

The 2008 Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit

Feedback Results from Summit Participants

Final Report

September 2009

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Executive Summary

Background

For the past three years, the Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit has been the centerpiece of the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. The primary goal of the MFI is to increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. The yearly summit provides unique opportunities for fathers to learn from national and local experts, attend panel discussions and town hall meetings, access services, and gather resources and referrals.

Since 2007, the Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc. has conducted a formative evaluation of the MFI. The Planning Council is a private, nonprofit research and planning organization whose mission is to advance community health and human services through planning, evaluation, and research. A major focus of the Planning Council's evaluation of the MFI has been to facilitate and summarize feedback from participants in the Fatherhood Summits.

The 2008 Fatherhood Summit, entitled "Building Fathers of Worth and Greatness," was free to the public and included a wide variety of events and services for participants. The two-day summit focused on the key areas that the MFI believes are vital for successful fatherhood: health, employment, child support debt reduction, driver's license recovery, educational workshops, and faith. Core components of the 2008 summit included:

- Community Health Fair: Over 20 health information and service organizations participated as exhibitors at the one-day health fair.
- Community Job Fair: Approximately 57 employers participated in the one-day job fair to offer employment information and recruitment to summit participants.
- Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance: For a third consecutive year, the MFI partnered with the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement to enable fathers to receive information and explore options regarding child support interest debt owed to the State of Wisconsin.
- Driver's License Recovery Assistance: Representatives from the Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability were available for the two days of the summit to assist participants in resolving driver's license revocation issues.
- Summit Workshops: Multiple professionals from the Milwaukee community facilitated workshops that addressed topics related to responsible fathering. A total of 20 workshops were offered over the two-day summit.
- Faith and Spirituality: Summit planners added a faith component to the 2008 summit, including a spiritual wellness session, faith-related booths, and a call to area churches to address the topic of fatherhood in their Sunday sermons.

The present report provides: 1) a description of the people who registered for the 2008 summit; 2) a summary of participants' overall ratings of the summit; 3) an overview of participants' feedback on the major areas addressed by the summit (men's health, community job fair, child support debt reduction assistance, and driver's license recovery assistance) and 4) a summary of feedback from the summit's educational workshops. Finally, the report summarizes perspectives from faith leaders in the Milwaukee community who participated in qualitative interviews about the summit.

Methodology

To support a description of those who registered for the summit, the Planning Council designed a registration form that was used for online and onsite summit registration. The form was designed to capture an accurate count of registrants and key demographic data for individuals who registered for the summit.

The Fatherhood Summit was organized to have multiple events and services available to participants concurrently. During the summit, participants were asked to complete a feedback survey or workshop evaluation form as they exited a service area or workshop. In addition, on the second day of the summit, participants were asked to complete a survey evaluating their overall experience at the summit. The surveys and workshop evaluation forms asked participants to elaborate on: 1) what they felt was most helpful or important about the summit services and workshops, 2) how the summit and workshops could be improved, and 3) suggestions for future summits and workshops.

Finally, in order to more fully understand the faith community's involvement with the summit and the MFI, key informant interviews were conducted with a small number of faith-based leaders who either had some previous contact with the MFI or assisted in the planning of the Fatherhood Summits. Four faith leaders participated in in-depth interviews conducted by Planning Council staff between November, 2008 and January, 2009.

Summit Registration Information

A total of 808 registration forms were completed, including both online and on-site registrants. The majority (75%) of the individuals who registered for the 2008 summit were newcomers; a relatively small number of individuals reported having previously attended either the 2006 or 2007 summits. The majority of those who registered (79%) identified themselves as fathers and most (93%) identified themselves as African American. The two areas with which registrants were most interested in receiving assistance were child support issues (55%) and employment (46%).

Summit registrants were also asked to elaborate on what they believed was the greatest challenge they experienced as a father. The challenges that registrants reported fell into several thematic areas: being a responsible father and provider; spending time with children; finding and maintaining employment; providing guidance and being a role model; child support and legal issues; and conflicts with their children's mothers.

Feedback from Summit Participants

Summit participants completed a total of 607 feedback surveys and workshop evaluations over the two days of the event.¹ For a variety of reasons, including that participation in the evaluation was voluntary, the overall survey results may not be representative of the perspective of all summit participants.

Overall Rating of the Fatherhood Summit

The vast majority of the 2008 summit participants who completed a feedback survey rated the summit very highly. Overall, 98% rated the summit as "outstanding" or "good." Almost all (98% or more of respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the summit addressed important issues, offered potential solutions for fatherhood challenges, and provided useful information and materials.

¹ Individual summit participants were likely to have attended multiple events and therefore may have completed more than one survey. As a result, a survey "response rate" is not possible to calculate.

When asked to describe the most important aspect of the summit, respondents noted that the summit was not only interesting and practical, but that it also provided a sense of unity, empowerment, and inspiration around fatherhood. When asked to provide suggestions for improvement, approximately half (54%) of those who responded offered compliments or indicated that no improvements were needed. The few suggestions for overall improvement were related to having more information and services at the summit; more frequent or longer summits; wider advertisement to reach more potential attendees; and better organization and improved space.

Community Health Fair

A total of 51 surveys were completed and returned by individuals who attended the community health fair. Most (94%) survey respondents rated the community health fair as “outstanding” or “good.” More than 80% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the health fair, they knew more about men’s health, they knew where to go to get help with health concerns, and they received helpful information that they could use. When asked to describe what was important about the health fair, respondents highlighted receiving personally-relevant information and materials; learning about their own health status; and having the opportunity to help others.

Community Job Fair

A total of 96 surveys were completed and returned from participants at the job fair. Overall, 93% rated the job fair as “outstanding” or “good.” More than 90% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had obtained employment leads or knew more about getting a job after attending the summit. When describing the most important part of the job fair, respondents noted: filling out job applications and getting job leads; networking; and having access to helpful information and resources.

Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance

A total of 104 surveys were completed by child support debt reduction assistance attendees. Overall, 78% rated the child support debt reduction assistance component as “outstanding” or “good.” Approximately 90% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the child support assistance component, they learned more about how to take care of child support responsibilities and they received helpful information that they could use. In addition, 95% strongly agreed or agreed that they had a plan to take care of their child support responsibilities after attending this component of the summit. When describing the most important aspects of the summit’s child support assistance, respondents generally noted that they received personalized and understandable assistance or that they had actually received a reduction in child support interest debt.

The child support debt reduction component had a somewhat lower overall rating than the other 2008 summit service areas. Suggestions for improvement provided by survey respondents offer some insight into this rating (e.g., there need to be systemic changes in how child support is managed, debt should be reduced further, etc.). However, it is also possible that the summit’s requirements and procedures related to this service area may have caused some confusion for participants. Specifically, some participants were told that they needed to pre-register for this service area and/or attend two educational workshops to be eligible for assistance.

Driver’s License Recovery Assistance

A total of 63 surveys were completed by attendees at the driver’s license recovery assistance component. Overall, 95% rated this component as “outstanding” or “good.” Over 90% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the driver’s license recovery assistance, they knew more about how to get their licenses back, they had a plan regarding who to see and what to do to get their licenses back, and they knew what it would take to keep their licenses after reinstatement. When describing what was most important about the driver’s license recovery component,

respondents generally noted that they valued receiving information about license reinstatement or that they felt hopeful about their own future reinstatement.

Summit Workshops

A total of 16 workshops were conducted at the summit, with a total of 201 evaluation forms completed. Overall, workshops conducted at the 2008 Fatherhood Summit received high ratings, with approximately 90% of respondents rating the workshops as “excellent” or “very good.” Across the workshops, nearly all of the respondents (97%) indicated that they learned something new from the workshop they attended. Most (96%) strongly agreed or agreed that the workshops were helpful, and most (96%) indicated they would use the information gained at the workshop to be a “better” parent.

Summary of Key Informant Interviews with Faith-based Leaders

Four faith leaders participated in in-depth interviews conducted by Planning Council staff between November, 2008 and January, 2009. A number of clear themes emerged from these interviews. However, given the small number of interviews, the themes identified may not be reflective of the faith leaders involved with the MFI or of the larger faith community in Milwaukee.

Each respondent articulated in various ways that fatherhood contains a powerful and important spiritual component. Each of the respondents believed that to be successful, the MFI and the Fatherhood Summits should incorporate and provide spiritual and faith-based components and ideas. They differed, however, on how this should be done, especially with respect to integrating traditional religious leadership and organizations. There were also differences of opinion on how to best integrate both the role of faith and spirituality in the MFI and how visible traditional religious leaders should be in determining the summit’s agenda and mission.

The issue of absent fathers was a major concern expressed by each of the respondents, yet they differed on how effective they believed faith-based communities have been in addressing it. Faith-based communities, they suggested, can provide a base where non-religious professionals and service providers can be brought in to help fathers while remaining a spiritually focused effort.

Recommendations from Respondents for Future Summits

The feedback from participants who completed summit surveys and workshop evaluation forms was overwhelmingly positive, very much mirroring the feedback from the 2007 summit. Participants’ recommendations for improving future summits were relatively modest, seeking only to support an already notable planning and implementation process. When asked to provide suggestions for improvement, respondents generally noted a need for very little change; many were very complimentary about the two-day event.

However, survey respondents did provide several suggestions for improvement. Looking forward to the 2009 Fatherhood Summit, the top three recommendations based on feedback from respondents included:

- Have even more information and services available at the summit.
- Invite more employers and conduct job interviews on-site.
- Increase advertising of the summit in the community and neighborhoods to reach more men.

In addition to the modest suggestions for improvement noted by survey respondents, the overall feedback about the summit's child support debt reduction assistance suggested that additional clarity about the requirements for receiving this service may be needed. Looking forward to the 2009 summit, it may be helpful to:

- Clearly identify expectations for participants interested in child support debt reduction services.
- Generate additional ways to address the limitations on the number of people that can participate in this service.

Conclusions

A total of 808 people registered for the 2008 Fatherhood Summit. The summit clearly reached its target audience, in that most of those who registered were fathers and described themselves as African American. Most of those who registered were newcomers to the summit, suggesting that the summit continues to reach different members of the Milwaukee community each year. People who registered for the summit were most interested in receiving assistance with child support issues and employment, two of the core components of this year's summit.

The feedback from individuals who participated in the 2008 Fatherhood Summit was overwhelmingly positive, replicating the positive feedback received from participants in the 2007 summit. In both years, attendees reported that the summit provided them with concrete assistance around employment, health, child support, and driver's license recovery. Beyond the concrete assistance, attendees often expressed that being part of the summit inspired and empowered them. In both years, attendees indicated that the summit helped them appreciate the importance of fatherhood and motivated them to commit themselves to the ideals of good fathering.

Overall, very few suggestions for improvement were offered by either 2007 participants or 2008 participants. However, it does appear that the planners for the 2008 summit successfully addressed the small number of concerns raised the previous year. Specifically, the 2008 summit offered a larger number of workshops, provided a schedule of summit events and activities, and had visible signage to direct attendees to event locations.

