

# Using research to inform CQI

Continuous quality improvement (CQI) office hours August 27, 2024 | 2:00 – 3:00pm ET





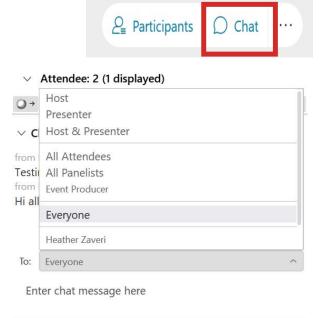
OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

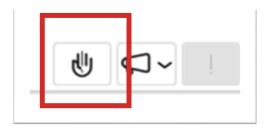
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families



## How you can participate

- You may use the chat or share verbally using the hand raise feature
- / REMINDER: Never text or email client personally identifiable information (PII), including during office hours or when contacting the TA teams







## Maintaining and strengthening CQI practices

/ Using research to inform CQI







# Agenda

- / Why bring research evidence into CQI?
- / Infusing research throughout CQI
- / Be a discerning consumer of research
- / How to find relevant research



# Why bring research evidence into CQI?



### Share with us

/ Have you drawn on research to inform your CQI efforts?

/ What are some of your go-to resources to find research?



### Slido results



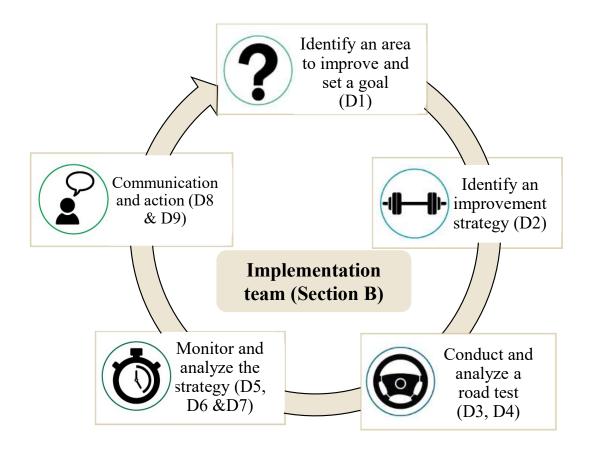
### Why bring research into CQI?

- / Research provides an opportunity to learn more about the nature of challenges and solutions that have worked for others
- / Improvement efforts focus on local implementation challenges, but programs often face the same challenges related to recruitment, retention, and engagement
- / Avoid reinventing what is already known
  - Minimize staff time needed to identify potential solutions
  - Minimize burden of new data collection



# Infusing research throughout the CQI cycle

### Where can research enhance CQI?



**Step 1**: To inform your understanding of challenges and root causes

**Step 2**: To generate inspiration for strategy ideas or flesh out strategy ideas to align with strong practices

**Step 3**: To inform supports to implement a strategy well

# At each step, evidence from other sources can help answer your questions

- / Step 1: Why are participants dropping out between recruitment and first workshop?
  - Explore what the research says about program attrition to guide discussions with participants about why they are dropping out
- / Step 2: How can we improve our enrollment process to reduce dropout between recruitment and first workshop?
  - Research may highlight strategies that have improved retention for other programs
- / Step 3: How should we implement a new retention strategy to test if it will work in our program?
  - Research on the strategy can provide details about how it was implemented in other programs—timing, staffing, etc.



# Be a discerning consumer of research



# Be a discerning consumer of research

Consider	Ask yourself
Generalizability	Was the research done in a similar context to our program? If not, can the research apply to other contexts?
Relevance	Is the research applicable to the challenge our program faces? Did the research find that different approaches than ours could be successful?
Rigor	Is the research high quality? Is the research method valid and reliable to answer our specific question?
Feasibility	Are the solutions described in the research feasible for our team to implement?



# Know the difference between a best practice and a research-informed practice

### Best practice

- Has been used in another context and shown to support success
- A good source of ideas

### Research-informed practice

- Validated by scientific research
- A good source for refining strategies

### Example – Assessing research



#### Data Snapshot: Reaching Potential Clients



Healthy Marriage and Responsible **Fatherhood Recruitment Strategies** 

Generalizability

The federal government has a long-standing commitment to supporting healthy relatio stable families, and fathers' involvement in the lives of their children and families. Since 2005. Congress has funded \$150 million each year in healthy marriage (HM) and responsible fatherhood (RF) grants. The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) within the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has awarded and overseen three cohorts of these grants.

