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Robert P. Astorino
Westchester County Executive

IMPROVING THE SOCIAL CAPITAL OF OUR FATHERS

FATHERHOOD INNOVATIONS IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY, NEW YORK

2017 NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR WELFARE
RESEARCH AND STATISTICS WORKSHOP

July 31, 2017

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Special Acknowledgments

“success has many fathers (and mothers)”

- To County Executive Rob Astorino and Commissioner Kevin McGuire for their support of this pilot project and the full spectrum of dads in Westchester County.
- To the Family Services of Westchester (FSW) for their collaboration and partnership with the county on this pilot and a host of other county Fatherhood Initiative programming.
- To the Westchester County Family Court system, our DSS team and a vast array county nonprofits, community based organizations and other champions for the Westchester County family.
- To the team at the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for their approval of this pilot project.

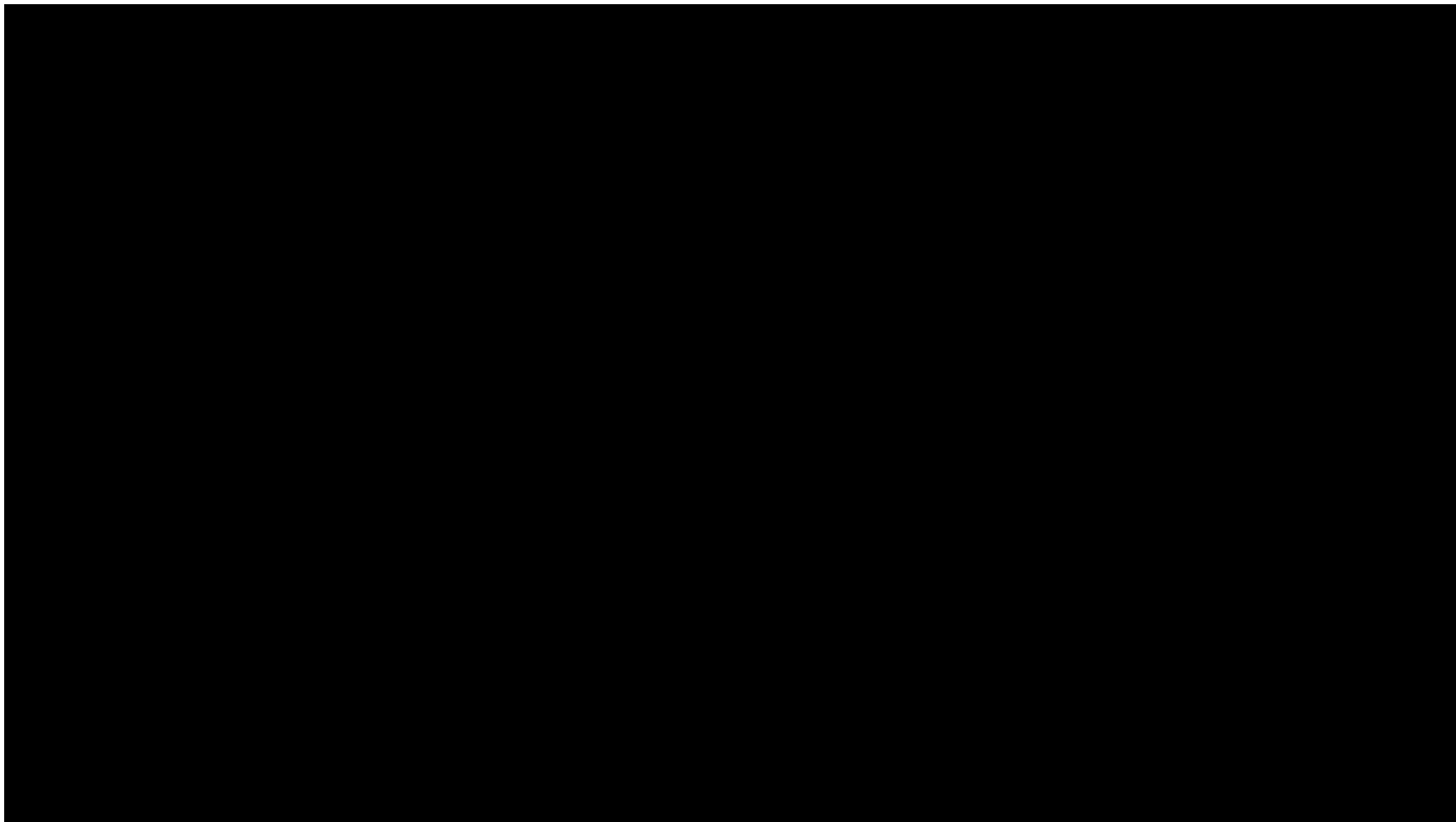
R.E.A.L. Parenting

Responsible. Employed. Active. Loving.

