



How to Partner with Existing Social Service Systems

Expanding the reach of Hispanic-serving healthy marriage and family strengthening programs

How-To Guide

September 2010



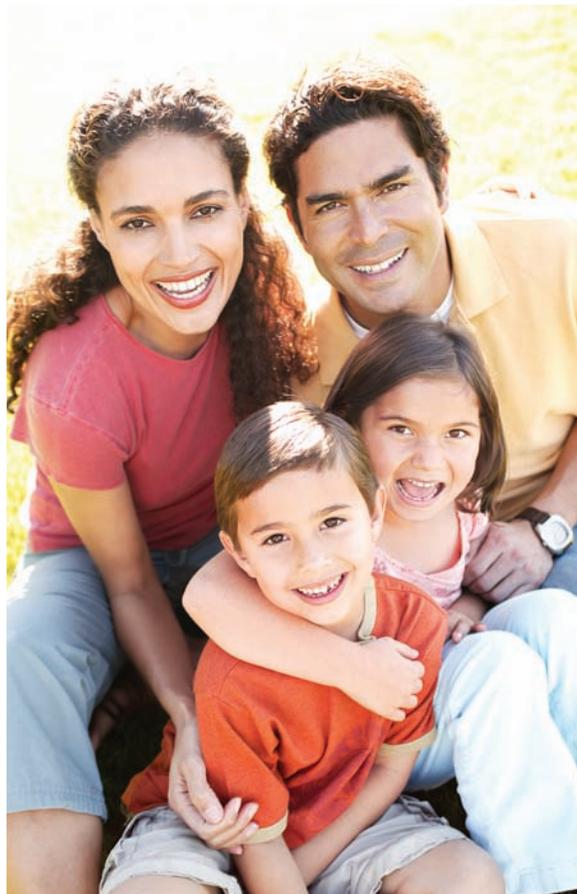
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Background

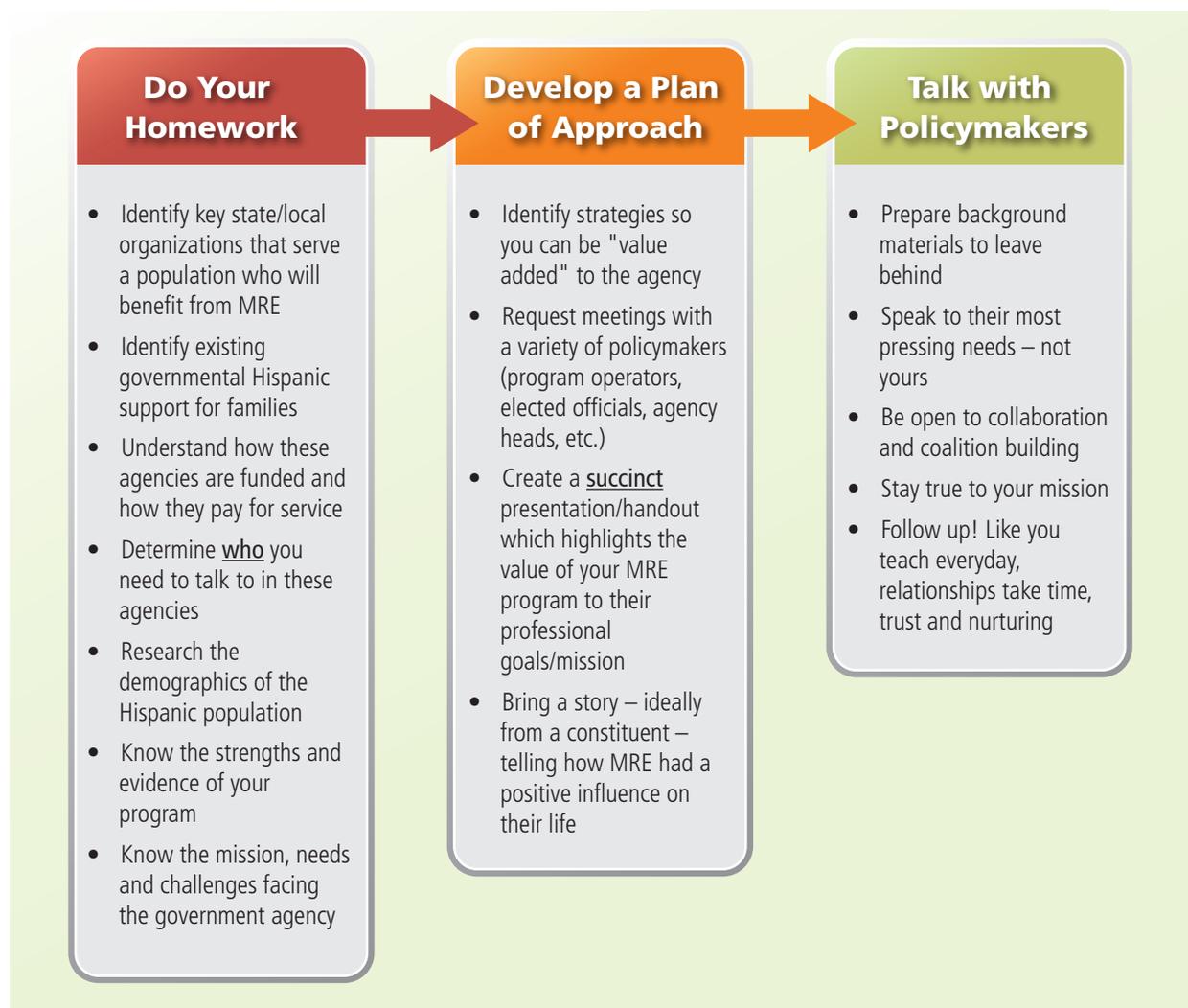
Government touches the lives of families in many ways. Because of the complexity of governmental organizations, community- and faith-based organizations may be reluctant to partner with government, especially to deliver marriage/relationship education services (MRE). This may be particularly true for Hispanic-serving organizations with respect to accessing state funding. A 2010 survey of Hispanic-serving organizations indicated that these organizations were more aware of federal grants available for the types of services they provide while over 63% of the 126 nationwide respondents were unaware of state government grants available to support their work, or the work they could provide in the community. Of the organizations that had never applied for a state grant, the most common answers given as to why they had not included 1) not knowing about the opportunities and 2) not knowing how to apply. Similarly, when these organizations were asked what would help more state funding and grants reach their local Hispanic community, their responses included 1) gaining more knowledge about the funding opportunities available and the processes involved, and 2) creating more awareness about the need among Hispanic-serving organizations.

