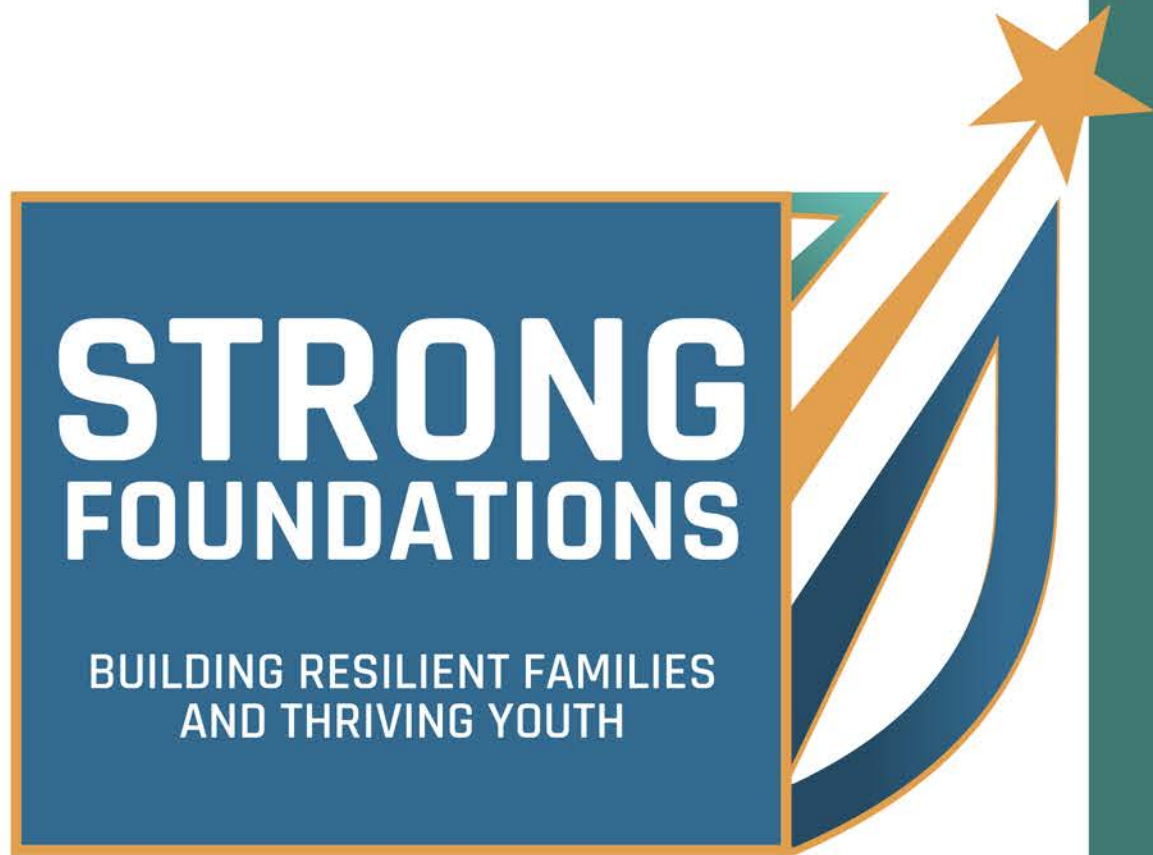




The Journey Ahead: Using Data to Strengthen Your Program

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Mathematica, Inc.



Today's session



- Data for doers
- Using data for program improvement
- Overview of the 2025 performance measures
- Advancing data capacity and continuous quality improvement (CQI)