AGENDA

- **Why R.E.A.L. and a Fatherhood Initiative? – Setting the context**
- **R.E.A.L. Parenting for Stronger Families Pilot program eligibility, process and overall journey and outcomes**
- **Westchester County Executive Rob Astorino's Fatherhood Initiative programming**
- **Questions & Comments**

The R.E.A.L. Parenting Pilot Program (video)



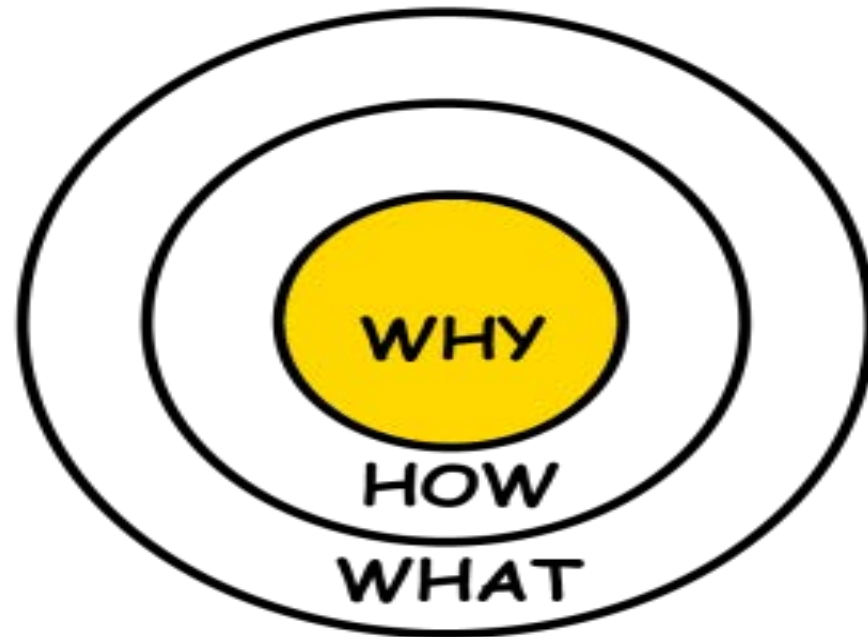
Source: <http://www3.westchestergov.com/fatherhood-initiative?id=0>

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“People don’t buy what you do; they buy why you do it...”



