



**Comparison of CSPED Participants to National and State  
Child Support Caseloads**

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## **Abstract**

This paper examines the broader child support contexts in which Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) programs were implemented. State and national case-level data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement's annual reports to Congress and participant-level administrative data from the CSPED impact evaluation are used. We compare state-level child support measures for the eight CSPED grantees to each other and to national measures. We find that the grantees included states with a range of characteristics, but that state-level measures are generally comparable to national measures. Child support collections and cost-effectiveness improved for the eight grantees and for the nation as a whole over the CSPED enrollment period. We compare child support measures for CSPED participants to state-level measures, and we find that they are less comparable. We observe higher rates of arrears balances and lower amounts of child support collected at the CSPED level than at the state level. Possible explanations for these differences are discussed.

**I. Introduction**

Many noncustodial parents struggle to meet their child support obligations and, in a given year, less than half of custodial parents with a child support order receive full payments. The increasing incidence of children living in single-parent families, along with the large poverty gap between single- and two-parent families, has contributed to calls to increase noncustodial parents' contributions to their children by strengthening child support policy. The Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED), federally funded through grants awarded to eight state child support agencies (grantees), aimed to identify whether providing enhanced child support, employment, and parenting services to noncustodial parents who were having difficulty meeting their child support obligations could increase child support payment regularity in order to improve child well-being.

The eight grantees selected to implement CSPED (in California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Wisconsin) chose a total of 18 implementation sites, ranging from one county each in Ohio, Iowa, and California to five counties in Colorado (see Table 1). The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) described the target population for CSPED programs as noncustodial parents involved with the child support program who were not regularly paying child support, or who were expected to have difficulty paying, due to lack of regular employment. For the purpose of evaluating the CSPED demonstration, random assignment of noncustodial parents in the target population into the treatment group (extra services) or the control group (business as usual, or regular services) occurred at each of the implementation sites.

**Table 1. National, state, and CSPED-level caseload sizes and available measures**

	Nation	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Caseload and participant totals</b>									
Caseload <sup>a</sup>	15,123,628	1,257,649	153,950	175,078	873,517	200,444	380,648	1,462,517	365,667
CSPED counties	18	1	5	1	1	3	3	2	2
CSPED participants	10,161	1,330	Arapahoe, Boulder, El Paso, Jefferson, Prowers	Polk	Stark	Charleston, Horry, Green	Hamilton, Davidson, Shelby	Bell, Webb	Kenosha, Brown
<b>Unit of analysis for child support measures</b>									
<i>Support orders<sup>b</sup></i>									
Nation/state	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case
CSPED	N/A	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person
<i>Arrears due</i>									
Nation/state	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case
CSPED	N/A	Person	N/A	Person	Person	N/A	N/A	N/A	Person
<i>Collections</i>									
Nation/state	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case
CSPED	N/A	Person	Person	Person	Person	Person <sup>c</sup>	Person	Person	Person
<i>Cost-effectiveness</i>									
Nation/state	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case	Case
CSPED	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

**Source:** Administrative data from CSPED impact evaluation; and national and state-level data from Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

**Notes:**

<sup>a</sup>Caseload totals for FY 2014.

<sup>b</sup>Support orders include cases with arrears-only orders and medical support-only orders.

<sup>c</sup>Child support measures available for 497 of 948 South Carolina participants.

The purpose of this report is to capture the broader child support contexts in which CSPED programs were implemented by providing information regarding the state-level child support characteristics of the eight grantees during the CSPED enrollment period (October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2016). We are particularly interested in comparing (1) state-level child support measures for the eight CSPED grantees to national measures; (2) state-level child support measures for the individual grantees to each other; and (3) CSPED-level child support measures to state-level measures. For the comparisons we draw on state and national case-level data from the Office of Child Support Enforcement's annual reports to Congress and on participant-level administrative data from the CSPED impact evaluation.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 lists the child support measures and their respective units of analysis.

## **II. Comparing State-Level Child Support Measures for CSPED Grantees to National-Level Measures**

To what extent do the eight states that were awarded grants to implement CSPED programs represent a distinct group of states whose child support characteristics differ from the nation as a whole? We begin by comparing state-level child support measures averaged across the eight CSPED grantees to national measures for fiscal years (FYs) 2014, 2015, and 2016.<sup>2</sup>

For the most part, the state-level child support characteristics for the eight grantees that participated in the CSPED demonstration was not particularly different in level or trend from that of the nation as a whole. Nationally, over the three-year period, orders for child support were established for 85 percent of child support cases, arrears were due on 75 percent of cases, and

