

Child Support Report

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT



Keep your eye on the OCSE website for a new design coming soon!



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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Colorado Alert System: the Answer to Better Management and What's Best for the Family

By Larry Desbien, Policy & Evaluation Section Chief
Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement

Question #1: How effective is your child support office at following up to ensure that employers send in the child support collections on time in response to the income withholding orders (IWOs)?

Question #2: Do you know how many obligors stop paying their full child support payment each month?

Question #3: Do you have effective caseload management tools to help your child support professionals identify and contact these obligors?



We asked ourselves those questions a few years ago as part of an overall effort to improve the current rate of collections in the Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement. Our answers were: "not very effective," "nope" and "not really."

Figure Out the Needs

For a number of years, our division has been implementing the concept of early intervention in all aspects of the program. However, without automation to identify cases in need of early intervention, our child support professionals (CSPs) had to manually "work" the monthly reports and then search through a myriad of screens on the automated child support system to identify contact information for obligors.

Our analysis showed that 39 percent of the IWOs resulted in no child support collections, and generally, we were ineffective at following-up with the employers to find out why. We also learned that, on average, 8 percent of the 56,000 obligors who paid in full one month paid either nothing or less than the full amount the following month.

Ready, Set...Action

State policy staff, analysts and programmers worked with our CSPs to develop business requirements for an Alert System (part of the statewide automated system) to identify "mission critical" actions and the appropriate date or time to take an action that would lead to improving performance on IWOs and early intervention.



Members of the Alert System Design Team (from left) Larry Desbien, Carol Lewis, Mike Erickson and Darletta Evans with the Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement.

continued on next page

The Alert System tracks the actions to ensure that CSPs take appropriate actions at the child support professional and county levels, and for the entire state. The alerts provide the CSPs with all of the case and obligor information to work the case. These alerts can be deleted, or cleared, only after the CSP takes the appropriate action.

Daily and Monthly Alerts

The first type of alert, the daily IWO alert, notifies the CSPs of IWOs issued 30 days earlier that have resulted in no employer payments. We have found that about 30 percent of the IWOs issued don't generate payments within the first 30 days. The CSPs now follow up with the employer within 5 days after receiving the alert. The year we implemented this alert (2007), IWO collections increased 20 percent; the number of IWOs issued increased only 11 percent.

The second type, the monthly Early Intervention (EI) alert, notifies the CSP of obligors who went from making their full monthly payment to only a partial or zero payment the following month. The CSPs are clearing these EI alerts

within the 20 days allotted. Obligor now know we are paying attention when they stop paying in full. And no more manual work to identify these cases. In one month, CSPs cleared 4,307 EI alerts; 65 percent of the obligors resumed making payments—adding up to nearly \$2 million.

Our Final Answers

So how do we answer the three questions today? “We are extremely effective about following up with employers on IWOs”; “we absolutely know how many obligors stop making their full payment due each month”; and “yes, we have effective caseload management tools.”

The Alert System provides the county child support professionals with caseload management information that allows them to focus on what action is best for the family and avoid unnecessary next steps in enforcement, such as license suspension.

For more information, contact larry.desbien@state.co.us or 303-866-4460.



Electronic Document Management an Easy Sell for West Virginia

By Charles Letts
OCSE Region III

If you have doubts about why your agency should convert from manual to electronic document management, just ask Kimberly Bentley in the West Virginia Bureau for Child Support Enforcement (BCSE). She'll tell you that the Electronic Document Management program, as it's called, lets workers view files formerly stored in other locations, right at their desk, and access files by a standard taxonomy. The result—better customer service!

But that's not all...Attorneys can download files for court hearings to their laptops, eliminating the need for staff assistance and unnecessary time in the office or file room. All materials are at their fingertips.

Further, electronic filing has reduced administrative costs for paper, postage, file cabinets and storage space. Staff spends less time filing, retrieving, and refileing documents, and searching for “lost” documents, thereby increasing worker productivity.

An Eye on the Prize

BCSE management first looked at the process for handling documents with an eye on increasing usefulness for customers, workers, attorneys, and others who need them. BCSE also wanted to use agency resources most efficiently.

In the manual workflow process, the clerk opened the mail. Workers reviewed piles of hard-copy documents, which later were filed in one of several storage locations, also a manual

process. Other individuals who needed access to the documents would have to physically obtain them from the file locations, and only one party could use a document at a time. And there was always the chance of the inaccurate refileing.

