

# Child Support Report

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

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## It Makes Sense: Conferees Round-Up Ideas for the Future

On the first morning of OCSE's 19th National Training Conference last month, some 400 attendees—first-timers, old hands, and from jurisdictions near and far—offered ideas for the child support program's road ahead.

The conference theme—"Dollars and Sense: Child Support in a Changing Economy"—set the tone for a multi-group brainstorming session. The exercise encouraged folks at each table around the room to identify several concerns: desirable changes for the program's future; the most critical needs of parents and their biggest roadblocks to addressing those needs; ideas for helping parents work together and for enhancing partnerships to help clients or improve program outcomes; and what OCSE can do now to help.

Spokespeople for the roundtables presented a range of ideas—from a desire for nationally integrated systems, to consistent messaging about the program's mission to help families and children; from mandatory genetic testing, to more on-site Access and Visitation programs (within child support programs) and allowing parents to incorporate visitation in the child support order.

The roundtables followed speeches by Commissioner Vicki Turetsky and Joshua DuBois, Executive Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships. Each delivered a complementary message for a national child support program that will balance its focus on both enforcement of child support orders and family-centered services.

ACF Assistant Secretary Carmen R. Nazario reiterated, in her address to the conference, that balancing child support enforcement and helping parents overcome financial obstacles are functions that can coexist. She acknowledged State and Tribal programs for demonstrating that "we can do this, and we do it well."



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# OCSE 19th National Training Conference

## Recipients of Commissioner's Awards

### Award for Innovative Partnership

- Karen Anthony – OCSE
- Brenda J. Lyttle and Lee Spoonhunter – Wyoming
- Washington State Department of Child Support and Domestic Violence Team

### Award for High Performance

- Gilbert Chavez – Texas
- South Dakota Division of Child Support Team
- Financial Management Services – Debt Management Services Team (US Department of Treasury)

### Award for Innovative Technology

- The Performance Improvement Module Team – Pennsylvania
- New Jersey KiDS Team
- Iowa Child Support Imaging Team

### Award for Exemplary Customer Service

- Lori Keel – Maryland
- Mary Steward – Social Security Administration
- Sherri Larkins – OCSE, Region VIII

### Emerging Leader Award

- Rose Bynum – OCSE, Region III
- Teresa Salas – Texas

### Award for Exemplary Leadership

- Daniel Richard – Pennsylvania
- Sylvia Booth – Maryland

### Lifetime Achievement Award

- Nicki Famiglietti – Massachusetts
- Thomas Kennedy – OCSE Audit, Region VII
- Dail Moore – OCSE
- Rod Winn – US Department of Defense
- Mary Helen Carlson – US Department of State



**Table Talk**  
Participants at the 19th National Conference discuss the program's road ahead.



### Barometer for a Promising Future



“Tough economic times” is a phrase on everyone’s mind. This month, we continue to share the effects of the economy on child support agencies in articles about Texas, Washington, and Oregon. In an article that looks at changes in OCSE customer service, we see that customers are increasingly seeking answers about enforcement—what and when will enforcement actions be taken so they can get the child support they are owed. These times call for dedicated services to our program’s military customers, as shown in an article about Region III states.

The economic climate—and the effects on our work, the program outcomes, and the lives of the families we serve—crystallize the need for the child support program to provide a balance of enforcement and family-centered services. As we work toward this vision, I am optimistic for several reasons: We are strengthening our enforcement abilities through new partnerships, for example, with USDA (*see article on page 10*); we are strengthening our partnerships with community organizations through national and local networks; and we have a proven resiliency and determination to improve outcomes for families and children. You are part of a national child support community that inspires one another through innovative practices and strategies.

A couple months ago, I challenged Region IX child support program directors to help articulate the vision for our program’s future and a message to convey to its participants, the child support community, and other stakeholders. I asked: What is the program’s mission in the future?

