



Child Support Enforcement Crucial for Idaho

Child Support Affects Nearly 1 in 4 Idaho Children

May 2015

DATA REPORT

POLICY PERSPECTIVE

Idaho state legislators recently rejected legislation that would commit Idaho to cooperate with other states and countries in the enforcement of child support orders. This could result in the loss of child support payments for Idaho's children, along with the loss of vital services to children and families. This report examines the impact this crisis would have on Idaho's children if it is not resolved quickly. Idaho has until July 1st to resolve the crisis before losing federal funding for child support collection.

A Significant Portion of Idaho's Children Depend on Child Support

Thousands of Idaho children are in danger of losing support payments from absent parents unless the Governor and Legislature act swiftly. In Idaho, both parents, whether legally married or not, are required to support their children.

At the close of the 2015 Legislative Session, the House Judiciary and Rules Committee held up passage of a bill that would have brought Idaho in compliance with a national and international agreement to help ensure child support orders are enforced across borders, when they meet Idaho's standard for due process. This agreement was intended to protect children first and foremost: it prevents parents from hiding from child support obligations by relocating to another state or country.

Governor Otter has called for a Special Session of the Legislature starting May 18 to address this issue.

About one in four, which is nearly 112,000 Idaho children, depend on support payments as part of their family's budget (*please refer to the table on the reverse side*). The range is from 7.3% of children in Madison County to 43.9% in Lewiston County. These payments represent private dollars collected and distributed by the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

Child Support System at Risk

Our child support system is one way we ensure that parents take care of their children. Unfortunately, the system that ensures the financial responsibility of parents and protects Idaho children—is currently at risk. Without passage of the compliance measure, our system could unravel by July 1, when federal funding would cease if Idaho is not brought into compliance.

Idaho takes advantage of \$16 million annually in federal funds and access to federal tools to administer the child support program effectively. Without this assistance, Idaho's child support enforcement system will become inoperable; children and families would lose financial resources needed to keep households strong.

Without a reliable child support payment program, families have to turn to public assistance. Over \$200 million in annual payments, from private individuals to Idaho kids, would cease. Once Idaho loses approval for our child support enforcement system, we would also become ineligible for \$30 million used to address such other critical state needs as child care assistance for working parents, children's mental health services, and early learning opportunities.

Idaho Child Support Collections for the Month of April 2015

County	Children (Ages 0-19)	Children on Child Support (Ages 0-19)	Percent of Children on Child Support	In-State Child Support Collected
Ada	115,942	26,775	23.1%	\$3,475,271
Adams	734	207	28.2%	\$25,561
Bannock	24,760	6,626	26.8%	\$910,549
Bear Lake	1,769	335	18.9%	\$44,139
Benewah	2,195	756	34.4%	\$77,932
Bingham	15,566	3,644	23.4%	\$430,119
Blaine	5,467	792	14.5%	\$101,182
Boise	1,433	288	20.1%	\$42,668
Bonner	9,100	2,343	25.7%	\$285,396
Bonneville	36,272	8,755	24.1%	\$1,262,123
Boundary	2,815	663	23.6%	\$94,643
Butte	738	152	20.6%	\$19,827
Camas	257	54	21.0%	\$5,303
Canyon	66,031	20,170	30.5%	\$2,318,277
Caribou	2,097	389	18.6%	\$65,891
Cassia	8,216	1,979	24.1%	\$265,891
Clark	263	50	19.0%	\$3,148
Clearwater	1,533	437	28.5%	\$49,999
Custer	862	172	20.0%	\$26,817
Elmore	7,624	1,849	24.3%	\$224,687
Franklin	4,723	642	13.6%	\$94,159
Fremont	4,104	750	18.3%	\$90,858
Gem	4,250	1,311	30.8%	\$171,731
Gooding	4,733	1,290	27.3%	\$158,374
Idaho	3,532	680	19.3%	\$78,874
Jefferson	9,998	1,593	15.9%	\$248,325
Jerome	7,547	2,241	29.7%	\$252,361
Kootenai	37,583	10,052	26.7%	\$1,391,063
Latah	9,670	1,231	12.7%	\$146,708
Lemhi	1,527	409	26.8%	\$60,075
Lewiston	959	421	43.9%	\$38,907
Lincoln	1,771	435	24.6%	\$56,978
Madison	13,092	954	7.3%	\$141,193
Minidoka	6,317	1,856	29.4%	\$267,851
Nez Perce	9,483	2,725	28.7%	\$326,673
Oneida	1,307	255	19.5%	\$30,746
Owyhee	3,492	813	23.3%	\$104,596
Payette	6,723	1,979	29.4%	\$237,151
Power	2,556	639	25.0%	\$66,755
Shoshone	2,784	1,009	36.2%	\$129,712
Teton	3,128	427	13.7%	\$59,986
Twin Falls	24,022	6,735	28.0%	\$962,140
Valley	1,902	410	21.6%	\$62,867
Washington	2,560	760	29.7%	\$103,524
Total Count	471,437	111,994	23.8%	\$15,011,032



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Children on Child Support data was provided from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare via a Public Records Request.

*In April there were 51,964 cases in which the State of Idaho received payments for children with no address on file who may or may not reside in the state. Therefore, the total number of cases by county are underestimated. In April there were 18,148 out-of-state child support cases.

**The statewide total of "children on child support" in Idaho is an unduplicated count. The county total of "children on child support" includes children who exist on more than one case and are therefore slightly overestimated. As a result, the statewide total for "children on child support" is 4,059 greater than the total reflected here.

Children on child support and child support collected data is from the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare and only represents data from April 2015.

Total population of children data is from 2013 Census Bureau Population Estimates. The number of children in each county may have fluctuated up or down since 2013.