

# Policies and Programs Affecting Fathers

## *A State-by-State Report*

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## Chapter 9: Food and Housing

### Food

According to the most recent report from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, an estimated 10.5% of U.S. households in both 2019 and 2020 were food insecure, including 4.1% and 3.9%, respectively, with very low food security.<sup>1</sup> Nutrition assistance benefits ameliorate food insecurity.<sup>2</sup> Further, the substantial differences in food security patterns by state are due to state policy factors that include wage levels and unemployment rates, rates of participation in the food security programs, access to unemployment insurance, and the state Earned Income Tax Credit.<sup>3</sup> Where feasible, the following examines food adequacy for men, their access to food security programs, and state-level initiatives to improve access to both.

### Food Security and Quality

Data on food security, and food insecurity, come from an analysis of the annual Food Security Supplement to the Current Population Survey by the Economic Research Service (ERS) of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.<sup>4</sup> Food security means that all household members had access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food insecurity means that households were, at times, unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members because they had insufficient money and other resources for food.

- 1 Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2021). *Household food security in the United States 2020* (ERR-298). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=102075>.
- 2 Nord, M., & Prell, M. (2011). *Food security improved following the 2009 increase in SNAP benefits* (ERR-116). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=44839>.
- 3 Bartfeld, J., Dunifon, R., Nord, M., & Carlson, S. (2006). *What factors account for state-to-state differences in food security?* (EIB-20). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=44133>.
- 4 Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2020). *Household food security in the United States in 2019* (ERR-275). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=99281>.

Households classified as having very low food security were food insecure to the extent that eating patterns of members were characterized by reduced food intake because they could not afford enough food.

Food insecurity rates vary substantially by state. Averages of three years of data (2017–2019) reveal that food insecurity ranged from 6.6% in New Hampshire to 15.7% in Mississippi, while prevalence rates of very low food security ranged from 2.6% in New Hampshire to 7.0% in Louisiana. Eleven states had prevalence rates of food insecurity that were significantly higher than the 2019 national average of 10.5%. Twelve states had prevalence rates that were significantly lower than the national average. In the remaining 27 states and the District of Columbia, differences from the national average were not statistically significant. Nine states had prevalence rates of very low food security that were significantly higher than the 2019 national average of 4.1%. Ten states had prevalence rates that were significantly lower than the national average. In the remaining 31 states and the District of Columbia, differences from the national average were not statistically significant.

Food quality is also a significant concern. A United Health Foundation analysis of fruit and vegetable consumption found that the percentage of adult males in the United States who consumed two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily in 2019 was 6.5% and the percentage of adult females in the United States who consumed two or more fruits and three or more vegetables daily was 9.7%.<sup>5, 6</sup> In 25 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of adult males who consumed adequate fruits and vegetables was equal to or greater than the national average. In 25 states, the percentage of adult males who consumed adequate fruits and vegetables daily was lower than the national average. The three states with the highest percentage of adult males consuming adequate fruits and vegetables in 2019 were Vermont (9.6%), Connecticut (9.0%), and New York (9.0%). The three states with the lowest percentage of adult males consuming adequate fruits and vegetables in 2019 were Kentucky (3.5%), West Virginia (3.9%), and Mississippi/Wisconsin (4.5%).

Table 1 indicates, for each state and the District of Columbia, the prevalence rate of food insecurity and the prevalence rate of very low food security for the time period of 2017–2019. It also shows the percentage of male adults consuming adequate fruits and vegetables in 2019.



5 United Health Foundation. (2021). *America's health rankings: Fruit and vegetable consumption – Male, United States*. Retrieved from [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo\\_Male/state/ALL?edition-year=2020](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo_Male/state/ALL?edition-year=2020).

6 United Health Foundation. (2021). *America's health rankings: Fruit and vegetable consumption – Female, United States*. Retrieved from [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo\\_Female/state/ALL?edition-year=2020](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo_Female/state/ALL?edition-year=2020).

Chapter 9, Table 1. State Prevalence Rates of Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security (2017–2019) and Percentage of Adult Males Consuming Adequate Fruits and Vegetables (2019)

State	Food Insecurity Prevalence Rate (2017–2019)	Very Low Food Security Prevalence Rate (2017–2019)	Percentage of Adult Males Consuming Adequate Fruits and Vegetables (2019)
Alabama	13.9%	5.9%	5.2%
Alaska	10.7%	4.9%	5.8%
Arizona	11.7%	4.2%	8.1%
Arkansas	13.8%	5.8%	7.5%
California	9.9%	3.6%	6.7%
Colorado	10.2%	4.3%	7.2%
Connecticut	12.9%	4.5%	9.0%
Delaware	10.2%	4.2%	7.5%
DC	10.2%	4.0%	9.1%
Florida	10.9%	4.4%	5.4%
Georgia	10.0%	3.6%	6.0%
Hawaii	8.4%	3.4%	6.9%
Idaho	9.6%	3.4%	7.4%
Illinois	9.9%	3.8%	4.8%
Indiana	12.4%	4.1%	7.0%
Iowa	7.9%	3.6%	5.4%
Kansas	12.5%	5.5%	6.5%
Kentucky	13.7%	4.8%	3.5%
Louisiana	15.3%	7.0%	6.4%
Maine	12.0%	6.2%	6.8%
Maryland	10.1%	5.0%	5.9%
Massachusetts	8.4%	3.2%	7.1%
Michigan	12.2%	4.7%	4.8%
Minnesota	8.3%	3.4%	6.1%
Mississippi	15.7%	6.2%	5.7%
Missouri	11.7%	4.4%	4.5%
Montana	10.0%	3.9%	6.6%
Nebraska	10.8%	4.3%	5.6%
Nevada	12.8%	5.5%	4.8%
New Hampshire	6.6%	2.6%	7.3%
New Jersey	7.7%	3.0%	7.5%
New Mexico	15.1%	5.5%	5.8%
New York	10.8%	3.9%	9.0%
North Carolina	13.1%	4.9%	7.8%
North Dakota	8.3%	2.8%	4.6%
Ohio	12.6%	5.4%	5.1%
Oklahoma	14.7%	5.3%	5.1%
Oregon	9.8%	4.3%	7.0%
Pennsylvania	10.2%	4.1%	5.1%
Rhode Island	9.1%	3.1%	8.2%
South Carolina	10.9%	4.0%	6.6%
South Dakota	10.9%	4.7%	5.2%
Tennessee	12.5%	5.3%	8.1%
Texas	13.1%	4.9%	8.3%
Utah	10.7%	3.5%	5.4%
Vermont	9.6%	3.2%	9.6%
Virginia	9.2%	3.9%	7.0%
Washington	9.9%	3.5%	7.1%
West Virginia	15.4%	5.9%	3.9%
Wisconsin	10.1%	3.3%	4.5%
Wyoming	12.2%	5.0%	4.6%

Sources: Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2020). *Household food security in the United States in 2019* (ERR-275). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=99281>.  
 United Health Foundation. (2021). *America's health rankings: Fruit and vegetable consumption – Male, United States*. Retrieved from [https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo\\_Male/state/ALL?edition-year=2020](https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/fvcombo/population/fvcombo_Male/state/ALL?edition-year=2020).  
 Note: Prior data on fruit and vegetable consumption was used for New Jersey as current data was not available.

