

NCSEA Legislative Quarterly Update



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What is NCSEA? >>>

Who We Are and What We Do

Our Mission: To promote and influence child support policies and services and to educate, connect, and inspire those who work in child support

Who We Are: Individuals and organizations with a passion for child support. Our members come from public, non-profit, and private sectors; and from local, state, tribal, national and international jurisdictions.

NCSEA

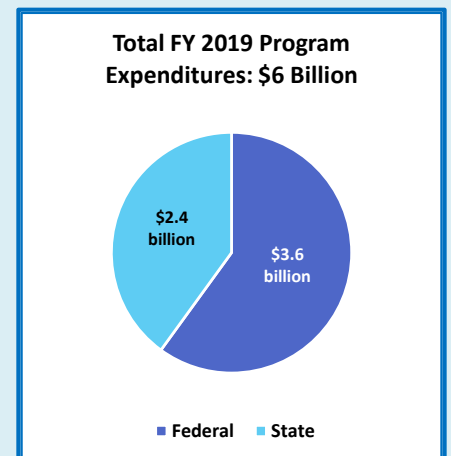
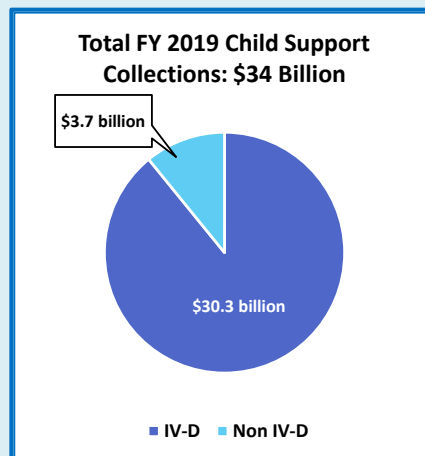
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What is the Child Support Program?

The Child Support Program is an intergovernmental partnership pursuant to Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The program seeks to ensure children receive financial, medical, and emotional support from both parents even when they live apart. The program supports state, local and tribal agencies in their vital work of locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing and modifying support obligations, and monitoring and enforcing those obligations.

In recent years, the program has shifted its focus from welfare cost reimbursement to family support. This change in emphasis has seen the creation of innovative programs to help parents with job training, employment services, co-parenting, and other supports. The national child support program is one of the largest income support programs for families. Below is some preliminary data on the 2019 program



FY 2019 Performance Highlights Federal Performance Measures:

- Paternity Establishment
 - Statewide Percentage: 94%
 - IV-D Percentage: 102%
- Cases with Orders: 88%
- Current Support Collections: 66%
- Arrearage Collections: 64%
- Cost Effectiveness: \$5.06

NCSEA Resolutions >>>

The NCSEA Board of Directors recently approved one new resolution, and updated and re-adopted two existing resolutions.

NEW: [Support of Establishing Parenting Time Orders](#)

In December, the NCSEA Board approved a resolution supporting legislation to expand federal financial support for activities undertaken by child support agencies to incorporate parenting time plans into child support orders and to increase Access and Visitation Program grant funding. For more information see the NCSEA Quick Fact Paper about [Parenting Time and Child Support](#).

UPDATED: [New Tools to Improve Child Support Collections](#)

This resolution recommends additions and improvements to the enforcement tools mandated by federal law and to the sources of information that can be used to increase the amount of child support collected. For more information about existing enforcement tools, see the following NCSEA Quick Fact Papers: [Child Support Enforcement](#), [Credit Reporting](#), [Gambling Intercepts](#), [Income Withholding](#), [IRS and the Child Support Program](#), and [Passport Denial](#).

UPDATED: [Federal Earned Income Tax Credit for Parents Paying Support](#)

This resolution seeks to reward work among parents who pay child support by proposing an earned income tax credit under qualifying circumstances for parents who pay support comparable to the credit presently available only to parents with a qualifying child.