I draw much inspiration from the response Arizona Director Veronica Ragland e-mailed to me: “Child support creates opportunity. The opportunity for shoes, medical attention, and after-school activities. The opportunity for parents to demonstrate their love and responsibility. The opportunity for our program to ensure that a child’s basic needs are met (or to prevent the need for other supports and services). The opportunity to restore dignity to separated parents—the dignity that comes from providing for your family.”

The 19th National Conference in DC last month also inspired me. The discussions I heard in plenary sessions and workshops, in the halls, and even during breaks, provide a barometer for the future of our program—and I’m pleased that it’s moving in a positive direction. I am eager to continue these discussions with all of you in 2010!

*Vicki Turetsky*

## In OCSE, Opening Up to Changes in Customer Service

By Elaine Blackman  
OCSE

The phrase “open government” has been getting a lot of attention lately. It refers to the Administration’s initiative that calls for Federal agencies to offer transparent, participatory, and collaborative communications. This means, in part, offering the public easily accessible and clear information.

In OCSE central and regional offices, staffs who answer customers’ inquiries might say they are familiar with “open government.” These professionals strive to prepare thorough and thoughtful answers to child support

customers every day.

“Being open and responsive has been a constant for customer service staff through the years,” says Dianne Offett, who manages customer service in the central office in Washington, DC. “We need to read or listen carefully to every letter, phone call, and e-mail so we understand the customer’s concerns and can answer each one with clarity and respect for the individual.”

### The Internet Revolution

While openness remains important, the inquiries are changing. Several years ago, customers usually wanted





general contact information about child support cases. Now many customers are looking for more definitive answers, such as details about enforcement actions or why

the agency won't take the obligor to court.

"Greater access to the Internet means customers are educating themselves about the child support processes and are able to ask more specific questions," explains Offett. "They may have read Federal laws and might ask whether certain laws can be applied to their cases."

Access to the Internet also means more inquiries through the FAQs on the Web site. The central office receives about 300 e-mails each month from customers with further concerns after they've read the FAQs. In addition, about 500 phone calls stream into the office each month.

As in the central office, Region V in Chicago is getting increasing numbers of inquiries through the Internet, says Program Manager Linda Lawrence. "We still get many letters and encourage inquirers to write so their personal information is not on the Internet and we are clear about the inquirers' specific concerns." The office usually receives five to seven inquiries per day. Some can be answered immediately and require no follow-up, but others, especially intergovernmental cases, are complex and require considerable follow-up, explains Lawrence.

However, Demetricus Johnson in Region IV (Atlanta) says most inquiries are phoned in—about 60 percent in September. Likewise in Region IX (San Francisco), where Selena Long says the office received 127 phone calls this year through September. Most asked for the status or contact information for their case.

### More Calls for Enforcement

In the current economic downturn, more inquiries focus on enforcement issues as customers face more dire financial needs. Offett regularly hears, "Take him to court to make sure he pays the full amount as ordered." Three years ago, more callers wanted money for added expenses in summer and winter months. Now Offett and her staff hear "I need the money for everyday living" all the time.

In addition, they get more inquiries not only from custodial parents, but from noncustodial parents—both expressing concerns about the noncustodial parent having lost his or her job. The custodial parent may want to know whether there is some kind of assistance or subsidy in the interim until the child support payments begin again. Offett and Lawrence each cite customers who recently had to make a tough choice: The noncustodial parent, after much searching, was unable to get a job and re-enlisted in the military to provide for his family.

In Region V, too, inquiries overwhelmingly focus on enforcement, says Lawrence. Many custodial parents are owed large arrearages and need or want their money "now." They are very frustrated when the state can't get them the amount due or when it is being paid back to them in small increments. Custodial parents not receiving current support are even more upset when enforcement is not successful. "They can't understand how noncustodial parents can evade their responsibilities by working underground, constantly switching jobs, or hiding assets in other people's names. Some custodial parents, in utter desperation, ask what would happen if they decided to abandon the children like the noncustodial parent."

