



UNIVERSITY *of* MARYLAND
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
RUTH YOUNG CENTER
FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN

DECEMBER 2016

MARYLAND'S CHILD SUPPORT CASELOAD: A PROFILE OF CUSTODIANS, 2015

LAUREN A. HALL, MA
Research Specialist

LETITIA LOGAN PASSARELLA, MPP
Research Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Jamie Haskel, Michael Funk, and Somlak Suvanasorn for their assistance in the collection and processing of data for this report. The authors would also like to thank Lisa Nicoli for her assistance with editing and Kathy Patterson for the cover design of this report.

This report was prepared by the Ruth Young Center for Families & Children, School of Social Work, University of Maryland, 525 West Redwood Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21201 with support from its long time research partner, the Maryland Department of Human Resources.

For additional information about the report, please contact Letitia Logan Passarella (410.706.2479; llogan@ssw.umaryland.edu) at the School of Social Work.

Please visit our website, www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu, for additional copies of this report and our other reports.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	i
Introduction	1
Background.....	3
Methods.....	5
Sample	5
Data Sources.....	5
Child Support Enforcement System (CSES)	5
Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES).....	6
Maryland Automated Benefits System (MABS)	6
Data Analysis	6
Custodian Characteristics	7
Demographics	7
Employment: July 2014 – June 2015.....	8
Other Characteristics.....	9
Welfare Participation	11
Current Support	12
Current Support Orders: July 2015.....	12
Current Support Owed: July 2014 – June 2015	15
Arrears.....	17
Arrears Balances: July 2015.....	17
Arrears Orders: July 2015.....	18
Payments.....	20
Payments Received by Custodians: July 2014 – June 2015.....	20
Payments Retained by Maryland:	23
July 2014 – June 2015	23
Conclusions	25
References	27

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Gender.....	7
Figure 2. Race	7
Figure 3. Age	7
Figure 4. Employment and Earnings	8
Figure 5. Number of Children	9
Figure 6. Number of Cases as a Custodian.....	9
Figure 7. Welfare (TANF) Participation.....	11
Figure 8. Percent with a Current Support Order	12
Figure 9. Total Monthly Current Support Orders.....	14
Figure 10. Percent Owed Current Support	15
Figure 11. Annual Current Support Owed	16
Figure 12. Percent with Arrears Balance	17
Figure 13. Percent with Arrears Order.....	18
Figure 14. Percent of Custodians who Received a Payment.....	20
Figure 15. Annual Support Received by Custodians	22
Figure 16. Percent with a Payment Retained by the State	23
Figure 17. Annual Support Retained by State	24

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Jurisdiction	10
Table 2. Monthly Current Support Orders.....	13
Table 3. Current Support Owed	15
Table 4. Arrears Balances.....	18
Table 5. Monthly Arrears Orders	19
Table 6. Support Received by Custodians	21
Table 7. Support Retained by the State	23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The core mission of the Child Support Enforcement program—a federal, state, and local partnership—is to locate parents, establish paternity, establish support orders, and collect child support on behalf of custodial families (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2013). When received, this support is an indispensable form of income for families, especially for vulnerable, low-income families. In 2011, for example, the average child support received by poor custodial parents represented more than half of their average total annual income (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2014).

Despite how important child support is for families, custodians who participate in the public child support system are seldom the focus of research, even though they are the primary caregivers of children. Federal data often examines custodial parents, rather than *all custodians*, which can include caregivers who are not the child's parents. Additionally, federal data includes custodial parents served by the public child support program as well as custodial parents with private agreements. This broad scope does not allow stakeholders to draw conclusions solely about the public child support program and all the custodians it serves.

Using Maryland data, the University of Maryland School of Social Work has routinely created descriptive profiles of the public child support caseload as part of an ongoing partnership with the Child Support Enforcement Administration. In the past, these profiles have included information on cases, noncustodial parents, and

custodians; however, custodian profiles have been sparse at best. In this report, we analyze current support and arrears owed to custodians, payments received by custodians, and payments retained by the state. Specifically, we utilize a sample of custodians who had active cases in July 2015 and examine each of these topics for the period of July 2014 through June 2015. We provide information for all custodians as well as for two groups of custodians: those with a recent history of cash assistance participation (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, commonly referred to as TANF) and those without a recent history of cash assistance. We examine TANF custodians separately because they are required to participate in the child support program, and they must assign all support payments to the state while receiving TANF benefits.

Key findings of this report are as follows:

Custodian Characteristics

- The typical custodian who participates in the child support program is an African American (63.8%) woman (95.5%) who is 37 years old, on average. She usually has only one child support case (76.3%) and one or two (69.6%) children.
- Most custodians (69.8%) in the public child support system did not participate in the cash assistance program (TANF) between July 2010 and July 2015. Custodians who did have TANF assistance histories received assistance for a median of 15 months.

Current Support

- Two out of three (67.0%) custodians had a current support order in July 2015. On average, the monthly support owed to custodians was \$476 (median = \$389).
- TANF custodians had lower average monthly order amounts than non-TANF custodians (\$367 vs. \$517).
- A slightly higher percentage (70.6%) of custodians were owed current support between July 2014 and June 2015. These custodians were owed an average of \$5,313 during the year (median = \$4,312).
- TANF custodians were owed less throughout the year than non-TANF custodians, on average (\$3,980 vs. \$5,815).

Arrears

- Three out of five (61.0%) custodians were owed arrears in July 2015. The average total owed was \$10,962 (median = \$5,669).
- TANF custodians were less likely than non-TANF custodians to have an arrears balance (58.4% vs. 62.2%) and also had smaller balances, on average (\$9,165 vs. \$11,692).
- Arrears order amounts were lower than current support order amounts. The average monthly arrears order was \$123 (median = \$72).
- TANF custodians had smaller arrears orders than non-TANF custodians, on average (\$78 vs. \$139).

Payments Received by Custodians

- Maryland collected and disbursed nearly \$28 million to this sample of families between July 2014 and June 2015. Four out of five (79.6%) custodians with support due received a payment, and the average amount received was \$4,483 (median=\$3,340) during the year.
- TANF custodians were less likely than non-TANF custodians to receive a payment (70.6% vs. 82.8%). Additionally, TANF custodians received less, on average, than non-TANF custodians (\$2,767 vs. \$4,999).

Payments Retained by the State

- One out of 10 (9.9%) custodians had a child support payment retained by the state during the year. The state retained, on average, \$1,093 per custodian (median=\$601).
- Custodians with a recent TANF history were 10 times more likely than non-TANF custodians to have a payment retained by the state (29.6% vs. 2.9%) and had more support retained, on average (\$1,201 vs. \$693).

This report is the first to provide a thorough examination of custodians who participated in Maryland's public child support program. Many findings are positive. To illustrate, most custodians had an order for current support or arrears, and most of them received payments. Custodians with a TANF history and custodians without a TANF history were markedly different, though. TANF custodians were less likely than other custodians to have orders

established and to receive payments. Although this support is important for all families, it may be even more critical for low-income families who struggle to meet their basic needs even with the assistance of TANF.

To provide additional assistance to these vulnerable families, some states pass through a portion of the child support collected on behalf of TANF families. Maryland, however, is one of 27 states that retains the child support collected while the custodial family is receiving TANF. Family

advocates have always favored a pass-through policy. In April 2016, though, the General Assembly also expressed a renewed interest when the budget committees requested specific analyses be conducted to examine the potential use of pass-through. It is possible that Maryland may enact legislation that requires some child support to be passed through to current TANF families. If so, TANF custodians will receive more income each month when child support is collected, and they will be able to use that money to care for their children.

INTRODUCTION

Custodians—the primary caregivers of children who do not reside with both of their parents—are not a widely-studied group. Federal data is exceedingly broad in the sense that it represents *all* custodial parents (biological or adoptive parents) with whom children live. This includes parents served by the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program and parents who have entered into private agreements, either legally binding or informal (Grall, 2016). This wide scope is a limitation because it does not allow for examination of only those served by the public child support program or caregivers who are not a parent, such as a relative. In contrast, Maryland administrative data includes all primary caregivers of children who participate in the public child support program, both custodial parents and other nonparent caregivers. Collectively, in this report, we refer to this group of caregivers as custodians.

For the past two decades, the University of Maryland School of Social Work has partnered with Maryland’s Child Support Enforcement Administration to provide timely and pragmatic data to both policymakers and program managers. Throughout this partnership we have critically examined the use of Maryland child support guidelines, frequently assessed child support initiatives throughout the state, and provided descriptive profiles of the child support caseload. This latter part of the partnership consists of profiles of child support cases, noncustodial parents, and

custodians. To date, though, limited analyses have been completed on custodians, offering only a handful of descriptive characteristics.

Beginning in 2015, we approached these profiles differently than in past years. Rather than producing one report each year that collectively, and briefly, examined cases, noncustodial parents, and custodians (see, for example, Passarella, 2014), we moved to writing one report that solely focuses on each component of the child support program (i.e., cases, noncustodial parents, and custodians). Using this new format, the first report analyzed child support cases and trends in cases over time (Passarella, Nicoli, & Hall, 2015). Following that analysis, we released a brief that focused exclusively on noncustodial parents (Gleason & Passarella, 2015).