Looking forward to the 2009 summit, planners may be able to similarly respond to the few suggestions provided by 2008 attendees. Specifically, the amount and placement of advertising could be increased prior to the summit, additional services and information could be available at the summit itself, and the job fair could be broadened to include a wider variety of employers and on-site interviews by potential employers. Finally, the findings indicated that child support debt reduction assistance has been an important draw for summit attendees and has been highly valued as a service. However, feedback from 2008 participants suggests that it would be helpful to provide registrants and attendees with clear information about and pathways for accomplishing the prerequisites for participating in this service component.

The immediate feedback indicated that the 2008 Fatherhood Summit was experienced by participants as an overwhelming success. However, the ultimate goal of the summit is to support and strengthen men in their roles as fathers. To explore the ways in which participants utilized their experiences at the summit, a series of focus groups were conducted with attendees as a five-month follow-up to the event. A report describing the themes that emerged from these focus groups will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

Introduction

Background

In October of 2005, under the leadership of Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, 25 community leaders participated in an initial training session conducted by the National Fatherhood Initiative. This training set the planning stage for the development of the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative (MFI) and the establishment of the first Fatherhood Summit in the City of Milwaukee in October 2006. The MFI is designed to provide support, resources, education, and assistance to fathers in the City of Milwaukee. Its primary goal is to promote responsible fathering in the lives of Milwaukee children by addressing the crisis of absentee fatherhood.

Since March of 2007, the MFI has received funding from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and support from the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee to carry out the efforts of the MFI, including the planning and implementation of the annual Fatherhood Summit.

In September of 2007, The Planning Council for Health and Human Services, Inc. began conducting a formative program evaluation of the MFI. The Planning Council is a private, non-profit research and planning organization whose mission is to advance community health and human services through planning, evaluation, and research. The Planning Council summarized participant feedback from the two-day Fatherhood Summit in 2007. As documented in the Planning Council's report ("The 2007 Fatherhood Summit: Feedback from Summit Participants", May 2008), the immediate feedback from participants at the 2007 summit was very positive.

To expand on the feedback from 2008 summit participants, the MFI asked the Planning Council to provide program evaluation services for the 2008 Fatherhood Summit. The MFI was interested in additional evaluation activities to help inform future summits and MFI program development.

The evaluation used quantitative and qualitative data to document the efforts of the Fatherhood Summit in 2008. This evaluation was designed to: 1) capture an accurate count of and demographic data for individuals who registered for the 2008 summit, 2) report on feedback from summit attendants, 3) explore the role of faith leaders in the Milwaukee community in addressing the issues of fatherhood, and 4) examine the ways in which summit participants utilized their experience from the summit and how they integrated what they learned into their lives and their role as fathers.

The 2008 Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit

The Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit is an annual event sponsored by the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. The goal of the annual summit is to bring together the Milwaukee community to generate support for fathers, to provide resources for men, and to address specific issues of fatherhood in the community.

The 2008 Fatherhood Summit was held at two locations: Destiny High School, a private independent Christian school, and Christian Faith Fellowship Church, under the leadership of Bishop Darrell Hines. In an effort to address the issue of limited space at the 2007 summit, which had been held entirely at Destiny High School, the MFI was allowed to use Christian Faith Fellowship Church to hold additional summit activities over the two days. The MFI hired a charter bus service to transport summit participants to both locations.

The theme of the 2008 summit was "Building Fathers of Worth and Greatness." The two-day event included a variety of scheduled events which were open to the public free of charge. Summit participants had an opportunity to hear local public speakers, attend a panel discussion or town hall meeting on fathers and the foster care system, attend several workshops, visit over

40 resource exhibitors, and receive services or assistance through one or more of the summit's four core components.

For the 2008 summit, the MFI focused again on the core topics they have identified as having the most potential impact on men and fathers: community health education, employment, child support debt reduction assistance, and driver's license recovery assistance. The pre-summit planning for each of these core topics was spearheaded by separate committees.

The MFI added a new component to the 2008 summit that focused on faith and spiritual well-being. Since 2006, the MFI has partnered with the faith community to address the issues and needs of fathers. Feedback from previous summits suggested that future summits incorporate the faith and spiritual community into the annual event. To honor this request, the MFI collaborated with members from the faith community in Milwaukee to plan and organize this new component of the 2008 summit.

The 2008 MFI Evaluation Report

The primary objectives of the 2008 Fatherhood Summit evaluation were to: facilitate and summarize participant feedback, describe the number and the demographic characteristics of people who registered, and summarize results from qualitative interviews with members of the faith-based community in Milwaukee. Feedback surveys and evaluation forms designed for the 2007 summit were revised and updated for the 2008 summit with approval from the MFI Director. The purpose of the feedback surveys and evaluation forms was to describe the usefulness of the two-day summit, the needs of summit participants, and suggestions for future summits.

In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with individuals from the faith-based community in Milwaukee to discuss the value and importance of having a faith and spiritual component at the summit. These interviews also focused on the value of the faith community and the MFI partnering together to help fathers in need.

The 2008 MFI summit evaluation report summarizes:

- Demographic characteristics of people who registered for the 2008 summit.
- Participants' overall perceptions of the 2008 Fatherhood Summit and their evaluation of the core topics addressed within the event which included: men's health, employment, child support debt reduction assistance, and driver's license recovery assistance.
- Feedback from the summit's educational workshops.
- Results from key informant interviews with planners from the faith planning committee and faith leaders in the Milwaukee community.

Approximately five months after the summit, focus groups were conducted with attendees to explore the ways in which they utilized their experiences at the summit. A report describing the themes that emerged from those focus groups will be issued as an addendum to the present report.

Summary of 2008 Summit Registrations

Methodology

For the 2008 summit, the MFI was interested in capturing an accurate count and a description of the individuals who registered for the summit. In the months leading up to the summit, individuals were given the opportunity to pre-register on the MFI's website. Individuals were also able to register for the summit on-site during both days of the summit. The Planning Council designed a registration form to document online and on-site registrations. The registration form asked registrants to provide general demographic information as well as information about their family status, their history of attending previous Fatherhood Summits, and the areas in which they were hoping to receive assistance.

Summit Registration Findings

Were those who registered for the 2008 summit previous attendees?

A total of 808 registration forms were completed, including both online and on-site registrants. The majority of summit registrants (79.4% or 637) identified themselves as fathers. One-tenth (9.2% or 75) of the registrants said they attended the 2006 summit only, another tenth (11.1% or 90) said they attended the 2007 summit only, and a very small number of registrants (3.0% or 25) reported attending both summits in 2006 and 2007. As a result, based on the data from the completed registration forms, most (76.7%) of the individuals who registered for the 2008 summit were newcomers.

Who registered for the 2008 summit?

- *ZIP Codes:* Most summit registrants came from ZIP Code regions in Milwaukee. Specifically, 41.5% (335) of registrants listed ZIP Codes from the Northwest side, approximately a quarter of registrants (28.1% or 227) listed ZIP Codes from the West side, and another quarter (25.5% or 206) listed ZIP Codes from the Downtown/Central region. A small number of registrants (3.8% or 31) listed ZIP Codes in the Southeast region and in other cities in Wisconsin and Illinois.²
- *Gender:* 86.1% (695) of summit registrants identified themselves as male; 13.9% (112) of registrants were female.
- *Age:* Over a quarter (28.3% or 227) listed their age range as 21 to 30 years of age, One-third (33.5% or 269) listed their age range as 31 to 40 years, and 28.9% (232) registrants listed their age range as over 40 years of age.
- *Marital status:* Just over three-quarters of registrants (76.6% or 574) reported that they were not married, while approximately one-quarter (23.4% or 175) reported being married.
- *Ethnicity:* The majority (93.0% or 729) identified themselves as African American. Other ethnicities identified included: Caucasian (3.6% or 28), Latino (1.0% or 8), and other (1.8% or 15).
- *Employment:* Approximately 40% of registrants (41.6% or 320) reported being employed at the time they registered for the summit.

² The Downtown/Central region=53202, 53203, 53205, 53206, 53212, & 53233. The West region=53208, 53210, 53213, 53216, 53222, & 53226. The Northwest region=53209, 53218, 53223, 53224, & 53225. The Southeast region=53204, 53207, 53214, 53215, 53219, 53220, 53221, 53227 & 53228. Other ZIP Codes= 53295,53408, 53555, 53716, 54204, 54220, 54318, & 60610.

Were those who registered for the summit parents?

Summit registrants were asked several questions about their parenting status.

- *Number of children:* 91.2% of the registrants (721 of 791) reported having at least one child. Just fewer than half (43.9% or 347) of the registrants with children had one or two children. Approximately one-third (35.3% or 279) reported having three to five children. Just over one-tenth (12% or 95) reported having more than five children.
- *Fathers:* A total of 637 men who registered for the summit indicated that they were fathers.
- *Living with children:* Slightly more than 40% of all registrants with children (42.7%, or 300 of 702) reported living with their children. Looking only at the fathers who registered, slightly more than one-third (35.9%, or 219 of 610) reported living with their children.
- *Primary caregiver:* Approximately 40% of all registrants with children (39.8%, or 274 of 689) reported being the primary caregiver for their children. Looking only at the fathers who registered, approximately one-third (33.7%, or 202 of 599) reported that they were the primary caregiver.
- *Contact with children:* Most of the registrants with children (95.2%, or 670 of 704) indicated that they had contact with their children. Looking only at the fathers who registered, most (94.6%, or 579 of 612) reported that they had contact with their children.

What did summit registrants report as being their greatest challenge in being a father?

Summit registrants were asked to elaborate on what they believed was the greatest challenge they experienced as a father. A total of 410 out of 808 summit registrants (50.7%) provided written comments to this question.

The reported challenges associated with being a father fell into several thematic areas: being a responsible father/provider, spending time with children, finding and maintaining employment, providing guidance and being a role model, child support and legal issues, conflicts with mothers, maintaining a good relationship with children, and being a single parent. Sample responses, by the top six themes, included:

- Being a responsible father and being a provider (117 comments), for example:
 - *“Trying to meet all the children needs on the daily basis and being understanding of all the mistakes that you try not to repeat.”*
 - *“You name it! Name brand products, i.e. shoes, clothes.”*
 - *“Raising my kids watching them grow and learn.”*
 - *“Not having enough finances to support my children’s everyday needs and also the lack of communication with the mother of my children. If I could learn new skills without working two jobs it would help.”*
 - *“My greatest challenge of being a father is to have the opportunity to become a more responsible individual, as well as a parent.”*
- Spending time with children (63 comments), for example:
 - *“Having time to spend with my child because of working so hard to provide a better life for my child and planning for her future.”*
 - *“Being locked up and getting out and coming back into his life.”*

- *“Well, in my situation, the hardest thing is not being able to spend more time with my children due to custody issues. Other than that, I got a great dad. He taught and still teaches me about being a father.”*
 - *“Trying to adapt to not being in the same house as son and giving him the time he deserves.”*
 - *“My son is in Illinois, and I don’t get a chance to be with him much.”*
- Finding and maintaining employment (51 comments), for example:
 - *“The greatest challenge is finding a good career to support my children like I want to.”*
 - *“Having a job and keeping a roof over our heads.”*
 - *“Staying employed to care for them, never enough money an hour.”*
 - *“Transportation and having a decent job to have money to spend on them and to pay off arrears.”*
 - *“Finding employment with my history so I can not do for them as I would like and child support debt is so great that I can’t own nothing.”*
- Providing guidance and being a role model (39 comments), for example:
 - *“Teaching my boys how to become a man.”*
 - *“Teaching my son right from wrong and keeping a good relationship with his mom.”*
 - *“Being seen as a good father without being looked at like the bad fathers.”*
 - *“Making sure that my children finish high school and go to college.”*
 - *“Just loving and caring and being there for my kids also teaching them the importance of life and get a good education.”*
- Child support and legal issues (38 comments), for example:
 - *“Being able to adequately provide for my children more than child support. I am constantly trying to work on my child support arrears in order to get myself out of this financial hole I feel I am in.”*
 - *“Getting child support knocked down to be able to buy a house or a car that’s nice.”*
 - *“Obtaining more rights to seeing my daughter that I had as a teenager. I have moved on with my wife and inherited a step-son, in which I spend a lot of time with, and I want that same relationship with my daughter, but her mom makes that difficult.”*
 - *“Past arrears and custody of two children prior to marriage.”*
 - *“Being continuously charged for child support even if I’m between jobs, and also not seeing a child that’s out of the state.”*
- Conflicts with mothers (22 comments), for example:
 - *“Being able to get her mother to comply with the things that I teach my daughter when she gets back home.”*
 - *“Dealing with the mothers and keeping up with the child support payments.”*

- *“The biggest challenge of me being a father is dealing with my children’s mother, getting her to be responsible.”*
- *“Dealing with baby mama drama and her new man; and her lingering issues which can last for years afterwards when the kids are in college.”*
- *“Communicating with children’s mom.”*

What kinds of assistance were registrants seeking from the summit?

