

# Dunn County Child Support Agency 2015 Annual Report “Family First Program Intended to Ensure Families Self-Sufficiency”



***“We have two bedrock values in our program. One is that parents have the fundamental responsibility to support their children. The other is that the government has a fundamental responsibility to provide due process and procedural fairness to litigants, particularly unrepresented litigants.”***

***Vicki Turetsky, Commissioner  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
The Commissioner’s Voice, July 31, 2015***

## Child Support Enforcement Program

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) is a United States government entity with the purpose of pursuing a parent who is responsible for the financial support of a child. The program was established with the enactment of Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment Program in 1975, which was created to reduce welfare expenses by collecting child support from non-custodial parents.

Economic well-being of children raised in a two-parent family and those raised in families headed by a single parent are significantly different.

## Program History

In 1935 a program was created as a result of the Social Security Act called “Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The program was designed to meet the needs of low income families, especially children living in single parent households. Particular focus was placed on children who had lost a parent due to death or abandonment.

The need for services by those families expanded over time. The reasons for financial assistance evolved from the original intent and by the 1970’s the majority of aid needed was because couples were divorcing, separating or had never married.

The Federal Government then enacted the Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment Program in 1975. The intent was not only to pursue a parent responsible for financial support of the child, but to also establish paternity for non-marital children, hopefully resulting in payment of child support. The Law also amended the Social Security Act (Title IV-D) authorizing Federal matching funds for enforcement purposes i.e. locating nonresident parents, establishing paternity, establishment and collection of child support obligations.

AFDC was abolished by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, being replaced by TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). States are now required to meet certain federal performance standards to include but not limited to court order establishment, paternity establishment, and collection of current support and arrears. In order to receive federal funding, state child support enforcement programs must conform to certain federal regulations and standards.

The national child support program celebrated 40 years of service to families in 2015. Collections have increased from \$1 billion to \$28 billion over the past four decades. The program continues to innovate as we are challenged to find new ways to do business in this ever changing world.

## Program Relationships

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement partners with state, tribal and local agencies to administer their programs. In Wisconsin, the Department of Children and Families, Bureau of Child Support administers the child support enforcement program. A few examples of the Bureau's responsibilities are development and administration of the Title IV-D plan, monitoring activities of county agencies to ensure compliance with state and federal law and policies; provision of technical support to county agencies; distribution of child support payments, and maintenance of a statewide automated child support data system.

Counties contract with DCF to implement and administer the program at a local level. Examples of county responsibilities are establishment of child and medical support obligations, location of absent parents, establishment of paternity and collection of child support orders.

Counties then partner with clerks of court, sheriff's departments, human service departments, and district attorneys to provide services required under the program. Examples of the duties conducted by those partners include clerking of IV-D court hearings by the Clerk of Court, execution of warrants by the Sheriff's Department; referral of foster care cases by Human Services; and filing of criminal non-support charges by the District Attorney's Office.

## Our Mission

Increasing the reliability of child support paid by parents when they live apart from their children by:

- Locating parents
- Establishing legal fatherhood (paternity)
- Establishing and enforcing support orders
- Increasing health care coverage for children
- Removing barriers to payment, such as referring parents to employment services

## Wisconsin's Role

The Bureau of Child Support, in the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, Division of Family & Economic Security, manages the statewide Child Support Program. The Bureau works with other states, nations, the federal office of Child Support Enforcement, and tribal and county child support agencies.

