



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



## NRFC State Profile: Colorado 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>Catholic Charities of Pueblo, Inc.</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting Incarceration/Reentry	Catholic Charities of Pueblo, Inc. is a state-funded organization that provides the <i>Nurturing Parenting Program</i> . This program is for low-income families and offers specialized courses for teen parents, fathers, families facing separation or divorce, and parents who are incarcerated. The program focuses on parenting skills and creating a nurturing learning environment for children at home. The organization also participates in <i>ReHire Colorado</i> , a transitional jobs program to assist noncustodial parents' transition from incarceration or long unemployment into work.	Serves Pueblo, Crowley, and Huerfano counties.  <a href="#">Website</a>  <a href="#">Rehire Colorado provider website</a>  (719) 586-8623
<b>The Center for Relationship Education</b>	Healthy Relationships	The Center's federally funded <i>Colorado Healthy Marriage Project</i> provides relationship education for couples and singles.	Denver and surrounding area.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (720) 488-8888

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<b>Colorado Judicial Department</b>	Healthy Relationships	The Colorado Judicial Department was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Healthy Families Project</i> will provide services designed to foster healthy relationships, economic stability, and improved family functioning for at risk youth and their parents/caregivers.	City and County of Denver  <i>Contact info to be added</i>
<b>Colorado Seminary</b>	Healthy Relationships	Colorado Seminary was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015 to provide healthy relationship services for women who are receiving pre-natal services.	Denver  <i>Contact info to be added</i>
<b>Colorado Department of Corrections</b>	Incarceration Economic Stability	Colorado Department of Corrections provides pre-release and community re-entry programs and classes, which include assistance with education, job training, parenting education, and housing.	Serves individuals at state correctional facilities in Colorado.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (719) 226-4417
<b>Colorado Department of Human Services (DHS) – Division of Child Support Services (DCSS)</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	As part of the <i>Child Support Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED)</i> , a five year federal grant project (2012-2017), Colorado DHS is providing the <i>Colorado Parent Employment Project (CO-PEP)</i> for noncustodial parents in five counties (Arapahoe, Boulder, El Paso, Jefferson, and Prowers). For evaluation purposes, some participants receive enhanced fatherhood support, including parenting classes, employment assistance, and managing child support orders; others are placed in a control group and may be referred to other community services.  DHS also provides <i>ReHire Colorado</i> , a transitional employment program that combines wage-paid work, job skills training, and supportive services to help individuals facing employment barriers.	For more information on CO-PEP, contact the child support office in one of the five participating counties: Arapahoe: (303) 752-8909 or 752-8842. Boulder: (303) 814-7148. El Paso: (719) 457-6331 x88260. Jefferson: (303) 271-4642. Prowers: (719) 336-7486 x182.  <a href="#">Rehire Colorado website</a> for program locations and requirements.

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<b>Denver Department of Human Services</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	Denver Human Services offers the <i>Fatherhood Program</i> , which provides information on parenting, co-parenting, child support, and the court system. The program works internally with Denver Human Services staff in every program area to increase participation of fathers and include fathers in other family services provided by the agency.	Serves the city of Denver and the surrounding area.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (720) 944-6300
<b>Denver Indian Center</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	Denver Indian Center was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Honoring Fatherhood</i> program will provide culturally competent, trauma-informed parenting, relationship and economic stability support services for American Indian/Alaska Native and other low-income fathers.	Denver  (303) 936-2688  <a href="#">Website</a>
<b>El Paso County Department of Human Services (DHS)</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting Incarceration/Reentry Domestic Violence	El Paso County DHS's Center on Fathering receives state funding and provides various programs for fathers: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <i>The Fathering Class</i>, a 15-session program on parenting skills.</li> <li>2) <i>Conflict-Resolution for Dads</i>, a 10-week program on conflict resolution skills.</li> <li>3) <i>Nurturing Fathers</i>, a 13-session program for fathers with histories of domestic violence.</li> <li>4) <i>Inside Out Dad</i> classes for incarcerated fathers.</li> <li>5) <i>Fathers as Providers</i>, an 8-week program for unemployed and underemployed fathers. Groups meet daily to discuss the connection between being an involved father and a good employee. Help is provided on filling out job applications, completing resumes, and doing interviews.</li> </ol>	Serves El Paso County.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (719) 634-7797 or (800) MY DAD-34
<b>Fremont County Department of Human Services</b>	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Fremont County Department of Human Services offers state-funded fatherhood classes.	Serves Fremont County.  <a href="#">Website</a>

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
			(719) 275-2318
<b>Job Corps</b>	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.	There is one Job Corps Center in Colorado. It is located in Collbran.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (970) 487-3576
<b>Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services</b>	Economic Stability Healthy Relationships	Montrose County Department of Health and Human Services uses state funds to provide services for non-custodial parents who need assistance with child support, employment and co-parenting issues.	Serves Montrose County.  (970) 252-5000

