



Orange County
Child Support Services



2026

ORANGE COUNTY CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT

*A trusted partner of parents in securing
financial stability for Orange County's children*



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VISION

To be a trusted partner of parents in securing financial stability for Orange County's children.

MISSION

To facilitate the financial support of children by engaging parents and providing professional child support services.

VALUES

COMMITMENT TO CHILDREN

DEDICATED CUSTOMER SERVICE

COMPASSION AND ENCOURAGEMENT

INTEGRITY AND RESPECT

GROWTH AND LEARNING

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

ORANGE COUNTY CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES EXECUTIVE TEAM



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE TEAM

U.S. Census data reflects that 10.9% or 72,445 children in Orange County are experiencing poverty while 1 in 10 children face barriers to medical care.¹ The child support program is a critical service for families navigating co-parenting and our role in securing financial stability and facilitating medical coverage for their children is essential to closing these gaps. Orange County Child Support Services (OC CSS) is an integral part of the system of support for Orange County's children.

As we kick off 2026, a new era of child support is well underway due to legislation that changed the way we think about our critical work. The important changes urged us to reflect and define our future at OC CSS as a human services program focused on supporting the family unit. Last year, we reflected on our mission, vision, and values and crafted a framework for actionable accomplishments. We considered our organization's priorities and used them to set goals that stay true to our vision of being a trusted partner to the parents we serve.

The goals developed for the future of OC CSS prioritize innovation, our effectiveness as an organization, and awareness and accessibility to child support services. Continual investment in our staff's development and growth ensures we have the leadership and knowledge to provide our customers with solution-oriented, comprehensive services. Prioritizing innovation and effectiveness require us to re-imagine our services to focus on helping parents overcome barriers to success and re-defines what it means to be a true partner in helping them support their family. Finally, focusing on building partnerships, diversifying the way customers can reach us, and educating our community helps build bridges to our services for the parents who need us most.

Transformative legislation and service delivery are vital for OC CSS to continue as a sustainable solution for Orange County families and children.

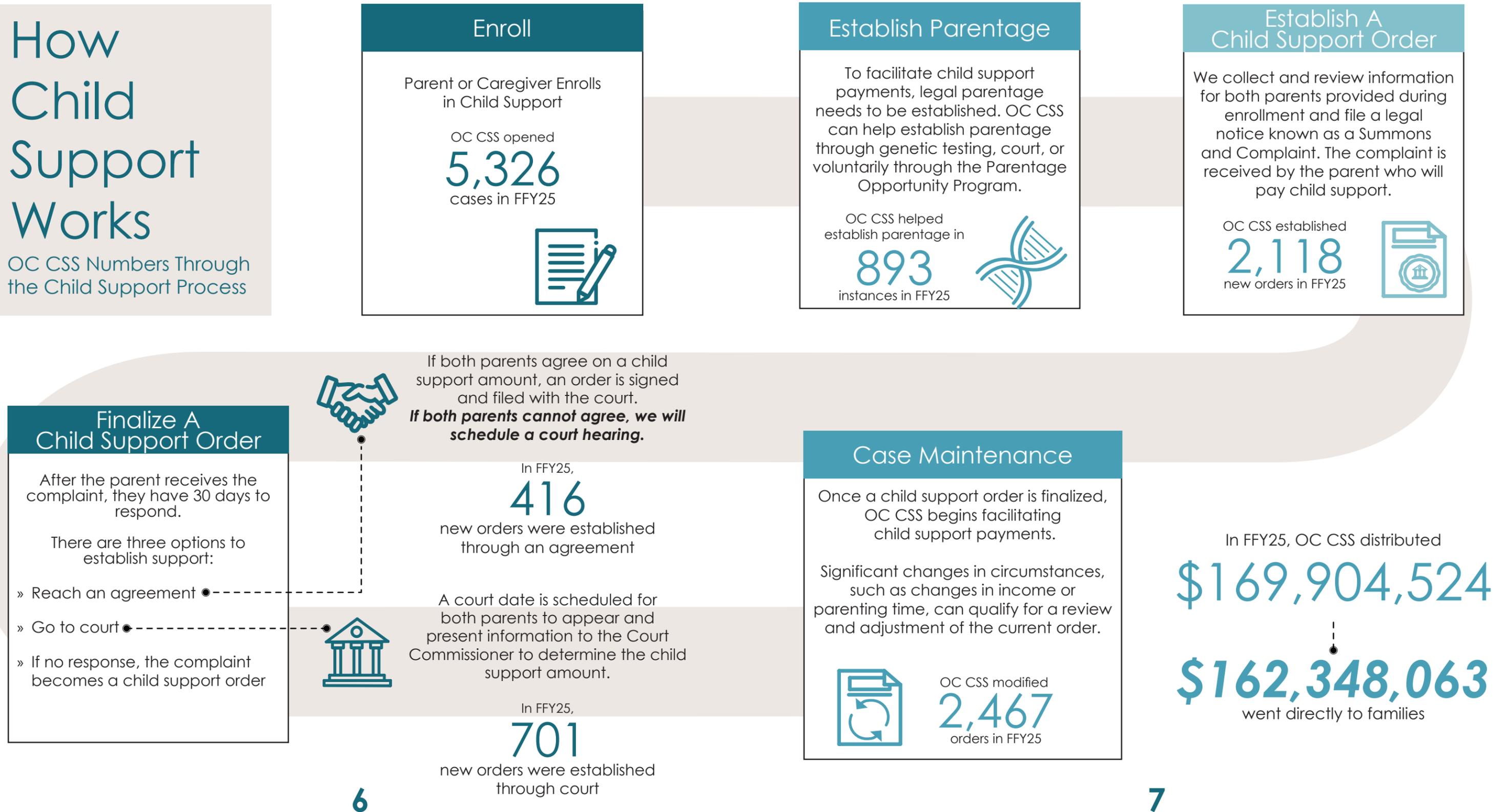
¹ The 31st Annual Report on the Conditions of Children in Orange County, December 2025: https://www.ssa.ocgov.com/sites/ssa/files/2025-12/2025_12_31st_Annual_Conditions_Children_Report.pdf

