



**National Child Support Enforcement Association**  
**Voice for the child support community.**

# **MEDIA KIT**

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### **WHO WE ARE**

NCSEA serves the child support community worldwide through professional membership communications, public awareness, and advocacy to enhance the financial, medical and emotional support that parents provide for their children.

- **NCSEA's membership includes line/managerial/executive child support staff at the state, local, Tribal and international level; state, local, Tribal and international child support agencies; child support judges; court masters; hearing officers; government and private attorneys; social workers; advocates; educators; researchers; and corporations that partner with government to provide child support services.**

### **WHAT WE DO**

Advocate on behalf of children by promoting sound public policy and allocation of resources to support implementation of those policies.

- **In its advocacy capacity, NCSEA testifies on Capitol Hill, provides written testimony on existing or proposed legislation and conducts Congressional briefings on child support issues. In the area of ongoing policy analysis NCSEA's Policy & Government Relations Committee works diligently to deliberate the issues, craft the Association's position in the form of policy resolutions and inform membership/stakeholders on the status of key bills before Congress.**

**More →**



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### ***MORE OF WHAT WE DO***

**Advocate for and enhance professionalism among child support workforce through nationally recognized conferences, seminars and forums.**

- **NCSEA's Annual Training Conference & EXPO is the premier national training and networking opportunity for child support professionals from across the country and around the world. Each year the Association also sponsors a Policy Forum & Training Conference and conducts a series of Web-Talks bringing virtual learning opportunities to those in the field. NCSEA has also hosted two international child support training conferences fostering cross-border cooperation.**
- **Instill public trust and confidence in the child support system by publicizing child support program successes and the dedication and professionalism of service providers.**
- **Provide timely and accurate information about child support issues to public officials, child support professionals and agencies, media representatives, strategic partners and the general public.**
- **Educate parents and other stakeholders about the services provided by the child support community.**
- **With the largest roster of industry experts and the greatest geographical reach, NCSEA is a widely recognized resource for information on every aspect of child support.**



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**CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT OVERVIEW**

**Child Support Enforcement - Public Sector**

***When it began – Who it serves***

- Established in 1975 under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.
- Designed as a joint federal state and local partnership, the program’s goal is to ensure that children are financially supported by both their parents.
- At the federal level, the U. S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Administration for Children and Families provides technical assistance and funding to states and Tribes through the Office of Child Support Enforcement.
- The program operates in all 54 state and territories and is usually run by state and local human service agencies, often with the help of prosecuting attorneys, other law enforcement offices and officials of family or domestic relations courts. Twelve Native American Tribes operate comprehensive Tribal child support enforcement programs.
- Child support enforcement services are available automatically at no cost to families receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and to families not receiving TANF who apply. For these families, states must charge an application fee of up to \$25, but may pay this fee from state funds. Some states may also charge for the cost of services rendered. Families *formerly* on public assistance comprise the largest portion of the caseload.

**Public Sector Child Support Caseload  
FY 2003 – FY 2007**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>Caseload (millions)</b>
2003	15.9
2004	15.9
2005	15.9
2006	15.8
2007	15.8

Source: U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement  
FY 2007 Preliminary Report



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### **Child Support Enforcement - Public Sector**

#### ***What services it provides***

- **Locating Non-custodial Parents**  
Identifying and verifying the location of the non-custodial parent is the first step in the child support enforcement process. A variety of location techniques ranging from automated database matches to skip tracing are employed.
- **Establishing Paternity**  
In cases involving children of unmarried parents, paternity must be legally determined prior to establishing an order for child support. Paternity can be established by an administrative order of a child support agency in some states, a court in all states and/or by both parents signing a voluntary paternity acknowledgment form. Establishing paternity is an important, crucial step toward securing an emotional and financial connection between the father and child. It also opens the door to Social Security, pension/retirement benefits and health insurance, provides an opportunity for extended family ties and facilitates access to medical history and genetic information.

#### **QUICK FACT**

- **1.7 million paternities were established or acknowledged in FY 2007.**

- **Establishing Child Support and Medical Support Orders**  
An order for child support can be established either through a court-based, judicial process or an administrative process handled by the child support agency. Either way, the amount a parent should pay is based on mandatory child support guidelines set by forth by each state's legislature and court statutes. Health insurance coverage can also be ordered.

#### **QUICK FACT**

- **Over 1.1 million child support orders were established in FY 2007.**



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### Child Support Enforcement - Public Sector

#### *What services it provides*

- **Enforcing Child Support Orders**

**Income** withholding is the premier child support collection tool. As a result, a strong partnership has been forged between the nation's 6.4 million employers, state child support agencies and the federal government. Under New Hire Reporting, employers report newly hired employees within 20 days to state child support agencies enabling them to locate non-custodial parents, establish court orders and institute income withholding for cases that need them, implement income withholding for cases with valid court orders and/or redirect an income withholding order when a non-custodial parent changes jobs.

States forward this employment data to the *National Directory of New Hires*, an automated centralized information repository operated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Child Support Enforcement. Since nearly 30% of the nation's child support cases payable through a state agency involve parents who live or work in a different state from their children, the information is used to assist states by quickly locating a parent so that child support can be obtained for children.