Region IV is getting more calls based on the economic climate as well, says Johnson. "I've noticed a dramatic increase in the amount of clients who never thought they would need the assistance of the child support program." Johnson recently spoke to a custodial parent who had been quite successful in her field of employment; however, 10 months ago she was laid off (without a severance package), which has caused her to seek public assistance.

"Interestingly, many of our inquiries not only pertain to establishment, enforcement, and locate assistance, but also issues about requiring TANF participants to cooperate with the child support program," says Johnson. "Custodial parents are routinely angry about involving the noncustodial parent into their private affairs because, as one caller informed me, 'I've burned that bridge [i.e., the relationship with the noncustodial parent] years ago, so I don't necessarily think it's fair that the child support program is forcing me to repair it now.'"



## International Inquiries Up

More common now are inquiries about international cases as more people take jobs with companies in other countries. Many involve currency conversion and may be referred to the Web site's FAQ: "Should the costs of converting a foreign payment into US dollars be deducted from the amount paid to the obligee and credited to the obligor?" The answer is "No."

To process international cases, says Offett, staff first needs to understand interstate processes. "The tough part is when noncustodial parents leave the country believing they can escape payments. But when their payments cease, workers still may be able to locate and garnish wages if the employer operates in the States. However, it usually takes more time to contact the foreign agency."

Under the Federal Passport Denial program, some parents who owe past-due child support and have taken jobs in Iraq and Afghanistan as military contractors may be denied passports to travel overseas. When customers call OCSE with questions about their passports being denied, they're referred to the state agency with the authority to withdraw the denial. Some states have a "zero-tolerance policy," which requires the parent to pay arrears in full before getting the passport reinstated.

"When one father said he was already paying his child support, the state worker explained he owed \$12,000 in arrears. He had to get a loan from a bank because he needed the passport to go overseas for work," says Offett. In some cases, the new employers pay the past-due child support, or the grandparents pay; however, in most cases, the parents themselves come up with the payment.

## More Congressional Inquiries

In recent years, more customers are contacting their congressional office. They may say, for example, "Everyone says I owe a different balance—how will I pay it off?" And more congressional requests to OCSE involve interstate cases. To respond to these, staff in the



various child support offices involved in a case may need to spend additional time reaching a common understanding of the accounts.

Recently a congressional

office described its constituent as "extremely distressed and anxious." Feelings like these are a common signal, says Offett, that "we need to try to remember that if we can reply in an open and clear manner, then the customer may be more willing to respond to child support concerns positively in the future because he or she will feel assured we are doing everything we can to help."



## Answering Calls for Help

Doing everything they can to help also means the staff is spending more time on calls. Johnson has noticed that the average time on the phone with a caller in Region IV has increased—from 17 minutes in July to 33 minutes in September.

In addition, some custodial and noncustodial parents are seeking assistance with more than one issue. For example, Johnson first spoke to a custodial parent about an enforcement issue, however, in the next couple of weeks the same custodial parent called to discuss three additional issues—locate, modification, and medical support. "It seems as if the subject of each inquiry is increasing in quantity and complexity," says Johnson.

Even with some calls requiring more time and research, Region IX's Long has realized "many customers seem to think we can do more at the Federal level than we actually can."

"We wear many hats," explains Offett. "We're like investigators when we gather facts from various sources. And we're like therapists when we need to help customers calm down because they are frustrated." In addition, customer service staff needs to know what's happening in the program "because we are the folks who help them understand certain program initiatives, such as how the garnishment process works."

The bottom line, says Offett, is that the customer service infrastructure is an important priority for child support agencies. "If customers receive good service, then they can believe in the program. Even if the outcome isn't positive in terms of seeing more money right away, they can be assured people are working to do everything they can and that the system does work."

# Region III States Deploy Range of Services to Military Customers

By Jack Shaw  
*OCSE Region III*

OCSE Region III states are providing customer services to military members through intake, outreach, and special policies and procedures. When customer service staff receive calls from noncustodial parents stationed in Iraq or Afghanistan, calling them back isn't easy; sending and receiving mail also is not as routine as in the States. Calls can center on collecting child support from military members or coordinating child support-related proceedings when a military member is overseas. Stateside, a custodial parent may have concerns that the other parent is about to be—or already is—deployed.

