



INNOVATION PLAN APPROVAL SUMMARY

Stanislaus County

Name of Innovative Project: Father Involvement Project

Total Requested for Innovative Project: \$212,565

Duration of Innovative Project: Two Years

Staff Recommends: APPROVAL

Review History

County Submitted Innovation Plan: May 11, 2015

Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission (MHSOAC) vote on Innovative Project: June 25, 2015

Innovative Project Summary

Stanislaus County is seeking MHSOAC approval for the Father Involvement Project to reduce risk indicators and build protective factors for fathers who are at high risk of mental illness. The primary purpose is to promote interagency and community collaboration.

This Innovative Project intends to benefit fathers with mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorders, and mental disorders that manifest in anti-social behavior. Fathers – many of whom have untreated mental health issues – who participate in County battering intervention and anger management groups, referrals from Child Protective Services and the County’s Family Reunification Service, and victims of abuse and violence will be included.

Through interagency collaboration, this Project introduces to the mental health system a community defined approach that has been successful in a non-mental health context. The County intends to develop a collaborative learning network as the key strategy to achieve positive results for fathers at high risk of mental illness. Family Resource Centers and other community-based organizations to be involved in the collaboration already function in Stanislaus County as critical links to identify protective factors against mental health problems for individuals, families, and communities. Several of the participating organizations focus on and represent Latino communities in the County. These community partners represent a rich array of culture, history, diversity and family strengthening expertise, as well as a shared desire to better understand how to engage and involve more fathers, in particular, those at risk for or with a mental illness. The network will build on assets that already exist within each organization and expand their collective knowledge and capacity.

The County will hire a Project Liaison to provide support and technical assistance to the Father Involvement Project partners and to coordinate all project activities. Partners will meet monthly to expand the impact of their services and learn together about the most effective practices.

Evaluation:

The county intends to address the following learning questions through its evaluation:

1. How will participation in a learning network affect the growth and development of partner organizations?
2. How will the learning network affect the quality (e.g., best practices) and quantity of father involvement activities for fathers at risk for or experiencing mental illness?
3. Will participation by fathers at risk for or experiencing mental illness increase as a result of the learning network?
4. Will fathers at risk for or experiencing mental illness, and their families, benefit from participating in the project activities, in particular by increasing protective factors?
5. By implementing what is learned from the network, will father involvement activities be successful in reaching and further engaging unserved and underserved fathers who are at risk for or who have a mental illness?

The evaluation will include both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess outcomes at various levels:

Network-Level Results (examples):

- Increase in father involvement activities in Stanislaus County.
- Improved inter-agency collaboration and increases in cross-sector activities related to involving fathers at risk of or experiencing a mental illness.
- Increased countywide awareness of the importance of father involvement to healthy child development, family life, and protective factors related to risk of or experience of mental illness
- New sections, neighborhoods, school, communities, and populations engaged in the engagement of or services to diverse fathers at risk of or experiencing mental illness.

Results for Participating Partners (examples):

- Increased understanding of existing services and activities for fathers in Stanislaus County.
- Increased knowledge and capacity to implement best practices for involving fathers at risk of or experience mental illness in their respective neighborhood, community, school, or agency.
- Improved coordination of father involvement activities, working across sectors to share resources and implement activities.
- Increased ability to improve protective factors for fathers and families at risk for or experiencing mental illness.

Results for Fathers at Risk or Experiencing Mental Illness (examples):

- Increased participation in opportunities to share their experiences in support of each other.
- Increased parental competencies and social connections.
- Increased protective factors, including access to concrete support, parental resilience, and self-confidence.
- Reduce risk indicators.
- Improved access to mental health services.