Summit registrants were asked to identify the type of assistance and help they were seeking at the 2008 summit. Child support issues (54.6% or 441), employment (45.7% or 369), and driver’s license recovery (24.4% or 197) were the areas that registrants were most interested in addressing at the summit. Relatively few registrants (less than 10%) indicated that they were seeking help with health information, parenting information, or foster care information.

Core Components Survey Results

Background and Methodology

The Fatherhood Summit was organized to have multiple events and services available to participants concurrently. The planning process for the summit included core service committees organized around each of the summit's core components: community health fair, community job fair, child support debt reduction assistance, and driver's license recovery. After the summit, each of core service committees were asked by the MFI director to provide information on the services provided and report out on early accomplishments from the summit.

During the summit, participants were asked to complete a survey as they exited a service area or workshop. In addition, on the second day of the summit, participants were asked to complete a survey evaluating their overall experience at the summit. As an incentive, participants received a raffle ticket for several gift drawings.

The surveys and workshop evaluation forms were designed to be user-friendly and accessible to people with a range of literacy levels. The forms included questions that were open-ended, allowing for written responses, and questions that used a four-point Likert rating scale to quantify overall perceptions about various components of the summit.

The surveys and workshop evaluation forms asked participants to elaborate on: 1) what they felt was most helpful or important about the summit services and workshops, 2) how the summit and workshops could be improved, and 3) suggestions for future summits and workshops.

Additionally, participants were asked to rate summit services and workshops, on a scale of 1 to 4, in order to document: 1) if the services and workshops addressed issues that were important for fathers; 2) whether they felt they knew more about the topic presented and had a plan for moving forward; 3) if they would use the information received; and 4) their perception of the overall quality of the summit, individual workshops, and the workshop presenters. (See Appendix 1 for copies of the summit surveys and Appendix 2 for a template of the workshop evaluation forms.)

Summit participants completed a total of 608 feedback surveys and workshop evaluation forms during the two-day event.³ For a variety of reasons, including the voluntary nature of evaluation participation, the overall survey results may not be representative of the perspectives of all summit participants. In addition, it should be noted that the overall number of responses for each individual survey item varies throughout this report because not all participants answered each question, and some items could be marked with more than one answer.

Summit participants provided feedback on the following components of the summit:

1. Overall Summit Rating: Participants' overall experience of the 2008 Fatherhood Summit, including presentations, workshops, individual assistance, referrals, and general resource availability. A total of 93 surveys were completed for the general summit.
2. Community Health Fair: Over 20 health information and service organizations participated as exhibitors at the summit. Service providers and health specialists were available for health screenings (blood pressure, HIV, STD, etc.), medical information, and referral. A total of 51 surveys were completed for this focus area.
3. Community Job Fair: For the second year, the job fair was sponsored in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Maximus, the Policy Studies Institute and the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS). The job fair was

³ Individual summit participants were likely to have attended multiple events and therefore may have completed more than one survey. As a result, a survey "response rate" is not possible to calculate.

designed to link participants to employment information and opportunities in the Milwaukee area. Over 100 employers and career organizations in Milwaukee County were on hand at the fair. A total of 96 surveys were completed for this focus area.

4. **Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance:** This summit event was presented by staff from the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement. Milwaukee County staff provided reviews of cases, interest reduction, alternative payment plans, and information about the child support process. By attending summit workshops, participants were eligible for a reduction in their child support interest debt. A total of 103 surveys were completed for this focus area.
5. **Driver's License Recovery Assistance:** The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability and representatives from the Milwaukee County Court House were available for the two-day summit to assist participants in resolving driver's license revocation issues by reviewing case files and providing legal support/information. A total of 63 surveys were completed for this focus area.
6. **Summit Workshops:** Twenty-five trained professionals from various local community organizations facilitated the workshops offered at the two-day summit. Each workshop addressed specific content related to fatherhood. The workshops afforded men and fathers the opportunity to connect with one another and to share their stories and life situations. A total of 201 evaluation forms were completed for 16 workshops.

Overall Summit Surveys

A total of 93 overall summit surveys were completed and returned by summit attendees.

In general, respondents rated the summit very highly. Specifically, 98.0% (51 out of 52 survey participants) rated the summit as "outstanding" or "good." Only one participant rated the overall summit as "okay."⁴

How did respondents hear about the 2008 Fatherhood Summit?

Participants were asked to identify how they heard about the 2008 summit. Participants indicated that they heard about the summit from a variety of sources. The top three ways that survey respondents heard about the summit were word of mouth, family and friends, and the radio and/or newspaper. Specifically:

- 38.7% or 36 survey respondents heard about the summit by "word of mouth."
- 29.0% or 27 survey respondents heard about the summit from family members and friends.
- 26.9% or 25 survey respondents heard about the summit from the radio and/or newspaper.

How did respondents rate the overall usefulness of the summit?

Survey respondents were asked several questions about their overall experience of the event. In general, respondents reported having a positive experience of the summit, valuing the services they received, and finding the information useful. Specifically,

- All of the survey respondents (100% or 93) strongly agreed, or agreed, that the summit addressed some important issues faced by men/fathers in Milwaukee.

⁴ Forty-one respondents did not answer this question. It is unclear why this item was skipped by a relatively high number of respondents.

- 98.9% (92 out of 93 survey respondents) strongly agreed, or agreed, that the summit provided useful information and materials.
- 97.8% (90 out of 92 survey respondents) strongly agreed, or agreed, that the summit provided suggestions for solving some of the issues facing fathers.
- 91.3% (85 out of 93 survey respondents) strongly agreed, or agreed, that having the summit at two locations was convenient.

Survey respondents were asked what they got help with at the summit. Almost two-thirds of the survey respondents (62.4% or 58) noted they got help with child support debt reduction. Registration data indicated that, prior to the summit, over half of the registrants (54.6%) were looking for assistance in the area of child support debt reduction. With regard to the other areas for which services were available at the summit:

- 38.7% or 36 respondents received help with driver's license recovery.
- 16.1% or 15 respondents received help with faith and spiritual support.
- 15.1% or 14 respondents received help with health information and screenings.
- 14.0% or 13 respondents received help with employment.
- 11.8% or 11 respondents received help with parenting information.
- 11.8% or 11 respondents received help with educational workshops.

Survey respondents were also asked what other areas or issues they would like information about or assistance with after the summit. Responses indicated that there was an interest in receiving information or assistance with a wide range of additional issues, including:

- 40.9% or 38 respondents wanted information or assistance with job training.
- 36.6% or 34 respondents wanted information and/or assistance with housing.
- 31.2% or 29 respondents wanted information and/or assistance with child custody and visitation.
- Some respondents wanted information or assistance with marriage/relationships (20.4% or 19) and re-entry from prison (12.9% or 12).

What was the most important thing that happened for survey respondents at the 2008 Fatherhood Summit?

Summit participants were asked to elaborate on what was the most important thing that happened for them at the summit. A total 85 out of 93 survey respondents (91.3%) provided written comments on this question.

Participants' perceptions of the most important aspects of the summit fell into four thematic areas: helpful resources, information, materials and assistance; a sense of unity, mutual support and healing; a sense of empowerment about and commitment to roles of fatherhood; and overall positive experience. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- Helpful resources, information, materials and assistance (40 comments), for example:
 - *"Provided sound information about issues I face in my daily life."*
 - *"Information provided by summit helpful to fathers and supports the community."*
 - *"The talk with the lawyer about child support issues."*
 - *"Good information about fatherhood and knowledge."*

- *“It helps me take care of some things I need to.”*
- Sense of unity, mutual support and healing (21 comments), for example:
 - *“The opportunity for men of all ages, races and circumstances to come together and support each other through the weekend.”*
 - *“That people are actually trying to have positive resources that men and women could use to better our city, world and planet.”*
 - *“It gave me insights on what I need to know to better myself.”*
 - *“Being able to hear that I’m not the only one going through.”*
- Sense of empowerment about and commitment to role as fathers (11 comments), for example:
 - *“Help me understand the time I need to spend with my kids.”*
 - *“Understand the importance of fatherhood and what it means to be a responsible parent for yourself as well as the child.”*
 - *“Learning steps towards raising my daughter.”*
 - *“The empowerment for male role models.”*
 - *“Most of all about being a good father and my right of being a father and being able to exercise those rights.”*
- Overall positive experiences (11 comments), for example:
 - *“The father/daughter class was beautiful.”*
 - *“The total experience.”*
 - *“Presentations heartwarming.”*
 - *“It is a good thing.”*

In what ways did respondents think the Fatherhood Summit could be improved?

Summit participants were asked to elaborate on what ways they believed the summit could be improved. A total of 74 of the 93 respondents (79.5%) shared comments on this question.

Participants’ suggestions for improvement fell into five thematic areas: no changes and compliments; more information and services; have more summits and make them longer; more organization and improved space; and more advertisement.