Here are some ways Region III States and the District of Columbia are accommodating these more unusual customer-service situations.

## Delaware

Delaware's Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) has had a military liaison, Gwen Anderson, since 2002. In addition to working with the military on understanding the benefits of the Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity program, Anderson coordinates with the Family Readiness staff of the Delaware National Guard and various reserve branches to discuss unique challenges of child support and paternity for service members.

DCSE collaborated with the state's Family Court Commissioner, Judge Advocate General Officer for the National Guard, and Deputy Attorney General to develop materials for civilian-soldier noncustodial parents who are being deployed. This information also was placed on the [DCSE Web site](#) and on links to the various military Web sites and to the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

Military Liaison Anderson has opened dialogue with the National Guard to determine the feasibility of having DCSE representation available during its Soldier Readiness Program process, a pre-deployment step to determine how prepared soldiers are for deployments. Also, DCSE has been invited to be part of the National Guard's Inter-Service Family Assistance Committee.

**Delaware Military Liaison Gwen Anderson presents information at a child support program display.**



## District of Columbia

The District of Columbia's Chief of Program Operations Division, Adrienne Day, says the District's normal case processing, which includes dedicating staff to modification of orders, has proven effective and meets the needs of its military customers. The division's locate manager has developed procedures for serving military members. While several military bases are located in the District, including Fort McNair/Fort Myer, the Marine Barracks, and Bolling Air Force, the District has very few military cases, and they usually involve Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

## Maryland

Maryland's Judith Angell, program analyst for the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA), reports that while the state child support program does not have specific programs for the military, it recognizes that military customers have limited ability to communicate with the child support office and at times need special attention. For this reason, the state's Customer Care Center treats all overseas calls from military personnel as "hot calls" and if necessary transfers the customer directly to the local office for assistance. Other calls from military personnel are treated with increased urgency depending on the situation.

In addition, Maryland has a small central customer service unit that handles difficult cases. This unit, working directly with the local child support offices, makes every attempt to provide "same day" service to military personnel deployed in Iraq or Afghanistan.

The Maryland [new hire registry Web site](#) provides instructions for employers who employ reservists in the event the employee is called to active duty. The site

instructs the employer to contact the child support agency that issued the income withholding order, advises them that the employee-reservist has been called up to military duty, and provides the date of activation.

With assistance from OCSE, Maryland collaborates with the Maryland National Guard Reintegration Program Phase II events. The events focus on transitioning military personnel into society after deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan by providing information and referrals for issues such as suicide; anger management; and home, community, and workplace conflicts. The program's intent is to connect soldiers to local, state, Federal, and social service agencies to assist in overcoming challenges of reintegration through briefings and a workshop.

The Baltimore County CSEA provides child support services or information at the events. It coordinates services with the Military OneSource, a 24/7 resource for military members, spouses, and friends, and anticipates collaboration with the Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training to assist homeless veterans.

## Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE), through its Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement Training Institute, provides the course "Working with the Military in Child Support Matters" for its local Domestic Relations Sections and BCSE workers. It focuses on how to work effectively with military personnel using procedures and methods consistent with Federal and state statutes, regulations, and rules that govern military child support matters. The training also highlights information about the *Servicemembers' Civil Relief Act* and its effect on the establishment and enforcement of child support orders.

## Virginia

Virginia is home to the third largest group of military families in the country. Vivian S. Giles, supervisor of the Program Guidance Team, reports that Virginia staff members try to be mindful of the unique circumstances of military families as well as the time constraints they face that civilian residents may not encounter.

The Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) is targeting lower pay-grade enlisted personnel and their families in reducing conflict and opening the door to more involvement of noncustodial parents with their children as part of the Access and Visitation grant program.