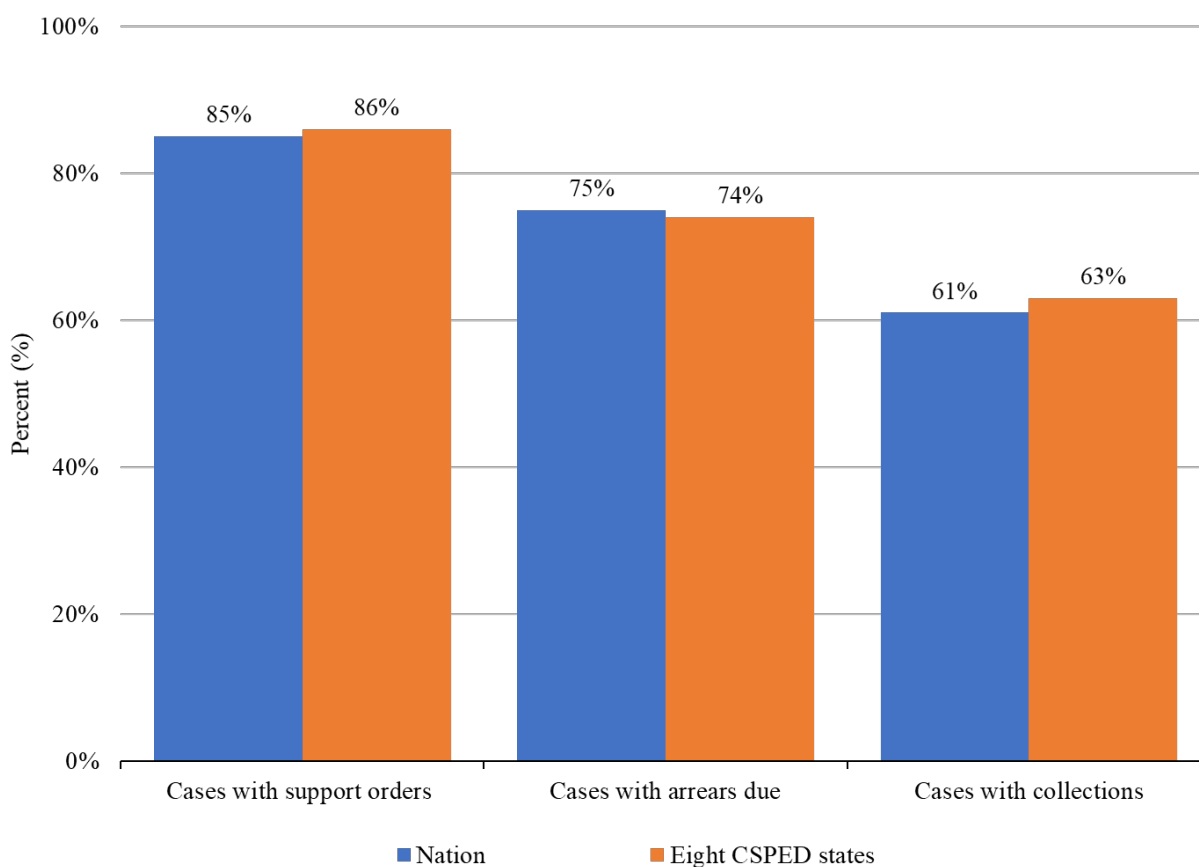
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<sup>1</sup>Using person-level rather than case-level data for CSPED participants would have led us to overestimate the percentages with orders and with arrears balances. Nearly all CSPED participants had at least one case with an order, but those with multiple cases did not necessarily have an order for all of their cases. Similarly, those with multiple cases did not necessarily have arrearages due on all of their cases.

<sup>2</sup>Each fiscal year (FY) begins October 1 of the prior year and ends September 30 of the current year.

collections were made on 61 percent of cases (Figure 1). State-level measures totaled across the eight CSPED grantees and averaged over the three-year period show that orders for child support were established for 86 percent of child support cases, arrears were due on 74 percent of cases, and collections were made on 63 percent of cases (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. National and grantee-state child support caseloads**



