



THE VALUE OF CHILD SUPPORT:

TOUCHING THE LIVES OF PARENTS & CHILDREN



Pamela C. Ovwigho

Joohee Yum

Correne Saunders

University of Maryland, School of Social Work

**Presented at the 25th Annual Training Conference of the
Maryland Joint Child Support Council, October 2006**

This research was funded by The Maryland Department of Human Resources,
Child Support Enforcement Administration

OUTLINE

- **Caseload Characteristics**
- **Custodians and Children**
- **Non-Custodial Parents**
- **Payments and Arrears**
- **Innovative Strategies**

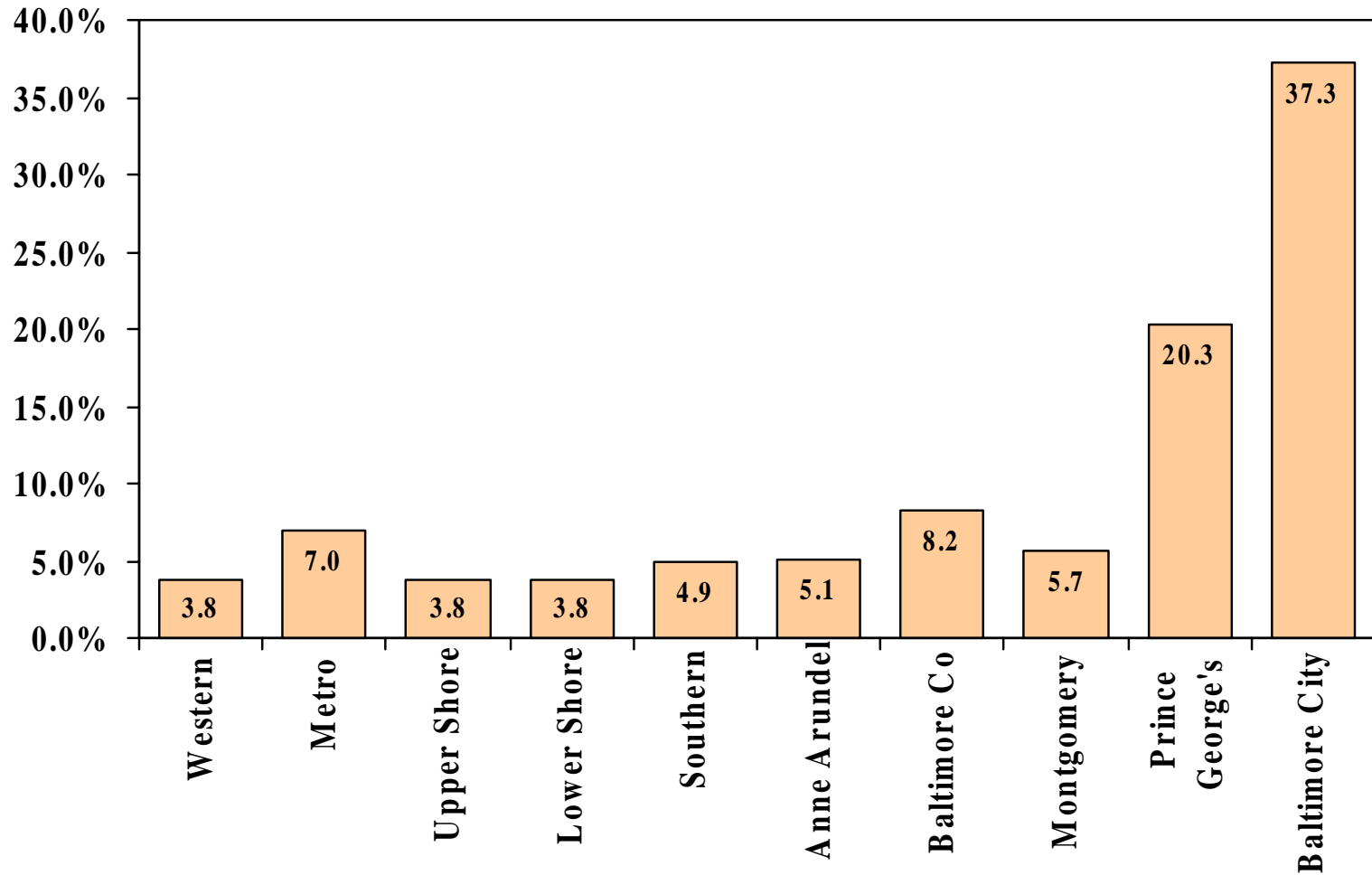




CASELOAD CHARACTERISTICS

MARYLAND'S CASELOAD

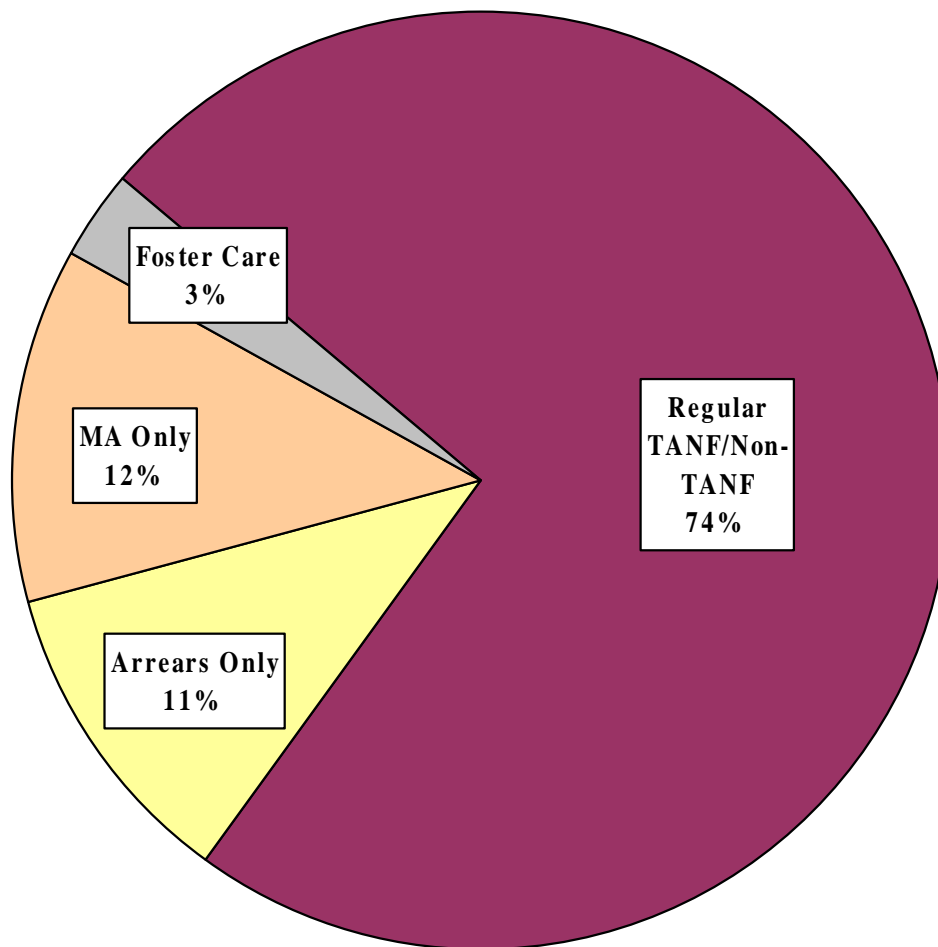
The majority of the caseload is located in Prince George's County and Baltimore City.



Percentages are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005.

MARYLAND'S CASELOAD

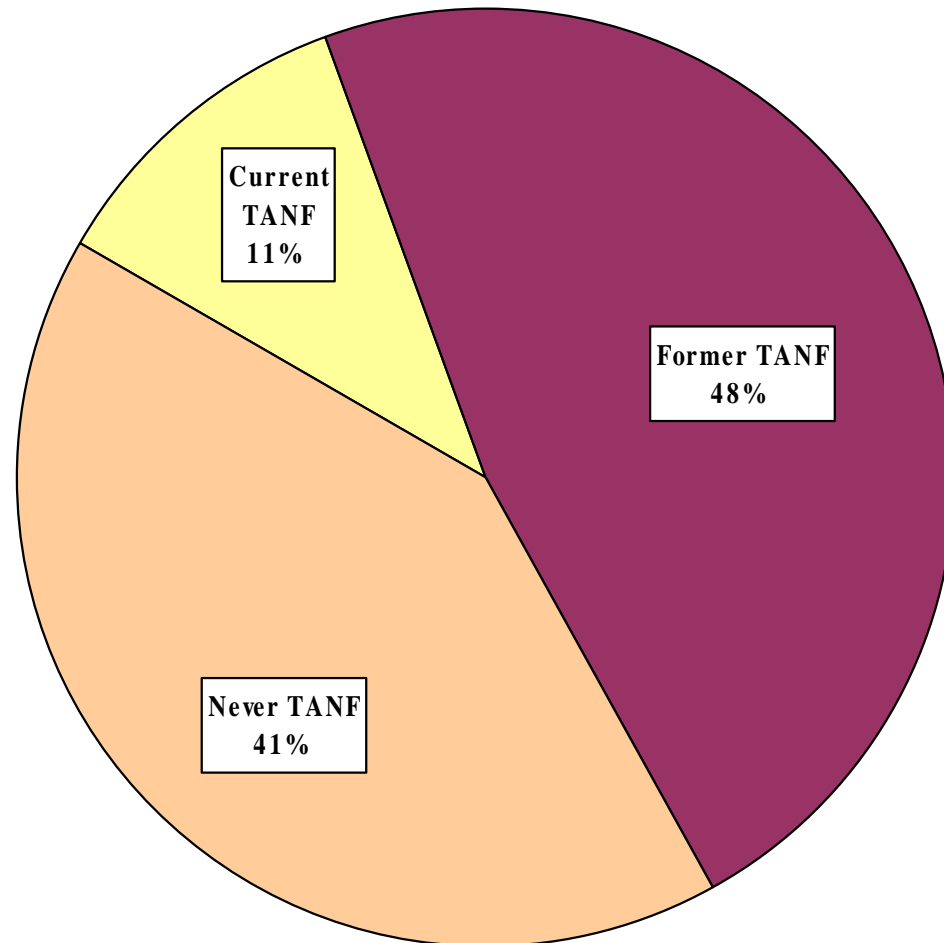
About 1 out of 4 cases are Foster Care, Medical Assistance, or Arrears Only cases.