For the past 4 years, Tidewater military families have

been served through a grant to the Community Mediation Center of Southeastern Virginia based in Norfolk. Last year this program served 194 custodial and noncustodial parents, an estimated half of which were military service members. Part of this grant provides outreach through personal visits to area military commands, as well as print and broadcast media outlets touting program benefits for military families.

In 2008, this center made presentations to 1,052 military members. It has developed working relationships with a number of military commands to offer services to the estimated 83,000 military family members (dependents) who live in the Hampton Roads area. Of these, Fleet and Family Support Centers and Navy Legal Services have proven particularly valuable as referral sources.

The state's Norfolk District Office provides regular training to the military both on base and in its District Office. The training, in coordination with the military Judge Advocate General office, focuses on assistance to both custodial and noncustodial parents in the military and includes instructions on requesting a review of a child support order, applying for child support services, establishing paternity, and establishing child support obligations affected by military deployment.

Virginia's child support legal staff routinely accommodates requests from senior military officials to create special sessions to explain general or more complex child support policies to service members. To assist DCSE staff in fully understanding the military customer needs, a chapter for the division program manual will be dedicated to working with the military.

## West Virginia

According to Shirley Kitchen, West Virginia's Bureau for Child Support Enforcement (BCSE) Ombudsman, "The customer service staff often goes that extra mile to accommodate these individuals because of the difficulty with the communication factor."

West Virginia legislators passed a bill, signed by the Governor in April, to expedite the modification process for military personnel.

Other than the National Guard, West Virginia has a couple of Coast Guard installations and the Marine Safety Office and Coast Guard Operations Systems Center, and has other military members representing all the major services scattered throughout the state.

*For further information, please contact Jack Shaw at [jack.shaw@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jack.shaw@acf.hhs.gov) or 215-861-4790.*

# Oregon and Washington Create Services, Build Partnerships to Meet Economic Demands

By David E. Johnson  
*OCSE Region X*

Faced with some of the highest unemployment rates in the country, the Oregon and Washington State child support programs are helping to meet customers' needs through innovation, agility, and partnerships. In tough economic times, customers who need extra assistance often turn to the child support program; both states are working proactively to find solutions that will help these parents.

## Oregon Team Quickens Modification Process

During Oregon's 2009 legislative session, the child support program researched how to help parents who lost their jobs get their child support orders modified quickly. With unprecedented speed, Oregon passed laws and implemented rules that allow for a temporary adjustment to the child support order.

The state formed a Recession Response Team of caseworkers specifically trained to help parents through the new "Employment-Related Modification" process. Temporary order modifications change the basic support

obligation for up to 6 months if one or both parents in the order have suffered loss of income due to the recession. Media ads have helped to spread awareness about the program to customers around the state.

Oregon staff work closely with both custodial and noncustodial parents in an attempt to agree on a modified order, and have built strong partnerships with the Oregon Office of Administrative Hearings to rule on disputed modifications more quickly than normal.

If a parent becomes re-employed within that 6-month period, the previous order may be reinstated. If a parent remains unemployed or underemployed after the 6 months, the temporary modification order may be renewed for an additional 6 months, with notice to the other parent.

Oregon Child Support Director Jean Fogarty credits innovative thinking and teamwork to the success of this initiative. "It took every level of the program to make this work. Attorney General John Kroger introduced emergency legislation; my policy team and general counsel wrote and implemented temporary administrative rules; operations got the processes in place and worked with the hearings panel to establish a 'rocket docket.' All this was accomplished with the common goal of meeting the needs of families facing unprecedented economic hardship. We have demonstrated that state government can be responsive and act quickly when everyone works in concert on a focused effort."

After the program gathers and analyzes more data, Fogarty expects it will publish an in-depth analysis so other states can consider replicating this quick-response approach.



