§ 657. Distribution of collected support

(a) In general

Subject to subsections (d) and (e), the amounts collected on behalf of a family as support by a State pursuant to a plan approved under this part shall be distributed as follows:

(1) Families receiving assistance

In the case of a family receiving assistance from the State, the State shall—

(A) pay to the Federal Government the Federal share of the amount collected, subject to paragraph (3)(A);

(B) retain, or pay to the family, the State share of the amount collected, subject to paragraph (3)(B); and

(C) pay to the family any remaining amount.

(2) Families that formerly received assistance

In the case of a family that formerly received assistance from the State:

(A) Current support

To the extent that the amount collected does not exceed the current support amount, the State shall pay the amount to the family.

(B) Arrearages

Except as otherwise provided in an election made under section 654 (34) of this title, to the extent that the amount collected exceeds the current support amount, the State—

(i) shall first pay to the family the excess amount, to the extent necessary to satisfy support arrearages not assigned pursuant to section 608 (a)(3) of this title;

(ii) if the amount collected exceeds the amount required to be paid to the family under clause (i), shall—

(I) pay to the Federal Government the Federal share of the excess amount described in this clause, subject to paragraph (3)(A); and

(II) retain, or pay to the family, the State share of the excess amount described in this clause, subject to paragraph (3)(B); and

(iii) shall pay to the family any remaining amount.

(3) Limitations

(A) Federal reimbursements

The total of the amounts paid by the State to the Federal Government under paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection with respect to a family shall not exceed the Federal share of the amount assigned with respect to the family pursuant to section 608 (a)(3) of this title.

(B) State reimbursements

The total of the amounts retained by the State under paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subsection with respect to a family shall not exceed the State share of the amount assigned with respect to the family pursuant to section 608 (a)(3) of this title.

(4) Families that never received assistance
In the case of any other family, the State shall distribute to the family the portion of the amount so collected that remains after withholding any fee pursuant to section 654 (6)(B)(ii) of this title.

(5) **Families under certain agreements**

Notwithstanding paragraphs (1) through (3), in the case of an amount collected for a family in accordance with a cooperative agreement under section 654 (33) of this title, the State shall distribute the amount collected pursuant to the terms of the agreement.

(6) **State option to pass through additional support with Federal financial participation**

(A) **Families that formerly received assistance**

Notwithstanding paragraph (2), a State shall not be required to pay to the Federal Government the Federal share of an amount collected on behalf of a family that formerly received assistance from the State to the extent that the State pays the amount to the family.

(B) **Families that currently receive assistance**

(i) **In general**

Notwithstanding paragraph (1), in the case of a family that receives assistance from the State, a State shall not be required to pay to the Federal Government the Federal share of the excepted portion (as defined in clause (ii)) of any amount collected on behalf of such family during a month to the extent that—

(I) the State pays the excepted portion to the family; and

(II) the excepted portion is disregarded in determining the amount and type of assistance provided to the family under such program.

(ii) **Excepted portion defined**

For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “excepted portion” means that portion of the amount collected on behalf of a family during a month that does not exceed $100 per month, or in the case of a family that includes 2 or more children, that does not exceed an amount established by the State that is not more than $200 per month.

(b) **Continuation of assignments**

(1) **State option to discontinue pre-1997 support assignments**

(A) **In general**

Any rights to support obligations assigned to a State as a condition of receiving assistance from the State under part A and in effect on September 30, 1997 (or such earlier date on or after August 22, 1996, as the State may choose), may remain assigned after such date.

(B) **Distribution of amounts after assignment discontinuation**

If a State chooses to discontinue the assignment of a support obligation described in subparagraph (A), the State may treat amounts collected pursuant to the assignment as if the amounts had never been assigned and may distribute the amounts to the family in accordance with subsection (a)(4).

(2) **State option to discontinue post-1997 assignments**

(A) **In general**

Any rights to support obligations accruing before the date on which a family first receives assistance under part A that are assigned to a State under that part and in effect before the implementation date of this section may remain assigned after such date.

(B) **Distribution of amounts after assignment discontinuation**

If a State chooses to discontinue the assignment of a support obligation described in subparagraph (A), the State may treat amounts collected pursuant to the assignment as if the amounts had never been assigned and may distribute the amounts to the family in accordance with subsection (a)(4).
(c) Definitions

As used in subsection (a) of this section:

(1) Assistance

The term “assistance from the State” means—

(A) assistance under the State program funded under part A of this subchapter or under the State plan approved under part A of this subchapter (as in effect on the day before August 22, 1996); and

(B) foster care maintenance payments under the State plan approved under part E of this subchapter.