Objectives



Understand

How performance measures support your program

Hear

How your peers have used data for program improvement

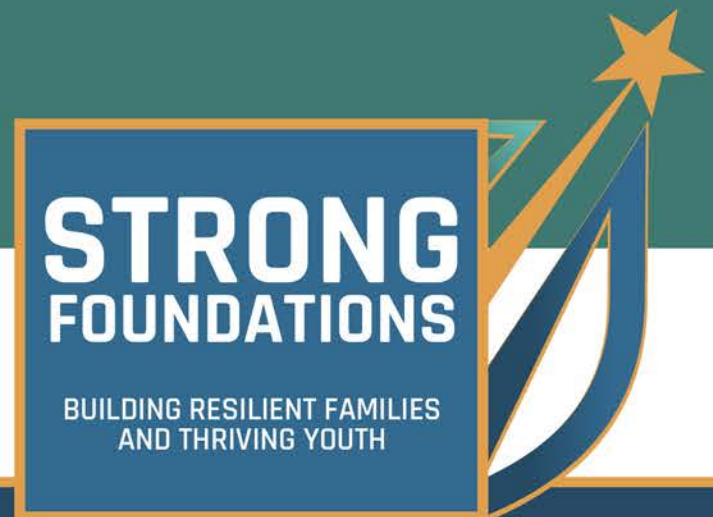
Learn

What's next in the 2025 HMRF performance measures

Access

Resources to strengthen your program's data capacity and continuous quality improvement

Data for doers



Performance measures align with ACF's goals for the programs



- ACF is committed to data-driven monitoring, support, and improvements for Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) programs
 - Developing measures, surveys, and nFORM
 - Improving these tools based on experience and grantee and client feedback, starting with the 2015 cohort
- Performance measures data—collected and reported by HMRF grantees—helps ACF, grantees, and the field understand key aspects of the programs
 - Who was served, how they were served, and how they changed over time

How can HMRF data be useful to you?



- Data can inform your day-to-day work and support your program's mission to serve your community
- Use data to:
 - Manage program operations
 - Identify an area for improvement
 - Generate possible solutions
 - Test the solutions, and
 - Modify because solutions rarely work exactly as intended

Commonly used terms to describe similar concepts:



Data-Driven
Decision Making



Plan-Do-Study-Act
(PDSA)



Continuous Quality
Improvement

Your insights and professional experience are essential to using data



1. Pinpointing areas for improvement

Your day-to-day experience helps identify what's not working and where the greatest needs exist.



2. Figuring out the likely causes for those issues

Your professional insight helps get to the root of the problems, not just the symptoms.



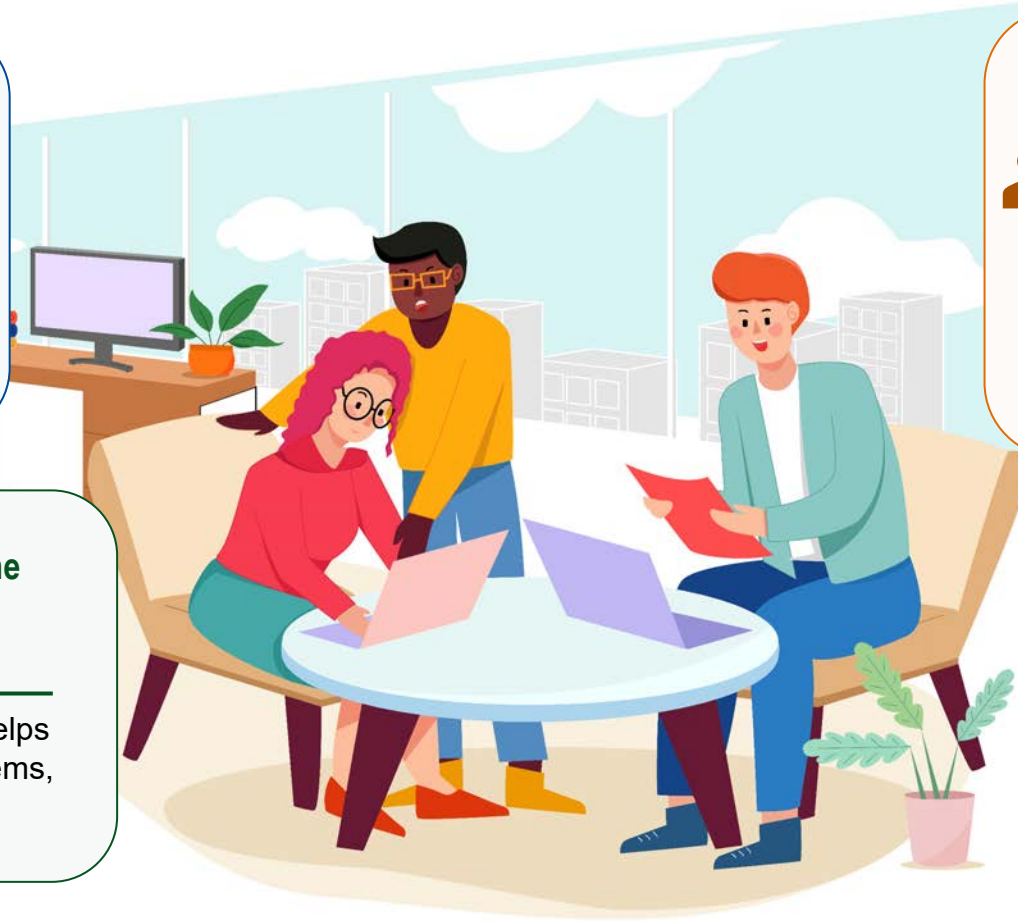
3. Brainstorming practical solutions given your context