Percentages are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005.

MARYLAND'S CASELOAD

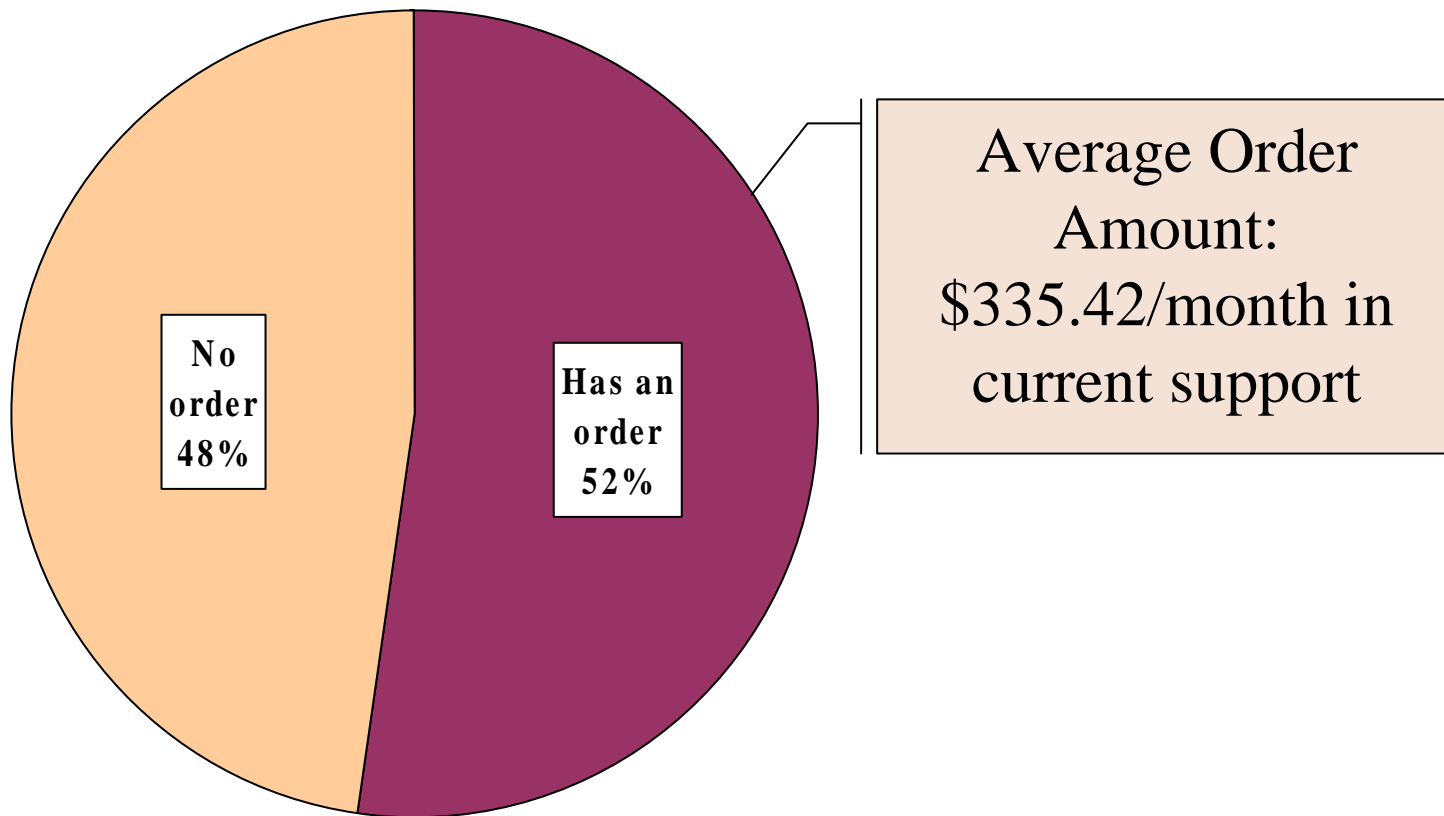
About 3 out of 5 custodians have received TANF in the past, or are currently receiving TANF.



Percentages are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005.

MARYLAND'S CASELOAD

One-half of all cases have a current support order established, with an average order amount of about \$300 per month.



Percentages and means are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005, and do not include arrears orders or other types of orders.



CUSTODIANS AND CHILDREN

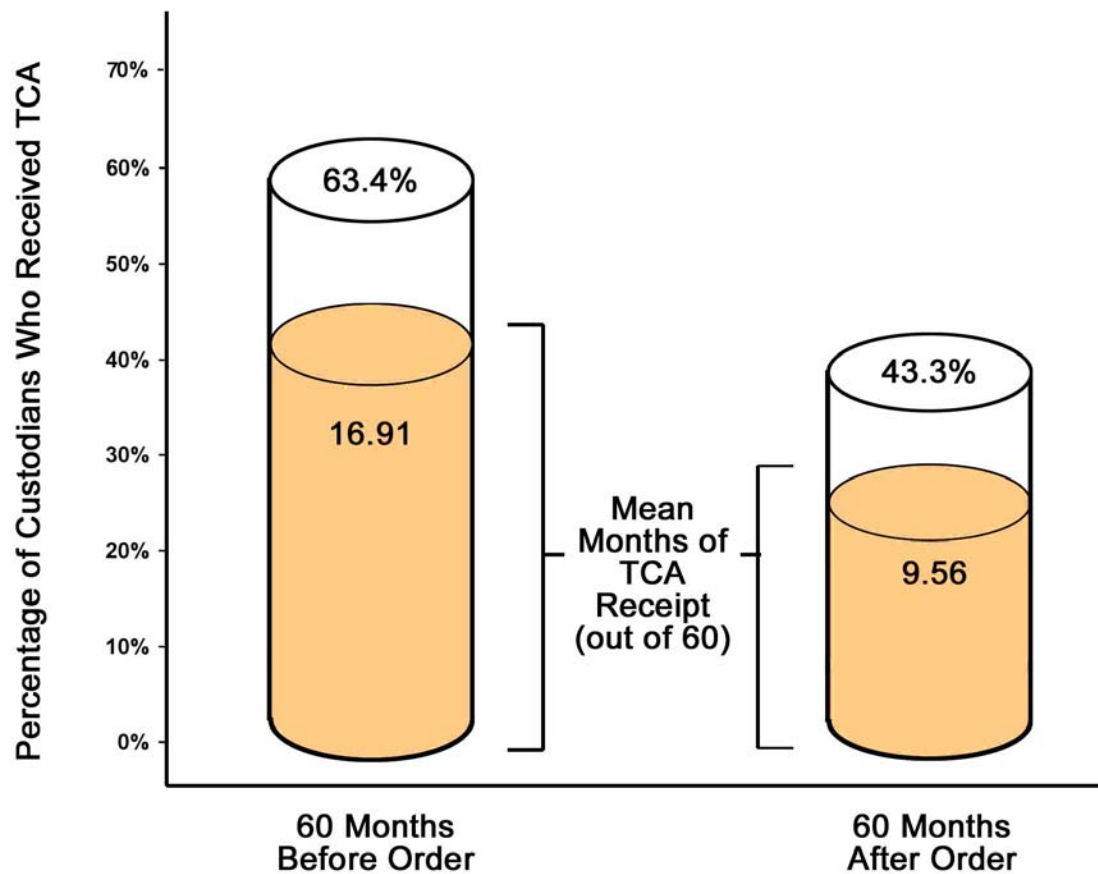
CUSTODIANS

- **9 out of 10** are female (93.0%)
- **Mid-thirties**, on average (36.6)
- **1 in 10 with an order** live out of state (9.7%)



CUSTODIANS

TANF receipt declines in the years following child support order establishment.