“...And what you do simply proves what you believe.” – Simon Sinek, Author

PRESERVE

P

**ESSENTIAL
SERVICES**

PROTECT

P

TAX
PAYERS

PROMOTE

P

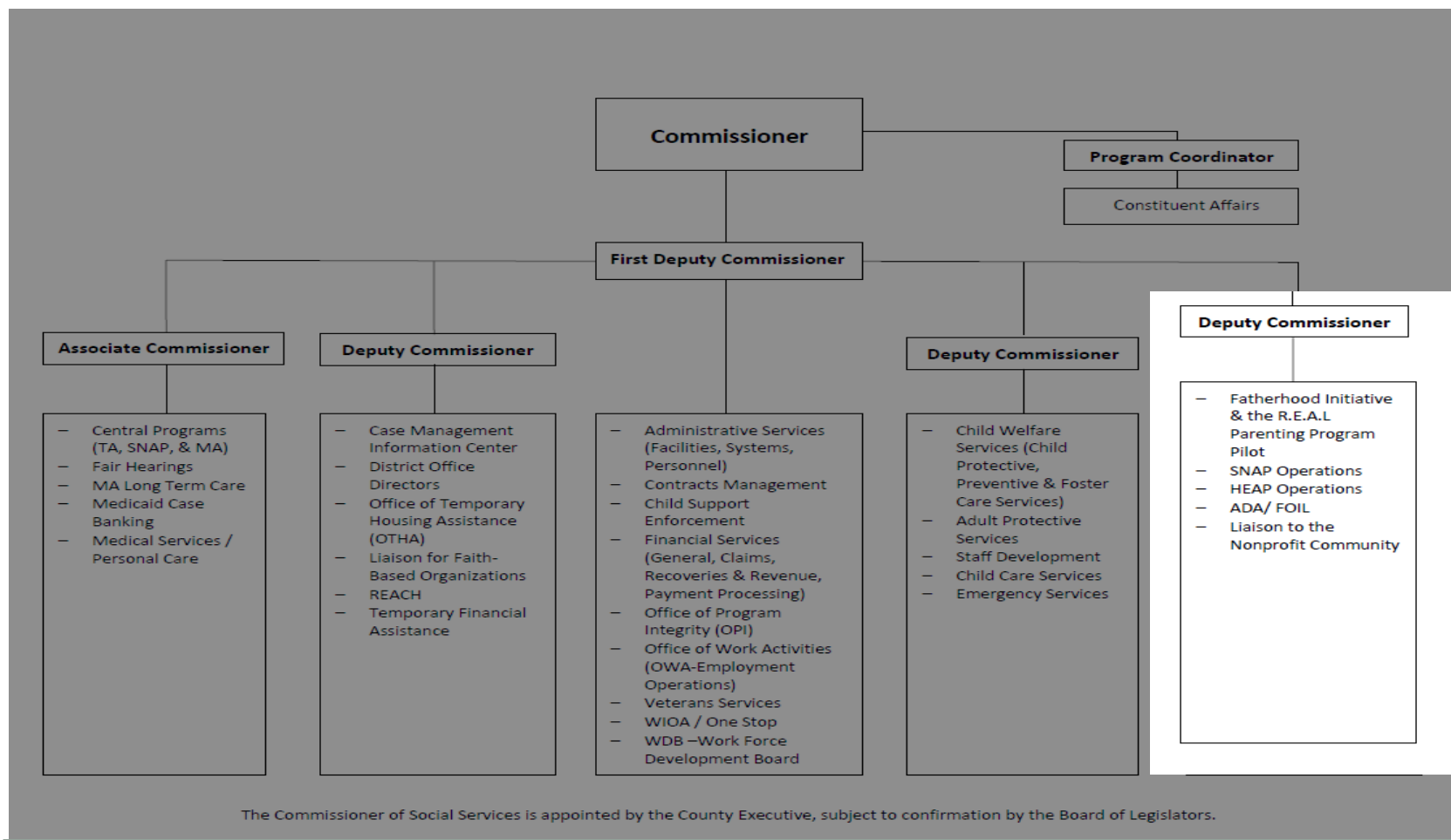
ECONOMIC
GROWTH



County Executive Astorino uses three guideposts –
“Three Ps” – to manage Westchester County:

- Preserve Essential Services
- Protect Taxpayers
- Promote Economic Growth

The Department of Social Services (DSS) is the single largest county department by budget and employees



There is a crisis...fatherlessness

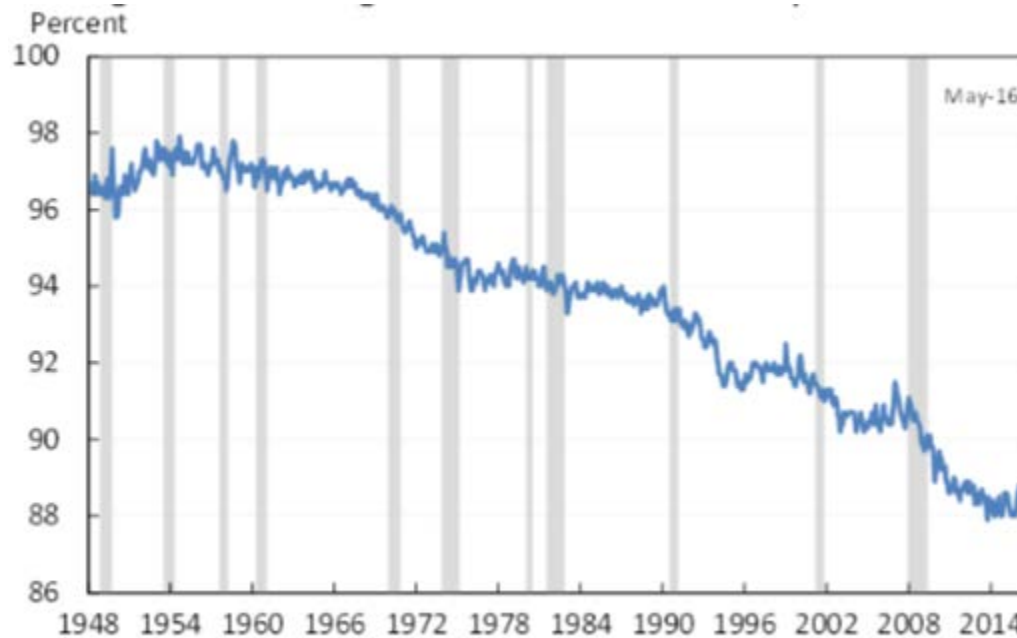


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U.S. prime-age male labor force participation rate has fallen steadily over the past 60 years



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey; CEA calculations.

The number of prime-age men not in the labor force who have not worked in the prior year increased from 73% in 1988 to 83% in 2015