You understand your community, resources, and realities—so that you can create solutions that are feasible and effective.

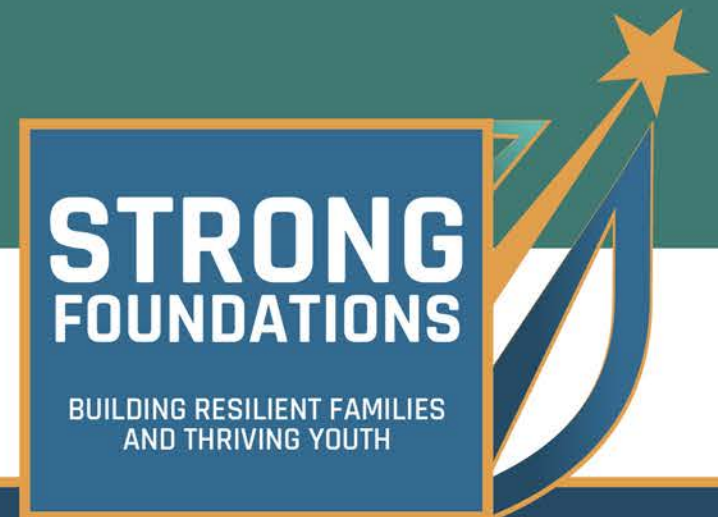


4. Determining what success looks like, so it can be measured

You define meaningful outcomes that reflect your program's goals and community priorities—and track what matters.



