

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Department: Social Services

HB Section(s): 11.225

Program Name: Child Support Field Staff and Operations

Program is found in the following core budget(s): Child Support Field Staff and Operations

1a. What strategic priority does this program address?

Economic independence for Missourians

1b. What does this program do?

The Department of Social Services Family Support Division collects financial and medical support for children to help ensure children have the financial and medical support of both parents. Children benefit when both parents are involved in their children's lives.

The Family Support Division, Child Support program provides effective services to Missourians and promotes stable, safe, and healthy relationships between parents and children. The responsibilities of the Child Support program include promoting parent involvement at all levels, locating parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing child support and medical support orders, reviewing and initiating modification of support orders, and distributing child support collections. The Child Support program collects an average of \$1.9 million per day.

The Child Support program is also charged with securing private health care coverage information, establishing and enforcing medical support obligations for children, and assisting with efforts to contain MO HealthNet costs by identifying possible third parties liable for medical costs.

Paternity Establishment

Child Support staff provided paternity establishment services for over 4,225 cases in SFY 2020. Establishing legal paternity for children born to a mother who is not married to the child's biological father, is the first step in addressing the social and economic needs of children. FSD contracts with a genetic testing vendor to scientifically determine paternity by providing genetic paternity testing at no cost to clients. FSD may establish a child support order by using administrative process when paternity is presumed (for instance, the child was born of the marriage or genetic testing established a presumption), or legally established by court order, or by affidavit signed by the parents. The resulting administrative order is filed with the circuit court thereby becoming an order docketed by that court.

The goal of the program is to increase the percentage of children for whom paternity is established. Federal studies show that the best time for unmarried parents to acknowledge paternity of their newborn is at the hospital, immediately following the birth of the child. FSD operates an in-hospital paternity program in all of Missouri's birthing hospitals to provide hospital staff with comprehensive training to assist them with offering unmarried parents the option of establishing paternity with the Affidavit Acknowledging Paternity. The program was expanded to include FSD staff being on-site at selected hospitals to obtain affidavits from parents of newborn children. In SFY 2020, 71,725 children were born in Missouri, of which 29,357 were born to mothers who were not married. Of those children born out of wedlock in Missouri, 18,460 had paternity established through the affidavit. In SFY 2020, approximately 96% of all affidavits came directly from birthing hospitals.

If the alleged father does not cooperate with FSD in determining his paternity through genetic tests or affidavit, FSD must use judicial processes to establish paternity and obtain a child support order. FSD staff refer such cases to prosecuting attorneys throughout the state.

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Order Establishment and Modification

Missouri uses an "income shares" model (guidelines) to calculate the amount of child support obligation to be paid in the establishment of an order and the modification of an existing order. The guidelines take into account special circumstances such as daycare expenses, health insurance premiums, other children of the parents, and extraordinary needs of the child or the parents.

Order Enforcement

Child Support staff enforce administrative and/or judicial support orders on over 264,000 cases. An obligor who fails to comply with his/her support order may be subject to a variety of enforcement actions. The division has statutory authority to enforce child support orders through income withholding, state and federal tax refund intercepts, passport denial, driver license suspension, and liens on property/bank accounts. Enforcement tools utilized by the division resulted in a half a billion dollars collected annually from FFY 2004 to 2020. In SFY 2020, 95% of collections were disbursed to the families and the remaining 5% were reimbursed public assistance dollars. Collections from the child support program's enforcement actions have helped families live better lives by providing children with the support they are entitled to.

Customer Service

Child Support experiences a high volume of customer inquiries. In the Spring of 2021, the Family Support Division will transition from a contracted call center to state employees handling child support customer inquiries from employers, custodial parents, and non-custodial parents.

FSD has a website to assist the public in learning more about the division and the services available. Through this website, individuals may apply for child support services online; custodial parents can access an application to receive payments by direct deposit and non-custodial parents can access an application for auto withdrawal of support payments. The FSD website also enables customers to access information regarding payments and balances.

Mediation

The Family Support Division (FSD) contracts for mediation services for divorced or never married eligible parents to resolve parenting disputes and to reduce or eliminate potential emotional trauma to children due to parental conflict. Mediation services are designed to resolve issues relating to parenting time, custody, child support, transportation, health care coverage, and health and safety of the children. The Department of Social Services refers clients for mediation.

