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Quick Facts: Child Support Enforcement

This Quick Facts guide provides information about enforcement of child support orders and what happens when non-custodial parents fall behind in their orders.

The Child Support Enforcement Program¹ is a successful federal-state partnership and a key component in promoting economic stability for families. In FY 2015 \$34.1 billion dollars was collected in 14.7 million cases for 15.9 million children².

The most important enforcement tool is the income withholding order. This type of order is part of each state's law and includes a provision that it must be put into effect immediately, with limited exceptions, so that the child support can be deducted from the wages before the balance is paid to the employee. If the parent changes jobs and it is reported by the employer as a new hire, that information is available to the states and the income withholding order is sent to subsequent employers.

The Program utilizes numerous additional enforcement tools, broken down as follows:

Income Withholding 72 % - \$24.5 billion
Federal and State Tax Offsets 5.8% - \$2.0 billion
Unemployment Compensation 1.4% - \$462 million
Collections from other states 4.5% - \$1.5 billion
Collections from other countries .015% - \$5.0 million
Other collections listed below 16.6% - \$5.7 billion

Passport Denial	Insurance Intercept	Drivers License Suspension
Lottery Intercept	Professional License Suspension	Bank Liens
Real Estate Liens	Civil Contempt	Credit Bureau Reporting
Gambling Proceeds	Criminal Prosecution	

It is during difficult economic times that the Child Support Program's mission of getting regular payments to families becomes even more difficult and at the same time more critical, as front line staff tries to balance non-custodial parent's difficulties with the children's immediate financial needs.

¹ Created by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act

² http://ht.pdf.tp://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy2015_preliminary.