As the Hispanic population across the United States continues to grow, preventive and supportive services to strengthen Hispanic families are even more critical. Many Hispanic-serving, community- and faith-based organizations provide quality, culturally relevant healthy marriage and family strengthening services to their local communities. However, the resources required to continually provide these services are often insufficient for the rapidly growing Hispanic community. This guide is intended for practitioners who are familiar with operating an MRE program for Hispanic families and are



interested in exploring collaboration with government to expand the reach of their MRE program. It offers concrete strategies on 1) how to identify which areas of government are right for you to partner with and 2) how to develop relationships with policymakers. An overview of the key components of this process is highlighted in Exhibit A. Examples of collaborations with the social service system are provided to illustrate potential areas for healthy marriage and relationship integration. For purposes of this guide, a policymaker is anyone with the power to influence and determine policies and practices at the national, state, regional and/or local level. These individuals may be elected, appointed or be career civil servants. They may be a county commissioner, state TANF director, city human services coordinator or any other governmental service provider in your community.

Exhibit A



A logical first step is determining the social services agency in which your program can enhance services.

Research your state and locality to identify service delivery systems to connect with your healthy relationship program. Most state/local agencies' family services are under the name health and human services, social services, department of children and families, or family services (The American Public Human Services Association, www.aphsa.org, maintains a directory of state and local human services agencies and contacts.). The agency name

may vary, but the core services typically included are outlined in Table A. Another strategy for identifying the appropriate government agency to connect with might be to contact your local Office of Hispanic/Latino Affairs. This may be part of the Governor's or Mayor's Office and may operate as a liaison agency to address prominent health, education, labor and/or human services concerns relevant to the Hispanic population. This office may help Hispanic-serving programs navigate local bureaucracy and/or provide an opportunity for your organization to inform policymakers about the MRE and family strengthening work you do.

Service Area	Description	Potential Connection
Child Welfare and Child Abuse Prevention	Protects children and encourages family stability. These typically include investigation of alleged child abuse, child protective services, foster care, adoption services, and services aimed at supporting at-risk families so they can remain intact.	Child welfare programs often include prevention services for parents. Parents can receive relationship skills, which are applicable to parenting skills and healthier family interactions.
Foster Care and Adoption	Provides services for children placed in temporary homes with several possible end results including reunification with biological parents, transferring from a foster home to a permanent adoption, or placing a child into another legally permanent family.	Adding a child to the home through adoption or foster parenting can place stress on couple relationships. MRE can strengthen the couple relationship to create the most stable environment for the child(ren). Families who are providers or wish to adopt must meet certain requirements to be certified.
Child Support	Enforces the court ordered periodic payment made by an obligor for the financial care and support of children resulting from a relationship or marriage that has been terminated, or in some cases never existed.	Child wellbeing is enhanced through positive and effective co-parenting skills taught in MRE. MRE programs targeted to fathers (custodial or non-custodial) are another opportunity.
Refugee Programs	Help refugees and their families gain self-sufficiency by providing social and financial services and medical assistance.	Culturally appropriate MRE can help families deal with unique stressors associated with living in a new country/ culture.
Child Development (Early Head Start/ Head Start)	Provides parent education, health and nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income children and their families.	Many child development programs offer parent education. There is generally a parent involvement requirement which could possibly be fulfilled through participation in MRE services.
Maternal and Child Health	Administers a broad range of program services to pregnant women, mothers, infants, children and their families — and children with special health care needs. This may include Women Infants and Children (WIC) or the state children’s health insurance program (SCHIP).	Providing opportunities for couples to learn skills and strengthen their relationship through stressful times can add value to these programs.
Youth Development Programs	Prepares young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood and help them to become socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively competent.	MRE includes youth-focused relationship education. Similarly, some programs offer relationship education for adults whose youth are participating in the programs.
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF-previously known as welfare)	Provide cash assistance to needy families with dependent children; States are provided with block grants to design and administer their own programs which can provide prevention services for parents, couples, fathers, or families.	Two goals of TANF are related to strengthening families and marriage making MRE services an appropriate activity for TANF recipients, low-income couples or others to encourage self-sufficiency

When approaching potential government partners, be familiar with government operations, fiscal years and funding processes. The complexity of government social service systems may add additional layers to the research you have to do. For example, some third party organizations are contracted to manage certain government programs. Here are some issues to consider:

1. Understand how government funding works.

Government money is allocated through various channels. Once you have identified the program area to collaborate with, it is necessary to understand *where* the funding is coming from and *who* controls it. Can the counties in your state make decisions on how child welfare money is spent or does the state mandate it? Is the program you wish to partner with federally funded? If it is, do the federal funds come directly from the federal government? If they do, from which federal office do they come? In some cases, the state receives the money and then allocates it; Can you trace the funding stream from the Joint Budget Committee (or similar budget-monitoring body) at your state legislature to the program? It can be difficult to determine funding streams. You may want to consult with someone in state or local government to help you better understand the fiscal environment of the program.

2. Once you understand where the funding is coming from, the next step is to **identify who** in the government office is in charge of it and/or supports it, and develop a plan for forming a relationship with them. Allow yourself enough time to establish who the key contacts are. It cannot be emphasized enough how important relationship building is to the success of this whole process.

3. Some government funds are allocated directly to organizations (government or non-profit); others are competitively bid through a Request for Propos-

als or similar process where organizations write a grant application to bid for funds. To effectively collaborate with government entities, it is important to **be familiar with the process of grant funding**. Grant-writing classes are a good way to learn about government funding. You may find it helpful to participate in a class even if you are not going to be writing grants.

