

CFA Boosts Motivation, Improves Parenting, and Helps Fathers Earn Their HSE

The Urban Institute’s July 2014 report, “The CUNY Fatherhood Academy (CFA): A Qualitative Evaluation,” presents findings on the design, implementation and outcomes of participants in the CFA program. It draws upon interviews with CFA administrators and staff, CFA advisory group members, administrators from CUNY’s central office and LaGuardia Community College, and staff from the New York City’s Young Men’s Initiative and the Open Society Foundations’ Campaign for Black Male Achievement, as well as focus groups with CFA participants and CFA administrative data.

The report assesses CFA participant experiences and outcomes, examines the importance of the program’s college campus location, and offers recommendations for program modifications.

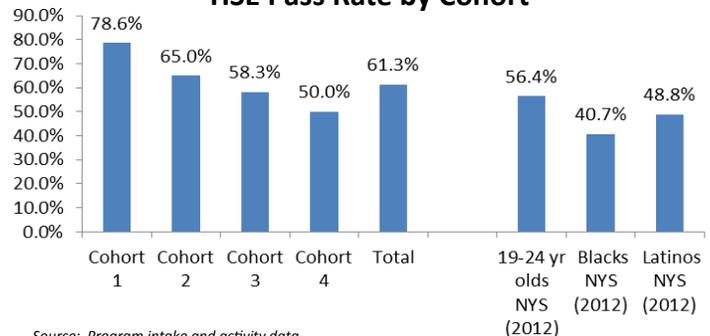
Evaluation Findings

- Life Changing.** Participants describe CFA as placing them on a path to a better future, and credit the program with increasing their motivation and their ability to pursue education and employment.
- HSE Attainment.** CFA serves young fathers who are disconnected from education and employment, and who have high rates of criminal justice system involvement. In only 16 weeks, the program helps its participants earn high school equivalency (HSE) diplomas at rates above the NYS average (61.3% average pass rate among CFA participants, compared to 56.4% average among 19 to 24 year olds in New York State).
- Community of Fathers.** The program’s focus on fatherhood was the primary draw for participants. The fathers value the parenting workshops and peer learning opportunities, and highlight the bond that develops between cohort members as key to program retention.
- College Campus.** Stakeholders and participants credit CFA’s location on the LaGuardia Community College campus as a source of motivation and self-confidence for the fathers. The campus setting helps CFA participants develop a sense of belonging and possibility, which the fathers report was missing in HSE programs they had experienced elsewhere. In addition, the staff, resources and space provided by LaGuardia enhance the services that CFA can deliver to its participants.

What is the CUNY Fatherhood Academy?

CFA is a no-cost high school equivalency and college preparatory program designed to promote responsible parenting and foster economic stability for unemployed and underemployed young fathers ages 18 to 24 years through education, employment, and personal development. Participants enroll as cohorts and engage in parenting workshops, high school equivalency preparations courses, college exploration and enrollment support services, and job readiness services. CFA launched in 2012 at LaGuardia Community College as a component of the Young Men’s Initiative and with funding from the Campaign for Black Male Achievement at the Open Society Foundations. In 2016, with new funding from Mayor Bill de Blasio, the program will double its capacity at LaGuardia Community College, and will expand to Hostos Community College and Kingsborough Community College.

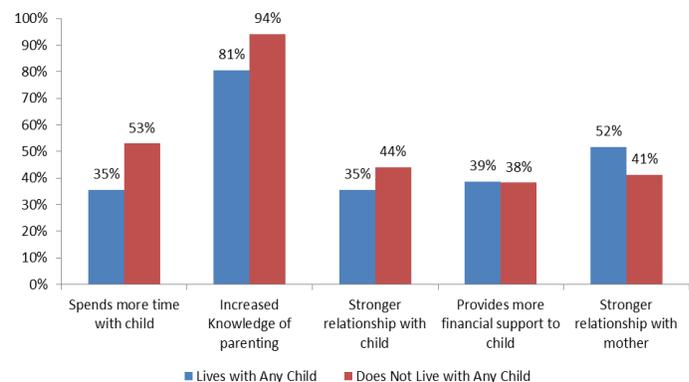
HSE Pass Rate by Cohort*



Source: Program intake and activity data.

*Observed decline in pass rate across cohorts not representative of declining program performance. Higher pass rate among earlier cohorts reflects successful retesting post-program. It is anticipated that pass rates of later cohorts will climb with subsequent retesting.

Parenting Changes Following Program



Source: Program intake and activity data.

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