In 2010, BCSE piloted the program in a few counties to scan documents electronically when received. Now, the clerk opens the mail and scans them into the electronic file. The documents are forwarded to the worker's document imaging mailbox, within the document imaging program, at the time of scanning. Workers review the inbox several times a day. (The system also allows administrators to scan non-case-related documents such as time sheets, reports, leave slips, evaluations and contracts.)

To address a concern with instant availability, BCSE developed taxonomy of standard naming and filing of all documents. Users can obtain documents with agency-selected key words. Each document has multiple key words, and therefore, multiple ways to retrieve a document. Categories include fields such as the document name, type and group. The result: no lost documents.

Security also was a prime concern. The system assures that access to confidential files is restricted to certain individuals. Computer passwords and security features assure that the protected information is secure and confidential. Computer servers are regularly backed-up to a secure location.

“Document imaging has been a challenging adjustment, but now is an invaluable asset to the agency,” says Bentley.

For more information, contact Kimberly Bentley at 304-356-4660.

Our Program's Turning Point in Technology



The child support program has a deep culture of innovation and investment in technology. Technology makes it possible to locate parents and enforce support for 17.5 million children.

Technology also can help us identify effective enforcement strategies,

intervene early when payments fall off, and support excellent customer service at every point of contact with our program.

This issue of the *Child Support Report* highlights two of the ways that technology is improving our case management and customer service, through early-intervention “alerts” in Colorado (page 1) and electronic document management in West Virginia (page 2).

We need technology to help us:

- Locate income and assets for the 75 percent of our caseload that does not need hands-on service intervention.
- Identify the 25 percent of parents who lack steady employment and analyze service needs. Technology can help us conduct case analysis, segment our caseload, use data analytics, and track performance data at the caseworker, manager and executive levels. We don't need to impute income on a routine basis anymore. We can develop income profiles of our noncustodial parents. No case should be going to court on a contempt motion without an analysis of the real financial situation of the noncustodial parent.
- Improve customer service for a new generation of parents, many of whom grew up without a parent, have diverse ethnic backgrounds, and get their information through technology. We can expand interactive websites

and voice response systems. We can use cell phone texts and email alerts to parents. We can make applications for services available online for our program and other programs, and link parents to benefit calculators and program navigators. We can develop apps, such as [text4baby](#).

- Develop online staff training and online resource libraries.
- Tell our story differently through the electronic face of our program—not only to each other, but to specific groups of stakeholders, community organizations and the public—through customer-friendly websites, short videos of real parents describing their experiences, and useful online resources.

A final note: According to the USDA [Expenditures on Children by Families](#) report, the costs of child-rearing vary considerably by household income level and age of the child. The [Cost of Raising a Child Calculator](#) can estimate how much it will annually cost to raise a child. This may help your agency work with parents to plan better for overall expenses. Asset-building strategies like those in Texas (see article on page 4) present ways we can encourage both parents to manage their money so they are better able to support their children and improve their own situations.

Please submit a comment on this [blog](#) with a way we might use technology as we head into a new year filled with great potential for our program.



Vicki Turetsky

Tool for Job-Seeking Veterans

Veterans enrolled in VA health care can use the Department of Veterans Affairs online [MyHealthVet](#) portal to download official data about their military training and experience, which can help them find jobs. Veterans can register for a MyHealthVet account at any VA medical center.

For more resources in your work with military and veteran parents, see:

- OCSE webpage [Working with our Military and Veteran Parents](#)
- [December 2011 Child Support Report](#)
- Department of Veterans Affairs [Homeless Veterans website](#)



Texas Integrates Child Support Services, Asset-Building Strategies

By Chris Giangreco

Texas Office of Attorney General Child Support Division

Parents in the child support program can benefit from asset-building services in a variety of ways. Think about a young father who is struggling to complete his education, work and pay child support. The opportunity to receive a match to his savings for educational expenses could help assure that he completes his education and pays his child support.



Take the case of a mother who receives a lump-sum child support payment. With appropriate information and assistance, she could use the lump sum to start her child's college fund.

Because the first step to building assets is managing debt, noncustodial parents whose tax refunds will be intercepted might be more willing to file their returns if they understand the benefit of applying the refund

to their child support arrears. Asset-building programs have the potential to help families in the child support system and improve collections.