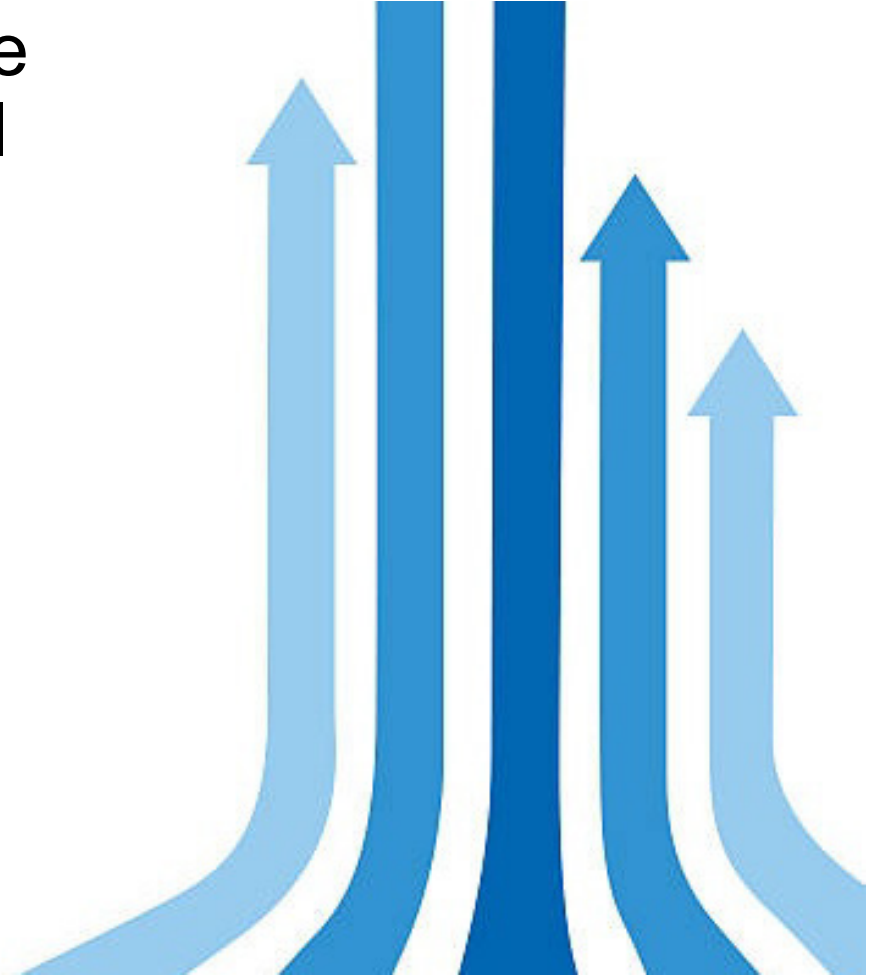
Using data for program improvement



Lessons and accomplishments from the 2020 cohort



- The 2020 cohort also collected performance measures in nFORM—and provided helpful feedback that shaped the changes for this cohort's performance measures.
- Let's take a brief look at some of their accomplishments and hear real life examples of how a few grantees used that data to drive improvement.



2020 HMRF cohort highlights



Who We Reached Across the 2020 HMRF Cohort

Five program populations. One shared commitment to stronger families.



HM Couples
47,723
enrolled

(counts each client)

18 grant recipients

12 states

67% completion¹

25% of all clients



HM Individuals
23,757
enrolled

16 grant recipients

11 states

77% completion¹

12% of all clients



HM Youth
58,658
enrolled

24 grant recipients

14 states

76% completion¹

31% of all clients



RF Community Fathers
51,893
enrolled

53 grant recipients

23 states

63% completion¹

27% of all clients



RF Reentering Fathers
9,356
enrolled

12 grant recipients

10 states

74% completion¹

5% of all clients



191,387

clients served across
five program populations

¹ Program completion is defined as attending at least 90 percent of a programs primary workshop hours, which provide core content. For couples, both partners must attend a workshop to be counted toward participation.

Source: nFORM data,
April 1, 2021, through
September 29, 2025

Participants' outcomes improved across multiple domains



	 HM Couples	 HM Individuals	 HM Youth	 RF Community Fathers	 RF Reentering Fathers
 Relationships	 Support & affection (3.2 → 3.4)	 Support & affection (3.4 → 3.5)	 Expect healthy marriage for life (49.6 → 51.0%)	 Coparenting alliance (3.4 → 3.5)	 Coparenting alliance (3.4 → 3.5)
 Parenting/ Coparenting	 Work well together as parents (84.1 → 88.6%)	 Work well together as parents (68.2 → 72.7%)	Stable parenting outcomes among youth parents	 Child contact in past month (54.1 → 57.6%)	 Child contact in past month (67.1 → 69.8%)
 Economic Well-Being	 Employment (76.6 → 77.9%)	 Employment (49.6 → 53.3%)	Not measured	 Employment (48.8 → 58.4%)	 Employment (21.3 → 26.5%)

Note: Data from entrance and exit surveys, April 1, 2021 through September 29, 2025. Many outcomes were measured; we highlighted only a few here. These results reflect clients' change over time, which the programs may or may not have caused.

