
2010 CENSUS OF MALE-FOCUSED PROGRAMS

A Snapshot of Programs and Organizations Supporting American Males



About this publication

This brief explains the findings of a national online census of male-focused programsⁱ conducted by Thinking Man Consulting with generous support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. The census was designed to increase understanding of the services that exist to help men take care of themselves and their families. A key objective of this project was to identify those initiatives or programs within organizations that intentionally serve males – especially low-income males – so that public and private resources can be better targeted and outcomes improved.

The analysis and viewpoints conveyed herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of supporters or respondents to the census survey.

Background

The information summarized in this brief was voluntarily submitted over an eight-week period by more than 300 organizations across the United States. A database rich with information on these groups has been created and is resource for additional analysis and briefs. Target audiences for this publication include private foundation staff, policymakers, nonprofit leaders, individual donors, advocates and males seeking support.

Based on an extensive review of relevant literature, this process of enumerating male-focused programs and organizations is believed to be the first undertaking of its kind. Therefore, this summary provides only a snapshot of this community of practice premised upon responses to the online survey. In light of this limitation, generalizations about the field of male-focused practice should not be inferred from these findings.

Abstract

Technological advances in American workplaces and the globalization of economic markets – especially labor markets – have helped drive a thirty-year trend of deteriorating labor market opportunities for large segments of men, particularly lesser-skilled males of color. During this period subgroups of men and boys have also experienced declines in academic achievement and increases in rates of incarceration. These long-standing patterns have motivated scholarly research and significant media commentary positing the existence of a masculinity crisis.

Motivated by these concerns, a broad range of nonprofit and government initiatives that are designed to improve education, employment and health outcomes among men and boys now populate the national landscape. The field is characterized by grassroots and grassroots mobilization approaches, single- and multiple-issue concentrations and secular, faith and academic-based groups working for change. These organizations undertake a range of strategies to accomplish their goals, including statewide commissions on males, direct social services, basic research, media projects and public policy advocacy. Like other human service fields, male-focused practitioners aim to meet men and boys where they are and employ all resources at their disposal to improve their plight.

Many challenges exist in increasing understanding and improving the effectiveness of male-focused interventions. Generally, this field of practice lacks cohesion. Knowledge about the variety, scope, scale and impact of male-focused initiatives is limited. Unlike other human service sectors, many male-focused interventions operate in local communities without connections to larger professional networks or peer organizations. The absence of a central bank of information, combined with the relative isolation of practitioners, scholars and

advocates, contributes to episodic, inadequate funding and low policy prioritization of this field’s important work.

This initial brief on the 2010 Census of Male-Focused Programs is a step toward gathering and sharing basic knowledge about the diversity of activity in the field and improving its capacity to leverage greater public and private investment.

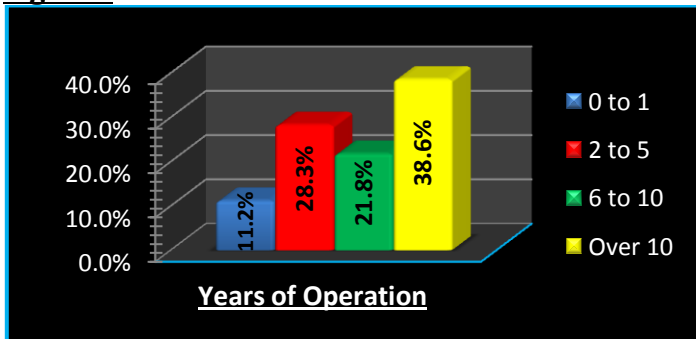
Findings

The online census of male-focused programs garnered 321 responses from organizations located in 34 states and the District of Columbia. The survey included 10 questions designed to gather basic information across three general categories: organizational capacity, service offered and geographic focus. Although answers varied significantly, analysis of the results reveals commonalities, deficiencies and opportunities to strengthen the field.

Organizational Capacity

Mature organizations were the majority of respondents to the survey. As reflected in **Figure 1**, over 60 percent of respondents have existed at least six years. More than 38 percent of these programs have existed over 10 years. Survey results also reveal new growth in male-focused practice, with 11 percent of respondents operating for less than one year.

