



**The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual International Fatherhood Conference**  
**Moving Forward Fearlessly**  
**June 4-6, 2024**  
**DoubleTree Hotel**  
**Washington, DC Silver Spring**

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual International Fatherhood Conference (IFC) will be held June 4-6, 2024, in Washington, DC, the nation's capital. The conference theme is *Moving Forward Fearlessly*.

Since the inception of the International Fatherhood Conference in 1998, this conference has served the fatherhood field as an annual gathering of parents, practitioners, funders, researchers, and policymakers to discuss and share ideas on the essential role of fathers in families to reduce child poverty.

I take seriously my role as a responsible fatherhood legacy leader, having spent the last 33 years of my career working in this arena. It has certainly been a labor of love. During this period, I have had the extraordinary opportunity to witness the field evolve from the first fatherhood demonstration project to the creation of a national fatherhood infrastructure, mainly financed by private foundations from 1995-2004 to the passage of the 2004 Deficit Reduction Act, which provided the first federal funding for fatherhood programs. IFC is the first national and international fatherhood conference in the United States, and it has catalyzed the growth of fatherhood conferences nationwide today. The IFC is the "seed planter" for many local and regional fatherhood conferences and summits that are now prevalent. The time has come to pave the way for the next chapter of the responsible fatherhood field. Moving beyond mere coming together to conferences and workshops and expanding IFC to include the bold step of national strategy discussions and opportunities for professional growth and advancement among individuals in the fatherhood field is the focus of this year's conference.

The 26<sup>th</sup> annual conference will begin with an Opening Reception on June 4, honoring Favorite Fathers for 2024 from DC, Maryland, and Virginia (DMV). On June 5, conference attendees will participate in evidence-based workshops and national strategy sessions. There will also be networking opportunities and the celebration of individuals advancing fatherhood work at the annual Spirit of Fatherhood Hall of Fame Luncheon.

The wisdom and insights of fatherhood legacy leaders are invaluable and should be leveraged rather than recreated from scratch. Conference attendees will have the unique opportunity to provide input for the launch of the first national responsible fatherhood mentoring academy. The academy's primary mission is to connect and offer one-on-one mentoring opportunities among fatherhood legacy leaders and emerging fatherhood leaders, practitioners, and others who desire to be mentored by a legacy leader. Conference attendees will contribute to the planning and development of the academy and connect with potential fatherhood legacy leader mentors.

In addition to the mentoring academy, we will also explore creating a national fatherhood practitioners organization. The fatherhood field is disorganized and fragmented. There is a great need to organize ourselves as a collective fatherhood community. Hence, the need for a national practitioners fatherhood organization. This organization would be a member-supporting body with a father-centric mission comprised of grassroots fatherhood practitioners and others to form an organized network (national,



**The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual International Fatherhood Conference**  
**Moving Forward Fearlessly**  
**June 4-6, 2024**  
**DoubleTree Hotel**  
**Washington, DC Silver Spring**

regional, and local) exchanging and advancing ideas in fatherhood practice, research, funding, and policy.

There was a national fatherhood and family practitioner network (started in the late 1990s). However, for many reasons, the lack of sustainable funding being the primary issue, it was discontinued. As we move responsible fatherhood activities forward, we must become *influencers*. A nationally organized fatherhood membership association of grassroots fatherhood organizations, practitioners, and other stakeholders *and partner organizations* is essential in providing a *collective voice* on government policies and programs (state and federal) focused on fathers and families *to reduce child poverty*.

We want to encourage the hundreds of you who plan to attend the conference to schedule a visit with your Congressional representative and staff in the nation's capital to share how they help fathers in your communities. The conference agenda will set a time for this activity. Generally speaking, many members of Congress need to learn what practitioners are doing for fathers in their backyard. Your visit will be an opportunity to educate them and make a statement about our importance. Please bring information and materials about your fatherhood program with you.

Finally, as we move fatherhood forward fearlessly, let's do so with bold intent, passion, hope, courage, resilience, and love for the fathers, families, and children we serve. Please register today, encourage your colleagues to register, bring your family, and join us for this important conference and national strategy meeting in our nation's capital. I am excited to see you!

Dr. Jeffery Johnson, President, NPCL and Conference Host