Grantee panel



Champions for Children

Family and Workforce Centers of America



Champions for Children



Fathers Resource and Networking Community (FRANC) Program

- FORGE program serving Community Fathers in Hillsborough County, FL
- Offer workshops on parenting, relationship education and financial literacy along with case management services

Panelist: Sinziana Bularca (Project Director)



Family and Workforce Centers of America



FWCA Ready4Life Project

- READY4Life program serving High School Youth and Late Adolescents in St. Louis City and County
- Offer comprehensive 17-hour primary workshop on relationship education, financial literacy and career readiness, along with additional services such as Career Success workshops, targeted case management, and referrals to community resources

Panelist: Dr. Kevin Nicholson (Project Director)



Panel question #1



Tell us how about how you foster a learning culture in your program.

- Why is it important to foster a learning culture?
- What's made the biggest difference?



Panel question #2



**Tell us about how you
have used data to improve
your program.**



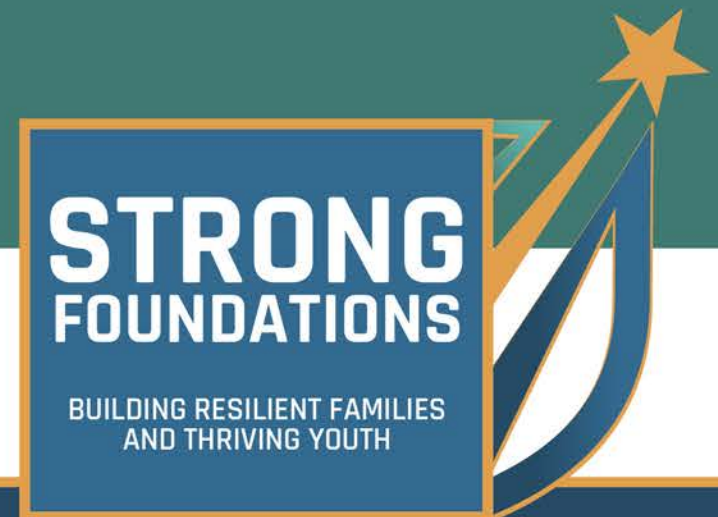
Panel question #3



What are the biggest lessons your team learned about using nFORM and other data for program monitoring and improvement?



Overview of the 2025 performance measures



Preparing the 2025 performance measures



- ACF's performance measures support program monitoring and improvement and advance learning in the field
- ACF collected a standardized set of measures from the 2020 cohort
- In preparation for the current cohort, ACF and Mathematica collected and analyzed information about the measures to continue learning and improving
 - Feedback from grantee staff, federal staff, and program clients
 - Analyzed the 2020 cohort's performance measure data
 - Reviewed public comments about proposed changes

High-level changes



- Reduced burden on clients and staff
 - Shortened all client surveys, dropped the applicant characteristics survey, and shortened the program operations survey
 - Reduced frequency of program operations survey and required reports from once a quarter to once a year
 - Although the most consistent and frequent feedback was to shorten the surveys, there was not consensus among those giving feedback on what to cut, so hard choices were made
- Added new questions to better measure key areas in HMRF programs, such as communication skills

