



DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

California Department of Child Support Services' Supplemental Report of the 2024-25 Budget Act Regarding Full Pass-Through of Child Support to Families Currently Receiving California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs)

February 2026

Executive Summary

By January 10, 2026, the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) must submit a report to the Legislature's budget and policy committees¹. This report details DCSS's efforts to implement full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving cash aid and services through California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs), excluding those exempt from child support enforcement. California has prioritized the payment of child support to families before state and federal government (also known as "Family First Distribution") most recently by implementing full pass-through of child support payments collected to families formerly receiving CalWORKs. The report also provides data on these families to help the Legislature evaluate the impact and options for full pass-through implementation. The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has supported DCSS by providing necessary information. This report is organized by the reporting requirements listed under "Item 5175-001-0001 — Department of Child Support Services" of the [Supplemental Report of the 2024-25 Budget Act](#), published by the Legislative Analyst's Office in September 2024.

The report includes:

- Summaries of challenges and successes from implementing full pass-through for families formerly on CalWORKs.
- Data on families currently receiving CalWORKs, including average child support order amounts, zero order case percentages, monthly child support collections, and demographic information.
- Descriptions of required administrative, infrastructure, and technology changes, along with cost estimates and timelines for implementation.

On March 10, 2025, DCSS held a meeting with stakeholders, including local child support agency (LCSA) partners, families, advocates, labor organizations, family courts, and legislative staff, to gather feedback on the full pass-through initiative.

Additionally, DCSS launched a family-centered assessment in May 2024, in partnership with Child Trends, comprised of focus groups with parents affected by the new Family First Distribution policy and those that are currently assisted. Interviews were also conducted with LCSA Directors. The assessment team explored questions aimed at advancing program communication of policies and program rules, engagement with families on case decision making, and included families in the overall decision-making processes. As a result of Chapter 573, Statutes of 2022 (AB 207)², it can be concluded that Family First Distribution policies largely achieve their objectives and have a profound effect on families. The impact was significant not only for families but also for DCSS, as implementing this new policy

¹ <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2024/4927/Supplemental-Report-2024-25-Budget-Act-091124.pdf>

² [AB-207 Human services omnibus](#)

required one of the most extensive automation updates to the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) system since its inception between 2005 and 2008. Impacts were department-wide, statewide, and occurred at every local and regional child support agency in California.

A summary of challenges and successes from implementation of full pass-through of child support payments collected to families formerly receiving CalWORKs that are relevant to the implementation of full pass-through of child support payments collected to families currently receiving CalWORKs.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Assignment and Enforcement of Arrears: Under federal law, recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) must cooperate with the state to establish a child support order unless they can demonstrate good cause not to establish the child support case³. Additionally, they must assign their child support rights to the government while receiving assistance, limited to the period they receive aid⁴. The Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005⁵ provides states with policy options, including Family First Distribution and decisions on the assignment of arrears passed through to formerly assisted families. California's CalWORKs program, aligned with TANF requirements, retains and divides child support collected on behalf of current recipients among state, federal, and county governments as reimbursement.

For families that formerly received CalWORKs, any child support collected is paid to the family, although the parent ordered to pay support (PPS) continues to owe debt to the government for any remaining assigned arrears. California retains assignment of child support to allow the possibility that a PPS is eligible for debt reduction⁶ or uncollectable debt⁷ programs offered through DCSS.

As of January 1, 2022, the pass-through and disregard amounts for families currently receiving CalWORKs increased to match federal limits⁸. Federal law allows states to pass-through the "excepted portion" of current child support payments, up to \$100 per month for a family with one child and up to \$200 per month for a family with two or more children, without counting this amount as income for CalWORKs eligibility⁹. For collections received in a month above the excepted portion amount; after paying the federal share, a state may choose to retain the state share or pay it to the family. The remaining child support collection is retained by the state to reimburse CalWORKs costs.

³ [45 CFR § 302.31\(c\)](#)

⁴ [42 USC § 608\(a\)\(3\)](#)

⁵ [S.1932 - 109th Congress \(2005-2006\): Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

⁶ [California Code, FAM 17560](#)

⁷ [California Code, FAM 17400](#)

⁸ [California Code, FAM 17504](#)

⁹ [42 USC § 657\(a\)\(6\)\(B\)](#)

Maintaining the assignment of child support to the state for a currently assisted CalWORKs family should be considered to better monitor that the PPS is providing child support to a person ordered to receive support (PRS) currently assisted by CalWORKs. This may affect mandatory federal IV-A referrals to the federal IV-D program.

Federal and County Share of Collections: Federal law allows a state to waive the collection of the federal share of child support for a formerly assisted CalWORKs family if the state pays the entire amount to the family.¹⁰ Counties, responsible for a portion of CalWORKs costs, receive a share of child support collections and are held harmless for their loss of revenue on former assistance cases, representing roughly 70 percent of DCSS's statewide caseload.

California's CalWORKs program, aligned with federal TANF requirements, retains and divides child support collected on behalf of currently assisted families among state, federal, and county governments as reimbursement for the assistance paid to the family. Federal law allows states to pass-through a portion or all these collections to the family, provided both federal and state shares are included. Specifically, states may pass-through up to \$100 per month for a family with one child and up to \$200 per month for a family with two or more children.¹¹, without counting this amount as income for CalWORKs eligibility. For collections above the amount that is passed through and disregarded, and after paying the federal share, a state may choose to retain the state share or pay it to the family. As of January 1, 2022, the pass-through and disregard for families receiving CalWORKs was increased to match federal \$100 and \$200 amounts. The remaining child support collection is retained by the state to reimburse federal, state, and county CalWORKs costs.

For Family First Distribution full passthrough to currently assisted CalWORKs families, the state may need to discontinue¹² some or all assignments for permanently assigned arrears. The state may consider whether to hold counties harmless for their loss of revenue, which represents approximately 20 percent of DCSS's statewide caseload. For the federal share of collections, the state will likely be responsible for reimbursing any loss of revenue for the federal government.

Low-limit Thresholds for Disbursements: Almost 40 percent of pass-through disbursements to formerly assisted CalWORKs families are sent via paper check. The CSE system includes a low-limit threshold function which holds lower value check disbursements until a \$10.00 threshold is reached. This reduces postage, the number of paper check disbursements, and stale-dated payments. The same consideration must be made for full pass-through to current CalWORKs families.

Suspended Disbursements Due to Outdated Contact Information: The Family First Distribution pass-through disbursement is automatically placed in suspense if the PRS does

¹⁰ [42 USC § 657\(a\)\(6\)\(A\)](#)

¹¹ As mentioned in the previous section, Assignment and Enforcement of Arrears

¹² [42 § USC 657\(b\)](#)

not have a valid address or an alternative disbursement method such as direct deposit or electronic payment card. This was of major concern for DCSS, as formerly assisted cases with only government-owed assigned arrears do not require much participation by the PRS. This non-participation results in inaccurate, and often outdated, contact information for the PRS. This scenario is less likely for a currently assisted CalWORKs family, as up-to-date information is required for program eligibility. However, DCSS cannot rule out other likely scenarios that may contribute, such as homelessness or lack of general mail delivery.

Stale-dated Check Payment: Paper check payments stale date, or expire, 180 days after issuance. Current DCSS policy requires LCSAs to attempt to locate the PRS for an additional six months. The stale-dated check payment is then eligible to be diverted to recoupment a full 12 months after initial issuance. Under Family Code section 17504.2¹³, a PRS has 12 months from the date the payment is sent to recoupment to file a claim for said payment. A similar mechanism may be needed for full pass-through to current CalWORKs families.

Automation and Technical Challenges: DCSS evaluated whether to create a new disbursement type with the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) and if a new payable category was necessary to distinguish Family First Distribution payments for formerly assisted families. Ultimately, the pass-through payment category was mapped to an existing "support" category, requiring no changes to the CSE/SDU interface or contract. DCSS will need to determine if a new payable category is necessary for Family First Distribution pass-through to currently assisted CalWORKs families.

Throughout the development process, automation of key system functions was emphasized to address workload concerns raised by LCSAs. Automated actions, such as suspending or reissuing disbursements, were deemed essential to alleviate workload. However, due to system limitations and lack of positive cost-benefit, some actions, like diverting stale-dated checks to recoupment, remained manual. These challenges will also apply to Family First Distribution for full pass-through for currently assisted CalWORKs families.

Challenges for Families:

Communication:

Parents were unaware of the policy change and unclear about how policies prior to 2024 had affected their receipt of child support payments. While DCSS launched a comprehensive outreach campaign for parents on its website, some parents reported insufficient or inconsistent communication via their local child support offices. LCSAs conducted broad communication through their websites, social media, and direct communication with individual parents, while collaborating with external programs to share new policy information. However, LCSAs varied in their capacities for mass communication, particularly via their websites. Parents expressed a strong desire for the state to use every

¹³ [California Code, FAM 17504.2.](#)

possible method of communication, including mail, email, and phone calls to inform families about policy changes.

