

Child Support

Definition

Child support is financial assistance for children from a noncustodial parent. *Total collections* is the amount of child support successfully collected on behalf of families by the state's child support enforcement program. *Percent collected* is the ratio of the amount collected in each county to the total current year obligation.

Data in context

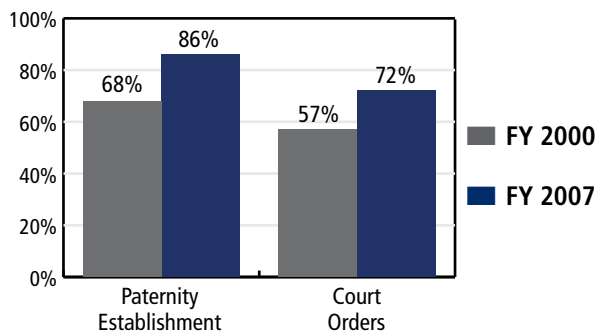
All children need basic necessities, such as food and clothing, and child support payments provide a critical means for families to meet these needs. Child support helps reduce poverty rates by about 5 percent for children with a nonresident parent.¹ Second only to earnings, child support constitutes 31 percent of income for low-income families headed by single mothers.²

In addition to the monetary benefits, child support contributes to family self-sufficiency. Even when controlling for other factors impacting employment, low-income parents who receive regular child support payments are more likely to find jobs quickly and keep jobs longer.³ Additionally, regular child support payments help working families that left welfare overcome financial crises without relying on government assistance again.⁴

Federal, state, and local governments work together to help families promote self-sufficiency and child well-being. In 2006, more than 17 million children and their families received \$24 billion in child support.⁵ The Child Support Enforcement Program, a federal-state partnership, facilitates collections and has been increasingly effective at collecting child support.⁶ Collections have increased substantially over the past two decades while enforcement costs have grown slowly.⁷

In Kentucky, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Child Support works to collect child support through services such as locating

Percent of Open Child Support Cases with Paternity Establishment and Court Orders, FY 2000 and 2007



Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Child Support.

noncustodial parents, establishing paternity, establishing support orders, and collecting support payments. Families receiving Medicaid or benefits through the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program are automatically enrolled. Other families may enroll by visiting their local child support office or county attorney. In addition to collecting child support on behalf of families, the state's child support program secures medical support obligations.

During FY 2007, Kentucky's child support program collected \$382 million of approximately \$626 million in child support owed. Obligations increased by more than \$167 million from FY 2000 to 2007. The percent of child support successfully collected statewide increased as well, from 53 percent to 61 percent.

Jefferson County had the most dollars obligated, and collections exceeded \$71 million in FY 2007. Collection rates vary by county, and Larue and Livingston Counties had the highest rates of collection in FY 2007 (73 percent each). While collection rates for most counties range from 50 to 70 percent, ten counties had rates below 50 percent: Clay, Fulton, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox, Lee, Lewis, McCreary, Owsley, and Whitley. Rates of child support

collection declined in twenty counties between FY 2000 and FY 2007. In contrast, rates in Leslie and Magoffin Counties showed the largest increases (23 percentage points each).

States can increase child support collections by working to establish paternity and establishing a court order for payment of child support.⁸ Additional measures that encourage noncustodial parents to pay child support include allowing families that receive welfare to keep a portion of the payment; setting reasonable obligations for noncustodial parents; and working closely with incarcerated noncustodial parents to encourage their return to the workforce, which increases their chance of making regular child support payments after release.^{9,10}

Data Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Division of Child Support.

Rate Calculation: $(\text{amount, in dollars, of child support payments collected in fiscal year 2000} * 100) / (\text{total obligated amount, in dollars, of child support payments for fiscal year 2000})$
 $(\text{amount, in dollars, of child support payments collected in fiscal year 2007} * 100) / (\text{total obligated amount, in dollars, of child support payments for fiscal year 2007})$

- 1 Sorensen, E., and Zibman, C. (2000). *To What Extent Do Children Benefit from Child Support?* Available at <http://www.urban.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 2 Center for Law and Social Policy (2007). *Basic Facts About Child Support*. Available at <http://www.clasp.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 3 Turetsky, V. (2005). *The Child Support Enforcement Program: A Sound Investment in Improving Children's Chances in Life*. Available at <http://www.clasp.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Center for Law and Social Policy (2007). *Basic Facts About Child Support*. Available at <http://www.clasp.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 National Center for Children in Poverty (2004). *State Policy Choices: Child Support*. Available at <http://www.nccp.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Turetsky, V. (2007). *Staying in Jobs and Out of the Underground: Child Support Policies that Encourage Legitimate Work*. Child Support Series, no. 2. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Social Policy.

