



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



National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse

NRFC State Profile: Alabama June 2016

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 2016) 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
Alabama Career Center System	Economic Stability	The state funded Alabama Career Center System has one-stop career centers in 45 locations throughout the state. Centers have resources for veterans, unemployed workers, dislocated workers, and other residents of Alabama who are looking for job search help. This includes skills assessments, training opportunities, help with resumes, and interview prep. The Alabama <i>JobLink</i> website also offers employment resources and a state job bank.	There are 48 Workforce Centers and 2 One Stop Centers in Alabama. <i>JobLink</i> website and list of career centers with phone numbers.
Alabama Coalition Against Domestic Violence (ACADV)	Domestic Violence	The federally and state funded ACADV is a statewide network of community-based programs that provide support and advocacy for those facing abuse. Services include a 24/7 crisis hotline, safety planning, links to external resources and shelters, and awareness of the issue of domestic violence. Perpetrator intervention programs are also available. Abusers may enroll voluntarily or by court order. The victim has no obligation to participate.	Serves the entire state. Website (334) 832-4842 Alabama Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 650-6522

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Alabama Cooperative Extension System	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state funded Alabama Cooperative Extension System provides the Begin Education Early (B.e.e.) program for parents and their young children. It also offers the <i>Being Dads</i> program, which helps noncustodial fathers play an active role in the healthy development and school readiness of their children.	Choctaw and Wilcox Counties. Website with locations and phone numbers.
Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. (ACHR)	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	Federally funded Alabama Council on Human Relations, Inc. offers the <i>Fatherhood Program</i> . The program supports responsible fathering, increases fathers' understanding of the importance of being positively involved with their children, and encourages their children's learning and love of literacy. The program also includes job exploration, remaining in school, and returning to school or training.	Lee and Russell Counties. Website (334) 821-8336
Alabama Department of Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention (DCANP)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability Incarceration/Reentry	The DCANP's Children's Trust Fund receives federal and state funding to deliver services for children and families across Alabama. The primary goal of all programs is to prevent child abuse and neglect and many provide parenting education focused on skills such as child rearing, behavior management, child development, and communication. There are also 20 programs that provide additional services for fathers such as job placement assistance, enrollment in food assistance programs, support for incarcerated or reentering fathers, and assistance for noncustodial parents.	Serves many counties. Website with list of programs and counties served. (334) 262-2951
Alabama Department of Corrections	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Incarceration/Reentry	The Alabama Department of Corrections funds an <i>Institutional Pre Release/Re-entry Program</i> for inmates who are within 30 to 90 days of release. The program is divided into six modules, which include topics such as Career Planning, Co-Parenting, Child Development, Communication and Relationship Skills, and Challenges of Returning to the Family. The Department's website also includes a link to additional re-entry resources.	Alabama Correctional Facilities. Website (334) 353-9511

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	The state funded Alabama Network of Family Resources is a network of nonprofit centers that provide services to strengthen and support families. Programs vary by site and range from parenting skills, case management, counseling, home visitation, health, employment readiness, emergency services, and youth services.	Centers are located in several counties. Website with locations. (334) 801-9185
Auburn University	Healthy Relationships	Auburn University was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. <i>The Alabama Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Initiative (AHMREI)</i> is a partnership between Auburn University, 10 Family Resource Centers, and other local agencies. The initiative provides workshops to help build and sustain healthy family relationships and parenting skills.	Serves the entire state. Website (334) 844-3227
Christian Services for Children in Alabama (CSCA)	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state funded CSCA offers <i>Family Outcome-Centered Unification Services (FOCUS)</i> , a family preservation program that helps families so children can remain safe in their homes and avoid unnecessary separation from their parents. Families may be referred to the program by the Alabama Department of Human Resources.	Dallas, Autauga, Chilton, Marengo, Perry and Wilcox Counties. Website (334) 875-0608
Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA)	Economic Stability	The federally and state funded Community Action Association of Alabama (CAA) has 21 affiliated Community Action Agencies throughout Alabama. Agencies offer services to help low-income families achieve economic self-sufficiency. Programs and services are agency-specific, and help with job training, education, money management, and skills training.	There are 21 Community Action Agencies in Alabama. Website with locations and phone numbers. Main office: (205) 323-6674
Job Corps	Economic Stability	Job Corps is a federal job training program to help low-income young men and women ages 16 to 24 with educational and career goals.	Website Gadsden office: (256) 547-6222 Montgomery office: (334) 262-8883