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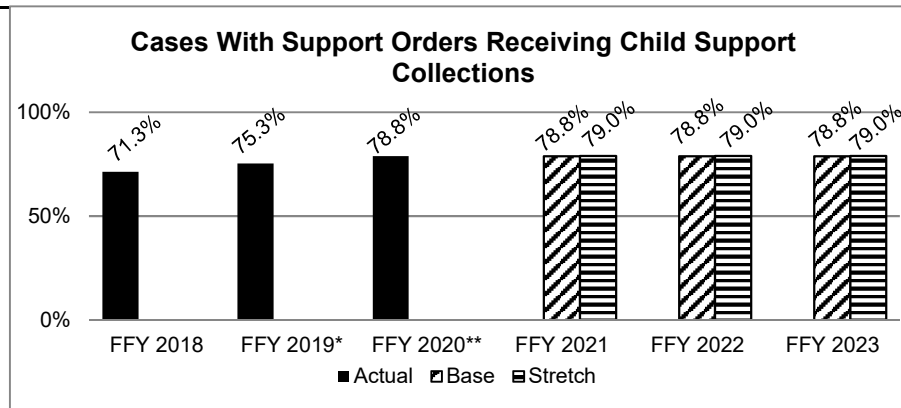
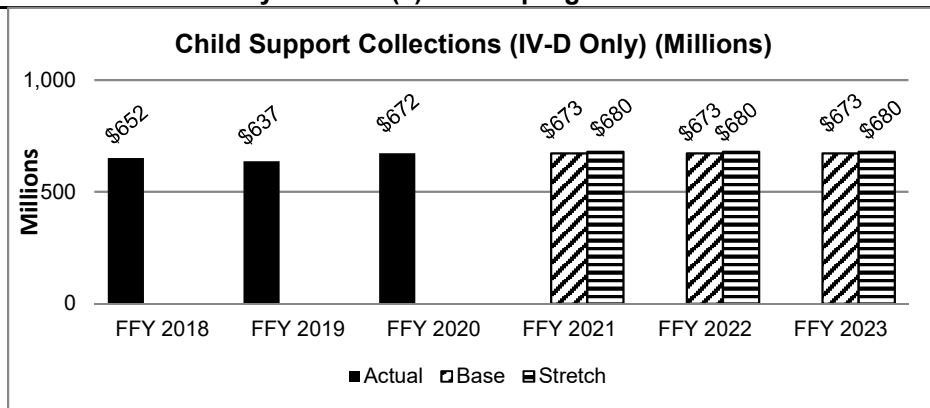
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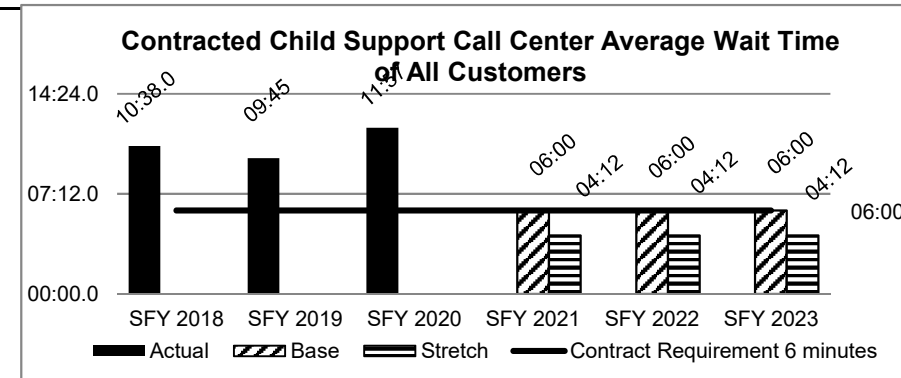
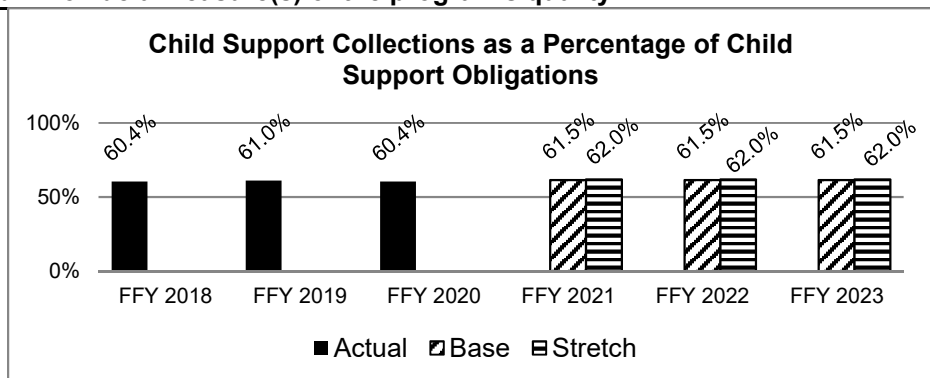
2a. Provide an activity measure(s) for the program.