Figure 1

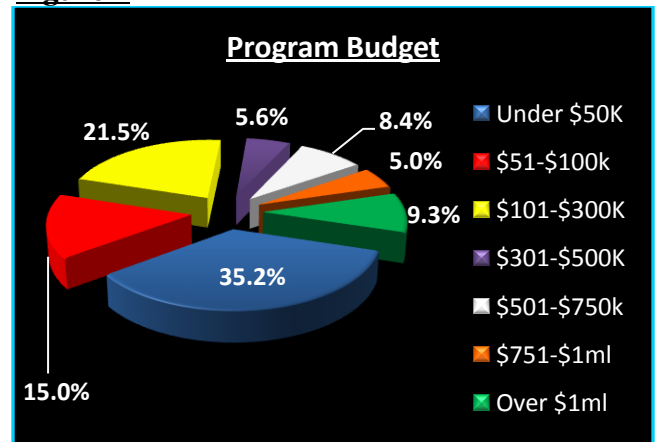


These data are encouraging as male-focused practice has historically faced rates of attrition that undercut long-term sustainability. For example, a 2007 review

of 51 male-focused programs found that after more than a decade, 50 percent of sample groups still existed and only 25 percent had continued male-focused practice.ⁱⁱ The online census data indicates a new trend, with a cohort of the field devising strategies to maintain its organizations and male-focused activity.

The financial figures of the responding organizations, which collectively reported revenue totaling at least \$70 million, show that the majority operate their male-focused endeavors on a modest budget with a small staff. **Figure 2** shows that over 70 percent of respondents had budgets of \$300,000 or less; 35 percent of this group had budgets under \$50,000; and slightly more than 9 percent operated with over \$1 million. By comparison, Urban Institute research on the nonprofit sector reveals that approximately 75 percent of *all* public charities had annual operating budgets of less than \$500,000 in 2008; 45 percent of these groups had operating budgets under \$100,000.ⁱⁱⁱ

Figure 2



This finding suggests that male-focused interventions are operating on par with similarly sized peers and therefore are no more fragile than they are. Additional comparisons would help clarify how male-focused groups match up to similar organizations.

Human resource capacity is principally driven by program budgets. Most of the study's surveyed groups (some 65 percent) reported having fewer than four full-time staff; many of these – 54 percent – count 1-4 staff. Just 14 percent of those surveyed counted staff of 10 or greater. Perhaps these low staff and budget numbers help explain why these organizations have successfully continued their efforts.

Services Provided

The survey inquired about a broad range of services and invited respondents to write in additional service categories. Most groups reported delivery of two or more services. The six leading service categories identified were:

- * Educational Services, 78%;
- * Violence Prevention, 45%;
- * Employment, 43%;
- * Parenting, 41%;
- * Health, 33%; and
- * Reentry 30%.

These groupings typify male-focused practice and suggest insights about the pressing concerns faced by men and boys.

The roles and life circumstances of the males engaged by the respondents also fit conventional categories of males in need of support. Most males fell into multiple groupings. The following were named as the primary groups receiving support:

- * Fathers, 67%;
- * Students, 67%;
- * Unemployed, 58%;
- * School-Leavers, 51%; and
- * Formerly Incarcerated, 51%.

These profiles align well with the services reported by the organizations and inform the field's understanding about the males most in need.

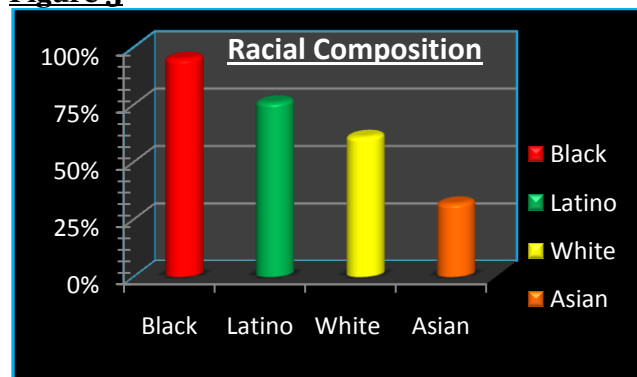
Demographic Subgroups

The demographics of the men and boys served by the respondents are diverse.

Figure 3 profiles the racial composition of

the males served in this universe. Nearly all groups reported working with African American males (95%), and 75% of groups count Latino males among their participants; 61% of respondents work with Caucasian males, and 32% with Asian males.

Figure 3



The age of the males engaged was another key demographic marker captured in survey results. Responding organizations indicated their work with males spanned ages 5 to over 55. However, most groups reported that boys and young men comprised the majority of their program participants. Over 60 percent of groups named males aged 12-17 years as their primary client group; as did nearly 80 percent of groups working with young men aged 18-24 years. Other groups indicated substantial engagement with males in the 25-34 and 35-54 age groups (44% and 39% respectively). Slightly less than 25 percent identified the cohort of the ages 5- 11 years among their participants.