**OREGON RECESSION RESPONSE TEAM – Back row (from left): Jennifer Freeman, Amanda Leeth, Christina Martinez, and Amy Eaquinto; front row: Charissa Self, Tonja Wall, Sue Armintrout, and Robin Spurlock**

## Washington Gets Parents Connected

Washington State is taking another approach. “Delivering clear and accessible services adapted to our individual customer needs” is Goal Number One in Washington’s new 2009 – 2013 strategic plan. Several initiatives under way support that goal.

Because child support programs cannot directly provide employment-related services to noncustodial parents, the state has pursued funding through partnerships and other approaches. “Project Get Connected” is one means to help connect parents to employment services.

Project Get Connected started with initial funding from OCSE (Region X) and kicked-off in November 2008 as a one-day meeting for community and government partners that work to remove barriers to services for noncustodial parents struggling to find or retain employment.

The project partners include the Division of Child Support, TANF, the prosecuting attorney’s office, public defender’s office, Employment Security Department, Department of Corrections, a community-based Access and Visitation program grantee, community and technical college training programs, noncustodial advocacy groups, City of Seattle, and private employers that provide

intensive case-management services to those coming out of prison or facing homelessness.

Project Get Connected conducted a “resource fair” to provide child support staff with information about community service providers for referring noncustodial parents. Child support staff now partner with a local access and visitation grantee and meet with noncustodial parents weekly at a Department of Corrections work-release facility with live, portable computer access onsite.

Other initiatives are under way in the King County courts to provide child support assistance and live computer access to noncustodial parents appearing in drug court. Prosecutors, defense attorneys, and judges are working to incorporate more collaborative, tangible “cures” in court orders for noncustodial parents who face contempt charges.

Through quick legislative action, creative thinking, and strengthening innovative partnerships at the local level, child support programs are stretching themselves to find ways to help willing parents caught in tough economic times.

*For more information, please contact John Cheng at 206-615-2566 or Levi Fisher at 206-615-2519.*

## Tall Order in Texas: Collections, Caseload, Customers’ Calls Reflect Tough Economy

By Alicia Key  
*Deputy Attorney General for Child Support  
OAG Child Support Division*

Virtually everyone is affected in some way by the nation’s economic slump. Each day brings new reports of industry downsizing, factory closures, and widespread job losses. Although Texas’ unemployment rate is below the national average, many families are having a tough time making ends meet.

Statistics reflect what families are experiencing. State child support collections from unemployment are at an all-time high, increasing from \$30 million in state fiscal year 2008 to \$103 million in 2009. At the same time, in every

month since January, new hire reports have decreased by at least 21 percent when compared to the same months in 2008. These are not the types of records that bode well for child support programs or for families.

As a result of the faltering economy, the Texas program is hearing from parents who pay child support and from those who receive it. Noncustodial parents are requesting that their orders be modified to match their reduced incomes. Custodial parents, who may have been doing fine on a single income, are asking for help to establish a child support order or enforce an existing one.

Field staff opened more than 14,000 new cases in March 2009, compared to about 13,000 cases in March 2008. Virtually every office across the state is experiencing an increased demand for services, and daily call volume escalated from 21,700 in November 2008 to 24,800 in March 2009.



Hiring temporary employees is one way Texas is addressing the heightened demand for services. A total of 259 temporary attorneys, child support officers, and child support technicians have been hired through Aug. 31, 2010. In addition, overtime pay will be granted to employees who sign up for special projects to address the increased workload. One special project involves identifying noncustodial parents who are receiving unemployment benefits and proactively contacting them about requesting a modification of their order.

Texas also is using its Web site to make it as easy as possible for noncustodial parents to request a review and adjustment of their order. The questionnaire parents complete is available on the child support section of the main attorney general [Web site](#), along with FAQs about modifying orders. Parents who think they qualify can download the form and send it to the office handling their case. Staff in local offices, due to additional hands on board, can quickly review modification requests, request additional documentation when needed, and notify parents of the results. Parents whose cases qualify will be scheduled for in-office negotiation conferences or court.

Planned enhancements to the Web site include an online

calculator for determining whether or not a parent's reduced earnings warrant a modification to the child support order.

