



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

# Responsible Fatherhood State Profile: Kansas

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[www.fatherhood.gov](http://www.fatherhood.gov)

## Kansas

### Strategies Intended to Promote Healthy Marriage

#### *State-Funded Marriage Preparation Activities*

Currently, Kansas does not use state funds for marriage preparation activities.

#### *Other Marriage Initiatives*

Recent funding provided by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services has enabled community organizations to create or expand upon healthy marriage endeavors in the state. For example, Catholic Charities has received funding to provide marriage enhancement activities and training in conflict resolution and communication skills to married couples.<sup>i</sup>

### Strategies Intended to Promote Parenting and Responsible Fatherhood

#### *State-Funded Direct Service Parenting/Responsible Fatherhood Programs*

An annual fatherhood conference in Kansas serves to heighten awareness about the importance of father involvement, provide tools for community programs, develop organizational policies to promote father involvement, and promote parents' cooperation in their children's best interest. This statewide summit is sponsored by the Kansas Fatherhood Coalition and is funded by a number of public and private agencies, including the state's Department for Social and Rehabilitation Services.<sup>ii</sup>

#### *State-Funded Programs to Prevent Unwanted or Early Fatherhood*

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment provides grants to community organizations that work with adolescent males and females. These programs use positive youth development approaches to encourage teens to delay sexual activity; to promote abstinence; to provide information about contraception; to foster family communication; and to foster teens' self-worth and assertiveness.<sup>iii</sup>

#### *The Family and Medical Leave Act*

Kansas has a Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) that ensures 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

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ill family member, or to recover from their own serious 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. Moreover, public-sector employers must allow paid sick leave to be used to care for family members.<sup>iv</sup>

### *Domestic Violence Services*

The governor of Kansas has established a Domestic Violence Fatality Review Board that reviews domestic violence-related fatalities, describes patterns about these fatalities, recommends techniques for preventing future fatalities, and determines if domestic violence responders have adequate resources. The governor's office is also developing a public awareness plan and a comprehensive training system for those who work with domestic violence victims.<sup>v</sup> In January 2007, Kansas instituted an address confidentiality program for victims of domestic violence so that abusers cannot use public records to locate their victims. The state also has enacted a law prohibiting employment discrimination against domestic violence victims.<sup>vi</sup> In addition, a number of community-based organizations in Kansas provide services to domestic violence victims, including crisis hotlines, legal advocacy and assistance, emergency shelter, counseling, and service referrals.<sup>vii</sup>

### *Child Custody Policy*

When a couple with children is divorcing, both parents must participate in the creation of a parenting plan that addresses parents' involvement with their children's activities, visitation between the noncustodial parent and the child, co-parenting decisions, and ways to reduce conflict. Parents also must be informed about the effects of divorce and domestic violence on children, mediation options, and ways to address their children's needs. Parents may be referred to mediation to help develop parenting plans or resolve disputes.<sup>viii</sup>

### *Paternity Establishment*

Paternity establishment ensures a child's right to a range of benefits, including medical and life insurance, Social Security, and veterans' benefits. Kansas has an in-hospital paternity acknowledgment program. When paternity is uncontested, parents may sign a voluntary agreement and agree on an order establishing paternity. In cases in which paternity is contested, parents must submit to genetic testing.<sup>ix</sup>

### *Child Support Assistance*

The Kansas Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program is responsible for helping parents to provide financial and medical support for their children. The program locates noncustodial parents, establishes paternity, establishes and enforces child support orders, and collects and distributes child support payments. All parents and guardians of children are eligible to receive CSE services, and individuals receiving public assistance benefits automatically receive services at no cost.<sup>x</sup>

### *Child Support Enforcement*

To ensure payment of child support, the state may withhold the noncustodial parent's income, intercept federal and state tax refunds, place liens on property, report the parent's nonpayment to credit bureaus, hold the parent in contempt of court, or suspend hunting, fishing, and professional licenses.<sup>xi</sup>

### Strategies Intended to Enhance Fathers' Economic Stability

#### *Welfare Benefits*

Kansas offers cash benefits to two-parent families on the same basis as to single-parent families. Temporary Assistance for Families (TAF) benefits are offered as part of the Successful Families program, which also provides employment and support services for families. Welfare recipients must participate in work activities 24 months after they begin receiving benefits; however, education and training can fulfill a portion of this requirement. There is a lifetime limit of 60 months on receipt of benefits in the state.<sup>xii</sup>

#### *Services Geared Toward Low-Income Noncustodial Fathers*

Noncustodial fathers whose children receive TAF benefits and who have child support arrears may be able to work with CSE to establish arrearage payment plans. These plans, which include work activities, are intended to help fathers become capable of paying owed child support.<sup>xiii</sup>

#### *Job Training and Employment Services*

Fathers in Kansas may be eligible to receive employment services through the state's network of workforce centers, which provide job-search assistance, case management services, and skills training opportunities.<sup>xiv</sup>

### Incarceration and Reentry

#### *Services and Programs for Incarcerated Fathers*

Kansas offers a variety of programs to inmates in state correctional facilities. One program, 40 Days of Purpose, focuses on helping inmates to reconnect with their children and with other family members and to improve their decision-making skills. Additional programs focus on relationship education, life skills, employment preparation, and reentry services.<sup>xv</sup>

### Resources

- **Kansas Child Support Enforcement Manual.** This Web site provides an overview of the state's child support policies; available at <http://www.srskansas.org/cse/kcsem/ITOC.htm>
- **National Center for Children in Poverty - Kansas.** This Web site offers information about policies relating to families and children in Kansas; available at [http://www.nccp.org/profiles/index\\_KS.html](http://www.nccp.org/profiles/index_KS.html)



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