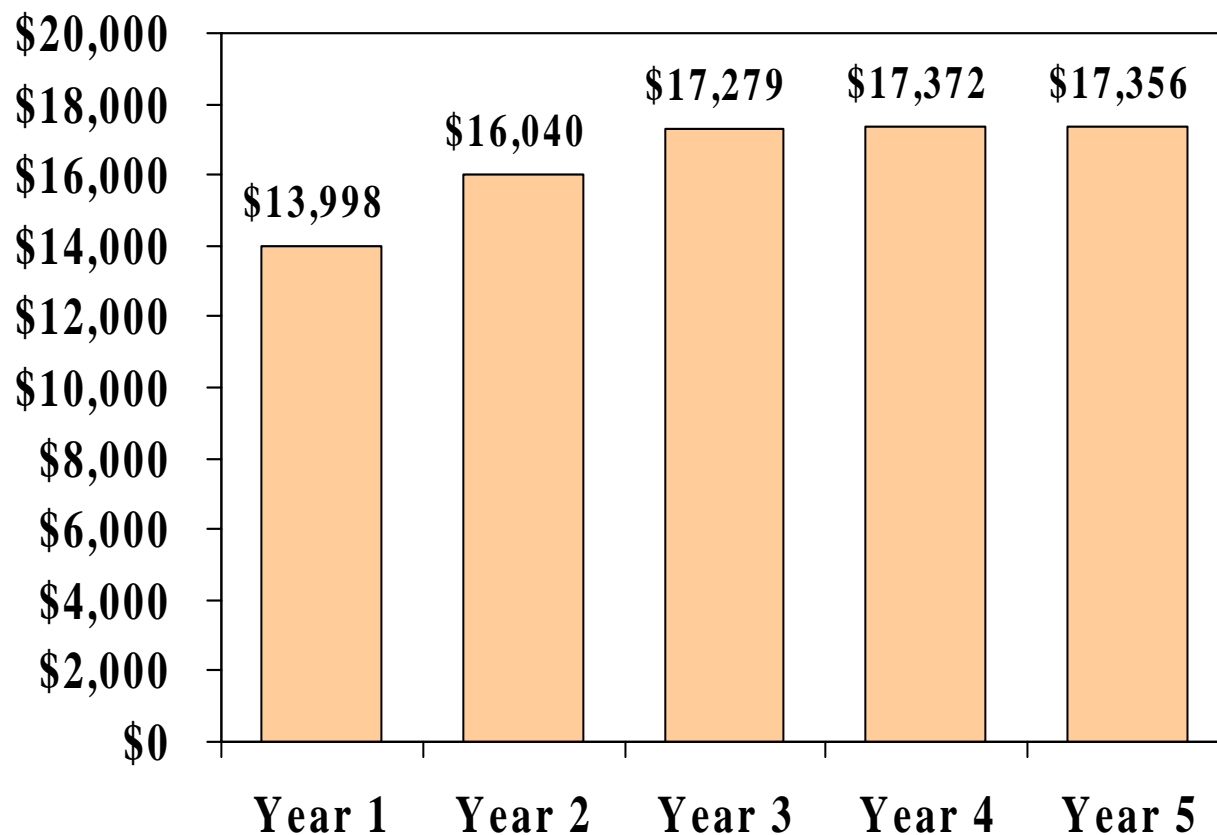
CUSTODIANS

In the year before order establishment*:

- 67.4% employed in MD
- Worked 3 out of 4 quarters, on average
- Earned \$3,659.98 per quarter, on average
- Earned \$13,089.46 for the year, on average

CUSTODIANS

Average earnings increase in the years following child support order establishment.



Means are based on a random sample of cases with new current support orders established between Jan. 1999 and Dec. 2001; Excludes data from other states, federal government, and other non-UI-covered employment; Wages standardized to 2004 dollars.

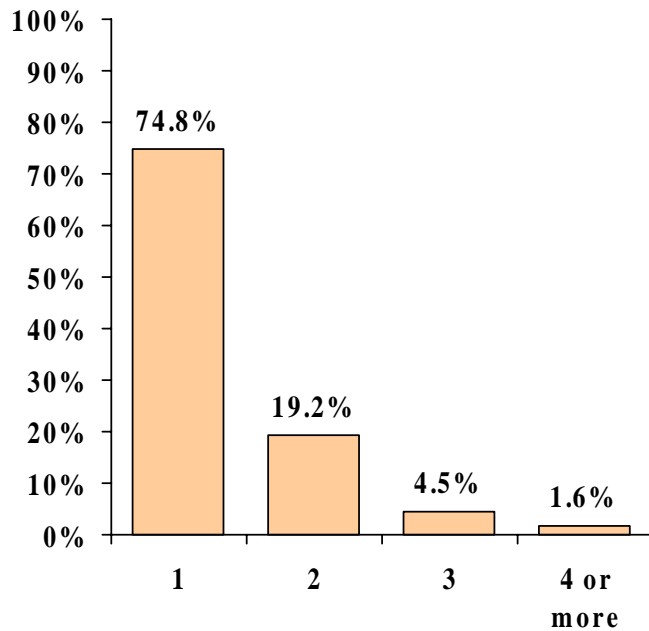
CUSTODIANS

“For every \$1.00 of child support paid to the mother, her income increases by \$1.89.”

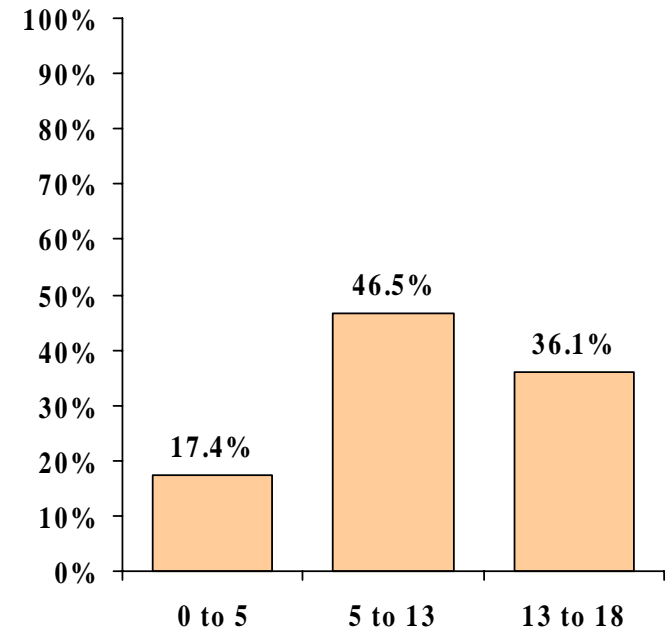


CHILDREN

- **50.8% Male, 49.2% Female**



Average # of Children
per Case: 1.3



Average age: 10.4 years

CHILDREN

“Among families receiving support in 2001, families below poverty received an average of \$2,500 in support, or 30 percent of total family income.”



CHILDREN

\$1,000 of Child Support vs. \$1,000 of other income

- Child Support is more likely to raise a child's GPA.
- Child Support is more likely to reduce problems at school.



CHILDREN

- **Children's receipt of child support is related to:**
 - Higher standardized test scores
 - Higher grades
 - Higher teachers' rating
 - Graduation from High School
 - More years of education completed
 - Less misbehavior at home or school
 - Less aggression and delinquency





NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

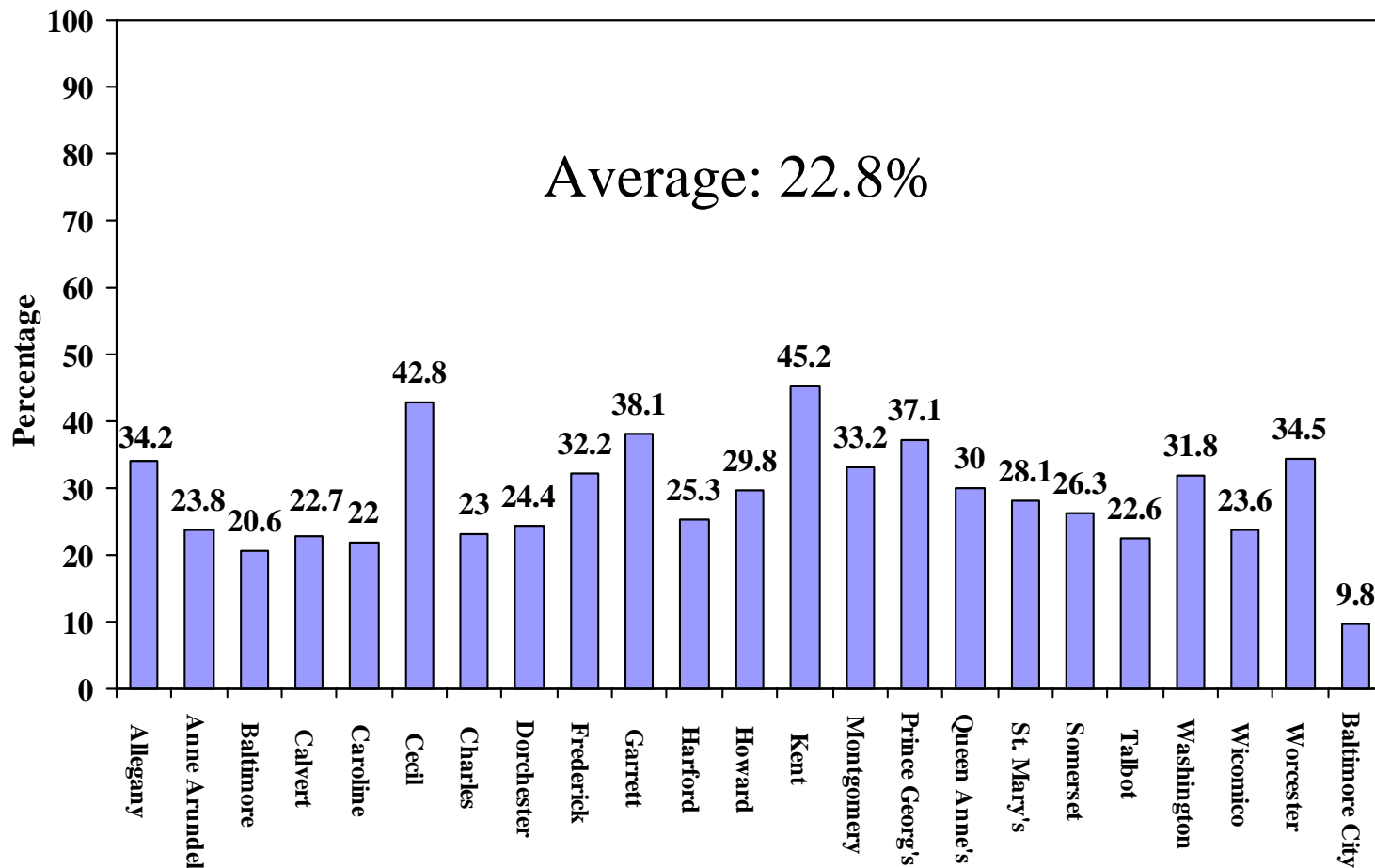
- **9 out of 10** are male (89.9%)
- **40 years old**, on average (38.8)
- **Less than 1 in 20** are incarcerated when their order is established (3.0%)
- **1 in 10** were previously incarcerated (10.0%)



Gender and Age figures are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005 and Incarceration figures are based on a random sample of non-custodial parents in an active child support case in Maryland in September 2004, with data from Maryland state prisons and the Baltimore City Detention Center, but not County jails.

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Approximately 1 in 5 NCP's live outside of Maryland, but this varies by jurisdiction.