Approximately half of those who responded to this question (54.0% or 40) felt no changes were needed to improve the summit. For those who did provide suggestions for improvement, sample responses, by theme, included:

- More information and services (10 comments), for example:
 - *“More of a point of view from the mothers side of things.”*
 - *“I think and I’m telling you what I think that should be addressed [is] people with drug and alcohol problems and try to get them help.”*
 - *“More information on business.”*
 - *“Let men speak more.”*
- Have more summits and make them longer (9 comments), for example:
 - *“Make them longer and more often”*

- *“I’d make it longer for more sessions or longer sessions.”*
 - *“Just keep having summits.”*
- More organization and improved space (8 comments), for example:
 - *“Being more organized and not having to move from one location to another.”*
 - *“More feedback from the program – though good, it could use a little more direction.”*
 - *“Be aware of time.”*
 - *“One location next time.”*
- More advertisement (7 comments), for example:
 - *“Stronger advertisement, trying to get more brothers to attend.”*
 - *“More TV, radio and advertising plus small handouts to all the neighborhood stores around north 76th & West Good Hope so you can support the summit 2009!!”*
 - *“Just get the word out.”*

Community Health Fair

For the 2008 summit, men’s health continued to be a focus area for the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. The MFI has a goal of helping men and fathers by promoting healthy lifestyles and education. One of the primary goals of the community health fair is to provide educational materials, information, and preventive services to attendees. For the 2008 summit, the MFI collaborated with the Alzheimer’s Association of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Health Department, the Wisconsin Department of Public Health, and several local health agencies to provide educational materials and health services for summit attendees.

It is estimated that over 20 health information and service organizations participated as exhibitors at the health fair. Service providers and health specialists were available for health screenings (blood pressure, HIV, STD, memory, etc.), medical information, and referrals.

Information obtained from the health fair committee indicated that:

- Approximately 800 participants were counted as coming into the health care area for the one day fair.
- The Milwaukee Health Department reported that 162 Glucose and Blood Pressure screenings were completed for summit attendants, in addition to a reported 38 HIV and 29 STD screenings completed.
- 25 pre-natal care screens were completed for female attendees.
- The United Community Center completed 17 memory screens, and the Blood Center of Wisconsin reported that 11 summit attendants volunteered to be screened to donate blood. Six of the 11 screened were able to donate blood, which has the potential to benefit 18 people in the community.

Community Health Fair Surveys

A total of 51 surveys were completed and returned from individuals who attended the summit’s health fair in 2008. The majority of respondents (92.2% or 47) indicated they attended the health fair to get information on health and to learn more about their own health status.

Who attended the health fair?

Respondents who attended the health fair were primarily male and approximately one-third were over the age of 40. Specifically:

- 85.7% (36 out of 42) of survey respondents identified themselves as males.
- Just under one-quarter (20.9% or 9) of survey respondents listed their age range as under 21 years of age. One-quarter (25.6% or 20) listed their age as 21 to 30 years of age, and approximately one-third (34.9% or 15) indicated that they were over the age of 40.

Health fair attendees also attended other events and services offered at the summit. For example, over half of the health fair survey respondents (52.9% or 27) also attended the job fair.

Other events attended by health fair survey respondents included:

- 25.5% or 13 also attended the child support debt reduction assistance.
- 21.6% or 11 also attended the driver's license recovery assistance at the summit.
- 19.6% or 10 also attended one or more of the educational workshops offered at the summit.

How did respondents rate the health fair?

Overall, 93.6% (44 out of 47) rated the health fair as "outstanding" or "good." A small number of respondents (6.4% or 3) rated the health fair as "okay."

Survey respondents were asked several questions about the materials and information they received. Most respondents found the men's health information and services to be both educational and useful. Specifically:

- 93.9% (46 out of 49) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they received helpful information from the health fair that they would use.
- 84.3% (43 out of 51) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they knew more about men's health after attending the health fair.
- 84.0% (42 out of 50) strongly agreed, or agreed, that after attending the health fair, they knew where to go to get help with health concerns.
- 82.0% (41 out of 50) strongly agreed, or agreed, that after attending the health fair, they wanted more information about men's health.

What was the most important thing that happened for survey respondents at the health fair?

Health fair participants were asked to elaborate on what they thought was the most important thing that happened for them at the fair. A total of 46 out of the 51 survey respondents (90.2%) provided written comments to this question.

Participants' perceptions of the most important things that happened for them at the health fair fell into three thematic areas: receiving personally relevant information and educational materials; learning about one's own health status; and helping others. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- Receiving personally relevant information and educational materials (22 comments), for example:
 - *"....Made me think and more aware of consequences, decisions about my life."*
 - *"Colon explanation – polyp prostate explained."*

- *“The diabetic information I got for my mother.”*
- *“Learning about asthma because my asthma is really bad.”*
- *“Obtaining information about health issues and concerns.”*
- Learning about one’s own health status (9 comments), for example:
 - *“That I’m in good shape.”*
 - *“I have high blood pressure.”*
 - *“Learning different things about my health.”*
 - *“Testing for S.T.D.”*
- Helping others (6 comments), for example:
 - *“I became a bone marrow person.”*
 - *“I helped somebody who might need blood in the future.”*
 - *“Giving blood.”*
 - *“Uniting with people who care.”*

In what ways did respondents think the health fair could be improved?

Health fair participants were asked to elaborate on the ways they believed the health fair could be improved. A total of 39 of the 51 survey respondents (76.4%) shared comments on this question.

Participants’ suggestions for improvement fell into two thematic areas: additional information and services and no changes needed and/or compliments. Some suggestions for improvements were not specific to the health fair but suggested improvements that related to the overall summit. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- Additional information and services (11 comments), for example:
 - *“More info about women too.”*
 - *“More doctors.”*
 - *“More testing.”*
 - *“Breast cancer mobile for women.”*
- No changes needed and/or compliments (11 comments), for example:
 - *“I think there’s no need for improvement everything went great.”*
 - *“Its awesome, couldn’t improve.”*
 - *“Well put together.”*
 - *“There’s no way because it’s already had been improved.”*

Community Job Fair

The MFI continued its efforts to provide information on employment placement, skills, and training to men at the 2008 summit. Returning for a second year, the community job fair was sponsored again in partnership with the Policy Studies Institute, the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, Maximus, and the United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS). The job fair was offered for one day at the summit and was designed to link participants to potential employment contacts, employment information and opportunities in Milwaukee County.

Information obtained from the job fair committee indicated that:

- Informal comments from employers and job seekers were very positive.
- 57 employers attended the summit for one day to offer employment information and recruitment to summit attendants.
- 353 summit attendants registered as job seekers at the summit.
- 29 job seekers were interviewed on-site at the summit, and 13 of the 29 interviewed were hired by employers.

Community Job Fair Surveys

A total of 96 surveys were completed and returned from individuals who attended the job fair. Almost all (96.8% or 93) survey respondents indicated that they attended the job fair because they were unemployed and needed work immediately, were looking for a “better” job, or were interested in more stable employment.

Who attended the job fair?

Approximately two-thirds of the respondents who attended the job fair were male and approximately 40% were between the ages of 21 and 30. Specifically:

- Approximately two-thirds (67.0% or 59 out of 88) identified themselves as males.
- Approximately 40% (40.9% or 34) listed their age as 21 to 30 years of age. Just under 20% (19.6% or 16) listed their age as 31 to 40 years of age, and one-quarter (26.5% or 22) indicated that they were over the age of 40.

Job fair attendees also attended other events and services offered at the summit. For example, one-quarter (23.9% or 23) of those who attended the job fair also attended the child support debt reduction assistance.

Other events attended by job fair survey respondents included:

- 21.9% or 21 also attended the driver’s license recovery assistance.
- 17.7% or 17 also attended one or more of the summit’s educational workshops.
- 11.5% or 11 also attended the health fair.
- 2.1% or 2 of the respondents also attended the faith and spiritual support component.

How did respondents rate the job fair?

Overall, 92.6% (87) of attendees rated the job fair as “outstanding” or “good.” A small number (7.4% or 7) rated the job fair as “okay.”⁵

One of the primary goals of the job fair was to provide participants with potential employment contacts and networking opportunities. After attending the fair, survey respondents were asked several questions about their experiences and the assistance they received. Specifically:

- 96.8% (93 out of 96) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they had some job leads after attending the fair.
- 94.6% (89 out of 94) strongly agreed, or agreed, that after attending the job fair, they believed that they would have a job soon.
- 92.3% (84 out of 91) strongly agreed, or agreed, that after attending the job fair, they wanted more help with finding a job.

⁵ Two respondents did not answer this question.

- 90.3% (84 out of 93) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they knew more about getting a job after attending the job fair.

What was the most important thing that happened for survey respondents at the job fair?

Job fair participants were asked to elaborate on what they thought was the most important thing that happened for them at the job fair. A total of 89 of the 96 survey respondents (92.7%) provided written comments.

Participants' perceptions of the most important aspects of the job fair fell into three thematic areas: filling out applications and getting job leads, networking, and having access to helpful information and resources. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- Filling out applications and getting job leads (31 comments), for example:
 - *"I was blessed with numerous opportunities."*
 - *"Opened doors to jobs I would not have otherwise known about."*
 - *"The opportunity to fill this many apps at one time in the same place."*
 - *"Got a step further to a brighter future."*
 - *"I was given some good leads."*
 - *"Had a opportunity for employment."*
- Networking (28 comments), for example:
 - *"I got the chance to talk to a few employers that would give me a better chance at working."*
 - *"Meeting lots of new people that could help me find a job."*
 - *"I had a chance to meet with employers and actually had to try to convince them with charm and precision."*
 - *"I happened upon a previous employer dating back almost 20 years."*
 - *"I talked to a lot of VIP people."*
- Having access to helpful information and resources (21 comments), for example:
 - *"I received valuable information and some positive feedback from employers."*
 - *"It gave me a lot of encouragement to go out and apply for other jobs."*
 - *"I got to see how many fields are open."*
 - *"I saw plenty jobs that I like."*
 - *"Very interesting resources to support one another our children, family and our community."*

In what ways did respondents think the job fair could be improved?

Job fair participants were asked to elaborate on ways they believed the job fair could be improved. A total of 79 of the 96 survey respondents (82.2%) provided written comments on this question.

In general, participants' comments on ways to improve the job fair fell into two thematic areas: more variety of jobs, more representatives, and interviews on the spot; and no changes needed and/or compliments. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- More variety of jobs, more representatives, and interviews on the spot (31 comments), for example:
 - *“By having more jobs for people who don’t have driver license.”*
 - *“It should be more organized and should have more employers who interview on the spot.”*
 - *“Onsite applications instead of applying online.”*
 - *“Have chairs/more chairs, more employers.”*
 - *“By companies bring[ing] in applications, not everyone has access to a computer.”*
- No changes needed and/or compliments (30 comments), for example:
 - *“Though I didn’t find exactly what I’m looking for, I believe the fair will help a lot of people – There for better serving our community – It’s fine the way it is.”*
 - *“It seemed organized pretty well.”*
 - *“No improvement needed, it was great.”*
 - *“The job fair was excellent.”*
 - *“Never stop providing job fair for those unemployed.”*

Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance

For a third consecutive year, the MFI partnered with the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement to enable fathers to receive information and explore options regarding back child support owed to the State of Wisconsin. This has been a high request service area for the summit. Thus for the 2008 summit, attendants were asked to pre-register to receive assistance in this area. The pre-registration was designed to assist Milwaukee County with planning around staff availability at the summit.

One of the primary goals of the child support debt reduction assistance program was to provide procedural information, guidelines, and possible reduction of accrued interest of child support debt. By attending summit educational workshops, participants were eligible to meet with Milwaukee County staff to review their cases and to explore interest reduction, alternative payment plans, and information about the child support process.

