



Child Support: Ripple Effects Throughout the Community

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The child support program helps families become stronger and more self-sufficient. The program has other bridges into the community as well—to employers, financial institutions, property owners, health insurers, and many other sectors. Without adequate support, these bridges are at risk of collapse. The impacts of the child support funding cut will ripple throughout the community.

Employers: Employers collect 70 percent of child support through payroll withholding. Employers require a responsive, streamlined child support process. State and county child support programs have gone a long way toward providing employers with efficient service. Some child support programs even work with employers planning large lay-offs. *For example, the Milwaukee County child support program answered over 8,000 employer questions between January and September 2007.*

Military. A substantial number of our military personnel are non-custodial parents, and pay child support through payroll allotments. Child support programs have worked hard to coordinate their child support efforts with DFAS, the military payroll department.

Property owners. The child support program has the authority to attach a lien against any real or personal property for past-due support. That means if someone tries to sell or trade a car, the dealer needs the child support program to respond efficiently to clear the title. That home sale or re-financing process? Again, the lending institutions and real estate agents are counting on the child support program to complete paperwork in a timely manner to make a closing date. Estate settlements? The ability of the child support program to process claims will affect how quickly probate issues can be resolved.

Financial institutions. Financial institutions conduct quarterly data matches to identify non-custodial parents with assets who owe child support. Again, financial institutions need a well-run child support agency as a partner.

Licenses. Child support programs have the authority to request drivers and other license suspensions and reinstatements. Both citizens and motor vehicle agencies need to know that the child support program has the capacity to respond promptly, provide accurate information, and help solve problems.

Passports. Child support programs also can request the State Department to suspend passports for nonpayment of child support. The child support program needs resources to ensure that this system works smoothly and efficiently so that business travelers and other citizens can travel on-time with valid passports.

Medical costs: The child support program partners with Medicaid and SCHIP to ensure that parents with private insurance provide it to their children, reducing taxpayers' costs. However, without sufficient child support resources, this partnership will be less effective. Private insurers, too, will feel the impact of a less efficient child support program.

The numbers from just one large county child support program during September 2007:¹

- 968 individuals called the county child support program to report a change in employers. These are parents who are acting responsibly to ensure there is no interruption of payments for their children.
- 607 participants called needing a Spanish-speaking customer service representative.
- The county is averaging 30-35 real estate transactions each week, closing or re-financing.

- Last week, the county filed 23 claims involving foreclosure actions.
- The county processed 25 vehicle transactions per week, in which someone was trying to sell or trade their vehicle.
- An average of 900 employers called the county for assistance on wage garnishment or a health insurance order.

¹ Numbers provided by child support agency in Milwaukee County, Wisconsin.