

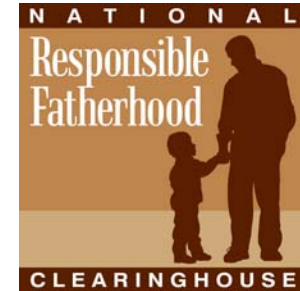


U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: Indiana

www.fatherhood.gov

July 2008



Indiana

Strategies Intended to Promote Healthy Marriage

State-Funded Marriage Preparation Activities

Indiana mandates that couples undergo counseling prior to marrying.ⁱ Although Indiana does not use state funds to support marriage activities directly, other sources of funds are used for this purpose. For example, a number of programs in the state recently have received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to provide marriage preparation and relationship-strengthening activities to unmarried couples. For example, the Father and Families Resource/Research Center, Inc., will use the Prevention and Relationship Enhancement Program (PREP®) curriculum to provide healthy marriage skills, employment training, and educational support to unmarried, expectant parents. Other programs will use funds to offer premarital education, teach healthy marriage skills, mount public awareness campaigns, provide mentoring, and work with high school students to encourage healthy relationships.ⁱⁱ

Other Marriage Initiatives

Community- and faith-based organizations in Indiana have received funding aimed at strengthening marriages and reducing marital conflict. For example, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops received funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement that enables the Catholic Social Services of Indianapolis to provide conflict resolution, parenting skills education, relationship training, and communication skills education to refugee families in the state.ⁱⁱⁱ

Strategies Intended to Promote Parenting and Responsible Fatherhood

State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs

The Indiana Family and Social Services Administration funds community-based organizations that encourage fathers to be emotionally and financially involved in their children's lives, by increasing their parenting skills, improving their co-parenting relationships, and increasing their child support. Offerings of these organizations include parenting curricula, educational opportunities, parenting education for expectant fathers, life-skills education, paternity establishment, relationship counseling, and support services.^{iv}

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood

The Indiana State Department of Health manages the state- and federally-funded Indiana RESPECT program. This program provides funding to community organizations, schools, and faith groups that work with teens to promote abstinence. The program also supports a statewide media campaign aimed at promoting abstinence among teens and raising awareness among parents.^v

The Family and Medical Leave Act

Indiana has a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows both fathers and mothers time off after the birth or adoption of a child, or during an illness, without fear of losing their jobs. Parents are entitled to up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave over a one-year period to care for a new child, an ill family member, or to recover from their own illness. The FMLA protects fathers and mothers who have worked with the same organization for at least one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours within the past year. Furthermore, public sector employees may use paid sick leave to care for family members.^{vi}

Domestic Violence Services

A number of community-based programs to serve victims of domestic violence have been established in several communities.^{vii} These programs provide crisis hotlines, individual and group support and counseling, legal advice, support groups, and housing. Indiana has an address confidentiality program for domestic violence victims in order to prevent them from being located by abusers.^{viii} And victims of domestic violence in the state are eligible to receive unemployment benefits.^{ix}

Child Custody Policy

Upon the dissolution of a relationship, either parent may petition the Indiana court system to determine custody of the children. Indiana has no presumption or preference for joint custody. Instead, custody decisions are based upon the best interests of the child, including the child's age and gender, the parents' and child's desires, the child's adjustment, the child's relationship with his or her parents and siblings, the mental and physical health of the parents and child, and evidence of domestic abuse.^x

Paternity Establishment

Paternity establishment ensures a child's right to a range of public benefits, including survivor's insurance, education, health care, and workers' compensation. Establishing paternity gives a child born outside of marriage the same legal rights as a child born to married parents. Indiana has an in-hospital paternity acknowledgement program. Upon the birth of a child, parents can sign a paternity affidavit within 72 hours of the birth to establish paternity. If the father's identity is unclear, the alleged father may be required to submit to a court hearing and genetic testing to establish paternity. In Indiana, paternity may be established at any time until the child turns 20.^{xi}

Child Support Assistance

The Child Support Enforcement System has as its primary objectives: 1) to ensure that children have the financial support of both parents; 2) to foster fathers' responsible behavior towards their children; and 3) to reduce welfare costs associated with child support delinquency. Indiana operates its Child Support Bureau through the state's Department of Child Services. The bureau seeks to ensure that children receive care and



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

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: Indiana



support from both parents by locating noncustodial parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing financial and medical orders, collecting payments, and reviewing existing child support orders.^{xii}

Child Support Enforcement

When noncustodial parents fail to pay child support, Indiana may use a number of methods to induce payment. The state can withhold income; intercept tax refunds, lottery winnings, and unemployment benefits; report the parent's debt to credit bureaus; place liens on personal property; suspend the parent's passport; or suspend recreational, professional, or driver's licenses.^{xiii}

