

APPENDIX A

CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS
SUCCESSFUL STEPS PROGRAM PROFILE

RESPONSIBLE FATHERHOOD PROGRAM PROFILE: SUCCESSFUL STEPS AT CONNECTIONS TO SUCCESS

Program overview

Connections to Success (CtS) has served men and fathers in Kansas City for about 10 years. Their Responsible Fatherhood program, Successful STEPS, is comprised of a full-day, two-and-a-half week Relationship and Workforce Readiness (RWR) workshop that integrates content on personal development, parenting, and employment readiness, and a separate workshop that meets weekly, called Connect, where fathers who have completed the RWR workshop receive material on healthy relationships. CtS expects fathers in Successful STEPS to complete the daily RWR workshop, and then encourages attendance at Connect.

Program context and background

Organizational context

Connections to Success (CtS) is a workforce development organization operating in Kansas City, Kansas and Missouri, and St. Louis, Missouri. The mission of CtS is to help its clients achieve self-sufficiency. CtS leaders believe that clients should earn a living wage, not just a minimum wage, and that those who have been incarcerated or separated from their families should have the tools to productively reengage with their children.

CtS grew out of two parallel efforts by its founders, Kathy and Brad Lambert, to reduce barriers to employment for low-income families in and around St. Louis, Missouri. In the early 1990s, Kathy Lambert opened a Dress for Success boutique in St. Louis to provide business clothes to low-income single mothers. Around the same time, Brad Lambert began a program called Wheels for Success, which refurbished donated vehicles for low-income families in St. Charles County, a St. Louis suburb with limited access to public transportation, so they could have reliable transportation to get to work.

Through their work, the Lamberts came to recognize that the hardships faced by low-income families went far beyond lack of access to a job, and they began developing a holistic intervention to improve the circumstances of low-income families. In 1998, their newly formed organization, Connections to Success, began offering Personal Professional Development (PPD), a multi-session workshop combining workforce readiness training with soft skills development and case management. PPD is still offered in its original form in St. Louis, and formed the basis for CtS's Kansas City operations when the organization opened a location there in 2003.

Responsible fatherhood program development

CtS expanded to Kansas City after receiving funding in 2003 from the U.S. Department of Justice to provide faith-based reentry services to women leaving prison. CtS then received a Department of Labor Reintegration of Ex-Offenders (RExO) grant in 2005 to extend its work serving ex-offenders. Through the RExO grant, CtS came to understand how parenting education complemented its mission of self-sufficiency. They saw that men participating in RExO-funded services would quit their jobs over “family drama”—and those lacking employment could not pay child support or provide for their families. But, under the RExO grant, CtS did not explicitly or systematically provide parenting education; its model included a network of mentors, many of

them faith based, who sometimes provided guidance to fathers about challenges in their family lives.

In 2011, the Kansas City location of CtS received a Responsible Fatherhood grant from the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) to create the Successful STEPS program. Successful STEPS integrates workforce readiness training and case management with parenting, fatherhood, and healthy relationship education. CtS's initial approach to Successful STEPS was to compress its PPD model into 10 half-days of instruction. To this, they added an equivalent portion on fatherhood and parenting; the result became known as Relationship and Workforce Readiness (RWR).

In fall 2013, CtS staff revised the format of Successful STEPS to ensure fathers had sufficient time to engage deeply with the subject matter. Instead of offering two weeks of RWR classes split evenly between employment and fatherhood, CtS began to offer two and a half weeks of full-day classes. The first two weeks were dedicated to employment, following the PPD model, and the last two and a half days were dedicated to fatherhood education. This revised format increased the amount of time focused on delivering the PPD curriculum.

Community context

Successful STEPS enrolls Kansas City fathers from both sides of the state line. During the first year of PACT enrollment—2013—the unemployment rate in the Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area was lower than the national average by nearly a percentage point, but Kansas City residents had lower-than-average household income, were more likely to receive public assistance, and were more likely to have lived below the poverty line during the prior four years.¹ Between 2008 and 2012, the proportion of families headed by single mothers in Kansas City—16 to 19 percent, on average—was higher than the national average of 14 percent (all statistics from the American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics). Additionally, Kansas City struggled with above-average violent crime (Federal Bureau of Investigation Uniform Crime Statistics).

Fathers in Kansas City, Kansas, faced relatively more disadvantage than those living in Kansas City, Missouri. Between 2008 and 2012, annual household income in Kansas City, Kansas, was \$37,768, compared to \$45,150 in Kansas City, Missouri. The receipt of public assistance was higher in Kansas City, Kansas: 4 percent of its population received cash assistance and about 17 percent received SNAP benefits, on average, compared to roughly 3 percent and 14 percent in Kansas City, Missouri. Nearly one-quarter of families in Kansas City, Kansas, lived below the poverty line between 2008 and 2012, compared to about 19 percent in Kansas City, Missouri. Between 2008 and 2012, more than one in five Kansas City, Kansas, residents had not completed high school by age 25, a rate nearly twice that of Kansas City, Missouri (all statistics from the American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau).

CtS is alone among Kansas City organizations in providing comprehensive services that combine employment and parenting skills development into a single workshop. A number of

¹ The Kansas City Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) includes both Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas. The American Community Survey provides household statistics separately for Kansas City, Missouri, and Kansas City, Kansas, whereas the Bureau of Labor Statistics provides unemployment data for the MSA only.

organizations in the community offer either job search assistance, workforce assessments, and training, or parenting classes and family services, but no other community organizations combine these activities. Some related community services are tailored to specific populations, such as Hispanic families or families of children with disabilities. Also, similar services and workshops offered by other community organizations are open-entry, open-exit, or by appointment, rather than cohort-based.