Strategies Underway

The Texas Child Support Division (CSD) is integrating asset-building strategies into its core services. The Houston-based Urban Fathers Asset Building project, a partnership among CSD, [Baylor College of Medicine](#) and [Covenant Community Capital](#) Corporation, aims to build young men's fatherhood and financial skills.

As of July 2011, fathers who participate in Baylor's fatherhood programs are offered a workshop to learn about the financial responsibilities of fatherhood, the Texas child support system and the availability of money management services at Covenant Community Capital. Covenant is giving 200 qualifying fathers the opportunity to enter its Smart Savers program to get hands-on experience in money management and budgeting.

The program matches participant's own savings to achieve one of three goals: home ownership, small business development or post-secondary education and training. Fathers who



receive the match must have no child support debt.

A second part of the initiative revolves around collaboration between CSD and RAISE Texas (a statewide association of asset-building practitioners). Building on RAISE Texas' strategy to increase asset-building opportunities for Texans, CSD has begun educating asset-building practitioners about the child support system and ways they can serve child support customers who are seeking money management skills and family financial stability.

RAISE Texas and CSD developed an electronic [toolkit](#) for nonprofit community tax preparation centers that offer free services to lower- and middle-income families during tax season. The centers help families file their taxes, obtain tax credits and access quality financial services. The toolkit contains information and templates for handouts about child support and custody issues relevant to the families that CSD serves. The material encourages custodial and noncustodial parents to follow through on tax filing and helps them understand the interplay of child support and taxes. When tax season begins, every child support customer who calls the CSD will hear a very short message on ways to connect with a local tax center.

Additionally, RAISE Texas recently received a private grant to encourage custodial parents who receive lump-sum child support payments to save a portion in a "tax-incentivized" college savings account. CSD will provide information about the program to child support customers in the three pilot regions—Austin, San Antonio and Bryan/College Station. Financial coaches from local nonprofit organizations will offer

workshops to interested families about setting savings goals. Families who meet their goals will receive a match to their savings.

A number of other ideas are under discussion in Texas and across the country to integrate child support services with asset-building strategies. This new connection has the potential to move the families we serve toward long-term financial stability, while also taking full responsibility for supporting their children.

For more information, contact chris.giangreco@cs.oag.state.tx.us or 512-460-6535.



Baltimore Paves PATH Toward Ensuring a Legal—and Involved—Father for All Children

By Abraham Verghis
Policy Studies Inc.

Baltimore City Office of Child Support

Many attendees at the first community-wide conference for the Baltimore City Child Support Office's paternity establishment program—Paternity at the Hospital (PATH)—were pleasantly surprised to learn they were working toward the same goal. Though several revealed that they came in thinking they were alone in their efforts to guide unmarried parents toward paternity establishment, the conference debunked this misconception. Attendees represented hospitals, feeder clinics, fatherhood programs, legal agencies, and centers dedicated to women's issues.

The process for establishing paternity is deceptively straightforward. Consequently, the misperception exists that paternity establishment is merely a simple administrative function. The outreach experts at PATH appreciate the significant, lifelong benefits that the links between fathers and their children can achieve. From providing financial and medical support to helping children grow up emotionally secure and well-adjusted, fathers can make a world of difference in the lives of their children.

The mission for the PATH conference, therefore, was twofold: 1) bring stakeholder groups together to build partnerships that improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of our shared mission of paternity establishment for all Baltimore City children; and 2) instill a shared vision of the importance of their role in connecting families.

Achieving a Shared Goal

Throughout the conference, Baltimore staff encouraged attendees to form partnerships, emphasizing that our shared goal is not something we need take on individually but rather as a team. The PATH Connector Model (*above*) illustrates this concept.



Gina Higginbotham (left), then-interim executive director for the Maryland child support program, and PATH team members



The PATH Connector Model illustrates Baltimore City's PATH program partnerships among numerous stakeholder groups in the community to promote the establishment of paternity by affidavit.



Along the same line of reasoning, staff also offered a simple message for stakeholders to share with unwed fathers in presenting a consistent, united front: Once they take the step to becoming fathers legally as well as biologically, they almost immediately begin to feel and act differently toward their children, developing emotional bonds and the desire to be responsible parents. Thus the act of establishing paternity can help young, unmarried fathers become better fathers.