This report follows the previous two in structure: we present the first-ever report that is wholly focused on Maryland custodians. Utilizing a sample of 9,524 custodians who had active child support cases in July 2015, we develop a profile of Maryland custodians. We also conduct analyses that establish differences between custodians who recently received assistance from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (TANF, the federal welfare program) and custodians who did not have recent histories with TANF.

Specifically, we answer the following research questions:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of custodians?
2. What were custodians' histories with the TANF program?
3. Did custodians have current support orders between July 2014 and June 2015, and how much current support was owed?
4. Did custodians have arrears orders between July 2014 and June 2015, and how much arrearages were owed?

5. Did custodians receive the child support owed to them between July 2014 and June 2015, and how much did they receive?
6. Were there differences between custodians with recent TANF histories and custodians without recent TANF histories?

Before answering these questions, we first provide an overview of how the TANF and child support programs work together, and how this relationship influences our findings throughout this report.

BACKGROUND

The main purpose of the child support program is to ensure children receive financial support from both parents. There are many factors that determine how much support custodians receive as well as how often they receive that support, including previous marital status, income of the noncustodial parents, number of children, and state-level policy decisions (Cancian & Meyer, 2006). When both custodial and noncustodial parents have higher incomes, for example, they are ordered to pay a higher amount of support. Or, if a custodian has more children, the noncustodial parent could be ordered to pay higher amounts (though this can be offset by a lower income). Although the precise amount received by custodians is contingent on several variables, economic theory suggests that there are three leading factors that affect the payments custodians receive: (a) the noncustodial parent's willingness to pay support, (b) the noncustodial parent's ability to pay support, and (c) the policy environment (Cancian & Meyer, 2006).

Noncustodial parents' willingness to pay has become less of an issue than it previously had been since the implementation of wage withholding and other enforcement tools (Bartfeld & Meyer, 1994). This automatic process has helped child support agencies ensure many families receive the money owed to them. For noncustodial parents with formal employment, the support payment process is seamless; mechanisms are already in place that match an employee's social security number to a database of parents who owe child support. When a match is made, a wage withholding letter is generated and issued to the employer; child support payments are then automatically made to the child support agency. In

Maryland, wage withholding is the primary collection tool used; it has a significant and large effect on collections (Saunders, Passarella, & Born, 2014) and, ultimately, payments received by custodians.

In today's economic and policy environment, the two most relevant factors affecting payments received by custodians include the noncustodial parent's income and state-level policy decisions. Naturally, custodians cannot receive payments if noncustodial parents do not make payments. In order to make payments, noncustodial parents have to have an income. In a recent study of Maryland noncustodial parents, Gleason & Passarella (2015) found that more than half of noncustodial parents did not work in formal employment in the year prior to being selected into the study. Even those who were employed had relatively low earnings, with median annual earnings of only \$21,000.

If noncustodial parents (who are mostly men) have low earnings or no income at all, they may not be able to make full child support payments. At the national level, increases in male unemployment have been found to reduce child support collections (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2015). In Maryland, noncustodial parents who are fully compliant with child support orders earn significantly more than those who make no payments or partial payments (Hall, Passarella, & Born, 2014).

The most significant state-level policy decision that affects how much custodians receive is the method by which states calculate order amounts. States have the flexibility to choose which model is best for

their state, and Maryland, like most other states, utilizes the Income Shares model (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). This approach takes into account the income of both parents as well as child-related expenses in the calculation of the child support amount. Accordingly, child support order amounts increase as either parent's income increases. If either parent does not have income, the courts may impute income to full-time minimum wage, thus resulting in current support orders that cannot always be paid.

A second state-level policy decision that affects payments custodians receive is whether the state chooses to retain or pass through the child support collected on behalf of TANF families. TANF custodians are required to participate in the child support program, and any support that is owed to them while they are receiving TANF can be

retained by the state and federal governments as reimbursement for services provided. Not all states, however, retain the child support. At present, 22 states and the District of Columbia pass through at least a portion of collected child support to families while they receive TANF (Huber, Kassabian, & Cohen, 2014). Additionally, both Colorado and Illinois recently passed legislation to institute a pass-through policy.

Throughout this report, we make comparisons between TANF custodians and non-TANF custodians. Much of the information discussed in this chapter provides insight as to why differences persist between these two groups of custodians. In general, TANF custodians and the noncustodial parents on their cases have lower incomes. This, in turn, affects the amount of their support order and ultimately, the amount they receive.

METHODS

In this chapter, we describe the sample selected for this study, the data sources utilized, and data analysis techniques.

Sample

The sample of custodians selected for this report was originally drawn from a 5% random sample of Maryland's public child support cases that were active in July 2015. In total, there were 9,810 custodians part of the original sample. In July 2015, 249 of these custodians with an active case did not have any current child support owed to them in the prior year and also did not have any arrears balance; for this report, we chose to exclude these custodians. An additional 37 custodians were deceased and are also excluded from the sample. After accounting for these two exclusions, the final sample included in this report is *9,524 custodians*.

Typically, a noncustodial parent—the person who owes child support—is listed on a child support case, along with either a custodial parent or a custodian. Custodial parents are biological or adopted parents who are the primary caregivers of their children.¹ Custodians, on the other hand, include adults other than the parent who are the primary caregivers of the children, such as grandparents or other relatives. Both custodial parents and custodians are owed child support once a support order has been established.

In this report, custodial parents and custodians are not distinguished from one another; rather, the entire sample of primary

caregivers is examined. Throughout, we refer to these caregivers as custodians. This is different from federal census data, which only collects data on custodial parents.

Data Sources

The analyses presented in this report are based on administrative data retrieved from three information systems maintained by the State of Maryland. The sample of custodians, their demographic characteristics, and information about their child support cases were obtained from the Child Support Enforcement System (CSES). Data on participation in the state welfare program was obtained from the Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES). Finally, employment and earnings data were obtained from the Maryland Automated Benefits System (MABS).

Child Support Enforcement System (CSES)

CSES has been the statewide automated information management system for Maryland's public child support program since March 1998. This database contains identifying information and demographic data on children, noncustodial parents, and custodial parents receiving services from the public child support agency. Data on child support cases and court orders, including paternity status and payment receipt are also available. CSES supports the intake, establishment, location, and enforcement functions of the Child Support Enforcement Administration.

the parent who receives child support payments is determined primarily by income and the number of nights spent with the child[ren].

¹ In joint custody cases in which both parents have equal physical custody, the parent who receives child support is designated as the custodial parent by the courts and in the administrative data. In these cases,

Client Automated Resources and Eligibility System (CARES)

CARES became the statewide automated data system for certain DHR programs in March 1998. This database provides individual-and case-level program participation data for the Temporary Cash Assistance program (TCA), the Food Supplement Program, Medical Assistance, and other services. Demographic data are available, as well as information about the type of program, application and disposition (denial or closure), date for each service episode, and codes indicating the relationship of each individual to the head of the assistance unit.

Maryland Automated Benefits System (MABS)

The MABS system provides data on quarterly employment and earnings. It also includes data from all employers covered by the state's Unemployment Insurance (UI) law and the unemployment compensation for federal employees (UCFE) program. Together, these account for approximately 91% of all Maryland civilian employment. Independent contractors, commission-only salespeople, some farm workers, members of the military, most employees of religious organizations, and self-employed individuals are not covered by the law and consequently, are not represented in our employment data. Additionally, informal jobs—for example, those with dollars

earned *off the books* or *under the table*—are not covered. Though all data sources have their limitations, empirical studies suggest that UI earnings are actually preferred to other types of data in understanding the economic well-being of welfare recipients (Kornfeld & Bloom, 1999; Wallace & Haveman, 2007).

One limitation of the MABS system is that it only tracks employment in Maryland. The state shares borders with Delaware, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia, and out-of-state employment is relatively common. The rate of out-of-state employment by Maryland residents (17.3%) is four times greater than the national average (3.8%).² Out-of-state employment is particularly common among two populous jurisdictions, Prince George's County (42.1%) and Montgomery County (29.0%). It is also high in two less-populated jurisdictions, Charles County (34.2%) and Cecil County (30.8%). Consequently, these four jurisdictions may be especially affected by the exclusion of out-of-state employment data.

Data Analysis

In this report, we utilize univariate statistics to describe custodians. When appropriate, we use ANOVA to compare averages between groups of custodians and Pearson's chi-square to compare categorical variables between custodians.

² Data obtained from U.S. Census Bureau website: <http://www.factfinder.census.gov> using the 2011-2013 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates for

Sex of Workers by Place of Work—State and County Level (B08007).

CUSTODIAN CHARACTERISTICS

In this first chapter of findings, we present several characteristics of custodians. We begin with standard demographics such as gender, race, and age and then move to other characteristics, including employment history, the number of child support cases and children they have, and the jurisdictions responsible for maintaining their cases. We conclude this chapter with an examination of custodians' connections to the TANF program and delve into how the two programs—child support and cash assistance—work together.

