



Fatherhood
Research
& Practice
Network

The Blueprint

News from the Fatherhood
Research & Practice Network

Fatherhood Policy

Paid Family Leave Is Expanding, But Fathers Still Aren't Taking It

Virginia Governor Spanberger signed landmark [legislation](#) this month, making Virginia the first state in the South to establish a paid family and medical leave program. Beginning December 1, 2028, Virginia workers will be eligible for up to 12 weeks of paid leave including for the birth or adoption of a child. Virginia joins 13 other states and the District of Columbia in their adoption of paid family and medical leave policies.

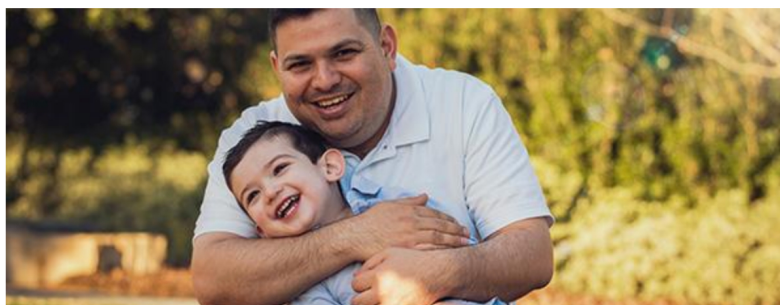
Importantly, a [working paper](#) from the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis is a useful reality check: Fathers in the United States take an average of only three days leave following the birth of their child; 95% of fathers take zero leave at all; and state paid family leave programs don't substantially change those findings—fathers in states with paid family leave programs only take about 2.24 more days (0.32 weeks) than those in states without. A McKinsey/Moms First [report](#) helps explain why: 59% of eligible fathers didn't know they qualified, and 73% of those earning under \$40,000 feared job loss if they took it.

Passing paid leave laws is necessary but not alone sufficient. States that want fathers to actually use these benefits need to pair them with active outreach, meaningful wage replacement rates, and employer culture change — and fatherhood programs are well-positioned to help close that gap.

Child Support Enforcement: A Counterproductive Approach (and a Better One)

In a recent [op-ed](#) in The Hill, Kenneth Braswell (Fathers Incorporated) and Dr. Tova Walsh (University of Wisconsin) push back on the State Department's plan to revoke passports from Americans with child support debt. The starting point—which is for noncustodial parents with arrears of \$100,000 or more—is just the first phase of a rollout expected to eventually impact everyone who owes more than \$2,500. This approach is expected to affect hundreds of thousands of people, and Braswell and Walsh argue this punitive approach will make it harder, not easier, for low-income fathers to earn the income needed to support their children.

Several states, including California, Illinois, Maryland, Minnesota, Washington, and Wisconsin, are moving in the *opposite* direction, reducing enforcement for low-income noncustodial parents in recognition that punishment-first approaches often deepen debt without improving outcomes for families. CPR will be releasing a brief on this topic, digging deeper into what these state-level initiatives look like and what states have learned.



Fatherhood Research

Beyond Child Support: What TANF-Connected Fathers Are Actually Doing

A [brief](#) from the National African American Child and Family Research Center (NAACFRC) provides an overview of the social characteristics, engagement, and responsibility of the African American fathers connected to households receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits. Findings demonstrate that, even with economic and emotional hardship, fathers participate in a relatively high level of engagement activities with their children per week. Fathers also reported relatively high levels of coparenting quality/trust with the birth mother. The results suggest that fathers' parental responsibility extends beyond financial obligations, such as child support.

The Education of Boys and Men: A Special Volume of AAPSS

A special [volume](#) of the ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (AAPSS), which offers a multi-disciplinary perspective on the current state of male education, is now available online and in print. The American Institute for Boys and Men (AIBM) is hosting a [public launch event](#), both in-person and virtual, on June 2nd to discuss the latest evidence and actionable solutions.

New from NFI: Fatherhood Resources for Practitioners

National Fatherhood Initiative® (NFI) has launched a 10-part series of Championing Fatherhood [blog posts](#) for practitioners. Each post will contain practical and brief activities that can be used with fathers in either face-to-face or virtual settings and in either group-based or one-on-one settings.

NFI also created a [tool](#) for identifying funding sources for father-inclusive efforts. This tool includes information on and examples of public and private funding streams as well as guidance on aligning your programming with funding priorities.

Opportunities to Conduct Local HMRF Evaluations

Current FORGE Fatherhood grantees can propose to conduct a local evaluation. Findings from local evaluations conducted by FIRE grantees were presented during a session at last week's [Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency](#) (RECS). Local evaluations in Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood (HMRF) grants often focus on program implementation, participant outcomes, and/or program effectiveness. You can find local evaluations from earlier HMRF cohorts [here](#).

CPR has extensive experience in fatherhood research and evaluation, including responsible fatherhood and economic stability. If you would like to discuss a local evaluation for your project, including the validated [FRPN measures](#), please reach out to [Rachel Wildfeuer](#) or [Jacque Whearty](#).

Where We'll Be

CPR Research Associate Rachel Wildfeuer will be speaking at the plenary session, "Empowering the Path Forward," on June 9th at the 28th Annual [International Father and Family Practitioners Conference](#)—Hope to see you there!

Contact Us to Learn More

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