

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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N.D. Child Support Collections Set Record

BISMARCK, N.D. - The North Dakota Department of Human Services announced today that child support collections hit a record in 2005 – just under \$102 million. This is a 6.3 percent increase over 2004, the previous record year when \$95.9 million was collected.

In addition to the record, the department noted that growth in overdue child support principal slowed to 1.7 percent over the last six months of 2005. Overdue support is subject to interest charges and can grow quickly once a parent falls behind in payments.

“Together with the Legislature, we’ve put tools in place to help the Department of Human Services see that children are properly taken care of,” Governor John Hoeven said. “We appreciate the hard work of the department on behalf of these young people.”

Child Support Enforcement Division Director Mike Schwindt praised parents as well as staffs at the regional and state child enforcement offices, the county social service offices, and the courts for making the record collections possible.

Schwindt said legislatively authorized enforcement tools, such as license suspensions and financial institution data matches, are working. He also recognized the vital role of employers, stating, "Income withholding by employers is by far our most effective source of collections and totaled \$65 million last year."

He also said that more noncustodial parents are working with the regional child support enforcement offices to set up payment plans to better manage current and overdue support obligations.

The collections enable families to live more independently and reduce dependence on government assistance programs, Schwindt said. Families received 87 percent of the collected funds. The department sent five percent to other states for further distribution, and the balance was used to reimburse the state, county, and federal governments for assistance previously provided by taxpayers.

North Dakota’s child support enforcement program serves 72,000 children, and impacts 43,000 custodial parents and 47,000 noncustodial parents both within and outside of North Dakota as well as internationally.

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