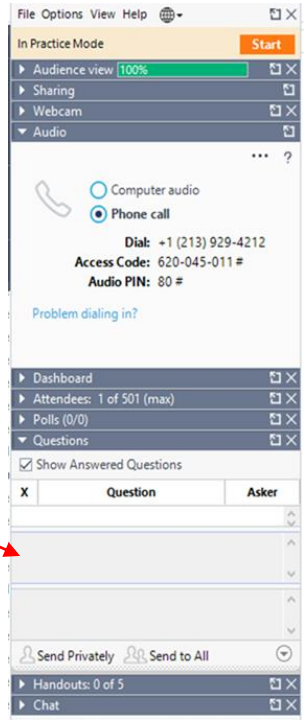
Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research

NCSEA Web-Talk

June 20, 2019

Housekeeping

- **Questions**
  - Time for Q & A after the presentation
  - Submit using the “Questions” box on your GoToWebinar dashboard
  - Submit throughout the presentation and we’ll fit them in where we can!



Presenters

Lauren Antelo, Senior Social Science Analyst, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Asaph Glosser, Principal Associate, MEF Associates

Letitia Logan Passarella, Research Director, University of Maryland School of Social Work

Presenters

Susan Brown, Director, Child Support Enforcement Agency, Franklin County, Ohio

Laura Buehrle, BICS Modification Specialist, Support Officer II, Child Support Enforcement Agency, Franklin County, Ohio

Goals of our presentation:

- Share the child support research agenda and how to use it.
- Share how one researcher partners with state human services programs to provide timely, policy-relevant analysis.
- Share how a child support director and child support caseworker engage with research and incorporate it into their program and daily work.

Why a research agenda?

- To move the child support program forward we need evidence on what works and what doesn't work.
- A healthy research environment is supported by a large and diverse community.
- Much of the child support research has been government funded and is getting dated.

Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research

Asaph Glosser
MEF Associates
June 20, 2019

Project Overview

Building the Next Generation of Child Support Research

- **Child Support Research Agenda**
- The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act at 20: Examining Trends in State Performance
- Independent Contractors and Nontraditional Workers: Implications for the Child Support Program

Funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of The Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation

Research on the Child Support Program

- Child support is a data rich program
  - How to make it evidence-driven

- Research can inform policymaking and program operations
  - Federal funding has been primary driver
  - Much of the research is dated

What's next?

Defining a Child Support Research Agenda

- Engaging stakeholders
- Identifying key issues facing the field
- How can research inform policy and practice?

So, what exactly is a Research Agenda?

What we do and don't know

Key issues facing the field over the next 10 years

Ways research can improve practice

Ideas the funders (not just the feds) can prioritize

Ideas that inspire researchers

Let’s Take a Look

https://childsupportresearch.org/

Questions

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Child Support Research: The Maryland Partnership

