



## NRFC State Profile: Florida October 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
<b>Champions for Children</b>	Healthy Relationships Fatherhood/Parenting	Champions for Children was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Positive Parenting Partnership (P<sup>3</sup>)</i> program will provide healthy relationship activities for parenting couples. The organization also offers the <i>Boot Camp for New Dads</i> program and <i>Parents as Teachers</i> home visiting services.	Tampa  (813) 673-4646  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Children First</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	Children First is a federally funded organization based in Sarasota that offers various family strengthening services through the Families First Initiative, including <i>Nurturing Dads</i> and <i>Bootcamp for New Dads</i> .	Sarasota  (941) 953-3877  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Children's Harbor</b>	Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Children's Harbor was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>True North</i> program for youth aged 18-23 will provide healthy relationship sessions, strengths-based case management, financial literacy sessions, job readiness, and employment opportunities. The organization also offers the <i>Family Strengthening Program</i> , which provides	Broward County  (954) 252-3072  <a href="#">Website</a>

**Take Time to Be a Dad Today**

Toll-free: 877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411) | Fax: 703-934-3740 | [info@fatherhood.gov](mailto:info@fatherhood.gov) | [www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)



[facebook.com/fatherhoodgov](https://www.facebook.com/fatherhoodgov)



[@fatherhoodgov](https://twitter.com/fatherhoodgov)

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
		in-home services to strengthen family relationships, improve communication, and increase parents' confidence and competence in their parenting abilities.	
<b>Family Resources</b>	Healthy Relationships	Family Resources was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Safe2B-You and Me</i> program will provide relationship education and parenting services for high risk youth and young adults. The organization also offers family counseling and a range of services for youth in need.	Pinellas County (727) 521-5200  Manatee County (941) 741-3575  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence</b>	Domestic Violence	The Florida Coalition Against Domestic Violence is a state and federally funded organization that provides support and resources to victims of domestic violence.	Services are provided throughout the state. <a href="#">Website with phone numbers</a>
<b>Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) - Domestic Violence Program</b>	Domestic Violence	DCF's <i>Domestic Violence Program</i> is a state-funded program that coordinates and funds interventions for victims and perpetrators of domestic violence, including a domestic violence hotline and a <i>Batterer Intervention Program</i> . Services are provided by 42 domestic violence centers around Florida.	The Domestic Violence Program serves the entire state.  Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 500-1119 <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Florida Department of Corrections – Office of Re-Entry</b>	Incarceration/Reentry	The Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) Office of Re-Entry provides various education and transition services for inmates at select institutions. DOC also offers Faith- and Character-Based Residential programs for incarcerated fathers at 16 institutions. The programs include parenting classes, life-skills, and family relationship classes.	Services are provided at various facilities throughout the state.  (850) 717-3050  <a href="#">Office of Re-Entry</a>  <a href="#">Faith and Character Based Residential Programs</a>
<b>Florida Department of Economic Opportunity - One-Stop Career Centers</b>	Economic Stability	Florida has a network of Regional Workforce Boards and One-Stop Career Centers that offer employment services and training to low-income and unemployed individuals.	Regional Workforce Boards and One-Stop Career Centers serve the entire state.  <a href="#">Phone numbers for various locations</a>
<b>Florida Department of</b>	Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood	The Florida Department of Health and county public health agencies provide family planning services including	Services are provided throughout the state.

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<b>Health - Family Planning Program</b>		education, medical services, and referrals to help individuals prevent unwanted pregnancies.	(850) 245-4475 <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Hillsborough County Head Start</b>	Healthy Relationships Fatherhood/Parenting	Hillsborough County Head Start is a federally funded organization that offers two programs for fathers. 1) <i>His Involvement Matters</i> enhances men’s influence in the home through positive skill building, interactive activities, and programs for fathers and other men such as uncles, grandfathers, boyfriends, and friends who play a role in a Head Start enrolled child’s life. 2) <i>Healthy Marriage Initiative</i> offers interactive workshops that provide single parents as well as engaged and married couples with the tools necessary to promote healthy relationships, marriages, and families.	The Hillsborough County Head Start serves Hillsborough County.  (813) 272-5140  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Jewish Family and Children Services</b>	Economic Stability Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	Jewish Family and Children Services is a federally funded organization that offers the <i>Healthy Fathers/Healthy Children</i> and <i>Healthy Families/Healthy Children</i> programs, which include parenting classes, job and career advancement activities, marriage and relationship education, and support services.	Jewish Family and Children Services serves Sarasota and Venice.  (941) 366-2224  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Job Corps</b>	Economic Stability	<i>Job Corps</i> is a federal job training program for low-income young men and women to help with educational and career goals.	Job Corps centers are located in Gainesville, Homestead, Jacksonville, Miami, and St. Petersburg.  <a href="#">Phone numbers for various locations</a>
<b>The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Northeast Florida Healthy Start Coalition is a state and federally funded organization that offers several fatherhood programs, including <i>Real Dad</i> , <i>Real Man</i> and <i>Boot Camp for New Dads</i> .	Services are offered in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau, and St. Johns counties.  (904) 723-5422



Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
			<a href="#">Website</a>
<b>Project SOS, Inc.</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Project SOS, Inc. is a state funded organization that provides <i>Why Knot</i> relationship skills workshops that teach healthy communication, financial skills, how to fight fair, and parenting skills. Each attendee is connected with an individual Life Coach. After the program, couples are encouraged to partner with a mentoring couple to model and encourage healthy relationships.	Jacksonville and the surrounding area.  (904)-296-9950  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>ReCapturing the Vision International</b>	Healthy Relationships Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood	ReCapturing the Vision International is a state funded organization that offers programs for healthy relationship education, teen pregnancy prevention, and self-esteem development for middle and high school students. These programs include <i>Men of Vision</i> and <i>Making It Work</i> .	ReCapturing the Vision International serves Miami-Dade.  (305) 232-6003  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>University of Central Florida</b>	Healthy Relationships Fatherhood/Parenting	The University of Central Florida is a federally funded institution that offers <i>Project Harmony</i> , a marriage and relationship education program for low-income parents. Participants are taught communication skills, anger and stress management skills, and parenting skills.	Orlando.  (407) 823-1748  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>University of Florida</b>	Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	The University of Florida Board of Trustees was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>SMART Florida</i> project will provide relationship education and economic stability services for low-income individuals, couples, and at-risk youth.	Santa Rosa, Duval, Manatee, Citrus, and Palm Beach counties.  <i>Contact info not yet available</i>
<b>University of Miami</b>	Healthy Relationships	The University of Miami was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The university will use web-based curricula to provide healthy relationship services for low-income couples nationwide.	Nationwide.  <i>Contact info not yet available</i>
<b>Young Fathers of Central Florida</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	Young Fathers of Central Florida is a state funded organization located in Orlando that offers parent skills training, mentoring, fathers' support	(407) 423-9400  <a href="#">Website</a>

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
		groups, and a <i>Teen Fatherhood Academy</i> .	

## 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.

**In Florida, there are two ways that unmarried parents can establish legal paternity. 1) Paternity can be established by a court order, or through genetic testing. 2) A father can establish paternity by completing an Acknowledgement of Paternity form, if paternity is not contested.<sup>i</sup>**

### 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 Florida, when married couples with children separate voluntarily (as opposed to abandonment or desertion by one partner), both parents have the right to petition the Florida family court system to determine the custody of the children. The state has a presumption or preference for joint custody of children. Some parents may be required to participate in mediation prior to the resolution of a custody dispute.**

### 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.<sup>ii</sup>

**The Florida Department of Revenue provides child support services in all but two counties. The Department partners with the State Attorney's Office for services in Miami-Dade County and the Manatee County Clerk of Court for services in Manatee County. For more information see <http://dor.myflorida.com/childsupport/Pages/default.aspx> or call 1(800) 622-5437.**

### 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.<sup>iii</sup>

**Florida has no additional state provisions for paid or unpaid leave.**

### 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.

Many states have multiple Head Start programs providing services for fathers. **To find information on Head Start programs in Florida, go to:** <http://www.floridaheadstart.org/program%20directory.html>

## 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.<sup>iv</sup>

**In Florida, CCDF funds are used for the *Florida School Readiness Program* which provides child care to low-income families so fathers and mothers can work or attend a training or education program. To be eligible, families must have a household income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level for its family size.<sup>v</sup>**

### 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.<sup>vi</sup>

### Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

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.<sup>vii</sup>

**In Florida, the *Florida Food Assistance Program* helps ensure that eligible low-income families and individuals are able to obtain a nutritious diet. Food Assistance recipients are able to purchase their food by using an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which may be used at any retail store authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The amount of benefits received is based on the household size and financial circumstances.<sup>viii</sup>**

### 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 Florida, in order to qualify for TANF families must be U.S. citizens or qualified noncitizens; be legal residents of the state; be a family with a minor child living with a custodial parent or caretaker relative; be a pregnant woman; and be a needy family with income commensurate with the financial eligibility required by the program.<sup>ix</sup> Recognizing that TANF program standards may penalize those who have been victimized by domestic violence, Florida legislature enacted the Domestic Violence Diversion Program. This program allows temporary suspension of work and training requirements when the victim is unable to comply due to safety considerations or the effects of past violence.**

### Temporary Cash Assistance

Florida offers Temporary Cash Assistance to low-income two-parent and single-parent families. A 48-month lifetime limit exists on receipt of these benefits. Parents receiving financial assistance must participate in work activities immediately upon receipt of benefits unless they meet an exemption; however, postsecondary education and training can fulfill this work requirement.<sup>x</sup>

## References

<sup>i</sup> For more information on Paternity Establishment in Florida, see <http://dor.myflorida.com/dor/childsupport/pdf/cs150.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup> For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse)

<sup>iii</sup> For more information on the Family and Medical leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>

<sup>iv</sup> For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>

<sup>v</sup> For more information on the Florida School Readiness Program, see

[http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/ADA\\_Compliant-2013-SR\\_FactSheet.pdf](http://www.floridaearlylearning.com/sites/www/Uploads/ADA_Compliant-2013-SR_FactSheet.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> For more information on Rental Assistance, see [http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental\\_assistance](http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance)

<sup>vii</sup> For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>

<sup>viii</sup> For more information on the Florida Food Assistance Program, see <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1244>

<sup>ix</sup> For more information on TANF, see <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/access/docs/TANF-Plan.pdf>

<sup>x</sup> For more information on Temporary Cash Assistance, see <http://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/access-florida-food-medical-assistance-cash/temporary-cash-assistance-tca>