Information obtained from the Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance committee indicated that:

- A total of \$710,327.11 in interest was forgiven for summit attendants.
- County staff provided on-site services to 310 individuals at the summit.
- County staff assisted summit attendants with: 56 stipulation/modification packets, 13 Children First referrals, and 14 Alternative Payment plans.⁶

Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance Surveys

A total of 104 surveys were completed and returned by participants attending the child support debt reduction assistance component of the summit. Over 90% of respondents (91.3% or 95)

⁶ As defined under Chapter DWD 43 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code, an “alternative payment plan” refers to “a negotiated agreement between a child support agency and a payer, or an order set by the court, which establishes terms for the payment of the arrearage debt.”

indicated that they attended the child support debt reduction assistance to get child support interest reduced or to get information on child support issues.

Who attended the child support debt reduction component?

Virtually all of the respondents who attended the child support debt reduction assistance were male and most respondents were over the age of 30. Specifically:

- The majority (97.7% or 86) of respondents identified themselves as males.
- Approximately 15% (15.9% or 14) of respondents listed their age as 21 to 30 years of age. Just over 40% (44.3% or 39) listed their age as 31 to 40 years of age, and almost 40% (38.6% or 34) indicated that they were over the age of 40.

Child support attendees also attended other events/services offered at the summit. For example, approximately one-third of survey respondents (36.5% or 38) also attended one or more educational workshops at the summit. It is possible, however, that those who attended an educational workshop did so in part because they were asked to attend two workshops in order to receive the child support assistance offered at the summit. Other events attended included:

- 26.0% or 27 also attended the job fair.
- 22.1% or 23 also attended the health fair.
- 21.2% or 22 also attended the driver's license recovery assistance.
- 11.5% or 12 also attended the spiritual/faith support.

How did respondents rate the child support debt reduction assistance?

Overall, 77.8% (77 out of 99) of respondents rated the child support debt reduction assistance as "outstanding" or "good." Approximately 20% (22.3% or 22) rated the child support debt assistance as "okay."

One of the primary goals of the child support debt reduction assistance program was to provide procedural information, guidelines, and possible reduction of accrued interest of child support debt. After attending the child support assistance, survey respondents were asked several questions about the materials and information received. The majority found the child support services and information to be helpful. Specifically:

- 95.1% (98 out of 103) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they have a plan to take care of their child support responsibilities (e.g., who to see, where to go).
- 93.2% (96 out of 103) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they received helpful information that they would use.
- 88.4% (92 out of 104) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they learned more about how to take care of their child support responsibilities.
- 89.1% (90 out of 101) strongly agreed, or agreed, that would like more help with their child support responsibilities.

What was the most important thing that happened for survey respondents at the child support debt reduction assistance?

Child support debt reduction assistance participants were asked to elaborate on what they thought was the most important thing that happened for them at this service. A total of 91 of the 104 survey respondents (87.5%) provided written comments on this question.

Participants' perceptions on the most important aspects of the child support debt reduction assistance fell into two thematic areas: receiving specific, personalized, understandable

information and assistance; and receiving a reduction in child support interest. Sample responses by theme included:

- Receiving specific, personalized, understandable information and assistance with child support issues (42 comments), for example:
 - *“I know now that I don’t have a lot to pay and I’m doing good!”*
 - *“Got my payments and money I owed broke down.”*
 - *“The most important thing that happened with me today is that I was equipped with the knowledge to get in the clear.”*
 - *“The knowledge on becoming more responsible instead of being idle.”*
 - *“Information that was said so I can easily understand.”*
 - *“Got some leads on help with arrears.”*
- Receiving a reduction in child support interest (29 comments), for example:
 - *“They reduced my back pay by more than 75%!”*
 - *“I got my child support reduced to a reasonable amount.”*
 - *“That I was helped to better my chance of paying my debt off.”*
 - *“Some of the money owed taking off – what a relief.”*
 - *“I been forgiven on some of my pay it was reduced.”*
 - *“It had been reduced for a lot less.”*

In what ways can the child support debt reduction assistance be improved?

Child support debt reduction assistance participants were asked to elaborate on the ways in which they believed the program could be improved. A total of 82 of the 104 survey respondents (78.8%) shared comments on this question.

Participants’ suggestions on improvement fell into three thematic areas: systemic changes and more debt reduction assistance; no changes needed and/or compliments; and more information and services. Sample responses, by theme, included:

- Systemic changes and more debt reduction assistance (28 comments), for example:
 - *“Finds ways to lower the debt more! Maybe attend classes, do community services.”*
 - *“I would like all debt removed on a case by case situation, incarceration, health reason, (etc). But over all, I was happy with the services.”*
 - *“Instead of a black man going so far in debt there should be limit that a man can afford in paying 50k to 100k – what black man in America is making that type of money.”*
 - *“They could really reduce debt. Also do something about the interest on the past due bill, because that is what’s most hurtful to most cases.”*
 - *“Make fathers pay more, stop taking what little money we do get from fathers.”*
- No changes needed and/or compliments (21 comments), for example:
 - *“Right now it’s ok, but everything shouldn’t be put on daddies that aren’t dead beats.”*

- *“I think they are doing a good job.”*
- *“Do not stop program.”*
- *“Doesn’t need improvement.”*
- More information and services offered (15 comments), for example:
 - *“Help with other problems and not just support.”*
 - *“Yes. To have mediators with both parties.”*
 - *“We need to get more answers about how the money is given out.”*
 - *“Longer hours.”*

Driver’s License Recovery Assistance

The MFI is committed to helping to reduce the number of unlicensed drivers in Milwaukee. Representatives from the Center for Driver’s License Recovery and Employability were available for the two days of the summit to assist participants in resolving driver’s license revocation issues by reviewing case files and providing legal support, information, individualized license recovery plans and advice.

Information obtained from the Driver’s License Recovery Assistance committee indicates that:

- 116 individuals received assistance at the summit, including advice and an individualized license recovery plan.
- 6 of the 116 individuals used their recovery plans and obtained valid driver’s licenses within two months of participating in the summit.

Driver’s License Recovery Assistance Surveys

A total of 63 surveys were completed and returned from participants attending the driver’s license recovery assistance. The majority of respondents (95.2% or 60) indicated that they attended the driver’s license recovery assistance at the summit either to recover their driver’s license or to learn how to get their license back.

Who attended the driver’s license recovery component?

Virtually all of the respondents who attended the driver’s license recovery assistance were male and just over one-third were between the ages of 31 and 40. Specifically:

- The majority of survey respondents (95.9% or 47) that answered this question identified themselves as males.
- Just over one-quarter (29.1% or 14) of respondents listed their age as 21 to 30 years of age. Just over one-third (37.5% or 18) listed their age as 31 to 40, and almost one-quarter (22.2% or 14) indicated that they were over the age of 40.

Driver’s license recovery assistance attendees also attended other events and services offered at the summit. For example, approximately half of survey respondents (46.0% or 29) also attended the child support debt reduction assistance offered at the summit. Other events attended included:

- 33.3% or 21 also attended the job fair.
- 14.3% or 9 also attended one or more educational workshops.
- 12.7% or 8 also attended the health fair.

How did respondents rate the driver's license recovery assistance?

Overall, 94.9% (56 out of 59) rated the driver's license recovery assistance as "outstanding" or "good." A small number of respondents (5.1% or 3) rated the driver's license recovery component as "okay".

One of the primary goals of the driver's license recovery assistance is to provide procedural information, guidelines, and review of driving records for potential reinstatement of driving privileges. After attending the driver's license assistance, respondents were asked several questions about the materials, information, and the assistance they received. The majority of respondents found the driver's license recovery services informative and helpful. Specifically:

- 96.7% (60 out of 62) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they understood what it takes to keep their license after reinstatement.
- 95.2% (60 out of 63) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they had a plan to get their license back.
- 92.0% (58 out of 63) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they knew more about how to get their license back.
- 72.8% (43 out of 59) strongly agreed, or agreed, that they would like more help with getting their license back.

What was the most important thing that happened for survey respondents at the driver's license recovery assistance?

Driver's license recovery assistance participants were asked to elaborate on what they thought was the most important thing that happened for them at this service. A total of 56 of the 63 survey respondents (88.8%) provided written comments on this question.

Participants' perceptions of the most important aspects of the driver's license recovery assistance fell into two thematic areas: information about what to do/how to get license reinstated and relief and hope for the future. Sample responses by theme, include:

- Information about what to do/how to get license reinstated (34 comments), for example:
 - *"Knowing what I need to do to get back my permit and how to go about it."*
 - *"Well I have a chance to work for the community service with getting back my license."*
 - *"Understanding how to keep my license valid for a long time."*
 - *"Receiving info that I had no prior knowledge of."*
 - *"New ways to help myself get my license."*
- Relief and hope for the future (16 comments), for example:
 - *"I can look for more jobs, and not worry about being stop without my driver license"*
 - *"I know now that it won't be long before I have them."*
 - *"A change and hope of reinstatement of driver's license."*
 - *"Doors open for me, no license no work (truck driver)."*
 - *"Realized it wasn't as serious as I thought."*

In what ways did respondents think the driver's license recovery assistance could be improved?

Driver's license recovery assistance participants were asked to elaborate on the ways they believed the driver's license recovery assistance could be improved. A total of 50 out of the 63 survey respondents (79.3%) shared comments on this question.

Participants' perceptions on improvement fell primarily into two thematic areas: no changes needed and/or compliments and have more help/assistance. Sample responses, by theme, include:

- No changes needed and/or compliments (31 comments), for example:
 - *"They do a good job already, won't have to improve anything from what I see."*
 - *"Can't get any better than this."*
 - *"It appears to be running good."*
 - *"No way, it has good service."*
- Have more help and assistance (12 comments), for example:
 - *"Have more of them to help people that trying to get right."*
 - *"Giving people a better opportunity and chance to keep their license and chance."*
 - *"They explain things better, in a way to understand."*
 - *"By reopening cases."*
 - *"Give out the actual license."*

Workshop Evaluation Form Results

In addition to the four core components, the Fatherhood Summit also offered workshops for the attendees during the two-day event. These workshops were designed to offer individuals an opportunity to learn and discuss key issues affecting men and fathers in the Milwaukee community. The workshops afforded men and fathers the opportunity to connect with one another, share stories, and validate personal experiences.

The MFI invited a variety of community professionals to facilitate workshops on topics addressing issues important to men and promoting responsible fathering. In 2008, the Fatherhood Summit substantially increased the number of workshops from the previous year, in which eight workshops were offered. The 2008 summit had originally planned for 24 workshops, each lasting a minimum of 1.5 hours. Nine workshops were to be held on Friday and 15 workshops were to be held on Saturday. Two workshops were canceled prior to the summit, and two were canceled the day of the summit due to a lack of attendance. As a result, a total of 20 workshops were offered for the two days. A total of 25 professionals from various local community organizations were scheduled to facilitate the workshops addressing specific topics related to fatherhood.

Methodology

As part of the Fatherhood Summit evaluation, the Planning Council designed a workshop evaluation form, which attendees were asked to complete after each workshop. (See Appendix 2 for a template of the workshop evaluation forms.)