(2) Federal share

The term “Federal share” means that portion of the amount collected resulting from the application of the Federal medical assistance percentage in effect for the fiscal year in which the amount is distributed.

(3) Federal medical assistance percentage

The term “Federal medical assistance percentage” means—

(A) 75 percent, in the case of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa; or

(B) the Federal medical assistance percentage (as defined in section 1396d (b) of this title, as such section was in effect on September 30, 1995) in the case of any other State.

(4) State share

The term “State share” means 100 percent minus the Federal share.

(5) Current support amount

The term “current support amount” means, with respect to amounts collected as support on behalf of a family, the amount designated as the monthly support obligation of the noncustodial parent in the order requiring the support or calculated by the State based on the order.

(d) Gap payments not subject to distribution under this section

At State option, this section shall not apply to any amount collected on behalf of a family as support by the State (and paid to the family in addition to the amount of assistance otherwise payable to the family) pursuant to a plan approved under this part if such amount would have been paid to the family by the State under section 602 (a)(28) of this title, as in effect and applied on the day before August 22, 1996.

(e) Amounts collected for child for whom foster care maintenance payments are made

Notwithstanding the preceding provisions of this section, amounts collected by a State as child support for months in any period on behalf of a child for whom a public agency is making foster care maintenance payments under part E of this subchapter—

(1) shall be retained by the State to the extent necessary to reimburse it for the foster care maintenance payments made with respect to the child during such period (with appropriate reimbursement of the Federal Government to the extent of its participation in the financing);

(2) shall be paid to the public agency responsible for supervising the placement of the child to the extent that the amounts collected exceed the foster care maintenance payments made with respect to the child during such period but not the amounts required by a court or administrative order to be paid as support on behalf of the child during such period; and the responsible agency may use the payments in the manner it determines will serve the best interests of the child, including setting such payments aside for the child’s future needs or making all or a part thereof available to the person responsible for meeting the child’s day-to-day needs; and

(3) shall be retained by the State, if any portion of the amounts collected remains after making the payments required under paragraphs (1) and (2), to the extent that such portion is necessary to reimburse the State (with appropriate reimbursement to the Federal Government to the extent of
its participation in the financing) for any past foster care maintenance payments (or payments of assistance under the State program funded under part A of this subchapter) which were made with respect to the child (and with respect to which past collections have not previously been retained); and any balance shall be paid to the State agency responsible for supervising the placement of the child, for use by such agency in accordance with paragraph (2).


Amendments

2006—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 109–171, § 7301(b)(1)(A), which directed general amendment of subsec. (a), was executed by adding pars. (1) to (5) and striking out former pars. (1) to (6), to reflect the probable intent of Congress and the amendment by Pub. L. 109–171, § 7301(b)(1)(B)(iii). See below. Prior to amendment, pars. (1) to (6) related to families receiving assistance, families that formerly received assistance, families that never received assistance, families under certain agreements, the Secretary’s report to Congress, and a State option for applicability, respectively.

Subsec. (a)(3). Pub. L. 109–171, § 7310(b), amended heading and text of par. (3) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “In the case of any other family, the State shall distribute the amount so collected to the family.”


Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109–171, § 7301(c), amended heading and text of subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “Any rights to support obligations, assigned to a State as a condition of receiving assistance from the State under part A of this subchapter and in effect on September 30, 1997 (or such earlier date, on or after August 22, 1996, as the State may choose), shall remain assigned after such date.”


1999—Subsec. (a). Pub. L. 106–169, § 301(c)(1), substituted “subsections (d) and (e)” for “subsections (e) and (f)” in introductory provisions.


Subsec. (d). Pub. L. 106–169, § 301(c)(2), (4), redesignated subsec. (e) as (d) and struck out heading and text of former subsec. (d). Text read as follows: “If—

“(1) the State share of amounts collected in the fiscal year which could be retained to reimburse the State for amounts paid to families as assistance by the State is less than the State share of such amounts collected in fiscal year 1995 (determined in accordance with this section as in effect on August 21, 1996); and

“(2)(A) the State has distributed to families that include an adult receiving assistance under the program under part A of this subchapter at least 80 percent of the current support payments collected during the preceding fiscal year on behalf of such families, and the amounts distributed were disregarded in determining the amount or type of assistance provided under the program under part A of this subchapter; or

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“(B) the State has distributed to families that formerly received assistance under the program under part A of this subchapter the State share of the amounts collected pursuant to section 664 of this title that could have been retained as reimbursement for assistance paid to such families,

then the State share otherwise determined for the fiscal year shall be increased by an amount equal to one-half of the amount (if any) by which the State share for fiscal year 1995 exceeds the State share for the fiscal year (determined without regard to this subsection).”

