



DOJ Creating Center To Help Ex-Con Dads Be Better Parents

By [Andrew Ramonas](#) | June 22, 2010 2:54 pm

The Justice Department is establishing a center that will help put fathers leaving prison on a path toward responsible parenthood, President **Barack Obama** said Monday.

"The idea here is very simple: to reach fathers right as they're leaving the criminal justice system and connect them immediately to the employment and services they need to start making their child support payments and reconnecting them with their families," Obama told D.C. residents at a Father's Day event attended by Attorney General **Eric Holder**, who will direct the "Fathering Re-Entry Court" program.

The DOJ has yet to announce the location of the court. In fiscal 2009, the D.C. Courts hosted a "[Fathering Reentry Court](#)" pilot program, which was partially supported by DOJ grant money. According to an [annual report](#) published by the D.C. Courts last year, the Fathering Reentry Court provides parenting education courses, employment counseling, job training and job placement services for fathers.

The department will assist law enforcement and court officials looking to copy the court program and provide more effective services for fathers leaving prisons, according to DOJ spokeswoman **Hannah August**. About 55 percent of men released from prison have children who are minors, and many of the fathers have vast amounts of child support debt, she said.

Responsible fatherhood is a [key priority](#) of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. The Attorney General has also focused on fatherhood, calling on black men to be a part of their childrens' lives in [various speeches](#).