Barriers to Access:

Several populations reported that they faced unique barriers to accessing their pass-through payments. Parents faced barriers such as lack of access to banking services, residential instability, and technological challenges which hindered their ability to receive payments. LCSAs also noted that a small proportion of parents encountered barriers to accepting these pass-through payments due to personal relationships with the other parent. Parents did not want any involvement with the paying parent, often citing high levels of domestic violence, resentment over unpaid support during the child's upbringing, termination of the other parent's parental rights (e.g., due to stepparent adoption), or because the couple had reunited. These types of cases represent a small percentage of all parents affected by the new policy, as most still had low incomes and desired payments, although some relayed an opt-out option to decline the payment would have been beneficial.

IMPLEMENTATION SUCCESS

Despite these challenges, the rollout of the policy saw notable success. The first phase of the Family First Distribution was implemented without major incidents. Collaboration with internal and external working groups, including LCSAs and other stakeholders, was instrumental in the successful rollout. DCSS also launched a comprehensive customer outreach and education campaign, which included updates to its public website, informational videos, social media posts, and mailers. Statewide training efforts were effective, with self-paced training followed by live question and answer sessions and post-implementation engagement meetings to address immediate concerns.

Family First Distribution Collections Passed Through: As of May 1, 2024, DCSS began passing through collections distributed to government-assigned arrears to these former CalWORKs families regardless of age, emancipation status of the child(ren), and whether the child(ren) continue to reside in the same household, resulting in over \$151.5 million being passed through to approximately 98,000 former CalWORKs families as of July 2025. Some specifics about these distributions are:

- Approximately \$136 million, or 92 percent, of total collections have been distributed to over 81,226 persons ordered to receive support who identify as female.
- Approximately \$86.3 million, or 57 percent, of total collections have been distributed to families who identify themselves as an underrepresented group.
 - \$30.1 million to over 18,545 African-American families.
 - \$52.6 million to approximately 31,112 Hispanic/Latinx families.

- \$2.5 million to over 1,322 Asian families.
- \$1.06 million to 737 Native American or First Nation families.
- \$40.5 million, or 27.5 percent, has been distributed to families whose race is unknown.
- Approximately \$2.4 million has been distributed to families with minor or unemancipated children.

Approximately 87.9 percent of disbursements collected are from parents 30 years or older, a quarter of which are 60 years or older.

Internal and External Workgroup Participation: DCSS established internal and external working groups for implementation of Family First Distribution pass-through to formerly assisted CalWORKs families. The external working group included collaborators from LCSAs, as well as other interested parties. DCSS also collaborated with CDSS in drafting the legislative report under Family Code section 17504.6¹⁴, detailing the unintended consequences, positive or negative, of pass-through to former CalWORKs families and whether an opt-out provision is necessary to avoid negative impact to families. The internal and external workgroups met frequently during the initial planning and execution phases of the project. As a result, DCSS was able to issue policy guidance and procedures in a timely manner.

DCSS county partners reported, anecdotally, that some parents are more incentivized to make payments in direct support of their children, since the payment is no longer retained by the government.

The Department has undertaken significant efforts in customer outreach and education, as well as statewide training, to support the implementation of Family First Distribution pass-through payments.

Customer Outreach and Education: DCSS's Office of Communications and Public Affairs launched a comprehensive outreach campaign. This included updates to the public website, creation of informational videos, social media posts, and informational mailers. Additionally, call scripts, text message templates, and email templates were developed to assist LCSAs with public inquiries. The campaign provided information on eligibility for pass-through payments, expected receipt timelines for arrears pass-through payments, and instructions on enrolling in direct deposit or signing up for an electronic payment card.

Statewide Training Efforts: DCSS's Statewide Training Section developed comprehensive training for both phases of implementation. This training included self-paced modules followed by live question and answer sessions, and post-implementation engagement meetings to address immediate concerns. The training was developed in collaboration with LCSA child support professionals to provide thorough preparation and support for all. DCSS uses Blackboard Learning Management System to administer training programs. The self-

¹⁴ Repealed on January 1, 2025. [See previously added Section 8, 17504.6\(b\).](#)

paced training modules allowed DCSS and LCSA staff to learn of the new program's benefits and impacts on families, in addition to learning about the changes to the systems they use daily. A similar training approach was used when the current assistance pass-through amount was increased to \$100 for a family with a single dependent, and \$200 for family with two or more dependents, in 2022. As a result of the comprehensive training, the post-training follow-up by DCSS and LCSA staff, relative to the major program and system updates, was minimal.

End User Preparation and Post-Implementation Support: Starting in February 2024, DCSS hosted recurring "End User Adoption Engagement Meetings" with LCSA end users. These meetings aimed to prepare users for upcoming system changes and gather feedback on the customer outreach campaign. They provided an early look at expected system changes and insights into customer engagement.

Completion of User Acceptance Testing: DCSS completed user acceptance testing (UAT) with LCSA end users over three days. Child support professionals from across the state participated in the UAT, completing more than a dozen testing scenarios. While some tested functionalities were not visible in the production environment, testers experienced the behind-the-scenes batch processing that would enable pass-through to former CalWORKs recipients. All test scenarios passed successfully.

These experiences highlight the importance of robust systems and clear communication in managing the full pass-through of child support payments, ensuring compliance with federal guidelines, and addressing both policy and technical challenges.

Positive Impacts to Families: Interviews held with parents affected by the Family First Distribution policy resulted in unanimous support of this new policy. Both parents ordered to receive support and parents ordered to pay support supported this policy change. Parents ordered to receive support noted that the additional income from pass-through payments provided crucial financial support, allowing them to better meet their children's basic needs. This included covering expenses such as food, clothing, and housing, which contributed to overall family well-being. In some cases, these payments supported their transition off public assistance. Some parents believed that knowing their payments were going directly to the family encouraged more regular and consistent payments and helped improve their relationship with the other parent. The policy change was seen as a positive step in recognizing and addressing the financial challenges faced by families previously on CalWORKs.

A description of the infrastructure changes that would be necessary to implement the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs, including a fiscal estimate of any one-time or ongoing General Fund and total fund costs for all fiscal years where costs are anticipated and an estimate of the anticipated time line to implement

those changes should the Legislature appropriate the necessary funding in a subsequent budget act.

To implement the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs, several infrastructure changes are necessary. Under current federal law, TANF-eligible families must assign their child support rights to the state to receive benefits. States can either retain these payments to offset public assistance costs or pass them through to the PRS. California currently passes through the first \$100 for a family with one child or \$200 for a family with two or more children, with the remainder used to repay CalWORKs payments.

To fully implement the pass-through, California would need to adjust its systems to handle the increased volume of payments. This includes upgrading payment processing systems to ensure accurate and timely disbursements. The fiscal estimate for these changes would involve both one-time costs for system upgrades and ongoing costs for maintenance and operations. The total fund costs would span multiple fiscal years, with a detailed timeline dependent on legislative appropriations.

Additionally, administrative changes would be required to revise policies and procedures, train staff, and ensure compliance with federal and state regulations. This would include costs for training and policy development, as well as ongoing administrative expenses. The timeline for these changes would also depend on the availability of funding and the complexity of the required adjustments.

Finally, technological changes would be necessary to enhance the California State Disbursement Unit's capabilities and integrate new functionalities into the California Statewide Automated Welfare System (CalSAWS) . This would involve one-time costs for system development and ongoing costs for maintenance and support. The implementation timeline would be contingent on the legislative appropriation of necessary funds and the complexity of the technological enhancements.

Things to consider for full pass-through of child support payments for a family currently receiving CalWORKs aid.

Implementing the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs aid involves several considerations. Full pass-through of child support to currently assisted CalWORKs families will render some state statutes obsolete, or duplicative, as discussed in the sections below. This may cause confusion in interpreting program rules. Additionally, General Fund resources will likely be necessary to implement Family First Distribution full pass-through for currently assisted CalWORKs families.

General Fund Resources for Federal and County Reimbursements: In state fiscal year 2020-21, California collected \$192.5M on behalf of current and mixed assistance families, all but \$18.8M was retained as recoupment under the then current law (only \$50 was disregarded at the time). Full pass-through of child support to currently assisted CalWORKs families is estimated to cost an additional \$150 million annually, based on projected estimates of CalWORKs recoupment in 2022-23.¹⁵ This figure represents the state and county's foregone

¹⁵ <https://lao.ca.gov/reports/2022/4550/Child-Support-Program-Proposals-021822.pdf>

share of collections. The same projection estimates that the state would incur an \$80 million general fund impact if only the nonfederal amount of CalWORKs recoupment payments was passed through to the current CalWORKs family. California must also reimburse the federal government for their share of collections, as federal law does not permit waiving the federal share above the \$100/\$200 maximums.

60-day Time-on-Aid Limit: Welfare and Institutions Code Sections 11454 and 11454.5:

Legislatively, the state must decide whether payments will count toward the 60-day time-on-aid limit and address potential obsolescence or duplication of existing statutes. These statutes were not amended to “untick” time-on-aid for former CalWORKs recipients now in receipt of pass-through. The Legislature must make the same consideration for full pass-through of child support to current CalWORKs recipients.

