



ERICSA 2014: *TAKING FLIGHT*  
*for Children and Families*



# Right Path for Fathers Partnership: Stark County Ohio



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# Right Path for Fathers Partnership

The “Right Path for Fathers Partnership” in Stark County is a community effort with the following partners:

- ❖ Goodwill Industries
- ❖ Stark County Community Action (SCCAA)
- ❖ Early Childhood Resource Center
- ❖ Domestic Violence Project Inc. of Stark County
- ❖ Stark County Child Support



# Right Path for Fathers Partnership

The Project is designed to:

1. Assist those fathers who are job challenged and need additional skills/education in order to compete for employment by referring them to job skills/employment services at Goodwill or SCCAA.
2. Work with community employers to provide job opportunities for NCPs, provide job leads, and coordinate interviews and serve as a job coach.



# Right Path for Fathers Partnership

## 3. Offer “Arrearage Waiver/Compromise”

- ❖ NCPs who complete a job skills program and have assigned arrearages owed to the state will have \$2,500 of that debt compromised.
- ❖ NCPs who become employed and make current support payments for 6 months will be eligible to have an additional \$2,500 in state arrearages compromised.



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4. Ensure that participating NCPs' support obligations are appropriate, reflecting current income and realistic earning potential, and not be based on a past job or income imputed.
  - ❖ A proactive effort to “right size” support orders will result in realistic orders and decrease the climbing debt of back support owed by many NCPs.
  - ❖ Often that rising debt encourages NCPs to avoid the CSEA and seek employment in the underground economy to avoid being detected.



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5. Refer NCPs to Fatherhood Classes conducted by Early Childhood Resource Center.
  - ❖ 24/7 Dads Curriculum is used; 16 hours with 8 two hour sessions on site at Goodwill or SCCAA. Attendance is mandatory.
  - ❖ Includes a class on Navigating the Child Support System and a class on Domestic Violence Awareness.



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- ❖ Not every NCP needs to be in a Fatherhood Class.
- ❖ Many of the fathers in the class have good relationships with the custodial parent and are actively involved in their child's life. We want these individuals to be in the class to be role models and mentors.
- ❖ Female NCPs are given the option to enroll in the Fatherhood Class or a Parenting Class.



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6. Partner with Domestic Violence Project Inc. to promote safe service delivery and provide referrals to treat NCPs who perpetrate violence or are at risk.
  - ❖ A Domestic Violence Screening Tool exists and each NCP accepted into the program has to be screened.
  - ❖ All project staff who deal directly with participants in the program receive domestic violence training.
  - ❖ When domestic violence, or the risk of domestic violence is identified, the Right Path Project Manager consults with our domestic violence expert at DVPI for guidance on if treatment or protection is needed.





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## 7. Delay Child Support Enforcement:

- ❖ Enforcement Actions will be suspended for NCPs who are actively participating in the program.
- ❖ Drivers Licenses will be reinstated or be protected from suspension.
- ❖ This gives an active and engaged NCP breathing room to focus on the goals of the program.



# Right Path for Fathers Partnership

## Enhancements Planned for Right Path Program:

1. Parenting Plans thru Mediation will become Available thru Early Childhood Resource Center.
  - ❖ When both parents are willing to work together on a positive strategy for parenting together, a Parenting Plan with a visitation schedule will be created.
  - ❖ This service is intended to be particularly helpful for NCPs whose support orders were established through the administrative process. Administrative orders do not include parenting time in Ohio.



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## 2. Subsidized Employment (SEP):

- ❖ Child Support is working with Human Services Division to utilize SEP funds to encourage potential employers in the community to hire NCPs in the Right Path for Fathers Program.
- ❖ If employed 30 or more hours per week, SEP will pay \$1000 per month to the employer for salary and benefits.
- ❖ If working 20 – 29 hours per week, SEP will pay \$600 per month to the employer.



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## 3. Felony Expungement Program

- ❖ In collaboration with the Family Court, Legal Aid, and United Way, our agency is creating a Felony Expungement Program that can help take away this barrier to employment for NCPs.
- ❖ The individual cannot have more than one felony and one misdemeanor to qualify.
- ❖ Violent offenses or crimes against children are excluded.



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- ❖ NCPs who do not qualify for Expungement may qualify for a “Certificate for Qualification for Employment” (CQE) issued by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections.
- ❖ Either process potentially can help NCPs have an easier pathway to employment



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## Child Support's Role in the Project

- ❖ 4 Staff are dedicated 100% to Right Path for Fathers Partnership: Project Manager, 2 Case Managers, and Right Path Recruiter.
- ❖ Child Support's role is to recruit and refer NCPs to the employment and fatherhood programs, ensure the safe delivery of services and monitor participation.



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## Pathways Into Right Path for Fathers Partnership Program:

- ❖ Last Chance Letters
- ❖ NCP requests Driver's License Reinstatement
- ❖ Court Referrals
- ❖ New Support Orders – NCP unemployed
- ❖ Case Manager or Community Partner Referrals
- ❖ Referrals from Right Path Recruiter



# Right Path for Fathers Partnership

## Results First 9 Months (8/1/13 – 4/30/14)

- ❖ 33 Participants in Pilot Period
- ❖ 105 Participants Randomly Selected for the Program
- ❖ 62 Participants Completed Job Readiness
- ❖ 58 Participants Completed Fatherhood Class
- ❖ 28 Participants Became Employed





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## Existing Challenges:

- ❖ Increase Recruitment
- ❖ Increase Show Rate at Intake Interview
- ❖ Increase Show Rate at First Day of Classes
- ❖ Increase Retention Rate for Completion of Classes
- ❖ Increase Participation in Job Development/Job Search
- ❖ Expand Employers Willing to Interview/Hire Participants



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## QUESTIONS???