

An Assessment of **Programs & Services for Fathers** in Baytown, Texas

Prepared For:
City of Baytown



Prepared By:

**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

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INTRODUCTION

The City of Baytown, Texas has partnered with National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) to create a city-wide initiative to promote responsible fatherhood. The framework for creating the initiative is NFI’s Community Mobilization Approach™ (CMA), which has been used by government and nonprofit agencies operating at state (e.g., Texas, Indiana, Ohio, Rhode Island), county (e.g., Prince George’s, MD, Wapello, IA), and city levels (e.g., Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Sioux Falls) across the United States to launch initiatives that promote responsible fatherhood.

Baytown’s CMA, diagrammed in Figure 1 below, consists of three phases: (1) a needs and assets assessment of Baytown’s ability to promote responsible fatherhood; (2) a Leadership Summit on Fatherhood attended by Baytown’s leaders; and (3) implementing an action plan for a fatherhood initiative involving a cross-section of Baytown’s sectors.

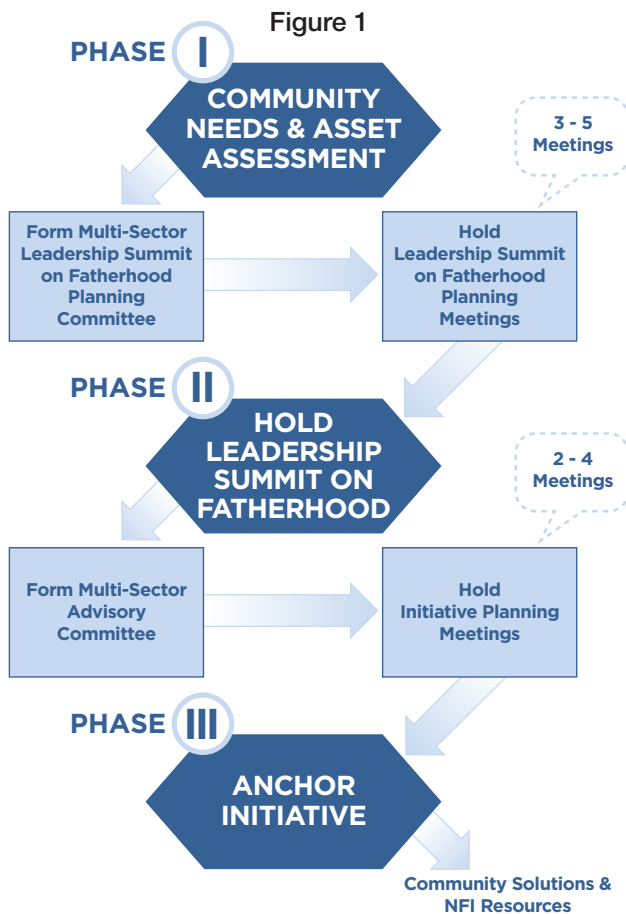


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The start of Phase I involved introducing the CMA to community leaders and getting their input to guide the assessment. NFI conducted a full-day workshop on January 31, 2024, attended by 18 city leaders representing seven sectors. These leaders decided on the issues affected by father absence and presence that they wanted to learn more about. NFI focused the collection of secondary data on those topics. NFI used publicly-available sources of local, state, and national data. NFI supplemented that data with information gathered during focus groups attended by community leaders.

This report is the culmination of Phase I, the Community Needs and Assets Assessment. This phase is driven by the application of NFI’s research methodology called the *Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of Programs and Services (REAPS)* for fathers. It allows for collecting comprehensive data on the state of fatherhood programs and services in a community with the participation of community leaders.

This REAPS will help Baytown leaders:

- Identify the need to address father absence with an emphasis on reducing drug and opioid misuse.
- Identify the services and programs for fathers that exist in the greater Baytown area and the service and program gaps.
- Identify the assets in the greater Baytown area that can be mobilized to promote responsible fatherhood.
- Identify potential strategies for the promotion of responsible fatherhood that can be woven into the social fabric of Baytown.
- Collect information critical to attracting funds for a sustainable city-wide fatherhood initiative.

The REAPS has four components:

1. Gathering secondary (existing) data.
2. Conducting focus groups with leaders in different sectors to supplement the data.
3. Analyzing the data and focus group results, and report writing.
4. Creating a city “assets” map using the results of components 1 through 3.

SECONDARY DATA

This section of the report presents the “Local Picture” for Baytown related to 12 issues (topics) of interest to community leaders. NFI gathered the most recent, readily available data from government agencies or non-governmental organizations at the national, state, or local level. (Baytown officials leading this initiative directed NFI to use county-level data for Harris and Chambers counties as a proxy for data on the “Baytown area.” NFI included national and statewide data to put the local data in context.) The Local Picture is followed by research on why father absence or presence matters to the issue as a way to draw the attention of city leaders to the impact of father absence and presence.

City leaders chose to gather secondary data on the following 12 issues related to father absence and presence:

- Father Absence Rate
- Drug and Alcohol Use
- Incarceration and Recidivism
- Juvenile Justice
- Poverty
- Teen Pregnancy
- Child Abuse
- Educational Attainment
- Employment
- Physical Health
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Marriage and Relationship with Mom

Father Absence Rate

Local Picture

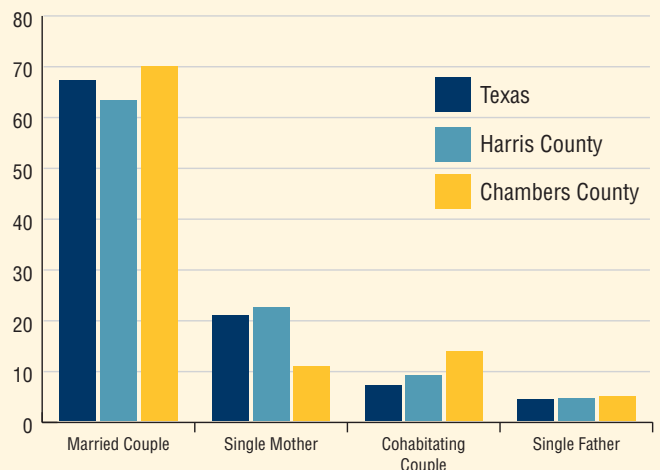
The vast majority of children in father-absent homes grow up with single mothers. As a result, these households serve as a proxy for examining the impact of father absence at the local level. (Keep in mind that some non-resident fathers are involved in their children’s lives.)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the proportion of all children in Texas under 18 years of age who live with single mothers is 21.1%.¹ The proportion of those children in Harris County is slightly higher at 22.66% and significantly lower in Chambers County at 10.97%. See Chart 1 for a further breakdown of the data.

