



## NRFC State Profile: Arizona July 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   |
|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Arizona Department of Economic Security</b>     | Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Security                  | The Arizona Department of Economic Security offers <i>Healthy Families Arizona</i> , a state funded home visitation program for families of newborns and pregnant women. The program provides support and education for families that includes child development, nutrition and safety, referrals for developmental delays, health care, child care, housing, and other community services.  | Serves the entire state.<br><br><a href="#">Website</a><br><br>(855) 432-7587                          |
| <b>Arizona Department of Health Services (DHS)</b> | Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood Domestic Violence | DHS operates state and federally funded programs to prevent unwanted or early fatherhood, including the <i>Family Planning Program</i> , which provides education, counseling, and medical services regarding reproductive health and family planning. DHS also provides education and awareness services to prevent domestic violence, as well as case management, advocacy, and counseling services for victims of domestic violence. The <i>Rural Safe Home Network</i> provides temporary emergency shelters for those experiencing domestic violence. | Serves the entire state. Services vary by county.<br><br><a href="#">Website</a><br><br>(602) 542-1025 |

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| Organization   | Services Provided   | Description   | Service Area and Contact Information   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <b>Arizona Youth Partnership (AYP)</b>                             | Healthy Relationships<br>Fatherhood/Parenting<br>Economic Stability | AYP is a state funded organization that provides relationship education programs for youth and adults; various afterschool and youth leadership programs; and the <i>Stronger Families Project</i> , which helps parents with parenting skills to help their youth transition into their teen years.  | Serves multiple counties.<br><br><a href="#">Website</a><br><br>(520) 744-9595   |
| <b>Job Corps</b>   | Economic Stability  | <i>Job Corps</i> is a federally funded job training program that assists low-income men and women ages 16 to 24 with educational and career goals.  | Job Corps centers are located in Tucson and Phoenix.<br><br><a href="#">Website</a><br><br>Tucson:<br>(520) 792-3015<br>Phoenix:<br>(602) 254-5921 |
| <b>Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA)</b> | Fatherhood/Parenting<br>Healthy Relationships                       | The state and federally funded NAFFA offers <i>Fatherhood is Sacred/ Motherhood is Sacred</i> and <i>Linking Generations by Strengthening Relationships</i> programs for Native American parents across the United States. Both programs strengthen families by motivating fathers and mothers to devote their best efforts in teaching and raising children to develop their full potential. | Serves the entire state.<br><br><a href="#">Website</a><br><br>(480) 833-5007  |

## 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.

There are several ways to establish paternity in Arizona. The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) allows unwed parents to go to a local DCSS office and open a case to establish paternity and child support. Both parents must sign the Voluntary Affidavit Acknowledging Paternity. If there is a question about paternity, either parent may choose to establish paternity through genetic testing, which can be conducted at a local DCSS office. If one party is uncooperative in establishing paternity, a case may be referred to the Assistant Attorney General’s Office for a court hearing to establish paternity and a child support order. Parents may sign an Acknowledgment of Paternity form after the child’s birth. Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity forms are also available at all hospitals, birthing centers, and Vital records offices. Once signed, the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity is filed with the DCSS Hospital Paternity Program and the Office of Vital Records to establish paternity. Unwed parents may go through the Arizona court system address any issues surrounding paternity and child support without the involvement of DCSS. This option may involve legal fees. If the child was born in a different state, a copy of an Affidavit Acknowledging Paternity is sent to the state’s Vital Records Agency.<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.

**Arizona requires parents who ask the court system to determine custody, parenting time arrangements, or child support to attend a parent education class or Parent Education Program. The class must be a minimum of two hours and maximum of six hours, and provides information on how parents can help their children adjust to divorce, understand the effects of a divorce or separation on children, reduce conflict between parents, understand the value of a parenting plan, and options available as alternatives to divorce. In 2012, the statutes related to the Parent Education Program were amended to include education on the impact of divorce on adults, information on alternatives to divorce, and resources to improve or strengthen a marriage.<sup>ii</sup>**

## 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>iii</sup>

**The Arizona Division of Child Support Services provides child support services in Arizona. For more information regarding policies or to obtain contact information for your local Child Support Services Office, visit the [website](#) or call DCSS at (602) 252-4045 or (800) 882-4151.**

## 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 12 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>iv</sup>

**Arizona 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. Most states have multiple Head Start programs providing services for fathers.