Eligibility, Disregard, and Pass-Through: Family Code section 17504 requires the pass-through of up to \$100 per month for a family with one child and up to \$200 per month for a family with two or more children, without counting this amount as income for CalWORKs eligibility. For collections above the pass-through amount, after paying the federal share, a state may choose to retain the state share or pay it to the family. As of January 1, 2022, the pass-through and disregard amounts for CalWORKs families increased to match federal limits. The remaining child support collection is retained by the state to reimburse CalWORKs costs.

Family Code section 17504 will likely be unnecessary or need to be amended to consider a PRS’s eligibility for CalWORKs assistance if Family First Distribution full pass-through is implemented.

Child Support In Lieu of CalWORKs Grant Option: Chapter 729, Statutes of 2017 (SB 380) added Welfare and Institutions Code sections 11008.14 and 11450 which provide CalWORKs applicants and recipients with the option to exclude¹⁶ the needs of qualified stepsiblings and half-siblings of CalWORKs-eligible children from consideration in the determination¹⁷ of the Maximum Aid Payment for the Assistance Unit in order to keep 100 percent of any current child support payments made on behalf of the step/half-siblings.

Implementing Family First Distribution full pass-through to current CalWORKs families would render this policy obsolete.

Other Policy Considerations

Operationally, the Department will need authority to implement, interpret, or make specific Family First Distribution full pass-through by means of letters, or similar written instructions, until the adoption of regulations.

Additionally, the state must determine if child support pass-through will be considered unearned income and whether it will be disregarded in calculating assistance grants. The state must also choose an option for distributing support, either retaining or paying the state

¹⁶ [WIC § 11450.17](#)

¹⁷ [WIC § 11008.14](#)

share of collections to the family or paying the family and disregarding the "excepted portion" as a pass-through.

The state must also decide whether to retain or discontinue the assignment of child support to the state, affecting mandatory federal IV-A referrals to the federal IV-D program. An opt-out provision may be necessary for recipients who might lose eligibility for other public assistance programs due to increased household income. This would also allow recipients to opt out in response to concerns of domestic violence and personal safety.

Finally, the estimated timeline for implementing these changes is three to five years, contingent on legislative appropriations and the complexity of the required adjustments. This timeline includes planning, engagement with stakeholders, execution, ongoing monitoring, and drawing from the experience of implementing pass-through for formerly assisted CalWORKs families. The timeline also accounts for any additional policy discussion or changes, as well as any automation efforts to minimize human intervention and workload increases for LCSAs.

A description of the administrative changes that would be necessary to implement the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs, including a fiscal estimate of any one-time or ongoing General Fund and total fund costs for all fiscal years where costs are anticipated and an estimate of the anticipated time line to implement those changes should the Legislature appropriate the necessary funding in a subsequent budget act.

Implementing Family First Distribution full pass-through to families currently receiving CalWORKs will necessitate several administrative changes. Firstly, DCSS will need letter authority to implement Family First Distribution full pass-through. Additionally, the loss of federal and county shares of recoupment will need to be backfilled with ongoing General Fund appropriation. DCSS will also require provisional authority in the Budget Act to adjust expenditures during the fiscal year, as pass-through collections may exceed initial estimates. The state's IV-A caseload has been on an upward trend since the end of the COVID-19 emergency. The state's IV-D caseload follows a similar trend. However, the amount of pass-through for current CalWORKs families will also be contingent upon payments being made by the PPS. Although a PPS is likely to participate more willfully when child support payments are not being recouped by the state and federal governments, it is known that a relatively small percentage of obligors make payments towards assigned current support in current CalWORKs cases. As shown from data derived from DCSS' final submission of the annual OCSE 157 (for Federal Fiscal Year 2024, published February 2025), there were 203,720 current assistance cases (down from 213,044) in the IV-D caseload. This represents 20 percent of the statewide IV-D caseload. During the same period, DCSS distributed approximately \$224 million, or nine percent of total statewide distributions, to current assistance families.

These changes would exacerbate the loss of General Fund revenue due to the pass-through collections and the program's implementation by DCSS and CDSS. Recent legislative changes, such as the transition from the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) to the Federal Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, have already prioritized current child support and family-owed arrears over government-owed

arrears for formerly assisted CalWORKs families. Furthermore, Assembly Bill 79 (Committee on Budget, Chapter 11, Statutes of 2020) increased the pass-through amounts for currently assisted CalWORKs families from \$50 to \$100 for one child, and from \$100 to \$200 for two or more children (the maximum allowed by federal law).

State statutes and regulations will need to be amended to support the full pass-through for current CalWORKs families. This includes comprehensive training and policy guidance to ensure that both DCSS and LCSAs understand and can effectively implement the new program. The fiscal estimate for these administrative changes includes both one-time costs for training and policy development and ongoing costs for administration and oversight. The timeline for these changes is estimated to be three to five years, contingent on legislative appropriations and the complexity of the required adjustments.

A description of the technology changes that would be necessary to implement the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs, including a fiscal estimate of any one-time or ongoing General Fund and total fund costs for all fiscal years where costs are anticipated and an estimate of the anticipated time line to implement those changes should the Legislature appropriate the necessary funding in a subsequent budget act.

Implementing the full pass-through of child support payments to families currently receiving CalWORKs will require several technological changes. Modifications to welfare distribution and disbursement processes are necessary to facilitate the pass-through to currently assisted families. Additionally, updates to the CSE system pages and user interface will be required to make relevant data accessible to state and local users.

Existing form sets, such as the Monthly Statement of Collections and Distributions form, will need to be updated to reflect the new pass-through arrangements, and new forms may need to be created. Furthermore, federal and state fiscal reports will require modifications to account for the pass-through to currently assisted families.

DCSS, having previously implemented arrears pass-through to formerly assisted CalWORKs families, would be well-prepared to extend this policy to currently assisted families, subject to appropriation of resources. The fiscal estimate for these technological changes includes both one-time costs for system modifications and ongoing costs for maintenance and support. The anticipated timeline for implementing these changes, contingent on legislative appropriations, is estimated to be three to five years, encompassing planning, stakeholder engagement, execution, and ongoing monitoring.

Child Support Financials Unit - Data Review and Analysis

Supplemental Report of the 2024-2025 Budget Act: Full Pass-Through of Child Support to Families Currently Receiving CalWORKs.

The following data and visualizations are inclusive of the time period beginning July 1, 2024, and ending on June 30, 2025.

Table 1

Average child support order amount owed to families currently receiving child support, excluding zero orders, during State Fiscal Year 2024-2025