Program design

Population served

CtS serves low-income men and women living in Kansas City, Kansas, and Kansas City, Missouri. Successful STEPS serves low-income fathers who are interested in getting a job or improving their employment situation, do not face debilitating or untreated substance abuse or mental health disorders, and have no convictions related to sex offenses.

Fathers who enrolled in PACT prior to August 22, 2014 were predominantly black, non-Hispanic men (Table A.1). About half had worked for pay in the 30 days prior to enrollment; the majority of these fathers earned less than \$500 during that time. Staff reported that many fathers had been incarcerated; data show that four out of five had been convicted of a crime, with the longest stint in a correctional institution averaging 2.4 years. Though 83 percent of fathers had ever lived with one of their biological children, only 20 percent did so at the time of enrollment. Most men reported that they were involved in the life of at least one of the children they fathered; over three-quarters of men reported spending time with a child in the month prior to enrollment. Many fathers were referred to Successful STEPS through the Kansas Department of Children and Families (DCF) for failing to make child support payments. Although three-fifths had a legal child support arrangement, the average amount a father had paid in the 30 days prior to enrollment was about \$88. On average, the men had fathered 2.5 children.

Program philosophy, service delivery approach, and logic model

CtS's credo, "do with, not for," is aligned with its overall mission of promoting self-sufficiency and is woven into each component of Successful STEPS (Figure 1). Workshop facilitators, known as trainers, emphasize experiential learning and development of soft skills and emotional intelligence over didactic information delivery, to provide fathers with the tools to achieve stability and self-sufficiency and productively interact with others in a work environment. Case management and job placement services are intended to connect fathers with resources, services, and job leads, but it is ultimately up to fathers to take advantage of these services and communicate with CtS staff.

One of the main activities underpinning a father's experience in Successful STEPS is his life plan, which he writes with help from a trainer at the end of RWR and updates four times over the next 12 months with a life transformation coach (case manager). Fathers identify goals in eight domains (transportation, education, family, social, spiritual, employment, housing, and health)² along with timelines for completion. The intent of the life plan is for fathers to focus on their

² RF grantees must be neutral with respect to religion and not promote, endorse, or favor religious beliefs over nonreligious beliefs, nor disparage religious beliefs in any way.

lives and take accountability for their actions. Whereas RWR focuses on developing a father's mindset to make a life plan, the goal of case management is to begin to actualize it.

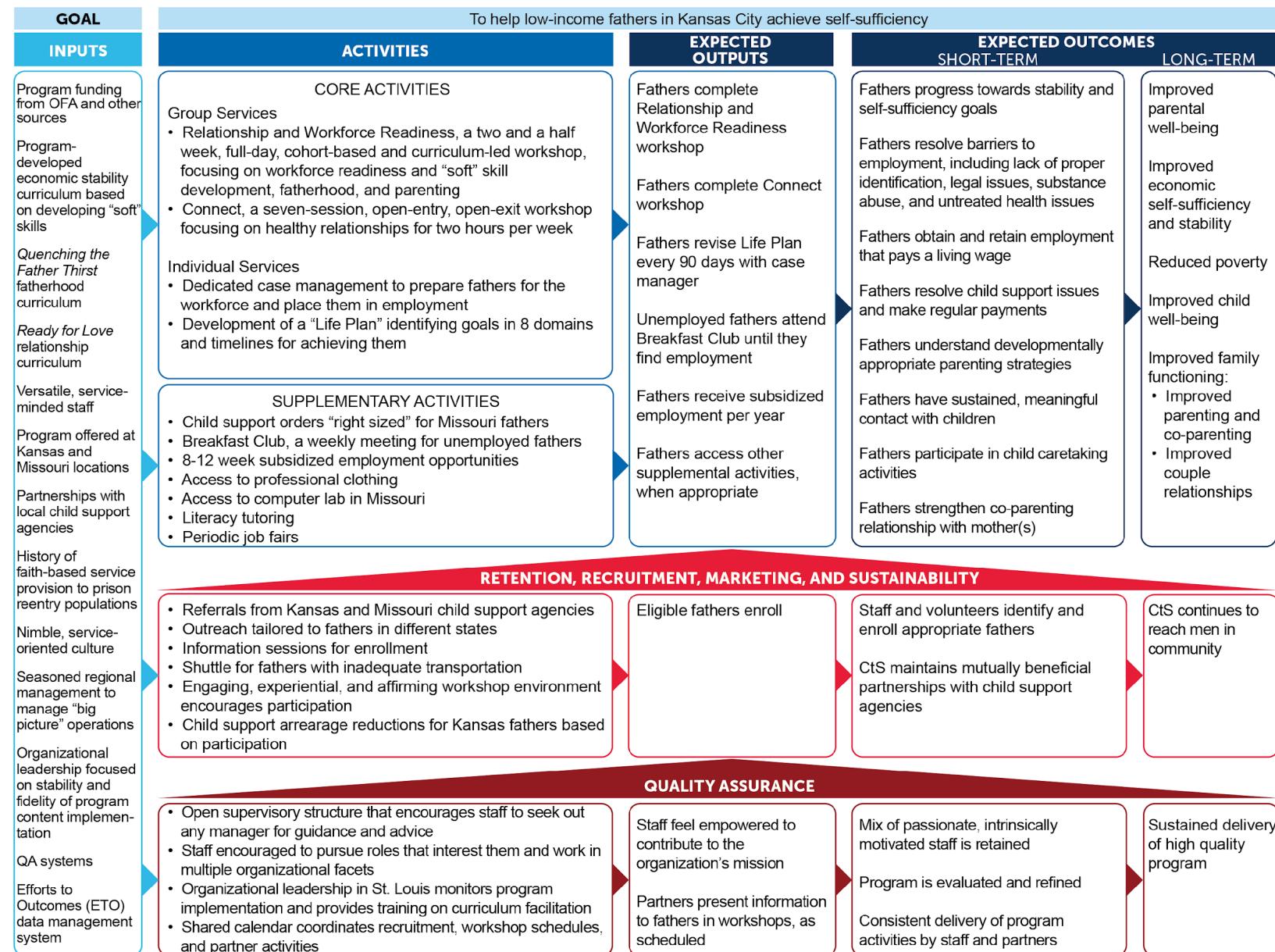
Table A.1. Baseline characteristics of randomly assigned fathers