OUR BUSINESS

As a local child support agency (LCSA), we provide families with essential support. We empower parents and caregivers by equipping them with knowledge and resources while guiding them through every step of the child support process. We are invested in customer education to ensure an understanding of the program and its requirements, which can be challenging at times to navigate on their own.

How Child Support Works

OC CSS Numbers Through the Child Support Process



OUR CUSTOMERS

A key focus area for OC CSS is to gain valuable insight into the community we serve to enhance our service delivery approach to better serve families. The main factors to consider include customer demographics, including external barriers encountered to meet child support obligations, and the challenges faced within the child support program. These are critical components to identify the opportunities for OC CSS to tailor our approach and proactively engage with parents.

CUSTOMER DEMOGRAPHICS

THROUGHOUT FFY25,
OC CSS SERVED

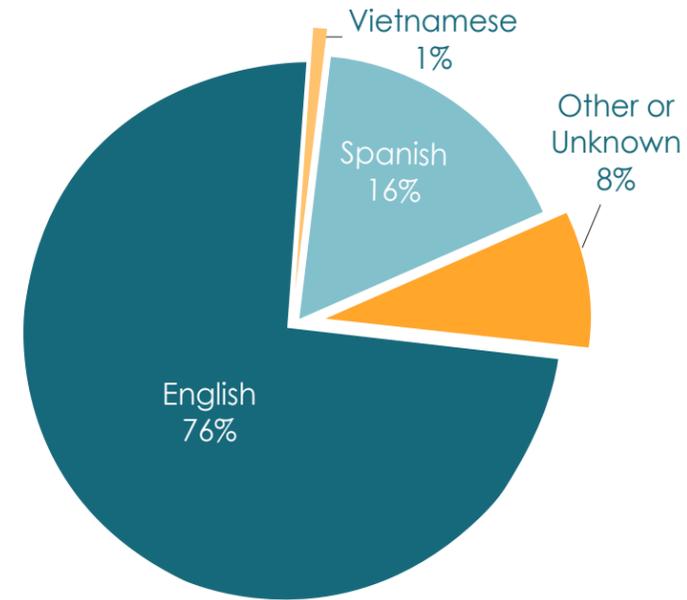
58,258
CHILDREN

OC CSS SERVED

1 IN 11 CHILDREN*
IN ORANGE COUNTY

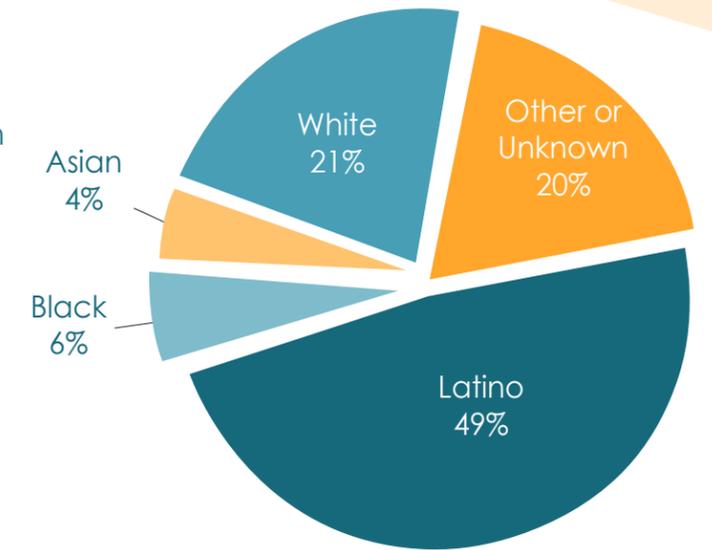
PRIMARY LANGUAGE

N=94,455



CUSTOMERS BY RACE

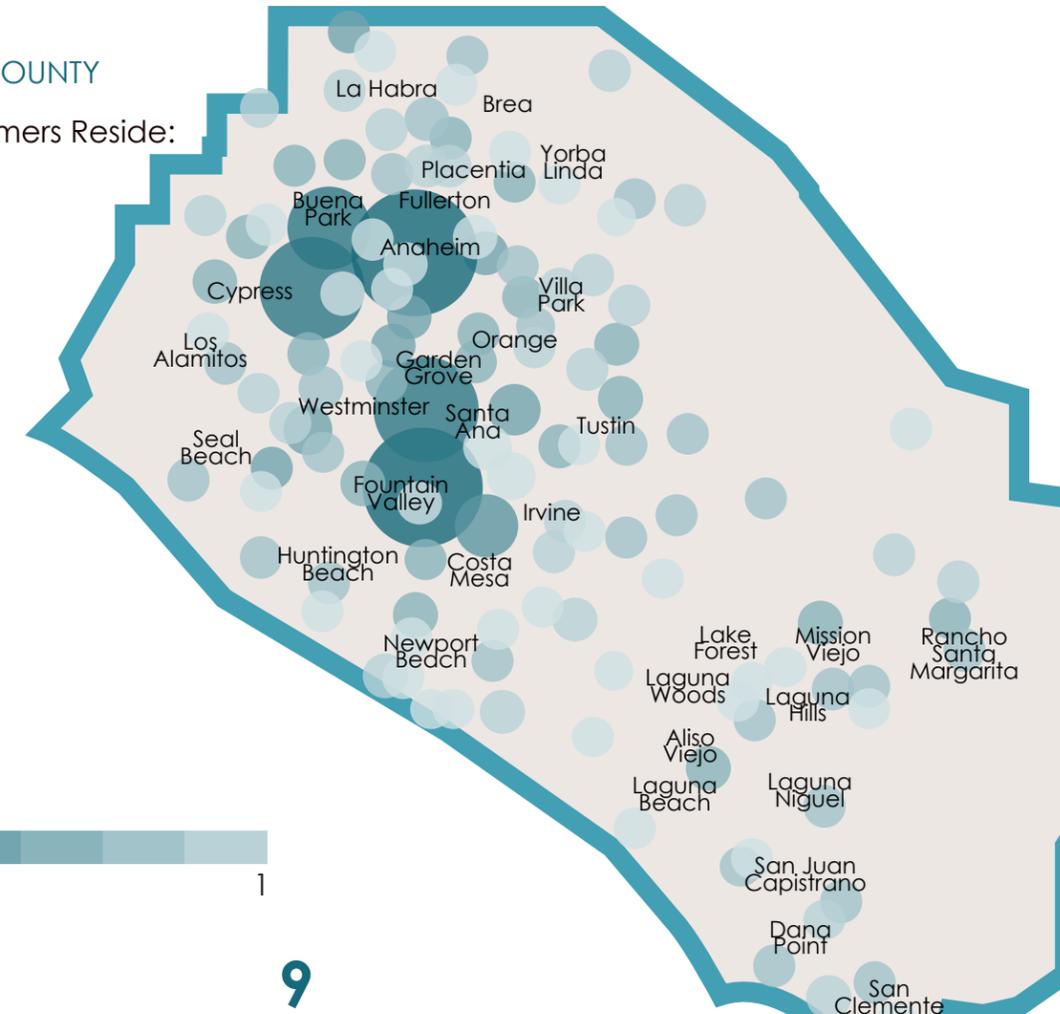
N=94,455



DISTRIBUTION OF CUSTOMERS IN ORANGE COUNTY

Top 10 Cities Where Customers Reside:

- Santa Ana, 20%
- Anaheim, 19%
- Garden Grove, 7%
- Fullerton, 5%
- Orange, 5%
- Huntington Beach, 4%
- Irvine, 4%
- Buena Park, 3%
- Costa Mesa, 3%
- Westminster, 3%

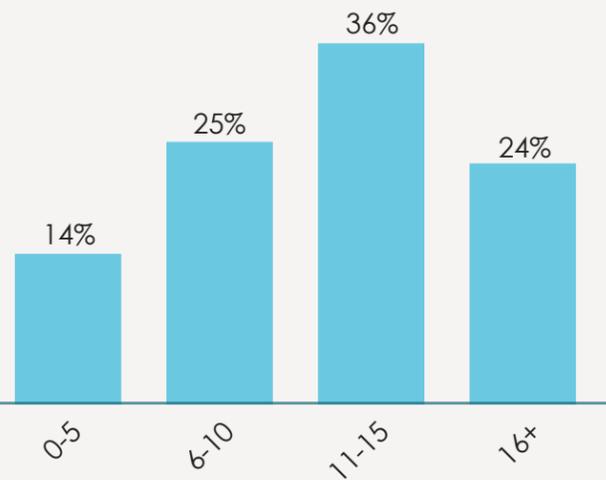


COUNT



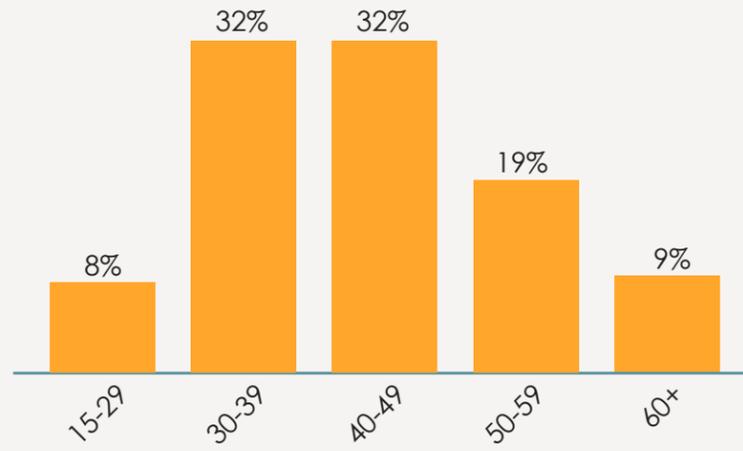
AGE OF CHILDREN

N = 51,379



AGE OF PARENTS

N = 94,219



* The ratio of children served as of September 2025.