Strategies Intended to Enhance Fathers' Economic Stability

Welfare Benefits

In Indiana, single-parent families may receive public assistance benefits through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; two-parent families facing unemployment or underemployment may be eligible to participate in the state-funded TANF for Unemployed Parents program. Families are eligible for benefits for up to 24 months; however, benefits to children may be able to continue receiving benefits after this 24-month limit is reached. Participants in TANF and TANF for Unemployed Parents must take part in work activities; however, training and education may fulfill at least part of this requirement.^{xiv}

Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers

Indiana offers a number of programs to noncustodial incarcerated fathers. These programs offer support groups and educational programs, and are aimed at helping fathers improve both their parenting skills and their relationships with their children and partners.^{xv}

Job Training and Employment Services

Parents who receive TANF public assistance are eligible to participate in the Indiana Manpower and Comprehensive Training (IMPACT) program. The program offers case management, job-search assistance, job-readiness training, work experience, educational activities, and support services.^{xvi}

Incarceration and Reentry

Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers

Fathers in a number of Indiana correctional facilities are eligible for participation in InsideOut Dad, a 12-week program aimed at helping incarcerated fathers improve their parenting skills and their relationships with their children. Moreover, the Indiana Department of Correction has recently received a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to expand existing fatherhood programs to incarcerated fathers, including programs that work with fathers to teach communication skills, child development, active parenting, and relationship skills, and to prepare them for reentry into society. The Department of Correction will also use the PREP® curriculum to strengthen relationships between incarcerated fathers and their partners.^{xvii}

Resources

- **Indiana Fathers & Families.** This Web site provides information about Indiana's initiative to increase father involvement, especially among noncustodial fathers; available at <http://www.in.gov/dcs/fathers/index.html>

References

- ⁱ Gardiner, K.N., Fishman, M.E., Nikolov, P., Glosser, A., & Laud, S. (2002). State policies to promote marriage: Final report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/marriage02f/index.htm>
- ⁱⁱ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *Region 5 abstracts – healthy marriage*. Accessed online 5/21/07 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/hmabstracts/region5hm.htm>
- ⁱⁱⁱ United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (n.d.). *Migration and refugee services: Strengthening Refugee Families and Marriages*. Accessed online 5/21/07 from <http://www.usccb.org/mrs/mfs.shtml>
- ^{iv} Indiana Department of Child Services, Indiana Fathers & Families (n.d.). *Existing programs*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/dcs/fathers/programs.html>
- ^v Indiana State Department of Health (n.d.). *Indiana RESPECT*. Accessed online 5/21/07 from <http://www.in.gov/isdh/programs/mch/respect/>
- ^{vi} National Center for Children in Poverty (2006). *Indiana: Family and medical leave*. Accessed online 2/27/07 from http://www.nccp.org/profiles/IN_profile_28.html
- ^{vii} The Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2000). *Indiana programs overview*. Accessed online 5/21/07 from <http://www.violenceresource.org/inprog.htm>
- ^{viii} National Council of State Legislatures (2007). *States with address confidentiality programs for domestic violence survivors*. Accessed online 5/21/07 from <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/dvsurvive.htm>
- ^{ix} Indiana Workforce Development (2003). *Workforce Development announces unemployment benefits for victims of domestic and family violence*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from http://www.in.gov/dwd/newsroom/news_releases/DVUI_Release.pdf
- ^x Indiana Code 31-17-2, § 8. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/legislative/ic/code/title31/ar17/ch2.html>
- ^{xi} Indiana Department of Child Services, Child Support Bureau (n.d.). *Establishing paternity for the mother*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from http://www.in.gov/dcs/support/about/paternity_mother.html
- ^{xii} Indiana Department of Child Services, Child Support Bureau (n.d.). *About the child support program*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/dcs/support/about/index.html>
- ^{xiii} Indiana Department of Child Services, Child Support Bureau (n.d.). *About the child support program*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/dcs/support/about/index.html>
- ^{xiv} State of Indiana (n.d.). *Indiana's state plan for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families block grant*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from http://www.in.gov/fssa/family/children/pdf/INDIANA_TANF_PLAN.pdf
- ^{xv} Indiana Department of Correction (2007). *Facility information*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/facilities.htm>
- ^{xvi} Indiana Family & Social Services Administration (n.d.). *Families – IMPACT program*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/fssa/family/impact/index.html>
- ^{xvii} United States Department of Health and Human Services (2006). *Region 5 abstracts – fatherhood*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/hmabstracts/region5fr.htm>; Indiana Department of Correction (2007). *Facility information*. Accessed online 5/18/07 from <http://www.in.gov/indcorrection/facilities.htm>