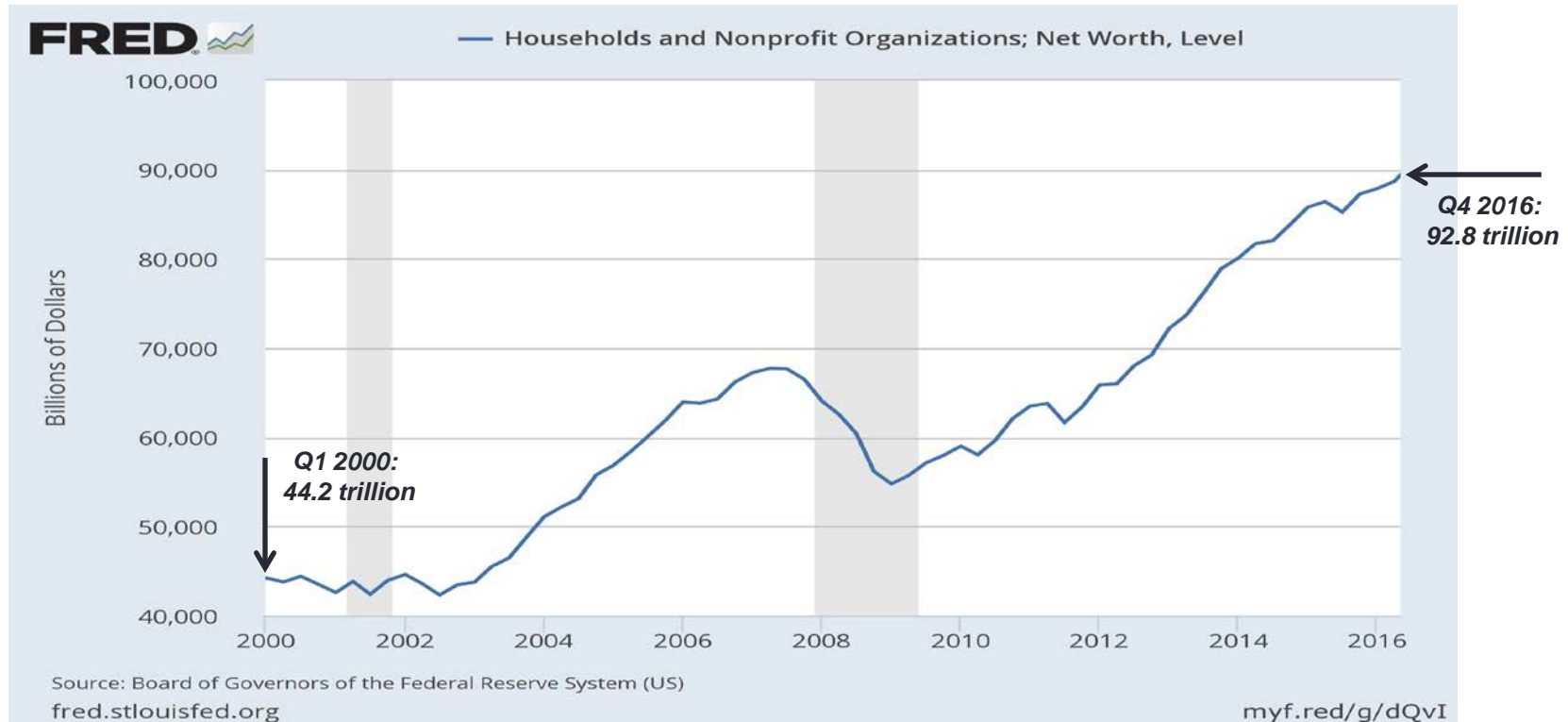
Source: Council of Economic Advisers, *The Long-Term Decline in Prime-Age Male Labor Force Participation*, Executive Office of the President, June 2016
https://cbam.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/page/files/20160320_cea_primeage_male_fm.pdf

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The net worth of U.S. households and nonprofits more than doubled from Q1 2000 to Q4 2016 to nearly \$93 trillion...



...yet challenges abound for those at the margins in our society, particularly in Westchester County...otherwise considered an affluent county

Westchester County is an affluent county, compared to the U.S. and New York State, however pockets of poverty exist

	<i>Median</i>	<i>Multiple vs. U.S.</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Multiple vs. U.S.</i>
United States	53,889	1.0	75,558	1.0
New York	59,269	1.1	86,825	1.1
Westchester County	83,958	1.6	134,714	1.8

- Average Westchester County household income of \$135,000 is nearly twice that United States' income of \$76,000 and well head of new York's income of \$87,000
 - Nearly 70% make \$50,000 or more
 - About 18% make over \$200,000, compared to 8% for New York State and just over 5% for the United States
 - Meanwhile, 5% makes less than \$10,000 a year, compared to 7% for the United States and almost 8% for New York State