**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

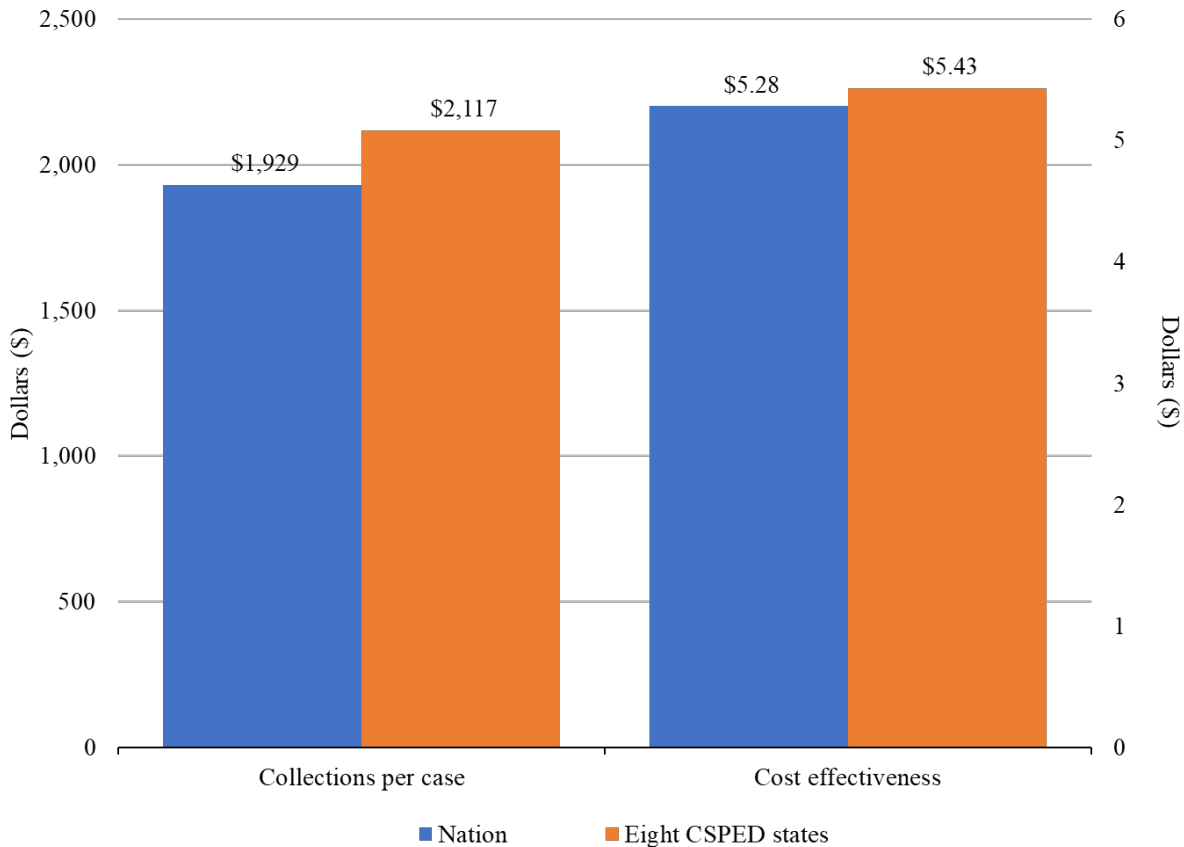
**Notes:** Average of national and CSPED grantee amounts for FYs 2014–2016.

In terms of child support collected, grantee states' child support programs collected more dollars per case compared to the nation as a whole (\$2,117 compared to \$1,929) (Figure 2).

Additionally, although there was great variation across grantees, overall, grantees' programs

were similar to those of the nation in cost-effectiveness: over the three-year enrollment period, CSPED grantees collected \$5.43 for every administrative dollar spent compared to \$5.28 for the nation as a whole.

**Figure 2. National and grantee-state collections and cost-effectiveness**



**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

**Notes:** Average of national and CSPED grantee state amounts for FY 2014–2016. Caseload includes current support, arrears-only, and medical support-only cases.

National-level measures from the three-year CSPED enrollment period indicate relatively stable patterns in the percentages of cases with orders established, with arrears due, and with collections (Table 2). For example, in FY 2014 child support programs collected child support on 60 percent of cases, and in FY 2016 child support programs collected child support on 62 percent

of cases. Although a few individual grantees showed more variability, the state-level patterns for the eight grantees mirror the national-level patterns with slight increases in the percentages of cases with orders established and with collections over the three-year period.

The dollars collected per case by states' child support programs also increased between 2014 and 2016 (Table 2). Nationally, collections amounted to \$1,865 per case in FY 2014 and \$1,986 per case in FY 2016. The eight grantees' programs collected \$2,068 per case in FY 2014 and \$2,162 per case in FY 2016. Child support programs' cost-effectiveness also improved over the three years. Nationally, \$5.25 was collected for every administrative dollar spent in FY 2014 and \$5.33 for every dollar spent in FY 2016. For the eight grantees, \$5.33 was collected for every administrative dollar spent in FY 2014 and \$5.51 for every dollar spent in FY 2016. However, individual grantees showed more variability in cost-effectiveness from year to year (as will be discussed in the next section).



**Table 2. National and Grantee-State Caseloads, Collections per Case, and Cost-Effectiveness, FYs 2014–2016**

FY	Nation	CSPED grantee states
<b>Cases with support orders</b>		
2014	84%	86%
2015	86	86
2016	86	87
Average	85	86
<b>Cases with arrears due</b>		
2014	75%	74%
2015	76	74
2016	76	74
Average	75	74
<b>Cases with collections</b>		
2014	60%	62%
2015	61	63
2016	62	63
Average	61	63
<b>Dollars collected per case</b>		
2014	\$1,865	\$2,068
2015	1,937	2,122
2016	1,986	2,162
Average	1,929	2,117
<b>Cost-effectiveness ratio</b>		
2014	\$5.25	\$5.33
2015	5.26	5.46
2016	5.33	5.51
Average	5.28	5.43

**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

**Note:** The caseload totals used to calculate caseload percentages are shown in Appendix Table 1. Total distributed collections and total administrative costs used to calculate cost-effectiveness are shown in Appendix Table 2.

