Media contact: Brian Schleter
410-767-8944

MARYLAND COLLECTS A RECORD $549 MILLION IN CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS
State moves into Top 10 for Collection of Past Due Payments

BALTIMORE, MD (April 9, 2014)— Maryland set new records for child support collection last year, achieving "Top 10 State" status for the percentage of past due child support (arrears) collected, up from the 26th ranked state just two years ago. Among 36 metro regions nationwide, Prince George's County in Maryland ranked third overall for cases paying on arrears and fifth for the percentage of current support paid, according to preliminary data for federal fiscal year 2013, which ended Sept. 30.

Maryland ranked above the national average in each of four key child support collection performance measures for the second consecutive year. In all, the Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR) collected a record $549 million in child support payments. These record increases have translated to a 16 percent increase in collections per case—an average increase of $353 per case. More than 293,000 children directly benefited from the department's efforts to enforce court ordered child support.

"In Maryland, we're doing everything we can to protect and care for our most vulnerable. Child support plays a vital part in ensuring the well-being of Maryland's children and the stability of many single parent households," said Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley. "We are committed to helping more parents who pay child support to invest in their children's future."

This year to date, DHR has collected $7.2 million compared to same period a year ago, bringing the total increase since the Department began reforming its processes in 2011 to $37.2 million.   More than $155 million was disbursed to former recipients of Temporary Cash Assistance (Maryland's TANF program) who otherwise may very well have been relying on the state for economic stability.

"Our success comes from recognizing the distinction between a dead-beat parent and one who is just dead-broke," said DHR Secretary Ted Dallas. "While we will never hesitate to use every tool in the box to collect child support from those who can afford to pay but don't, our approach must also work with those who would contribute but simply cannot afford to pay. By linking these parents to job training, educational opportunities or work experiences, they are better able to make regular child support payments."

In Maryland, 44 percent of non-custodial parents paid 75 percent or more of their current child support due during a one-year study period, according to a recent report on payment compliance from the University of Maryland School of Social Work that was commissioned by DHR. However, 35 percent of the sample caseload paid 25 percent or less of the amount due. These individuals are seven times less likely to be employed year-round, and their incomes are five times lower than the more compliant group.

Through its Non-custodial Parent Employment Program, the department has enrolled 17,551 parents in job training and job readiness programs to help them secure and retain employment since June 2007. Collectively, they have made $97 million in payments.

DHR's Child Support Enforcement Administration utilizes a number of strategies in addition to wage garnishment to ensure that children receive the financial support of both parents. Other commonly used tools include suspending passports, driver's licenses and professional licenses, requesting a bench or arrest warrant, and intercepting lottery winnings.

As part of a strategic plan to improve customer service, DHR has expanded classroom and online staff training opportunities, implemented new business processes and redesigned its CSEA website offerings.

"Our child support staff deserve the real credit," said CSEA Executive Director Joseph DiPrimio. "Their hard work and embrace of change made these increases possible and the Secretary and I thank them for helping Maryland families."

For more information about child support services in Maryland, visit www.dhr.maryland.gov.

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General Information 800-332-6347 | TTY 800-925-4434 | 311 West Saratoga Street | Baltimore | Maryland 21201-3500 | www.dhr.maryland.gov