

Census of Male-Focused Groups Series No. 2

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A REVIEW OF NEW YORK STATE PROGRAMS AND ORGANIZATIONS SUPPORTING MEN & BOYS



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About this publication

This brief is part of a series of publications that explain the findings from a national online census of male-focused programs. Survey results from New York based providers and programs are analyzed in this writing. The census was conducted to take stock and increase understanding of the organizations that administer programs designed to help men take care of themselves and their families. The aim is to gather and share information that strengthens the field and increases the prospects of leveraging greater public and private investment.

The analysis and viewpoints offered 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 by over 300 organizations nationally and 28 from the state of New York. A database rich with information on these groups has been created and is a resource for ongoing analysis and writings. Target audiences for this publication include private foundation staff, policymakers, nonprofit leaders, individual donors, advocates and males seeking support.

The Census of Male-Focused Organizations is believed to be the first undertaking of its kind nationally or in New York. This summary only provides a limited snapshot of male-focused practice at the time of the survey. The data gathered from groups is largely descriptive, not evaluative. Given these limitations, generalizations about individual organizations and the broader field should not be inferred from these findings.

Abstract

Technological advances in American workplaces, the globalization of economic markets and the widespread loss of jobs during the Great Recession have helped drive a forty-year trend of deteriorating labor market opportunities and declining wages for large segments of men, particularly males of color. During this period subgroups of men and boys have also experienced declines in educational attainment 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 and signaling the end of American manhood as we know it.

In response to these concerns, a broad range of nonprofit and government initiatives designed to improve education, employment and health outcomes among men and boys now populate the national landscape. Evidence of this growing field of practice can be found in a majority of states and the nation's capital city. The field is characterized by grassroots and grassroots mobilization approaches, single- and multi-service organizations,

university affiliated and secular and faith-based efforts to improve male life outcomes.

This brief profiles organizations operating in New York State. The organizational capacity, scope of services and geographic reach of these groups is examined within the context of the Great Recession of 2008-09. The economic downturn provides an important marker for the nation and pivotal turning point in the economic and social plight faced by men and their families, particularly lesser-skilled men of color.

The publication also analyzes comparative information shared between New York and national survey responses. Based on the findings, the report closes with recommendations for the field, current and potential funders and policymakers concerned about males and their communities.

Findings

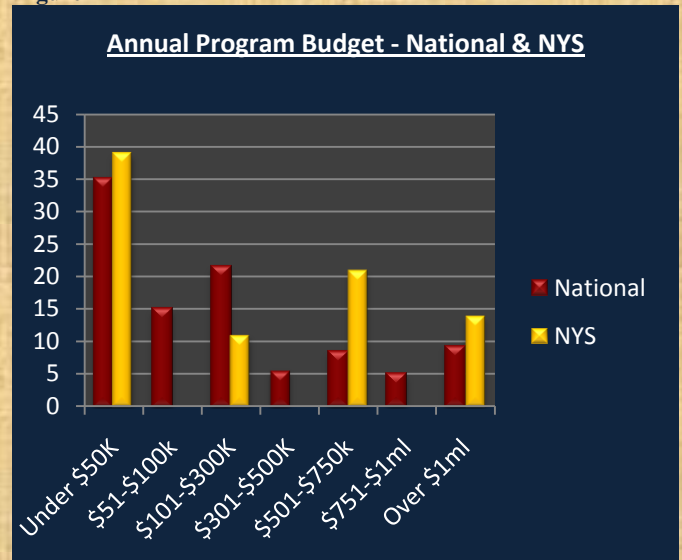
The online census of male-focused groups yielded 28 total responses from New York state; 24 of these were from New York City and Long Island combined. The survey included 10 questions designed to gather basic information across three broad categories: organizational capacity, service delivery and geographic focus. The results of the survey reveal commonalities, strengths and deficiencies among providers. The results suggest opportunities for strengthen the field.