Demographics

As shown in Figure 1, custodians who participated in Maryland's public child support program in July 2015 are largely women. These women represent biological and adoptive mothers, aunts, grandmothers, and other women who care for children. The majority of these custodians are African American (Figure 2). In fact, nearly two thirds (63.8%) are African American, and just under one third (30.5%) are Caucasian. Only 5.7% of custodians identify as some other race.

In addition to being mostly African American women, the majority (69.8%) were between 25 and 44 years of age, as shown in Figure 3. Only one in 10 (9.1%) were younger than 25, and one in five (21.1%) were 45 and older. On average, custodians were 37 years of age.

Figure 1. Gender

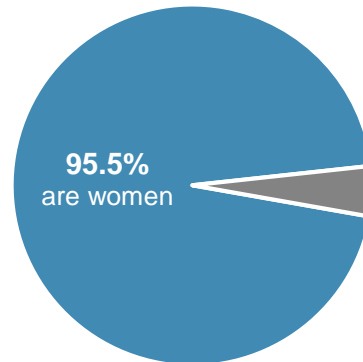
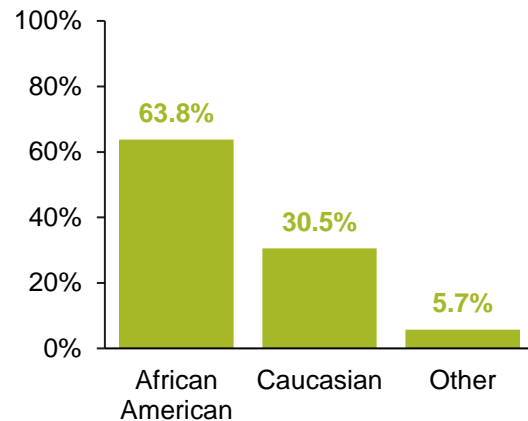
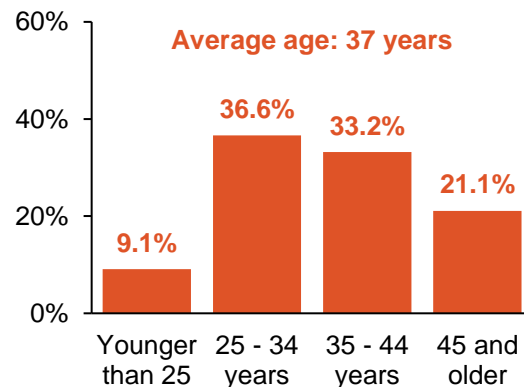


Figure 2. Race



Note: Data is missing for some participants. Valid percentages are reported.

Figure 3. Age



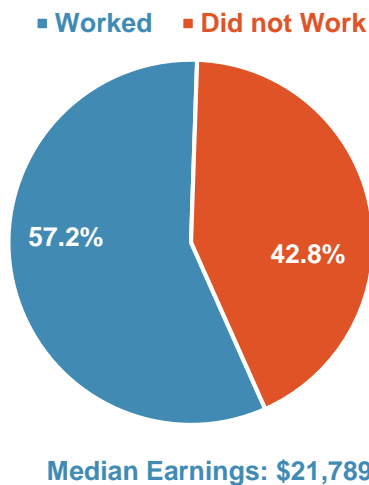
Note: Data is missing for some participants. Valid percentages reported.

In Maryland, certain demographic characteristics, such as the race and gender of custodians, have remained stable over time (see, for example, Gleason, Passarella, & Born, 2013a; Gleason, Passarella, & Born, 2013b; and Passarella, 2014). Over the last few years, though, the average age of custodians has decreased by a couple of years. In July 2010, for example, custodians were an average age of 39 years (Gleason et al., 2013a), and in July 2012 they were an average age of 38 years (Passarella, 2014). In this July 2015 sample, custodians were 37 years of age, on average. It is too soon to tell if this observed decrease in average age is a noteworthy trend. To offer more context, a comparison of Maryland custodians to custodians in other states would be ideal; unfortunately, federal data on custodians (both parents and nonparent caregivers) who participate in the public child support program is not available.

Employment: July 2014 – June 2015

As a part of the custodian profile, we present the employment history of custodians in this sample in Figure 4. As shown, nearly three fifths (57.2%) of custodians worked between July 2014 and June 2015. The majority of employed custodians worked in each of the four quarters during the year, indicating that they may have been consistently employed. Their median earnings for the year were \$21,789 (average=\$26,936).³ Compared to the last brief that examined employment among custodians (Passarella, 2014), the percentage who had previously worked increased (from 52.4% in July 2012) while both median and average earnings remained stable.

Figure 4. Employment and Earnings
July 2014 – June 2015



Note: Excludes 115 custodians for whom we had no unique identifier. Earnings are standardized to 2015 dollars.

³ The median represents the mid-point of the data; half of custodians had earnings above the median,

and half of custodians had earnings below the median.

Other Characteristics

In Figure 5, we present the number of children custodians had in July 2015. This figure represents only children who were members of a child support case within the public child support program. On average, custodians had two participating children. Slightly more than two fifths (42.6%) had one child, and just over half had two or more children (52.4%). Some custodians in the sample (5.0%) had no children listed as participating in the child support program, though their cases were still open. Children of these custodians are all emancipated, but their cases were still open because past-due child support was still owed.

Figure 5. Number of Children

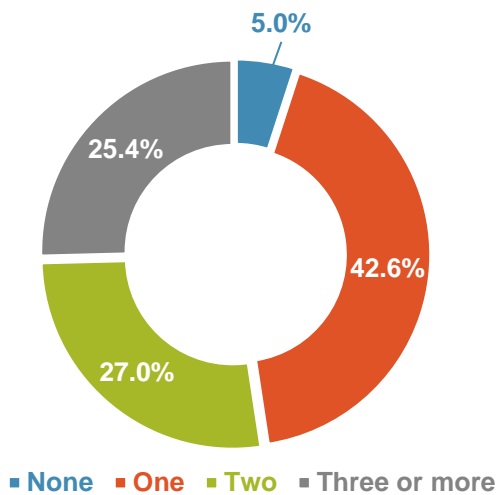
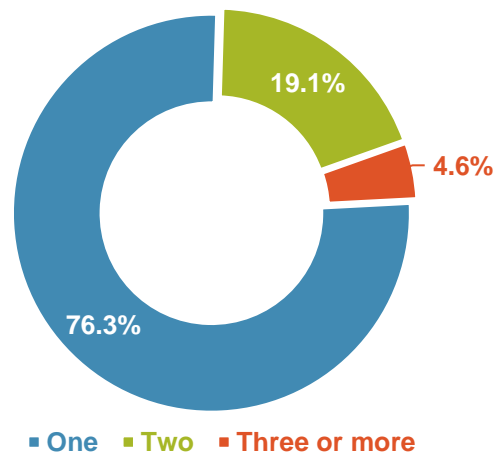


Figure 6 presents the number of public child support cases custodians had in July 2015. In this sample, the majority (76.3%) of custodians were the custodian on only one case, though one in five (19.1%) had two separate cases. Three or more cases were rare (4.6%). Typically, custodians whose children share the same biological parents have all children on one child support case. Custodians with more than one case likely had children with different biological parents, and a separate case was opened for each noncustodial parent. Custodians can also be a noncustodial parent on a separate case, but only a small percentage (2.8%) of custodians in this sample were also noncustodial parents.

Figure 6. Number of Cases as a Custodian



Each jurisdiction in Maryland has its own child support office that assists residents with obtaining and making child support payments. A jurisdictional office becomes responsible for a child support case when a resident custodian enters the office and seeks assistance with obtaining support, the custodian is referred through the local TANF office, or when a divorce is finalized in that jurisdiction and the family chooses to utilize the public child support program for their child support management needs.

Jurisdictions with larger populations will inherently have more child support cases. This is reflected in Table 1. As shown, most custodians opened their child support cases in one of the five most populous jurisdictions in Maryland: Baltimore City (28.8%), Prince George’s County (17.8%), Baltimore County (10.5%), Montgomery County (8.4%), and Anne Arundel County (6.4%). Together, cases in these jurisdictions amount to nearly three quarters (71.9%) of all of Maryland’s public child support cases. Less populous jurisdictions had less representation within Maryland’s child support system ranging from 0.3% (Garrett County and Kent County) to 3.1% (Charles County) of all cases.

Table 1. Jurisdiction

<i>Jurisdiction</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>
Baltimore City	28.8%	(2,395)
Prince George’s County	17.8%	(1,477)
Baltimore County	10.5%	(870)
Montgomery County	8.4%	(698)
Anne Arundel County	6.4%	(533)
Charles County	3.1%	(260)
Harford County	3.0%	(250)
Washington County	2.7%	(223)
Frederick County	2.3%	(190)
Howard County	2.2%	(180)
St Mary’s County	2.2%	(179)
Wicomico County	1.8%	(148)
Carroll County	1.6%	(136)
Cecil County	1.4%	(120)
Allegany County	1.4%	(116)
Calvert County	1.3%	(106)
Dorchester County	1.0%	(84)
Worcester County	0.8%	(69)
Somerset County	0.8%	(64)
Queen Anne’s County	0.7%	(61)
Caroline County	0.7%	(58)
Talbot County	0.5%	(42)
Kent County	0.3%	(27)
Garrett County	0.3%	(24)

Note: Excludes custodians who had out-of-state addresses or who had child support cases in more than one jurisdiction in July 2015 (n=1,214).