Percentages and are based on a random sample of *active* child support cases in July 2005.

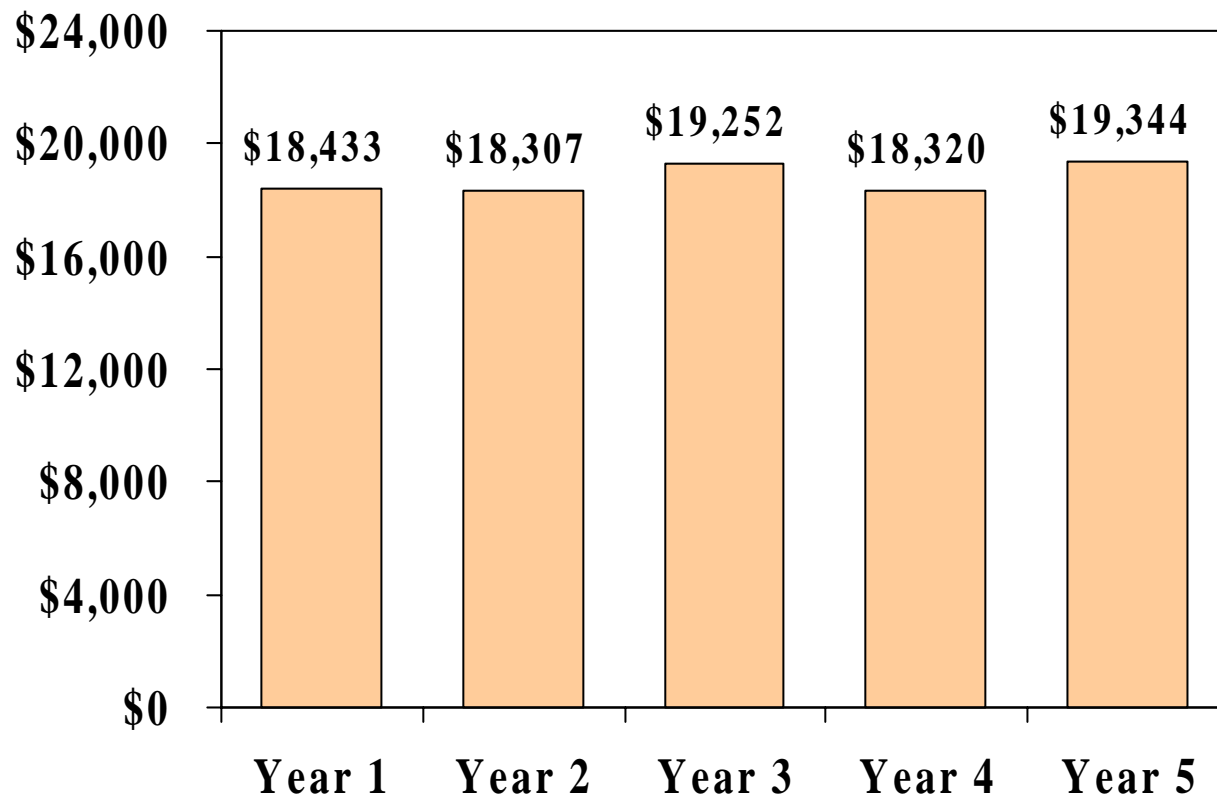
NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

In the year before order establishment:

- 71.1% employed in Maryland
- Worked 3 out of 4 quarters, on average
- Earned \$4,655.64 per quarter, on average
- Earned \$16,369.20 for the year, on average

NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS

Average earnings remain relatively flat in the years following child support order establishment.

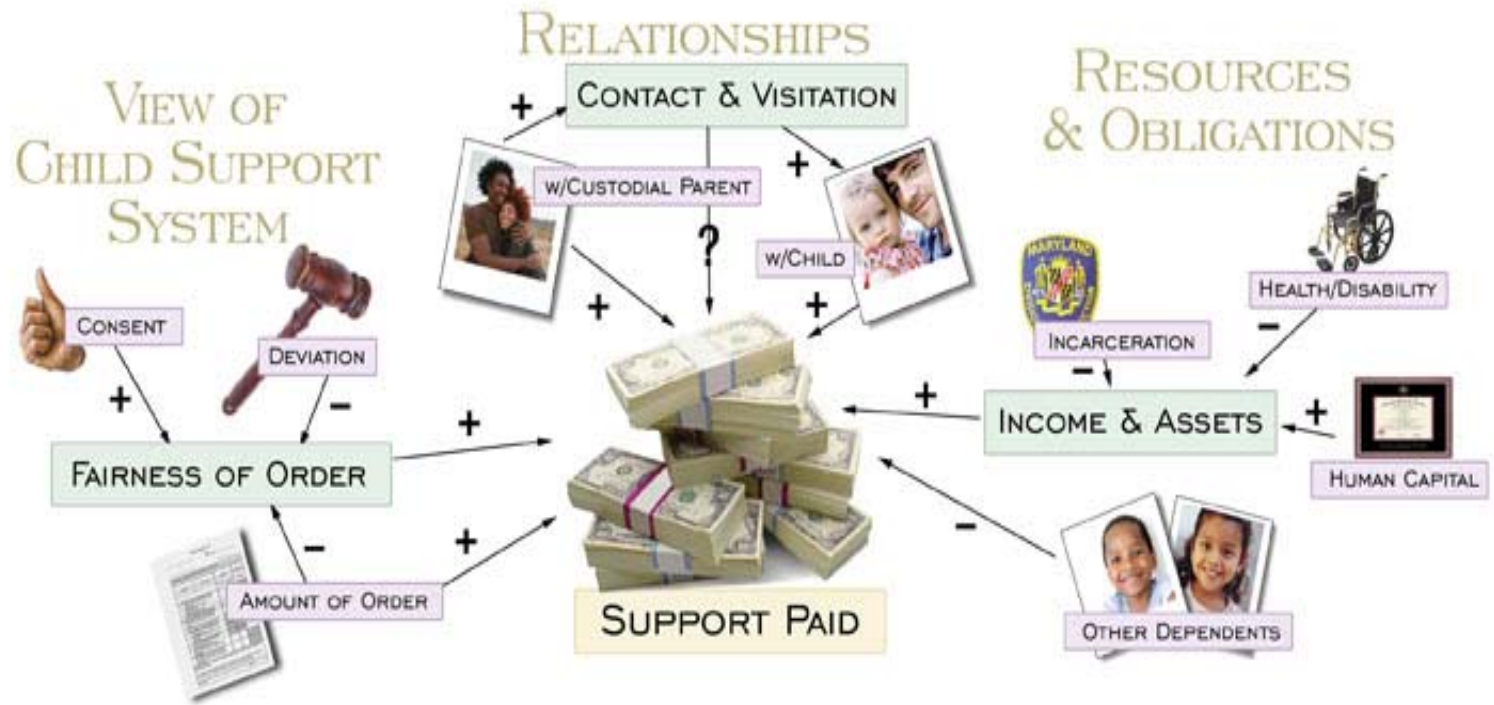


Percentages and means are based on a random sample of cases with new current support orders established between Jan. 1999 and Dec. 2001; Excludes data from other states, federal government, and other non-UI-covered employment; Wages standardized to 2004 dollars.