Key Conference Takeaways

Attendees were excited to have a ready-built network within the community. With these new connections with other community groups, they now can coordinate and deliver a similar message to unwed parents. Just as important, attendees renewed their spirits with the understanding of the importance of their work in helping to bring and keep families together.

Gateway to Healthy Lives

Establishing paternity encompasses so much more than a simple administrative process to prepare the way for future child support services. It is the gateway to providing children of unmarried parents with a foundation for developing healthy lives and relationships. Studies show that establishing paternity reduces many of the risks children face from having absent fathers, such as drug abuse, obesity and incarceration. Establishing paternity enriches children's lives with a sense of family and belonging in addition to providing them with financial resources and healthcare coverage.

As the PATH team conveyed to community groups at the conference, ours is a noble endeavor that is most efficiently achieved by working together. Establishing paternity gives children the opportunity to thrive, prosper and excel. And this, truly, is what all of us working in child support enforcement strive to accomplish.

For more information, contact Averghis@policy-studies.com or 410-951-8007.

Building Trust through Connecticut's CULTURA



At the radio station (from left): DJ Juan A. Colon, Maria Padilla, Yosley Saxton, Mercedes Fermin and host Felix Viera

At the Telemundo event: Derik Rodriguez, Yosley Saxton, Mercedes Fermin and Delbert Martinez



Since 2007, Connecticut Support Enforcement Services (SES) has offered a Speakers Bureau, now 26 members strong, to conduct outreach events about child support services. The members, drawn from line staff across the state, participate in about 25 events per year. Most popular have been resource and transitional fairs at correctional facilities, high schools and statewide legal services, and for a project for homeless people, the Veteran's Stand Down, grandparent's family days and career fairs.

Two years ago, the Speakers Bureau needed help to reach the state's ever-growing Hispanic community. Assistance came from the OCSE online [Hispanic Resource Center and Toolkit](#), which offers public awareness material in Spanish and lessons in outreach and education to culturally diverse populations.

"As our website and brochures were already available in Spanish, and many field offices were staffed with Spanish-speaking staff, we came to the conclusion that effective outreach to the Hispanic community would not be just about bilingual services, but also about cultural sensitivity. We would need to build trust and strive to have SES become a friendly face within the Hispanic community," says Kate Scordino, SES Hispanic outreach coordinator.

By late 2010, a group of nine staff members with a rich cultural background (Puerto Rican, Colombian and Venezuelan) redesigned the outreach program and named it CULTURA (Committee Uniting Latinos Together Ultimately Raising Awareness) to encompass what they saw as their vision. The program's mission is clear in both languages: "*Nuestra agencia junto con la comunidad Hispania tenemos como mision promover y educar en cuanto a los servicios que ofrecemos*" or "Improve the relationship with the Hispanic community through education and outreach in raising awareness about Support Enforcement Services."

Because of their cultural roots, the group members were familiar with the Hispanic cultures and the barriers between the agency and the community. They translated regularly used forms and a slide presentation into Spanish—"a huge undertaking," says Scordino.

This past June, CULTURA began its renewed outreach campaign with an invitation from the Hispanic Health Council,

a nationally recognized, community-based organization in Hartford, to conduct a session in both English and Spanish to make sure that nothing was "lost in translation." Council Director Virginia Ruiz and her staff were so pleased that she invited the group back to present to 30 additional staff.

Also in June, Maria Padilla met with the TV host and producer for the *El Show de Analeh* on the local Spanish television network. The meeting led to an invitation to tape a segment for the show. Yosley Saxton also met with an account executive from the same network, in October, to discuss taping a public service announcement. By August, CULTURA was on the radio, as Saxton, Mercedes Fermin and Padilla were invited to appear on WPRX 1120 AM's *Hablando en serio con Felix Viera* (Speaking Seriously with Felix Viera).

"The first interview was a huge success!" says Scordino, and CULTURA was invited to come back monthly. In October, the second live interview—"just as successful"—featured Padilla, Janice Bilbraut and Derik Rodriguez. The interviews air live at [www.wprx1120.net](#) from 11 to noon.

