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.


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