### III. Comparing Child Support Measures across Grantees

To what extent did the characteristics of each grantee state’s child support program differ from the other grantees? Did particular grantees have higher overall levels of characteristics? Did some show greater improvements over the study period than others did? In this section, we compare each of the eight CSPED grantees on their state-level child support outcomes.

In terms of state-level child support characteristics, South Carolina had the lowest percentage of cases with orders established (81 percent on average), while Iowa had the highest percentage of cases with orders established (91 percent on average); see Table 3. In addition to Iowa, California, Colorado, Ohio, and Wisconsin were above the national average for the percentage of cases with orders, whereas Tennessee and Texas (in addition to South Carolina) were below. Tennessee showed the most improvement in the percentage of cases with orders established. The percentage increased by three percentage points over the period (from 81 percent in FY 2014 to 84 percent in FY 2016). California, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, and South Carolina also showed improvements over time, whereas Texas and Wisconsin stayed the same (83 percent and 87 percent, respectively).

**Table 3. Eight CSPED-state caseloads, fiscal year 2014–2016**

Fiscal year	Nation	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Cases with support orders</b>									
2014	84%	89%	87%	90%	88%	79%	81%	83%	87%
2015	86	89	89	91	89	82	83	83	87
2016	86	90	89	92	90	81	84	83	87
Average	85	90	88	91	89	81	83	83	87
<b>Cases with arrears due</b>									
2014	75%	72%	88%	78%	74%	75%	74%	74%	74%
2015	76	71	89	79	74	79	76	73	73
2016	76	72	88	79	74	76	77	74	72
Average	75	72	88	79	74	77	76	74	73
<b>Cases with collections</b>									
2014	60%	57%	75%	78%	65%	53%	59%	64%	62%
2015	61	57	77	79	66	57	61	62	63
2016	62	59	77	79	66	57	62	62	63
Average	61	58	76	79	66	56	61	63	63

**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

Turning to state-level performance on arrearages, California had the lowest percentage of cases with arrears due (72 percent on average), while Colorado had the highest percentage of cases with arrears due (88 percent on average). Iowa had the second highest percentage of cases with arrears due (79 percent). Compared to the national average, California, Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin all had fewer cases with arrearages; and Tennessee, South Carolina, Iowa, and Colorado all had more cases with arrears. Between FY 2014 and FY 2016, the percentage of cases with arrears due increased by 3 percentage points in Tennessee and 1 percentage point in South Carolina and Iowa. Conversely, the percentage of cases with arrears due decreased by 2 percentage points in Wisconsin. California, Colorado, and Texas showed no change over the time period.

Finally, considering state-level performance on collections (child support payments), South Carolina had the lowest percentage of cases with collections (56 percent on average) followed by California (58 percent on average). Iowa's program had the highest percentage of cases with collections (79 percent on average), followed by Colorado (76 percent on average). Ohio, Texas, and Wisconsin were also above the national average in cases with collections. Although South Carolina and California fell below the national average, they both showed increases over time (4 percentage points from FY 2014 to FY 2016 for South Carolina and 2 percentage points for California). On the other hand, although Texas was very close to the national average, the percentage of cases with collections declined by 2 percentage points in Texas from 64 percent in FY 2014 to 62 percent in FY 2016.

Comparing child support amounts collected by each of the grantee states, Texas collected the most dollars per case (\$2,551 on average), and South Carolina collected the fewest dollars per case (\$1,409 on average); see Table 4. In addition to South Carolina, California, Tennessee,

and Wisconsin were below the national average for dollars collected per case. However, each of the grantee states' programs collected more dollars per case in 2016 than in 2014. For example, out of all of the grantees, South Carolina collected the fewest dollars per case but had the largest percentage increase in collections per case: from \$1,292 in FY 2014 to \$1,479 in 2016, an increase of 14 percent. Ohio had the smallest increase in dollars collected per case going from \$1,924 in FY 2014 to \$1,964 in 2016, an increase of only 2 percent.

In addition to collecting the most dollars per case, Texas by far had the highest cost-effectiveness ratio with \$11.60 collected for every administrative dollar spent; see Table 4. In addition to Texas, Iowa, Ohio, Tennessee, and Wisconsin were also above the national average in cost-effectiveness. California's child support program was the least cost-effective, with \$2.48 collected per dollar spent, followed by Colorado with \$4.77 collected per dollar spent, and South Carolina with \$4.92 collected per dollar spent. Wisconsin had the largest increase (nearly \$2) in cost-effectiveness during the three-year period.