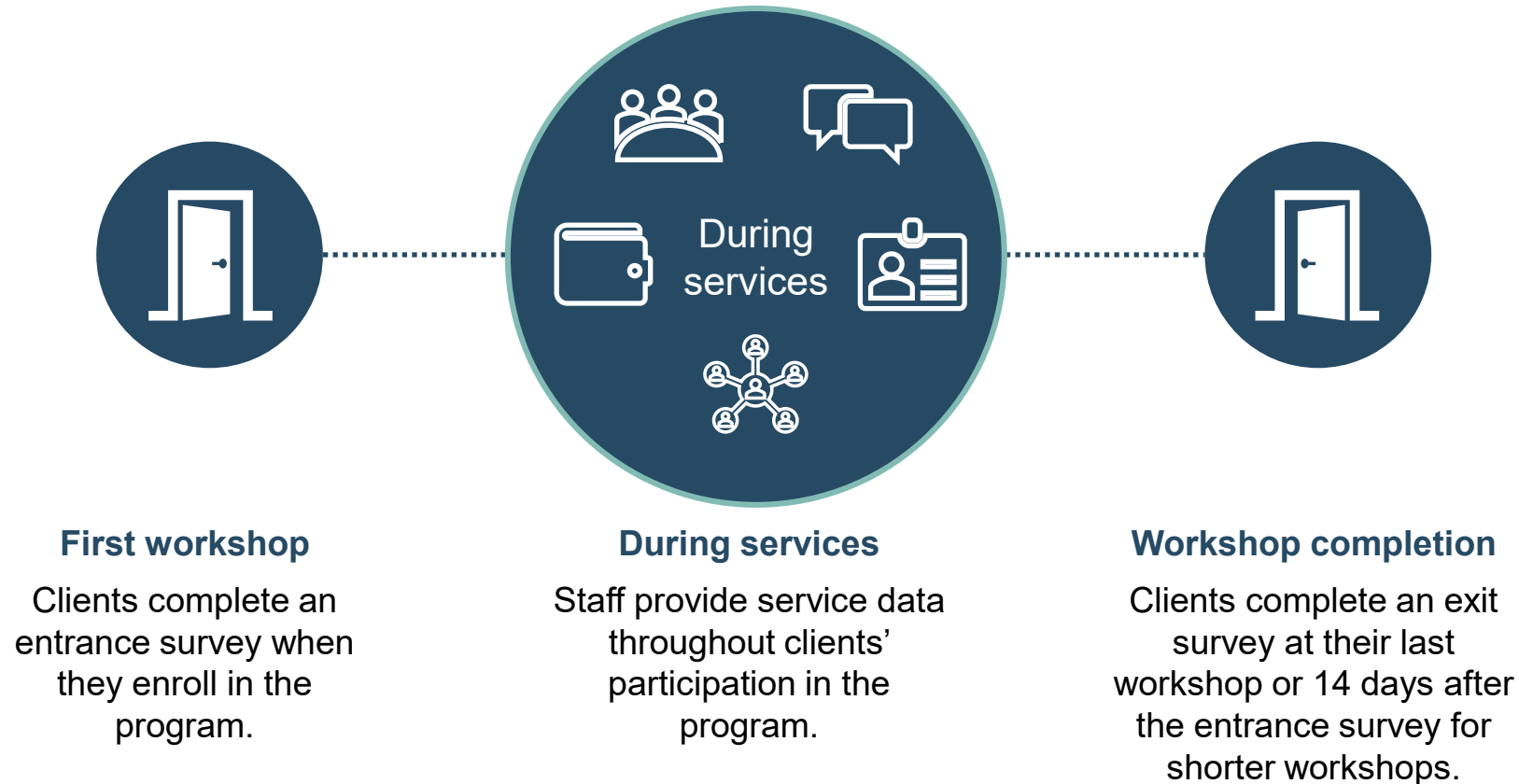
Overview of performance measure sources and reports



Source or report	Content
Sources completed by clients	
Entrance survey	Client characteristics at the time they start a workshop
Exit survey	Client characteristics when they finish a workshop
Sources completed by staff	
Program operations survey	Program operations and implementation, such as recruitment practices and staffing turnover
Services	Workshops, individualized service contacts, referrals, incentives, and program supports
Performance progress report	Aspects of grantee's progress during the year, including required questions from the ACF Office of Grants Management

} Enables us to measure change over time

Performance measure timing



Staff complete a program operations survey and performance progress report once a year.