	Successful STEPS	Total PACT RF sample
Demographics		
Average age (years)	36	35
Race and ethnicity (%)		
Hispanic	4	5
Black, non-Hispanic	78	81
White, non-Hispanic	13	8
Other	5	6
Socioeconomic status		
Have high school diploma or GED (%)	68	69
Earnings in last 30 days (%)		
Did not work for pay	52	50
\$1–\$500	34	27
\$501–\$1,000	9	12
More than \$1,001	4	11
Housing stability (%)		
Stable housing		
Own home	3	2
Rent home	21	26
Contribute to rent	10	18
Unstable housing		
Halfway house, group house, or treatment facility	14	10
Homeless	10	10
Live rent free in someone's home	38	30
Other unstable housing	4	4
Criminal justice system involvement		
Ever convicted of a crime (%)	80	73
Longest time in an adult correctional institution (years)	2.4	1.7
Currently on parole (%)	43	34
Father involvement and parenting behavior		
Number of children	2.5	2.6
Have children with multiple mothers (%)	48	47
Ever lived with any child (%)	83	87
Live currently with at least one child (%)	20	22
Spent time with at least one child in past month (%)	78	80
Have legal child support arrangement (%)	60	58
Amount paid in last 30 days	\$88	\$149
Paid informal child support in last 30 days (%)	27	31
Romantic relationships (%)		
Ever married to mother of at least one child	30	27
In romantic relationship	49	53
In romantic relationship with mother of at least one child	30	34
Motivation to participate in program (%)		
Improve relationship with children	39	60
Improve job situation	58	35
Improve relationship with children's mother	3	5
Sample size	605	4,734

Source: PACTIS/site MIS data

Note: All fathers randomly assigned to the program or control group through August 22, 2014, were included. RF sites began PACT intake between December 9, 2012, and February 13, 2013.

Figure A.1. Program logic model



Two important documents support the development of life plans by helping fathers identify and track needs and goals, and by assisting staff with guiding fathers on how to influence their circumstances. First, life transformation coaches (case managers) complete a stability checklist with each father. This questionnaire documents a father's potential barriers to self-sufficiency, including his housing situation, mental health, and substance abuse. Life transformation coaches update the stability checklist every 90 days. Second, job developers complete an employment data sheet with each father. This sheet documents a father's barriers to employment, such as a prior felony or suspended license, as well as his career interests and prior education or training.

CtS approaches the delivery of each service component of Successful STEPS differently. The RWR workshop is highly structured and intensive. Fathers participate as a cohort for two and a half weeks, receiving 80 hours of instruction. Connect, a relationship workshop, is less intensive, meeting weekly for two hours over seven weeks. Fathers who complete the RWR workshop can begin attending Connect at any time and may attend as frequently as they like.

CtS staff believe core services and topics should be covered in a specific sequence. Staff report that many fathers enter the program with "old habits" formed by negative expectations from society, such as laziness or participation in illegal activity. As a result, fathers may have negative self-images that needed to be addressed in the RWR workshop before they can think about being a strong co-parent or keeping a job.

Fathers graduate from Successful STEPS by completing all RWR workshop sessions. Attendance at Connect is not required to graduate. Life transformation coaches and job developers follow up with fathers for one year after graduation, but a father's case is never closed. Though it is primarily the father's responsibility to seek out services after finishing the workshop, Successful STEPS leadership believe that any father who has gone through the program should be able to receive services at any point thereafter.

Service components

For PACT, Successful STEPS includes the following core services:

Relationship and Workforce Readiness. The employment portion of the RWR workshop follows a curriculum developed in-house by the organization's founders over 15 years ago. This two-week portion of RWR covers career interests, resume development, and interviewing. During these sessions, facilitators, known at Successful STEPS as trainers, also emphasize personal or soft skill development, including developing self-confidence and a positive mindset, recognizing the environments in which one functions best, and analyzing how one reacts to different situations and stimuli. Trainers dedicate time to "affirmations" and activities to help fathers develop positive self-images, but they are also frank with fathers about the challenges they face and their responsibility for their own circumstances. Staff believe that this type of "keeping it real," together with the socio-emotional development the workshop fosters, prepare fathers to tackle the sensitive topics covered in the fatherhood portion of the workshops. Guest speakers from child support enforcement offices, a local bank, and SAFEHOME, a domestic violence shelter, give presentations on child support, financial literacy, and domestic violence.

The final two and a half days of the RWR workshop cover fatherhood and parenting topics. Successful STEPS draws on the evidence-informed *Quenching the Father Thirst* curriculum,

developed by the National Center for Fathering to “train men to become responsible fathers.”³ Topics addressed include (1) children’s needs, (2) manhood as the foundation for fatherhood, (3) challenges of being a father, (4) the effects of stress on parenting, (5) reconnecting with children, (6) family history, and (7) the relationship with the mother as a co-parent. At the end of the RWR workshop, fathers write a life plan with goals and timelines in eight domains of their lives (see above).

