GUIDANCE ON PROGRAM INCENTIVES

Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grant recipients may use this guidance when electing to use incentives to meet one or more of the statutory purposes of the program. The Office of Family Assistance (OFA) Family Assistance Program Specialist (FPS) will review and advise the Office of Grants Management (OGM) on whether or not the recipients' proposed incentives are programmatically satisfactory. OGM Grants Management Specialists will review, assess, and provide guidance, as needed, to recipients regarding their incentive levels and monitoring of said expenditures.

WHAT ARE PROGRAM INCENTIVES?

Program incentives are awarded to HMRF program participants to acknowledge one or more of the following statutory purposes of the program.

- **Enrollment:** encouraging potential participant to come into the organization for intake and/or attending the first class session.

- **Participation Milestones:** encouraging participant to continue attending by recognizing milestones in participation. For example, these incentives may be awarded after half of all classes are attended or after all classes are completed.

- **Survey Completion:** encouraging participant to complete surveys, including nFORM surveys (the Applicant Characteristics, Entrance, and Exit surveys) and other surveys (e.g., for local or federally led evaluations). Incentives must be tied to completion, not just participation.

LIMITATIONS ON INCENTIVES COSTS

The total incentive amount per individual participant (not by couple) should not exceed $350. Each individual member of a couple is eligible for incentives up to the individual maximum amount, contingent upon whether the participant meets the incentive requirements.

Each of the incentives must be used to meet one or more of the statutory purposes of the program.

Gift cards may not be:

- Associated with entertainment (e.g., movies, games, and so forth)

- Redeemable for cash

- Used to purchase tobacco, alcohol, or firearms

- Transferred by grant recipient to other parties

The grant recipient must have policies, procedures, and internal controls to track and monitor distribution of incentives.

WHAT ARE NOT PROGRAM INCENTIVES?

Incentives do **NOT** include:

PROGRAM SUPPORTS

Program supports are methods to reduce barriers to program participation, such as providing childcare, offering public transit fare, or offering supplies to support work and employment activities.

FEES OR CONTRACTED COSTS

Payments made in the form of a fee or contracted cost, such as for use of an organization's facilities to conduct classes, is not an incentive but may be an appropriate allocable cost of administering the program. For example, a community center may charge a fee for its meeting space, which could be paid out of the grant.

COLLABORATION REQUIREMENTS BETWEEN GRANT RECIPIENT AND LOCAL/FEDERAL EVALUATOR

Collaboration between grant recipient and local/federal evaluator is expected. The grant recipient and the local/federal evaluators must work collaboratively to identify an incentive structure/package that best meets the goals of the program and enables evaluations to have the best opportunity to identify program impacts/outcomes.

Grant recipients and evaluators must discuss their incentive procedures to meet program needs and support local and/or federally led evaluations with their FPS. The FPS has the discretion to include the Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE) Evaluation Team and/or a Evaluation Technical Assistance Partner (ETAP).

RECORDING INCENTIVES IN NFORM

In addition to the incentive type and amount, the user is asked to provide an incentive category. Table 1 shows suggested categories for incentives that can be selected in nFORM based on the reason for providing the incentive. Grant recipients should also review Module VII.B of the user manual for more information about documenting incentives in nFORM 2.0.

TABLE 1:
MAPPING OF NFORM INCENTIVE CATEGORIES*

Incentive Category	Reason for Incentive
• Enrollment	• Related to encouraging participation
• Participation/Client Milestone	• Related to program milestone
• Survey Completion	• Related to program milestone

The incentive categories in nFORM are being updated to align with the categories in this guidance.

HM RF
Healthy Marriage & Responsible Fatherhood