Welfare Participation

The federal Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program and the federal welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF, formerly Aid to Families with Dependent Children), have functioned in cooperation with one another for several decades. Since its conception in 1975 under Title IV of the Social Security Act, the CSE program has collected support from noncustodial parents whose children receive welfare as a method of cost-reduction. Payments collected from noncustodial parents are used to reimburse both the state and federal governments for the cost of providing TANF.

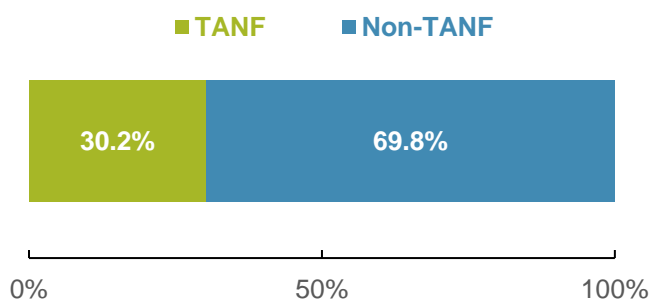
Federal provisions grant states flexibility in designing their welfare programs, and many states have utilized this flexibility to determine how much child support they retain and how much they pass through to families. Maryland, like many other states, retains the full amount of the child support collected while a family receives TANF (Huber et al., 2014). To encourage compliance with the child support agency, financial sanctions are imposed, and the entire TANF grant is revoked, if the custodian does not cooperate with the child support process. In general, most TANF

custodians comply, so use of child support sanctions is rare (Hall, Passarella, & Nicoli, 2015).

In this sample of custodians, three in 10 (30.2%) were recent recipients of TANF (Figure 7). Custodians were identified as recent TANF recipients if they received assistance in Maryland for at least one month at any point between July 2010 and July 2015. Custodians with a recent TANF history had just over one year (median: 15 months) of receipt in the previous five years, so cash assistance was not a long-term economic solution for many of them. Though not shown, only 10.9% of custodians in this sample received TANF in the month from which the sample was drawn (July 2015).

Given the nature of the child support and welfare partnership, as well as the economic circumstances of TANF families, there is good reason to believe that differences exist between TANF and non-TANF custodians in both the amount of child support owed to the custodian and in the amount received by the custodian. To explore these differences, we present data in the remaining chapters for TANF custodians, non-TANF custodians, and all custodians.

Figure 7. Welfare (TANF) Participation



Median TANF receipt: 15 months

TANF ($n=2,873$): Custodians received cash assistance in Maryland at any point between July 2010 and July 2015

Non-TANF ($n=6,651$): Custodians did not receive cash assistance in Maryland between July 2010 and July 2015

CURRENT SUPPORT

In the previous chapter we presented characteristics of custodians. In this chapter, we present several tables and figures that examine current support that was owed to custodians. We include information about current support orders and the amount of current support owed to custodians. Each analysis is presented for TANF custodians, non-TANF custodians, and all custodians.

Current Support Orders: July 2015

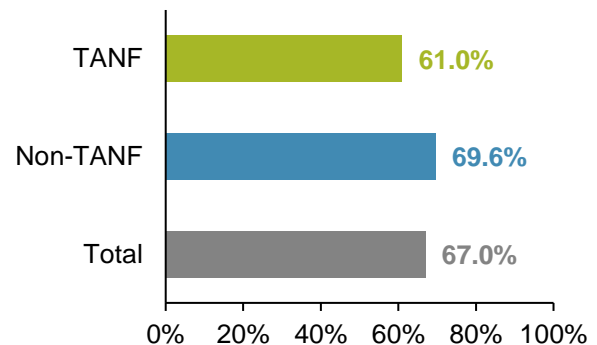
Establishing a child support order for current support is a multi-faceted process. Typically, the process of establishment begins in one of three ways: (a) after the dissolution of a legal partnership between parents, (b) when the custodian requests assistance from the child support agency, or (c) when the custodian seeks cash assistance through the TANF program. Requesting assistance from the child support enforcement program, however, does not guarantee a support order will be secured.

Figure 8 shows the percentage of this sample of custodians who had an order for current support in July 2015. As shown, two out of three (67.0%) custodians had an established order. This percentage was lower for custodians with a recent TANF history, compared to non-TANF custodians (61.0% vs. 69.6%).

There are a couple of reasons why custodians may not have orders. First, custodians—both TANF and non-TANF—may not want to pursue support against the

other parent even after opening a case (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2016b). This may occur in cases in which a relative is caring for the child and does not want to pursue support against a family member. For example, if a grandmother is caring for her grandchild, she may not want to pursue formal support against her own child. Custodians may also not want to pursue child support in cases in which there is already an informal agreement in place. Many families receive informal, direct support from noncustodial parents (Kane, Nelson, & Edin, 2015; Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2010). This can be either monetary or in-kind support, such as food and clothing. Some custodians may also not want to pursue support for fear of retaliation by the noncustodial parent. For TANF custodians, good-cause waivers can be granted in these extreme circumstances. If granted the waiver, they do not have to pursue child support even if a case has already been opened.

Figure 8. Percent with a Current Support Order* July 2015**



Note: Includes all custodians in the sample (n=9,524). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

A second reason custodians may not have support orders is because they are unable to identify or locate the other parent. As part of the child support process, some unmarried parents need to first establish paternity, which presents its own set of challenges. Indeed, nearly one quarter of poor custodial parents across the country self-report that they have no legal support order due to this setback (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2016b). Establishing paternity, and consequently, support orders, may be less of a challenge for previously married custodians, but fewer adults are electing to marry, choosing cohabitation over a legally-binding union (Copen, Daniels, & Mosher, 2013). Even if the other parent is located, the process can be delayed if the other parent is uncooperative with the child support agency.

During the order establishment process, the courts take many factors into consideration before setting an order amount. Support determination is not arbitrary; it is based on a set of numeric guidelines that are reviewed every four years. These guidelines vary from state to state. Maryland, like many other states, utilizes an Income Shares model to establish child support orders (National Conference of State Legislatures, 2016). In using this approach, the most significant determinants of the child support order amount include the combined income of both parents, the number of children they share, and additional expenses (such as health care and child care) expended on behalf of the children. Parents with lower combined incomes have lower support order amounts, then, and parents with higher combined incomes have higher support order amounts.

In Table 2, we describe the current support orders for the 67% of custodians who had a current support order in July 2015. Overall, custodians had an average monthly support order of \$476, and a median support order of \$389. Support orders ranged from a minimum of \$10 per month to a maximum of \$5,000 per month. TANF custodians had lower monthly support orders than non-TANF custodians. On average, they were owed \$150 less each month (\$367 vs. \$517) and had lower median support orders as well (\$291 vs. \$423). The maximum support order amount for TANF custodians was also about \$2,000 less than non-TANF custodians (\$2,951 vs. \$5,000).

These differences between TANF and non-TANF custodians are unsurprising. TANF custodians were either receiving cash assistance in July 2015 or had recently received cash assistance, meaning their incomes were extremely low. Most likely, noncustodial parents' incomes were also low. Previous research has shown that nonresident fathers whose children receive welfare have significantly lower incomes than other nonresident fathers (Cancian & Meyer, 2004). Given that support orders are based on both parents' incomes, we would expect lower-income custodians to have lower support order amounts.

Table 2. Monthly Current Support Orders
July 2015

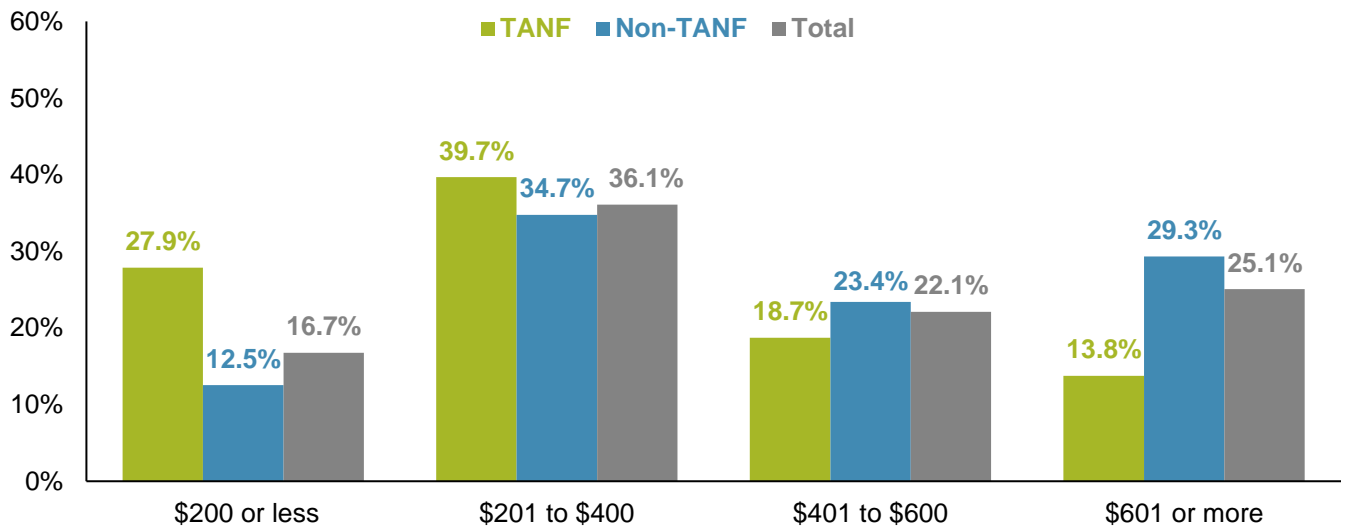
	TANF (n=1,752)	Non-TANF (n=4,631)	Total (n=6,383)
Average***	\$367	\$517	\$476
Median	\$291	\$423	\$389
Minimum	\$10	\$10	\$10
Maximum	\$2,951	\$5,000	\$5,000