Common Government Funding Terms

- 1. Allocation:** funds set apart for a particular purpose; assign or allot
- 2. Obligation:** any bond, note, bill, certificate or the like as of a government or corporation, serving as evidence of indebtedness
- 3. Appropriation:** a legal authorization granted by the governing body which permits public officials to incur obligations and make expenditures up to the amount of money allocated and within time limits set by the governing body
- 4. Carryover:** unobligated federal funds remaining at the end of any budget period that may be carried forward to another budget period to cover allowable costs of that budget period
- 5. RFP:** Request for Proposal—a document outlining a government agency's requirements and the criteria for the evaluation of offers

Additional terms can be found by visiting <http://www.dhhs.gov/grantsnet/adminis/gpd/index.htm>

Develop a Plan of Approach

Develop a plan about how your MRE services match up to the mission, goals and objectives of the program areas with which you wish to partner. This shows policymakers that you are knowledgeable not only about your program but about the objectives of government operations.

How can your MRE services support an agency's mission or goals? Communicate clearly ways in which your program can help theirs. Look at their mission statement to see how you can help them meet their requirements and how you will help them with their intended outcomes. Also research the number of Hispanic families served by the agency. Many organizations have seen a recent spike in the number of Latinos seeking services and may be ill-equipped to address those needs. The staff working in most social service programs is overburdened. Understand what challenges they face working with Hispanic families and where their needs are most prominent. Describe to them the ways in which your partnership will alleviate some of their pressure and help meet their organizational goals. This creates a “win-win” situation for both parties.

At what point in an existing social service program is it logical to deliver your relationship education service? Determining where healthy relationship services can be delivered within an existing program is a key piece of information. The more you know and understand how the program works, the better you will be able to see the opportunities and utilize entry points. For example, if you desire to integrate with a Head Start program, it is important to know when parents meet and

how often. Do they come together while their children are in class? Could your services be delivered either right before or right after an existing meeting?

What program/agency trainings or background information might be available before pursuing a partnership?

In some cases there may be some special training that will help you better understand the organization with which you desire to partner. For instance, if you want to integrate healthy relationship program services into a program for foster care parents, you may want to attend foster parent training classes. This allows you to get a deeper understanding of how the program works and how MRE can be integrated.

Can you demonstrate that MRE and your program have positive outcomes and/or are research based? Evidence-based practice (implementing interventions that have been empirically proven to be effective) is becoming the standard practice for social services programs. In fact, many government programs now are limiting funds to those that are evidence-based programs. If you haven't already done so, evaluate your program. Evaluation tools such as pre- and post-tests may be available online for you to use and/or adapt for your own program evaluation (See Appendix 1 for an example of an evaluation tool.). You may want to locate evaluation tools specifically designed for Hispanic populations and should consider whether or not you will need a tool that has been developed for/used with Spanish-speaking respondents. Some curriculum developers that have Spanish resources may also have Spanish language evaluation tools.



You might also want to review existing evaluations looking at the effectiveness of MRE and reference these when talking with policymakers. Examples of several state and local research studies are provided as Appendix 2. A forthcoming study by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation evaluates the implementation of programs from across the country serving Hispanics. This study will be completed in 2012 and will provide valuable information related to whether certain program models appear to be associated with more positive outcomes for Hispanic populations. Information about this study as well as two other articles that you may want to review are listed below.

- Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative: Grantee Implementation Evaluation http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/strengthen/hispanic_healthy/index.html

- Does marriage and relationship education work? A meta-analytic study. By Hawkins, Alan J.; Blanchard, Victoria L.; Baldwin, Scott A.; Fawcett, Elizabeth B. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Vol 76(5), Oct 2008, 723-734.
- Strengthening couples' relationships with education: Social policy and public health perspectives. By Halford, W. Kim; Markman, Howard J.; Stanley, Scott. *Journal of Family Psychology*. Vol 22(4), Aug 2008, 497-505.

There are a number of additional articles and briefs related to MRE program evaluation found on the following websites:

- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) http://aspe.social.service.gov/_topic/subtopic.cfm?subtopic=377
- Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation (OPRE) <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/project/strengthFamily-Projects.jsp>

Many government programs now are limiting funds to those that are evidence-based programs. If you haven't already done so, evaluate your program. Evaluation tools such as pre- and post-tests may be available online for you to use and/or adapt for your own program evaluation.

Be “Value Added”

You have experience delivering services for Hispanics, and you designed your program to follow a certain format. Although you may have success operating within your current structure, it may be necessary to adjust certain elements to be more aligned with the program area with which you are trying to work.

Can your program adapt to a variety of target audiences such as working with Spanish speaking recent immigrants, typically underserved migrant worker populations and second generation (U.S.-born) Hispanic couples? Many federal and state social service programs are directed toward low-income families. There are also government programs that are directed to populations in a certain circumstance, regardless of income. For instance, foster and adoptive parents come from all economic backgrounds. Making sure your program uses appropriate language and examples and is relevant to the target audience of the government program is necessary to succeed.

How should you position your issue? This is really about knowing who you are talking to and tailoring your message to this person. It is important to know what areas of your program are flexible and can be matched to your prospective partners. For example, messages related to “the benefits of healthy marriage services” would likely work with those who are already pre-disposed to care about human service issues. However, this tactic will probably gain little traction with those who think there is too much government spending on programs and/or programs that don’t work. When addressing those with the latter mindset, frame your presentation by leading with the cost savings to government and taxpayers that this type of intervention has demonstrated—and show them how your program connects with their goals. This approach illustrates the value that your program



can bring to an existing service or organization while also positioning the issue so that it is relevant to the policymaker. An important point to make regardless of your audience is how important it is to develop trust within the Hispanic community. You have already built a trusting relationship with and have access to a population that the agency may be trying to engage. This may demonstrate to a prospective partner an immediate value that your program adds.

What can you directly offer the agency? Could your staff provide training on the prevalent family/social circumstances and values of Hispanics in your community? Do you have bilingual staff who may be able to help the agency better communicate with the Hispanic families they serve? When you come to the discussion with something to offer, instead of only seeking program funds, you may have a better opportunity to build an effective partnership.

Know the Players

There is not a one size fits all approach to knowing who to talk to, or how best to approach policymakers. However, there are some key questions to ask yourself that will guide you in this process.