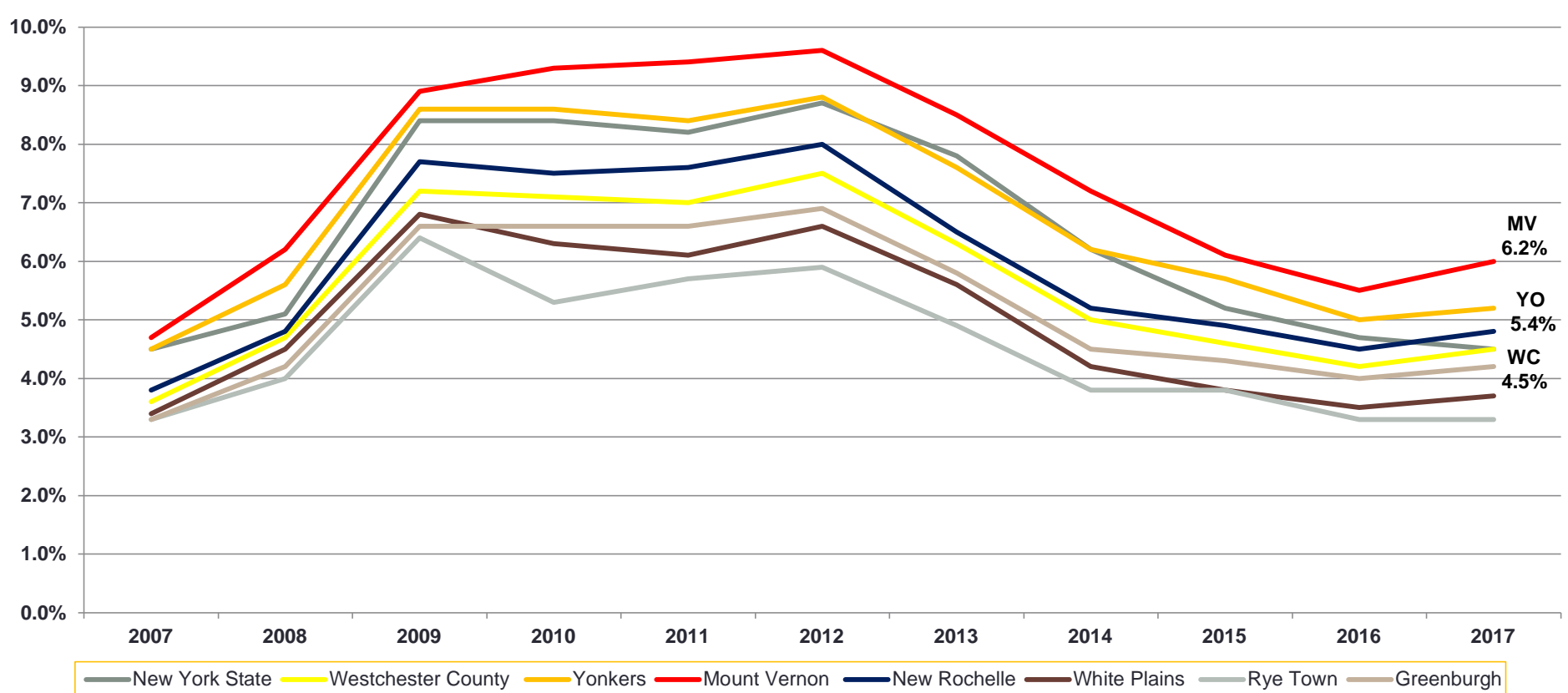
Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Children Characteristics. 2011-15.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

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The employment recovery in our major urban centers lags that of the county as a whole



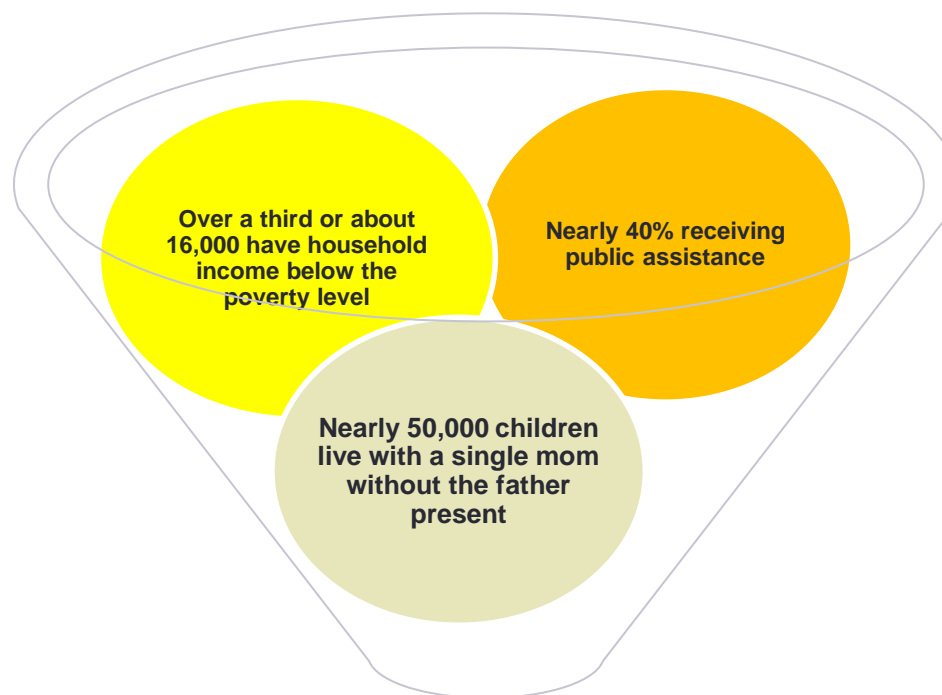
Source: New York State, Labor Market Regions, Metropolitan Areas, Counties, and Municipalities of at least 25,000 Population, Local Area Unemployment Statistics Program as of June 2007-2017, <https://www.labor.ny.gov/stats/LSLAUS.htm>

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The absence of a father presents serious challenges for the mother and child



Source: American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Children Characteristics. 2011-15.
https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml

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What are the fiscal and social implications of fatherlessness?

Higher Dropout Rates

Poor Health

Substance Abuse

Low Self Esteem

Higher Rates of Teen pregnancy

Increased Risk of Juvenile Delinquency

¹ Howard S. Weisler, 2002, p.15

Just the Facts

Individuals from father absent homes are

279%

more likely to carry guns and deal drugs than peers living with their fathers.

SOURCE: Allen, A. N., & Le, C. C. (2012). Drugs, guns, and disadvantaged youths: Co-occurring behavior and the code of the street. *Crime & Delinquency*, 58(6), 932-953.

National Fatherhood Initiative

FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

Just the Facts

Adolescents in single-mother and single-father families are at higher risk of risky behaviors, victimization and mental distress compared to those in two-parent families.