When comparing the two counties, the second largest proportion of children are growing up with single mothers in Harris but with cohabiting couples in Chambers. In fact, a higher proportion of children in Chambers are growing up with cohabiting couples² than in Harris. That’s noteworthy because children who grow up with cohabiting couples are at increased risk of their parents’ relationship dissolving and, thus, eventually living without their fathers.

Chart 1

The proportion of children under age 18 by family type in Texas, Harris County, and Chambers County.



¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2022. American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

² The U.S. Census Bureau defines cohabiting as two or more people who live together in an intimate relationship but are not married or in a civil union.

Father Absence Rate *continued*

Why It Matters

Father absence is a crisis affecting a quarter of our nation's children (24.1%).³ It has staggering human and economic costs. Decades of research show unequivocally that children who grow up without a resident father (i.e., biological, step, or adoptive) are at higher risk, on average, for a host of poor physical, cognitive (mental and emotional), and social outcomes. These children are more likely, for example, to be poor, use drugs, be abused, engage in criminal activity, perform poorly in school, be injured, and have emotional and behavioral problems compared to children who grow up with a resident father.⁴

These poor outcomes are not simply correlated with father absence, they're caused by them. A meta-analysis of nearly 50 studies that employed innovative, rigorous designs to examine the causal effects of father absence concluded that father absence causes poor outcomes for children in educational attainment, mental health, relationship formation and stability, and labor force success.

American taxpayers foot a huge bill to address the human costs of father absence. A study of 13 means-tested federal programs supporting poor single-parent families, for example, calculated that the federal government spends nearly \$100 billion. This was a conservative estimate because it did not include many other federal benefit programs for communities, indirect costs related to poor outcomes of children from father-absent homes, and long-term costs in reduced tax income from low-earning single-parent families.⁵

Drug and Alcohol Use

Local Picture

Overdose deaths were the leading cause of accidental death in Harris County from 2016 to 2020 and have risen alongside national averages, with an estimated 1,084 overdose deaths in 2021. **From 2016 to 2021, overdose deaths in Harris County increased by 78%**, with opioid-involved and methamphetamine-involved overdose deaths occurring most frequently.

The main driver of increased overdose deaths appears to be the increase of fentanyl in the illicit drug supply (illegally manufactured street drugs). Illicitly manufactured fentanyl is often added to street drugs to make them more potent and more addictive, making those drugs incredibly dangerous. Fentanyl is up to 100 times more potent than morphine—a mere 2mg can result in a lethal overdose. **From 2019 to 2021, fentanyl-involved overdose deaths in Harris County increased 331%.**⁶

Why It Matters

Drug and alcohol use has a negative impact on Baytown's community health. Family structure impacts adolescent substance and alcohol use significantly, particularly for young men. Children from father-absent homes are more likely to use substances or alcohol. Research points to the importance of paternal involvement as a protective factor against alcohol and substance abuse.⁷

³ U.S. Census Bureau, 2023. Current Population Survey.

⁴ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

⁵ Nock, Steven L., and Einolf, Christopher J., 2008. *The One Hundred Billion Dollar Man*.

⁶ Harris County Public Health Department, 2024. Retrieved from [https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Divisions-Offices/Divisions/Community-Health-Wellness-Division/Substance-Use-Prevention#:~:text=From%202016%20to%202021%2C%20overdose,\(illegally%20manufactured%20street%20drugs\)](https://publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/Divisions-Offices/Divisions/Community-Health-Wellness-Division/Substance-Use-Prevention#:~:text=From%202016%20to%202021%2C%20overdose,(illegally%20manufactured%20street%20drugs))

⁷ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

Incarceration and Recidivism



Local Picture

Texas has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the country at 840 per 100,000 residents.⁸ The overall incarceration rate in Harris and Chambers counties (jails and prisons combined) is significantly lower at 267 and 368 per 100,000 residents, respectively. Both counties had significant reductions in their rates from 2010 - 2020. The jail and prison rates in Harris County dropped by 55% and 59%, respectively. The same rates in Chambers County dropped by 23% and 46%, respectively.⁹

In examining data on the three-year recidivism rate for adults and juveniles, the Legislative Budget Board reported a large discrepancy. The recidivism rate for adult inmates released in 2019 was 60.1% while the rate for juvenile inmates released in the same year from state residential facilities was 75.8%.¹⁰

Incarceration is expensive for Texas. The Texas Department of Criminal Justice reports that it costs \$61.63 per day to house an inmate in a state prison—an annual cost of \$22,495. Therefore, the state saves nearly \$2.25 million per year for every 100 individuals who don't return to prison after release.¹¹



Why It Matters

The vast majority of incarcerated parents in the country are fathers, more than 9 in 10. Incarcerated fathers can face several barriers to maintaining a connection to their children, including the desire of the non-incarcerated parent for the child not to visit their incarcerated father. The effects of paternal incarceration on children are negative and generational, including reduced cognitive abilities, reduced educational and academic outcomes, poorer health and well-being, increased stress, and reduced economic stability. Some studies have documented the negative effect of paternal incarceration on children's biology (e.g., hormones). Incarcerated fathers are less likely than non-incarcerated fathers to provide both formal and informal financial support to their children. Incarceration also negatively affects relationships between fathers and the co-parents of their children.¹² Fortunately, the negative effects can be ameliorated to an extent when incarcerated fathers build and maintain family connections. Strong family ties reduce recidivism rates.¹³

Juvenile Justice



Local Picture

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States in March 2020, Harris County was several years into a significant youth justice reform effort, and the county leveraged the public health crisis to strengthen and deepen reforms. Prior to COVID-19, strong advocacy efforts by local groups had already built momentum for change, and the new executive director of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD) implemented several policy and practice changes to reduce out-of-home placements, state commitments, and certifications to adult court.

HCJPD, the Harris County District Attorney's office, local advocates, and others advanced a wide range of strategies to further expedite the release of youths from detention and placements and to bolster support for them in their home communities. These strategies included expanding diversion opportunities, launching weekly meetings to examine individual detention cases and develop plans to expedite release, and shifting resources to community-based organizations to support youth returning home.

