefits or something that would indicate a person is disabled and not looking for work.
- Parenting
 - o B3-B8: Asking only about the YOUNGEST child is limiting. In situations where fathers have multiple partners, the relationship with the mother of the youngest child could be the most fractured – we have no idea. So, they may answer that they never see this child, etc. And it would be a skewed view of their involvement. I would either remove these questions or ask them about their children in general or their children under the age of 18 to get an overall understanding of their involvement.
 - o B10 – in this question we ask fathers how often they feel overwhelmed, but there’s nothing that asks them how often they feel fulfilled/happy/etc. with parenting.
 - o B11-B12; Asking only about the co-parent of the youngest child is limiting yet again.
 - Ask first, how many co-parents do you have (meaning, how many mothers of your children are there?).
 - Then ask about them in general or say, “Answer these questions about the co-parent that is the most challenging relationship for you.”
- Program Perceptions
 - o D2 – D6 - Exit survey asks fathers to rate their communication skills primary with spouse or partner, or boss and coworkers. Just one question asks about using communication skills with “the coparent of your youngest child” and “your children.” These before/after questions would also be helpful when it comes to parenting and economic stability, but they are not asked in these sections. Also, there is a lot skip logic here so not all fathers will get all questions.
 - o D7 - This version of the survey asks about the program’s overall helpfulness only
 - Previous version also asked about helpfulness specifically for:
 - Parenting
 - Coparenting
 - Financial well-being
 - The separate questions helped identify areas of programmatic strengths and areas for improvement. Grouping into overall helpfulness results in a loss of important data for programs.

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