



## **Commonwealth of Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Contact: Christina Dettman**

(502) 229-2791

**Jordan Rowe**

(502) 352-3977

### **Summit held to engage fathers, strengthen families across Kentucky**

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (Sept. 27, 2019) Governor Matt Bevin on Friday joined the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) for the Kentucky Fatherhood Summit.

The summit explored the best methods of outreach to fathers for the purpose of leveraging their individual experiences and abilities for the betterment of children, families, communities and the Commonwealth.

“There is an undeniable correlation between the presence of fathers in the lives of our children and how our children are able to adapt and succeed as they grow into adults,” Governor Bevin said.

“I am calling upon the men of Kentucky to step up and be bold leaders in the lives of the children they parent, coach, teach and mentor,” he added. “We are grateful to the hundreds of non-profit representatives, law enforcement officers, legislators, and faith-based leaders who recognize the vital role that fathers play in our society and are willing to come together to chart a course for the future of fatherhood.”

The summit featured a discussion of the vital role fathers play in healthy childhood development and prevention of childhood poverty.

“Strong fathers lead to strong families,” said Adam Meier, CHFS Secretary. “This is an opportunity to influence the future of fatherhood in Kentucky, and we encourage all community partners to join us in making this issue a priority.”

Statewide data shows that in seven counties, the number of children living with a single mother is as high as 40 percent. The data also shows 13 percent of Kentucky children have an incarcerated parent, compared to the national average of 7 percent.

Commissioner W. Bryan Hubbard with the Department for Income Support (DIS), an agency within CHFS, expressed support for local fatherhood programs.

“All who have gathered here today are making a commitment to lift up Kentucky’s men so they may stand and strive for their families on their own two feet, and not a moment too soon,” Hubbard said.

The summit served as an introduction for the Commonwealth Center for Fathers and Families (CCFF), an independent organization focused on the critical issue of father engagement.

“Father absence contributes to a number of societal issues that children, families and communities deal with on a daily basis,” said David Cozart with CCFF. “This summit is really about collaboration and networking across the state that will enable communities to deliver and increase fatherhood engagement services.”

CCFF’s mission is to support fathers in providing child and family safety, economic stability, and overall community well-being through education, advocacy and collaboration.

Earlier this year, the organization received a statewide strategic planning grant from the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network (FRPN).

CCFF has a vision to enhance the quality of life for children and the promotion of family well-being through healthy and positive father engagement.

The organization will develop and maintain a repository of data related to the state of fathers in Kentucky, while increasing programming through a collaboration of social service professionals.

For video of the event, click [here](#).

Additional information is available at <http://chfs.ky.gov/>.

###

*The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and healthcare programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.*