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Fatherhood
Research
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Network

The Blueprint

News from the Fatherhood
Research & Practice Network

New Report Highlights the Need to Advance Investment in Fathers and Support Their Engagement with Their Children

The \$154 Billion Man: The Economic Argument for Investing in Fathers, authored by National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) and Center for Policy Research, compares federal expenditures from 2006 and 2018. The analysis draws on federal budget data and the Survey of Income and Program Participation to estimate spending associated with single mother-headed (father-absent) households. It serves as an update to NFI's landmark 2006 study, *The \$100 Billion Man*.

The report finds that the United States spent \$154.2 billion in 2018 on 14 major federal government assistance programs supporting children and mothers in father-absent households. Spending on these 14 programs increased by 54.5% from 2006 to 2018 and the \$154.2 billion represented about 42% of the combined budgets of the programs and nearly 4% of the total federal budget that year. Separated, divorced, widowed, and never-married mothers all receive a variety of food, tax, and medical benefits from government assistance programs which help to mitigate child poverty and other negative effects of father absence.

Overall, the report makes the case for greater investment in low-income fathers to increase their economic capacity, promote their relationships with their children, and reduce taxpayer burdens. Preventive policy and research measures implemented at the state and federal levels may help to strengthen fathers' economic capacity and reduce the need for government assistance programs. Such measures include paid family leave, affordable childcare, workforce training, expanded Earned Income Tax Credits for nonresident fathers, expanded evidence-based fatherhood and relationship education programs, improved data collection efforts, and more.

The full report, including a document on how to use it, is now available for [download here](#).





Congressional Hearing on Strengthening the Child Support Enforcement Program: Status, Challenges, and Opportunities for Modernization

On January 21, 2026, the Work & Welfare Subcommittee of the United States House Committee on Ways & Means held a hearing to discuss strengthening the child support enforcement program. The recording and witness testimonies are available [here](#) along with [key moments](#) from the hearing. Witnesses highlighted the growth of remote work and the 'gig' economy which makes it harder to verify and collect income, the benefits of child support collaborating with employment services to help unemployed noncustodial parents, and the importance of coordination among government agencies. In their testimony, the witnesses also discussed pass-through policies (e.g., giving collected child support to families rather than reimbursing the government for assistance paid to families), parenting time (e.g., providing nonresident parents in the child support program with a visitation schedule), and father engagement (e.g., strengthening opportunities for fathers to connect with their children in all areas of public life).

Fatherhood in Focus: A New Weekly News-Style Brief

Kenneth Braswell, CEO of Fathers Incorporated, will be taking a clear, journalistic look at the stories, policies, and cultural moments shaping fatherhood, family stability, and child well-being to provide context, insight, and information. The pilot episode, focused on child support, fatherhood culture, and family stability, is available [here](#).

Upcoming Webinar and Conferences

On February 10, 2026, from 2:30-3:30 p.m. ET, National Fatherhood Initiative® will present its Community Mobilization Approach™ and discuss how to mobilize fatherhood efforts in your city or county using this approach. Find more information and register [here](#).

Registration is open for the 26th Annual New England Fathering Conference taking place March 18-20, 2026 in Mystic, CT. Registration will close February 20 (or when they reach capacity). Find more information and register [here](#).

Registration is open for the 27th International Families & Fathers Conference taking place April 13-16, 2026 in Los Angeles, CA. The early bird registration rate ends March 15. Find more information and register [here](#).

Registration is open for the 28th Annual International Father and Families Practitioners Conference taking place June 8-10, 2026 in Bethesda, MD. Find more information and register [here](#).

Contact Us to Learn More

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