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The Child Support Enforcement Program: A Review of the Data

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Summary

The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program is a federal/state program that is designed to promote self-sufficiency of families in which one of the biological parents is living outside of the home. The program achieves its mission by trying to ensure that noncustodial parents meet their financial responsibility to their children. The CSE program provides several services on behalf of children including parent location, paternity establishment, establishment of child support orders, and collection and distribution of child support payments.

In FY1978, families who received cash welfare comprised 85% of the CSE caseload and 45% of CSE collections. By FY2015, they comprised only 10.5% of the CSE caseload and 5% of CSE collections. Using a more recent classification of the CSE caseload, in FY2015 *current* Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) families and Title IV-E foster care families comprised 10.5% of the CSE caseload and 3% of collections, and *former* TANF families and Title IV-E foster care families comprised 42.8% of the CSE caseload and 31% of collections. Families that had *never* received TANF or Title IV-E foster care comprised 46.7% of the CSE caseload and almost 66% of collections. This reflects the underlying premise of the CSE program: as child support becomes a more consistent and stable income source/support, former cash welfare families will not have to return to the cash welfare rolls, and families that never resorted to cash welfare will not have to do so.

In FY2015, the CSE caseload was 14.7 million families. The CSE program is estimated to handle about 60% of all child support cases; the remaining cases are handled by private attorneys, by collection agencies, or through mutual agreements between the parents. All of the data in this report are exclusively CSE program data.

Before a state can enforce/collect a child support obligation, paternity must be determined and a child support order must be established. During the period FY2011-FY2015, the number of paternities established or acknowledged fell 12% nationwide, from nearly 1.7 million to 1.5 million. During that same period, the number of cases with a child support order established dropped 1% nationwide, from 12.8 million to 12.6 million.

The CSE program is characterized by paradoxes. It collected only 20% of the child support obligations for which it had responsibility in FY2015 (i.e., 65% of all current collections and 7% of obligations that were past due). However, during the period FY1999-FY2015 child support payments collected by CSE agencies increased 80% nationally, from $15.9 billion to $28.6 billion. Child support collections have continued to increase even though the CSE caseload has declined. Although the number and percentage of CSE cases with collections have been increasing over time, the average monthly child support payment for families that actually receive one has been decreasing and is relatively small, amounting to $264 per month in FY2015. Although the national cost of the CSE program was $5.7 billion in FY2015, $5.26 in child support was collected for every $1 spent on CSE activities. The CSE program began as a welfare cost-recovery program; however, in FY2015 93% of CSE collections went to CSE families (rather than the federal government or the states); the comparable figure in FY1979 was 56%.

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Introduction

The Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program is a federal/state program that is designed to promote self-sufficiency of families in which one of the biological parents is living outside of the home. The program achieves its mission by trying to ensure that noncustodial parents meet their financial responsibility to their children. States are responsible for administering the CSE program (directly or through local CSE agencies and family or domestic courts), but the federal government plays a major role in dictating the primary design features of state programs, funding state and local programs, monitoring and evaluating state programs, providing technical assistance, and giving direct assistance to states in locating absent parents and obtaining child support payments.

The CSE program was created by Congress in 1974 with two primary goals: (1) reducing public expenditures for actual and potential welfare recipients by obtaining ongoing support from noncustodial parents (i.e., welfare cost-recovery), and (2) establishing paternity for children born outside of marriage so that child support could be obtained. The December 1974 Senate Finance Committee report on the CSE legislation stated, "The problem of welfare in the United States is, to a considerable extent, a problem of the non-support of children by their absent parents."[1] It also stated that the result of a new federal-state CSE program would be to lower welfare costs to the taxpayer and to deter fathers from abandoning their families. The CSE program (Title IV-D of the Social Security Act) was enacted in January 1975 (P.L. 93-647).

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands operate CSE programs and are entitled to federal matching funds.[2] For every dollar a state spends on CSE expenditures, it generally receives 66 cents from the federal government. To qualify for federal matching funds, each state's CSE plan must be approved by the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). States also are eligible to receive incentive payments, based on certain performance indicators.[3]

Since 1975, the federal administration of the CSE program has been in the OCSE, which was originally located in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW), renamed the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in 1979. From the beginning, the OCSE has been required by law to review and approve state CSE plans, establish standards for effective state CSE programs, provide technical assistance to the states, assist them with reporting procedures, maintain records of program operations and child support expenditures and collections, audit state CSE programs, and prepare and submit an annual report to Congress. The annual report to Congress has always included collection, expenditure, and caseload data; Section

[1] U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Finance, *Social Services Amendments of 1974, report to accompany H.R. 17045*, 93rd Cong. 2nd sess., S.Rept. 93-1356, December 14, 1974, p. 42.

[2] In contrast to the federal matching rate of 66% for CSE programs run by the states or territories, pursuant to the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193) the CSE program provides direct federal funding equal to 100% of approved and allowable CSE expenditures by tribes and tribal organizations during the start-up period, provides 90% federal funding for approved CSE programs operated by tribes or tribal organizations during the first three years of full program operation, and provides 80% federal funding thereafter. As of April 2016, 57 Indian tribes or tribal organizations operated comprehensive tribal CSE programs and 4 Indian tribes or tribal organizations operated start-up tribal CSE programs. For additional information, see CRS Report R41204, *Child Support Enforcement: Tribal Programs*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

[3] For additional information on the CSE program, see CRS Report RS22380, *Child Support Enforcement: Program Basics*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

452(a)(10) of the Social Security Act stipulates that certain data must be included in the annual report.

The CSE program provides seven major services on behalf of children: parent location, paternity establishment, establishment of child support orders, review and modification of support orders, collection of support payments, distribution of support payments, and establishment and enforcement of medical support. CSE services are provided to both welfare and nonwelfare families. Collection methods used by state CSE agencies include income withholding;[4] intercept of federal and state income tax refunds; intercept of unemployment compensation; liens against property; reporting child support obligations to credit bureaus; intercept of lottery winnings; sending insurance settlement information to CSE agencies; authority to withhold or suspend driver's licenses, professional licenses, and recreational and sporting licenses of persons who owe past-due support; and authority to seize assets of debtor parents held by public or private retirement funds and financial institutions. Moreover, federal law authorizes the Secretary of State to deny, revoke, or restrict passports of debtor parents. All jurisdictions also have civil or criminal contempt-of-court procedures and criminal nonsupport laws, and federal criminal penalties may be imposed in certain cases. Federal law also requires states to enact and implement the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) and expand full faith and credit procedures, and it provides for international enforcement of child support.[5]

In FY2015, $28.6 billion was collected at a combined federal/state cost of $5.7 billion. Thus, in effect, $5.26 in child support was collected for every dollar spent. While the extensive reforms made to the CSE program in 1984, 1988, 1996, 1997, 1998, and 2006 have helped to significantly improve child support collections and increase the number of paternities established, the CSE program has generally been considered a highly respected and valuable program since its beginning in 1975. It has made significant progress in achieving its original goals of reducing public expenditures for actual and potential welfare recipients by obtaining ongoing support from noncustodial parents, and establishing paternity for children born outside of marriage so child support could be obtained for them.

Many commentators agree that the mission of the CSE program has changed over the years. It began as a welfare cost-recovery program, but the Child Support Enforcement Amendments of 1984 (P.L. 98-378) broadened the mission to reflect service delivery.[6] The criteria for making

[4] There are three exceptions to the immediate income withholding rule: (1) if one of the parties demonstrates, and the court (or administrative process) finds that there is good cause not to require immediate withholding, (2) if both parties agree in writing to an alternative arrangement, or (3) at the HHS Secretary's discretion, if a state can demonstrate that the rule will not increase the effectiveness or efficiency of the state's CSE program.

[5] The CSE program has reciprocating agreements regarding the enforcement of child support with 15 countries: Australia, Canada, Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Note: Canada is a federal state, composed of 10 provinces and 3 territories, each with its own government and power to make laws. The United States currently has bilateral, federal-level agreements with nine Canadian provinces and three Canadian territories. The nine provinces are Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan. The three territories are Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Yukon. The United States does not have a bilateral, federal-level agreement with Quebec. (See the federal Child Support Enforcement website: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/international/.) Moreover, P.L. 113-183, an omnibus bill (enacted on September 29, 2014) that included changes to child welfare and child support programs, contained provisions that are designed to improve child support collections in cases where the custodial parent and child live in one country and the noncustodial parent lives in another country.

[6] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Family-Centered Innovations Improve Child Support Outcomes*, Child Support Fact Sheet no.1, June 19, 2011, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/family-centered-innovations-improve-child-support-outcomes.

incentive payments to the states were broadened in 1984 to include collections for nonwelfare families. Some commentators assert the service-delivery goal was reemphasized in 1996 legislation, which established the "family first" policy. To help ensure that former welfare recipients stay off the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)[7] rolls, the "family first" policy requires that such families are to receive any child support arrearage payments collected by the state before the state and federal governments retain their shares of collections.[8] Reforms enacted in 2006 (P.L. 109-171) extended the "family first" policy by providing incentives to states to encourage them to allow more child support to go to both former welfare families and families still on welfare. Additionally, the sharp decline in the cash welfare rolls and reduced expenditures on cash welfare since the mid-1990s helped shift the program from recovering declining costs for a smaller population to collecting and paying child support to nonwelfare families. For the past 32 years (since the 1984 amendments), the CSE program and major changes or modifications to it have consistently had bipartisan congressional support.

This report examines CSE caseload, collection, and expenditure data over the period FY1978-FY2015 (FY1978 is the first year of complete data and the data for FY2015 are the most recent available). It also presents more detailed data on collections, expenditures, paternity establishment, child support order establishment, cost-effectiveness, and program financing impacts on the federal government and the states for various years during the period. All of the tables in this report are based on data from OCSE, obtained from the OCSE website. The information is taken from state-submitted reports on program status sent to OCSE quarterly for financial data and annually for statistical data. Readers should note that the 38-year trend data for CSE collections and caseload have been disaggregated into two categories: TANF cases and non-TANF cases. Before 1997, TANF cases were Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) cases and non-TANF cases were non-AFDC cases.[9] In FY1999, OCSE started classifying the CSE caseload into three categories—current TANF assistance, former TANF assistance, and never TANF assistance. Also, note that the tables that display TANF cases, collections, or expenditures include Title IV-E foster care cases as well, even though they may not labeled as such.[10]

Table 1 presents a summary of child support program statistics for the nation as a whole over the 38-year span from FY1978 through FY2015. Child support payments[11] collected by CSE

[7] The TANF block grant replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193).

[8] An exception to this rule occurs when child support is collected via the federal income tax refund offset program. In federal income tax refund offset cases, the child support arrearage payment (up to the cumulative amount of TANF benefits that has been paid to the family) is retained by the state and federal governments. In other words, if child support arrearages are collected via the federal income tax refund offset program, the family does not have first claim on the arrearage payments.

[9] The TANF block grant replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program in the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193). For heading simplification, the tables in this report generally categorize families as TANF families when they were actually AFDC families if the time period specified is before implementation of the 1996 welfare reform law.

[10] In 1984, Congress reinstated authority for state CSE agencies to secure (when appropriate) an assignment to the state for any rights to support on behalf of Title IV-E foster care children and to collect child support on behalf of those children. In FY2015, CSE collections made on behalf of foster care cases ($70.8 million) amounted to less than 0.2% of total CSE collections ($28.6 billion).

[11] Child support is the cash payment that noncustodial parents are obligated to pay for the financial support of their children. Child support payments enable parents who do not live with their children to fulfill their financial responsibility to them by contributing to the payment of childrearing costs.

agencies increased from $1 billion ($3.5 billion in 2015 dollars)[12] to $28.6 billion (an eight-fold increase, adjusting for inflation).[13] The number of children whose paternity was established (or acknowledged) through the CSE program increased by 1,237%, from 111,000 to 1.484 million; and the number of child support obligations established increased by 223%, from 315,000 to 1.016 million. The CSE caseload expanded from 4.146 million to 14.745 million, an increase of 256%. CSE expenditures also increased significantly, from $312 million ($1.042 billion in 2015 dollars) to $5.749 billion (a more than five-fold increase, adjusting for inflation). Expenditures per case increased from $75 ($250 in 2015 dollars) to $390 (a 56% increase, adjusting for inflation).

[12] This report uses the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers Research Series (CPI-U-RS) to adjust dollars for inflation. However, note that the data in this report have been adjusted with respect to calendar year 2015 dollars rather than fiscal FY2015 dollars.

[13] **Table A-1** shows the data in **Table 1** in millions of current/nominal dollars.

Table 1. Summary of National Child Support Enforcement Program Statistics, Selected Fiscal Years 1978-2015

(Numbers in thousands, dollars in millions of constant 2015 dollars)

Measure	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2015
Total child support collections	$3,493	$4,177	$6,702	$10,572	$15,590	$20,848	$26,534	$28,139	$28,866	$28,233	$28,559
Total TANF collections	$1,574	1,855	$2,529	$3,078	$4,036	$3,849	$3,812	$2,483	$1,947	$1,506	$1,451
Federal	*$1,037*	*$734*	*$762*	*$938*	*$1,206*	*$1,395*	*$1,555*	*$1,277*	*$982*	*$593*	*$574*
State	*$494*	*$835*	*$875*	*$1,091*	*$1,410*	*$1,582*	*$1,252*	*$1,029*	*$765*	*$744*	*$717*
Total non-TANF collections	$1,918	$2,322	4,168	$7,494	$11,554	$16,999	$22,722	$25,657	$26,919	$26,728	$27,108
Total administrative expenditures	$1,041	$1,444	$1,943	$2,825	$4,045	$5,208	$6,830	$6,538	$6,278	$5,697	$5,749
Federal	*$787*	*$1,083*	*$1,307*	*$1,866*	*$2,756*	*$3,466*	*$4,522*	*$4,323*	*$4,143*	*$3,450*	*$3,474*
State	*$254*	*$361*	*$636*	*$959*	*$1,292*	*$1,742*	*$2,309*	*$2,215*	*$2,135*	*$2,247*	*$2,275*
Federal incentive payment pool to states and localities	$180	$252	$357	$454	$592	$559	$593	$538	$548	$535	$520
Number of TANF cases in which a collection was made	458	597	582	701	926	790	806	747	713	558	522
Number of non-TANF cases in which a collection was made	249	448	786	1,363	3,169	3,071	7,013	7,783	8,137	8,490	8507
Number of paternities established	111	174	245	393	592	848	697	675	620	464	412
Number of support obligations established	315	462	731	1,022	1,025	1,148	1,220	1,159	1,297	1,069	1,016
Total child support collections per dollar of total administrative expenses (in constant dollars)	$11.21	$6.82	$7.12	$6.58	$6.09	$5.81	$5.13	$5.06	$5.00	$4.97	$4.97

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (preliminary CSE Data Reports to Congress for various fiscal years, Table1 and Table 2).

Notes: Paternities established do not include the paternities established through the In-Hospital Paternity Acknowledgment Program. In FY1994, 84,411 paternities were established in hospitals; 614,081 in FY1998; 829,988 in FY2002; 1,025,521 in FY2006; 1,113,719 in FY2010; 1,077,157 in FY2014; and 1,072,223 in FY2015.

Total TANF Collections = Total Assistance Reimbursement + Medical Support (for current assistance collections) + Payment to Families or Foster Care (for current assistance collections).

