



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



NRFC State Profile: Maine August 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
Advocates for Children	Fatherhood/Parenting	Advocates for Children is a state-funded organization that provides several programs for fathers including the <i>Nurturing Parenting Program</i> ; <i>Active Parenting Program</i> ; <i>1,2,3 Magic</i> ; <i>Parent Support Groups</i> ; and <i>Bootcamp for New Dads</i> . These programs provide education on parenting, building positive relationships with children, and child abuse and neglect.	Serves Androscoggin County. Website (207) 783-3990
Catholic Charities	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	Catholic Charities is a state-funded organization that provides the <i>Functional Family Therapy</i> program, a home-based program focused on creating better family relationships, enhancing communication, developing conflict resolution skills, building trust, and reducing interactions with the juvenile justice system. Eligible families must have a child between 11 and 18 years old who is struggling with social, emotional, and/or behavioral problems.	Services are provided in many counties throughout the state. Website (207) 781-8550

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Children's Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	Children's Center is a state-funded organization that offers two-hour workshops covering a range of topics for parents with special needs children. Families can request specific topics for sessions.	Serves Augusta and Skowhegan. Website (207) 399-6020
Franklin County Children's Task Force	Fatherhood/Parenting Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood	Franklin County Children's Task Force is a state-funded organization that provides several resources and classes for parentings. Curricula include <i>Nurturing Program</i> ; <i>Active Parenting Now</i> ; <i>1,2,3 Magic</i> ; and <i>Guiding Good Choices</i> . The organization also offers the teen pregnancy prevention curriculum <i>Baby Think It Over</i> .	Serves Franklin County. Website (207) 778-6960
Job Corps	Economic Stability	<i>Job Corps</i> is a federally funded job training program to help low-income men and women ages 16 to 24 with educational and career goals.	Serves the entire state; centers are in Limestone and Bangor. Website (800) 733-5627
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	Kennebec Valley Community Action Program (KVCAP) is a state- and federally funded organization that offers several parenting classes, including <i>The Nurturing Fathers Program</i> , a 13-week course covering topics such as discipline without violence, balancing work and fathering, conflict resolution, cultural influences, and dealing with feelings. Additional curricula include <i>1,2,3,4 Parents!</i> ; <i>Active Parenting Now</i> ; and <i>Community Nurturing Parenting</i> . In addition, KVCAP offers an 8-week program and a 1-day workshop to help parents reduce the negative impact of their divorce or separation on their children.	Serves the Kennebec Valley area. Website (800) 542-8227

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Maine Career Centers	Economic Stability	The Maine Career Centers are 12 state- and federally funded centers across the state that provide job search assistance and training opportunities to low-income and unemployed Maine residents. The Maine Career Centers also maintain Maine’s Job Bank, which is a free, online resource to help Maine residents gain access to unemployment benefits and job training opportunities.	Serves entire state. Website In-state: (888) 457-8883 Out-of-state: (207) 623-7981
Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence	Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence (MCEDC) is a state- and federally funded organization that provides prevention messages to boys and men through public awareness campaigns and the curriculum <i>Coaching Boys into Men</i> in middle and high schools. MCEDC also operates a hotline for domestic violence victims and offers a batterers education groups with the Department of Corrections and school-based services to reduce teen dating violence.	Services are provided throughout the state. Website Hotline: (866) 834-4357 Main Number: (207) 430-8334
Maine Department of Corrections	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Maine Department of Corrections offers a parenting class for incarcerated parents at the Charleston Correctional Facility twice a year.	Services are provided at the Charleston Correctional Facility. Website (207) 285-0800
Maine Family Development Account Coalition	Economic Stability	The Maine Family Development Account Coalition is a federally funded collection of organizations that provide matched savings accounts for individuals and families to save money to buy a house, pay for education, or start a business. It also gives guidance on how to save and manage money, build good credit, and reach financial goals.	Serves the entire state. Each coalition member’s contact information and location can be found at this website .

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
The Opportunity Alliance	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Opportunity Alliance offers state-funded parenting programs for mothers and fathers, including <i>Parent and Family Coaching</i> , <i>Parent Effectiveness in Resolving Conflict with Teens</i> , and <i>Parents as Partners</i> , which is a peer-support program for parents with children involved in the state's Child Protective Services system.	Serves the greater Portland area. Website (877) 429-6884
Penquis	Fatherhood/Parenting	Penquis is a state- and federally funded organization that offers parenting and economic assistance programs. <i>New Dads Boot Camp</i> provides peer mentoring to expectant fathers. <i>Nurturing Parenting Class</i> provides education on youth development, conflict management, communication, and stress and anger management for parents of children age 5 and younger.	Serves Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Knox counties. Website (800) 215-4942
State of Maine Judicial Branch	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	The Family Division of the Maine District Court within the State of Maine Judicial Branch helps facilitate parenting arrangements and provides referrals to parent education programs for separated or divorcing parents. While parents may sign-up together, they take different workshops. There is a fee to attend. They offer 4-5 hour workshops to help parents address problems and reduce the negative effects of separation and divorce for children using the following curricula: <i>Kids First</i> , <i>Parent Works</i> , <i>For Kids' Sake</i> , and <i>Moving Forward</i> .	Serves the entire state, though each program is offered in different locations. See the website for each program's location and contact information.

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.

An unwed father in Maine may declare paternity at the hospital where his child is born by signing a voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form (AOP).ⁱ The mother of the child must also sign this form. Parents do not have to sign at the same time, but each signature must be notarized and returned to the Maine Office of Vital Records. Parents may also sign an AOP form at the Maine Office of Vital Records, at their municipal clerk's office, or at a Notary Public.

