

# Department of Social Services Office of Family Support Support Enforcement Services

In 1975, the Child Support Enforcement (Title IV-D of the Social Security Act) program was created to establish paternity and child support orders and collect child support. The program is a federal/State/local partnership. In Louisiana, there are 12 Support Enforcement Services (SES) offices.

All families receiving assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Foster Care (IV-E) and/or Medicaid must cooperate with support enforcement services. All families who formerly received TANF, IV-E and/or Medicaid continue to receive services. Never-TANF families may apply for services but are assessed a fee.

For the 2006-2007 federal fiscal year the Louisiana SES program statistics show:

- 289,488 cases
- 312,317 children
- 25,656 paternity establishments
- 20,062 new child support orders established
- \$323,079,437 in child support collections, and
- \$7,779,885 collected on TANF cases.

Half (50%) of the cases are former public assistance cases, over one third (40%) are never-assistance cases and the remaining 10% are public assistance cases (i.e., TANF, IV-E or Medicaid).

The federal government pays 66% of all administrative costs of Louisiana SES, 66% of laboratory costs incurred in determining paternity, and provides financial incentives based on performance. The State's share of SES costs is about \$24 million per year or \$77 per child. The benefits are:

- About \$323 million in child support collections per year
- For every \$1 the State spends for SES, \$14 is collected in child support
- The State retains \$2.4 million in collections per year to offset TANF outlays
- The State received \$6.2 million in federal performance incentive payments to re-invest into the program (2006)
- Child support alleviates poverty
- Child support helps low-income families avoid public assistance, and
- There are several non-tangible benefits to a child's well-being, such as children who

receive support have higher educational outcomes than children who do not.

Financial incentives for State performance based on key child support outcomes measurement were phased in between 2000-02. States must achieve specified thresholds to receive additional federal dollars and could be subject to financial penalties if improvements do not continue from year to year. The pool of federal incentive dollars is about \$450 million per year for all states. In 2006, Louisiana received about \$6.2 million in federal incentives.

Federal incentives must be spent to supplement, not supplant, other state funds [45 CFR §305.35]. Federal performance standards are set higher and higher each year. The intent is to promote continuous improvement in state child support enforcement programs and friendly competition between states; foster creativity in techniques and approaches used by child support enforcement agencies; encourage best practices to achieve performance goals; and enable states to re-invest in their child support enforcement programs.

Louisiana's performance relative to other states on the federal performance measures in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2005 is shown below.

| Federal Performance Measure                                    | Louisiana | Average of All States |
|--|-----------|-----------------------|
| % of cases under order   | 73%       | 77%                   |
| % of children born to unwed parents with paternity established | 81%       | 90%                   |
| % of current support due that is paid                          | 54%       | 60%                   |
| % of arrears cases with payments                               | 56%       | 61%                   |
| Cost effectiveness ratio (2004)                                | 4.58      | 4.58                  |

To continue improving performance, SES has developed a re-investment plan funded by federal performance incentive dollars it earns.