

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR HOLLY J. MITCHELL

June 25, 2024

Celebrating Fatherhood Well-being Month in Los Angeles County

On June 27, 2023, the Los Angeles County (County) Board of Supervisors (Board) approved a [motion](#), authored by Supervisor Mitchell, proclaiming June as Fatherhood Well-being Month.¹ Among other things, this motion directed the Director of the Department of Public Health (DPH) to target education and awareness related to common health issues affecting men and instructed the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to report back service gaps and recommendations to improve public social service access for fathers. The motion further directed the CEO to convene community stakeholders and relevant County departments, including the Departments of Public Social Services (DPSS), Child Support Services (CSSD), DPH, Mental Health (DMH), Children and Family Services (DCFS), Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative, Office of Public Defender (OPD), CEO’s Homeless Initiative, Department of Youth Development (DYD), and Children’s Institute, Inc. (CII) to discuss ways in which the County can better serve fathers to access public benefits and remain involved in their children’s lives.

On March 6, 2024, the CEO released its written report back regarding its Fatherhood Workgroup efforts, which identified gaps and described the Workgroup’s collective recommendations (Workgroup Report). From October 2023 through January

¹ The motion was adopted in furtherance of California House Resolution 36, introduced by Assembly Member Gipson which annually declares the month of June as Fatherhood Well-being month.

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MOTION

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2024, the Fatherhood Workgroup met monthly to develop a baseline inventory of County services and community-based partnerships. The Fatherhood Workgroup also co-created and implemented three 90-minute listening and working sessions held in November 2023 and January 2024.

The workgroup sessions demonstrated fathers did not know what father-centered County services exist, where to find them, or how to navigate them. For the services that do exist, fathers shared they were not well-coordinated, or delivered by men with lived experiences or from the same racial/cultural background as the fathers.

Some of the takeaways also include:

- Only DMH and DCFS report having services or initiatives specifically directed towards fathers;
- DMH and DCFS both identified the need to recruit and retain more staff who can provide culturally responsive services (particularly to men of color); and
- Service gaps identified by departments include not having enough departments participating in fatherhood partnerships to comprehensively meet the needs of fathers due to data sharing restrictions and the lack of programming tailored to meet the needs of fathers.

Some workgroup session recommendations include:

- CSSD and OPD to provide community-based child support and expungement clinics;
- DCFS to engage judges/attorneys regarding systemic bias against fathers via "brown bag" lunches addressing racial equity, disproportionality, and disparity;
- DCFS to hire/assign one Parents in Partnership team member to every regional office to help fathers navigate the agency;
- DEO/DMH to identify community agencies to co-host mental health services and male-centered support groups; and
- DPSS to partner with CII and Community Based Organizations, to explore becoming DPSS Application Assistants.

The recommendations demonstrate steps that the County can take to promote immediate and long-term well-being of fathers by streamlining and better utilizing its existing resources. Adopting these recommendations would advance father-involvement, improve pathways to economic mobility, promote healthy and empowering lives and lead to increased positive childhood outcomes for their children. As the County implements these recommendations, it's important that its efforts to connect with father figures are dad-affirming, meaning that they recognize that fatherhood is a defining role and primary motivation for many men.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS celebrate June 2024 as Fatherhood Well-being Month throughout the County of Los Angeles and:

- 1) Direct the Chief Executive Office (CEO), the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Child Support Services Department (CSSD), the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the Department of Public Health (DPH), the Probation Department (Probation), Economic Opportunity (DEO), the Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Inclusion (ARDI) Initiative, Office of Public Defender (OPD), Department of Youth Development (DYD) to promote father well-being resources and outreach events and activities through targeted outreach to underserved populations, public messaging efforts and social media;
- 2) Direct the CEO and departments listed above to add fathers as a subpopulation to each of the County's prevention and promotion initiative's focus areas and that focus area subcommittees work to further guide the implementation of the County's recommendations and explore options to ensure that fathers have efficient access to accurate information and essential resources needed, as recommended in the CEO March 6, 2024 Workgroup Report;
- 3) Direct the Chief Executive Officer, in collaboration with DPSS, DCFS, DMH, DPH, CSSD, and Probation, to report back in 90 days on steps that the departments have taken to adopt and implement the recommended changes from the Workgroup Report, prioritizing those that are cost neutral (e.g. hosting "brown bag" lunches with judges to address bias and racial equity, including disproportionality and ongoing disparities);

- 4) Direct the CEO to work with departments listed in Directives # 2 and #3 above, including the CEO's Anti-Racism, Diversity, & Inclusion Initiative and the Center for Strategic Partnerships to identify resources needed to carry out Directives 2 and 3, and report back to the Board in 30 days; and
- 5) Direct DPH to work with individuals with lived experience to design education and awareness efforts that are dad-affirming and incorporate common health issues affecting men. Services and partnerships can include:
 - a) Free health screenings for men, including blood pressure, cholesterol, blood glucose, and prostate exams;
 - b) Collaboration with community-based organizations for care coordination to connect men with healthcare providers and resources in the community;
 - c) A public health awareness campaign focused on men's health and well-being; and
 - d) Creation of a toolkit for fathers to support them in supporting their own and their family's health.

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(VG/YV/ME/YF)