



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



NRFC State Profile: Connecticut July 2015

This profile describes state and federally funded programs and policies that aim to strengthen families. These programs and policies support parenting and father involvement, promote strong family relationships, enhance fathers' economic stability, and provide support during incarceration and reentry. The profile lists phone numbers and websites for the programs. This information was correct when the profile was written (in 2015) but may change over time.

Programs to Support Responsible Fatherhood and Strengthen Families

Responsible fatherhood programs focus on issues such as enhancing parenting and relationship skills, keeping fathers involved with their children, improving their economic stability, helping them pay child support, and generally helping to strengthen families.

The following state and federally funded programs are available in the state:

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Career Resources, Inc.	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability Incarceration/Reentry	Career Resources, Inc., is a state-funded organization offering multiple programs focused on job and employment skills such as networking opportunities, training, transportation, and resources to help with basic job skills. The organization also offers reentry services and the <i>Fathers for Life</i> program, which provides group sessions and individual case management for dads.	Serves the entire state. Website General info: (203) 334-5627 Fathers for Life: (203) 953-3247
Catholic Charities Inc. Archdiocese of Hartford	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Catholic Charities provides a range of family support and strengthening services, including home visiting programs, fatherhood support, and a Parenting Education Program (PEP) designed for parents with active divorce, separation or custody cases in the Family Division of the Connecticut court system. The organization receives a mix of state and federal funding.	Serves Hartford and Waterbury. Website (888) 405-1183

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<p>Community Renewal Team</p>	<p>Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability</p>	<p>Community Renewal Team (CRT) is a state-funded organization aimed at building more stable and successful futures for families. CRT provides two economic stability programs: <i>Jobs First Employment Services</i> which is provided to TANF recipients and <i>SNAP Employment & Training</i> for SNAP recipients. CRT also offers <i>Real Fathers, Real Men</i>, a fatherhood support group.</p>	<p>CRT serves the entire state, but the programs only serve select areas.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>General info: (860) 560-5600</p> <p><i>Real Fathers, Real Men</i> is offered in New Britain and Hartford. (860) 761-7900</p> <p><i>Jobs First Employment Services</i> serves Middletown County and the cities of Meriden, Wallingford, and Cromwell.</p> <p><i>SNAP Employment & Training</i> serves the Greater Hartford area.</p>
<p>Connecticut Coalition Against Domestic Violence</p>	<p>Domestic Violence</p>	<p>With funding from Connecticut Department of Social Services, this coalition provides emergency shelter services, a 24-hour crisis line, preventive education programs, and other services for victims of domestic violence.</p>	<p>Serves the entire state.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>State information line: dial 211</p> <p>24 hour crisis line: (888) 774-2900</p>
<p>Connecticut Department of Social Services (CDSS) -Children’s Trust Fund</p>	<p>Domestic Violence</p>	<p>The Children’s Trust Fund is a division of CDSS with a mission to prevent child abuse and neglect and establish resources that support and strengthen families. Program services for fathers address poverty, domestic violence, substance abuse, nurturing parenting and child development.</p>	<p>Serves the entire state.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>(860) 713-5330</p>

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Connecticut Workforce Investment System	Economic Stability	Connecticut Workforce Investment System is a state-funded network of Regional Investment Boards using CT Works Centers to provide <i>One Stop</i> employment services to workers seeking jobs, including job vacancies, student financial aid, and resume and interview training. Each center can also award Individual Training Accounts to subsidize or pay the full cost of a qualified training program.	Serves the entire state. Website (860) 263-6000
Families in Crisis, Inc.	Fatherhood/Parenting Domestic Violence Incarceration/Reentry	The federally funded organization Families in Crisis, Inc. offers programs to prepare inmates for reentry to the community through group sessions, counseling, and financial education. The organization also provides domestic violence intervention, parenting classes, and support for families of offenders.	Serves the entire state. Website (860) 727-5800
Family ReEntry, Inc.	Domestic Violence Economic Stability Incarceration/Reentry Domestic Violence	Family ReEntry, Inc. provides state-funded programs that include batterer intervention programs in the community and services for inmates and their families to ease transition back to the community. Topics covered include employment training, domestic violence prevention, substance abuse and behavioral health assessment, and empowerment, as well as programs for families and youth.	Serves the entire state. Website (203) 838-0496 or (866) 302-8030
Job Corps	Economic Stability	<i>Job Corps</i> is a federal job training program for low-income young men and women to help with education and career goals.	Job Corps centers are located in Hartford and New Haven. Job Corps Centers in Connecticut Hartford Center (860) 953-7201 New Haven Center (203) 397-3775

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Madonna Place	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state-funded Madonna Place offers the <i>Fatherhood Initiative</i> program to support fathers with counseling, case-management, and group meetings, and to improve fathers' parenting responsibilities and positive relationships with their children.	Serves New London county. Website (860) 886-6600
Non-Violence Alliance	Domestic Violence	Non-Violence Alliance is a state-funded organization specializing in services for men and promoting non-violent partner relationships, families, and communities.	Serves Middletown, East Hartford, Torrington, and New Haven. Website (860) 347-8220

Policies to Promote Responsible Fatherhood

Paternity Establishment

Establishing paternity gives a child born outside of marriage the same legal rights and privileges as a child born to married parents. Children gain access to family medical history and rights to inheritance, fathers' medical and life insurance benefits, social security and veterans' benefits, and child support. In addition, Native American children gain tribal enrollment rights.

