



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



NRFC State Profile: New Mexico 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
First Born Program (FBP)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	The state funded FBP provides home visiting for first time families who are parenting, pregnant, or adopting their first baby. During weekly home visits, families receive education, support, and service coordination. Services begin at pregnancy or birth and can continue until the child is three years old.	Serves many counties throughout the state. Website with locations and phone numbers. (575) 538-8504
First Nations Community HealthSource	Domestic Violence Healthy Relationships	First Nations Community HealthSource provides state funded Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention and Education programs for Native Americans. Services include healthy relationship education; domestic violence and sexual assault prevention education; emergency shelter placement; and collaborations with the legal system.	Albuquerque. Website (505) 262-2481
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 educational and career goals.	There are two Job Corps centers in New Mexico. They are located in Albuquerque and Roswell. Website with locations and phone numbers.

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Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
New Mexico Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD)	Fatherhood/Parenting	CYFD offers home visiting for parents who are prenatal or have children under three years old. The program provides support for children, parents, and the family’s wellbeing. Services include referrals, support, and information on child health and development.	Serves the entire state. Website (505) 827-7946
New Mexico Graduation, Reality, and Dual-Role Skills (GRADS)	Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships Preventing Unwanted/ Early Fatherhood Economic Stability	The state funded GRADS program provides in-school parenting education for teen parents. Topics covered include fatherhood and parenting; child development; healthy relationships with partners, friends, and family; birth control and pregnancy options; career readiness; and financial independence. The program also provides on-site licensed child care centers.	Serves the entire state. Website (575) 835-1785
New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers	Economic Stability	New Mexico Workforce Connection Centers provide job search assistance, education services, online resources, and information about unemployment insurance for unemployed workers, veterans, dislocated workers, and other residents of New Mexico.	Serves the entire state. Website
Parents Reaching Out	Fatherhood/Parenting	Parents Reaching Out provides state funded resources, support groups, workshops, and supportive services for parents and families, especially those with children who are special needs. Focus areas are in education, early childhood, and health care. The organization also holds an annual Family Leadership Conference to help families learn new techniques to advocate for their children and understand the systems that affect their children.	Albuquerque. Website (505) 247-0192 or (800) 524-5176

Organization	Services Provided	Description	Service Area and Contact Information
PB&J Family Services	Economic Stability Reentry Fatherhood/Parenting Healthy Relationships	The state funded PB&J Family Services provides parenting, healthy relationships, child development, and family support services for families who are low-income, have a child or parent with disabilities, or are impacted by incarceration. <i>Mas Papas</i> is a program for Spanish speaking fathers who meet weekly to deal with domestic violence and anger management, and gain therapeutic and peer support to help them support their family in a healthy environment. PB&J also offers a <i>Fatherhood Reentry Program</i> for fathers recently released from Los Lunas Men’s Prison or Bernalillo’s Metropolitan Detention Center. The program provides pre-and post-release support including parenting education, counseling, job training and placement.	Bernalillo and Sandoval counties. Website (505) 877-7060

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 New Mexico, parents can sign an Acknowledgement Statement before a notary and file it with the New Mexico Bureau of Vital Records and Health Statistics (BVRHS). There is a \$10.00 filing fee. A parent who wants to establish paternity to get child support or a custody and visitation order may file a Petition to Establish Parentage, Determine Custody and Time-Sharing and Assess Child Support. New Mexico’s Child Support Enforcement Program can assist with this process.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 New Mexico, the court assumes in most cases that joint custody is in the best interest of children, although joint custody is not awarded automatically. Joint custody means that both parents share legal decisions regarding the child’s welfare, such as the child’s school or doctor. Joint custody does not necessarily mean that children split time equally between parents. If there is an existing custody arrangement that is working, the court will usually leave it in place,

even if one parent has sole custody. If parents think that joint custody will not work for them, or if they need help establishing a visitation schedule, then they can ask the court for a referral to mediation or Court Clinic.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

New Mexico's Human Services Department implements the New Mexico Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED). Parents can download an application for services online. Go to the [website](#) or call (800) 288-7207 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}

In addition to FMLA, New Mexico has Domestic Violence Leave, which requires employers to provide intermittent paid or unpaid leave for employees experiencing domestic violence. Employers must provide up to 14 days of leave for this purpose in any calendar year, which employees may use in increments of up to eight hours in one day.^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 New Mexico, 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.^{vi}