The evaluation form asked workshop participants to elaborate on what they thought was most helpful about the workshop, how the workshop could be improved, and suggestions for future workshops. Additionally, workshop attendees were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 4: 1) whether they felt they had a better understanding of the topic presented; 2) whether the workshop was a good topic of discussion for the summit; 3) if they would use the information presented; and 4) the overall quality of the presentation and the facilitator. (See Appendix 2 for a template of the workshop evaluation forms.)

Workshop Evaluation Findings

Overview of workshops

The summit offered 20 different workshops over the two-day event. For each workshop offered at the summit, Table 1 lists the workshop topic, the number of facilitator(s), the number of evaluation forms completed, and the day workshops were scheduled.

Table 1: Workshops offered at the 2008 Fatherhood Summit.

Workshop Topic	Facilitator(s)	Feedback Evaluations Completed	Day of Workshop
Men and Access to Healthcare	1	10	Friday & Saturday
Making Career Decisions	1	6	Friday
Learning to Father from the Father	1	0*	Friday
Daddy's Little Girl	2	29	Friday & Saturday
Stress Management	2	14	Friday & Saturday
No Father to Having a Father	1	11	Friday & Saturday
Your Body, Your Health	2	10	Friday
Making your Baby Rich	1	7	Friday
A Father Friendly Company	1	6	Friday
Healthy Cooking	2	5	Saturday
Building Father-child Partnership	1	0*	Saturday
Community of Self	1	13	Saturday
My Baby, My Drive	1	3	Saturday
What is a Healthy Relationship?	1	0*	Saturday
Fatherhood and Masculinity	1	0*	Saturday
Random Acts of Kindness	2	34	Saturday
Celebrating the Roles of Fathers	1	24	Saturday
A Family Law Class	1	20	Saturday
Veterans' Workplace	1	1	Saturday
Making the Cut	1	8	Saturday

*Note: Evaluation forms were not collected for workshop due to cancellation or reported non-attendance.

How did respondents rate the workshops?

A total of 201 evaluation forms were returned for the 16 workshops that were conducted during the two-day Fatherhood Summit.⁷ Most of the respondents (90.5% or 182) rated the workshops very highly. For example:

- 100% or 34 respondents rated the *Random Acts of Kindness* workshop as “excellent” or “very good.”

⁷ Four workshops reportedly had few, if any attendees: Learning to Father from the Father, Building Father-child Partnership, What is a Healthy Relationship?, and Fatherhood and Masculinity. As a result, evaluation data was not available for these workshops.

- 100% or 29 rated the *Daddy's Little Girls* workshop as “excellent” or “very good.”
- 90.9% or 10 rated *No Father to Having a Father* workshop as “excellent” or “very good.”
- 90.0% or 18 rated *A Family Law Class* workshop as “excellent” or “very good.”

Did workshop participants learn something new?

A primary objective of the Fatherhood Summit was to empower men to become “better” fathers by addressing critical issues facing them within the Milwaukee community. Workshop attendees were asked to indicate whether they learned something new from the workshops they attended. Almost all of the attendees (96.5% or 193 out of 200) indicated that they learned something new from the workshops they attended, For example:

- 100% or 10 strongly agreed, or agreed, that they learned something new from the *Men and Access to Health* workshop.
- 100% or 10 strongly agreed, or agreed, that they learned something new from the *Your Body, Your Health* workshop.
- 92.3% or 12 strongly agreed, or agreed, that they learned something new from the *Community of Self* workshop.
- 100% or 7 strongly agreed, or agreed, that they learned something new from the *Stress Management* workshop.

Did participants find the workshops helpful?

The Fatherhood Summit workshops were designed to provide attendees with relevant and useful information aligned with the overall goals of the summit. Attendees were asked if the workshops were helpful to them. Almost all of the respondents (96.5% or 193 out of 200) either strongly agreed or agreed that the workshops were helpful. For example:

- 100% or 8 strongly agreed, or agreed, that the *Making the Cut* workshop was helpful.
- 97.0% or 33 strongly agreed, or agreed, that the *Random Acts of Kindness* workshop was helpful.
- 97.0% or 28 strongly agreed, or agreed, that the *Daddy's Little Girl* workshop was helpful.
- 95.0% or 19 strongly agreed, or agreed, that the *A Family Law Class* workshop was helpful.

Did participants find information from the workshops usable?

One important goal of the Fatherhood Summit was to provide user-friendly, educational information and materials for fathers to put into action in their lives. Attendees at the workshops were asked if they would use the information and materials to be a “better” parent. Overall, the majority of respondents (96.4% or 191 out of 198) either strongly agreed or agreed that they would use the information and materials to be a “better” parent. For example:

- 100% or 14 strongly agreed, or agreed, they would use the information from the *Stress Management* workshop to be a better parent.
- 96.3% or 23 strongly agreed, or agreed, they would use the information from the *Celebrating the Roles of Fathers* workshop to be a better parent.
- 92.3% or 12 strongly agreed, or agreed, they would use the information from the *Community of Self* workshop to be a better parent.

- 82.0% or 9 strongly agreed, or agreed, they would use the information from the *No Father to Having a Father* workshop to be a better parent.

What were participants' perceptions of the presentation quality and facilitators?

The MFI collaborated with 25 professionals from various local community organizations to facilitate workshops for the 2008 Fatherhood Summit. Survey respondents were asked to evaluate the presentations and facilitators. Most of the respondents (90.5% or 182) rated the overall presentations in each of the workshops as "excellent" or "very good." Similarly, most of the respondents (94.5% or 190) rated the workshop facilitators as being "excellent" or "very good". A very small number of survey respondents rated the facilitators as "good" or "fair" (5.4% or 11, with no single facilitator receiving the bulk of the less positive ratings).

What was most helpful about the workshops?

Workshop attendees were asked to elaborate on what they found most helpful about the workshops. A total of 163 responses were given for this question across the 201 evaluation forms completed for all 16 workshops.

Some examples of what respondents indicated was most helpful about the workshops included:

- *"How to improve being kind to myself and others – how my act of kindness is important to my children and being a good father."*
- *"The fact that I am a important factor in my daughter's life and she needs my love and protection."*
- *"Giving me a chance to get my child support issues in order – If it wasn't for this program, a lot of true fathers would be swept away by the system – the State don't care, they just want money."*
- *"I learned a lot of good tips on my rights as being a father, also what I can and can't do."*
- *"Understanding stress and how it change my moods and feelings."*
- *"How to deal more with spiritual self."*
- *"How and why the absence of a father affects a child and the ways to forgive and make me a better person and father."*
- *"If you don't have children living with you, you maybe still eligible for Medicare."*
- *"How to be spiritually inclined no matter what challenges life throw at you."*
- *"How to stop and think and use what we have and know to be a good father."*
- *"Healthiness of food and how to use different foods."*
- *"Breast feeding makes babies smarter all the way round."*
- *"Work balancing can help a company with excellence, plus help the working family."*

In what ways did respondents think the workshops could be improved?

Workshop attendees were asked to elaborate on the ways they believed that the workshops could be improved. A total of 120 responses were given for this question across the 201 evaluation forms completed for all 16 workshops.

Examples or respondents' comments on the ways the summit workshops could be improved included:

- *"Bring younger brothers and continue this dialogue."*
- *"I think they could be longer and more often than once a year."*

- *“Find out what daughters think about their fathers.”*
- *“Better seating, more seats, more space.”*
- *“Give men a worksheet they can take home to have a paper format or learned lessons (from sessions) or a checklist (i.e. call daughter, treat women/significant other).”*
- *“The workshop is excellent; I would look for ways to find more encouraging speakers.”*
- *“More participation by the men attending the workshops.”*
- *“Expand the time so that materials can be discussed.”*
- *“There’s nothing wrong with the ladies running the classes but I think when you are talking about fatherhood we should get some men in the classes, as far as the presenter at least one man.”*
- *“Put all the workshops at one place not two different places.”*
- *“More people from child support and attorneys from the State.”*
- *“Sitting down, getting one-on-one time on something you’re going through.”*
- *“More follow-up with the participants for the workshops.”*
- *“Defining what a father is and the power he plays in the heart and mind of his child.”*

Key Informant Interviews with Faith-based Leaders

Since 2006, the MFI has partnered with the faith community in Milwaukee to address the issues and needs of fathers. Feedback from previous summits suggested that future summits should incorporate the faith and spiritual community into the annual event for men. To honor this request, the MFI collaborated with leaders from the faith community in Milwaukee to plan and organize this new component of the 2008 summit, which focused on faith and spiritual wellbeing. The faith and spiritual component of the summit featured spiritual wellness sessions, booths, and a call to churches in the City of Milwaukee to address the topic of fatherhood in their Sunday sermons.

To evaluate the faith and spiritual well being component of the 2008 summit and to explore future initiatives in this area, a small number of key leaders from the faith-based community were asked to participate in in-depth interviews concerning their experience with the MFI. These leaders were identified by the MFI director because of their involvement in previous Fatherhood Summits or their membership on the 2008 planning committee.

The Planning Council developed an interview questionnaire to guide in-depth interviews with leaders from the faith community in Milwaukee. The goals of the interviews were to gather direct input about the role of faith leaders in the Milwaukee community in addressing the issue of fatherhood and the value of having a continuing faith and spiritual component at future summits. A set of semi-structured qualitative interview questions was designed to allow the participants to elaborate on their experiences and provide feedback.

Methodology

The MFI director identified eight faith leaders in the Milwaukee community as potential key informant interview candidates. Each of these leaders had some previous contact with the MFI and Fatherhood Summits. A letter was mailed to the eight faith leaders requesting participation in the confidential interview. Two weeks after the letters were mailed, the Planning Council contacted the faith leaders to schedule an interview time. In-person interviews were completed with four of the faith leaders from November 2008 through January 2009. Two faith leaders did not respond to requests and the remaining two experienced numerous scheduling conflicts and therefore were unable to complete an interview.

The questions that guided the interviews were grouped into the following areas:

1. How the interviewee became involved in the Fatherhood Summit as a faith-based leader and why.
2. The value of incorporating a faith-based/spiritual component into the Fatherhood Summit to enhance its mission and effectiveness.
3. How collaboration between the faith-based community and the MFI can best benefit fathers in the Milwaukee community.
4. How the faith-based community can become more involved with the Fatherhood Summit and how to improve the spiritual component and services of the MFI.
5. The role of faith-based leaders in addressing the issue of fatherhood in the Milwaukee community, especially with regard to the challenge of absent fathers.

Interview Results

Interviews were completed with four faith-based leaders from the Milwaukee community. Interview times ranged from 45 minutes to one hour for each interview.

Faith-based involvement in the MFI and the 2008 summit

Each of the faith leaders interviewed became involved with the MFI and/or summits through a referral from the director or someone working with the MFI. Each one articulated, in various ways, that fatherhood contains a powerful and important spiritual component. This is what brought each of the respondents to become involved with the MFI and the summit, along with hopes that addressing the spiritual needs of fathers will significantly improve the quality of fathering in the Milwaukee community.