**Table 4. Eight CSPED-states' dollars collected per case and cost-effectiveness, fiscal year 2014–2016**

Fiscal year	Nation	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Dollars collected per case</b>									
2014	\$1,865	\$1,756	\$2,012	\$1,761	\$1,924	\$1,292	\$1,560	\$2,535	\$1,719
2015	1,937	1,815	2,104	1,801	1,942	1,455	1,628	2,551	1,760
2016	1,986	1,903	2,135	1,834	1,964	1,479	1,649	2,567	1,786
Average	1,929	1,825	2,084	1,799	1,943	1,409	1,612	2,551	1,755
<b>Cost-effectiveness ratio</b>									
2014	\$5.25	\$2.43	\$4.90	\$5.58	\$7.34	\$4.53	\$7.74	\$11.34	\$6.46
2015	5.26	2.51	4.83	5.71	6.31	5.62	7.99	12.26	6.76
2016	5.33	2.51	4.59	5.73	8.25	4.62	7.00	11.21	8.43
Average	5.28	2.48	4.77	5.67	7.30	4.92	7.58	11.60	7.22

**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

**Note:** The numbers for the numerators and denominators used to calculate cost-effectiveness (the ratio of child support collected to administrative costs) are shown in Appendix Table 2.

#### **IV. Comparing Child Support Measures for CSPED Participants to State-Level Measures**

We now turn to comparing child support measures for CSPED participants to grantees' state-level measures. The CSPED-level child support measures differ from the state-level measures in a number of ways. First, recall that the CSPED program targeted noncustodial parents who were not regularly paying child support, or who were expected to have difficulty paying, due to lack of regular employment. As a result, we might expect the percentage of noncustodial parents making child support payments to be lower among CSPED participants compared to noncustodial parents at the state level, and we might expect arrearages to be more prevalent among CSPED participants than at the state level.

Second, in addition to defining a target population, OCSE provided eligibility criteria for enrollment in CSPED including having at least one open, non-interstate child support case (for a detailed description of OCSE-established eligibility criteria, see Noyes, Vogel, and Howard [2019]). Because we would expect orders to be established for nearly all CSPED participants, we would expect that the percentage with orders established to be higher (close to 100 percent) at the CSPED-level than at the state-level.

Third, none of the grantees implemented CSPED statewide, but only in particular counties. These counties may have had different characteristics than the state as a whole (see Table 5).

**Table 5. Select characteristics of CSPED grantee states and counties in 2013**

	Population ( <i>N</i> )	Unemployment rate	High school or higher	Below poverty level	White	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
<b>California</b>	<b>38,414,128</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>81.2%</b>	<b>14.9%</b>	<b>64.5%</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>38.8%</b>
Stanislaus	518,321	12.9	76.4	20.3	76.5	2.8	42.5
<b>Colorado</b>	<b>5,271,132</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>10.6</b>	<b>87.3</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>21.3</b>
Arapahoe	585,333	6.6	91.4	12.1	74.7	10.0	18.4
Boulder	301,072	5.5	93.9	14.2	87.7	0.9	13.4
El Paso	634,423	6.1	93.6	12.4	81.2	5.9	15.4
Jefferson	540,669	8.6	93.7	8.6	90.6	1.0	14.6
Prowers	12,473	6.3	79.2	23.3	93.5	0.3	35.7
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>3,092,224</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>91.0</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>92.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>	<b>5.7</b>
Polk	438,307	7.6	91.1	13.8	91.1	5.3	2.7
<b>Ohio</b>	<b>11,572,232</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>88.5</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>3.6</b>
Stark	375,348	7.1	89.1	15.0	88.8	7.3	1.7
<b>Tennessee</b>	<b>6,496,130</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>84.4</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>79.7</b>	<b>17.8</b>	<b>5.2</b>
Shelby	932,919	8.8	86.0	20.8	41.0	52.3	5.7
Davidson	638,395	5.9	86.4	18.5	62.5	27.7	9.7
Hamilton	340,973	6.1	86.3	16.6	74.9	20.1	4.6
<b>South Carolina</b>	<b>4,768,498</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>84.5</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>69.1</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>5.5</b>
Charleston	358,736	5.9	88.3	18.2	66.3	29.4	5.2
Greenville	459,857	7.9	85.7	15.8	76.6	18.1	8.3
Horry	276,688	7.2	87.7	18.6	80.4	13.6	6.1
<b>Texas</b>	<b>26,500,674</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>81.2</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>38.9</b>
Bell	316,144	6.9	89.5	15.3	66.2	21.3	22.3
Webb	254,829	6.1	64.2	31.4	93.5	0.4	95.5
<b>Wisconsin</b>	<b>5,743,653</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>11.0</b>	<b>88.0</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>6.6</b>
Brown	250,597	6.2	90.4	11.5	88.4	2.3	7.5
Kenosha	166,874	6.2	88.8	14.0	87.4	7.0	12.0

**Source:** State-level unemployment rate from University of Kentucky Center for Poverty Research, “UKCPR National Welfare Data, 1980-2017,” Lexington, KY, 2018. Available at <http://ukcpr.org/resources/national-welfare>. County-level unemployment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS). Available at <https://www.bls.gov/lau/>. State and county-level demographic data from U.S. Census 2013 available at [https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community\\_facts.xhtml](https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/community_facts.xhtml).

**Notes:** Detailed summaries of the characteristics of counties implementing CSPED are available from Noyes, Vogel, and Howard, “Final Implementation Findings from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) Evaluation,” report prepared for Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin–Madison, 2018. <https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/csped-final-implementation-report/>.



