

Dunn County Child Support Agency

2011 Annual Report

“Putting Children’s Needs First”



“The Child Support Program serves 17 million children overall, and half of all poor children. The program lifts a million people out of poverty every year and helps families avoid the need for public assistance. Child support provides about 30 percent of income for the poor families who receive it.”

*Carmen Nazario, Assistant Secretary,
Federal Administration for Children & Families
testimony to the Committee on Ways and Means, March 2010*

The Child Support Program

The Child Support program assists families in becoming independent and remaining self-sufficient. The program helps families by establishing paternity (legal fatherhood) and obtaining and enforcing court orders for child and medical support.

The Child Support program is a cooperative local, state, and federal effort designed to ensure that **both parents support their children**. Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, enacted in 1975, requires every state to provide child support services.

The Federal Role

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement administers the federal Child Support program and provides services and assistance to the states. Reimbursement of some child support administrative costs is provided to state and local government.

Locate

Finding one of the parents is often the first step in many child support cases. Wisconsin's statewide computer system, KIDS, automatically checks other computer databases for information on parents who owe child support. The need for locate can arise at any point in the life of a IV-D case. Specific case circumstances that indicate a need for locate:

- a. Unknown identity of a father in a paternity case;
- b. No known address for non-custodial parent;
- c. No verified SSN for non-custodial parent;
- d. Need to implement income withholding but do not know payer's current employer.

Legal Fatherhood

Before a court can order payment of child support for unmarried parents, **legal fatherhood** (paternity) must be established. An administrative process is available for parents who are 18 or older. Adult and teen parents can request paternity establishment services from their local child support agency. In 2008, the Wisconsin Child Support program established paternity for 21,500 children utilizing the administrative and judicial processes.

Establishing Support Orders

County and tribal child support agencies help **establish court orders** for financial and medical support. In Dunn County in 2011 the Family Court Commissioner held hearings in approximately 175 cases over twenty-three court dates. In addition, appearances by agency staff were made at divorce cases on behalf of the State of Wisconsin.

Early Intervention Initiative

In an attempt to make the child support experience positive and effective for both parents, we have implemented a new practice. Agency staff is meeting with child support payers and payees following their initial court appearances. Individuals meet with agency staff and are given a new order packet containing brochures and reference material which will enable them to understand the processes, requirements, and expectations. Case managers answer questions and gather information necessary to manage the case. It is our hope that providing these tools and information to participants will increase collections by decreasing misinformation and uncertainty.

The objectives of the project are:

- Increase timely collections
- Empower payers by providing information relevant to the process
- Improve efficiency
- Increase customer satisfaction
- Decrease interpersonal conflicts

Child Support's Role in Strengthening Families

The Child Support Program has changed significantly over the years. Initially the program was designed to ensure that noncustodial parents repaid the government for welfare paid to the family. The program is now a powerful anti-poverty program. Child support is a major source of income for low-income children. In the year 2010, an estimated 9.8 million children received child support, with each receiving, on average, \$2,500.

Monitoring & Enforcing Support Orders

Local child support agencies **monitor and enforce the court order** using a variety of enforcement tools. Interstate and international actions may be initiated to ensure payment of child support from individuals living outside of the State of Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, the majority of child support obligations are paid using income withholding. A notice is prepared and sent to the paying parent's employer authorizing withdrawal of a certain amount of the parent's income for payment of child support. The money withheld is then sent to the Wisconsin Support Collections Trust Fund for disbursement to the payee. Support payments are sent to more than 19,000 Wisconsin families daily.

Non-payment of court-ordered child support requires action by the child support agency. The amount of overdue child support may be reported to credit bureaus and collected from tax refunds and lottery winnings. Liens might be placed against the parent's titled property. Delinquent payers may have their recreational, occupational, and drivers licenses revoked. Failure to comply with a court order may result in a hearing for contempt of court. In some cases, the district attorney may be asked to file criminal charges.

Agency staff made appearances in approximately 518 cases in forty-seven weeks in Dunn County Circuit Court as a part of the monitoring and enforcing requirements in IV-D cases. In addition appearances were made at bond appearances in warrant situations on behalf of the State of Wisconsin.

