



October 1, 2013

The Honorable Norman H. Conway  
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee  
131 Lowe House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

- RE: (1) 2013 Annual Report on the Couples Advancing Together Program – Human Services Article § 5-318.1(g)**
- (2) Report on Funding for Couples Advancing Together Program – Chapter 367 of the Acts of 2013 – Section 2**

Dear Chairman Conway:

Pursuant to Human Services Article §5-318.1(g) and Section 2 of Chapter 367 of the Acts of 2013, the Department of Human Resources hereby submits the enclosed Annual Report of the Couples Advancing Together Program. This includes a report on DHR's efforts to secure funding for the Program.

If you require additional information, please contact Allyson Black, Executive Director of Government Affairs with the Department of Human Resources, at (410) 767-7193.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Theodore Dallas', written over a white background.

Theodore Dallas  
Secretary

Enclosure

C: Thomasina Hiers  
Allyson Black



October 1, 2013

The Honorable Thomas M. Middleton  
Chairman, Senate Finance Committee  
3 West, Miller Senate Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401-1991

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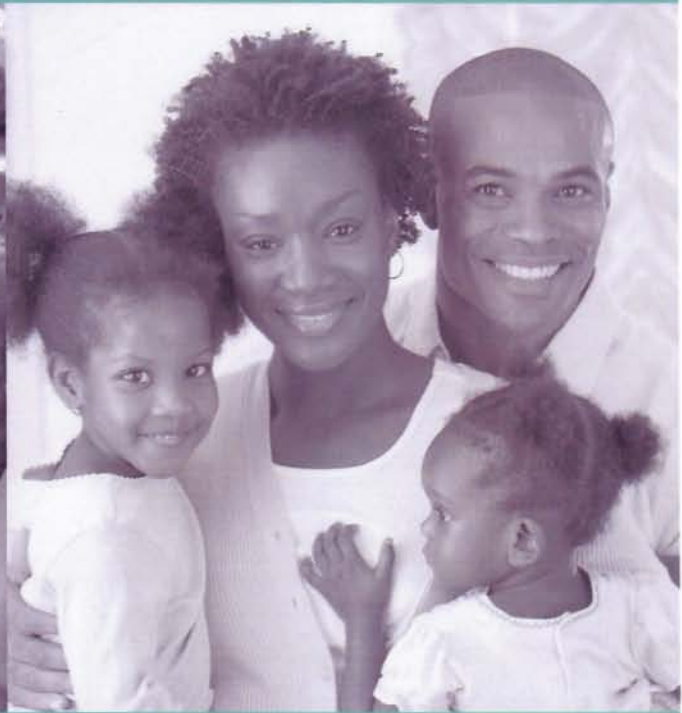
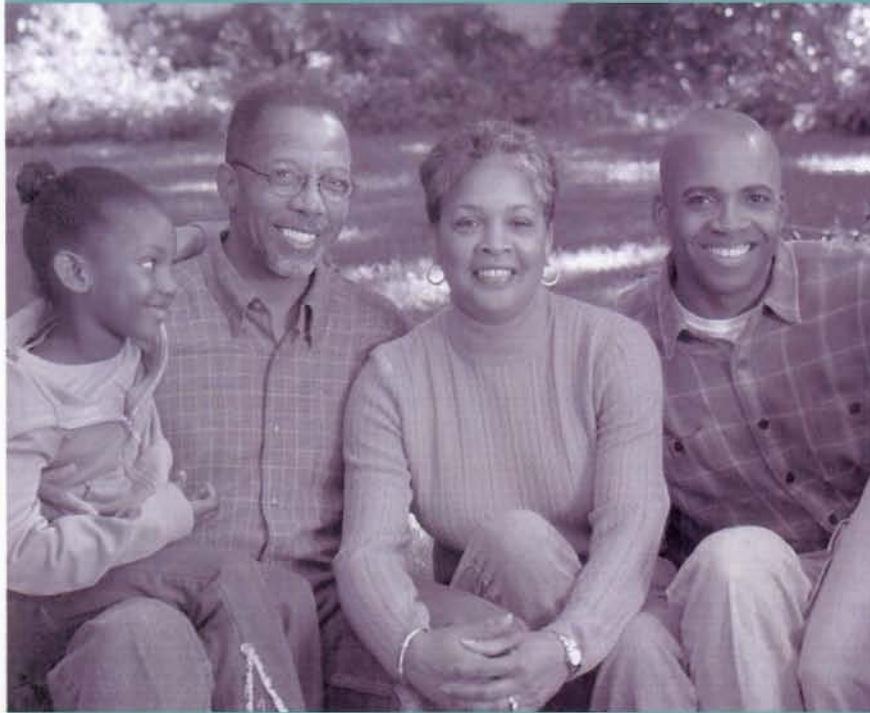
Enclosure

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Allyson Black



**The Couples Advancing Together Program – Annual Report and Funding Update**

**October 1, 2013**



Martin O'Malley, Governor

Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor

Theodore Dallas, Secretary



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## STATUTORY REPORT REQUIREMENT

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### Human Services Article §5–318.1(g)

The Department of Human Resources submits this report in accordance with the Annotated Code of Maryland, Human Services Article §5–318.1(g), which states: “*The Secretary [of Human Resources] shall report annually to the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations Committee, in accordance with §2–1246 of the State Government Article, on the effectiveness of the [Couples Advancing Together Pilot] Program...*”.

