

## Tools

### Marriage Calculator

The Marriage Calculator website provides a set of tools for assessing the financial consequences of marriage for low-income families. The Marriage Calculator tool allows users to see how taxes and public assistance may change when a couple's living arrangement changes from living apart to cohabiting (both reported and not reported to government programs) to married. The State Policies Database allows users to search through tax and transfer program rules to learn how state policies influence the financial consequences of couples' decisions. The Prepared Tables- all created by the Marriage Calculator- illustrate how income change upon marriage or cohabitation for sample families with a range of characteristics.

For more information, see <http://marriagecalculator.acf.hhs.gov/marriage/index.php>

### Marriage Education Curricula Assessment Guide

The Marriage Curriculum Assessment Guide was developed cooperatively by ACF healthy marriage specialists from various regions to help select or identify a curriculum that is most appropriate for program participants. It's available on the ACF Healthy Marriage website. The Guide offers a practical and easy-to-use framework to complete a formal review of various curricular resources and it identifies the key topics that are required in healthy marriage projects funded by ACF. Through completing the Marriage Curriculum Assessment Guide, practitioners consider central questions before making a final curricular choice.

For the purposes of the assessment, topics are arranged under Minimum Required Content, Advised Content and Optional Content lists. Minimum required content is:

- *Commitment* to healthy marriage (for current or future relationship)
  - Role of commitment, long-term vision on relationship qualities, dynamics
  - Perseverance and patience in relationship
- *Communication*
  - Listening and/or speaking skills, effective communication dynamics
  - Body Language, non-verbal communication
- *Conflict resolution*
  - Dealing with issues, events, disagreements, quarrels and arguments
  - Speaking and listening skills to reduce verbal conflict, escalation
- *Beliefs about marriage* or family (cultural and/or faith-based)
  - Attitudes, ideas, values about marriage or family life related to couple relationship
- *Benefits of marriage* (for adults, children, community and society)
  - Impact on marital and social indicators, finances, crime rates, etc.
  - Role of marriage in society and cultures, marriage as a social institution

- *Qualities of healthy relationships* and healthy marriage
  - Research based qualities, characteristics and aspects of healthy relationships and healthy marriages
  - Values, attitudes associated with long-term, low-conflict partnerships

For more information, see

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/pdf/ACF\\_Curriculum\\_Assessment\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/pdf/ACF_Curriculum_Assessment_Guide.pdf)

### **Domestic Violence Protocol**

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 specifies “programs or activities proposed in the application will address, as appropriate issues of domestic violence.” As a result, all ACF healthy marriage grantees develop domestic violence protocols.

Instructions on how to develop implement effective domestic violence protocols are at the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center.

For more information, see <http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/>

### **Tip on How to Teach your Staff about Domestic Violence**

The Louisiana Healthy Marriage Knapsack Project in the Louisiana Department of Social Services, funded by the Children’s Bureau, taped staff training meetings of a domestic violence expert onto DVDs. These DVDs are now available to train more staff on domestic violence protocol in healthy marriage programs.

### **Research and Evaluation of Marriage Education**

ACF’s Healthy Marriage Initiative website links to publications, think tanks, evaluations and other resources that explain why marriage matters, why marriage education programs are funded, and how effective these programs are. See ACF-Funded Research and Evaluation results on pages 14-20.

For more information, see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/resources/research.html>

### **ACF Website Navigation Tool**

To learn about the Healthy Marriage Initiative, see

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/index.html>

To view upcoming regional events and activities, see

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/regionalevents.html>

### **Targeted Programs**

To see a comprehensive list of marriage education grantees, go to

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthy\\_marriage/pdf/june18\\_list\\_marriageedprograms.pdf](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthy_marriage/pdf/june18_list_marriageedprograms.pdf)

To see marriage education programs by target population, such as African American, Hispanic American and Youth, go to

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthy\\_marriage/funding/index.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthy_marriage/funding/index.html)

### **National Healthy Marriage Resource Center**

Sponsored by ACF's Office of Family Assistance, the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (NHMRC) was funded in September 2004. It is a national resource and clearinghouse for information and research relating to healthy marriage. Target populations included individuals, couples, educators, policymakers, researchers, and organizational leaders with an interest in marriage.

The NHMRC will serve the healthy marriage field in the following ways:

- *Operate a center* to develop and disseminate healthy marriage resource materials;
- *Provide training and technical assistance* to a wide variety of users, focusing specifically on ACF- funded grantees; and
- *Conduct communications and outreach* to build awareness of the Healthy Marriage Initiative and to promote healthy family formation

For more, see [www.healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org)