*FFY 2019 increased with the case closure projects.

**FFY 2020 increased due to receiving collections from stimulus payment and high unemployment collections.

2b. Provide a measure(s) of the program's quality.



Industry standards have indicated that optimal customer service is achieved at the contractual required wait time for allocations of staff in existing contract. In the Spring of 2021, the Family Support Division will transition from a contracted call center to state employees handling child support customer inquiries.

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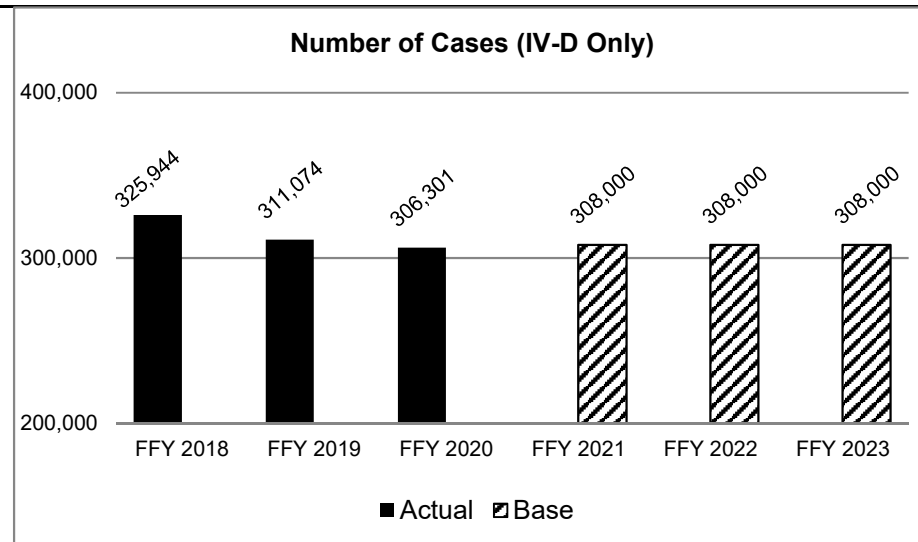
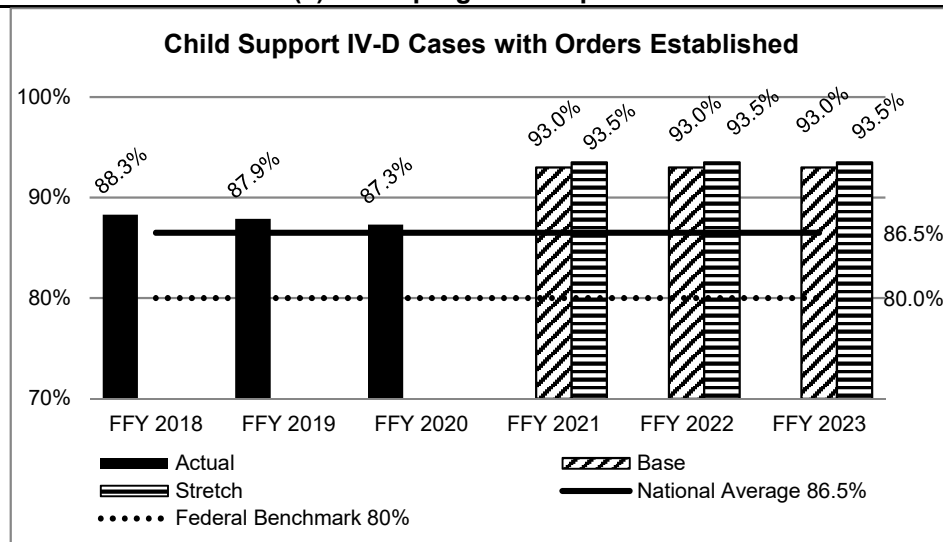
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2c. Provide a measure(s) of the program's impact.



The number of cases is expected to continue to decline due to reduced TANF caseloads and a reduction in incoming TANF applications.

