



BC Family Maintenance Agency



FMEP Annual Report 2019 - 2020

British Columbia Family Maintenance Enforcement Program



Foreword

What started out as a year of transition ended up as the year of the highest payments to recipients in the history of the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP). In a year of change, one constant remained – the delivery of high quality services to clients.

After 31 years of delivering maintenance enforcement services by contract, the delivery model was changed to a Crown Agency. The BC Family Maintenance Agency took over the FMEP on November 1, 2019. A tremendous amount of effort went into the transfer, with transition teams both within FMEP as well as in the Ministry of Attorney General.

The overall caseload continued to drop in BC, as it has in almost all other maintenance enforcement programs in North America. As the overall economy stays strong, enrolment in enforcement programs tends to drop; when the economy faces challenges, enrolment tends to increase. This has been the experience in most Canadian provinces and territories, and throughout the United States. The reduction in caseloads provide staff with greater time to focus on the complexities of cases, particularly special and extraordinary expenses. Caseloads are still high, as evidenced by enforcement officers carrying over 600 active cases.

BC's FMEP saw a continued increase in cases with 'special or extraordinary' expenses. These expenses are in addition to the basic, or 'table amount' of child support that is prescribed by the *Child Support Guidelines*. Special expenses can take considerable time to calculate and often require receipts to complete the payment process. While initial agreements between parents for some expenses existed, changes in the nature and amount of the expenses call for continued communication and negotiations between the parents.

BC has always had international agreements that allow for the exchange of child support when parents live in different countries. By far, the largest number of cross-border cases are with the United States. A new international agreement – the *Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance* – is being adopted by an ever-increasing number of countries to assist parents wherever they may live. It is anticipated that Canada will see the implementation of this new agreement in the coming years. This will provide important benefits to BC families, and especially BC children.

The program year started with the challenge of transition, and it ended with the emerging challenges of COVID-19. By the middle of March 2020, the impact could be felt by clients and staff alike. A 'new normal' was quickly established to protect the safety of staff and maintain contact with clients. BC's FMEP invested in web services early, with the first interactive website established in 2002. And it has updated those services often, resulting in the use of web services over 1.5 million times per year. Never have such services been more important or more valued than during the initial stages of addressing the challenges that the pandemic has presented to us all.

Achieving success during a year of great challenge has positioned us to address the even greater challenges that we face in the coming year. Our goal remains the delivery of high quality services to our clients.

Chris Beresford
Chief Executive Officer
BC Family Maintenance Agency
September 2020



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Program Highlights

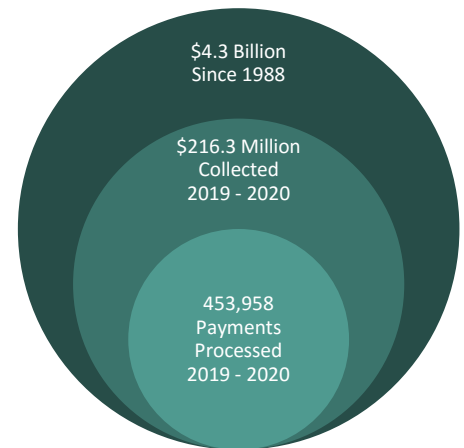
2019-2020 marked the 31st year of operation for the FMEP. This was the seventh consecutive year that the FMEP collected over \$200 million. Since the program began in 1988 over \$4.3 billion has been collected and distributed for British Columbia children and families.

Payment

- Payments received increased by \$1.7 million.
- Total collected: \$216.3 million – the most ever in a single year.
- Seventh consecutive year collecting \$200 million or more.

Caseload

- Overall caseload fell by just over 1,000 cases.
- Government fee-only cases increased slightly to 728 (+19).



Clients

- As of March 31, 2020 there were 123,693 clients enrolled in the FMEP (recipients, payors and children).
- The FMEP provided support to over 51,400 children in 2019-2020. Nearly 60% of these were aged 14 or older.
- The number of Payors in receipt of income assistance grew in 2019-2020 to 4,825 – an increase of 205 cases (+4.4%).

Operations

- 2019-2020 was a year of transition for the FMEP. After 30 years as a privately managed program, the FMEP was moved to a new Crown Agency on November 1, 2020. This was achieved with no disruption to the delivery of service.
- Business and Technology Solutions teams worked to enhance privacy and security infrastructure throughout the organization, support innovative work arrangements through technology and reviewed critical hardware infrastructure to develop long-term plans for replacement and maintenance.
- Resources for the fiscal year 2019-2020 were focused on implementing staff and management requests for change. Some requests were as small as updating and automating letters - some larger requests involved a redevelopment of workflow and internal processes. All requests were reviewed by an internal “RFC” (request for change) committee and passed to our IT teams for implementation in the case management system. Dozens of these types of changes were completed in 2019-2020, resulting in improved automation, workflows and productivity; enabling FMEP staff to focus on working with clients for better financial outcomes for their families.



FMEP OPERATING PRINCIPLES

FMEP work is based on the following operating principles.

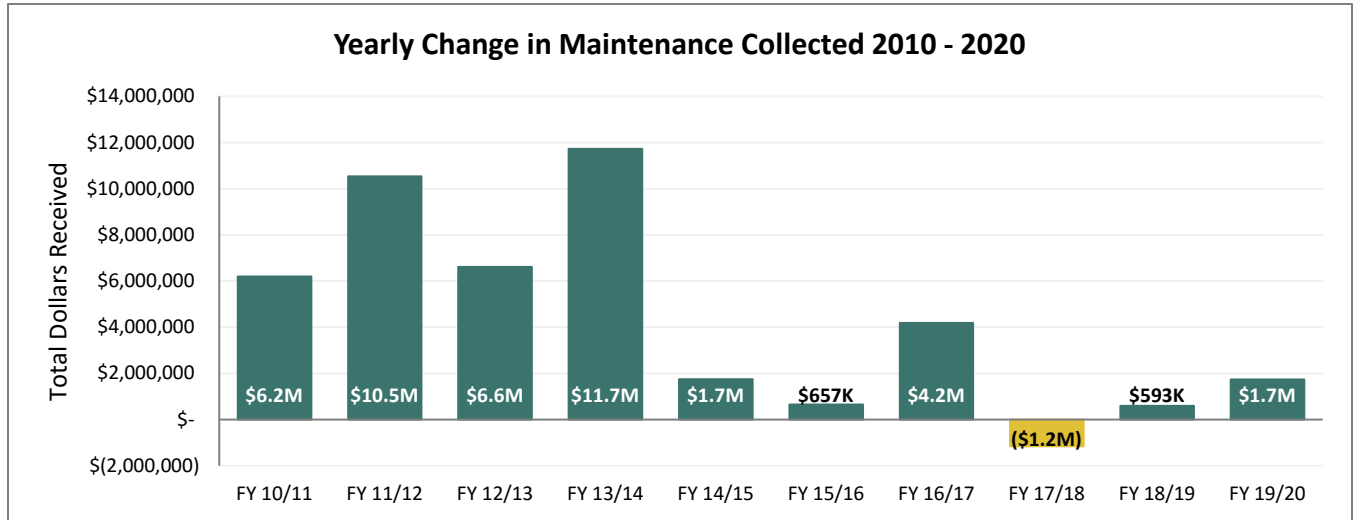
- A key goal of FMEP is to ensure that the terms of maintenance orders and agreements are fulfilled.
- FMEP is authorized to facilitate the collection of child support and spousal payments in accordance with the *BC Family Maintenance Enforcement Act (FMEA)*.
- FMEP is not authorized to mediate or counsel clients with respect to court orders or agreements.
- The focus of FMEP is to ensure that children and families receive the maintenance that they are entitled to.
- When working with payors FMEP staff encourages voluntary payment of maintenance orders or agreements.
- In cases where voluntary payment fails, emphasis will be given to enforcement through administrative (non-court) means whenever possible.
- FMEP staff strive for a good working relationship with all payors and recipients, and treats all clients with respect.
- The FMEP supports clients through communication tools that allow clients easy access to case and FMEP information.



