



*Delaware Health and Social Services*

***Division of Child Support Enforcement***

***Joint Finance Committee Hearing  
Fiscal Year 2017***

*Joint Finance Committee Hearing*

***Theodore G. Mermigos Jr.***

*Division Director*

*Wednesday, February 24, 2016*

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Senator McDowell, Representative Smith and members of the Joint Finance Committee, and members of the public, my name is Ted Mermigos, I am honored to present my first budget as Director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE). I am joined today by my Deputy Director, Julie Rhoades and Chief of Administration, Midge Holland.

The material distributed today is comprised of two handouts. The first handout details our FY '17 Governor's Recommended Budget (GRB), which I'll be talking about shortly. The second packet contains an overview of our agency, program updates, as well as some of our accomplishments since we were here last year.



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## **DCSE Mission Statement**

- The DCSE mission is to promote family independence by reducing dependency of single parent households through the collection of monetary child support payments and medical support from non-custodial parents.
- This mission is achieved through the effective use of paternity establishment programs, aggressive case processing enforcement techniques, and efficient collection and prompt distribution of support payments.

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The DCSE mission supports the overall DHSS mission which is “to improve the quality of life for Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.” The collection and distribution of child support and obtaining medical benefits help to “maximize personal and family independence.”



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## **DCSE Functions**

- Locate non-custodial parents
- Establish paternity for children born out-of-wedlock
- Establish and modify cash court orders
- Establish medical support orders
- Collect, distribute and disburse collections from non-custodial parents to families

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DCSE's core functions are discrete, yet interrelated steps which are required to achieve success in securing financial support for families in Delaware and across the country.

Although our division relies heavily on using information from robust computer systems and interfaces, the dedicated staff at DCSE would not be able to complete their job responsibilities without the help of engaged customers.

Staff continues to use our new system, the Delaware Child Support System (DECSS) and is continuing to learn how to best maximize case processing functionality to yield positive results.



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## **Enforcement Methods**

- Federal & State Tax Refund Intercept
- Financial Institution Data Match
- Passport Denial
- License Suspension
- Administrative Offsets
- Child Support Lien Network
- State Lottery Offsets
- Federal Insurance Offsets
- Video Lottery Intercept



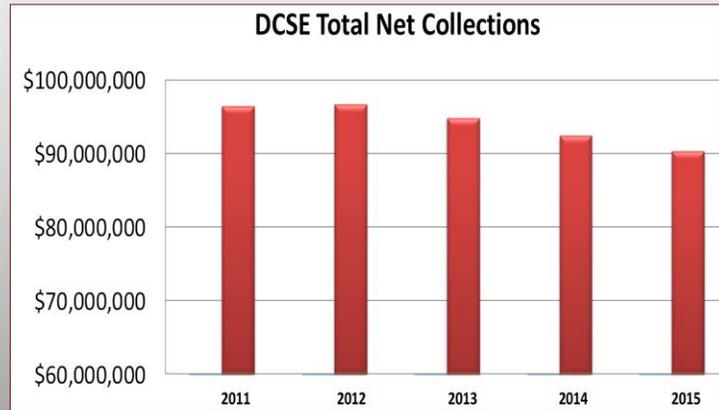
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We would hope that all parents pay their child support voluntarily. However, when this does not occur, there are a variety of enforcement options available to receive payments for families. Some of those options are listed on this slide.



## DCSE Net Collections



Total collections for FY '15 were \$90.4 million

Total collections for FY '15 were \$90.4 million, which represents a slight decrease from 2014. Hopefully, as we begin to see signs of a healthier economy, we will see a corresponding increase in collections.

On average we collect and distribute about 60 percent of the total support due during each federal fiscal year.



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## DCSE Customer Websites

The image shows two screenshots of the DCSE Customer Websites. The top screenshot is a login page with a header for the State of Delaware and a central box for logging in with a username and password. Below the login box are links for 'New User/Questions', 'Forgot My Password', and 'Forgot My Username'. The bottom screenshot is a registration page titled 'Subscribe to DCSE Application for Services'. It contains a form with fields for 'Login ID', 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'PIN', 'Country', 'State of Birth', 'Last 4 digits of SSN', 'Phone Number', and 'Email Address'. There are also 'Security Questions' with prompts like 'What is the name of your first school?' and 'What is the name of the last school you attended?'. A 'Subscribe' button is at the bottom of the form.

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On February 1<sup>st</sup>, DCSE went live with two (2) new Customer Websites.

The first is an Application for Services website which allows new customers to create a username and password to complete a child support application online and submit it electronically.

The second Customer Website allows both custodial and non-custodial parents, who already have an existing child support case, to access specific case information online 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

Information on these two sites can be found on our website:

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dcse/>



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## **Moving Forward**

- **Fatherhood Program**
- **Back to Basics**
- **Building Trust**
- **Rebranding**



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DCSE is in the process of starting a Fatherhood program that will focus on providing non-custodial parents with intensive case management and referrals to training and educational programs. We have developed partnerships with the Department of Labor and non-profit organizations to help support our Fatherhood program. Our goal is to assist non-custodial parents by helping them obtain the necessary skills to find quality and sustainable employment opportunities.

At DCSE, we are constantly looking for ways we can improve. We realize this has to be done by changing the culture of our workforce. Our goal is to find an acceptable balance of reliance on computer systems without losing the human touch of case processing. We are working with staff statewide to be more interactive with our customers and to not forget about the basics of customer service.

With customer service at the forefront of our daily work, DCSE is exploring options to rebrand ourselves focusing on and centered around customer service.



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The child support program is an important part of the safety net provided by the state and federal governments. We work hand-in-hand with the Courts, the TANF and Medicaid programs in DHSS, the Foster Care program in DSCYF, and many others.

All of our efforts will help us fulfill our vision which is to:

*“Assist single parent families achieve self-sufficiency by providing child support services in a timely and efficient manner through the use of modern technology and strong working relationships with partner agencies.”*

Thank you!