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Quick Facts: Enforcing Child Support Orders and Collecting Past-Due Obligations through the Passport Denial Program

This Quick Facts guide provides information about Passport Denial

The Child Support Enforcement Program¹ is a successful federal-state-tribal partnership and a key component in promoting economic stability for families. One effective remedy for collecting past-due support is the Passport Denial Program.

Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) submits the noncustodial parent to the U.S. Department of State for passport denial when:

- the state IV-D child support agency submits a noncustodial parent with arrearages exceeding the threshold (\$2,500) to OCSE's debtor file; or
- the state submits an update to an existing case(s) that increases the noncustodial parent's arrears to more than \$2,500 and the state has not excluded the noncustodial parent from passport denial.

The Department of State denies a certified individual's passport at the time of application or revokes the passport when he or she uses a passport service. Currently, the Department of State can only revoke (physically take) a noncustodial parent's passport when the passport agency/U.S. embassy has the passport in hand and is:

- renewing an existing passport
- adding pages to an existing passport
- repairing/reissuing a damaged passport
- changing a name or updating a picture
- accepting an existing passport as proof of identification

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





Although participation in the passport denial program is a state plan requirement, states can release a noncustodial parent's passport on a case-by-case basis. Because a passport is valid for 10 years, states carefully review the circumstances of each case before authorizing OCSE to notify the Department of State to release the passport hold. Parents owing support are not automatically removed from the Passport Denial program even if their arrearages fall below the \$2,500 threshold.

Since the implementation of this program in 1998, states have reported the following statistics²:

- \$365 million in cumulative collections
- \$423,890 largest individual lump sum collection
- \$5,217 is the average per collection
- \$40.7 million reported in 2007 (highest collection year)
- March, 2016 was record high month with over \$3 million reported

Passport denial is a proven and critical tool for collecting past-due support, particularly when a noncustodial parent's income is not subject to withholding or when other enforcement means have not resulted in payments. For more information, visit the OCSE [website](#).

²As of January 2015, information from the federal OCSE. States voluntarily report passport denial numbers to OCSE. Information provided does not reflect the actual amount states collected through direct collections or the withholding orders and payment plans they established as a result of the program.