To establish paternity in Connecticut if the parents are not married at the time of birth, the father can sign an Acknowledgement of Paternity at the hospital. If the father did not sign this form at the hospital, he can still acknowledge paternity by completing this acknowledgement at the Connecticut Department of Social Services or other state government offices. In cases of contested paternity, a court order is required to establish paternity.¹

Child Custody

If unmarried or divorced parents cannot reach agreement concerning child custody or visitation, a legal order can be made through the court system. Either parent may be granted custody of the child, or both may share equally in physical custody and/or decision-making responsibilities. There is no legal connection between payment or non-payment of child support and rights to visitation.

In Connecticut, after the dissolution of a relationship, both parents have the right to petition the Connecticut court system to determine the custody of the children. Child custody decisions are made in the best interest of the child, which includes the child's developmental needs, each parent's ability to respond to the child's needs, the wishes of the child and the parents, past behavior, child adjustment, and a range of other factors. The state presumes that joint custody is in the child's best interest. Parents also must participate in a parenting education program designed to help parents understand how children are affected by changing family structure, how to reduce stress, and how to manage conflicts with the child's other parent.²

Child Support

The Federal Child Support Enforcement Program was established in 1975 as Title IV-D of the Social Security Act to locate noncustodial parents, establish paternity and establish and enforce child support orders. General services available in all states and territories include voluntary in-hospital paternity acknowledgement, genetic testing, explanation of state

guidelines for determining child support orders, and review of child support orders at least every three years at the request of either parent. State child support offices are responsible for collection and distribution of child support payments and can modify orders when appropriate. If a parent is behind in their payments, the office may use enforcement tools such as license revocation (including drivers, professional, recreational or occupational licenses), seizure of assets, property liens, passport denial, and federal and state tax refund offsets.³

In Connecticut, the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement oversees child support. Low-income fathers who are unable to pay their child support orders can receive child support assistance services through programs funded by the Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut. Services and supports offered by these programs include legal advocacy and employment services, which may help fathers better provide financial and medical support for their children.⁴ The website for the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement provides information on child support eligibility, modifications, and enforcement. The website is [Child Support Resource Center](#) and the phone number is (855) 626-6632.

The Family and Medical Leave Act

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) protects employees who have worked with the same organization for at least twelve months and worked at least 1,250 hours within the past year. It contains provisions for both fathers and mothers to take time off after the birth or adoption of a child, or during a serious illness, without fear of losing their jobs. Employees in companies with 50 or more employees are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave, over a one-year period, to care for a new child, recuperate from a serious illness, care for a seriously ill family member, or handle issues arising from a family member's call to active military duty. The FMLA also gives employees the right to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a family member who is seriously injured or becomes ill while on active military duty.⁵

Connecticut also has a state FMLA policy that applies to employers with 75 or more employees. Parents are entitled to unpaid leave in any two-year period, for up to 16 weeks, to care for a new child, an ill family member, to serve as an organ donor, or to recover from a serious illness. The act protects fathers and mothers who have worked with the same organization for at least one year and have worked at least 1,000 hours within the past year. In addition, parents are allowed to use up to two weeks of sick leave as paid family leave.⁶

Head Start

Head Start is a federally funded school readiness program for young children from low-income families. The program, currently delivered by about 1,700 local organizations – public and private, non-profit and for-profit – provides preschoolers with comprehensive services, such as education and health screenings, with the goal of building their skills across five school readiness domains: language and literacy, cognition and general knowledge, approaches to learning, physical development and health, and social and emotional development. Head Start encourages the role of parents (both mothers and fathers) as their child's first and most important teachers. Programs build relationships with families that support positive parent-child relationships, family well-being, and connections to peers and community. Early Head Start, also managed by the federal Office of Head Start, is directed toward children up to the age of three and their parents. While the program is federally funded and managed, local agencies make decisions regarding service delivery based on the specific needs of their communities; for example, some may opt to include home-based services for families in their programs. Most states have multiple Head Start programs providing services for fathers.

To find information on Head Start programs in Connecticut, go to: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/directories>.