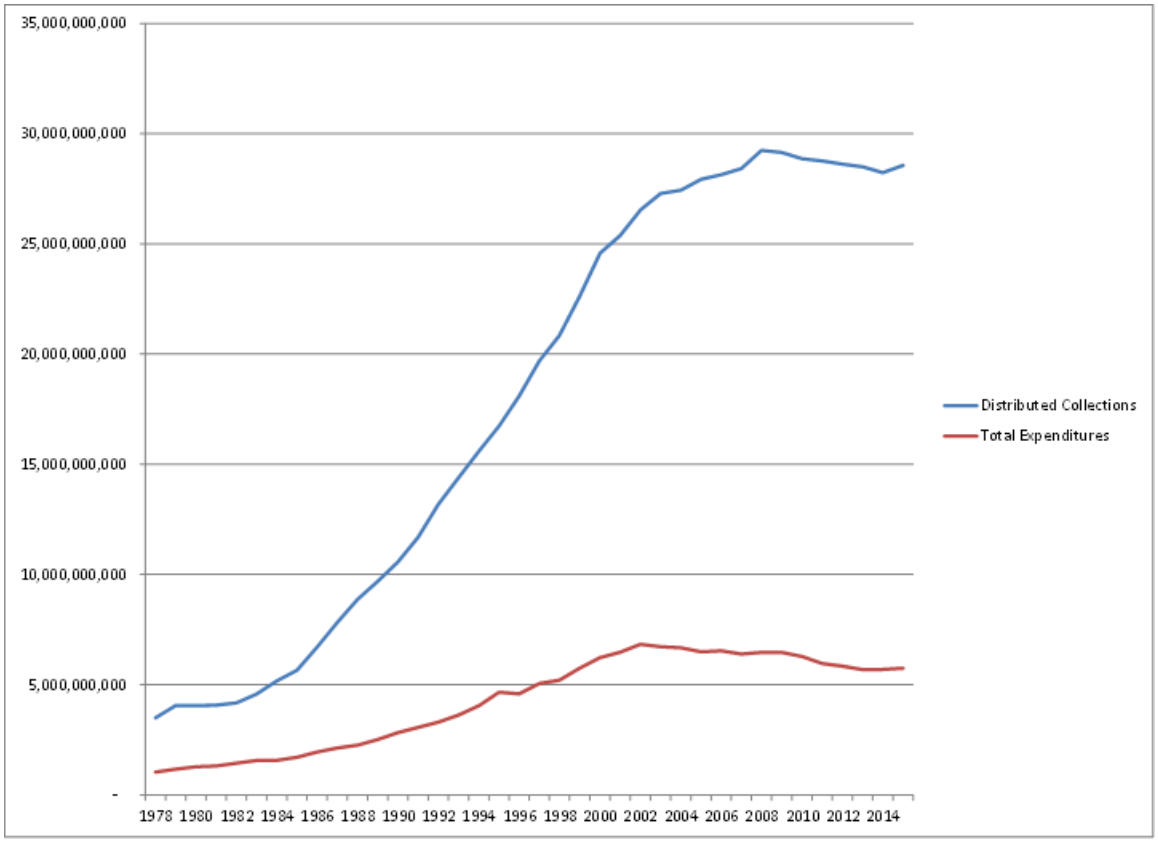
The row entitled "Total child support collections per dollar of total administrative expenses" differs from the CSE collections-to-cost ratio (mentioned elsewhere in this report) because total child support collections do not include collections forwarded to other states, fees retained by other states, or prior-quarter adjustments.

Data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items). See **Table A-3** for CSE collection and expenditure data in nominal dollars. See **Table A-4** for CSE collection and expenditure data in constant 2015 dollars.

Figure 1 shows CSE collections and expenditures over the 38-year period from FY1978 through FY2015. The CSE program is estimated to handle about 60% of all child support cases; the remaining cases are handled by private attorneys, by collection agencies, or through mutual agreements between the parents. All of the data in this report are exclusively CSE program data.

Figure 1. Child Support Enforcement Program: Collections and Expenditures, FY1978-FY2015

(In constant 2015 dollars)



Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: The data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items). See **Table A-4** for CSE collection and expenditure data in constant 2015 dollars.

CSE Caseload

The CSE program serves both TANF and non-TANF recipients. In FY2015, the CSE system handled 14.7 million cases, of which 6.9 million (47%) were families who had never been on TANF, 6.3 million (43%) were former-TANF families (i.e., no longer on TANF and therefore non-TANF cases), and 1.6 million (11%) were families who were receiving TANF assistance.

OCSE defines a CSE "case" as a noncustodial parent (mother, father, or putative/alleged father) who is currently or eventually may be responsible under law for support of a child or children receiving services under the CSE program. If the noncustodial parent owes support for two

children by different women, it would be considered two cases; if both children have the same mother, it would be considered one case.

Families who receive TANF cash benefits are required to assign their child support rights to the state in order to receive TANF. In addition, such families must cooperate with the state if necessary to establish paternity and secure child support. Families receiving TANF cash benefits, Medicaid benefits, or whose children receive Title IV-E foster care payments are automatically enrolled (free of charge) into the CSE program.[14] Collections on behalf of families receiving TANF cash benefits are used to reimburse state and federal governments for TANF payments made to the family (i.e., child support payments go to the state instead of the family, except for amounts that states choose to "pass through" to the family as additional income that does not affect TANF eligibility or benefit amounts). Other families must apply for CSE services, and states must charge an application fee that cannot exceed $25. Child support collected on behalf of nonwelfare families goes to the family (usually via a state child support disbursement unit). In addition, P.L. 109-171, effective October 1, 2006, required families who have never been on TANF to pay a $25 annual user fee when child support enforcement efforts on their behalf are successful (i.e., at least $500 annually is collected on their behalf).[15]

The CSE program defines a current assistance case as one in which the children are (1) recipients of cash aid under TANF (Title IV-A of the Social Security Act) or (2) entitled to Foster Care maintenance payments (Title IV-E of the Social Security Act). In addition, the children's support rights have been assigned by a caretaker to the state, and a referral to the state CSE agency has been made. A former assistance case is defined as one in which the children were formerly receiving TANF or foster care services. A never-assistance case is defined as one in which the children are receiving services under the CSE program but they are not currently eligible for and have not previously received assistance under TANF or foster care.

Figure 2 shows the trend in the CSE caseload, differentiated into TANF cases and non-TANF cases. It shows a sharp drop in TANF cases between FY1995 and FY2005 and then a slower decline through FY2015. As noted earlier, during the beginning years of the CSE program, AFDC cases were a large part and central focus of the program. After the enactment of P.L. 104-193 (the 1996 welfare reform law), there was a sharp drop in TANF cases overall and thereby TANF cases in the CSE program, given that TANF cases are automatically enrolled in the CSE program. The CSE caseload reached its peak in FY1998 with 19.4 million cases and has steadily fallen, with some fluctuations, since then. Even though TANF cases declined steadily after welfare reform, the number of children born to unmarried women did not reach its peak until 2008. Moreover, the percentage of births to unmarried women held steady at 41% from 2008 through 2013. In 2014, it dropped slightly to 40%.Thus, a full understanding of why the CSE caseload has fallen remains unclear. In FY2015, there were 14.7 million CSE cases (a reduction of 24% since FY1998).

The underlying data for **Figure 2** (shown in **Table A-2)** indicate that AFDC cases comprised 85% of the CSE caseload in FY1978, but TANF dropped to about 10% of the caseload in FY2015. By the same token, non-AFDC cases represented only about 15% of the CSE caseload in FY1978, and non-TANF cases increased to almost 90% of the caseload in FY2015. **Table A-2** also indicates that the CSE caseload increased 256% over the period FY1978-FY2015, from 4.146 million in FY1978 to 14.745 million in FY2015.

[14] In addition, families who are required by the state Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to cooperate with the CSE agency automatically qualify for CSE services free of charge.

[15] For more information on the CSE annual user fee, see CRS Report RS22753, *Child Support Enforcement: $25 Annual User Fee*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

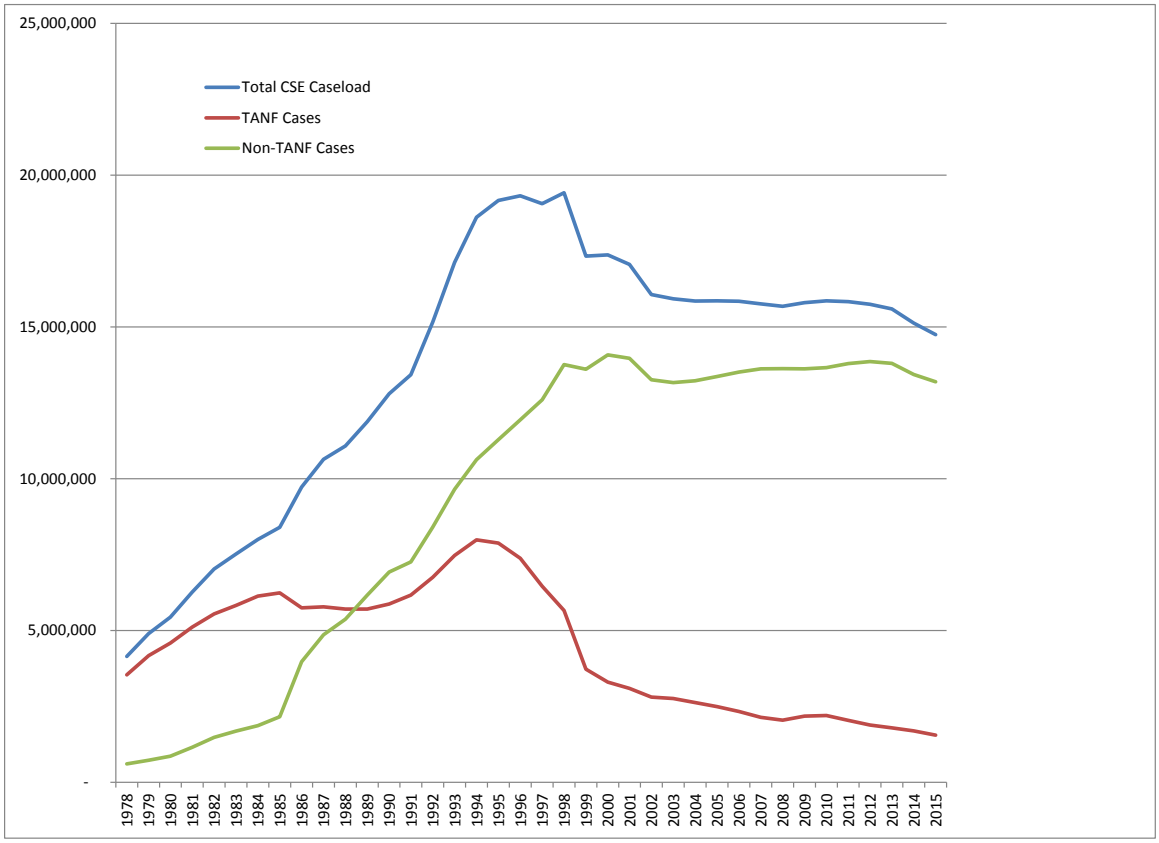
In FY1999, OCSE started reporting data in current assistance, former assistance, and never received assistance categories rather than TANF and non-TANF. The data indicate that the number and percentage of CSE families who currently receive TANF has decreased over time while the number and percentage of CSE families who formerly received TANF has increased. The data also show that the proportion of the CSE caseload composed of families who had never received TANF has also increased over the period FY1999-FY2015 (see **Figure 3**). The CSE caseload has been declining (with some upward fluctuations) since it reached its high point in FY1998.

In FY2015, the largest group of families (47%) who were participating in the CSE program were those who had never been on the TANF rolls (i.e., never-TANF families). Families who were formerly on TANF represented 43% of the CSE caseload, and families who were currently receiving TANF benefits represented about 10% (see **Figure 3**). Although the majority of the CSE caseload is comprised of non-TANF families, many of them at some point in their lives received TANF/AFDC. This is consistent with the expanded mission of the CSE program. The expectation is that as child support becomes a more consistent and stable income source/support, former TANF families will not have to return to the TANF rolls, and families that never resorted to the TANF program will never have to do so. In its strategic plan for the period FY2000-FY2004, the CSE agency stated:

> It is our commitment to lead the child support program into the new century as a key component to assist families to become self-sufficient or to remain self-sufficient. It is our vision that child support is an important line of defense against children living in poverty.[16]

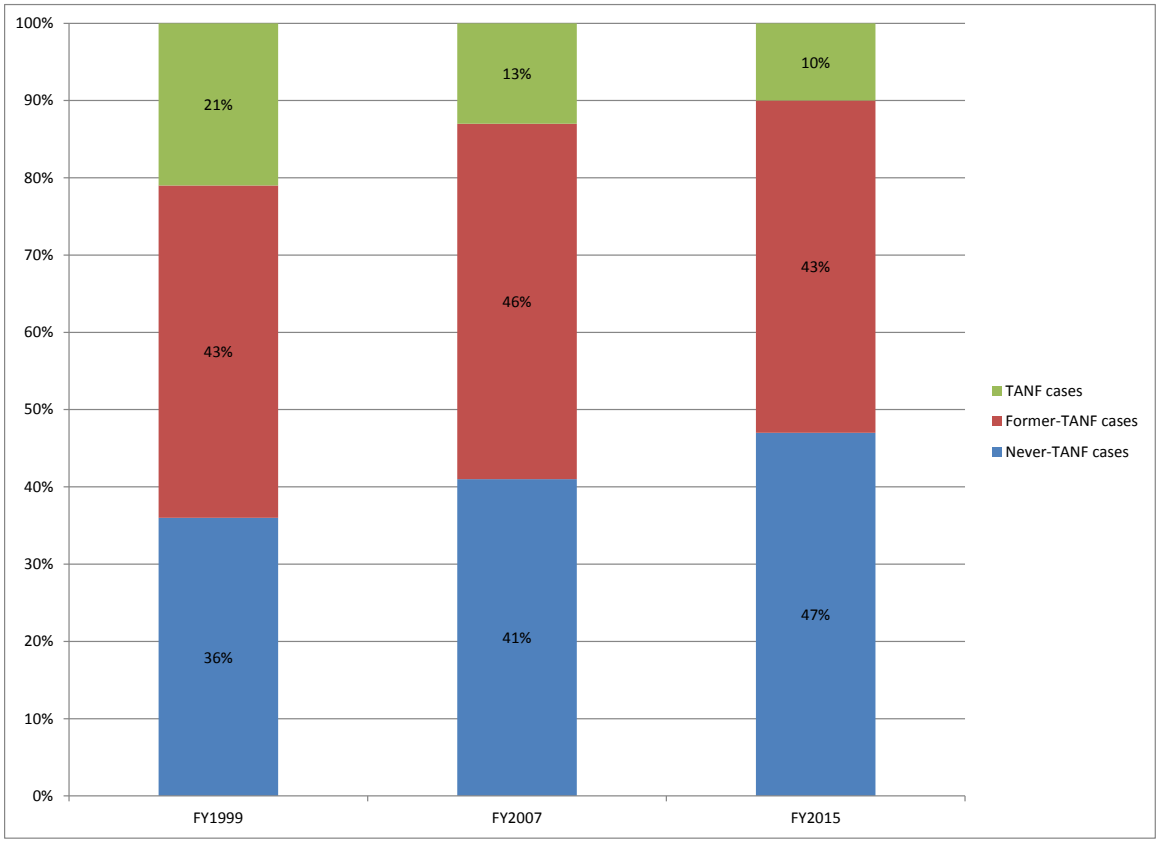
[16] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Dear Colleague Letter (DCL-00-76), *National Child Support Enforcement Strategic Plan for FY 2000-2004*, July 14, 2000.

Figure 2. Child Support Enforcement Caseload, FY1978-FY2015



Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Figure 3. Child Support Enforcement Caseload Composition, Selected Years



Source: Congressional Research Service, based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 2 presents the three categories of CSE cases (i.e., TANF cases, former-TANF cases, and never-TANF cases) by state/jurisdiction for FY2015.

Table 2. CSE Caseload Composition, by State/Jurisdiction, FY2015

States	TANF Cases	Former-TANF Cases	Never-TANF Cases	Total Caseload
Alabama	17,732	104,032	97,063	218,827
Alaska	6,462	22,899	19,662	49,023
Arizona	10,939	103,625	63,549	178,113
Arkansas	7,892	39,496	60,950	108,338
California	327,971	634,257	275,755	1,237,983
Colorado	15,764	69,719	66,154	151,637
Connecticut	16,174	100,755	65,061	181,990
Delaware	8,722	20,086	53,724	82,532
District of Columbia	13,311	23,655	12,376	49,342
Florida	46,817	239,513	364,091	650,421
Georgia	21,550	172,099	209,914	403,563

States	TANF Cases	Former-TANF Cases	Never-TANF Cases	Total Caseload
Guam	391	3,168	3,246	6,805
Hawaii	12,890	40,502	25,766	79,158
Idaho	3,580	29,768	87,987	121,335
Indiana	9,629	121,074	148,624	279,327
Iowa	15,195	95,061	60,561	170,817
Kansas	13,038	69,218	51,960	134,216
Kentucky	35,263	126,723	113,026	275,012
Louisiana	20,633	115,745	155,013	291,391
Maine	4,840	33,799	15,493	54,132
Maryland	19,345	87,718	100,528	207,591
Massachusetts	27,112	121,075	82,189	230,376
Michigan	51,252	373,706	417,813	842,771
Minnesota	25,537	116,019	88,864	230,420
Mississippi	11,915	97,916	191,091	300,922
Missouri	30,784	201,517	111,999	344,300
Montana	4,631	19,058	13,632	37,321
Nebraska	6,650	55,265	46,528	108,443
Nevada	6,616	37,296	50,200	94,112
New Hampshire	3,685	19,344	15,086	38,115
New Jersey	33,285	155,302	158,951	347,538
New Mexico	7,048	32,023	28,610	67,681
New York	136,203	366,941	393,754	896,898
North Carolina	28,967	182,687	199,561	411,215
North Dakota	3,022	18,521	16,590	38,133
Ohio	90,538	402,103	363,495	856,136
Oklahoma	19,170	61,826	127,090	208,086
Oregon	27,382	122,702	54,282	204,366
Pennsylvania	50,677	142,635	202,640	395,952
Puerto Rico	27,034	19,278	179,835	226,147
Rhode Island	5,392	30,369	16,641	52,402
South Carolina	22,689	101,917	65,532	190,138
South Dakota	7,062	16,269	23,891	47,222
Tennessee	55,322	189,675	124,644	369,641
Texas	46,624	427,577	1,042,473	1,516,674
Utah	6,498	35,803	50,300	92,601
Vermont	2,927	8,899	5,041	16,867

States	TANF Cases	Former-TANF Cases	Never-TANF Cases	Total Caseload
Virgin Islands	886	2,924	5,276	9,086
Virginia	36,300	139,798	130,678	306,776
Washington	33,369	185,438	117,905	336,712
West Virginia	11,734	53,798	56,800	122,332
Wisconsin	31,292	118,981	212,911	363,184
Wyoming	2,441	7,673	20,095	30,209
Total	**1,550,234**	**6,304,838**	**6,889,466**	**14,744,538**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Paternity Establishment

A child born outside of marriage has a biological father but not a legal father. Legally identifying the father of a child is a prerequisite for obtaining a child support order. In divorce cases, the husband is generally deemed to be the father of any children born during the marriage. When a child is born to unmarried parents, a legal relationship between the father and child must be established before a court or administrative authority will order child support. This legal relationship is called paternity.