Connect. Once a week, CtS offers Connect, a seven-session workshop that covers healthy relationship topics, for fathers who complete the RWR workshop. CtS staff facilitate the *Ready for Love* curriculum, an adaptation of the evidence-based *Relationship Enhancement* curriculum. *Ready for Love* covers topics such as what makes a good mate, building trust, and setting and enforcing relationship boundaries.⁴ Facilitators also use Connect to reinforce modules from the RWR workshop. Guest speakers from partner organizations give presentations on domestic violence and financial literacy. Classes start with a light meal. Fathers can begin participating at any point and attend sessions in any order, and can attend as many—or as few—sessions as they chose.

Case management. After completing RWR, fathers are assigned to a life transformation coach for case management. Life transformation coaches hold an initial meeting with each father to complete a stability checklist and help the father secure proper identification, connect to a health care provider, arrange transportation to appointments or interviews, and provide professional clothing. When making a referral to an external organization, the case manager follows up with the organization and the client to make sure the client has followed through on the referral. Life transformation coaches help fathers review and update their life plans and stability checklists every 90 days for a year. They arrange weekly meetings with fathers who are just beginning case management, and adjust schedules based on individual fathers’ needs.

Life transformation coaches determine when a father is “job ready.” Upon making this determination, the life transformation coach refers the father to a job developer. To be job ready, fathers with any substance abuse issues have to be clean for two weeks. Their medical needs have to be addressed, including filling any prescriptions and getting eyeglasses, and they must have appropriate government identification, such as a birth certificate. Fathers who missed any sessions of the RWR workshop have to make them up before being deemed “job ready.”

Job development. In an initial meeting with a job developer, the father discusses the type of job he wants to pursue and his barriers to employment, such as a felony conviction or lack of access to transportation. Together, the father and job developer complete an employment data sheet that includes the father’s employment barriers, interests, and progress toward becoming employable. In follow-up meetings, job developers check on fathers’ job search progress, update employment data sheets, and administer the O*NET assessment to help fathers identify potential

³ A description and details of the *Quenching the Father Thirst* curriculum are available through the National Center for Fathering website (<http://support.fathers.com/site/PageServer?pagename=QFTOverview1>).

⁴ *Ready for Love* is a 16-hour curriculum developed by IDEALS for Professionals (IFC, <http://www.skillswork.org/mml-curriculum/mastering-the-mysteries-of-love/ready-for-love/>).

occupations.⁵ Job developers also help fathers research employers, complete online applications, schedule interviews, arrange transportation, and conduct mock interviews. They make formal appointments with fathers on an as-needed basis.

Successful STEPS includes the following supplementary services:

Child support arrearage reductions. CtS partners with the Kansas Department of Children and Family Services (DCF) to reduce fathers' state-owned child support arrears for participation in Successful STEPS. For every hour of participation, Kansas DCF reduces the father's state-owned child support arrearages, up to a maximum of \$1,625 (\$50 for each of the first 15 hours, and \$25 per hour for up to an additional 35 hours). CtS reports that between the beginning of the partnership between CtS and Kansas DCF in July 2011 and fall 2013, over \$170,000 was forgiven for fathers in Successful STEPS. Missouri fathers are not eligible for state-owned arrearage reductions.

Breakfast Club. All Successful STEPS graduates are encouraged to attend Breakfast Club, a weekly job club that meets for one and a half hours. Participants discuss employment issues and provide peer support. Employers and successful program alumni visit to give presentations. Breakfast Club is facilitated by the Successful STEPS trainer manager. Life transformation coaches and job developers expect unemployed fathers to attend. Those in attendance receive a weekly packet of job listings compiled by job developers.

Subsidized employment. Successful STEPS works with employers to subsidize 8–12-week jobs for Successful STEPS graduates. Job developers tell fathers that these are “try-outs” that could potentially turn into full-time jobs. Fathers receive a paycheck from the employer, who is reimbursed by CtS. CtS has established partnerships with employers in hospitality, trash collection, and construction for placements. For example, a local construction company provides fathers with an 8-week internship on a job site.

In addition, fathers in Successful STEPS have access to a professional clothing closet; transportation to activities such as job interviews, eye exams, and meetings with parole officers; a computer lab in both states' offices; literacy tutoring; and periodic job fairs.

Partners in service delivery

CtS has formal partnerships with three organizations: a domestic violence education and shelter program and child support agencies in both Kansas and Missouri. Representatives from these organizations conduct presentations for fathers during RWR.

SAFEHOME. CtS's partnership with SAFEHOME, a domestic violence shelter, began in 2011 with the OFA Responsible Fatherhood grant. CtS approached the organization because of its experience providing education. A SAFEHOME facilitator conducts a presentation during each RWR cohort about how domestic violence affects children, and leads a discussion on healthy relationships, emotional abuse, and controlling behavior during Connect. Fathers can

⁵ The O*NET (<http://www.onetcenter.org/tools.html>) is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor/ Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA).

bring their romantic partner and/or co-parent to the Connect discussion. SAFEHOME also provides domestic violence training to CtS staff working on Successful STEPS.

Kansas Department of Children and Families. CtS first partnered with Kansas DCF in July 2011. As the primary recruitment source for Successful STEPS, Kansas DCF mails Successful STEPS pamphlets to fathers in its system with overdue child support payments. It has also provided CtS with spaces to recruit fathers and conduct RWR workshops and information sessions. A liaison from the agency delivers a presentation to each RWR cohort in Kansas on legal obligations, navigating the child support system, establishing paternity, and modifying child support orders. The liaison provides contact information for Kansas fathers to receive assistance with their specific cases. Kansas fathers with state-owned child support arrearages are eligible for reductions.