Does your program have existing partnerships and collaborations to leverage? At the local level, it may be effective for one organization, or individual, to approach local policymakers. However, if you're pursuing a state opportunity you may want to be part of a larger coalition of Hispanic-serving and like-minded organizations and/or individuals. Connecting with your Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and/or your Hispanic Legislative Caucus might be a good starting point to help you identify other organizations serving Hispanics. Your "strength in numbers" approach may pay dividends when talking with policymakers.

Do you know which legislators to talk to?

A recommended approach is to connect with different types of legislators: those in your district, those on the human service committee and those who deal with appropriations or those who have been advocates for the Hispanic community. These include members from both houses (state senators and representatives). You want your legislators to know you and your issues and that you will be actively watching what they do. Search your state legislature website for human services bills and find answers to the following questions:

- Which legislators tend to introduce human services-related bills?
- Who is in the news talking about human services issues?
- Have any legislators' districts been identified as having a high number of out-of-wedlock births, higher than average poverty rates or a large Hispanic population which could benefit from your program?
- Who sits on the human services committee?

- Are any staff members listed as the policymaker's human services advisor?

Alternatively, you may want to contact the National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators (www.nhcsl.org) or your State Legislature's Hispanic Caucus for key contacts at the state level.

To learn about one MRE practitioner's experience talking with state legislators, you can review "A Personal Perspective in Talking with Your State Legislator about Marriage and Relationship Education: Tips from the Field" (<http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/talkingwithyourstatelegislator.pdf>).

Who are the program administrators overseeing the office or program with which you wish to partner?

Program directors/administrators within the state or county office over the social service program area must be identified. Meet with these individuals face-to-face and discuss the benefits of MRE. Be prepared to offer national and state statistics as well as statistics specifically related to Hispanics and discuss why healthy marriage services will help them meet the outcomes for which their office is responsible. Provide examples of similar initiatives in other states.

A resource to help you identify key leaders is the Leadership Directories' "Yellow Book." This resource is available, for an annual fee, as an electronic or print publication and provides information for a number of state and local contacts in social service programs. Additional information about the resource can be found by visiting Leadership Directories' website at <https://www.leadershipdirectories.com/products/syb.html>.

A recommended approach is to connect with different types of legislators: those in your district, those on the human service committee and those who deal with appropriations or those who have been advocates for the Hispanic community. These include members from both houses (state senators and representatives). You want your legislators to know you and your issues and that you will be actively watching what they do.

Talking with Policymakers – Step by step

Getting Your Foot in the Door. The first and best way to meet a policymaker is to be referred by someone they already know and trust. If you are aware of a mutual friend or colleague, ask him/her to tell the policymaker about you and your program, and ask if they will see you and listen to your idea.

The second way is to “cold call.” This is more difficult but not impossible. The initial phone call should be brief. The goal of this call is to get a meeting, not to share your entire wealth of information. Plus, the policymaker has many pressing issues to attend to and very little time for long phone conversations. It also helps to discuss the issue with any advisors the policymaker may have (i.e. human services policy advisor, committee chairperson, task force director, etc.); sometimes this is easier than meeting with the policymaker. A sample call script can be found in Appendix 3.

Preparing for the Meeting. Learn what your leaders have done/not done on the issue. Learn what they have supported or opposed, including family strengthening initiatives and other issues focused on Hispanics. It can destroy your credibility if you ask for something that they just funded or are opposing. It is a signal to them that you don’t know what is happening in their world. Even if it has nothing to do with what you are asking, it shows that you are aware of their world, and that you are to be taken seriously. If they are passionate about early childhood education, criminal justice, health or a related issue, talk about how strengthening marriages and families can support the policy goals they care most about.

Know exactly how much time has been allotted and plan your presentation accordingly. Be sure to plan for interaction and know how to answer any questions that might be asked. Plan for a condensed version and an extended version and be proficient in both. Be to the point even with a small amount of time. Likewise, know how much time to request. Often a request for an hour of a legislator’s or director’s time is a red flag that you are not clear on what you want and you wish to bombard this busy person with information. If you can take what is available you stand a better chance of getting in and getting in sooner.

Learn what your leaders have done/not done on the issue. Learn what they have supported or opposed, including family strengthening initiatives and other issues focused on Hispanics.

The best way to go into a meeting is to have three or four main points that you want to convey such as:

1. Background (national, state and Hispanic-specific statistics). In addition to the U.S. Census, the Pew Hispanic Center (www.pewhispanic.org) has recent data/statistics on Hispanic families.
2. Benefits of healthy marriage program services (see the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center's Marriage and Culture page at <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/marriage-and-culture/hispanics-and-latinos> for more information)
3. How your services connect with and enhance the social service program you have targeted
4. An example of another program in another state that accomplishes what you are proposing (See Appendix 4 for descriptions of a few MRE programs that collaborated with government.)

The Meeting. Most policymakers will ask staff to sit in the meeting with them when you come to share your ideas and program. It is important that you understand this process. The director of the program needs to hear and understand and approve of the idea, but it is the other staff in the room that he/she will listen to after you leave. Thus, it is very important that you connect and begin to build a relationship with the other staff in the room. They can make or break the effort. Even if the "boss" approves of the idea the staff can still derail progress. Therefore, talk directly to the leader out of respect for their position, but be sure you are also speaking and communicating with the others in the room.

Be prepared to discuss ways in which healthy relationships/marriages fit in with the policymaker's agenda. This is an opportunity to make your best case for how your healthy marriage services can be

integrated into the existing service area and gives you the chance to highlight the benefits of doing so. If there is interest, there will be more meetings and thus more opportunities to build/strengthen relationships through additional information sharing.

It is not necessary to cover all aspects of your program in this initial meeting. Remember to be succinct. You may also want to prepare a brief handout that summarizes your main points and provides information about additional resources. An example of a reference page for policymakers is provided as Appendix 5. After your meeting, the policymaker will likely have staff look into the issue further, so provide an overview of additional resources. You should also leave your business card with the policymaker and his/her staff so that you can be contacted if there are additional questions or if clarification is needed.

