



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

www.fatherhood.gov

Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: Hawaii



Strategies Intended to Promote Healthy Marriage

State-Funded Marriage Preparation Activities

Hawaii does not directly use state funds for marriage promotion programs. However, pilot marriage programs funded by the federal government and nongovernmental sponsors are available in the state. For example, the U.S. Army conducted a pilot of its Building Strong and Ready Families program in Hawaii. Federal funding was used to support this program, which offered marriage assessment and relationship skills training to soldiers stationed in Hawaii and their partners.ⁱ

Other Marriage Initiatives

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has previously funded healthy marriage activities in Hawaii. One example is the Hawai'i Moving Forward project, a partnership among the University of Hawai'i Center on the Family, the Hawai'i Community Foundation, and Hawaiian Island Ministries. The project works with community-based organizations and practitioners to improve programs and enhance services offered to low-income residents in the state. Organizations offering healthy marriage skills and marriage strengthening skills were eligible to participate in this initiative.ⁱⁱ

Strategies Intended to Promote Parenting and Responsible Fatherhood

State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs

The Hawaii State Legislature established the State Commission on Fatherhood in 2003 to promote healthy family relationships and to highlight the role of fathers in their children's lives. The commission serves as a clearinghouse for information on being a father, identifies promising practices for engaging fathers, identifies and attempts to address obstacles to fathers' involvement with their children, raises public awareness of the importance of fathers, and recommends policies and practices to increase services to fathers. In addition, the commission sponsors local and statewide events promoting fatherhood and provides funding to direct service programs that offer parenting skills, behavior management skills, and supports and services to fathers.ⁱⁱⁱ

State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood

Hawaii uses federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to provide support to a number of pregnancy prevention programs and abstinence education programs for teenagers. In addition, the Male Achievement Network Program works with teenage males with the goals of reducing risky sexual behaviors and preventing unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. Men are also eligible for family planning services and education through the Department of Health's Maternal and Child Health Bureau.^{iv}

The Family and Medical Leave Act

Hawaii 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, employers of 100 or more must allow employees to use up to 10 days of sick leave to care for family members. Hawaii has partial wage replacement for medical leave.^v

Domestic Violence Services

A number of community-based organizations provide services and programs for victims of domestic violence in Hawaii. These programs provide 24-hour crisis hotlines, support groups, education, emergency and transitional housing, and social and support service referrals. Various organizations also provide educational programs and anger management groups for batterers.^{vi} In addition, Hawaii law has established that employers of 50 or more must allow a domestic violence victim or a parent of a domestic violence victim to take up to 30 days of unpaid leave per calendar year to receive medical attention, counseling, and other services.^{vii}

Child Custody Policy

When married couples with children separate voluntarily, both parents have the right to petition the Hawaii Family Court system to determine the custody of their children. The state has no presumption of or preference for joint custody.^{viii} Divorcing parents may be required to participate in an educational program designed to help them understand the effects of divorce on children.^{ix}

Paternity Establishment

Paternity establishment provides a child born outside of marriage with the same rights as a child born to married parents; moreover, establishing paternity ensures that the child has a right to inheritances, Social Security benefits, health insurance, benefits associated with Hawaiian ethnicity, and veterans' benefits. Hawaii has an in-hospital paternity acknowledgment program. When paternity is uncontested, both parents may sign the Voluntary Establishment of Paternity by Parents form. When paternity is contested, parents must work with the court system, and may be required to undergo genetic testing, to establish paternity.^x

Child Support Assistance

The Child Support Enforcement System has as its primary objectives: 1) to ensure that children have the financial support of both their parents; 2) to foster fathers' responsible behavior towards their children; and 3) to reduce welfare costs associated with child support delinquency. Hawaii operates a child support program through its Department of the Attorney General. The state's Child Support Enforcement Agency aims to promote children's well-being and families' self-sufficiency by ensuring that parents provide financial and medical support for their children.

Child Support Enforcement

Hawaii employs a number of remedies against noncustodial parents who are delinquent in their payment of child support. The state may withhold wages and income, intercept state and federal tax payments, place liens and levies on the parent's property or bank accounts, and report the parent's arrears to credit bureaus. When the parent is three months delinquent in payment, Hawaii may suspend his or her driver's and recreational licenses; when the parent is six months delinquent, the state may suspend his or her business and professional licenses. As arrears rise to \$2,500, the nonpaying parent's passport may be revoked or denied.^{xi}

Strategies Intended to Enhance Fathers' Economic Stability

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Benefits

Hawaii offers welfare benefits to two-parent families on the same basis as to single-parent families. Single-parent families receive benefits through the federally funded Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, and two-parent families receive benefits under the state-funded Temporary Assistance for Other Needy Families (TAONF) program. Parents receiving financial assistance must participate in work activities within 24 months of first receiving benefits; however, secondary education and training can fulfill part of this requirement.^{xii}

Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers

The Hawaii State Commission on Fatherhood funds programs that encourage noncustodial fathers to support their children financially and emotionally. In addition, a number of programs focus on developing noncustodial fathers' parenting skills and encouraging contact between incarcerated fathers and their children.^{xiii}

Job Training and Employment Services

Men in families receiving welfare benefits are eligible to participate in the First-to-Work program (FTW), which provides job training, job search assistance, and skills-building activities. Fathers also may be eligible to participate in the Supporting Employment Empowerment (SEE) program, which reimburses companies that hire prescreened candidates with basic employment skills and job experience. Participants in SEE receive on-the-job training from their employers.^{xiv}

Incarceration and Reentry

Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers

Hawaii offers fathers incarcerated in several state correctional facilities the opportunity to participate in parenting education programs. One such program, Supporting Keiki of Incarcerated Parents, allows fathers to participate in group parenting sessions with other inmates and reading activities and structured play activities with their children.^{xv} In addition, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has recently provided funding to community-based organizations that work with incarcerated fathers to teach parenting skills and to encourage fathers to read to their children.^{xvi}

Resources

- **Hawaii Commission on Fatherhood.** This Web site provides information about the mission of the state's Fatherhood Commission, its activities, and organizations and programs for fathers across the state; available at <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood/>

References:

- ⁱ National Healthy Marriage Resource Center (n.d.). *Hawaii: Marriage laws and policies*. Accessed online 5/7/07 from http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org/policylaw/policy_document.asp?d={78E74EC9-79DB-4B64-9A90-77247CDEA119}
- ⁱⁱ Center on the Family, University of Hawaii at Manoa (n.d.). *Compassion capital – Hawai'i Moving Forward project summary*. Accessed online 5/7/07 from <http://uhfamily.hawaii.edu/projects/movingForward/movingForward.asp>
- ⁱⁱⁱ Hawaii Department of Human Services (2007). *Hawaii Commission on Fatherhood*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood/>
- ^{iv} Hawaii Department of Human Services (2007). *Report on Fiscal Year 2006*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/main/reports/AnnualReports/DHS%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202006>; Hawaii State Department of Health (n.d.). *MCHB – Male involvement*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/health/family-child-health/mchb/fp-docs/fp5.html>
- ^v National Center for Children in Poverty (2006). *Hawaii: Family and medical leave*. Accessed online 2/27/07 from http://www.nccp.org/state_detail_HI_policy_29.html
- ^{vi} Hawaii State Coalition Against Domestic Violence (2006). *Member organizations*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hscadv.org/organizations/index.html>
- ^{vii} Hawaii Revised Statutes, Ch. 378, Sec. 72. Accessed online 4/27/07 from http://www.capitol.hawaii.gov/hrscurrent/Vol07_Ch0346-0398/HRS0378/HRS_0378-0072.HTM
- ^{viii} National Conference of State Legislatures (2003). *Presumption/preference for joint custody*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/cyf/jointcustody.htm>
- ^{ix} National Center for Children in Poverty (2006). *Hawaii: Marriage-related policies*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from http://www.nccp.org/state_detail_HI_policy_27.html
- ^x Department of the Attorney General, Child Support Enforcement Agency (n.d.). *How to voluntarily establish paternity if you're a parent*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://hawaii.gov/ag/csea/main/pis/Paternity%20Brochure.pdf>
- ^{xi} State of Hawaii Department of the Attorney General (2006). *Enforcement*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://hawaii.gov/ag/csea/main/pis/enforcement>
- ^{xii} Hawaii Department of Human Services (2007). *Report on Fiscal Year 2006*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/main/reports/AnnualReports/DHS%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202006>; National Center for Children in Poverty (2006). *Hawaii: TANF cash assistance*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from http://www.nccp.org/state_detail_HI_policy_12.html
- ^{xiii} Hawaii Department of Human Services (2007). *Hawaii Commission on Fatherhood*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/fatherhood/fatherhood/>; State of Hawaii Department of Public Safety (n.d.). *Corrections division*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from http://www.hawaii.gov/psd/corr_home.php
- ^{xiv} Hawaii Department of Human Services (2007). *Report on Fiscal Year 2006*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.hawaii.gov/dhs/main/reports/AnnualReports/DHS%20Annual%20Report%20FY%202006>
- ^{xv} State of Hawaii Department of Public Safety (n.d.). *Corrections division*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from http://www.hawaii.gov/psd/corr_home.php
- ^{xvi} U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (2006). *Region 9 abstracts – Fatherhood*. Accessed online 4/27/07 from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/hmabstracts/region9fr.htm>