

FEDERAL CASE REGISTRY

Federal law mandated the creation of the Federal Case Registry (FCR). Implemented on October 1, 1998, the FCR is a database that contains basic case and participant data from each of the State Case Registries (SCRs). The SCRs, also mandated by federal law, are central registries of child support cases and orders in each state. The FCR is integral to the success of the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS).

What is the Federal Case Registry (FCR)?

The FCR is a national database that includes all child support cases handled by state IV-D child support agencies (referred to as IV-D cases), and all support orders established or modified on or after October 1, 1998 (referred to as non IV-D orders). It assists states in locating parties that live in different states to establish, modify, or enforce child support obligations; establish paternity; enforce state law regarding parental kidnapping; and, establish or enforce child custody or visitation determinations.

While information in the FCR is provided through the SCRs, the FCR is not a duplication of all of the data maintained in each state's automated child support system. Rather, it is a database of the most basic case and participant information.

When a state sends the FCR information about persons in a new case or child support order, this new information is automatically compared to existing person information in the FCR. If matches are found, the FPLS notifies all appropriate state child support enforcement agencies of the record match. In this way, a state will know if another state has a case or support order with participants in common with them, and can take appropriate action. The data in the FCR is also compared to the employment data in the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH). This process is discussed in the National Directory of New Hires section.

Why are non IV-D orders included?

Traditionally, the issuing court has maintained support orders in private cases. Effective October 1, 1998, all support orders issued or modified must be reported to the SCR. Non IV-D order information is included to assist states in processing interstate cases. The information will assist in locating parents across state lines by acting as a "pointer system" to other states, and helping states determine legal jurisdiction. Maintaining information about non IV-D court orders also allows for faster service, should there be a request for full child support services through a state IV-D office.

How are persons who may be victims of domestic violence or child abuse protected?

The FCR and each SCR include a Family Violence Indicator (FVI) to restrict access to locate information. A state sets an FVI in its SCR for any case participant who is covered by a protection order against another party in the case. A state also sets an FVI when it has reasonable evidence of domestic violence or child abuse and believes that the release of information may result in physical or emotional harm to a case participant. Each state establishes its own specific procedures for determining when to set the FVI. An FVI may be removed only by the state that places it.

A state transmits the FVI to the FCR via its SCR. If a state notifies the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) about domestic violence or child abuse in this way, no information from the FPLS, which includes the FCR and the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH), will be disclosed. There is one exception. A person, authorized by law to have access to FPLS data, may seek the assistance of a state court to override the denial of FPLS information caused by an FVI. Federal law specifies the state courts that may assist in this process. Upon verification of the request, the protected FPLS information will be provided to the state court. That court must then determine whether disclosure of the information to the requestor could be harmful to the protected parent and/or child. If harm could result, the FPLS information is not to be released.