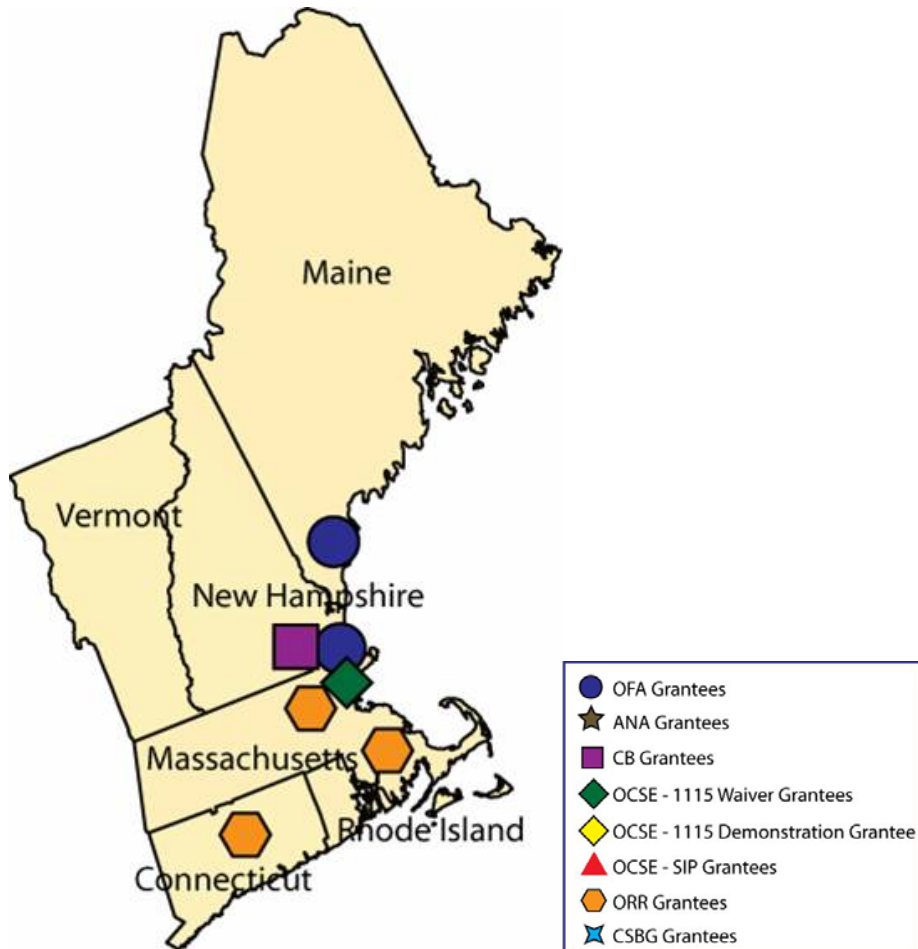


Region I

Regional Administrator: Hugh Galligan, hugh.galligan@acf.hhs.gov

Healthy Marriage Specialist: Josephine Hauer, josephine.hauer@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region I	
OFA	2
CB	1
OCSE	1
ORR	3
TOTAL	7



Regional Highlights

2006 Conference: "Dads Deserve the Best!"

ACF Region I co-sponsored the seventh annual New-England Fathering Conference titled, "Dads Deserve the Best!" in March 2006. The conference drew over 400 participants from the six New England States. The conference was opened by keynote speaker Jason De Parle, New York Time Senior Editor and author of *American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare*. Mr. DeParle described how through writing the book he came to appreciate the essential role dads play in the healthy development of children

and families. DeParle brought along Ken Thigpen, whose story is told in *American Dream*. A former drug addict, Mr. Thigpen is now employed and supports his son and step-children both financially and emotionally.

Certification Achievement

Connecticut Department of Social Services was awarded a \$1million, five year grant to expand its innovative Fatherhood programs and include healthy marriage and relationship education to low-income dads and couples.

Connecticut has pioneered establishing a certification process for fatherhood programs done in community or State agencies. This process has contributed significantly to creating key quality standards that help to assure programs that effectively serve dads and their children.

IN 2002, 7.8 percent of children in married-couple families were living in poverty, compared to 38.4 percent of children in female-householder families and 19.4 percent in father-only families. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P200-547, Table C8. Washington D.C.: GPO, 2003

Grantees in Region I

Collaborating Partners: Child and Family Services of New Hampshire, Casey Family Services, Department of Children, Youth and Families of New Hampshire

This Children's Bureau grantee is serving 60 couples and families each year that have adopted children from foster care or are caring for foster children. These couples with their children attend a family-style weekend retreat in rural New Hampshire. Couples attend a six to eight hour marriage skill building workshop on Saturday while children are involved with activities led by qualified staff. The marriage education curriculum used is PREP- Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program- which enhances communication, teaches conflict resolution skills and strengthens teamwork.

Family fun and relationship building activities are available on Friday night and Sunday. The program for children of all ages includes daycare for infants and toddlers, outdoor activities (boating, hiking, games, swimming in LAKE Ossipee) and indoor games organized by age group led by camp staff. The benefit of the retreat model for teaching couples key relationship skills includes respite and rejuvenation, couple-time and the opportunity to socialize with other adoptive parents. In 2006, the project added the option of attending an eight hour, one-day seminar in Concord to accommodate the families that were not able to attend the full weekend retreat.

Feedback from Program Coordinator

Zuska Sladeck finds that parents caring for foster children often do not make enough time to nurture and care for their relationship, which is so important to effectively dealing with the ongoing stresses and challenges they face in family life. "The workshop helps couples realize that no matter how crazy family life can get, they need to take time for themselves and work on keeping a warm rapport as a couple."

Father Friendly Initiative of the Massachusetts Public Health Department

The Office of Child Support Enforcement funded the Massachusetts Department of Revenue through an 1115 Waiver Project. Their Relationships for Real Life (RRL), a program coordinated by Father Friendly Initiative (FFI) in Boston, began recruiting men and their partners to participate in eight weeks of marriage and relationship education group sessions in late 2004. Building on a network of community partnerships with health agencies, hospitals, residential treatment and other organizations, the project has grown to serve over 200 participants that included teen fathers, low-income dads and their partners, Latina women in residential treatment, parents of middle school students, youth at risk and couples from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Feedback from Jan Quiram, Director of FFI

'Since incorporating the Relationships for Real Life program into our services, a whole new dimension was added to our efforts to serve the needs of low-income men of color. Most importantly, our staff members have been energized by the curriculum and the dynamic process of leading the groups. Working with couples and helping men to improve their relationships has been a welcome and relevant addition to our work. Group leaders commonly remark that the curriculum speaks to the real issues that clients face in their relationships that were not previously addressed by our services. The promotion and positive response to the RRL groups has raised the profile of Father Friendly Initiative in the community. Through participants' word of mouth and our new partnerships, referrals to other FFI services have increased. The range of services we provide are now generally better known and valued. I think it is likely that we may continue the program after the grant has finished.'

