



Having trouble viewing this email? [Click here](#)

Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

The Blueprint

News from the Fatherhood
Research & Practice Network

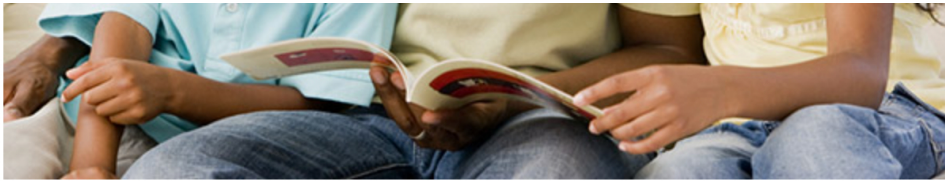
The FY 2027 Federal Budget: Implications for Fatherhood Programs and the Families They Serve

Moynihán Institute for Fatherhood Research and Policy & Fathers Incorporated | April 7, 2026 | [Read the blog post](#) | [Access the HHS Budget in Brief](#) | [Access the HHS Full Budget](#)

On November 13, 2025, President Trump issued an [Executive Order](#). The proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) budget describes a significant reorganization of federal family policy as well as proposed funding levels. If approved, two new consolidated entities would replace multiple existing agencies: the Administration for Children, Families, and Communities (ACFC) and the Administration for a Healthy America (AHA). Overall, HHS discretionary authority would fall and within the ACFC alone, funding would drop by 19% from \$35.5 billion in FY 2026 to \$28.7 billion in 2027 while AHA's would drop 25% from \$19.7 billion in FY 2026 to \$14.7 billion in 2027.

Although the Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grants and many programs that affect low-income fathers and their families (e.g., Head Start, childcare, child welfare, and family violence services) largely remain funded in the proposed budget for FY 2027, the broader support environment around families would be substantially reduced. For example, programs like the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Preschool Development Grants, and the Community Services Block Grant are all proposed for elimination along with initiatives dealing with teen pregnancy prevention, sexual risk avoidance, and family planning. As noted in the blog post, it will be important to integrate fathers into the programs that remain funded in the federal budget.





Mississippi Enacts 50/50 Custody Presumption and Modernized Child Support Formula

On April 8, 2026, Governor Tate Reeves signed [HB 1662](#) into law, making Mississippi the sixth state — joining Kentucky, Arkansas, West Virginia, Florida, and Missouri — to establish equal shared parenting time as the default starting point in custody cases, effective July 1, 2026. The law also replaces Mississippi's flat percentage-of-income child support formula with an income-shares model that accounts for both parents' earnings and actual parenting time. The law includes a family violence exception, and the presumption applies only to new cases filed on or after July 1.

New Research: A Father's Early Engagement Has Lasting Effects on Child Health

Penn State Edna Bennett Pierce Prevention Research Center | [Read the research summary](#) | [Access the Public Health 2026 article](#)

A Penn State study tracked 399 families from infancy through age seven, examining parent-child interactions and measuring children's physical health through bloodwork. The findings have direct implications for practitioners in perinatal care, home visiting, pediatric health, and infant mental health. Engaging fathers early is not supplementary — it is part of the health intervention itself.

- Fathers who were warm and developmentally supportive at 10 months had more positive co-parenting relationships at age two, and their children showed better physical health markers at age seven.
- Fathers who showed less sensitivity early on were more likely to compete for the child's attention or withdraw from family play — and their children showed higher levels of inflammation and blood sugar dysregulation years later.
- The mother's warmth and co-parenting behavior did not predict child physical health in the same way. This finding points to the specific role fathers play in shaping the family environment, even before children are old enough to form lasting memories.

In Case You Missed It: Supporting Fathers and Their Families Surrounding Separation

The University of Wisconsin's [Institute for Research on Poverty](#) and the [Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Board](#) | March 11, 2026 | [Watch here](#)

This webinar examined what happens to the father-child relationship when separation occurs — and what it takes to sustain and rebuild it. Panelists brought research and practice perspectives together across multiple separation contexts including incarceration, child welfare, job demands, and military deployment. As they noted, separation is a process, not a single event; no single system owns this issue; and programs should explicitly help fathers maintain meaningful contact during separation and plan for re-engagement.

Use Data to Support Your Work:

- **Economic context:** [American Affordability Tracker](#) (Urban Institute) — Get real-time

- Economic context: [American Affordability Tracker](#) (Urban Institute) — Get real-time data on Americans' finances and everyday costs
- Incarceration and inequality: [Vera Institute Data Explorer](#) — Find state-level data on how incarceration intersects with economic inequality

New Center for Policy Research Website

Check out Center for Policy Research's (CPR)'s [newly updated website](#) for information on its exciting [fatherhood projects](#).

Contact Us to Learn More

FRPN Director [Jessica Pearson, PhD](#) | [Director, Center for Policy Research](#)



© 2026 Fatherhood Research & Practice Network. All rights reserved

The Fatherhood Research and Practice Network is supported by the Center for Policy Research in Denver, Colorado. The contents are solely the responsibility of the Fatherhood Research and Practice Network and the Center for Policy Research.