In September, CULTURA members Fermin, Saxton, Rodriguez and Delbert Martinez participated in *La Feria de la Familia*, hosted by Telemundo in Hartford and sponsored by large corporations. The six-hour family fair was attended by 15,000 people. They spoke to attendees about child support and judicial matters, and networked with other Latino providers who were pleased that SES had a group that catered to the Hispanic community.

"This fair gave CULTURA the opportunity to show the Hispanic community that SES has the means and desire to assist them and provide them with quality services both in English and Spanish," says Scordino.

"During this new year, we expect many more outreach opportunities for CULTURA," says Scordino, as the nine members have been busy contacting different agencies and media groups. "The members of CULTURA are very dedicated to this program. Their passion and desire to educate the Hispanic community about SES is evident every time they present at an outreach event."

For more information, contact catherine.scordino@jud.ct.gov in Connecticut Support Enforcement Services.

Tribal Director: Enforcement Success Brings Joy to the New Year

By Vincent Owen, Director
Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribe
Office of Child Support Enforcement



Vince Owen

In September 2009 I was offered the position of Director of Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Office of Child Support Enforcement in South Dakota. Having served 14 years in law enforcement, as county sheriff, state trooper and tribal officer, I still had the

burning desire to help people. So

I accepted the job and put away my gun and badge.

In late spring of 2010, I presented the idea of using land sales as an enforcement tool to the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Tribal Council. The council agreed to place child support on the “indebted list” held by the tribal realty office. When a person sells land to the tribe, the realty office sends the name to the child support office. If we respond back that the person owes arrears, the realty office sends us a check for the arrears amount.

Some good news came at the end of 2011 when we received a payment for \$12,860 as a result of a lands sale. It just made my day—to see something you did a year ago show a return in this amount just makes me feel joy.



Knowing that a mother received the collection—and at a perfect time of year—is just one of many reasons I am honored to serve as director. Because I was a recipient of child support, I had always been aware of this office. When I became the director, I was amazed and extremely proud of our tribe and the accomplishments of this office. The amount of work and time it took to start this program was immense.

As I read about its history, I realized how fortunate our tribe has been to have this—one of the original—tribal child support programs. Like many others, I was not aware of this great honor.

The SWOOCSE program helps our children and tribe by offering a variety of services to ensure they receive much needed financial help, and include paternity establishments, locates, court proceedings and wage withholdings. The office has an active caseload of 1,500, and averages 80 cases heard in court per month and 50 DNA tests per year.

In 2010 we were awarded for our accomplishments by SWO Tribal Secretary Hopkins and Tribal Council. We increased our collections from 2009 to 2011 by more than \$110,000, an amount that I believe will continue to rise.

The office is in the late stages of a project that will help us perform the locate function in its entirety. I feel this will also help us speed up the process of finding the noncustodial parents.

New Research: Employment Assistance Leads to Child Support

The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance conducted a pilot employment program to help parents behind in their child support in four communities from 2006 to 2009. The program was part of the state’s Strengthening Families Through Stronger Fathers Initiative. Research found that when disadvantaged fathers received employment assistance, along with other support services, they were more likely to find work and pay their child support than other similarly situated fathers who did not receive these services.

The local child support agencies were involved in this program in a variety of ways. In one site, the child support agency managed the program. In other sites, the child support agencies verified eligibility, educated staff and participants about the child support program, and provided one-on-one case reviews.

During the first year after enrollment, participants earned an average of \$986 more than nonparticipants (a 22-percent increase in earnings for the participants) and paid an average

of \$504 more in child support than nonparticipants (a 38-percent increase in payments).

“Given the success of the pilot, funding this program makes sense,” says Elaine Sorensen of the Urban Institute’s Income and Benefits Policy Center, in her brief titled “[New York Initiative Helps Fathers Increase their Earnings and Child Support.](#)”

The brief and [full report](#) are on the Urban Institute website.



Indiana Prosecutors' Forums

The Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council (91 attorneys) recently conducted a series of regional county Best Practices meetings throughout the state, modeled after OCSE's "Urban Jurisdictions meetings" sponsored by Region V.

Begun in 2009, the annual Best Practices meetings bring together Marion, Lake, Allen and St. Joseph counties. Participants look at common challenges to improving performance and share effective practices.

The recent meetings centered on the OCSE bubble chart, with prosecutors sharing family-centered programs, such as interagency work-referral programs with courts, prison outreach programs where noncustodial parents are given information on their rights regarding child support (modification and assistance in getting the paperwork filed), and parenting time/mediation referral programs.