Organizational Capacity

Nearly 40 percent of New York agencies operate male-focused

initiatives on program budgets of of less than \$50,000. At the opposite end of the budget spectrum, an equal percentage – 40 percent – have program budgets that exceed \$500,000. Among these providers only 4 have program budgets over \$1 million. By comparison, among survey respondents from the rest of the country 35 percent had budgets under \$50,000 and 30 groups – about 9 percent – had program budgets exceeding \$1 million (see Figure 1).

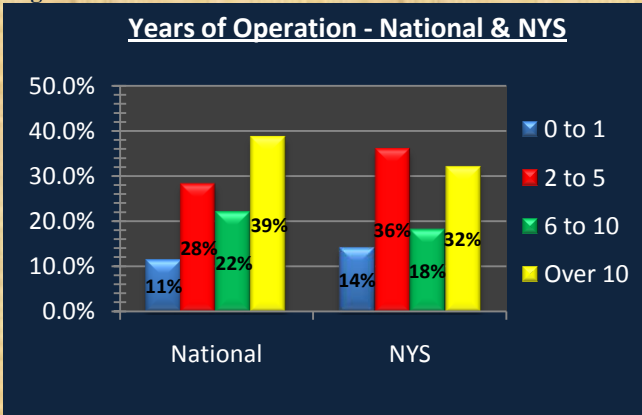
Figure 1



Half of the groups in the state have operated male-focused programs for at least six years (see Figure 2). This is notable staying power. However it trails the 60 percent of national respondents operating for that length of time. At the time of the survey 14 percent of New York providers had been in operation for less than a year. This proportion is slightly higher than the 11 percent of new efforts captured around the country. More established organizations also tended to have larger program

budgets. It is worth noting and better understanding the emergence of these nascent initiatives at the height of the Great Recession.

Figure 2

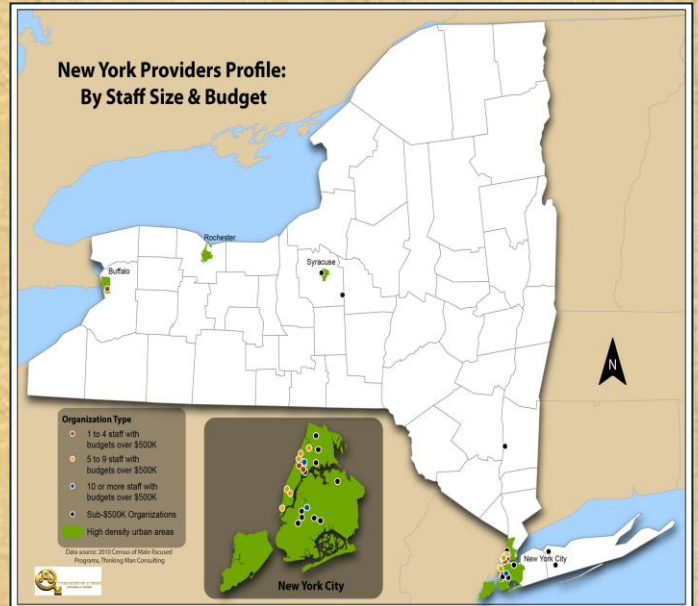


Urban Institute research on the nonprofit sector reveals that approximately 75 percent of *all* public charities had annual operating budgets of less than \$500,000 in 2008; 45 percent of the nonprofits studied by the Institute had operating budgets under \$100,000.ⁱ This finding suggests that male-focused interventions are operating on par with similarly sized peers and, therefore, are no more fragile. Additional comparisons would help clarify how male-focused groups match up to similar organizations.

Much like their peer providers across the country, a majority – nearly 80 percent – of New York respondents have between 1 to 9 staff members. A higher percentage – 39 percent – of New York providers reported employing a larger workforce of 5 to 9 persons than the 20 percent of national respondents with this staff size. As shown in Maps 1 and 2, groups with

larger staff are more mature and have been in operation for at least six years. Nearly all of these providers are located in Manhattan.

