



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



## NRFC State Profile: Nebraska

### August 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>Blue Valley Action Partnership</b>	Economic Stability	The Blue Valley Action Partnership is a federally and state-funded organization that offers a number of economic stability programs for men and women, including affordable housing, child care, <i>Head Start</i> , and family development programs designed to help families reach financial stability.	Serves 9 counties. <a href="#">Website</a> Administrative office: (402) 367-4347 <a href="#">Website with local office numbers</a>
<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.	Job Corps is located in Chadron. <a href="#">Website</a> (308) 432-3316
<b>Nebraska Department of Corrections</b>	Incarceration/Reentry Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	The Nebraska Department of Corrections offers several parenting, education, and life skills programs for inmates. Topics include relationships, parenting, how to find and keep a job, and financial education. Courses are in an individualized or group format depending on course content and the needs of the inmate.	Serves Nebraska correctional facilities. <a href="#">Website</a> (402) 471-2654

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<b>Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services</b>	Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood	The federally funded <i>Nebraska Reproductive Health</i> program provides family planning and health education services for men and women at clinics throughout Nebraska. Program goals include promoting responsible behavior; increasing the well-being of families; and reducing mother and infant death, unintended pregnancies, child abuse, and sexually transmitted diseases.	Serves the entire state.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (402) 471-3980
<b>Nebraska Department of Labor</b>	Economic Stability	The Nebraska Department of Labor provides One Stop Career Centers with employment, training, resume writing, GED preparation, job referrals, and veterans' services. Onsite services are provided by a network of Workforce Investment Act partners. The Department of Labor also offers the <i>Apprenticeship Advantage</i> program, which provides opportunities to earn wages while learning a skilled profession such as construction, electrical, healthcare, and culinary arts. It can take one to six years to become fully trained.	Serves the entire state.  <a href="#">Website with One Stop Career Center locations and phone numbers</a>
<b>Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition</b>	Domestic Violence	The state-funded Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition provides Spanish and English helplines, as well as a list of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention programs throughout the state.	Serves the entire state.  <a href="#">Website with state and county wide programs and phone and hotline numbers</a>
<b>Nebraska Secretary of State</b>	Domestic Violence	The Nebraska Secretary of State provides services for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking through the <i>Address Confidentiality Program</i> . For victims (men and women) who have moved to a new location unknown to their abuser, the program provides a substitute address for use when interacting with state and local agencies. The program also provides an alternate mailing address so that victims can keep their actual address confidential and free from the risk of discovery by third parties through public records.	Serves the entire state.  <a href="#">Website</a>  (402) 471-3568

## 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 Nebraska, when parents are not married, paternity may be established by submitting a notarized Acknowledgment of Paternity form to the Department of Health and Human Services Vital Records Management or through a court order. This can be done voluntarily and can be completed at the hospital at the time of the child's birth. If paternity is contested, the Child Support Program will take steps, such as genetic testing, to determine paternity. Genetic tests can be requested by the mother, father, child, or the court. In most cases, the state is required to do genetic testing if the child's father has not been legally determined.**<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 Nebraska, child custody is determined based on the child's best interest. Factors taken into account are 1) moral fitness of the child's parents, including the parents' sexual conduct; 2) environment provided by each parent; 3) emotional relationship between the child and parents; 4) age, sex, and health of the child and parents; 5) attitude and stability of both parents; 6) parental capacity to meet the child's physical care and educational needs; 7) child's preference depending on the maturity of the child; and 8) general health, welfare, and social behavior of the child.**<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>

**The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services' Child Support Enforcement office helps locate parents, establish paternity, and establish, modify, and enforce child medical support orders in Nebraska. For more information, visit their [website](#) or call (402) 441-8715.**

### 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>iv</sup>

In Nebraska, the Family Military Leave Act allows an employee who is the spouse or parent of a person called to military service lasting 179 days or longer to request leave. This leave can be taken during the time federal or state deployment orders are in effect. To be eligible, an employee must be employed by the same employer for at least 12 months and have been employed for at least 1,250 hours during the 12 month period immediately preceding the commencement of leave. The employee must give at least 14 calendar days of notice if the leave will consist of five or more consecutive work days. The employee can receive up to 15 work days of unpaid leave if the employer has between 15 and 50 employees, and up to 30 work days of unpaid leave if the employer has more than 50 employees.<sup>v</sup>

Nebraska Adoption Leave requires that employers that provide leave following the birth of a child must make the same leave available to parents who adopt a child under age 9 (or 19 if the child is special needs). This does not extend to step-parent or foster parent adoptions.<sup>vi</sup>

### 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 Nebraska, go to: <http://www.neheadstart.org/index.php/service-area.html>.

## 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>vii</sup>

**In Nebraska, Department of Health and Human Services provides child care assistance to qualified families through the Child Care Subsidy Program. Families who are eligible must be 1) employed, 2) actively seeking employment, 3) participating in an Employment First activity as part of the Aid to Dependent Children program, 4) attending school or training sessions, 5) going to medical or counseling appointments for oneself or another child, or 6) incapacitated (must be verified by a physician). If the family has two parents, both must meet one of these criteria.<sup>viii</sup>**

### 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>

**In Nebraska, to qualify for SNAP, state residents must have \$2,000 or less in countable resources, such as a bank account, or \$3,250 in countable resources if at least one person is disabled or age 60 or older.<sup>xi</sup> Families must meet additional household income requirements by family size to qualify for SNAP benefits.<sup>xii</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.

**In Nebraska, TANF provides cash assistance to low-income families with children ages 18 or younger. To qualify for cash assistance, a family must have a net monthly income lower than the program's eligibility standards. Parent(s) who are capable of attaining independence are limited to receiving a lifetime of 60 months of cash assistance. If the parent is disabled or otherwise unable to work, cash assistance is not time-limited. Families who become ineligible because of an increase in pay may become eligible for extended assistance, and may receive up to five transitional cash grants and six months of Medicaid coverage without consideration of income. To apply for TANF in Nebraska, an application must be completed and given to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The application form can also be downloaded and mailed to the nearest Health and Human Services Office.<sup>xiii</sup>**

## Other Helpful Resources

### Nebraska's Resource and Referral System (NRRS)

Nebraska's Resource and Referral System (NRRS), funded by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services, provides a searchable statewide database of direct service providers. Users are able to search for agencies providing family support, employment services, and educational services. The web tool is available at <https://nrrs.ne.gov/>.

## References

- <sup>i</sup> For more information on Paternity Establishment in Nebraska, see [http://dhhs.ne.gov/children\\_family\\_services/CSE/Pages/PaternityEstablishment.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/CSE/Pages/PaternityEstablishment.aspx).
- <sup>ii</sup> For more information about Nebraska's Child Custody policy, see <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=42-364>.
- <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 the Family and Medical Leave Act, see <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs28.pdf>.
- <sup>v</sup> For more information on Nebraska's Military Leave Act, see [http://das.nebraska.gov/emprel/Employee\\_Relations\\_FamilyMilitary.html](http://das.nebraska.gov/emprel/Employee_Relations_FamilyMilitary.html).
- <sup>vi</sup> For more information on Nebraska's Adoption Leave, see <http://nebraskalegislature.gov/laws/statutes.php?statute=48-234>.
- <sup>vii</sup> For more information on the Child Care and Development Fund, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/about/what-we-do>.
- <sup>viii</sup> For more information on Nebraska's Child Care Subsidy Program, see [http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/chs\\_chc\\_ccsubsypa.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/publichealth/Pages/chs_chc_ccsubsypa.aspx).
- <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 on SNAP assistance in Nebraska, see [http://dhhs.ne.gov/children\\_family\\_services/Pages/fia\\_fstamps.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Pages/fia_fstamps.aspx).
- <sup>xii</sup> For more information about income eligibility requirements for SNAP benefits in Nebraska, see [http://dhhs.ne.gov/children\\_family\\_services/Pages/fia\\_guidelines.aspx](http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Pages/fia_guidelines.aspx).
- <sup>xiii</sup> For more information about TANF in Nebraska, see [http://dhhs.ne.gov/children\\_family\\_services/Documents/Nebraska%20State%20TANF%20Plan%2010-1-2013%20Amend%20One.pdf](http://dhhs.ne.gov/children_family_services/Documents/Nebraska%20State%20TANF%20Plan%2010-1-2013%20Amend%20One.pdf).