Wisconsin's statewide performance is as follows (FFY 2015 preliminary data - Not reviewed by OCSE):

- % of Paternity Established ... 104.9%  
(8th in the nation - up from 11th last year)  
✓ National Average: 95.12%
- % of Support Orders ... 87.1 %  
(23<sup>rd</sup> in the nation - down from 20th last year)  
✓ National Average: 85.78
- % of Current Support ... 74.2%  
(3rd in the nation - up from 4<sup>th</sup> last year)  
✓ National Average: 65.29%
- % of Arrearage Collections ... 67.6%  
(11th in the nation - up from 13th last year)  
✓ National Average: 64.16%

### COURT CASES INITIATED

	2012	2013	2014	2015
SUPPORT	118	116	115	130
PATERNITY	21	16	19	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>153</b>

### FOSTER CARE COLLECTIONS

**2014 - \$ 46,677.51**

**2015 - \$ 50,231.09**

**\* These sums are collected pursuant to Court orders initiated in cases for children in out of home placements.**

#### Paternity Establishment Rate

This is the ratio of paternity related children present in a caseload as of September 30 compared to the number of paternity related children present at anytime during the year that have paternity established.

- Federal Target: ..... 90%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/07 ..... 105.83%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/08 ..... 111.40%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/09 ..... 112.53%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/10 ..... 114.25%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/11 ..... 109.98%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/12 ..... 113.43%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/13 ..... 113.74%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/14 ..... 113.18%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 115.04%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 104.89%

#### Court Order Rate

This is the ratio of the number of IV-D cases with court orders compared to the total number of IV-D cases at a point in time. This includes all enforceable orders including current child support, arrearage orders, medical support orders, work search orders and orders that are held open by the Court.

- Federal Target: ..... 80%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/07 ..... 83.64%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/08 ..... 87.51%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/09 ..... 88.85%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/10 ..... 86.41%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/11 ..... 86.69%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/12 ..... 90.13%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/13 ..... 88.72%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/14 ..... 90.03%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 89.47%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 87.14%

#### Current Support Collection Rate

This ratio compares the number of cases with a current child support order present in the IV-D caseload to the number of those cases with a current collection during the month.

- Federal Target ..... 80%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/07 ..... 76.46%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/08 ..... 76.89%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/09 ..... 77.56%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/10 ..... 77.72%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/11 ..... 79.13%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/12 ..... 80.66%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/13 ..... 81.28%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/14 ..... 80.01%
- Dunn County rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 80.64%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/15 ..... 74.15%

## 2016 Program Service Goals

- Continue to identify strategies enabling agency staff and our partners to strengthen the economic stability of families in the child support program.
- Continue our work in establishing repayment toward the arrears and interest owed in our cases.
- Evaluate “non-productive cases” in an effort to determine possibility of collection and proceed to effectively manage those cases utilizing state policy emphasizing the need to maximize performance.
- Continue to streamline operations “doing more with less” and maintain our performance percentages.
- Utilize all in house training offered by State of Wisconsin in an attempt to minimize costs and maximize performance.
- Promote a comprehensive family-centered framework designed to address barriers to employment, respond to changes in family roles, and increase the consistency of support payments.
- Continue to evaluate current processes and procedures anticipating conversion to electronic filing of circuit court cases (new and existing).

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Studies conducted all find one common factor when discussing compliance with support orders. **Parties are more willing to comply with an order when they feel they have been dealt with fairly.** Procedural fairness is an evidence-based and cost-effective way to improve compliance with court orders.

Researchers have identified and tested five specific elements of perceived fairness. They are:

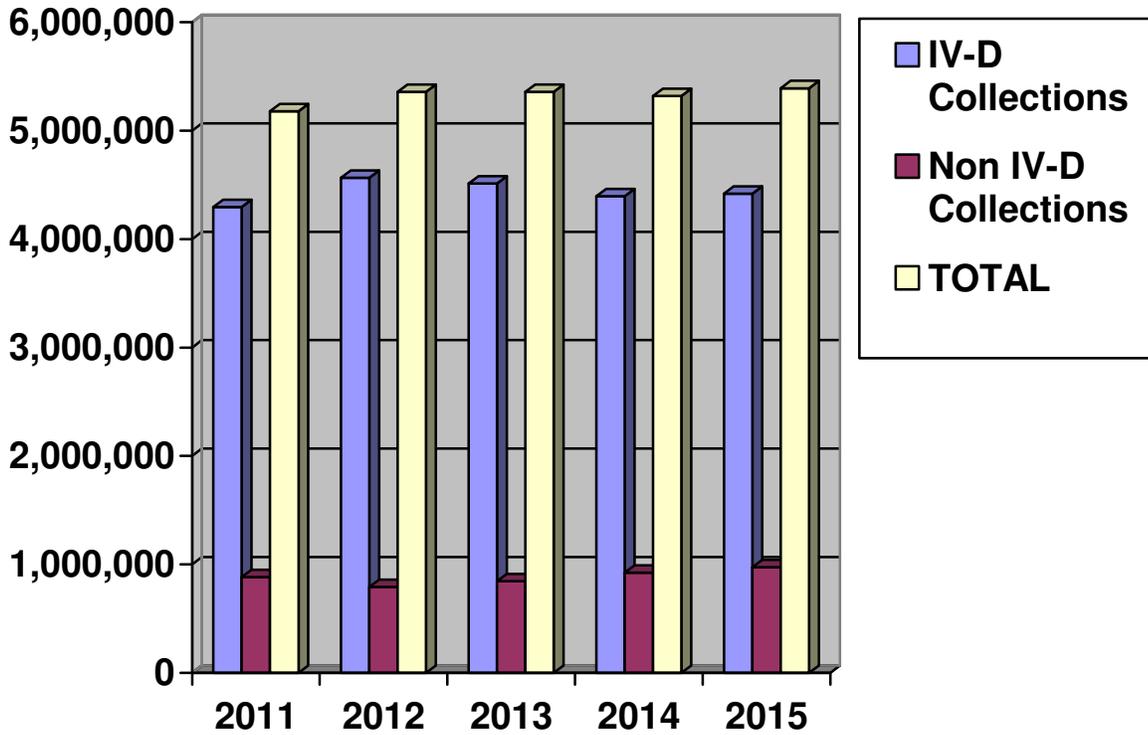
- Voice - you feel that you have an opportunity to participate, tell your story, show your papers and be a part of the outcome.
- Respect - you feel that you have been treated with dignity and were given credence to your side of the story.
- Lack of bias - you feel you do not get different treatment based on race, gender or economic status.
- Understanding - you feel people understand your circumstances, what you may be dealing with and that you are trying.
- Helpfulness- you feel people care about you and want to help as much as they can. Part of this consideration must be a clear explanation of the agency limitations in resolving issues whatever the situation may be.

As we attempt to accomplish our mission through our parents we consider all of the above. Increasing trust and compliance can be achieved if we improve the perception of procedural fairness, provide an opportunity to be heard and realistic demands to comply.

As always, many thanks from agency staff for your continued support in helping us continue our work in support of Wisconsin's children, families, and taxpayers.

Jeanne Stevenson  
Director  
Dunn County Child Support Agency  
April 18, 2016

## COLLECTIONS



	<u>IV-D</u>	<u>NON IV-D</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<b>2011</b>	4,294,620.13	882,978.45	5,177,598.58
<b>2012</b>	4,564,722.73	793,280.84	5,358,003.57
<b>2013</b>	4,512,103.18	845,114.93	5,357,218.11
<b>2014</b>	4,396,145.60	922,965.77	5,319,111.37
<b>2015</b>	4,418,711.19	973,174.11	5,391,885.30

PRESS RELEASE

DUNN COUNTY CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY

May 18, 2016

The Dunn County Child Support Agency presented their 2015 Annual Report to the County Board of Supervisors at their May meeting.

The agency collected and disbursed approximately \$5,391,885 in 2015.

Agency goals identified for 2016 include mandatory conversion to electronic filing of documents in circuit court. eFiling is part of a movement toward greater automation and efficiencies for the courts, attorneys and litigants.

Jeanne Stevenson  
Dunn Co. Child Support Agency Director