Policies to Promote Economic Stability

Child Care Assistance

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) works with states to provide support for children and their low-income families. Subsidized child care services are available to eligible families through certificates (vouchers), grants, or

contracts with providers. Fathers and mothers may select a child care provider that satisfies applicable state and local requirements, including basic health and safety requirements.⁷

In Connecticut, the Department of Social Services provides child care services through contracts with statewide and community organizations, municipalities, and other state agencies. The state contracts with more than 90 child care providers throughout the state to provide preschool, infant/toddler, and school age services to families earning less than 75 percent of the state median income level. Before and after school age child care is also available at approximately 30 organizations around the state for the same income bracket. The program Care 4 Kids is a partnership of the State, the families in the program, and the child care providers to make child care affordable for low and moderate income families. Families must be working or attending an approved education or training program, must meet the income requirements (which vary based on family size) and children must be below age 13 (below age 19 if the child has special needs).⁸

Rental Assistance

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) provides rental assistance to low-income families and individuals through a number of methods. HUD subsidizes privately owned apartments, allowing low-income tenants to rent them at reduced rates. In the Public Housing program, local housing agencies manage rental housing for low-income tenants, while HUD provides professional and technical assistance in their planning, development, and management. The Housing Choice Voucher Program, better known as Section 8, provides eligible families and individuals with vouchers that they can use to pay for all or part of the rent at housing units of their choice. Generally, eligibility for the HUD rental assistance programs is based on annual gross income, assets, family size, and other considerations such as elderly or disabled status. Local housing agencies generally set the fixed eligibility rules for their regions, determine assistance amounts, and manage waiting lists for assistance.⁹

In Connecticut, the Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program is administered by over 40 public housing agencies and statewide by the Connecticut Department of Housing (DOH) and its agent, J D'Amelia & Associates (JDA). A family that is issued a housing voucher is responsible for finding a suitable housing unit of their choice where the owner agrees to rent under the program. This unit may include the family's present residence. Rental units must meet minimum standards of quality and safety as established by HUD. Connecticut also has the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) to help low-income families afford decent, safe, and sanitary housing in the private market. Participants find their own housing, including apartments, townhouses, and single-family homes. The participant is free to choose any private rental housing that meets the requirements of the program.¹⁰ Participants of HCV pay 30 percent of their adjusted gross income toward rent while participants of RAP pay 40 percent of their adjusted gross income (or 30 percent of adjusted gross income if the participant is elderly or disabled).¹¹

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly the Food Stamp program, provides low-income individuals (both men and women) and families with funds delivered in an electronic benefit transfer card, or EBT card) that can be used to purchase food. SNAP is administered within the Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Services and is federally funded, but applications, delivery, and outreach are handled at the state or local level. In general, individuals and households are eligible to receive SNAP if they have less than \$2,250 in countable resources and earn less than 130 percent of the poverty line in gross monthly income. However, characteristics of recipients (for example, age or disabled status) can affect eligibility requirements, and states have flexibility in determining eligibility, particularly with regard to what is considered a countable resource. In 2014, the average monthly SNAP benefit per individual was \$125.35.¹²

In Connecticut, you can apply for these benefits by completing a state application form. This form can be done online, or mailed, faxed, or dropped off at a local DSS Regional Office. Once the form is complete, you will be assigned an eligibility worker who will interview you to complete the application process.¹³

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program grants federal funds to states for developing and implementing their own welfare programs that provide assistance and work opportunities to needy families.

In Connecticut, the Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) program provides monthly cash and employment assistance to eligible single parents and two-parent families to support basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. TFA recipients must begin work activities immediately upon receiving benefits; however, education and training activities can fulfill part of this requirement. The state limits benefit receipt to 21 months for most families.¹⁴ Individuals who receive public assistance benefits through TFA are required to participate in the Jobs First Employment Services program, which offers skill assessments, job search services, educational and training opportunities, and support services.

Other Helpful Resources

[The John S. Martinez Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut](#) provides a [directory of services](#) that lists state and local programs supporting fathers in Connecticut. [The Initiative](#) can also be contacted via email at fatherhood.dss@ct.gov or phone (866-6CT-DADS).

CTPARENTING.COM is a state-funded website from the Connecticut Department of Children and Families that provides a clearinghouse of information on parenting and family topics, as well as links to local and national resources for parenting.

References

- ¹ For more information on where you can complete the Acknowledgement of Paternity form and how to establish paternity through a court order see, www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3132&q=390668#Process.
- ² For more information on Connecticut's Child Custody policy, see www.jud.ct.gov/lawlib/Notebooks/Pathfinders/bestinterest.pdf.
- ³ For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css.
- ⁴ For more information on the Child Support policy in Connecticut, including how the state handles and processes support payments, see www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?a=2353&Q=305184. To learn more about the types of services available through the Fatherhood Initiative of Connecticut, see www.ct.gov/fatherhood/site/default.asp, or contact the Fatherhood Initiative at (866) 6CT-DADS.
- ⁵ For more information on the Family and Medical Leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>
- ⁶ For more information on the Connecticut Family and Medical Leave policy, see www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wgwkstnd/fmla/FMLAstatute.pdf.
- ⁷ For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- ⁸ For more information on Child Care Assistance, see <http://www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?A=2353&Q=307386>. For more information on Child 4 Care, see <http://www.ctcare4kids.com/>.
- ⁹ For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance
- ¹⁰ For more information on RAP, see <http://www.ct.gov/doh/cwp/view.asp?a=4513&Q=530584>.
- ¹¹ For more information on the Housing Choice Voucher program, see <http://www.ct.gov/doh/cwp/view.asp?a=4513&Q=530586>.
- ¹² For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ¹³ For more information on SNAP in Connecticut, see <http://www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?a=2353&q=411676>.
- ¹⁴ For more information on TFA, see www.ct.gov/dss/cwp/view.asp?a=2353&q=305260.