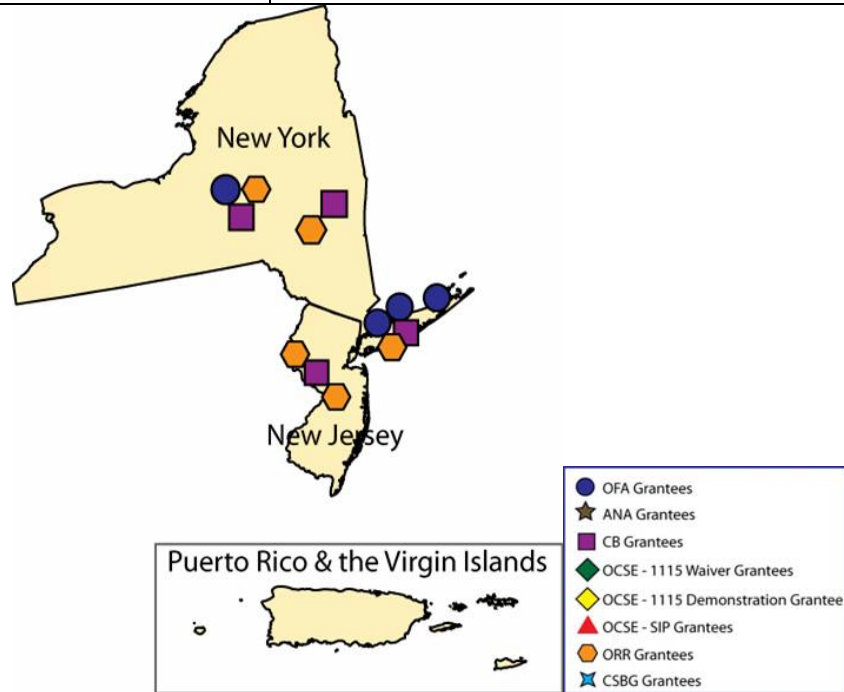
Region II

Regional Administrator: Mary Ann Higgins, maryann.higgins@acf.hhs.gov

Healthy Marriage Specialists: Maysee Yang- Jacobs, maysee.yang-jacobs@acf.hhs.gov

Barbara Andrews, Barbara.andrews@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region II	
OFA	4
CB	4
ORR	5
TOTAL	13



Regional Highlights

ACF Region II promoted the Healthy Marriage Initiative by educating the public and supporting the development of healthy marriage demonstration sites and activities through outreach and technical assistance meetings, presentations, exhibits and ongoing contact with State and community representatives. HMI regional staff delivered training to current HMI grantees and community members, often in conjunction with regional Faith-based and Community Initiative staff, about Federal funding resources, logic model preparation and grant writing.

Public awareness efforts also included issuing "ACF Region II Healthy Marriage Initiative News and Notes," a semi-monthly electronic newsletter distributed to individuals, community and faith-based organizations. State, local and Tribal governments throughout Region II sponsored a multi-day public exhibit and distributed information materials about healthy marriage and other topics of interest to commemorate National Family Week 2006. Region II HMI staff also hosted a presentation delivered by the Federal Occupational Health/ Employee

Assistance Program. Mindful of the impact work can have on the family, the presentation for National Family Week 2006 highlighted "Transitions in the Workplace for Employees-Coping with Change." Regional office staff was kept informed about HMI through periodic updates and introductions to different curriculums, such as "PREP" and "How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk/Jerkette."

Region II HMI staff participated actively on the ACF national Healthy Marriage Education workgroup that developed the ACF Marriage Education Curriculum Assessment Guide.

Grantees in Region II

JFS (Jewish Family Services) Bergen County

JFS Bergen is a program site for the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), an ORR grantee. JFS provides support services to individuals and families throughout its New Jersey community. An enthusiastic program coordinator has diligently reached out to the community, recruited participants, and provided marriage education to refugees and mentors. In conjunction with HIAS, this site has also hosted healthy marriage professional training events open to the community.

Catholic Charities of Trenton/El Centro

El Centro de Recursos Para Familias, a program within Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton, NJ, is a multi-service family resource and community building program serving Trenton and Mercer County, NJ. Their project, the El Centro Healthy Marriage Initiative, utilizes linguistically and culturally appropriate outreach and intervention services using both bilingual and bicultural staff to serve Latino couples. This Children's Bureau grantee's strong points have been creative and persistent outreach, integrating this service throughout the fabric of the organization, good networking in the community, and enthusiastic staff. The curriculum used is PREP and classes are conducted in Spanish. Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 was their first year.

Syracuse University

This Children's Bureau grantee has implemented the Healthy Marriage and Family Formation training project, a cross disciplinary program for graduate students in Social Work, Marriage and Family Therapy, and Child and Family Studies. This project has also hosted semi-annual workshops for community child welfare workers since Fall 2004. Attendance at the community workshops continues to increase and has exceeded the original target. The FY 2006 "For the Sake of children" workshop topics included "Narrative Therapy and the Development of Healthy Couple Relationships" and "Addressing Domestic Violence in Couple Relationships," features speaker for the November 2006 event was Robert (Rob) Scuka, Executive Director of the National Institute of Relationship Enhancement.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

SYLLABUS Excerpt, Fall 2006

Course Title: Healthy Marriages, Relationships and Families: Interventions, Research and Policy

Course Number: 600, MFT 600 and SWK 700

Course Overview: The course will prepare students to understand the connection between the health of couple relationships and the parent/ caretaker's capacity to function effectively as a parent and as a couple. Students will develop skills in couple assessment and will be trained in couple intervention models that have documented success with specific child welfare populations. Special attention will be paid to issues of diversity and particular social issues or conditions, which have the potential to hinder healthy functioning of a family. These issues may include but are not limited to: racism, poverty, health and mental health problems, substance abuse, criminal justice system involvement, underemployment, divorce and family violence, relationships, and family formation will be conceptualized as a policy issue as well as a practice issue.

Visit their website at <http://www.thrivingcouplesthivingkds.syr.edu/index.asp>

Social Work and Marriage Tie the Knot at Syracuse: On-line Resources

The following are excerpts from the Syracuse University website, entitled "Promoting Child Welfare: Training Professionals to Support Healthy Marriage, Relationships and Families." By the end of 2006, 27 graduate students completed the program. The average was about 14 students a year.

Under the Best Practice and Interventions tab, it states that evidence-based practice was considered a critical framework for content. Six lengthy documents follow. One "When Parenting: Elements of a Healthy Couple Relationship" lists six marital qualities: 1) evident respect, fondness and friendship between spouses; 2) strong couple communication; 3) good couple communication: significantly more positive than negative, 4) shared approach to resolving difference and conflict, 5) clear long-term couple commitment, and 6) shared values and goals.

