



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

National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



NRFC State Profile: Iowa 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
Iowa Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives	Healthy Relationships	Iowa Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives received a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Healthy Relationships Iowa</i> project will provide marriage and relationship education and parenting skills training for couples and high school youth.	<i>Location and contact information will be added when available</i>
Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence	The state-funded Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence offers shelter and support for victims of domestic and sexual abuse. The coalition's website also offers information about domestic violence victims, batterers, and ways to detect if a relationship is unsafe.	Serves the entire state. Website Iowa Domestic Violence Hotline: (800) 942-0333
Iowa Department of Corrections	Incarceration/Reentry Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	The Iowa Department of Corrections (DOC) offers a number of programs to help inmates maintain family connections and prepare for reentry, including parenting programs that help offenders recognize the needs of their	Serves correctional facilities throughout Iowa. Website

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
		children and their responsibilities to them.	List of DOC phone numbers
Iowa Workforce Development	Economic Stability	Iowa Workforce Development is a state-funded agency that provides several resources through <i>IowaWORKS</i> to help individuals find employment and improve economic stability. Fifteen <i>IowaWORKS</i> centers offer career counseling, veteran services, skills training, and assistance managing unemployment insurance claims. The agency also provides <i>Iowa Registered Apprenticeship</i> , an <i>ApprenticeshipUSA</i> program that provides opportunities for individuals ages 16 or older to earn wages while learning a skilled profession.	IowaWORKS center locations Iowa Registered Apprenticeship Website + Brochure for more information (515) 284-4690
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.	<i>Job Corps</i> is located in Denison and Ottumwa. Denison <i>Job Corps</i> Website (712) 263-4192 Ottumwa <i>Job Corps</i> Website (641) 682-2000
Kids First Law Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state-funded Kids First Law Center offers the <i>Putting Kids First With Your Ex</i> program for separated parents. The program is free and includes joint parenting sessions, one-on-one parenting coaching, and neutral, child-friendly pick up and drop off locations for parents who need help exchanging their children peacefully.	Serves Linn and Johnson counties. Website (319) 365-5437
Mid-Iowa Community Action	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	State and federally funded Mid-Iowa Community Action offers several programs for parents including <i>Family Development and Self-Sufficiency (FaDSS)</i> , which helps families address barriers to employment; <i>Steps to Success</i> , crisis intervention services for families in need; and <i>Family Connections</i> , a program for low-income	Serves Hardin, Marshall, Tama, Story, and Poweshiek counties. Website Administrative office

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
		families with young children in Poweshiek county.	phone number: (641) 752-7162
Center for Violence Prevention (CVP)	Domestic Violence	The state-funded CVP provides domestic violence prevention programs for men including the <i>Iowa Men's Action Network</i> , a group of men working to end gender based violence in Iowa. The center is based out of three public Iowa Universities.	CVP is located in Normal, Cedar Falls, and Iowa City. The <i>Iowa Men's Action Network</i> is a statewide group. Iowa Men's Action Network (319) 273-3054
The YMCA of Greater Des Moines	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	The YMCA of Greater Des Moines offers the state-funded <i>Fatherhood Outreach</i> program, a 12-week course focused on key principles of fatherhood and building connections between fathers and their children and families. Fathers have the opportunity to meet other fathers in similar situations and work with YMCA staff to find solutions to problems affecting their relationship with their children.	Serves Des Moines. Website (515) 282-9622

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 Iowa, unmarried parents can establish paternity through an affidavit of paternity. If paternity is contested, the court may require that the mother, child, and alleged father undergo genetic testing. In instances when paternity establishment involves the court, most cases are filed by Iowa's Child Support Recovery Unit.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 Iowa, the court uses a variety of factors to determine the most appropriate child custody arrangement. These include 1) suitability of each parent as a custodian; 2) psychological and emotional needs of the child; 3) ability of the parents to communicate with one another; 4) who has previously and who is currently caring for the child; 5) whether the parents are supportive of each other's relationship with the child; 6) the wishes of the child, depending on age and

maturity; 7) whether both parents are willing to accept joint legal custody; 8) geographic locations of both parties; and 9) any safety or health issues affecting the child, including domestic abuse, parent mental illness, or substance abuse.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

Iowa operates its child support program through the Department of Human Services' Iowa Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU). Parents can make and receive child support payments on the CSRU [website](#) or call (888) 229-9223 for assistance.