### Chapter 367 of the Acts of 2013

This report also fulfills the requirement of Chapter 367 of the Acts of 2013 – Section 2, which requires the Secretary of the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to report on or before October 1, 2013, “*on the Department of Human Resources efforts to secure funding for the Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program from federal grants or other funds available in the federal budget...*”. More on DHR’s efforts in this area may be found on page 3 of this report, under “Resources Mobilization and Financing.”

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## BACKGROUND

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During the 2013 legislative session, the legislature passed House Bill 333 (Chapter 367) which requires the Department of Human Resources (DHR) to establish a Couples Advancing Together Pilot Program in at least three counties. The purpose of the program is to assist 100 couples that qualify for the Family Investment Program (FIP) to move toward stable relationships and family-friendly employment, for one or both parents of a child who resides with the family, in order to improve their economic circumstances and provide support for lasting family units. The bill took effect on June 1, 2013, and terminates on June 30, 2015.

DHR recognizes the importance of effective family-focused programming for the families that we serve. Although federal funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for fatherhood programs ended in fiscal year 2011, DHR has devoted resources to sustain father and family-focused programs. For fiscal year 2013, DHR supported programs such as the Young Father’s Employment Program in five jurisdictions throughout the state.

Through these programs, DHR seeks to meet the following goals:

- Increase in parental involvement and nurturing of mothers and fathers through relationship and parental skill development and mediation;
- Assist with barriers to financial and emotional responsibility through job readiness, employment development and life skills counseling; and
- Increase in child support payments through job placement and retention assistance.

In addition, DHR, through its Child Support Enforcement Administration, previously collaborated with the Center for Urban Families (CFUF) to pursue funding as part of the National Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Projects, under the federal Administration for Children and Families' Office of Child Support Enforcement. In the end, both CFUF and DHR determined that: (1) there was insufficient funding available to effectively design and maintain a sustainable program, and (2) there was a very short turnaround time for grant submission.

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## STATUS

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### Overview

In continuation with its partnership with CFUF, DHR has worked to effectively design and maintain a sustainable Couples Advancing Together Program (CATP). Over the past four months, DHR has worked with staff from CFUF, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Delegate Samuel Rosenberg, as well as other stakeholders to determine the goals and objectives of the model, build out the evaluative platform, determine the implementation phases of the pilot and identify other public and private funding sources to support the model. From our partnership, we have outlined a solid foundation to both maintain and enhance father and family-focused programming such as the Couples Advancing Together Program.

The following is a summary of the integrated approach taken to facilitate the creation of the Program.

### Program Evaluation and Design

The Annie E. Casey Foundation has agreed to serve as the evaluative partner in the implementation of CATP. The CATP evaluation framework is comprised of three major components:

- The first component is the *Planning Phase*, which will outline intra-departmental steps, processes and communication protocols between CFUF and DHR to clarify roles and responsibilities between partners regarding all implementation stages, from recruitment to case management. This phase will also include a revision and refinement of the curriculum and a performance-based outcomes evaluation.
- The second component is *Training and Capacity Building*. This section of the evaluation will include peer-learning sessions geared at identifying barriers within the current DHR process that would deter, exclude or act as disincentives for potential CATP participants. This segment of the evaluation will also create a core group of leaders and advocates within each of three selected DHR/Local Departments of Social Services offices who will put in place policies and procedures for successfully referring participants to CATP. The final section of this part of the evaluation will provide training for front line staff that promotes an organizational structure and culture that is focused on family strengthening, specifically among couples in committed relationships.



- The third and final component of the evaluation will provide a *Landscape Analysis and Cost Assessment* of expansion options for year 2 of the pilot. It will also provide the development of a work plan for site expansion and documentation to highlight lessons learned during this pilot phase. All evaluation components are intended to ensure that CATP is successfully implemented and ready for expansion and scale-up following the two-year piloting phase.

### Program Management

The CATP pilot program will begin with a cohort in Baltimore City. To enhance DHR's efforts in developing an evaluation format, a CATP Program Manager position was established. The Program Manager, a CFUF employee, is responsible for overseeing the daily implementation of the Program. Currently, the Program Manager is in the process of recruiting the first cohort of couples from Baltimore City and is slated to begin facilitating workshop sessions in January 2014.

### Resources Mobilization and Financing

While federal funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for fatherhood programs ended in fiscal year 2011, DHR has devoted resources to sustain father and family-focused programs as they become available to ensure the success of the Couples Advancing Together Program. DHR has committed \$100,000, which will be matched by CFUF over the two-year pilot to implement CATP. DHR is also working closely with CFUF to implement a fundraising plan. As of this publication date of this report, the Annie E. Casey Foundation has committed to funding CATP, and a total of four grant applications have been submitted to various foundations. Additionally, CFUF has secured a \$12,000 commitment from a private donor. DHR is also partnering with CFUF to solicit funds from other organizations, including federal sources.

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## CONCLUSION

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In an effort to fully support our objectives, DHR and the CFUF intend to launch the first CATP cohort of families, located in Baltimore City, in January 2014. We remain confident that through our partnership with CFUF, DHR will continue to work collaboratively to identify funding sources to support this Program.