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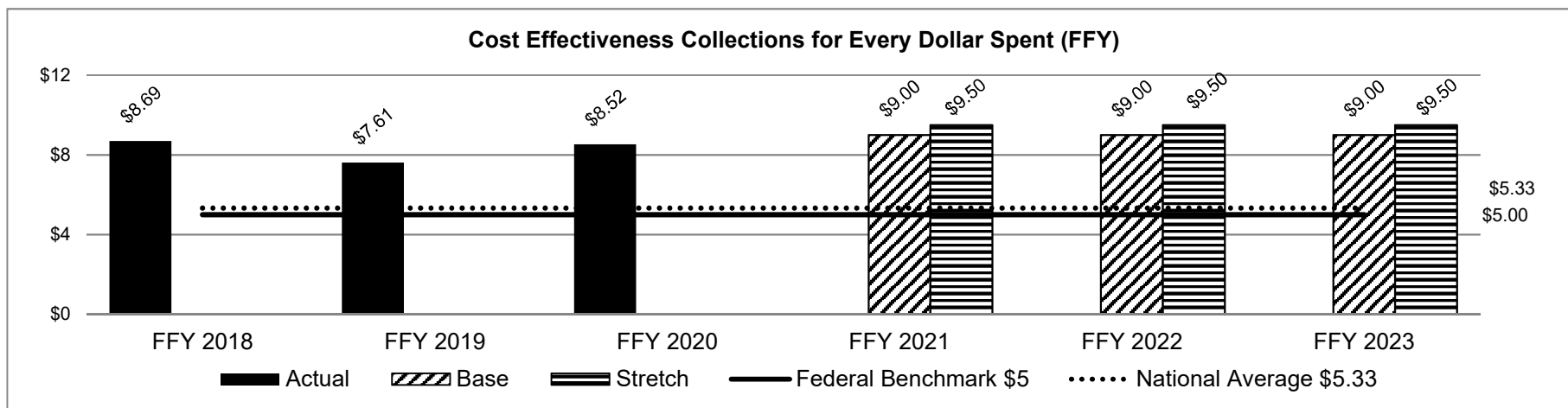
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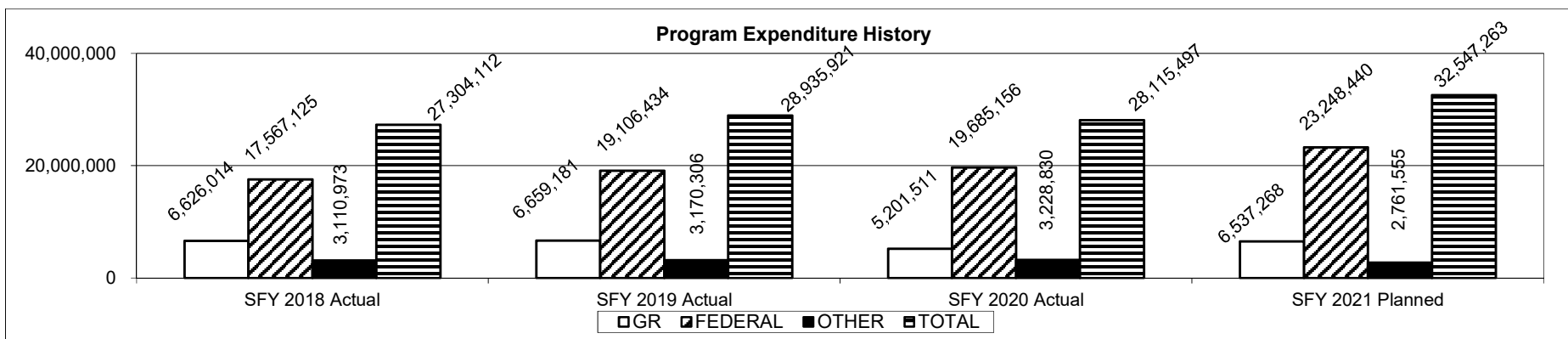
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2d. Provide a measure(s) of the program's efficiency.



3. Provide actual expenditures for the prior three fiscal years and planned expenditures for the current fiscal year. (Note: Amounts do not include fringe benefit costs.)



SFY 2021 Planned expenditures are net of reverted, restricted and reserves.

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4. What are the sources of the "Other " funds?

Child Support Enforcement Collection Fund (0169)

5. What is the authorization for this program, i.e., federal or state statute, etc.? (Include the federal program number, if applicable.)

State statute: Chapters 210 and 454, RSMo. Federal: US Code, Title 42, Chapter 7, Subchapter IV, Part D, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Chapter III

6. Are there federal matching requirements? If yes, please explain.

Yes. This program is funded by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, which requires a 34% state match.

7. Is this a federally mandated program? If yes, please explain.

Yes. Public Law 93-647 (Title IV-D of the Social Security Act), Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Chapter III