Both HM and RF grantees strive to support the long-term success of families. HM grantees promote: healthy marriage and relationships through eight. legislatively authorized activities, RF grantees' legislatively authorized activities promote responsible parenting, healthy marriage, and economic stability (see Box 1 for a description of services). OFA works with the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, also within ACF, to conduct research on how to best serve families through these grants.

#### Box 1. What are HMRF program services and who do they serve?

HM grammes may use grant funds for eight allowable activities such as education in high schools, manage and relationship education and skills, and marriage enhancement. HM grantees serve adult couples. individuals, and youth.

RF grantiers must offer programs with activities that (I) promote marriage or austain marriage; (2) promote responsible parenting; and (3) feater economic stability. RF grantees serve fathers and couples in the community and fathers who are incarcerated and teersering their communities.

The primary service offered by both HM and RF grantees is group-based workshops. Under the 2015 Funding Opportunity Announcement, grantees were also required to offer case management (unless they received an exemption from ACFI, in case management, clients receive individualized attention. and might receive referrals to other services.









Relevance

# Example (cont.)

#### Rigor

This snapshot describes client recruitment by the 2015 cohort of HM and RF grantees. To implement their programs, each grantee must find potential clients for whom its services would be appropriate, and encourage them to enroll. Recruitment is usually an ongoing process, and it can be challenging. See Box 2 for practice tips on using the data in this snapsh

#### Methods

his snapshot describes recruiting by 45 l grantees and 40 RF grantees that received five year grants in September 2015. Data came from a program operations survey that grantees completed quarterly. The snapshot covers program operations from July 2016 (the last quarter of the first grant year) through March 2019 (the first half of the fourth grant year). An interim report describes more findings, including client characteristics, the services grantees provide, and the ways clients have changed from the beginning to the end of the program.1

#### Recruitment findings

Grantees enrolled more than 150,000 clients into their programs. In the nearly three-year period covered in this brief, HM grantees enrolled 106,314 clients, including couples, single adults, and youth. During that same time, RF grantees enrolled 43,920 clients, including fathers in the community, incarcerated fathers, and partners in couples.

All grantees used a variety of activities to get the word out about their programs. Advertising the program highlights its presence, its activities, and who it serves to current and potential partners, clients, and funders. The most commonly reported advertising activities and venues were

#### **Box 2. Practice Tips**

This brief desc es the recruitment activities and 45 HM and 40 RF grantees that were ed in 2015. This information is intended to increase the field's understanding of how HMRF programs recruit clients, which is critical to successful program. implementation. However, the brief does not assess whether the recruiting practices described here are associated with better performance.

For practitioners, when designing and improving your recruiting processes:

- · Consider a variety of activities to spread the word about your program. Table 1, "Advertising and outreach activities used by grantees," describes the activities HM and RF grantees used to increase awareness of their programs.
- · Assess which recruiting approach(es) are the best fit for your program. Figure 1, "Recruiting methods used by grantees" shows four method used com only across HM and RF grantees to recruit clients
- · Explore the possibility of enlisting community agencies to help you recruit clients. Table 2, "Locations where grantees conducted on-site recruitment," and Table 3, "Grantees' referral sources," provide information on the types of agencies HM and RF grantees partnered with for on-site recruitment and as sources for referrals.

presentations to staff at program partners or community organizations, word of mouth, flyers, and social media marketing (Figure 1). More than 90 percent of HM and RF grantees reported using all four of these advertising activities and venues. Less common advertising venues included radio, Internet, television, newspaper and theater ads, and

