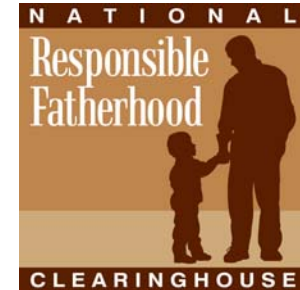




U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: New Hampshire

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www.fatherhood.gov

New Hampshire

Strategies Intended to Promote Healthy Marriage

State-Funded Marriage Preparation Activities

New Hampshire does not directly use state funds for marriage promotion programs. However, a pilot marriage program funded by the federal government is available in the state.ⁱ

Other Marriage Initiatives

The Collaborative Post-Adoption Services Project of New Hampshire (CPAS-NH), which is operated by Child and Family Services of New Hampshire, offers family strengthening classes and support services for families adopting children. The program is funded partly through the Healthy Marriage Initiative of the Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.ⁱⁱ

Strategies Intended to Promote Parenting and Responsible Fatherhood

State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs

New Hampshire does not directly use state funds for responsible fatherhood programs.

State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood

A statewide project reaches out to high school males as part of New Hampshire's teenage pregnancy prevention initiative. This project involves having staff from child support and welfare programs visit health education classes to discuss responsibility issues and the effects of welfare laws on teen parents.ⁱⁱⁱ

The Family and Medical Leave Act

New Hampshire 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. All public-sector employers must allow sick leave to be used to care for family

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members. 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. No provisions beyond those that are federally mandated have been required by the New Hampshire Legislature.^{iv}

Domestic Violence Services

New Hampshire provides domestic violence services through the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence (NHCADSV), a nonprofit umbrella agency. Member organizations operate 24-hour shelters throughout New Hampshire to provide victims of domestic violence with safe havens. The NHCADSV also provides hotlines, therapy, support groups, legal advocacy, and case management.^v

Child Custody Policy

Since 1996, New Hampshire law requires parents involved in divorce or other lawsuits that affect parental rights and responsibilities to participate in the state's Child Impact Program, which involves attending a four-hour seminar on helping children deal with divorce or separation.^{vi}

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; and establishing paternity gives a child born outside of marriage the same legal rights as a child born to married parents. New Hampshire has an in-hospital paternity acknowledgement program. When paternity is uncontested, parents can establish a child's paternity either in the hospital or by submitting an Affidavit of Paternity. Genetic testing can be arranged in cases of disputed paternity. The man is presumed to be the father if the test results show at least a 97 probability that this is the case.^{vii} In New Hampshire, paternity may be established at any time prior to the child's 18th birthday.^{viii}

Child Support Assistance

The New Hampshire Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), in partnership with the Workforce Development staff, offers employment and support services for noncustodial parents who have difficulty making child support payments. Participation by the responsible parent is usually voluntary, but occasionally participation is ordered by the court. Through a federal grant, the DCSS also helps fund court-based mediation programs designed to improve communication between parents with child support and/or visitation issues. These programs are currently available in Coos, Carroll, Cheshire, and Merrimack counties.^{ix}

Child Support Enforcement

The DCSS can collect owed child support from the noncustodial parent's federal or state tax refund, paycheck, lottery winnings, or unemployment benefits, and may also place liens on the parent's property and/or bank accounts. The state may restrict the parent's driver's, professional, business, or recreational license and report the parent's missed payments to credit bureaus.^x



Strategies Intended to Enhance Fathers' Economic Stability

Welfare Benefits

Two parent families in New Hampshire face stricter requirements for welfare benefits than do one-parent families. The state imposes a lifetime limit of 60 months on the receipt of benefits. Recipients of financial assistance must participate in work activities after 26 weeks. This work requirement can be partially fulfilled by education and training—specifically, by up to three years for part-time education or training and up to two years for full-time education or training.^{xi}

Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers

Services geared specifically toward low-income noncustodial fathers are not available in New Hampshire.

Job Training and Employment Services

Adults in New Hampshire who receive cash benefits through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or the food stamp programs are eligible for employment and training programs offered by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services - Division of Family Assistance. The programs operate in 12 Employment Security one-stop training and employment centers throughout the state with a goal of empowering people to achieve self-sufficiency.^{xii}

Incarceration and Reentry

Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers

The Family Connections Center, a family support program sponsored by the New Hampshire Department of Corrections, offers classes, resources, therapy and information for incarcerated fathers at the Lakes Region Facility, a medium- and minimum-security prison for men.^{xiii} The center is seeking funding to expand services in other prisons in New Hampshire.^{xiv}

Resources

- **New Hampshire Division of Child Support Services.** This Web site provides an overview of state services for custodial and noncustodial parents, including paternity establishment and mediation programs; available at <http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DCSS/default.htm>.

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