Note: Includes custodians who had a current support order in July 2015 (n=6,383). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Although monthly support order amounts ranged widely (\$10 to \$5,000), Figure 9 shows that most orders were established at the lower end of that range. One in six (16.7%) custodians had a monthly order of \$200 or less in July 2015. Overall, three quarters (74.9%) of custodians had a support order of \$600 or less. Similar to Table 2, Figure 9 also shows that TANF custodians were more likely to have lower

monthly orders than non-TANF custodians. More than one in four (27.9%) TANF custodians had an order amount of \$200 or less compared to only one in eight (12.5%) non-TANF custodians. Furthermore, only one in seven (13.8%) TANF custodians had monthly order amounts higher than \$600 while three in ten (29.3%) non-TANF custodians had order amounts that high.

Figure 9. Total Monthly Current Support Orders***
July 2015

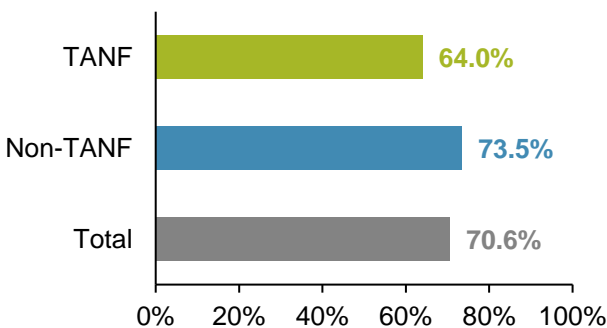


Note: Includes custodians who had a current support order in July 2015 (n=6,383). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Current Support Owed: July 2014 – June 2015

Examining data for an entire year provides another perspective on support owed to custodians. In the figures and table in the remainder of this chapter, we present data on current support owed between July 2014 and June 2015, the state fiscal year before custodians were selected into this sample. Beginning with Figure 10, we show the percentage of custodians who had any current support owed during the year. Overall, 70.6% of all custodians were owed current support during this time period. Custodians who recently received TANF were less likely to be owed current support than non-TANF custodians (64.0% vs. 73.5%). These percentages do not align with those for current support orders (Figure 8) because they represent current support owed *at any point* between July 2014 and June 2015 rather than the presence of a current support order in July 2015.

Figure 10. Percent Owed Current Support*** July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes all custodians in sample (n=9,524). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Table 3 complements Figure 10 and provides the average and median amounts owed between July 2014 and June 2015, as well as the minimum and maximum amounts. This table includes only the 70.6% of custodians who were owed current support during the year. Between July 2014 and June 2015, custodians were owed an average of \$5,313 throughout the year and a median of \$4,312. Total support owed ranged from a minimum of \$50 to a maximum of \$60,000.

During this same year, TANF clients were owed about \$1,800 less than non-TANF clients, on average (\$3,980 vs. \$5,815). Median support totals were also lower (\$3,138 vs. \$4,800). Even more starkly dissimilar were the maximum amounts owed to custodians. The maximum amount owed to a TANF custodian during the year was substantially smaller, a difference of more than \$36,000 (\$23,484 vs. \$60,000). This difference is to be expected, though, given that support orders are based on combined income, and TANF custodians generally have lower incomes than non-TANF custodians.

Table 3. Current Support Owed July 2014—June 2015

	TANF (n=1,840)	Non-TANF (n=4,888)	Total (n=6,728)
Average***	\$3,980	\$5,815	\$5,313
Median	\$3,138	\$4,800	\$4,312
Minimum	\$50	\$100	\$50
Maximum	\$23,484	\$60,000	\$60,000

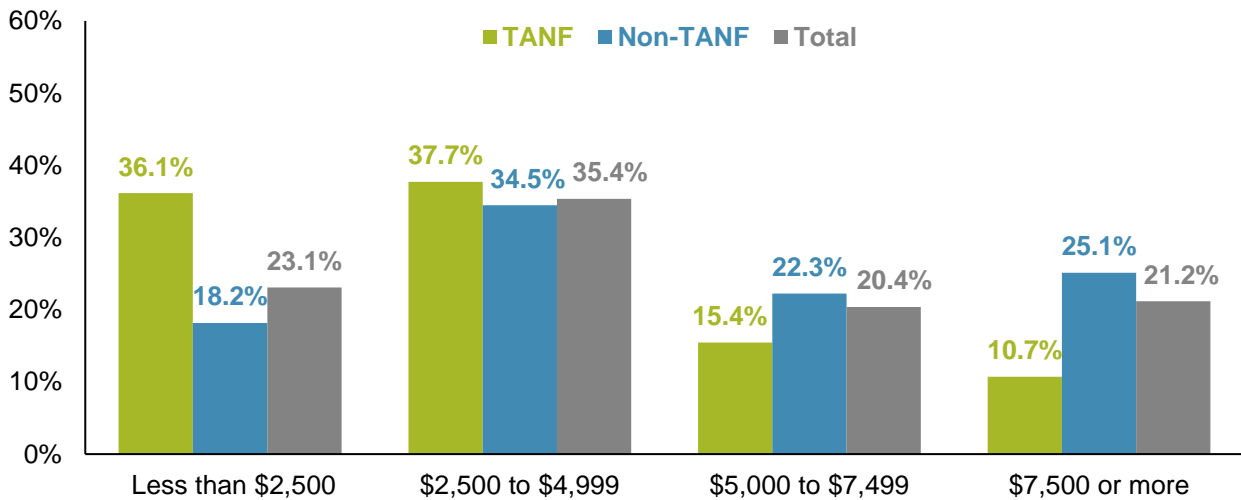
Note: Includes custodians owed current support between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=6,728). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Though the total current support owed to custodians between July 2014 and June 2015 ranged from \$50 to \$60,000, most custodians were owed amounts at the lower end of that range, just as with monthly current support. As shown in Figure 11, three out of every five (58.5%) custodians were owed less than \$5,000 during the year, while the remaining two in five were owed \$5,000 or more. If we examine custodians by their participation in TANF, we see that TANF custodians are overrepresented in the smaller support categories, while non-TANF custodians are overrepresented in the larger support categories. Approximately three out of four (73.8%) TANF custodians were owed less than \$5,000 during the year, compared to just over half (52.7%) of non-TANF

custodians. In contrast, just under half (47.4%) of non-TANF custodians were owed \$5,000 or more during the year, compared to only one in four (26.1%) TANF custodians.

Both Table 3 and Figure 10 do not take into consideration the number of months out of the year in which support was owed to custodians; the total owed reflects those custodians who were owed current support for only one month as well as custodians who were owed support for 12 months. By and large, though, this chapter demonstrates the important role income plays in determining how much child support a family is owed: lower-income custodians are not owed as much as their higher-income counterparts.

Figure 11. Annual Current Support Owed***
July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes custodians owed current support between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=6,728). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

ARREARS

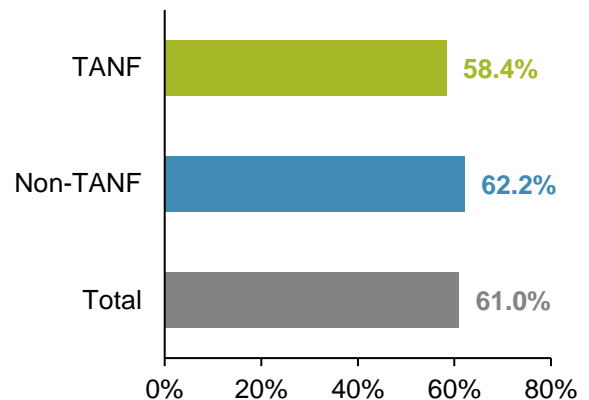
In this chapter, we present information on arrears owed to custodians. Arrears are past-due child support balances that accrue when noncustodial parents do not make timely current support payments. Similar to the previous chapter, we present information on arrears balances and orders as well as the amount of arrears owed to custodians. Each analysis is presented for TANF custodians, non-TANF custodians, and all custodians.