Understand that this process is not about winning people to your side or recruiting people to be the legislative "champions" of your services (although that is certainly fantastic if that happens). Rather, a success story is getting support for what you do, even if it is simply by not opposing it. A good way to garner support for what you do is to "tell the story." Share what couples have said about the program. You may want to leave the policymaker and his/her staff with testimonials from Hispanic couples and/or with a brief video illustrating the impact MRE services have on Hispanic communities. Several videos have been produced by the Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative and are available for use at the following websites:

- Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/about/hispanic_hm_initiative.508.html
- National Healthy Marriage Resource Center www.healthymarriageinfo.org

Follow-Up, Follow-Up, Follow-Up. Leave the meeting with a reason to contact them again, even if by phone. Be prepared to suggest a follow-up meeting. Agree to follow up with someone they recommend and do it! Attend the next meeting or hearing you know that the policymaker will attend. Go to a community function where he/she will be so he/she will know you aren't going away.

Your goal initially is to create rapport and establish a sense of credibility and trust. This probably won't happen immediately. Getting "buy-in" may occur over several meetings/interactions that span weeks, months or even years. If you don't go in thinking you are building an on-going relationship, you will go out wondering why you were treated politely with little result. Creating a long-term relationship is also key for the sustainability of your program or initiative.

Conclusion

Although developing partnerships with government programs may take time and energy, they can be some of the most fruitful collaborations due to the number of social service programs ideal for an MRE partnership. When approaching policymakers and key decision makers about collaborating, it is to your advantage to know details about the programs that could be viable partners, understand their funding streams and identify the key players involved. This will demonstrate that you not only know how to run a successful program serving Hispanic families but that you have the know-how to expand the program to reach a broader audience.

This is a product of the *Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative (HHMI)* directed by Frank Fuentes of the Administration for Children and Families. The content was adapted from materials developed by the *National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC)*. The HHMI would like to thank the original contributing author, Jerry Regier, former Oklahoma Cabinet Secretary of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Assistant Secretary for Planning & Evaluation, as well as Courtney Harrison, MPA, Rachel Derrington, MSW, and Leah Rubio for their contributions. We would also like to thank marriage education practitioners at Family Bridges for submitting a sample evaluation tool.

Appendix 1: Sample Evaluation Tool (English)

Exit Survey (Couples)

FB Website ID #: _____

Date

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Rate how you feel about each statement that follows.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I feel good about our chances to make this relationship work for a lifetime.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
2. We have a circle of friends outside of our family.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
3. I let things build up for a long time before I complain.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
4. Our arguments occasionally escalate to verbal insults, criticism, or put-downs.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
5. I don't talk about things that are important to me because I fear we will have an argument.---	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
6. We try to talk through our differences.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
7. When we have a problem, I feel isolated.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
8. When my partner and I have a problem, I seek help from others (family, friends, church, co-workers, peers).-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
9. I try to listen to my partner even when I disagree.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
10. I can usually see both sides of an argument.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
11. I feel safe enough to tell my partner my deepest thoughts and feelings.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
12. We have the skills a couple needs to make a marriage last.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
13. I try to take the time to listen to my partner by not interrupting when he or she speaks to me.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Please answer the following questions if you have children.					
14. Our children do not show adequate respect for us.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
15. My partner and I argue about parenting our children.-----	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Within the course of this group, have you...(Please check all that apply)					
<input type="radio"/> Not been able to pay your rent, mortgage or utility bills	<input type="radio"/> Had any parenting or child support problems with a former spouse or partner				
<input type="radio"/> Felt threatened by someone or something in your neighborhood	<input type="radio"/> Been arrested, convicted of a crime, or put in jail				
<input type="radio"/> Received a pay raise or promotion	<input type="radio"/> Moved to a better home or neighborhood				
<input type="radio"/> Experienced unplanned pregnancy	<input type="radio"/> Been fired or laid-off from work				
Please rate your current satisfaction level with the current romantic relationship you are in: (check one)					
<input type="radio"/> Very Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Somewhat Satisfied	<input type="radio"/> Unsatisfied	<input type="radio"/> Very Unsatisfied	



Revised 8-31-10

Appendix 1: Sample Evaluation Tool (Spanish)

Exit Survey (Couple Spanish)

FB Web ID# _____

Fecha:

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Marca del 1 al 5 como te sientes acerca de cada una de las siguientes declaraciones.	Totalmente de Acuerdo	De Acuerdo	No Estoy Segura(o)	Desacuerdo	Totalmente en Desacuerdo
1. Me siento bien acerca de nuestras posibilidades de hacer que esta relación funcione por siempre.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
2. Tenemos un círculo de amigos aparte de nuestra familia.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
3. Dejo que las cosas se acumulen antes de quejarme.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
4. Nuestras discusiones ocasionalmente se elevan a insultos verbales, críticas, o menosprecio.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
5. No hablo de cosas que son importantes para mí por temor a que tengamos una discusión.--	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
6. Cuando tenemos diferencias de opiniones tratamos de hablar.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
7. Cuando tenemos algún problema me siento aislado/a.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
8. Cuando mi pareja y yo tenemos un problema, busco ayuda de otros (familia, amistades, iglesia, compañeros/as de trabajo).....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
9. Trato de escuchar a mi pareja aun cuando no estoy de acuerdo.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
10. Usualmente puedo ver los dos lados de una discusión.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
11. Siento seguridad al compartir con mi pareja mis pensamientos y sentimientos más profundos.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
12. Tenemos las capacidades necesarias que una pareja necesita para que el matrimonio permanezca.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
13. Trato de tomar tiempo para escuchar a mi pareja y no interrumpir cuando él o ella me habla.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Si tienes hijos/as, por favor responde a las siguientes afirmaciones.					
14. Nuestros hijos no nos muestran el respeto adecuado.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
15. Mi pareja y yo discutimos acerca de como educar a nuestros hijos.....	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Durante el transcurso de este grupo, has experimentado...(Por favor marca todo lo que aplique a tu caso)					
<input type="radio"/> El no poder pagar la renta, hipoteca o servicios de casa.	<input type="radio"/> Problemas de crianza o como educar sostenimiento para tu/s hijos/as con tu ex-esposo/a o ex-pareja.				
<input type="radio"/> El sentirte amenazado/a por alguien o algo en tu vecindario (barrio).	<input type="radio"/> El ser arrestado/a, sentenciado por un delito o encarcelado/a.				
<input type="radio"/> El recibir un aumento de sueldo o una promoción..	<input type="radio"/> El mudarte a una mejor vivienda o vecindario (barrio).				
<input type="radio"/> Un embarazo no planeado.	<input type="radio"/> El ser despedido o dado cesado del trabajo.				
Por favor describe el nivel de satisfacción que sientes en tu relación actual de pareja: (circula uno)					
<input type="radio"/> Muy Satisfecho/ a	<input type="radio"/> Satisfecho	<input type="radio"/> Algo Satisfecho/ a	<input type="radio"/> Insatisfecho/ a	<input type="radio"/> Muy Insatisfecho/ a	



