



Photo: Rick Demopolis

Resources to support fathers returning from prison or jail to families in Minnesota



What can community agencies do?

Why should community organizations pay attention to fathers coming out of corrections and their families?

On any given day, there are about 77,000 children in the U.S. with a parent who is incarcerated. Research demonstrates that children benefit in a variety of ways when they have significant positive involvement with their fathers, including when they are incarcerated. Research also demonstrates that fathers accrue a variety of benefits by being positively involved. Community organizations can play a critical role in supporting and empowering fathers coming out of corrections to succeed as parents and in their own lives.

1. Understand employment and other needs in the context of fatherhood and child support responsibilities.

For many dads who are incarcerated or leaving incarceration, their children are a primary motivation and responsibility in their lives. Including programming that addresses parenting and programs for children can lead to better engagement and outcomes in other areas, such as employment.

2. Support engagement with child support in case management and other programming.

When fathers proactively work with their child support workers, payment plans can often be adjusted to be more realistic, and the incentives for legal employment can increase.

Family support and employment

"play an important role for released offenders who succeed at reentering society and avoid returning to prison."¹

3. Build partnerships between your agency, child support, and corrections. Partnerships with corrections can allow essential pre-release relationship-building with participants, as well as post-release collaboration to avoid recidivism. Your agency can help build bridges between participants and child support, such as by hosting child support workers to provide resources and information at your location.

4. Focus on positive outcomes for children. Effective support for fathers can lead to improved educational, health, and other well-being outcomes for their children. Help make this link by offering onsite early childhood education, child-friendly family activities, and other ways to integrate the well-being of participants' children into your programming.

5. Coordinate services with the network of reentry and fatherhood programs in your area. No single organization can provide everything. Develop plans for referrals and collaborative services with related programs in your area. Directories of reentry and fatherhood programs in Minnesota are listed on the website below.

For videos and connections to supportive resources for fathers and their families go to:

www.mnfathers.org/mindthegap

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1. "Incarceration, Reentry, and Child Support Issues: National and State Research Overview." U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement. 2006.