Arrears Balances: July 2015

When custodians do not receive the current support owed to them, arrears accumulate, creating a backlog of child support that is owed to custodians. This unpaid child support balance is referred to as an arrears balance. Nationally, arrearages continue to grow. Between federal fiscal years 2011 and 2015, total unpaid support increased nearly 4% to more than \$115 billion (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2016a). During this same time period, though, Maryland arrearages decreased a staggering 18%. In federal fiscal year 2015, Maryland arrearages totaled approximately \$1.3 million.

In Figure 12, we present the percentage of custodians who had an arrears balance in July 2015. These arrearages represent unpaid support owed specifically to the custodian.⁴ As shown, three in five (61.0%) custodians were owed arrears in July 2015. TANF custodians were less likely than non-TANF custodians to be owed arrears (58.4% vs. 62.2%). TANF custodians are less likely to be owed arrears because fewer were owed current support, which must be in place before arrears can accrue. Additionally, TANF arrears have declined in recent years at the national level (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2014).

Figure 12. Percent with Arrears Balance July 2015**



Note: Includes all custodians in sample (n=9,524).
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

⁴ Arrears can also be owed to the state and federal governments (state-owed arrears) as reimbursement

for providing TANF to families. State-owed arrears are not included in the analyses in this chapter.

Table 4 shows the total arrears balances owed to custodians as of July 2015. On average, custodians had an arrears balance of \$10,962. Median balances were much lower (\$5,669). There was a wide range of balances: the minimum arrears balance was less than one dollar while the maximum arrears balance was \$159,265. TANF custodians had smaller arrears balances than non-TANF custodians. On average, their balances were about \$2,500 less (\$9,165 vs. \$11,692), and median balances were \$1,400 less (\$4,715 vs. \$6,123). The maximum arrears owed to TANF custodians was also smaller, though still substantial (\$111,663 vs. \$159,265).

Table 4. Arrears Balances
July 2015

	TANF (n=1,678)	Non-TANF (n=4,134)	Total (n=5,812)
Average***	\$9,165	\$11,692	\$10,962
Median	\$4,715	\$6,123	\$5,669
Minimum	\$0.36	\$0.15	\$0.15
Maximum	\$111,663	\$159,265	\$159,265

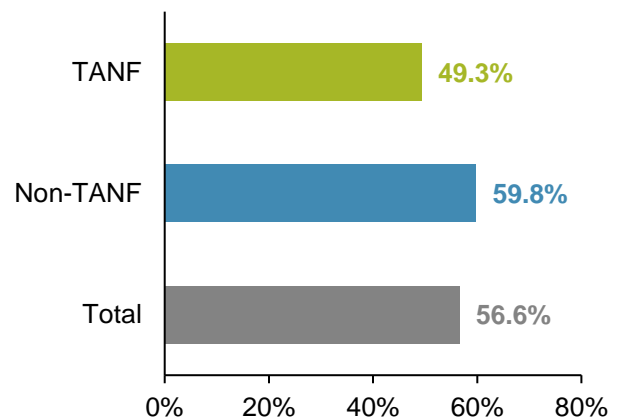
Note: Includes custodians who had an arrears balance in July 2015 (n=5,812). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Arrears Orders: July 2015

Once an arrears balance accrues, the courts will often establish a monthly support order for arrears. This monthly support order is separate from, and in addition to, the current support order. As shown in Figure 13, nearly three fifths (56.6%) of custodians had an arrears order in July 2015. TANF custodians were less likely to have an arrears order than non-TANF custodians (49.3% vs. 59.8%).

Not all arrears orders are established after support is unpaid. Once the process of obtaining a child support order is complete, current support is ordered retroactively to the date the custodian originally applied for support. Because of this process, the custodian can be owed both current support and arrears almost immediately. Sometimes, arrears orders are established at the same time current support orders are established or modified.

Figure 13. Percent with Arrears Order***
July 2015



Note: Includes all custodians in sample (n=9,524). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

In Table 5, we present the amount of monthly arrears orders. Custodians were owed \$123 each month in arrears, on average, with a median order amount of only \$72. TANF custodians had smaller arrears orders than non-TANF custodians. TANF custodians were owed \$78 each month for arrears, on average, with a median of \$51. Non-TANF custodians, on the other hand, were owed \$139 each month, on average, with a median of \$83.

Minimum arrears orders were substantively low for both TANF and non-TANF custodians, offering little support. Some TANF custodians had arrears orders for as low as one dollar, while non-TANF custodians had arrears orders for as low as one cent. It is unlikely that these order amounts, even when received, have any practical significance. The presence of these negligible support orders, then, may represent the courts assigning responsibility to the noncustodial parent even in the presence of economic hardship. For example, if a noncustodial parent is not in the financial position to make significant contributions to both a current support order and an arrears order at the time, the court may decide to establish a small arrears order to ensure that a small amount, rather than nothing, is being paid to the past due support.

Table 5. Monthly Arrears Orders
July 2015

	TANF (n=1,417)	Non-TANF (n=3,976)	Total (n=5,393)
Average***	\$78	\$139	\$123
Median	\$51	\$83	\$72
Minimum	\$1	\$0.01	\$0.01
Maximum	\$1,250	\$2,000	\$2,000

Note: Includes custodians who had an arrears support order in July 2015 (n=5,393). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

The figures and tables in this chapter demonstrate that many custodians have arrears balances because they do not receive all of the current support owed to them on a monthly basis. In some cases, this may be because current support was retroactively ordered, not allowing noncustodial parents a chance to make payments. Though large arrears balances can accrue, courts try to ensure that most custodians obtain an order to receive at least some of the past-due support owed to them.

PAYMENTS

Thus far, we have described custodians who participate in the public child support program, the current support owed to them, and the arrears owed to them. In this final chapter, we turn to the support (both current and arrears) that custodians received between July 2014 and June 2015. In the first part of this chapter, we focus on payments received by custodians. In the latter part of the chapter, we discuss payments that were retained by the state as reimbursement for families who participated in the TANF program.

Payments Received by Custodians: July 2014 – June 2015

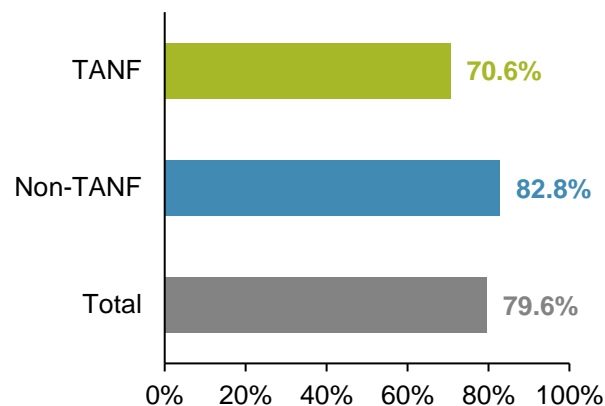
After a support order has been established by the courts, noncustodial parents presumably begin making payments. As these payments are received by the child support agency, money owed to custodians⁵ is processed and sent in the form of a monthly check or direct deposit. Although only custodians with a support order in place can receive monthly support, the existence of an order in and of itself does not guarantee payments. In fact, payments depend largely on noncustodial parents' incomes and employment.

In Figure 14, we show the percentage of custodians who received at least one child support payment between July 2014 and June 2015, the state fiscal year before they were selected into the sample. These percentages include only custodians who were owed current support or arrears during

this time period. As shown, four out of five (79.6%) custodians who were owed support received a payment, which is a noteworthy success. Non-TANF custodians (82.8%) were more likely than TANF custodians (70.6%) to receive a payment during the year, a difference of 12 percentage points. Still, most TANF custodians received a payment. This finding is consistent with other research on Maryland custodians with a TANF history. A recent study of custodians who had a support order when they exited the TANF program, for example, found that about 70% of former welfare recipients received child support each year after they exited from TANF (Passarella, Nicoli, and Hall, 2016).

Figure 14. Percent of Custodians Who Received a Payment***

July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=7,808). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

⁵ Payments can be owed to both the custodian and the state.

Table 6 provides information on the total amount of support received by custodians during this year. The table includes only custodians who were owed current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 and who also received a payment during this same year. As shown, custodians received an average of \$4,483 throughout the year and a median of \$3,340. Some custodians received very little, with minimum receipt at less than one dollar, while others received substantial amounts, at a maximum of \$44,225 throughout the year.

TANF custodians received significantly smaller payments than non-TANF custodians, which is expected given that current support and arrears owed to TANF custodians were also lower. On average, they received about \$2,000 less (\$2,767 vs. \$4,999), and median payments were also about \$2,000 less (\$1,951 vs. \$3,881). Though minimum amounts were similar, the maximum amount a non-TANF custodian received (\$44,225) was more than double the maximum amount TANF custodians received (\$19,952).