The Child Welfare Worker's Communication Toolkit Presents Concrete Communication Skills:

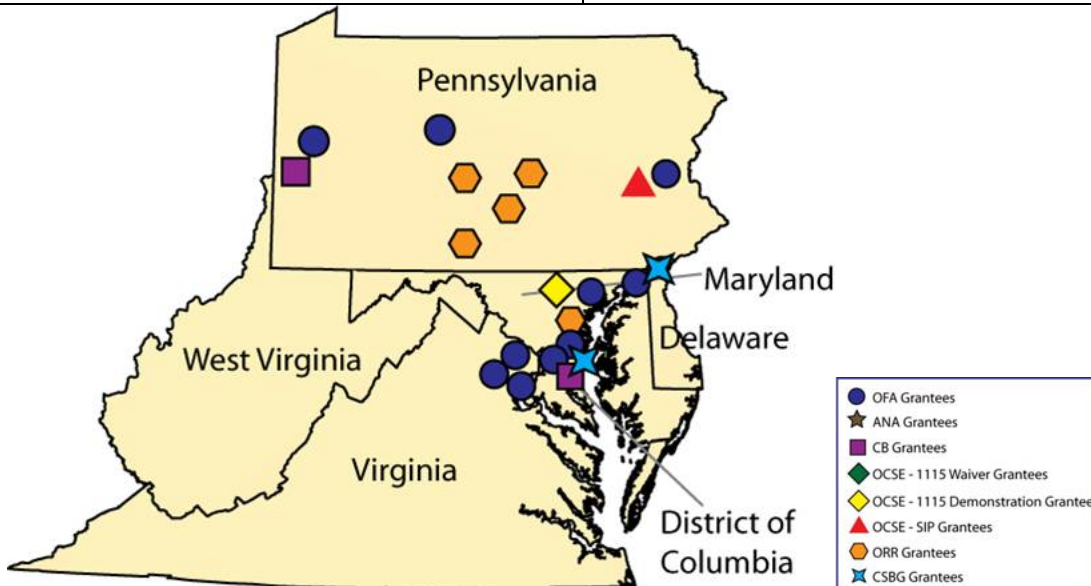
"Assertiveness Contains: 1) a description of the situation as you see it. Be specific about the time and actions. Don't make general accusations. Focus on behaviors not motives; 2) A description of your feelings. Use "I" messages. "I feel _____ because _____." To remain focused and less emotional, try thinking of positive feelings related to your goals and not resentment of the other person; 3) A description of the changes you'd like to make. Be specific about what should stop and what should start. Make sure your request is reasonable and do-able. Be willing to make changes in return."

“Behaviors to Avoid: Not listening, name calling, sneering/contempt, bossing bringing up the past, making excuses, not taking responsibility, and getting even.”

Region III

Regional Administrator: Dave Lett, dave.lett@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region III	
OFA	10
CB	0
OCSE	2
ORR	5
CSBG	2
TOTAL	21



Regional Highlights

The Center for Fathers, Families and Workforce Development

This Community Services Block Grant recipient provided relationship skills and supportive marriage services to individuals in low-income communities. They were also a technical assistance provider that aided Maryland Community Action Agencies (CAAs) in creating and administering marriage programs.

On August 21, 2006 Center for Fathers and Workforce Development (CFWD) was featured on National Public Radio. The feature “Promoting Marriage to Reduce Poverty” discussed the Baltimore Building Strong Families (BBSF) program and its potential effect on reducing poverty. The radio reported:

“After five months, the couples are done with sitting in a classroom, learning what a healthy relationship feels like. They’re graduating with some new skills, and some old challenges...”

“These African-American couples learned how to fight fair, tell your partner what you need and plan for the future.”

Then on July 23, 2006, the Baltimore Building Strong Families program was featured on the front page of the Sunday *Washington Times* newspaper. The story, “Shoring Up ‘fragile families,’” featured the first BBSF couple to marry. The article begins:

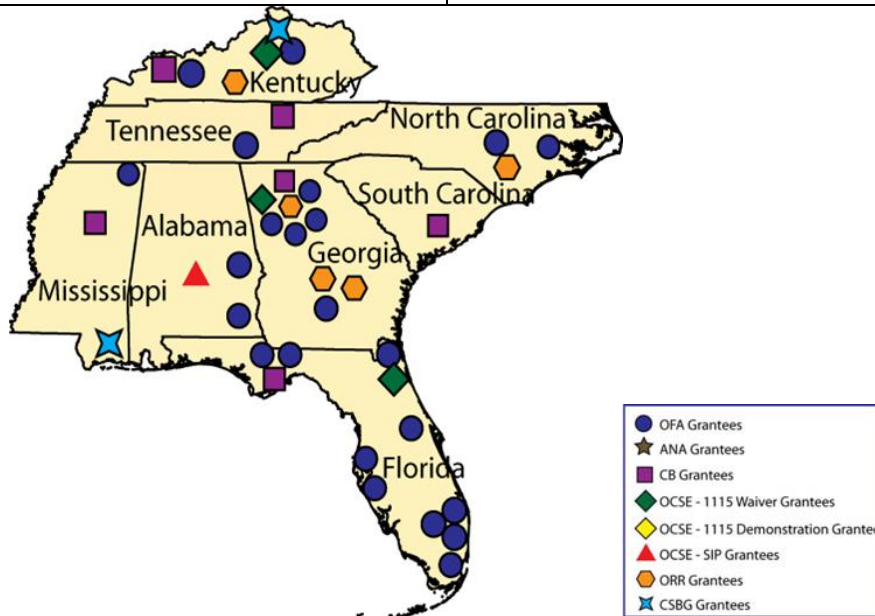
“Jerrence Caesar and Corey Roscoe may not have had a fancy wedding by bridal-magazine standards, but their marriage could set an example for couples across the country. The couple had thought about marriage last year when she became pregnant, but “we were having serious problems, communication problems,” said Mr. Roscoe, 36. Then they learned about a Federally funded relationship skills class aimed at helping low income ‘fragile families.’”

Since their marriage, the couple has graduated from the program and secured appropriate housing. They attribute the BBSF program with not only helping them sort through their issues, but with being the reason they married.