Missouri State Department of Social Services Family Support Division/Child Support Enforcement Office (FSD/CSE). CtS formed a partnership with Missouri FSD/CSE in October 2013. A Missouri FSD/CSE staff member gives a presentation about child support to each RWR cohort of Missouri fathers. Unlike Kansas DCF, Missouri FSD/CSE does not have the administrative authority to alter state-owned child support arrearages. Missouri FSD/CSE allows CtS to recruit for Successful STEPS and hold information sessions in its Kansas City offices; it also refers fathers to Successful STEPS.

In addition to these partnerships, four other organizations provide support to Successful STEPS. Two are curriculum developers for *Quenching the Father Thirst* and *Ready for Love*, which CtS uses in workshops. The curriculum developers have provided trainings to staff. The third, Workforce Partnership, is an American Jobs Center that helps fathers enroll in Workforce Investment Act-funded training programs and KansasWorks, a state-run job board. Workforce Partnership employs a liaison who sends referrals to Successful STEPS. A fourth organization, Literacy KC, conducts literacy assessments and provides tutoring to fathers; Literacy KC does not have a formal partnership with CtS.

Staffing, supervision, and implementation support

Successful STEPS has expanded significantly since February 2013, the start of enrollment for PACT. At the time of the staff survey in fall 2013, the average length of tenure in the organization was 2.7 years (Table A.2). Equal proportions of staff were men and women, and 64 percent described themselves as black, non-Hispanic.

Background and experience of staff

The founders of CtS stress the importance of having “the right people on the bus”: in their view, being self-motivated and having mission-driven character matter most. Managers cite qualities such as “servant heart,” “leadership attitude,” and a “passion to serve” as important for CtS employees. Prior direct experience and educational attainment are not critical hiring factors. Though nearly three-quarters of staff surveyed reported previous experience providing employment services, reflecting CtS’s history of workforce development, only 36 percent of staff reported experience providing parenting or relationship skills education. All staff had at least some college coursework, and more than three-fifths had a bachelor’s degree or higher (Table A.2).

Table A.2. CtS staff characteristics and experience

Staff characteristics		Staff experience	
Gender (%)		Experience providing parenting education (%)	36
Male	46	Mean (years)	7.3
Female	46		
Other	8	Experience providing relationship skills education (%)	36
Race and ethnicity (%)		Mean (years)	7.3
Hispanic	18		
Black, non-Hispanic	64	Experience providing employment services (%)	73
White, non-Hispanic	0	Mean (years)	8.3
Other, including mixed race	18		
		Education (%)	
Average length of employment (years)	2.7	High school diploma or equivalency	0
		Some college, associate's degree, or certificate	36
		Bachelor's degree	27
		More than bachelor's degree	36

Source: PACT staff survey.

Note: Eleven out of 13 staff from CtS completed the survey.

Several staff members had experience in criminal justice, likely a reflection of CtS's history of serving ex-offender populations. Before joining CtS, the regional director was a parole officer. The training manager worked as a job developer for a county probation office. The lead life transformation coach's background was in prison ministry. One life transformation coach worked with mentally ill members of the reentry population for more than a decade. CtS's background as a faith-based organization is reflected in its staff members' backgrounds. In addition to the lead life transformation coach's experience in prison ministry, a trainer and an outreach coordinator/trainer both worked as pastors outside of their employment with CtS.

Roles and responsibilities

To accommodate organizational growth, CtS has added management positions to oversee frontline staff working on Successful STEPS. CtS employed a dedicated Successful STEPS program manager; however, when the position became vacant, the regional director, who oversees all Kansas City programming, covered the responsibilities. Three managers are responsible for training new hires and supervising and supporting staff. Frontline staff are asked to be flexible and open to working on tasks not part of their job description. Table A.3 lists CtS staff positions and the primary responsibilities of staff at each level of the organization.

Staff training

All new staff participate in an orientation to introduce the organization's background, funders and grants, and programming. After orientation, new employees meet with other members of their department to discuss their roles and complete department-specific training. For example, new life transformation coaches observe a full session of RWR, and shadow meetings between other life transformation coaches and fathers. Experienced staff train new staff on how to document services, use the MIS, and fill out forms like the stability checklist.

Table A.3. Successful STEPS staff roles and responsibilities

Job title	Primary responsibilities
Leadership	
Regional director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oversee all CtS programming in Kansas City, including Successful STEPS and non-OFA RF grant-funded programs
Program manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage day-to-day operations of Successful STEPS program
Managers	
Lead life transformation coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise life transformation coaches Conduct community outreach to help life transformation coaches find helpful resources for fathers
Job developer manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise job developers Maintain relationships with potential employers Manage transitional job program Develop job leads for participants and job developers
Trainer manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervise trainers and outreach coordinators Facilitate Breakfast Club Organize and manage overall program calendar, including information sessions
Frontline staff	
Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate RWR May cover other duties within CtS, as requested.
Outreach coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead outreach and recruitment activities Work with trainer manager to schedule and run information sessions May assume other duties; for example an outreach coordinator has also facilitated the fatherhood curriculum in RWR
Life transformation coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist fathers who enroll in Successful STEPS more than two weeks before the beginning of a cohort Provide case management to help fathers become “job ready,” may include individual meetings, providing referrals, and updating life plans
Job developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help fathers obtain employment through identifying job leads and training opportunities, and administering occupational assessments Liaise with potential employers to identify job opportunities Prepare job leads for fathers attending Breakfast Club
Retention specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interact with employers to facilitate employment retention for fathers