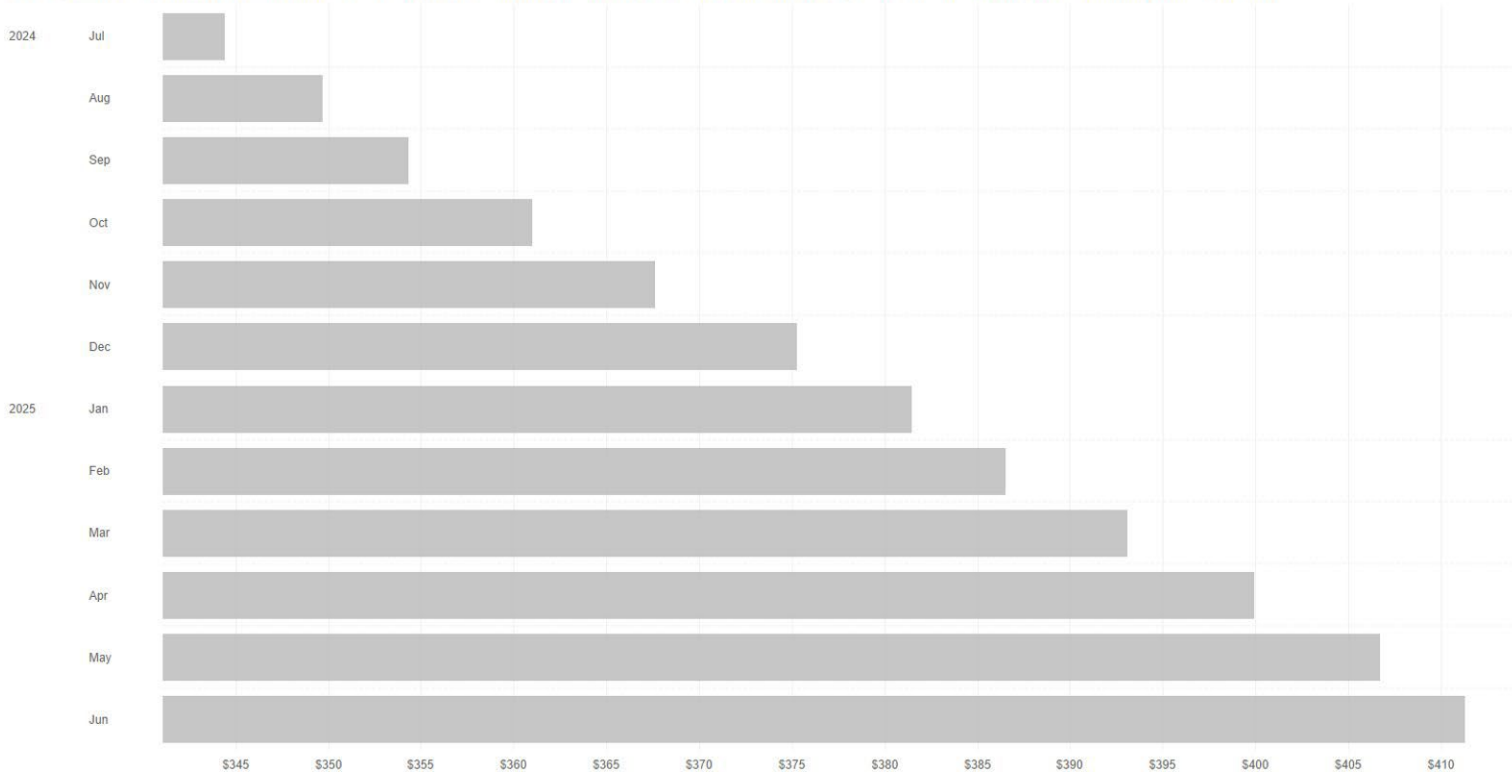


Table 1 displays the average child support order amount owed to families currently receiving child support, excluding zero orders. The monthly average ranged from \$344 in July 2024 to \$411 in June 2025. An analysis of zero-dollar order amounts showed that 22 percent of current assistance cases include at least one month when a zero order was being enforced. These cases may reflect parents ordered to pay support with no income, outdated orders, or administrative issues. Their inclusion in overall averages may understate the financial needs of families.

Table 2

Total child support collections for families currently receiving CalWORKs by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.

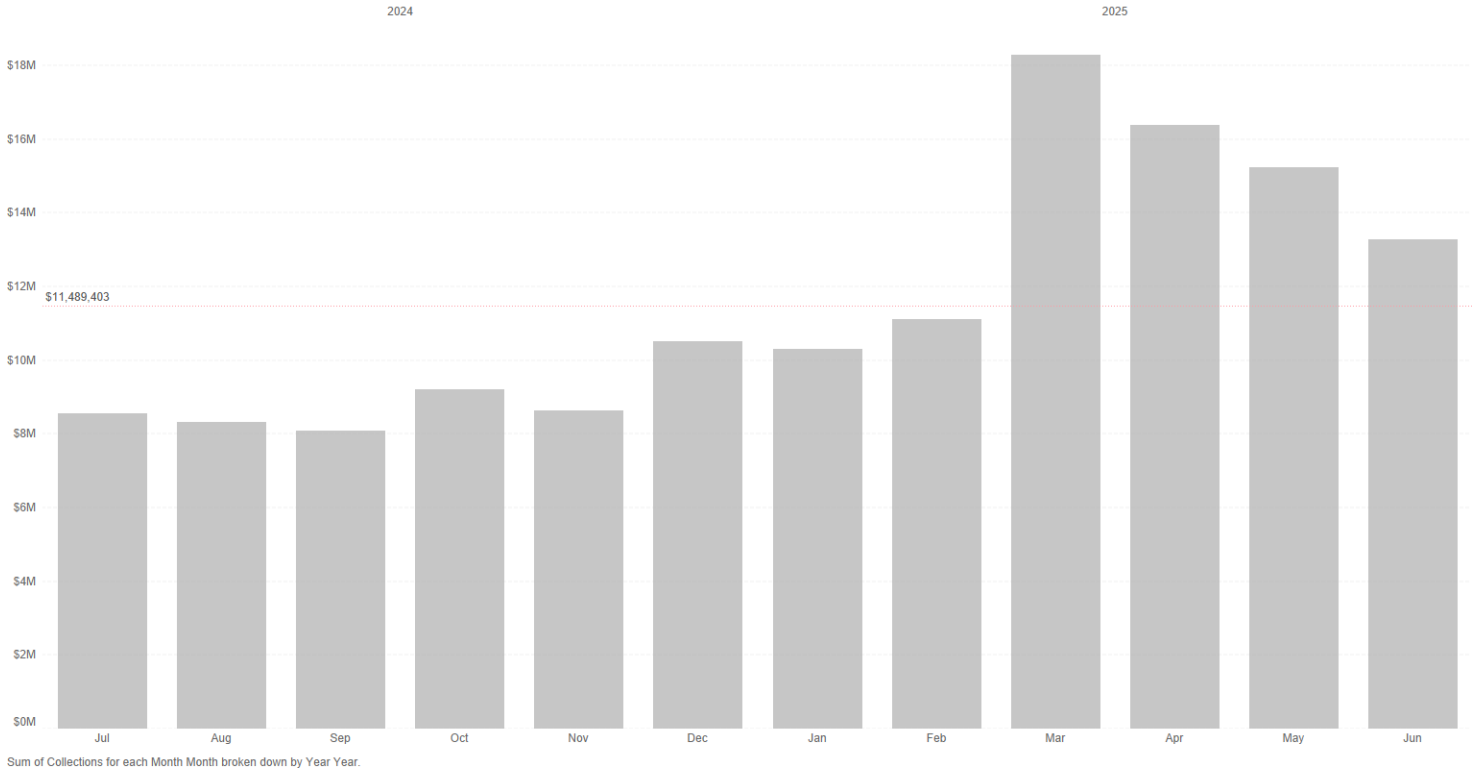
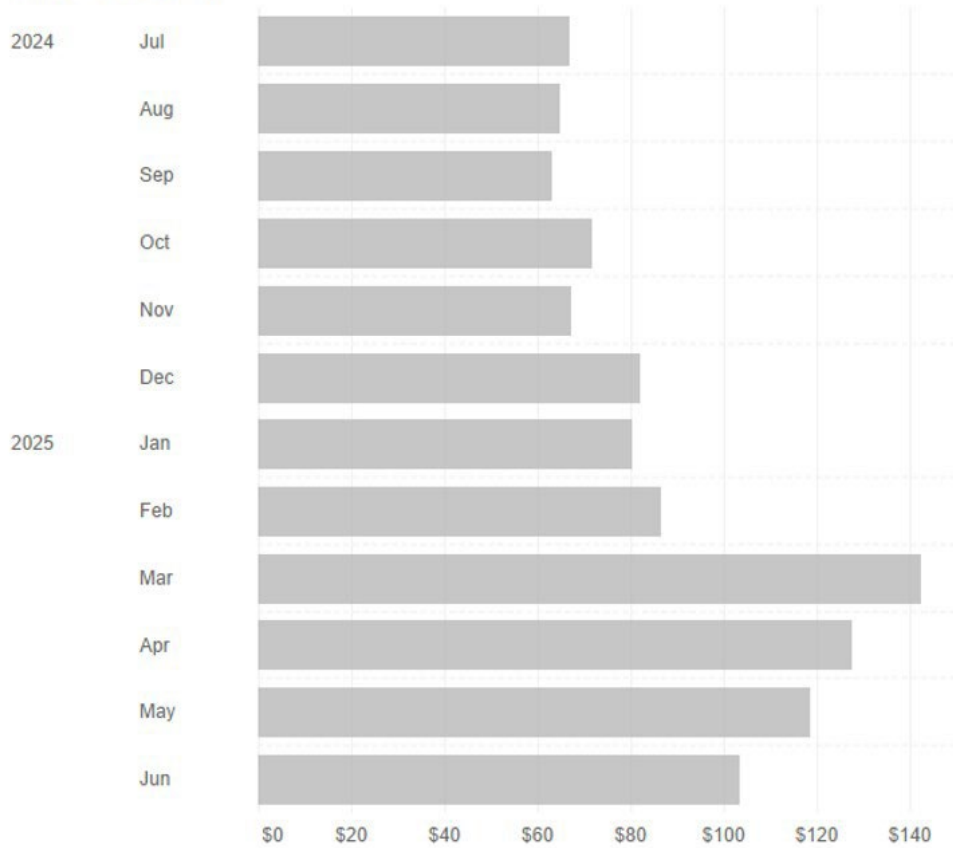


Table 2 displays total child support collections by month for families receiving CalWORKs. Total child support collections were \$8.5 million in July 2024 and \$13.2 million by the end of June 2025. Total child support collections for families receiving CalWORKs peaked in March 2025 at an estimated \$18 million. The average collections were \$11.5 million per month.