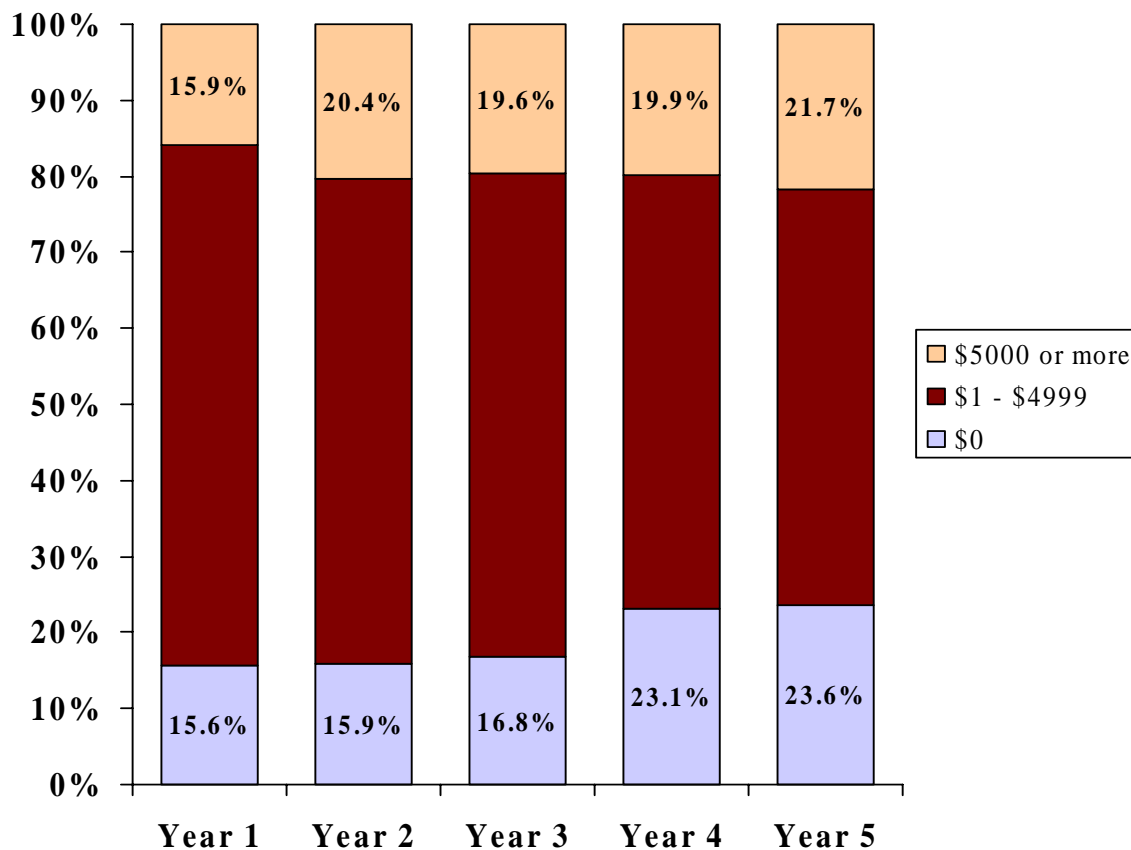
PAYMENTS PATTERNS AND ARREARS

FACTORS AFFECTING CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS



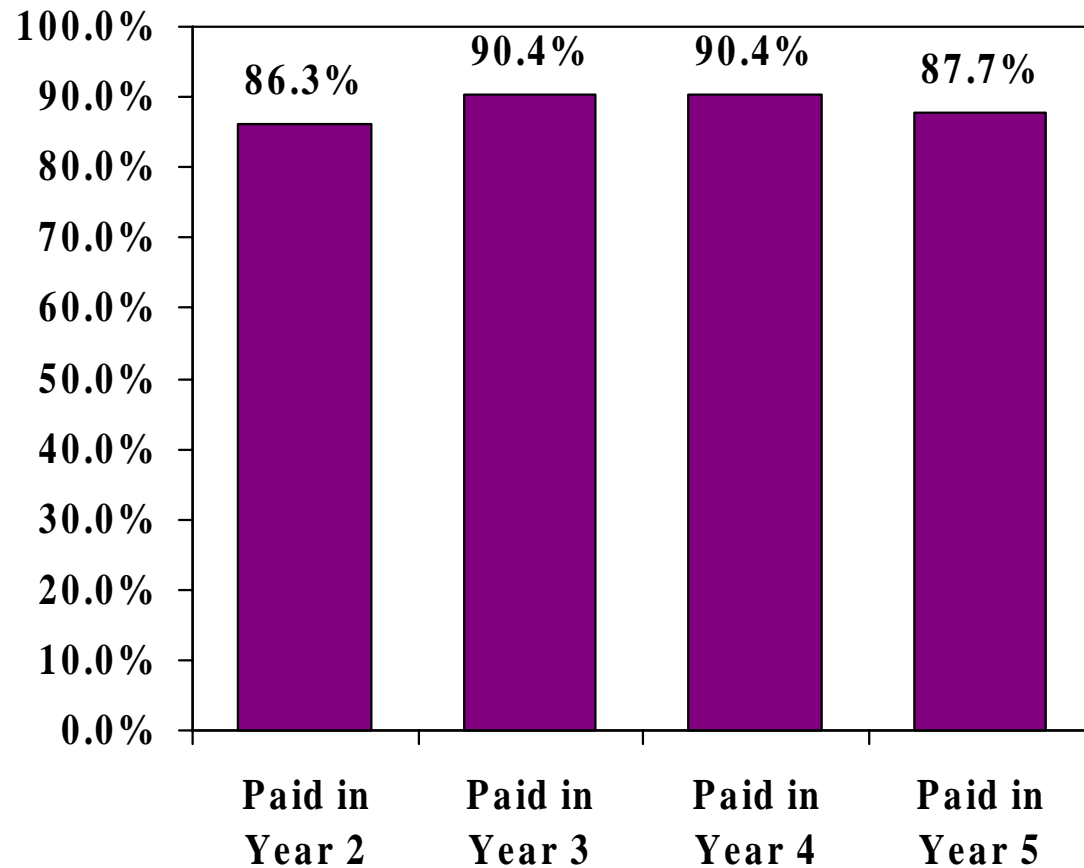
TOTAL CHILD SUPPORT PAID

Over time, the % of obligors paying \$5,000 or more increases, but so does the % paying \$0; Most obligors pay some support.



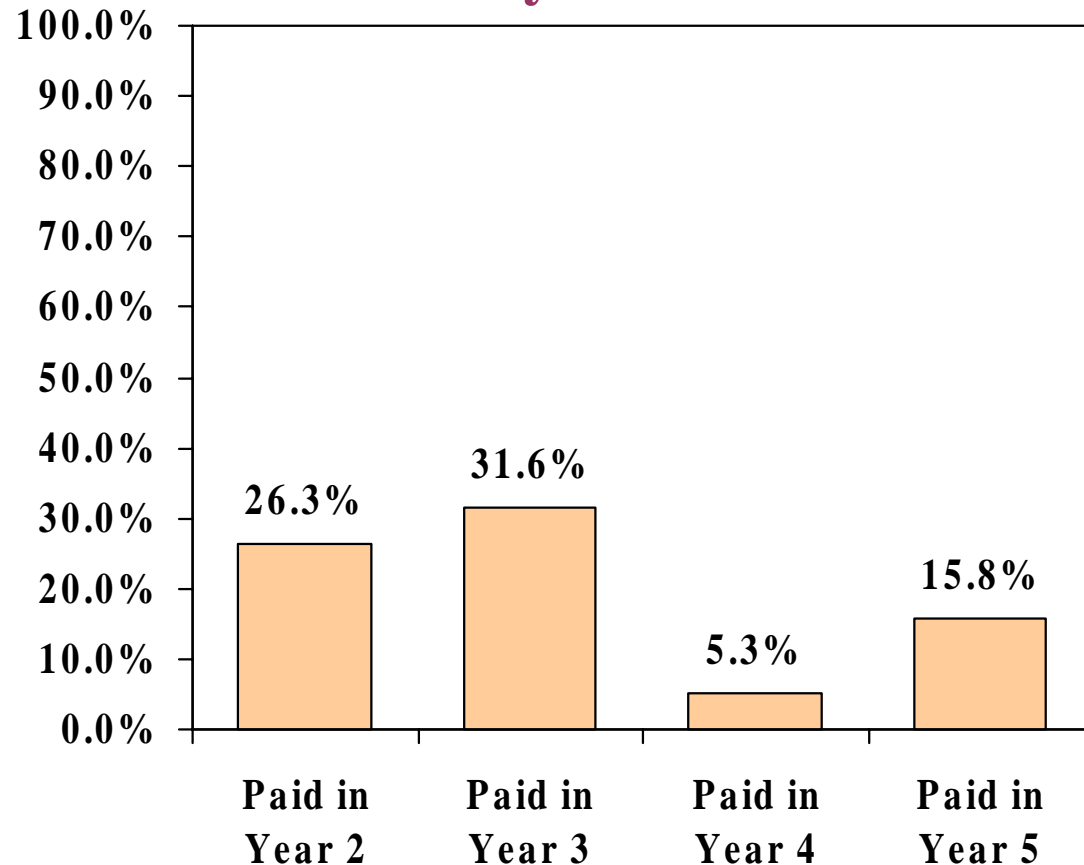
PAYERS & NON-PAYERS OVER TIME

Those who paid something in the 1st year after order establishment also paid in subsequent years.



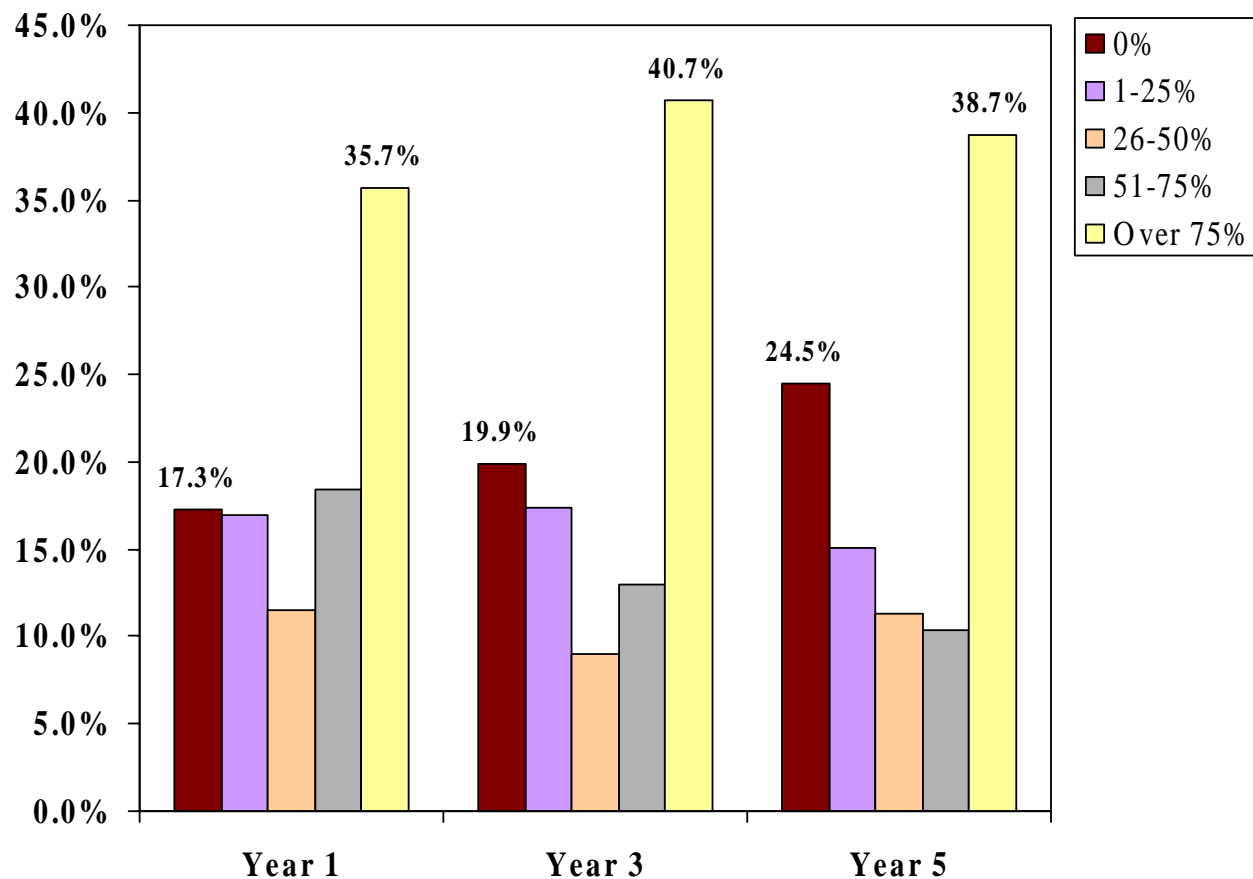
PAYERS & NON-PAYERS OVER TIME

Those who paid nothing in the 1st year after order establishment also paid nothing in subsequent years.