In 2013, the start of the enrollment period, poverty rates tended to be higher in the counties implementing CSPED, with three counties having poverty rates over 20 percent (Stanislaus County, CA; Prowers County, CO; and Shelby County, TN) and only four of the counties having rates lower than state levels (Jefferson County, CO; Hamilton County, TN; Greenville County, SC; and Bell County, TX). County-level unemployment rates were higher than state-level unemployment rates in a number of the counties implementing CSPED as well, including Stanislaus County, CA (12.9 percent vs. 8.9 percent); Jefferson County, CO (8.6 percent vs. 6.1 percent); Polk County, IA (7.6 percent vs. 4.7 percent); Shelby County, TN (8.8 percent vs. 7.8 percent); Greenville County, SC (7.9 percent vs. 7.6 percent); and Bell County, TX (6.9 percent vs. 6.2 percent). There were also differences in levels of educational attainment and racial and ethnic composition at the county and state levels (see Table 5).

Finally, the CSPED-level child support measures and the state-level child support measures have different units of analysis, but comparable timeframes. In terms of unit of analysis, the measures are calculated per participant at the CSPED level and per case at the state and national levels. Additionally, the state-level measure of percentage of cases with support orders established includes arrears-only and medical-support only orders. This makes comparisons difficult. In particular, the percentage of noncustodial parents who have at least one order for current support is likely higher than the percentage of support cases with an order. Similarly, the percentage of noncustodial parents who owe arrearages is likely higher than the percentage of cases with arrears balances. In terms of timeframes, grantees' began enrolling participants in the CSPED program in October 2013, with the exception of South Carolina, where participants were enrolled beginning in June 2014. Because enrollment into CSPED could have affected child support outcomes for some participants (those who were randomly assigned

to treatment), we group CSPED participants into cohorts (based on fiscal year of enrollment) and rely on child support measures in the year before enrollment averaged across the three cohorts for comparison with the state-level fiscal year measures.<sup>3</sup>

Comparing child support measures for CSPED participants to grantees' state caseload measures confirms our expectation of a greater percentage of cases with orders established among CSPED participants than among grantees' state caseloads (Table 6).

Weighting each cohort equally, nearly all (95 percent on average) CSPED participants owed current support in the year before enrollment. The percentages varied somewhat across grantees with an average of 87 percent of CSPED participants owing current support in Texas compared to 99 percent of CSPED participants owing current support in California and Iowa. This variation is likely due to differences in how CSPED eligibility guidelines were implemented across the grantees. Both South Carolina and Texas allowed noncustodial parents without a current order for support, but with a current order for past arrears, to enroll in CSPED. Both Ohio and Tennessee allowed noncustodial parents with \$0 support orders, or an order temporarily reduced to \$0 due to circumstances such as incarceration rendering a participant unable to pay their obligation, to enroll in CSPED. Finally, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, and Texas allowed noncustodial parents with new establishment cases to enroll in CSPED (Noyes, Vogel, and Howard, 2019).

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<sup>3</sup> For the first cohort of participants, those who enrolled in CSPED in fiscal year 2014 (between October 2013 and September 2014), the year before enrollment covers the period from October 2012 through September 2014. For the second cohort of participants, those who enrolled in CSPED between October 2014 and September 2015 (cohort 2), the year before enrollment covers the period from October 2013 through September 2015. Finally, for the third cohort of participants, those who enrolled in CSPED between October 2015 and September 2016, the year before enrollment covers the period from October 2014 through September 2016.

**Table 6. CSPED state-level and participant-level child support outcomes**

	Average	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina <sup>a</sup>	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Support orders</b>									
CSPED <sup>b</sup>	95%	99%	92%	99%	98%	92%	96%	87%	97%
State <sup>c</sup>	86	90	88	91	89	81	83	83	87
<b>Arrears due</b>									
CSPED <sup>d</sup>	97%	95%	N/A	98%	99%	N/A	N/A	N/A	96%
State	74	72	88	79	74	77	76	74	73
<b>Collections</b>									
CSPED <sup>e</sup>	73%	72%	76%	85%	65%	74%	79%	55%	77%
State <sup>f</sup>	63	58	76	79	66	56	61	63	63
<b>Dollars collected</b>									
CSPED <sup>g</sup>	\$1,158	\$1,288	\$1,598	\$1,287	\$572	\$940	\$1,421	\$661	\$1,118
State <sup>h</sup>	2,117	1,825	2,084	1,799	1,943	1,409	1,612	2,551	1,755

**Source:** CSPED participant-level outcomes: Authors own calculations from administrative records collected as part of the CSPED impact evaluation. CSPED state-level outcomes: Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).

**Notes:** *N* CSPED participants: 9,703 (5,026 for arrears). <sup>a</sup> Child support measures available for 497 of 948 South Carolina participants. <sup>b</sup> Percentage of NCPs with positive amounts for current support orders. Both South Carolina and Texas allowed NCPs without a current order for support, but with a current order for past arrears, to enroll in CSPED. Both Ohio and Tennessee allowed NCPs with \$0 support orders, or an order temporarily reduced to \$0 due to circumstances such as incarceration rendering a participant unable to pay their obligation, to enroll in CSPED. Finally, Colorado, Iowa, Ohio, and Texas allowed NCPs with new establishment cases to enroll in CSPED. <sup>c</sup> Support orders include cases with arrears-only orders and medical support-only orders. <sup>d</sup> Administrative data on arrears balances not available for Colorado, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas participants. <sup>e</sup> Paid any current child support in year before enrollment. For participants for whom we cannot distinguish current payments from payments towards arrears, we measure current payments as amounts paid that are less than or equal to amounts due. <sup>f</sup> Includes arrears-only and medical support-only cases in the denominator. <sup>g</sup> Payments towards current support. <sup>h</sup> Total distributed collections including medical support.

Comparing child support measures for CSPED participants to grantees' state caseloads also confirms our expectation of a higher incidence of arrears balances among CSPED participants than among the state caseload (Table 6). Weighting each cohort equally, virtually all (97 percent) of CSPED participants owed past-due support prior to enrollment in CSPED.

Unlike with orders established and arrearages, we find results that are somewhat contrary to our expectations when comparing child support paid measures for CSPED participants to grantees' state caseloads (Table 6). We expected that the percentages with child support payments would be lower at the CSPED level than at the state level due to the relative disadvantage of the CSPED target population. Instead, we observed higher rates of child support payments at the CSPED level than at the state level. In California, 72 percent of CSPED participants paid any child support in the year before enrollment; at the state level, collections were made on 58 percent of cases. Iowa, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Wisconsin also showed higher rates of child support payments at the CSPED level than at the state level. In Colorado and Ohio, the percentages of CSPED participants paying any child support more closely resemble the state caseloads. In Colorado, 76 percent of CSPED participants paid any child support in the year before enrollment; at the state level, collections were made on 76 percent of cases. In Ohio, 65 percent of CSPED participants paid any child support in the year before enrollment; at the state level, collections were made on 66 percent. Only in Texas is the proportion of CSPED noncustodial parents with collections lower than the statewide proportion of cases with collections. These differences may be due to the inclusion of cases without an order for current support (including arrears-only and medical support-only cases) in the denominator of the state-level measure. Nationally, the percentage of cases with collections among cases with orders was around 71% between 2014 and 2016 (OCSE, 2017).

Despite the relatively high incidence of any child support payments among CSPED participants, our examination of differences in amounts of child support collected at the CSPED and state levels highlights the relative disadvantage of noncustodial parents who participated in CSPED. For each of the grantees we observe less child support collected per CSPED participant than per state child support case (Table 6). In Ohio, the average amounts collected at the CSPED level and at the state level differed by over \$1,000 and in Texas the amounts differ by nearly \$2,000. The smallest difference between CSPED-level measures and state-level measures appears in Tennessee, where an average of \$1,421 was collected per CSPED participant compared to \$1,612 per child support case (a difference of \$200). Again, it is important to note differences in the CSPED measure compared to the state-wide measure. The CSPED measure includes payments made by the noncustodial parent towards current support obligations, whereas the state-wide measure includes all distributed collections (i.e., collections distributed toward current support and medical support).

## **V. Summary and Conclusion**

The Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) aimed to identify whether providing enhanced child support, employment, and parenting services to noncustodial parents who were having difficulty meeting their child support obligations could increase the regularity of child support payments in order to improve child well-being. To better understand the child support contexts of the eight states that received grants to implement CSPED, this report compared CSPED child support measures to state and national child support measures over the study enrollment period (October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2016).

Generally, when comparing to national-level measures of child support characteristics, we found few differences in the average characteristics of the eight grantees' child support

programs. In particular, child support collections and cost-effectiveness improved over the three-year period for the eight grantees and for the nation as a whole. When comparing the child support measures for the individual grantees to each other, we observed that the grantees included states with a range of characteristics. For example, the states of California and South Carolina had below-average percentages of cases with collections, amounts of child support collected, and cost-effectiveness. Texas, on the other hand, stood out in terms of high amounts of child support collected per case and a high level of cost-effectiveness. Finally, when comparing child support measures for CSPED participants to grantees' state caseloads, we found higher rates of orders established, arrears, and collections at the CSPED level than at the state level. However, average amounts of child support collected were lower at the CSPED level than at the state level. Where we found unexpected differences between CSPED participants and grantees' state caseloads, we hypothesize that the differences may reflect differences in measurement and units of analysis as well as differences in the characteristics of CSPED participants and elements of CSPED enrollment criteria.

