



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



NRFC State Profile: Maryland October 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
Center for Urban Families	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability Healthy Relationships	Center for Urban Families is a state- and federally funded organization that serves Baltimore’s low-income fathers and communities. Their <i>Baltimore Responsible Fatherhood Program (BRFP)</i> aims to increase fathers’ emotional and financial support of their children and families by increasing child support awareness and management, improving parenting skills, increasing healthy relationships and effective communication, and increasing client job readiness and employability. The organization also <i>offers Couples Advancing Together (CAT)</i> , a pilot program which provides healthy relationship skill building, employment assistance, and case management services to couples with children who currently receive public benefits through the Department of Social Services.	Baltimore City. Website (410) 367-5691

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Housing Opportunities Commission (HOC) of Montgomery County	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	HOC was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The HOC <i>Family Program</i> reaches out to fathers through Public Housing households and works with partner agencies to reinforce parenting and relationship skills and help fathers and mothers improve their economic self-sufficiency.	Montgomery County Website (240) 627-9400
Job Corps	Economic Stability	<i>Job Corps</i> is a federal job training program to help low-income young men and women ages 16 to 24 with education and career goals.	Centers in Woodstock and Laurel. Website Laurel: (301) 362-6000 Woodstock: (410) 461-1100
Linden Resources	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Linden Resources was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The <i>Fathers Forward</i> program is providing responsible fatherhood and relationship skills education plus employment training for low-income fathers in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, including the District, four counties in northern Virginia, and four counties in southern Maryland.	Classes are held in southern Maryland, Washington, D.C., and northern Virginia. Website (703) 521-4441
Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation - One-Stop Career Centers	Economic Stability	One-Stop Career Centers provide training referrals, career counseling, job listings and other employment-related services to low-income and unemployed individuals.	Serves the entire state. Locations are in each county and Baltimore City. Website with locations and phone numbers.
Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence	Domestic Violence	The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence is a federally-funded domestic violence coalition that provides education, training, and resources to reduce domestic violence. Local programs offering domestic violence services are located throughout the state. Services include a 24-hour hotline, access to shelter and counseling services, and advocacy.	Serves the entire state. Website List of local programs Statewide Helpline: 1 (800) MD-HELPS (301) 429-3601

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 Maryland, unwed fathers may sign an Affidavit of Parentage in the hospital at the time of birth to legally establish paternity. If the father signs the affidavit form at a later date, a notary public must be present. This form can be signed up until the child's 18th birthday. If a custodial parent requests assistance to establish a child support order, the Maryland Child Support Enforcement Program can assist in establishing paternity.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 Maryland, child custody and visitation decisions are based on establishing an arrangement that is in the best interest of the children. There is no exhaustive list of factors that the court will use when determining custody. Instead, the court considers the "totality of circumstances" surrounding the care of the child.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 the 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

Maryland's Department of Human Resources (DHR) manages the Child Support Program. If the family does not receive financial or medical assistance, a one-time \$25 fee must be paid to the Child Support Program for its services. For more information about the Child Support program visit their [website](#) or call them at (800) 332-6347.

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.^{iv}

In addition to the benefits allowed by the federal FMLA, Maryland provides Maryland Family Military Leave which requires employers with at least 50 employees to give covered employees the day off when an immediate family member (defined as a child, stepchild, spouse, parent, stepparent, sibling, or stepsibling) leaves for or returns from

active military duty outside of the United States. Employees are covered if they have worked for the employer for at least 12 months and at least 1,250 hours in the past year.^v

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 Maryland, 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}

Maryland's Child Care Subsidy Program issues vouchers to eligible families in need of help with the cost of child care. In addition, to help with the cost of child care families can receive help locating a licensed child care provider. To receive this assistance, the recipient must be a Maryland resident who is 1) working, in an approved training program, or in public school; 2) receiving Temporary Cash Assistance or Supplemental Security Income or within CCS income guidelines; 3) willing to have his or her child immunized by Maryland State standards; and 4) if a single parent, has provided information to pursue child support.^{vii}

Emergency Assistance to Families with Children

Emergency Assistance to Families with Children (EAFC) provides emergency cash assistance to families in Maryland who need emergency help paying rent or utilities or for other emergencies. These funds are available through the local department once every two years when funds are available. Eligibility includes having at least one child under the age of 21 in the household, proof that the family has an emergency that was not caused by a family member quitting a job, and ability to present an eviction notice from utility company that services have been/will be cut off or other proof of an emergency.^{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

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](#).

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 Maryland, TANF is referred to as Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Maryland offers public assistance benefits to both single and two-parent families. The lifetime limit on TCA benefits in Maryland is 60 months. Families receiving TCA benefits must participate in work related activities for a specific number of hours per week depending on the number of work-eligible adults and age of children. Some families, who need only short-term assistance, may receive a welfare avoidance grant (WAG). A WAG is provided as a one-time lump sum payment equal to three months of TCA.^x



References

- ⁱ For more information on Paternity Establishment, see <http://dhr.maryland.gov/child-support-services/apply-for-support-services/establish-paternity/>.
- ⁱⁱ For more information on Child Custody, see <http://www.courts.state.md.us/family/familylawinformation-childcustodyvisitation.html>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ For more information on the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, see www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse.
- ^{iv} For more information on the Family and Medical leave Act see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.
- ^v For information on Maryland Family Military Leave, see http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/2013RS/Chapters_noln/CH_163_sb0012t.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://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/child-care-providers/child-care-subsidy-program>.
- ^{viii} For more information on Emergency Assistance to Families with Children, see <http://dhr.maryland.gov/blog/?p=102>.
- ^{ix} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^x For more information on Temporary Cash Assistance, see <http://www.benefits.gov/benefits/benefit-details/1277>.