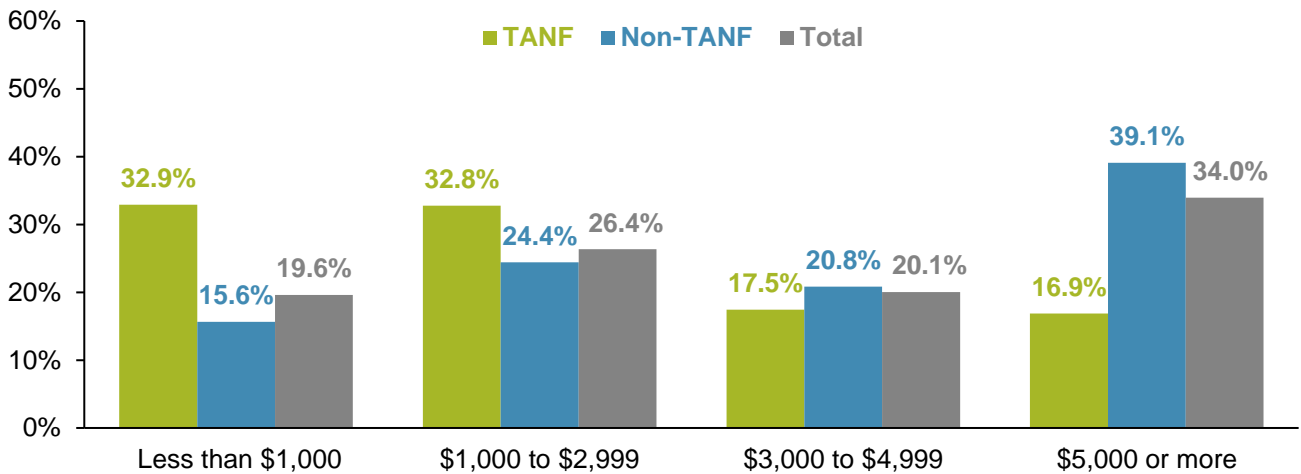
Table 6. Support Received by Custodians July 2014—June 2015

	TANF (n=1,438)	Non-TANF (n=4,779)	Total (n=6,217)
Average***	\$2,767	\$4,999	\$4,483
Median	\$1,951	\$3,881	\$3,340
Minimum	\$0.53	\$0.54	\$0.53
Maximum	\$19,952	\$44,225	\$44,225

Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 and who also received a child support payment during that same time (n=6,217). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

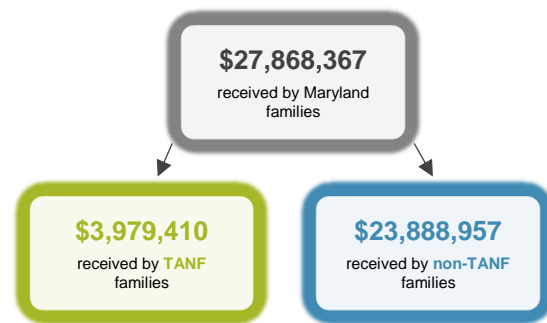
Although custodians received a wide range of payment amounts throughout the year, Figure 15 shows that a large percentage of TANF custodians received total payments toward the lower end of the range, while most non-TANF custodians received total payments towards the larger end of the range. Two thirds (65.7%) of TANF custodians, for example, received less than \$3,000 between July 2014 and June 2015. Half of those custodians (32.9%) received less than \$1,000 during the year. Two fifths (39.1%) of non-TANF custodians, on the other hand, received \$5,000 or more during the year, and an additional one fifth (20.8%) received between \$3,000 and \$5,000.

Figure 15. Annual Support Received by Custodians***
July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 and who also received a child support payment during that same time (n=6,217). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

One caveat to both Table 6 and Figure 15 is that they do not take into account the number of months in which custodians received payments. Similar to the current support chapter, the totals included here reflect custodians who received payments for only one month out of the year as well as custodians who received payments every month during the year. Regardless, a substantial amount (\$28 million) was collected and disbursed to these custodians during the year.⁶ Although the majority (\$24 million) of the support collected went to non-TANF families in the sample, the \$4 million received by TANF custodians is not negligible; in fact, without requiring TANF custodians to participate in the child support program, some of these payments may have never been received



Note: Only includes payments made to this sample of custodians.

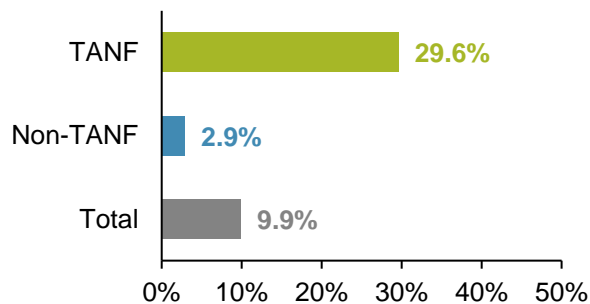
⁶ The total payments received by this sample of custodians includes only those who were owed either

current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=7,808).

Payments Retained by Maryland: July 2014 – June 2015

Although many states allow families to receive a portion of the money collected while they are on TANF, Maryland does not currently have a pass-through policy in place. Instead, Maryland retains the child support collected while a family receives TANF. As shown in Figure 16, one out of every 10 custodians in the sample had a child support payment retained by the state between July 2014 and June 2015. Custodians with a recent TANF history were more likely than non-TANF custodians to have a payment retained (29.6% vs. 2.9%) during this time period. This finding is not surprising, given that TANF custodians must assign the right to support to the state while receiving cash assistance. Perhaps more surprising is that non-TANF custodians had payments retained throughout the year. Though these custodians did not have recent histories with TANF, and consequently, are not included in the TANF group, they received either TANF or Aid to Dependent Families and Children (AFDC, the predecessor to TANF) at an earlier point in time.

Figure 16. Percent with a Payment Retained by the State***
July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support, had custodian-owed arrears, or had state-owed arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=8,064).

As shown in Table 7, child support payments that were retained by Maryland between July 2014 and June 2015 were relatively low (compared to payments received by custodians in Table 6). An average of \$1,093 and a median of \$601 was collected on behalf of each custodian with prior TANF receipt and retained during the year. For some custodians, very small amounts were retained, with a minimum of only one cent for some custodians. The maximum amount, however, was considerably larger, as \$8,716 was retained on behalf of one custodian during the year. This means that nearly \$9,000 did not go to the family, but was kept by the state instead.

Unsurprisingly, custodians with a recent TANF history had a higher amount of child support retained by the state than non-TANF custodians. The average amount retained was nearly double (\$1,201 vs. \$693), and the median amount was also larger (\$670 vs. \$400). Again, non-TANF custodians who had support retained did have histories with the TANF or AFDC program, though not within the last five years, so they are not included in the TANF group.

Table 7. Support Retained by the State
July 2014—June 2015

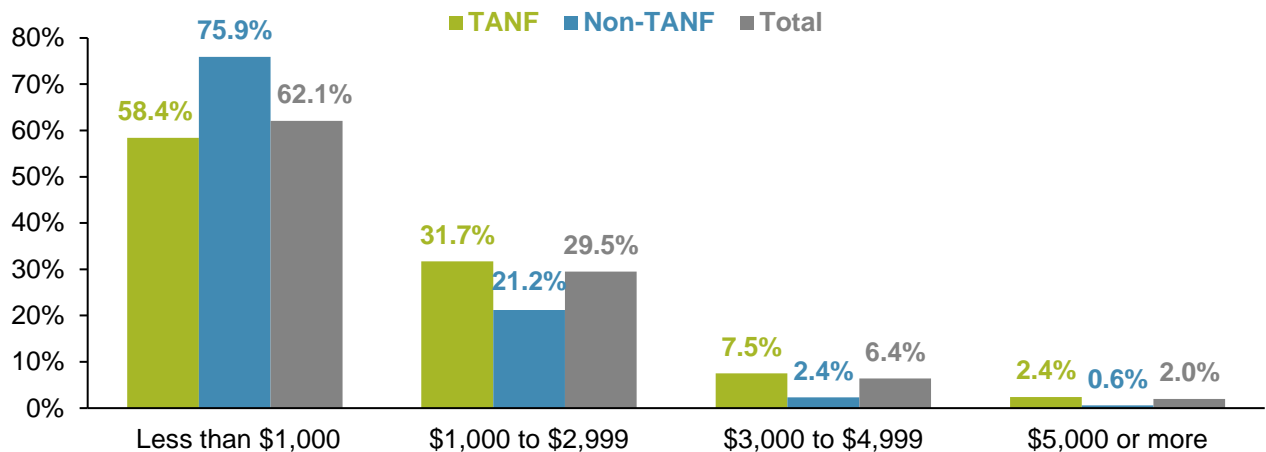
	TANF (n=627)	Non-TANF (n=170)	Total (n=797)
Average***	\$1,201	\$693	\$1,093
Median	\$670	\$400	\$601
Minimum	\$0.01	\$0.52	\$0.01
Maximum	\$8,716	\$6,900	\$8,716

Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 and who also had a child support payment retained by the state during that same time (n=797). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Although a wide range of payments was retained for each custodian, Figure 17 shows that three fifths (62.1%) of custodians had less than \$1,000 retained by the state between July 2014 and June 2015. Overall, TANF custodians had more support

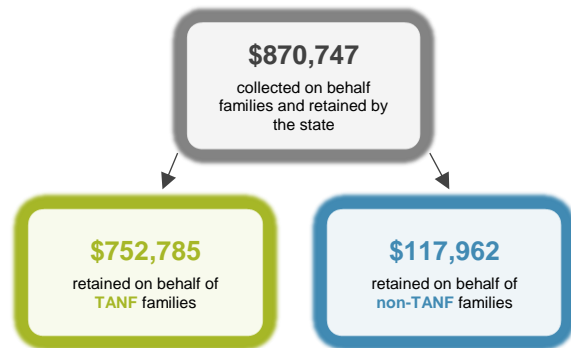
retained than non-TANF custodians, which we would expect. Two in five (41.6%) TANF custodians had more than \$1,000 retained, compared to just one in four (24.1%) non-TANF custodians.

