

Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

The Blueprint

News from the Fatherhood
Research & Practice Network

New Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) Grant Awards

Since 2006, the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services' Administration for Children and Families (ACF) has invested in local efforts to strengthen marriages, support responsible fatherhood, promote healthy relationships, and connect families with economic stability services with five-year HMRF grants.

In the current grant cycle, ACF [awarded](#) over \$100 million to [109 organizations across 38 states](#). The responsible fatherhood awards, named Family, Opportunity, Resilience, Grit, Engagement – Fatherhood ([FORGE Fatherhood](#)) grants, were awarded to 51 organizations across 23 states. Notably, eight FORGE Fatherhood grants were awarded in California, six in New York, and five in Florida. During the previous HMRF cycle, there were 58 responsible fatherhood awards, then called Fatherhood FIRE (Family-Focused, Interconnected, Resilient, and Essential) grants, across 28 states.

In [Chapter 11](#) of the state-by-state report, FRPN summarizes the total number of responsible father awards made in each state from 2011-2025 (as state breakdowns were not available for the 2006-2010 cycle).

As of this current grant cycle:

- Three states have received responsible fatherhood funding for the first time (Hawaii, New Hampshire, and Oregon).
- Eight states have never received responsible fatherhood funding (Arizona, Delaware, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, and Wyoming).
- The federal investment in responsible fatherhood grants since 2006 totals approximately \$1,250,000,000.



Maryland Advances Supportive Reforms for Low-Income Fathers and Families

This month marks important progress in Maryland's efforts to strengthen family stability and fathers' abilities to support their families. Effective October 1, 2025:

[**HB681**](#) ends automatic driver's license suspensions for unpaid child support in cases where the noncustodial parent has an income below 250% of the federal poverty guideline, which was \$39,125 in 2025. The new law reflects research showing that, rather than increasing payments as intended, driver's license suspensions reduce access to noncustodial parents' employment. In fact, as cited in a recent an Abell Foundation [article](#), 42% of people who had their licenses suspended lost their jobs as a result, and 45% of those who lost their jobs could not find a new one. You can read more about the law and its proposed impacts [here](#).

[**HB881**](#) will ensure that more child support goes directly to children — rather than to reimburse the state for Maryland's Family Investment Program (FIP) — by incrementally increasing the amount of child support passed through to families who receive FIP. The law makes it so that 100% of child support will be passed through to FIP families by FY 2031. The legislation also prohibits the consideration of child support in computing the amount of FIP assistance a family receives.

Together, these reforms advance economic stability, encourage father involvement, and reduce barriers that have disproportionately affected low-income and noncustodial fathers.

Research

A [**special issue**](#) of the journal *Parenting* that addresses contemporary perspectives on fathering and father-child relationships argues for moving away from traditional models of father involvement (e.g., the amount of time spent in caregiving activities) to a more nuanced perspective that is focused on fathers' parenting behaviors (e.g., reading or singing to their children). Articles in this issue showcase diverse fathers, present practices for recruiting fathers in research, and discuss how to best analyze data on fathers.

A [special double issue](#) of the journal *Child Welfare* focuses on the multiple dimensions of fathers' engagement in supporting their children's well-being. Articles in these issues address a variety of topics, including engaging fathers in child welfare, multi-partner fertility among Black fathers, and child support cooperation requirements.

Upcoming National Fatherhood Initiative® Webinar

Join NFI for an overview of the new 4th edition of their 24:7 Dad® program — one of the nation's leading fatherhood curricula — on **Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2025 at 3 p.m. ET**. Learn practical ways to engage dads, strengthen family outcomes, and integrate father-inclusive practices into your work. [Register here!](#)

Contact Us to Learn More

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