Region IV

Regional Administrator: Carlis Williams, carlis.williams@acf.hhs.gov
 Healthy Marriage Specialist: Bridget Minor, bridget.minor@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region IV	
OFA	23
ANA	0
CB	6
OCSE	4
ORR	5
CSBG	2
TOTAL	40



Grantees in Region IV

Jacksonville Network for Strengthening Families, Florida Department of Revenue

This Office of Child Support Enforcement 1115 Waiver has access to 58 volunteers representing over 32 agencies with a 73 percent graduation rate. It has served nearly 959 individuals and couples under the waiver and served 400 before the waiver was in place. The Director, Robyn Cenizal, is a stellar example of dedication to the families she serves. Awards include:

- 2005 Francis Edwards Rushton Community Pediatrics and Child Advocacy Award (presented by the University of Florida)*
- 2005 Community Service Excellence Award (presented by Franklin Covey)*
- Community Partnership for the Protection of Children Award*

University of Louisville Research Foundation, Inc.

Many wonder how the field of marriage education will intersect with the realm of social work. This grantee has developed a training curriculum to enhance the skills of child welfare workers in the area of healthy marriage and family formation. They successfully worked in collaboration with faith-based and mental healthy partners from the community to increase access to marriage and family services for the child welfare population.

Bethany Children's Services of Georgia

This project, the relationship Enhancement Program for Adoptive Parents (REAP), utilizes the National Institute for Relationship Enhancement (NIRE) curriculum. It graduated a total of 195 couples in FY 2006.

Faith- Based Outreach

In April 2006, ACF Region IV staff assisted Family Life and Marriage Enrichment, Inc. (FLAME) in developing goals, objectives, evaluation procedures, and service delivery strategies based on the logic model. FLAME is a partnership of several Metro-Atlanta churches, faith and community-based organizations, and State and local government agencies united to promote Healthy Family and Marriage Programs in the Metro-Atlanta area.

Carlis Williams, the ACF Southeast Regional Administrator presented at the "Strong African American Marriages" held on October 16, 2006, at the Georgia International Convention Center. The Program for Strong African American Marriages (ProSAAM) is a partnership between the community and the University of Georgia. The goal is to increase the number of years that African American couples remain together in satisfying marriages and to provide a best practices model to strengthen African American marriages within a religious, faith-based framework. The partnership between organizations has the potential to build on the deep religious faith so prevalent in the African American community to reinforce values associated with developing and maintaining enduring marriages.

Memorandum of Understanding

Florida hosted a Strengthening Hispanic Families Research and Training Conference in Miami on February 24, 2006. Carlis Williams and Danny Osburn of ACF's Special Initiatives Unit participated.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed, linking ACF, the Miami-Dade CAA Headstart Program, the Enfamilia Healthy Marriage Project, and the State of Florida Strengthening Families Initiative. This will provide healthy marriage training and support to Hispanic couples whose children are enrolled in the Miami-Dade Head Start Program.

A Statewide MOU is in process to promote this linkage throughout Florida.

Health

Region IV staffed a display table at the Annual Urban League Conference held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta, GA from July 27-29, 2006.

Hundreds of representatives from many community and faith-based organizations took materials and literature from our table, including information about the African- American Healthy Marriage Initiative and hand-outs explaining the whole spectrum of ACF programs and services. Partnerships with local coalitions and service delivery networks were established.

From August 4-5, 2006, Region IV took part in the Travis Smiley Health Fair held at the Georgia International Convention Center. August 4 was a youth day and with approximately 500-600 in attendance. August 5 was Family Day with approximately 1000 people in attendance. Many received information on AAHMI to share with their communities.

FACT: Health Benefits of Marriage

Findings Reported at the third African American Healthy marriage Initiative HHS-Agency Partners Roundtable

Compiled by Martha Okafor, PhD

“Marriage offers social integration and supports that are linked with protection against cardiovascular disease.

“Marital status can lead to greater protection from death: 50 percent higher among women; 250 percent higher among men.

“Married adults are less likely to smoke, drink heavily or be physically inactive.

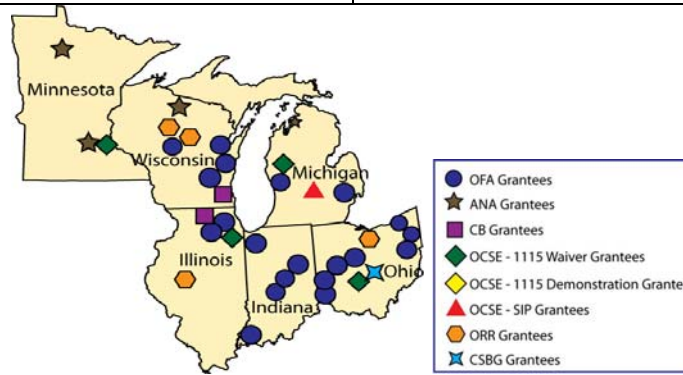
“Adults who live in cohabiting relationships are more likely to have health problems than married adults, and more closely resemble divorced and separated adults.

“Unmarried adults who live happily together may have similar economic and social support benefits, but they report poorer health than do married adults, and as much distress as single adults.”¹

Region V

Regional Administrator: Joyce Thomas, joyce.thomas@acf.hhs.gov
 Healthy Marriage Specialist: Dianna Durham-McLoud, dianna.durham-mcloud@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region V	
OFA	20
ANA	3
CB	2
OCSE	5
ORR	4
CSBG	1
TOTAL	35



Another Year of Proactive Advocacy for Children, Families and Fathers

Action words best describe Region V's activity for FY 2006; *convened*, *sponsored*, *developed* and *promoted* convey the constant combination of programmatic competence, care, concern and capability shared with Healthy Marriage (HM) partners within the Region. Many of these partners were successful in competing for government and private funds to provide the resources necessary to establish or expand their family strengthening services.

While groups awaited funding decisions, the Region held two HM education sessions at no cost to participants. Conference calls entitled *Bridging the Gap* were held that addressed areas of need or interest in order to provide information exchange on coordinating healthy marriage and fatherhood programs. Region V also:

- Provided outreach through its FH, HMI and FBCI listservs.
- Convened a Chicago Area Healthy Marriage Initiative "Upfront and Center: Best Practices" meeting at ACF's Chicago facility.
- Presented at a number of conferences on a wide cross-section of issues/interests from the International Fatherhood Conference to the National Council on Educating Black Children and others with newly established HM efforts.
- Ensured that each ACF program office included healthy marriage and fatherhood goals and objectives in their 2007 strategic plans.

Grantees in Region V

Ohio Governor's Office of FBCI

The Governor has taken a personal interest in this office's mission to (1) Improve the capacity of small faith-based and community organizations to compete for grants; (2) Encourage effective partnerships among public agencies and Faith-Based and Community organizations with a shared mission; and (3) Measure the impact of these partnerships to assist Ohio's most vulnerable citizens. Two of the programs currently working are "turning the Tide for Ohio's Black Marriages," a program to reduce divorce in the African American Community and a statewide fatherhood initiative that will look at issues facing the fathers of this State.

Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services-Division of Child Support

FUTURE, Families United Through Understanding Relationships and Empowerment, is an OCSE 1115 Waiver project. Partners include the Illinois Department of Human Services; Women, Infants, and Children Food Centers in Chicago; Catholic Charities and Family Ministries of the Archdiocese of Chicago; and the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development; serving low income Hispanic and African American families in the Chicago area.

Regional Administrator Joyce A. Thomas describes FUTURE as, "A leader in actually being able to recruit and retain low-income clients-especially men-for marriage and relationship work."

Family Bridges

Since its inception in 2004, this Hispanic/African American coalition has managed competing priorities while harmonizing diverse views and approaches. Since being funded in 2006, Family Bridges has implemented estimated 2,089,000 people. This coalition of the Chicago Alliance for Latino marriages (CALMA) and ARUSI (an African American network) has successfully completed 15 educational groups with another 15 to be completed Spring 2008.

Jewish Family and Community Service

This refugee program provides relationship services that further the integration and self-sufficiency of refugee families in 14 Chicago area locations. ACF's Marriage Education Specialist affirmed, "*an outstanding grantee that provides excellent services to a rainbow of refugees from around the world.*"

Indiana Healthy Marriage and Family Coalition

Begun as a grassroots effort in 2003, this Indianapolis based organization provides a comprehensive program of marriage and family life education to increase the awareness, knowledge and skills base of low-income people on how to build and sustain healthy marriages and healthy families. From humble community beginnings, this movement now serves several Indiana cities and partners with over 50 other family serving organizations, and all levels of

government, in strategic efforts to establish culturally sensitive programming throughout the State.

Michigan Department of Human Services

This OCSE 1115 waiver project, Healthy Relationships, Healthy Marriage of Grand Rapids (MI), tests new strategies and supports the child support enforcement program by enhancing its ability to promote the financial and broader well-being of children by fostering healthy relationships between parents to increase the likelihood that they will comply with support orders. It demonstrates the power and synergy that can be created when the faith, government and communication sectors come together with a common purpose.

Participant Feedback

Participants found the communication classes most helpful. The Family Wellness curriculum used has key lessons on listening skills, communication, and negotiation between partners, parents and children, and among family members. They also:

- Praised the interactive nature of the classes and the role-playing exercises
- Appreciated that classes were facilitated jointly by a man and a woman, and that they are culturally appropriate
- Felt the mix of married and single people enhanced the quality of the discussion
- Found the program “very kid-friendly.” “What I like about this is it’s [about] family,” a parent said

Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies

Through its training aim, the Ohio Community Action Training Organization (OCATO) provides technical assistance to its member agencies and the Healthy Marriage and Faith-Based communities engaged in family strengthening activities. OCATO provides staff development, curriculum research and public training services for organizations engaged in Healthy Marriage activities.

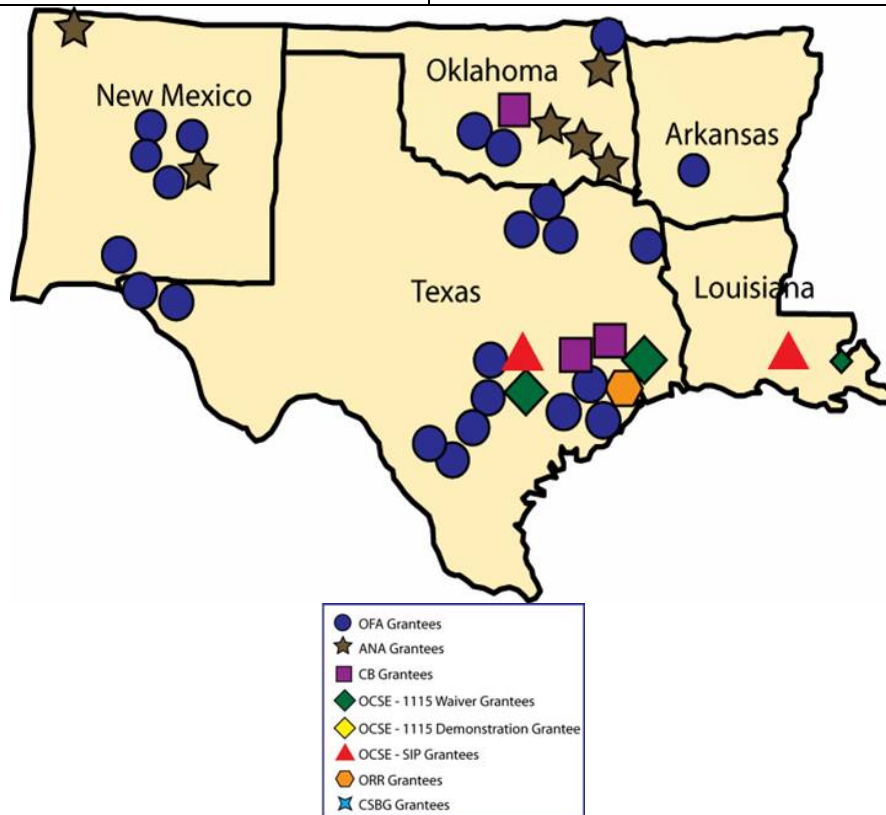
Collaboration is the term that best describes OCATO’s efforts to date. Working with the Governor’s Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives and other organizations, a Statewide healthy Marriage Coalition was established, and the “Within My Reach” (WMR) leader training was provided. Thirty-eight curriculum leaders from across the State representing 13 Community Action Agencies, five Faith-Based Organizations and five Community- Based Organizations were trained. Further efforts will be to expand the coalition, explore presenting the WMR curriculum within correctional facilities to persons about to be released to the community, and forge closer ties to Domestic Violence providers at the local level. Building on lessons learned, OCATO will continue to share Healthy Marriage information, particularly funding information, with its ever growing coalition membership.

Region VI

Regional Administrator: Leon McCowan, leon.mccowan@acf.hhs.gov

Healthy Marriage Specialist: Larry McDowell, larry.mcdowell@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region VI	
OFA	23
ANA	6
CB	3
OCSE	4
ORR	1
TOTAL	37



Tips from Grantees

The Louisiana Healthy Marriage Knapsack Project: Louisiana Dept. of Social Services

Numbers: 2,659 families were served through a combination of PREP and Knapsack resources, exceeding the goal of 1,080 families by 1, 579 families. During this three-year project, 63 PREP workshops were conducted, and 150 couples and 190 single parents successfully completed the workshops. In addition, 2,319 families were provided Knapsack resources.

What is a Knapsack? This program consisted of a collection of self-help relationship and marriage education resources (books, video tapes, DVDs, website listings, etc.).

The Oklahoma Department of Human Services

This grantee, funded by the Children's Bureau, found that adoptive parents are better able to commit to weekend retreats than week-night workshops. Thus, this three-year project conducted nine retreats, three each year, and graduated 363 adoptive couples and 11 single parents.

