

Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects: Employment and Child Support Outcomes and Trends

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EMPLOYMENT AND CHILD SUPPORT OUTCOMES AND TRENDS**

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Introduction

In recent years, policymakers and programs have paid increased attention to the role of noncustodial fathers in the lives of low-income families. With welfare reform placing time limits on cash benefits, there has been a strong interest in increasing financial support from noncustodial parents as a way to reduce poverty among low-income children. Although child support enforcement efforts have been increasing dramatically in recent years, there is some evidence that many low-income fathers cannot afford to support their children financially without impoverishing themselves or their families. To address these complex issues, a number of initiatives have focused on developing services and options to help low-income fathers become more financially and emotionally involved with their families and to help young, low-income families become stable.

Sponsored by the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Ford Foundation,¹ the Partners for Fragile Families (PFF) demonstration program intended to effect systems change, deliver appropriate and effective services, and improve outcomes for both parents and children in low-income families. By making lasting changes in the way public agencies and community organizations work with unmarried families, the initiative aimed to increase the capacity of young, economically disadvantaged fathers and mothers to become financial, emotional, and nurturing resources to their children and to reduce poverty and welfare dependence. The PFF demonstration, which built upon lessons from programs and demonstrations that operated over the past two decades, was implemented over a three-year period beginning in 2000 at 13 project sites in nine states.²

The PFF projects sought to help government agencies (especially CSE agencies) and community- and faith-based organizations provide more flexible and responsive programs at the state and local levels to better support the needs of children living in fragile families. The key elements of the PFF projects included

- promoting voluntary establishment of paternity;
- connecting young fathers with the child support system and encouraging payment of child support;
- improving parenting and relationship skills of young fathers;
- helping young fathers secure and retain employment (so they can pay child support and otherwise financially support their children); and
- providing other types of services to strengthen family ties, commitments, and father involvement when parents do not live together.

Unlike other program initiatives for noncustodial fathers, PFF targeted young fathers (16 to 25 years old) who had not yet established paternity and did not yet have extensive involvement with the CSE system. The underlying theory was that by targeting new fathers at a point when they had little or no previous involvement with this system and when they still might have a positive relationship with the mother of their children and the children themselves, the projects could better assist these young parents to become strong financial and emotional resources for their children.

HHS contracted with the Urban Institute and its subcontractors, the Johns Hopkins University's Institute for Policy Studies and Capital Research Corporation, to conduct a process and outcome evaluation of the PFF demonstration. Two reports have already been released. *The Implementation of the Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects* report addressed implementation of the initiative, by examining the program models, systems change (particularly with the connection of young fathers with the child support system), services provided, client flow, challenges to start-up and ongoing implementation, characteristics of young fathers served, participation levels, and lessons learned from the demonstration. A second report, *Voices of Young Fathers: The Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Project*, presented ethnographic case studies of a small number of PFF participants from two demonstration sites—the Father Friendly Initiative in Boston and the Fathers Resource Program in Indianapolis.³

As part of this multicomponent evaluation, this report examines how participants fared in two areas of prime importance to the PFF demonstration: (1) employment rates and earnings levels and (2) the establishment of child support orders and the payment of child support. These outcomes are examined for a one- to two-year period. The report begins with background information on the design of the PFF programs and the characteristics of participants. It then discusses design and data sources for the outcome analyses and some limitations of this study. The fourth and fifth sections examine trends in the employment and earnings of PFF participants and the establishment of child support orders and child support payments, respectively. The final section summarizes the most critical findings.

PFF Programs and Participants

Table 1 briefly describes each of the PFF programs. Three states had multiple project sites: California (with three sites in the Los Angeles area), Maryland (with two sites in Baltimore), and Massachusetts (with two sites in Boston). The cities in which PFF operated vary in their socioeconomic characteristics but, for the most part, have median household incomes and educational levels that fall below the national average. Some, such as Baltimore, Los Angeles, and New York, have a significant portion of families living below the poverty level. The cities also tend to have substantial minority populations, some with relatively more African Americans (Baltimore, Boston, Indianapolis, New York) and others with more Hispanics (Denver, Los Angeles, and New York).

During the course of the demonstration, economic conditions in the study sites generally worsened, following the national economy. The unemployment rate in Denver increased from 2.8 percent in 1999 to 7.0 percent in 2003. The unemployment rate was over 6 percent in 2003 in several cities involved in the project—Baltimore, Denver, Los Angeles, New York, and Racine, Wisconsin. Racine had the highest unemployment rate (11.8 percent), and Minneapolis had the lowest (4.5 percent).⁴ The employment rate among African American men was relatively low in many of the sites, ranging from 49 percent in Racine to almost 70 percent in Boston.

Within each city, the PFF projects primarily operated in low-income, minority neighborhoods and focused on serving participants within that immediate neighborhood and the surrounding community. Many cities and neighborhoods in which the projects operated had relatively poor economies, and participants often had to seek jobs outside their immediate neighborhoods because of the lack of local job opportunities.

