



Washington Fatherhood Council – Monthly Meeting

December 5, 2025 10:30am-12:00pm

Welcome, Introductions and Group Norms and Mission – 10:30-10:40am

Jose Romo initiated introductions and welcomed attendees to the space. The group reflected on the Fatherhood Council norms and mission.

- Council Norms
 - **Use I** statement, avoid using “we” or “us”
 - Participation** style, verbal interactions are preferred but chat responses are acceptable
 - Familiarize** yourself with the Councils values and commit to upholding those values
 - Assume** good or neutral intent in everyone
 - Listen** with curiosity and intent to learn
 - Allow** for diverse experiences and opinions
 - Check intention**, if you talk often, welcome opportunities to listen
 - Respond** rather than react when difficult topics are raised
 - Adhere** to confidentiality, share what you are comfortable sharing and unless otherwise stated, do not share what you hear
 - Mutual accountability**, we hold one another accountable and foster respect and kindness
- Jose shared a link to the Council’s mission and vision on the new website: [Washington Fatherhood Council | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#)
- We are working to have the old website automatically redirect to the new one, and we’re still transitioning content to the new site.
- You can find information on the [Provider Learning Series on the new site here](#).

Fatherhood Council Engagement & Planning Discussion – Jose Romo & Laura Alfani, 10:40-11:10am

Council members received an update on the initial engagement survey results and then broke into small groups to discuss Council priorities for 2026.

- Laura Alfani provided an update on the Fatherhood Council Engagement Survey
- If you haven’t taken the survey, here’s the link to share how you’d like to engage with the council: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9HRR7G7>
 - We were hoping to review the initial survey responses but are having difficulty accessing them. We will share them as soon as they are available.
- Members joined breakout groups based on their roles (state partner, community partner, and fathers) to discuss the following prompt: ***What should the Council’s priorities be for the next 12 months?***

Large Group Share-out:

- Our Group talked about regional groups – both having regional representation within the Council and also looking at existing regional groups to connect with to expand reach

and capacity.

- Perinatal screening tool for fathers – assessing where we are with that tool right now and how we can move that work forward
 - I would be great to partner with someone that could help it become a standardized tool so it can have the reliability and validity needed.
- Our group discussed the success and value of the Provider Learning Series and the Fatherhood Summit and the importance of continuing them.
- Fatherhood Council Roadshow – legislature & lived experience. Directors and legislators. Honors dads who came to retreat.
- Identifying and mapping where community organizations with support for fathers are to increase capacity and support.
 - We encourage all local organizations supporting fathers to add themselves to the [Father Friendly Resources Map of Washington State.](#)
- Sharing stories and data on the impact of the Council and fatherhood in general.
- Which state agency partners are participating and who else should be at the table.
- Policy impacts from H.R.1 and the very real risk of fathers losing Apple Health/Medicaid coverage - primarily via the work requirements or the change to six-month redetermination. Folks with marketplace coverage will also lose coverage. What support or assistance can the Council provide as these requirements roll out?
- I am interested in how the Citizen Review Panels could connect with the Fatherhood Council and align efforts/priorities.
- Case planning – how are we prioritizing and engaging fathers in Child Welfare. Supporting caseworkers to consider placement with dad as much as mom.
- Commerce – housing policy. Great time for the following year to support housing and fathering needs as a family. (housing provider learning series?)
- In terms of youth focused work, I am interested in the discussion around engagement and the intersection of pregnant/parenting youth and housing.
- Leadership engagement – engaging new leadership at the state agencies and the MOU.
- Community partners shared about fears they are hearing and how the Council could serve as a trusted resource by sharing clear information and offering ideas for responding to concerns.
- Here is a video that features Elder Hernandez in the Tri-Cities. Some of you already know that Elder is an early childhood educator with Head Start and he is very involved in supporting dads, including by soon starting a nonprofit to expand the number of dad support groups in the Tri-Cities utilizing the 24:7 Dad curriculum

Washington Men and Boys Leg/Policy Partner Sharing – Blair Daly 11:10-11:25am

Blair Daly provided an update on the work to establish a Commission for Men and Boys and led a conversation to discuss and explore connections/collaborations with the Council.

- Blair shared mission and vision of the [Washington Initiative for Boys and Men](#) (WIBM), which does advocacy journalism and grassroots political organizing focused on boys and men's issues.
- Blair provided an overview of the State of Fatherhood in Washington Study Report key findings:
- Blair provided an update on the work to introduce legislation to establish the Washington State Commission on Boys and Men
 - *Fathers and fatherhood figures experience stigmas and inequities.*
 - *Data and monitoring systems that track fathers' access to services are not fully developed, making it hard to address inequities.*
 - *Policies and approaches to fatherhood inclusion remain inconsistent.*
 - *Representation of fathers is limited.*
 - *Increased cross-agency funding, planning, and coordination are needed.*
 - *The Washington Fatherhood Council plays a unique and critical role in shaping solutions to these challenges.*
- The State of Fatherhood study will be post on the website soon: [Resources for Fathers | Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families](#).
- Blair provided an update on the work to introduce legislation to establish the [Washington State Commission on Boys and Men](#)
- [House Bill 1266](#) and [Senate Bill 5446](#) call for the establishment of a Washington State Commission on Boys and Men to produce policy recommendation focused on five areas:
 - *Education & Skills*
 - *Mental & Physical Health*
 - *Fatherhood, Family & Relationships*
 - *Jobs, Careers & Financial Health*
 - *Experiences of Males in Court Systems*
- As of 2025, there are 24 bipartisan legislative sponsors and numerous endorsing organizations.
- Looking forward to 2026 - Representative April Berg will be prime sponsor in 2026. We are expecting to see draft proposal language in January.
- Do you know if the existing states who have commissions on boys and men – do they have carved out language that requires representation from their state agencies?
 - There aren't any existing commissions that are the same as what we are trying to build, but Representative Berg will be the decision-maker on what the representation requirements of the Commission will look like.

Partner Share out – Steven Thibert, 11:20-11:45am

Attendees had the opportunity to share updates on work in their agency, organization or area.

- Executive Director of [Journeyman](#), Nicky Wilks, shared an overview of their work in the community:
- Journeyman is a non-profit organization offering mentorship programs and rites of passage

for boys and learning programs for youth and educators, highlights include:

- Partnering with schools to offer CIRCLES and group mentoring
- Working with schools to adapt the education system to support the needs of boys.
- Currently rolling out curriculum with local partners
- Transformational camps for fathers and sons that focus on building healthy relationships
- Vashon Island recently sponsored a pilot program for CIRCLES in community; this is the first time we've had public funding to pilot on issues of belonging.
- Adapted modern rites of passage working with boys ages 8-18

Closing 12:00pm – Steven Thibert, 11:45am

Thank you for your time and wisdom! Our next meeting is Friday, January 9 10:30am-12:00pm.

About the Fatherhood Council

The Washington Fatherhood Council is a collaborative, transformational group of more than 35 state and local providers, academics and — most importantly — fathers with lived expertise, which helps further the goals of reducing poverty and inequality through increased fatherhood access and belonging. The Council fosters service provider capacity, creates community for fathers, works for policy change and resource investment in fathers, and promotes their voices and experiences to transform family systems.

We know that:

- Child and family well-being improve when fathers are positively engaged in their children's lives.
- Fathers play a unique and important role in children's development.
- Fathers should have support and resources to become the fathers they aspire to be.