Federal law requires states to have procedures that permit the establishment of paternity for all children under the age of 18.[17] Federal law also requires TANF applicants and recipients to cooperate in establishing paternity or obtaining support payments. Moreover, a penalty for noncooperation exists. If it is determined that an individual is not cooperating and does not qualify for any good cause or other exception, then the state must reduce the family's TANF benefit by at least 25% and may eliminate it entirely. In addition, federal law (1) requires that paternity be established for 90% of the CSE cases needing such a determination; (2) requires a simple civil process for establishing paternity; (3) requires an affidavit to be completed by men voluntarily acknowledging paternity and entitles the affidavit to full faith and credit in any state; (4) stipulates that a signed acknowledgment of paternity be considered a legal finding of paternity unless it is rescinded within 60 days, and thereafter may be challenged in court only on the basis of fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact; (5) provides that no judicial or administrative action is needed to ratify an acknowledgment that is not challenged; and (6) requires all parties to submit to genetic testing in contested paternity cases.

Under a state's simple civil process for establishing paternity, the state must ensure that the rights and responsibilities of acknowledging paternity are explained to both parents and that due process safeguards are afforded to both. The statute requires that voluntary acknowledgment procedures include hospital-based programs that focus on the period immediately before or after the birth of a child.[18]

[17] Section 466(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §666(a)(5)). P.L. 109-171 stipulated that the 90% federal matching rate for laboratory costs associated with paternity establishment would be reduced to 66% beginning October 1, 2006.

[18] If voluntary paternity acknowledgment is not completed in the hospital, the parents can receive these services at any time from the vital records agency or the CSE agency.

The state has the power to establish paternity through court or administrative action if a father does not voluntarily admit it. In judicial cases, child support staff collects information and other evidence about the alleged father and refers the case to the state child support attorney (referred to as the IV-D attorney) for legal action. The IV-D attorney represents the state child support agency. A parent may also hire a private attorney to represent him or her. When the case goes to trial, the mother may be required to be present in court to testify about the father. If the custodial parent lives in a different state, the custodial parent may be allowed to present testimony telephonically.[19]

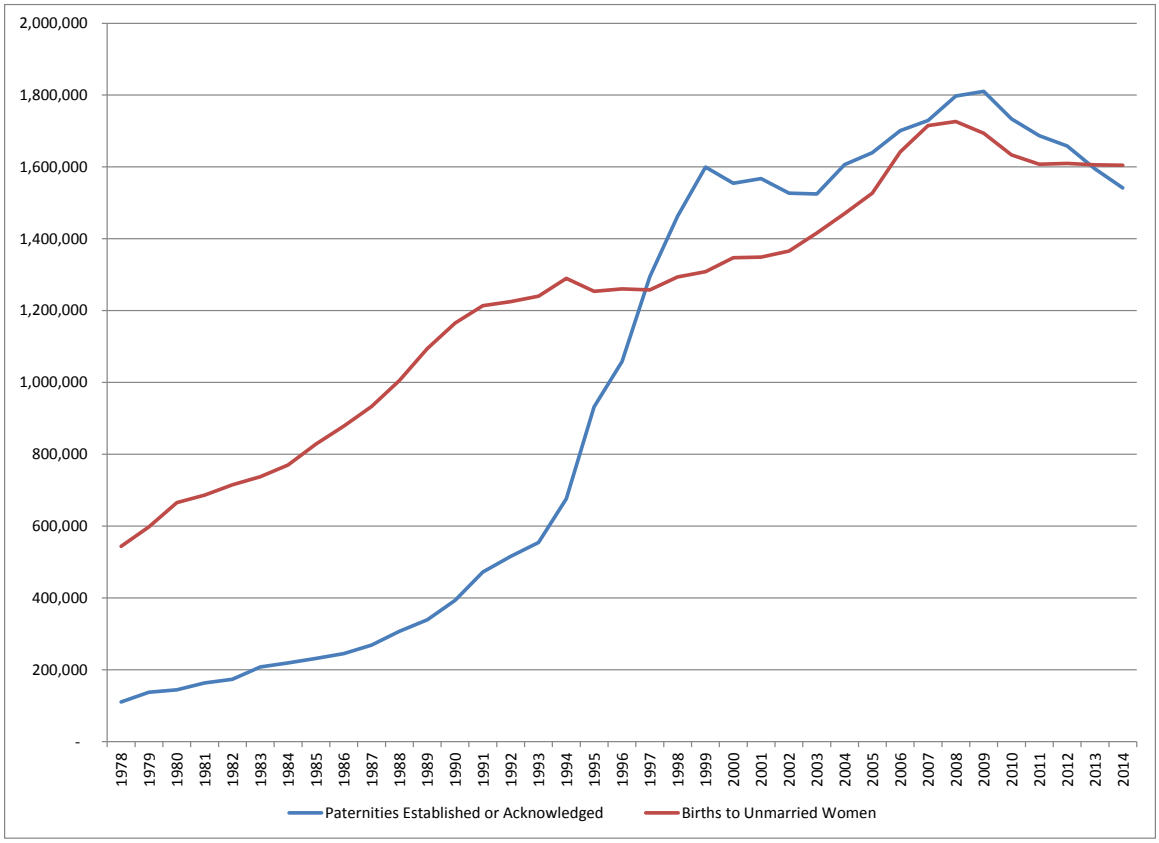
Figure 4 shows the number of paternities established or acknowledged in the CSE program during the period from FY1978 through FY2015 and the number of births to unmarried women during the period from FY1978 through FY2014. It indicates that the number of paternities established or acknowledged increased substantially from FY1978-FY1999, dropped in FY2000, fluctuated between FY2001 and FY2003, increased from FY2004 to FY2009, and has fallen in each of the years beginning with FY2010. During the period FY1978-FY2015, the number of paternities established or acknowledged nationwide increased 1,241% from 111,000 in FY1978 to 1,484,477 in FY2015 (see **Table 3**). From its high of 1,810,564 in FY2009, the number of paternities established or acknowledged fell 18% nationwide, from 1.8 million in FY2009 to about 1.5 million in FY2015.[20] It should be noted that in any given year, the CSE program establishes paternity for both babies born outside of marriage in the given year as well as for older children (up to age 18) who were born outside of marriage.

FY2003 was the first year in which more fathers were legally identified through a voluntary paternity acknowledgment process (862,000) than through the courts or administratively via the CSE agency (663,000). Paternity was established or acknowledged for 1.5 million children in the CSE program during that year.

[19] National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), *Child Support 101.2: Establishing Paternity*, http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/enforcement-establishing-paternity.aspx.

[20] With respect to the period 1978-2014, a comparison of paternity establishment/acknowledgment data with nonmarital birth data (i.e., the number of births to unmarried women) indicate that the number of paternities established has outpaced the number of nonmarital births since 1997 (after implementation of the 1996 welfare reform law (P.L. 104-193, which included many changes to improve the paternity establishment process, including the in-hospital paternities acknowledgement program); except that in 2013 and 2014, nonmarital births were higher than the number of paternities established. As mentioned later in the report, the CSE program currently establishes paternity for over 90% of its caseload, for newborns that percentage is close to 100%.

Figure 4. Number of Paternities Established or Acknowledged and Births to Unmarried Women



Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and data from the National Center for Health Statistics (National Vital Statistics Reports), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 3. Paternities Established or Acknowledged, FY1978-FY2015

FY	Number	FY	Number	FY	Number	FY	Number
1978	110,714	1988	307,135	1998	1,462,565	2008	1,797,435
1979	137,645	1989	339,264	1999	1,599,979	2009	1,810,564
1980	144,467	1990	393,304	2000	1,554,440	2010	1,733,973
1981	163,582	1991	472,105	2001	1,567,509	2011	1,686,980
1982	173,621	1992	515,857	2002	1,527,103	2012	1,658,287
1983	208,270	1993	554,637	2003	1,524,569	2013	1,594,664
1984	219,360	1994	676,459	2004	1,606,303	2014	1,541,637
1985	231,838	1995	932,116	2005	1,639,457	2015	1,484,477
1986	244,996	1996	1,058,349	2006	1,701,019		
1987	269,161	1997	1,294,336	2007	1,729,302		

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

State performance on paternity establishment is calculated as a percentage of either (1) all births in a given year for which paternity is established, or (2) all cases in the state CSE program for which paternity is established. **Table 4** uses all cases in the state CSE program for which paternity is established as the base. It shows the paternity establishment performance measure for FY2015. For the nation as a whole, the CSE paternity establishment percentage (PEP) was 95.62%. In other words, in FY2015 there were nearly 10.6 million children on the CSE rolls who had been born outside of marriage, and the CSE agencies had determined paternity for 10.1 million of them. In FY2015, the PEP ranged from a low of 69% in the District of Columbia to a high of 140% in Arizona. The reader should note that **Table 4** indicates that for some states the PEP was greater than 100%. This is because paternity is established for more than just the children who were born outside of marriage in the specified year. Most states acknowledge that while they have made significant improvement in establishing paternity for newborns they are not performing nearly as well with respect to establishing paternity for older children.

Table 4. Paternity Establishment, FY2015

State	Children in CSE Cases Who Were Born Outside of Marriage	Children in CSE Cases for Whom Paternity was Established or Acknowledged	CSE Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP), FY2015
Alabama	135,923	129,380	95.19%
Alaska	22,906	21,451	93.65%
Arizona	124,756	174,139	139.58%
Arkansas	83,276	82,942	99.60%
California	953,820	972,791	101.99%
Colorado	92,346	85,659	92.76%
Connecticut	135,515	127,981	94.44%
Delaware	68,421	56,767	82.97%
District of Columbia	42,061	28,942	68.81%
Florida	476,224	400,453	84.09%
Georgia	377,502	389,304	103.13%
Guam	7,692	7,093	92.21%
Hawaii	51,927	47,952	92.35%
Idaho	82,710	80,650	97.51%
Illinois	384,566	310,097	80.64%
Indiana	205,275	214,334	104.41%
Iowa	109,357	106,537	97.42%
Kansas	100,845	98,351	97.53%
Kentucky	190,554	179,983	94.45%
Louisiana	254,223	232,129	91.31%
Maine	48,718	50,111	102.86%
Maryland	166,087	164,265	98.90%
Massachusetts	159,661	151,758	95.05%

State	Children in CSE Cases Who Were Born Outside of Marriage	Children in CSE Cases for Whom Paternity was Established or Acknowledged	CSE Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP), FY2015
Michigan	502,434	453,547	90.27%
Minnesota	180,564	178,755	99.00%
Mississippi	298,172	279,787	93.83%
Missouri	294,544	282,411	95.88%
Montana	25,511	26,753	104.87%
Nebraska	77,113	77,030	99.89%
Nevada	67,637	80,258	118.66%
New Hampshire	25,879	27,933	107.94%
New Jersey	200,193	190,730	95.27%
New Mexico	65,788	64,584	98.17%
New York	598,071	516,057	86.29%
North Carolina	303,932	301,443	99.18%
North Dakota	29,155	30,420	104.34%
Ohio	584,979	568,787	97.23%
Oklahoma	154,976	133,214	85.96%
Oregon	N.A.	54,793	N.A.
Pennsylvania	295,077	316,569	107.28%
Puerto Rico	51,299	50,525	98.49%
Rhode Island	49,076	45,316	92.34%
South Carolina	208,584	194,547	93.27%
South Dakota	26,732	29,666	110.98%
Tennessee	299,730	290,412	96.89%
Texas	1,128,209	957,716	84.89%
Utah	58,128	62,075	106.79%
Vermont	13,039	13,820	105.99%
Virgin Islands	3,482	2,302	66.11%
Virginia	202,928	199,007	98.07%
Washington	206,516	203,777	98.67%
West Virginia	76,235	76,894	100.86%
Wisconsin	270,133	283,344	104.89%
Wyoming	15,907	19,326	121.49%
Total	**10,588,388**	**10,124,867**	**95.62%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Notes: With respect to the paternity establishment percentage (PEP), states have two options:

(1) CSE Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP). State performance on paternity establishment is calculated by dividing the total number of children in the state's CSE caseload during the fiscal year (or at state option, at the end of the fiscal year) who were born outside of marriage and for whom paternity has been established by the total number of children in the state's CSE caseload as of the end of the preceding fiscal year who were born outside of marriage.

(2) Statewide Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP). State performance on paternity establishment is calculated by dividing the total number of minor children who were born outside of marriage and for whom paternity has been established during the fiscal year by the total number of children born outside of marriage during the preceding fiscal year.

For illustrative purposes, this table only shows the CSE PEP. In FY2015, 25 states and Guam chose to use the CSE PEP and 25 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands chose to use the Statewide PEP. See Table P-39 in the OCSE FY2015 Preliminary Data Report to see both the CSE PEP and the Statewide PEP. Also see Table P-72 in the OCSE FY2015 Preliminary Data Report for underlying data, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy2015_preliminary.pdf.

N.A.—not available.

Establishment of Child Support Orders

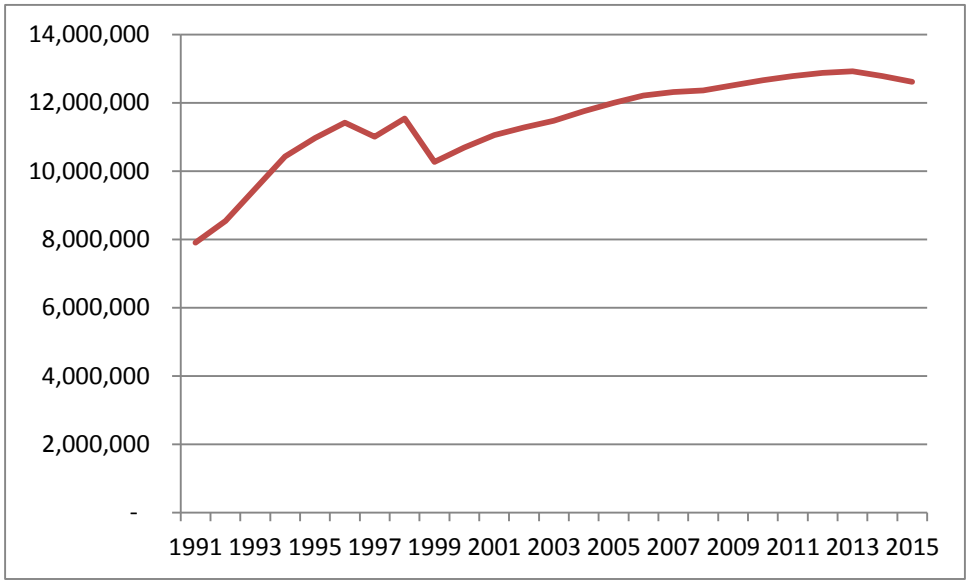
A child support order legally obligates noncustodial parents to provide financial support for their children and stipulates the amount of the obligation and how it is to be paid. It is usually established at the time of divorce, when an unmarried couple dissolves their relationship, or when a welfare case is initiated. Child support payments enable parents who do not live with their children to fulfill their financial responsibility to them by contributing to the payment of childrearing costs.

The child support order is established administratively by a state/county CSE agency or through the state courts. P.L. 100-485 required states generally to use their state-established guidelines in establishing child support orders. Child support guidelines are a set of rules and tables that are used to determine the amount of the child support order. They are designed to (1) protect the best interests of the children by trying to ensure that the child or children in question continue to benefit from the financial resources of both parents in situations in which the parents go their separate ways; and (2) make the calculation of child support fair, objective, consistent, and predictable (which in many instances has the added benefit of reducing conflict and tension between the parents).

Figure 5 shows the total (national) number of CSE cases with a child support order established during the period FY1991-FY2015. The figure shows that the number of CSE cases with a child support order increased through FY1996, fluctuated between FY1997 and FY1999, increased from FY2000 to FY2013, and decreased in both FY2014 and FY2015.The figure shows a drop in CSE cases with a child support order established in both FY1997 and FY1999, in both of these years the CSE caseload for the nation also declined. The number of cases with a child support order established increased by about 60% during that 25-year period, from almost 7.9 million in FY1991 to 12.6 million in FY2015 (see **Table 5**).