Table 1
PFF Demonstration Sites

Program location	Project description
Men's Services Program Baltimore, MD	Operated by the Center for Fathers, Families, and Workforce Development, a nonprofit organization. Weekly workshops and peer support sessions. Some participants enrolled in the CFWD/STRIVE program for employment services.
Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers Baltimore, MD	Operated by Baltimore City Department of Social Services. Six-month program, with workshops three times a week. Employment services provided by the Urban League.
Father Friendly Initiative at Healthy Start Boston, MA	Operated by the City of Boston's Health Department. Weekly two-hour workshops lasting 16 weeks.
Family Services of Greater Boston Boston, MA	Operated by the nonprofit Family Services of Greater Boston. Weekly workshops lasting 13 weeks.
Young Fathers Program Denver, CO	Operated by Human Services, Inc., a nonprofit organization. Month-long workshops, meeting 16 hours a week, with strong emphasis on employment and parenting. CSE staff on site.
Father Resource Program Indianapolis, IN	Operated by Fathers and Families Resource/Research Center, a nonprofit organization. Month-long workshops, meeting 20 hours a week, with strong emphasis on employment. Separate peer support sessions. CSE staff on site. Co-parenting class.
Bienvenidos Los Angeles, CA	Operated by the nonprofit organization Bienvenidos. Focus on serving Hispanic population. Weekly workshops lasting 16 weeks.
Role of Men Los Angeles, CA	Operated by the local Department of Health and Human Services. Eight-week sessions meeting two to three times a week.
Truevine Community Outreach Los Angeles, CA	Operated by local faith-based organization affiliated with a church. Three-week workshops meeting three days a week. Separate peer support sessions.
FATHER Project Minneapolis, MN	Operated as a stand-alone program in an organization created for PFF. Two-week workshops meeting three days a week focus on employment issues. Separate weekly peer support sessions and parenting sessions. Contract with Urban League for employment services. On-site CSE staff, legal staff, GED instructor, and social worker.
Fathers Strive for Family New York, NY	Operated by STRIVE/East Harlem, a nonprofit employment organization. Weekly workshops lasting eight weeks. Referrals to separate STRIVE workshops for employment services.
Children Upfront Racine, WI	Operated by Goodwill Industries, a nonprofit organization. Workshops covering 25 modules over about three months. Pre-apprenticeship programs.
Family Matters West Chester, PA	Operated by the local housing authority. One-week workshops (20 hours) focused on employment services. Separate peer support sessions and parenting classes. Apprenticeship programs.

Established organizations, usually nonprofits, implemented most of the PFF projects. The sponsoring organizations included a housing development corporation, a faith-based program administered by a church, local health departments, a local social service agency, and private service organizations. About half the PFF agencies had previous experience serving noncustodial

fathers; the other half started PFF from scratch. Even those with previous experience had not focused on the target group of young fathers with little or no involvement with CSE.

A key goal of the PFF program was to support the formation of viable partnerships between public agencies and community-based organizations to strengthen the involvement of both parents, but particularly fathers, in the lives of their children. To ensure strong partnerships, the demonstration incorporated a planning period, supported by foundation grants, to allow these relationships to be developed in each site. Most PFF projects developed collaborations to serve young fathers that included CSE agencies, workforce development agencies, health and social service organizations, and schools; some projects involved more partners than others. The state and local CSE agencies were partners in all the projects. Although the CSE agency played a more significant role in some PFF sites than others, this linkage is notable because, particularly at the time PFF was implemented, partnerships between fatherhood programs and CSE were not widespread.

The PFF projects were generally small by design. The initial goal for each site was to serve between 150 and 300 participants over the course of the demonstration. Primarily because of problems identifying men who met the eligibility requirements, most projects enrolled far fewer participants than planned, ranging from 37 (in New York) to 266 (in Denver). About half the projects enrolled fewer than 100 participants. Several projects, however, served some fathers who did not meet the PFF eligibility criteria, using other funding sources.

Although sites vary, all the projects served a disadvantaged population. The projects, as intended, served young fathers who had limited connections to the child support system. The average age of the participants was 21, and about two-thirds of the participants were age 19 or older at enrollment. Most participants had one child and had never been married. Across the projects, about half the participants did not have high school diplomas or general equivalency diplomas (GED), and only about a third were working at the time of enrollment. With the exception of *Bienvenidos* (which serves a significant numbers of Hispanic fathers), the PFF projects served predominantly African American populations.

PFF Study Design, Data Sources, and Limitations

The PFF evaluation is a multicomponent study employing a range of research strategies and data sources to describe and assess the projects, particularly their implementation and service delivery. This report examines the economic and child support outcomes for PFF participants over time.

The research design for this report on outcomes is a pre-post examination of the aggregate employment and child support behaviors of the participants in the PFF program. The analysis seeks to determine if these behaviors changed from before program enrollment to after program enrollment. There are no comparison or control groups, therefore the analysis cannot be used to determine the effectiveness or impact of the PFF projects; that is, that any changes observed are the result of PFF. Additionally, we are not able to analyze the behaviors of individual participants over time, only the outcomes for all participants in each site. The descriptive analysis, however, does provide information useful to determining whether the trends

indicated are consistent with the purpose and design of the programs funded under this demonstration.

This report focuses on the individual participants who enrolled in the PFF projects between June 1998 and September 2003 and whose start date was recorded in the program's management information system (MIS). Start dates were recorded for 833 of the 1164 program participants in the PFF programs MIS systems. Start dates were not always recorded for all participants in the MIS; in particular, start dates are missing for all participants in the Los Angeles Bienvenidos project and for about a third of the participants in the Denver project. Because of the lack of start dates, there is no outcome information for Los Angeles Bienvenidos in this report.

As shown on table 2, the overall distribution of participants for whom program reporting data were available across all the study sites is as follows: Los Angeles Bienvenidos (0); Los Angeles Role of Men (35), Los Angeles Truevine (17), Boston Healthy Start (131), Boston Family Services (43), Denver (79), Indianapolis (105), Baltimore Men's Services (42), Baltimore Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers (91), Minneapolis (186), New York City (32), West Chester (62), and Racine (60).

The analysis in this report is based on several sources of state and program administrative data:

- *PFF management information systems (MIS)*. The projects' MIS provided demographic characteristics, PFF enrollment dates, and participation. Program enrollment or start dates (or a proxy) were used to define a baseline indicator of employment and child support status.
- *Unemployment insurance (UI) quarterly earnings records*. State CSE agencies obtained quarterly earnings records maintained for UI purposes. These records indicate who is employed and what the total income is for the quarter. Employment that is not covered by the UI system, that is "off the books," or that is illegal would not be reflected in this data. Quarterly earning records were sought for eight quarters before program enrollment and for eight quarters after program enrollment.
- *Monthly child support payment records*. Child support outcomes included whether there was a child support order, the amount of any order, whether there were any child support payments, and the amount of any payments. These data also were obtained from the state CSE agencies responsible for the demonstration projects in its state.

