**MEMORANDUM**

**TO: Dr. Rufus Lynch, Strong Families Commission and Jeff Steiner, Dads’ Resource Center**

**FROM:** Corinna Wilson, Wilson500,Inc.

**RE:** Fatherhood Research & Practice Network Webinar, Tuesday, November 5, 2019

**DATE:** November 10, 2019

This memo summarizes this fantastic webinar which included a conversation among four featured grantees (South Carolina, State of Washington, Michigan and Kentucky). In the slides, as you'll see, the Strong Families Commission ranked very strong and Dr. Lynch would have brought as much if not more value to this webinar as the other featured speakers. We can definitely "borrow" strategies from the other organizations engaged in this work as we move forward.

1. My single biggest takeaway from the webinar was how highly evolved greater father family engagement work is in the US and how well the work you have done here compares to your peers! Well done!
2. Only four states have commissions, although everyone agrees they are needed in all states.
   1. Father engagement is now a federal priority under ACF-ACF=IM-18-01, October 17, 2018 memo urging all human services agencies and providers to pursue father inclusion
   2. Ohio’s is acknowledged to be the most active
3. Strong Families Commission was one of 11 grantees in the FRPN mini grants and shows really well against the other grantees
   1. Consistently in all categories, SFC leads the pack.
4. Four presenters were: South Carolina, Washington State, Michigan and Kentucky.
5. South Carolina: A central organizing structure is essential
6. Washington: Its “north star” was brain science of early childhood development and whole families. “it’s all about the health and welfare of the children.”
7. Michigan has good participation from state courts and its DHS was able to use TANF funds.
8. Lessons learned:
   1. Build strong local coalitions that can act as your “farm team”
   2. Build “teeth” into your state commission
   3. Use time pressure as a tool. “Big, fast and go.” Michigan
   4. Michigan did a statewide survey of fatherhood practitioners
   5. “Dads are more than a paycheck”
   6. Washington: “Transforming systems through fatherhood voices” a video project done on the cheap
   7. In WA, 80% of fathers are present for the birth of their child, which practitioners believe is a critical inflection point for fathers
   8. WA: launched a speaker’s bureau
9. On statewide commissions
   1. MI: We need one!
   2. OH Fatherhood Commission was created by statute and state-funded, creating a practitioner network supporting fathers through programming
10. Key goal categories
    1. Developing lasting organizational structure for father inclusion
    2. Cultivating high-level legislative and executive support
    3. Obtaining funding for fatherhood commissions and services (PA did not list)
    4. Building multi-agency partnerships and alliances
    5. Engaging fathers for authentic input to state agencies and programs (PA did not list)
    6. Collecting data on barriers to father engagement, unmet needs, service gaps and fatherhood resources and services
11. Main activities pursued by FRPN grantees (PA did all of them)
    1. Interviews, focus groups, surveys
    2. Building multi-agency coalitions
    3. Strategic planning and state policy review
    4. Conducting fatherhood summits and conferences
    5. Engaging in legislator education and cultivation of champions
    6. Planning and funding permanent statewide fatherhood commissions
12. Main challenges encountered
    1. Political and organizational issues (PA)
    2. Difficulty engaging or managing impacted fathers
    3. Geographic distance and time constraints of partners (PA)
    4. Lack of data on father engagement
13. FPPN will be issuing a written report later this month with all of this data and anecdotal evidence from its grantees.
14. Main achievement cited:
    1. All four featured grantees created broad coalitions
    2. Kentucky: strategic plan
    3. Michigan: increased knowledge of fatherhood resources and gaps
    4. SC: press coverage
    5. Washington: Fatherhood Summit
    6. PA did all of this!

        