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
National Children's Advocacy Center	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	The state and federally funded National Children's Advocacy Center (NCAC) offers the <i>Just for Dads Partnership in Parenting</i> program and the <i>Nurturing Program for Parents</i> . <i>Partnership in Parenting</i> builds responsible parenting and relationship skills and provides employment and money management assistance. <i>The Nurturing Program for Parents</i> is a six week program for parents who want to build their parenting skills and knowledge. NCAC also provides a Parenting Library, with books and DVDs covering a wide variety of parenting topics, and case management services to connect parents with community resources.	Madison County. Website (256) 533-KIDS (5437)
The Family Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state funded Exchange Club Family Center offers positive parenting classes and anger management workshops. Individuals may enroll voluntarily or by court order. Programs stress the importance of both parents in children's lives and emphasize prevention of child abuse and neglect. Parents pay \$10 per class or \$75 for 9 weeks. Classes are free if a completion certificate is not required. Free child care is provided in Mobile.	Chatom, Mobile, and Daphne. Website (251) 479-5700

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 Alabama, a father may voluntarily establish paternity by completing an Acknowledgement of Paternity form. This can be signed at the hospital after the child's birth, or at the Department of Human Resources office. If an alleged father does not voluntarily acknowledge paternity, the mother may request that the State begin a court action. Child support then collects information about the alleged father and refers the case to an attorney who represents the State. If the case goes to trial, the mother and alleged father may be called upon to testify. The court may also request genetic tests from the mother, alleged father, and child to help establish paternity. A parent can start a court case to establish paternity at any time before the child turns nineteen.ⁱ

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 Alabama, the court officially favors joint custody, as long as both parents have the ability to act in the best interest of the child. In some cases, the court may give custody to grandparents if neither parent is fit to raise the child. Courts may also decide visitation rights for a noncustodial parent, including whether parents will follow a specific parenting schedule or be involved in a court intervention program. ⁱⁱ

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. ⁱⁱⁱ

Alabama's Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Division is in charge of child support services. Parents may apply for Child Support Services by making an appointment with any County Department of Human Resources office in Alabama. Go to the [website](#) or call (800) 997-8888 for more information.

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. ^{iv}

Alabama has no additional 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 is currently delivered by about 1,700 local organizations – public and private, non-profit and for-profit – and it 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 Alabama, go to this [website](#).

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.^v

In Alabama, the Office of Child Care Subsidy administers the subsidized child care program through four Child Care Management Agencies (CMAs) in nine regions. Application forms for subsidized services are available in English and Spanish on the Office of Child Care Subsidy's [website](#). To be eligible, families must meet Child Care Service's definition of a family, be employed or enrolled in school/job training, and fall under the maximum income requirements.^{vi}

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.^{vii}

Alabama has no additional state provisions for rental assistance.

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 many states, individuals over the age of 18 and under the age of 50 are limited to three months of SNAP benefits every three years unless they are working or in a work or training program 20 hours a week. Some states have waivers to this rule for all or part of the state – for detailed state eligibility requirements, consult the [state SNAP agency](#).^{viii}

Alabama has no additional state provisions for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

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 Alabama, TANF is called the Family Assistance (FA) Program. The Program provides temporary cash payments, work and job training services, and child care assistance for qualifying families. To qualify, families must reside in Alabama, 1) be pregnant or have a child under nineteen, 2) be a U.S. national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident, 3) have low or very low income, and 5) be either under-employed (working for very low wages), unemployed, or about to become unemployed. Families may still qualify if their child is under nineteen and a full time student in a secondary school or in the equivalent level of vocational or technical training.^{ix}

Other Helpful Resources

The University of Alabama Child Development Resources

The University of Alabama Child Development Resources works with the state and federally funded Alabama Children's Trust Fund to provide the *Parenting Assistance Line (PAL)*. PAL is a hotline for parents who want information and support in becoming a more confident parent. A parenting resource specialist listens to callers' concerns and offers nonjudgmental support, resources, and helpful information. Callers may also request free literature about their specific parenting concerns. All calls are free and confidential. More information can be found at their [website](#) or by calling (866) 962-3030.

References

ⁱ For more information on paternity establishment in Alabama, see

http://www.dhr.alabama.gov/documents/CS_Guide.pdf.

ⁱⁱ For more information on child custody in Alabama, see

<http://www.crckids.org/legal-resources/family-law-overview/alabama-law/> and

http://www.womenslaw.org/laws_state_type.php?id=106&state_code=AL&open_id=all#content-4462.

ⁱⁱⁱ For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css.

^{iv} For more information on the Family and Medical leave Act, see

<http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.

^v For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see

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

^{vi} For more information on Child Care Assistance in Alabama, see

http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/child_care_services/Subsidy_Overview.aspx. For more information about eligibility

requirements, see http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/child_care_services/documents/DHRCMA1972FactSheet.pdf.

^{vii} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.

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

^{ix} For more information on FA in Alabama, see

http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Family_Assistance/Family_Assistance_Program.aspx. For more information on FA

eligibility requirements, see

http://dhr.alabama.gov/services/Family_Assistance/Documents/2015_10_01_07_05_45.pdf.