Table 2
Total Number of Participants Served in PFF, by Site

State and PFF program	Total number of participants	Number of participants with start dates
California		
Los Angeles, Bienvenidos	56	0
Los Angeles, Role of Men	39	35
Los Angeles, Truevine	17	17
Colorado		
Denver	131	79
Indiana		
Indianapolis	106	105
Maryland		
Baltimore, Men's Services	50	42
Baltimore, Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers (YF/RF)	103	91
Massachusetts		
Boston, Health Start	173	131
Boston, Family Services	100	43
Minnesota		
Minneapolis	186	186
New York		
New York City	33	32
Pennsylvania		
West Chester	110	62
Wisconsin		
Racine	60	60
Total for all sites	1,164	883

Sources: MIS maintained by each PFF site.

For several reasons, quarterly earnings data were not consistently available for analysis for all projects or all PFF participants. For some participants, we have data for up to eight quarters *before* enrollment and up to eight quarters *after* enrollment, but for many participants we have fewer quarters of data, either because the state did not provide data for all the quarters or because the enrollment date was later in the project period and not enough time had elapsed to allow for eight quarters of follow-up. Overall, we have a sufficient amount of quarterly data to present trends in employment and earnings for participants in nine PFF projects. UI quarterly earnings data are not available for the two Boston projects, the West Chester project, and, as indicated above, the Los Angeles Bienvenidos program.

Similarly, for child support we have data up to 24 months before and up to 24 months after enrollment for some but not all participants. Data on participant child support orders and payments is available for 12 sites, missing data only from Los Angeles Bienvenidos. Data on the amount of the child support award, however, is missing for most programs. Only one site (Minneapolis) had data available on 10 or more individuals. No data were provided for five sites: Racine, West Chester, New York City, and the two Boston sites. Because so much award amount data is missing, the award analysis could not address the issue of child support compliance—that is, was there a change in the amount of child support paid relative to the amount of child support owed.

The data presented here are descriptive and should be interpreted cautiously since, as noted above, there are constraints owing to data limitations and the low number of participants in some projects. In addition, one must be very cautious in making cross-site comparisons. As noted in the separate implementation report, the sites operated in localities with different economies and in states with different child support policies and practices. The sites also varied in the groups on which they targeted (e.g., by age and child support status), when in the process an individual was officially enrolled into the program, and the number of participants served (meaning some sites have very small numbers at follow-up points). Given these issues, comparisons across sites regarding the differential effects of the PFF programs are not possible. Despite these limitations, however, the data provide insight into some general patterns and trends on key outcome measures.⁵

Employment and Earnings Outcomes

One goal of the PFF projects was to increase the employment rates and earnings of program participants. Trends for these outcomes are examined using UI administrative records data. The UI records consist of employer reports to the state UI agency; all employers subject to the state UI tax are required to report employee earnings quarterly. Although these data cover most civilian employees, earnings reports are not required, for example, for self-employed individuals, most independent contractors, and military and federal employees. In addition, UI records will miss earnings for individuals who work “off the books” or for cash and for those who work out of state (since records are collected at the state level).⁶

Employment rates were low and did not change much over time. Roughly half of the PFF participants were employed one year before enrollment, and a slightly higher proportion were employed one year after enrollment (figure 1 and table 3). These PFF participant employment rates, as reflected by the UI data, were substantially below the national average quarterly employment rate for African American men over this period and the fluctuations in employment rates were more extreme. Between the first quarter of 1998 and the last quarter of 2003, the national employment to population ratio for African American men ranged from 66.4 to 64.7 percent, with peaks as high as 67.7 and dips as low as 63.8. This contrasts with the PFF sites where overall employment rates ranged from 47 to 57 percent and individual site rates as low as 3 percent and as high as 76 percent. Even when sites showed pre-post intervention gains, the gains were not likely to be sustained over the long term.⁷

Figure 1
Overall PFF Employment Rates, before and after Enrollment

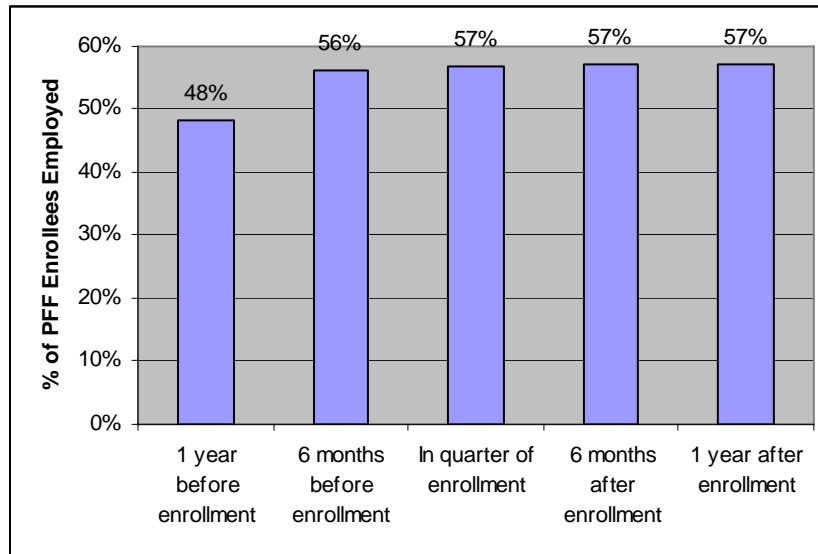


Table 3
Overall PFF Employment Rates before and after Enrollment, by Site

PFF site	Percent Employed					N
	1 year before enrollment	6 months before enrollment	In quarter of enrollment	6 months after enrollment	1 year after enrollment	
Baltimore, Men's Services	41	44	54	51	49	39
Baltimore, YF/RF	38	57	52	55	57	77
Denver	22	38	51	53	63	72
Indianapolis	61	69	76	72	72	98
Los Angeles, Role of Men	42	58	37	32	32	19
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6
Minneapolis	56	61	54	51	47	129
New York City	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Racine	61	56	61	72	63	57
All sites	48	56	57	57	57	499

Source: Based on match of PFF enrollees with state Unemployment Insurance quarterly earnings records.

