



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



NRFC State Profile: Kansas 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
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.	There is one Job Corps center in Kansas. It is located in Manhattan. Website (785) 564-4900
Kansas Department for Children and Families	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	The Kansas Department for Children and Families offers the <i>Successful Families Program</i> , which provides job training, help with parenting skills, and employment and support services for low-income families.	Serves the entire state. Website (888) 369-4777
Kansas Department of Corrections	Incarceration/Reentry Fatherhood/Parenting	The Kansas Department of Corrections offers several curricula for incarcerated individuals and their families. Parenting curricula include <i>Inside Out Dad</i> , <i>Parenting Inside Out</i> , and <i>Active Parenting Now</i> . <i>Play and Learn</i> sessions provide opportunities for dads to play with their child and apply skills learned through the parenting classes. A six-session <i>Family Transitions</i> class helps inmates prepare for family reintegration and, after successful completion of the	Serves correctional facilities throughout Kansas. Curricula offered vary by correctional facility. Website (785) 296-3317

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
		class, program participants are eligible to participate in <i>Family Workshop</i> , which provides an opportunity for inmates and their families to discuss their concerns.	
Safe Homes, Inc.	Domestic Violence Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	The federally and state-funded <i>Safe Homes, Inc.</i> provides a number of services, including a 24-hour counseling line, emergency and transitional housing, support groups, parenting and financial literacy classes, and referrals and legal advocacy.	Serves Chatauqua, Cowley, Elk, and Sumner Counties. Website 24-hour counseling: (620) 221-HELP or (800) 794-7672 Support groups and classes: (620) 221-7079

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 Kansas, paternity can be established by completing a Paternity Consent Form for Birth Registration if the child is less than 18 years old and the mother was not married at any time between conception and birth of the child. If this is not done at the hospital at the time of the child’s birth, the mother and father must appear before a district court judge to sign forms and have the father’s name added to the birth certificate. No attorney is necessary for this, and there is no court cost. In cases where paternity is contested, Child Support Services will arrange for genetic testing. The noncustodial father may be charged with the costs if he is proven to be the father. If he is not the father, the State of Kansas will pay for the testing.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 Kansas, a judge grants custody based on the best interest of the child. This includes the child’s adjustment to home, school, and community, the wishes of the parents and the child, and evidence of spousal abuse. Parties also have the option to present a written custody agreement to the judge for approval. Kansas law provides a presumption that a written agreement between parties is in the child’s best interest. In many counties, the court will provide mediation to facilitate a custody agreement. The court has the power to change the child’s primary residence until the child is 18 or graduates from high school.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

The State of Kansas District Court sets child support amounts based on the needs of the child, other children in the family, cost of insurance, cost of work-related child care, and the incomes of both parents. A child support order will have a set amount that the noncustodial parent is required to provide each month. Kansas Office of Child Support Services (CSS) is responsible for collection and distribution of child support payments and can modify orders when appropriate. CSS will usually review cases every three years to see if a modification is appropriate. Either parent can request that a case be reviewed sooner if there is a substantial change of services. This can include when a child turns age 6, 12, or when a permanent change in income(s) would make the support order change by 10 percent or more. The Kansas Department for Children and Families' [website](#) provides information about child support services in the state. The phone number is (888) 757-2245.

In partnership with the Kansas State Treasurer's Office, CSS offers a Child Support Savings Initiative (CSSI) that enables noncustodial parents owing child support arrears to save money towards their children's higher education expenses by opening a Learning Quest 529 Education Savings Account for their children. A noncustodial parent can enroll in the Child Support Savings Initiative as long as the child is a minor and all arrears are owed to the State of Kansas. For every dollar invested in the child's CSSI Program account, two dollars of child support arrears owed to the state will be written off. The noncustodial parent must contribute at least \$25 to open an account.^{iv} For more information, visit the [website](#) or call (913) 826-7471.

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

Kansas 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, 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 Kansas, go to: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/hs/directories>.

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.^{vi}

In Kansas, the Child Care Subsidy Program helps pay for child care costs. To qualify, families must be either 1) working and low-income, 2) receiving TANF, 3) teen parents completing high school or GED, or 4) in some cases, enrolled in education or training activities. The child must also be under 13 (or under 19 if they cannot provide self-care). Income and total assets will be taken into account when determining eligibility. Most families must pay a portion of the child care costs. Child care assistance is issued via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Kansas Benefits card on the first day of each month, and families use this to pay the child care provider electronically. Applications for the program can be picked up at the Kansas Department for Children and Families office.^{vii}

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.^{viii}

Kansas also offers the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program, which is designed to help income-eligible households with their rent, security deposit, and/or utility deposit. Assistance in the form of a rental payment helps reduce a household's rent to only 30 percent of their income. Any amount above 30 percent is paid directly by the state to the landlord on behalf of the household. Security or utility deposits may be in the form of a loan or a grant.^{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 Kansas, monthly SNAP benefits are provided on a Kansas Benefit card and electronically subtracted when food is purchased. Households must have under \$2,250 in resources, but may have up to \$3,250 if a member is disabled or over 60 years old.^{xi}

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 Kansas, TANF has a lifetime limit of 48 months. Adults must work or participate in work activities to receive cash assistance for their family, unless they are caring for a child less than 2 months of age or a disabled household member. Families receiving TANF can also receive employment support services. These services include job training, employment or GED help, transportation assistance, physical or mental health services, substance abuse, domestic violence, and help with parenting skills.^{xii}

References

- ⁱ For more information on establishing paternity in Kansas, see <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/CSS/Documents/CSS5000WebVersion.pdf>.
- ⁱⁱ For more information about Kansas' Child Custody policy, see https://www.ksbar.org/?child_custody.
- ⁱⁱⁱ For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css.
- ^{iv} To learn more about the Child Support Savings Initiative, see <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/CSS/Pages/529.aspx>.
- ^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 the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- ^{vii} For more information on the Child Care Subsidy Program, see http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Child_Care/ChildCareSubsidy.aspx
- ^{viii} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^{ix} For more information on the Tenant Based Rental Assistance program, see <http://www.kshousingcorp.org/rental-assistance.aspx>.
- ^x For more information on SNAP and to find services in your area, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ^{xi} For more information on SNAP in Kansas, see <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Food/FoodAssistance.aspx>.
- ^{xii} For more information on TANF in Kansas, see <http://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/ees/Pages/Cash/CashAssistance.aspx>.