Although the ERS does not provide data on food insecurity by gender, they do report the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security by household composition. Table 2 indicates the prevalence of food insecurity and very low food security by household composition in 2019. Food insecurity was highest in female-headed households with children under age 18 (28.7%), but insecurity for men living alone (12.8%) exceeded the average for all households (10.5%).

Chapter 9, Table 2. **Prevalence of Food Insecurity and Very Low Food Security by Household Composition in 2019**

Household Composition	Percentage Experiencing Food Insecurity (2019)	Percentage Experiencing Very Low Food Security (2019)
All households	10.5%	4.1%
Households with children < 18 years	13.6%	3.9%
With children < 6 years	14.5%	3.7%
Married-couple families	7.5%	1.4%
Female head, no spouse	28.7%	9.6%
Male head, no spouse	15.4%	5.9%
Households with no children < 18 years	9.3%	4.2%
More than one adult	6.7%	2.7%
Women living alone	13.0%	6.4%
Men living	12.8%	6.3%

Source: Coleman-Jensen, A., Rabbitt, M. P., Gregory, C. A., & Singh, A. (2020). *Household food security in the United States in 2019* (ERR-275). U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service. Retrieved from <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=99281>.

## Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Participation in federal nutrition assistance programs mitigates food insecurity. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of families in need so that they can purchase healthy food.<sup>7</sup> In 2019, 10.1% of males and 13.1% of females between the ages of 18–60 in the United States received assistance from SNAP.<sup>8</sup> Twenty-three states had a higher percentage of nonelderly adult males receiving assistance from SNAP than the national average and 27 states and the District of Columbia had a lower percentage than the national average. The three states with the highest percentage of males aged 18–60 receiving SNAP in 2019 were New Mexico (17.5%), West Virginia (16.5%), and Oregon (14.0%). The three states with the lowest percentage of males aged 18–60 receiving SNAP in 2019 were Wyoming (3.2%), New Hampshire (4.9%), and Utah (5.1%).

States have the option of requiring custodial and noncustodial parents to cooperate with the child support program in order to receive SNAP benefits.<sup>9</sup> For custodial parents, this involves providing information needed to establish paternity or a support order and to enforce the order. For noncustodial parents, this includes refusing to cooperate with establishing paternity, failing to make good faith efforts to provide child support

7 Food and Nutrition Service. (2021). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>.

8 U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *2019 1-year American Community Survey estimates*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

9 Food and Nutrition Service. (2019). *State flexibilities related to custodial and noncustodial parents' cooperation with state child support agencies* (FNS-GD-2019-0043). U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/state-flexibilities-related-custodial-and-noncustodial-parents-cooperation-state-child>.

payments, or being delinquent in any payment due under a court order. As of October 1, 2017, seven states implemented cooperation requirements on custodial parents (Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, South Dakota, and Virginia) and three implemented the cooperation requirements for noncustodial parents (Maine, Mississippi, and Virginia).<sup>10</sup>

States can increase participation in the SNAP program among eligible households, including low-income men and nonresident fathers, by simplifying their application and enrollment process. While SNAP benefit levels and general eligibility criteria are set at the federal level, states have flexibility to implement their SNAP programs and decide how it will be administered. Research suggests that reducing the administrative burdens associated with SNAP enrollment boosts program participation and saves costs.<sup>11</sup> According to the Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center, 25 states and the District of Columbia have reduced the administrative burden for eligible families to accessing SNAP and have adopted the following policies: a 12-month recertification period; simplified income reporting; and the availability of online services, including the initial application, change reporting, and renewal.<sup>12</sup>

States also have the flexibility to lift or modify the restrictions on SNAP receipt that the federal government imposes on individuals with previous drug felony convictions. Begun in 1996 under the personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation ACT (PRWORA), the act imposes a lifetime ban on SNAP and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) for those with a previous drug felony conviction, whether they have completed their time in jail or prison or received a lighter sentence due to the nonviolent and/or low-level nature of the offense. States, however, can opt to remove or modify the ban. The Center for Law and Social Policy reports that as of August 2021, South Carolina was the only state that still had a full drug felony ban in place. To contrast, 28 states and the District of Columbia had lifted the federal ban entirely, while 21 states had modified the ban. Modifications included limiting the classes of drug felonies subject to the restriction, implementing temporary bans rather than a permanent one, and/or requiring enrollment and participation in a drug education or treatment program.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to reducing recidivism, access to SNAP addresses severe food insecurity needs of people transitioning from jail or prison. According to the National Institutes of Health, 91% of people released from prison reported experiencing food insecurity,<sup>14</sup> and a Rhode Island study concluded that 70.4% of those on probation experienced food insecurity, compared to 12.8% of the general population.<sup>15</sup> Although women are more likely to be convicted of a drug offense than men, the overwhelming majority of incarcerated people are men, as are the number of paroled and released offenders, and the ban has a negative effect on them and their families.

10 Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *State options report: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf>.

11 Issacs, J. B., & Katz, M. (2016). *Improving the efficiency of benefit delivery*. Urban Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/2016/11/16/improving-the-efficiency-of-benefit-delivery-esbrief.pdf>.

12 Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. (2021). *2021 Prenatal-to-3 state policy roadmap*. Child and Family Research Partnership, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <https://pn3policy.org/pn-3-state-policy-roadmap-2021/>.

13 Thompson, D., & Burnside, A. (2021). *No more double punishments: Lifting the ban on SNAP and TANF for people with prior felony drug convictions*. Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/no-more-double-punishments>.