SOURCE: Jablonska, B., & Lindberg, L. (2007). Risk behaviours, victimization and mental distress among adolescents in different family structures. *Social Psychiatry & Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 42, 656-663.

National Fatherhood Initiative

FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

Just the Facts

Allowing new fathers to be involved in caring for their child in the first days of a child's life can have positive long-term benefits.

SOURCE: Anthes, E. (2010, May/June). Family guy. *Scientific American Mind*.

National Fatherhood Initiative

FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

The impact of the “father factor” made R.E.A.L.

Just the Facts

Adolescent boys with absent fathers are more likely to engage in delinquency than those with fathers who are present.

SOURCE: from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health. Cobb-Clark, D. A., & Tekin, E. (2014).

National Fatherhood Initiative

NEW! FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

Just the Facts

In America, **23.6%** of children (17.4 million) lived in father-absent homes in 2014.

SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau (2015)

National Fatherhood Initiative

NEW! FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

Just the Facts

Higher quality father daughter relationships is a protective factor against engagement in risky sexual behaviors.

SOURCE: Ellis, B. J., Schlomer, G. L., Tilley, E. H., & Butler, E. A. (2012).

National Fatherhood Initiative

NEW! FATHER FACTS SEVENTH EDITION

Westchester County Executive Astorino's Fatherhood Initiative branding concept

facebook

I love being a Dad because _____.

#DadBeThere
Share the moment.



Making memories.



#DadBeThere
Share the moment.

#DadBeThere

Selfie time!

#DadBeThere
Share the moment.



Instagram



This is your time.



#DadBeThere
Share the moment.

#DadBeThere

What a “fatherhood initiative” is not

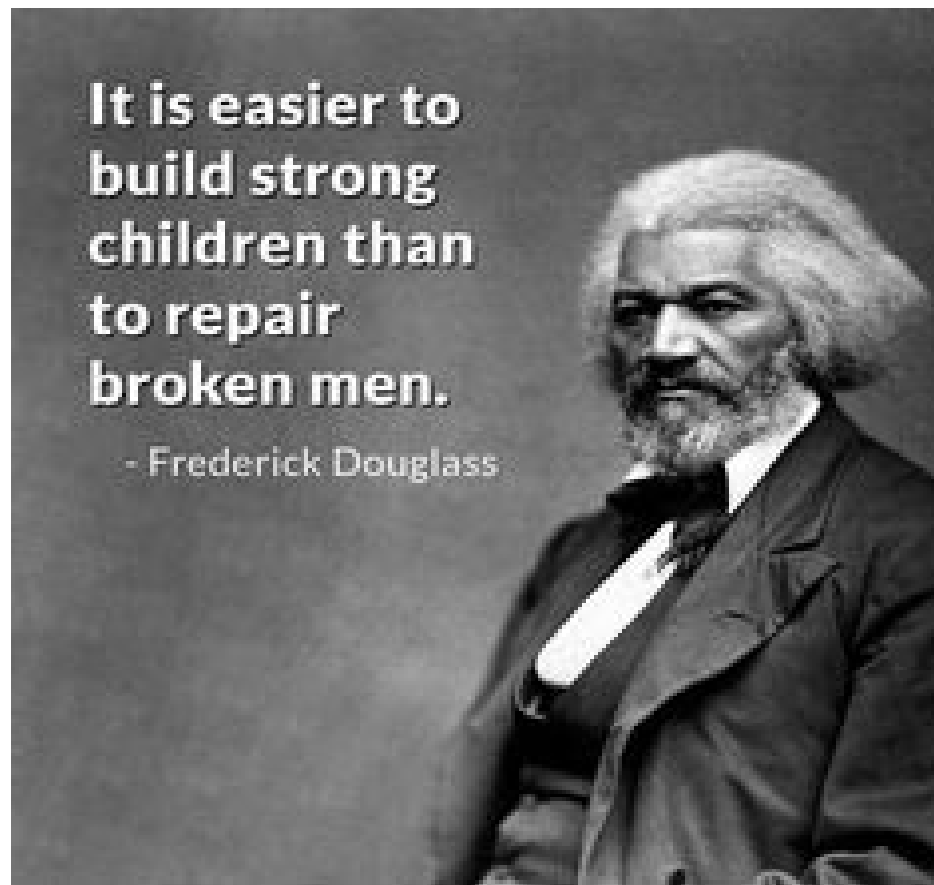
- A way to absolve fathers of their responsibilities
- A short-term “flavor of the month” program for a LDSS
- A total focus on fathers, excluding the needs of women and children
- A heavy-handed way to get fathers to pay child support

What a “fatherhood initiative” is

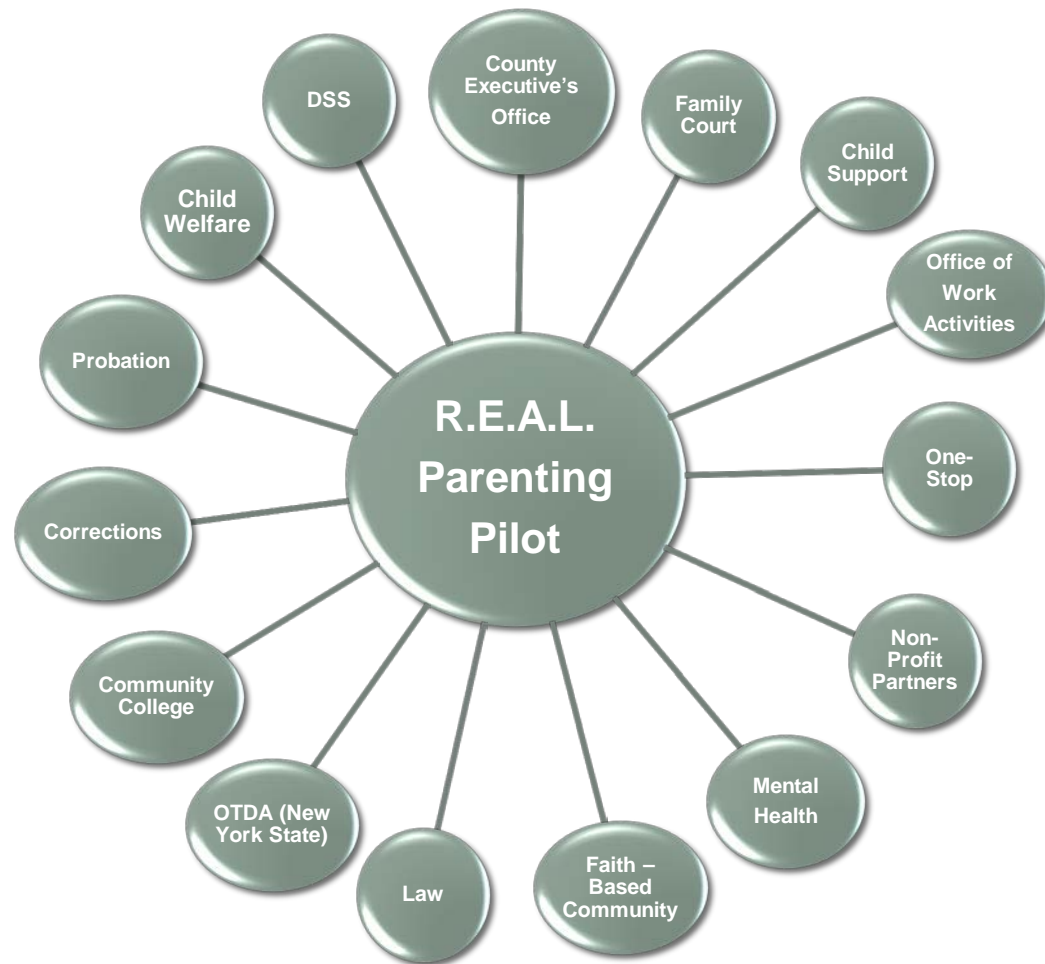
- Another tool to build our family engagement strategies
- Recognition of the positive role fathers play in the lives of their children
- A way to improve collaboration across “systems”

The goal of the R.E.A.L. pilot goes beyond just reducing arrears and increasing child support payments

- Equipping non-custodial parents to:
 - Learn effective parenting and life skills
 - Find sustainable employment
 - Achieve self-sufficiency



The R.E.A.L. Parenting Pilot is a true example of cross departmental & “system” collaboration



R.E.A.L. Parenting

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R.E.A.L. Parenting Pilot Program Eligibility

