NCSEA
Shaping the Future of Child Support

September 2026

Overview of the Child Support Program

A Federal–State–Tribal Partnership Supporting Children and Families

What the Program Does

The Child Support Program works to ensure children receive financial and medical support from both parents when they live apart. By promoting parental responsibility and involvement, the Program helps strengthen family stability and reduce child poverty. The Program:

- Serves **1 in 6** children nationwide
- Establishes parentage and child and medical support orders
- Collects and distributes payments
- Enforces and modifies orders

Why Child Support Matters

- Provides reliable income for children
- Promotes family self-sufficiency
- Reduces public assistance costs
- Strengthens child well-being and family connections

Key Program Statistics (FFY 2024)

- **$31 billion** in child support collected
- **12 million** cases served
- **12.2 million** children served
- **$4.24 collected** for every **$1 in public funds invested**

Methods Used to Enforce Child Support Orders

The Child Support Program enforces child support obligations through administrative and judicial actions, including income withholding through employers and other income payors. Income withholding payments represent **74%** of all collections. The Child Support Program also uses other tools to pursue support, including:

- Offsetting federal and state income tax refunds
- Withholding unemployment benefits
- Suspending driver, professional and recreational licenses
- Seizing bank accounts and issuing property liens
- Denying or revoking a U.S. passport
- Filing court enforcement actions

States also collaborate to enforce support across state lines.

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Reducing Reliance on Public Assistance

Child support is a critical source of income and helps reduce reliance on public benefits. Among the families served by the Child Support Program:

- 52% receive Medicaid
- 36% receive SNAP
- 15% receive housing assistance
- 10% receive TANF
- 7% receive SSI

For custodial families living below the federal poverty level, child support represents 57% of family income when the family receives the full amount of child support owed.

More than Just Payments

The Program supports parents and families by:

- Helping parents who owe support obtain and maintain employment
- Modifying orders when circumstances change
- Supporting individuals with barriers (veterans, incarcerated, re-entry)
- Connecting families to community support services, such as access and visitation and fatherhood programs
- Providing family violence safeguards and referrals to local support services

National Leadership

The National Child Support Engagement Association (NCSEA) is a national membership organization dedicated to advancing child support policy and practice. NCSEA educates, connects, and inspires child support professionals through resources, policy leadership, and collaboration, including:

- Quick Fact papers, conferences, and web-talks that share data, research, and best practices
- Regular legislative updates that inform Congress and other policymakers about child support legislation, policy priorities, and emerging issues
- The annual National Policy Forum that brings together child support leaders to discuss emerging issues and shape the future of the child support program

Sources: FFY 2024 OCSS Preliminary Report; Office of Child Support Enforcement (2021). Characteristics of Custodial Parents and Their Children: Who Receives Support (IV-D) Services and Who Doesn't?; Congressional Research Service. (2025). *The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program: Establishment and Major Legislative Changes* (R47630).

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