14 Wang, E. A., Zhu, G. A., Evans, L., Carroll-Scott, A., Desai, R., & Fiellin, L. E. (2013). A pilot study examining food insecurity and HIV risk behaviors among individuals recently released from prison. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 25(2), 112-123.

15 Dong, K. R., Tang, A. M., Stopka, T. J., Beckwith, C. G., & Must, A. (2018). Food acquisition methods and correlates of food insecurity in adults on probation in Rhode Island. *PLoS ONE*, 13(6), e0198598.

Finally, states might expand SNAP access to low-income, noncustodial fathers by suspending the three-month time limit on SNAP benefits that many adults without dependents face unless they are exempt, working, or in a work or training program 20 hours a week. Although Congress suspended the three-month time limit during the federal public health emergency due to COVID-19, they have been reimposed. Nevertheless, states are allowed to suspend them in areas with high and sustained unemployment, and some states have done this.<sup>16</sup> While updated information is not available, as of October 1, 2017, only six states and the District of Columbia had full waivers, 27 states had partial time limit waivers, and 17 states had no Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependent (ABAWAD) time limit waiver.<sup>17</sup>

Table 3 indicates, for each state and the District of Columbia, the percentage of males between the ages of 18–60 that received assistance from SNAP in 2019; whether they have reduced the administrative burden for SNAP; whether they have eliminated, modified, or retained the federal ban on SNAP for a drug-related felony conviction as of August 2021; and whether they had a full, partial, or no time limit waiver on SNAP benefits for ABAWDs as of October 1, 2017.

**Chapter 9, Table 3. State Percentage of Males Receiving SNAP in 2019, Reduced Administrative Burden for SNAP, SNAP Bans as of August 2021, and ABAWDs Time Limit Waivers on SNAP Benefits as of October 2017**

State	Percentage of Males 18–60 Receiving SNAP (2019)	Reduced Administrative Burden for SNAP	Ban on SNAP for a Drug-Related Felony Conviction (As of August 2021)	ABAWDs Time Limit Waiver on SNAP Benefits (As of October 2017)
Alabama	12.1%	Yes	Modified ban	No waiver
Alaska	9.5%		Modified ban	Full waiver
Arizona	11.1%	Yes	Modified ban	Partial waiver
Arkansas	9.7%	Yes	No ban	No waiver
California	9.2%	Yes	No ban	Full waiver
Colorado	6.1%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Connecticut	9.8%	Yes	Modified ban	Partial waiver
Delaware	9.3%	Yes	No ban	No waiver
DC	8.4%	Yes	No ban	Full waiver
Florida	12.8%		Modified ban	No waiver
Georgia	10.3%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Hawaii	10.6%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Idaho	10.1%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Illinois	11.2%		No ban	Full waiver
Indiana	7.5%	Yes	Modified ban	No waiver
Iowa	9.2%		No ban	No waiver
Kansas	6.8%	Yes	Modified ban	No waiver
Kentucky	11.3%		No ban	Partial waiver
Louisiana	13.1%	Yes	No ban	Full waiver
Maine	11.7%	Yes	No ban	No waiver
Maryland	9.3%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Massachusetts	8.8%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Michigan	11.5%		No ban	Partial waiver
Minnesota	6.2%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Mississippi	11.8%		No ban	No waiver
Missouri	9.2%	Yes	Modified ban	No waiver
Montana	8.4%	Yes	Modified ban	Partial waiver
Nebraska	6.4%		Modified ban	No waiver
Nevada	10.2%		No ban	Full waiver

<sup>16</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2022). *A quick guide to SNAP eligibility and benefits*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/11-18-08fa.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *State options report: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf>.

New Hampshire	4.9%		No ban	Partial waiver
New Jersey	6.0%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
New Mexico	17.5%	Yes	No ban	Full waiver
New York	11.7%		No ban	Partial waiver
North Carolina	9.7%		Modified ban	No waiver
North Dakota	6.4%		No ban	Partial waiver
Ohio	10.5%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Oklahoma	12.2%	Yes	No ban	No waiver
Oregon	14.0%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Pennsylvania	12.4%		No ban	Partial waiver
Rhode Island	13.9%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
South Carolina	8.9%		Full ban	No waiver
South Dakota	9.3%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Tennessee	11.1%		Modified ban	Partial waiver
Texas	9.8%		Modified ban	No waiver
Utah	5.1%		No ban	Partial waiver
Vermont	8.9%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Virginia	6.7%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
Washington	11.2%	Yes	No ban	Partial waiver
West Virginia	16.5%	Yes	Modified ban	Partial waiver
Wisconsin	8.5%	Yes	Modified ban	No waiver
Wyoming	3.2%		No ban	No waiver

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau. (2021). *2019 1-year American Community Survey estimates*. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>. Prenatal-to-3 Policy Impact Center. (2021). *2021 Prenatal-to-3 state policy roadmap*. Child and Family Research Partnership, LBJ School of Public Affairs, The University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <https://pn3policy.org/pn-3-state-policy-roadmap-2021/>. Thompson, D., & Burnside, A. (2021). *No more double punishments: Lifting the ban on SNAP and TANF for people with prior felony drug convictions*. Center for Law and Social Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/no-more-double-punishments>. Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *State options report: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf>.

## Other State Initiatives

**Expand Access to SNAP.** Healthy Food Policy Project (HFPP) provides a snapshot of state laws passed between January 2015 and June 2018 that address access to healthy food with a focus on disadvantaged and marginalized groups.<sup>18</sup> This snapshot, which is not a comprehensive summary of state law, describes policy efforts to make healthy food more accessible to SNAP participants in Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, and Maryland. It features initiatives to "double up" food bucks for SNAP and associated retailers including farmers markets for eligible fruits and vegetables, to expand Electronic Benefits Transfers (EBT) to owners and operators of markets selling fresh produce, and programs to double the purchasing power of residents with limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables.<sup>19</sup>

**Increase Access to Healthy Food.** The HFPP snapshot also features state laws passed between January 2015 and June 2018 that attempt to create healthier retail food environments.<sup>20</sup> Legislation enacted in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Michigan, and Oklahoma encourage grocery store development through incentives such as tax exemptions. Expansion of the availability of fresh dairy, produce, meats, and fish in underserved neighborhoods is encouraged through small loans for refrigerators and freezers.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Healthy Food Policy Project. (2021). *About*. Retrieved from <https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/about>.