#### Table 1. Locations where grantees recruited on-site

n-site recruiting locations	HM grantees (% of grantees)	RF grantees (% of grantees)	
Schools	93	80	
Other community agencies or organizations	91	97	
Places of worship or faith-based community centers	69	68	
Child welfare agencies (for voluntary enrollments)	58	63	
Head Start programs	53	70	
WIC agencies	51	50	
Hospitals, maternity clinics, and doctors' offices	47	58	
Child support agencies (for voluntary enrollments)	347	70	
Probation and parole	47	90	
TANF offices	44	55	
realthy Start	36	38	
Child welfare agencies (for court-ordered enrollments)	22	30	
Child support agencies (for court-ordered enrollments)	18	43	
ther	60	70	
otal sample size (grantees)	45	40	

#### **Feasibility**

nses do not sum to 100 because grantees could select more than one location. Other reported on-site recruiting locations included, ple, family resource centers, prisons, housing complexes, and job fairs or other community events.

#### munity agencies were also important ces of referrals for HM and RF programs.

ddition to directly recruiting potential clients at other agencies, grantees could receive referrals from agencies for people who might be eligible for and interested in the HM or RF services. RF grantees reported receiving referrals from 11 types of agencies, on average, and HM grantees reported an average of 10 types of agencies as referral partners. Common referral sources for both HM and RF grantees included schools, places of worship or falth-based community centers, and employment assistance centers. More than two-thirds of HM and RF grantees reported receiving referrals from each of these sources (Table 2). Ninety-five percent of RF grantees reported receiving referrals from probation and parole, and 90 percent reported referrals from child support agencies. In comparison, about half of HM grantees reported getting referrals from these sources (Table 2). Schools were a common referral source for HM grantees (96 percent of HM grantees), which often serve students. Seventy percent of RF grantees reported schools as a referral source. In addition to referrals from community agencies, almost all HM and RF grantees had participants who self-referred.



### How to find relevant research

### Sources of evidence for CQI

# / Evidence from your program

- Program data
- Local evaluation (if you have one)
- Participant, staff, partner feedback
- Practice knowledge
- Lived experience

### / Evidence from the field

- Findings from federal studies
  - Formative (rapid cycle learning)
  - Implementation
  - Descriptive
  - Impact
- Peer-reviewed journal articles
- Literature review syntheses



# Where to start looking for research

### / OPRE resource library

- Find research from federal studies of HMRF and other grant programs, as well as research syntheses

### / Research and evaluation clearinghouses

- Find relevant research that has been systematically reviewed based on accepted standards for high quality

### / Conferences

- Learn about new research on evidence-informed and best practices to support children and families

### / Other research tools

- Find additional research that may support CQI efforts

**OPRE** resource library

Research and evaluation clearinghouses

**Conferences** 

Other



## **OPRE** resource library

- / Includes research related to HMRF and other ACF programs (e.g. child support, TANF)
- / Search function is very effective for finding resources on specific populations
  - Who are you struggling to reach or engage?
  - Search the resource library to view resources related to a particular group
- / Or filter for HMRF programs to view everything available

**OPRE** resource library

Research and evaluation clearinghouses

Conferences

Other

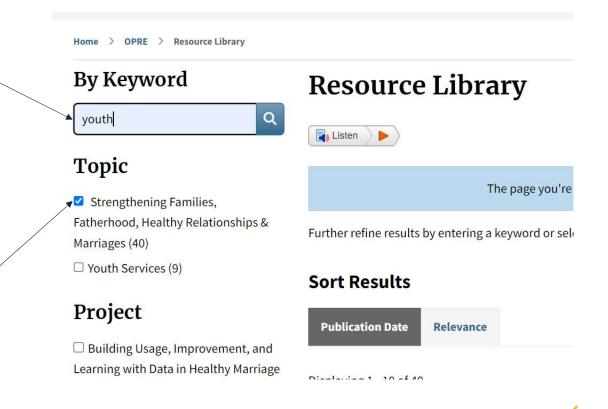
www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/resource-library



# OPRE resource library (cont.)

For best results, search topics (LGBTQ, recruitment strategies), rather than specific questions ("How do we improve attendance at the first workshop?")