Highlights of the entrance and exit surveys



- Tailored versions for HM adult clients, HM youth, RF community fathers, and RF reentering fathers
- Designed for clients to complete directly online through nFORM
- Available in English and Spanish
- Option for clients to listen to the text through audio computer-assisted self-interview technology
- PDFs available in English and Spanish for paper administration, when needed

Topics covered on the entrance and exit surveys



Topic	HM adults	HM youth	RF community	RF reentering
Demographic characteristics (Entrance only)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Parenting and co-parenting	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic well-being/stability	✓	✓	✓	✓
Marriage and relationships	✓		✓	✓
Attitudes about marriage and relationships		✓		
Relationship skills		✓		
About the program (Entrance only)	✓	✓	✓	✓
Program perceptions (Exit only)	✓	✓	✓	✓

New questions on client surveys



- ACF removed many questions, but added some new questions to learn more about changes in clients' communication skills, which are critical to all healthy relationships
- Examples include:
 - During the program, how often did you learn about communication skills?
 - How often have you used communication skills from the program with your spouse or partner to discuss: Your relationship? Parenting? Your finances?
 - How confident are you in working out differences respectfully with: Your spouse or partner? Your boss or coworkers?
 - How much has your communication with your spouse or partner changed since you started the program?

Program operations survey



- Question topics include recruitment methods, staffing, quality assurance and monitoring, and implementation challenges.
- Key changes include:
 - Completed once per year (instead of four times)
 - Eliminated questions that were less useful for program monitoring, such as staff characteristics
 - Revised and streamlined questions—for example, removing ambiguous and somewhat overlapping questions about implementation challenges
 - Improved analytics, such as asking grant staff to identify the most common types of recruitment methods instead of asking about every method they used, and requesting more comprehensive information about staff turnover, a common operational challenge for programs

Overview of the performance progress report (PPR)



- nFORM automatically populates the PPR with quantitative (numerical) information from the completed program operations survey, client surveys, and other data in the system
- Grantee staff then complete the PPR narrative by responding to prompts to provide more information about the program and explain the quantitative information, as needed

Key changes to the PPR



- Grantee staff will complete the PPR narrative in nFORM instead of using a separate template
- The quantitative information from nFORM will be integrated with the narrative responses in one report, rather than being reported in separate documents
- Streamlined and reduced prompts to improve clarity of the narrative
- Eliminated semi-annual and quarterly PPRs and Quarterly Progress Reports

PPR presents related narrative and numeric data together



PERFORMANCE PROGRESS REPORT
Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Family Assistance (OFA)
Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Grant Program

B-01 PERFORMANCE NARRATIVE

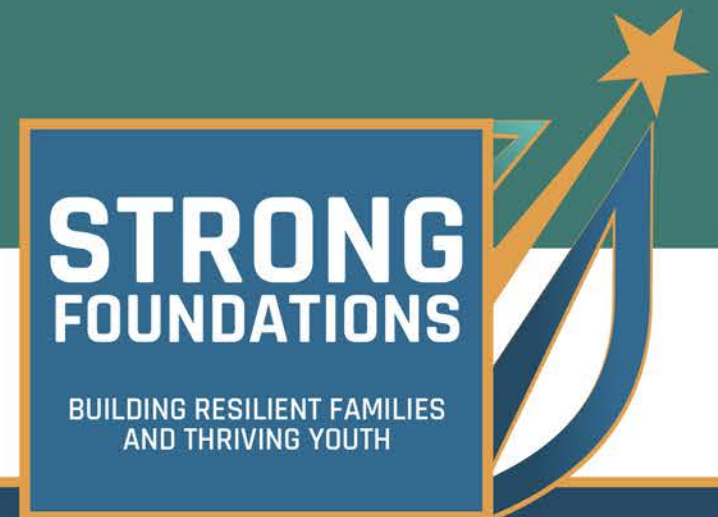
1. Target Population

Describe the population(s) your program intends to serve. Did you serve the intended population(s) during the reporting period? Review the information in Table B-01.1. The Applicant Characteristics tab of the nFORM query tool provides additional demographic information about the population your program is serving.

Our HEART program aims to serve adult individuals and couples in our community who would like to develop strong relationship and parenting skills. Our goal is to serve a mix of male and female adults of all ages. Based on enrollments in the reporting period we are reaching our target demographic, as shown in Table B-01.1.