<sup>19</sup> Healthy Food Policy Project. (n.d.). *State law companion*. Retrieved from [http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion\\_9\\_9\\_final.pdf](http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion_9_9_final.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Healthy Food Policy Project. (2021). *State policy options to increase access to healthy food*. Retrieved from <https://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/key-issues/state-policy-options-to-increase-access-to-healthy-food>.

<sup>21</sup> Healthy Food Policy Project. (n.d.). *State law companion*. Retrieved from [http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion\\_9\\_9\\_final.pdf](http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion_9_9_final.pdf).

Still other state initiatives supporting healthier food retail are featured in an overview provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. They highlight 2009 Louisiana legislation that created a task force to investigate and address the lack of access to healthier foods in rural and urban communities. Their primary recommendation was to establish a statewide financing program that provides grants and loans to supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers markets, and other food retail outlets that are selling healthier foods in underserved communities and in 2009, the Healthy Food Retail Act passed which authorized a statewide financing program.<sup>22</sup> The Louisiana task force was influenced by the Pennsylvania Fresh Food Financing Initiative (FFFI), a practice-tested policy-level intervention that was designed to increase access to affordable and healthy foods in underserved areas of the state by providing one-time loans and grants for the development, expansion, or renovation of fresh food retail establishments.<sup>23</sup>

Healthy food initiatives through Medicaid are other ways to reach underserved populations and Amy Clary, in an article for the National Academy for State Health Policy, highlights 2020 legislation regarding healthy food prescription programs and Medicaid contracting requirements. The Produce Plus program in the District of Columbia gives Medicaid participants up to \$20 per week in credit to spend at local farmers markets. Similarly, Washington established a fruit and vegetable prescription program in which a health professional gives vouchers for fruits and vegetables to be purchased at participating farmers markets or grocery stores.<sup>24</sup>

In Michigan, legislation requires Medicaid managed care contractors to coordinate services and referrals for people who face challenges accessing healthy food. In North Carolina, healthy food boxes, fruit and vegetable prescriptions, healthy meals, and medically tailored meals will be reimbursed by Medicaid. Medicaid managed care contractors in Virginia are required to address access to healthy foods.<sup>25</sup>

**Reduce Hunger.** The Food Research & Action Center (FRAC) works to eradicate poverty-related hunger and undernutrition in the United States through advocacy, partnerships, and by advancing policy solutions.<sup>26</sup> FRAC has an initiative in the District of Columbia, D.C. Hunger Solutions, that was founded in 2002 and is working to create a hunger-free community and improve the nutrition, health, economic security, and well-being of



22 Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. (n.d.). *State initiatives supporting healthier food retail: An overview of the national landscape*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Retrieved from [https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/healthier\\_food\\_retail.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/healthier_food_retail.pdf).

23 Karpyn, A., Manon, M., Treuhaft, S., Giang, T., Harries, C., & McCoubrey, K. (2010). Policy solutions to the 'grocery gap'. *Health Affairs*, 29(3), 473-480.

24 Clary, A. (2020). *States are advancing healthy food policies in 2020*. National Academy for State Health Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.nashp.org/states-are-advancing-healthy-food-policies-in-2020/>.

25 *Ibid.*

26 Food Research & Action Center. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://frac.org/about>.



low-income residents.<sup>27</sup> FRAC also has an initiative in Maryland, Maryland Hunger Solutions, that was founded in 2007 and is working towards improve the nutrition, health, and well-being of residents by overcoming barriers and creating self-sustaining connections between residents and nutritious foods.<sup>28</sup> Statewide task forces and coalitions on hunger and food insecurity exist in Alaska,<sup>29</sup> Arkansas,<sup>30</sup> Idaho,<sup>31</sup> Illinois,<sup>32</sup> Kentucky,<sup>33</sup> Massachusetts,<sup>34</sup> North Dakota,<sup>35</sup> Oregon,<sup>36</sup> Rhode Island,<sup>37</sup> and Washington.<sup>38</sup>

Table 4 indicates, for each state and the District of Columbia, whether they have adopted legislation to expand access to SNAP, adopted legislation to increase access healthy food, and/or adopted an initiative to reduce hunger (e.g., task force, coalition, etc.).

**Chapter 9, Table 4. State Legislation to Expand Access to SNAP and Healthy Food and Initiatives to Reduce Hunger**

State	Legislation to Expand Access to SNAP	Legislation to Increase Access to Healthy Food	Initiative to Reduce Hunger
Alabama			
Alaska			Yes
Arizona			
Arkansas	Yes		Yes
California	Yes		
Colorado			
Connecticut			
Delaware			
DC		Yes	Yes
Florida	Yes		
Georgia			
Hawaii			
Idaho			Yes
Illinois	Yes		Yes
Indiana			
Iowa			
Kansas			
Kentucky			Yes
Louisiana		Yes	
Maine			
Maryland		Yes	Yes
Massachusetts			Yes
Michigan		Yes	
Minnesota			
Mississippi			
Missouri			
Montana			
Nebraska			
Nevada			
New Hampshire			

27 D.C. Hunger Solutions. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.dchunger.org/about-us/>.

28 Maryland Hunger Solutions. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/about-us/>.

29 Food Bank of Alaska. (2021). *Alaska food coalition*. Retrieved from <https://foodbankofalaska.org/alaska-food-coalition-2/>.

30 Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. (2021). *About*. Retrieved from <https://arhungeralliance.org/about/>.

31 Idaho Hunger Relief Task Force. (2019). *Our story*. Retrieved from <http://www.idahohunger.org/our-story>.

32 Illinois Hunger Coalition. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.ilhunger.org/About-us/>.

33 Kentucky Hunger Initiative. (2021). Retrieved from <https://www.kyagr.com/hunger/#Home>.

34 Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2021). *Food security infrastructure grant program*. Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program>.

35 Creating a Hunger Free North Dakota. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <http://www.hungerfreend.org/about-us/>.

36 Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. (2021). *History & mission*. Retrieved from <https://oregonhunger.org/who-we-are/>.

37 Rhode Island Food Policy Council. (2021). *Hunger elimination task force*. Retrieved from <https://rifoodcouncil.org/hunger-elimination-task-force/>.

38 Washington Food Coalition. (2021). *Mission and history*. Retrieved from <https://www.wafoodcoalition.org/our-history>.