Use filters to narrow your search to certain programming types or grant streams

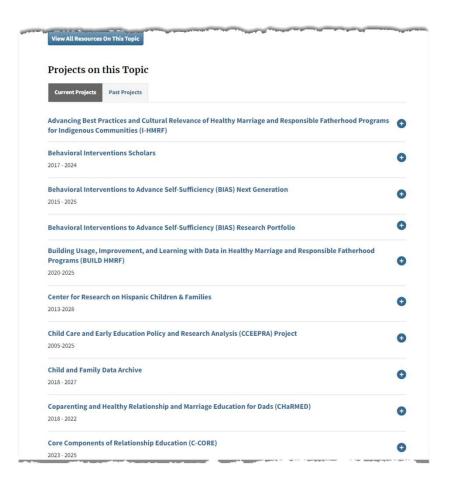


# HMRFspecific resources



https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/topic/strengthening-families-healthy-marriage-responsible-fatherhood

### Featured research



#### Featured Cross-Cutting Topic Pages

#### Racial Equity Research

Explore relevant OPRE research and resources about racial equity, and learn more about OPRE's commitment to equity in our research and evaluation work.

Learn More

#### **Research and Evaluation Centers**

Explore OPRE funded present and past research and evaluation centers focused on a variety of topics related to children and families.

**Learn More** 

#### Research with Indigenous Communities

Learn more about OPRE's intentional approach to research, evaluation, and evaluation technical assistance with Indigenous communities.

Learn More

#### COVID-19 Research

Explore relevant OPRE research and resources about COVID-19 and its impacts on ACF programs and populations.

Learn More

#### **Archived Data**

OPRE regularly archives research and evaluation data for secondary analysis. Explore our archived data page to explore datasets.

Learn More

#### **Coordinated Services Research**

Learn more about OPRE's portfolio of research focused on the coordination of services to support children and families

Learn More

### Research helps identify ideas for improving...

### **Recruitment of dads**

### IF A FATHER SAYS ... "I am not interested."

CHALLENGE		Inside program	Outside program
Distrust of programs	•	Focus on opportunities, not barriers.     Lef fathers observe before enrolling.     Build program intensity, using short interactions to establish relationships.     Hire staff members who know the language and culture of the fathers.     Provide content in fathers' native languages.	Find a trusted community member or resource to build a partnership with or incorporate in marketing and testimonials.     Participate in community events or cohost events.     Spend time at places in the community when fathers congregate (for example, barbershops).
Feeling misunderstood	•	Train staff members to be aware of and confront their implicit and explicit biases related to racial and gender stereotypes, young parents, and criminal justice involvement. Tailor messages and content to fathers' needs and preferences. Train staff members to maintain a calm demeanor if a father has an emotional reaction.	Host listening sessions with fathers in the community.     Build in time for staff members to tour, observe, or participate in experiences outside the program that build their understanding of or relationships with fathers.
Fear of discrimination	•	Before they engage with fathers, allow staff members time to reflect on race and different cultural contexts, including their own, and how they influence relationships.     Collaborate with fathers and staff members from varied backgrounds to develop messages.	<ul> <li>Engage with community leaders and media to understand perceptions of fathers and to shift views and expectations of them.</li> </ul>
View that fathers are providers, not caregivers	•	Provide messages about the role of a father and its intersection with other roles men have.     Host group activities for fathers and children.	Arrange for fathers to give presentations at community forums.
View of the program as punitive	•	Focus on the importance of fathers and combat the stigma that the program is for men in trouble.     Integrate nonpunitive approaches into program policies and train staff members.	Learn more about how people's perception of fairness and how they are treated by social service and legal systems may affect how they respond to your program.

### **Program completion**



### Predicting Participation in Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs

Consistent participation is an essential requirement for social services interventions. Intervention research suggests that programs are most effective when participants receive the intended dosage of programming—that is, when participants attend most of the planned programming (see, for example, Nation et al. 2003; Yalom and Leszcz 2005). But achieving high rates of attendance can be difficult, particularly when programs support underserved populations with low incomes, because of the many stresses and economic challenges these populations often face (Eisner and Meidert 2011; Fabiano 2007; Nock and Photos 2007).

Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs funded by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, are generally required to offer a primary workshop aimed at improving healthy relationship and parenting knowledge and skills. RF programs also offer employment and economic stability opportunities. A long-standing body of research demonstrates some positive effects of HMRF programs on certain outcomes (see, for example, Holcomb et al. 2019; Holmes et al. 2020; Markman et al. 2022; Patnaik et al. 2021; Wu et al. 2021). Similar to other social services programs, HMRF programs often face challenges with consistent participant attendance in their primary workshops (Baumgartner et al. 2022; Michalopoulos et al. 2022). Studies find that consistent participation is required

For example, a few noncausal studies found that greater participation was associated with better outcomes for program participants (Arnold and Beelmann 2018; Dradford et al. 2017; Cobb and Sullivan 2015). Overall, preliminary evidence suggests that consistent participation and dosage are important for HMRF programs to achieve their intended goals (Markman et al. 2022; Wadsworth and Markman 2012).

To date, little published research has focused on understanding the factors that predict regular participation in HMRF programs. Three recent exceptions have addressed this gap by focusing on either participant or workshop characteristics as key predictors. One study examined characteristics of couples when they enrolled in an HMRF program (Bulling et al. 2020). The authors found that younger couples attended fewer sessions and that those









...and many other program challenges!



## Research and evaluation clearinghouses

- / A research clearinghouse compiles and evaluates evidence for interventions
  - They are searchable by useful characteristics like population or outcome of interest to help you find the most **relevant** research
- / ACF clearinghouses focus on topics of relevance to HMRF programming like parenting or workforce

**OPRE** resource library

Research and evaluation clearinghouses

**Conferences** 

Other

# Research and evaluation clearinghouses

www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/research-and-evaluation-clearinghouses

#### **Research and Evaluation Clearinghouses**

#### Liste

In addition to building evidence through a broad range of rigorous empirical studies, OPRE catalogs, reviews, and disseminates evidence related to ACF programs. OPRE conducts systematic reviews of the effectiveness of interventions designed to help job seekers who are low-income succeed in the labor market, research on programs and services for children and families to prevent foster care placements, the evidence for early childhood home visiting services, and sponsors the Child Care and Early Education Research Connections.



#### Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse ø

The Pathways Clearinghouse identifies interventions that aim to improve employment outcomes, reduce employment challenges, and support self sufficiency for low income populations, especially Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and other public program recipients. The Pathways Clearinghouse systematically evaluates and summarizes the evidence of their effectiveness.

Explore (



#### Child Care & Early Education Research Connections ø

Child Care & Early Education Research Connections, launched in 2004, promotes high quality research in child care and early education to support policy making. This website includes research and data resources for researchers, policy makers, practitioners, and others.

Explore @



#### Home Visiting Evidence of Effectiveness (HomVEE) ∅

HomVEE provides an assessment of the evidence of effectiveness for early childhood home visiting models that serve families with pregnant women and children from birth to kindergarten entry (that is, up through age 5). The HomVEE review assesses the quality of the research quidence.

Explore @



#### Title IV- E Prevention Services Clearinghouse ∅

The Title IV. E Prevention Services Clearinghouse was established to conduct an objective and transparent review of research on programs and services intended to provide enhanced support to children and families and prevent foster care placements.

Explore @

The following evidence reviews also address topics relevant to ACF's programs:

- Education Department Institute of Education Sciences What Works Clearinghouse Early Childhood Education Ø
- Department of Labor Clearinghouse for Labor Evaluation and Research ⊗



## Research and evaluation clearinghouses

- / What can you learn from evidence-based models?
- / Look up models that have worked for your population or outcome of interest (e.g., youth, increase employment)
- / Learn how other programs design supports and services like childcare, case management, coaching

### Conference websites

- / ACF, OPRE, OFA, and other agencies host conferences relevant to HMRF
- / Presentations are typically organized by year
- / Scan prior year presentations to find related topics emerging from HMRF, TANF, employment programs (e.g., engaging fathers)
- / For example, RECS is focused on selfsufficiency research, National Fatherhood Summit includes sessions on emerging research

https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/opreconferences-and-events **OPRE** resource library

Research and evaluation clearinghouses

**Conferences** 

Other

### https://recsconference.net/2022videos.html



### RECS Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS)



HOME

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**AGENDA** 

**PAST CONFERENCES** 

#### **CONTACT US**



#### Opening Remarks and Plenary Session

Adapting to Serve Families and Build Knowledge During COVID-19 and Beyond



#### **Breakout Session**

Adapting the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) Employment Model



