

## **Bringing Opportunities for Ex-Offenders to Connect Financially and Emotionally with Their Children**

The Fatherhood Re-entry Program is specifically created for low-income non-custodial fathers who have had involvement with the legal system and who have difficulty becoming employed. The program, a collaboration between NYC's Human Resources Administration (HRA) and its Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD), helps enrollees enter the labor market and to reconnect financially and emotionally with their children. Its mission meets a critical need.

Research has demonstrated that father absenteeism correlates with child poverty, and juvenile delinquency, whereas father involvement plays an important role in the overall well being of their children. Fathers themselves have more positive outcomes when they are more involved with their children.

Each year the Fatherhood Re-entry Program selects 600 noncustodial fathers in receipt of cash assistance who are ex-offenders (300 from HRA and 300 from DYCD) to enroll in the program. Participants are offered parenting classes and case management—which includes child support counseling and assistance in establishing visitation rights and in mediating any conflict with mothers or other guardians.

The first 12 weeks of this 26-week program focus on addressing personal and familial issues. The second program phase focuses on obtaining employment and offers a 14-week paid internship supported with job search for placement in an unsubsidized job. In addition to job education and retention support, participants receive continued individual and group counseling on fatherhood issues, as well as workshops on building life skills and financial literacy.

During August, HRA and DYCD coordinated recruitment for a new session of the program. One hundred twelve interested candidates who responded to the mail outreach attended a screening session, held on August 26. HRA provided one-on-one interviews with these candidates and referred 58 eligible candidates to 13 DYCD employment vendors. The session was hosted by HRA's Business Link. Business Link, which connects job candidates from HRA's programs with recruiting employers, subsequently provided placement services for attendees found to be ineligible for the Fatherhood Re-entry Program.

A second recruiting session for the Fatherhood Re-entry Program is planned for December, 2009.