

**Creating A City-Wide Initiative  
to Promote Responsible Fatherhood in  
Baytown, Texas**

Final Report Prepared For:

City of Baytown

Prepared By:

National Fatherhood Initiative®

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## Introduction

The City of Baytown, Texas, partnered with National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) to create a city-wide initiative to promote responsible fatherhood. The framework for creating the initiative is NFI's Community Mobilization Approach™ (CMA), which has been implemented in states (e.g., Texas, Indiana, Ohio, Rhode Island), counties (e.g., Prince George's, MD, Wapello, IA), and cities (e.g., Milwaukee, Pittsburgh, Sioux Falls) across the United States to launch initiatives that promote responsible fatherhood.

Baytown's CMA, diagrammed in Figure 1 below, consists of three phases: (1) a needs and assets assessment of Baytown's ability to promote responsible fatherhood; (2) a Leadership Summit on Fatherhood attended by Baytown's leaders; and (3) implementing an action plan for a fatherhood initiative generated by a cross-section of Baytown's sectors.

Figure 1



This report summarizes Phases 1 through 3 of the initiative.

## The Community Mobilization Workshop

To introduce the CMA to the community, NFI conducted a full-day workshop on January 31, 2024, attended by 18 city leaders representing seven sectors. During the CMA workshop, Baytown leaders decided on the issues affected by father absence and presence that they considered important for NFI to gather secondary data about. NFI followed up with the attendees to obtain local data that could be included in the Secondary Data section of the **Assessment of Programs & Services for Fathers in Baytown, Texas**. NFI staff identified additional local, state, and national data included in that assessment. A few of the attendees participated in the focus groups, which were conducted on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and highlighted in the Focus Group Results section of the **Assessment of Programs & Services for Fathers in Baytown, Texas**.

## Phase 1 – An Assessment of Programs & Services for Fathers in Baytown, Texas

Phase 1 involved the application of NFI's research methodology called the ***Rapid Ethnographic Assessment of Programs and Services (REAPS)*** for fathers. This REAPS helped Baytown leaders:

- Identify the need to address father absence with an emphasis on reducing drug and opioid misuse.
- Identify the services and programs for fathers that exist in the greater Baytown area and the service and program gaps.
- Identify the assets in the greater Baytown area that can be mobilized to promote responsible fatherhood.
- Identify potential strategies to weave the promotion of responsible fatherhood into the social fabric of Baytown.
- Collect information critical to attracting funds for a sustainable city-wide fatherhood initiative.

The REAPS methodology had four components:

1. Gathering of secondary (existing) data.
2. Conducting focus groups with leaders in different sectors.
3. Analyzing secondary data and focus group results, and report writing.
4. Creating a city "assets" map using the results of components 1 through 3.

The REAPS process culminated in **An Assessment of Programs & Services for Fathers in Baytown, Texas**, completed in April 2024 and distributed at the Leadership Summit on Fatherhood highlighted in Phase 2 of the CMA.

## **Phase 2 – The Leadership Summit on Fatherhood**

NFI and the City of Baytown held the Leadership Summit on Fatherhood (LSF) on August 9, 2024.

The objectives of the LSF were to:

- Help leaders from across sectors combat father absence and promote responsible fatherhood.
- Help leaders capture a vision for how to promote responsible fatherhood.
- Shape an action plan to promote fatherhood in all areas of the community.
- Understand why father absence is a crisis and why fathers are so important to the well-being of children.
- Realize that the consequences of father absence affect the leaders as well; therefore, every leader has a stake in promoting responsible fatherhood.
- Identify ideas for how to promote responsible fatherhood.
- Understand that they, as leaders, can do something to promote responsible fatherhood within their sector.
- Learn about NFI's ability to help the community build capacity to serve fathers and families.

The agenda was as follows:

<b>Time</b>	<b>Event/Topic</b>
9:00 a.m. to 9:15 a.m.	Introductions & Welcome
9:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.	Breakfast, Introduction to the Fatherhood Movement, & Overview of the Baytown Assessment of Programs & Services
9:45 a.m. to 10:15 a.m.	Keynote Speaker
10:15 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.	Facilitated Group Discussions
11:15 a.m. to 11:45 a.m.	Reconvene, Report Backs, & Next Steps

80 Baytown leaders attended, representing the following sectors:

- Public safety
- Business
- Education
- Civic
- Government
- Social Service
- Health
- Media
- Faith-based

NFI collected the strategies captured on flip charts from the facilitated group discussions and transferred them to a document sent to the Phase 3 Planning Committee on August 14, 2024. These strategies will inform the action planning process highlighted in Phase 3.

An [article](#) published in the Baytown Sun on August 16, 2024, highlighted the LSF.

### **Phase 3 – Anchor The Initiative with An Action Plan**

The third and final phase of the Baytown CMA is anchoring the initiative with an action plan.

This phase will help Baytown leaders accomplish the following:

- Create a multi-sector advisory committee comprised of 10-20 leaders who will finalize the action plan.
- Identify one or two short-term actions in each sector to get the initiative rolling.
- Make plans to use available fatherhood resources.

Eight Baytown leaders met on August 9, 2024, to begin work on the Baytown Action Plan to Promote Responsible Fatherhood.

At the conclusion, two out of the 11 sectors of the Action Plan were completed.

The multi-sector advisory committee will continue to meet and complete the first draft of the Action Plan in the coming months.

### **Identifying the Lead Agency**

The most critical next step is for the City of Baytown to identify the Lead Agency for the Baytown Fatherhood Initiative.

The primary responsibilities of the Lead Agency will be to:

- Assemble the multi-sectoral planning committee and coordinate the planning committee meetings.
- Ensure that an Action Plan to Promote Responsible Fatherhood is created and monitored for follow-through.
- Develop and manage a sustainability plan.
- Create the initiative's structure (e.g., initiative's name, mission/vision, whether to create a distinct 501c3 or make it a part of the Lead Agency, and staff allocation)

NFI and the City of Baytown met with several agencies that expressed interest in being the Lead Agency, and one agency is still exploring its interest. The City of Baytown will also explore the feasibility of remaining the Lead Agency.

## **Conclusion**

The partnership between the City of Baytown and NFI has successfully laid the groundwork for a sustainable and impactful fatherhood initiative through the systematic application of the CMA. By following the three phases—needs and assets assessment, leadership summit, and action plan development—Baytown has positioned itself to effectively address the challenges related to father absence and promote responsible fatherhood.

Completing the first two sectors of the Baytown Action Plan to Promote Responsible Fatherhood is a significant milestone demonstrating the city's commitment to this cause. The ongoing efforts of the multi-sector advisory committee will be crucial in finalizing the Action Plan and implementing the strategies identified during the LSF. The city's dedication to this initiative highlights the importance of fatherhood in the well-being of families and children and sets an example for other communities looking to tackle similar challenges.

As the initiative moves forward, the continued collaboration of Baytown's leaders across various sectors through the establishment of a Lead Agency will be essential in ensuring the long-term success and sustainability of the fatherhood initiative. The work accomplished thus far, combined with the strong foundation established through the CMA, provides a promising outlook for the future of responsible fatherhood in Baytown.