



**Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 OPERATING BUDGET**  
**CHILD SUPPORT ADMINISTRATION - N00H00**

Response to Department of Legislative Services Analysis

Senate Budget and Taxation Committee  
Health and Human Services  
Senator Cory McCray  
February 27, 2025

House Appropriations Committee  
Health and Social Services  
Delegate Emily Shetty  
March 3, 2025

Honorable Chair and Members of the Subcommittee, my name is Carnitra White, and I serve as the Principal Deputy Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS). On behalf of our department, I thank Governor Moore, Lieutenant Governor Miller, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), and the Budget Committees for their support. We are also grateful to the Department of Legislative Services Nathaly Andrade for her assistance leading up to today's hearing. Joining me at the table are our Executive Director of the Child Support Administration, Jarnice Johnson and Acting Chief Financial Officer Jessica Smith. We have senior members of our leadership team, and directors of our local departments of social services present in the audience as well.

The Maryland Child Support Administration (CSA) works with parents to provide the financial, medical and emotional support their children need to grow and thrive. Child support and related services provide an opportunity for families to foster connections between the custodial parent, child, and noncustodial parent that may not have otherwise occurred. CSA's mission is to encourage responsible parenting, family self-sufficiency, and child wellbeing.

Maryland's Child Support Administration reduces poverty and the negative effects of poverty for children and the custodial parents by providing comprehensive child support services. In the federal fiscal year 2024, CSA served over 150,000 families, collected and distributed \$482.71 million in child support payments. Families previously participating in the Temporary Cash Assistance program took home \$71 million last federal fiscal year, providing a base level of financial stability for children.

In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2023, Maryland ranked above the national average in two key federal child support performance measures. These performance measures include: the percentage of support orders established – 86.60 percent (86.40 percent national average) and the percentage of cases paying arrears - 67.30 percent (65.00 percent national average). We know that we have more work to do to meet the other performance standards, and we are investing in our policies, practices, and people to do so.

We are clearly communicating performance expectations and metrics to all employees. Through employee engagement, we are fostering a culture that values performance improvement and encourages employee participation in the process. We are providing employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve performance goals through training and development opportunities. We are introducing new training modules, including investigations and appeals, customer experience (“Cultivating Connection”), changes to laws or policies as a result of the legislative session, data reliability audits, and updating our Driver’s License Suspension program. Not only will these training modules improve our service to Maryland families but this will also improve our performance by ensuring child support cases are being effectively handled and monitored.

This year we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Title IV-D Child Support Program. The purpose and function of child support programs have evolved since first authorized in 1975. The work of CSA is meant to invest in and support families, not punish them when they’re trying to make ends meet. We utilize the tools at our disposal as engagement tools to facilitate parental support and we offer support to those who are unable to pay.

For example, in August 2024, we hosted the first statewide Driver’s License Suspension Amnesty Program. This event led to the reinstatement of 1,127 driver’s licenses and collection of over \$599,000. We administratively exempted parents from the driver’s license suspension program when they have a wage attachment in place, even if the full obligation has not been met. We are taking a holistic view of the family and supporting noncustodial parents who intend to provide child support, but are not able.

Additionally, we implemented the Incarcerated Obligors bill passed by the 2024 Maryland General Assembly to properly serve those customers that have no ability to pay due to incarceration. This law is a critical part of our holistic approach to customer service, aimed at reducing the barriers that incarcerated parents face in fulfilling their obligations.

We continue to develop new methods to increase engagement and assist noncustodial parents with providing support for their children. In 2025, we will host a series of statewide activities including expungement and resource fairs for both parents. We plan to also increase education and enrollment of our Payment Incentive Program (PIP) to help noncustodial parents reduce their state owed arrears. We are also working with community-based partners to develop additional Noncustodial Parent Employment Programs (NPEP) to assist noncustodial parents who need job skills and employment opportunities to financially and emotionally support their children.

We remain committed to creating a more equitable child support program for Marylanders to strengthen families and ensure children have the support of both their parents. We thank you for your continued support in these efforts.

#### **DHS Responses to DLS Analysis:**

***DHS should comment on the projected decline in revenues for fiscal 2025 and 2026 compared to the peak in fiscal 2023. Specifically, DHS should explain whether this decrease is due to changes in federal reimbursements, lower collections, policy shifts, or other factors impacting the fund's revenue streams. (pg. 5, DLS Analysis)***

**DHS Response:** A portion of the Child Support Reinvestment Fund was inadvertently omitted from the fiscal 2025 budget and proposed fiscal 2026 budget. We request that the FY2025 appropriation and FY2026 allowance be restored to the FY2025 target totaling \$20,050,163. This proposed action will align with the revenue projection for those fiscal years.