Table 3

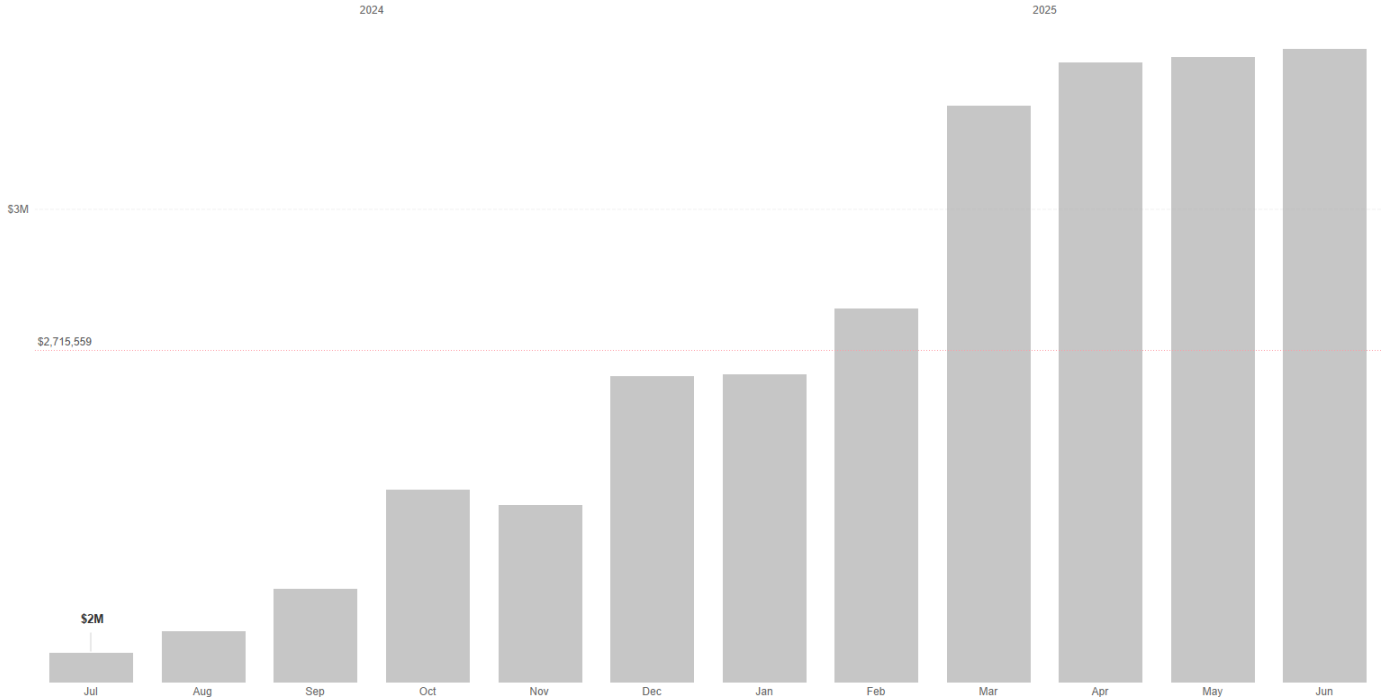
Average child support collections for families currently receiving CalWORKs by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025.



On average, child support collections for families receiving CalWORKs ranged from \$67 a month in July 2024 to \$103 in June 2025. Average collections reached a high in March 2025 when they were \$143. Historically, total and average child support collections will increase during tax season; parents ordered to pay support may have their state or federal, or both, tax refunds intercepted to pay past due child support.

Table 4

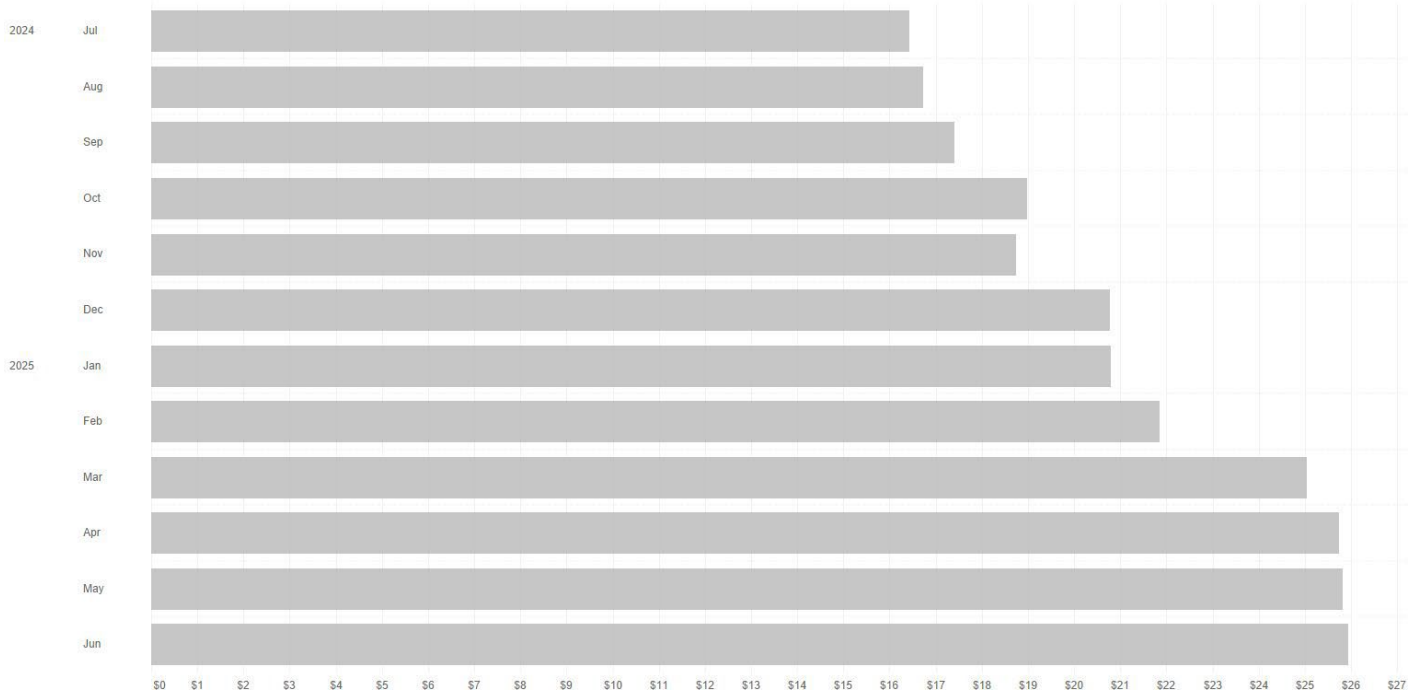
Total child support collections passed through to families currently receiving CalWORKs by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025



The total child support collections passed through to families currently receiving CalWORKs ranged from \$2.1 million in July 2024 to \$3.3 million in June 2025. On average, families who received public assistance via CalWORKs received \$2.7 million a month in the form of pass-through. This form of pass-through, which is disregarded as income when determining CalWORKs program eligibility and monthly benefit amount, is capped at \$100 a month for a family with a single child and \$200 a month for a family with two or more children.

Table 5

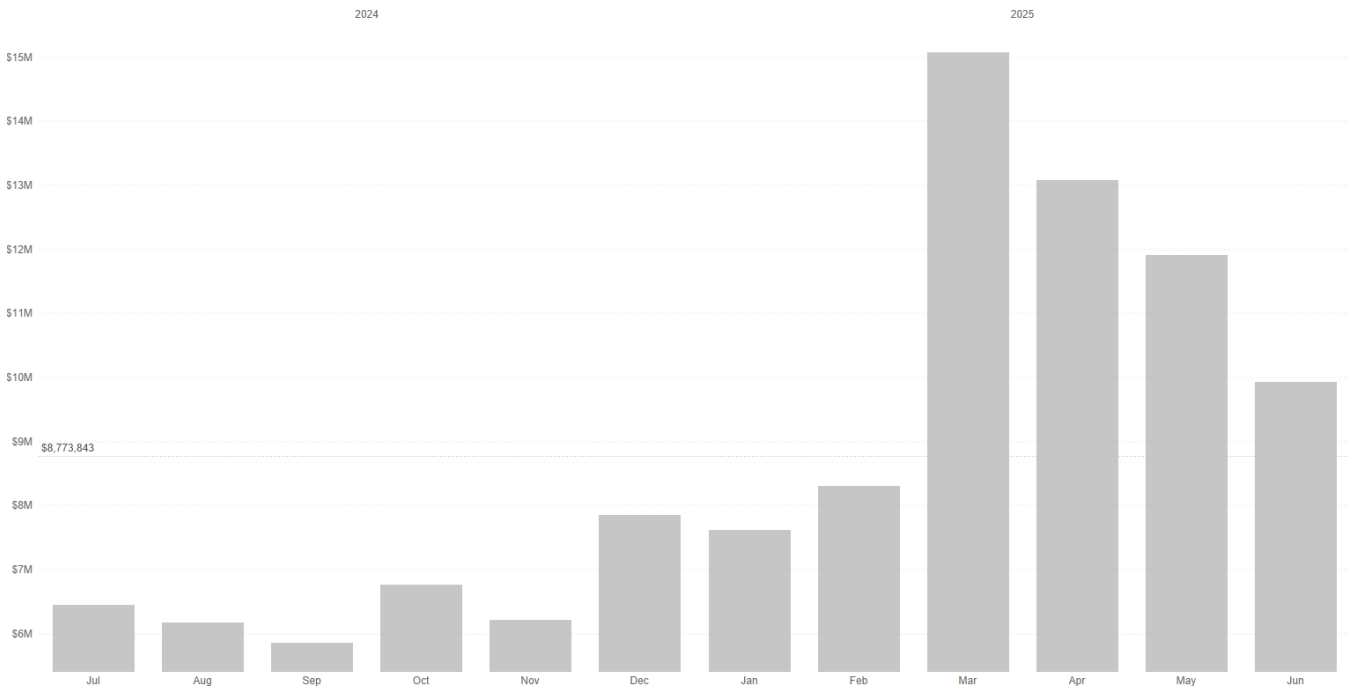
Average child support collections passed through to families currently receiving CalWORKs by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025



The average amount of child support passed through to families currently receiving CalWORKs ranged from \$16.43 in July 2024 to \$25.94 in June 2025.