Pub. L. 106–169, § 301(a), amended heading and text of subsec. (d) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “If the amounts collected which could be retained by the State in the fiscal year (to the extent necessary to reimburse the State for amounts paid to families as assistance by the State) are less than the State share of the amounts collected in fiscal year 1995 (determined in accordance with this section as in effect on the day before August 22, 1996), the State share for the fiscal year shall be an amount equal to the State share in fiscal year 1995.”

Pub. L. 106–169, § 401(k), made technical amendment to reference in original act which appears in text as reference to August 22, 1996.

Subsec. (e). Pub. L. 106–169, § 301(c)(4), redesignated subsec. (f) as (e). Former subsec. (e) redesignated (d).

Pub. L. 106–169, § 301(c)(3), struck out end “For purposes of subsection (d) of this section, the State share of such amount paid to the family shall be considered amounts which could be retained by the State if such payments were reported by the State as part of the State share of amounts collected in fiscal year 1995.”


Subsec. (a)(2)(B)(i)(I), (ii)(I). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(f)(1), in introductory provisions, struck out “(other than subsection (b)(1))” after “provisions of this section” and inserted “(other than subsection (b)(1) (as so in effect))” after “1996”.


Subsec. (a)(4). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(d), amended heading and text of par. (4) generally. Prior to amendment, text read as follows: “In the case of a family receiving assistance from an Indian tribe, distribute the amount so collected pursuant to an agreement entered into pursuant to a State plan under section 654 (33) of this title.”


Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(a), substituted “assigned” for “which were assigned” and “and which were in effect on the day before August 22, 1996.”

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(h)(1), substituted “is distributed” for “is collected”.

Subsec. (c)(3)(A). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(g), substituted “75 percent” for “the Federal medical assistance percentage (as defined in section 1318 of this title)”. Subsec. (c)(3)(B). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5532(h)(2), substituted “as such section was in effect on September 30, 1995 and in effect on September 30, 1995” for “as in effect on September 30, 1995”. Subsec. (f). Pub. L. 105–33, § 5547(2), added subsec. (f). 1996—Pub. L. 104–193 substituted “collected support” for “proceeds” in section catchline and amended text generally. Prior to amendment, text consisted of subsecs. (a) to (d) relating to distribution of amounts collected by States as child support during 15 months beginning July 1, 1975, and during any fiscal year beginning after Sept. 30, 1976, distribution of support collected for families whose assistance under part A of this subchapter has terminated, and distribution of support collected on behalf of children for whom foster care maintenance payments were being made.

1988—Subsec. (b)(1). Pub. L. 100–485 substituted “of such amounts as are collected periodically which represent monthly support payments, the first $50 of any payments for a month received in that month, and the first $50 of payments for each prior month received in that month which were made by the absent parent in the month when due,” for “the first $50 of such amounts as are collected periodically which represent monthly support payments”. Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 100–203 amended subsec. (c) generally, revising and restating as single unnumbered subsection provisions of former pars. (1) and (2).
1986—Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 99–514, § 1899(a), inserted “or administrative” after “court”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 99–514, § 1883(b)(6), substituted “subsection (b)(4)(A) and (B)” for “subsection (b)(3)(A) and (B)”.

1984—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 98–378, § 11(a)(2), inserted “(subject to subsection (d) of this section)” after “shall” in provisions preceding par. (1).


Subsec. (b)(2). Pub. L. 98–369, § 2640(b)(1), (2)(A), redesignated former par. (1) as (2), and inserted “which are in excess of any amount paid to the family under paragraph (1) and”. Former par. (2) redesignated (3).

Subsec. (b)(3). Pub. L. 98–369, § 2640(b)(1), (2)(B), redesignated former par. (2) as (3), and substituted “paragraph (2)” for “paragraph (1)”. Former par. (3) redesignated (4).

Subsec. (b)(4). Pub. L. 98–369, § 2640(b)(1), (2)(C), redesignated former par. (3) as (4), and substituted “paragraphs (1), (2), and (3)” for “paragraphs (1) and (2)”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 98–378, § 7(a)(1), substituted “shall” for “may” in provisions preceding par. (1).