Case Management

Referrals (How we receive business)

Referrals are received by:

- **IV-A Interface.** Cases include W-2, Medical Assistance and Transitional Child Care. When a participant applies for services, they must sign an agreement to fully cooperate with Child Support
- **IV-E Interface.** Cases referred to by the Department of Human Services for children placed in a substitute care situation. Possible collection of child support from both parents.
- **Central Registry.** Services requested by another State.
- **Center for Health Statistics.** Every child deserves a father. The referral is made when a birth certificate is filed without a father's name. An outreach letter is sent to the child's mother notifying her of services available.
- **Self-Referrals.** A person who walks into the office and filed the IV-D application for services.

Families in some public assistance programs automatically receive case management services. Families may also apply for case management services at no cost.

Taxpayer Savings

In Fiscal year 2010, Wisconsin collected more than \$5.81 for every \$1.00 spent for program costs. The national average is \$4.88. Child support collected for families who no longer receive public assistance helps to keep those families independent and reduced public assistance costs. Wisconsin ranks 16th in the nation in this efficiency test.

Administrative Lien Update

Administrative liens are liens placed on a payer by operation of law - that is, without obtaining a court order. These liens are a valuable tool for collecting past due child support. Child support agencies have long had the authority to attach a lien to a specific property by judicial means; however, the process is complicated and time consuming and is effective for only the property named in the court order.

Administrative liens become effective when the debtors name is listed on the Child Support Lien Docket. This is an electronic list of payers who have administrative liens in Wisconsin. Unpaid child support is automatically considered a lien against property. It affects all titled property (real and personal) the debtor holds, such as, but not limited to:

- ☐ Land and structures (real property),
- ☐ Motor vehicles (personal property),
- ☐ Accounts at financial institutions, and
- ☐ Recreational vehicles (personal property) titled by the Department of Transportation.

The total collected from inception of this project through December 31, 2011 is \$319,590.75.

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.

- % of Paternity Established 100.17
(13th in the Nation)
- % of Support Orders 85.33
(15th in the Nation)
- % of Current Support 70.58
(3rd in the Nation)
- % of Arrearage Collections 62.09
(26th in the Nation)

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%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/11 101.38%

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%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/11 84.78%

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%
- Statewide Rate as of 9/30/11 70.59%