New Jersey		
New Mexico		
New York		
North Carolina	Yes	
North Dakota		Yes
Ohio		
Oklahoma	Yes	
Oregon		Yes
Pennsylvania	Yes	
Rhode Island		Yes
South Carolina		
South Dakota		
Tennessee		
Texas		
Utah		
Vermont		
Virginia		
Washington	Yes	Yes
West Virginia		
Wisconsin		
Wyoming		

Sources: Healthy Food Policy Project. (n.d.). *State law companion*. Retrieved from [http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion\\_g\\_g\\_final.pdf](http://healthyfoodpolicyproject.org/wp-content/uploads/HFPP-State-Law-Companion_g_g_final.pdf).

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Clary, A. (2020). *States are advancing healthy food policies in 2020*. National Academy for State Health Policy. Retrieved from <https://www.nashp.org/states-are-advancing-healthy-food-policies-in-2020/>.

Food Research & Action Center. (2021). *State anti-hunger organizations*. Retrieved from <https://frac.org/about/1303-2>.

D.C. Hunger Solutions. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.dchunger.org/about-us/>.

Maryland Hunger Solutions. (2021). *About us*. Retrieved from <https://www.mdhungersolutions.org/about-us/>.

Commonwealth of Massachusetts. (2021). *Food security infrastructure grant program*. Retrieved from <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/food-security-infrastructure-grant-program>.

Rhode Island Food Policy Council. (2021). *Hunger elimination task force*. Retrieved from <https://rifoodcouncil.org/hunger-elimination-task-force/>.

## Housing

Homelessness is gendered in the United States, and approximately 70% of all people experiencing homelessness are male.<sup>39, 40</sup> The CDC has identified homelessness, both chronic and temporary, as a public health concern, as it is closely connected to physical and mental health.<sup>41</sup> Housing instability, and access to safe and stable housing, is also important for good health. Housing hazards, such as mold and lead, are associated with chronic illnesses, including asthma and heart disease. Eviction, and the threat of eviction, has been associated with poor physical and mental health outcomes.<sup>42</sup>

39 National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2021). *Demographic data project: Gender and individual homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://endhomelessness.org/demographic-data-project-gender-and-individual-homelessness/>.

40 National Alliance to End Homelessness. (2021). *State of homelessness: 2021 edition*. Retrieved from <https://endhomelessness.org/homelessness-in-america/homelessness-statistics/state-of-homelessness-2021/>.

41 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). *Homelessness as a public health law issue: Selected resources*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/resources/resources-homelessness.html>.

42 Moran-McCabe, K., Waimberg, J., & Ghorashi, A. (2020). Mapping housing laws in the United States: A resource for evaluating housing policies' impacts on health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 26, S29-S36.

## Rates of Homelessness and Lack of Affordable Housing

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that of the 567,715 people who were experiencing homelessness in all U.S. states and territories in 2019, 60.4% were male.<sup>43</sup> Homeless persons include those that are sheltered (in emergency shelters or in transitional housing) and unsheltered. In 24 states, the percentage of homeless persons who were male in 2019 was higher than the national percentage of 60.4% and in 26 states and the District of Columbia, the percentage of homeless persons who were male in 2019 was lower than the national percentage of 60.4%. In 2019, the three states with the highest percentage of homeless persons who were male were Nevada (70.3%), Louisiana (70.0%), and Wyoming (68.6%). In 2019, the three states with the lowest percentage of homeless persons who were male were Massachusetts (50.4%), Maine (51.9%), and New York (52.9%).<sup>44</sup>

Information on the availability of rental homes affordable to extremely low-income household — those with incomes at or below the poverty line or 30% of the area median income — comes from the American Community Survey. Data for 2019 shows that there are 10.8 million renter households with extremely low incomes (25% of all renter households), who face a shortage of nearly 7 million affordable and available rental homes. Looked at somewhat differently, only 37 affordable and available homes exist for every 100 extremely low-income renter households, with no state having an adequate supply. In 2019, the relative supply of affordable homes for every 100 extremely low-income renter households ranged from 20 in Nevada to 61 in Mississippi and Wyoming with 13 states falling below the national average of 37. In addition to Nevada, low-income renters faced the greatest challenges finding affordable homes in Arizona, California, Florida, and Oregon. In addition to Mississippi and Wyoming, the states with the greatest relative supply were Alabama, South Dakota, and West Virginia.<sup>45</sup>

Table 5 indicates, for each state and the District of Columbia, the percentage of homeless persons who were male in 2019 and the number of affordable and available units per 100 households at or below the extremely low-income threshold in 2019.



43 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). *HUD 2019 Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance Programs homeless populations and subpopulations*. Retrieved from [https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC\\_PopSub\\_NatlTerrDC\\_2019.pdf](https://files.hudexchange.info/reports/published/CoC_PopSub_NatlTerrDC_2019.pdf)

44 U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). *CoC homeless populations and subpopulations reports*. Retrieved from [https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/?&filter\\_year=2019&filter\\_scope=State&filter\\_state=&filter\\_coc=&current\\_page=1](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/?&filter_year=2019&filter_scope=State&filter_state=&filter_coc=&current_page=1)

45 Aurand, A., Emmanuel, D., Threet, D., Rafi, I., & Yentel, D. (2021). *The gap: A shortage of affordable homes*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved from <https://reports.nlihc.org/gap>.

Chapter 9, Table 5. State Percentage of Homeless Persons Who Were Male in 2019 and Number of Affordable and Available Units Per 100 Households At or Below the Extremely Low-Income Threshold in 2019