Letitia Passarella

Research Director

University of Maryland School of Social Work

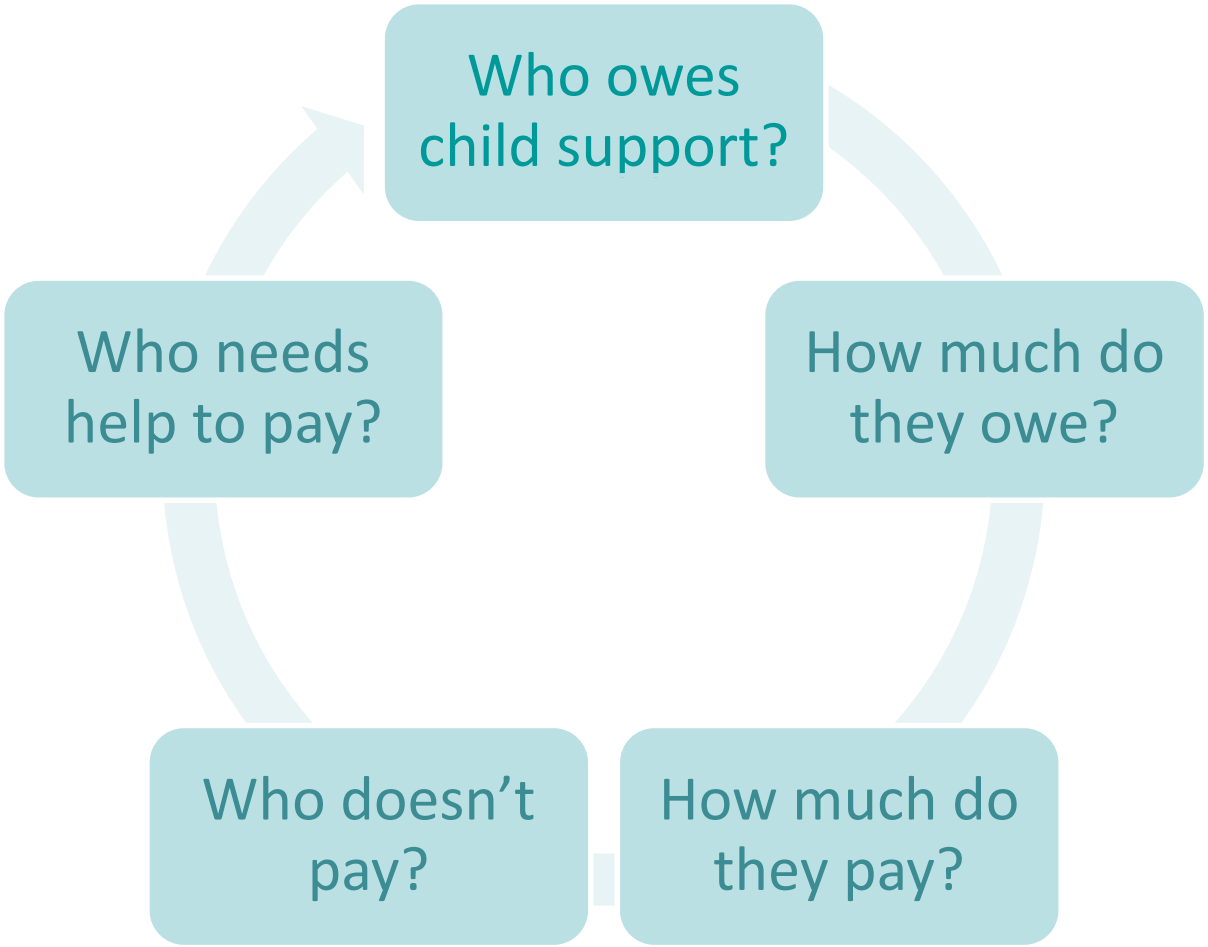
University of Maryland research is made possible through a partnership with the Child Support Administration of the Maryland Department of Human Services.

About Us

We have partnered with the Maryland Child Support Administration for over 25 years

to provide empirical research and management reports that shape and enhance policies and programs for Maryland's families.

Policy Relevant Questions



Research to Policy Implementation

Guidelines Committee

Determine changes to child support guidelines and family law.

Low-income obligor subcommittee

Chair sub-committee to address issues related to low-income obligors

Legislation

Submitted legislation during 2019 session. Attempt will be made again in 2020.

Research to Policy Implementation

Guidelines for Low-Income Families

For incomes below $1,250 per month…

Current Guidelines	• $20 to $150
Proposal	• Specify guideline amounts

Data Supporting Proposal

- **40%** of orders were **above $150**
- **33%** of orders were for **$162 or $163**
- Determined that guidance is necessary