BUDGET REVIEW – 2011

EXPENDITURES ***585,263.49***
REVENUES ***502,842.92***

COLLECTIONS – 2011

IV-D COLLECTIONS ***4,294,620.13***
NON IV-D ***882,978.45***

2012 Program Service Goals

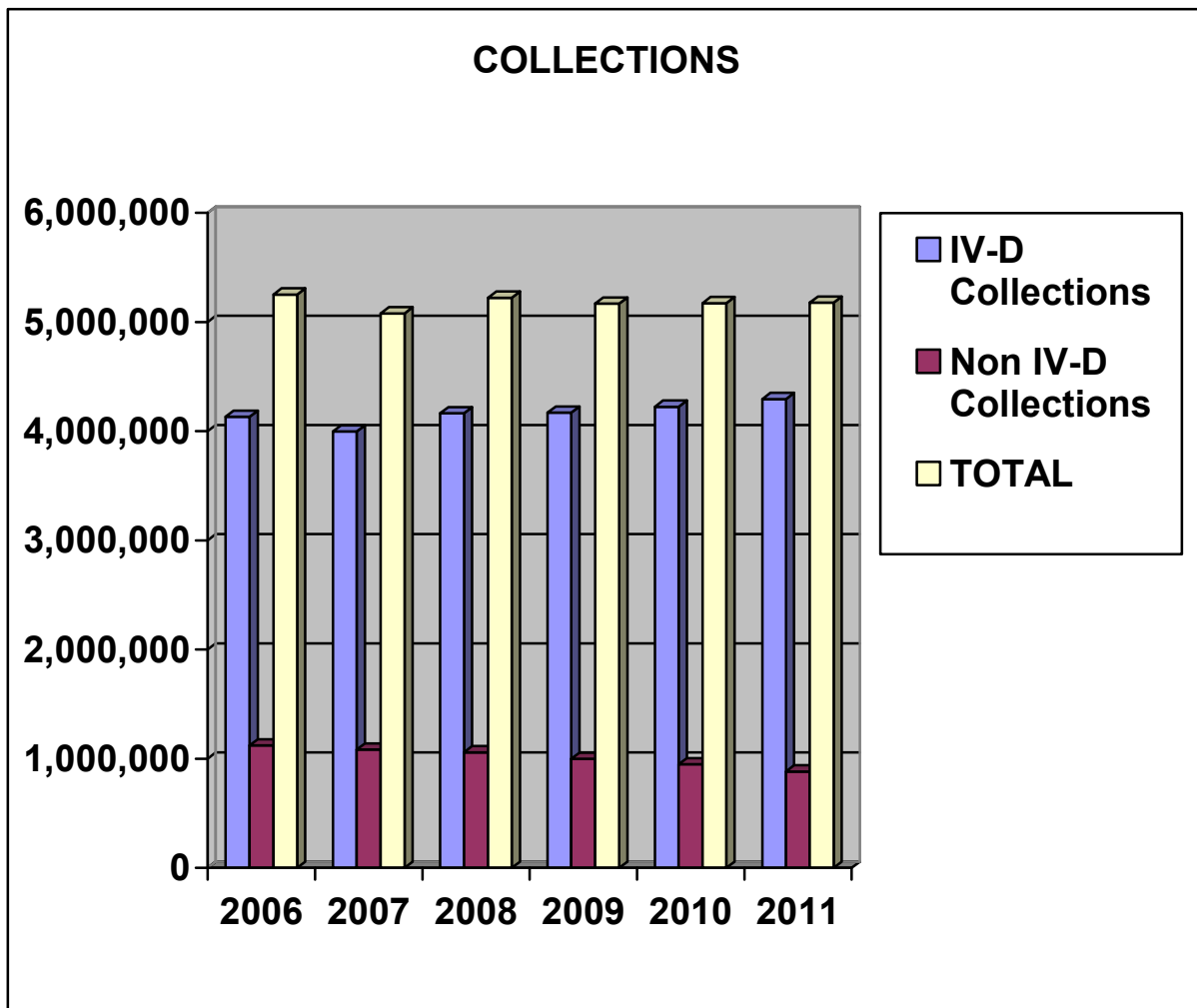
- Continue to identify strategies enabling agency staff and our partners to strengthen the economic stability of families in the child support program.
- Continue our work in establishing repayment toward the arrears and interest owed in our cases.
- Continue to streamline operations “doing more with 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.
- Implement new Child Support Payee Debit Card.

In 2011, I “celebrated” thirty years in the Child Support Agency. I have held various positions within the agency and have had the pleasure of working with some of the most hard working individuals you will find in public service. Agency staff has approximately 118 accumulative years of child support knowledge and experience which they use to successfully serve agency customers.

The direction of the agency has changed dramatically since inception. Originally intended to be a mechanism to secure reimbursement of public assistance to the current profile as a means to collect and secure income for custodial parents while assisting non-custodial parents in becoming economically stable presents many challenges. Meanwhile the economic downturn has impacted program stability on the state and federal level necessitating changes on the local level in an attempt to maintain our funding sources.

Recently we have taken a moment to “look back” at milestones particularly since 1998 when the Child Support Agency became the financial managers (duties transitioned from the Clerk of Court). While the agency has completed all the projects and implemented all the changes we continue to “look forward” to moving forward.

Jeanne Stevenson
Director
Dunn County Child Support Agency
May 7, 2012



	<u>IV-D</u>	<u>NON IV-D</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
2006	4,131,495.42	1,120,935.39	5,252,430.00
2007	3,996,137.00	1,083,220.00	5,079,357.00
2008	4,164,465.30	1,058,167.80	5,222,633.00
2009	4,170,615.82	998,768.86	5,169,385.00
2010	4,224,632.42	948,258.88	5,172,891.30
2011	4,294,620.13	882,978.45	5,177,598.58

IV-D: Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The federal legislation, which authorized the child support program. Pronounced “Four D”.

Non IV-D: Child, family, or spousal support case for which no child support enforcement case has been opened with a child support agency. NON-ENFORCEMENT CASE.