N/A = Not available

Note: This table is based on participants for whom PFF enrollment dates and quarterly earnings reports were available from one year before enrollment through one year after enrollment. Data on sites with fewer than 10 valid observations are not shown by individual site but are included in table totals.

- *One year before enrollment.* In the quarter one year before enrolling in PFF, about 48 percent of participants had some earnings. This rate ranged from about 22 percent in Denver to about 61 percent in Racine and Indianapolis (table 3).
- *Quarter of enrollment.* In the quarter of enrollment into PFF, about 57 percent of participants across all sites had earnings. The project with the highest proportion of participants employed in the quarter of enrollment was Indianapolis (76 percent) and the lowest was Los Angeles Role of Men (37 percent)
- *One and two years after enrollment.* About 57 percent of PFF participants had earnings in the quarter one year after enrollment—about the same as at enrollment. (figure 1) For those projects with sufficient data to examine a two-year follow-up period, employment rates decreased from 61 percent in the quarter of enrollment to about 49 percent after two years (table 4).

Earnings for those who worked were generally low, even though they increased over time. Average quarterly earnings (for those with earnings) increased over the follow-up period, and the earnings gains were larger in some sites than others (figure 2 and table 5).

- *One year before enrollment.* For those employed one year before enrollment, average quarterly earnings across all sites were \$1,872, ranging from \$1,222 per quarter (in Denver) to \$2,776 (Baltimore City YF/RF Program).
- *Quarter of enrollment.* At enrollment into PFF, the average quarterly earnings for those employed were \$1,501 across all sites, ranging from \$1,011 (Racine) to \$2,144 (Indianapolis).
- *One and two years after enrollment.* Across the nine sites, average quarterly earnings one year after enrollment for those who had worked were \$2,470, ranging from about \$1,800 (in Minneapolis and Racine) to over \$2,600 (in both Baltimore projects, Denver, and Indianapolis). Two years after enrollment, average quarterly earnings increased to \$2,907. Average quarterly earnings rose in all sites between one year and two years after enrollment, except in Racine, where they remained about the same.

One cautionary note in assessing these wage gains is that even at the end of two years with some significant wage increases, the imputed annualized income for PFF participants was between \$7,332 and \$11,204. The poverty level for a one-person household in 2003 was \$8980.⁸

Table 4
Employment Rates for PFF Participants, Two Years before and after Enrollment, by Site

PFF site	Percent Employed									N
	2 years before enrollment	18 months before enrollment	1 year before enrollment	6 months before enrollment	In quarter of enrollment	6 months after enrollment	1 year after enrollment	18 months after enrollment	2 years after enrollment	
Baltimore, Men's Services	44	46	41	44	54	51	49	44	46	39
Baltimore, YF/RF	39	32	32	54	56	56	54	46	46	59
Denver	3	8	25	41	57	54	61	51	49	61
Indianapolis	51	54	61	69	76	72	72	61	59	98
Los Angeles, Role of Men	17	25	42	67	42	25	25	25	50	12
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Minneapolis	51	61	59	69	56	55	51	47	37	71
New York City	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Racine	54	50	62	56	60	71	64	60	58	52
All sites	40	43	48	58	61	59	59	51	49	397

Source: Based on match of PFF enrollees with state Unemployment Insurance quarterly earnings records.

Note: This table is based on participants for whom PFF enrollment dates and quarterly earnings reports were available from two years before enrollment through two years after enrollment. Data on sites with fewer than 10 valid observations are not shown by individual site (and are noted as N/A) but are included in table totals.

