

RESULTS OF THE FATHER-READINESS NETWORK ASSESSMENT™

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

Prepared For:



**Office of Children
and Family Services**

Prepared by:

**National
Fatherhood
Initiative®**

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
ASSESSMENT PROCESS	3
ASSESSMENT RESULTS	5
RECOMMENDATIONS	10
CONCLUSION	12

INTRODUCTION

National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) conducted a Father-Readiness Network Assessment™ for the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) in July 2025. To conduct the assessment, NFI deployed the online version of the Father Friendly Check-Up™ (FFCU) for staff of 54 OCFS partner organizations to assess how ready each partner is to include fathers: specifically, how well each partner includes fathers in programs and services and whether the culture of each partner (e.g., office norms and policies and procedures) provides the supportive environment necessary to include fathers effectively.

The FFCU consists of four parts or “Assessment Categories”



LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The attitudes, beliefs, and values held by the organization’s employees—the culture of the organization—and its impact on the delivery of services and programs.



ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The “nuts and bolts” of an organization that carries out its mission through organizational capacity as reflected in areas such as: 1) policies and procedures, 2) process, and 3) physical environment.



PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The services and programs an organization offers, how it includes staff in offering them, and how it promotes and markets them.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The ability of an organization to engage its community in the delivery of services and programs.

The individual assessment results provided to each of the 54 OCFS partners will guide them in creating customized action plans with no-cost and low-cost tactics to increase father inclusion among partners' staff and father involvement in the families they serve.

This report provides the aggregate assessment results and recommendations. For the results of each completed assessment, refer to the spreadsheet included with this report.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Preparing Staff to Complete the Assessment

NFI created a one-hour webinar training that presented:

- ⚙ How to create a father-friendly organization from a holistic perspective.
- ⚙ The four assessment categories.
- ⚙ How to create an organizational culture that supports exceptional fatherhood programs and services.
- ⚙ The foundation for a strategic plan to increase father friendliness that includes no-cost and low-cost tactics.
- ⚙ Information needed to complete the Father Friendly Check-Up™.
- ⚙ Information needed to encourage colleagues/co-workers to complete the Father Friendly Check-Up™.

OCFS identified partners' staff to complete the FFCU and sent emails with information on the webinar. NFI conducted the webinar on July 21, 2025, and 66 staff attended.

For staff unable to attend the live webinar, NFI recorded it so they could view it before completing the assessment.

Assessment Deadline and Follow-up

OCFS sent an email to designated staff with a deadline of August 4, 2025, to complete the assessment. OCFS coordinated follow-up emails to ensure as many staff as possible completed it.

NFI received 62 assessments from 54 OCFS partners.

Scoring the Assessment

The Father Friendly Check-Up™ (FFCU) is a series of statements that might or might not be true about a partner's organization. The designated staff assessed whether the statements were true of their organizations along a five-point Likert Scale from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with "neutral" in the middle.

To score the assessment, NFI conducted several conversions. The first conversion was to change each of the responses to the Likert Scale statements into a numeric score as follows:

- ⚙ Strongly Agree = 5
- ⚙ Agree = 4
- ⚙ Neutral = 3
- ⚙ Disagree = 2
- ⚙ Strongly disagree = 1

Consequently, a higher score reflected a higher degree or level of father friendliness from each staff member's perspective.

The second conversion involved calculating a percentage of the total maximum score for each assessment category based on each staff member's responses. Each category has a maximum score as follows:

- ⚙ Leadership Development: 120
- ⚙ Organizational Development: 225
- ⚙ Program Development: 155
- ⚙ Community Engagement: 150

If a staff member's responses to the statements in the Program Development category totaled 60, for example, that member's assessment of the organization's father friendliness in that category would be 39% (60/155).

After calculating all the assessments, NFI aggregated, compared, and analyzed the data using the following variables chosen by OCFS:

- ⚙ Region
- ⚙ Program Role (Program Supervisor/Administrator, Direct Staff Worker)
- ⚙ Size of Host Agency's Budget (\$100 million and over, Between \$99 and \$30 million, Between \$29 and \$8 million, \$7 million and below, and Unsure)
- ⚙ Years of Service with Program (0-5 Years, 6-9 Years, 10-19 Years, 20 Years and Up)
- ⚙ How long the program has been operating (0-5 Years, 6-9 Years, 10-19 Years, 20 Years and Up)

The following section presents the overall results, assessment results of staff by those variables, and the number of staff in each variable category that completed the assessment.

ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table 1 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category.

TABLE 1: OVERALL RESULTS

All Staff	Leadership Development	Organizational Development	Program Development	Community Development	Overall Score
(n=62)	70%	72%	66%	60%	68%

The assessment scores indicate there is room for improving partners' ability to include fathers effectively. The overall score was only 68%. All staff scored the lowest in Community Engagement, at 60%. The category that all staff scored highest was in Organizational Development at 72%.

Region

Table 2 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category by Region.

TABLE 2: RESULTS BY REGION

Region	Leadership Development	Organizational Development	Program Development	Community Development	Overall Score
Albany (n=10)	70%	75%	66%	62%	69%
Buffalo (n=4)	63%	70%	62%	52%	62%
New York City (n=8)	71%	70%	64%	57%	66%
Rochester (n=9)	71%	74%	70%	60%	69%
Syracuse (n=19)	71%	75%	72%	65%	71%
Westchester (n=12)	69%	68%	58%	57%	63%

The assessment scores overall indicate there is room for improving the partners' ability to include fathers effectively, regardless of region. No overall score by region reached 72%.

In comparing regions:

- ⚙️ Syracuse scored higher overall at 71% than Albany and Rochester, both at 69%, New York City at 66%, Westchester at 63% and Buffalo at 62%.
- ⚙️ Albany scored highest in Organizational Development at 75% and lowest in Community Engagement at 62%.
- ⚙️ Buffalo scored highest in Organizational Development at 70% and lowest in Community Engagement at 52%.
- ⚙️ New York City scored highest in Leadership Development at 71% and lowest in Community Engagement at 57%.
- ⚙️ Rochester scored highest in Organizational Development at 74% and lowest in Community Engagement at 60%.
- ⚙️ Syracuse scored highest in Organizational Development at 75% and lowest in Community Engagement at 65%.
- ⚙️ Westchester scored highest in Leadership Development at 69% and lowest in Community Engagement at 57%.

Program Role

Table 3 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category by Program Role.

TABLE 3: RESULTS BY PROGRAM ROLE

Program Role	Leadership Development	Organizational Development	Program Development	Community Development	Overall Score
Direct Staff Worker (n=25)	78%	80%	74%	67%	75%
Program Supervisor/Administrator (n=37)	65%	67%	61%	56%	63%

The assessment scores indicate there is room for improving partners' ability to include fathers effectively, regardless of program role. No overall score by program role reached 76%.

When looking at program role:

- ⚙ Direct Staff Worker scored higher overall at 75% than Program Supervisor/Administrator at 63%.
- ⚙ Direct Staff Worker scored highest in Organization Development at 80% and lowest in Community Engagement at 67%.
- ⚙ Program Supervisor/Administrator scored highest in Organizational Development at 67% and lowest in Community Engagement at 56%.

Size of Host Agency's Budget

Table 4 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category by Size of Host Agency's Budget.

TABLE 4: RESULTS BY SIZE OF HOST AGENCY'S BUDGET

Size Of Host Agency	Leadership Development	Organizational Development	Program Development	Community Dngagement	Overall Score
\$100 million and over (n=2)	61%	66%	61%	57%	62%
Between \$29 and \$8 million (n=9)	67%	69%	66%	61%	66%
\$7 million and below (n=11)	67%	66%	63%	56%	63%
Unsure (n=40)	72%	75%	68%	62%	69%

The assessment scores overall might indicate there is room for improving the partners' ability to include fathers effectively, regardless of the size of the host agency's budget. **However, NFI urges caution in using this variable for insight because 64.5% of the sample, or nearly 2 in 3, did not know the size of the agency's budget. Had they known, the results by this variable might look very different.** Moreover, only two of the 23 staff who provided the agency's budget size represented the largest of the agencies.

Nevertheless, for reporting purposes, no overall score by size of the host agency's budget reached 70%.

In comparing sizes:

- ⚙ Between \$29 million and \$8 million scored higher overall than the other two sizes of host agencies at 66%, 63% for \$7 million and below, and 62% for \$100 million and over.
- ⚙ \$100 million and over scored highest in Organizational Development at 66% and lowest in Community Engagement at 57%.
- ⚙ Between \$29 million and \$8 million scored highest in Organizational Development at 69% and lowest in Community Engagement at 61%.
- ⚙ \$7 million and below scored highest in Leadership Development at 67% and lowest in Community Engagement at 56%.

