

## The Fathers in the Criminal Justice System

### OVERVIEW

Operating from 2000 to 2003, the Fathers in the Criminal Justice System Project aimed to help noncustodial fathers in the criminal justice system meet their child support obligations. The project included joint efforts between criminal justice and child support enforcement agencies to identify eligible fathers. Additionally, project staff in criminal justice facilities and parole offices disseminated information on child support enforcement directly to inmates, and developing effective child support policies, including modification requests of existing orders while imprisoned.

See [\*OPRE Report 2011-20 Catalog of Research: Programs for Low-Income Fathers \(December 2011\)\*](#) or [\*Fathers in the Criminal Justice System Final Report\*](#) for more information.

### Focus

Responsible Fatherhood

### PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### Target Population

Noncustodial fathers who were incarcerated or on parole who had an open child support case

#### Service Delivery Unit

Individuals

#### Curriculum

Included information on child support regulations and modifications

#### Dosage

Not available

#### Setting

Prisons and Parole Boards

#### Location

Massachusetts

#### Adapted and/or Created for Hispanic Population

Available in Spanish

#### Demographics of Population Served

- See *Evaluated Population*

## PROGRAM EVALUATION

### Evaluated Population

- The 2001 extract included 3246 inmates and paroles and the 2003 extract included 3525 inmates and paroles
- Hispanic: 25 percent (long-term sentences), 38 percent (parolees), 14 percent (short-term sentences)
- Male: 93.8 to 99.8 percent (depending on year of extract and site)
- Less than high school education: 44 percent (long-term sentences), 33 percent (parolees), 54 percent (short term sentences)

### Study Design

- Pre-/post- test
- Outcomes from prior to project implementation (September 2001) and after implementation (September 2003)

### Outcomes

The rate at which paternity was established; the number of child support orders that were established; the percentage of inmate orders at various levels; the rate of child support order modifications; the number of downward adjustments among inmates and parolees whose child support orders were modified; and the percentage paying child support

### Results

- *Paternity establishment*
  - Increased from 17.4 to 24.3 percent (long-term sentences), 28.1 to 33.1 percent (short-term sentences), and 21.1 to 28.8 percent (parole)
- *Child support order establishment*
  - Increased from zero to 8.4 percent (long-term sentences) and zero to 10.8 percent (short-term sentences)
- *Inmate orders*
  - Increased from 20.4 to 32.7 percent (long-term sentences) and 13.8 to 22.8 percent (short-term sentences)
- *Child support order modifications*
  - Increased from 4.3 to 12.5 percent (long-term sentences) and 5.3 percent to 10.5 percent (short-term sentences)
- *Downward adjustments*
  - Significantly improved
- *Percentage paying child support*
  - Decreased among those paroled, no change over time among inmates

### Results for Hispanic Subgroups

None reported



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