

THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

The purpose of this Federal Offset Program (FOP) User Guide is to provide IV-D Agencies with information on the technical aspects of establishing and maintaining the interfaces needed between their statewide automated systems and the FOP. Although the primary audience is the IV-D Agency technical staff, this document provides basic information to assist IV-D administrative, programmatic and policy staff in understanding the functionality of the FOP. In brief, the User Guide provides:

1. an overview of the Federal Offset Program;
2. detailed information regarding FOP processing of State data;
3. an explanation of FOP Pre-Offset Notices;
4. an explanation of the Financial Management Services (FMS) procedures;
5. an explanation of the Department of State (DOS) procedures;
6. detailed information regarding FOP On-line processing;
7. technical information for submitting and receiving data; and
8. guidance on the use of FOP data.

This User Guide is written in a manner to make location of information as easy as possible. This document is divided into eight parts. The following descriptions provide a summary of the information contained in each section and the objective of each section.

Part 1.0, “Federal Offset Program Overview,” provides background information regarding the FOP, including an overview of the laws and regulations that are relevant to the FOP. The objective of this section is to provide a more detailed overview of the Federal Income Tax Refund Offset Program, the Administrative Offset Program, Passport Denial and the Multistate Financial Institution Data Match (MSFIDM) that will assist IV-D Agencies in understanding the FOP.

Part 2.0, “Federal Offset Program Processing,” describes the FOP update processing requirements and the transactions that the State transmits to OCSE and the transactions that are returned from OCSE to the State. This section discusses the transaction layouts and data elements and provides examples of FOP transactions. The objective of this section is to assist IV-D administrative, programmatic and policy staff in understanding the functionality of the FOP and to provide the IV-D Agency technical staff with an overview of the transactions that are involved in the FOP/State interface. This section provides information regarding the record layouts, although the layouts are not included in this section. Appendix E, “Input Record Specifications,” and Appendix F, “Output Record Specifications,” contain the actual transaction record layouts.

Part 3.0, “Federal Offset Program Pre-Offset Notices,” provides an overview of the policy and requirements for the FOP Pre-Offset Notices. The objective of this section is to provide information to assist States with the understanding and production of the Pre-Offset Notices.

Part 4.0, “Financial Management Services (FMS) Procedures,” describes the functions that FMS performs specifically for offsetting accounts, creating FMS Pre-Offset Notices and processing collections and adjustments. The objective of this section is to provide IV-D Agencies with an understanding of the FMS-only functions and how the FMS and OCSE interface.

Part 5.0, “Department of State (DOS) Procedures,” describes the functions that DOS performs specifically for passport denial processing. The objective of this section is to provide IV-D Agencies with an understanding of the DOS-only functions and how DOS and OCSE interface.

Part 6.0, “Federal Offset Program On-line Procedures,” describes the FOP on-line functionality and processing requirements. This section discusses how to access, utilize and exit the on-line system. This section also contains screen examples and procedures for each screen. The objective of this section is to provide IV-D administrative, programmatic and policy staff with an understanding of the functionality of the FOP on-line system.

Part 7.0, “Transmitting Files,” provides detailed information on the method of data transmission to and from the FOP. The objective of this section is to provide detailed information for successful transmission of data to the FOP and successful receipt of data from the FOP.

Part 8.0, “System Access, Security and Privacy,” discusses data access, privacy issues and system security. The objective of this section is to provide IV-D Agencies with guidance on who may access FCR and SCR data, and to review IV-D privacy and system security requirements.

The Appendices include sections that outline requirements of the FOP, describe codes and detailed record layouts, and present other information to assist States in interfacing with the FOP.

Certain portions of this Guide contain information that is likely to be more helpful to the technical staff than to administrative, programmatic or operational staff. The following list highlights these sections and how they might be helpful.

Part 2.0, “Federal Offset Program Processing,” describes the Update Process requirements and transaction types for input and output transactions. This section provides examples of processing issues and how they should be handled by the State.

Part 7.0, “Transmitting Files,” provides guidance about CONNECT:Direct and other transmission issues.

Appendix C, “Data Dictionary,” contains full descriptions of every field on the FOP’s input and output transaction records.

Appendix E, “Input Record Specifications,” presents separate input transaction records for each of the possible input actions and provides detailed field requirements.

Appendix F, “Output Record Specifications,” presents separate output transaction records for each of the possible output actions and provides detailed field requirements.

Appendix G, “Error Messages,” presents all error codes, including the title of each error and a brief description.