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NEW REPORT SHOWS EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG FATHERS CAN INCREASE EARNINGS AND CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

New York, NY—As seen in a variety of recent initiatives and at least one major bill in Congress, programs that aim to help young noncustodial fathers fulfill their responsibilities for their children are generating significant interest among policymakers. A new report by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV) reveals that six such programs, scattered around the country, produced encouraging results for fathers and families, including increased earnings and payment of child support.

The report, *Working Dads*, is the culmination of P/PV's evaluation of Fathers at Work, a national demonstration launched in 2001 and funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. Fathers at Work programs provided an unusual combination of employment, child support and fatherhood services to low-income (and often formerly incarcerated) noncustodial fathers, ages 18 through 30, through six well-established nonprofit organizations: Center for Employment Opportunities and Vocational Foundation, Inc., both in New York City; STRIVE (Support and Training Result in Valuable Employees) in Chicago; Impact Services, Inc., in Philadelphia; Rubicon Programs, Inc., in Richmond, CA; and Total Action Against Poverty in Roanoke, VA.

The P/PV study found that:

- Fathers at Work participants earned \$11,025 per year at follow-up, about \$4,602 more than the year prior to enrollment and *almost twice as much as comparison group fathers* earned at follow-up.
- Participants with support orders in place paid an average of \$90.32 in child support in the month before the follow-up interview, significantly more than they paid in the six months prior to enrollment (about \$32 per month) and significantly more than was paid by comparison group fathers with support orders in place (an average of \$38.13).
- The likelihood that participating fathers visited their child in the month before the follow-up survey was similar to that seen in the comparison groups and unchanged from when participants entered the programs; the quality of the fathers' relationships with their children was also similar to what was reported by the comparison groups.

“As a long-time funder of workforce development programs, Mott supported Fathers at Work with the belief that success in the labor market directly impacts the ability of young, noncustodial fathers to financially support their children,” said Neal Hegarty, a program officer in the foundation's Pathways Out of Poverty program. “We're pleased that the P/PV study has clearly

demonstrated this link and believe that workforce programs serving young men, including ex-offenders, would do well to enact these types of fatherhood services for their clients.”

“Fathers at Work was a turning point for us,” says Mindy Tarlow, executive director of CEO, which provides employment services to people with criminal records. “We knew our clients wanted to support their children, and Fathers at Work gave us a way to help them do it. Fathers want to support and reconnect with their kids when they come home from prison, and our ability to help them do that increased their motivation about work, gave them tools and techniques to be responsible parents, and provided a gateway to emotionally connecting with their kids.”

There are nearly 11 million noncustodial fathers in the United States today—and many of their children live in poverty. In fact, half of all children with family incomes below the poverty line live in households without a father present. While P/PV’s report does not suggest one particular approach to providing employment, fatherhood assistance or child support services (the six programs each implemented them differently), it highlights the potential of providing a combination of such services through a single community-based organization that has strong linkages to public child support agencies.

“The organizations that led these efforts—and other organizations like them—can be key partners for government agencies interested in helping young fathers live up to their responsibilities,” explains Sheila Maguire, P/PV’s vice president for labor market initiatives. “These organizations’ expertise in employment issues meant that they could meet young fathers where they are: in search of a job. And then build on that to reengage them with child support. Future policy efforts should leverage this insight.”

P/PV’s report can be found online at www.ppv.org.

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For 30 years, **Public/Private Ventures** has been a national leader in creating and strengthening programs that improve lives in low-income communities, using an approach rooted in three core principles:

- Innovation: We work with leaders in the field to identify promising existing programs or develop new ones;
- Research: We rigorously evaluate these programs to determine what is effective and what is not; and
- Action: We reproduce model programs in new locations, provide technical assistance where needed and inform policymakers and practitioners about what works.

P/PV is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with offices in Philadelphia, New York City and Oakland.