2018 Sandusky County Child Support Enforcement Agency Annual Report
Mission

The Sandusky County Child Support Enforcement Agency is committed to providing quality services to families through establishing parentage, establishing child support and medical support, enforcing support orders, and collecting and disbursing payments. Our goal is to improve the economic well-being of children who do not live with both parents.

Overview

The Sandusky County CSEA provides services to help ensure that children receive the financial and medical support they are legally entitled to and deserve. By working with both parents, the agency seeks to establish support orders and maintain consistent support payments. Research has shown that when support payments are ongoing, noncustodial parents are more involved in the lives of their children, which results in better outcomes for the children.

More than one million children are involved in the child support program in Ohio. In Sandusky County, 6,646 children were involved in the program in 2018.

Services

The services provided by the Sandusky County CSEA include:

- Location of non-custodial parents
- Paternity establishment
- Establishment and enforcement of financial and medical support orders
- Collection of child support obligations
- Review and possible modification of support orders

The Sandusky County CSEA operates a call center for handling customer inquiries. The call center received 8,990 calls in 2018.
The purpose of the Financial Institution Data Match is to identify financial accounts belonging to obligors who are delinquent in their child support payments. These accounts may be subject to “freezing” to prevent withdrawals and transfers, and “seizing” of funds to satisfy arrears of the obligor. In 2018, the Sandusky County CSEA collected $41,951.19 through the FIDM process.

On Site Collections
Sandusky County accepts child support payments at our agency for any Ohio county. We continue to be committed to making the ability to make child support payments as convenient as possible. In 2018, our reception area had 4,148 walk-in customers. A total of $384,479.32 was collected at our front desk.

The CSEA cannot control how the child support money collected is spent.

Child Support calculations are not arbitrary. A standard worksheet is completed using information from both parties.
Child Support Orders

Support orders can be established through a court or administrative order. Sandusky County has an administrative hearing officer who conducts hearings at the agency. The administrative hearing officer schedules an administrative hearing to determine the amount of child support either parent is to pay, the method of paying that child support, and the method of providing for the child’s health care. To determine the amount of support a parent is required to pay, the hearing officer will use the Ohio Child Support Guidelines. The administrative hearing officer cannot deviate from the amount of support established utilizing these guidelines. Both parents must provide verification of their assets and their incomes for the past six months or provide their most recent income tax returns. In 2018, 119 administrative hearings were held in Sandusky County.

Paternity

Paternity establishment refers to the process of confirming a father-child relationship. This process can occur at any time up until a child turns twenty-three years of age. Either a mother or a father can request that paternity be established. One way to establish paternity is through genetic testing. Currently, the state of Ohio has contracted with a private laboratory to do this testing. In 2018, 67 children and 112 adults completed genetic testing through the Sandusky County CSEA. Paternity was established for 73% (49) of these children based on these tests.
There are various methods of enforcement available to the Sandusky County CSEA. These include both administrative and court actions. Typically, court actions are not taken unless administrative enforcement options have been tried and are unsuccessful. Below are some examples of enforcement options available to the CSEA.

**Employer withholding notices**: a notice sent to an employer requiring that they withhold the child support obligation of the obligor so that it may be distributed to the obligee.

**License Suspension**: suspension of a license is available for motor vehicle operator’s licenses, professional licenses, and recreational licenses when a case is in default.

**Ohio Department of Taxation Tax Offset**: The ODT Tax offset program allows for the interception of an obligor’s state tax refund to help repay child support debt when the arrears are equal to or greater than $150.00.

**Contempt**: a court action taken when an obligor fails to meet their child support obligation. When found in contempt, obligors may be sentenced to serve between 30 and 90 days in jail. This sentence may be purged by complying with specific requirements prior to the jail report date.

**Criminal Non-Support**: when the obligor is $5,000 or more in arrears and has missed 26 or more weeks of child support payments out of 104 consecutive weeks the case may be referred to the Grand Jury for indictment. Those who are indicted may avoid a felony conviction by complying with the requirements of the Pretrial Diversion Program.

In 2018…

500 active cases in which the non-custodial parent had their driver’s license suspended due to failure to pay support as of December 31, 2018.

38 out of 66 obligors found in contempt successfully purged their sentence.

370 contempt hearings were handled by the agency’s CSEA staff attorney.

5 obligors were indicted for felony non-support.

74 criminal non-support hearings were handled by the agency’s CSEA staff attorney.