Staff do not receive regular, systematic ongoing training after initial orientation, but training is provided as needed. For example, CtS’s CEO delivered a workshop on facilitation techniques to trainers in fall 2013. The developers of *Quenching the Father Thirst* and *Ready for Love*, the parenting and healthy relationship curricula, have also trained facilitators (who are known at CtS as trainers). The National Center for Fathering, which developed *Quenching the Father Thirst*, has designated a staff liaison to provide technical assistance to CtS as needed. Several managers and job developers have attended the Offender Workforce Development Specialist Partnership Training, a 160-hour training developed by the National Institute of Corrections.⁶

⁶ An agency within the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons

Supervisory support for direct service staff

CtS is a small organization whose leadership intends that staff members should feel comfortable going to any manager—not just their department manager—for advice, and should have a supportive and empowering work environment. Though most staff reported receiving monthly group supervision on the staff survey (Table A.4), the content and focus of these meetings are department specific. Trainers meet as a team before each cohort of Successful STEPS. Life transformation coaches and job developers meet monthly to review caseloads and coordinate activities. Trainers and life transformation coaches meet towards the end of RWR to discuss specific issues facing fathers in the cohort who would transition to case management. Life transformation coaches also have group meetings every other week when the lead life transformation coach brings in speakers on community resources for fathers.

Table A.4. Staff support at CtS

Frequency of supervision	Percent
Individual	
Weekly or more	36
Biweekly	18
Monthly or less	27
Never	0
Group	
Weekly or more	0
Biweekly	18
Monthly or less	74
Never	0

Source: PACT staff survey.

Note: Eleven out of 13 staff from CtS completed the survey. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to item nonresponse.

Outreach and recruitment

All staff are expected to assist with outreach and recruitment and to attend information sessions. Successful STEPS accepts referrals from public and private agencies and conducts recruitment activities at service delivery locations, public benefits offices, community events, and through general outreach.

- **Public and private agencies.** CtS staff actively recruit for Successful STEPS in the lobbies of Kansas DCF and Missouri FSD/CSE. Kansas DCF mails a flyer to fathers who owe child support, and Missouri FSD/CSE refers fathers to Successful STEPS. The housing authority in Kansas City, Kansas, allows CtS to conduct outreach at housing projects and leave recruitment flyers at the front desks. CtS also recruits for Successful STEPS from adult residential centers, halfway houses, reentry facilities, drug treatment centers, and American Jobs Centers. CtS has ceased recruiting from homeless shelters because it found these men were unlikely to engage once enrolled. Workforce Partnership, a referral partner on the OFA Responsible Fatherhood grant, employs a liaison who referred fathers to Successful STEPS. Before beginning the PACT evaluation, Kansas DCF was the only referral source for Successful STEPS. Due to longstanding reliance on the agency's mailings, staff are

concerned that they may have exhausted their pool of potential participants in Kansas, and have discussed expanding mailings to fathers who are not receiving public assistance.

- **Community gatherings.** CtS staff attend events where large crowds are gathered, such as block parties, outdoor concerts, picnics, job fairs, sporting events, and local church functions, to hand out flyers and recruit eligible fathers. An outreach coordinator believes that these events are important to increase the community presence of Successful STEPS.
- **General street outreach.** Outreach coordinators hang door tags on houses, drop in to barbershops and food pantries, and ride bus routes handing out flyers. Staff noted that door hangers have been particularly successful because wives, girlfriends, and mothers have seen them and urged their partners and sons to enroll. CtS has periodically advertised for Successful STEPS on buses, on the radio and in newspapers. Newspaper advertising has been successful in bringing fathers to Successful STEPS, but many of those who responded were employed and did not meet enrollment requirements. Successful STEPS also receives exposure through a county legislator's radio program discussing reentry options for men leaving prison.

Outreach staff schedule regular information sessions for referred fathers to learn about the program and conduct enrollment. CtS screens potential participants for program suitability during the information session prior to enrollment by talking to the men, performing visual assessments to see whether they have tangible signs of mental health or substance abuse issues, and checking criminal databases to see whether potential participants have been convicted of sex offenses. Life transformation coaches with backgrounds in social work perform these screenings. Staff make case-by-case decisions about whether men are fit to participate. Men who admit to recent drug use are allowed to go through enrollment if they are in treatment. Men who exhibit visual signs of mental health issues are referred to the local health services agency and invited to come back once they receive treatment. Men who have been convicted of sex offenses are not allowed to participate in programming. Following enrollment and random assignment, life transformation coaches administer a quick needs assessment to see whether fathers require referrals to services before beginning a cohort of Successful STEPS.

Program outputs

Program enrollment

Between February 2013 and August 2014, CtS enrolled 606 fathers into the PACT evaluation; approximately half of the enrolled fathers were assigned to receive Successful STEPS. On average during this period, CtS enrolled 32 fathers per month; monthly enrollment ranged from 15 to 55 fathers. The number of fathers enrolled was impacted by staff turnover and inclement weather, with the lowest monthly enrollment occurring during the winter months. To explain success in months with higher enrollment, staff highlighted specific strategies used, including placing door hangers and appearing on a local legislator's radio show. High enrollment in October 2013 coincided with the beginning of the program's referral partnership with Missouri FSD/CSE.

According to the baseline survey, more than half of fathers who enrolled were motivated by the desire to improve their job situation. This is in keeping with Successful STEPS's main recruitment source, Kansas DCF, which refers fathers who have struggled to pay child support.

