



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



NRFC State Profile: Montana 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 Contact Information
Community Health Partners Learning Partners Family Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	This state and federally funded program offers home visitation, parenting classes, parenting support groups, and a family resource center.	Livingston Website (406) 823-6355
Developmental Education Assistance Program (DEAP)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	<i>DEAP</i> provides state and federally funded family preservation and supervised visitation services for families who either have had or are at risk of having a child placed in foster care. Families must have a referral from Child and Family Services to participate.	Miles City, Glendive, Colstrip, and Forsyth. Website (406) 234-6034
District IV Human Resources Development Council (D4HRDC)	Economic Stability Domestic Violence	D4HRDC offers the state and federally funded <i>Adult Basic Literacy Education</i> and <i>Workforce Investment Act</i> programs to help with employment, earnings, and educational and occupational skills. D4HRDC also offers a domestic violence intervention program for perpetrators and victims of violence. Groups are run separately for men and women with a focus on addictive relationships, power and control, violence and anger management.	The main office is located in Havre. Serves Hill, Blaine, and Liberty counties. Website (406) 265-6743

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Family Support Network (FSN)	Fatherhood/Parenting	FSN is a state and federally funded program that provides parenting classes using the <i>Nurturing Parenting</i> and <i>Triple P (Positive Parenting Program)</i> curricula. Childcare is provided for some classes. FSN also offers supervised visits and home visiting services in which parents can interact and connect with their children in welcoming environments and under the supervision of licensed social workers to help guide them toward healthy interactions.	Billings. Website (406) 256-7783
The Family Tree Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	The state-funded Family Tree Center offers the <i>Nurturing Parenting Program</i> , which provides developmentally sequenced parenting classes 3-4 times each year. There are separate groups for parents and children. <i>Respite Child Care</i> provides child care services to give parents a “stress break,” reducing the risk of child abuse and neglect for over-stressed parents.	Yellowstone County and surrounding areas. Website (406) 252-9799
Governor’s State Workforce Innovation Board (SWIB)	Economic Stability	SWIB is a “one-stop” system where Montana residents can find on-the-job training services, job postings, skills assessment tests, and individualized job search assistance. Free and confidential one-on-one tutoring is available for residents who need help with reading or basic math.	Serves the entire state. Website Main office: (406) 444-4100
Haven	Domestic Violence	This state funded program provides legal and counseling services, emergency shelter services, a 24-hour crisis line, adult and children’s support groups, and community education for victims of domestic violence. The program’s website also provides a list of resources and online information on domestic violence prevention and services. Men are served, but cannot stay in the emergency shelter; instead they are provided referrals to other shelters or hotel rooms.	Bozeman. Website (406) 586-7689 Crisis Hotline: (406) 586-4111



Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Human Resources Development Council Area 7 (HRDC7)	Economic Stability	HRDC7 is state funded and offers <i>Work Readiness Component (WoRC)</i> , which gives unemployed individuals opportunities for job readiness training, one-on-one case management, and supportive services to address barriers to employment. Participants must receive TANF to be eligible. HRDC7 provides other services such as child care, educational, and housing services.	Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone counties. Website Main Office: (406) -247-4732
Job Corps	Economic Stability	<i>Job Corps</i> is a federally funded, no-cost job training program that helps low-income men and women ages 16 to 24 with educational and career goals.	Anaconda, Ronan, and Darby. Website with location and contact information.
Lewis and Clark County Health Department	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Lewis and Clark County Health Department provides parent support groups and <i>Circle of Security</i> parenting classes. There is also a partnership between the <i>Nurse Family Partnership</i> and <i>Parents as Teachers (PAT)</i> programs, in which nurse advisors and home visitors provide free support and education to families with children through age five.	Lewis and Clark County. Website (406) 457-8912
Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (MDPHHS)	Fatherhood/Parenting Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood Economic Stability	MDPHHS provides funding and support for various programs through the <i>Montana Children's Trust Fund</i> , which promotes positive parenting skills to ensure the health, safety and well-being of children, and the <i>Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program</i> , which works with pregnant and parenting teen mothers and fathers in high schools and community service centers. The <i>Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program</i> prioritizes support for American Indian teens and offers family support services, educational services, referrals to prenatal care and reproductive health services, parenting education, and father involvement and support services.	Serves the entire state. MDPHHS's main office is in Helena. (406) 444-0936 Website with a link to contact information for <i>Children's Trust Fund</i> parenting programs. Website with a link to contact information for <i>Healthy Montana Teen Parent Program</i> sites.