Each of the four leaders voiced various levels of concern and confusion, however, about their specific roles with the MFI and, more generally, the MFI's relationship with faith-based ideas and organizations. Each had attended several MFI meetings and had private discussions with other faith-based leaders and MFI leadership. Examples of the ways in which the leaders had become involved with the MFI included:

- *“This was the first time I was involved with the Fatherhood Initiative...it was a learning experience for me.”*
- *“I was invited by a fellow pastor and attended about four meetings.”*
- *“I sat in on several meetings about follow up from the summit to faith-based communities but the ideas never became concrete.”*
- *“I volunteered when the first event [summit] came about, I was intrigued by brothers helping brothers.”*

Incorporating faith-based ideas and organizations

Each of the respondents expressed the belief that, to be successful, the MFI and the Fatherhood Summits should incorporate and provide spiritual and faith-based components and ideas. They differed, however, on how this should be done, especially with regard to integrating traditional religious leadership and organizations. One felt that the summit was clearly Christian-based and needed to incorporate other faith traditions.

Several expressed disappointment in the follow-up to the summit's faith-based workshops and wanted a means of bringing support to fathers more directly into faith-based communities as a follow up to the summit was not successful. One interviewee suggested:

- *“We have to let them [pastors] frame their roles around this issue and we need to spend more time cultivating that relationship.”*

One respondent voiced some concern that the connection of the MFI to a government entity may be preventing organized religious leaders from becoming more involved in the MFI or the summits and felt that a more ecumenical approach and outreach is required. This respondent also indicated that *“To me, the Initiative has political aspirations and motives.”*

All respondents, however, felt that the spiritual component to fatherhood provides the key means for fathers to embrace the challenges they face. They viewed the MFI and the summit as a potential resource to both link the MFI with the faith-based community and also to challenge the faith-based community to embrace the issue of fathering and provide more direct father-friendly services and support in the community. Examples of the ways in which interviewees viewed spirituality as interconnected with fatherhood and the MFI included:

- *“The faith-based community is absolutely instrumental in changing behavior and the new MFI is trying to bring us in.”*
- *“As a pastor, I want to address the issues of fatherhood and family more consistently.”*

- *“Men who attended were pleased to see the event [2008] grounded in faith.”*
- *“In order to sustain in life, you must have some kind of spiritual relationship, the church has the skill set to help with this process...it can help with spiritual introduction.”*

Collaboration

Each of the respondents expressed the belief that collaboration between the MFI and faith-based communities through the Fatherhood Summits is important. They tended to focus on how the summit can be a means to bring together faith-based organizations, social services, and support systems. One participant expanded on how fatherhood initiatives can originate within churches and religious communities, indicating that these initiatives already exist and that successful efforts can be integrated into the summit.

There were differences of opinion, however, on how to best integrate both the role of faith and spirituality in the MFI and how visible traditional religious leaders should be in determining the summit's agenda and mission. One respondent felt that such leadership was crucial and would positively change both the mission of the summit and the MFI's presence and importance in the community. Each of the respondents, however, indicated that a lack of clarity about the explicit nature and scope of such collaboration may be hindering efforts to expand the role of faith-based ideas and services. Examples of comments related to the possibilities of collaboration between the MFI and faith-based communities included:

- *“Collaboration can be a challenge but the MFI has started to create good links to the faith-based community.”*
- *“I have lost some confidence in the process and leadership of the MFI because of political issues; I admire it from a distance but am not willing to jump totally on board.”*
- *“It works both ways...it can be very positive to have people outside the faith-based communities organizing discussions and roundtables.”*
- *“Being a shoulder to cry on has the least spiritual impact. We need to be more spiritually intellectual with alderpersons, judges, social workers, etc. We need to influence the hearts of the decision-makers. We need to expand their perspectives by talking to people who are affecting the lives of fathers. People at the top need to hear [and understand the role that spirituality plays in] this.”*

Outreach to faith-based communities

Each of the respondents expressed the feeling that early planning with a clear focus on goals would build the faith-based component and participation in the MFI and the next summit. One respondent felt that the “seeds have been planted” to create a new level of collaboration, yet another remained skeptical about how deeply to endorse the MFI without clarity about the role and place faith-based efforts.

Each of the respondents expressed the feeling that a more visible display of faith-based fatherhood themes and resources at the summit would be helpful. According to several of the respondents, faith-based ideas bring in an explicit moral component and dimension to fathering that often is lost or overlooked. Suggestions included presenting the positive embrace of fatherhood by faith traditions as well as making ministers visibly available for counsel, advice, and assistance during the summit. For example, one respondent suggested that:

- *“A more visible display of the positive roles of fathers in faith traditions would enhance the summit.”*

More challenging to the respondents was how to assist the MFI in being more present and active in major religious organizations and communities. Keeping MFI initiatives closer to neighborhoods and having the initiatives be more decentralized might help, according to one respondent. Others felt that the MFI could benefit from being better “anchored” in key religious organizations. Collaboration, most voiced, must work both ways: religious organizations contributing to the MFI, but also the MFI bringing its message and challenging faith-based communities to find ways to more deliberately embrace fatherhood.

One such effort was the challenge offered to churches by the MFI to incorporate fatherhood into their Sunday sermons during the weekend of the 2008 Fatherhood Summit. Opinions about the success of this initiative were mixed. One respondent felt it had been very successful, while another was somewhat disillusioned by the lack of participation by most congregations.

Each of the respondents voiced the value of recruiting individuals from faith-based communities for the Fatherhood Summit but believed that such efforts, to be successful, will require greater planning and focus. Examples of comments related to this need for outreach included:

- *“We have to identify, engage and activate members of our congregations and this might mean that people realize they have to go outside their churches.”*
- *“We have to bring real decision makers [from a range of faith-based communities] to the table on this issue of fatherhood; the mayor can call a meeting [of faith leaders] and facilitate it with a faith leader.”*
- *“Planning and recruitment have to begin earlier but there has been a good start.”*

Faith-based communities and the challenge of absent fathers

The problem of absent fathers was a major concern expressed by all of the respondents, and they differed in opinions of how effective faith-based communities are in addressing it.

One respondent noted that there was a growing and influential group of local ministers that have taken on the challenge of fathering and the role of men in the community very effectively and boldly. Another voiced a very opposite opinion, indicating that congregations and ministers have been entirely too silent on the issue.

Several respondents mentioned various social factors that help create the phenomena of absent fathers. Given these factors, most of the respondents indicated that religious organizations need to “create a space” for men where they can bond, pray, or share their mutual struggle.

Examples of comments related to this need to “create a space” for men included:

- *“Praying together as men gives practical encouragement and biblical teachings that can bring absent fathers into a circle of support.”*
- *“Some churches have addressed fatherhood in their own communities [with church members] – they need to create the space for men to come into church – some pastors not always welcoming of that.”*
- *“More and more churches are embracing programs and outreach specifically to men...the most important feature of this is creating bonds between men.”*

The interview respondents suggested that faith-based communities can provide a base where non-religious professionals and service providers can be brought in to help fathers while remaining a spiritually focused effort.

Summary of key informant interviews with faith-based leaders

In order to more fully understand the faith community’s involvement with the summit and the MFI, key informant interviews were conducted with a small number of faith-based leaders who

either had some previous contact with the MFI or assisted in the planning of the Fatherhood Summits. Four faith leaders participated in in-depth interviews conducted by Planning Council staff between November, 2008 and January, 2009. A number of clear themes emerged from these interviews. However, given the small number of interviews, the themes identified may not be reflective of the faith leaders involved with the MFI or of the larger faith community in Milwaukee.

Each respondent articulated, in various ways, that fatherhood contains a powerful and important spiritual component. Each one became involved in the MFI with the hope of contributing to a partnership that would significantly improve and enhance the quality of fathering in the Milwaukee community. The leaders interviewed agreed that future Fatherhood Summits should incorporate and provide spiritual and faith-based components. They indicated that early planning for faith-based involvement in the summit, with a clear focus on goals and linkage to religious communities, would support increased collaboration and deepen the experience for fathers.

Each of the four respondents believed that to be successful, the MFI and the Fatherhood Summits should incorporate and provide spiritual and faith-based components and ideas. They differed, however, on how this should be done, especially with regard to integrating traditional religious leadership and organizations. For example, one felt that the summit was clearly Christian-based and needed to incorporate other faith traditions.

There were also differences of opinion on how to best integrate both the role of faith and spirituality in the MFI and how visible traditional religious leaders should be in determining the summit's agenda and mission. One respondent felt such leadership was crucial and would positively change both the mission of the summit and the MFI's presence and importance in the community. Each of the respondents, however, believed that a lack of clarity about the explicit nature and scope of such collaboration may be hindering efforts to expand the role of faith-based ideas and services.

The problem of absent fathers was a major concern expressed by each of the respondents, and they differed in how effective they believed faith-based communities have been in addressing this issue.

Most felt that religious organizations need to "create a space" for men where they can bond, pray, or share their mutual struggle. Faith-based communities, they suggested, can provide a base where non-religious professionals and service providers can be brought in to help fathers while remaining a spiritually focused effort.

Summary of the 2008 Fatherhood Summit Components

For the past three years, the Milwaukee Fatherhood Summit has been the centerpiece of the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative. The primary goal of the MFI is to increase the involvement of fathers in the lives of their children. The yearly summit provides unique opportunities for fathers to learn from national and local experts, attend panel discussions and town hall meetings, and gather resources and referrals.

The 2008 Fatherhood Summit focused on the key areas that the MFI believes are vital for successful fatherhood: health, employment, child support debt reduction, driver's license recovery, educational workshops, and faith.

The Planning Council documented participants' experiences of the summit using feedback surveys and workshop evaluation forms. The Planning Council also described the number and demographic characteristics of people who registered for the summit and summarized results from qualitative interviews with members of the faith-based community in Milwaukee.

Summit Registration

A total of 808 registration forms were completed, including both online and on-site registrants. The majority (75%) of the individuals who registered for the 2008 summit were newcomers; a relatively small number of individuals reported having previously attended either the 2006 or 2007 summits. The majority of those who registered (79%) identified themselves as fathers and most (93%) identified themselves as African American. The two areas with which registrants were most interested in receiving assistance were child support issues (55%) and employment (46%).

Summit registrants were asked to elaborate on what they believed was the greatest challenge they experienced as a father. The challenges that registrants reported fell into several thematic areas: being a responsible father and provider; spending time with children; finding and maintaining employment; providing guidance and being a role model; child support and legal issues; and conflicts with their children's mothers.

Overall Evaluation of the Fatherhood Summit

The vast majority of the 2008 summit participants who completed a feedback survey rated the summit very highly. Overall, 98% rated the summit as "outstanding" or "good." Almost all (98% or more of respondents) agreed or strongly agreed that the summit addressed important issues, offered potential solutions for fatherhood challenges, and provided useful information and materials.

When asked to describe the most important aspect of the summit, respondents noted that the summit was not only interesting and practical, but that it also provided a sense of unity and empowerment. Respondents indicated that the summit helped participants understand and appreciate the importance of fatherhood, inspiring them to spend more time with their children. In addition, respondents noted that the summit prompted them to receive proper medical screenings for HIV and other medical concerns. Overall, respondents indicated that they found the speakers and presentations valuable and the exhibits accessible and helpful.

When asked to provide suggestions for improvement, approximately half (54%) of those who responded offered compliments or indicated that no improvements were needed. The few suggestions for overall improvement were related to having more information and services at the summit; more frequent or longer summits; wider advertisement to reach more potential attendees; and better organization and improved space.