These strategies had a remarkable effect. Even after significant pre-pandemic declines from 2018 to 2020 in the number of incarcerated youth in Harris County, the number of that incarcerated population dropped by more than half from February and June 2020. Although it has crept back up, that figure has stayed well below pre-pandemic levels through the third quarter of 2022.¹⁴

⁸ Prison Policy Initiative, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html?gad_source=1&gclid=CjwKCAjwrcKxBhBMEiwAIVF8rCJqDJZWyjbu1HX_QXj9rx-pF9DviyfqHXz00ZMGs9tZYwnUcd9A2BoCaYMQAvD_BwE

⁹ Vera Institute, 2024. Retrieved from <https://trends.vera.org/state/TX>

¹⁰ Legislative Budget Board, 2022. Statewide Criminal and Juvenile Justice Recidivism and Revocation Rates.

¹¹ Texas Department of Criminal Justice, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/divisions/rpd/mentor_course/A-Introduction/03Statistics.htm

¹² National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

¹³ Prison Policy Initiative, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2021/12/21/family_contact/

¹⁴ *Youth Justice in the COVID-19 Pandemic Harris County, Texas*. Center for Children's Law & Policy, Justice for Families, Justice Policy Institute, National Juvenile Justice Network. February 2023.

Juvenile Justice *continued*



Why It Matters

Father absence is associated with long-term effects on children’s delinquent behavior and criminal activity later in life. A cumulative effect of risk factors, such as low socioeconomic status and lack of social support, may contribute to those effects. Father absence due to incarceration may increase the risk that children engage in delinquent behaviors in school. Research suggests that there are differences in how father absence affects delinquency based on gender, with father absence being more closely linked to criminal activity for young men but not for women. Research also suggests that the quality of father-child relationships can have an impact on delinquency, with poorer quality associated with higher levels of delinquency.¹⁵

Poverty



Local Picture

In examining child poverty, children who grow up with single mothers serves as a proxy for examining the impact of father absence at the local level. (Keep in mind that some non-resident fathers are involved in their children’s lives.)

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the proportion of all children in Texas under 18 years of age who live in poverty is 19%.¹⁶ The proportion of those children in Harris County is slightly higher at 23% and slightly lower in Chambers County at 18.5%. See Chart 2 for a further breakdown of the data.

In both counties and statewide the more than half of children in poverty grow up in single-mother households. It’s noteworthy that the proportion of children in those households is nearly three quarters in Chambers County.

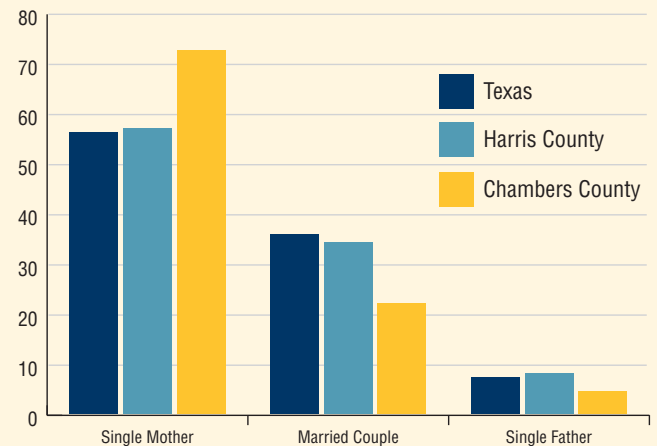


Why It Matters

Father absence increases economic hardship for children. Children living in father-absent homes are at greater risk for growing up in poverty, living in disordered neighborhoods, and experiencing food insecurity than are their peers with involved fathers. Involvement by a nonresident father, both in active engagement with children and payment of formal child support, may reduce long-term economic hardship (e.g., food insecurity) and income disparities.¹⁷

Chart 2

The proportion of children under age 18 living in poverty by family type in Texas, Harris County, and Chambers County.



¹⁵ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2022. American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

¹⁷ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

Teen Pregnancy



Local Picture

One of the greatest public health triumphs in recent times is the dramatic reduction in teen birth rates nationally, including in Texas. From 1991 to 2022, Texas saw a staggering drop from 75.1 to 20.4 (per 1,000 births). Both Harris County and Chambers County also had staggering drops. Harris County saw its teen birth rate go from 79.0 to 22.3, while the rate in Chambers County went from 41.4 to 12.36.¹⁸



Why It Matters

Despite these drops, the teen birth rate in Texas is 46% higher than the national rate of 13.9. The rate in Harris County is significantly higher than the national rate while the rate in Chambers is slightly lower. Growing up without an involved father has a significant impact on children's risk to engage in sexual behavior and age of initiated sexual behavior, thus increasing the risk of pregnancy and subsequent births to teen mothers. The closeness and quality of father-son and father-daughter relationships may reduce risks associated with sexual activity, including early sexual onset, inconsistent condom use, and sexually transmitted diseases. Paternal incarceration, limiting father involvement, increases these risks. Studies also point to the effect that father absence has on the age of menarche for young women and the younger age of early sexual onset for young women and young men. Overall, the effects of father absence on sexual activity in youth point to earlier and riskier sexual behavior for children who grow up in father-absent homes, while the presence of an involved father reduces these risks.¹⁹

Child Abuse



Local Picture

In 2023 there were 58,120 confirmed victims of child abuse and neglect in Texas. There were 5,903 confirmed cases in Harris County and 69 in Chambers County.²⁰



Why It Matters

Child maltreatment is influenced by multiple factors involving interactions at the community, family, and individual levels. Household economic hardship, unemployment, young maternal age, low educational attainment, personal history of abuse or neglect, alcohol or drug over use, parenting stress, and depression can all be related to child maltreatment. While most perpetrators are parents of the children being mistreated, father involvement can be a protective factor for children especially if the perpetrator is the other parent. A nonresident fathers' support (e.g., in-kind informal support and formal child support) can act as a protective factor against child neglect, as most neglect cases in single-parent families are influenced by a lack of economic resources and increased rates of poverty.²¹

¹⁸ Healthy Futures of Texas, 2024. Retrieved from <https://hftx.org/resources/teen-birth-in-texas/>

¹⁹ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

²⁰ Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.dfps.texas.gov/About_DFPS/Data_Book/Child_Protective_Investigations/Investigations/Victims.asp

²¹ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

Educational Attainment



Local Picture

A key measure of educational attainment for the citizens of a state or community is the four-year high school graduation rate. Conversely, the four-year high school dropout rate is a challenge that a state and local community may face. For the graduating class of 2022, the four-year dropout rate statewide was 6.4%. The rate for school districts in Harris County varied greatly. Some were below and some were above the statewide average. For example, the rate was 2.7% in the Katy Independent School District (ISD), 4.3% in Goose Creek CISD, 4.6% in Crosby ISD, 7.0% in Pasadena ISD, 9.4% in Alief ISD, and 13.5% in Houston ISD. In contrast, all three ISDs in Chambers County (Anahuac, Barbers Hill, and East Chambers) had rates of 1.1% or lower.²² See Chart 3.