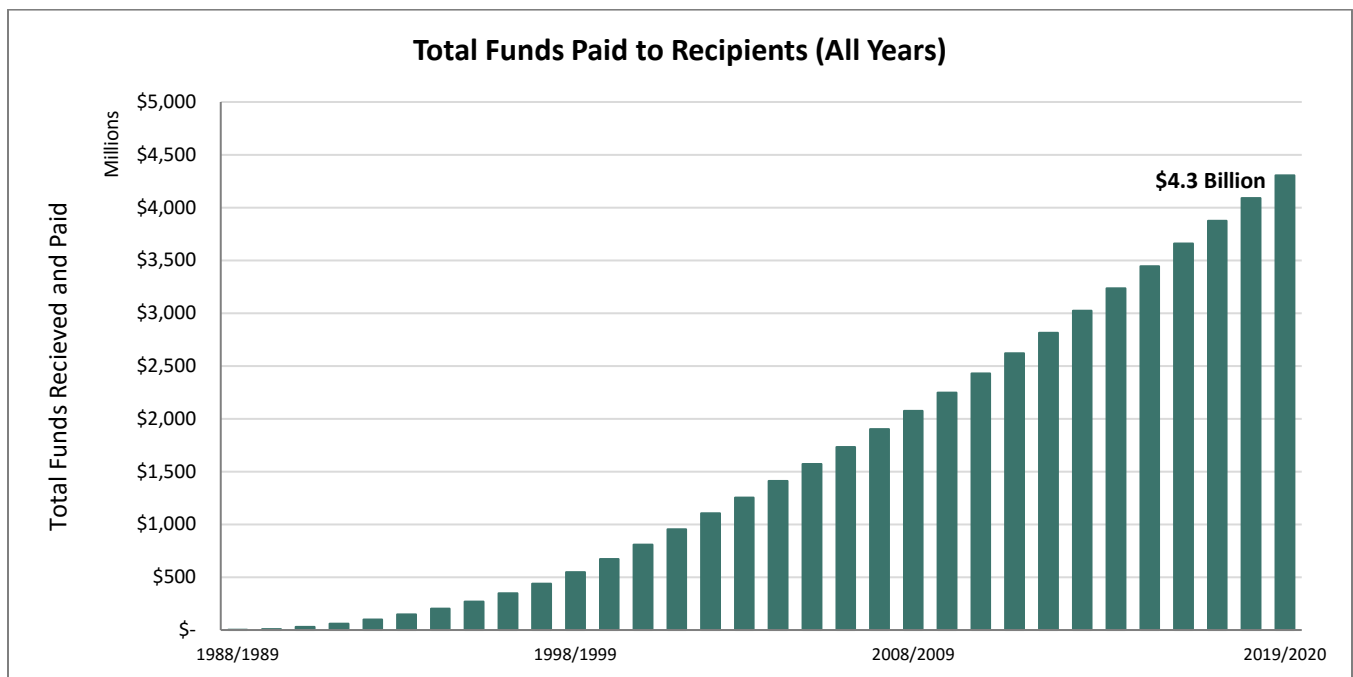


FAMILY SUPPORT OUTCOMES

FMEP continues to focus on successful outcomes for BC families. Some of the best measures for this can be seen in the total funds collected by the FMEP. This past year, the FMEP collected over \$216.3 million, the seventh consecutive year over \$200 million. This was \$1.7 million more than the previous fiscal year, and a record amount for the FMEP.



Since the Program began in 1988, the FMEP has collected over \$4.3 billion for BC families.





Collection on Reciprocal Cases

The FMEP has reciprocal agreements with;

- **Canada** – all of the provinces and territories;
- **United States of America** – all of the United States, including the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa and the US Virgin Islands;
- **Pacific Ocean** – Australia, Fiji, New Zealand (including the Cook Islands), Papua New Guinea;
- **Europe** – Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, Slovak Republic, Swiss Confederation, Gibraltar, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland;
- **Caribbean** – Barbados and its Dependencies;
- **Africa** – South Africa, Zimbabwe; and
- **Asia** – Hong Kong, Republic of Singapore

These are cases where one of the parents resides in a different jurisdiction. In 2019-2020, just over \$32 million was received on these cases. This was comprised of \$17.7 million received from other jurisdictions (the paying parent lives outside of British Columbia) and \$14.3 million collected by the FMEP and sent to families residing outside of British Columbia.

Canada

Cases in Canada comprise the largest number of reciprocal cases enrolled in the FMEP. The largest single partner remains Alberta. British Columbia and Alberta share 3,336 cases (52.8 percent of all domestic reciprocal cases). Together the FMEP and Alberta programs collected \$16.4 million in 2019-2020. British Columbia collected \$6.5 million for families living in Alberta, and Alberta collected \$9.9 million for families living in British Columbia. The disparity is a result of the large caseload difference between the jurisdictions – more paying parents live in Alberta.

Working with domestic partners, the FMEP and the reciprocating jurisdictions have collected \$282.8 million over the last ten years. (\$164.4 million for families in British Columbia and \$118.5 million distributed to families elsewhere in Canada).

United States

The United States is the largest international partner for British Columbia. Washington State continues to be the largest single state partner with 218 cases. Combined collections with the United States was \$3.4 million for 2019-2020. Collections from Washington State were 26.1 percent (\$884,000) of the overall total.

International

International cases (not including the United States) comprise a small percentage of the FMEP overall caseload – just 2.9 percent of reciprocal cases. Combined collections on these cases totaled \$854,523 for 2019-2020 and over \$4.8 million in the past five years.

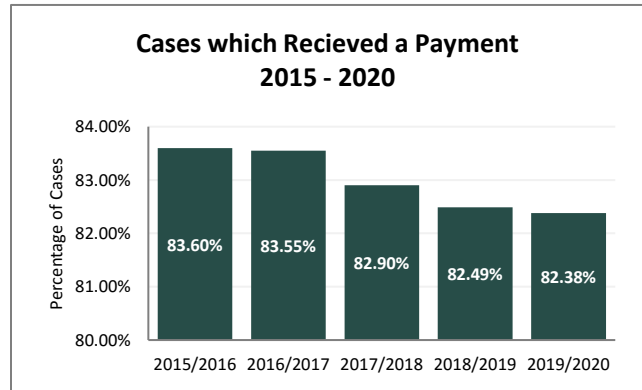


Collection Rates and Arrears

The FMEP uses a number of key performance metrics to monitor payments. One of those is the percentage of enrolled cases which have received a payment during the year. This figure remains fairly consistent (as noted in the chart) and shows that the majority of cases enrolled in the FMEP can expect to receive a payment.

In addition, the FMEP monitors whether or not cases are fully complied with (case has no arrears), partially complied with (case has arrears but has received some payment since enrolment) or have never received a payment. In 2019-2020 more than 32 percent of all cases were fully paid, receiving ongoing payments each month and having no arrears. Just under 64 percent of cases are partially paid and have some level of arrears.

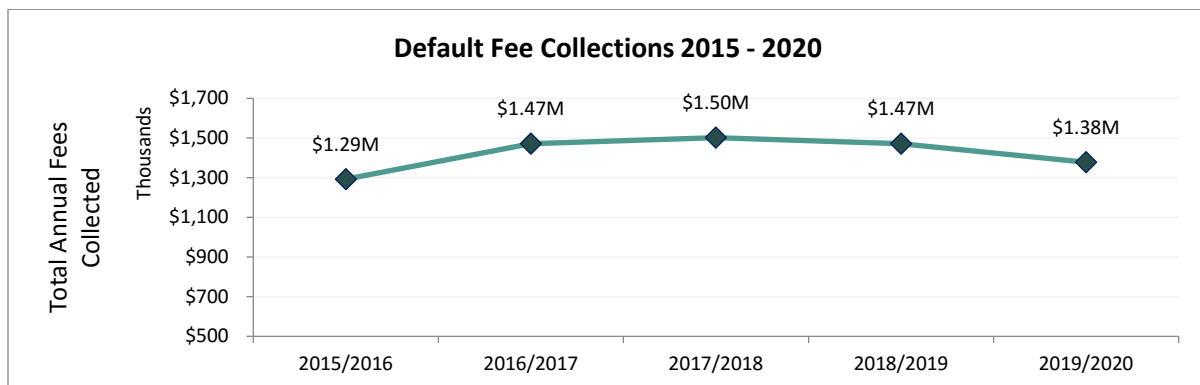
Only 3.96 percent of cases have never received a payment. This figure includes cases which are enrolled with non-reciprocating jurisdictions (the paying parent lives outside British Columbia in a country that does not reciprocate enforcement for child/spousal maintenance). British Columbia enrolls all cases where there is a valid maintenance order, even when the paying parent lives outside British Columbia in a non-reciprocating jurisdiction. These cases have unique challenges as the FMEP cannot issue enforcement outside of British Columbia. The FMEP uses a team of specialized Enforcement staff who negotiate and work with payors to gain compliance. In 2019-2020 they did manage to obtain just over 24 percent of the maintenance due on these non-reciprocal cases.



Fee Recovery for Government

Under British Columbia law, an annual fee equivalent to one month of maintenance, to a maximum of \$400, may be charged to payors who either miss or are late on two payments in a calendar year. These default fees are collected only after all maintenance owed to the recipient, including arrears and interest, is paid in full.

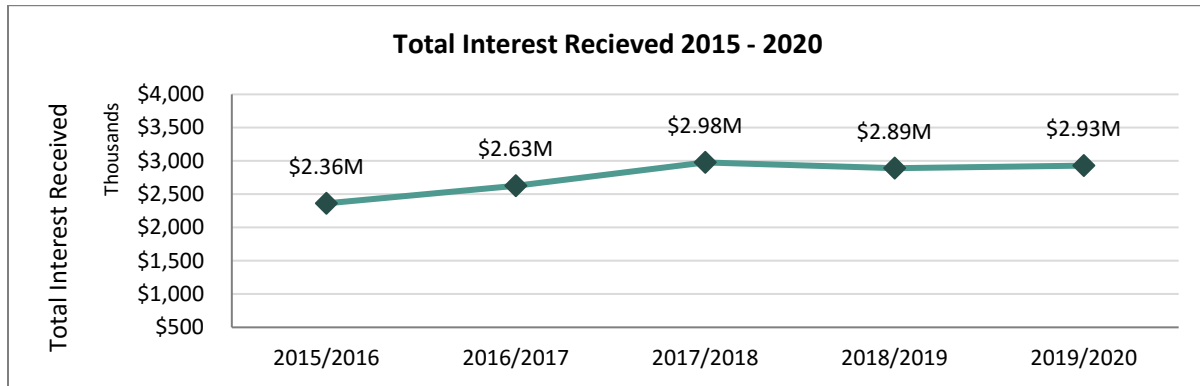
In 2019-2020 just under \$1.4 million was collected from default fees. Over the past five years, the FMEP has collected \$7.1 million in default fees as shown in the table below. Collection of these fees help offset the cost of the FMEP and ensure that the FMEP remains highly cost efficient.