## References

- Noyes, J. L., Vogel, L. K., and Howard, L. (2019). “Final Implementation Findings from the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration (CSPED) Evaluation.” Report prepared for Office of Child Support Enforcement, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Madison, WI: Institute for Research on Poverty, University of Wisconsin–Madison.  
<https://www.irp.wisc.edu/resource/csped-final-implementation-report/>

**Appendix Table 1. National and CSPED-state child support caseload totals**

Year	Nation	CSPED States	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Total cases</b>										
2014	15,123,628	4,869,470	1,257,649	153,950	175,078	873,517	200,444	380,648	1,462,517	365,667
2015	14,744,538	4,856,210	1,237,983	151,637	170,817	856,136	190,138	369,641	1,516,674	363,184
2016	14,522,408	4,844,867	1,214,962	150,409	167,846	840,689	194,451	366,715	1,548,574	361,221
Average	14,796,858	4,856,850	1,236,865	151,999	171,247	856,781	195,011	372,335	1,509,255	363,357
<b>Cases with orders established</b>										
2014	12,779,273	4,189,121	1,121,654	134,613	156,872	771,610	159,138	309,978	1,217,245	318,011
2015	12,613,822	4,199,968	1,106,842	134,484	154,602	765,790	155,793	308,419	1,257,571	316,467
2016	12,537,234	4,209,659	1,097,510	133,305	153,986	757,204	157,783	307,937	1,287,064	314,870
Average	12,643,443	4,199,582	1,108,669	134,134	155,153	764,868	157,571	308,778	1,253,960	316,449
<b>Cases with arrears due</b>										
2014	11,334,255	3,607,595	900,432	135,805	136,092	648,625	149,401	282,647	1,084,478	270,115
2015	11,139,788	3,600,131	883,955	134,885	134,674	635,602	150,804	281,591	1,113,027	265,593
2016	11,020,324	3,601,753	880,141	132,368	133,237	624,976	147,890	281,005	1,142,508	259,628
Average	11,164,789	3,603,161	888,176	134,353	134,668	636,401	149,365	281,748	1,113,338	265,112
<b>Cases with collections</b>										
2014	9,047,839	3,026,339	713,098	116,136	136,694	564,241	105,914	224,944	938,018	227,294
2015	9,028,701	3,036,599	711,114	116,098	134,569	563,837	109,299	227,015	946,748	227,919
2016	9,015,064	3,046,165	716,474	115,289	132,837	556,088	110,536	227,279	960,422	227,240
Average	9,030,535	3,036,368	713,562	115,841	134,700	561,389	108,583	226,413	948,396	227,484

**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).



**Appendix Table 2. Details of national and state-level cost-effectiveness ratio**

Fiscal Year	Nation	CSPED States	California	Colorado	Iowa	Ohio	South Carolina	Tennessee	Texas	Wisconsin
<b>Numerator: Total distributed collections + collections sent to other states+ fees retained by other states</b>										
2014	\$29,772,722,608	\$10,072,232,456	\$2,301,142,891	\$343,609,706	\$324,249,207	\$1,721,233,468	\$269,677,716	\$631,312,979	\$3,833,713,850	\$647,292,639
2015	30,144,333,810	10,303,390,533	2,340,978,122	353,152,292	323,751,389	1,703,279,222	288,299,367	639,381,814	3,996,406,417	658,141,910
2016	30,423,639,022	10,473,917,656	2,405,389,968	355,574,355	323,876,664	1,692,338,407	299,602,578	643,336,675	4,101,081,734	652,717,275
Average	30,113,565,147	10,283,180,215	2,349,170,327	350,778,784	323,959,087	1,705,617,032	285,859,887	638,010,489	3,977,067,334	652,717,275
<b>Denominator: Total administrative expenditures – non-IV-D costs</b>										
2014	\$5,676,173,782	\$1,889,429,356	\$946,825,068	\$70,237,361	\$58,168,356	\$234,616,041	\$59,473,310	\$81,550,816	\$338,387,149	\$100,171,255
2015	5,735,581,393	1,886,986,393	932,199,071	73,242,148	56,680,158	269,844,104	51,344,075	80,102,865	326,207,700	97,366,272
2016	5,716,486,011	1,900,299,898	959,131,565	77,609,371	56,588,188	205,082,217	64,845,216	91,996,627	366,219,809	78,826,905
Average	5,709,413,729	1,892,238,548	946,051,901	73,696,293	57,145,567	236,514,121	58,554,200	84,550,103	343,604,886	92,121,477
<b>Cost-effectiveness ratio (as reported by OCSE, 2018); numerator/denominator</b>										
2014	\$5.25	\$5.33	\$2.43	\$4.90	\$5.58	\$7.34	\$4.53	\$7.74	\$11.34	\$6.46
2015	5.26	5.46	2.51	4.83	5.71	6.31	5.62	7.99	12.26	6.76
2016	5.33	5.51	2.51	4.59	5.73	8.25	4.62	7.00	11.21	8.43
Average	5.28	5.43	2.48	4.77	5.67	7.30	4.92	7.58	11.60	7.22

**Source:** Office of Child Support Enforcement, *Annual Report to Congress, FY 2016*, Washington, D.C.: Administration for Children & Families, 2018. Available online at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy\\_2016\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/fy_2016_annual_report.pdf).