

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services
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North Dakota Child Support Program extends Amnesty Project through the end of July for parents who owe past-due child support

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Child Support Program announced today that the Amnesty Project will be extended through the end of July. The project is a temporary effort to help parents who are behind on child support payments to establish regular monthly support payments for their children. It was launched on June 1, 2016.

“With the extension of time, we hope more parents will contact our program to see if they qualify for the project and enter into a reliable payment plan for their children,” said Jim Fleming, director of the Child Support Program.

The Amnesty Project includes a match incentive. For every \$2 paid toward past-due support, eligible parents can receive a “write-off” of \$1 toward any accrued interest or past-due support assigned to the state.

Fleming said 22 parents who were behind on support payments had taken advantage of the match incentive as of June 24. In at least three cases, parents satisfied their entire past-due amount and one of those cases had a balance of more than \$11,000. In a separate case, a family received a child support payment for the first time since 2009.

“Every payment helps children, even if there are more parents yet who could take advantage of this time-limited opportunity,” Fleming said.

In addition to the match incentive, parents can enter into a payment plan with a reduced or waived down-payment in exchange for paying current support and an affordable contribution toward past-due support. If a payment plan is signed, Child Support will reinstate any suspended licenses and will suggest to the court that any outstanding warrants for non-payment of court-ordered child support be dismissed.

Parents who are behind on child support payments and are interested in participating in the Amnesty Project should contact Child Support to talk about their case. Contact information is online at www.childsupportnd.com. Offices are open Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Department records show nearly \$259 million is owed in past-due support. Adding privately-enforced child support cases, the past-due support climbs to \$349.4 million.

This is the first time the North Dakota Child Support Program offered the Amnesty Project.

To raise awareness about the Amnesty Project, the Child Support Program sent letters in June to nearly 2,000 parents with suspended driver's licenses. In May, over 600 people with outstanding warrants for non-payment of court-ordered child support were notified of the project.

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**North Dakota Child Support Program extends Amnesty Project
through the end of July for parents who owe past-due child support
Page 2**

Fleming said community partners, including judges and judicial referees, have supported the project by referring parents to Child Support so they can enter into a payment plan under the Amnesty Project.

The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Child Support Program serves about 66,400 children per year by helping disburse nearly \$158 million in support payments to their families. The program also helps to establish paternity and child support orders, and takes enforcement against those parents who are not supporting their children.

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