Community Health Fair

For the 2008 summit, men's health continued to be a focus area for the MFI. Over 20 health information and service organizations were available to summit attendants.

A total of 51 surveys were completed and returned by individuals who attended the community health fair at the Fatherhood Summit. Most (94%) survey respondents rated the community health fair as "outstanding" or "good." More than 80% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the health fair, they knew more about men's health, they knew where to go to get help with health concerns, and they received helpful information that they could use. When asked to describe what was important about the health fair, respondents highlighted receiving personally-relevant information and materials; learning about their own health status; and having the opportunity to help others.

Community Job Fair

The MFI continued its efforts to provide information on employment placement, skills, and training for men at the 2008 summit. Approximately 57 employers attended the summit for one day to offer employment information and recruitment to summit participants.

A total of 96 surveys were completed and returned from participants at the job fair. Overall, 93% rated the job fair as "outstanding" or "good." More than 90% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they had obtained employment leads and knew more about getting a job after attending the summit. When describing the most important part of the job fair, respondents noted: filling out job applications and getting job leads; networking; and having access to helpful information and resources.

Child Support Debt Reduction Assistance

For the third year, the MFI partnered with the Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement to provide assistance to men concerning issues related to the child support process. At previous summits, this had been a high request area. In 2008, over half of those registering for the summit (55%) indicated that they were most interested in child support debt reduction assistance.

A total of 104 surveys were completed by child support debt reduction assistance attendees. Overall, 78% rated the child support debt reduction assistance component as "outstanding" or "good." Approximately 90% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the child support assistance component, they learned more about how to take care of child support responsibilities and they received helpful information that they could use. In addition, 95% strongly agreed or agreed that they had a plan to take care of their child support responsibilities after attending this component of the summit. When describing the most important aspects of the summit's child support assistance, respondents noted that they received personalized and understandable assistance and that they actually received a reduction in child support interest.

The child support debt reduction component had the lowest overall rating (78%) of all the 2008 summit service areas. Suggestions for improvement provided by survey respondents offer some insight into this lower rating (e.g., there need to be systemic changes in how child support is managed, debt should be reduced further, etc.). However, it is also possible that the summit's requirements and procedures related to this service area may have caused some confusion for participants. Specifically, some participants were told that they needed to pre-register for this service area and/or attend two educational workshops to be eligible for assistance.

Driver's License Recovery Assistance

The MFI worked with The Center for Driver's License Recovery and Employability and representatives from the Milwaukee County Court House to assist participants with resolving driver's license revocation issues.

A total of 63 surveys were completed by attendees at the driver's license recovery assistance component. Overall, 95% rated this component as "outstanding" or "good." Over 90% strongly agreed or agreed that after attending the driver's license recovery assistance, they knew more about how to get their licenses back, they had a plan regarding who to see and what to do to get their licenses back, and they knew what it would take to keep their licenses after reinstatement. When describing what was most important about the driver's license recovery component, respondents noted that they valued receiving information about license reinstatement and that they felt hopeful about their own future reinstatement.

Summit Workshops

The MFI offered educational workshops for participants during each day of the two-day summit. Multiple professionals from the Milwaukee community facilitated the workshops that addressed responsible fathering, with topics ranging from 'Celebrating the Roles of Fathers' to "A Family Law Class".

A total of 16 workshops were conducted at the summit, with a total of 201 evaluation forms completed. Overall, workshops conducted at the 2008 Fatherhood Summit received high ratings, with approximately 90% of respondents rating the workshops as "excellent" or "very good." Across the workshops, nearly all of the respondents (97%) indicated that they learned something new from the workshop they attended. Most (96%) strongly agreed or agreed that the workshops were helpful and most (96%) indicated they would use the information gained at the workshop to be a "better" parent.

Summary of Key Informant Interviews with Faith-based Leaders

In 2008, summit planners added a faith component to the summit, including spiritual wellness session, faith-related booths, and a call to area churches to address the topic of fatherhood in their Sunday sermons. In order to more fully understand the faith community's involvement with the summit and the MFI, key informant interviews were conducted with a small number of faith-based leaders who either had some previous contact with the MFI or assisted in the planning of the Fatherhood Summits. Four faith leaders participated in in-depth interviews conducted by Planning Council staff between November, 2008 and January, 2009. A number of clear themes emerged from these interviews. However, given the small number of interviews, the themes identified may not be reflective of the faith leaders involved with the MFI or of the larger faith community in Milwaukee.

Each respondent articulated in various ways that fatherhood contains a powerful and important spiritual component. Each of the respondents believed that to be successful, the MFI and the Fatherhood Summits should incorporate and provide spiritual and faith-based components and ideas. They differed, however, on how this should be done, especially with respect to integrating traditional religious leadership and organizations. There were also differences of opinion on how to best integrate both the role of faith and spirituality in the MFI and how visible traditional religious leaders should be in determining the summit's agenda and mission.

The issue of absent fathers was a major concern expressed by each of the respondents, and they differed on how effective they believed faith-based communities have been in addressing it. Faith-based communities, they suggested, can provide a base where non-religious professionals and service providers can be brought in to help fathers while remaining a spiritually focused effort.

Summit Evaluation Comparisons for 2007 and 2008

For the past two years, the Planning Council has documented participants' experiences of the Fatherhood Summit through feedback surveys and workshop evaluation forms. In both 2007 and 2008, the two-day Fatherhood Summit focused on five key areas that the MFI believes are

vital for successful fatherhood: health, employment, child support debt reduction, driver's license recovery, and educational workshops. In response to feedback from previous summits, a faith component was added to the 2008 summit.

Most (89%) of those who registered for the 2008 Fatherhood Summit had not attended the 2007 summit. However, the feedback from participants who completed summit surveys and workshop evaluation forms for the 2007 and 2008 summits was strikingly similar. For both years, the overall rating of the summit was overwhelmingly positive; 97% of respondents in 2007 and 98% of respondents in 2008 gave the summit a rating of "outstanding" or "good." Survey results from both years suggested that participants considered the summit to be a very valuable experience and an important event for fathers in the Milwaukee community.

Similarly, participants also rated the primary service areas highly in both years. Specifically, over 90% of respondents rated the health fair, the job fair, and the driver's license recovery assistance as "outstanding" or "good". In both years, child support debt reduction assistance received the lowest overall rating. Specifically, 80% of respondents in 2007 and 78% of respondents in 2008 rated this component as "outstanding" or "good".

Finally, in response to open-ended questions about the value of the summit, survey respondents from both 2007 and 2008 reported that the summit provided them with both general and specific, personalized information and assistance. Most importantly, respondents experienced the summit as providing them with concrete assistance to help them resolve issues interfering with their current functioning as fathers. Each year, participants provided numerous examples of concrete assistance received in the areas of jobs, health issues, child support, and driver's license revocation. Overall, respondents from both years indicated that the summit inspired them to commit themselves to the ideals of responsible fathering.

In both years, survey respondents had few suggestions for improvement. However, a number of the suggestions that were made by 2007 summit participants were implemented at the 2008 summit. For example, in 2007 survey respondents recommended that future summits have more workshops available. For the 2008 summit, 20 workshops were scheduled compared to the eight workshops held in 2007. Additionally, in 2007, some summit participants reported being confused about the schedule of events and what was being offered at the summit. In 2008, summit participants received a program listing the activities scheduled over the course of the two-day event. Lastly, in 2007, many summit participants were challenged with finding the room locations of events because many of the areas did not have signs visibly placed. In 2008, the summit placed large signs in multiple locations listing the location and room numbers for the core summit areas and workshops. As the issues raised by 2007 participants were not raised again by the 2008 participants, it appears that planners for the 2008 summit successfully addressed the small number of concerns raised the previous year.

Recommendations from Respondents for Future Summits

The feedback from participants who completed summit surveys and workshop evaluation forms was overwhelmingly positive, very much mirroring the feedback from the 2007 summit. Participants' recommendations for improving future summits were relatively modest, seeking only to support an already notable planning and implementation process. When asked to provide suggestions for improvement, respondents generally noted a need for very little change; many were very complimentary about the two-day event.

However, survey respondents did provide several suggestions for improvement. Looking forward to the 2009 Fatherhood Summit, the top three recommendations based on feedback from respondents included:

- Have more information and services at the summit.

Participants overwhelmingly appreciated the resources and assistance offered at the 2008 summit and requested more of the same (e.g., more health screenings, more employment opportunities, etc.). The child support debt reduction assistance was a highly attended and requested service at the summit. Some respondents wanted more information about child support beyond information about interest reduction (e.g., how child support is determined, mediation between parties, etc.).

- Have more employers and interviews on the spot at the summit.

The job fair was also a highly requested service among those who registered for the summit. Survey respondents rated the job fair highly and indicated that they received some possible job leads. However, respondents recommended that future summits invite more employers and a wider variety of employers. In addition, respondents suggested that there be additional space available to allow employers to conduct interviews on the spot.

- Have greater advertising of the summit in the community and neighborhoods.

In general, survey respondents reported hearing about the summit by “word of mouth” or through family members and friends. Some summit attendants indicated that they would like to see the summit advertised more in neighborhoods, such as in local stores, to attract more men from the community. Others indicated that if greater efforts were given to advertising, more young men would possibly attend the annual event.

In addition to the modest suggestions for improvement noted by survey respondents, the overall feedback about the summit’s child support debt reduction assistance suggested that additional clarity about the requirements for receiving this service may be needed. Because this service is highly individualized (i.e., Milwaukee County Department of Child Support Enforcement review attendees’ cases and explore payment modifications), a limited number of individuals can be accommodated. During the 2008 summit, there appeared to be some confusion about the strategies used to address this issue (i.e., were pre-registration and/or educational workshop attendance required in order to attend this component). Looking forward to the 2009 summit, it may be helpful to clearly identify expectations for participants interested in services related to child support debt reduction. In addition, it may be helpful to generate additional ways to address the limitations on the number of people that can participate in this service.

Addressing the Long Term Need for Additional Services

Participants at both the 2007 and 2008 summits reported wanting more services after the summit. Specifically, more than 80% of respondents at the 2008 summit indicated that were interested in additional information about or assistance with men’s health, getting a job, and child support responsibilities. Furthermore, the Planning Council conducted several follow-up focus groups with men who attend the 2008 summit, and preliminary results also suggested a need for additional services after the summit, particularly related to child support issues.

During the MFI’s recent strategic planning process, the mobilization of resources in the community was identified as one of the most important factors necessary to increase service impact and access for fathers. To address this need, the MFI is currently working to create what it terms a systematic approach to supporting responsible fatherhood. This approach involves coordinating collaborative services and directly involving fathers in efforts to improve their family relations and “lift up” conditions of the community. The MFI’s strategy includes working with a variety of community-based organizations to serve as points of contact for fathers and as facilitation partners. The MFI plans to draw upon and support these organizations to continue to assist the many fathers in the community.

As the MFI moves forward with planning for the 2009 Fatherhood Summit, it is recommended that they include local organizations in the summit planning process. This can set the stage for addressing, planning, and coordinating the post-summit service needs of fathers in the Milwaukee community