In Texas, the majority of parents on the child support caseload pay a percent of their net income each month, ranging from 20 percent for one child to not less than 40 percent for six or more children. Special rules apply for parents with a net monthly income greater than \$7,500, and in cases of joint placement or multiple children in different households. An order can be modified if the monthly amount of the current payment differs by either 20 percent or \$100 from the amount that would be awarded according to the legal guidelines.

Being responsive to current economic conditions is good customer service. It is in everyone's best interest to set realistic support payments that help prevent the build-up of unnecessary arrears. The Texas child support program is serious about making obligations consistent with a parent's ability to pay—in the good times as well as the bad.

*For more information, please contact Alicia Key at [Alicia.Key@cs.oag.state.tx.us](mailto:Alicia.Key@cs.oag.state.tx.us) or 512-460-6122*

## Administrative Offset Program Sows New Crop of Collections

Gardeners and farmers know that there are still crops to reap in the fall, and this proved true for the Federal Administrative Offset program as well. Late September and October produced a harvest of child support collections coming from the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) payments issued by the US Department of Agriculture through Treasury's Financial Management Service (FMS).

Due in part to USDA issuing a large number of its FSA/CCC payments in October, collections through mid-November totaled nearly \$1 million, with the average amount per offset coming in at \$1,001. Since FSA/CCC began processing all of its payments through FMS in mid-September, 35 states have received at least one payment. Iowa has received the largest combined total from the agricultural subsidies, collecting more

than \$134,000, while Alabama has received \$15,408, the single largest payment so far.

All payments eligible for offset under the Debt Collection Improvement Act (DCIA), other than Federal tax refunds, are categorized as administrative payments. Unlike tax refund offset, administrative offset is optional for states. Forty-two states participate in the administrative offset program with several others scheduled to start soon.

The payments received from the agricultural subsidies through the administrative offset program provide yet another source of hope for America's children.

For more information on the FSA/CCC payments or the administrative offset program, please contact Rebecca Hamil at [rebecca.hamilton@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:rebecca.hamilton@acf.hhs.gov).

# Passport Denial Program



## Paid in Time for the Holidays

Bells aren't the only thing jingling this holiday season—12 families will have extra coins in their pockets. But this is no holiday happenstance; it's the result of collections from noncustodial parents whose passports have been denied through the Federal Passport Denial program. The payments are attributed to either overseas employment opportunities or leisure travel plans for the noncustodial parents.

- **California \$106,584:** Collected inheritance; used to help the oldest child in medical school and the youngest child buy a car
- **Puerto Rico \$91,050:** New employment opportunity; custodial parent was able to purchase a home for the family
- **New York \$71, 636:** Caribbean vacation
- **Nebraska \$59,008:** Employment in the Middle East
- **New York \$50,422:** Employment in Indonesia

- **Texas \$41,900:** Job opportunity overseas
- **Michigan \$37,000:** Professional athlete with competition in London
- **New Jersey \$33,617:** Middle East vacation
- **Tennessee \$30,000:** Employment in Canada
- **Virginia \$26,549:** Business travel to Middle East
- **Ohio \$20,966:** Taking a cruise; ecstatic custodial parent contacted her local child support agency to verify the validity of the payment
- **Illinois \$14,600:** Professional athlete in Japan needed pages added to his passport

Since 1998 the passport denial program has collected over \$183 million in voluntarily reported lump-sum payments.

For more information on the passport denial program or to report a success story, please contact Rebecca Hamil at [rebecca.hamilton@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:rebecca.hamilton@acf.hhs.gov).

## Unemployment Updates



Stay on the top of the news about unemployment across the country. See the Web site for the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics:

<http://www.bls.gov/lau/tables.htm>

## Child Support Report

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Carmen R. Nazario  
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

Vicki Turetsky  
Commissioner, OCSE

Robert Cohen  
Director, Division of Consumer Services

Elaine Blackman  
Editor  
202-401-5353, (fax) 202-205-5927  
[elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov)