

Child Support Enforcement

September 11, 2015

DHS celebrates the 40th anniversary of the federal Child Support Enforcement Program by recognizing Pennsylvania's ranking as a national leader in child support enforcement collection, according to federal standards. Governor Tom Wolf also recently declared August as Child Support Awareness Month in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania is the only state to meet or exceed all five federally-mandated performance measures established by the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act. These measures include current collections, arrearage collection, support order establishment, cost-effectiveness, and paternity establishment. Additionally, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia rank #1 and #2 in child support performance among U.S. cities.

DHS' Bureau of Child Support Enforcement administers Pennsylvania's child support collection and enforcement efforts through cooperative agreements with 67 county Courts of Common Pleas' Domestic Relations Sections.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration of Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement determines which states meet the federal performance measures. Pennsylvania receives a greater return from the federal performance incentives, which the commonwealth reinvests within the child support program.

"DHS has the highest current collections and arrears percent in the nation – and that is something of which we are extremely proud. The funds collected by DHS employees and county Courts of Common Pleas' Domestic Relations Sections are a vital lifeline for Pennsylvania children. Because of the tireless work of these commonwealth employees, thousands of Pennsylvania children have the resources to help ensure they have the food, clothing, and school supplies they need."

- Secretary Ted Dallas

The Impact: DHS Wins Award for Child Support Collections

DHS won a 2014 State IT Recognition Award from the National Association of State Chief Information Officers (NASCIO) for its automated text messaging system. The system sends reminders for upcoming appointments, missed payments, and other events related to child support enforcement.

Using texts, DHS doubled the success rate of its previous phone messaging and increased monthly child support collections by more than \$1 million per month. The texts provide more privacy than phone messages and improve the Department's customer service.