BARRIERS OUR CUSTOMERS FACE

As a trusted partner in securing financial stability for our customers and their children, it is important for us to understand the barriers faced and apply the appropriate tools and actions for their case. Some of the most significant barriers for our customers include:

Cost of Living and Housing

Orange County families experience a higher cost of living than the national average, with housing being the largest expense. Child support payments contribute toward families meeting expenses for their children by covering critical costs, such as school supplies and food.

In our caseload, 53% of paying parents earn below the average minimum wage income. These statistics also reflect a barrier for parents to balance child support payments and daily expenses. The child support program aims to engage with parents to set realistic orders based on income and other factors with focus on sustainable orders for families. We take other measures to continually strive to strengthen our support to parents who make partial or no payments by connecting them with local resources and employment services.



Employment

Fifty-seven percent (57%) of our paying customers pay their child support through their employer, which increases consistency in regular payments. The remaining paying customers are responsible for making their payments independently, which is often less consistent.

\$3,510

is the monthly median income of parents paying support*

Reliable income and employment are essential for our customers to support their families and meet their child support obligations. Through strengthened partnerships with OC Workforce and Economic Development, we expanded access to employment resources for customers — a commitment we will continue to build upon over the next year.

*Data only includes parents with reported income information.

Involvement in the Justice System

Justice-involved parents experience many challenges that affect their financial and overall stability, from housing and employment opportunities to social stigmas. With the implementation of Assembly Bill (AB) 1148, the child support program provides for the suspension of child support orders for up to 10 months after release from incarceration to help support parents' transition back into society and secure employment resulting in consistent payments.

When customers become involved with the justice system, our case managers share how the change in the law affects their case through step-by-step support, express understanding, and provide community resources that can further help them stabilize.



Navigating the Child Support Process

While navigating the child support process can be complicated, we work alongside both parents to make the child support process easier to understand. Our case managers provide guidance and support every step of the way, helping families to navigate the legal process with confidence.

We regularly evaluate our services to ensure we meet customer needs and aim to provide the best possible experience. To identify areas for improvement, we use customer surveys to better understand the challenges families face throughout the child support process. Based on this feedback, we implemented changes that made access easier, such as Saturday office hours, virtual appointments, and Forms Workshops designed to help customers complete the documents needed for their case.

Informal Agreements

Parents are increasingly choosing informal agreements over legal processes to establish and enforce child support. While an informal agreement is an alternative option, there are disadvantages that should be considered. OC CSS uses tools to set realistic orders and if circumstances change, we inform customers of the review and adjustment process. If payments become less reliable, engagement with both parents is critical to determine the next appropriate step. Overall, parents engaging in the child support process increases familiarity with our services and significantly improves the outcomes and likelihood of consistent, long-term support for their children.

OUR APPROACH

Our approach to customer service is rooted in flexibility and proactive measures to meet customer needs while reducing barriers. We achieve this by identifying the most appropriate actions for each case and by providing customers with clear options and next steps.

SERVING OUR CUSTOMERS

OC CSS had a total of **58,831** cases in FFY25. Our case managers support families in our caseload through in-office interviews, phone calls, correspondence and helping them prepare for their hearing at court.



INTENTIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY

Our dedicated child support professionals address customer needs by first understanding each family's unique situation and creating a path forward. We work with a mindset to find the right tool that is appropriate for each parent and child(ren).

We are experts in the child support program and identifying the support that our customers need. Rather than addressing a single issue, our case managers engage with our customers to gain a full understanding of what is happening in their case, identifying any needed next steps, and taking appropriate steps to move cases forward.

To provide the best support for customers, OC CSS is intentional in the approach to the case actions. With a blend of dedicated teams to address specific scenarios and using tools that optimize our work, we consistently work towards improving both customer service and our overall performance. In 2025, we increased customer engagement by dedicating a team to work with parents making partial payments. Case managers prioritized building a strong relationship with parents and provided resources and strategies to address their needs and barriers to payments.

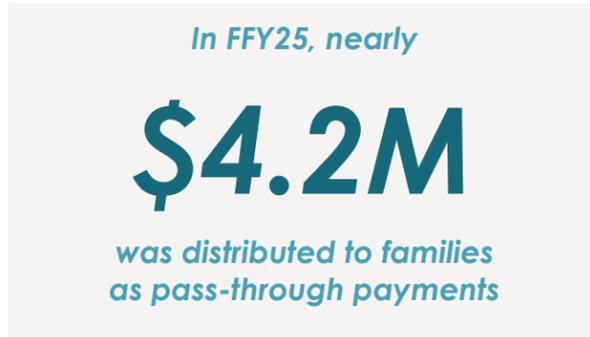
Our efforts demonstrate our commitment to continuous improvement for the work that we do and how we do it.

PROGRAM OVERSIGHT

In 2025, the child support program experienced several legislative changes that required implementation of new business processes. It motivated us to put into place comprehensive assessments to continue to provide services with consistency and effectiveness. The framework applied supports efforts to monitor service delivery and business efficiencies through internal audits to identify areas for improvement in customer experience, program compliance, and overall outcomes.