Table 6

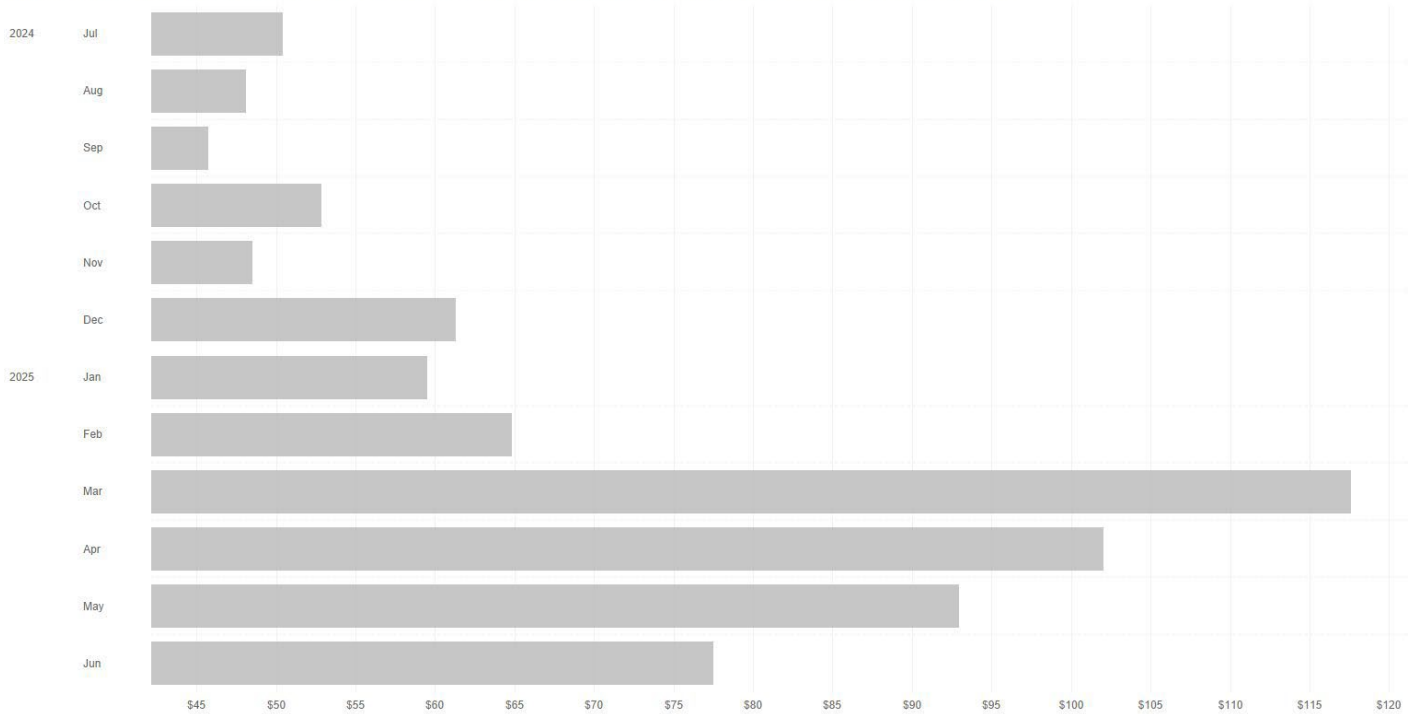
Total child support collections retained as recoupment by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025



Total child support retained as recoupment was \$6.5 million in July 2024 and \$9.9 million in June 2025. Child support retained as recoupment reached a high of \$15 million in March 2025. On average, \$8.8 million was retained as recoupment for each month in State Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Table 7

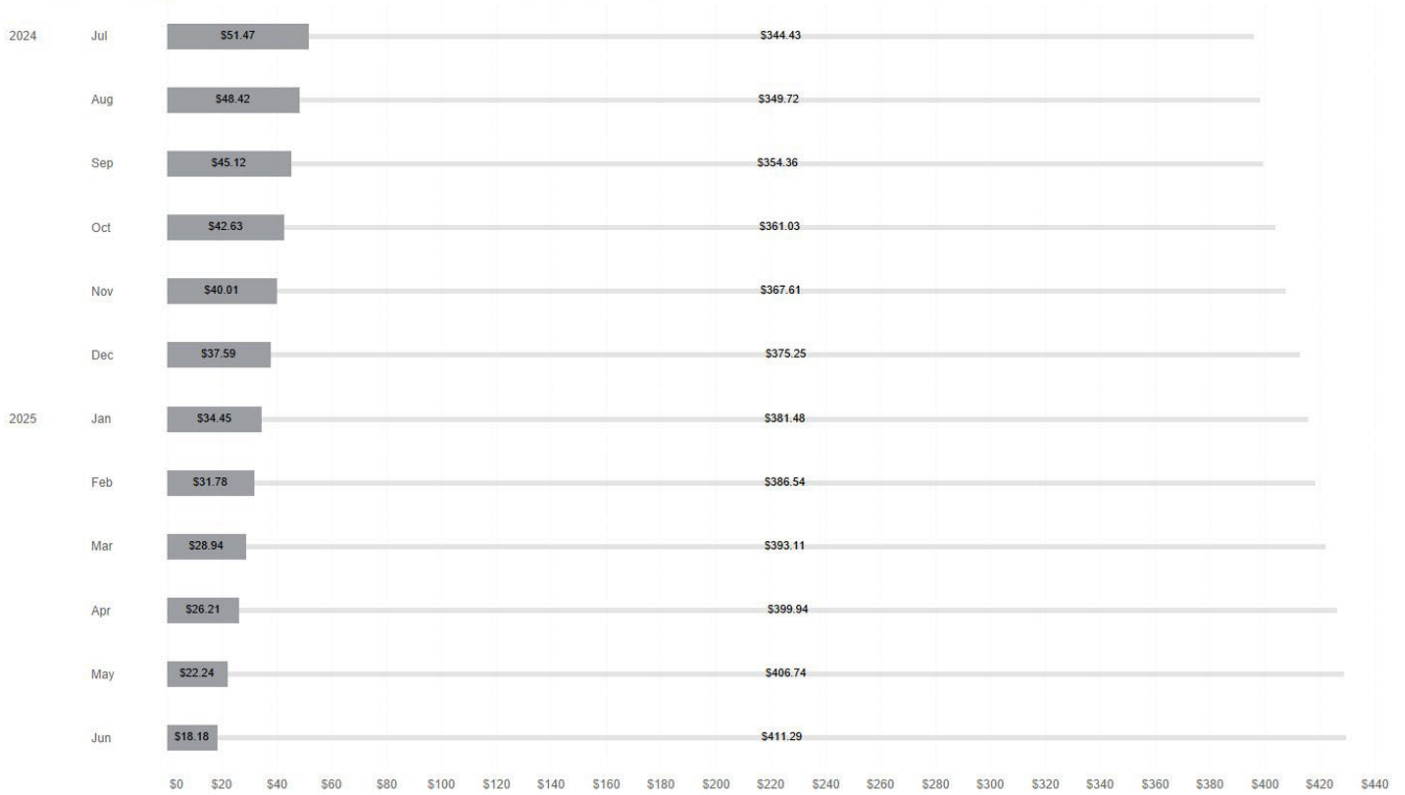
Average child support collections retained as recoupment by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025



The average child support collection amount retained as recoupment ranged from \$50 in July 2024 to \$78 in June 2025. The average amount retained as recoupment reached a high in March 2025 when \$118 was retained as recoupment.

