



NRFC State Profile: Wyoming 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
Community Education Centers (CEC)	Fatherhood/Parenting Reentry Economic Stability	CEC's state and federally funded Casper Re-Entry Center (CRC) provides reentry treatment and education services, including a <i>Fatherhood Initiative Program</i> , family services, individual assessments, individual and group counseling, substance abuse treatment, educational services, vocational and skills-based training, NA/AA groups, anger management, and aftercare/Alumni services. CRC also provides culturally sensitive treatment for Native Americans referred by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.	Casper Website (307) 268-4840
Strong Families Strong Wyoming	Fatherhood/Parenting Domestic Violence Healthy Relationships Economic Stability	Strong Families Strong Wyoming, formerly High Country Consulting, was awarded a federal grant from the Office of Family Assistance in September 2015 to provide healthy relationship and parenting skills education for young parents. Services are provided at high school and community locations. Career planning, job training, and employment services are also available.	Cheyenne, Gillette, Casper. Website (307) 514-4450

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
Workforce Wyoming Services	Economic Stability Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services offers <i>Dads Making a Difference</i> for low-income fathers. The program provides job training, employment assistance, and counseling and education on parenting skills and healthy relationships. The department also offers general employment services for unemployed workers, veterans, dislocated workers, and other state residents.	Serves the entire state. Website (307) 777-3717 (307) 777-3639

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 Wyoming, parents can establish paternity by signing an Acknowledgement of Paternity form at the hospital at the time of their child’s birth. To establish paternity at a later time, parents must notarize the form and mail it to the Office of Vital Statistics. If paternity is contested, a child support district office can order genetic testing to determine the paternity of a child, and then establish paternity given the results of the test.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 Wyoming, the court encourages parents to work together or attend mediation to come up with a proposed parenting plan. If the parents cannot agree, the judge will make an order in the best interest of the child. The order can include any combination of joint or shared custody for both parents or sole custody for one parent. The judge may also require the parents to attend a parenting class for divorced or separated parents.

The court favors time with each parent, but if either parent has a history of child or spousal abuse, the court will make custody and visitation orders that best protect the child from the abusive parent.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

In Wyoming, the Child Support Program is run by the Child and Home Support Division within the Department of Family Services. The DFS will serve any individual who fills out a \$25 application. Services are not based on income. Child Support Program offices are located in 16 towns and cities in Wyoming's nine judicial districts. Go to the [website](#) or call (307) 777-5831 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}

Wyoming 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 Wyoming, 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

Wyoming's Child Care Subsidy Program pays a portion of the cost of child care for eligible low income families when the parent(s) are working or in school. To qualify for the Child Care Subsidy Program, a family must meet all eligibility criteria, including income limits and approved activity criteria, such as working or attending an approved educational activity.^{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}

Wyoming 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 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](#).^{viii}

In Wyoming, eligibility for SNAP and the maximum amount of benefits a family can receive depends on the family's 1) size, 2) monthly income, and 3) if they have a disabled or elderly family member. SNAP benefits are distributed electronically through the Wyoming Card. ^{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.

Wyoming's temporary cash assistance program is called *Personal Opportunities With Employment Responsibilities (POWER)*. POWER helps families with a dependent child work to become self-sufficient through employment, child support and other resources. Eligible families may receive up to 60 months (5 years) of assistance in a lifetime. While receiving benefits, eligible family members must also participate in work or training activities. Wyoming also offers State Adult Student Financial Aid (SASFA), a cash assistance program for single parents who are attending college for their first degree or first vocational training program. The application for both programs is available in English and Spanish on the Department of Family Services' website. ^x

Other Helpful Resources

Wyoming Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (WCDVSA)

WCDVSA provides support for all domestic and sexual violence prevention agencies and shelters in Wyoming. The support provided includes training, technical assistance, advocacy, and a program listing on the [website](#).

References

ⁱ For more information on Paternity Establishment in Wyoming, see <https://docs.google.com/a/wyo.gov/viewer?a=v&pid=sites&srcid=d3lvLmdvdnXkZnN3ZWJ8Z3g6MzA1MGQ5ODZINGE4Mjc4Yw>.

ⁱⁱ For more information on Child Custody in Wyoming, see <http://www.divorcenet.com/resources/child-custody/child-custody-basics/child-custody-wyoming-the-bes>.



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>.

^{vi} For more information on Wyoming's Child Care Subsidy Program, see <https://sites.google.com/a/wyo.gov/early-childcare-and-licensing/child-care-1/home/dfs-in-your-community/child-care-resources/licensing-faqs/child-care-licensing-and-eligibility-staff-maps/providers/financial-assistance>.

^{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 Wyoming, see <https://sites.google.com/a/wyo.gov/dfsweb/economic-assistance/snap>.

^x For more information on POWER, see <https://sites.google.com/a/wyo.gov/dfsweb/economic-assistance/power>.