

2024 Fatherhood Summit
Table Group Discussion Consolidated Notes

Child Support

Barriers -

- Winner take all system – a system of winners and losers not families
- Need to remove incentive related to residential credit
- Housing equity/parity if shared parenting time –no credit
- Parent equity
- Employment barriers make dads choose between kid time and work to pay child support
- Cost of living on top of child support is a challenge
- Orders too high not leaving enough for dad to live on
- Unfair system where courts don't value dads role beyond the money

- Lack of and access to resources to support dads that are struggling
- Overwhelming process – where do I turn
- Complicated system that is hard to understand
- Confusing/overwhelming packets
- Dads don't know their rights and don't know where to start
- Dads don't know the difference between a legal v. private agreement
- Mistrust of the system when they have to fight so hard for so long
- Scared of the unknown
- Not aware of DCS or how to ask questions or that they can go into the office
- Scary, intimidating system and staff

- Stigmas – Dads don't think they can ask for help

- Inability to pay in case at office or anywhere

- Mental Health/substance abuse keeps dads from engaging

- Jurisdiction/intergovernmental issues

- WA state does not have an economic model for calculating child support

- Coercive control laws (DV) are vague and open to abuse

How can Government Agencies Do Better -

- Better data collection
 - Track protection orders
 - Track parenting time
- Abatement like policy for parents at in-person treatment
- Improve interagency communication and cooperation
- Collaborate with partners to increase access to supports

- Education/awareness about child support
 - In high school
 - In the community

- Make resources for dads available
- Barrier removal needs to be guided by lived experience
- Recognition of Barriers – need to be more aware of what is happening
- Adjust to barriers
- Offer Help
- Educate community providers who support families.
- Better form delivery method
- Simplify language on forms so those that are not represented can make good decisions
- Target outreach about resources to dads
- Engage with fathers, treat them like people
- Let people be heard/share their story
- Decrease stigma around child support

- Train staff to recognize their own biases
- Establish a customer support system
- Hire navigators to guide and answer questions
- Better contact and communication
- Provide info to the public - “Advertise” “market” solutions
- Strive for more personal interaction v. info sent by mail or summons
- Simplified softened language
- Have an open forum about child support
- Involve fathers/parents in order establishment

What Were You Hoping to See That You Didn't -

- More diversity on Dads Panel, include dads w/o custody
- Conversation about specific legislation or legislative ideas
 - Workgroups?

- More data
 - # of children born out of wedlock
 - # of Children abused
 - False allegations of abuse where it was unfounded
- Include the Courts- possibly Representatives
- Wish we would have address false allegations of domestic violence
 - Take too long to resolve
 - No due process
 - Biased towards mom
 - No consequences for lying
 - Survey dads about this in the next study
- Drum performance
- More info about “Dads and Dad

What Excited You About What You Heard Today -

- The speaker from Ohio
- Kim Dent – State of Ohio
- Ohio presentation
 - Measuring lots of data
 - Built into statute
 - Multi-disciplined approach
 - The right people on their Council
 - Funding for local dads groups
- The number of people who attended the Summit
- Great turnout
- Seeing how far fatherhood engagement has come
- Dads can come out of their funk and succeed
- Hearing that programs want to go “behind the walls”
- Interagency actions
- Getting to meet people
- DCS employees able to provide answers (insert tears)
- Lived experience panel
- Panel discussion with Dads
- Dads at our table, sharing their story Hope