In FY1991, 59% of the 13,422,739 CSE cases had an established child support order. In FY2015, almost 86% of the 14,744,538 CSE cases had an established child support order.

Figure 5. Number of CSE Cases with Child Support Order Established, FY1991-FY2015



Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service, based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 5. CSE Cases with Child Support Orders Established, FY1991-FY2015

FY	Number	FY	Number	FY	Number
1991	7,906,389	2001	11,049,610	2011	12,783,711
1992	8,538,798	2002	11,275,601	2012	12,872,311
1993	9,484,243	2003	11,471,374	2013	12,920,344
1994	10,429,167	2004	11,753,603	2014	12,779,273
1995	10,972,667	2005	11,994,590	2015	12,613,822
1996	11,413,684	2006	12,215,891		
1997	11,006,016	2007	12,318,042		
1998	11,540,068	2008	12,363,221		
1999	10,272,095	2009	12,512,816		
2000	10,688,015	2010	12,659,895		

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: Data are not available before FY1991 because the previous definition of support obligations established included modifications to orders while the new definition only includes new, not modified orders.

Table 6 shows the number of CSE cases with child support orders established by a state from FY2011 to FY2015. The number dropped by 1.3%, from almost 12.8 million to 12.6 million.

During the period, Florida established 18% fewer cases in FY2015 than in FY2011. Even so, the child support order establishment percentage for Florida for FY2015 was nearly 83%.[21] In contrast, Texas established 19% more cases in FY2015 than in FY2011. The child support order establishment percentage for Texas for FY2015 was also nearly 83%.[22]

Table 6. Number of CSE Cases with Child Support Orders Established, by State, FY2011-FY2015

States	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Alabama	190,712	192,898	192,902	193,020	189,533	-0.6%
Alaska	43,163	43,190	44,409	44,716	44,834	3.9%
Arizona	162,079	160,645	158,768	157,085	153,407	-5.4%
Arkansas	102,032	103,084	102,354	100,883	98,048	-3.9%
California	1,204,613	1,171,159	1,148,813	1,121,654	1,106,842	-8.1%
Colorado	127,546	132,129	133,116	134,613	134,484	5.4%
Connecticut	144,190	151,785	157,850	158,503	157,101	9.0%
Delaware	50,509	51,633	53,485	56,372	58,210	15.2%
District of Columbia	35,023	34,620	34,594	34,973	35,197	0.5%
Florida	658,062	694,485	686,065	564,925	538,755	-18.1%
Georgia	337,224	341,850	338,255	354,427	361,555	7.2%
Guam	4,980	5,033	5,181	5,159	5,160	3.6%
Hawaii	55,781	58,436	59,629	59,112	59,298	6.3%
Idaho	102,239	103,340	100,948	102,272	103,623	1.4%
Illinois	408,652	401,835	406,771	392,400	392,348	-4.0%
Indiana	271,849	272,720	268,679	265,350	260,369	-4.2%
Iowa	159,714	157,528	157,256	156,872	154,602	-3.2%
Kansas	106,784	109,829	111,040	115,448	117,647	10.2%
Kentucky	264,950	266,027	265,494	259,797	249,517	-5.8%
Louisiana	229,032	234,386	240,214	245,192	247,488	8.1%
Maine	58,325	57,569	57,347	56,290	51,645	-11.5%
Maryland	197,994	183,977	184,811	182,702	175,516	-11.4%

[21] P.L. 105-200, the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998, revised the original incentive payment system in an effort to further improve the CSE program by linking incentive payments to states' performance in five major areas: (1) establishment of paternity, (2) establishment of child support orders, (3) collection of current child support, (4) collection of child support arrearages (i.e., past-due child support), and (5) cost-effectiveness of the CSE program. State performance on child support orders is calculated by dividing the number of cases in the CSE caseload for which there is a child support order by the total number of cases in the program. In FY2015, the child support order establishment percentage for Florida was 83% (538,755/650,421).

[22] In FY2015, the child support order establishment percentage for Texas was 83% (1,257,571/1,516,674)).

States	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Massachusetts	216,410	202,358	204,432	203,268	197,332	-8.8%
Michigan	772,687	774,463	770,849	760,284	683,193	-11.6%
Minnesota	208,132	211,170	211,321	207,737	202,050	-2.9%
Mississippi	207,764	201,742	209,149	221,754	223,313	7.5%
Missouri	305,165	310,765	312,204	313,087	310,499	1.7%
Montana	33,239	33,645	33,459	33,053	31,933	-3.9%
Nebraska	90,663	92,675	92,960	93,080	93,605	3.2%
Nevada	84,706	84,157	84,688	83,255	81,898	-3.3%
New Hampshire	30,342	29,877	29,965	30,015	30,756	1.4%
New Jersey	303,700	299,238	296,607	294,156	289,594	-4.6%
New Mexico	45,817	48,190	50,092	51,236	51,734	12.9%
New York	736,743	746,297	741,412	741,996	740,120	0.5%
North Carolina	354,680	357,591	358,405	356,544	352,497	-0.6%
North Dakota	33,662	34,460	34,753	34,883	34,020	1.1%
Ohio	783,566	788,208	782,092	771,610	765,790	-2.3%
Oklahoma	153,379	158,615	164,931	169,167	171,780	12.0%
Oregon	173,834	174,713	176,786	176,970	170,282	-2.0%
Pennsylvania	384,894	378,749	371,933	363,730	356,096	-7.5%
Puerto Rico	186,973	185,329	185,200	187,365	188,643	0.9%
Rhode Island	38,044	38,816	39,582	40,797	39,991	5.1%
South Carolina	159,149	157,062	158,591	159,138	155,793	-2.1%
South Dakota	33,672	34,630	35,469	35,177	35,481	5.4%
Tennessee	317,641	315,432	308,849	309,978	308,419	-2.9%
Texas	1,055,058	1,110,564	1,172,083	1,217,245	1,257,571	19.2%
Utah	75,410	78,498	80,348	80,558	81,225	7.7%
Vermont	17,672	17,666	16,658	15,949	15,196	-14.0%
Virgin Islands	5,984	5,950	6,169	6,293	6,301	5.3%
Virginia	292,616	293,238	294,162	280,273	275,856	-5.7%
Washington	325,822	331,263	333,262	318,442	313,675	-3.7%
West Virginia	108,485	110,456	112,869	115,298	111,189	2.5%
Wisconsin	303,293	309,784	315,478	318,011	316,467	4.3%
Wyoming	29,056	28,552	27,605	27,159	26,344	-9.3%
Total	**12,783,711**	**12,872,311**	**12,920,344**	**12,779,273**	**12,613,822**	**-1.3%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Note: Amounts shown are not adjusted for inflation.

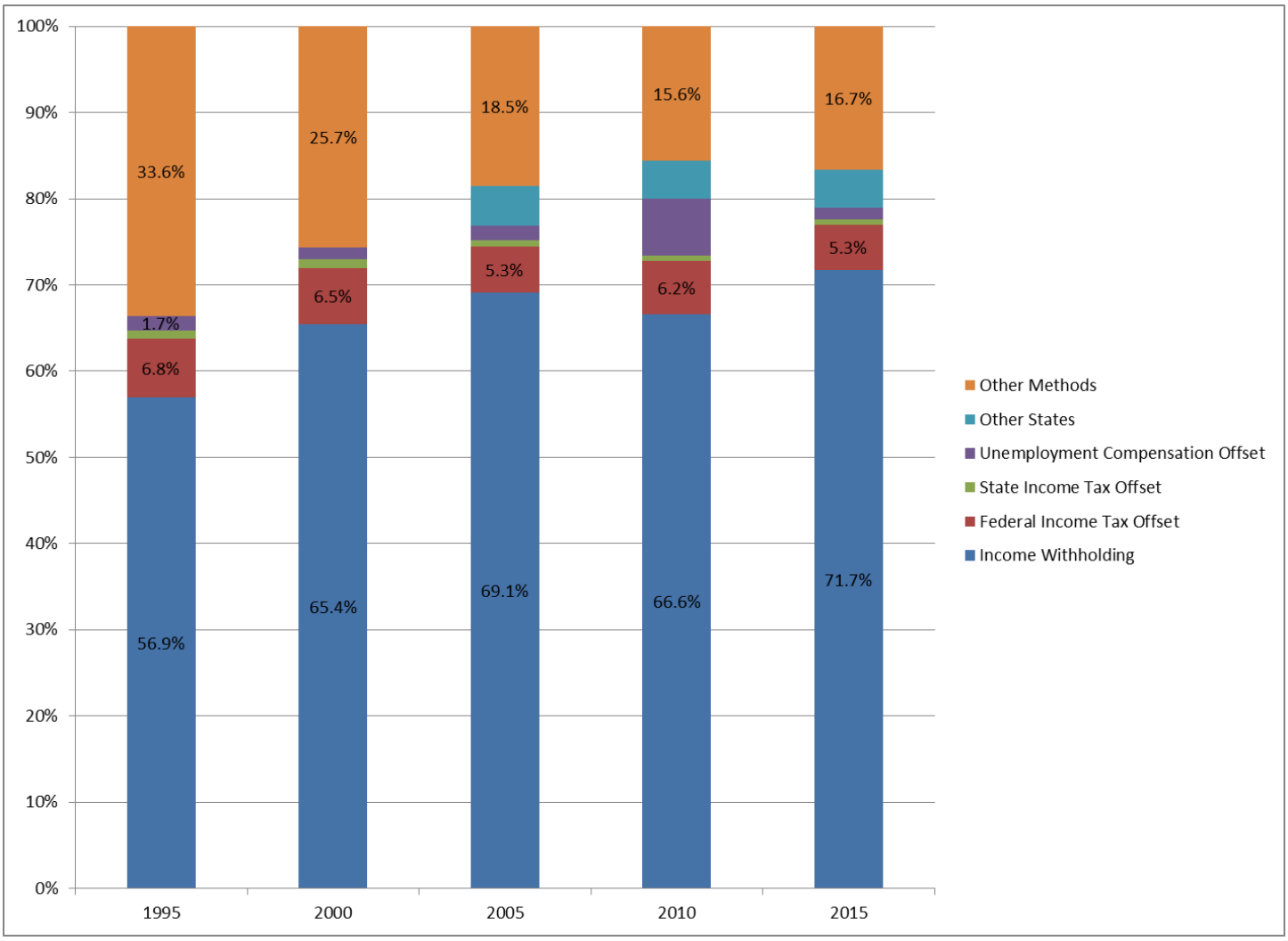
CSE Collections

As noted earlier, for the nation as a whole child support payments collected by CSE agencies from noncustodial parents increased from $1 billion in FY1978 (when the CSE program was in its infancy) to $28.6 billion in FY2015, an increase of 718% if adjusted for inflation. (See **Table A-4**.) During that span of 38 years, the CSE program transformed from a welfare cost-recovery program into a program that helps strengthen families by securing financial support for children from their noncustodial parents on a consistent and continuing basis.

Child support collection methods used by CSE agencies include income withholding, interception of federal and state income tax refunds, interception of unemployment compensation, liens against property, security bonds, reporting child support obligations to credit bureaus, regular billings, delinquency notices, garnishment of wages, revocation of various types of licenses (e.g., drivers, business, occupational, recreational), attachment of lottery winnings and insurance settlements, and seizure of assets held by public or private retirement funds and financial institutions (see **Figure 6**). In FY2015, total CSE collections amounted to $34.1 billion, of which $28.6 billion was distributed on behalf of families in the CSE program. About $5 billion was received through the income withholding process on behalf of non-CSE families and about $0.6 billion was undistributed collections.[23] Income withholding accounted for about 72% of total collections received ($24.5 billion) in FY2015 (see **Table 7**). All jurisdictions also have civil or criminal contempt-of-court procedures and criminal nonsupport laws.

[23] Undistributed collections are child support payments that have been collected by state child support offices, but have not been sent to custodial parents. These payments, collected on behalf of individual recipients, cannot be immediately disbursed due to the lack of identifying information, unknown whereabouts of the intended recipient, determination of welfare status, dispute resolution, or other reasons.

Figure 6. Child Support Collections Made by Various Enforcement Methods, Selected Years



Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 7. Child Support Collections Made by Various Enforcement Techniques, Selected Fiscal Years, 1995-2015

(In millions of constant 2015 dollars)

Enforcement Techniques	Child Support Collections					Percent of Total Collections				
	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015	1995	2000	2005	2010	2015
Income Withholding	$9,427	$17,892	$23,549	$23,153	$24,500	56.9%	65.4%	69.1%	66.6%	71.7%
Federal Income Tax Refund Offset	$1,134	$1,789	$1,821	$2,174	$1,800	6.8%	6.5%	5.3%	6.2%	5.3%
State Income Tax Refund Offset	$150	$286	$251	$222	$208	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
Unemployment Compensation Offset	$289	$358	$557	$2,283	$462	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%	6.6%	1.4%
Other States	$0	$0	$1,578	$1,522	$1,500	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	4.4%	4.4%
Other Methods	$5,564	$7,019	$6,312	$5,435	$5,700	33.6%	25.7%	18.5%	15.6%	16.7%
Total Collections	**$16,564**	**$27,345**	**$34,069**	**$34,788**	**$34,170**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Notes: Total collections reported on this table exceed the distributed collection amounts reported elsewhere because income withholding includes collections received from CSE and non-CSE cases processed through the State Disbursement Unit.

The data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items).

Although income withholding has been the primary source for obtaining child support payments, the broad array of child support collection/enforcement techniques has enabled states to provide some help to the entire spectrum of CSE families (i.e., current TANF families, former TANF families, and families that had never been on TANF/AFDC).

As mentioned earlier, in FY1999 OCSE started reporting data in categories designated as current assistance (i.e., child support collected on behalf of families that are currently receiving TANF cash assistance or Title IV-E foster care payments), former assistance (i.e., families that used to receive TANF assistance, AFDC benefits, or Title IV-E foster care), and never received assistance (i.e., families that never received AFDC, TANF, or Title IV-E foster care) rather than TANF and non-TANF. **Table 8** indicates over the 17-year period from FY1999 through FY2015, child support collections for the nation as a whole decreased almost 62% for current TANF cases, increased almost 31% for former TANF cases, and increased almost 38% for families that had never been on TANF.[24]

[24] Note that as shown in **Table A-4**, after adjusting for inflation, distributed CSE collections nationwide increased each year since the beginning of the program (with the exception of FY1980) until FY2008 (with CSE collections reaching a high of $29.2 billion in FY2008). Total distributed CSE collections decreased (after adjusting for inflation) in each of the years from FY2009 through FY2014. CSE collections decreased 3%, from $29.1 billion in FY2009 to $28.2 billion in FY2014. OCSE attributed the decrease in CSE collections to the downturn in the American economy.

Table 8. Distributed Collections, by Recipient Category, FY1999 and FY2015

(In constant 2015 dollars)

Family Category	FY1999	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY1999-FY2015
Current TANF & Foster Care	$2,106,209,472	$808,350,174	-61.6%
Former TANF & Foster Care	$6,860,047,428	8,958,517,382	30.6%
Never Assistance	$13,662,169,909	18,792,266,619	37.5%
Total Distributed Child Support Collections	**$22,628,426,809**	**28,559,134,175**	**26.2%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: The data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items).

Table 9 shows that during the most recent five-year period, FY2011-FY2015, child support payments collected and distributed by CSE agencies increased almost 5% nationally, from $27.3 billion to $28.6 billion. Child support collections fluctuated among the states, increasing in 34 jurisdictions and decreasing in 20 jurisdictions during the period. They ranged from a 24% decrease in the Virgin Islands to a 25% increase in Texas. Interestingly, child support collections continued to increase even though the CSE caseload declined. During the period, the CSE caseload declined 7%, from 15.8 million to 14.7 million (see **Table A-2**).

