

# Title IV-D – Child Support and Establishment of Paternity

CFDA: 93.563

**Administering Federal Agency:** U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (ACF), [Office of Child Support Enforcement](#) (OCSE)

**Description:** [Title IV-D of the Social Security Act \(Title IV-D\)](#) establishes a state-federal partnership to provide child support services. States must have a single statewide agency that receives the federal funding and administers the program. States are permitted to fund local jurisdictions, enter cooperative agreements with others like law enforcement or state courts to provide IV-D child support services. A Title IV-D case is one in which a parent is either now or may eventually receive services under Title IV-D, such as a parent who receives TANF, Medicaid, or foster care payments.

**Find your state/local administrator:** To find the agency in your state that handles child support and paternity establishment, [this National Conference of State Legislatures resource](#) lists all the entities that oversee child support in states as well as which committees in the state legislature pass new policies. Once that entity is identified, each website should list an executive director and staff. HHS OCSE also has a [map](#) with state contacts.

**Amount of available funding:** Title IV-D is [a federal-state matching grant program](#) under which states must spend money in order to receive federal funding. The federal reimbursement is “open ended,” in that there is no ceiling on the federal government’s match of state expenditures. In addition to matching funds, states receive child support enforcement incentive payments from the federal government.

**Matching Requirements:** Under Title IV-D, the federal government reimburses states \$2 for every \$3 the

state spends on eligible program costs for providing child support services.

**Potential uses:** In December 2016, OCSE published the [Final Rule: Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs](#). This final rule made changes to strengthen the child support enforcement program and update practices to increase regular, on-time payments to families, to increase the number of noncustodial parents supporting their children, and to improve program operations. One of those changes clarifies that states can use Title IV-D funding for self-help services. Background for the rule’s language regarding pro se services can be found [in this OCSE factsheet about Access to Justice Innovations](#): “Providing information to pro se parents helps ensure that parents understand the child support process, know what to expect in the child support process, and provide accurate financial information.”

In [final rule](#), 45 C.F.R. 304.20 (b) (3) (vi), HHS clarifies that funds can be used for “services to increase pro se access to adjudicative and alternative dispute resolution processes in IV-D cases related to providing child support services.” The rule makes clear in 45 C.F.R. 304.21(a), that these pro se services are eligible for Federal financial participation (FFP), or in other words, federal reimbursement. Self-help services can also include educational and outreach activities.

To be eligible for Title IV-D reimbursement, [self-help services--with the exception of allowable education and outreach costs--must be for paternity establishment and child support](#). This can include assistance with paternity acknowledgement forms, providing information to litigants about relevant court procedures, help with child support order establishment and modifications when circumstances

change affecting amounts that should be paid, enforcement processes, or assisting with domestic violence protection orders if the order is necessary to safely obtain child support.

**Other Helpful Information:**

- ACF and OCSE COVID-19 Guidance is [here](#). Find flexibilities for supporting a virtual workforce during COVID-19 [here](#).
- *ACF Program Flexibilities on IT and PPE to support State, Local and Tribal Human Services Workforce during COVID-19 Response* document summarizes “virtual workforce” specific flexibilities for Title IV-D [here](#). See the [case study](#) under the heading Focus on a Specific Funding Source examining the effectiveness of virtual mediation in parenting disputes.
- The Self-Represented Litigation Network’s Resource Guide, [Use of Title IV-D Child Support Program Resources for Court Based Self-Help Services](#) offers a comprehensive nuts and bolts overview to facilitate cooperation between state Title IV-D child support agencies and partners to provide self-help services to parents and others engaged in paternity establishment and child support establishment, modification, and enforcement processes.