Pending COVID-19/CARES Act Updates >>>

Congress adopts key provision in 2020 to assist non-custodial parents - Other measures await action in 2021

Last year, the child support program and the customers they serve were not immune to the coronavirus pandemic. Countless child support customers lost their jobs and other sources of financial support and state and local agency operations serving them were disrupted. Given the federal focus on responding to COVID-19, most child support legislation (see below) in 2020 did not see action, with the major exception of a key provision adopted in the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

The Act included a NCSEA-supported provision to exempt Economic Impact Payments from reduction or offset for those individuals owing past-due child support. The policy is consistent with NCSEA's support for looking at the whole family with a goal of ensuring children are financially supported while preserving self-sufficiency for both parents. NCSEA urges that the provision be maintained until Congress determines that parents who owe past-due support have enough employment opportunities to be self-sufficient without a relief payment.

Pending Child Support Legislation >>>

In 2020, NCSEA worked with House and Senate members on five bills. All are expected to be re-introduced in 2021. They are:

Increasing Opportunity for Former Foster Youth Act ([S. 3025](#))

Sponsored last year by Senators Chuck Grassley (R-IA) and Ron Wyden (D-OR), this [bipartisan bill](#) is focused on improving services for older youth aging out of the foster care system and pays for those services by including three provisions to help child support agencies identify individuals owing support and ease its collection, including a provision to require companies to report basic information on independent contractors who have earned at least \$600.

Tribal Child Support Enforcement Act ([S. 534](#))

Long supported by NCSEA and sponsored by Senator John Thune (R-SD) with co-sponsor Ron Wyden (D-OR), the measure would give tribal governments equal and direct access to the Federal Tax Refund Offset Program and other resources to locate parents while ensuring that all Internal Revenue Service confidentiality safeguards are met.

Providing Adequate Resources to Enhance Needed Time with Sons and Daughters Act (PARENTS Act [S. 503/HR 7725](#))

Passed by unanimous consent in the Senate last year, the NCSEA-supported bipartisan bill has been re-introduced in the Senate by John Cornyn (R-TX) with Democratic co-sponsors Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Ben Cardin (D-MD). The House companion was introduced last year by Representative Gwen Moore (D-WI) with Republican co-sponsors Ron Estes (R-KS) and Tom Rice (R-SC). The House bill may be included in a broader fatherhood measure later in the session. The legislation would streamline a process to allow states to use existing child support performance incentive funds to establish voluntary parenting time arrangements without requesting a waiver from OCSE. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) consistently approves those waivers, so it is an unnecessary administrative step.

Child Support Works Act ([S. 4998](#))

Introduced last year by Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR), the NCSEA-supported bill would allow states to choose an option to receive reimbursement at the 66 percent federal matching rate for expenditures on mandatory work programs for non-custodial parents who are underemployed, unemployed, or behind on their child-support payments. Federal reimbursement for work programs would be capped at two percent of the state's reimbursable child support spending. The concept was proposed in budgets of both the Obama and Trump administrations.

Strengthening Families for Success Act ([S.4844/HR 8704](#))

Introduced last year by Senators Chris Van Hollen (D-MD) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) and Representative Danny Davis (D-IL), the legislation completely eliminates cost recovery for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF), Title IV-E foster care maintenance payments, and Medicaid birth costs by Fiscal Year 2026 while providing bridge funding to states to help implement these changes. It also would provide administrative flexibility to child support agencies for meeting child support performance measures during COVID-19.



NCSEA's Policy Forum is *THE* conference dedicated to the policies and issues influencing the child support program at the national, state, and local levels. The 2021 [NCSEA Policy Forum](#) took on the timely and tough subject of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Over five days spanning two weeks, our child support community came together virtually to talk about the impacts of our policy choices on the people we serve. How do we, as an institution, reckon with the ways we help or harm and how do we move forward to be more equitable and inclusive?

We extend an invitation to Congressional staff to access the recorded version of any Policy Forum plenary session that might be of interest to you. Contact NCSEA [Ann Marie Ruskin](#) for more information.