Child support in Minnesota: Facts and figures

County and state child support offices provide services for 345,946 custodial and noncustodial parents and their 239,540 children. All families who receive public assistance are required to cooperate with the child support office to establish and enforce their child support orders. The child support program promotes the well-being of children and self-sufficiencies of families by delivering quality child support services, which helps families work toward becoming and remaining self-sufficient.

Federal fiscal year 2017 data is used in this fact sheet unless otherwise indicated.

Paternity for children

- Approximately 172,000 children who have a Minnesota child support case were born outside of marriage.
- More than 101 percent of children had paternity established using the federal performance measure (this uses a specific calculation that can result in percentages above 100).

Demographic information

- The child support program served approximately 239,000 children.
  - Children on public assistance totaled approximately 30,000.
  - Children not on public assistance totaled approximately 209,000.
- Approximately 89 percent of Minnesota child support cases have a child support order in place.

Collections for children

- The child support program collected and disbursed $580.6 million in child support, including $9.1 million via pass-through in the Minnesota Family Investment Program.
- Collections for ongoing child support totaled $439.7 million, which was 74.5 percent of the total ongoing support that was due; in approximately 86 percent of cases with ongoing support obligations, parents made some payment toward the obligation during the year.

Child support debt

- Cumulative past due support, or arrears, owed as of Sept. 30, 2017, was about $1.5 billion.
- Parents paid about $132 million on child support debt. More than 72 percent of cases with arrears received some arrears payment during the year.
• Average debt owed in cases with child support debt was $8,649. Approximately 80 percent of child support cases have debt.

Collection and enforcement methods

• **Income withholding:** Employers collect $431.4 million withholding child support from parents’ paychecks.

• **New hire reporting:** Each month employers reported an average of 217,203 newly hired staff; new hire reporting provides information for child support location and enforcement efforts.

• **License suspension:** About 17,600 parents had their driver’s licenses suspended for failing to pay on a child support order.

• **Tax refund intercepts:** Through tax refunds and rebate intercepts, $31.8 million, 5.4 percent of all collections, was collected. Approximately 72 percent of intercepts are federal; 28 percent are state.

• **Financial institution data match:** A total of $1.7 million was collected by freezing or seizing financial assets.

• **Other enforcement methods.** Parents who do not comply with child support orders may also have lottery winnings intercepted, be denied approval or renewal of their passport, be reported to a credit bureau, be subject to civil contempt proceeding or charged with nonsupport.

Service delivery

• **PRISM,** Minnesota’s automated child support computer system, supports the work of more than 1,499 county and state workers in providing child support services.

• The **Child Support Payment Center,** Minnesota’s centralized collection and disbursement unit, receives and processes $49.9 million each month.

• Automated phone lines receive an average of more than 15,000 calls a month, providing parents with information about their child support cases 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

• Parents access information about their child support case activities and payments through a secure state website, [childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us/Action/Welcome](childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us/Action/Welcome), 206,000 times per month.

• Minnesota has implemented direct deposit for child support payments into custodial parents’ savings, checking or stored value accounts. Approximately 95 percent of the collections disbursed were directly deposited into custodial parents’ accounts.

Program funding

• Child support expenditures totaled $175.9 million. The federal government funded 68 percent, the state 8 percent and Minnesota counties 24 percent.
• The federal government provides funding two ways, providing federal financial participation reimbursement on certain county and state program expenditures, and providing funding based on meeting performance outcomes, which is passed on to counties.
• For every $1 spent on Minnesota’s child support program, $3.30 was collected in support of Minnesota children.