Table 8

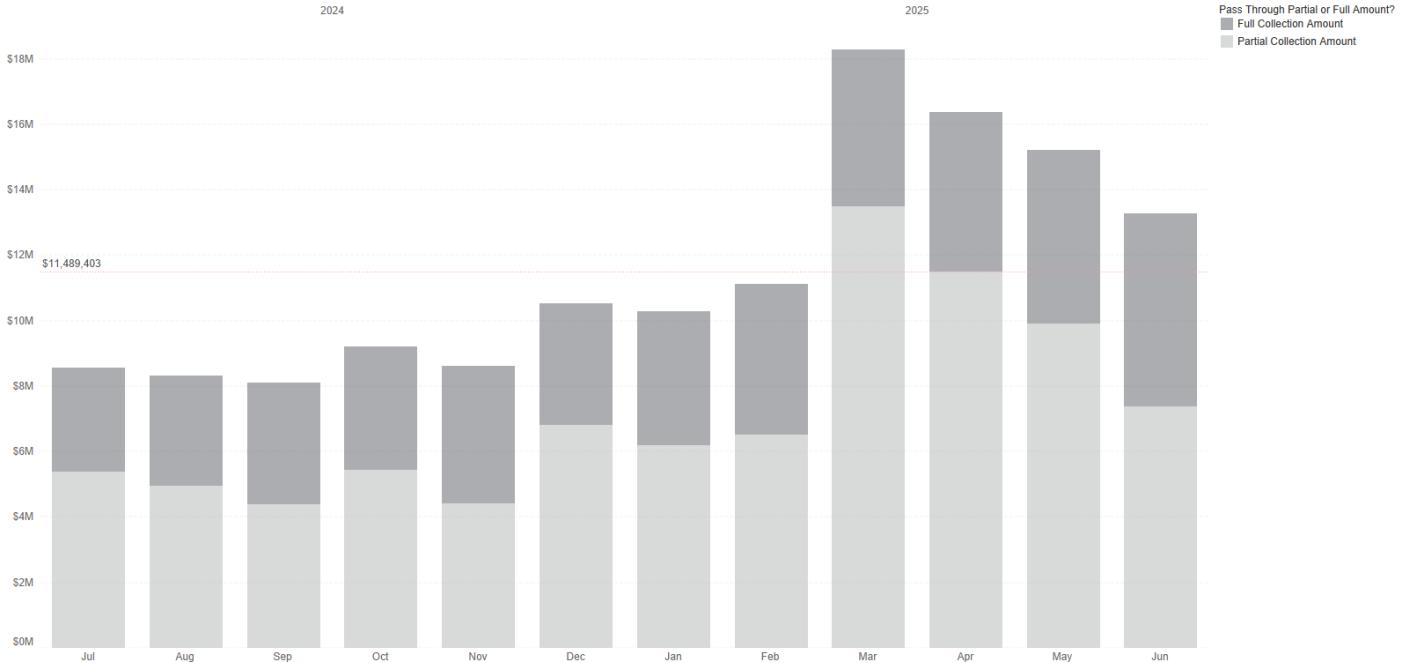
Average child support order amount owed to families currently receiving CalWORKs during State Fiscal Year 2024-2025



Beginning in July 2024, the average child support amount owed to families currently receiving CalWORKs, excluding zero orders, increased month-over-month. For those cases that did not include enforcement of a zero order during State Fiscal Year 2024-2025, the average child support amount owed to families increased gradually throughout the year, ranging from \$344 in July 2024 to \$411 in June 2025. By the end of June 2025, the monthly average child support order amount owed to families currently receiving CalWORKs, with at least one month with zero-dollar enforcement, had decreased from \$51 to \$18 per month.

Table 9

Total child support collections for families currently receiving CalWORKs by month for the time period July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, segmented between full and partial pass through



If child support pass-through for families currently receiving CalWORKs had been implemented by July 1, 2024, the monthly distribution of child support pass-through would have been in the range of \$8 million in the early months of the fiscal year to up \$18 million in March 2025. On average, distribution of child support pass-through for CalWORKs recipients would have been \$11.5 million a month over the course of State Fiscal Year 2024-2025.

Using the following conditions, DCSS sought to determine what proportion of total monthly collections would result in full or partial pass-through of the collection amount. The full collection amount accounts for amounts retained as recoupment to reimburse past aid paid. Table 6 includes amounts retained as recoupment to the government only, while Table 9 includes amounts retained as recoupment to the government, in addition to those amounts issued as pass-through (any portion of the collection issued as pass-through and disregarded as income (\$100/\$200 monthly maximum)). The conditions are as follows:

1. If the full collection amount is *greater than* the child support amount owed for that particular month, then pass-through the amount that would have otherwise been retained as recoupment up to the amount of child support owed for that month. An indicator of “1” is assigned to these cases and designated as pass-through of a “partial collection amount.”
2. If the full collection amount is *equal to* the child support amount owed for that particular month, then pass-through the amount that would have otherwise been retained as recoupment to the government to the parent ordered to receive support. An indicator of “2” is assigned to these cases and designated as pass-through of a “full collection amount.”

3. If the full collection amount is less than the child support amount owed for that particular month, then pass-through the amount that would have otherwise been retained as recoupment to the government to the parent ordered to receive support. An indicator of “3” is assigned to these cases and designated as pass-through of a “full collection amount.”.

A numeric indicator of 1, 2, or 3 was assigned to the total monthly child support collection amount for each case in the data set. The total monthly child support collection amount was compared to the child support amount due for that particular month and assigned an indicator value based on whether one of the three aforementioned conditions was met.

This visualization shows that the number of cases that fall within the “partial collection” subgroup is a significant portion of the monthly total collections that could have been passed through during State Fiscal Year 2024-2025. Should the Legislature decide to only pass-through child support collections up to the amount owed for that particular month, any amount in excess of the amount due could be applied to assigned arrears (if applicable) or passed through to the person ordered to receive support.

Table 10

Race Category	Parent Ordered to Pay Support		Person Ordered to Receive Support		Total Money Owed to Person Ordered to Receive Support had pass-through been enacted		Percent of California's Population
	Count	%	Count	%	Amount	%	
African-American	27,679	21.8	24,366	19.2	\$9,194,899	13.9	5.36
American Indian	715	0.6	778	0.6	\$392,719	0.6	0.39
Asian	1,740	1.4	1,802	1.4	\$1,161,004	1.8	15.12
Hispanic/Latinx	59,183	46.7	62,059	49	\$33,895,422	51.2	39.4
Middle Eastern (MENA)	81	0.1	45	0	\$26,110	0	
Pacific Islander	670	0.5	830	0	\$571,651	0.9	0.35
Unknown	3,178	2.5	4,003	3.2	\$2,085,904	3.1	
White	16,159	12.7	18,312	14.4	\$10,683,323	16.1	34.69

(blank)	17,356	13.7	14,566	11.5	\$8,236,078	12.4	
Grand Total	126,761	100	126,761	100	\$66,247,109	100	95.31

Table 10 shows the aggregate race categories for the parent ordered to pay support and person ordered to receive support, the child support amount owed to the person ordered to receive support, and the racial demographics of California as a whole. Unknown is a race category within CSE, while “blank” indicates no available value in CSE. Unknown and “blank” values account for an estimated 15% of case participants in receipt of CalWORKs in the CSE system.

African-American and Hispanic/Latinx persons ordered to receive support account for approximately 70 percent of the current assistance population, while representing an estimated 45 percent of California's population. Hispanic/Latinx case participants are disproportionately represented in the child support system. African-Americans are 5.36 percent of the population yet represent 22 percent of all payors and 19 percent of recipients. This represents a significant overrepresentation in both paying and receiving roles. White individuals are 35 percent of California population yet are underrepresented with only 13 percent of payors and 14 percent of recipients. Asians represent a very low share of child support involvement, with \$1.16 million owed to current assistance families, despite being 15 percent of the state's population.

Monthly Aggregate Tables*:

Monthly Sum and Average

Month of Mo.	Year	Charging Instructions Amount	Avg. Charging Instructions Amount	Collections	Avg. Collections	Disregard	Avg. Disregard	Recoupment to Government	Avg. Recoupment to Government
July	2024	\$35,802,677	\$279.24	\$8,557,329	\$66.87	\$2,102,361	\$16.43	\$6,454,968	\$50.44
August	2024	\$36,243,426	\$282.67	\$8,314,174	\$64.87	\$2,144,700	\$16.73	\$6,169,474	\$48.13
September	2024	\$36,611,314	\$285.54	\$8,094,957	\$63.15	\$2,230,549	\$17.40	\$5,864,408	\$45.75
October	2024	\$37,205,403	\$290.18	\$9,206,107	\$71.82	\$2,433,074	\$18.98	\$6,773,033	\$52.84
November	2024	\$37,786,204	\$294.71	\$8,621,884	\$67.26	\$2,401,712	\$18.73	\$6,220,172	\$48.52
December	2024	\$38,479,320	\$300.11	\$10,521,583	\$82.08	\$2,663,574	\$20.78	\$7,858,009	\$61.30
January	2025	\$39,010,973	\$304.26	\$10,292,345	\$80.30	\$2,666,766	\$20.81	\$7,625,579	\$59.49
February	2025	\$39,439,223	\$307.60	\$11,111,668	\$86.68	\$2,800,574	\$21.85	\$8,311,095	\$64.83
March	2025	\$40,012,858	\$312.07	\$18,284,068	\$142.64	\$3,210,470	\$25.05	\$15,073,598	\$117.60
April	2025	\$40,616,150	\$316.78	\$16,379,603	\$127.79	\$3,298,201	\$25.73	\$13,081,401	\$102.06
May	2025	\$41,180,144	\$321.18	\$15,224,947	\$118.78	\$3,309,327	\$25.82	\$11,915,620	\$92.96
June	2025	\$41,518,295	\$323.82	\$13,264,168	\$103.47	\$3,325,404	\$25.94	\$9,938,764	\$77.53

* Charging Instructions Amount” means the amount of child support ordered by a court.