Why It Matters

The presence of fathers is associated with increased levels of children's educational attainment, while the absence of fathers may reduce educational attainment and increase behavioral problems at school. Transitions such as divorce and separation may affect children's learning and success in school. The duration of father absence is a factor in educational success as is the quality of father-child relationships. Family structure not only affects educational outcomes for children but is also associated with educational expectations. Boys from father-absent homes and who are born out of wedlock are less likely to attend college than are girls in the same situation.

Students living in biological father-absent homes are twice as likely to repeat a grade in school; 10% of children living with both parents have ever repeated a grade, compared to 20% of children in stepfather families and 18% in mother-only families.²³

Employment



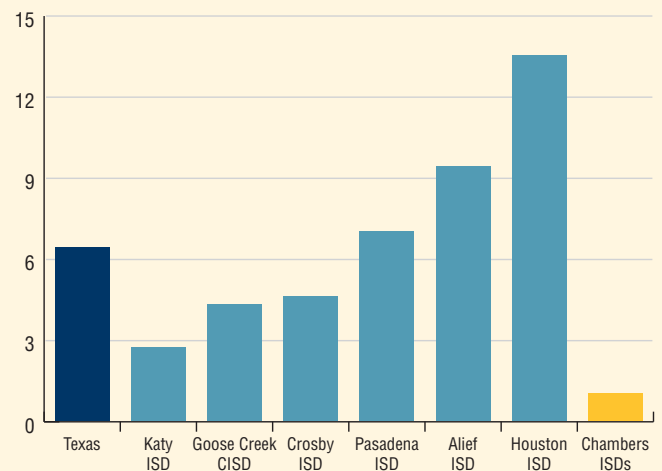
Local Picture

The economy of Baytown employs 35,000 people. The largest industries are construction (5,011 people), manufacturing (4,610 people), and education services (3,566 people), and the highest paying industries are wholesale trade (\$69,000 average salary), agriculture (\$67,000 average salary), and mining & gas extraction (\$67,000 average salary).

From 2020 to 2021, employment in Baytown grew at a rate of 5.33%, from 32,800 employees to 34,500 employees.²⁴ The most recent employment data (February 2024) finds an unemployment rate of 4.6% in the "Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land" metro area.²⁵

Chart 3

Dropout rates for Texas (statewide), Harris County (select ISDs), and Chambers County (all ISDs).



²² Texas Education Agency, 2024. Retrieved from <https://tea.texas.gov/reports-and-data/school-performance/accountability-research/completion-graduation-and-dropout/four-year-graduation-and-dropout-data-class-of-2022>

²³ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

²⁴ Data USA, 2024. Retrieved from [https://datausa.io/profile/geo/baytown-tx/#:~:text=%C2%B1%207.21%25-,From%202020%20to%202021%2C%20employment%20in%20Baytown%2C%20TX%20grew%20at,Education%20Services%20\(3%2C566%20people\)](https://datausa.io/profile/geo/baytown-tx/#:~:text=%C2%B1%207.21%25-,From%202020%20to%202021%2C%20employment%20in%20Baytown%2C%20TX%20grew%20at,Education%20Services%20(3%2C566%20people))

²⁵ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.bls.gov/charts/metro-area-employment-and-unemployment/metro-area-unemployment-rates-map.htm#>

Employment *continued*

Why It Matters

Evidence suggests that men who are under financial strain or who have unstable employment have more problems being responsible fathers and establishing a household than do other fathers.²⁶ Lack of economic and employment stability are likely to matter for children's and fathers' well-being.

National data show that in recent decades fathers are spending more time with their children than ever. The increase in time fathers spend with children has, ironically, contributed to an increase in family-work conflict among fathers. Fathers now report more family-work conflict than do mothers. Moreover, greater family-work conflict leads to lower quality father-child relationships. Half of fathers report difficulty balancing work and childcare responsibilities. Full-time employment negatively affects father time. On the other hand, a supportive work environment reduces family-work conflict. And yet very few companies offer paid paternity leave. Nearly 9 in 10 fathers take leave after the birth of their child, but most of them take a week or less of time off. Nontraditional work schedules may have a negative effect on unmarried fathers' family-work balance compared to married fathers who work such schedules.²⁷

Physical Health

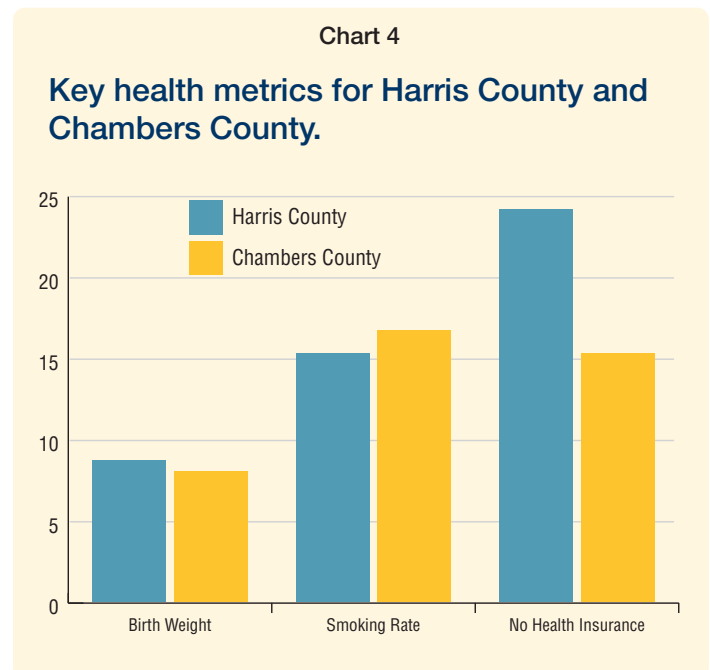
Local Picture

In its latest Healthiest Communities report (2022), U.S. News and World Report gave Harris County an overall score of 40 out of 100. That was slightly above the state median score of 39 and below the nationwide median of 47. The overall score is based on scores in nine categories that cover everything from equity, education, and housing to the environment, public safety, and infrastructure.²⁸

One of those categories is Population Health. It has metrics related to physical health in five categories: Access to Care, Healthy Behaviors, Health Conditions, Health Outcomes, and Mental Health. A few key metrics for Harris County were an 8.8% rate of babies born with low birth weight, a smoking rate of 15.4%, 24.2% of the population without access to health insurance (see Chart 4), and life expectancy of 79.9 years.