Karla Mantia (left), Title IV-D Policy Liaison, Indiana Prosecuting Attorneys Council; and Kathy Dvorak, Deputy Prosecutor, St. Joseph County Prosecutor's Office, shared the OCSE bubble chart, which illustrates the child support program's core mission and family-centered approach to delivering innovative services across six interrelated areas.

Guam's First Employer Symposium

Bobbi Cepeda, director of the Guam Child Support Enforcement Division, addresses 150 attendees at the division's first employer symposium last fall in Mangilao. Titled "A Partnership that Works," the symposium informed employers about the laws and procedures of the child support program and forged a stronger partnership with all hiring sectors of the community. The symposium welcomed any and all employers, including construction companies, government agencies and retail outlets, and all were eager to attend.



Judicial 'Bench Cards'



Judges and the judiciary have a new resource on the OCSE website. Eight bench cards under the title **Child Support and the Judiciary** give definitions for establishing paternity and child support orders, issuing realistic and enforceable orders, ordering retroactive support, entering default orders, modifying support orders, and applying the servicemembers Civil Relief Act.



Research Shows Benefits of Distribution to Families

By Dvora Wilensky
OCSE

Even in a time of budget challenges, the child support program continues to evolve into a family-centered program that promotes child well-being and family self-sufficiency. One of the largest social services programs in the country, it serves 17.5 million children and their families. Since 1999 collections have increased by about two-thirds. In FY 2010 the program collected \$26.6 billion, distributing 94 percent to families.

Despite the budget challenges, our program can help provide long-term financial stability to children as they grow up. The program is especially critical for the poor and deeply poor families. Child support payments make up 40 percent of poor custodial families' income. For deeply poor families that live at 50 percent of the poverty level, child support makes up 62 percent of their income.

Requirement and Options

Over the years, the child support community has moved away from welfare cost recovery and toward family distribution of child support payments. The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) gives states distribution options to ensure that more money goes to families and less to the state. For states that select a family distribution option, the federal government waives its right to its share of those collections. By implementing one or more of the options, many state child support programs have prioritized family payments to help families become and stay self-sufficient.

The DRA included one requirement—that a family receiving TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) assigns its rights to child support for during-assistance arrears only (arrears accrued while the family was on TANF). Before the DRA, TANF recipients assigned to the state arrears that accumulated before and during the assistance period.

Back in 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act reflected a political compromise that “split the baby” between welfare reimbursement and family distribution approaches by requiring TANF families to agree to a complicated set of “permanent,” “temporary” and “conditional” assignments of support depending on whether support was owed before or during the TANF assistance period. Since DRA, states and territories can no longer require families to assign their pre-assistance arrears.

The first DRA post-TANF option allows states to use a federal tax refund offset collection to pay down the family arrears before the state debt in former-assistance cases. This option removes the special treatment of federal tax refund offsets. Under the option, federal tax offset collections would be treated like any other collection—first distributing to current support, then to arrears. Six states chose this option: Alaska, Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Vermont, Virgin Islands and West Virginia.



The second option under post-TANF distribution is pass-through for former-assistance cases where states may pass through all collections to families. So rather than the state retaining the collections to reimburse the state and federal governments, the full child support payment goes to the family. Wisconsin elected this option.

A third option in DRA is pass-through in current-assistance cases. As a term of TANF eligibility, a family must assign to the state all rights to child support. That is, while the family is receiving TANF benefits, the state may retain all child support payments to reimburse TANF benefits; the retained payments reduce the arrears owed to the state. Under DRA, however, states have the option to pass through child support payments to the family. While states may pass through 100 percent of collections to families, the federal government will waive its share of collections only up to a \$100 pass-through for one child and a \$200 pass-through for two or more children. For the federal government to waive the right to its share, the state must disregard the pass-through amount when calculating income for TANF eligibility. Twenty-four states pass through and disregard some amount of collections to families.

The last DRA option is discontinuation of older assignments. If a state agrees to discontinue an assignment, it waives its right to the arrears, which then are paid to the family when collected. States have the option to discontinue pre-assistance arrears (arrears that accumulated before the family went on TANF) and during-assistance arrears that accumulated before 1997. The state may also discontinue arrears that accumulated after 1997, or discontinue both sets of arrears.

Child Support Report



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