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Appendix 2: State and Local Research Studies

Information retrieved from the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center
<http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/facts/state/localstudies.cfm>

California

The State of California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State

This survey, California's Unions: Marriage and Divorce in the Golden State was commissioned by the California Healthy Marriages Coalition, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. The survey sought to (1) determine how California residents view marriage, divorce and marriage education; (2) gain understanding about residents' marriage and relationships, past and present, including relationship quality and family support; and (3) examine findings by demographic variables including gender, age, income, ethnicity, political affiliation, and religious involvement.

Florida

Family Formation in Florida: 2003 Baseline Survey of Attitudes, Beliefs, and Demographics Relating to Marriage and Family Formation

Funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families and conducted by researchers at the University of Florida, this survey sought to describe the range of family structures in Florida, the attitudes of Floridians towards marriage, family formation, and marriage education, and the characteristics associated with healthy intimate relationships. More than 4,500 adult residents in Florida were interviewed over the phone regarding these and related topics.

Michigan

State of the State Survey: Marriage in Michigan, Factors that Affect Satisfaction, Clifford Broman, Institute for Public Policy and Social Research, Michigan State University (2000)

This report uses data from the State of the State survey conducted by the Institute in 1999, which interviewed nearly 1,500 residents on their volunteer activities, mental health, families, and marriage. The report examines factors that contribute to happy marriages in Michigan, and the extent to which marital happiness differs across social and economic status.

Formative Research Report; Together We Can: Creating a Healthy Future for our Family (two-county Michigan survey) 2007 This report highlights the findings from focus groups and surveys conducted in Pontiac and Saginaw Michigan by the Michigan State University Extension Service to inform the development of a community-based healthy marriage initiative. Report includes attitudes towards marriage, parenting, co-parenting, and other relationship issues.

Minnesota

Crime and Marriage in Minnesota and the Nation: If Wedding Rings Help Break Vicious and Violent Cycles, What's Impeding Them from Doing So More Often, Mitchell Pearlstein, PhD, American Experiment Quarterly (2005)

This essay discusses the role of crime in the decline of marriage in Minnesota and in the broader United States. It examines the effect of collateral sanctions (laws that prohibit ex-offenders from holding certain types of jobs) and other employment barriers faced by formerly incarcerated men

on their propensity to marry.

The Minnesota Income Tax Marriage Credit (2006)

Written by the Minnesota House of Representatives Research Department in 2006, this document describes marriage penalties in the Minnesota and federal tax codes and how the state's income tax marriage credit is designed to reduce the effect of that penalty on married couples.

Oklahoma

Marriage in Oklahoma: A Statewide Baseline Survey on Marriage and Divorce (2001-2002)

To develop programs to promote and strengthen marriage for Oklahoma residents, the Oklahoma Marriage Initiative (OMI), launched by former Governor Frank Keating in 1998, commissioned a survey to understand marriage and divorce rates in the state, as well as Oklahomans' attitudes towards marriage. In partnership with Oklahoma State University's Bureau for Social Research, and a group of nationally-recognized researchers and sociologists serving as advisors, the OMI designed and completed the first comprehensive statewide survey on marriage in the United States. The survey included questions on attitudes about relationships, demographic data on marriage, divorce, remarriage, patterns of cohabitation, and intent to marry/remarry, relationship quality, and views toward marriage education.

Tennessee

The State of the Family (Hamilton County, TN, 2006)

Developed by the nonprofit organization First Things First in Chattanooga, this report offers demographic data and attitudes regarding marriage, divorce, and family formation for residents of Hamilton County, Tennessee.

Texas

Together in Texas: Baseline Report on Marriage in the Lone Star State (2008)

Measures and analyzes attitudes and beliefs related to healthy marriage. With over 2,500 Texans participating in phone interviews, which included questions on marriage, divorce, cohabitation and family roles, researchers were able to represent the diverse population of the state and included a special report, *Culture and Marriage: Strengths and Weaknesses of More Traditional Versus Assimilated Hispanics in the Texas survey*. The authors of this report were careful to avoid extensive references to statistical procedures, and instead focused on developing a document that is equal-parts approachable and educational.

Utah

Marriage in Utah: 2003 Utah Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce

Inspired by Oklahoma's 2001 Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce conducted in 2003, Utah launched a similar survey to help guide its state-level efforts to develop programs and policies that promote and strengthen marriage. This report provides the highlights of the 2003 Utah Baseline Statewide Survey on Marriage and Divorce prepared by researchers at Utah State University, in conjunction with Oklahoma State University's Bureau for Social Research. The survey includes demographic data on marriage, divorce, remarriage, and patterns of cohabitation among Utah residents. It also explores Utahans' perspectives on the quality of their marriages, as well as overall attitudes towards marriage and divorce, with particular attention to the thoughts of young adults and low-income residents. Information is also provided on the impact of mental health and substance abuse problems on the quality of Utahans' unions.

Appendix 3: Example of Call Script to Policymakers

The following are examples of scripts to introduce MRE services and to secure a meeting for further discussion. Script A is an example for talking with an elected official such as state legislator, city council member, or county commissioner, etc. Script B is an example for talking with a program director such as TANF Director, Head Start program director, etc. The language and structure used in the following can also be adapted to email correspondence or a written letter.

Script A

Hello Representative X,

I appreciate you taking the time to learn about services to strengthen families. I wanted to set up a time to meet with you and share some ways that I believe my program could be helpful in providing services to low-income Hispanic individuals and couples in your constituency.*

I am providing marriage/relationship education (and/or responsible fatherhood) services to Hispanic families through the community center here in town and we have seen some impressive results which I would like to share with you. I understand federal funding may become available to states and I am eager to help you understand recent achievements within the area of family strengthening.