#### **QUICK FACT**

- **Income withholding is the source for nearly 70% of child support collected across the country.**

**Court Action** – bringing contempt of court actions against parents who do not comply with their child support court order.

**Seizing Tax Refunds** – intercepting Federal and State tax refunds to pay child support arrears

#### **QUICK FACT**

- **For tax year 2006 \$1.5 billion in overdue child support was collected from tax intercepts.**

**Credit Bureau Reporting** – reporting parents owing past-due child support to credit bureaus.



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### Child Support Enforcement - Public Sector

#### *What services it provides*

- **Enforcing Child Support Orders (cont.)**

**License Suspension/Revocation** – suspending or revoking drivers, professional, business, occupational and recreational licenses of parents owing past-due support unless they come into compliance.

**Denying Passports** – certifying cases with past-due support exceeding \$2,500 to the U.S. State Department for passport denial.

#### **QUICK FACT**

- **Since 1998 the Passport Denial program has collected over \$146 million in lump sum payments.**

**“Freeze and Seize”** – using Financial Institution Data Matching to identify accounts of delinquent parents and use existing state laws to place a lien on and seize all or part of the accounts to pay child support arrears.

**Criminal Non-Support/Project Save Our Children** – referring chronic delinquent cases with large arrears for federal prosecution.

- **Collecting and Distributing Child Support**

In order to streamline payment processing and expedite distribution of support to families, states are implementing centralized collection and distribution centers (State Disbursement Units or SDUs) so employers and non-custodial parents can send payments to one location.

#### ***How much \$***

**\$24.8.9 billion collected for children in fiscal year 2007!**

#### ***By Whom***

**Over 60,000 full time equivalent (FTE) staff working in the states and jurisdictions. Nationally, the amount of child support collected per FTE was \$413,000.**

Source: U. S. Dept. of Health and Human Services  
Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement  
FY 2007 Preliminary Report



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### **Child Support Enforcement - Public/Private Partnerships**

Before the advent of the child support enforcement program under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, virtually all enforcement of child support obligations was accomplished in the private sector through civil actions using private attorneys. Since that time, state government programs have assumed the primary responsibility for child support enforcement. However, public/private partnerships on behalf of child support are nothing new. Public sector child support programs have relied on the private sector for certain services needed in the process of enforcing child support. Services such as genetic testing for paternity establishment have been supplied nearly exclusively by the private sector. More recently, comprehensive automated system development, full-service program operation, location, employer new hire reporting, legal services, voice information response systems and customer service call centers are principal areas which state government programs have contracted out to private sector firms.

### **Child Support Enforcement - Private Sector**

Private sector resources devoted to child support enforcement are also available. Private attorneys continue to play an important role in enforcing child support obligations on behalf of individual clients. Private firms specializing in child support collection are increasing being employed by custodial parents to obtain past-due support. Operating on a contingency basis, private firms locate non-custodial parents and their assets, file liens on assets, file income withholding orders with employers of non-custodial parents and initiate legal action when necessary.

### **Child Support Enforcement - Promoting Parental Responsibility**

How does the child support community encourage fathers to connect with their children and stay involved emotionally *and* financially? Examples abound across the country; some are:

- Young Fathers/Responsible Fathers programs
- Paternity Opportunity Programs
- Dads Make a Difference programs
- Responsible Fatherhood demonstration projects
- Partnership for Fragile Families Initiative projects
- Access and Visitation programs
- Child Support/Child Care/Head Start Collaboration



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### Child Support Enforcement – *Hot Topic 2008*

#### Impact of the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA)

The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) went into effect in October 2007. This legislation contained child support provisions that repealed the long standing authority for states to reinvest their earned performance-based incentives as base for federal matching funds to support improvements to the program. NCSEA and its strategic partners have consistently urged that Congress restore the funding lost by state and local governments as a result of the provisions of the DRA. Bills in both the House and Senate have been introduced that would restore funding; however, until either full or temporary restoration of federal matching funds to the child support program takes place states and the children and families they serve are gravely impacted. Impact may be summarized as follows:

- **Income in the form of child support collections will decrease at the rate of \$ 1 billion per year.** Child support collections are a major source of income to all families, but particularly to low income single parent families and loss of those collections will force those families to use other economic services of state government such as Medicaid, TANF, Food Stamps, and housing assistance. You should note that 17 million children in single parent families currently receive and depend upon child support services.
- **The child support collections are quickly reinvested in the local economy for basic needs.** Data from states and financial institutions indicate that at least 97% of all support payments are spent within the month of collection.
- **Programs that help fathers in securing employment and pay child support will be curtailed or eliminated.** The reduction of fathers' income both increases the likelihood of reduced support collections and decreases taxes to federal and state governments.
- **In other programs, expenditures will increase as the safety net is torn.** Research shows that the collection of child support actually reduces the expenditures in need-based programs such as Medicaid, Food Stamps, and housing assistance.
- **State and local government will begin to downsize the work force in local and state offices.** The reduction in resources will result in a reduction in the number of orders established, thus beginning a long term reduction in support collections for families. This reduction in employment will worsen the economy overall.
- **Reversing the child support cuts would produce a timely, well-targeted stimulus.** Economists agree that child support collections are a major contributor to the economy and the efforts of state and local agencies is highly efficient. Every dollar spent by the federal government produces \$6.50 in collections for working families.