



The Child Support Enforcement Program (CSE) is an intergovernmental partnership promoting economic stability for children with parents who live apart. CSE is one of the most successful health and human services programs today. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), the program currently serves almost 16 million children nationwide and collects \$5.26 for every \$1 in public funds invested. Only the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid reach more kids. Collecting financial support owed to the child by the non-custodial parent continues to be the core mission of the program, but it does much more.

Nationally, child support becomes ever more important as family compositions continue to change. A NCSEA review of data found:

- A Pew Research Center's analysis of Census data finds that a record 40% of all households with children include mothers who are either the sole or primary breadwinner.ⁱ
- Sixty-three percent of those households (8.6 million) are headed by single mothers, with an annual median income of \$23,000.ⁱⁱ
- The share of single mom households has more than tripled in the past five decades, from 7% to 25%.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The share of never married mothers among all single mothers has increased from 4% in 1960 to 44% in 2011.^{iv}
- Custodial mothers with incomes below poverty (31.8%) is double that of custodial fathers.^v
- While there are about 11.8 million custodial mothers, there are also 2.6 million custodial fathers - - of which 674,000 are due child support.^{vi}

The changing nature of the modern family makes the financial support provided by the program even more important.

- Efficiently administered, ***the program collected \$28.5 billion*** from non-custodial parents in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2015 and ***distributed 93 percent of collections directly to families.***^{vii}
- Payments have a huge impact on child poverty. Child support received by families is ***39% of the income*** of those headed by single poor mothers and ***reduces their poverty rate by nearly 25%.***
- The Urban Institute has estimated that ***\$4 in child support expenditures reduces spending in public programs by \$5.***
- OMB has characterized the child support program as “one of the highest rated block/formula grants of all reviewed programs government-wide....”





For every dollar the government spends on enforcement, \$5.26 is collected in child support.

- In 2015, 790,000 children would have been considered “poor” had they had not received child support, increasing child poverty by 7 percent^{viii}. Most of these children would have been classified as living in “deep poverty” as a result of losing their child support income^{ix}.
- In addition to benefiting children, 593,000 adults would have been considered “poor” according if their families had not received child support^x. Just like the children, most of these adults would have lived in deep poverty if their families had not received child support.

ⁱ Pew Research Center, "Breadwinner Moms," May 29, 2013, p.1.

ⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 1.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ibid., p. 4.

^{iv} Ibid., p. 4.

^v U.S. Census, "Custodial Mothers & Fathers & Their Child Support: 2011," October 2013, p.1.

^{vi} Ibid., p. 3.

^{vii} Dept. of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Preliminary Report 2015

^{viii} Renwick, T., & Fox L. (2016). The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau. P60-258(RV)

^{ix} Sorensen, E. (2010). Child Support Plays an Increasingly Important Role for Poor Custodial Families. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

^xRenwick, T., & Fox L. (2016). The Supplemental Poverty Measure: 2015. Suitland, MD: U.S. Census Bureau. P60-258(RV)