New Mexico's Child Care Assistance Program subsidizes the cost of child care for low-income families who are at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty level and are working or in school. Eligibility is determined by family size and gross monthly income. Once determined eligible for Child Care Assistance, families remain eligible until their income increases above 200 percent of the federal poverty level. The child receiving assistance must be under age 13, or under 18 if they require special supervision. An eligibility interviewer will work with the family to determine the amount of subsidy the family can receive. The amount covered by the program varies by the age of the child, the type of child care, program location, and the rating of the child care program according to the *Look for the STARS* Quality Rating System. Families can choose the care best for their child, such as a licensed center, licensed child care home, a registered family child care home, or a before-and-after school program. The Child Care Services Bureau directly pays the service provider each month; the family pays the co-payment separately.^{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}

New Mexico has no additional 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.^{ix}

To qualify for SNAP in New Mexico, families must meet income eligibility requirements. About ten days after submitting an application, an eligibility worker will ask the family to come in for an interview. The worker will tell the family what forms and information to bring. This information will help the worker determine if the family qualifies for SNAP assistance. The family will then be notified by letter within 45 days whether or not they are approved for SNAP. Some SNAP recipients may be required to participate in work programs to continue their family's benefits.^x

In addition to SNAP, The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) in New Mexico provides United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) food for eligible New Mexicans through five food banks throughout the state. Families must meet income requirements to qualify. To apply for TEFAP, families can contact their regional TEFAP distribution site and complete an application on-site.^{xi}

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.

New Mexico Works, New Mexico's TANF program, provides a monthly cash benefit to assist in meeting basic family needs such as housing, utilities, and clothing costs. Families must have a dependent child who is 18 or younger (or a child who is 19 and a full time high school student expected to graduate the month before they turn 20) and meet income eligibility requirements to qualify. About ten days after submitting an application, an eligibility worker will ask the family to come in for an interview. The worker will tell the family what information and forms to provide. This information will help the worker determine if the family qualifies for *New Mexico Works*. The family will then be notified by letter within 45 days whether or not they are approved. If the family does not agree with the decision, they have the option to appeal the decision. If the family qualifies for *New Mexico Works*, then they will receive their monthly cash benefit on an Electronic Benefits Card, which works like a debit card. Most adults receiving benefits must participate in work activities, such as employment, on-the-job vocational training, community service, and job searching.^{xii}

Additionally, the *New Mexico Works* Intensive Case Management, Recovery and Employment (ICARE) pilot program in Albuquerque addresses substance use barriers to employment in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. TANF recipients identified as having substance use issues that prevent them from finding and keeping employment will be referred to the ICARE program. The program combines 12 weeks of Intensive Case Management with job readiness classes and job development.^{xiii}

Other Helpful Resources

New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic Violence

The New Mexico Coalition Against Domestic collaborates with state agencies to provide program development, public policy, education and funding proposals. While it does not provide direct services, it connects individuals affected by domestic violence with shelters, domestic violence organizations, and domestic violence offender programs throughout the state. The coalition has information on domestic violence, service providers, batterer's intervention programs, and other resources on its [website](#).

New Mexico State University (NMSU) Extension Family & Consumer Sciences

The NMSU Department of Family and Consumer Sciences provides educational programming on the developmental life span of children and families through the Child Development and Family Life Program. Resources, newsletters, and publications on parenting are available on the [website](#) in both English and Spanish.

References

ⁱ For more information on Paternity Establishment in New Mexico, see <http://seconddistrictcourt.nmcourts.gov/establishing-parentage-custody-or-child-support.aspx> and <https://nmhealth.org/about/erd/bvrhs/vrp/aop/>.

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- ⁱⁱ For more information on Child Custody, see <http://seconddistrictcourt.nmcourts.gov/establishing-parentage-custody-or-child-support.aspx>.
- 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 about the New Mexico Domestic Violence Leave, see <http://www.nolo.com/legal-encyclopedia/family-medical-leave-new-mexico.html>.
- ^{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 Assistance in New Mexico, see <https://cyfd.org/child-care-services/child-care-assistance>.
- ^{viii} For more information on Rental Assistance, see http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/topics/rental_assistance.
- ^{ix} For more information on SNAP and to find services in your state, see <http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/apply>.
- ^x For more information on SNAP in New Mexico, see [http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program SNAP .aspx](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Supplemental_Nutrition_Assistance_Program_SNAP.aspx).
- ^{xi} For more information on New Mexico's Emergency Food Assistance Program, see [http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Emergency Food Assistance.aspx](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Emergency_Food_Assistance.aspx).
- ^{xii} For more information on New Mexico Works, see [http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.aspx](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/Temporary_Assistance_for_Needy_Families.aspx) and <http://www.slstart.com/new-mexico-works/>.
- ^{xiii} For more information on New Mexico Works' I-Care pilot program, see <http://www.hsd.state.nm.us/LookingForAssistance/i-care.aspx>.