Map 1



Conversely, emerging organizations with smaller budgets and fewer staff populate New York’s upstate communities, Long Island and the New York City’s outer boroughs of Brooklyn and the Bronx.

Map 2



Services Provided

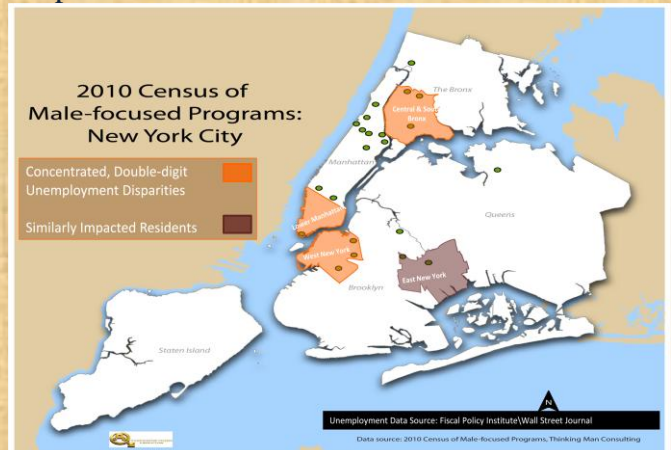
Most New York state providers – nearly 80 percent – are multi-service organizations (MSOs); all of the single-service groups program under the broad category of educational services. In fact, educational services – made available by almost 90 percent of organizations – are the most offered service. As might be expected during a tough economic period, more than 50 percent of providers administer employment programs; and to round out the top three service types, slightly more than 40 percent of respondents reported providing parenting (fatherhood) programs. A sizeable minority – just under one-third – work on each reentry and violence prevention matters.

The services offered by New York City’s providers correspond to the pervasive challenges known to be faced by large numbers of lesser-skilled males, particularly males of color. The Great Recession substantially dimmed the prospects for success – particularly labor force attachment – available to the males served by these providers. The Community Service Society reports that unemployment among Black males doubled from the pre-recessionary rate of 9 percent – an already inordinately high rate – to 17.9 percent during the recession.ⁱⁱ During this same period the rate for Latino males also ballooned from 5.7 to 12.4 percent.

As revealed in Map 3, more than 60 percent of New York City providers are physically located in the communities most deeply

impacted by the recession. For example, Map 3 shows communities highlighted in orange and it is in these places where unemployment rates were among the highest in New York City and the most stratified by race. The sole exception, outlined in purple on Map 3, is the East New York section of Brooklyn. This was the only New York City community that experienced both high overall unemployment rates and racial parity, as unemployment rate for Whites – 25 percent – exceeded the rates for Blacks and Latinos 21 and 17 percent respectively.ⁱⁱⁱ High rates of failure should not be the goal of American schools, labor markets or prisons, for that matter. However, when breakdowns occur in systems, institutions and markets, the impact can be more equitably shouldered as evidenced in East New York.

Map 3



Population Served

The men and boys served by New York organizations are largely of color and young. Over 80 percent of the agencies work with 18 to 24 year old males. More than 90 percent reported working with Black and

Latino males. Slightly more than 50 percent of the organizations engage White males and nearly 40 percent are supporting Asian men and boys. The age and race profile of males served by New York providers mostly mirrors that of peer organizations that responded to the national census.

Organizations are also working with males that face multiple barriers to mainstream social and economic opportunities. Over 50 percent of New York agencies reported working with males that are either school leavers, unemployed or former convicts. Aggregate data from other census responders was quite similar to New York on these measures. Over 60 percent indicated their client population includes fathers; and, nearly one-third are supporting homeless males. National data revealed slightly higher – 67 percent – percentage of national groups supporting fathers and roughly the same proportion of homeless males being engaged.

