

ANNUAL SERVICE FEE
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Question:** What is the Annual Service Fee?

Answer: Federal law requires States to impose a mandatory annual service fee of \$25 on individuals when the state has collected more than \$500 of support during the federal fiscal year if the individual has never received assistance under the Title IV-A program.

2. **Question:** Why is the annual service fee being deducted from my child support?

Answer: The state law requires that the fee be withheld from child support collected.

3. **Question:** Who does the fee apply to?

Answer: The fee applies to individuals in receipt of child support services who have never received assistance under the federal Title IV-A program (currently the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; previously the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program). It does not include food stamps, safety net or home relief payments, Medicaid, SSI or SSD.

4. **Question:** I don't recall what type of benefits I received, or I received benefits from another state. How can I find out if I have to pay the fee?

Answer: You should contact the state or agency that provided you with benefits for this information.

5. **Question:** When and how does the fee get deducted?

Answer: Beginning with federal fiscal year (FFY- October 1, 2008 to September 30, 2009), and then each year thereafter, after the child support program collects the first \$500 of child support during the FFY, the SCU will withhold the next \$25 to pay the fee.

6. **Question:** What if I have more than one child support case?

Answer: The fee will be imposed for each case in which more than \$500 is collected during the FFY.

7. **Question:** Why wasn't I notified of a service fee being withheld from my child support payment?

Answer: A One-Time Notice was mailed to all Never Assistance recipients of child support services on October 1, 2008. Also, all new applications for child support services include information about the fee.

8. **Question:** The notice I received said to avoid withholding to return by October 24th, but you took the service fee anyway. Why?

Answer: The fee process was mandated to begin effective October 1, 2008. If more than \$500 was received on your case between October 1 and October 24, the fee would have been withheld. If you mailed the One-Time Notice by October 24 stating that the fee should not have been taken because you are a former assistance recipient, you will be issued a refund.

9. **Question:** Why is child support deducting a fee from one of my cases but not for another?

Answer: It may be because only one of your cases received in excess of \$500 in support payments during the FFY. As such, you would only have had to pay the fee for that one case.

10. **Question:** Why didn't I get all the money that the NCP paid?

Answer: The law requires that the \$25 fee be withheld from support collected.

11. **Question:** I did receive TANF/AFDC benefits, and you still took the fee, what do I do now?

Answer: If you believe the fee was deducted in error, please complete the mailer you received and return it. The child support unit will review your account and make a determination.

12. **Question:** I sent in the return mailer and indicated that I had been in receipt of cash assistance under the Title IV-A program can I get a refund for support you withheld for the fee?

Answer: A. Your case has been updated with the information you provided in the mailer. I will have the child support unit review the account to refund the \$25 fee. This will take approximately 20 days.

B. Your case has been updated with the information you provided in the mailer. The \$25 fee has been refunded. The payment was issued to you on (provide date).

C. A review of your account indicates:

- i. Your mailer was received and reviewed but your account does not qualify for an exemption to the fee.
- ii. You were advised in the notice that we needed to receive the return mailer by October 24, 2008 to update our records as no refund would be made for any fees that are imposed after that date.

13. **Question:** \$25.00 (or a part there of) was deducted from my child support check. Can you tell me why?

Answer: If the money was **NOT** withheld as an Annual Service Fee - The withholding of \$_____ is due to _____.

If the money **WAS** withheld as an Annual Service Fee - The withholding is for the \$25.00 annual service fee that went into effect on October 1, 2008. The service fee is a Federal requirement for cases where a recipient of child support services has **never** been in receipt of TANF/ADC benefits. A letter was mailed on October 1st to recipients of child support services notifying them of this service fee.*

14. **Question:** I received some assistance in the past, but it was not cash assistance. Am I still subject to the fee?

Answer: “IV-A Assistance” includes cash, payments, vouchers, and other forms of benefits designed to meet a family’s ongoing basic needs (i.e., for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items, and general incidental expenses) paid under the federal Title IV-A program (currently the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program; previously the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program). It does not include food stamps, safety net or home relief payments, Medicaid, SSI or SS-D. It includes such benefits even when they are: provided in the form of payments by a TANF agency to individual recipients. The TANF agency in New York State is the local Department of Social Services and, in New York City, the Human Resources Administration. However, cases that are open only for the purpose of making an emergency payment, which could be to a landlord for rent arrears to a utility company for utility arrears, are not "assistance" cases for the purpose of federal reporting, and therefore recipients of such assistance would be subject to the fee.

***NOTE: If the caller insists that he/she qualifies for the removal of the fee or did not receive notification, a referral must be made to the local district. The local district will have the CP complete Attachment B.**