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}

Iowa 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 Iowa, go to: <http://www.iowaheadstart.com/find-program.cfm>.

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 Iowa, child care services are provided for families that meet income-eligibility requirements and are absent for a portion of the day due to employment or participation in academic or vocational training.^{vi} Families participating in activities approved under the PROMISE JOBS program and receiving Family Investment Program (Iowa's version of TANF) benefits are also eligible for child care assistance.^{vii} Applications can be completed online or printed and mailed to the Iowa's Central Department of Human Services in Des Moines.^{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}

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.^x

In Iowa, individuals can apply for SNAP by completing the state application form online, by mail, or in person at a local Department of Human Services (DHS) office.^{xi} Iowa also has SNAP-Ed, a nutrition education program funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. SNAP-Ed provides educational programs intended to increase the likelihood that SNAP recipients make healthy food choices with a limited budget.^{xii} Several other nutrition and food budgeting education programs are available in Iowa, such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, and Family Nutrition Program. Both of these programs work with pregnant teens and families with young children to help participants learn about food budgeting, meal planning, healthy food choices, feeding children, increasing physical activity, and preparing healthy snacks.^{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.

Iowa's TANF program is the Family Investment Program (FIP). To qualify for FIP, one must 1) be a resident of the state of Iowa; 2) be a citizen or legal qualified non-citizen; and 3) participate in work and training services.^{xiv}

The PROMISE JOBS program provides work and training services for individuals enrolled in FIP.^{xv} To be eligible, participants must also have a Family Investment Agreement (FIA). The FIA is an individualized agreement between the FIP participant and the State of Iowa; it outlines the family's needs, the services to be provided by PROMISE JOBS,

actions the family will take, and how long it will take families to become economically self-sufficient. The program assists individuals with job-seeking skills training, employment, GED preparation, ESL education, post-secondary education, and work experience. Services are also offered to refugees enrolled in FIP who are neither U.S. citizens nor English proficient.^{xvi}

Families receiving FIP can also choose to participate in the Family Development and Self Sufficiency Program (FaDSS). This program provides in-home visitation to help families with significant barriers to self-sufficiency. The program works to improve safety and health among all family members, as well as parents' employment, education, job, and budgeting skills.^{xvii}

Other Helpful Resources

BeThere

The Iowa Child Support Recovery Unit and the state Attorney General operate this [website](#), which provides resources to help parents address family issues and improve their parenting skills.

Iowa Fatherhood

This [website](#), run by Iowa's Department of Human Services, provides information on Iowa fatherhood projects, national fatherhood organizations, online resources, and state childcare and child support information.

Iowa Jobs

This [website](#) is a state-maintained job bank that provides resources for all jobseekers and a list of targeted services for veterans, individuals with disabilities, individuals looking for careers in science, technology, engineering, and math, and for individuals who are looking for "green" jobs.

References

- ⁱ For more information on Paternity Establishment in Iowa, see http://www.iowacourts.gov/for_the_public/representing_yourself_in_court/divorcefamily_law/paternity/index.asp.
- ⁱⁱ For more information about Iowa's Child Custody Policy, see http://www.iowacourts.gov/For_the_Public/Representing_Yourself_in_Court/DivorceFamily_Law/Child_Custody/.
- 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 about Child Care eligibility requirements in Iowa, see <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/ChildcareEligibilityInfo.aspx>.
- ^{vii} For information about Child Care eligibility under PROMISE JOBS and FIP, see <https://dhs.iowa.gov/child-care>.
- ^{viii} For the Iowa Child Care Assistance client portal, see <https://ccmis.dhs.state.ia.us/clientportal/default.aspx>.
- ^{ix} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^x For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ^{xi} For more information on how to apply for SNAP benefits in Iowa, see <http://dhs.iowa.gov/how-to-apply>.
- ^{xii} For more information about SNAP-Ed, see <https://www.idph.state.ia.us/inn/SNAP.aspx>.
- ^{xiii} For more information about EFNEP and FNP, see <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/nutrition-education>.
- ^{xiv} For more information about FIP in Iowa, see <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1387>.
- ^{xv} For more information on how to apply for PROMISE JOBS, see <http://dhs.iowa.gov/how-to-apply>.
- ^{xvi} For more information about PROMISE JOBS, see <https://dhs.iowa.gov/reports/promise-jobs-reports>.
- ^{xvii} For more information about FaDSS, see <http://dhs.iowa.gov/reports/fadss>.