

30 Ways to Recruit Dads into Fatherhood Programs

Struggling to attract dads to your fatherhood program? Feeling stuck? Doing okay, but want more dads to enroll? Review this checklist to evaluate your promotional tactics and try the new ones listed here. Implementing the tactics that best suit your program will most certainly increase enrollment!

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- 1** Hire an intern from your local college’s marketing program (often unpaid or for a small stipend). Give them a project to promote your fatherhood program with goals/targets for the number of dads to reach. Give them this tip sheet to get started!
- 2** Don’t call the program a “Father Absence Program” or something that will turn dads off. Give your program a catchy name—like Strong Dads or the 24:7 Dad® program—dads can relate to and would want to attend.
- 3** Use attractive, attention-getting promotional materials with positive portrayals of dads. Design the materials first, then ask dads in and around your organization for feedback on the text and design (colors and images) to ensure they appeal to men.
- 4** Create videos of dads who are currently enrolled or have completed the program, saying why they enjoyed it, what they got out of it, and why they enjoyed learning from staff who delivered it.
- 5** Encourage dads to “bring a friend” or neighbor. Ask newly enrolled dads to bring a friend and consider offering an incentive when they do!
- 6** Encourage moms to invite dads to the program. Ensure your staff repeatedly mentions your fatherhood program to the moms you serve and give them a flyer to give to dads! Tell them about the incentives dads will get when they attend.
- 7** Contact your local food businesses, such as pizza places, to have them place flyers on their bags or boxes.
- 8** Post flyers on bulletin boards at coffee shops, community centers, churches, and other community locations where dads and families look for information.

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- 9 Get community partners, such as Head Start and Early Head Start, government social service agencies, faith groups, and schools, to refer the dads they serve to your program. Drop off promotional materials and send email reminders to staff to refer.
- 10 Contract with local government agencies, such as health and human services departments, to provide your program to the dads they serve. Check with other community organizations, such as courts, shelters, parole offices, addiction treatment facilities, and mental health organizations, that may require the dads they serve to attend a fatherhood or parenting program.
- 11 Gain access to dads by going to where they often visit or work: barber shops, sports arenas, community centers, basketball courts, car repair shops, sporting goods stores, and more. Promote the program to dads at area offices and workplaces.
- 12 Contact expectant dads during the prenatal period and immediately after their child is born by alerting pregnancy centers, doctors, and hospitals. This time is known as the “golden moment” when motivation and interest in parenting are highest, and moms are most likely to want dads’ involvement.
- 13 Staff your program with men as facilitators and ask them to invite dads they know.
- 14 Place advertisements in local print and online publications dads will see.
- 15 Draw dads in with assistance or referrals for issues important to specific groups of dads, such as legal assistance for those with custody or child support issues, and who need help locating housing or work.
- 16 Promote the program through well-respected dads in the community who are connected to community groups, sports teams, fraternities, and other community movements.
- 17 Don’t just promote your program one way: use multiple communication mediums such as flyers, email, social media, and mailings/door hangers.
- 18 Provide incentives for program participation, such as gift certificates to hardware stores, food stores, barber shops, and gas cards, and include these offers in your promotional materials and messages.
- 19 Serve food at your program sessions and provide childcare. Promote these offers in your promotional materials and messages.

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- 20 Make your program location as easy to get to as possible. Offer transportation vouchers so dads can get there and promote that you offer them!
- 21 Choose a comfortable program location with a seating arrangement that encourages participation and discussion. For example, use a “U” shape of tables and chairs rather than a chair-only classroom style.
- 22 Invite local media to shoot parts of sessions and conduct interviews with staff and dads, with dads’ permission, of course. Contact your local radio station or news publications to ask about public service announcements or free ad space to promote your program.
- 23 Advertise through the local news and radio shows by telling stories about dads who were transformed by the program.
- 24 Gather data on program effectiveness to promote the program and help draw the attention of dads and promotional channels, such as local media.
- 25 Host a dad-specific event before starting your fatherhood program. Invite dads who attend to enroll.
- 26 Post about the program on your organization’s social media accounts. Then, assign key staff to repost to their social media accounts. Ask community partners to share your post on their social media accounts.
- 27 Recruit dads studying at community colleges. Work with department chairs to recruit dads and go through student union groups.
- 28 Go places families go and hand out or post flyers, such as malls, sporting events, grocery stores, laundromats, and libraries.
- 29 To attract dads who are unwilling or unable to attend in person, offer your program virtually using Zoom or a similar platform.
- 30 Write a plan to recruit dads into your program. Evaluate the results, do more of what’s working, stop what’s not working, and try new tactics!

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BONUS! Enroll in the [Recruitment and Retention Certificate™](#) training from National Fatherhood Initiative®! This online, on-demand training will teach you an approach proven to recruit and retain dads successfully. It’s jam-packed with even more help, including case studies of fatherhood programs’ innovative tactics.

ENROLL NOW!