***DHS should provide an explanation for not processing the [budget] amendment [to replace general funds with special funds from the Child Support Reinvestment Fund] and clarify the impact of this omission on the program's operations and funding levels. (pg. 6, DLS Analysis)***

**DHS Response:** The Child Support Administration is [federally mandated](#) to provide services supported by the Child Support Reinvestment Fund and will continue to do so in order to support the families we serve. The appropriation for this purpose was inadvertently omitted from the fiscal 2025 and fiscal 2026 budgets. We will be working with the Department of Budget and Management to address this omission via the appropriate budget corrective vehicle.

**DHS should provide updated and accurate performance measures as of December 2024 to ensure a comprehensive understanding of statewide and local progress toward federal incentive goals. Given that only one of the three requested reports has been submitted, and the MFR measures, which are all federally required performance metrics, were not reported with actual figures, DHS should also clarify its plans to meet reporting requirements and address any barriers to timely data submission. (pg. 9, DLS Analysis)**

**DHS Response:**

Of the two overdue reports, the September 2024 performance report was submitted on February 21, 2025; the December 2024 performance was submitted on February 22, 2025. We will work with DBM to update our MFR measures.

As we have discussed at the previous DHS budget hearings, over the last year, we renewed our focus on ensuring that any public-facing data is consistent, validated, and comprehensive. We are committed to transparently sharing high-quality data with our partners, and we will continue to enhance our ability to do so. We are also providing our latest performance measures here for your reference.

**Maryland 2024 Performance Measures**

	<b>FFY 2024 September Performance</b>	<b>FFY 2025 December Performance</b>	<b>Federal Annual Goals</b>
Cases with Support Orders	86.17%	85.63%	80%
Paternity Establishment	94.90%	85.53%	90%
Current Support Collections	64.41%	67.00%	80%
Cases Paying Arrears	65.95%	46.67%*	80%
Cost Effectiveness	\$2.51	N/A*	\$5.00

\*Since these numbers are cumulative for the federal fiscal year and December includes only the first quarter, these numbers are not yet complete or comparable.

***However, given the large number of eligible NCPs who did not participate, DHS should comment on any barriers to participation and explore strategies to enhance outreach and effectiveness in future amnesty programs. (pg. 9, DLS Analysis)***

**DHS Response:** Past amnesty programs, including our 2024 program, have had two principal barriers:

1. Some noncustodial parents fear engaging with the local child support office due to the perception of arrest, or other harm; and
2. We may not have the last known address for a noncustodial parent.

We are addressing the first barrier with public outreach campaigns and working with community based organizations to decrease fear. For contact information, we have focused on updating our contact information as we receive new information, such as through returned mail, court updates, and other locate resources.

We are diversifying the way we communicate with our customers to provide notification via email, text and through the consumer portal. We will plan further in advance, send marketing materials earlier and through multiple mediums, and partner with community based organizations as well as Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA).

**DHS Response to DLS Recommended Actions (starting pg. 10, DLS Analysis):**

***1. Adopt the following narrative:***

**Child Support Performance Reports:** The federal government evaluates states' performance against five measures to determine federal incentive payments: paternity establishment; support order establishment; collections on current support; cases paying toward arrears; and cost effectiveness. Recent data from the Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Support Administration (CSA) shows that the agency is falling behind the federal performance goals in each of the five areas. Considering CSA's transition of its primary data system, the Child Support Management System (CSMS), to make its agency's processes and tasks more efficient, the committees are interested to understand how this new system is helping CSA achieve its performance goals.

The committees request that DHS submit three reports on performance using data as of June 30, 2025; September 30, 2025; and December 31, 2025. Each report should include the following:

- a discussion of factors affecting performance in the quarter;

- **the State’s aggregate performance set against the five performance measures used to determine federal incentive payments;**
- **each jurisdiction’s performance set against the five performance measures used to determine federal incentive payments;**
- **the number of cases in each jurisdiction in the quarter;**
- **specific tasks related to each of the five performance measures that are streamlined, made more efficient, or made more complicated by the new CSMS; and**
- **the number of staff in each jurisdiction who have been trained and those who have yet to be trained in the new CSMS.**

**DHS Response:** We concur, but request the following adjustment to the report due dates so that we can receive the relevant information and analyze the data. Our data is not available immediately at the end of a fiscal quarter, it takes at least two weeks after the end of the quarter to receive the data, analyze & validate the data, and then draft the report.

Report date (period)	DLS requested date	DHS requested date
As of June 30, 2025	August 15, 2025	September 15, 2025
As of September 30, 2025	November 15, 2025	December 15, 2025
As of December 31, 2025	February 15, 2026	February 28, 2026