Subsec. (c)(2). Pub. L. 98–378, § 7(a)(2), substituted “any amount so collected, which represents monthly support payments, to the family (without requiring any formal reapplication and without the imposition of any application fee) on the same basis as in the case of other individuals who are not receiving assistance under part A of this subchapter,” for “the net amount of any amount so collected, which represents monthly support payments, to the family after deducting any costs incurred in making the collection from the amount of any recovery made,”.


1981—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 97–35, § 2332(e)(1), substituted in provision preceding par. (1) “as support” for “as child support”.

Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 97–35, § 2332(e)(2), substituted in provision preceding par. (1) “whom support payments” for “whom child support payments” and in pars. (1) and (2) “amounts of support payments” for “amounts of child support payments” in two places and “amounts of support so” for “amounts of child support so”.

1977—Subsec. (c). Pub. L. 95–171, § 11(a)–(c), in par. (1), substituted “amounts of child support payments which represent monthly support payments” for “such support payments” and inserted “, which represent monthly support payments,” after “amounts so collected”; in par. (2), substituted “amounts of child support payments which represent monthly support payments” for “such support payments” and inserted “, which represents monthly support payments,” after “amount so collected”; changed to a comma the period at end of par. (2); and inserted provision for distribution of child support proceeds.

**Effective Date of 2006 Amendment**

Amendment by section 7301(b)(1)(A), (2), (c) of Pub. L. 109–171 effective Oct. 1, 2009, and applicable to payments under parts A and D of this subchapter for calendar quarters beginning on or after such date, subject to certain State options, see section 7301(e) of Pub. L. 109–171, set out as a note under section 608 of this title.


Amendment by section 7310(b) of Pub. L. 109–171 effective Oct. 1, 2006, see section 7310(c) of Pub. L. 109–171, set out as a note under section 654 of this title.

**Effective Date of 1999 Amendment**

Pub. L. 106–169, title III, § 301(b), Dec. 14, 1999, 113 Stat. 1857, provided that: “The amendment made by subsection (a) [amending this section] shall be effective with respect to calendar quarters occurring during the period that begins on October 1, 1998, and ends on September 30, 2001.”


Effective Date of 1997 Amendment


Effective Date of 1996 Amendment

Section 302(c) of Pub. L. 104–193 provided that:

“(1) In General.—Except as provided in paragraph (2), the amendments made by this section [amending this section and sections 654 and 664 of this title] shall be effective on October 1, 1996, or earlier at the State’s option.

“(2) Conforming amendments.—The amendments made by subsection (b)(2) [amending section 654 of this title] shall become effective on the date of the enactment of this Act [Aug. 22, 1996].”

For provisions relating to effective date of title III of Pub. L. 104–193, see section 395 (a)–(c) of Pub. L. 104–193, set out as a note under section 654 of this title.

Effective Date of 1988 Amendment

Section 102(c) of Pub. L. 100–485 provided that: “The amendments made by this section [amending this section and section 602 of this title] shall become effective on the first day of the first calendar quarter which begins after the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 13, 1988].”

Effective Date of 1986 Amendment


Section 1899(b) of Pub. L. 99–514 provided that: “The amendment made by this section [amending this section] shall become effective on the date of the enactment of this Act [Oct. 22, 1986].”

Effective Date of 1984 Amendments

Section 7(b) of Pub. L. 98–378 provided that: “The amendments made by subsection (a) [amending this section] shall become effective October 1, 1984.”

Amendment by section 11(a) of Pub. L. 98–378 effective Oct. 1, 1984, and applicable to collections made on or after that date, see section 11(e) of Pub. L. 98–378, set out as a note under section 654 of this title.

Section 2646 of Pub. L. 98–369 provided that: “Except as otherwise specifically provided in this subtitle [subtitle B (§§ 2611–2646) of Pub. L. 98–369], the provisions of parts 1 and 2 [sections 2611 to 2642 of Pub. L. 98–369, enacting section 1320b–6 of this title, amending this section and sections 602, 609, 614, 615, 1320a–6, 1382 to 1382b, 1382j, and 1383 of this title and section 51 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code, and enacting provisions set out as notes under sections 602, 609, 614, 1320a–6, 1382a, and 1383 of this title and section 51 of Title 26] and the amendments made thereby shall take effect on October 1, 1984.”

Effective Date of 1981 Amendment