Geographic Distribution

As shown in **Figure 4**, at least one organization from 34 states and the District of Columbia responded to the online survey. About 68 percent of responding organizations were from states in the Southeast, Mid-South, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions of the country. All Midwestern and Mid-Atlantic states had at least one respondent, and most states in the Mid-South and Northeast regions were represented. Surveys

were completed in nearly all states in the Southeast.

Populous states with large urban centers produced the most census responses. California-based groups represented 21 percent of all responses and helped compensate for the relatively low response rate from west coast states. Similarly, respondents from Texas made up 9 percent of all responses but 80 percent of input from the southwest. California, New York, Pennsylvania and Texas each yielded at least 25 completed surveys. Surveys submitted from these four states alone comprise over 50 percent of all survey responses.

Other statistics reveal more about this phenomenon. Six states generated between 10 and 20 responses each and are home to a total of 80 male-focused organizations. In a vein similar to that of the four large states described above, significant male-focused activity is concentrated in this small grouping of states, five of which dot the eastern seaboard. Collectively, 10 states – California, Georgia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Washington, D.C. – account for over 75 percent of surveys completed for this census.

While it is not altogether clear what factors have led to a geographic concentration of services in more population-dense places, current unemployment and poverty rates among men and boys highlight the widespread need for the supports that the respondents provide. Certainly more analysis is needed to better grasp existing capacity in states where it seems male-focused activity may have been underreported, or, is nonexistent. However, limited data in this area does not obscure the obvious and gross mismatch between the demand among men and boys for support and the supply of accessible programs and services.

More public and private investment will be necessary to enable greater numbers of organizations to capably support males and

their families, especially in smaller, more sparsely populated states and communities.

Figure 4



Summary

Several important insights emerged from the survey of male-focused groups. Gathering baseline data about the field is an obvious but nonetheless important outcome. Prior to this national survey, no reference point existed to discern either the scope of male-focused practice or the character or scale of the average operation. Though not exhaustive, the results of this survey provide an important step in gathering this important information.

Both the longevity and organizational capacity reported by survey respondents suggests male-focused organizations may be less fragile than traditionally believed. Among survey respondents, over 35 percent have operated for more than 10 years; 23 percent claim budgets over \$500,000; and nearly 10 percent had over \$1 million budgets. On average, these organizations have budgets of over \$200,000 to support male-focused practice. Data limitations notwithstanding, this insight should inform public and

private funding strategies intended to improve outcomes among men and boys.

There are opportunities to better leverage the field's knowledge and secure greater public and private investment. For example, more than three-quarters of respondents reported providing educational services; however, few education-focused foundations explicitly support male-focused initiatives. Similarly, once more is understood about the quality of male-focused practice, the most effective efforts could leverage their expertise to inform public policies and funding priorities related to meeting the health and employment needs of men and boys.

The degree to which the organizations described in this brief typify male-focused practice is not yet understood. Certainly, the list of respondents is not exhaustive and some key organizations were not well represented. In particular, several national organizations with large affiliate networks did not respond well to the survey. Additional inquiry is needed to capture male-focused practice omitted from this initial survey and build deeper understanding of the organizations included.

For more information on survey results or to make a specific data request please contact us at:
loren@thinkingmanconsulting.com.

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Thinking Man Consulting (TMC) is a social enterprise that was founded to provide premium consulting services and tools to improve the effectiveness and impact of philanthropic and social interventions that strengthen society. TMC specializes in concerns related to males, particularly males of color. We also deeply value gender equity and welcome opportunities to partner with women and women's groups to undo sexism, patriarchy, misogyny and hegemonic masculinity and stop men's violence against women. Please visit www.thinkingmanconsulting.com for more information on the firm.

Sources:

ⁱ The term "male-focused" practice is used inclusively in this brief to refer to all charitable activity undertaken by respondents with either an exclusive or primary focus on men and boys.

ⁱⁱ Marcus J. Littles, Ryan Bowers, and Micah Gilmer, *Why We Can't Wait: A Case for Philanthropic Action, Opportunities for Improving Life Outcomes for African American Males* (New York: Ford Foundation, 2008), p. 9.

ⁱⁱⁱ Urban Institute, National Center for Charitable Statistics, 2010. *The Nonprofit Sector in Brief: Public Charities, Giving and Volunteering, 2010*.
<http://www.urban.org/uploadedpdf/412209-nonprof-public-charities.pdf>