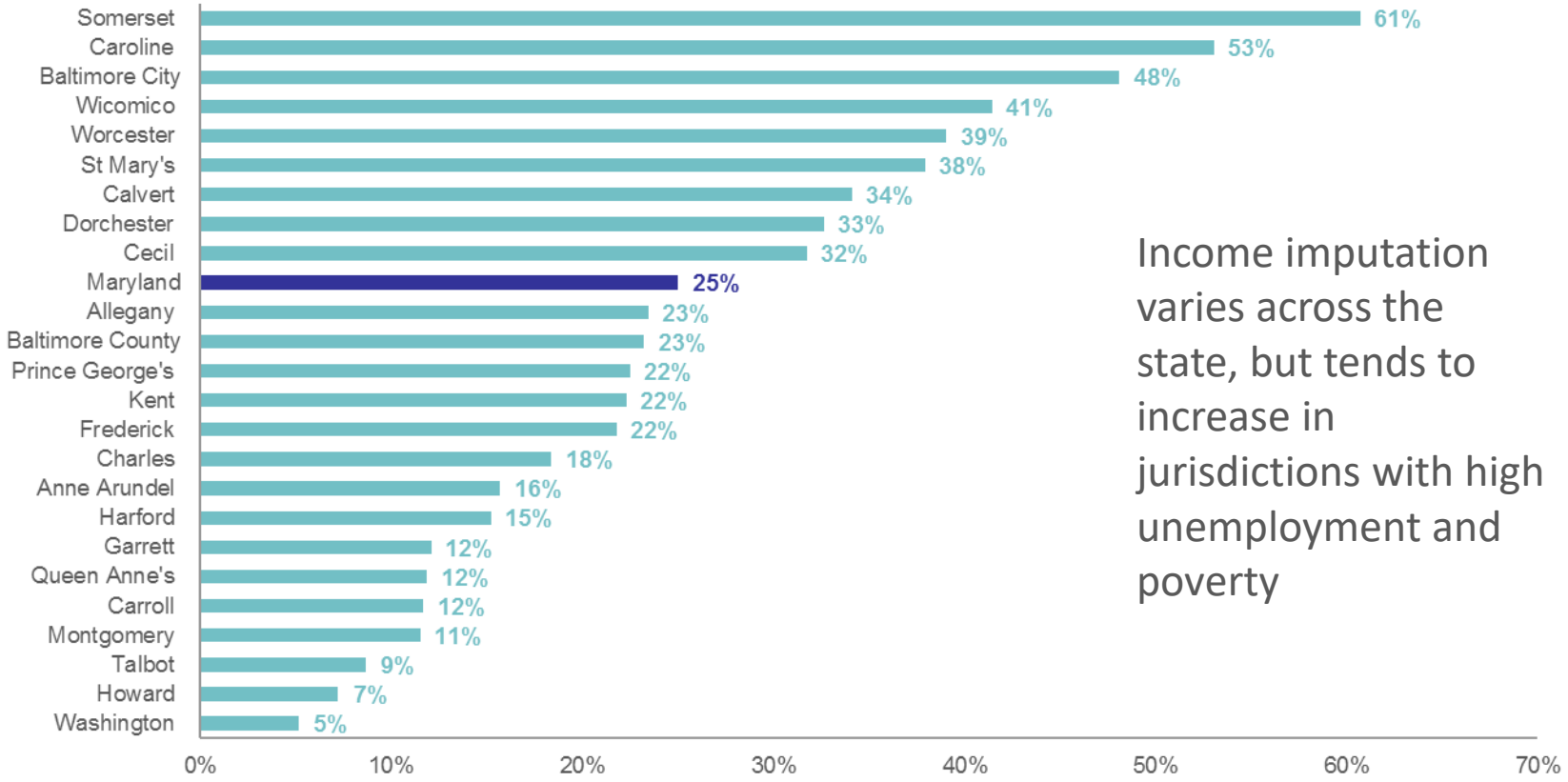
Research to Policy Implementation

Income Imputation

Current Family Law	• Does not define voluntary impoverishment
Current Practice	• Income imputation is routine for unemployed individuals
Proposal	• Include definition in MD Family Law & update potential income