2006 Regional Accomplishments

Promoted and supported the ACF Healthy Marriage and Fatherhood Initiatives by educating the public and supporting the development of local community healthy marriage coalitions, grant funded demonstration programs and State-level activities and programs through outreach, presentations, exhibits, technical assistance, and regular contact including face-to-face interaction with State and community representatives and organizations.

Included in these activities were:

- Region VI 2006 Technical Assistance Institute- January 23-27, 2006, Dallas
- Provided a display on the HMI and its African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American initiatives/ programs and distributed related printed hand-out information. Approximately 800 individuals attended.
- Provided seven workshops attended by an average of 250 individuals covering topics such as culturally competent approaches (African American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American) to healthy marriage and related marriage education curricula, an overview of effective marriage education and ACF requirements, ACF HMI funding opportunities, and healthy marriage and fatherhood partnerships.
- Education and technical assistance (TA) that resulted in the formation of a Community Healthy Marriage and Fatherhood Coalition in Waco, Tex.
- Provided a marriage education program (How Not to Marry a Jerk) to Region VI ACF employees that was attended by members of several AAHMI coalitions from the State of Texas.
- Provided individualized TA to two African American HMI Coalitions.
- Provided a staffed resource booth at the Dallas Fatherhood Resource Fair, disseminated print information and gave a presentation on ACF resources and funding.
- In cooperation with the Texas Head Start Collaboration, provided three grant writing workshops to Texas Head Start grantees in preparation for the Head Start Healthy Marriage Initiative grant announcement.
- Participated on the national ACF Marriage Education Assessment Guide Workgroup.
- Disseminated current event news, research, funding announcements, and training opportunities through the Regional Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood listserv on a weekly basis.

**Highlights: Supporting Our Families and Communities
For the Well-Being of Children
ACF Region VI, 2006 Technical Assistance Institutes
January 23-27, 2006**

Sessions covered a broad range of topics related to marriage education. For example:

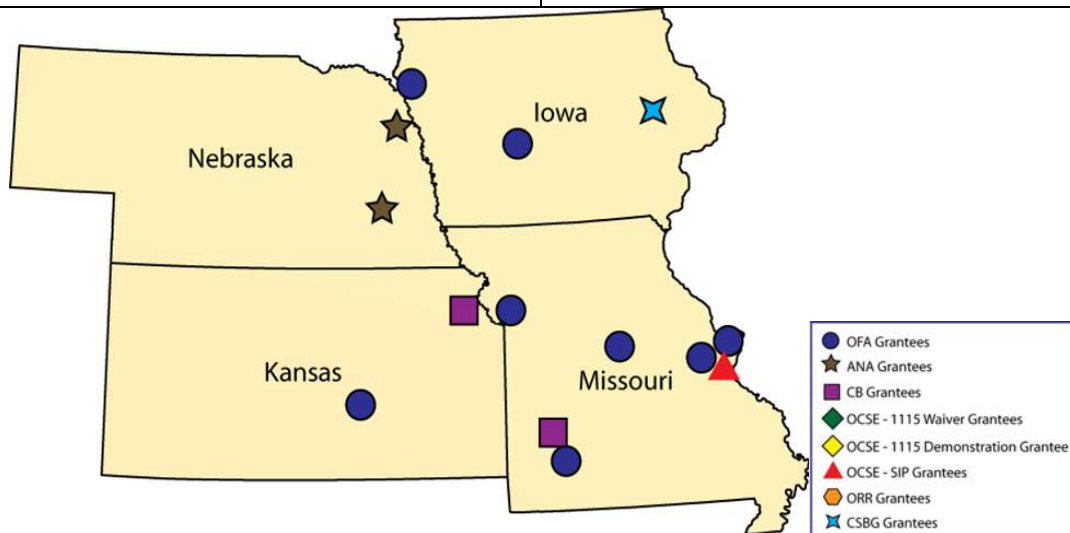
1) Culturally Competent Approaches to Healthy Marriage, 2) Effective Marriage Education: What it IS and IS NOT, 3) Culturally Appropriate Healthy Marriage Curricula for African Americans and Hispanics, 4) NPCL-PAIRS Strengthening Fragile Families, 5) Fatherhood and Healthy Marriage Partnerships, 6) TANF Reauthorization Regarding Marriage Education and Fatherhood, 7) What Is Abstinence and Abstinence Education, and 8) Abstinence Education and Marriage Education: An Essential Link.ⁱⁱ

Region VII

Regional Administrator: Patricia Brown, Acting Regional Administrator

patricia.brown@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region VII	
OFA	8
ANA	2
CB	2
OCSE	1
CSBG	1
TOTAL	14



Grantees in region VII

Fathers' Support Center Missouri

This Office of Child Support Enforcement Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant demonstrated phenomenal success in its first year by: collaborating with a variety of community and faith-based partners to deliver its curriculum; and by providing Family Wellness curriculum workshops to 331 custodial and non-custodial parents (70 percent African American, 18 percent Hispanic, and 11 percent White).

Forest Institute of Professional Psychology

This Children's Bureau grantee developed, refined and provided field test training on 11 healthy marriage training modules:

- Fragile Families and Environment
- Premarital and Marital Education
- Infidelity
- Stepfamilies
- Concerns for Immigrants
- Domestic Violence

- Substance Abuse
- Marriage and Your Community
- Relationship Education for Singles
- Father Involvement
- Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

The training consisted of two phases, training workshops using the curriculum modules followed by mentoring trainees as they provided services to the clients. Curriculum modules include an overview of the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP) and other marriage education programs. Four hundred child welfare workers and Head Start staff were served in the first three years of the project.

Children in father-absent homes are five times more likely to be poor.

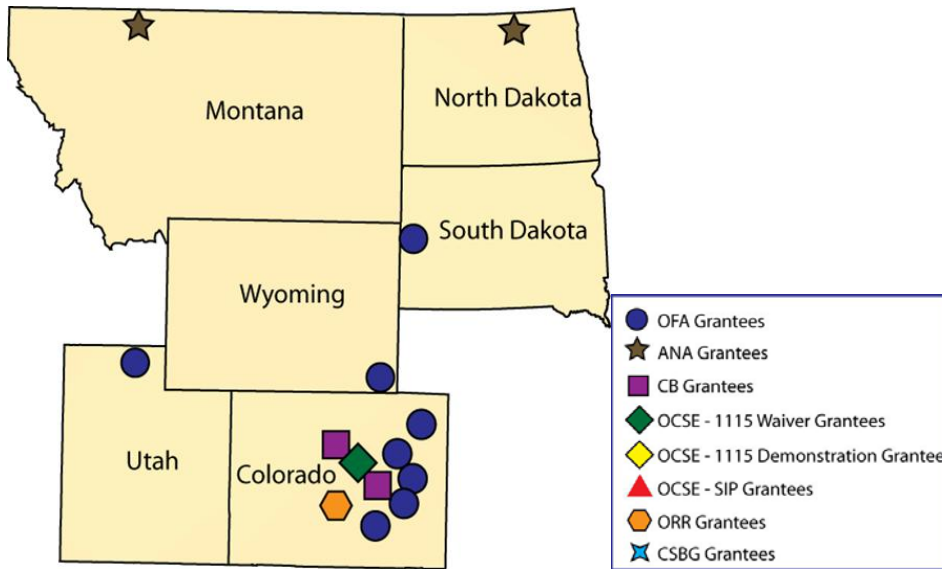
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002, P200-547, Table C8

