



Updated May 2020

Quick Facts: Members of the Military

This Quick Facts guide provides information about child support issues for military members.

The Child Support Program¹ is a successful federal-state-tribal partnership that seeks to promote economic stability for children whose parents live apart. It serves one in five children nationwide² and collects \$5.12 for every \$1 in public funds invested. In FY 2018, \$34 billion was collected in 13.9 million cases for 14.7 million children.³

Cases where one or both parents have served in the military pose unique case processing challenges for the child support program. This document focuses on the basics of working with members of the military, highlights current military programs, and discusses the keys to successful partnerships in assisting the veteran population.

Over the last decade, the United States military has mobilized more troops than at any time since World War II. Many of these service members have returned home, and thousands more will follow. As the military prepares for continued troop draw down, child support agencies also need to plan for how they can help these men and women transition to civilian life.⁴ Military families face unique challenges because of deployments or other lengthy separations. State child support programs help by responding quickly to the changing circumstances of both parents so that support orders remain reasonable and fair.⁵

At the federal level, the Office of Child Support Enforcement provides resources to states and tribes and works with the Department of Veterans Affairs and the American Bar Association to help homeless veterans address unresolved child support issues and other challenges to stable residence.⁶

Best practices from around the country include child support programs:

- Collaborating with nationally recognized veterans' organizations to develop policies and procedures to better serve members of the military.

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

² https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/2018_infographic_national.pdf

³ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/resource/fy-2018-preliminary-data-report>

⁴ <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/resource/assisting-veterans-in-the-child-support-caseload>

⁵ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/military_child_support_partnerships.pdf

⁶ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/ending_homelessness_among_veterans.pdf





- Implementing policies that promote the review of cases for members of the military leaving and returning from deployment.
- Providing an expedited review and adjust process for members to assure that orders match the member's ability to pay.
- Encouraging service members to complete an authorization for release of information to speak with a person designated in the member's absence.
- Developing publications specifically geared towards military and veterans' families.
- Designating a child support veteran or military liaison or advocate with military experience so that the staff person has a full understanding of not only child support, but also of the military, and can navigate in both worlds.
- Developing useful training resources to help child support agencies explain the basics of the child support program to legal partners and veteran service provider partners.⁷

⁷ https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/vt_cs_basics_101.pdf