In contrast, Chambers County received a higher overall score of 54. In examining the same metrics in Population Health, it had an 8.1% rate of babies born with low birth weight, a smoking rate of 16.8% smoking rate, 15.4% of its population without access to health insurance (see Chart 4), and life expectancy of 78.2 years.

Of particular concern today is the epidemic of maternal and infant mortality, particularly its disproportionate impact on Black mothers and babies. For example, the U.S. ranks last in maternal mortality among 55 similarly wealthy nations.²⁹ The infant mortality rate (IMR) in Texas in 2021 was 5.29 (per 1,000 births), which ranks 21st best among states.³⁰ According to the Texas State Department of Health Services, the IMR in Harris County in 2019 was slightly higher at 5.9. (Data is not available for that year in Chambers County.)



²⁶ Roy, K. M. (2005). Transitions on the margins of work and family life for low-income African-American fathers. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 26(1), 77-100.

²⁷ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

²⁸ U.S. News and World Report, 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/healthiest-communities/texas/harris-county>

²⁹ One Health Trust, 2024. Retrieved from <https://onehealthtrust.org/publications/infographics/worldwide-maternal-mortality-rates/>

³⁰ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/infant_mortality_rates/infant_mortality.htm

Physical Health *continued*



Why It Matters

Paternal involvement and lack of involvement have been linked to physical health outcomes for children. For newborns and infants, a lack of father involvement has been linked to lower birth weight and greater potential for infant mortality, while father involvement may boost infant neurodevelopment. Recent studies highlight the impact that father absence has on children and adolescent health outcomes within populations with higher rates of incarceration—calling attention to the systemic barriers affecting parental involvement. Actively involved fathers, regardless of family structure, may positively benefit children’s and adolescents’ overall health. Involved fathers also benefit mothers’ physical health, including healthier births, lower rates of postpartum stress and depression, and lower depression and stress generally.³¹

Mental and Behavioral Health



Local Picture

The mental and behavioral health of individuals has garnered more attention recently, particularly in the wake of COVID-19’s impact on it. A key measure of mental and behavioral health is suicidal ideation and subsequent suicide. The suicide mortality rate (SMR) for 2021 in Texas was 14.2, placing it 16th best among states.³² The SMRs of Harris and Chambers counties were 11 and 18, respectively.³³ Moreover, adults in Harris County experienced 4.2 “mentally unhealthy days” monthly compared to 4.4 of those days among adults in Chambers County.³⁴ The SMR in Texas starts rising rapidly with teens aged 15-19 (12.8), continues to rise in young adults 20-24 years old (19.3), and peaks in young adults 25-29 years old (19.6).³⁵



Why It Matters:

Positive father involvement can be a significant predictor of children’s cognitive development and emotional well-being, while father absence boosts externalizing behaviors and adolescent risk behaviors. Multiple adjustments (e.g., changing family structures) experienced by children in single-mother households can have adverse effects on children’s behavioral health. Studies show differences based on gender, with some studies pointing to increased risk for girls. Importantly, the quality of the father-child relationship is very influential for children and their emotional and behavioral regulation.³⁶

While the research is limited, there is evidence pointing to the role of fathers and paternal care in predicting suicide risk in children. Perceptions of father love, connectedness to a father, and father presence are linked to lower potential for suicide in children, while weak father-child bonds, poor attachment, and father-child conflict are linked to greater potential for suicide in children. Fathers may be more at risk for suicide if their own father committed suicide.³⁷

³¹ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

³² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/suicide-mortality/suicide.htm>

³³ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2024. Retrieved from https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/texas?year=2022&measure=Suicides*&tab=1

³⁴ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, 2024: Retrieved from <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/health-data/texas?year=2022&measure=Poor+Mental+Health+Days&tab=1>

³⁵ Texas Health and Human Services, 2022. *The Report on Suicide Prevention in Texas 2022*.

³⁶ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

³⁷ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. *Father Facts 9th Edition*.

Marriage and Relationship with Mom

Local Data

In 2022, the proportion of Texas males aged 15 and older who were married was 52.6%. The proportion who had never been married was 36.5%. The proportion of Texas females aged 15 and older who were married was 50.0%. The proportion who never married was 30.9%. See Chart 5 for the corresponding proportions in Harris and Chambers counties.

Why It Matters

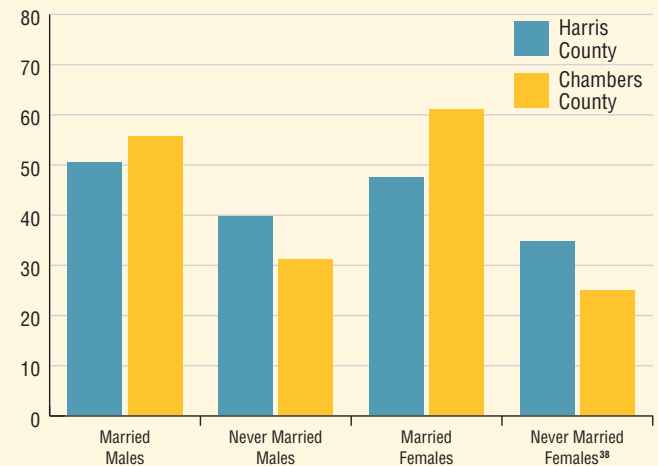
Americans today have a pessimistic view of marriage and parenthood, more so women than men. And fewer Americans are marrying than ever, especially men. (Note that the proportion of never-married males in Texas and both counties is higher than never-married females.) Coupled with the rise in cohabitation—a more unstable relationship form than marriage—there has been an increasing emphasis in research on comparing the impact of relationship stability on father involvement.