Monthly Average - Excluding Zero Dollar Orders

Month of Mo..	Year..	Avg. Charging Instructions Amount	Avg. Collections	Avg. Disregard	Avg. Recoupment to Government
July	2024	\$452.86	\$103.13	\$26.64	\$76.49
August	2024	\$454.43	\$99.20	\$26.89	\$72.32
September	2024	\$453.96	\$96.54	\$27.65	\$68.89
October	2024	\$454.18	\$107.86	\$29.69	\$78.16
November	2024	\$454.82	\$99.50	\$28.90	\$70.60
December	2024	\$456.71	\$120.13	\$31.61	\$88.53
January	2025	\$457.38	\$115.95	\$31.26	\$84.69
February	2025	\$457.44	\$123.65	\$32.48	\$91.17
March	2025	\$458.32	\$196.18	\$36.76	\$159.42
April	2025	\$458.63	\$174.45	\$37.23	\$137.22
May	2025	\$459.08	\$160.71	\$36.87	\$123.83
June	2025	\$458.74	\$139.55	\$36.73	\$102.82

DEFINITIONS

Arrears/Arrearages—The unpaid child support payments for past periods owed by a parent who is obligated to pay by court order. The arrears or arrearage or arrearages include interest and are adjusted for the amount of any partial satisfactions of the judgment.

Assigned Arrearages— Unpaid support that was due during past periods when public assistance was provided to the family or children of a child support obligor for which the right to receipt was assigned to the state as a condition of receiving assistance.

California Child Support Automation System—The California automated single statewide system for the child support program. It consists of two components: the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) system and the State Disbursement Unit.

California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids, (CalWORKs)—The public assistance program that implements the requirements set forth in the federal act Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), which replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Federally mandated changes in the new welfare program, set time limits on cash assistance, and included a requirement that recipients participate in a "Welfare to Work" plan. CalWORKs replaces all AFDC programs in California and is administered by the California Health and Human Services Agency (CalHHS).

Case—A parent ordered to pay support (PPS), whether mother, father, or alleged father, a person ordered to receive support, and a dependent child or children. The person ordered to receive support may be one of the child's parents, or other relative or caretaker including a foster parent. If both parents are absent and liable or potentially liable for the support of the child(ren), each parent is considered a separate case.

Child Support—Amounts required to be paid under a judgment, decree, or order, whether temporary, final, or subject to modification, for the support and maintenance of a child or

children, which provides for any or all of the following: monetary support, health insurance coverage, arrearages, and may include interest on delinquent child support obligations. Child support can be entered into voluntarily or ordered by a court or a properly empowered administrative agency, depending on state or tribal laws. Child support can involve different types of cases: IV-A Case, IV-D Case, IV-E Case, Non-IV-D Case, and Current Assistance IV-D (Child Support) Case.

Child Support Order—Any court or administrative order for the payment of a set or determinable amount of support for a child by a parent, or a court order requiring a parent to provide for health insurance coverage for a child, or a court order requiring a parent to make payment of arrearages. "Child support order" includes any court order for spousal support or for medical support to the extent these obligations are to be enforced by a single state agency for child support under Title IV-D of the federal Social Security Act (commencing with section 651 to Title 42 of the United States Code). This amount or responsibility must be established by court order or administrative process, voluntary agreement (in states or tribes where such agreements are filed in the court or agency of the administrative process as an order and are legally enforceable) or other legal process. It may include a judgment for child support arrears.

Child Support Agency—An agency run by a state, territory, tribal, or local government to help find noncustodial parents or the alleged father. The agency establishes, enforces, and changes child support orders; and collects and distributes child support money. The agency follows the child support guideline found in Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. Also known as a "IV-D Agency."

Current Assistance IV-D—Any child support case that is a referral from TANF or foster care and is also receiving public assistance from TANF or foster care funded under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. The child's caretaker has assigned the child's support rights to the state or tribe.

Collection—The amount of support payment received from a parent ordered to pay support or other person or agency on behalf of an obligor who is ordered by the court to pay support on behalf of the children or spouse.

Conditionally Assigned Arrearages—Arrearages that were temporarily assigned while a family received aid, but the temporary assignment has ended because the family is no longer receiving aid. These arrears are normally unassigned and paid to the family if collected from a source other than IRS tax intercept. However, when collections are received from IRS tax intercept these arrears are conditionally assigned and will be used to reimburse aid paid.

Disregard—A provision by which up to \$100 for families with one child and up to \$200 for families with two or more children of any amount of child support collected in a month for payment of the monthly required child support obligation is paid to a recipient of aid. Disregard amounts are not considered income or resources of the recipient family and are not deducted from the amount of aid to which the family would otherwise be eligible. Also known as a child support pass-through.

Distributed—“Distributed” or “distribution” means the allocation of child support collected to the various types of debt (e.g., monthly support obligations, arrears, ordered arrears) within a child support case as specified in 45 CFR 302.51 (45 CFR 309.115 for procedures governing tribal child support programs); the process of how the total child support payment amount is divided between all those owed under the support orders, including reimbursement for public assistance.

Excepted Portion—One type of pass-through and means that portion of an amount collected on behalf of a family in a current assistance case during a month that does not exceed more than \$100 per month, or \$200 per month for families that include two or more children. The “excepted portion” may include collections applied to current support and/or arrearages. The State is not required to pay the federal government the Federal share of the excepted portion.

Family First Distribution—Authorized by Section 7 of Chapter 573, Statutes of 2022 (AB 207), Family Code section 17504.2 collections that are received for government-assigned debt due to participation in the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program (CalWORKs) will be passed through to those families who no longer receive CalWORKs.

Federal Title IV-A—Title IV of the federal Social Security Act, Part A, Block Grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, codified at 42 U.S.C., Section 601, et seq. A case in which a state provides public assistance under the state’s IV-A program, which is funded under federal Title IV-A of the Social Security Act where the child(ren) have been determined to be eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The children’s support rights have been assigned to the state or tribe, and a referral to the child support agency has been made.

Federal Title IV-D—Title IV of the federal Social Security Act, Part D, Child Support and Establishment of Paternity, codified at 42, U.S.C., Section 651, et seq. A case in which a state provides child support services as directed by the state or tribal child support program that is authorized by federal Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. A IV-D case is comprised of: a dependent child or children; a custodial party (also known as a person ordered to receive support) who may be a parent, caretaker relative or other custodian, including an entity such as a foster care agency; and a noncustodial parent (also known as a parent ordered to pay support), a mother, a father, or a putative father whose paternity has not been legally established.

Federal Title IV-E—Title IV of the federal Social Security Act, Part E, Federal Payments for Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, codified at 42, U.S.C., Section 670 et seq. A case in which a state currently provides benefits or services for foster care maintenance to children entitled to foster care maintenance under the state’s IV-E Program authorized under federal Title IV-E of the Social Security Act. These cases are also eligible for IV-D services.

Former Assistance Case—A case where the children formerly received Title IV-A (AFDC or TANF) or Title IV-E foster care services.

Government-Owed Arrears—Unpaid support that was due during past periods when public assistance was provided to the family or children of a child support obligor for which the right to receipt was assigned to the state as a condition of receiving assistance.

Local Child Support Agency—The county office or department that has entered into a cooperative agreement with the California Department of Child Support Services to secure child, spousal, and medical support, and determine paternity.

Mixed Aid Status Case—A federal Title IV-D case where one or more of the children in the case have a different aid or non-aid status, either currently or in the past.

Monthly Support Obligation—The amount of money a parent ordered to pay support is required to pay each month for child support.

Never Assigned Arrears—Arrearages that have never been assigned to the state in never assistance cases. Never assigned arrearages are also the arrearages in former assistance cases that accrued after a family's most recent period of aid ends.

Never Assistance Case—A federal Title V-D case that is not currently and has never in the past received aid under AFDC, CalWORKs (which includes legal immigrant program), or foster care.

Parent ordered to pay support—The parent of the child(ren) that may be or is obligated to pay child support.

Person ordered to receive support—The person that has primary care, custody and control over the child(ren) and who is/are receiving or has applied to receive services under Title IV-D of the Federal Social Security Act (commencing with Section 651 of Title 42 of the United States Code)

Permanently Assigned Arrears—Unpaid support that is assigned to the state as of September 30, 1998, and the unpaid support that accrues on or after October 1, 1998, while the family is receiving aid.

Recoupment—The amount of support that was collected that has been applied to reimburse in whole or in part the unreimbursed assistance pool (UAP) which is used to reimburse the federal, state, and county governments for aid paid to the family.

Temporarily Assigned Arrearages—Time-limited public assistance payments made to poor families, based on Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. These arrearages are temporary assignments that convert to a conditional assignment when the family leaves the assistance program. Under DRA of 2005, there are no new assignments for this category. Under current assistance cases with assigned arrearages under assignments executed prior to October 1, 2009, may contain temporarily assigned arrears.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families—a federal program that provides cash assistance and support services to low-income families with children. It replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program in 1997. The program is designed to help families become self-sufficient through work and job preparation.

Unreimbursed Assistance Pool—The cumulative amount of assistance money paid to the family for all months, which has not been repaid by collection of assigned child support payments.