Interest

Since 1997, British Columbia has added interest to outstanding balances. This is done to ensure that all debt obligations are treated equally. In 2019-2020 the FMEP collected and distributed over \$2.9 million in interest. In the past decade the FMEP has collected nearly \$26 million in interest payments for British Columbia families.





FMEP CASES

This section provides an overview of the FMEP caseload – the number of cases enrolled, where those cases are located, and a breakdown of the cases by type (whether the cases involve parents who reside outside British Columbia or the cases are government fee-only).

Overview

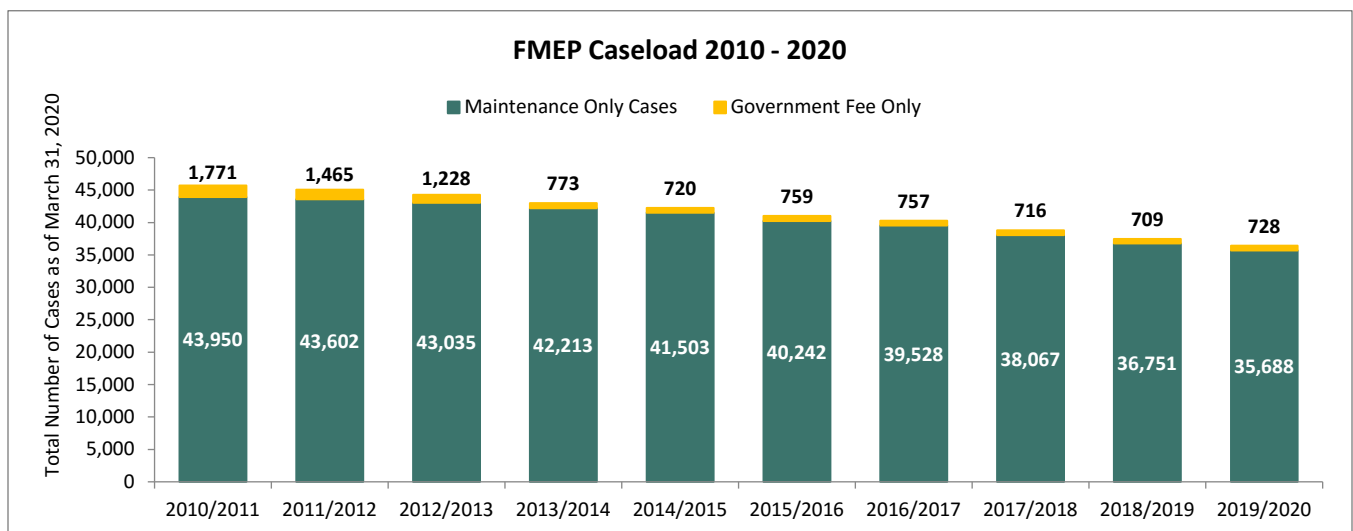
The FMEP caseload was relatively stable for many years, however, starting in 2011-2012, the annual number of new enrolments began to drop. As new enrolment fell, the number of cases being withdrawn has remained fairly constant. As a result, the overall caseload has declined. In 2015, the Province made changes to the requirement that single parents on income assistance were required to enrol in the FMEP. The overall result of this change was to further depress enrolment resulting in a larger drop in the caseload.

The FMEP handles two types of files – maintenance cases and government fee-only cases. Maintenance enforcement cases are those where the FMEP is enforcing child and/or spousal maintenance, also known as ‘family support’. Government cases are those where the FMEP is enforcing for any government fees or penalties which have been issued to a maintenance payor.

The 2019-2020 year ended with the FMEP having 35,688 maintenance cases and 728 government fee-only cases. The maintenance only caseload dropped by 1,063 cases (about 2.9 percent) from the previous year. The government fee-only caseload grew by 19 cases from the previous year.

Family Support Enforcement Cases

Family support cases make up the majority of cases enrolled in the FMEP. As noted in the chart below the support caseload is 98 percent of the cases worked on by FMEP staff.





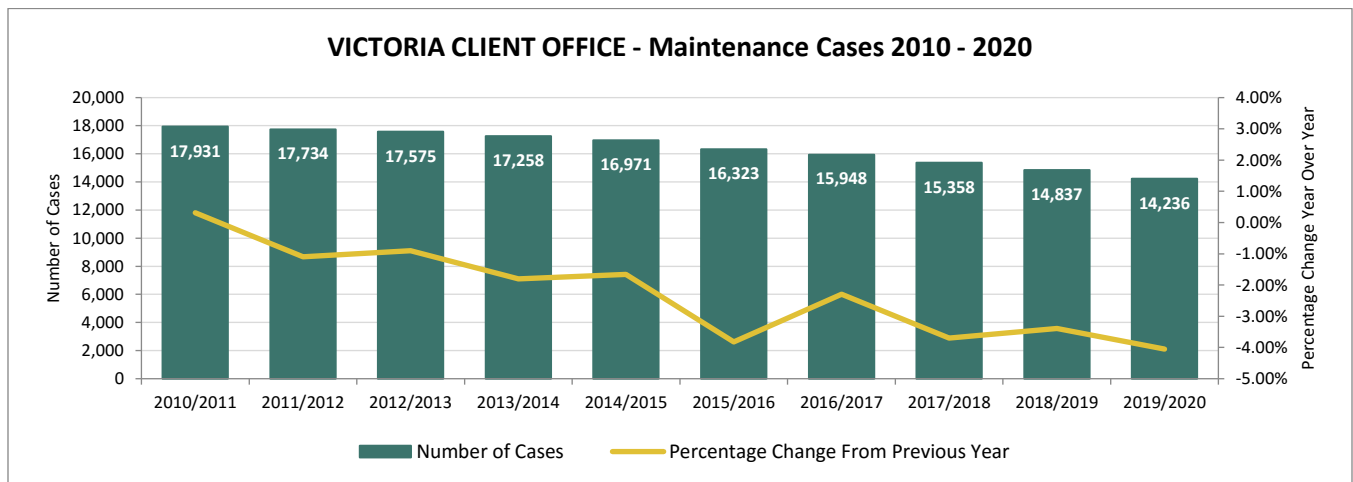
Geographic Distribution of Cases

The FMEP maintains three regional offices in British Columbia, located in the cities of Victoria, Burnaby and Kamloops. Generally, cases in the FMEP are managed by the office located closest to the court where the maintenance order or agreement is filed.

Victoria Client Office

The Victoria Client Office is the largest office in the FMEP. The Victoria location houses not only a regular maintenance caseload team, but also a specialized enforcement team that deals with interjurisdictional cases (those where one of the parents lives outside of British Columbia). Victoria is also the central location for all payment processing – Payment Services – and houses the FMEP Enrolment Office.

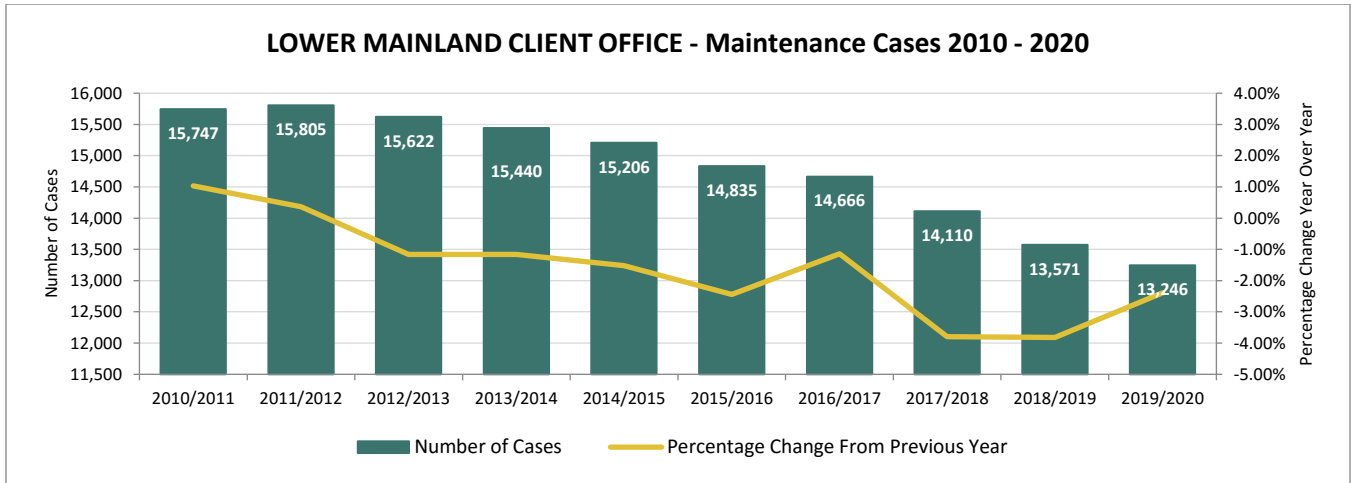
At the end of 2019-2020, the Victoria office was responsible for 14,236 maintenance cases. This was a decline of around 4 percent from the previous year. The chart below shows the Victoria caseload for the past ten fiscal years.