Geographic Distribution

Over 85 percent of New York census responses came from New York City's boroughs and Long Island. Specifically, 22 of the 28 responses or 79 percent were submitted by organizations located in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens; with 13 of 22 (59%) tendered by Manhattan based agencies.

As referenced earlier, nearly all of New York's census respondents are based in or near high need communities, proximal to the men and boys they engage. The providers work in communities and with people that have endured long-term disinvestment and perverse public policies. For example, specific neighborhoods in the communities of Central and South Bronx, East New York, Harlem and Washington Heights have been dubiously dubbed "million dollar blocks" – a term that references the emergence of "the criminal justice system [as] the predominant government institution in these communities and that public investment in this system has resulted in significant costs to other elements of our civic infrastructure – education, housing, health and family."^{iv} Such fiscal and public policy choices simultaneously help destabilize communities and elevate the vitality of male-focused practice.

Summary

The onslaught of joblessness and financial fallout that accompanied the recession combined with preexisting socioeconomic hardships have made improving the plight of males at the margins of society a decidedly more challenging, if not a seemingly impossible ambition. Surmounting the obstacles obstructing progress is further complicated by the gaping racial inequities that color the experiences of males and their

communities. Realizing broader achievement and expanding opportunities for males, specifically lesser-skilled males of color stands before New York State and, indeed, the entire nation as an urgent matter.

A closer examination of the organizations described here would demonstrate that incremental progress can be realized. However, no single sector can alone achieve the substantial turnaround necessary to improve the trajectory of these males and the nation. Improvement will require movement.

Recommendations

Based on findings from the national survey, analysis of responses from New York and extensive knowledge of the field the following suggestions are offered to practitioners, funders, advocates and thought leaders of the field.

- ✓ **Think institutionally, act collectively – regular communication and coordinated effort is needed from public and private funders commonly concerned about improving male life outcomes;**
- ✓ **Educate to activate – develop and implement smart public education campaigns to reduce resistance and motivate support for targeted strategies that would improve outcomes among vulnerable males;**
- ✓ **Invest, with others, in leaders and leading institutions – consistent investment to strengthen existing**

- models and seed the freshest ideas and innovations are needed;**
- ✓ **Track consumer satisfaction – develop tools to capture and monitor males’ assessment of their engagement with male-focused organizations; and**
- ✓ **Develop multiple platforms for professional development – generally the field of male-focused practice is fractured which makes it feel smaller than it really is. Creating virtual and actual markets for ideas and peer exchange can overcome miniaturization and increase professional capacity.**

Sustaining and strengthening male-focused work over time would be aided by developing alliances across the issue silos – education, employment, health, etc. More to the point, men and boys are whole people with diverse needs. The organizations committed to aiding them must be responsive and offer an array of supports designed specifically for males.

Finally, it is not yet well understood whether the organizations described in this brief typify male-focused practice in New York. The organizations that responded to the online survey are not believed to constitute the universe of male-focused organizations in New York. Additional inquiry is needed to capture and understand efforts missed in this initial census.

For more information about survey results or to make a specific request, please contact:
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Thinking Man Consulting (TMC) is a social enterprise founded to provide premium consulting services and tools to improve the effectiveness and impact of philanthropic and social interventions. TMC specializes in concerns related to males, particularly males of color. We equally 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 practice.

Sources:

ⁱ 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>

ⁱⁱ Holder, Michelle. *Unemployment in New York City During the Recession and Early Recovery: Young Black Men Hit the Hardest*, December 2010. <http://www.cssny.org/userimages/downloads/OnlyOneInFourYoungBlackMenInNYCHaveaJobDec2010.pdf>. Accessed February 18, 2011.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid.

^{iv} Kurgan, Laura. *Million Dollar Blocks*. The Spatial Information Design Lab website. Columbia University. <http://www.spatialinformationdesignlab.org/projects.php?id=16>. Accessed February 18, 2011.