I would like to share with you some additional background and brief research on the healthy marriage program benefits, and explain how we might be able to work with other programs that you support to strengthen Hispanic families in our state.

Script B

Hello Ms. X,

I appreciate you taking the time to learn about services to strengthen families. I wanted to set up a time to meet with you and share some ways that I believe my program could be helpful in your services to low-income individuals and Hispanic couples in your constituency.*

I have been providing marriage/relationship education services to Hispanic couples to strengthen their family and would like to explore providing these services to parents in your [Head Start] program. These services benefit the parents and the children and are an important part of helping you meet your mission.

I would like to share with you some additional background information on the healthy marriage program benefits and explain how it might serve and be part of a family strengthening strategy for Hispanic parents in your [Head Start] program.

* This may be the same conversation that you have to have as you go through the assistant to make the appointment.

Appendix 4: Examples of Existing Programs

Following are examples of MRE services integrated with government social service programs. These will provide you with concrete examples of projects that are already working or have been successful in the past, as well as offer ideas to integrate your own healthy marriage services with social service systems.

Child Welfare

A child abuse prevention program operated in partnership with a state child welfare agency is The Healthy Families Florida program. The mission of Healthy Families Florida is to provide a statewide system of voluntary, community-based home visitation services that strengthen families, promote positive parent-child relationships and optimize the health and development of children. Healthy Families Florida provides free home visiting services to parents expecting a baby and parents of newborns. Healthy Families Florida is nationally accredited by Prevent Child Abuse America/Healthy Families America. This accreditation is only awarded to programs that are following best practice standards in home visitation. Healthy Families Plus (HFP) is an enhanced marriage/relationship service provided as part of the Healthy Families Florida home visiting program in Broward and Orange counties. The enhanced service components are modeled after the National Building Strong Families Initiative and include marriage/relationship education group sessions, intensive referral to family support services and follow-up services and enhanced Healthy Families home visits. The core HF Plus program elements are offered in English and Spanish and include: relationship and marriage skills education, family support services, individual couple support and strategies for reducing marriage disincentives.

<http://www.healthyfamiliesfla.org/plus.html>

Child Support

Healthy Marriages Healthy Relationships (HMHR) was a community-based initiative that delivered relationship skills and parenting to low-income residents in Grand Rapids, MI, with an overall goal of enhancing the emotional and financial well-being of children in area low-income neighborhoods. HMHR was awarded a Child Support Enforcement Demonstration Section 1115 waiver to provide services between October 2003 and September 2008. The program's delivery model involved a partnership between Healthy Marriage Grand Rapids, an organization with experience in delivering marriage education to middle income residents, and ten "organizations of trust"—faith and community-based organizations with a track record in low-income neighborhoods of providing services such as financial counseling and child care. The organizations were identified through an intermediary community group called City Vision, a group that provides capacity-building services to organizations serving low-income residents in Grand Rapids. The 10 organizations were responsible for recruiting participants and delivering classes. They conducted intake and provided written information about child support and domestic violence. Child support issues were referred to the HMHR liaison at the Friend of the Court. Relationships with area hospitals and in-house hospital paternity establishment staff were also developed to facilitate referrals.

<http://www.healthymarriagesgr.org/>

Department of Human Services

Family Expectations (FE), implemented by Public Strategies in partnership with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (OKDHS), is a comprehensive social service program targeting low-income couples who are expecting or have just had a child. FE provides marriage and relationship education (MRE) as well as parenting education (with a focus on infant care) to low-income married and unmarried couples. The program is delivered, in English and Spanish, until the child is one-year old and includes job placement services, referrals to other social service providers and social support opportunities (such as mothers' meetings and fathers' groups). FE partners with local health care providers and Women Infants and Children (WIC) for referrals.

<http://www.familiesok.org>

Appendix 5: Example of Reference Page for Policymakers

Healthy Marriage and Relationships Matter

- A healthy marriage remains a widely held and highly rated personal goal. Three-quarters of Latino teen boys (75%) and more than half of Latina teen girls (55%) believe that getting married is better than remaining single. (Del corazón de los jóvenes: What Latino teens are saying about love and relationships, The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, 2008.)
- A healthy marriage is the best environment in which to raise children. Children raised by their parents in married households are at reduced risk for child abuse, poverty, poor health, suicide, and psychological distress. (Why Marriage Matters: 26 Conclusions from the Social Sciences, Institute for American Values, 2005.)
- Hispanic couples generally have more children than other racial and ethnic groups. In 2000 the birth rate for Hispanics was 96 per 1000, compared with 69 for Blacks and 57 for Whites. (Marriage and Culture: Overview and Background of the American Hispanic and Latino Population, National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.)
- 35% of all low-income married couples are Hispanic. 40% of all low-income married parents with children under age 6 are Hispanic. (Marriage and Culture: Marriage in the Hispanic and Latino Community, National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.)
- Disadvantaged individuals value marriage very highly but face many barriers and disincentives to marriage, and their marriages are less likely to last. (Adapting Healthy Marriage Programs for Disadvantaged and Culturally Diverse Populations: What are the Issues? CLASP, 2007)
- The government cost to taxpayers is an estimated \$112 billion per year due to expenditures for social programs (e.g., food stamps, child support collections, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, criminal justice programs) that support children when parents divorce, or if parents never marry. Reducing family fragmentation by as little as 1 percent could yield a savings of nearly \$1 billion annually. (The Taxpayer Costs of Divorce and Unwed Childbearing: First-Ever Estimates for the Nation and All 50 States, Institute for American Values, Georgia Family Council, Institute for Marriage and Public Policy, and Families Northwest, 2008.)
- Married men and women experience better health, lower rates of serious illness, and longer life expectancy than those who are divorced. (Why Marriage Matters: 26 Conclusions from the Social Sciences, Institute for American Values, 2005.)
- Discusses the reasons why government should be involved in healthy marriage. (Healthy Marriage and Relationship Programs: A Promising Strategy for Strengthening Families. National Healthy Marriage Resource Center, November, 2009.)