#### **Breakout Session**

Co-Regulation and Connection in Human Services: Developing a Learning Agenda





#### **Breakout Session**

Exploring Evaluations of Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Programming





#### **Breakout Session**

Facilitators and Barriers to Low-Income Latino Families' Uptake of Public Safety Net Programs

#### TANF Data Collaborative: Hose States Are Building Data Analytics Capacit



#### **Breakout Session**

TANF Data Collaborative: How States Are Building Data Analytics Capacity

### Other research tools

### / Google Scholar

- Provides access to <u>very</u> wide pool of articles and reports
- Not focused on HMRF and related fields, not vetted for relevance and rigor

### / Al tools

- Chatbots like ChatGPT or Gemini can be a source of ideas
- Try prompts like, "What are key insights about how to form and maintain community partners to support HMRF programs?"
- Not vetted for relevance, rigor, or source

### **OPRE** resource library

Research and evaluation clearinghouses

**Conferences** 

**Other** 

What are key insights about how to form and maintain community partners to support Healthy marriage programs?"

- \$
- Forming and maintaining community partnerships to support Healthy Marriage Programs involves several strategic insights:
- Align Objectives with Community Needs: Ensure that the goals of your Healthy Marriage
  Programs are closely aligned with the specific needs and interests of the community. This
  alignment helps to foster a sense of shared purpose and commitment.
- Engage Key Stakeholders Early: Identify and reach out to influential community leaders, organizations, and stakeholders early in the process. Engaging them from the start helps in building trust and securing their support.



## Activity: Use tools to find research to help

- / Context: You are the program director of a fatherhood program, serving formerly incarcerated fathers
- / Challenge: Participation in the job supports component is just 40%
- / Root causes: Fathers are enthusiastic about the program but due to changing work schedules cannot commit to the 12-week program
- / What tools can you use to learn more or determine how to address the problem?

## Activity: Use tools to find research to help

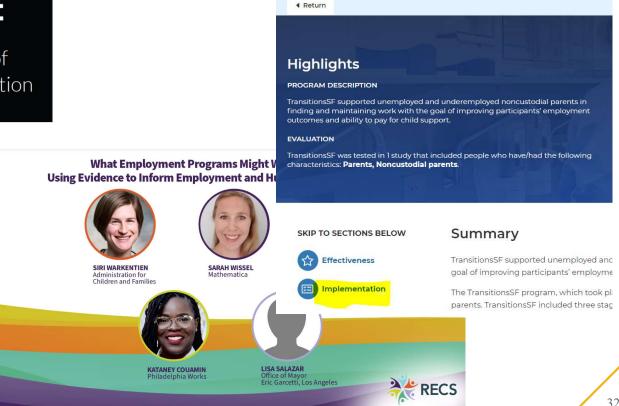


Jocelyn Fontaine and Emma Kurs

February 2017 OPRE Report #2017-04

#### Importance of Economic Stability Activities for Fathers with Incarceration Experiences

People return from incarceration with limited resources, accumulated debt, weak employment histories, and no means of supporting themselves financially (McLean and Thompson 2007; Visher, Debus, and Yahner 2008; Visher, Yahner, and La Vigne 2010). For many of these people, their ability to achieve economic stability in the community is exacerbated by other reentry challenges they might facthat may preclude or hinder their ability to find and maintain employment (La Vigne and Kachnowski 2005; La Vigne, Shollenberger, and Debus 2009; La Vigne, Visher, and Castro 2004; Visher and



**TransitionsSF** 

### **Announcements**

- / Join us for the next CQI office hours!
  - The next office hours will be on September 24, 2024
  - A calendar invite will be shared soon
- / The next nFORM office hours will be on September 10, 2024
- / Check out OPRE's resource site for a variety of reports and briefs related to HMRF and other grant programs
  - Resource library
- / For CQI-related questions, reach out to the CQI helpdesk
  - HMRFCQI@mathematica-mpr.com

# Thank you!