



NEW MEXICO HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT
P.O. Box 2348
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504-2348

Bill Richardson
Governor

Kathryn Falls
Secretary

Contact Betina Gonzales McCracken 505-476-6205

July 12, 2010
For Immediate Release

NM Human Services Department Collects Record Amount of Child Support in 2010

Collections Surpass Annual Target by 10 Percent for a Total of \$115.4 Million

SANTA FE – The NM Human Services Department reports another record breaking amount of collections for the New Mexico Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) with \$115.4 million collected during the 2010 budget year that ended June 30, 2010.

“During a difficult economic year, the Child Support Enforcement Division saw increased caseloads and requests for modifications of court-orders, which required the division to work more efficiently and effectively to ensure child support collections continued to flow to New Mexico’s families,” said Charissa Saavedra, Human Services Department Deputy Secretary.

Last year’s collections are 10 percent above the department’s target for collections and nearly four percent above the previous year’s collections, which was itself a record.

Nearly 60 percent of the \$115.4 million collected last year was paid through wage withholding, which is the single best method of ensuring consistent reliable payments. However, collections from unemployment benefits soared to an all time high with \$8.2 million collected, or seven percent of all collections.

“While it may seem insensitive to collect from unemployment benefits knowing that the non-custodial parent is unemployed, it is even more difficult to know that these collections often don’t cover the full amount of the monthly support obligation,” said Stephen Klump, Acting CSED Director. “That, often times, causes the non-custodial parents to fall behind in their payments and leaves custodial parents short of their monthly support obligation.”

Non-custodial parents and custodial parents who are receiving unemployment benefits may be eligible for a modification of their support obligations. They should contact CSED to schedule an appointment with a case worker and initiate the modification review process.

Other collections came in through direct non-custodial payments, tax refund intercepts, and the license suspension and passport denial programs.

Governor Richardson’s Fresh Start Program has also played an important role over the last few years in helping to increase child support collections. Since it began in 2005, 1,348 cases have taken part in the initiative, collecting more than \$2 million in child support.

“This program has allowed non-custodial parents, who had allowed their arrears to grow so large they were ignoring the problem, come in and find out how they can settle their obligation by making a lump sum payment and entering into a new payment plan for the remaining support arrearages,” said Saavedra.

The Child Support Customer Service Center can be reached toll free at 1-800-288-7207 in New Mexico or 1-800-585-7631 from out of state.

###