Despite Americans' pessimism about marriage, most research indicates that married fathers are much happier than are unmarried fathers. With the exception of some recent research, it also indicates that married fathers are more involved with their children than are nonresident or cohabiting fathers. The involvement of married fathers varies based on whether they live with all of their children (e.g., fathers in second or third marriages). Married and cohabiting fathers can be less involved with the children they don't live with (i.e., non-coresident children) than are fathers who are unmarried and not cohabiting. Unmarried fathers may become less involved over time, but their involvement is important in the lives of their children. Marriage may matter more for the involvement of "social" fathers (e.g., cohabiting father figures) than biological fathers.³⁹

When fathers are involved in the lives of their children, mothers generally report higher levels of relationship (e.g., marital) satisfaction. However, different styles of parenting can lead to relationship conflict and differences in perceived relationship satisfaction. Moreover, low relationship satisfaction/high relationship conflict may influence how well fathers cooperate with mothers to parent their children. Relationship satisfaction may differ between first-time and second-time fathers, with the former experiencing steeper declines in satisfaction. Father involvement is positively associated with couples' satisfaction and reduced stress.⁴⁰

Chart 5

The proportion of married and never-married men and women in Harris and Chambers Counties.



³⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2022. American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

³⁹ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. Father Facts 9th Edition.

⁴⁰ National Fatherhood Initiative, 2024. Father Facts 9th Edition.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

On April 3, 2024, NFI conducted two focus groups attended by 14 Baytown leaders combined. These individuals were identified and recruited by the City of Baytown's Director of Public Affairs with assistance from NFI's Chief Partner Success Officer. Focus group participants represented a variety of sectors and organizations serving children and families.

The goal of these two-hour focus groups was to help identify needs to address and local assets to mobilize around promoting responsible fatherhood. These results complement the secondary data reported above and will aid in developing a "city assets map" for Baytown. NFI will also use the results to inform the remaining phases of the CMA, the Leadership Summit on Fatherhood (LSF) and an Action Plan to Promote Responsible Fatherhood.

The objectives of the focus groups were to identify: 1) the need to address father absence in Baytown; 2) the services and programs for fathers that exist in Baytown and the service and program gaps; 3) the assets in Baytown that can be mobilized to promote responsible fatherhood; 4) the leaders and organizations in sectors that are often a challenge to get to attend the LSF and to ensure that these leaders and organizations are invited to attend the event; and 5) information critical to attracting funding for a sustainable citywide fatherhood initiative.

To accomplish the objectives, we asked the leaders a series of questions. This section of the report groups the questions by objectives and includes leaders' responses and a summary of those responses.

The community sectors represented in the focus groups were:

- Social Service
- City/County Government
- Health
- Faith
- Law Enforcement
- Education
- Business
- Media

Addressing Father Absence

The first five questions are specific to identifying the need to address father absence in Baytown.

QUESTION #1:

Is there a need to address father absence in Baytown?

Responses and Summary:

100% of the leaders agreed that there is a need to address father absence in Baytown.

QUESTION #2:

What are the most pressing needs in Baytown in addressing father absence?

Responses:

- Understanding the causes of absence. Some fathers are working and making a living for their families. Not all fathers are absent for a bad reason.
- Raising awareness of the important role dads play in their child's well-being. Dads underestimating the value they have to others. Not realizing the impact dads have on their children's lives.
- Breaking the intergenerational cycle of father absence. Helping young fathers who didn't have an involved father.
- Economic challenges that individual households experience when a father isn't there, spilling into all other aspects of family dynamics.
- Removing barriers for fathers who made mistakes and are trying to turn their lives around. Unforgiveness from society further compounds the issue and sends the fathers back into their unhealthy behavior.
- Helping dads co-parent with the mom in the best interest of the child.
- Free counseling and resources for dads.
- Creating a safe place for dads to open up and process challenges.
- Providing certifications to help dads acquire good-paying jobs.
- Education for dads on child support and visitation.
- Education for moms on why dads are important to their child's well-being.

Summary:

The following four themes are reflected in the responses: 1) education and awareness on why fathers are important, 2) education for dads on what it means to be a great man and great dad, 3) the need to establish one place where dads can go to find whatever resources or services they need, and 4) the need to address systemic barriers that prevent involved, responsible, and committed fathers.

QUESTION #3:

If you had to pick one need that is the greatest, what would be picked and why?

Responses and Summary:

- Decreasing drug, alcohol, and opioid use among young people.
- Getting information to fathers so they realize their importance.
- Providing legal support (e.g., helping fathers effectively come into their child's life and navigate the system).

QUESTION #4:

Is there a type of father in Baytown who is most in need of being a responsible father?

Responses:

- Young fathers
- Single fathers
- Fathers with financial challenges
- Incarcerated fathers
- Fathers with a criminal history
- Fathers who grew up in a father-absent house
- Fathers with substance abuse
- Fathers dealing with children to multiple partners
- Homeless fathers

Summary:

These responses reflect a view among leaders that many types of fathers are in need of being a responsible father.

QUESTION #5:

Do other leaders in Baytown believe that there is a need to address father absence?

Responses:

- Staff connected to mentorship programs and dealing with children struggling behaviorally and academically will talk about needing male mentors for those students.
- I've never heard anyone ask, "What are we going to do about the absent father situation?"
- There's usually discussion about what we can do about the family unit as a whole. I've never isolated it just to fathers.
- It's likely that other community leaders believe there is a fatherless problem, and that leads to kid problems.
- It's easier to address a single-family home because of the challenges of keeping the child involved and the financial challenges of a single-family home.
- Leaders are not typically thinking about how to get the father involved.
- Some leaders do.
- If [father absence] is not in your face or your backdoor, you don't recognize it.
- Most leaders don't until [addressing father absence] is presented to them as something they should be a part of.
- We've known there's a need for a long time, but nobody has said it until now with the city putting it out there.

Summary:

These leaders had a different sense of whether other leaders see addressing father absence as a need. Even among some leaders who are aware of the challenges facing families, they are unsure other leaders are aware of father-specific challenges.

Existing Fatherhood Programs and Services

The objective of questions 6 through 9 was to identify current services and programs for fathers that exist in the city and any gaps remaining in services and programs.

QUESTION #6:

Has there ever been a countywide initiative or an initiative in any community in Baytown to address father absence/promote responsible fatherhood?

Responses and Summary: No one was aware of any such initiative.

QUESTION #7:

What programs and services for fathers exist in Baytown?