To find information on Head Start programs in Arizona, 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.<sup>v</sup>

**The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) provides child care assistance for the following activities or needs: 1) participation in the DES jobs program, 2) employment, 3) eligible education and training services related to employment if employed for a minimum of 20 hours/week, 4) high school, GED or remedial classes for adolescent parents, 5) help with childcare due to a physical, mental or emotional condition, participation in a drug treatment or rehabilitation program, or court order community service program, 6) residency in a homeless or domestic violence shelter, or 7) other needs determined eligible by The Department of Child Safety. Eligibility requirements vary by specific program; some may require that the family pay a portion of the child care costs. Due to limited funding, a statewide waiting list may be implemented; in this case, a parent may be required to wait for services to be rendered even if he or she qualifies for them.**<sup>vi</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>vii</sup>

**Arizona 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](#).<sup>viii</sup>

In Arizona, SNAP is called the Nutrition Assistance program. Families in Arizona may use the benefits estimator to see if they may qualify for benefits.<sup>ix</sup> After completing a required eligibility interview, families will receive a QUEST Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card in the mail. Adults receiving benefits must participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Employment & Training Program (SNA E&T), which provides assistance with services to help with employment and work-related activities.<sup>x</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.

Under the TANF block grant, needy families in Arizona are eligible for Cash Assistance (CA), Arizona's TANF program. To qualify, families must have a dependent child under age 19 and meet income eligibility requirements. All adults in households receiving TANF funds must complete and sign a Personal Responsibility Agreement, specifying their willingness to engage in activities that will lead to employment and to comply with child support payments, if applicable. Families may receive CA benefits for a maximum of 24 months. Cash Assistance Grant Diversion is available as an alternative to receiving ongoing CA. Arizona also has Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Programs.<sup>xi</sup>

Arizona also offers the *Jobs Program*, a mandatory employment and training program for work-eligible individuals in households receiving TANF Cash Assistance. The program includes a variety of work-related activities that improve employability skills and can also provide supportive services to eliminate barriers to employment. The Jobs Program's case management and employment services are operated by two private vendors: MAXIMUS, which serves Maricopa County, and Arbor/ResCare Workforce Services, which serves residents throughout the remaining counties in Arizona. For a list of statewide locations and phone numbers, visit their [website](#).

## Other Helpful Resources

### Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence (ACESDV)

Federal and state funded ACESDV prevents domestic violence and promotes awareness by providing training, awareness campaigns, and events. For more information visit their [website](#) or call (602) 279-2900.

## References

- <sup>i</sup> For more information on Paternity Establishment in Arizona, see <https://des.az.gov/services/child-and-family/child-support/arizona-child-support-establishing-paternity>.
- <sup>ii</sup> For more information on Child Custody in Arizona, see <https://www.azcourts.gov/familylaw/Parent-Education/MinimumStandards2013>.
- <sup>iii</sup> For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css).
- <sup>iv</sup> For more information on the Family and Medical leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.
- <sup>v</sup> For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- <sup>vi</sup> For more information on Child Care Assistance in Arizona, see <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/child-care-home>.
- <sup>vii</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>viii</sup> For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- <sup>ix</sup> To see if you may qualify for Nutrition Assistance, see <http://www.arizonaselfhelp.org/>.
- <sup>x</sup> For more information on Nutrition Assistance in Arizona, see <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/food/nutrition-assistance-formerly-food-stamp-program>.
- <sup>xi</sup> For more information on TANF in Arizona, see <https://des.az.gov/services/basic-needs/financial-support/cash-assistance>.