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Quick Facts: Passport Denial Program

This Quick Facts guide provides information about Passport Denial

The Child Support Program¹ is a successful federal-state-tribal partnership that seeks to promote economic stability for children whose parents live apart. The program collects \$5.27 for every \$1 in public funds invested. In FY 2021, \$34 billion was collected in 12.7 million cases for 13.2 million children.²One effective remedy for collecting past due support is the Passport Denial Program.

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

- the state IV-D child support agency submits a 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 a parent's arrears to more than \$2,500 and the state has not excluded the 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 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

Although participation in the passport denial program is a state plan requirement, states can release a 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

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

² [Office of Child Support Enforcement \(OCSE\) FY 2021 Preliminary Report.](#)





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. OCSE removes the parent from the program when the past-due balance reaches zero or the state agency deletes or excludes the case.²

OCSE's Passport Denial Customer Service Team acts as a liaison among state child support staff, the State Department, parents, regional staff, congressional liaisons, attorneys, employers, and others. This team works together with necessary entities to promote effective use of the program, explain the process to those parents denied of a passport, and to provide fast and easy way for parents to reinstate their passport. They also coordinate and communicate with various regional offices, congressional liaisons, parents, other parties as necessary to ensure prompt and thorough actions.

Since the implementation of this program in 1998, states have reported the following statistics:³

- \$514 million in cumulative collections
- \$713,878 collected in FFY 2018 holds the record for largest single collection.
- Almost \$16 million reported in 2020 along with 2,300 success stories.
- In FFY 2018, there were at least five (5) large collections of more than 100,000 reported.

Passport denial is a proven and critical tool for collecting past-due support, particularly when a 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.

³ As of June 2018, information from the federal OCSE Child Support Report (Vol. 40, No. 5. June 2018). 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. Information updated by Passport Denial Program 101, A Look Inside OCSE – Story Series (9/7/21).