FAMILIES FIRST

OC CSS prioritizes families and provides services focused on support to both parents for overall positive impact on their children. The child support program serves both parents through facilitation of consistent payments for current child support and debt owed to the parent receiving support. With the implementation of AB 207, a significant change was implemented to prioritize families. Child support payments previously applied to recoup funds owed to the state are now issued directly to families known as pass-through payments.



SETTING CUSTOMERS UP FOR SUCCESS

To help customers achieve success, focus is placed on engagement from both parents to gather information with the goal of setting realistic orders that encourage and support consistency of payments. Success is achieved through involvement and participation from both parents.



This year, Senate Bill (SB) 343 became law and it modified the way child support is calculated. The key change was modifications to the formula used to make calculations to be more equitable to set realistic and sustainable child support order amounts. The intent was to establish child support orders that will result in more consistent payments. We will continue to see changes to the calculation in the coming year with adjustments to determine a parent's ability and opportunity to earn when setting child support amounts. This is demonstrative of changes to emphasize support for the whole family — each parent and child involved in the case.



HELPING CUSTOMERS MANAGE CHILD SUPPORT DEBT

If a parent accrues debt due to missed payments, OC CSS focuses on educating parents on options to address the past due support.

Several programs exist to help customers manage child support debt. Through the Debt Reduction Program, qualifying customers are encouraged to apply for the opportunity to pay a reduced amount on debt owed to the state.



The passing of AB 135 further created opportunities for parents to manage debt with consideration to barriers and circumstances affecting the ability to pay support. More specifically, customers with the sole source of income from Supplemental Security Income (SSI), State Supplementary Program (SSP), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), Cash Assistance Program for Aged, Blind, and Disabled Legal Immigrants (CAPI), or Veterans Administration Disability Compensation benefits qualify for forgiveness of government-owed debt. The change became effective in March 2024. OC CSS has forgiven over \$1 million dollars of government-owed debt.

Government-owed child support debt forgiven through the implementation of AB 135 (March 2024 - November 2025):



COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

Child support is an important aspect of our customers' lives, and it is one element of a broader support system for families. A critical focus to support families is to build strong partnerships with nonprofits, community organizations, and government agencies to make a greater impact and support the overall success of our customers. Through resource referrals and fostering partnerships, we collectively work towards enhancing the well-being of families and children.

COMMUNITY AMBASSADORS

Community Ambassadors attend local resource events to actively engage with the community and provide valuable information about services. They strengthen community connections by promoting awareness of the child support program, assisting current customers with case-related needs, and fostering partnerships with local organizations to deliver comprehensive assistance to members of the community. The goal is to reach underserved populations not aware of the services and to inform them about the value of the program. This year, Ambassadors connected with over 800 members of the public, providing them with information about case enrollment, modification of support orders, receipt and making of support payments, case status, and debt reduction programs.

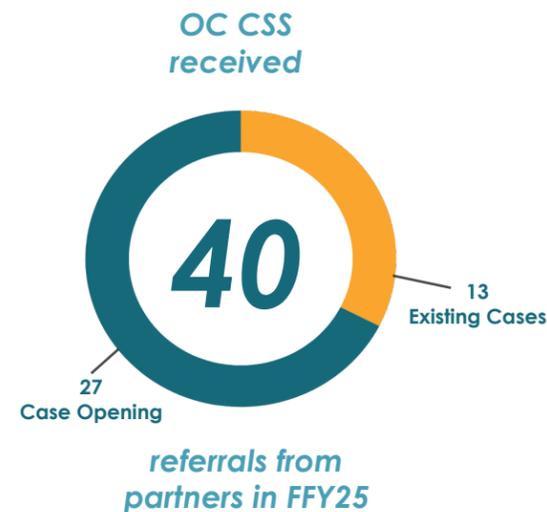


SUMMER CARE FAIR

Each summer, OC CSS hosts the Summer Care Fair, inviting various organizations and community partners to participate. This event serves as a one-stop center where members of the community can access multiple services and children receive essential back-to-school resources. The fair provides parents with an opportunity to connect with much-needed support in a setting designed to facilitate access to resources. Partner participation increased from 12 to 15 organizations this year, offering services such as backpacks, school supplies, health resources, and other critical assistance.

MUTUAL REFERRALS

OC CSS has strengthened its referral program over the last year, increasing the number of partner referrals. Helping partners understand child support creates knowledgeable advocates within organizations that extend our ability to reach and support families. At the same time, developing warm referrals to key partners, such as employment or childcare, increases our ability to indirectly support families with issues that also affect their child support case.



SOCIAL SAFETY NET

We host quarterly presentations to provide our case managers with information about services offered by local resources. Community partners are invited to share details about their programs and explain how they can assist our customers. This year, presentations were delivered by Working Wardrobes, H.I.R.E. OC, Food Finders, and Bracken's Kitchen.



FATHERHOOD

Focusing on fatherhood engagement is important to support Orange County families. We participate in the OC Fatherhood Coalition, a group of organizations that focus on enhancing outcomes for children and families through positive father participation in family support programs. This past year, First 5 Orange County participated in a hosted event to share the positive impacts of fatherhood involvement and provided opportunities for OC CSS to adopt practices focused on approaches that consider how to best serve fathers.

TEEN PARENTS

OC CSS provides regular presentations to teen parents in programs and services provided by Fristers, an organization supporting teen parents in preparing for their new role.

The partnership allows sharing of information to young parents about our services and connecting them to our Teen Parent Program where we provide personalized guidance and support as they navigate the child support process.