COMPLIANCE

The portion of obligors paying over 75% of their child support obligation increases over time, but so does the portion paying 0%.



COMPLIANCE

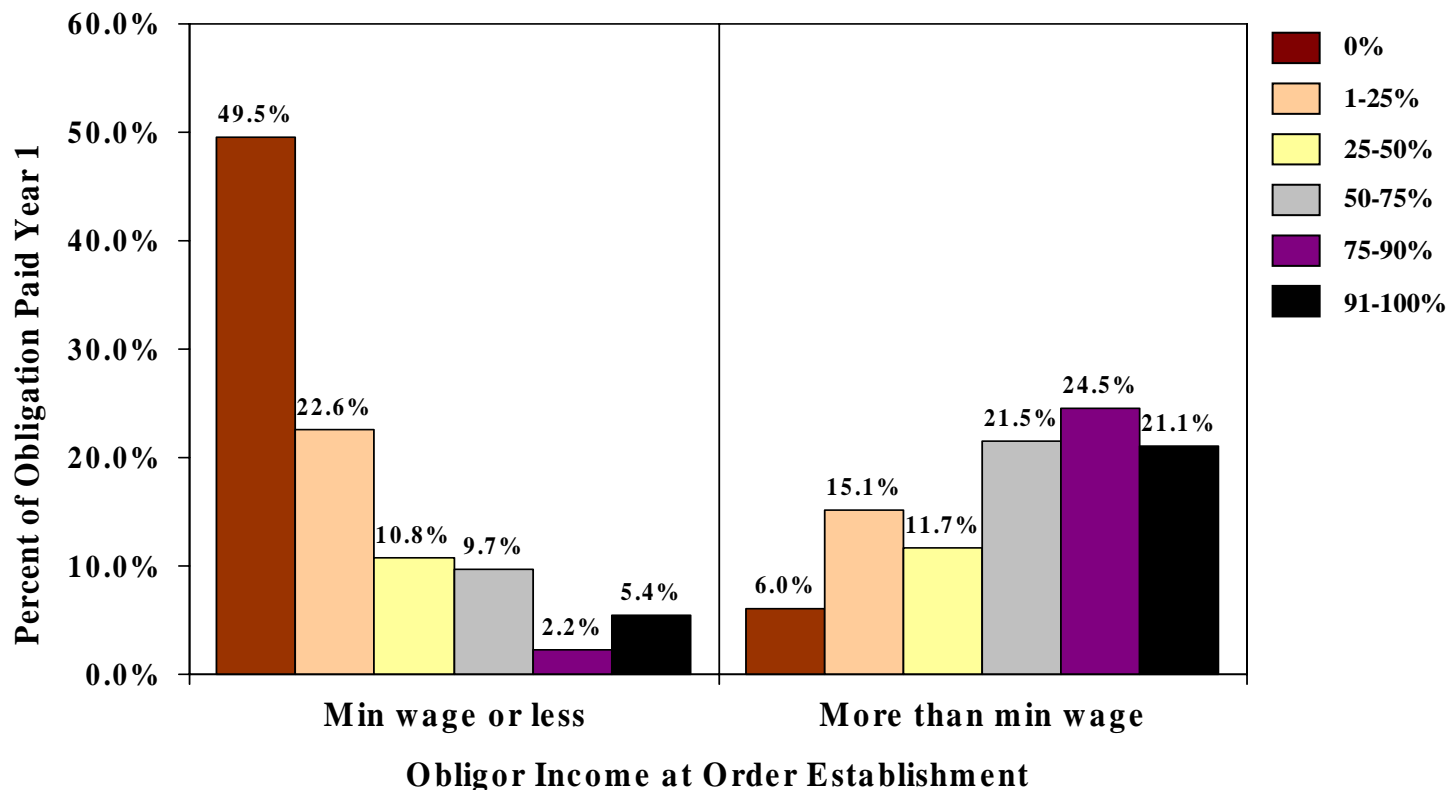
“Of the 1 million poor nonresident fathers paying child support, a quarter pay more than 50 percent of their gross income in support...”³



³Sorensen, E. (2002). *Helping poor nonresident dads do more*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved 9/18/06 at: <http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=310480>.

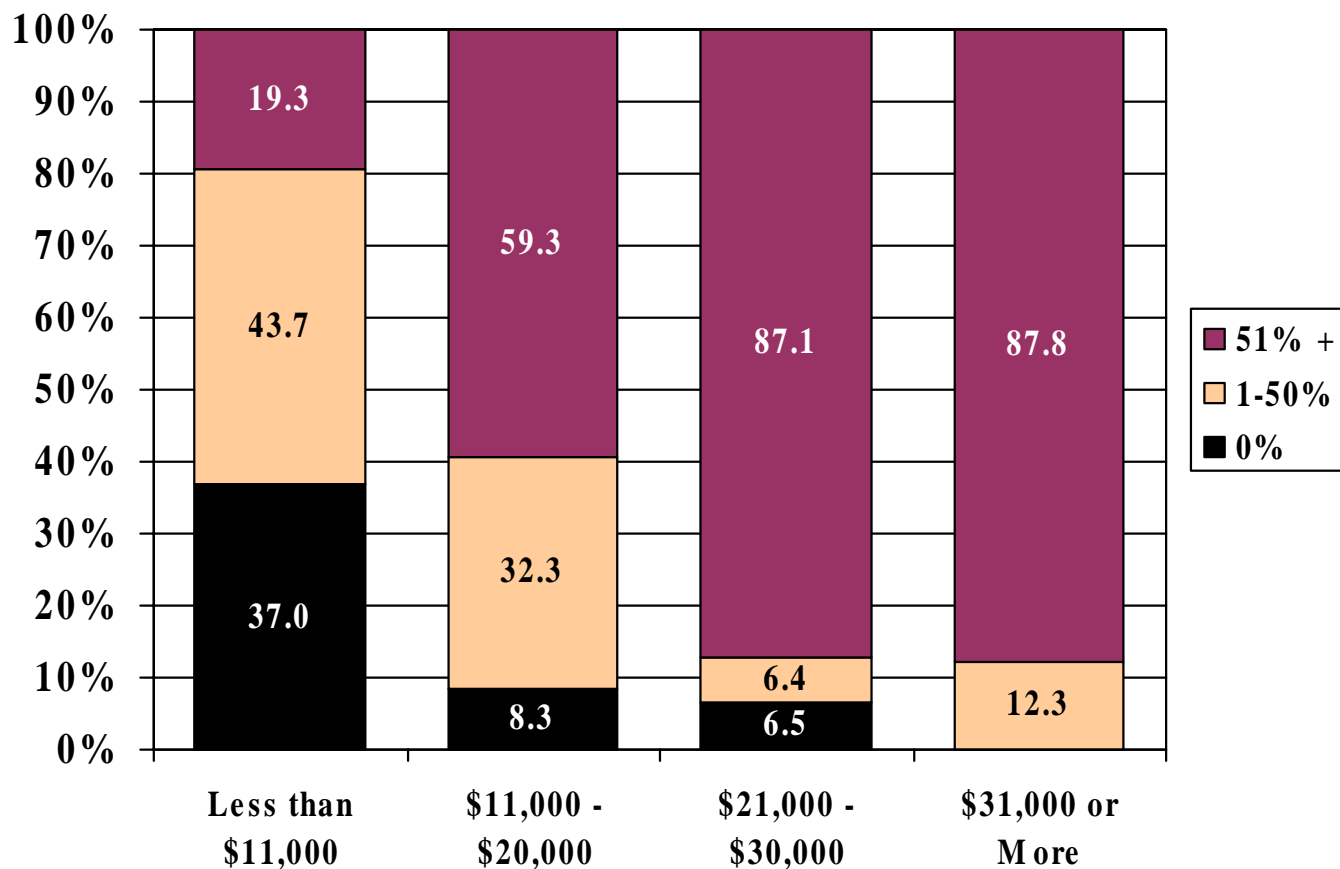
COMPLIANCE

Half of obligors with a monthly income of minimum wage or less pay no support in the first year.