Figure 2
Average Quarterly Earnings before and after Enrollment

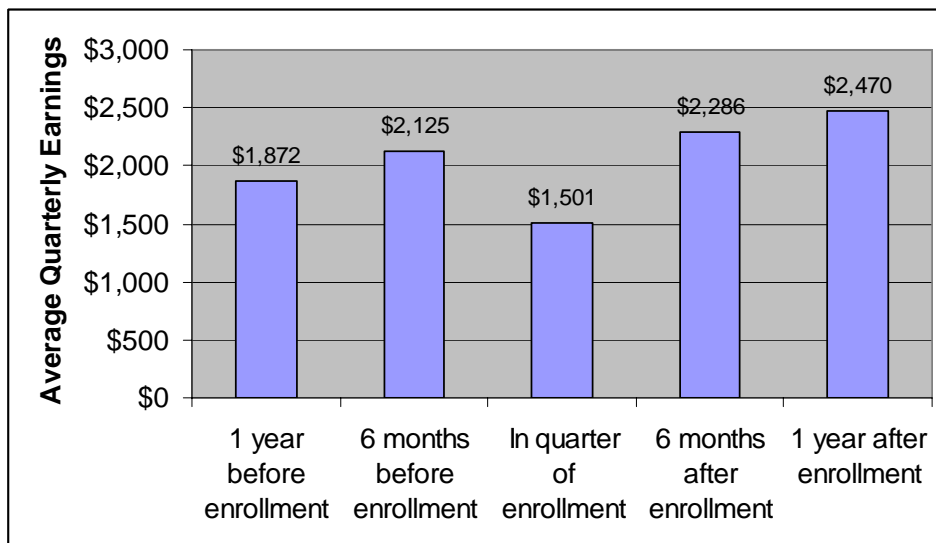


Table 5
Average Quarterly Earnings before and after Enrollment, by Site

PFF site	Average Quarterly Earnings for Those Employed				
	1 year before enrollment	6 months before enrollment	In quarter of enrollment	6 months after enrollment	1 year after enrollment
Baltimore, Men's Services	\$1,678	\$1,532	\$1,229	\$2,489	\$2,760
<i>N=</i>	16	17	21	20	19
Baltimore, YF/RF	\$2,776	\$2,463	\$1,416	\$2,491	\$2,806
<i>N=</i>	29	44	40	42	44
Denver	\$1,222	\$2,280	\$1,277	\$2,358	\$2,676
<i>N=</i>	16	27	37	38	45
Indianapolis	\$2,204	\$2,457	\$2,144	\$2,704	\$2,760
<i>N=</i>	60	68	74	71	71
Los Angeles, Role of Men	N/A	\$1,462	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>N=</i>	8	11	7	6	6
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>N=</i>	3	3	1	0	2
Minneapolis	\$1,754	\$2,062	\$1,297	\$2,022	\$1,833
<i>N=</i>	72	79	69	66	60
New York City	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<i>N=</i>	1	0	0	1	2
Racine	\$1,263	\$1,382	\$1,011	\$1,608	\$1,846
<i>N=</i>	35	32	35	41	36
All sites	\$1,872	\$2,125	\$1,501	\$2,286	\$2,470
<i>N=</i>	240	281	284	285	285

Source: Based on match of PFF enrollees with state Unemployment Insurance quarterly earnings records.

Notes: This table is based on participants who had some earnings in the relevant quarter and for whom PFF enrollment dates and quarterly earnings reports were available from one year before enrollment through one year after enrollment. Data on sites with fewer than 10 valid observations are not shown by individual site (and are noted as N/A) but are included in table totals.

Child Support Outcomes

Another important goal of the PFF project was to increase the establishment of child support orders and the level of payments made on these orders. Trends for these outcomes are examined using monthly child support order and payment administrative data obtained from each state in the project. This section examines several aspects of child support payments: (1) the extent to which child support orders were established for PFF participants, (2) the order amounts established for those PFF participants with child support orders, and (3) the frequency and amount PFF participants with child support orders paid on them during the follow-up period.

The number of child support orders increased over time. The proportion of PFF participants with child support orders increased considerably over time. Across the projects, 14 percent of cases had child support orders at the time of enrollment in PFF. The rate doubled in the year following enrollment in PFF to 28 percent; two years after enrollment, the rate increased further to 35 percent (figure 3).

About 14 percent of PFF participants had a child support order that was established before or at the time of enrollment in PFF, with a somewhat bimodal distribution across the sites. In five sites, fewer than 10 percent of participants had orders before or at enrollment (Boston Healthy Start, the two Baltimore sites, Denver, and New York). In a sixth site (Indianapolis) 11 percent of participants had child support orders established at the time of enrollment. In the other six sites, 18 percent or more of participants had child support orders at the time of enrollment. Racine, where child support enforcement policies were the most aggressive among the study sites, experienced the largest gains. In Boston Family Services, Indianapolis, Minneapolis, and West Chester, the child support order rate also increased substantially in the year after enrollment into PFF.

Two years after enrollment, the child support order rate increased to 35 percent across all sites, ranging from 18 percent in Boston Healthy Start, to 24 percent in the Baltimore YF/RF project, 25 percent in New York, 37 percent in Minneapolis, and 72 percent in Racine (table 6).

Data on award amounts is weak and inconclusive. Scant data were available on average monthly child support awards (i.e., data were limited to fewer than 100 participants across all projects, over half of whom were served in the Minneapolis site). Despite the scarcity of available data, in the first year after enrollment into PFF, average monthly child support order amounts generally remained stable (figure 4). The number of participants with orders gradually increased over the two years following enrollment, but the average order amount did not change significantly. For the very small number of sites and participants for which data were available, the average order amount in the month of enrollment (\$255) was slightly above that recorded for various periods over the next two years; for example, two years after enrollment, the average order amount was \$232.

Figure 3
Overall Percentage of PFF Participants with Child Support Orders from Enrollment to Two Years after Enrollment

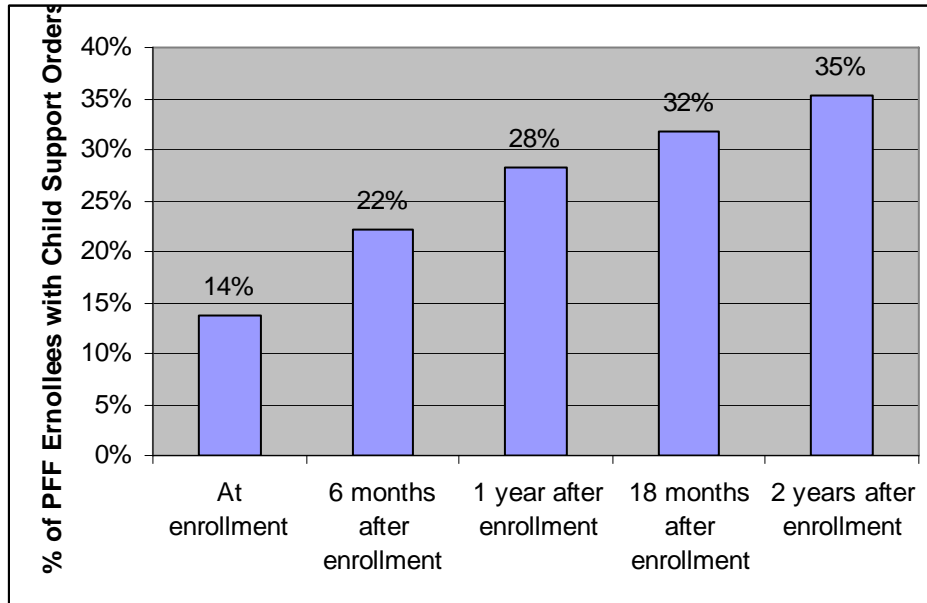
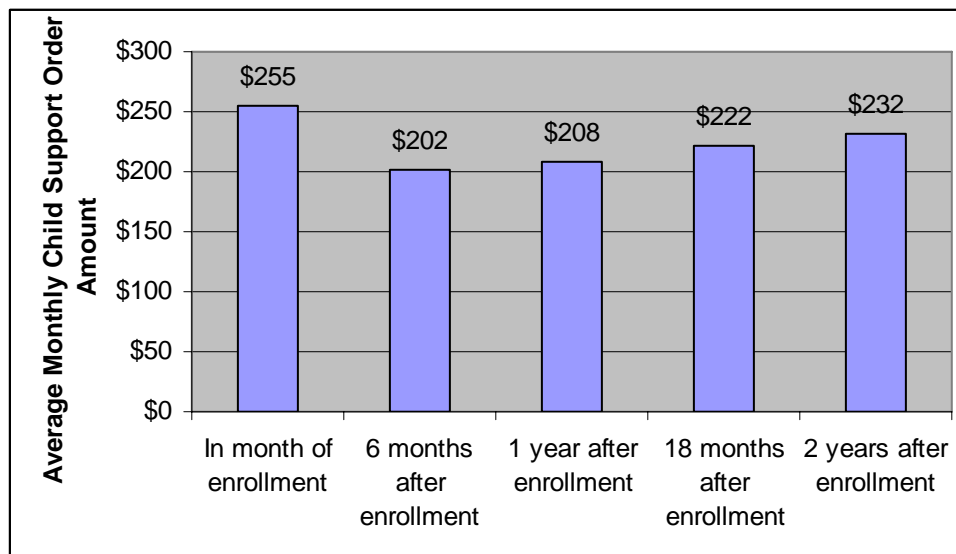