Figure 17. Annual Support Retained by State***
July 2014—June 2015



Note: Includes custodians who were owed either current support or arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 and who also had a child support payment retained by the state during that same time (n=797). *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

When considered together, Table 7 and Figure 17 show that, overall, the state retained small amounts of child support to recoup the costs of TANF benefits. Regardless, this money collected from noncustodial parents but kept by the state for this sample of custodians amounted to \$870,747 during the year.⁷ The majority (\$752,785) of the money collected and retained was on behalf of families with recent TANF histories.



Note: Only includes payments retained on behalf of this sample of custodians.

⁷ Includes custodians who were owed either current support, had custodian-owed arrears, or had state-

owed arrears between July 2014 and June 2015 (n=8,064).

CONCLUSIONS

At both the national level and the local level, the child support program has been commended for the services that are provided to families. Most notably, the program ensures that families receive necessary monetary support. In federal fiscal year 2015, for example, more than \$500 million went directly into the pockets of Maryland families (Office of Child Support Enforcement, 2016), certainly keeping many families out of poverty and guaranteeing more than 220,000 children were supported by both of their parents. Though child support is routinely described as an indispensable source of income for families, we know very little about the custodians who participate in the program, as custodians who participate in the public child support system are seldom the focus of research.

The University of Maryland School of Social Work, with its long-standing research partnership with the Child Support Enforcement Administration, is uniquely equipped to fill this research gap. In this report, the first-ever focused wholly on custodians, we examined both parent and nonparent caregivers who are served by the program. This differs from federal-level research, which includes custodians who do not make use of the public program, and is focused on custodial *parents* rather than all custodians. For this report, we used a sample to describe custodians' characteristics and to analyze current support and arrears owed to them, payments received by them, and payments retained by the state. Since TANF custodians are required to participate in the

child support program, we presented data for all custodians and for custodians with and without recent histories of TANF participation.

Overall, we found that seven in 10 custodians had a current support order established. Custodians were owed a median of \$389 each month and a median of approximately \$4,000 throughout the year. Arrears support orders were less common, although arrears balances were common. Between July 2014 and June 2015, four out of five custodians who were owed support received at least one payment, and a median of \$3,340 was received throughout the year.

We also found that there were significant differences between TANF custodians and non-TANF custodians. TANF custodians were less likely to have orders for support and were owed less than non-TANF custodians. Most likely, this reflects their lower incomes, which affects the amount of their support orders. TANF custodians were also less likely to receive a support payment between July 2014 and June 2015, and when payments were received, they were more than \$2,000 less than what non-TANF custodians received.

Finally, we examined payments that were owed to the custodian but were retained by the state: one in 10 custodians had at least one child support payment retained by the state as reimbursement for participation in the TANF program between July 2014 and June 2015. Custodians with a recent TANF history were 10 times more likely than non-TANF custodians to have support retained, an unsurprising finding.

Although Maryland does not currently pass through to families any child support that is collected while they receive TANF, the implementation of a pass-through policy can have a substantial financial benefit for low-income families. This benefit was acknowledged by the federal government with the passing of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which allowed states to pass through some money to families without reimbursing the federal share of TANF benefits. Simulation models released in the mid-2000s showed that Maryland custodial families' incomes could increase by as much as \$200 per month if a pass-through

policy was ever adopted, (Solomon-Fears & Falk, 2007). During the 2016 session, the General Assembly expressed interest in information about a pass-through policy. The budget committees specifically requested analyses to examine the potential use of pass-through. It is possible, then, that Maryland will enact legislation that integrates this family-friendly policy into the child support program. As it stands now, though, Maryland should be applauded for its commitment to families, and continuing to ensure that children receive the support they need.

REFERENCES

- Bartfeld, J. & Meyer, D.R. (1994). Are there really deadbeat dads? The relationship between ability to pay, enforcement, and compliance in nonmarital child support cases. *Social Service Review*, 68(2), 219-235.
- Cancian, M. & Meyer, D.R. (2006). Child support and the economy. In R.B. Blank, S.H. Danziger, & R.F. Schoeni (Eds.), *Working and Poor*, (pp. 338-365). New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
- Cancian, M. & Meyer, D.R. (2004). Fathers of children receiving welfare: can they provide more child support? *Social Service Review*, 78(2), 179-206.
- Copen, C.E. Daniels, K., & Mosher, W.D. (2013). *First premarital cohabitation in the United States: 2006-2010 National Survey of Family Growth*. Retrieved from the National Center for Health Statistics website: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nhsr/nhsr064.pdf>
- Gleason, E., Passarella, L.L., & Born, C.E. (2013a). *People & payments: A profile of Maryland's child support caseload in July 2010*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/ca2010.pdf>
- Gleason, E., Passarella, L.L., & Born, C.E. (2013b). *People & payments: A profile of Maryland's child support caseload in July 2010*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/ca2011.pdf>
- Gleason, E. & Passarella, L.L. (2015). *Maryland's child support caseload: noncustodial parents in 2010 & 2014*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/ncppprofile2010and2014.pdf>
- Grall, T. (2016). *Custodial mothers and fathers and their child support: 2013*. Retrieved from the U.S. Census Bureau website: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/publications/2016/demo/P60-255.pdf>
- Hall, L.A., Passarella, L., & Born, C.E. (2014). *Who pays child support? Noncustodial parents' payment compliance*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/paymentcompliance.pdf>
- Hall, L.A., Passarella, L.L., & Nicoli, L.T. (2015). *Welfare cases with child support sanctions: Characteristics and outcomes*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/CSsanctions.pdf>
- Huber, E. Kassabian, D., & Cohen, E. (2014). *Welfare rules databook: State TANF policies as of July 2013*. Retrieved from the Urban Institute website: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/welfare_rules_databook_final_v2.pdf
- Kane, J.B., Nelson, T.J., & Edin, K. (2015). How much in-kind support do low-income nonresident fathers provide? A mixed-method analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 77(3), p. 591 - 611.

- Kornfeld, R., & Bloom, H.S. (1999). Measuring program impacts on earnings and employment: Do unemployment insurance wage reports from employers agree with surveys of individuals? *Journal of Labor Economics*, 17, 168–197.
- National Conference of States Legislatures (2016). *Child support guideline models by state*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/guideline-models-by-state.aspx>
- National Conference of States Legislatures (2015). Child support pass-through and disregard policies for public assistance recipients. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/state-policy-pass-through-disregard-child-support.aspx>
- Nepomnyaschy, L. & Garfinkel, I. (2010). Child support enforcement and fathers' contributions to their nonmarital children. *Social Services Review*, 84(3), p. 341- 380.
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2013, June 30). Family-Centered innovations improve child support outcomes. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/family_centered_innovations.pdf
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children & Families, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (2014, January 31). Custodial parents living in poverty. Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/sbtn_custodial_parents_living_in_poverty.pdf
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2016a, April 18). *Preliminary Report FY 2015*. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy2015_preliminary.pdf
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2016b, June 28). *Why don't more poor custodial parents have a child support order?* Retrieved from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/why_dont_more_poor_cps_have_a_cs_order_sbtn_6.pdf
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2015, June 30). *Effect of male employment on child support collections*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/resource/effect-of-male-employment-on-child-support-collections>
- Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2014, March 31). *Major change in who is owed child support arrears*. Retrieved from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/changes_in_who_is_owed_arrears.pdf
- Passarella, L. (2014). *People & payments: A profile of Maryland's child support caseload in July 2012*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/life2016.pdf>
- Passarella, L., Nicoli, L., & Hall, L. (2016). *Life after welfare: 2016 annual update*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/life20.pdf>

Passarella, L.L., Nicoli, L., & Hall, L.A. (2015). *Maryland's child support caseload: Trends among cases, 2010 to 2014*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/child_support_caseload_10-14.pdf

Saunders, C., Passarella, L., & Born, C.E. (2014). *Reasonable child support orders: The relationship between income and collections*. Retrieved from the Family Welfare Research and Training Group website: <http://www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu/reports1/reasonablesupportorders.pdf>

Solomon-Fears, C. & Falk, G. (2007). *The financial impact of child support on TANF families: Simulation for selected states*. Retrieved from the Committee on Ways and Means Green Book: http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/images/RL34105_gb.pdf

Wallace, G.L. & Haveman, R. (2007). The implications of differences between employer and worker employment/earnings reports for policy evaluation. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 26(4), 737–753.



525 W. Redwood Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
410-706-2479
www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu