



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



NRFC State Profile: Virginia September 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
Capital Youth Empowerment Program (CYEP)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood	The state funded CYEP's <i>Fathers in Touch (FIT)</i> is a 12-week program that includes classes, supervised visitation, case management, and referrals to community resources. The program assists fathers with parenting and relationship skills. <i>Project Success</i> is a teen pregnancy prevention and HIV/AIDS risk reduction program for male students enrolled in Alexandria middle or high schools.	Alexandria and Fairfax counties. Programs and schedules vary by county. Website Alexandria office: (240) 676-7903 Fairfax office: (703) 324-7144

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
<p>Child Development Resources (CDR)</p>	<p>Fatherhood/Parenting Incarceration/Reentry</p>	<p>CDR was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015 for <i>Investing In Fatherhood: New Pathways</i>, which provides parenting education and other services for fathers. CDR also offers <i>Rookie Dads</i> (free classes for expectant fathers); <i>Rookie Dads Family Connections</i> (father/child playgroups, discussion groups, and home visits), and <i>Linkages: Building Strong Connections</i> (weekly parenting education sessions and family support services for incarcerated fathers and their families).</p> <p>CDR also runs the TOTS line, which provides parenting information and connects eligible parents with home visiting and other services.</p>	<p>Williamsburg.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>(757) 566-2831</p> <p>TOTS line serves James City, Poquoson, Williamsburg, and York counties.</p> <p>(757) 566-TOTS (757) 566-3300 (para Español)</p>
<p>Job Corps</p>	<p>Economic Stability</p>	<p><i>Job Corps</i> is a federal job training program to help low-income young men and women ages 16 to 24 with educational and career goals.</p>	<p>There are three Job Corps centers in Virginia. They are located in Marion, Coeburn, and Monroe.</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Marion office: (276) 783-7221</p> <p>Coeburn office: (276) 395-3384</p> <p>Monroe office: (434) 929-4081</p>

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington, Inc. (KCSC)	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability Domestic Violence Healthy Relationships	KCSC was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The Home Sweet Home (HSH) Project provides education on healthy relationships, parenting, and financial skills for Korean, Chinese and Vietnamese communities. KCSC also provides counseling services, parenting education, and mental health seminars in English and Korean. Other services include the <i>Jobs Service</i> program, which provides a job readiness course and individual job counseling; and a domestic violence victim assistance program, which provides linguistically competent and culturally sensitive services, including a 24/7 hotline, counseling, and legal assistance.	Metro-DC area. Website (703) 354-6345
Linden Resources, Inc.	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Linden Resources was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. In partnership with Granato Counseling Services, Linden Resources offers the <i>Fathers Forward</i> program for low-income, unemployed, or underemployed fathers of dependent children up to 24 years of age. The program provides services to increase economic stability and strengthen families, with a focus on parenting, relationships communication, problem solving, and employment skills.	Metro-DC area. Website (844) 454-6336
Seton Youth Shelters	Parenting/Fatherhood	Seton Youth Shelters is a federally funded organization that offers <i>Active Parents of Teens</i> , a parenting course on how to turn the challenges of raising a teenager into growth opportunities. Topics covered include respectful discipline, communication skills, prevention of risky behavior, bullying, and depression.	Virginia Beach. Website (866) 751-7640

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
The Up Center	Fatherhood/Parenting Economic Stability	The Up Center, a state and federally funded organization, offers a number of parent education services, including <i>For Children's Sake</i> , which helps parents shield children from conflict associated with separation or divorce; <i>Parents as Teachers</i> , a home visiting program; and <i>Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)</i> , which helps parents learn how to increase their child's self-esteem, improve parent-child communication, and apply effective discipline techniques. The Up Center also offers job training, housing assistance, and financial counseling.	Norfolk, Nansemond, and Suffolk counties and Portsmouth city. Services vary by location. Website (757) 354-3819
Total Action for Progress (TAP)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	TAP's federally funded <i>Fathers First</i> Program enrolls fathers in classes and support groups to discuss issues such as healthy relationships, communication skills, and parenting responsibilities. An employment specialist is available to assist fathers with their job search and job skills training, and to discuss child support payments and caring for family needs.	Serves multiple counties. Website (540) 777-4673
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)	Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	USCRI was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. USCRI, which is headquartered in Arlington, VA, provides programs and resources for immigrant and refugee adults and children in Virginia and other states. Services include relationship education, mentoring, and support services to strengthen relationships and promote economic self-sufficiency. USCRI also helps refugees and immigrants with the transition to a new community, as well as obtaining housing, food, health care, education, and legal guidance.	Arlington and Richmond. Website (703) 310-1130

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Virginia CARES	Incarceration/Re-entry	State funded Virginia CARES provides reentry programs that offer immediate assistance finding food, housing, clothing, and transportation. In addition, programs provide counseling, peer support, employment assistance, career development, and financial aid.	Serves the entire state. Website (540) 342-9344
Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC)	Incarceration/Re-entry Economic Stability Fatherhood/Parenting	Virginia DOC offers several reentry and life skills programs to help individuals reenter their communities upon release from prison. The Life Skills program, which is offered a year before an offender’s scheduled release, covers topics such as finding and maintaining employment, finding housing, budgeting, parenting, and handling family responsibilities.	Serves the entire state. Website (804) 674-3000
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)	Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Virginia Tech was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015. The federally funded <i>TOGETHER</i> program at Virginia Tech provides a 20-hour couples education workshop focusing on communication, problem solving, stress management, and money management. Additionally, the program offers career services and access to services in the community.	Northern Virginia. Website (877) 432-1669
Virginia Workforce Connection	Economic Stability	Virginia Workforce Centers provide job search assistance, including skills assessments and training opportunities. The Virginia Workforce Connection website also offers employment resources and a state job bank.	Serves the entire state. Website with locations and phone numbers.

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.

To establish paternity in Virginia, both parents may voluntarily sign an Acknowledgement of Paternity form under oath at the hospital or birthing center at the time of birth. If parents want to sign this form after the birth, they may do so by visiting a local health department clinic, local department of social services, local child support office, or the Office of Vital Records in Richmond.

If paternity is contested and one parent is filing for child support assistance, the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) will become involved. DCSE may bring the case to court, in which case a hearing would be held to decide on paternity, based on evidence presented by both parents. The judge may also order both parents and the child to take genetic tests, with the father generally paying for the test if his paternity is confirmed.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 Virginia, custody determinations are made in the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court. When parents do not live together and cannot agree on a custody arrangement, the court will hear and make a decision on custody based on the child's best interests. When considering the best interests of the child, judges look at factors such as: the role each parent has played and will play in raising the child, the age and mental condition of each parent and the child, the child's needs, the quality of the relationship between each parent and the child, the willingness of each parent to facilitate a relationship between the child and the other parent, the willingness of the parents to cooperate with each other, and any history of domestic violence or other behavior (e.g., substance abuse) which could be harmful to the child. No preference is given to the mother or father. Children between the ages of 7 and 13 are generally asked what they want in terms of custody, and their preference may be considered. Children aged 14 and older must be asked what they want, and their preference often plays a large role in the custody decision, assuming that the preference is reasonable. As part of the case, both parents must attend a four-hour parenting education class.

Noncustodial parents are generally entitled to visitation unless parental rights have been terminated by the court. If parents cannot agree to a visitation schedule, the judge will order a schedule, which may include general visitation days as well as holidays, school breaks, summer break, other vacations, and/or special occasions. If the judge has concerns about the noncustodial parent's ability to care for the child, or suspects that the parent is a danger to the child, the judge may order supervised visitation.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

The Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE), under the Virginia Department of Social Services, works to establish paternity, processes and receives child support payments, modifies support orders, and enforces payments. A parent may apply for child support by calling the DCSE Call Center, obtaining an application through the local child support

office, or by completing application from the DCSE website. DCSE will follow up with the parent approximately three weeks after receiving the application.

In Virginia, child support orders may be established administratively, but courts are occasionally involved in establishing orders (usually only under extenuating circumstances). To calculate the amount of child support, the DCSE or the court follows the Virginia Child Support Guidelines. The Guidelines take into account the income of both parents, the needs of the child, work-related child care expenses, child health care premiums, and any other children for whom the parents are responsible. A parent may request a modification of an order for any of the following reasons: either parent has experienced a gross income change of at least 25 percent, the custodial parent's work-related child care expenses have changed by at least 25 percent, the order does not include medical support or provisions for unreimbursed medical/dental expenses, the child's health insurance costs change by at least 25 percent, or a child needs to be added to or removed from the order.

Virginia takes measures to enforce child support. If the noncustodial parent (NCP)'s payments are 30 days or more past due, the DCSE will enforce support orders, most commonly by withholding income from the NCP's paycheck. DCSE may take noncustodial parents to court to enforce child support orders if other enforcement tools do not result in payment. Go to the [website](#) or call (800) 468-8894 for more information.

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}

Virginia 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 Virginia, go to this [website](#).

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 Virginia, eligible families can receive financial assistance from the Child Care Subsidy Program to help pay for the cost of child care while the parent(s) work or attend education or training programs. To qualify, families must have a child under 13 years of age or a child under 19 years of age who is physically or mentally unable to care for themselves. Parents must also meet income requirements and be employed or enrolled in job training activities. Families can check for eligibility and apply online, or submit an application manually by filling out a Child Care Service Application and Redetermination Form and returning it to a local Department of Social Services. Participating families may send their child(ren) to any day care facility that is eligible to participate in the program.^{vi}

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.^{vii}

Virginia has no additional state provisions for rental assistance.

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.^{viii}

The Virginia Department of Social Services (DSS) provides eligible residents with Food Assistance through SNAP. SNAP can be used as cash to buy eligible food products from authorized retailers. Eligible households will have a SNAP account and be provided with an EBT card to use as a debit card to purchase eligible food items. Automatic deposits into the account are made monthly. To be eligible for SNAP in Virginia, families must fall under size and maximum income guidelines. Families can screen for eligibility and apply online, or submit an application manually by filling out an Application for Benefits and returning it to a local department of social services. In most cases, families will need to complete an interview and provide proof of identity (driver's license or photo I.D.), residence, income, resource, and shelter expenses. Individuals between 18 and 50 who are able to work may be subject to a work requirement that limits SNAP benefits to 3 months in a 36-month period, with the possibility of gaining benefits for 3 more months upon completing certain work-related requirements. Virginia also offers the voluntary SNAP Employment and Training (SNAPET) program.^{ix}

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.

Low-income Virginians may apply for TANF benefits through an online application or in person at a local Department of Social Services (DSS) office.

When receiving TANF benefits, adult family members are required to participate in employment activities. Examples of employment activities include job skills training, work experience, and job readiness training. DSS may also provide child care assistance, transportation and other work-related expenses to facilitate employment activities.

DSS funds a number of local projects under TANF to help current and former TANF clients prepare for, obtain, and maintain employment. The projects are expected to improve job placement and retention, and result in higher initial wages and increased wage gains. Aspects of these projects include intensive case management, customized job placement assistance, and specialized assistance for individuals with specific needs, such as those in treatment for substance abuse.^x

Other Helpful Resources

Virginia Department of Health

The Virginia Department of Health's Domestic and Sexual Violence program offers *Project RADAR* and *Project Connect*. Both programs promote assessment and prevention of domestic and sexual violence by service providers in the health care setting. These initiatives seek to help health care providers throughout the state better recognize and respond to domestic violence. For more information about *Project RADAR*, visit this [website](#). For more information about *Project Connect*, visit this [website](#).

Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance

The Action Alliance is a statewide organization that supports and assists domestic violence and sexual assault prevention agencies. It also trains service providers, conducts statewide advocacy to support victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, and creates awareness around prevention. A helpline and resources are available on the organization's [website](#).

References

ⁱ To learn more about paternity establishment in Virginia, see http://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dcse/parent_guardian_resources/guidance_procedures/establishing_paternity_8-11.pdf

ⁱⁱ To learn more about child custody and visitation in Virginia, see <http://www.courts.state.va.us/courts/jdr/Lynchburg/custody.html> and <http://www.valegalaid.org/files/E095B726-FCD8-81C1-17DC-A16C7ED73FFF/attachments/B15E3342-01DA-7A49-955E-828A78FE15E6/85051childcustody%20mdw.pdf>

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>.



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- ^{vi} For more information about Child Care Assistance in Virginia, see <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cc/assistance.cgi>
- ^{vii} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^{viii} For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ^{ix} For more information on SNAP in Virginia, see <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/snap.cgi>
- ^x To learn more about TANF in Virginia, see <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/tanf/>