EMPLOYER OUTREACH



Building a partnership with employers is important to facilitate child support payments. Part of our outreach includes informing them of the different payment options, explaining their role in making child support payments, and establishing case managers as points of contact to assist them throughout the process. We also participate in a virtual Employer Workshop, along with other counties in our region, to educate participating employers about the child support process and the value in our partnership.

SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

Our partnership with the Social Services Agency has been critical in supporting families. By attending community events, we help each other's customers, providing a stronger support system for Orange County residents. We will continue to build this partnership by sharing resources in regional offices in the next year.

Partnerships with local county and government agencies play a vital role in helping us provide child support services to Orange County families. This includes The Orange County Superior Court, Self-help Office, Family Law Facilitator, Orange County Bar Association, and hospitals when establishing parentage. We are committed to maintaining these relationships to ensure we consistently provide the best experience possible for our customers.

COMMITMENT TO PROGRESS

OC CSS is committed to driving innovation and enhancing customer experience by continually investing in and empowering a strong and skilled workforce. We consistently make progress toward improvement of our services because Orange County families deserve reliable services that are responsive to their changing needs.

FLEXIBILITY AND ACCESS

Modernizing our service delivery and adapting to customer preferences enhances access to child support and increases flexibility of our services. Over the past year, we implemented the following initiatives for Orange County families:



855

customers indicated they heard about child support from an event, social media, or advertising in FFY25

Reaching Underserved Communities

For us to make our services accessible to the community we serve, it takes outreach and advertising efforts to increase awareness of our program. We strategically use census and caseload data that guide us to coordinate community events or advertise our services in different areas of Orange County that can benefit from child support.

Simplified Enrollment Process

California Child Support Services' Simplified Enrollment Process, an online enrollment form, makes opening a child support case easier. We connect potential customers to the enrollment form through quick response (QR) codes included in marketing material distributed to members of the community or at court and posted on social media. In addition, the online form allows us to reach out to customers who have not completed the enrollment process to address any questions or assist in navigating through the process.



OC CSS received and processed

2,768

simplified enrollments in FFY25

Connecting with Customers

We emphasize flexibility and accessibility for customers by providing various service options. In-person, we assist customers on a walk-in or appointment basis and shifted our focus to create a more collaborative process with value placed on eliminating wait times. Services are offered on Saturdays, once a month, to increase flexibility in addition to offering virtual appointments to increase accessibility that accommodates various schedule needs. To better connect with customers, a shift was also made to offer information in the form of an annual e-newsletter and to consistently share and highlight important information about services and resources.



Customers scheduled

980

appointments online in FFY25



OC CSS served

440

customers on Saturdays in FFY25

Forms Workshop

The child support process requires completion of forms that at times may be complex. To support customers with completion of these forms, services are available for one-on-one sessions via in-person appointments or walk-in basis, in addition to virtual workshops to offer various options.

In FFY 25, OC CSS helped **643** customers during Forms Workshop



Modernizing Services

To improve accessibility and convenience, online services and tools are critical. OC CSS leverages the use of texting and electronic signatures to expedite services and increase flexibility. Other implemented tools include electronic formats on forms required for child support, such as Income and Expense Declaration, Review and Adjustment, and Title Company Demand Request. The Income and Expense Declaration form, an important document for determining child support, was issued to approximately 5,000 customers to complete with a return rate of 43%. OC CSS will continue to identify opportunities to modernize services to increase efficiency and eliminate delays caused by traditional service models such as mailing of forms.



INVESTING IN OUR WORKFORCE



Well-rounded, knowledgeable staff are integral in providing quality service and critical in fostering a culture that prioritizes growth. Our training programs focus on comprehensive program knowledge, strong leadership development, and continuous professional and personal growth. In addition to formal training, OC CSS offers unique growth and mentorship opportunities to support long-term career development.

In FFY25,
OC CSS staff completed



- Program Knowledge
- Leadership
- Professional Development
- Personal Development

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Providing opportunities for growth and professional development support both our health as a department and retaining staff.

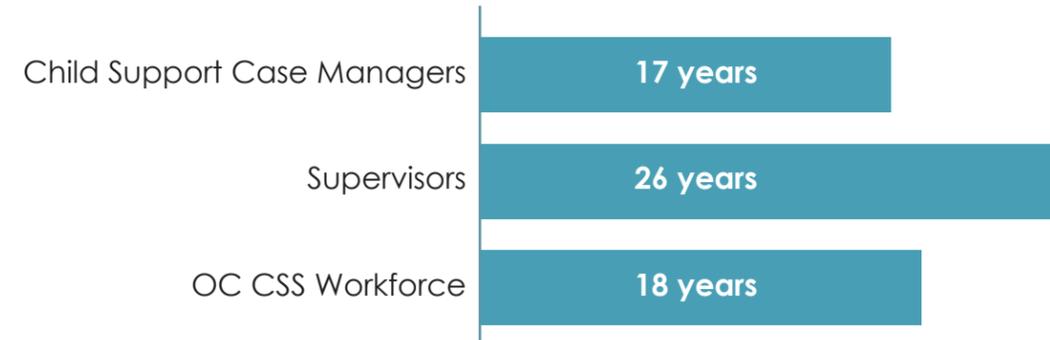
OC CSS has formalized these opportunities through mentorship, rotational opportunities, and recruitment support.