Child support (amount obligated & percent collected)

	FY 2000		FY 2007	
	Total obligated	Percent collected	Total obligated	Percent collected
Kentucky	\$458,023,323	53	\$625,574,833	61
Adair	\$855,725	47	\$2,103,715	67
Allen	\$1,443,587	62	\$3,352,597	68
Anderson	\$1,600,959	61	\$2,931,468	67
Ballard	\$1,104,221	56	\$1,470,246	59
Barren	\$3,949,220	63	\$5,941,636	59
Bath	\$1,080,093	49	\$2,216,265	53
Bell	\$3,048,527	46	\$4,634,681	57
Boone	\$12,784,394	72	\$19,436,059	71
Bourbon	\$1,981,834	49	\$3,103,541	57
Boyd	\$5,304,916	44	\$6,735,613	52
Boyle	\$2,914,266	54	\$4,075,377	55
Bracken	\$753,889	53	\$1,241,689	58
Breathitt	\$1,679,886	47	\$2,938,975	52
Breckinridge	\$1,792,869	63	\$3,000,376	67
Bullitt	\$3,450,965	45	\$7,667,018	64
Butler	\$1,002,219	59	\$1,639,479	64
Caldwell	\$1,283,783	47	\$2,264,555	60
Calloway	\$2,409,664	50	\$3,746,821	60
Campbell	\$13,352,468	62	\$18,429,034	56
Carlisle	\$555,303	53	\$810,854	60
Carroll	\$1,369,757	57	\$2,684,702	63
Carter	\$2,929,991	52	\$4,363,129	53
Casey	\$1,420,024	50	\$2,207,049	61
Christian	\$9,198,907	68	\$14,130,552	65
Clark	\$3,275,049	45	\$5,932,315	57
Clay	\$2,377,461	38	\$3,480,961	38
Clinton	\$749,606	43	\$1,179,122	55
Crittenden	\$895,782	59	\$1,298,974	67
Cumberland	\$498,793	38	\$926,017	59
Daviess	\$10,588,776	48	\$14,374,479	58
Edmonson	\$776,533	56	\$1,241,992	57
Elliott	\$504,981	44	\$784,226	52
Estill	\$1,300,173	49	\$2,026,213	59
Fayette	\$30,108,553	51	\$37,180,209	53
Fleming	\$1,215,502	56	\$2,363,781	54
Floyd	\$4,182,137	42	\$6,831,955	58
Franklin	\$5,259,491	53	\$7,602,639	58
Fulton	\$1,417,709	34	\$2,572,047	48
Gallatin	\$1,025,246	63	\$1,401,757	63
Garrard	\$1,126,962	54	\$1,611,446	61

	FY 2000		FY 2007	
	Total obligated	Percent collected	Total obligated	Percent collected
Grant	\$2,866,400	64	\$4,693,036	66
Graves	\$3,621,340	59	\$4,912,644	54
Grayson	\$2,594,797	61	\$4,453,440	63
Green	\$695,413	56	\$1,366,495	66
Greenup	\$3,105,553	48	\$3,998,062	53
Hancock	\$704,187	53	\$1,224,899	60
Hardin	\$11,052,627	56	\$14,463,823	67
Harlan	\$3,331,809	61	\$4,505,034	62
Harrison	\$2,128,577	74	\$3,129,630	62
Hart	\$1,477,110	59	\$2,593,610	60
Henderson	\$5,962,483	59	\$9,877,745	62
Henry	\$1,983,899	65	\$2,731,872	61
Hickman	\$586,635	51	\$558,583	63
Hopkins	\$5,165,927	54	\$8,516,419	60
Jackson	\$1,188,616	42	\$2,066,319	42
Jefferson	\$110,431,891	47	\$152,307,267	47
Jessamine	\$3,253,275	55	\$7,306,104	54
Johnson	\$2,442,798	44	\$3,167,920	57
Kenton	\$21,718,179	58	\$31,787,963	62
Knott	\$1,735,134	43	\$2,734,382	58
Knox	\$3,181,978	40	\$4,508,850	49
Larue	\$1,692,937	68	\$2,305,730	73
Laurel	\$4,246,959	39	\$7,079,938	52
Lawrence	\$1,273,697	39	\$1,806,726	55
Lee	\$898,583	47	\$1,055,064	44
Leslie	\$1,457,746	37	\$1,608,749	60
Letcher	\$2,142,410	47	\$4,018,687	58
Lewis	\$1,211,590	49	\$1,997,445	47
Lincoln	\$2,086,953	61	\$3,376,575	57
Livingston	\$1,097,152	67	\$1,344,535	73
Logan	\$2,997,503	61	\$3,913,793	63
Lyon	\$558,137	60	\$649,104	59
McCracken	\$7,168,949	40	\$11,010,587	53
McCreary	\$2,345,523	42	\$2,871,864	43
McLean	\$1,100,742	69	\$1,730,783	68
Madison	\$5,888,811	50	\$9,523,713	55
Magoffin	\$769,997	27	\$1,996,274	50
Marion	\$1,551,861	56	\$2,790,024	52
Marshall	\$2,354,222	51	\$4,471,460	57
Martin	\$1,451,105	41	\$1,881,056	54
Mason	\$1,968,827	54	\$3,086,672	56

	FY 2000		FY 2007	
	Total obligated	Percent collected	Total obligated	Percent collected
Meade	\$3,048,570	58	\$3,836,898	65
Menifee	\$508,785	53	\$836,913	57
Mercer	\$1,886,260	56	\$3,215,005	57
Metcalfe	\$709,835	45	\$1,348,648	59
Monroe	\$704,562	44	\$1,489,302	55
Montgomery	\$2,308,718	63	\$4,526,508	54
Morgan	\$961,576	56	\$1,720,718	65
Muhlenberg	\$2,287,660	45	\$3,717,388	52
Nelson	\$3,195,123	62	\$6,149,639	62
Nicholas	\$873,733	68	\$1,106,648	62
Ohio	\$1,694,664	57	\$2,647,838	60
Oldham	\$2,497,230	65	\$4,285,467	70
Owen	\$1,047,285	62	\$1,368,120	64
Owsley	\$832,151	21	\$756,506	35
Pendleton	\$1,694,190	62	\$2,863,039	68
Perry	\$3,472,898	37	\$4,153,776	59
Pike	\$8,824,612	44	\$9,855,677	52
Powell	\$2,509,678	61	\$2,590,205	57
Pulaski	\$6,356,877	60	\$10,207,930	60
Robertson	\$153,937	62	\$262,356	57
Rockcastle	\$1,514,046	53	\$2,757,885	54
Rowan	\$1,595,509	50	\$2,871,909	62
Russell	\$1,502,094	55	\$2,758,074	55
Scott	\$3,326,125	57	\$5,753,931	58
Shelby	\$2,834,524	57	\$4,973,049	61
Simpson	\$2,653,769	57	\$4,212,591	59
Spencer	\$291,596	49	\$1,369,962	59
Taylor	\$2,087,983	51	\$2,697,933	61
Todd	\$738,789	49	\$1,465,280	56
Trigg	\$1,158,162	63	\$1,759,375	64
Trimble	\$901,947	58	\$1,313,915	61
Union	\$1,966,429	59	\$3,610,838	65
Warren	\$8,223,739	45	\$13,189,358	60
Washington	\$575,613	64	\$962,745	66
Wayne	\$1,447,232	51	\$2,170,523	59
Webster	\$1,599,890	59	\$2,596,143	63
Whitley	\$3,806,057	39	\$6,642,194	45
Wolfe	\$952,280	58	\$1,552,974	56
Woodford	\$1,989,227	61	\$3,157,822	65