Table 9. Distributed Child Support Collections, by State, FY2011-FY2015

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Alabama	$280,431,731	$290,572,812	$292,851,132	$305,979,180	$320,480,355	14.3%
Alaska	97,483,308	99,583,102	96,778,053	96,470,329	99,574,780	2.1%
Arizona	322,358,501	323,093,647	322,560,931	317,199,298	313,943,546	-2.6%
Arkansas	211,058,254	219,645,476	227,060,980	230,001,139	234,810,293	11.3%
California	2,161,572,162	2,208,751,449	2,205,953,985	2,208,197,922	2,247,498,866	4.0%
Colorado	289,106,557	293,245,061	300,914,154	309,678,517	318,996,217	10.3%
Connecticut	248,731,241	245,369,851	242,343,350	239,004,703	242,487,423	-2.5%
Delaware	73,803,807	74,451,056	74,899,868	73,903,748	75,417,449	2.2%
District of Columbia	50,832,080	50,365,472	48,140,992	47,357,275	47,343,430	-6.9%
Florida	1,508,852,871	1,466,273,345	1,488,746,417	1,450,639,777	1,443,751,002	-4.3%
Georgia	632,448,613	647,282,139	646,823,263	658,549,802	678,646,491	7.3%
Guam	11,188,297	13,534,698	11,689,948	12,185,681	10,748,158	-3.9%
Hawaii	95,093,455	96,191,283	96,165,788	97,700,940	98,888,615	4.0%
Idaho	146,138,843	151,981,715	159,592,372	161,391,527	169,281,382	15.8%
Illinois	824,409,921	802,971,010	805,882,656	805,081,568	807,772,022	-2.0%
Indiana	572,813,539	580,545,272	568,000,950	556,624,325	553,887,280	-3.3%

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Iowa	318,741,380	313,319,066	311,829,311	308,319,557	307,628,096	-3.5%
Kansas	183,157,867	189,363,684	188,717,689	182,077,612	182,652,580	-0.3%
Kentucky	391,856,211	389,349,338	381,686,118	381,682,114	383,607,980	-2.1%
Louisiana	367,505,563	380,063,605	388,552,815	394,004,210	406,865,602	10.7%
Maine	101,125,421	99,657,835	98,477,135	96,570,225	98,680,730	-2.4%
Maryland	491,863,607	514,934,157	518,529,331	527,997,612	533,041,437	8.4%
Massachusetts	593,132,960	604,380,725	612,779,716	619,591,585	626,665,708	5.7%
Michigan	1,302,822,773	1,320,275,023	1,296,510,912	1,314,094,928	1,324,213,639	1.6%
Minnesota	582,918,142	582,324,840	584,830,863	584,663,171	583,371,957	0.1%
Mississippi	286,492,777	299,798,756	302,481,524	309,697,386	322,142,959	12.4%
Missouri	562,254,612	573,548,550	571,368,166	575,683,350	596,717,964	6.1%
Montana	58,110,726	59,935,863	60,812,705	61,057,236	62,718,670	7.9%
Nebraska	198,289,243	200,318,373	203,717,713	205,231,434	206,767,027	4.3%
Nevada	165,757,160	171,931,117	175,388,845	175,807,832	179,728,430	8.4%
New Hampshire	83,861,937	83,176,973	82,463,070	81,882,654	78,122,974	-6.8%
New Jersey	1,111,624,272	1,131,352,192	1,140,851,723	1,146,736,488	1,154,241,606	3.8%
New Mexico	106,437,786	112,170,094	114,839,125	118,649,455	121,805,960	14.4%
New York	1,705,428,336	1,703,265,881	1,694,254,663	1,697,340,934	1,701,208,206	-0.2%
North Carolina	662,975,022	662,096,486	663,887,308	655,469,608	661,805,785	-0.2%
North Dakota	85,908,604	89,592,169	92,256,930	95,110,175	96,939,840	12.8%
Ohio	1,694,857,119	1,697,143,384	1,704,229,238	1,680,821,856	1,662,243,146	-1.9%
Oklahoma	300,859,429	315,117,057	329,779,861	338,582,208	348,822,105	15.9%
Oregon	344,717,355	349,474,272	353,042,802	357,382,407	354,419,271	2.8%
Pennsylvania	1,351,340,919	1,320,237,119	1,300,546,352	1,263,370,002	1,247,383,434	-7.7%
Puerto Rico	342,402,735	336,840,678	332,069,166	334,919,932	328,304,424	-4.1%
Rhode Island	63,842,716	66,339,200	69,200,964	71,235,761	73,768,669	15.5%
South Carolina	247,263,227	255,318,273	242,271,997	259,070,133	276,692,044	11.9%
South Dakota	81,662,890	86,280,610	88,856,419	90,759,898	92,266,271	13.0%
Tennessee	539,348,423	555,988,101	580,403,541	593,728,173	601,662,972	11.6%
Texas	3,106,894,956	3,320,420,591	3,541,224,895	3,706,766,136	3,869,737,092	24.6%
Utah	182,972,269	194,717,309	200,149,786	205,110,708	208,930,091	14.2%
Vermont	46,483,138	45,987,161	45,014,073	45,135,618	44,091,884	-5.1%
Virgin Islands	8,769,471	8,186,414	7,928,193	7,300,367	6,698,268	-23.6%
Virginia	597,903,773	606,627,426	606,514,260	611,649,574	610,461,256	2.1%

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Washington	641,015,036	644,113,060	651,731,719	641,623,544	637,489,204	-0.6%
West Virginia	190,074,463	195,410,794	196,524,715	195,985,384	199,206,476	4.8%
Wisconsin	606,831,741	611,876,491	620,140,452	628,435,812	639,018,256	5.3%
Wyoming	62,857,790	64,255,732	64,331,256	65,545,303	65,484,853	4.2%
Total	**27,296,685,029**	**27,719,045,787**	**28,006,600,190**	**28,199,056,113**	**28,559,134,175**	**4.6%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Note: Amounts shown are not adjusted for inflation.

Many families that receive CSE services do not receive any child support payments. This could be because paternity has not been established, a child support order has not been established, the noncustodial parent has not been located, the noncustodial parent is not working and has no income, or the noncustodial parent is incarcerated. **Table 10** shows the number and percentage of CSE cases in which the CSE agencies collected child support payments from noncustodial parents for both of the years FY1999 and FY2015. In FY2015, about 34% of TANF families received child support collections. The comparable statistics for former TANF families and families that had never received TANF were 60% and about 69%, respectively.

Given that not all families in the CSE program actually receive child support payments, **Table 11** shows average monthly child support collections per *CSE case with a child support collection*, by category of family, for FY1999 and FY2015. **Table 11** accounts for inflation by converting the FY1999 figures into constant 2015 dollars. **Table 11** indicates that the average monthly child support payment for families that actually received a payment has decreased over time for two of the three categories of families. Child support payments collected on behalf of TANF families decreased in real/constant dollars from $192 in FY1999 to $129 in FY2015. Child support payments collected on behalf of families that had never been on TANF decreased in constant dollars from $427 in FY1999 to $332 in FY2015. Child support payments collected on behalf of families that had formerly been on TANF increased slightly over the 17-year period from $189 in FY1999 to $197 in FY2015 (adjusted for inflation). **Table 11** also shows that the average monthly child support payment for families who actually received a payment was relatively small, amounting to $264 in FY2015.

Table 10. Number and Percentage of CSE Cases with Child Support Collections, FY1999 and FY2015

	FY1999		FY2015		
Family Category	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Number**	**Percentage**	**Percentage Change in Number of Cases, FY1999-FY2015**
Current TANF & Foster Care	912,268	24.5%	522,220	33.8%	-42.8%
Former TANF & Foster Care	3,017,123	40.8%	3,790,011	60.3%	25.6%
Never Assistance	2,670,545	43.1%	4,716,470	68.6%	76.6%
Total Cases with Collections	**6,599,936**	**38.1%**	**9,028,701**	**61.4%**	**36.8%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 11. Average Monthly Child Support Payments for Families with Child Support Collections, FY1999 and FY2015

(In constant 2015 dollars)

Category	**FY1999**	**FY2015**	**Percentage Change, FY1999-FY2015**
Current TANF & Foster Care	$192	$129	-32.8%
Former TANF & Foster Care	$189	$197	4.2%
Never Assistance	$427	$332	-22.2%
Average per Case with Collections	**$286**	**$264**	**-7.7%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Notes: The average monthly CSE collections per family that actually received child support payments is derived by dividing distributed collections as shown in **Table 8** (for the appropriate category) by the appropriate category of families that actually received child support payments (see **Table 10**) and then dividing by 12 to obtain a monthly amount.

The FY1999 dollar figures were converted into constant 2015 dollars using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., CPI-U-RS (all items)).

Also noteworthy is the large amount of child support arrearages that hamper the effectiveness of the CSE program. Child support arrearages refer to an accumulation of the past child support payments that were not paid by the noncustodial parent of a child in the manner that was ordered by the court or CSE agency. According to Census Bureau data, in 1999 and 2013 only about 45% of custodial parents received the full amount of child support owed.[25] Data from OCSE indicate that in FY1999, the CSE program collected only about 18% of the child support obligations for

[25] Timothy Grall, "Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support, 2013," U.S. Census Bureau, *Current Population Reports*, P60-255, January 2016, p. 3.

which it had responsibility if arrearage payments are taken into account (otherwise, 53%).[26] In FY2015, the CSE program collected only 20% of child support obligations for which it had responsibility if arrearage payments are taken into account (otherwise, 65%).[27]

CSE Administrative Expenditures

Each state CSE agency operates under a state plan approved by the OCSE and based on the program standards and policy set by the federal government. The CSE State Plan sets the structure for state CSE agencies and their local counterparts to work with families to obtain support. States are required to track financial and statistical data on their programs.

The CSE program is funded with both state and federal dollars. States spend their own money to operate a CSE program; the level of funding allocated by the state and/or localities determines the amount of resources available to CSE agencies. The federal government reimburses each state for 66% of all allowable expenditures on CSE activities.[28] Thus for every $1 that a state spends on its CSE program, the federal government reimburses it 66 cents. The result is that, in effect, a state's net contribution of $.34 is nearly tripled.[29] The federal government's funding is "open-ended" in that it pays its percentage of expenditures by matching the amounts spent by state and local governments with no upper limit or ceiling. The federal government also provides states with an incentive payment to encourage them to operate effective programs.[30]

Table A-3 shows that during the 38-year period from FY1978 through FY2015, CSE expenditures increased every year until FY2009. Total expenditures decreased from FY2009 to FY2011, remained unchanged in FY2012, decreased in FY2013, and then increased in FY2014 and FY2015. Still, the FY2015 level of CSE expenditures remained below the FY2009 level. **Table A-4** indicates that accounting for inflation during the period FY1978-FY2015, total CSE administrative expenditures increased 452% in real (2015) dollars, from $1.042 billion to $5.749

[26] In FY1999, $98.0 billion in child support obligations ($32.6 billion in current support and $75.4 billion in past-due support) was owed to families receiving CSE services, but only $17.2 billion was paid ($11.9 billion current, $5.3 billion past-due).

[27] In FY2015, $149.0 billion in child support obligations ($33.5 billion in current support and $115.5 billion in past-due support) was owed to families receiving CSE services, but only $29.4 billion was paid ($21.8 billion current, $7.6 billion past-due).

[28] Although these expenditures are often referred to as administrative expenditures, they cover more than just the cost of operating the CSE program (i.e., personnel costs). CSE administrative expenditures cover all allowable expenditures for the CSE program (e.g., locate activities, paternity establishment, child support order establishment, collection and enforcement of child support obligations, distribution of child support payments, costs associated with automated systems).

[29] The general CSE federal matching rate is 66%. This means that for every dollar that a state spends on its CSE program, the federal government will reimburse the state 66 cents. So if the state spends $1 on its program, the federal share of that expenditure is 66 cents and the state share is 34 cents. The algebraic formula for this relationship is represented by .66/.34=x/1. Thereby, if the state share of the expenditure is $1, the federal share is $1.94 (i.e., the federal share is 1.94 times the state share), and the total expenditure by the state is $2.94 ($1+$1.94).

[30] The CSE incentive payment—which is based in part on a state's child support collections and five performance measures related to establishment of paternity and child support orders, collection of current and past-due child support payments, and cost-effectiveness—was statutorily set by P.L. 105-200. In the aggregate, incentive payments to states may not exceed $458 million for FY2006, $471 million for FY2007, and $483 million for FY2008 (to be increased for inflation in years thereafter). Aggregate incentive payments to states are capped at $564 million for FY2015 and estimated to amount to $481 million. For additional information on CSE incentive payments, see CRS Report RL34203, *Child Support Enforcement Program Incentive Payments: Background and Policy Issues*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

billion. During FY1999 and FY2015, total CSE administrative expenditures were the same, $5.749 billion, if adjusted for inflation.[31]

Table 12 shows that during the most recent five-year period, FY2011-FY2015, total CSE expenditures for the nation as a whole increased by less than 2%, from $5.661 billion to $5.749 billion. Total CSE expenditures fluctuated among the states, increasing in 34 jurisdictions and decreasing in 20 jurisdictions during the period. They ranged from a 41% decrease in Kansas to an 84% increase in Massachusetts.

Table 12. Total CSE Expenditures, by State, FY2011-FY2015

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Alabama	$69,257,811	$66,341,149	$60,715,726	$69,479,648	$68,028,161	-1.8%
Alaska	27,558,105	28,139,702	29,984,746	28,319,454	27,979,050	1.5%
Arizona	60,680,616	62,405,289	59,856,703	61,825,190	66,527,241	9.6%
Arkansas	54,351,286	51,255,627	55,459,523	56,162,597	52,188,024	-4.0%
California	985,334,186	932,703,797	907,740,837	947,255,569	932,640,548	-5.3%
Colorado	72,023,534	77,828,008	78,270,047	70,237,361	73,242,148	1.7%
Connecticut	72,971,296	69,637,919	73,001,269	76,970,571	80,492,792	10.3%
Delaware	36,685,264	47,356,832	48,985,649	39,803,937	43,502,079	18.6%
District of Columbia	26,846,039	30,144,474	29,747,076	27,211,035	26,103,264	-2.8%
Florida	301,647,654	270,554,944	254,970,362	275,445,976	268,319,854	-11.0%
Georgia	99,783,596	104,846,968	110,837,451	95,246,123	89,665,255	-10.1%
Guam	5,193,148	5,445,764	5,537,542	6,506,557	6,662,458	28.3%
Hawaii	17,141,315	19,048,930	17,566,175	19,226,710	22,016,084	28.4%
Idaho	22,704,063	22,825,157	22,393,178	23,772,198	23,265,609	2.5%
Illinois	190,441,679	199,084,450	190,625,633	190,437,383	187,964,021	-1.3%
Indiana	113,803,740	98,517,321	93,506,857	104,278,768	106,390,307	-6.5%
Iowa	53,675,088	55,759,654	55,527,785	58,223,180	56,732,798	5.7%
Kansas	59,602,238	55,383,143	51,133,958	34,844,763	35,437,126	-40.5%
Kentucky	68,747,116	69,559,996	58,627,582	62,408,040	63,894,424	-7.1%
Louisiana	78,228,126	78,441,279	76,231,995	77,663,427	79,074,716	1.1%
Maine	27,603,905	28,152,182	27,441,852	28,304,417	29,685,926	7.5%
Maryland	128,328,833	132,918,332	120,620,933	135,350,144	126,898,831	-1.1%
Massachusetts	65,556,965	106,995,484	113,306,715	119,593,686	120,870,421	84.4%

[31] During the period FY2008-FY2015, CSE expenditures decreased 11% after accounting for inflation.

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Michigan	216,048,395	227,004,454	222,163,243	214,754,170	235,775,892	9.1%
Minnesota	167,490,168	172,249,159	165,207,638	168,584,177	169,889,162	1.4%
Mississippi	30,693,642	30,621,901	31,770,619	33,662,083	42,481,442	38.4%
Missouri	79,412,552	81,276,606	81,135,427	78,344,839	75,358,920	-5.1%
Montana	12,976,575	14,965,112	15,469,434	15,898,675	16,029,621	23.5%
Nebraska	36,464,135	36,665,117	39,742,372	40,475,691	36,587,514	0.3%
Nevada	49,336,503	49,896,313	52,495,745	51,204,955	50,652,267	2.7%
New Hampshire	20,787,727	19,204,227	18,333,059	22,035,312	24,207,281	16.4%
New Jersey	250,952,270	277,488,617	279,470,406	282,897,887	271,694,567	8.3%
New Mexico	43,314,248	40,813,099	42,487,221	38,435,723	42,606,768	-1.6%
New York	334,123,065	371,975,259	370,326,444	355,585,322	382,599,551	14.5%
North Carolina	128,391,290	153,143,868	137,990,207	140,921,757	139,664,016	8.8%
North Dakota	14,893,954	14,927,364	16,028,086	16,631,456	17,451,505	17.2%
Ohio	256,304,436	237,619,155	234,292,673	234,616,041	269,844,104	5.3%
Oklahoma	71,073,760	75,262,245	73,964,610	75,613,357	73,830,396	3.9%
Oregon	68,377,114	68,432,876	69,804,890	73,668,716	84,223,538	23.2%
Pennsylvania	241,456,655	237,917,566	247,505,973	238,993,053	253,846,698	5.1%
Puerto Rico	40,943,317	35,631,052	41,719,672	36,574,275	35,734,082	-12.7%
Rhode Island	16,665,966	14,338,247	13,552,879	13,649,046	13,369,013	-19.8%
South Carolina	56,560,153	57,056,971	41,793,873	59,475,170	51,344,075	-9.2%
South Dakota	8,560,325	7,787,780	8,337,718	8,876,969	9,244,116	8.0%
Tennessee	78,625,646	82,279,486	78,618,805	81,550,816	80,102,865	1.9%
Texas	350,739,326	312,592,587	317,608,342	339,879,453	327,359,648	-6.7%
Utah	34,847,399	32,538,056	35,190,565	33,712,399	34,035,330	-2.3%
Vermont	14,885,683	13,826,843	14,467,565	15,619,254	15,191,527	2.1%
Virgin Islands	5,267,400	5,742,341	7,262,211	7,477,045	6,878,265	30.6%
Virginia	93,661,010	94,477,219	101,795,738	101,484,324	103,740,384	10.8%
Washington	145,656,303	135,600,312	139,344,541	149,593,236	149,585,390	2.7%
West Virginia	42,916,144	41,677,147	41,658,006	41,290,944	39,806,629	-7.2%
Wisconsin	97,675,730	95,638,999	98,464,911	100,726,694	97,837,562	0.2%
Wyoming	13,261,454	9,231,218	8,221,160	8,959,741	10,141,655	-23.5%
Total	**5,660,527,948**	**5,661,227,597**	**5,588,313,627**	**5,689,759,314**	**5,748,694,920**	**1.6%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.
Note: Amounts shown are not adjusted for inflation.