Research to Policy Implementation

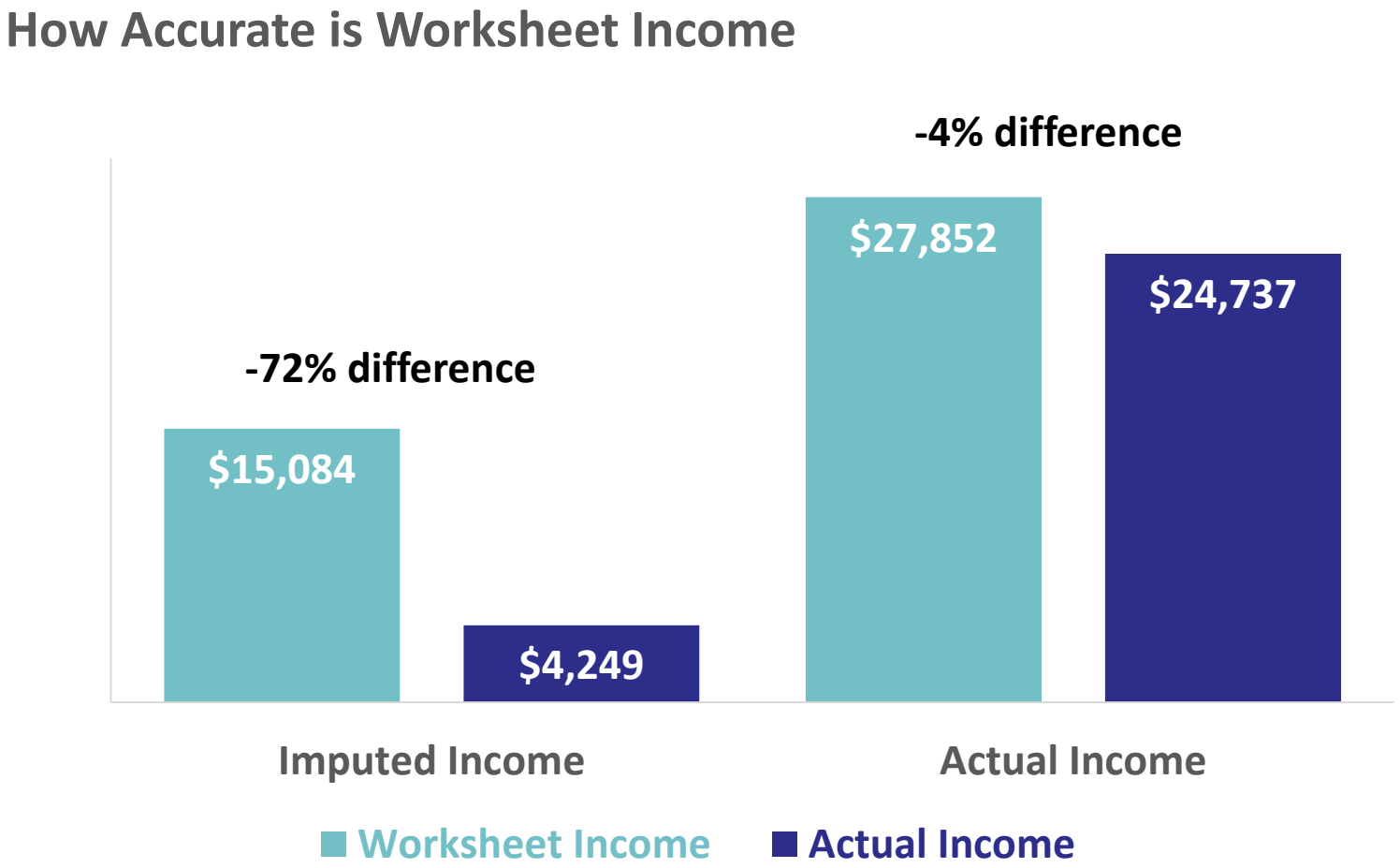
Income Imputation



Income imputation varies across the state, but tends to increase in jurisdictions with high unemployment and poverty