Region VIII

Regional Administrator: Thomas Sullivan, thomas.sullivan@acf.hhs.gov

Healthy Marriage Specialist: Sandra Naatz, sandra.naatz@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region VIII	
OFA	8
ANA	2
CB	2
OCSE	1
ORR	1
TOTAL	14



Regional Highlights

The Colorado Coalition of Adoptive Families

This Children’s Bureau grantee has provided marriage education, adoptive family support, services to adopted children, and healthy relationship services to more than 2, 900 people.

CCF

The Office of the Governor of Wyoming partnered with CCF Intermediary Faith Initiatives of Wyoming (FIWY) to bring noted marriage authors David and Claudia Arp to Cheyenne. The authors presented information, resources, and training material available to faith-based and community –based organizations who want to add a healthy marriage component o their service milieu. Approximately 40 church leaders, counselors, and state-funded service providers came to hear the Arps speak on March 2, 2006. On March 3, the Arps were the guests of honor at the Governor’s Prayer Breakfast.

For more information on this grantee, please see www.fiwyo.org and <http://wyofams.org>

Marriage Covenant

FIWY has hosted a Community Marriage Covenant signing for Natrona County and Laramie County, Wyo., wherein faith and lay leaders signed a commitment to help couples prepare for marriage.

The Colorado Springs Community Marriage Covenant, begun on February 10, 2006, has nearly 300 partners and signatories.

Covenant Marriage Ball

Each spring, Family Life Ministry of the Mountain Springs Church holds an annual Covenant Marriage Ball. In April 2006, the Ball was held at the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs.

FACT: By 2006, a handful of States (e.g., Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, Oklahoma, North Carolina, New Mexico, Texas, and Utah) were allocating significant public funds to support marriage and relationship education (MRE) efforts in their States.ⁱⁱⁱ

Statewide Celebration of Marriage

The Utah Marriage Commission holds an annual Celebration of Marriage in Salt Lake City, UT, bringing in guest speakers from across the country. Highlights included expert seminars and recognition of long-married couples who were nominated by their friends and loved ones across the State.

For more information, see http://www.utahmarriage.org/pdf_nurture.pdf

First State to Use One Percent

The State of Utah has agreed to allow one percent of TANF funds to be used for marriage education and healthy marriage initiatives. The estimated value of this investment is \$750,000. Director of the Utah Marriage Commission submitted a formal plan for use of the funds, which includes research, public awareness and education services. Utah has also passed a law requiring parties filing for divorce, legal separation, or temporary separation to attend a one-hour Divorce Orientation class, which is in addition to the two-hour Divorce Education class already required.

Grantees in Region VIII

Grantee University of Denver Butler Institute for Families provided trainings throughout 2006 to Child Welfare professionals in the fields of responsible fatherhood and healthy marriage and relationships.

Grantee Colorado Coalition for Adoptive Families provided marriage education to 115 post-adoptive parents, and 2,164 post-adoption family members received other supportive services.

JVA Consulting, in partnership with the Metro Denver Black Church Initiative, jointly granted \$400,000 in CCF Intermediary sub-awards to an estimated 48 organizations for capacity building Region VIII had 13 new Compassion Capital Fund mini-grantees and a total of 16 active CCF grantees.

Black Marriage Day

Fifty churches recognized Black Marriage Day in the Denver metro area on March 26, 2006, with celebrations, ceremonies and proclamations. The Regional Administrator and staff participated in the observance. The Region VIII Child Welfare Manager chairs the planning committee for the largest Black Marriage Day observance in the State.

Coalitions

The Colorado Healthy Marriage Coalition held a grant kickoff in the fall of 2006, bringing together 75 faith-based, education, and community leaders as well as family counseling practitioners at the Blair Caldwell Library. The event generated significant newspaper and television coverage.

Conferences

Region VIII staff participated in the African American Healthy Marriage Resource Conference in Chapel Hill N.C., and moderated "Exploring Relationships with African American Fragile Families."

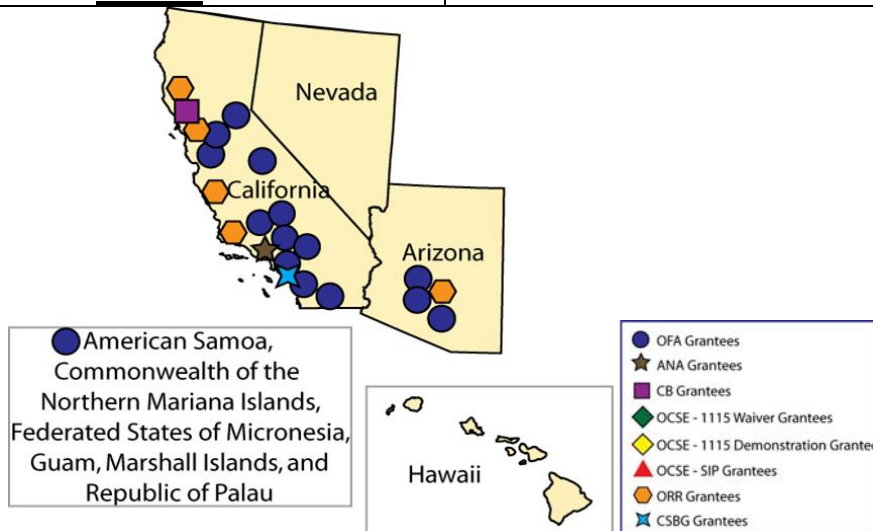
Faith Initiatives of Wyoming (FIWY) conducted a three-day marriage conference with a particular emphasis on Building Successful Step-Families in August 2006. The workshop was designed to help couples and families strengthen their blended families.

Region IX

Regional Administrator: Sharon Fujii, sharon.fujii@acf.hhs.gov

Healthy Marriage Specialist: Corinne Corson, corinne.corson@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region IX	
OFA	15
ANA	1
CB	1
ORR	5
CSBG	1
TOTAL	23



Grantee: The California Healthy Marriages Coalition

With divorces lingering at nearly 50 percent throughout society, and each divorce estimated to generate \$30,000 in associated costs for the State and Federal governments, it is clear that marital outcomes are critical to the overall stability of American society.

