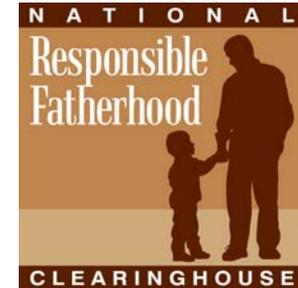




U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: Nebraska

July 2008



www.fatherhood.gov

Nebraska

Strategies Intended to Promote Healthy Marriage

State-Funded Marriage Preparation Activities

Nebraska does not use state funds for marriage promotion activities.

Other Marriage Initiatives

The Nebraska Healthy Marriage Initiative (NHMI) works with single persons and with dating, engaged, and married couples with and without children to develop the skills needed for healthy relationships. The NHMI uses self-administered diagnostic tools to help couples understand their relationship and the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP)® curriculum to teach communication and conflict resolution skills and problem solving. The NHMI also offers a series of workshops, the When Families Marry Program, that discuss financial management, parenting, and commitment.ⁱ

Strategies Intended to Promote Parenting and Responsible Fatherhood

State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs

The Nebraska Fatherhood Initiative is a partnership among the Nebraska Departments of Health and Human Services, Education, and Corrections; the University of Nebraska at Lincoln; the University of Nebraska at Omaha; community action programs; local and regional public health departments; and the Gallup Organization. The initiative promotes responsible fatherhood by raising public awareness, mobilizing communities, and training leaders.ⁱⁱ Separately, a mix of federal and state funding is used to provide the Access and Visitation program for noncustodial parents. In fiscal year 2005, this program increased the amount of parenting time spent with children for 98 noncustodial parents.ⁱⁱⁱ

State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood

The Nebraska Reproductive Health Program, which is supported by both federal and state funds, includes an information and education component directed at building community leadership around preventing unwanted or unplanned fatherhood. In addition, a local pilot program called It's Guy Talk educates men about reproductive health.^{iv}

Take Time to Be a Dad Today



The Family and Medical Leave Act

Nebraska has a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows both fathers and mothers time off after the birth or adoption of a child, or during an illness, without fear of losing their jobs. Parents are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave over a one-year period to care for a new child, an ill family member, or to recover from their own illness. All public-sector employers that provide paid leave for the birth of a child must provide paid leave for the adoption of a child.^v The FMLA protects fathers and mothers who have worked with the same organization for at least one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours within the past year. Nebraska's family and medical leave policy allows employees working in the public sector to take sick or accrued leave to attend to a sick family member.^{vi}

Domestic Violence Services

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services offers a 24-hour crisis hotline for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault.^{vii}

Child Custody Policy

Nebraska's Parenting Act of 1994 stipulates rules for handling child custody problems during divorce.^{viii} The state encourages couples who are separating to create a parenting plan to ensure that the needs of children are met.^{ix} Parents seeking an end to their union may be ordered to take a course on the effects of divorce on children.^x

Paternity Establishment

Paternity establishment ensures a child's right to a range of public benefits, including survivor's insurance, education, health care, and workers' compensation; and establishing paternity gives a child born outside of marriage the same legal rights as a child born to married parents. In Nebraska, the husband of a married mother is considered the legal father of the child. When an unmarried mother gives birth, the parents of the child can receive an Acknowledgment of Paternity affidavit that the father can sign to indicate that he is the legal father of the child. The affidavit can also be signed at a later time.^{xi}

Child Support Assistance

Nebraska's Office of Child Support Enforcement has a customer service call center available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The call center provides information to custodial and noncustodial parents about the child support program.^{xii} A demonstration grant from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement also supports a call center that reaches out to parents with new child support orders to help them understand their orders.^{xiii}

Child Support Enforcement

The state's Office of Child Support Enforcement locates parents whose whereabouts are unknown, establishes paternity, establishes and reviews support orders, and enforces support payment. Support payments can be collected from noncustodial parent's federal or state tax refund, paycheck, or unemployment benefits. Nebraska may restrict the parent's driver's, professional, business, or recreational license; ask the prosecuting attorney to file civil contempt or criminal nonsupport charges; and work with other states to collect support from parents living outside the state.^{xiv}



Strategies Intended to Enhance Fathers' Economic Stability

Welfare Benefits

Nebraska offers welfare benefits to two-parent families on the same basis as to single-parent families. The state imposes a lifetime limit of 60 months on the receipt of benefits. Parents in two-parent families receiving cash assistance must participate in work activities immediately upon receiving benefits; parents in one-parent families must begin participating in work activities 24 months after receiving benefits. Full-time education and training can fulfill this work requirement for up to 24 months.^{xv}

Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers

The state does not offer services geared specifically for low-income noncustodial fathers.

Job Training and Employment Services

Nebraska does not offer job training and employment services targeted exclusively at fathers.

Incarceration and Reentry

Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers

CEDARS, a Nebraska nonprofit organization, spearheads Project SEEK (for Services to Enable and Empower Kids), an intervention and prevention program serving children up to age 15 with a parent who has been sentenced to prison for three or more years. This effort seeks to increase the children's emotional stability and maintain and improve the parent-child relationship.^{xvi}

Resources

- **Nebraska Resource Referral Service.** This Web site is a searchable database of service providers in Nebraska; available at <http://nrrrs.ne.gov>.



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