Program participation

By the end of March 2014, 222 fathers in Successful STEPS had enrolled in the PACT evaluation, had been randomly assigned to receive the program, and had the opportunity to participate in program activities for at least four months. To understand Successful STEPS' early participation trends, we examined engagement and retention in program services and assessed total program dosage during these fathers' first four months after program enrollment. Program activities completed by fathers beyond the first four months in the program were excluded from this analysis.

Eighty-one percent of fathers assigned to the program group in Successful STEPS engaged in at least one program activity within four months of program enrollment (Table A.5). Roughly the same percentage of fathers attended at least one session of the core RWR workshop (75 percent) and received at least one individual contact (76 percent). About one-third of fathers attended an optional group activity, typically Breakfast Club. From the start of PACT enrollment until fall 2013, RWR was structured so that economic stability and personal development content was delivered in a morning session and parenting content was delivered in the afternoon. Initial engagement in these content areas was about the same. Engagement in relationship content, delivered through Connect, was much lower. Individual contacts coded as "other content"—generally related to items on the stability checklist—had the largest initial engagement, though 72 percent of fathers' had at least one individual contact focused on economic stability.

Table A.5. Engagement in at least one program activity, by content area

Content	Any program engagement	Core workshops	Individual contacts	Supplementary group activities
Engaged in any content (%)	81	75	76	32
Parenting/fatherhood		72	39	NA
Relationships		37	54	NA
Economic stability		74	72	32
Personal development		74	NA	NA
Other		NA	76	NA

Source: Site MIS data

Note: The sample includes 222 fathers enrolled between February 3, 2013, and March 31, 2014, who were randomly assigned to receive the program for PACT. Programs enrolled and served additional fathers who were not eligible for the evaluation and, thus, were not included in the report. All participation during the first four months after random assignment was included. "Other" content includes needs assessments, substance abuse, domestic violence, emergency needs, housing, legal services, clothing, food, utility assistance, health and wellness, medical services, and/or transportation.

Sixty-three percent of fathers assigned to receive the program attended half or more of the core workshop sessions (Table A.6). An additional 13 percent of fathers attended at least one session, but less than half, of the fatherhood portion of RWR, and an additional 11 percent of fathers attended at least one session, but less than half, of the economic stability portion of RWR. Attendance at the healthy relationship workshop, Connect, was much lower. More than three out of every five fathers never attended a session of Connect and only 15 percent of fathers attended three or more sessions of the healthy relationship workshop.

Table A.6. Attendance at core workshop sessions

Core workshop	Number of hours	Number of sessions	Percentage of sessions attended		
			None	1 to 50 percent	51 percent or more
Quenching the Father Thirst	30/25 ¹	10/5 ¹	28	13	59
Workforce Readiness	40/70 ¹	10	26	11	63
Healthy Relationships (Connect)	14	7	63	22	15

Source: Site MIS data

Note: The sample includes 222 fathers enrolled between February 3, 2013, and March 31, 2014, who were randomly assigned to receive the program for PACT. Programs enrolled and served additional fathers who were not eligible for the evaluation and, thus, were not included in the report. All participation during the first four months after random assignment was included. Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

¹ On November 11, 2013, Connections to Success revised the format for offering Quenching the Father Thirst and Workforce Readiness. The new format decreased the number of hours and sessions for Quenching the Father Thirst and increased the number of hours included in Workforce Readiness. The sequence of the workshops also changed so that fathers would receive all workforce readiness content before receiving fatherhood content. Retention is based on the number of sessions at the group the father attended.

Fathers received about seven individual contacts, on average, during the first four months enrolled; contacts were split evenly between telephone conversations and in-person meetings (Table A.7). Contacts were not evenly distributed throughout the first four months. Fathers had more than four individual contacts during the first two months, when they were likely to be participating in the core workshop, and about three contacts during the third and fourth months after enrollment. Over three-quarters of fathers received a referral to an externally provided support service, such as a free eye exam, GED program, or temporary housing.

Across all fathers assigned to receive Successful STEPS (including those who never participated), fathers averaged about 41 hours of participation within four months of entering the program (Table A.8). The bulk of these hours were from attending the core RWR workshop. Substantially less time—about three hours—came from attendance at the weekly relationship workshop, Connect. A little more than three hours were spent on individual contacts. Optional group activities accounted for an hour and a half of participation, on average. Across participation in core workshops, individual contacts, and optional group contacts, participants spent similar amounts of time on parenting and economic stability and slightly less time on personal development content. Average hours of participation increased by nearly 25 percent when limiting the sample to only fathers who attended at least one program activity. The pattern of service receipt was similar for these fathers, however.

Table A.7. Individual contacts and referrals

	Percentage or number
Referrals and individual contacts with fathers	
Number of fathers	222
Percentage of fathers receiving at least one outside referral for support services	76
Average number of individual contacts per father	7.2
Average number of individual contacts per month per father	1.8
Average number of individual contacts per month per father, first two months	2.1
Average number of individual contacts per month per father, third and fourth months	1.5
Mode of individual contact	
Number of individual contacts	1,601
Percentage of individual contacts by	
Telephone	47
Program office visit	49
Other	4

Source: Site MIS data

Note: The sample includes fathers enrolled between February 3, 2013, and March 31, 2014, who were randomly assigned to receive the program for PACT. Programs enrolled and served additional fathers who were not eligible for the evaluation and, thus, were not included in this report. All participation during the first four months after random assignment was included.