Research to Policy Implementation

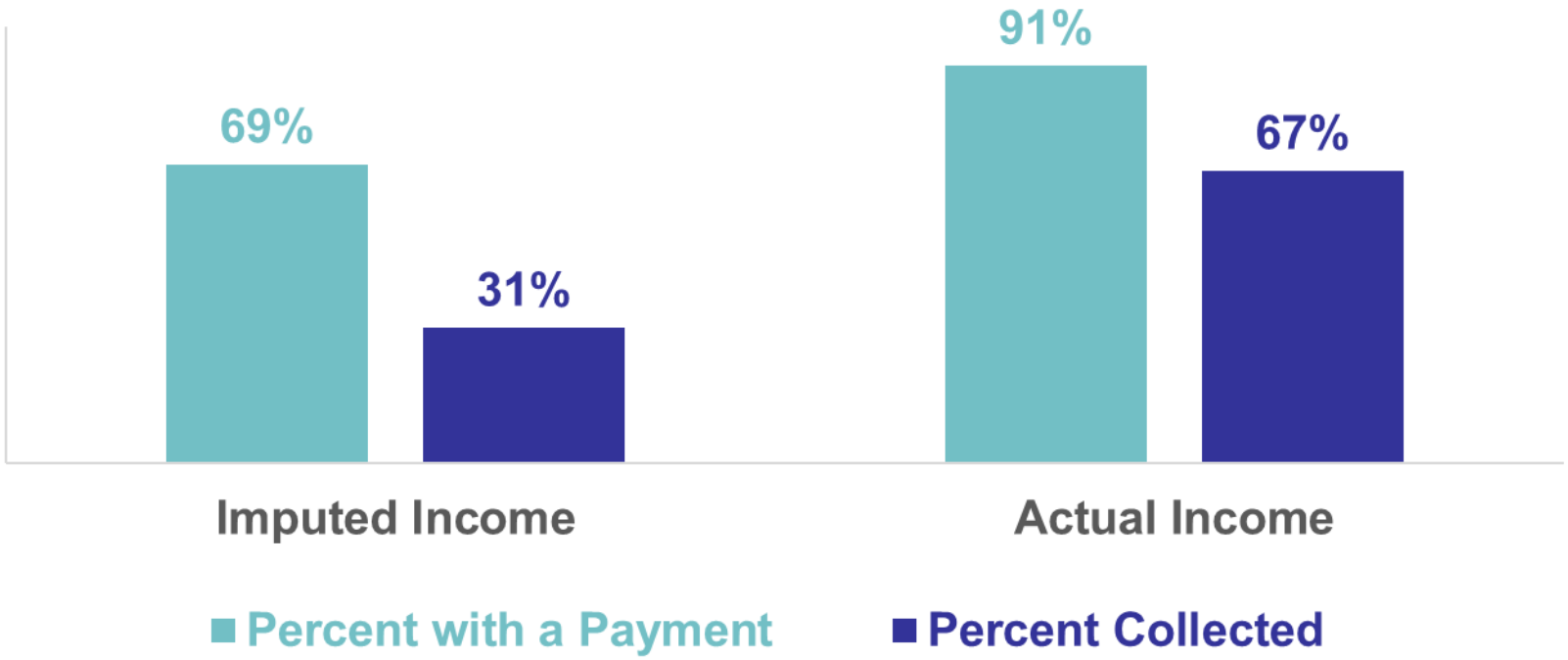
Income Imputation



Research to Policy Implementation

Income Imputation

What do collections look like?



Franklin County
Board of Commissioners
CHILD SUPPORT
ENFORCEMENT
1803

Every resident, every day.