Signing at the Office of Vital Records carries a fee of \$60. Parents must also pay the Notary fee, if applicable. If within 60 days of signing the AOP form, a man discovers that he is not the biological father of the child, he can file a rescission form to overturn the AOP he had previously signed. This form is available at the Maine Office of Vital Records, a DSER office, or a municipal clerk's office. If one parent refuses to sign an AOP form, the other has the right to take him or her to court to establish paternity. Mothers may also contact the Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery to establish paternity. Either of these methods will involve genetic testing to establish paternity.ⁱⁱ

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 Maine, parents looking to establish a child custody arrangement must seek assistance through the Family Division of the Maine Judicial Branch. Parents meet with a Family Law Magistrate, who helps to find areas of agreement between parents. In some cases, a Family Law Magistrate may appoint a Guardian ad Litem (GAL), an attorney whose job it is to act in the best interests of a child. The GAL may assess a child's history of and potential for neglect and abuse, among other risk factors of custody with one parent or the other.ⁱⁱⁱ

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.^{iv}

In Maine, child support services are handled through the Maine Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery. Child support orders are determined by the income of the non-custodial parent. Once an order has been made, the noncustodial parent has 30 days to request a formal hearing. Modifications of a child support order may be requested by the custodial parent. The website for the Division of Child Support Services provides information on child support enforcement, locating noncustodial parents, and establishing paternity. Visit their [website](#) for more information or call (207) 624-4168.

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.^v

In addition to the benefits allowed by the federal FMLA, Maine has its own Family and Medical Leave Requirements (FMLR), which protects individuals who have worked for any employer in the state with at least 25 employees (15 of

whom work in the same place) for at least 12 consecutive months. Workers are entitled to up to 10 consecutive weeks of unpaid leave in a two year period due to family or medical reasons, such as the employee's serious health condition, birth of the employee's child, adoption of a child 16 years old or younger, or a family member with a serious health condition. Unlike FMLA, which requires the employer to continue paying any share paid by the employer prior to the leave, the FMLR allows the employer to transfer the entire costs of health premiums to the employee during leave.^{vi}

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 Maine, go to:

<http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/ec/occhs/headstart.htm>.

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.^{vii}

In Maine, the Child Care Subsidy Program is overseen by the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. In order to be eligible for the program, children must be between 6 weeks and 12 years old. However, children with special needs who have not reached their 19th birthday may be served if they are physically or mentally incapable of caring for themselves as diagnosed by a qualified professional or court ordered. Additionally, families must demonstrate a need for care. In general, that means that the parent must be employed or attending an educational program which prevents the parent from providing care and supervision of the children in the household during the time the parent is participating in the activity. If there are two parents in the home, both must be employed or attending an educational program.^{viii}

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.^{ix}

In Maine, a resident's income must be below 50 percent of the area median income for the family size to qualify. Waiting lists are maintained for each area.^x

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.^{xi}

In Maine, individuals can apply for SNAP by visiting or calling their local Department of Health and Human Services Office for Family Independence office and setting up an interactive interview.^{xii} The individual's application is completed by an interviewer and the individual is asked to review and sign it at the end of the interview (it is mailed to those who complete the interview over the phone). Individuals may request a blank application form at any time to complete on their own, and an interview will be scheduled after they turn it in.^{xiii}

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.

Maine has several temporary assistance programs through the Office for Family Independence (OFI) including *Parents as Scholars, Alternative Aid Assistance, General Assistance, and Emergency Assistance*. These programs help low-income individuals purchase basic necessities, pay for shelter and utilities, and with cash benefits so that they do not have to apply for federal TANF benefits when they need short-term assistance. OFI also offers two federally funded *ASPIRE* programs, which may be mandatory for some TANF beneficiaries. The first, *ASPIRE/TANF*, helps TANF recipients find employment to get them off of cash assistance. The second, *ASPIRE/JET*, helps families receiving Food Supplement find employment. After receiving TANF benefits for two years, families must participate in work activities, such as employment (part time, full time, uncompensated, or volunteer), job training, or pursuit of a high school diploma or equivalency. More information can be found at the OFI [website](#) or by calling (800) 442-6003.^{xiv}

References

- ⁱ For more information on Paternity Establishment in Maine, see <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/dser/paternity/index.html>.
- ⁱⁱ For more information on genetic testing to establish paternity in Maine, see: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/dser/paternity/genetic-testing.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ For more information on the Family Division of the Maine Judicial System, see http://www.courts.maine.gov/maine_courts/family/index.shtml.
- ^{iv} For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css>.
- ^v For more information on the Family and Medical Leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.
- ^{vi} For more information on Family and Medical Leave Requirements, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/state/fmla/me.htm>.
- ^{vii} For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- ^{viii} For more information on the Child Care Subsidy Program, see <http://www.maine.gov/sos/cec/rules/10/148/148c006.doc>.
- ^{ix} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^x For more information on Rental Assistance in Maine, see <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/samhs/mentalhealth/housing/section-8/eligibility.html>.
- ^{xi} For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ^{xii} For a list of local Office of Family Independence locations and contact information, see <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/offices/index.html>.
- ^{xiii} For more information on SNAP in Maine, see <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ofi/services/snap/faq.html>.
- ^{xiv} For more information on TANF in Maine, see http://www.nccp.org/profiles/ME_profile_36.html.