Responses:

- Dads of Great Students (WATCH D.O.G.S.) is offered in a couple of schools but not in the schools that need it the most (e.g., a high number of single families).
- Peter E. Highland Center Alternative High School has support built into the campus for teen dads (e.g., daycare, time to work on relationships, parenting classes, soothing and activity rooms.) They provide what the student needs on a case-by-case basis.
- Perry W. and Lou F. Britton Family Center provides comprehensive transitional-type housing services to intact homeless families, specifically designed to return these families to self-sufficiency and more permanent housing in the shortest time possible. This has made it easier for fathers to stay connected to their families.
- MET, Inc. Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Program offers vocational training, educational intervention, and employment opportunities. They provide services to Chambers County, which is a part of Baytown.
- DePelchin All Dads Succeed (DADS) Program.

Summary: There is a lack of father-specific programs and services. The fatherhood programs offered by MET, Inc., and DePelchin (Children's Center) serve only a tiny part of the Baytown area. There are a few school-based fatherhood programs in the area that are limited in scope.

QUESTION #8:

What monthly or annual events are there for fathers in Baytown?

Responses:

- Annual Daddy/Daughter Dance coordinated by the Baytown Parks and Recreation Department.
- Annual Father's Day Photo Contest by the Baytown Parks and Recreation Department. The Baytown Sun also asked families to send in photos of fathers with their children.
- Fun With Dad Event at the Eddie V. Gray Wetlands Center by the Baytown Municipal Court

Summary:

There is also a lack of father-specific events hosted by the community at large or specific organizations.

QUESTION #9:

What programs or services for fathers don't exist that are needed in Baytown?

Responses:

- A program for teen dads.
- Being more intentional in promoting fatherhood and the positive impact dads have.
- Engaging dads in something that they want to do.
- Any type of program that can remove barriers [that prevent father involvement].
- Giving dads a clear starting point on how to get involved in their child's life (e.g., dedicated resource center).
- A resource list for father-specific support and services.
- Counseling
- Mentorship
- There is a Daddy and Me program offered by Baytown Parks and Recreation that should be expanded to have a Dad and Son and a Mom and Son and Mom and Daughter component.

Summary:

Not reflected in the responses above is that some leaders weren't sure if any services or programs needed to be created because they didn't know what already existed. Nevertheless, the responses indicate that there are many gaps in services and programs for fathers.

Assets to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

The objective of the following question was to identify the assets in the city that can be mobilized to promote responsible fatherhood. The responses are divided into various sectors since the hallmark of the CMA broadens the number of sectors actively involved in this initiative and increases their engagement level.

QUESTION #10:

What assets or resources exist in Baytown that can be mobilized or used to promote responsible fatherhood?

Responses:

Social Service Sector

- Bay Area Rehabilitation Services has a facility where fatherhood events can be held.

Faith Sector

- Churches/men's ministries

City/County Government

- The City of Baytown has facilities where fatherhood events and programs can be held.

Media Sector

- The Baytown Sun can write articles to keep people informed of what's going on.

Civic Sector

- Little Leagues
- Boy Scouts

Philanthropic Sector

- United Way

Summary:

Although the leaders did not identify many assets, their responses indicate there are resources in many sectors and that more in-depth work should be done to identify additional assets.

Identify Leaders and Organizations

The objective of the following questions was to identify leaders and organizations in sectors that are often a challenge to get to attend the LSF. These leaders and organizations will be invited to attend the LSF.

QUESTION #11:

Which organizations should send a representative to the summit?

Responses:

- Rotary Club
- Kiwanis Club
- United Way
- H-E-B Grocery Store
- The Thomas Family
- Houston Methodist Baytown Hospital
- Harris County Community Center
- Head Start Programs of Harris County
- YMCA
- The Promise Center
- Little League Boards
- Legacy Community Health
- Exxon
- Chevron Phillips Chemical
- 4 Corners BBQ
- Community Toyota
- KWWJ Gospel Radio 1360
- Pregnancy Resource Center East
- El Toro Restaurant

Summary:

The leaders provided a large list of organizations and representatives to invite. That's encouraging.

QUESTION #12:

Which individuals/people in the following sectors should attend the summit?

Responses and Summary:

- Judge Lucia Bates
- Fred Aguilar (The Promise Center)
- Lee Martinez (Athletic Director for Goose Creek CISD)
- City Council Members
- Chamber of Commerce members

Attract Funding

The objective of the following questions was to collect information critical to attracting funding for a sustainable citywide fatherhood initiative.

QUESTION #13:

Are there any private family or community foundations that could be approached to fund an initiative?

Responses and Summary:

- Service clubs
- United Way

QUESTION #14:

Are there any corporate giving programs or foundations that could be approached to fund an initiative?

Responses and Summary:

- Exxon
- Chevron Phillips Chemical
- Chick-fil-A
- Best Buy
- Wal Mart
- H-E-G Grocery Store

QUESTION #15:

Are there any philanthropists/wealthy individuals who might be open to funding an initiative?

Responses and Summary:

- There are some, but will be reached through Service Clubs
- R.D. Burnside

QUESTION #16:

Are there any communities within the city with leadership that would be open to funding a position that would focus on promoting responsible fatherhood and could attract funders to fund it? For example, one with a mayor, county executive, or state legislator who has a passion for father involvement or improving child well-being?

Responses and Summary:

- None identified

QUESTION #17:

Do any of the funders within the city or a community within the city have a history of collaborating to fund services, programs, or initiatives?

Responses and Summary:

- None identified

QUESTION #18:

Is there an influential organization that secures a lot of funding from multiple sources (e.g., public and private), that operates across the city or in one of the communities, and that would be willing to seek a large amount of funding to implement a citywide initiative?

Responses and Summary:

- None identified

QUESTION #19:

Is there a university, college, or research and evaluation firm within the city that might be willing to evaluate the impact of an initiative pro bono?