State	Percentage of Homeless Persons Who Were Male (2019)	Number of Affordable/Available Units Per 100 Extremely Low-Income Households (2019)
Alabama	57.4%	58
Alaska	59.6%	37
Arizona	62.9%	26
Arkansas	62.1%	52
California	65.0%	24
Colorado	65.4%	30
Connecticut	62.5%	42
Delaware	59.3%	28
DC	58.6%	50
Florida	64.8%	28
Georgia	63.3%	41
Hawaii	58.9%	38
Idaho	60.1%	40
Illinois	58.0%	39
Indiana	59.3%	37
Iowa	60.3%	37
Kansas	60.2%	49
Kentucky	58.6%	54
Louisiana	70.0%	49
Maine	51.6%	54
Maryland	61.7%	32
Massachusetts	50.4%	48
Michigan	58.6%	35
Minnesota	55.0%	42
Mississippi	63.5%	61
Missouri	56.1%	43
Montana	58.4%	46
Nebraska	63.2%	44
Nevada	70.3%	20
New Hampshire	54.3%	39
New Jersey	59.4%	32
New Mexico	59.5%	53
New York	52.9%	37
North Carolina	61.4%	45
North Dakota	67.9%	47
Ohio	59.8%	42
Oklahoma	65.4%	47
Oregon	60.2%	25
Pennsylvania	58.9%	39
Rhode Island	65.4%	52
South Carolina	63.4%	44
South Dakota	60.8%	58
Tennessee	62.0%	47
Texas	63.3%	29
Utah	59.8%	32
Vermont	56.6%	49
Virginia	59.7%	39
Washington	56.5%	31
West Virginia	62.1%	60
Wisconsin	56.8%	37
Wyoming	68.6%	61

Sources: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2019). *CoC homeless populations and subpopulations reports*. Retrieved from [https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/?&filter\\_year=2019&filter\\_scope=State&filter\\_state=&filter\\_coc=&current\\_page=1](https://www.hudexchange.info/programs/coc/coc-homeless-populations-and-subpopulations-reports/?&filter_year=2019&filter_scope=State&filter_state=&filter_coc=&current_page=1)

Aurand, A., Emmanuel, D., Threet, D., Rafi, I., & Yentel, D. (2021). *The gap: A shortage of affordable homes*. National Low Income Housing Coalition. Retrieved from <https://reports.nlihc.org/gap>.

## Homelessness and Housing Instability Among Low-Income, Nonresident Fathers in the Child Support Program

While there are no national or state breakdowns that show homelessness and/or housing instability among low-income, nonresident fathers, we get some indication of its prevalence from three recent, federally funded studies dealing with programs that seek to help unemployed and underemployed parents in the child support system obtain jobs and pay support. Surveys with the nearly 20,000 noncustodial parents, 90 to 100% of whom were fathers, who enrolled in the Enhanced Transitional Jobs Demonstration (ETJD), Parents and Children Together (PACT), and the Child Support Noncustodial Parents Demonstration (CSPED) projects, found that 52 to 55% were homeless, lived in a halfway house, or paid reduced rent.<sup>46</sup>

Still another read on the extent to which housing instability is an issue for noncustodial parents in the formal child support program comes from an exploratory study that used a microsimulation mode (TRIM3) to generate estimates of the numbers of noncustodial parents eligible for and receiving housing assistance, and how child support payments were incorporated into rent calculations and their potential impact on rent payments.<sup>47</sup>

Using data from the Annual Social and Economic Supplement of the Current Population Survey (CPS-ASEC), researchers found substantial gaps between eligibility for housing assistance and its receipt.

- 21.5% of noncustodial parents (or about 2.7 million parents) are eligible for housing assistance, while only 4.7% of all noncustodial parents (about 592,000 parents) receive housing assistance.
- Approximately 24% of noncustodial parents living with other children qualify for housing assistance, while only 4% receive it.

These rates of housing assistance fall far below the 23% observed for all low-income renters who pay more than 30% of their income toward housing or live in overcrowded or substandard housing.<sup>48</sup>

Among the suggestions that the researchers offer is that local Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) consider child support payments made by noncustodial parents when calculating income to determine rent and rental subsidies. Although PHAs must treat child support payments as income among those who receive it, they have discretion about whether it is deducted from income among those who pay child support. According to the TRIM3 analysis, rent required by the estimated 78,000 noncustodial parents who pay child support and receive housing subsidies would be about \$550 lower per year if child support payments were included in rent calculations.<sup>49</sup>

A second suggestion is that Housing Choice Voucher programs (also known as Section 8 programs) also have the flexibility to consider children who may visit or stay with a parent for part of the year when determining voucher size.

46 Sorensen, E. (2020). *What we learned from recent federal evaluations of programs serving disadvantaged noncustodial parents*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation. Retrieved from <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/opre/report/what-we-learned-about-programs-serving-disadvantaged-noncustodial-parents>.

47 Antelo, L., Benton, A., Chadwick, L., & Vandenberg, A. (2021). *Housing instability for noncustodial parents: Policy considerations*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/264831/housing-instability-for-np.pdf>.

48 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2021). *3 in 4 low-income renters needing rental assistance do not receive it*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/three-out-of-four-low-income-at-risk-renters-do-not-receive-federal-rental-assistance>.

49 Antelo, L., Benton, A., Chadwick, L., & Vandenberg, A. (2021). *Housing instability for noncustodial parents: Policy considerations*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy. Retrieved from <https://aspe.hhs.gov/system/files/pdf/264831/housing-instability-for-np.pdf>.

A third recommendation is that PHAs consider adopting policies to reduce the impact of negative credit score ratings among noncustodial parents who experience automatic credit reporting actions when they fall behind on their child support payments. In these instances, PHAs should communicate with private landlords in Housing Choice Voucher programs and advise them that a negative credit check result for child support debt does not imply an inability to pay rent, and that landlords should pursue follow-up conversations with parents to understand their individual circumstances.

In a similar vein, housing providers funded by Continuums of Care (CoCs) and HUD's Emergency Solutions Grants are urged to consider child support payments when calculating rent, child support debt when calculating credit checks, and access to and visitation by children when selecting unit sizes. CoCs are programs that coordinate the response to homelessness including funds for transitional housing, rapid rehousing, and permanent supportive housing.