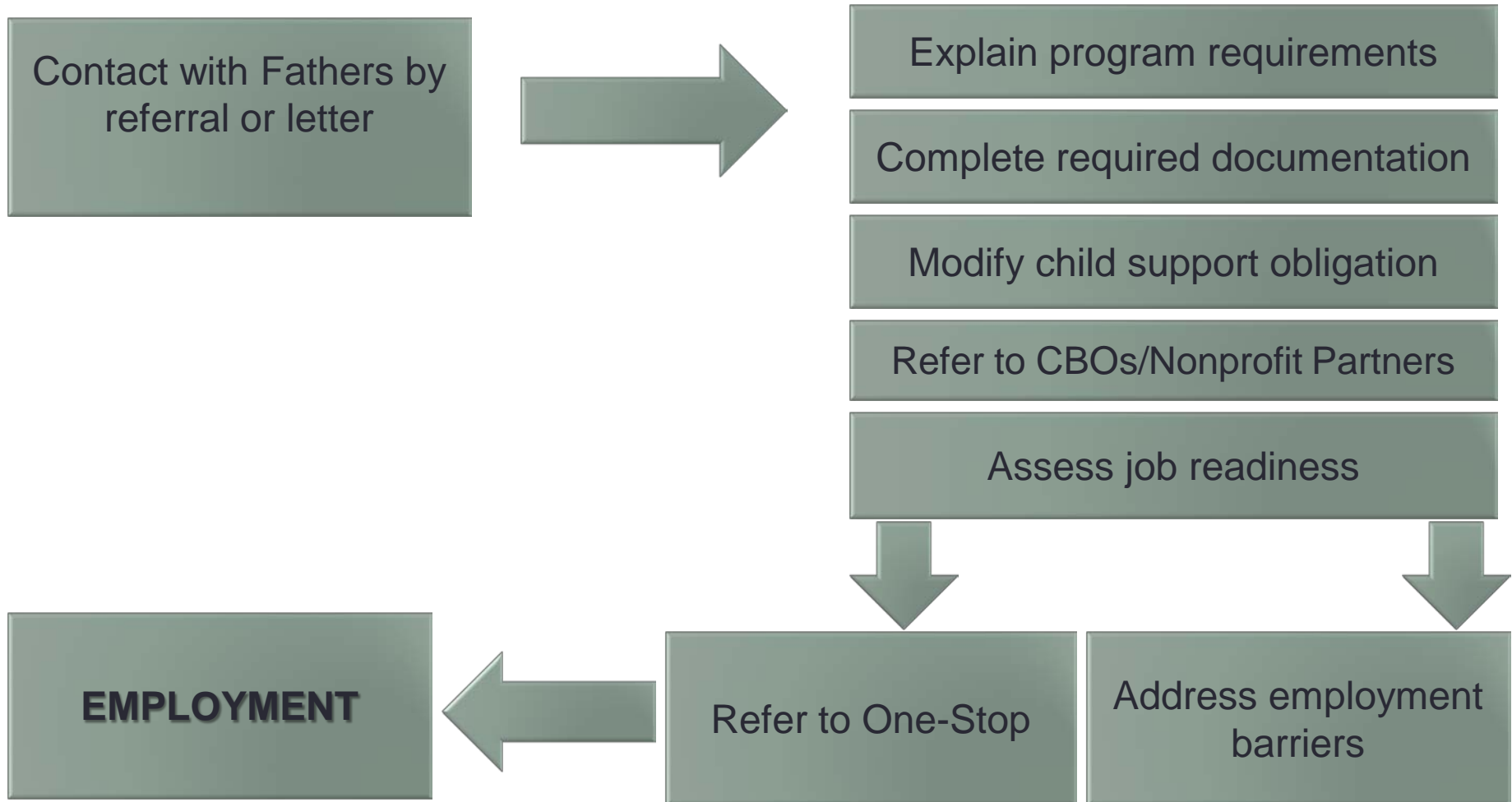
- Participation in the pilot is voluntary (limited to 25 participants)
- Eligible non-custodial parents (NCPs) include those who are:
 - Receiving Temporary assistance (TA), i.e. cash assistance
 - Currently underemployed or unemployed
 - Have a current support order
 - Have state-owed arrears over \$500
 - Have no history of domestic violence

Felony convictions will not exclude the NCP from participation

R.E.A.L. Parenting Pilot milestones

- Participants will have their arrears reduced on a gradual basis as they meet the following milestones:
 - 25% reduction for completing employment/parenting program
 - 25% reduction once employed for 90 days
 - Arrears reduced to \$500 for paying for 12 consecutive months

Process Flow



The early stages of the pilot presented a few challenges

- Developing a program that fits your local agency
- Building effective system-wide coordination
- Recruiting NCPs to be participants
- Establishing trust with the NCPs and removing skepticism
- Getting NCPs job-ready
- Securing sustainable employment for the NCPs

A future program evaluation will do a deeper dive into the pilot's overall operation and effectiveness

“Describe how you felt before coming into the R.E.A.L. Parenting Pilot”



Note: Ten responses each from nine non-custodial parents (fathers) in the R.E.A.L. Parenting for Stronger Families pilot on 24 January 2017.

The path forward



- Going forward, our emphasis will continue to focus on the pilot values:
 - Learn effective parenting and life skills
 - Find sustainable employment
 - Achieve self-sufficiency

R.E.A.L. Outcome Stats and Quotes

- 20% of NCPs are working with the balance engaged in job search or job training programs
- Two-thirds of NCPs have received state-owed arrears reductions
- \$100K in state-owed arrears reductions and other adjustments have been made to date

“Coming into this program is like a breath of fresh air. You have someone who can support you.”
– Don

“ I didn’t think it was possible for me to get the help I’m getting today.”
-Marquise

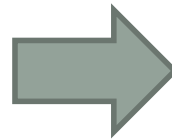
“You have to have a certain level of commitment. You have to have a certain level of conviction. If you take those things and carry it through, it will come to an end [state-owed arrears reduced].”
- Clinton

Pilot evaluation offers potential for systemic change

- Prepare a summary report of pilot outcomes for the Office for Temporary and Disability Assistance (OTDA)
- Offer recommendations to key pilot stakeholders:
 - DSS
 - ✓ Expand the pilot to a larger cohort
 - ✓ Change eligibility criteria
 - ✓ Organizational structure
 - ✓ Staff training
 - Family Court
 - ✓ Review of operational protocols among DSS, Family Court and Law
 - National/State
 - ✓ Institutionalize the pilot



Our Goal



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SAVE THE DATE
TUESDAY, APRIL 3, 2018

4th ANNUAL NEW YORK FATHERING CONFERENCE
WESTCHESTER COUNTY CENTER, WHITE PLAINS, NY



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Questions & Comments



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