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
The Nurturing Center	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	The Nurturing Center, which is state and federally funded, provides a number of parenting skills classes for mothers and fathers, including <i>Circle of Security</i> . The organization provides a list of resources for parents and families, and their <i>Safe Havens</i> program offers a comfortable, safe, and supportive place for children and parents to visit when one parent is absent from the child’s life. The Nurturing Center also offers a child care assistance scholarship program for income eligible families.	Kalispell. Website (406) 756-1414
The Parenting Place	Fatherhood/Parenting Incarceration/Reentry	The state funded Parenting Place provides home-visiting and center-based programming. Curricula include the <i>Nurturing Parenting Program</i> , a parenting class that focuses on brain development, appropriate expectations for children, positive discipline, and enjoying being a parent. Free on-site child care is provided during these classes. <i>Support for Families Touched by Incarceration</i> program serves fathers in the Missoula Pre-release Center and the Missoula County Detention Facility. The Parenting Place also organizes the <i>Montana Alliance for Families Touched by Incarceration</i> (MAFTI) program, which provides support and advocacy for families navigating the criminal justice system.	Missoula. Website (406) 728-5437
Richland County Library Family Resource Center	Fatherhood/Parenting	The Family Resource Center receives state and federal funds to operate parenting classes for the community at the Richland County Library. The Center helps support and strengthen families with media resources (books and DVDs), as well as computer-based and in-person parenting classes. Classes include the <i>Nurturing Parenting Program</i> , <i>1, 2, 3, 4 Parents!</i> , <i>Active Parenting of Teens</i> (video program), and <i>Parenting Wisely</i> (computer-based course).	Richland County. Website (406)-433-1917
Sunburst Community Service Foundation	Fatherhood/Parenting	Sunburst Community Service Foundation is a state- and federally funded program that offers family support, mental health, and education services in five locations.	Eureka, Libby, Kalispell, Polson, and St. Ignatius Website with contact information for each office.

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Thrive	Fatherhood/Parenting	Thrive, a state- and federally funded program, provides parent education and support for mothers and fathers. The program provides parenting classes (<i>Parenting with Love and Logic</i>); support groups (<i>Dynamite Dads</i>); home visiting services (<i>Parents as Teachers (PAT)</i>); parent-child play groups (<i>Thriving Tots</i> and <i>Thriving Babies</i>); and one-on-one parent consultations.	Bozeman and Belgrade. Website (406) 587-3840
Women’s Opportunity and Resource Development (WORD), Inc.	Fatherhood/Parenting	WORD, a state- and federally funded organization, offers the <i>Parents as Leaders (PAL)</i> program. <i>PAL</i> provides evidence-based parenting programs including <i>Love and Logic</i> , <i>Circle of Security</i> , and <i>The Right Question Project</i> . The <i>PAL</i> program helps mothers and fathers learn how to recognize and respond to their children’s needs.	Missoula and Bitterroot Valley. Website (406) 543-3550

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 Montana, an unmarried father can establish paternity by completing an Acknowledgement of Paternity form and submitting the form to the Department of Public Health and Human Services. Paternity can also be established by a court order or through genetic 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.

Montana has a state code indicating that it is in the best interest of a child to see both parents, so parents usually have equal parenting rights unless a court rules otherwise.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

Child support in Montana is managed by the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED). For more information on child support in Montana, visit the CSED [website](#) or call (406) 444-6856.

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}

Montana state government allows each parent to take up to 12 weeks (for a total of 24 weeks combined leave) of leave for pregnancy or birth of a child. Only fathers who are married to the mother of their child may also take FMLA to care for their spouse incapacitated during pregnancy.^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 Montana, go to: <http://mtheadstart.org/>.

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}

The Montana government offers scholarships to help Montana working families pay for child care. To be eligible, parents must be working, attending school, or participating in TANF.^{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}

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 Montana, families with resident children under 18 must have less than \$3,000 in real and personal property (with some exceptions, such as a home used as the primary residence or car used as transportation to work), and have limited income to qualify for TANF. For example, in 2015 a family of four must make less than \$1,317 per month. Receipt of benefits is limited to five years, or 60 months, over the course of an individual's lifetime. Each household receiving TANF will complete a Family Investment Agreement/*WoRC (Work Readiness Component) Employability Plan (FIA/EP)* with a case worker, who will monitor the family's path to self-sufficiency. Households must also cooperate with child support and health insurance laws. In addition to the state TANF program, there are two tribal TANF grantees in Montana that operate their own Tribal TANF programs.^{ix}

Other Helpful Resources

Montana Children's Trust Fund

This state- and federally funded agency provides a list of parenting programs available in various counties in the state. The list can be accessed at this [website](#).



References

- ⁱ For more information on Paternal Establishment, see <http://leg.mt.gov/bills/mca/40/6/40-6-105.htm>.
- ⁱⁱ For more information on Child Custody, see <http://courts.mt.gov/library/topic/childcustody>.
- 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 Family and Medical Leave Act in Montana, see <https://hr.mt.gov/Portals/78/newdocs/guidesandforms/FMLAGuide.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 Child Care, see <http://dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/ChildCare.aspx>.
- ^{viii} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^{ix} To learn more about the TANF program in Montana, see <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/hcsd/tanf/tanfeligibility.shtml>.