### **Housing Instability and Prior Incarceration**

Federal law requires PHAs, which administer housing assistance and manage public housing property, to exclude people convicted of methamphetamine production, those subject to lifetime registration requirements under state sex offender registration programs, and people who are currently using illegal drugs. PHAs also have the discretion to deny admission to three additional categories of applicants: 1) those who have been evicted from public housing because of drug-related criminal activity for a period of three years following eviction, 2) those who have engaged in disruptive alcohol consumption or illegal drug use in the past, and 3) those who have engaged in any drug-related criminal activity, any violent criminal activity or any other activity, if the PHA deems them a safety risk.<sup>50</sup> The net result is that PHAs, owners of federally assisted housing, and private landlords have broad discretion to set their own screening criteria for people with criminal records, and may deny access to prospective tenants with criminal records (regardless of conviction status) for any household member over an unspecified "look back" period.<sup>51</sup>

Although there is no national data on the number of people excluded from public housing because of criminal records, it is substantial. One in three adults (100 million Americans) have an arrest or conviction record, at least 11 million people cycle through our nation's jails, and more than 600,000 people return home from prison each year. Nor do we know the range of exclusionary practices and policies that the more than 4,000 local PHAs have adopted with respect to the types of conduct sufficient for exclusion and the length of the exclusion period they impose.<sup>52</sup>

Since 2011, HUD has issued several guidance letters to PHAs and owners of federally assisted rental properties encouraging them to stop denying eligibility automatically and use their discretion to give housing to otherwise qualified people with criminal records. To further reduce barriers to public and federally assisted housing faced by justice-involved individuals, stakeholders such as the Legal Action Center recommend that the federal government limit how far back in time a conviction matters for housing purposes, limit the types of criminal records that matter to those relevant to the safety of tenants and property, create housing

50 Human Rights Watch. (2004). *No second chance: People with criminal records denied access to public housing*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/11/17/no-second-chance/people-criminal-records-denied-access-public-housing#>.

51 Douglas, R. M. (2016). *Helping moms, dads and kids to come home: Eliminating barriers to housing for people with criminal records*. Legal Action Center. Retrieved from <https://www.lac.org/resource/housing-for-people-with-criminal-records>.

52 *Ibid.*

opportunities for people with criminal records and include these opportunities as part of reentry, and eliminate permanent exclusion from any type of housing, thereby giving people a second change.<sup>53</sup>

Some of these recommendations have been pursued through the Second Chance Act of 2007,<sup>54</sup> which provided funding for more than 900 grants across 49 states during 2008–2018, many of which aimed to provide stable housing in conjunction with other services.<sup>55</sup> Reauthorization of the Second Chance Act was achieved in December 2018 with the enactment of the First Step Act. It provides \$100 million per year to establish and enhance state and local programs that promote successful reentry for people returning to the community after incarceration.<sup>56</sup>

## Housing Policies, Eviction Moratoriums, and Task Forces

**Housing Policies.** While all states and the District of Columbia have state-level landlord–tenant laws to improve access to healthy housing among renters, only 22 states have laws that are comprehensive and require a landlord to maintain habitable conditions, comply with applicable housing codes, and make repairs. Similarly, while all states and the District of Columbia, except for Mississippi, have state-level fair housing laws that focus on rental and sales transactions, only 10 states and the District of Columbia prohibit discrimination against voucher holders. In five states, the landlord–tenant law requires landlords to maintain habitable conditions, comply with housing codes, and make repairs and the fair housing law prohibits discrimination against voucher holders. Of note, in 2018, 38% of voucher holders were male and 62% were female.<sup>57</sup>

**Eviction Moratoriums.** As a result of the Supreme Court's decision on August 26, 2021, the CDC's ban on evictions ended and as of January 17, 2022, only a few states (California, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oregon, and Virginia) and the District of Columbia had any emergency bans on evictions, moratoriums for utility shutoffs, or other tenant protections related to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>58</sup>

**Task Forces.** In Indiana<sup>59</sup> and Oklahoma,<sup>60</sup> recent task forces have been established that are focused on homelessness. Additionally, in Oregon, a proposed 19-member task force on homelessness will look at racial disparities in services.<sup>61</sup>

Table 6 indicates, for each state and the District of Columbia, whether their landlord–tenant law meets the three requirements (maintain habitable conditions, comply with applicable housing codes, and make repairs), whether their fair housing law prohibits discrimination against voucher holders, whether they have an eviction moratorium as of January 2022, and whether they have established a task force to reduce homelessness.

53 Douglas, R. M. (2016). *Helping moms, dads and kids to come home: Eliminating barriers to housing for people with criminal records*. Legal Action Center. Retrieved from <https://www.lac.org/resource/housing-for-people-with-criminal-records>.

54 Second Chance Act of 2007, H.R. 1593, 110th Congress. (2007). Retrieved from <https://www.congress.gov/bill/110th-congress/house-bill/1593>.

55 Council of State Governments. (2018). *States deliver results*. Retrieved from <https://csgjusticecenter.org/publications/reducing-recidivism-states-deliver-results-2018/>.

56 Council of State Governments. (2018). *President Trump signs first step act into law, reauthorizing Second Chance Act*. Retrieved from <https://csgjusticecenter.org/2018/12/21/president-trump-signs-first-step-act-into-law-reauthorizing-second-chance-act/>.

57 Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2021). *Policy basics: The Housing Choice Voucher Program*. Retrieved from <https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/the-housing-choice-voucher-program>.

58 O'Connell, A. (2022). *Emergency bans on evictions and other tenant protections related to coronavirus*. NOLO. Retrieved from <https://www.nolo.com/evictions-ban>.

59 LegiScan. (2021). *Indiana Senate Bill 218*. Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/IN/bill/SB0218/2021>.

60 City of Oklahoma City. (2021). *OKC releases strategies to address homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://www.okc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/3947/18>.

61 Stites, S. (2021). *Proposed Oregon task force would look at race and homelessness, services*. OPB. Retrieved from <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/06/15/oregon-legislature-homeless-services-race/>.



Chapter 9, Table 6. State Housing Policy, Eviction Moratoriums, and Task Forces to Reduce Homelessness

State	Landlord-Tenant Law: Meets 3 Requirements	Fair Housing Law: Prohibits Discrimination	Eviction Moratorium (As of January 2022)	Task Force to Reduce Homelessness
Alabama	Yes			
Alaska				
Arizona	Yes			
Arkansas				
California	Yes		Yes	
Colorado	Yes			
Connecticut	Yes	Yes		
Delaware	Yes	Yes		
DC		Yes	Yes	
Florida				
Georgia				
Hawaii	Yes			
Idaho				
Illinois				
Indiana				Yes
Iowa	Yes			
Kansas				
Kentucky	Yes			
Louisiana				
Maine		Yes		
Maryland				
Massachusetts		Yes	Yes	
Michigan				
Minnesota		Yes	Yes	
Mississippi				
Missouri				
Montana	Yes			
Nebraska	Yes			
Nevada	Yes			
New Hampshire				
New Jersey		Yes		
New Mexico			Yes	
New York				
North Carolina	Yes			
North Dakota	Yes	Yes		
Ohio	Yes			
Oklahoma				Proposed
Oregon	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania				
Rhode Island	Yes			
South Carolina	Yes			
South Dakota	Yes			
Tennessee				
Texas				
Utah		Yes		
Vermont	Yes	Yes		
Virginia	Yes		Yes	
Washington				
West Virginia	Yes			
Wisconsin				
Wyoming				





Sources: Moran-McCabe, K., Waimberg, J., & Ghorashi, A. (2020). Mapping housing laws in the United States: A resource for evaluating housing policies' impacts on health. *Journal of Public Health Management and Practice*, 26, S29–S36.