Marriage and Relationship Education Services

- Marriage and relationship education (MRE) programs provide information and teach attitudes, skills and behaviors designed to help individuals and couples achieve long-lasting, happy, and successful marriages and intimate partner relationships. This includes making wise partner choices and avoiding or leaving abusive relationships. (Frequently Asked Questions: What are Marriage and Relationship Education Programs? National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.)
- Discusses how MRE services can be delivered on a large scale and the evidence that MRE programs work. (Healthy Marriage and Relationship Programs: A Promising Strategy for Strengthening Families, NHMRC, November, 2009.)
- The ingredients of a healthy marriage can be learned. (What is a Healthy Marriage? Defining the Concept, Child Trends, September 2004.)
- MRE can be provided to the general public through media campaigns, websites, fact sheets, brochures, self-help books, self-guided Internet courses, and other kinds of community outreach activities. Most commonly, however, marriage education refers to structured programs, classes, and workshops for couples and individuals offered on a voluntary basis in the community, churches, campuses, and schools. (The New Kid on the Block: What Is Marriage Education and Does It Work? Center for Law and Social Policy, Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005.)
- Marriage and relationship skills are transferable to other aspects of healthy living. (Frequently

Asked Questions: Who Can Benefit from Marriage and Relationship Education (MRE)? National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.)

- Premarital prevention programs are generally effective in helping couples improve communication, conflict management and relationship quality in the short term. (Evaluating the Effectiveness of Premarital Prevention Programs: A Meta-Analytic Review of Outcome Research, Journal of Family Relations, 2003, 52, 105–118.)

National Playing Field

MRE services are offered throughout the country. To find MRE services in your state visit <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/programs/index.cfm>.

A sample of a few large-scale programs also serving Hispanics are listed below.

California:

- The *California Healthy Marriages Coalition (CHMC)* is a non-profit organization that partners with coalitions and other faith- and community-based organizations to operate a statewide saturation model for providing MRE services. To learn more visit <http://www.camarriages.com/>.
- *FuturoNow Healthy Marriage Initiative* is a multifaceted healthy marriage education and public awareness initiative serving the low-income Hispanic population of Los Angeles, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Orange Counties. For more information visit <http://www.futuronow.org/home.asp>.

Florida: Previous leadership from the Department of Children and Families and the Commission on Marriage and Family supported healthy marriage programs in the state of Florida. A few ongoing programs targeting the Hispanic population include:

- *EnFamilia* provides a number of family-centered services, including healthy marriage and responsible fatherhood education to South Dade county—a rural, primarily agricultural area attracting a large population of migrant and seasonal farm workers. For more information, visit <http://www.enfamiliainc.org/>.
- *PAIRS Relationship Skills for Strong South Florida Families* works with community- and faith-based partners to provide healthy marriage and relationship services to married, pre-marital and unmarried expectant couples as well as youth. For additional information visit <http://www.pairs.com/>.
- The *Together Project* is a program of the Marriage and Family Research Institute of the University of Central Florida. Healthy marriage services are provided to married couples in the Orlando area. For more information visit <http://mfri.ucf.edu/index.cfm>.

Illinois: *Family Bridges / Lazos de Familia* is a healthy marriage program in the Chicagoland area partnering with 500 community organizations to provide healthy marriage and relationship supports to minorities and develop culturally appropriate resources related to obtaining and maintaining healthy relationships. For more information visit <http://www.familybridgeschicago.org/home.asp>.

Oklahoma: The Oklahoma Marriage Initiative (OMI), a statewide marriage and relationship education program funded through annual allocations of State TANF dollars, is a public/private partnership providing MRE services across the state through community-based workshops. Services are offered, in English and Spanish, to the general population and business community as well as to specific audiences including: Hispanic couples, step-families, expectant couples, incarcerated individuals, adoptive couples, and social service personnel. More information about the OMI can be found at www.okmarriage.org.

Texas: Twogether in Texas is a state-wide program funded by the Texas Health and Human Services Commission offering healthy marriage services through community- and faith-based organizations across the state. Many of the organizations affiliated with Twogether in Texas serve Hispanic couples and families. For more information visit <http://www.twogetherintexas.com/UI/Homepage.aspx>.

Additional Information

- Administration for Children and Families Healthy Marriage Initiative <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/index.html>
- Hispanic Healthy Marriage Initiative http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/about/hispanic_hm_initiative.508.html
- National Healthy Marriage Resource Center www.healthymarriageinfo.org
 - ▶ TANF Funds and Healthy Marriage Activities <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/tanffundhmact.pdf>

- ▶ Understanding TANF <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/understandingtanf2.pdf>
- ▶ Been There, Done That – Sharing Lessons Learned as a State Administrator <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/beentheredonethatlessonslearned.pdf>
- ▶ Collaborating Within State Government to Support Healthy Relationships: Tips for State Administrators <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/collaboratingwithinstategovernment.pdf>
- ▶ Managing a Statewide Healthy Marriage Initiative: Tips From My Experience as a Policymaker <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/docs/managingastatewidehmiexperience.pdf>
- Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) <http://www.clasp.org/>
 - ▶ Ooms, T., Bouchet, S., Parke, M. (2004). Beyond the Marriage Licenses: Efforts in States to Strengthen Marriage and Two-Parent Families. Center for Law and Social Policy. http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/beyond_marr.pdf
 - ▶ Parke, M. (2003). Are Married Parents Really Better for Children? What Research Says About the Effects of Family Structure on Child Well-Being. Center for Law and Social Policy. http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_archive/files/0128.pdf
 - ▶ Roberts, P., Greenberg, M. (2005). Rethinking Welfare Rules From a Marriage-Plus Perspective. Center for Law and Social Policy. http://www.clasp.org/admin/site/publications_archive/files/0176.pdf
- Fein, D.(2004). Married and Poor. MDRC Supporting Healthy Marriage Evaluation. <http://www.mdrc.org/publications/393/workpaper.pdf>
- Institute for American Values <http://www.americanvalues.org/index.html>
- The Brookings Institution <http://www.brookings.edu/>
 - ▶ Haskins, R., Sawhill, I. (2003). Work and Marriage: The Way to End Poverty and Welfare. The Brookings Institution. http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2003/09childrenfamilies_haskins.aspx