Years of Service

Table 5 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category by Years of Service.

TABLE 5: RESULTS BY YEARS OF SERVICE

Years Of Service	Leadership Development	Organizational Development	Program Development	Community Engagement	Overall Score
0-5 Years (n=36)	71%	74%	67%	61%	69%
6-9 Years (n=9)	67%	68%	63%	63%	65%
10-19 Years (n=13)	68%	71%	66%	60%	66%
20 Years & Up (n=4)	69%	70%	69%	57%	67%

The assessment scores overall indicate there is room for improving the partners' ability to include fathers effectively, regardless of years of service. No overall score by years of service reached 70%.

In comparing years of service:

- ⚙ 0-5 Years scored higher overall than all other years of service at 69%, compared to 67% for 20 Years & Up, 66% for 10-19 Years, and 65% for 6-9 Years.
- ⚙ 0-5 Years scored highest in Organizational Development at 74% and lowest in Community Engagement at 61%.

- 6-9 Years scored highest in Organizational Development at 68% and lowest in Program Development and Community Engagement, both at 63%.
- 10-19 Years scored highest in Organizational Development at 71% and lowest in Community Engagement at 60%.
- 20 Years & Up scored highest in Organizational Development at 70% and lowest in Community Engagement at 57%.

Program Length

Table 6 presents the overall results and results of each assessment category by Program Length.

TABLE 6: RESULTS BY PROGRAM LENGTH

Program length	Leadership development	Organizational development	Program development	Community engagement	Overall score
0-5 Years (n=18)	67%	69%	65%	57%	65%
6-9 Years (n=4)	58%	63%	57%	50%	57%
10-19 Years (n=8)	69%	69%	60%	56%	63%
20 Years and Up (n=32)	73%	76%	70%	65%	71%

The assessment scores overall indicate there is room for improving the partners' ability to include fathers effectively, regardless of program length. No overall score by program length reached 72%.

In comparing program length:

- 20 Years and Up scored higher overall than all other program lengths at 71%, 65% for 0-5 Years, 63% for 10-19 Years, and 57% for 6-9 Years.
- 0-5 Years scored highest in Organizational Development at 69% and lowest in Community Engagement at 57%.
- 6-9 Years scored highest in Organizational Development at 63% and lowest in Community Engagement at 50%.
- 10-19 Years scored highest in Leadership Development and Organizational Development, both at 69% and lowest in Community Engagement at 56%.

- ⚙️ 20 Years and Up scored highest in Organizational Development at 76% and lowest in Community Engagement at 65%.





RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of the assessment by the variables desired by OCFS, NFI has the following recommendations. Please note that in arriving at these recommendations, NFI considered the sample sizes within each variable (i.e., the number of staff who completed an assessment).




Generally speaking, OCFS can gain insight by examining all but the Size of Host Agency's Budget to determine which ones might be most valuable in supporting its partners and looking for "bright spots" to apply across its partners. Bright spots are "home-grown" strategies and actions organizations have found to be successful for including fathers.

- ⚙️ **Recommendation #1:** OCFS should be concerned that the average overall score in Program Development for all staff is 66%. **This result means there is more *intention* to include dads—as reflected by higher scores in Leadership Development and Organizational Development—than *action* to include fathers.** Programs and services are the means by which any family-serving organization or agency engages its clients. OCFS should help its partners turn their intention into action by examining the level of programs, services, and resources for fathers to determine how to best improve scores in Program Development. (NFI offers [many programs and resources](#) to fill this need.)
- ⚙️ **Recommendation #2:** Even though Community Engagement is consistently the lowest overall score regardless of the variable analyzed, OCFS's partners should not include more Community Engagement activities in their initial action plans than in the other three assessment categories. Improvements in Leadership, Organizational, and Program Development should come first because after partners make improvements in these categories, it will be easier to establish Community Engagement activities in future iterations of their action plans because partners will have better outcomes to report, best practices to share, and staff will be more motivated to be fatherhood champions in their communities. NFI reinforced this approach to making improvements during the Father-Friendly Action Planning webinar conducted on August 13, 2024.
- ⚙️ **Recommendation #3:** The Buffalo region scored lower than the other regions. Though the sample size for the Buffalo region (n=4) was lower than other regions, OCFS should still explore why the Buffalo region is noticeably lower than the others. NFI recommends seeking more Buffalo region partners to take the assessment and, if

the overall assessment scores remain consistent, interviewing staff in that region to determine the reasons. Once those are identified, OCFS can better assist its Buffalo region partners' around increasing father friendliness.

-  **Recommendation #4:** For Program Role, Program Supervisor/Administrative staff provided much lower overall scores than did Direct Worker staff. This gap indicates that Program Supervisor/Administrative staff see their agencies as less father friendly. OCFS should look further into this gap because it will inform the kinds of trainings and resources needed to narrow the gap. Factors that might be at play in creating this gap include Program Supervisor/Administrative staff not observing the daily tasks of Direct Worker staff, a perspective that resulted in the former assessing their agency as being less father friendly than it is. Direct Worker staff might not communicate to Program Supervisor/Administrative staff the ways in which fathers are being served, thus negatively impacting the perspectives of Program Supervisor/Administrative staff about their organization's father friendliness. If that's the case, then Program Supervisor/Administrative staff observing Direct Worker staff during interactions with fathers could be a good strategy. Program Supervisor/Administrative staff could also create a way for Direct Worker staff to share feedback. On the other hand, administrators have a broader view while direct service workers can be siloed with a narrower view, especially in large agencies with many programs and services. OCFS should investigate which of these two possibilities is most likely. Regardless, delivering father-friendly trainings for staff at all levels and using NFI's resources (e.g., The Stages of Father Inclusion) could be helpful in closing the gap toward the higher end of overall scores.
-  **Recommendation #5:** Because nearly two-thirds of staff completing the assessment knew the size of their host agency's budget, NFI recommends OCFS **not** consider this variable when assisting with their partners' action plans.
-  **Recommendation #6:** Years of Service didn't have a material impact on the assessment scores, which only had a 4% difference between all years of service. Therefore, NFI recommends OCFS not consider this variable when assisting with their partner's action plans.
-  **Recommendation #7:** For Program Length, it makes intuitive sense programs in existence for at least 20 years scores significantly higher than younger programs. Some reasons might include:

 - Decades of lessons learned allow seasoned programs to fine-tune their father inclusion approaches.
 - Older programs often have deep, long-term partnerships with schools, community groups, faith-based organizations, and local agencies that can help reach and include fathers.

- Over time, programs can build diverse, reliable funding streams—grants, donations, government contracts—that support program continuity and innovation.
 - Long-running programs can have more experienced staff who understand the importance of father inclusion and have refined their skills through repeated training cycles.
 - These programs can have formalized policies, protocols, and evaluation tools for including fathers, developed and refined over many years.
 - Older programs can have longitudinal data to measure what works in father inclusion.
 - OCFS should explore interviewing staff in partner organizations with these seasoned programs to determine which of those potential factors and others have helped them to be more father friendly. Once identified, OCFS can better assist its partners with shorter program lengths around increasing father friendliness.
-  **Recommendation #8:** OCFS should follow up with partners who participated in the Father-Friendly Action Planning webinars to gather copies of their action plans and track their partners' progress in implementing them. This follow-through is vital to realizing the return on investment from this FRNA.
-  **Recommendation #9:** As soon as possible, OCFS should train its partners on how to include fathers effectively. OCFS should use NFI's online, on-demand training on including fathers called the Father Engagement Certificate™, which focuses on the five areas that any organization needs to build capacity in when trying to better include fathers. It is ideal for staff who manage father-inclusion programs and other efforts. Because it is self-paced, staff can work it into their busy schedules. OCFS should review other NFI trainings in the Father Engagement Academy™ to include, such as the Recruitment & Retention Certificate™.
-  **Recommendation #10:** OCFS should have staff who completed the assessment retake it at a time (e.g., 6-12 months from now) that will allow partners to implement tactics in their action plans and compare the results of that second assessment to the first assessment. This comparison will provide a quantitative evaluation of whether (or how much) father friendliness improved during that time. Should OCFS do this, NFI can assist with it.

CONCLUSION

The results of the Father-Readiness Network Assessment™ reveal that, regardless of how OCFS parses the data, there is room to improve the father friendliness of its partners.

OCFS should work closely with its partners to identify incremental next steps using NFI's recommendations above. Further investigating the perspectives and actions of staff based on the variables included in this assessment will shed light on the tactics to include in OCFS's assistance to its partners across New York to include fathers more effectively. That investigation should be OCFS's first step.