Table 13 shows monthly CSE administrative expenditures per CSE case for selected years during the period FY1978-FY2015. Average monthly CSE expenditures per case increased from $6 in FY1978 ($21 in 2015 dollars) to $32 in FY2015, a 52% increase, adjusting for inflation.[32]

Table 13. Average Monthly CSE Expenditures Per CSE Case, Selected Years

Fiscal Year	Current Dollars	Constant 2015 Dollars
1978	$6	$21
1999	19	28
2008	31	34
2011	30	31
2015	32	32

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Notes: The average monthly CSE expenditure per case is derived by dividing total CSE expenditures by the caseload number and then dividing by 12 to obtain a monthly amount.

Data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items)).

Cost-Effectiveness of the CSE Program

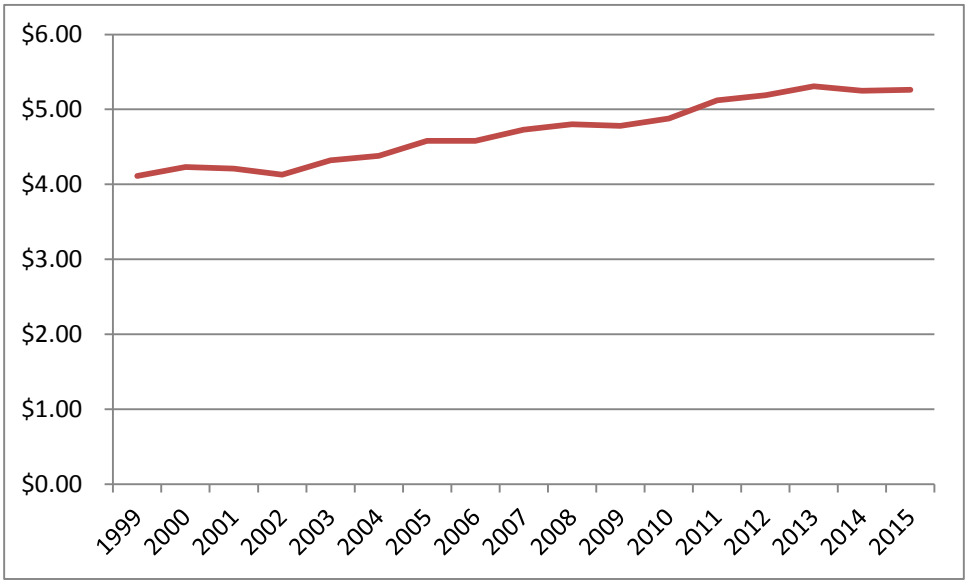
One measure of the CSE program's cost-effectiveness is obtained by dividing total state collections by total state administrative expenditures (costs).[33] This measure is referred to as the collections-to-costs ratio and/or the cost-effectiveness ratio. The CSE cost-effectiveness ratio is the amount of child support collected for each dollar expended (as defined in P.L. 105-200, the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998).

Figure 7 and **Table 14** show the cost-effectiveness ratio for the nation for the period FY1999-FY2015. It shows that in FY2015, $5.26 in child support was collected for every dollar spent on CSE activities (i.e., national average). In other words, for every dollar spent by federal, state, and local governments, $5.26 was collected by the states from noncustodial parents for the financial support of their children (i.e., private funds). This was an increase of 28% over the FY1999 cost-effectiveness ratio of $4.11.

[32] Average monthly CSE expenditures per case increased from $19 in FY1999 ($28 in 2015 dollars) to $32 in FY2015, a 14% increase, adjusting for inflation.

[33] The collection-to-cost ratio is not the sole measure of an effective CSE program. In the late 1990s, the CSE incentive payment system was revamped and Congress designated four additional indicators as reliable performance measures. The five performance measures in the CSE program currently are related to establishment of paternity, establishment of child support orders, collections of current child support payments, collections of past-due child support payments, and cost-effectiveness. For additional information, see CRS Report RL 34203, *Child Support Enforcement Program Incentive Payments: Background and Policy Issues*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

Figure 7. Cost-Effectiveness Ratio, FY1999-FY2015



Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 14. Cost-Effectiveness Ratio, National, FY1999-FY2015

(Amount of child support collected for every dollar spent)

FY	Amount	FY	Amount	FY	Amount	FY	Amount
1999	$4.11	2004	$4.38	2009	$4.78	2014	$5.25
2000	$4.23	2005	$4.58	2010	$4.88	2015	$5.26
2001	$4.21	2006	$4.58	2011	$5.12		
2002	$4.13	2007	$4.73	2012	$5.19		
2003	$4.32	2008	$4.80	2013	$5.31		

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table 15 displays the cost-effectiveness ratio by state for the most recent five-year data period, FY2011-FY2015. The table shows that there were wide differences among states in how much child support was collected for each dollar spent on the CSE program, ranging from $1.89 in Delaware[34] to $12.26 in Texas in FY2015. It also shows that during the period, the cost-effectiveness ratio fell by 43% in Massachusetts, from $9.45 to $5.40. In contrast, the ratio rose 68% in Kansas, from $3.45 to $5.80. The ratio increased about 3% nationally, from $5.12 to $5.26.

[34] The cost-effectiveness ratio in FY2015 was the lowest in the Virgin Islands; $1.14 was collected for every dollar spent.

Table 15. Cost-Effectiveness Ratio, by State, FY2011-FY2015

(Amount of child support collected for every dollar spent)

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
Alabama	$4.46	$4.83	$5.31	$4.85	$5.17	15.9%
Alaska	4.00	3.99	3.63	3.82	4.02	0.5%
Arizona	6.03	5.90	6.15	5.87	5.35	-11.3%
Arkansas	4.28	4.72	4.51	4.50	4.94	15.4%
California	2.29	2.47	2.54	2.43	2.51	9.6%
Colorado	4.49	4.20	4.28	4.90	4.83	7.6%
Connecticut	3.65	3.77	3.56	3.33	3.22	-11.8%
Delaware	2.23	1.73	1.67	2.03	1.89	-15.2%
District of Columbia	2.13	1.89	1.84	1.99	2.07	-2.8%
Florida	5.44	5.88	6.33	5.75	5.89	8.3%
Georgia	7.02	6.83	6.47	7.65	8.37	19.2%
Guam	2.31	2.68	2.27	2.02	1.74	-24.7%
Hawaii	5.95	5.39	5.84	5.42	4.93	-17.1%
Idaho	6.94	7.17	7.66	7.28	7.78	12.1%
Illinois	4.72	4.41	4.61	4.61	4.68	-0.8%
Indiana	5.35	6.26	6.46	5.69	5.56	3.9%
Iowa	6.24	5.91	5.91	5.58	5.71	-8.5%
Kansas	3.45	3.76	4.12	5.89	5.80	68.1%
Kentucky	5.99	5.88	6.85	6.45	6.33	5.7%
Louisiana	5.05	5.21	5.47	5.44	5.51	9.1%
Maine	3.84	3.71	3.76	3.59	3.50	-8.9%
Maryland	4.13	4.18	4.65	4.21	4.54	9.9%
Massachusetts	9.45	5.90	5.64	5.40	5.40	-42.9%
Michigan	6.18	5.96	5.98	6.26	5.75	-7.0%
Minnesota	3.60	3.50	3.66	3.58	3.55	-1.4%
Mississippi	9.79	10.26	9.98	9.62	7.94	-18.9%
Missouri	7.46	7.43	7.42	7.73	8.33	11.7%
Montana	5.13	4.60	4.51	4.40	4.48	-12.7%
Nebraska	5.78	5.80	5.43	5.37	5.97	3.3%
Nevada	3.98	4.05	3.90	4.00	4.13	3.8%
New Hampshire	4.31	4.63	4.79	3.97	3.46	-19.7%
New Jersey	4.64	4.27	4.28	4.25	4.45	-4.1%
New Mexico	2.71	3.02	3.04	3.37	3.14	15.9%

State	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013	FY2014	FY2015	Percentage Change, FY2011-FY2015
New York	5.47	4.90	4.90	5.10	4.75	-13.2%
North Carolina	5.55	4.63	5.16	4.98	5.07	-8.6%
North Dakota	6.32	6.63	6.38	6.37	6.20	-1.9%
Ohio	6.77	7.31	7.45	7.34	6.31	-6.8%
Oklahoma	4.58	4.53	4.81	4.81	5.07	10.7%
Oregon	5.41	5.48	5.41	5.18	4.50	-16.8%
Pennsylvania	5.80	5.76	5.45	5.48	5.10	-12.1%
Puerto Rico	8.86	10.05	8.48	9.72	9.75	10.0%
Rhode Island	4.10	4.94	5.44	5.55	5.86	42.9%
South Carolina	4.56	4.66	6.04	4.53	5.62	23.2%
South Dakota	10.41	12.05	11.57	11.08	10.78	3.6%
Tennessee	7.31	7.20	7.86	7.74	7.99	9.3%
Texas	9.29	11.11	11.61	11.34	12.26	32.0%
Utah	5.59	6.37	6.05	6.47	6.53	16.8%
Vermont	3.29	3.50	3.27	3.04	3.06	-7.0%
Virgin Islands	1.98	1.71	1.31	1.14	1.14	-42.4%
Virginia	6.99	7.02	6.52	6.59	6.42	-8.2%
Washington	4.68	5.05	4.97	4.56	4.54	-3.0%
West Virginia	4.73	4.99	5.01	5.03	5.29	11.8%
Wisconsin	6.44	6.64	6.54	6.46	6.76	5.0%
Wyoming	5.30	7.79	8.79	8.20	7.22	36.2%
Total	**5.12**	**5.19**	**5.31**	**5.25**	**5.26**	**2.7%**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

The CSE program generates both income and expenditures for the federal government and the states. States make expenditures to administer the program, but receive both partial reimbursement for these costs and incentive payments from the federal government. States also retain a share of collections made by noncustodial parents on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families. The federal government pays the above-mentioned share of state CSE expenditures and all incentive payments, but also retains a share of child support collections made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families.

Based on OCSE data, state budgets (in aggregate) were positively affected by the CSE program for the first 24 years of its existence, in the sense that the income generated by the CSE program for the state—comprised of the federal share of state CSE expenditures (i.e., the amount of federal matching funds provided to the state), plus incentive payments to the states, plus the state share of child support collections made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families—

exceeded state CSE program costs. FY1999 was the last year in which in the aggregate, the income generated by the CSE program for states exceeded their outlays. In FY1999, only 13 states (including California) experienced increased income from operating a CSE program; the other states and jurisdictions operated at a "loss." In FY1999, state CSE income exceeded state CSE expenditures by $49.7 million nationally (see **Table 16**). In contrast, since FY2000 state CSE expenditures have exceeded CSE income.[35] In FY2015, in aggregate, state CSE expenditures exceeded state CSE income by $1.2 billion (see **Table 19**).[36]

The primary explanation for the switch from state "gains" to "losses" during the last 17 years of CSE program operation is that nonwelfare collections are growing at a faster rate than welfare collections. Child support collections on behalf of former TANF and federal foster care families increased by almost 31% over the period FY1999-FY2015 and child support collections on behalf of families that had never received TANF or federal foster care increased almost 38% during that 17-year period, while child support collections on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families decreased by nearly 62% over the period (taking into account inflation, see **Table 8**). Note that while the state and federal governments share in a portion of TANF and federal foster care collections, nonwelfare collections go exclusively to the custodial parent via the state disbursement unit.

Table 16. Financing of the Federal-State CSE Program, FY1999

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Alabama	$35,611,163	$5,241,898	$2,925,629	$53,533,869	-$9,755,179
Alaska	11,892,504	8,124,670	2,683,407	17,964,120	4,736,461
Arizona	38,907,328	7,908,214	3,978,350	58,657,247	-7,863,355
Arkansas	24,408,488	2,678,949	2,072,889	36,804,856	-7,644,530
California	405,195,689	298,330,943	82,935,948	612,709,196	173,753,384
Colorado	34,459,151	14,837,153	5,377,881	51,970,056	2,704,129
Connecticut	25,500,777	23,648,357	7,570,416	38,575,967	18,143,583
Delaware	12,097,749	3,071,513	981,294	18,204,947	-2,054,391
District of Columbia	8,761,188	2,507,042	829,254	13,240,866	-1,143,382
Florida	126,081,489	32,227,673	13,486,222	190,501,671	-18,706,287
Georgia	59,553,919	13,972,035	7,399,714	89,929,572	-9,003,904
Guam	2,518,316	579,865	212,137	3,803,786	-493,468
Hawaii	13,853,295	4,259,798	1,524,364	20,129,474	-492,017
Idaho	6,933,950	1,220,776	926,483	10,486,201	-1,404,992
Illinois	91,778,835	35,626,059	10,783,073	138,846,999	-659,032
Indiana	25,536,707	7,366,308	3,948,769	38,548,504	-1,696,720
Iowa	28,716,250	15,577,006	6,357,855	42,592,938	8,058,173

[35] For additional information, see CRS Report RL33422, *Analysis of Federal-State Financing of the Child Support Enforcement Program*, by Carmen Solomon-Fears.

[36] See **Table 17** and **Table 18** for data on the financing of the CSE program for FY2013 and FY2014, respectively.

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Kansas	32,764,235	11,286,869	4,301,156	49,627,981	-1,275,721
Kentucky	37,249,397	10,425,186	5,070,254	56,187,842	-3,443,005
Louisiana	31,631,370	5,188,683	2,573,418	47,330,767	-7,937,296
Maine	12,331,480	8,957,322	4,352,601	18,622,365	7,019,038
Maryland	54,963,710	12,142,185	3,487,062	82,662,138	-12,069,181
Massachusetts	50,191,367	26,955,285	7,003,813	75,075,897	9,074,568
Michigan	108,662,792	56,952,941	16,937,698	164,473,879	18,079,552
Minnesota	74,863,180	27,771,128	8,416,633	113,148,820	-2,097,879
Mississippi	20,364,999	2,399,038	1,937,334	30,617,658	-5,916,287
Missouri	62,432,181	13,358,740	5,601,102	94,391,679	-12,999,656
Montana	7,776,191	1,573,860	968,243	11,640,510	-1,322,216
Nebraska	21,194,022	4,668,984	2,800,715	31,973,151	-3,309,430
Nevada	25,118,585	3,552,729	2,049,489	38,022,688	-7,301,885
New Hampshire	11,465,868	4,035,135	1,343,250	16,919,544	-75,291
New Jersey	91,926,796	35,984,052	10,384,931	139,127,636	-831,857
New Mexico	21,372,665	2,738,442	1,524,652	32,341,992	-6,706,233
New York	140,805,327	88,099,847	26,353,184	212,809,547	42,448,811
North Carolina	86,026,282	15,263,427	6,565,419	130,060,394	-22,205,266
North Dakota	6,840,076	1,433,106	832,665	9,957,810	-851,963
Ohio	181,533,385	35,691,105	13,003,442	274,378,160	-44,150,228
Oklahoma	21,367,112	5,982,850	3,243,588	32,252,862	-1,659,312
Oregon	27,941,846	9,165,538	4,673,083	42,336,273	-555,806
Pennsylvania	122,633,135	40,339,166	12,683,050	183,526,973	-7,871,622
Puerto Rico	19,678,756	519,976	384,110	29,797,384	-9,214,542
Rhode Island	7,458,854	8,153,600	2,888,831	10,920,203	7,581,082
South Carolina	24,393,946	3,244,212	2,331,956	36,672,072	-6,701,958
South Dakota	4,422,754	1,499,266	2,290,352	6,554,522	1,657,850
Tennessee	34,897,180	5,971,748	3,886,480	52,191,331	-7,435,923
Texas	135,875,645	40,379,443	13,965,567	202,946,289	-12,725,634
Utah	24,222,336	5,455,212	3,132,907	36,312,567	-3,502,112
Vermont	6,065,541	2,670,478	1,176,980	9,047,583	865,416
Virgin Islands	1,693,368	105,345	57,285	2,559,423	-703,425
Virginia	50,303,090	17,724,145	6,332,102	75,708,963	-1,349,626
Washington	78,023,327	45,326,692	13,956,503	118,133,123	19,173,399
West Virginia	18,986,263	1,338,056	4,223,837	28,668,536	-4,120,380
Wisconsin	64,579,502	13,523,868	5,162,502	96,688,882	-13,423,010

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Wyoming	5,900,784	1,330,007	633,827	8,764,286	-899,668
Total	**$2,679,764,145**	**$1,048,385,925**	**$360,523,706**	**$4,038,951,999**	**$49,721,777**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, FY1999 and FY2000 Annual Report to Congress.