-Alignment of Marital success/ Marital Failure with Other Important Social Concerns

This grantee is the country's first Statewide coalition of marriage- and family-support coalitions. Their comprehensive and pioneering approach first received national attention in 2005 by being awarded a CCF Targeted Capacity-Building Intermediary Grant of \$583,000. In 2006, The California Healthy Marriages Coalition (CHMC) was awarded ACF's largest Healthy Marriage Demonstration (HDMG) from the 126 that were awarded nationally- receiving \$2.34 million a year for five years.

The CHMC births, nurtures and supports a Statewide network of Healthy Marriage coalitions to help couples within California understand the characteristics of Healthy Marriages and gain greater access to Marriage Education skill-based programs that will aid them in forming and sustaining healthy marriages. As a result, they expect a decline in the marriage/divorce

ration, a reduction in child abuse, domestic violence, poverty, criminal behavior and an improvement in physical, emotional and mental healthy.

Best Practices Website

Their website is the best navigation tool for State residents to locate marriage education programs in their communities. Items include: Coalitions (citing contact information and descriptions for the partnering organizations in CA); Why Marriage Matters (fact sheets, research and handouts); Training Calendar (listing training classes to equip marriage educators); links to youth and online healthy marriage education resources; and the highlight, links to marriage education resources by region/city/county in CA. Programs are organized by ethnicity, including Korean, Spanish and African American.

Marriage Education courses range in length, with most being 8-20 hours long, and are taught over a weekend or through weekly classes. They are delivered in a variety of settings, including classrooms, community centers, childbirth clinics, houses of worship, courts, prisons, extension agencies, schools, and military bases.

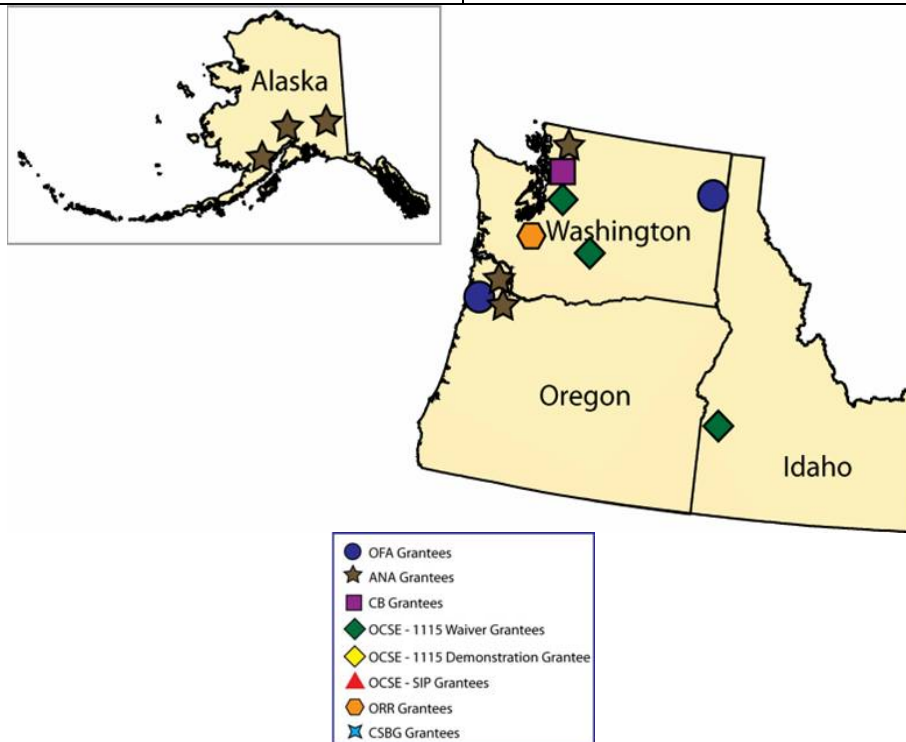
In a meta-analysis of over 100 studies on the impact of Marriage Education, researchers found clear evidence that these programs- work to reduce strife, improve communication, increase parenting skills, increase stability, and enhance marital happiness.

Cited from <http://www.californiamarraiges.org>

Region X

Regional Administrator: Steve Henigson, steve.henigson@acf.hhs.gov
 Healthy Marriage Specialist: Lewissa Swanson, lewissa.swanson@acf.hhs.gov
 Janice King-Dunbar, janice.kingdunbar@acf.hhs.gov

Grants in Region X	
OFA	2
ANA	6
CB	1
OCSE	3
ORR	1
TOTAL	13



Grantees in Region X Chugachmiut

This Alaskan-based organization has two marriage-related grants: Positive Relationship Pathways, and Wise Fathers, Well Families: 344 have participated in the former, 727 in the latter. They have offered PREP, Family Wellness, and Franklin Covey's Eight Habits of Successful Marriages classes for over a year for the seven communities within the Chugach region. They have also participated in the Native American Healthy Marriage Initiative Day celebration.

Healthy Families Nampa

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare, Nampa, has worked closely with their State, academic, non-profit, faith, media and military partners to offer marriage education courses for over two years.

Participant Feedback

Piloting a Community Approach to Healthy Marriage Initiatives: Early Implementation of the Healthy Families Nampa Demonstration October 2005, OPRE Report

I was a drill sergeant to my kids, They [the class] taught me to be a consulting parent. They taught me not to yell at my kids

They taught me to word things differently to my significant other. They taught me that responding in an emotional manner like a child only works in the short term

Participants praised the manner in which the services were delivered: *She made it fun. If it isn't fun, you aren't going to remember things.*

It helped that the counselor was a parent...She shared some personal stuff...She was not just lecturing on us how to do everything I learned much more this way.

I guess I basically found out how much I was doing wrong, I knew there was another way, but just didn't know how until now, [and] I've shared this with lots of people.

Read the full OPRE report at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/strengthen/eval_com/reports/nampa_demo/nampa_title.html

ⁱ *A Public Health Perspective on Healthy Marriage*. Martha Okafor, Ph.D. Deputy Director, Special Projects, Department of Public Health. Commissioned by the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Healthy and Human Services. Presented at HHS-AAHMI Agency Partners Roundtable, February 2007.

ⁱⁱ *Supporting our Families and Communities for the Well-Being of Children*. ACF Region VI 2006 Technical Assistance Institutes, January 23-27, 2006. <http://www.midwin.org/r6ta2006.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Alan J. Hawkins, Victoria L. Blanchard, Elizabeth B. Fawcett, & Jaelynn Jenkins. (May 30, 2007). *Is Marriage and Relationships Education Effective? A Comprehensive Meta-Analysis*. Poster presented at the Society for Prevention Research Annual Conference, May 30, 2007, Washington, DC.