Data and Research Driven Policy Development

"A high performing child support program is evidence based"

- Background – July, 2012 Behavioral Economics in Human Services Peer Practicum in Washington D.C. – The Behavioral Interventions to Advance Self-Sufficiency Project (BIAS)
- Understanding Perspectives - Behavioral Interventions in Child Support (BICS) (2014 – 2019)
- Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC) (2016-2021)
- Families Forward Demonstration (FFD) (2017-2021)
- "The Journey: A Parent's Voice" Early Intervention Blended Parenting and Employment Program ("The Journey") (2019 – ongoing)
- Access and Visitation Grant – Mediated CS and Parenting Time (2012 – ongoing)
- Experience Management Program (2018 – ongoing)
- Strategic Planning Initiative (2017 – on-going)

Dissemination, Incorporation and Operationalization

- “All Data is Good Data” – a determination of allocation of resources
- A Good Communication Plan is Key
- Findings are the Basis for Change in Operating Philosophy and Drives Training Development, Leadership and Staff Buy-In
- Operationalize Successful Outcomes

Staff Perspective

Benefits to Program Staff

- Greater Understanding of Research and Demonstration Projects and How It Impacts our Work
- Greater Organizational Structure Understanding – in navigating the layers, rules and requirements of government and its systems
- Greater Self Awareness
- Greater Client Understanding and Context
- Impact on Agency Staff Perception of Their Work
- Awareness of Resources to Support Clients

Key Take-Aways

- Federal, state, local and tribal agencies can use the research agenda.
- Child support agencies are poised to engage with and consume research to better their programs and policies.
- Explore ways to engage with the research community:
  - NCSEA Research Subcommittee and webpage
  - National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS)
  - Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management (APPAM)
  - Research and Evaluation Conference on Self-Sufficiency (RECS)

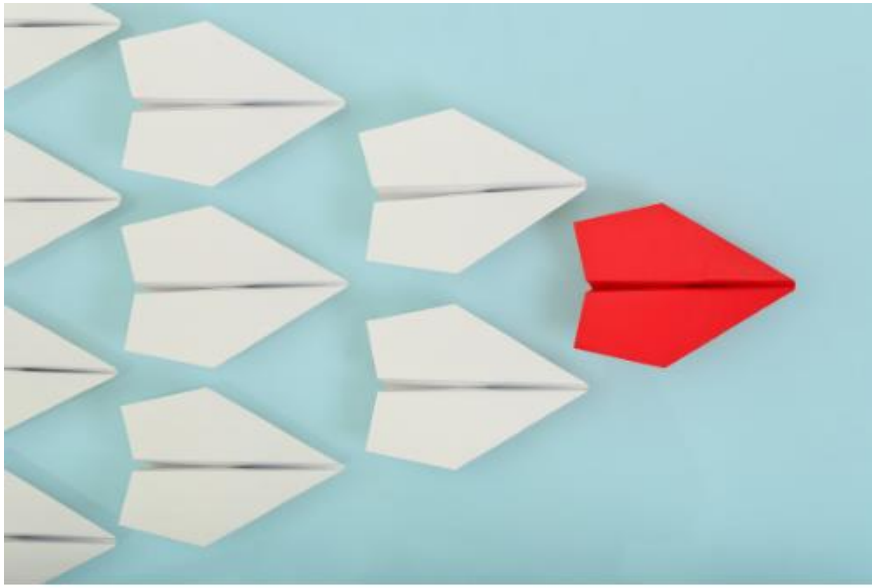
Thank you!

Questions?

Please take our short survey! It will take three minutes and help us prepare for future web-talks.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WT062019

Upcoming Events



Lessons Learned on Leadership

Thursday, July 18, 2019
2-3:00 PM EST
Registration: FREE Members, $159 Non-Members

Register online at www.ncsea.org

FOMO

(FEAR OF MISSING OUT?)

LEADERSHIP SYMPOSIUM 2019

AUGUST 11-14, 2019 • MINNEAPOLIS

LEADING *FORWARD*:
Meeting Challenges with Vision & Service