- Our Coaching Corner program provides one-on-one coaching sessions with leaders throughout the department. This opportunity supports career planning, skill development, and networking.
- To help staff explore career paths in the department, OC CSS provides interviews with staff holding various roles in the department. The interviews provide their experiences and advice for others looking to hold their role in the future.
- We also provide rotational opportunities across teams. These rotations support the transfer of knowledge and expertise and support well-rounded development.

SUCCESSION PLANNING

OC CSS's Succession Plan is designed to prepare the organization for the future by creating growth and development opportunities for staff at all levels. This approach strengthens stability, increases employee retention, and builds program expertise. Core components of the plan – such as Succession planning initiatives, targeted training sessions, focused discussions, and project opportunities – serve as foundational elements for expanding knowledge and providing professional exposure across multiple staff classifications to better prepare for the future. Over the past year, OC CSS has advanced its commitment to build a career-oriented workforce by launching programs tailored to all classifications.

AVERAGE WORKFORCE EXPERIENCE



LOOKING FORWARD

In 2024, OC CSS began to prepare for a number of changes to child support. While customers and staff adjusted to new laws and practices, we began to focus our efforts on planning for the future with a three-year Strategic Plan to provide all of us a clear direction and a united vision. OC CSS achieved significant progress in 2025 toward advancing these strategic goals, moving us forward in alignment with our Vision. These strategic goals include:

Promote employee engagement

Enhance organizational communication and employee engagement.

In emphasizing employee engagement, we want to ensure our staff have opportunities to shape our culture and services. To accomplish this goal, we plan to assess internal communication, conduct staff surveys, and hold focus groups to gain feedback, insight, and ideas from staff.

Promote employee development

Recognize the needs of an evolving workforce in support of development opportunities.

OC CSS has long prioritized employee development and promoting a growth mindset. Our commitment to professional development supports retaining staff and their knowledge while preparing them for the next steps in their career. To accomplish this goal, we will remain focused on mentorship, training, and introduce a formal succession plan.

Increase program effectiveness

Transform our service delivery by integrating data into operations and decision making.

Data-driven operations are important to understanding and planning for our changing program and services. Better integrating the language and use of data into day-to-day operations and decision-making helps us understand our impact and provides opportunities for innovation and improvement. To accomplish this goal, we will increase the use of case management dashboards, increase effectiveness of performance planning and monitoring, and test and refine new strategies.

Enhance customer experience

Ensure that our customer service meets the diverse needs of families.

Gaining insight into our customers' experiences in the child support program helps us identify opportunities for improvement. To accomplish this goal, we will increase opportunities for customer engagement, increase referrals to community resources, and continue to strengthen child support knowledge throughout the department.

Increase innovative solutions

Create a culture dedicated to innovation and continual improvement.

The expertise of our staff and learning from other programs and agencies can help identify innovations that influence performance and work efficiency. This goal helps us grow by exploring ideas and solutions that come from new perspectives.

Optimize resources

Effectively align resources to maximize workforce effectiveness.

To remain efficient and effective in a changing child support landscape, it is important to analyze and align resources and workloads. To accomplish this, we will draft resource plans and maintain budget forecasting.

Increase program awareness

Strategically raise program awareness through advertising, partnership, and outreach efforts.

Community understanding and awareness of child support increases access and reduces misconceptions. To accomplish this goal, we are educating partners and requesting their advocacy, using data-driven advertising, and enhancing our online presence to ensure information is easily obtained and understood.