Responses and Summary:

- Lee College
- University of Houston School of Social Work
- Rice University Master's Program

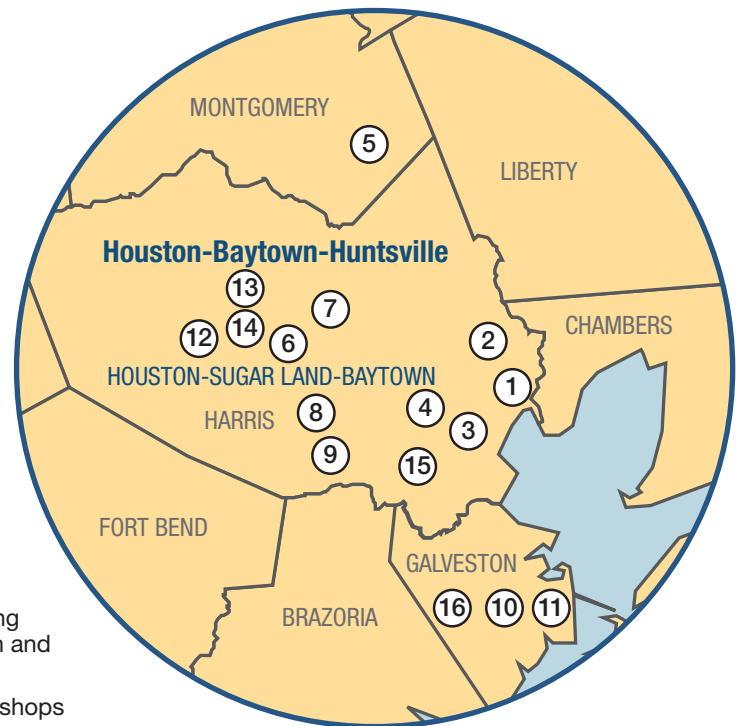
BAYTOWN-AREA MAP OF FATHERHOOD PROGRAM AND SERVICES

The assets map below shows the known father-specific programs and services in the Greater Houston Area. Baytown leaders identified roughly half of the programs and services while NFI staff identified the other half.

Baytown leaders should use this map as a starting point for the city-wide initiative by:

- Raising awareness of the father-specific programs that already serve Baytown fathers.
- Contacting father-specific programs that don't serve Baytown fathers but serve surrounding communities to explore partnerships that can extend those services to Baytown fathers.
- Meeting with staff at father-specific programs that don't serve Baytown fathers, but serve surrounding communities to learn how Baytown leaders can apply what was already learned to engage fathers.

1. **David Crockett Elementary – WATCH D.O.G.S.**
2. **Hopper Preliminary – WATCH D.O.G.S.**
3. **Peter E. Hyland Center** – Support for teen dads
4. **Perry W. and Lou F. Britton Family Center** – Comprehensive transitional housing services
5. **MET, Inc. Pathways to Responsible Fatherhood Program** – Vocational training, educational intervention, and employment opportunities
6. **DePelchin – All Dads Succeed Program** – Fatherhood groups, co-parenting sessions, Fathering in 15™ program
7. **Horizon Outreach: Horizon Eagle Fatherhood Program** – evidenced-based programming that teaches healthy relationship & healthy parenting education as well as resources to increase their economic stability
8. **University of Houston: Healthy Start Fatherhood Program** – information about fatherhood and referrals to other services they may need
9. **Blocks Fatherhood Initiative**
10. **Moody Early Childhood Center 24:7 Dad® Program**
11. **Family Service Center Fatherhood Program** – Free counseling and parenting groups for fathers and their families in Galveston and Wharton Counties
12. **Pregnancy Help Center of West Houston** – Fatherhood workshops
13. **Care Net Pregnancy Center** – Free consultations with male staff, referrals, mentoring, parenting classes
14. **Memorial Hermann Health System 24:7 Dad® Program**
15. **1RM Project**
16. **Pregnancy Support Center** – Resources and parenting classes



This map indicates that while few father-specific programs and services exist within the City of Baytown, there are many that exist within the greater Baytown area.

CONCLUSIONS

The involvement of fathers in the lives of children has a significant impact on the issues that Baytown leaders consider important to address. Research shows correlational and causal relationships between father absence and many of the social challenges facing Baytown's families such as: drug and alcohol abuse, poverty, teen pregnancy, child abuse, domestic abuse, and education.

This assessment of programs and services for fathers provides secondary and primary data that points to the need and value in starting a citywide initiative to promote responsible fatherhood. Although the leaders who participated in this first phase of the CMA represented a good cross-section of community leaders, it's vital to expand the leaders and sectors involved if the city is to realize the full benefits of an initiative. The more awareness is raised around the vital role that fathers play in breaking the cycle of these issues crucial to the health of Baytown, the more community leaders will be motivated to become part of the solution.

This assessment has established a good foundation for the remaining phases of the CMA. For example, the four themes that emerged around the most pressing needs surrounding fatherhood in Baytown will help focus the work of the LSF: 1) education and awareness on why fathers are important, 2) education for dads on what it means to be a great man and dad, 3) the need to establish one place where dads can go to find whatever resources or services they need, and 4) the need to address systemic barriers that prevent involved, responsible, and committed fathers. These themes could provide a framework for the action planning that will start at the summit and continue to inform the more detailed action planning that will take place in the third phase of the CMA. Leaders could establish objectives for each area and assign tasks to the sectors best positioned to address the tasks. Moreover, some objectives might cross over into multiple sectors. A campaign to hire more male teachers, for example, might cross over the social service, media, and education sectors. This would facilitate a more comprehensive, integrated approach to changing social norms around the issue.

Baytown is on par at the end of Phase I with cities NFI has worked with across the country. The city is poised to implement Phase II due to the great work of the City of Baytown and city leaders who have been involved so far. They have stepped up and taken initial ownership of the CMA process.

The lack of potential funding sources that the leaders identified to invite to the LSF points to the need to involve representatives from the philanthropic sector. Harris and surrounding counties have a large community of individual donors and family, community, and corporate foundations. It's likely that representatives of this sector will be interested in becoming involved, as father absence affects many of the issues they address. Without the involvement of the philanthropic sector, a citywide initiative will have difficulty getting established let alone maintained. When leaders are ready to engage this sector, NFI can provide guidance on how to reach and involve its representatives.

Based on the number of known fatherhood programs and services in the greater Baytown area and additional assets that can be mobilized (e.g., leaders who attend the LSF), the community is in a good position to launch a successful, sustained fatherhood initiative. The biggest assets that are already engaged around fatherhood fall under the city government and social service sectors. There are many assets available that aren't currently engaged in father-specific activities that can be expanded to reach fathers, such as Bay Area Rehabilitation Services, pre-schools and schools, the Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and hospitals.

At the same time, one objective of Phase I is to identify a lead agency that will act as the fatherhood champion driving the community forward in subsequent phases. Unfortunately, a lead agency in Baytown was not identified. That's a vital next step that needs to be taken early in Phase II.

This report concludes Phase 1 of the Baytown CMA. The focus will now turn to the Leadership Summit on Fatherhood (Phase 2) and creating a Baytown Action Plan to Promote Responsible Fatherhood (Phase 3).