Program sustainability and improvement

Strategies and supports for encouraging program participation

Since beginning evaluation enrollment, CtS has prioritized recruiting close to the start of a cohort of Successful STEPS to limit the time between enrollment and the start of core programming. As soon as there are enough fathers to make up a cohort, staff hold information sessions during which fathers enroll in Successful STEPS. Keeping enrollment and programming in close proximity provides less opportunity for fathers to lose motivation and not show up to RWR. CtS aims to have fathers start a Successful STEPS cohort within two weeks of enrollment. If a father enrolls more than two weeks before the start of his Successful STEPS cohort, he is referred to a life transformation coach to address immediate barriers to participation. In general, CtS starts two Successful STEPS cohorts each month, a practice that began in March 2013.

CtS has emphasized recruiting from sources that they believe yield motivated and interested fathers who will engage in programming. Over time, CtS stopped recruiting for Successful STEPS from sources such as homeless shelters, where the enrolled fathers tended to not participate in the services offered. CtS has also made an effort to hold information sessions in locations convenient to large referral sources. For example, CtS has held Successful STEPS recruitment sessions on location at Kansas DCF and at a halfway house.

Ultimately, staff believe that the key to ongoing participation is an engaging workshop environment. Trainers lead interactive group activities and ice breakers to encourage fathers to build connections and bond with one another. Trainers also share affirming messages that encourage fathers to continue attending.

Table A.8. Average hours of participation

Content	Core workshops	Individual contacts	Supplemental group activities	Total hours
All program group fathers				
Parenting/fatherhood	12.2	0.2	NA	12.3
Economic stability	10.6	1.4	1.5	13.5
Relationships	2.8	0.4	NA	3.2
Personal development	10.6	NA	NA	10.6
Other	NA	1.4	NA	1.4
Total hours	36.1	3.4	1.5	40.9
Program group fathers with any participation				
Parenting/fatherhood	15.1	0.2	NA	15.3
Economic stability	13.1	1.8	1.8	16.7
Relationships	3.4	0.5	NA	3.9
Personal development	13.1	NA	NA	13.1
Other	NA	1.7	NA	1.7
Total hours	44.8	4.2	1.8	50.8

Source: Site MIS data

Note: The sample includes 222 fathers enrolled between February 3, 2013, and March 31, 2014 who were randomly assigned to receive the program for PACT. Of these, 179 program group fathers had any participation. Programs enrolled and served additional fathers who were not eligible for the evaluation and, thus, were not included in this report. All participation during the first four months after random assignment was included. “Other” content includes needs assessments, substance abuse, domestic violence, emergency needs, housing, legal services, clothing, food, utility assistance, health and wellness, medical services, and/or transportation.

CtS has relationships with locale parole officers, and leverages these to encourage attendance. CtS serves as a parole reporting station, which encourages men to attend Successful STEPS and meet their parole expectations. Also, staff reach out to parole officers when contact information for a father is inaccurate or out-of-date in an effort to re-engage the father.

Trainers offer three reasons why fathers would stop participating in Successful STEPS. Some fathers have what program staff termed a “fear of success.” These fathers are concerned that they will not fit in with their communities or lifelong friends if they complete Successful STEPS. Others are “program hoppers” who sign up for a number of programs but do not yet have the commitment to see them through. A third group of fathers sign up for services because their main interest is getting a job. Once they become employed, they stop showing up.

Though CtS has stopped recruiting from homeless shelters, housing remains a chief barrier to participation. About two-thirds of men reported housing instability, including homelessness, on the baseline survey (Table A.1). Efforts of life transformation coaches to contact fathers in unstable housing often have been unsuccessful because their addresses and phone numbers changed frequently.

Providing services to fathers in two states creates challenges to ensuring program participation. Workshops are offered in locations in both states, but have sometimes been combined if there was only enough demand to fill one class or a facilitator was unavailable. CtS provides shuttle service to assist fathers who lack transportation or dislike crossing state lines.

However, for some, the cross-state barriers could be difficult to overcome. For example, a father on parole may need a travel pass from his parole officer to cross into another state. According to the baseline survey, over 40 percent of fathers were on parole at the time of enrollment (Table A.1). Trainers and child support staff have encountered difficulty talking about child support in combined workshops where both Kansas and Missouri fathers were present. Each state's child support system is different, making it difficult to explain processes and procedures, including arrears forgiveness, for which only Kansas fathers are eligible.

CtS's greatest challenge has been promoting participation at Connect. Fathers do not begin to participate in the workshop until after they complete RWR, and they may see Connect as an optional, supplementary activity. Transportation may also be an issue: when Connect sessions are scheduled in the evening, they sometimes end after the last public bus run. Fathers also may have conflicts due to work schedules or child care responsibilities. The program has found that providing food has helped to promote attendance, but participation remained low through summer 2014.

Systems for monitoring program operations

CtS uses Efforts to Outcomes, a web-based data management system, to track attendance and indicators of program operation. Social Solutions, the developer of the system, provides ongoing technical support. Staff track fathers' performance on curricula-based tests taken during RWR, and record whether a father has become employed, employment retention, changes in wage earnings, and the amount of child support arrears forgiven. Staff log their time spent in case management and upload each father's stability checklist and employment data sheet. They also use the "case notes" function to share information with other CtS staff, such as when one staff person has a contact with a participant on another staff member's caseload.

Managers use the data management system to monitor caseloads and see the breakdown between active participants and those who are stable because they have obtained employment or no longer require regular services. Managers also monitor the time fathers spend in case management, and what services are provided. Quarterly reports aggregate statistics on participants and are used to analyze trends in service provision.

CtS staff also use the data management system to improve recruitment and enrollment. The training manager and outreach staff use the system to monitor monthly recruitment numbers and targets. For example, early in 2013, staff met to review recruitment during 2012 and devise strategies for improvement, including intra-office challenges to see who could recruit the most fathers. The training manager also has used enrollment data to inform when and where classes should be scheduled.