Table 6
Percent of PFF Participants with Child Support Orders from Enrollment to Two Years after Enrollment, by PFF Site

PFF site	Percent with Child Support Order					N
	At enrollment	6 months after enrollment	1 year after enrollment	18 months after enrollment	2 years after enrollment	
Baltimore, Men's Services	5	19	26	31	33	42
Baltimore, YF/RF	8	11	13	16	24	91
Boston, Healthy Start	9	10	15	16	18	131
Boston, Family Services	19	26	30	33	33	43
Denver	1	8	11	15	20	79
Indianapolis	11	31	42	46	50	105
Los Angeles, Role of Men	20	31	37	40	40	35
Los Angeles, Truevine	18	24	24	29	29	17
Minneapolis	18	24	30	35	37	186
New York City	3	13	25	25	25	32
Racine	28	48	62	62	72	60
West Chester	27	35	39	44	48	62
All sites	14	22	28	32	35	883

Sources: State child support payment records.

Figure 4
Average Monthly Child Support Order Amounts for PFF Participants with Child Support Orders from Enrollment to Two Years after Enrollment



Sources: State child support payment records.

Notes: Only one site had data available 10 or more individuals (Minneapolis). No data were provided for five sites: Racine, West Chester, New York City, and the two Boston sites. The sample size was very small (15 or fewer observations for any time) and generally included fewer men than for the other sites for which data were provided. Overall sample sizes were as follows across all sites to calculate averages shown in the chart: in month of enrollment, 53; 6 months after enrollment, 78; 1 year after enrollment, 90; 18 months after enrollment, 97; and 2 years after enrollment, 93. As a result of extremely low number of observations and the fact that more than half of all observations came from the Minneapolis site, the results reported in this figure do not necessarily reflect trends across all sites.

The number of child support payment months increased over time. While the percentage of PFF participants with a child support order who made at least one child support payment remained constant two years following enrollment, the average number of months participants made payments increased over time. Overall, only about a fifth of those with an order did not make any payments in each of the two follow-up years, meaning about 80 percent made at least one payment (table 7). This proportion with at least one payment remained high even as the number of participants with orders more than doubled.

- *Number of payments one and two years after enrollment.* Only about a fifth of those with an order did not make any payments in each of the two follow-up years, meaning about 80 percent made at least one payment. The percentage of participants who made more than six payments a year increased from the first year to the second year. In the first 12 months, about 30 percent of participants with a child support order made payments in more than 6 months during that year (14 percent paid 7–9 months, 16 percent paid 10–12 months). The payment rate increased considerably in the second year after enrollment, when 38 percent of those with an order made payments in more than 6 months during the year (11 percent paid 7–9 months, 27 percent paid 10–12 months). The increases were particularly large for Baltimore Men’s Services (table 7).

Table 7
Percentage of PFF Participants Making a Child Support Payment by Number of Months Payments Were Made during the First and Second Years Following PFF Enrollment

# of months in which a child support payment was made	Baltimore, Men's Services	Baltimore, YF/RF	Boston, Healthy Start	Boston, Family Services	Denver	Indianapolis	Los Angeles, Role of Men	Los Angeles, Truevine	Minneapolis	New York City	Racine	West Chester	All sites
1st year after enrollment													
0 months	9	27	10	0	N/A	26	N/A	N/A	22	N/A	5	42	21
1–3 months	36	36	10	8	N/A	24	N/A	N/A	47	N/A	49	42	35
4–6 months	45	9	20	0	N/A	16	N/A	N/A	13	N/A	22	0	15
7–9 months	9	27	0	15	N/A	29	N/A	N/A	15	N/A	14	4	14
10–12 months	0	0	60	69	N/A	5	N/A	N/A	4	N/A	11	13	16
<i>N</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>237</i>
2nd year after enrollment													
0 months	7	19	4	0	38	27	N/A	N/A	34	N/A	16	23	23
1–3 months	29	48	9	0	19	22	N/A	N/A	32	N/A	33	27	26
4–6 months	7	10	0	7	0	11	N/A	N/A	13	N/A	26	20	13
7–9 months	21	14	4	0	19	13	N/A	N/A	9	N/A	7	13	11
10–12 months	36	10	83	93	25	27	N/A	N/A	12	N/A	19	17	27
<i>N</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>295</i>

Sources: State child support payment records.

N/A = Not available.