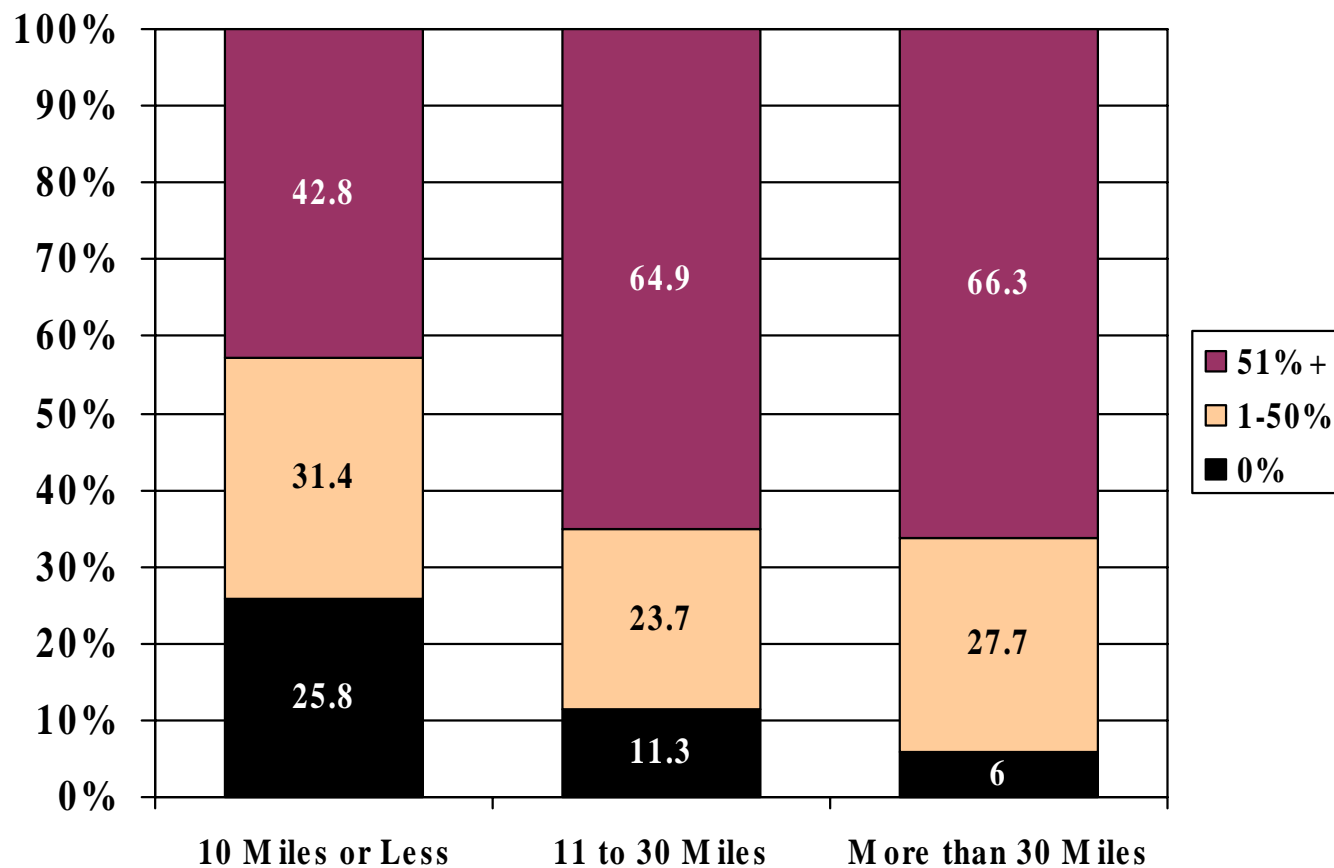
COMPLIANCE

As earnings increase, so does the likelihood of paying over 50% of the current support obligation.



COMPLIANCE

As the distance between obligor and custodian addresses increases, so does the likelihood of paying over 50% of the current support obligation.



ARREARS

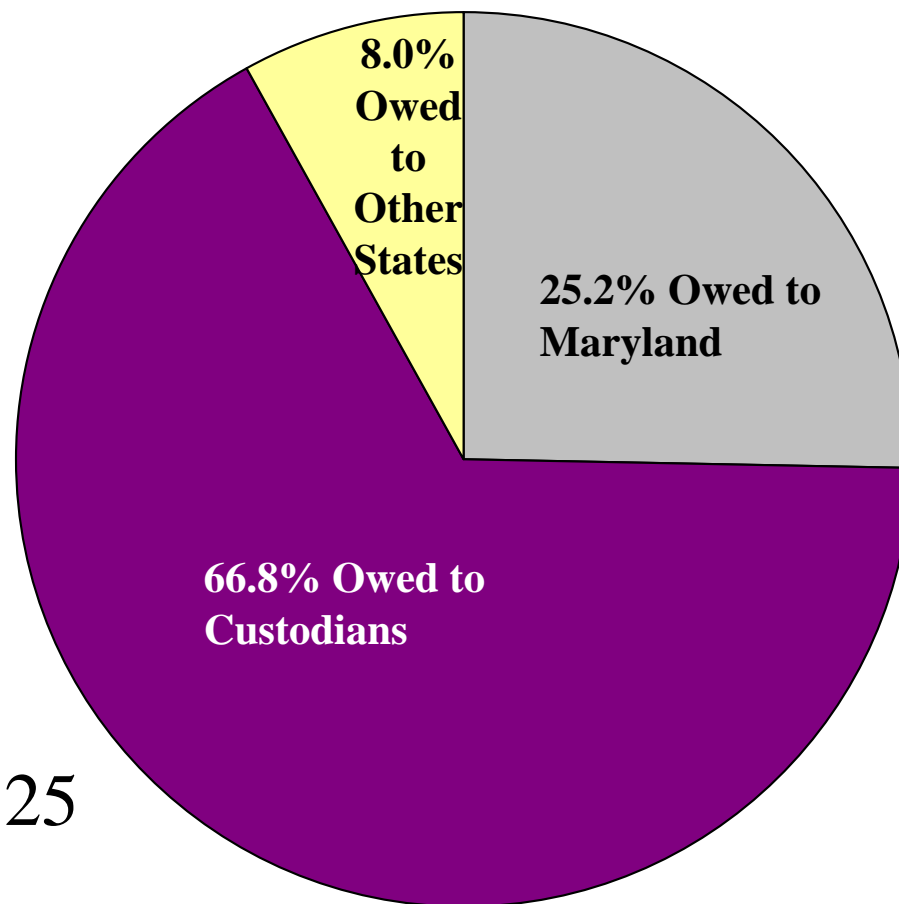
Most child support arrears are owed to custodians.

Custodians:
\$994,273,184

Maryland:
\$376,248,007

Other States:
\$119,573,334

Total:
\$1,490,094,525



Percentages and amounts are based on the universe of active or suspended child support cases in Maryland in September 2005 with an arrears balance greater than \$0.



INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES

ARREARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

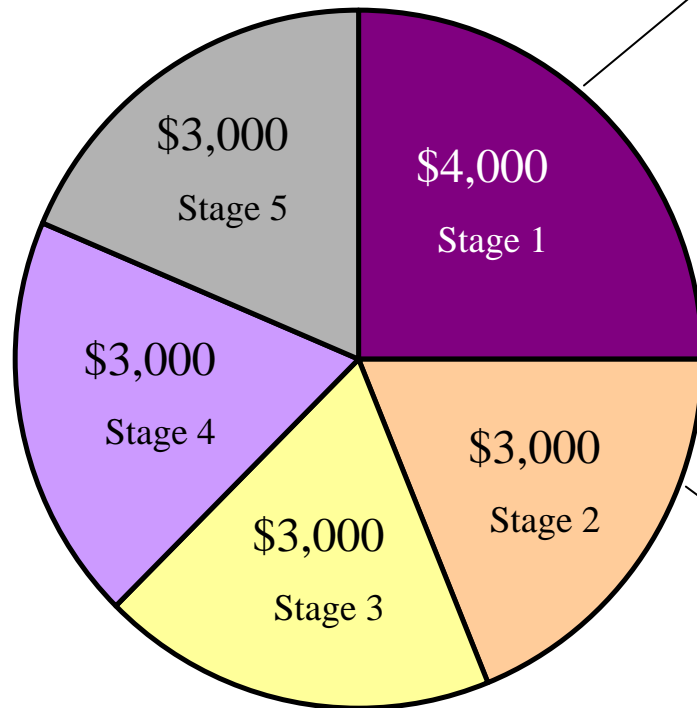


- **Forgiveness of state-owed arrears for NCPs who:**
 - Had at least one current/active child support case **in Baltimore City** with a **state-owed arrears** balance between November 2000 and March 2004; and
 - Successfully completed and was referred by an **employment program** offered through one of six local community-based organizations (CBOs); and
 - Regularly met **current support** obligations.

ARREARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

Example:

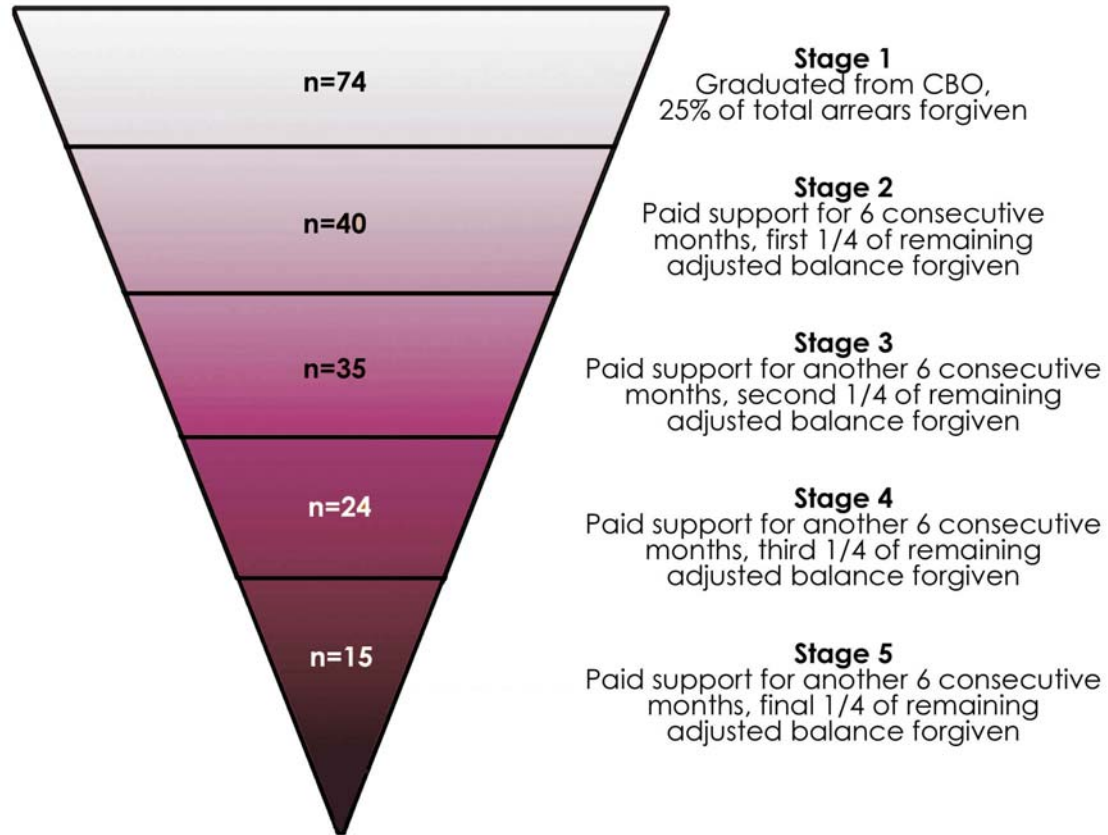
Total Obligation of \$16,000



25% of Original Balance forgiven upon completion of employment program through a CBO