Note: The "State Net" column is derived by adding the "Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures" column, the "State Share of Title IV-A and IV-E Collections" column (child support payments made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families), and the "Federal Incentive Payments" column and then subtracting the "State Administrative Expenditures" column.

Table 17. Financing of the Federal-State CSE Program, FY2013

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Alabama	$37,432,376	$3,473,163	$4,918,992	$60,715,726	-$14,891,195
Alaska	18,601,931	5,028,694	1,698,442	29,984,746	-4,655,679
Arizona	35,461,792	5,243,291	6,492,350	59,856,703	-12,659,270
Arkansas	34,550,886	1,764,877	5,198,113	55,459,523	-13,945,647
California	573,422,580	193,679,200	39,674,949	907,740,837	-100,964,108
Colorado	48,195,589	7,488,110	5,221,997	78,270,047	-17,364,351
Connecticut	45,276,837	14,245,304	4,971,790	73,001,269	-8,507,338
Delaware	31,726,151	1,663,946	698,219	48,985,649	-14,897,333
District of Columbia	19,127,350	2,602,366	785,473	29,747,076	-7,231,887
Florida	147,840,021	19,241,720	33,761,849	254,970,362	-54,126,772
Georgia	55,887,887	6,534,651	14,219,789	110,837,451	-34,195,124
Guam	3,439,143	309,832	171,537	5,537,542	-1,617,030
Hawaii	11,340,394	3,746,645	1,645,667	17,566,175	-833,469
Idaho	12,930,987	872,832	3,087,743	22,393,178	-5,501,616
Illinois	109,813,900	14,275,162	15,519,422	190,625,633	-51,017,149
Indiana	56,333,278	5,411,148	11,703,845	93,506,857	-20,058,586
Iowa	31,764,336	9,138,948	7,188,739	55,527,785	-7,435,762
Kansas	30,821,798	7,447,189	4,233,376	51,133,958	-8,631,595
Kentucky	35,031,572	10,445,913	7,650,751	58,627,582	-5,499,346
Louisiana	42,907,563	4,136,785	8,266,422	76,231,995	-20,921,225
Maine	15,830,282	6,364,179	1,957,750	27,441,852	-3,289,641
Maryland	76,879,432	10,550,623	7,787,591	120,620,933	-25,403,287
Massachusetts	65,850,161	19,852,955	10,654,424	113,306,715	-16,949,175
Michigan	129,721,363	21,333,881	25,182,209	222,163,243	-45,925,790

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Minnesota	101,178,063	12,514,455	11,930,935	165,207,638	-39,584,185
Mississippi	20,968,609	1,468,043	4,937,967	31,770,619	-4,396,000
Missouri	40,789,098	13,827,513	12,164,754	81,135,427	-14,354,062
Montana	9,421,386	1,226,477	1,188,263	15,469,434	-3,633,308
Nebraska	22,985,004	2,454,083	4,678,506	39,742,372	-9,624,779
Nevada	33,195,011	3,620,396	3,312,952	52,495,745	-12,367,386
New Hampshire	11,008,891	2,615,292	1,714,791	18,333,059	-2,994,085
New Jersey	176,079,129	17,947,394	16,717,042	279,470,406	-68,726,841
New Mexico	28,041,567	2,287,931	2,218,029	42,487,221	-9,939,694
New York	218,025,628	38,738,368	30,570,278	370,326,444	-82,992,170
North Carolina	88,150,401	6,619,512	14,649,269	137,990,207	-28,571,025
North Dakota	9,717,468	2,11,97	2,133,416	16,028,086	-4,104,941
Ohio	139,084,993	23,208,589	30,774,036	234,292,673	-41,225,055
Oklahoma	44,564,209	5,754,673	7,199,342	73,964,610	-16,446,386
Oregon	41,890,053	9,309,612	6,329,050	69,804,890	-12,276,175
Pennsylvania	149,189,616	14,874,918	24,985,769	247,505,973	-58,455,670
Puerto Rico	27,534,983	954,235	4,188,488	41,719,672	-9,041,966
Rhode Island	8,152,902	2,079,362	1,395,806	13,552,879	-1,924,809
South Carolina	27,056,744	2,339,761	4,442,194	41,793,873	-7,955,174
South Dakota	4,187,583	1,529,435	2,020,715	8,337,718	-599,985
Tennessee	51,888,411	8,207,644	11,576,248	78,618,805	-6,946,502
Texas	165,177,276	17,529,934	67,585,826	317,608,342	-67,315,306
Utah	20,783,641	2,535,280	4,155,630	35,190,565	-7,716,014
Vermont	9,025,225	1,073,142	839,285	14,467,565	-3,529,913
Virgin Islands	4,793,059	56,645	79,158	7,262,211	-2,333,349
Virginia	58,028,470	17,767,696	11,673,481	101,795,738	-14,326,091
Washington	84,109,304	29,317,879	12,551,989	139,344,541	-13,365,369
West Virginia	25,118,283	1,413,869	4,216,108	41,658,006	-10,909,746
Wisconsin	48,082,991	7,999,526	13,815,598	98,464,911	-28,566,796
Wyoming	5,425,966	823,079	1,263,636	8,221,160	-708,479
Total	**$3,343,841,573**	**$626,957,254**	**$538,000,000**	**$5,588,313,627**	**-$1,079,514,800**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Note: The "State Net" column is derived by adding the "Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures" column, the "State Share of Title IV-A and IV-E Collections" column (child support payments made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families), and the "Federal Incentive Payments" column and then subtracting the "State Administrative Expenditures" column.

Table 18. Financing of the Federal-State CSE Program, FY2014

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Alabama	$43,216,570	$3,375,144	$5,073,485	$69,479,648	-$17,814,449
Alaska	17,502,841	4,814,111	1,672,831	28,319,454	-4,329,671
Arizona	33,334,346	4,606,693	6,411,658	61,825,190	-17,472,493
Arkansas	34,083,796	1,640,128	5,289,441	56,162,597	-15,149,232
California	598,393,669	183,073,896	39,179,540	947,255,569	-126,608,464
Colorado	42,911,389	7,757,890	5,429,055	70,237,361	-14,139,027
Connecticut	47,896,577	13,969,360	4,951,145	76,970,571	-10,153,489
Delaware	25,675,729	1,806,044	1,102,609	39,803,937	-11,219,555
District of Columbia	17,868,607	2,376,311	796,137	27,211,035	-6,169,980
Florida	159,927,688	14,519,798	33,348,543	275,445,976	-67,649,947
Georgia	59,092,590	6,100,191	14,567,320	95,246,123	-15,486,022
Guam	4,142,374	203,759	174,665	6,506,557	-1,985,759
Hawaii	12,354,540	3,632,218	1,703,429	19,226,710	-1,536,523
Idaho	13,847,023	775,362	3,173,710	23,772,198	-5,976,103
Illinois	115,950,436	14,344,795	15,539,014	190,437,383	-44,603,138
Indiana	63,327,518	5,114,021	11,988,929	104,278,768	-23,848,300
Iowa	34,269,297	8,579,784	7,146,346	58,223,180	-8,227,753
Kansas	20,605,042	6,179,663	4,248,291	34,844,763	-3,811,767
Kentucky	36,090,316	11,153,516	7,812,092	62,408,040	-7,352,116
Louisiana	45,835,765	3,625,865	8,521,502	77,663,427	-19,680,295
Maine	16,996,173	5,759,699	1,938,765	28,304,417	-3,609,780
Maryland	83,675,650	10,863,527	7,868,161	135,350,144	-32,942,806
Massachusetts	69,422,217	18,624,715	10,799,704	119,593,686	-20,747,050
Michigan	125,080,445	17,330,551	25,997,666	214,754,170	-46,345,508
Minnesota	103,362,813	11,626,770	12,091,125	168,584,177	-41,503,469
Mississippi	22,216,976	1,357,223	5,220,059	33,662,083	-4,867,825
Missouri	43,994,914	11,957,902	12,264,987	78,344,839	-10,127,036
Montana	9,616,068	1,135,881	1,161,432	15,898,675	-3,985,294
Nebraska	21,848,373	2,396,326	4,781,811	40,475,691	-11,449,181
Nevada	32,775,070	3,283,954	3,428,160	51,204,955	-11,717,771
New Hampshire	12,812,952	2,361,089	1,663,075	22,035,312	-5,198,196
New Jersey	181,244,442	17,156,059	16,993,268	282,897,887	-67,504,118
New Mexico	25,367,577	2,059,463	2,294,613	38,435,723	-8,714,070
New York	214,782,220	38,152,229	31,820,270	355,585,322	-70,830,603

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Actual)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
North Carolina	86,164,233	6,121,370	14,249,571	140,921,757	-34,386,583
North Dakota	10,087,632	1,889,918	2,183,732	16,631,456	-2,470,174
Ohio	137,728,352	22,779,942	30,382,296	234,616,041	-43,725,451
Oklahoma	45,631,212	5,301,462	7,422,212	75,613,357	-17,258,471
Oregon	45,293,088	9,527,870	6,581,218	73,668,716	-12,266,540
Pennsylvania	143,099,858	13,577,125	25,442,927	238,993,053	-56,873,143
Puerto Rico	24,139,021	1,13,97	4,233,288	36,574,275	-8,129,998
Rhode Island	8,216,180	2,078,088	1,457,967	13,649,046	-1,896,811
South Carolina	38,565,553	2,322,141	4,955,440	59,475,170	-13,632,036
South Dakota	4,907,534	1,600,712	2,048,600	8,876,969	-320,123
Tennessee	53,823,540	9,752,170	12,325,769	81,550,816	-5,649,337
Texas	176,723,517	16,272,921	71,428,780	339,879,453	-75,454,235
Utah	20,410,795	2,360,403	4,324,273	33,712,399	-6,616,928
Vermont	9,720,547	1,065,141	850,695	15,619,254	-3,982,871
Virgin Islands	4,934,850	74,133	48,007	7,477,045	-2,420,055
Virginia	59,339,716	17,414,119	11,725,733	101,484,324	-13,004,756
Washington	90,234,036	26,384,519	11,237,494	149,593,236	-21,737,187
West Virginia	24,876,023	1,415,671	4,199,799	41,290,944	-10,799,451
Wisconsin	66,362,873	8,402,093	14,189,557	100,726,694	-11,772,171
Wyoming	5,913,429	775,185	1,259,804	8,959,741	-1,011,323
Total	**$3,445,693,992**	**$591,842,017**	**$547,000,000**	**$5,689,759,314**	**-$1,105,223,305**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Note: The "State Net" column is derived by adding the "Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures" column, the "State Share of Title IV-A and IV-E Collections" column (child support payments made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families), and the "Federal Incentive Payments" column and then subtracting the "State Administrative Expenditures" column.

Table 19. Financing of the Federal-State CSE Program, FY2015

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Estimates)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Alabama	$42,258,587	$3,077,091	$4,000,000	$68,028,161	-$18,692,483
Alaska	17,377,174	5,322,197	1,750,000	27,979,050	-3,529,679
Arizona	42,534,411	3,890,558	6,375,000	66,527,241	-13,727,272
Arkansas	30,977,810	1,507,078	4,780,905	52,188,024	-14,922,231
California	588,734,225	182,484,905	40,619,000	932,640,548	-120,802,418

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Estimates)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Colorado	44,893,300	7,563,843	5,000,000	73,242,148	-15,785,005
Connecticut	50,221,242	14,219,707	4,400,000	80,492,792	-11,651,843
Delaware	28,075,263	1,769,832	900,000	43,502,079	-12,756,984
District of Columbia	16,887,850	2,225,737	0	26,103,264	-6,989,677
Florida	156,410,689	14,182,586	34,351,682	268,319,854	-63,374,897
Georgia	58,883,383	5,783,312	15,000,000	89,665,255	-9,998,560
Guam	4,354,972	203,777	200,000	6,662,458	-1,903,709
Hawaii	14,408,275	3,736,605	1,600,000	22,016,084	-2,271,204
Idaho	13,426,459	778,148	2,922,492	23,265,609	-6,138,510
Illinois	114,157,509	13,597,403	15,157,700	187,964,021	-45,051,409
Indiana	64,950,071	4,883,703	9,734,398	106,390,307	-26,822,135
Iowa	33,186,647	8,546,187	7,000,000	56,732,798	-7,999,964
Kansas	20,748,505	5,819,151	4,000,000	35,437,126	-4,869,470
Kentucky	36,991,394	10,876,994	7,400,000	63,894,424	-8,626,036
Louisiana	46,997,473	3,343,814	6,657,848	79,074,716	-22,075,581
Maine	17,682,384	5,549,093	1,500,000	29,685,926	-4,954,449
Maryland	80,828,489	10,506,141	7,000,000	126,898,831	-28,564,201
Massachusetts	70,003,562	17,150,026	8,000,000	120,870,421	-25,716,833
Michigan	138,331,830	14,985,473	25,200,000	235,775,892	-57,258,589
Minnesota	104,252,432	10,877,604	12,000,000	169,889,162	-42,759,126
Mississippi	28,037,754	1,163,173	2,100,000	42,481,442	-11,180,515
Missouri	40,035,297	11,465,657	10,000,000	75,358,920	-13,857,966
Montana	9,713,458	1,213,158	1,100,000	16,029,621	-4,003,005
Nebraska	19,326,310	2,359,189	2,750,000	36,587,514	-12,152,015
Nevada	31,620,302	3,128,462	0	50,652,267	-15,903,503
New Hampshire	14,133,978	1,998,329	1,200,000	24,207,281	-6,874,974
New Jersey	170,944,853	16,911,762	15,456,000	271,694,567	-68,381,952
New Mexico	27,917,857	1,972,436	2,550,000	42,606,768	-10,166,475
New York	231,107,760	37,683,513	27,143,000	382,599,551	-86,665,278
North Carolina	83,873,142	5,750,781	11,200,000	139,664,016	-38,840,093
North Dakota	10,469,276	1,744,246	1,458,068	17,451,505	-3,779,915
Ohio	160,043,530	22,740,460	21,500,000	269,844,104	-65,560,114
Oklahoma	43,704,459	5,422,595	5,788,192	73,830,396	-18,915,150
Oregon	51,394,408	7,932,503	4,126,000	84,223,538	-20,770,627
Pennsylvania	153,779,531	13,548,281	21,441,680	253,846,698	-65,077,206

State	Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures	State Share of Title IV-A & IV-E Collections	Federal Incentive Payments (Estimates)	State Administrative Expenditures	State Net (Savings or Costs)
Puerto Rico	23,243,774	1,009,757	0	35,734,082	-11,480,551
Rhode Island	8,031,550	1,994,720	1,200,000	13,369,013	-2,142,743
South Carolina	33,361,558	2,505,422	1,800,000	51,344,075	-13,677,095
South Dakota	4,787,476	1,738,024	1,820,000	9,244,116	-898,616
Tennessee	52,867,893	9,505,959	6,800,000	80,102,865	-10,929,013
Texas	166,285,572	15,060,556	72,000,000	327,359,648	-74,013,520
Utah	21,768,997	2,139,018	2,800,000	34,035,330	-7,327,315
Vermont	9,438,246	1,028,430	1,552,259	15,191,527	-3,172,592
Virgin Islands	4,539,655	60,449	60,000	6,878,265	-2,218,161
Virginia	60,566,527	17,151,568	10,000,000	103,740,384	-16,022,289
Washington	89,684,357	23,707,233	13,549,998	149,585,390	-22,643,802
West Virginia	23,896,375	1,446,657	3,600,000	39,806,629	-10,863,597
Wisconsin	55,209,112	8,175,250	12,000,000	97,837,562	-22,453,200
Wyoming	6,693,491	803,112	800,000	10,141,655	-1,845,052
Total	**$3,474,050,434**	**$574,241,665**	**$481,344,222**	**$5,748,694,920**	**-$1,219,058,599**

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Preliminary CSE FY2015 Data Report.

Note: The "State Net" column is derived by adding the "Federal Share of State CSE Expenditures" column, the "State Share of Title IV-A and IV-E Collections" column (child support payments made on behalf of TANF and federal foster care families), and the "Federal Incentive Payments" column and then subtracting the "State Administrative Expenditures" column.

Conclusion

The CSE program is a highly complex, multifaceted program. Its purpose/mission has evolved over the years, from recovering welfare costs and producing income for the states to delivering services to custodial parents and promoting personal responsibility among noncustodial parents. This is not surprising given the changing composition of the CSE caseload, which is reflected in the decline in TANF and Title IV-E foster care families and the rise in former TANF and Title IV-E foster care families and families that have never received TANF or Title IV-E foster care. So far, it seems that the multiple purposes and broadened mission have not had a negative effect on the effectiveness of the CSE program.