Notes: This table excludes site-specific distributions where the number of observations is less than 10 PFF participants, but the table totals include data from these sites. The top half of this table is based on participants who established child support orders within one year of enrollment, while the bottom half is based on participants who established child support orders within two years of enrollment. Some participants may not have had the opportunity to make 12 payments in a given year because their child support order went into effect sometime after the beginning of the year (e.g., an individual whose order went into effect in July of the first year could only make a maximum of six payments for the first year and 12 for the second year).

- *Average number of payments.* The average number of months of payments in the first year after enrollment was 5.4 (for those who made any payments); that number rose to an average of 6.7 months in the second year after enrollment (table 8). For all those with child support orders (including some who made no payments), the average annual number of months with a payment also increased, from about 4.2 months in the first year after enrollment to 5.2 months in the second year after enrollment (table 9). The greatest increase in the average number of payments made in a year was among participants in the Baltimore Men’s Services program.

Table 8
Average Number of Months in Which a Child Support Payment Was Made for PFF Participants Who Made at Least One Payment in the First and Second Years Following Enrollment

PFF site	Average # of months paid in	N	Average # of months paid in	N
	1st year after enrollment		2nd year after enrollment	
Baltimore, Men's Services	4.2	10	7.2	13
Baltimore, YF/RF	N/A	8	4.5	17
Boston, Healthy Start	9.3	18	10.9	22
Boston, Family Services	9.7	13	11.6	14
Denver	N/A	5	7.3	10
Indianapolis	5.5	28	7.0	33
Los Angeles, Role of Men	N/A	5	N/A	6
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	1	N/A	2
Minneapolis	3.9	43	4.9	45
New York City	N/A	7	N/A	7
Racine	4.4	35	5.4	36
West Chester	4.4	14	5.8	23
All sites	5.4	187	6.7	228

Sources: State child support payment records.

N/A = Not available.

Notes: This table excludes site-specific distributions where the number of observations is less than 10 PFF participants, but the table totals include data from these sites. The second column of this table is based on participants who established child support orders within one year of enrollment, while the fourth column is based on participants who established child support orders within two years of enrollment. Some participants may not have had the opportunity to make 12 payments in a given year because their child support order went into effect sometime after the beginning of the year (e.g., an individual whose order went into effect in July of the first year could only make a maximum of six payments for the first year and 12 for the second year).

Table 9
Average Number of Months in Which a Child Support Payment Was Made for PFF Participants with a Child Support Order in the First and Second Years Following Enrollment

PFF site	Average # of months paid in 1st year after enrollment		Average # of months paid in 2nd year after enrollment	
		<i>N</i>		<i>N</i>
Baltimore, Men's Services	3.8	11	6.7	14
Baltimore, YF/RF	3.5	11	3.7	21
Boston, Healthy Start	8.4	20	10.4	23
Boston, Family Services	9.7	13	11.6	14
Denver	N/A	9	4.6	16
Indianapolis	4.1	38	5.1	45
Los Angeles, Role of Men	N/A	8	N/A	9
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	3	N/A	4
Minneapolis	3.1	55	3.2	68
New York City	N/A	8	N/A	8
Racine	4.1	37	4.5	43
West Chester	2.5	24	4.5	30
All sites	4.2	237	5.2	295

Sources: State child support payment records.

N/A = Not available

Notes: This table excludes site-specific data where the number of observations is less than 10 PFF participants, but the table totals include data from these sites. The second and third columns of this table are based on participants who established child support orders within one year of enrollment, while the fourth and fifth columns are based on participants who established child support orders within two years of enrollment. Some participants may not have had the opportunity to make 12 payments in a given year because their child support order went into effect sometime after the beginning of the year (e.g., an individual whose order went into effect in July of the first year could only make a maximum of six payments for the first year and 12 for the second year).

The amount of child support paid increased over time. The average annual amount of child support paid increased across the sites, and it increased in most of the individual sites. In the first year after enrollment, those with orders paid an average of \$1,238 over the entire year (including some who did not make any payments); in the second year following enrollment, the average payments rose to \$1,775 (table 10). For those who made at least one payment, the amounts are, of course, higher. In the first year following enrollment into PFF, those who paid some child support paid an average of \$1,569 that year, and in the second year their payments rose to \$2,296 (table 11). The highest amounts paid were by participants in the two Baltimore programs, the two Boston programs, Indianapolis, and Minneapolis.

Table 10
Average Annual Amount of Child Support Payments Made by PFF Participants with a Child Support Order in the First and Second Years Following Enrollment

PFF site	Average Annual Amount Paid	
	In the first year after enrollment	In the second year after enrollment
Baltimore, Men's Services	\$933	\$2,840
<i>N</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>14</i>
Baltimore, YF/RF	\$1,857	\$1,808
<i>N</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>21</i>
Boston, Healthy Start	\$2,306	\$3,396
<i>N</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>23</i>
Boston, Family Services	\$2,826	\$6,098
<i>N</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>
Denver	N/A	\$705
<i>N</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>16</i>
Indianapolis	\$1,031	\$1,723
<i>N</i>	<i>38</i>	<i>45</i>
Los Angeles, Role of Men	N/A	\$945
<i>N</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	N/A
<i>N</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Minneapolis	\$1,672	\$1,836
<i>N</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>68</i>
New York City	N/A	N/A
<i>N</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>8</i>
Racine	\$413	\$454
<i>N</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>43</i>
West Chester	\$640	\$936
<i>N</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>30</i>
All sites	\$1,238	\$1,775
<i>N</i>	<i>237</i>	<i>295</i>

Sources: State child support payment records.

Notes: This table excludes site-specific data where the number of observations is less than 10 PFF participants (noted as N/A), but the table totals include data from these sites. The second column of this table is based on participants who established child support orders within one year of enrollment, while the third column is based on participants who established child support orders within two years of enrollment. Some participants may not have had the opportunity to make 12 payments in a given year because their child support order went into effect sometime after the beginning of the year (e.g., an individual whose order went into effect in July of the first year could only make a maximum of six payments for the first year and 12 for the second year). The high value in the Boston Family Service program is due two high values of \$25,931 and \$13,718. If these are excluded, the average is \$3810.