APPENDICES

Performance Scorecard

Organizational Charts

Federal Performance Measures

What Customers Are Saying

Recognition Awards

PERFORMANCE SCORECARD FFY25

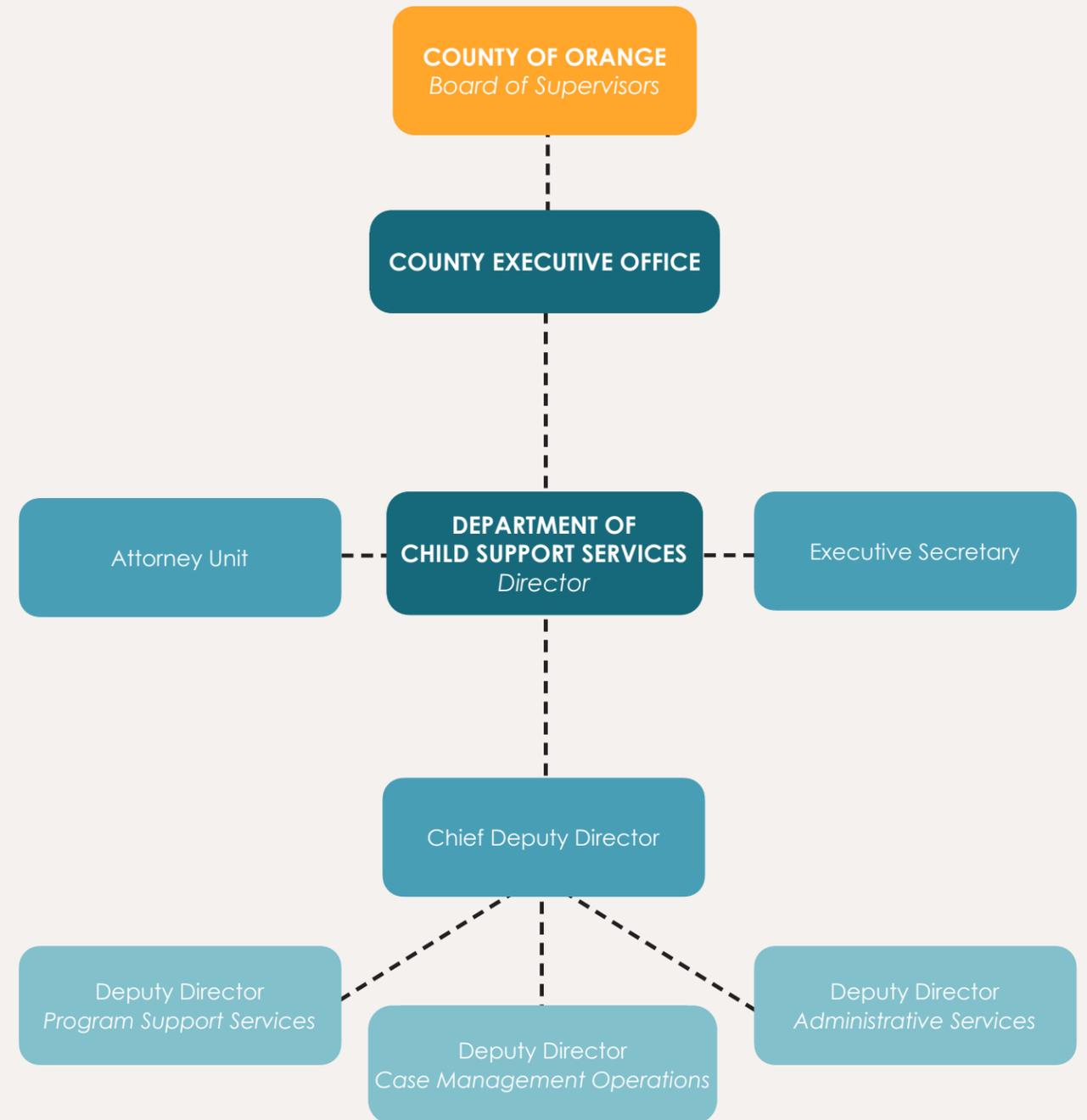
Objective	Metric	FFY25
Performance To ensure the financial and medical support of children	Annual Dollars Collected Per Case	\$3,227
	Annual Dollars Distributed to Families	\$162M
	Annual % of Current Support Collected	65%
	Annual % of Cases with Arrears Collected	62.9%
	Annual % of Cases with Orders Established	92.3%
	Annual % of Cases with Paternity Established	98%
Customers To build positive, lasting and valued relationships with customers	Annual Department Overall Customer Satisfaction	54%
	Annual Lobby Wait Time (Customer Contact)	8 min
Business Efficiencies To provide child support services efficiently and effectively	Annual Dollars Collected Per Full-Time Employee(FTE)	\$531,118
	PI #22 - Days: Case Opening to Order + Order to First Payment = Total Days	119
	PI #25 - Days: Case Opening with Order to First Payment	35
	Data Reliability Index Per QTR	96%
	Compliance Index Per QTR	98%
	Emergency Operation Action Plans	100%
Staff To deliver child support services in a professional manner	Annual Hrs of Professional Development Per FTE	22.6

FEDERAL TO LOCAL ORGANIZATION

The child support program was established in 1975. In California, child support services are provided through a network of 47 Local Child Support Agencies that operate at the county level.



OC CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES



Federal Performance Measures

Federal Performance Measures (FPMs) are metrics for establishing orders and facilitating child support payments.

Each year, OC CSS implements strategies that affect and improve performance. For 2024, these strategies include targeted customer engagement, outreach to employers, marketing and partnership development, and analyzing order amounts.

FPM 1. Parentage

Percentage of children with parentage established via Parentage Opportunity Program (POP) or court orders from the total of out of wedlock births from the prior calendar year.

98%

FPM 2. Court Orders

Percentage of active cases with an established support order.

92.3%

FPM 3. Current Support

Percentage of current support paid from the amount billed.

65%

FPM 4. Arrears

Percentage of cases with child support debt that made a payment during the Federal Fiscal Year.

62.9%

FPM 5. Cost Effectiveness

Total dollars received compared to program expenditures.

\$3.25
Received in child support payments
for every **\$1.00** spent

WHAT CUSTOMERS ARE SAYING

“The representative was very kind, patient, and helpful. In a time of such darkness it means a lot to come across kind people especially when navigating through the child support process, it can all be challenging at times. So thank you!”

“After my separation, it was my first time dealing with child support and I was completely lost in the process. OC Child Support representatives were patient with my many questions and kindly explained every step.”

“I wanted to acknowledge the level of professionalism and empathy I experienced from all the staff I encountered. Although the situations that bring people to this agency are not always favorable and can have people on high alert, every interaction I had were with well mannered and caring people that made the experience personable. At times, I was a little frazzled from the whole experience but everyone kept a high level of professionalism and understanding attitude. Thank you for the work you do and high level of customer service.”

ORANGE COUNTY CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES AN AWARD WINNING AGENCY

Communications and Innovation



Achievement



Program Engagement



Innovation in the Child Support Program





MARIA ARZOLA
DIRECTOR

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**Orange County
Child Support Services**