

Improving Public Safety by Positively Changing Lives

Strength in Families

Briefing Update
October 2024



Individuals Impacted*:

Fathers: 966

Spouses/Co-Parents: 1,555

Children: 3,120

SIF Program Completions:

579

Parent Related Outcomes**:

71% of the respondents reported that they work better together as parents with at least one of their child(ren)'s mothers.

85% of the respondents reported that they feel more confident about their ability to stay connected with their child(ren).

94% of the respondents reported that they feel more confident that they have the skills necessary to be an effective parent.

*Calculations as of October 31, 2024, Number of spouses/co-parents and children.

**Calculations from SIF post-program survey as of August 5, 2024.

Our Mission

To partner with reentering parents in the development of skills and knowledge that focus on positive parenting, and healthy relationships, to create safe, stable and nurturing environments for children and families.

Our Vision

We envision children living in safe homes, having a positive relationship with parents and care-providers, and being supported by families who have the skills and access to the resources and services needed to thrive.

Our History

Like national trends, individuals incarcerated within Washington DOC facilities often face a range of complex and interrelated challenges. Most incarcerated men (and women) are also parents, with the responsibility to support and care for their children. Recognizing the need, DOC applied for and received a 5- year Responsible Fatherhood grant from the Administration for Children and Families in 2015. Now funded through DOC, exceptional strides have been made in implementation and continuous quality improvement. Elements of the program are currently being evaluated for change to align with other Reentry and family programs. The program initially targeted a set of rural counties with disproportionate rates of poverty and incarceration. The current program includes a combination of both rural and urban counties which includes the state's largest and most diverse county. The Strength in Families program focuses on building skills and knowledge in the following key areas:

1. Healthy Relationships with Partners and Co-Parents
2. Responsible and Positive Parenting
3. Healthy communication skills

Eligibility

- A father or "father figure" of a child ages birth to 18 years.
- Approximately 24-36 months from release from a total confinement facility (we accept applications for review up to 48 months from ERD or transfer to EHM).
- SIF program is offered at WCC, SCCC, CCCC, King/Pierce/Thurston/Lewis/Kitsap/Grays Harbor/Lewis/Skamania/Clark/Cowlitz/Wahkiakum/Pacific counties and Reynolds Reentry Center/Olympia Reentry Center/Peninsula Reentry Center.
 - *We are currently facilitating Parenting inside out (PIO) at WCCW as a pilot program, targeting incarcerated individuals with dependency cases.*
- The program screening process also considers criminal history, family and community safety, and prison behavior.

Program Structure

Participants will take two classes pre-release: Parenting Inside Out, Walking the Line

Parenting Inside Out (PIO): This curriculum taught by SIF Instructors is approximately 60 hours in length. PIO is an evidence-based program developed specifically for incarcerated and criminal justice-involved parents. The program builds skills and strengths in parents based on cognitive behavioral and social learning theories with proven methodologies for creating positive change within incarcerated parents. PIO includes topics such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, anger management, family dynamics, giving effective directions, discipline techniques, using positive reinforcement, and more.

Walking the Line (WTL): This curriculum taught by SIF Instructors is approximately 28 hours in length. This individually-based curriculum focuses on the development of a considered approach to relationships and life through discussions of families of origin, individual characteristics, values, perceived roles as a partner and a father, and the development of skills in interpersonal communication, emotion and stress regulation, and conflict management.

Case Management Services

Each participant is assigned to a Case Manager who will begin partnering with them and their families in the facility, approximately 24 months prior to release. Case Managers are assigned to a facility and provide case management for 6 months or more post-release for their assigned counties as well. Participants releasing to King, Pierce, Kitsap, Mason, Grays Harbor, Thurston, Lewis, Skamania, Clark, Cowlitz, Wahkiakum, and Pacific Counties will continue to receive SIF case management services post-release. Case Managers will work with the participant to identify their personal and family strengths and challenges as well as provide connections to community resources for all participants. Among other services, SIF Case Managers provide the following for participants:

- Provide strength based, trauma informed & culturally sensitive case management
- Support fathers re-entering the communities to better support them
- Assist fathers with reintegration
- Provide support to children and families
- Connect participants with dependency cases to the dependency process
- Provide a variety of reentry resources based on Individual needs

What our participants have to say

"This is the best class or program I have ever attended and been a part of. I believe in this program; it has given me so many tools and how to understand others. This program really helps build families and communities together." - Past SIF Participant

"While in SIF I felt very comfortable about opening. I think the program gave me a new insight on how to deal with my wife and kids. The program is a tool that everyone should have to lead their family." - Past SIF Participant

"This is life changing program. The children, families and our community will benefit from fathers like me who will use the tools learned from Strength in Families. This would not be possible without the amazing staff, coaches who dedicate their life and heart to this cause." – Past SIF Participant

For more information:

StrengthInFamilies@doc1.wa.gov