

MDHS Celebrates August as Child Support Awareness Month

The Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS) celebrates August as Child Support Awareness Month by continuing to ensure that children in Mississippi receive the emotional and financial support needed to live secure and healthy lives. In the 2018 fiscal year, MDHS served over 344,000 children by collecting more than \$368 million dollars.

August 13-17 will be designated as Child Support Awareness week. During this week from August 13-August 15, child support clients may visit the district office locations and enter to win a “Back to School Bag.” Giveaway entries will be limited to one entry per client. Also, on Wednesday, August 15, clients and potential clients are welcome to visit the district offices for snacks. Snacks and giveaways are being sponsored by the Mississippi Child Support Association.

MDHS continues to improve the program and look for ways to better serve families and children across the state. In 2016, MDHS partnered with YoungWilliams, PLLC to provide legal and case management services across the state. Since implementation, MDHS has seen an increase in the number of cases that now have a child support order by 6.3%. Collections have also increased by 2.3%. “In December 2017, Mississippi met a federal performance goal of 80% for the number of cases that have orders for the first time in program history. It is my expectation that the program will continue to see improvements made to performance and customer service as we enter the third year of this partnership,” said Lyndsy Irwin, Director of the Division of Child Support. “We understand that there is still room for improvement, but we are excited to see the program moving forward, and we are ready to put in the hard work to continue improving services.”

Last year, MDHS began working with the State Disbursement Unit partner, Informatix, Inc., to increase payment options available to parents who owe support. MDHS has continued to add options, and recently began accepting payments from MoneyGram. Parents who owe support may now go into any location that has a MoneyGram agent and make a payment by cash, or a pin-based debit card in participating locations. To find a MoneyGram location near you visit: www.MoneyGram.com/BillPayLocations

In the fall of 2017, MDHS partnered with Families First for Mississippi to provide Access and Visitation services to non-custodial parents statewide who need assistance gaining access to or visitation with their children. MDHS is continuing to look for ways to partner with legal service providers to offer more services for visitation needs and to provide resources that assist parents in navigating the judicial system.

To learn more about the Child Support Program, please visit <http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/child-support/> or call 1-877-882-4916.

Information about payment options is available at <http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/child-support/choose-a-payment-option/>

| To learn more about the Mississippi Access to Visitation Program, please visit [http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/child-support/mississippi-access-visitation-program-\(mav-p\)/](http://www.mdhs.state.ms.us/child-support/mississippi-access-visitation-program-(mav-p)/) or call 1-800-590-0818.