O'Connell, A. (2022). *Emergency bans on evictions and other tenant protections related to coronavirus*. NOLO. Retrieved from <https://www.nolo.com/evictions-ban>.

LegiScan. (2021). *Indiana Senate Bill 218*. Retrieved from <https://legiscan.com/IN/bill/SB0218/2021>.

City of Oklahoma City. (2021). *OKC releases strategies to address homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://www.okc.gov/Home/Components/News/News/3947/18>.

Stites, S. (2021). *Proposed Oregon task force would look at race and homelessness, services*. OPB. Retrieved from <https://www.opb.org/article/2021/06/15/oregon-legislature-homeless-services-race/>.

## Conclusions

Food security and housing, the most basic requisites for an active, healthy life, are beyond reach for a substantial proportion of U.S. households and differ significantly by gender. State policies play a critical role in their incidence and mitigation.

Although food insecurity is highest in female-headed households with children under age 18, food insecurity for men living alone exceeds the average for all households. Assessments of adequate fruit and vegetable consumption are lower for men than for women. And enrollment of men aged 18–60 in SNAP fall below rates for women. Some reasons for this may be due to various state decision to disqualify individuals from SNAP benefits. This includes state options to adopt full (one state) or modified (21 states) bans on SNAP for individuals with drug felony convictions, and the state's failure to obtain a full or partial waiver to the requirement for ABAWADs to work or participate in a work program to get SNAP for more than three months in a three-year period. Fortunately, few states have opted to disqualify custodial and noncustodial parents from SNAP benefits for failure to cooperate with the child support program, and by treating child support payments as income exclusions (12 states) or income expense deductions (38 states and the District of Columbia), SNAP encourages low-income noncustodial parents to establish a child support order and make payments.<sup>62</sup> States should continue to incentivize child support cooperation through nonpunitive tactics that capitalize on case overlap between the two programs and the similar needs of many custodial and noncustodial households. This would include facilitating cross-program enrollment, marketing the benefits of both programs to parents, and experimenting with cross-agency staff training and co-location initiatives.

The gendered nature of homelessness and housing instability is even more pronounced. An estimated 60.4% of all people experiencing homelessness are male. In surveys conducted with noncustodial parents that participated in employment programs such as CSPED and PACT, 52–55% report being homeless, living in a halfway house, or paying reduced rent. And while an estimated 21.5% of noncustodial parents are eligible for housing assistance, only 4.7% receive it, a rate that falls far below the 23% observed of all low-income renters.

Criminal justice involvement contributes to housing instability and homelessness for men, including noncustodial fathers. In addition to facing outright exclusions from public housing for certain types of drug and sexual offenses, PHAs have discretion to develop their own policies regarding exclusions for criminal behaviors and the exclusion period they impose. Although HUD has urged PHAs to pursue more individualized determinations and exemptions for people who would otherwise be good tenants, there is no indication that this is the case. The vast number of criminally involved adults in America (especially men) and the anticipated increases due to the regular release of incarcerated offenders to the community portend serious housing shortages for this population that can only be addressed through dedicated public housing initiatives for ex-offenders.

62 Food and Nutrition Service. (2018). *State options report: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program*. U.S. Department of Agriculture. Retrieved from <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/snap/14-State-Options.pdf>.

Child support policy also plays an important role in the housing challenges that noncustodial parents face and affects their eligibility for assistance, the rental rates they are charged, and the size of the units they can obtain. Thus, unlike SNAP, the failure to consider child support payments that noncustodial parents make when calculating income for housing assistance results in lower housing subsidies and higher rents. The failure to consider children who may visit with a nonresident parent for part of the year in Housing Choice Voucher programs result in smaller vouchers and units. And automatic credit reporting practices by child support agencies for nonpayment may result in rental rejections by private landlords in Housing Choice Voucher programs.

The connections between child support, housing instability, and homelessness receive additional support in recent research with noncustodial parents. Following modification of their child support orders and other forms of child support relief, CSPED participants reported lower rates of housing instability.<sup>63</sup> Similar outcomes were found among noncustodial parents who participated in a program offering child support debt relief in San Francisco.<sup>64</sup> At a minimum, the authors of the exploratory study on housing and child support recommend stronger collaboration between child support agencies and housing providers.<sup>65</sup>

Mandates and incentives to include fathers in housing programs may be effective approaches too. One example comes from the Philadelphia Office of Homeless Services (OHS), which adopted a nondiscrimination policy in 2017 (in response to a 2016 HUD grant requirement) that required each family emergency shelter to admit fathers. When the policy was enacted, three of Philadelphia's nine shelters permitted father residents. Nevertheless, within eight months of the policy change, five shelters began including fathers and two were noncompliant with only one planning to apply for an exemption to the father-inclusion policy. Focus groups with administrators and staff revealed that the mandate was responsible for the change, but that the smooth transition was abetted by OHS training initiatives for staff on father inclusion, the retention of more male shelter staff, and other supportive actions taken by OHS and peer shelters.<sup>66</sup>

Ultimately, cutting food insecurity, homelessness, and housing instability will require huge public investments. Although research shows that child tax credit (CTC) recipients experienced a larger decline in food insecurity than nonrecipients, the temporary expansion of the CTC ended in December 2021.<sup>67</sup> In a similar vein, the Build Back Better Act passed by House Democrats, but derailed by the Senate, would have devoted \$170 billion for affordable housing including \$65 billion to preserve and rebuild public housing, \$45 billion for rental assistance, and \$15 billion to build or preserve rental homes for low-income families.<sup>68</sup> Absent these investments, these problems will go largely unaddressed.

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# Fatherhood Research & Practice Network

## About the FRPN

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To the best of our knowledge, the information we provide is current as of report publication and/or the date indicated in the report and table sources. Nevertheless, since state policies and programs continually evolve, there are inevitable changes and developments that we have not captured. The views expressed in the report are those of the authors.

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