Table 11
Average Annual Amount of Child Support Payments Made by PFF Participants Who Made at Least One Payment in the Relevant Period in the First and Second Years Following Enrollment

PFF site	Average Annual Amount Paid	
	In the first year after enrollment	In the second year after enrollment
Baltimore, Men's Services	\$1,026	\$3,059
<i>N</i>	10	13
Baltimore, YF/RF	N/A	\$2,233
<i>N</i>	8	17
Boston, Healthy Start	\$2,562	\$3,550
<i>N</i>	18	22
Boston, Family Services	\$2,826	\$6,098
<i>N</i>	13	14
Denver	N/A	\$1,127
<i>N</i>	5	10
Indianapolis	\$1,399	\$2,349
<i>N</i>	28	33
Los Angeles, Role of Men	N/A	N/A
<i>N</i>	5	6
Los Angeles, Truevine	N/A	\$907
<i>N</i>	1	2
Minneapolis	\$2,138	\$2,774
<i>N</i>	43	45
New York City	N/A	N/A
<i>N</i>	7	7
Racine	\$436	\$542
<i>N</i>	35	36
West Chester	\$1,097	\$1,220
<i>N</i>	14	23
All sites	\$1,569	\$2,296
<i>N</i>	187	228

Sources: State child support payment records.

Notes: This table excludes site-specific data where the number of observations is less than 10 PFF participants (and is noted as N/A), but table the totals include data from these sites. The second column of this table is based on participants who established child support orders within one year of enrollment, while the third column is based on participants who established child support orders within two years of enrollment. Some participants may not have had the opportunity to make 12 payments in a given year because their child support order went into effect sometime after the beginning of the year (e.g., an individual whose order went into effect in July of the first year could only make a maximum of six payments for the first year and 12 for the second year). The high value in the Boston Family Service program is due two high values of \$25,931 and \$13,718. If these are excluded, the average is \$3810.

Summary

The employment and child support payment trends presented here should be interpreted cautiously owing to the small number of participants in some projects, as well as the lack of a control group to precisely estimate the effects of PFF, both for individual projects and the demonstration as a whole.

The analyses show that most PFF participants fared poorly in the labor market, as measured using UI records. Consistent with other research on young fathers with similar characteristics and served by similar programs, only about half the PFF participants worked in any given quarter (before or after enrolling in PFF).⁹ In addition, although their earnings increased from about \$1,900 a quarter one year after enrolling in the program to about \$2,500 a quarter two years after enrollment, young fathers remained relatively low income, with the quarterly earnings reflecting an annualized income amount of about \$10,000. Thus, as in the pre-program period, some fathers in this study worked during the two year follow-up period, but some did not; the average earnings for those who worked remained low. The relatively low economic outcomes for PFF participants suggests that the appropriate intensity and mix of skills development and supportive services to address other employment barriers was not achieved by these child support-related employment services demonstrations.

Child support outcomes were more positive for PFF participants, especially in light of the very modest employment gains. Although we cannot directly attribute the results to PFF, there was a notable increase in the proportion of fathers who established a child support order over the follow-up period. The proportion of fathers who made at least one payment remained high (at 80 percent) even though the number of fathers who established orders increased. More promising is the finding that the number of payments and the cumulative amount of child support paid increased overall and in most of the sites.

There is still room for improvement here as well, however. A majority of PFF participants did not have child support orders two years after enrollment. This report is unable to address whether the lack of award establishment is because the formal child support system moves slowly or because some of these PFF participants were not part of the formal system. For example, this demonstration took place while welfare rolls were decreasing, and some custodial mothers may have been on TANF or have made application for IV-D services. Additionally, although consistent with their low earnings, some PFF participants made no payments, and none appeared to make payments in every month. Nonetheless, the results suggest that offering low-income fathers support services, such as peer support and parenting and family strengthening education and skills, may hold some promise for improving child support outcomes even in the absence of improvements in employment and earnings.

NOTES

¹ A number of other foundations provided funding for the PFF demonstration programs (often to individual projects), including the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the Lilly Endowment, the Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Rose Foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation, the Target Foundation, the Johnson Wax Foundation, and the Racine Community Foundation.

² In addition to the 13 projects, three PFF programs (in Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York City) were initially funded but closed either before enrolling any participants or soon after enrollment began.

³ See Karin Martinson, John Trutko, Demetra Nightingale, Pamela Holcomb, and Burt Barnow. *The Implementation of the Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Projects*. Final Report to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation. Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute (2007) (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/PFF/imp/index.htm>); and Young, Alford and Pamela Holcomb. *Voices of Young Fathers: The Partners for Fragile Families Demonstration Project*. Final Report to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Planning and Evaluation. Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute (2007) (<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/PFF/voices/index.htm>).

⁴ The unemployment rate likely understates the severity of the employment situation because it only counts individuals who are actively seeking work and excludes those who have not actively searched for work because they believe there are no job opportunities. See Martinson (2007) for more detail on the economic conditions in the PFF sites.

⁵ While the tables include data for all sites, the summary points highlighted below exclude findings for specific sites when the number of participants is low (i.e., fewer than 10 in a cell).

⁶ Because the UI records are reported by quarters only, they do not exactly coincide with dates of enrollment.

⁷ U.S. Department of Labor web site, <http://data.bls.gov/PDO/servlet/SurveyOutputServlet>. [Employment Population ratios-20](#) yrs & older, Black or African American Men , 1998-2003.

⁸ See <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/figures-fed-reg.shtml>.

⁹ See Jessica Pearson, Nancy Thoennes, Lanae Davis, Jane Venohr, David Price, and Tracy Griffith, "OCSE Responsible Fatherhood Programs: Client Characteristics and Program Outcomes, Center for Policy Research, Denver, July 2003.