## 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 Colorado, unmarried parents can sign a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form at the hospital when their child is born, or anytime thereafter, and submit it to a Colorado state Vital Records Office. Sixty days after filing the voluntary form, the child’s father will be legally considered the father. Under Colorado law, actions to establish paternity may be undertaken until the child is 18 years old, or 21 in some cases. In lieu of a voluntary acknowledgment form, parents can initiate court action through a private attorney or the county Child Support Enforcement Unit and have paternity established by a judge. The Child Support Enforcement Unit can also legally establish paternity without going to court. If a father doubts his parenthood, he can file an action with a court for genetic testing or withdraw his signature from the voluntary acknowledgment of paternity, usually within 60 days of signing the form.<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 Colorado, the courts make custody determinations when parents cannot come to a voluntary agreement on visitation terms. The court reserves the authority to make visitation decisions on behalf of parents who cannot agree, but may also order both parents to attend mediation with a third party, who will try to help parents come to an agreement. Custody decisions made by the court take the child’s best interests as the primary consideration, which includes “frequent and continuing contact between each parent and the minor children,” but also take into account the parents’ wishes, presence of abuse, and each parent’s history of parental involvement.<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>

**In Colorado, once paternity is established and the noncustodial parent is located, the local county Child Support Enforcement Unit works with both parents to establish a child support order. If the child is in foster care, a fee may be charged to the mother or father. The child support or parental fee is based on Colorado child support guidelines. The guidelines consider factors such as the needs of the children and the finances of both parents.<sup>iv</sup> The Child Support Enforcement website has information on how to pay, calculate, or change a child support order. Visit the [website](#) or call (303) 866-4300 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.<sup>v</sup>

**Colorado has the Family Care Act (FCA), which expands the definition of a "family member" under the FMLA to include domestic partners and partners in a civil union. In addition, the state has Domestic Violence Leave, which allows employees who have been victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, domestic abuse, or stalking to take up to three days off in a 12-month period to seek medical treatment or counseling; a civil protection order; legal assistance or attend court-related proceedings; or new housing or increased security at an existing home. Colorado also has the Small Necessities Leave, which specifies that employees who are parents or legal guardians can take up to 18 hours of unpaid leave per school year to attend parent-teacher conferences or any other school-related meeting (e.g., meetings around truancy and attendance).**

## 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 Colorado, go to: <http://www.coloheadstart.org/about-colorado-head-start-association>.**

## 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>vi</sup>

**In Colorado, the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) provides child care assistance for families who need child care services to support their efforts toward self-sufficiency. Eligible families can be working, searching for employment, in training, or enrolled in the Colorado Works Program and may have to pay some of their child care costs to participate in the program. The family fee is based on income and the type of child care provider selected to care for a child.<sup>vii</sup> Eligibility criteria vary according to household size and from county to county. All counties must serve families with incomes 130 percent or more below the federal poverty guideline<sup>viii</sup> and no county can serve families with incomes that are more than 85 percent of the state median income (133 percent of the federal poverty guideline for a family of four was \$31,525 in 2015; 85 percent of the state median income for a family of four was \$71,867.50 in 2014).**

### 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>ix</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>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. **Colorado's TANF program, Colorado Works, provides cash assistance to low-income families and is designed to assist families in becoming stable and self-sufficient. In addition, the program focuses on employment readiness and helping adults transition into work. The program is statewide, and is delivered through the local county departments of health and social services.<sup>xi</sup> Those who have at least one dependent child, are U.S. citizens or legal aliens, and meet income guidelines are eligible. All participants must participate in work-related activities. Services include family planning**



services not available through Medicaid, support for domestic violence victims and perpetrators, and parenting and relationship education programs.<sup>xii</sup>

## Other Helpful Resources

### Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault

For resources on Colorado's policy regarding sexual assault, visit [www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org)

### ColoradoDads.com

For more information on fatherhood programs and resources in Colorado, see [www.coloradodads.com](http://www.coloradodads.com), a website managed by the Colorado Practitioner Network for Fathers and Families.

## References

- <sup>i</sup> For more information on Paternity Establishment, see <https://childsupport.state.co.us/siteuser/do/vfs/Frag?file=/cm:faqEstPaternity.isp>.
- <sup>ii</sup> For more information on Child Custody, see [https://www.courts.state.co.us/Forms/Forms\\_List.cfm?Form\\_Type\\_ID=15](https://www.courts.state.co.us/Forms/Forms_List.cfm?Form_Type_ID=15).
- <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 Colorado's Child Support Establishment and Enforcement, see <https://childsupport.state.co.us/siteuser/do/vfs/Frag?file=/cm:establishingSupport.isp>.
- <sup>v</sup> For more information on the Family and Medical Leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.
- <sup>vi</sup> For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- <sup>vii</sup> For more information on Colorado's Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP), see <http://www.coloradoofficeofearlychildhood.com/#!child-care-assistance-program/cu2m>.
- <sup>viii</sup> For more information on federal poverty guidelines, see [http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/eceap/docs/2015\\_Federal\\_Poverty\\_Level\\_Chart.pdf](http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/eceap/docs/2015_Federal_Poverty_Level_Chart.pdf).
- <sup>ix</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>x</sup> For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- <sup>xi</sup> For more information about Colorado Works Program, see <http://www.colorado.gov/coloradoworks>.
- <sup>xii</sup> For more information about Basic Cash Assistance, see <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/frtempassisneedyfamiestanf-0>.