Table B-01.1. Demographic characteristics	Percent of applicants
1. Sex	
a. Female	40.0%
b. Male	60.0%
2. Age	
a. 13 – 15 years	0.0%
b. 16 – 17 years	0.0%
c. 18 – 20 years	0.0%
d. 21 – 24 years	20.0%
e. 25 – 34 years	40.0%
f. 35 – 44 years	0.0%
g. 45 – 54 years	20.0%
h. 55 years or older	20.0%

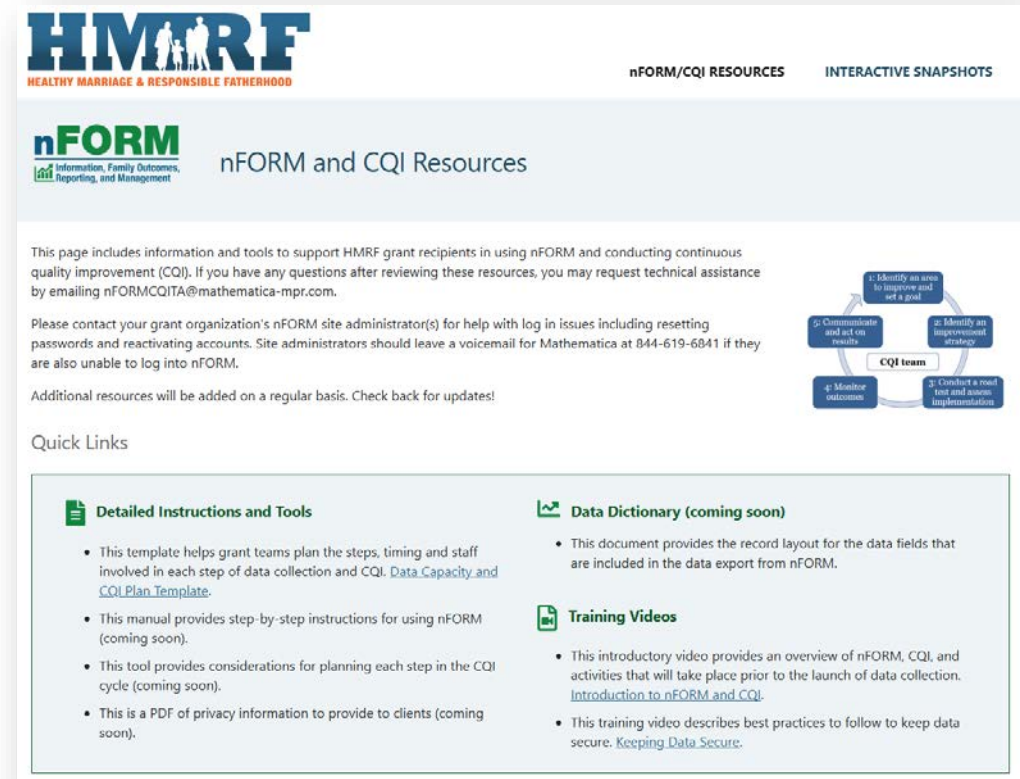
Advancing data capacity and CQI



Check out the HMRF Grant Resource site!



- Various resources available from detailed manuals, training videos, tip sheets and tools, and templates
 - Access recordings and slides from Well nFORMed trainings
- Search by keyword, type, or topic
- Check out the HMRF Weekly Digest email for details about new and updated resources and other nFORM and CQI information



<https://www.hmrfgrantresources.info/>

Join us for office hours



- Register for biweekly data capacity and CQI office hours
 - Upcoming sessions on August 18 and August 25 from 2-3pm Eastern time
 - Starting in September, office hours on 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month from 2-3pm Eastern time
 - Links included in HMRF Weekly Digest emails
- Sessions include tutorials, peer learning, and opportunities to ask questions in real time
- All nFORM users and CQI staff encouraged to attend!
- Reach out to the data capacity and CQI TTA team with any questions at nFORMCQITA@mathematica-mpr.com