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Quick Facts: Child Support Enforcement

This Quick Facts guide provides information about initiatives through the child support program centered on families.

The Child Support Program¹ is a successful federal-state-tribal partnership whose mission is to promote economic stability for children whose parents live apart. In FY 2016, \$32.7 billion dollars was collected in 14.5 million cases for 15.6 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 75 % - \$24.6 billion
- Federal and State Tax Offsets 5.7% - \$2.0 billion
- Unemployment Compensation 1.3% - \$451 million
- Collections from other states 4.5% - \$1.5 billion
- Collections from other countries .015% - \$5.0 million

Other collections listed below make up the remaining 16.6%, totaling \$5.1 billion:

- | | | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Passport Denial | Insurance Intercept | Driver’s License Suspension |
| Lottery Intercept | Professional License Suspension | Bank Liens |
| Real Estate Liens | Civil Contempt | Credit Bureau Reporting |
| Gambling Intercept | Criminal Prosecution | |

The ability to collect regular payments from non-custodial parents is related to the capability of obtaining steady employment. During difficult economic times the Child Support Program’s mission becomes challenging and at the same time more crucial, as front-line staff try to balance non-custodial parents’ difficulties by introducing them to Workforce Initiatives that could facilitate the opportunity to obtain employment so their children’s immediate financial needs are timely met.

¹ Title IV, Part D of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 651, *et seq.*)

² Includes collections received from IV-D and Non-IV-D child support cases processed through the SDU. Source: OCSE-34 Line 4a column G and Line 8 column G