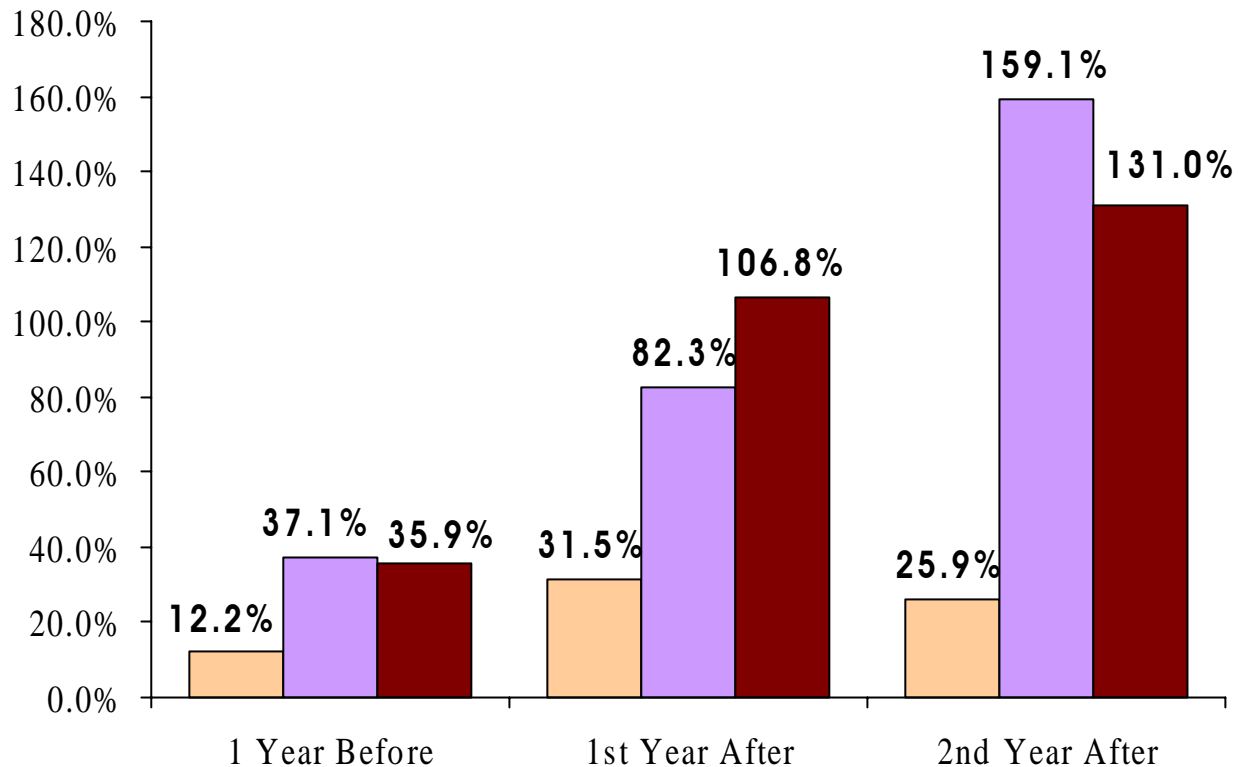
1/4 of Remaining Balance forgiven for each six consecutive month-period of current support payments

ARREARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM



ARREARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

The % of child support paid per year was highest among those who continued in the program.

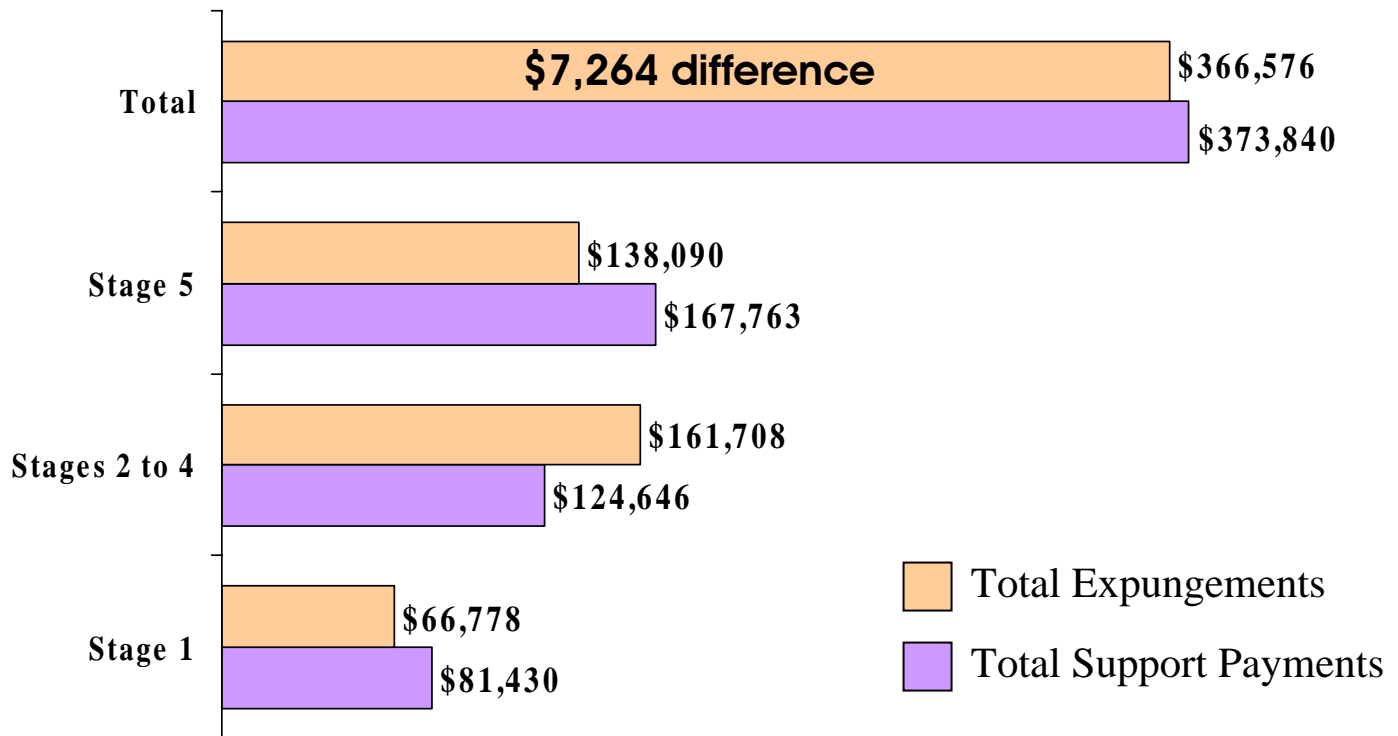


Stage 1 Participants Stages 2, 3 & 4 Participants* Stage 5 Participants

For methodological details, please see our report *Arrears Leveraging Pilot Project: Outcomes Achieved & Lessons Learned*, available at www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu

ARREARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

More child support was collected than was forgiven.



ARRAARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

Lessons Learned

- It is highly recommended that any project include:
 - An employment services component;
 - Designated liaisons; and
 - Carefully considered criteria for program eligibility.



ARRAARS LEVERAGING PILOT PROGRAM

Lessons Learned

- Implications of using other enforcement actions
- Possible need for support order modifications
- Non-payers can become payers through creative approaches



EARLY INTERVENTION

- Goal is to engage non-custodial parents so that they pay their child support obligations in full and on time.

Before

- *Establishment
- *Delinquency
- *Intervention

After⁴

- *Establishment
- *Intervention
- *Payment



⁴Clark, J. (2005). Early Intervention Program in Pennsylvania's Montgomery County. *Child Support Report*, XXVII(9), p.6

EARLY INTERVENTION

- **In Maryland, 4 counties began an early intervention project in May 2005:**
 - Howard
 - Montgomery
 - Washington
 - Calvert (Half of caseworkers used new methods, and half did not)



EARLY INTERVENTION

- **Project sites concentrated on the time between when an order is established and the first payment is due.**
 - Encouraged obligors to make first payment at the courthouse when the order is established.
 - Made reminder phone calls before the first payment was due.



EARLY INTERVENTION

- **Some took additional action if the first payment was not received:**
 - In Calvert County, NCPs were sent a court summons.
 - In Montgomery & Washington Counties, non-payers received a notice to appear at an administrative hearing.



EARLY INTERVENTION

Evaluation Design

Jurisdiction	Comparison Group	Early Intervention	Type of Comparison
Howard, Montgomery, Washington, Calvert (EI caseworkers)	New Current Support Orders: 6/1/04 – 5/31/05	New Current Support Orders: 6/1/05 – 5/31/06	Historical
Calvert	New Current Support Orders w/o EI: 6/1/05 – 5/31/06	New Current Support Orders w/EI: 6/1/05 – 5/31/06	Contemporaneous



EARLY INTERVENTION

Outcomes to be Measured

- Percent of obligors making the first payment by the payment due date; and
- Length of time from order establishment to the first payment.



TRIVIA ANSWERS



- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. T | 11. T | 16. T |
| 2. F | 7. T | 12. T | 17. T |
| 3. F | 8. T | 13. F | 18. T |
| 4. T | 9. F | 14. T | 19. T |
| 5. F | 10. T | 15. F | 20. T |



THANK YOU!

**For more information or to read
the full reports, please visit:**

www.familywelfare.umaryland.edu