The data highlighted in this report bring the CSE program into focus. They indicate that the CSE program has grown significantly. During the 38-year period from FY1978 through FY2015, CSE collections increased 8-fold to $28.6 billion (adjusting for inflation), program expenditures increased almost 6-fold to $5.7 billion (adjusting for inflation), the number of children whose paternity was established or acknowledged (through the CSE program) increased 13-fold to 1.5 million, the number of CSE cases with child support orders almost doubled to 12.6 million (from FY1991-FY2015), and the CSE caseload increased 3-fold to 14.7 million. From this viewpoint the CSE program is generally seen as being very successful.

The data presented also show that even though the CSE agency is second only to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) in terms of its collection/enforcement apparatus, it has consistently collected only a small fraction of the child support obligations for which it has responsibility (e.g., 20% in FY2015). Although this percentage is higher if past-due child support payments (i.e., arrearages, which generally are hard to collect) are not considered in the equation, it is still relatively low at 65%. CSE data indicate that the program is collecting child support for a greater number and higher percentage of families, but the average monthly child support payment for families that actually received one is still relatively small, $264 per month in FY2015.

For the 10.6 million children in the CSE program in FY2015 who were born outside of marriage, the establishment of paternity is the first step in obtaining a child support obligation. FY2003 was the first year in which more fathers were legally identified through a voluntary paternity acknowledgment process (862,000) than through the courts or administratively via the CSE agency (663,000). Most states acknowledge that while they have made significant improvement in establishing paternity for newborns (primarily through voluntary paternity acknowledgment at hospitals when the child is born) they are not performing as well with respect to establishing paternity for older children. Nonetheless, in FY2015 the CSE program had established paternity for almost 96% of its caseload.

Although the CSE program exhibits improved performance, and in many areas outstanding performance, there is still more to be achieved. Congress has consistently had high expectations for the CSE program. Since its enactment in 1975, almost 50 laws have made changes to the CSE program. Although the CSE program generally garners bipartisan support, for most of its history changes to the program have been achieved in tandem with more controversial changes to other social programs.

This report points out that in FY2015, only about 3% of CSE collections ($808 million, see **Table 8**) were made on behalf of TANF families; about 33% of that amount actually went to the families and the rest was divided between the state and federal governments to reimburse them for TANF benefits to the families. **Table 8** also indicates that nearly $9 billion was collected on behalf of former TANF families; about 90% of that amount went to the families and the rest was divided between the state and federal governments to reimburse them for the period in which the family received monthly TANF benefits. Overall, about 7% of CSE collections obtained in FY2015 were used to reimburse the states and the federal government for monthly TANF benefits paid to current and former TANF families.[37] This means that in FY2015, 93% of CSE collections ($26.6 billion) went to the families on the CSE rolls.[38] Thus, the data appear to indicate that the "family first" policy that was begun with the 1996 welfare law (P.L. 104-193) and extended with the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (P.L. 109-171) is being effectively implemented. [39]

[37] The 7% figure includes medical support which amounted to about $511 million in FY2015.

[38] In FY1979, 56% of the $1.3 billion in distributed child support collections went to families. In FY1989 about 75% of the $5.2 billion in distributed child support collections went to families. In FY1999, 86% of the $15.9 billion in distributed child support collections went to families. In FY2015, 93% of the $28.6 billion in distributed child support collections went to families.

[39] P.L. 104-193 required states to pay a higher fraction of child support collections on arrearages to families that have left welfare (i.e., former TANF families) by making these payments to the family first. The order of payment of the child support collection is of tremendous importance because in many cases past-due child support (i.e., arrearages) is never fully paid. The 1996 welfare reform law also gave states the option to pass through and disregard some, all, or none of the child support collected on behalf of TANF families (about half of the states currently pass through and disregard some child support for TANF families). P.L. 109-171 simplified CSE distribution rules and extended the "family first" policy by providing incentives to states to encourage them to allow more child support to go to both former welfare families and families still on welfare. In other words, states that chose to pass through some of the (continued...)

The data presented in this report indicate that the CSE program is making great strides in ensuring that children get the support they are owed from their noncustodial parents. Nonetheless, the HHS Justifications for Appropriations for the Administration for Children and Families, which includes the CSE program, stated that current challenges affecting CSE program performance include the following:

- state program spending cuts and staffing reductions that have reduced overall program resources;
- high rates of unemployment and incarceration and stagnant earnings that constrain the ability of less-educated noncustodial parents to pay child support;
- an increase in self-employment and independent contractors, making it harder to collect child support through income withholding;
- a higher percentage of children born outside of marriage and in more complex families, contributing to the growing proportion of harder-to-serve child support cases that require more intensive case management; and
- obsolete statewide systems in most states, reducing worker productivity and increasing operational risks and costs.[40]

Although sometimes overlooked, the CSE program is an integral component of welfare reform. It is not surprising that child support payments are now widely recognized as a very significant income source for single-parent families. The CSE program has the potential to impact more children and for longer periods of time than most other federal programs. In FY2014, it served 16.3 million children (nearly one in four children in the United States).

(...continued)

collected child support to a TANF family did not have to pay the federal government its share of such collections if the amount passed through to the family and disregarded by the state did not exceed $100 per month ($200 per month to a family with two or more children) in child support collected on behalf of a TANF (or federal foster care) family.

[40] U.S. Department of Health and Human Service, "Justification of Estimates for Appropriation Committees, Administration for Children and Families, Fiscal Year 2017," February 2016, p. 294. For information on future goals of the CSE program, see Office of Child Support Enforcement, National Child Support Strategic Plan FY 2015-2019, April 7, 2016, http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/national-child-support-strategic-plan-2015-2019.

Appendix. Supplementary Tables

Table A-1. Summary of National Child Support Enforcement Program Statistics, Selected Fiscal Years 1978-2015

(Numbers in thousands, dollars in millions of current/nominal dollars)

Measure	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2015
Total child support collections	$1,047	$1,770	$3,246	$6,010	$9,850	$14,347	$20,137	$23,933	$26,556	$28,199	$28,559
Total TANF collections	$472	$786	$1,225	$1,750	$2,550	$2,649	$2,893	$2,112	$1,791	$1,504	$1,451
Federal	*$311*	*$311*	*$369*	*$533*	*$762*	*$960*	*$1,180*	*$1,086*	*$903*	*$592*	*$574*
State	*$148*	*$354*	*$424*	*$620*	*$891*	*$1,089*	*$950*	*$875*	*$704*	*$743*	*$717*
Total non-TANF collections	$575	$984	$2,019	$4,260	$7,300	$11,698	$17,244	$21,822	$24,765	$26,695	$27,108
Total administrative expenditures	$312	$612	$941	$1,606	$2,556	$3,584	$5,183	$5,561	$5,776	$5,690	$5,749
Federal	*$236*	*$459*	*$633*	*$1,061*	*$1,741*	*$2,385*	*$3,432*	*$3,677*	*$3,811*	*$3,446*	*$3,474*
State	*$76*	*$153*	*$308*	*$545*	*$816*	*$1,199*	*$1,752*	*$1,884*	*$1,964*	*$2,244*	*$2,275*
Federal incentive payment pool to states and localities	$54	$107	$173	$258	$374	$385	$450	$458	$504	$534	$520
Number of TANF cases in which a collection was made	458	597	582	701	926	790	806	747	713	558	522
Number of non-TANF cases in which a collection was made	249	448	786	1,363	3,169	3,071	7,013	7,783	8,137	8,490	8507
Number of paternities established	111	174	245	393	592	848	697	675	620	464	412

Measure	1978	1982	1986	1990	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010	2014	2015
Number of support obligations established	315	462	731	1,022	1,025	1,148	1,220	1,159	1,297	1,069	1,016
Total child support collections per dollar of total admini-strative costs (in nominal dollars)	$3.36	$2.89	$3.45	$3.74	$3.85	$4.00	$3.89	$4.30	$4.60	$4.96	$4.97

Source: Table prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Preliminary CSE Data Reports to Congress for various fiscal years, Table1 and Table 2).

Notes: Paternities established do not include the paternities established through the In-Hospital Paternity Acknowledgment Program. In fiscal year 1994, 84,411 paternities were established in hospitals; 614,081 in fiscal year 1998; 829,988 in fiscal year 2002; 1,025,521 in fiscal year 2006; 1,113,719 in fiscal year 2010; 1,077,157 in fiscal year 2014; and 1,072,223 in fiscal year 2015.

Total TANF Collections = Total Assistance Reimbursement + Medical Support (for current assistance collections) + Payment to Families or Foster Care (for current assistance collections).

The (last) row entitled "Total child support collections per dollar of total administrative expenses" differs from the CSE collections to cost ratio (mentioned in other places in this report) because total child support collections do not include collections forwarded to other states, fees retained by other states, or prior quarter adjustments.

Table A-2. Child Support Enforcement Caseload, FY1978-FY2015

(Numbers in thousands)

Fiscal Year	Total CSE Caseload	TANF Cases	Non-TANF Cases	TANF as % of Caseload	Non-TANF as % of Caseload
1978	4,146	3,542	604	85.4%	14.6%
1979	4,899	4,175	724	85.2%	14.8%
1980	5,442	4,584	858	84.2%	15.8%
1981	6,266	5,113	1,153	81.6%	18.4%
1982	7,024	5,545	1,479	78.9%	21.1%
1983	7,516	5,828	1,688	77.5%	22.5%
1984	7,999	6,136	1,863	76.7%	23.3%
1985	8,401	6,242	2,159	74.3%	25.7%
1986	9,724	5,749	3,975	59.1%	40.9%
1987	10,635	5,776	4,859	54.3%	45.7%
1988	11,078	5,703	5,375	51.5%	48.5%
1989	11,876	5,709	6,168	48.1%	51.9%
1990	12,796	5,872	6,925	45.9%	54.1%
1991	13,423	6,166	7,256	45.9%	54.1%

Fiscal Year	Total CSE Caseload	TANF Cases	Non-TANF Cases	TANF as % of Caseload	Non-TANF as % of Caseload
1992	15,158	6,752	8,406	44.5%	55.5%
1993	17,125	7,472	9,653	43.6%	56.4%
1994	18,610	7,986	10,624	42.9%	57.1%
1995	19,162	7,880	11,282	41.1%	58.9%
1996	19,319	7,380	11,939	38.2%	61.8%
1997	19,057	6,462	12,595	33.9%	66.1%
1998	19,419	5,658	13,761	29.1%	70.9%
1999	17,330	3,724	13,606	21.5%	78.5%
2000	17,374	3,299	14,075	19.0%	81.0%
2001	17,061	3,093	13,967	18.1%	81.9%
2002	16,066	2,807	13,259	17.5%	82.5%
2003	15,923	2,759	13,164	17.3%	82.7%
2004	15,854	2,628	13,226	16.6%	83.4%
2005	15,861	2,496	13,365	15.7%	84.3%
2006	15,844	2,334	13,510	14.7%	85.3%
2007	15,755	2,137	13,619	13.6%	86.4%
2008	15,676	2,048	13,628	13.1%	86.9%
2009	15,798	2,180	13,618	13.8%	86.2%
2010	15,859	2,198	13,660	13.9%	86.1%
2011	15,832	2,041	13,791	12.9%	87.1%
2012	15,747	1,886	13,861	12.0%	88.0%
2013	15,589	1,793	13,796	11.5%	88.5%
2014	15,124	1,694	13,430	11.2%	88.8%
2015	14,745	1,550	13,194	10.5%	89.5%

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table A-3. CSE Collections and Expenditures, FY1978-FY2015

(In current/nominal dollars)

Fiscal Year	Total Distributed CSE Collections	Total CSE Expenditures
1978	$1,046,690,452	$312,339,447
1979	1,332,847,000	383,163,000
1980	1,477,564,000	465,604,000
1981	1,628,927,000	526,423,000
1982	1,770,378,000	611,792,000
1983	2,024,184,000	691,106,000

Fiscal Year	Total Distributed CSE Collections	Total CSE Expenditures
1984	2,378,088,000	722,910,000
1985	2,694,000,000	814,165,000
1986	3,246,000,000	941,252,000
1987	3,917,000,000	1,065,942,000
1988	4,605,000,000	1,170,714,000
1989	5,250,000,000	1,363,209,000
1990	6,010,124,882	1,606,065,000
1991	6,885,618,975	1,804,104,000
1992	7,964,141,422	1,994,691,000
1993	8,907,149,945	2,241,094,000
1994	9,850,159,410	2,556,372,000
1995	10,827,167,179	3,012,385,000
1996	12,019,789,424	3,049,248,000
1997	13,363,971,702	3,427,858,000
1998	14,347,706,681	3,584,972,000
1999	15,901,201,077	4,038,951,999
2000	17,854,271,522	4,525,771,150
2001	18,957,597,106	4,835,234,199
2002	20,136,867,071	5,183,316,271
2003	21,176,389,882	5,215,708,370
2004	21,861,258,876	5,322,260,723
2005	23,005,880,131	5,352,566,340
2006	23,933,384,257	5,561,444,218
2007	24,854,768,488	5,593,864,242
2008	26,560,705,860	5,870,215,454
2009	26,385,592,827	5,850,306,362
2010	26,555,741,023	5,775,633,834
2011	27,296,685,029	5,660,527,948
2012	27,719,045,787	5,661,227,597
2013	28,006,600,190	5,588,313,627
2014	28,199,056,113	5,689,759,314
2015	$28,559,134,175	$5,748,694,920

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Table A-4. CSE Collections and Expenditures, FY1978-FY2015

(In constant 2015 dollars)

Fiscal Year	Total Distributed CSE Collections	Total CSE Expenditures
1978	$3,491,530,724	$1,041,896,172
1979	4,058,864,445	1,166,830,609
1980	4,048,428,471	1,275,724,429
1981	4,076,122,037	1,317,287,018
1982	4,177,640,162	1,443,672,950
1983	4,581,469,273	1,564,225,833
1984	5,168,852,944	1,571,268,801
1985	5,661,424,131	1,710,962,649
1986	6,701,791,877	1,943,337,957
1987	7,821,271,528	2,128,420,172
1988	8,870,335,608	2,255,076,239
1989	9,693,592,576	2,517,027,170
1990	10,572,435,401	2,825,235,548
1991	11,691,198,474	3,063,215,959
1992	13,189,080,305	3,303,324,036
1993	14,392,526,908	3,621,248,760
1994	15,590,115,939	4,046,039,684
1995	16,732,712,705	4,655,453,447
1996	18,090,079,649	4,589,193,474
1997	19,687,628,022	5,049,875,495
1998	20,849,432,286	5,209,517,634
1999	22,628,424,011	5,747,686,477
2000	24,573,368,071	6,228,954,239
2001	25,378,836,264	6,473,004,799
2002	26,534,180,186	6,830,012,206
2003	27,285,277,832	6,720,316,955
2004	27,430,132,455	6,678,037,958
2005	27,926,259,235	6,497,345,650
2006	28,139,017,074	6,538,714,798
2007	28,411,666,525	6,394,386,876
2008	29,239,449,195	6,462,247,933
2009	29,149,585,180	6,463,148,459
2010	28,865,897,058	6,278,071,907
2011	28,763,641,774	5,964,731,541
2012	28,615,506,094	5,844,317,082

Fiscal Year	Total Distributed CSE Collections	Total CSE Expenditures
2013	28,494,187,400	5,685,604,631
2014	28,233,516,896	5,696,712,510
2015	28,559,134,175	5,748,694,920

Source: Figure prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: Data were adjusted for inflation using the Consumer Price Index, Research Series for Urban consumers (i.e., converted to constant 2015 dollars using CPI-U-RS (all items)).

Table A-5. Child Support Collections Made by Various Enforcement Techniques, Selected Fiscal Years, 1995-2015

(In millions of nominal dollars)

	Child Support Collections					Percentage of Total Collections				
Enforcement Techniques	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**	**2010**	**2015**	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**	**2010**	**2015**
Income Withholding	$6,100	$13,000	$19,400	$21,300	$24,500	56.9%	65.4%	69.1%	66.6%	71.8%
Federal Income Tax Refund Offset	734	1,300	1,500	2,000	1,800	6.8%	6.5%	5.3%	6.2%	5.3%
State Income Tax Refund Offset	97	208	207	204	208	0.9%	1.0%	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%
Unemployment Compensation Offset	187	260	459	2,100	462	1.7%	1.3%	1.6%	6.6%	1.4%
Other States	N.A.	N.A.	1,300	1,400	1,500	0.0%	0.0%	4.6%	4.4%	4.4%
Other Methods	3,600	5,100	5,200	5,000	5,700	33.6%	25.7%	18.5%	15.6%	16.7%
Total Collections	**10,718**	**19,868**	**28,066**	**32,004**	**34,100**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: Prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS), based on data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement (Annual Data Reports to Congress), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Note: Total collections reported on this table exceed the distributed collection amounts reported elsewhere because income withholding includes collections received from CSE and non-CSE cases processed through the State Disbursement Unit.

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