Lower Mainland Client Office

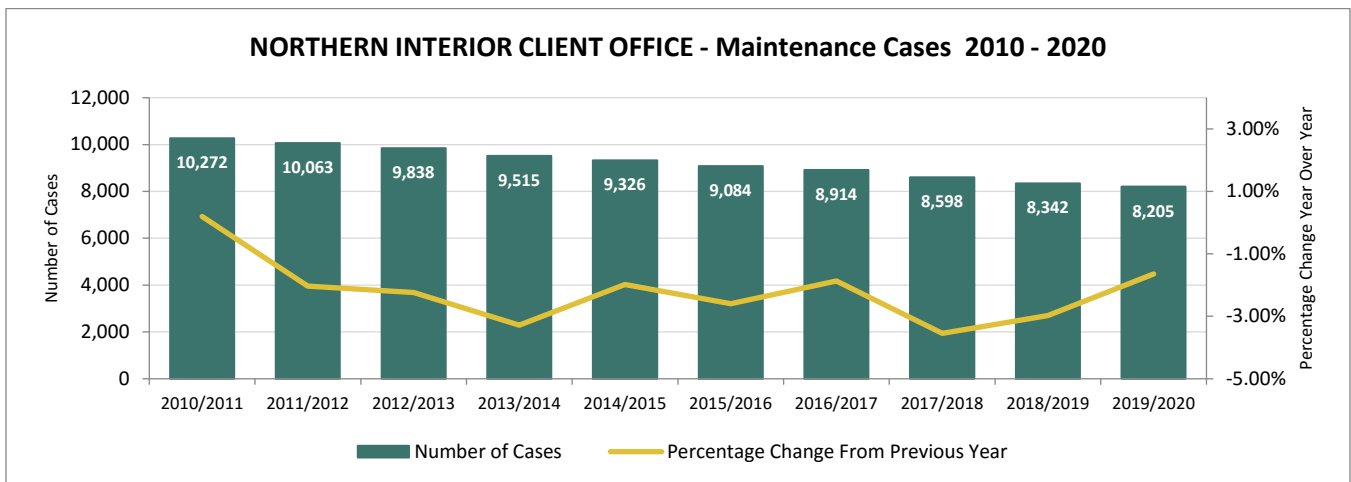
The Lower Mainland Client Office is situated in Burnaby and serves the populations of Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and the Sunshine Coast. The office also houses the Business and Technology Solutions team which provides IT services to the FMEP and BCFMA.

At the end of 2019-2020, the office was responsible for 13,246 maintenance cases. This was a decline of around 2.4 percent over the previous fiscal year. The chart below shows the maintenance caseload for the past ten fiscal years.



Northern Interior Client Office

The Northern Interior Client Office is located in Kamloops. The office handles most cases that are located to the east and north of the Lower Mainland Client Office. As of March 31, 2020 the office had 8,205 maintenance enforcement cases – a drop of just over 1.6 percent over the previous fiscal year. The chart below shows the maintenance caseload for the past ten fiscal years.





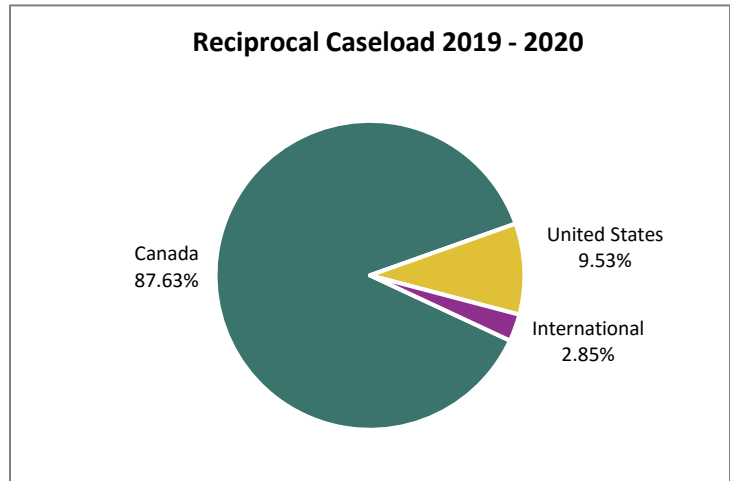
Reciprocal Cases

The FMEP has reciprocal agreements throughout the world. These agreements commit each province, state or country to enforce maintenance orders to ensure that children and families receive their support no matter where they live.

As of March 31, 2020 the FMEP had 7,273 reciprocal cases. This is down slightly from the previous year when the year ended with 7,664 reciprocal cases (about 3.8 percent).

The majority of reciprocal cases are domestic where one parent resides in British Columbia and the other parent resides elsewhere in Canada. These cases make up around 87.6 percent of the reciprocal caseload. Cases involving the United States make up the next largest single group, accounting for 9.5 percent of the reciprocal caseload. International (non-U.S.) cases make up just under 2.9 percent of the overall reciprocal caseload.

Most of these cases are handled by the specialized Interjurisdictional Support Order (ISO) team in the Victoria Client Office. These staff build and maintain the strong working relationships with our international and domestic partners to ensure that maintenance is collected and distributed no matter where a British Columbia family lives.

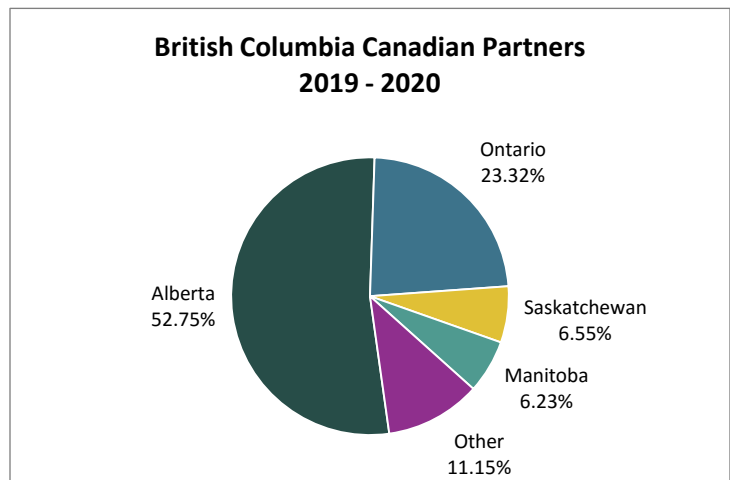


Canadian Caseload

Domestic reciprocal cases make up the majority of cases handled by the ISO team. As noted above, nearly 88 percent of all reciprocal cases have a parent living elsewhere in Canada.

The domestic caseload totaled 6,373 cases as of March 31, 2020. This was down just over 3.7 percent (248 cases) over the previous year.

The majority of cases enrolled domestically come from western Canada. Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba account for nearly 65.5 percent of all domestic cases. The province of Alberta alone is the largest single partner, accounting for over 52.7 percent of the domestic caseload.





Individual breakdown of the domestic caseload is provided below.

Canadian Caseload by Province 2019 - 2020 (all cases)			
Province	Cases	Province	Cases
ALBERTA	3,336	NUNAVUT	2
MANITOBA	394	ONTARIO	1,475
NEW BRUNSWICK	99	PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND	25
NEWFOUNDLAND	95	QUEBEC	179
NOVA SCOTIA	192	SASKATCHEWAN	414
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES	35	YUKON	78

International Cases – United States

The largest single partner outside of Canada is the United States. As of March 31, 2020 just over 9.5 percent (691 cases) of the reciprocal caseload were cases shared with the United States. This was down 4.2 percent from the previous year – a loss of 30 cases.

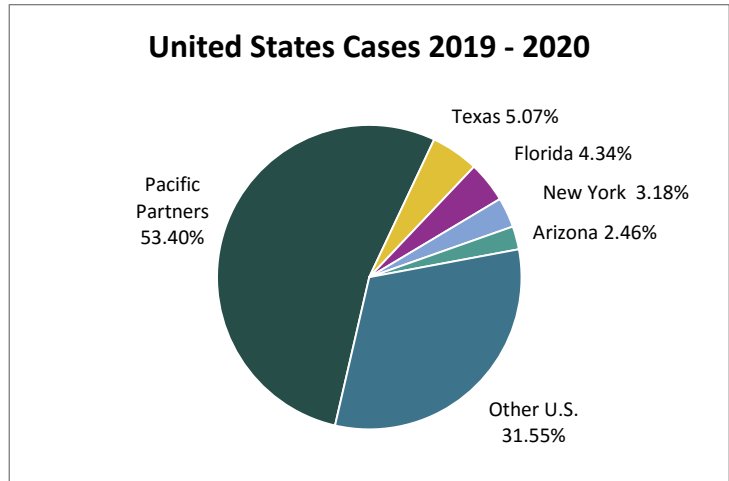
The table below shows the breakdown by state for reciprocal cases between British Columbia and the United States.

United States Caseload by State 2019 - 2020 (all cases)					
State	# Cases	State	# Cases	State	# Cases
ALABAMA	2	KENTUCKY	2	NORTH DAKOTA	2
ALASKA*	12	LOUISIANA	1	OHIO	12
ARIZONA	17	MAINE	6	OKLAHOMA	4
ARKANSAS	4	MARYLAND	7	OREGON*	28
CALIFORNIA*	95	MASSACHUSETTS	6	PENNSYLVANIA	8
COLORADO	11	MICHIGAN	12	RHODE ISLAND	1
CONNECTICUT	4	MINNESOTA	15	SOUTH CAROLINA	3
DELAWARE	0	MISSISSIPPI	6	SOUTH DAKOTA	1
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA	3	MISSOURI	11	TENNESSEE	6
FLORIDA	30	MONTANA	7	TEXAS	35
GEORGIA	8	NEBRASKA	4	UTAH	9
HAWAII*	16	NEVADA	15	VERMONT	0
IDAHO	5	NEW HAMPSHIRE	2	VIRGINIA	7
ILLINOIS	4	NEW JERSEY	3	WASHINGTON*	218
INDIANA	10	NEW MEXICO	2	WEST VIRGINIA	2
IOWA	3	NEW YORK	22	WISCONSIN	2
KANSAS	4	NORTH CAROLINA	3	WYOMING	1

*Pacific Partner



The majority of cases in the United States originate from the jurisdictions which are geographically close to British Columbia. These “Pacific Partners” comprise the five U.S. states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon and Washington State. More than 53 percent of cases come from these five jurisdictions. This pattern is similar to the domestic caseload where most reciprocal cases are shared with the western provinces, and has been very consistent since the FMEP started tracking this data.



International Cases – Other Countries

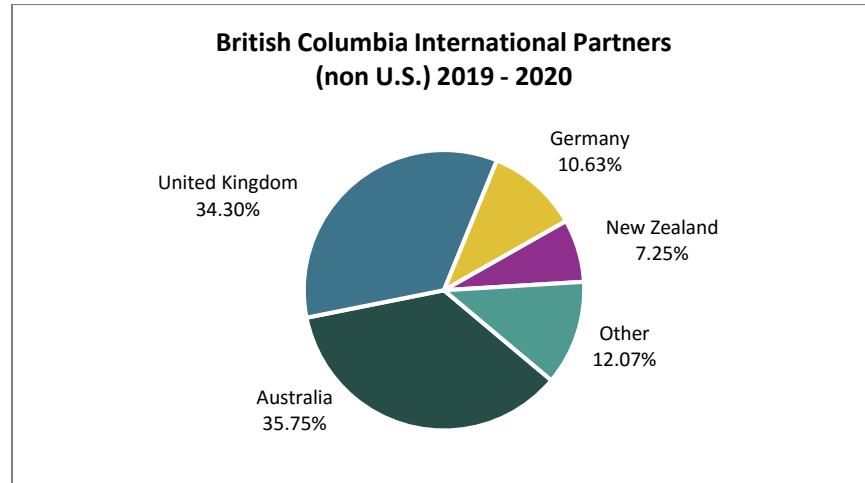
Cases involving a country other than the United States made up just over 2.8 percent (207 cases) of the reciprocal caseload as of March 31, 2020.

In May 2017, Canada became an official signatory to the *Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance (2007)*. This multilateral treaty provides for the enforcement of child (and other forms of family support) between signatory countries.

The chart below shows the number of cases, as of March 31, 2020, enrolled with international partners.

International Caseload 2019 - 2020 (non U.S.)			
Country	Cases	Country	Cases
AUSTRALIA	74	HONG KONG	4
AUSTRIA	2	NEW ZEALAND	15
CZECH REPUBLIC	4	NORWAY	2
GERMANY	22	SINGAPORE	2
FIJI	1	SLOVAKIA	4
UNITED KINGDOM	65	SOUTH AFRICA	3
SCOTLAND	6	SWITZERLAND	3

An interesting fact from the non-U.S. international caseload is that most cases originate from members of the Commonwealth Nations. Australia and the United Kingdom alone account for 70.7 percent of all non-U.S. international cases.



Government Fee Cases

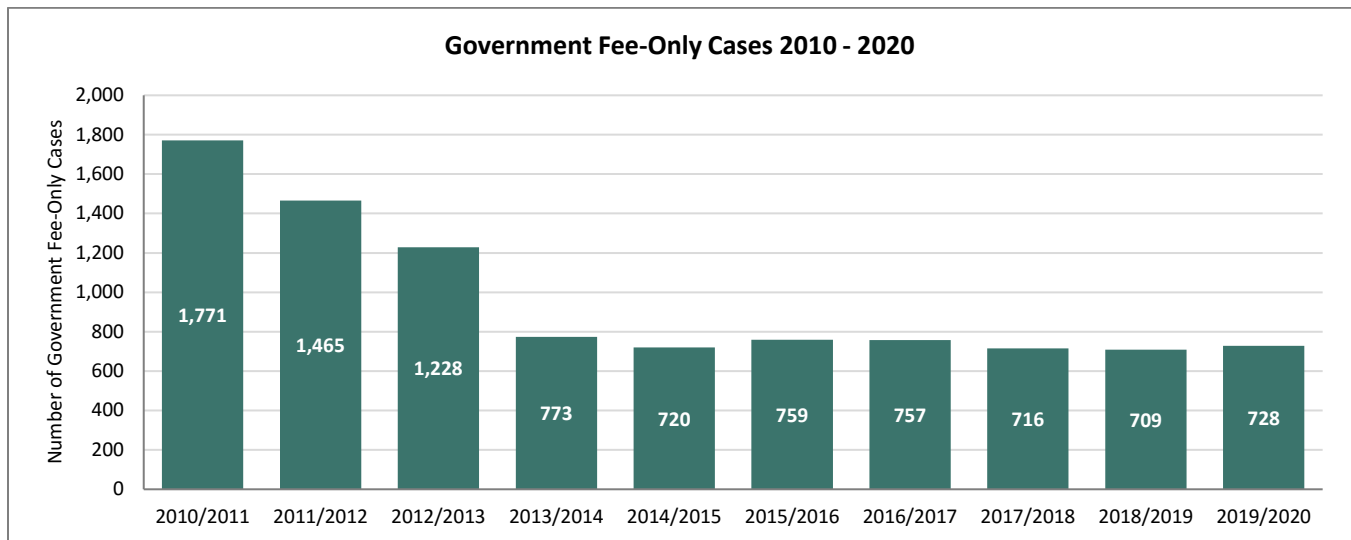
Government fee-only cases are those cases where the FMEP is only collecting a fee owed to the Government of British Columbia. The fee is collected after all maintenance owing to the recipient has been paid; this includes unpaid support and interest.

Currently, there is only one type of fee charged – a default fee – when the payor misses or is late with a payment twice or more in the same year.

A Default Fee is:

- Charged once a year;
- Equal to one month’s maintenance to a maximum of \$400;
- Forwarded to the Government of British Columbia to cover the costs of operating the FMEP.

The number of fee-only cases is very small. They represent less than two percent of the overall FMEP caseload. As seen in the chart below the caseload has remained relatively stable over the past ten fiscal years.

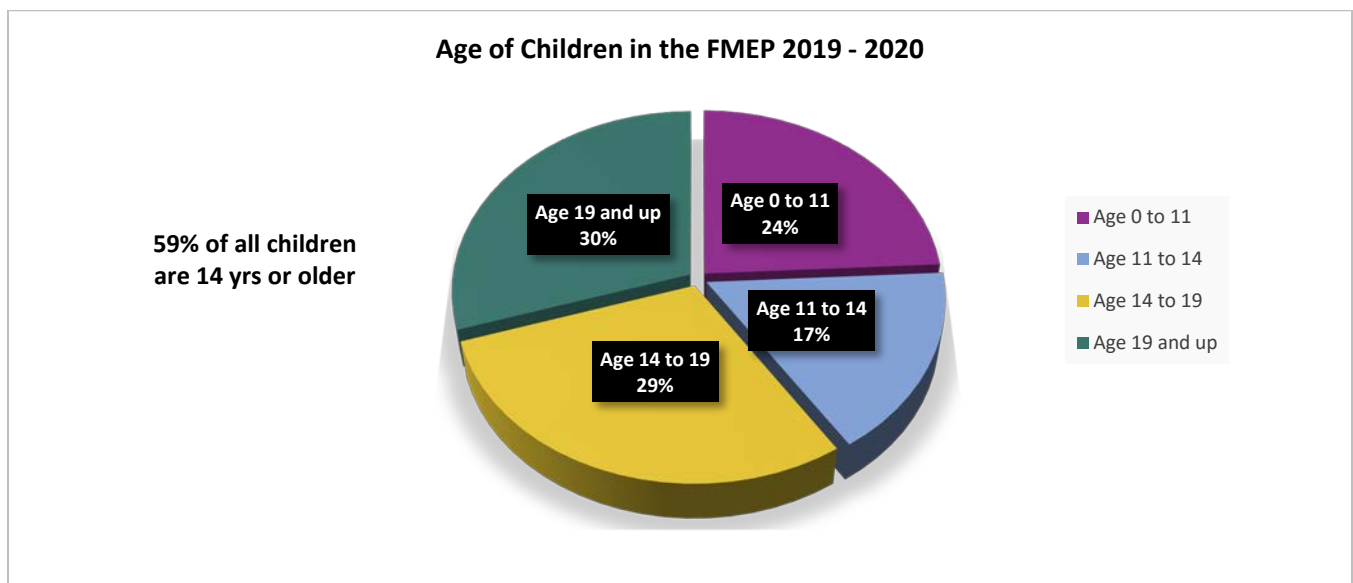




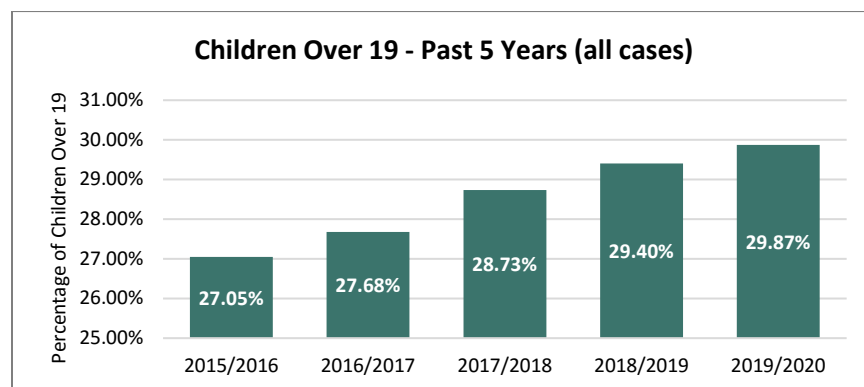
FMEP CLIENTS

Children

The FMEP is a program that provides services largely to families with older children. As of March 31, 2020 over 59 percent of children in the FMEP are over the age of 14. The FMEP provides an important function as it ensures that children over the age of majority (age 19 in British Columbia) are able to complete their secondary and post-secondary schooling. The chart below shows the age breakdown of children in the FMEP.



Children over the age of majority is one of the faster growing categories – over the past five years this cohort has gone from just under 26 percent of all children to nearly 30 percent.





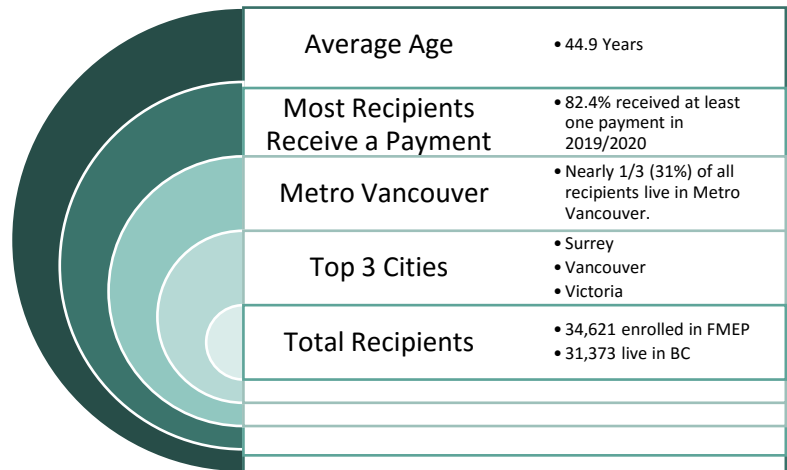
Recipients

As of March 31, 2020 there were 34,621 recipients collecting child and/or spousal support enrolled in the FMEP.

Nearly one third of recipients live in the Metro Vancouver area. This has declined slightly over the years when more than one third lived in Metro Vancouver.

The average age of a recipient enrolled in the FMEP is 44.9 years old. This is not surprising since the majority of children enrolled in the Program are in their teenage years.

Most recipients received at least one payment last year. As of March 31, 2020 more than 82.4 percent of recipients had received at least one payment in the fiscal year.



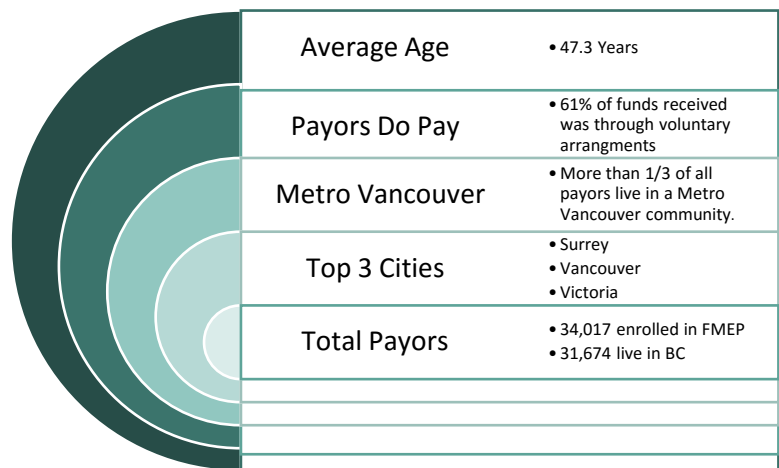
Payors

As of March 31, 2020 there were 34,017 payors enrolled in the FMEP. 1,565 of them had more than one case enrolled.

More than a third of payors live in Metro Vancouver, slightly higher than the percentage of recipients. Around 1 in 6 live in Surrey or Vancouver.

The average age of a payor enrolled in the FMEP is 47.3 years, which is slightly older than the recipients (44.9 years).

Payors do pay. More than 61 percent of all the funds the FMEP received was through voluntary arrangements, mostly after working through a repayment and ongoing payment plan with FMEP staff.





Payors in Receipt of Income Assistance

The FMEP records the number of payors in receipt of income assistance. This number is an important metric as these are generally cases where the payor is unable to provide ongoing support payments for his or her family.

Over the past five years, the number of payors on income assistance has remained stable. However, as a percentage of the overall caseload, they have been increasing. Over 15.2 percent of payors in British Columbia are in receipt of income assistance.

Fiscal Year	Number of Payors	Percentage of Payors in BC on IA	Change From Previous Year
2015/2016	4,635	13.05%	↑ 1.09%
2016/2017	4,639	13.33%	↑ 0.28%
2017/2018	4,607	13.70%	↑ 0.37%
2018/2019	4,620	14.22%	↑ 0.52%
2019/2020	4,825	15.23%	↑ 1.01%

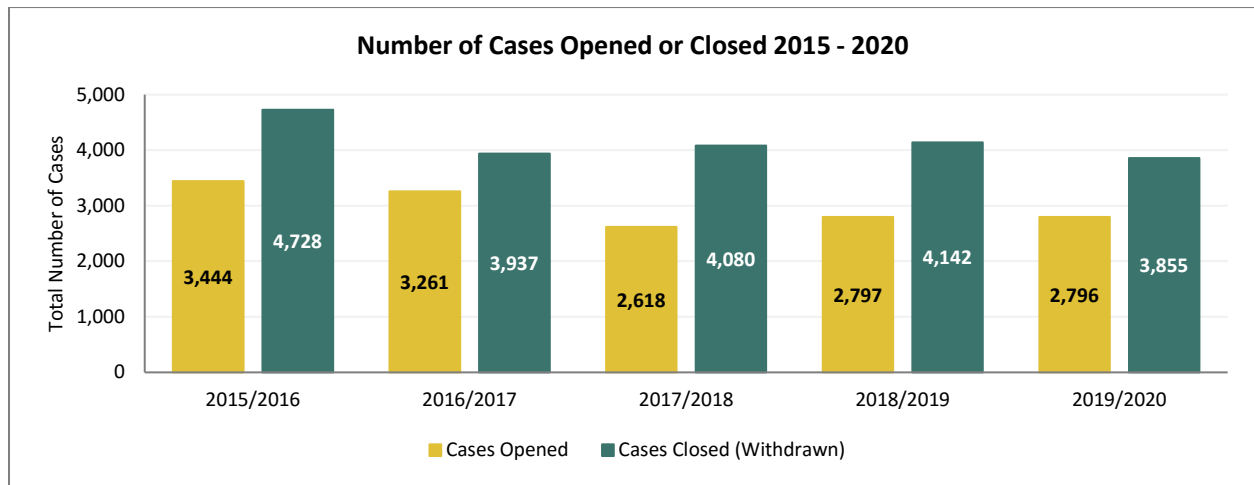
Of particular concern to the FMEP is that these clients generally fall further and further in to arrears as they are not able to pay the court-ordered maintenance. Although these clients do have the option of applying to the court to vary the order, they often face both personal barriers such as food insecurity and lack of a stable address, as well as systemic barriers such as a complex application process, lack of legal aid, or the inability to afford a lawyer to assist in the process.



PROGRAM OPERATIONS

Enrolment

The FMEP caseload is driven by two main factors – the number of new cases requesting enrolment each year and the number of cases being closed or withdrawn. The past five years of cases opening and closing are shown in the chart below.



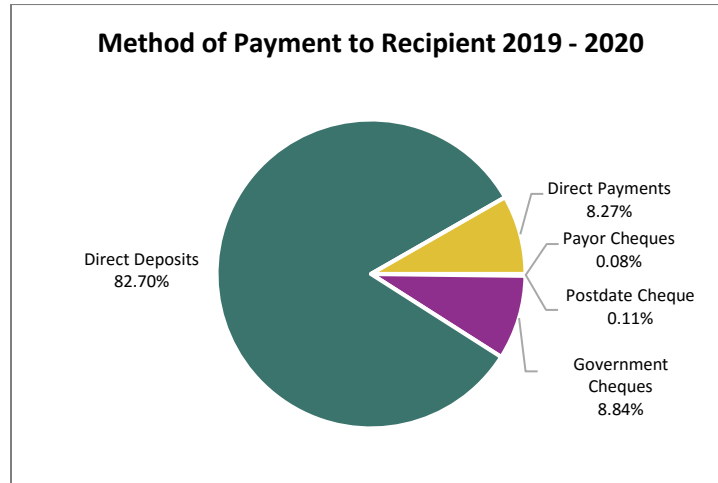
Cases are closed because the children have become adults and the maintenance is fully paid, because both parents have moved outside of British Columbia, or because the recipient of maintenance has decided to receive support directly from the paying parent and no longer requires the assistance of the FMEP.

Over the past ten years, the FMEP has had fewer new cases requesting enrolment. Enrolment dropped substantially after May 2015, when the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction eliminated the mandatory enrolment of clients in receipt of income assistance. Since then, enrolment has stabilized. 2018-2019 was the first year in the past ten, where the number of new or re-enrolled cases increased over the preceding year. 2019-2020 was stable with only one fewer case than the previous year.

Payment Processing

The FMEP processed over 453,000 payments in 2019-2020, an average of 37,829 individual payments each month.

Looking back over the past 31 years, the way payments are received and processed is one of the areas that has exhibited the largest change. When the FMEP began in 1988, all payments were received either by cheque, cash or money order. In addition, some clients were allowed to accept direct payments. In the past year, most payments were received electronically and distributed electronically. The FMEP has invested in e-payments and over 96 percent of all eligible recipients are enrolled in direct deposit. Issuing fewer paper cheques and using less mail results in faster payment turn around, and is better for clients and the environment. The chart below shows how payments were distributed to clients in the last completed year.

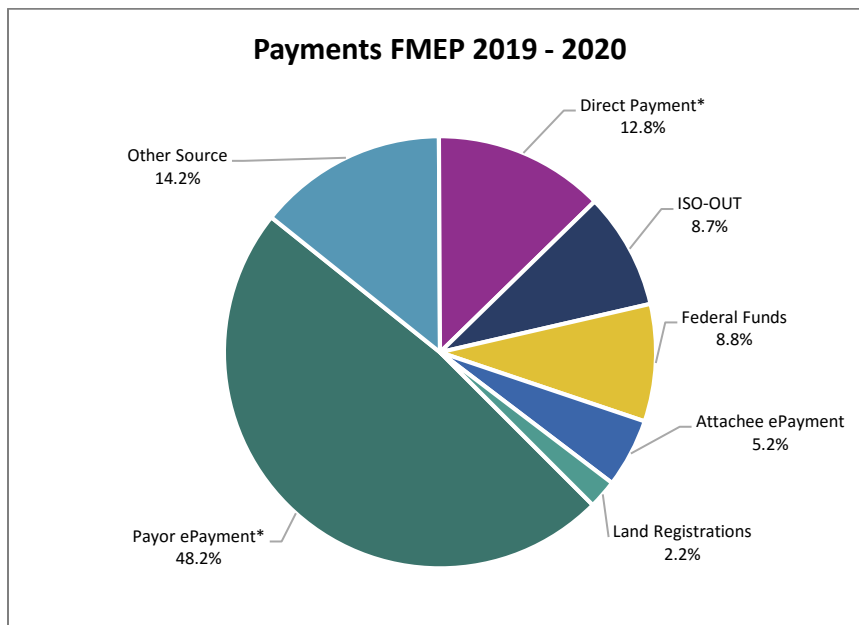


Enforcement

In 2019-2020, more than 61 percent of all funds processed by the FMEP and paid to recipients was received via voluntary methods from the paying parent. These payments were either by personal cheque, direct payment to the recipient, or using one of the FMEP electronic banking options. These payments were made for a number of reasons. A primary factor is the extensive work performed by our enforcement staff who negotiate voluntary agreements with payors to repay arrears and commit to long-term stable payments. As well, the dedication of many parents in maintaining strong relationships after separation and divorce also contributes to this.

The remaining 39 percent of all funds received by the FMEP involved some sort of administrative and/or court enforcement action taken by FMEP staff. Unfortunately there is no way for the FMEP to tie specific funds to every enforcement action. Some actions can span years – as in the case of land registration or seizure of property or assets.

The graph below shows the source of funds for 2019-2020.



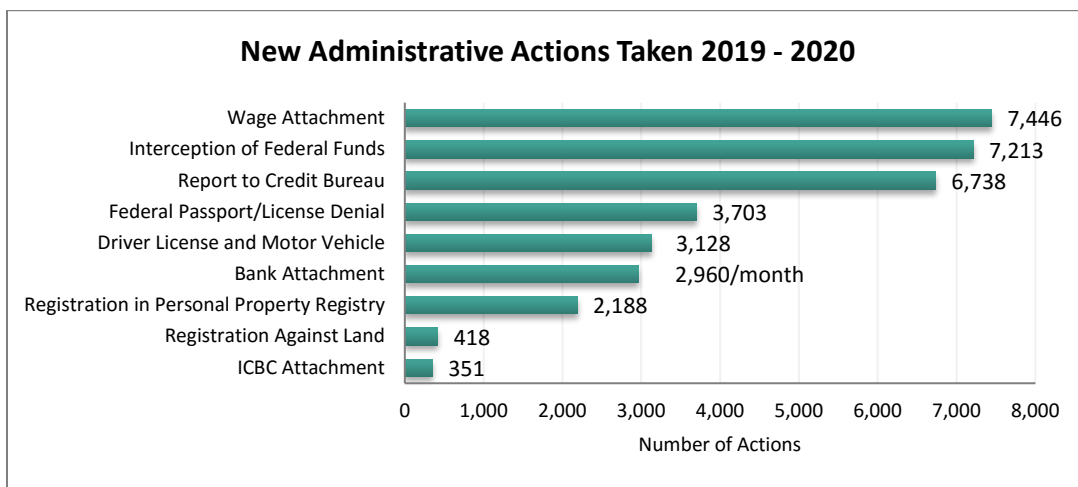
- **Payor ePayment** – these are payments sent electronically to FMEP by the Payor – usually due to voluntary payment arrangements
- **Direct Payment** – these are payments made directly by the payor to the recipient
- **ISO-OUT** – funds received from reciprocating jurisdictions
- **Federal Funds** – funds received from the federal government
- **Attachee ePayment** – funds sent electronically by employers to the FMEP to satisfy a notice of attachment (garnishment)
- **Land Registration** – Funds received as a result of a land lien on property owned by the payor.
- **Other Sources** – may include other garnishments, payments from the paying parent via cheque, cash or



Administrative Enforcement

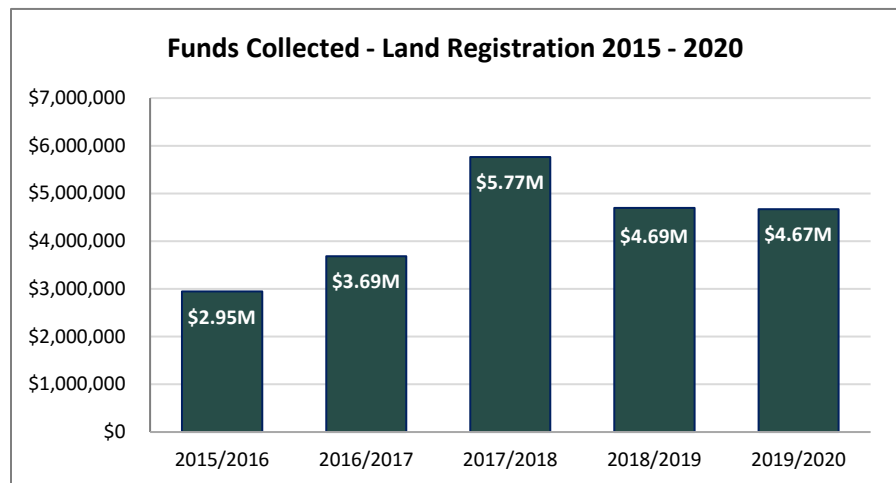
The FMEP will always attempt to negotiate and reach a voluntary payment arrangement with a paying parent. Negotiation of payments to cover the ongoing maintenance and arrears is a cornerstone of the client-centric focus of the FMEP. Where negotiation and voluntary arrangements do not work, the FMEP may initiate a variety of administrative actions to collect the outstanding arrears.

All cases enrolled in the FMEP are reviewed regularly, at least once every 3-4 months, and more often when cases are in arrears or non-compliant. A dedicated Enforcement Officer reviews and determines which form of administrative action would be best to take on a given case. The chart below shows the most common administrative actions taken by the FMEP in 2019-2020.



Land value in the Province of British Columbia has risen at a significant rate over the past decade. One action that the FMEP can take is to place a lien against land in which the payor has an interest. During the past five years the FMEP has collected over \$21.7 million from the sale of land. The chart below shows collections from land over the past five fiscal years.

Nearly \$4.7 million was collected in 2019-2020. Registration against land accounted for 2.2 percent of the funds received by the FMEP during the fiscal year.

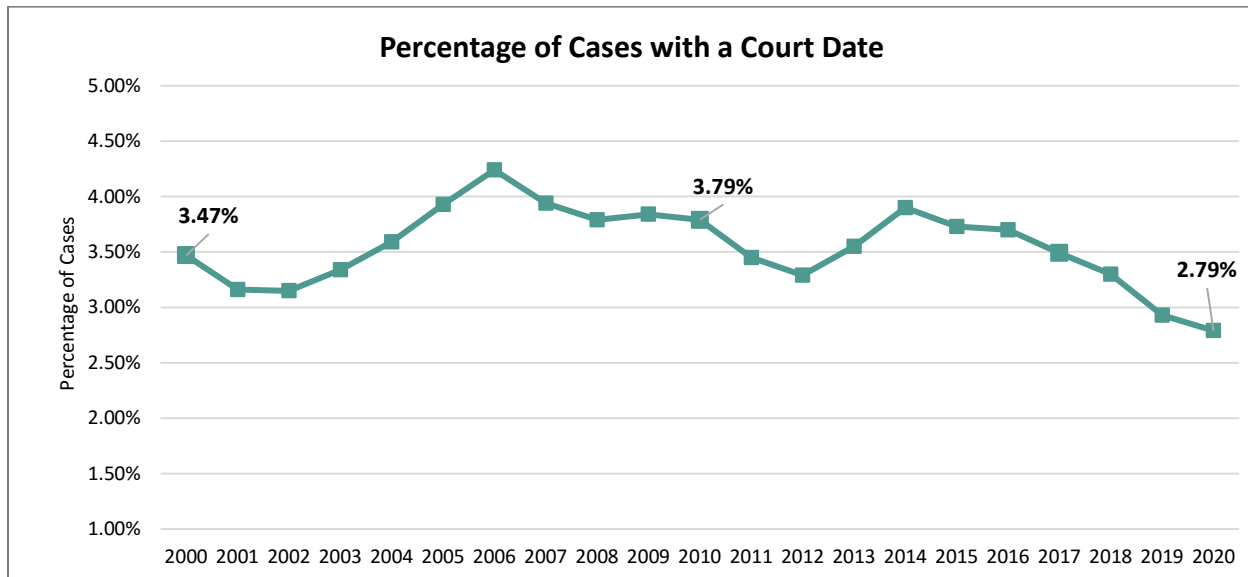




Court Enforcement

When both negotiation/voluntary compliance and administrative enforcement are unsuccessful, and the FMEP believes the payor has the capacity to pay, the FMEP may initiate a hearing in a British Columbia court to ask the payor to explain why he or she has not paid the amount required under the maintenance order.

Given the limited court time available, as well as the significant resources and costs involved in court actions, very few FMEP cases are taken to court each year. As noted in the following chart, the overall percentage of cases with court dates has remained relatively stable since the late 1990s – at between three and four percent of the caseload. It has for the past two years fallen below three percent of cases.



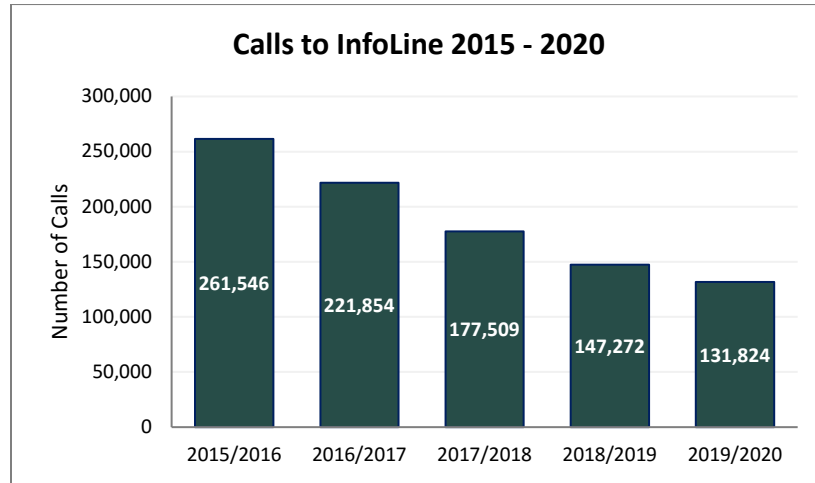
Client Services and Communications

The FMEP places a high priority on ensuring clients receive excellent customer service. This commitment ensures that clients are able to obtain information regarding their case in a timely fashion. To respond to the needs of a diverse clientele, the FMEP has created four core services that combined, provide barrier-free access. This covers general program information, specific case details, enforcement and payment information.

InfoLine

The InfoLine is an automated telephone system that provides clients with up-to-date enforcement and payment information as well as providing payors with quick access to their enforcement officer and a callback service. The service was designed based on client and staff feedback.

The FMEP redesigned the InfoLine service in 2013, and for the first two years usage grew. However, over the past five years, the usage of the telephony service has declined as usage of the FMEP website has grown. The chart below shows the total number of calls to the InfoLine service over the past five years.

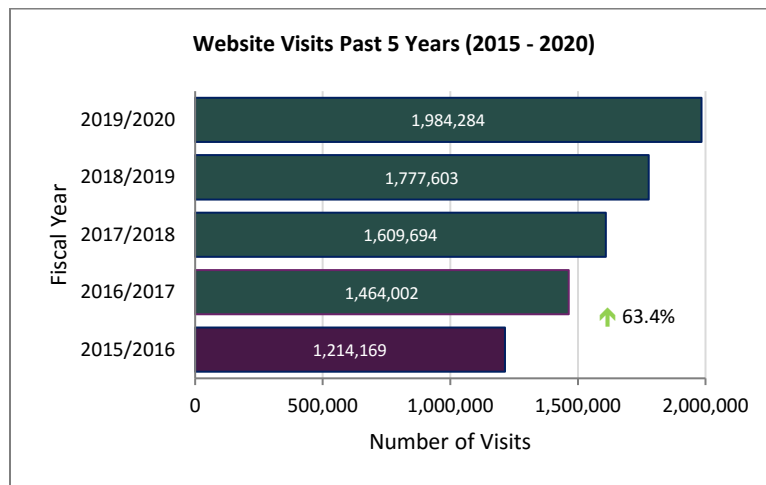


FMEP Website

The FMEP is committed to not only maintaining services, but responding to changes in customer behavior and ensuring innovative and client oriented solutions are implemented. The FMEP website is a key example of this.

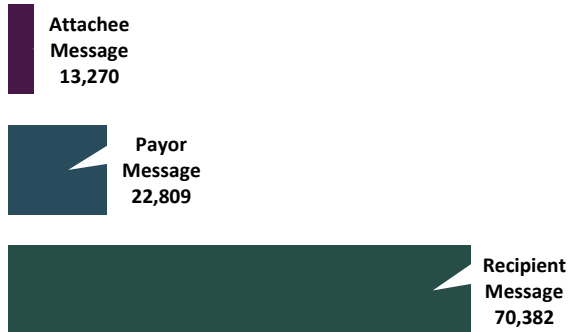
The website was implemented in 2002 and was a complimentary service to the existing strong telephony services provided by the FMEP. As technology and client behavior changed, the FMEP adapted and invested in long-term planning and redeveloped the web services with a primary focus on communications and customer service for clients.

The FMEP website is now the primary portal for parents, employers (attachees) and reciprocal partners to obtain information and communicate with FMEP staff. Total website visits are up 63.4 percent since 2015 and nearly 70 percent of recipients and almost one third of payors now have active web accounts. The charts below show the usage and service provided by the FMEP website.

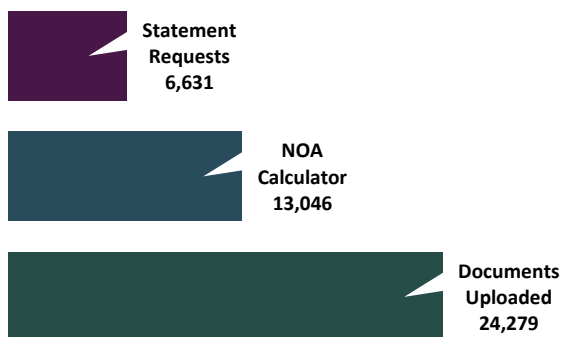




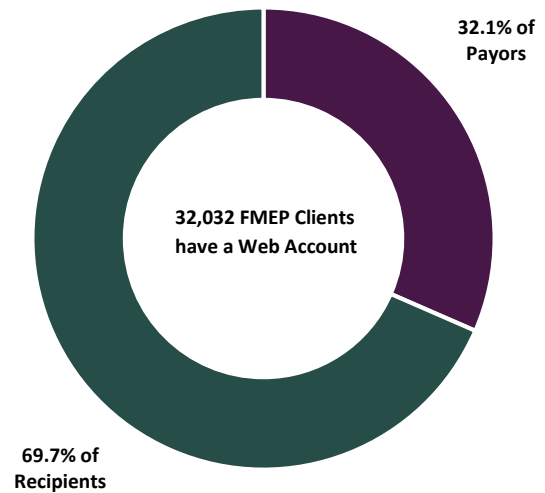
Client E-Messages 2019 - 2020



Web Services 2019 - 2020



Percentage of Clients with Web Accounts 2019 - 2020



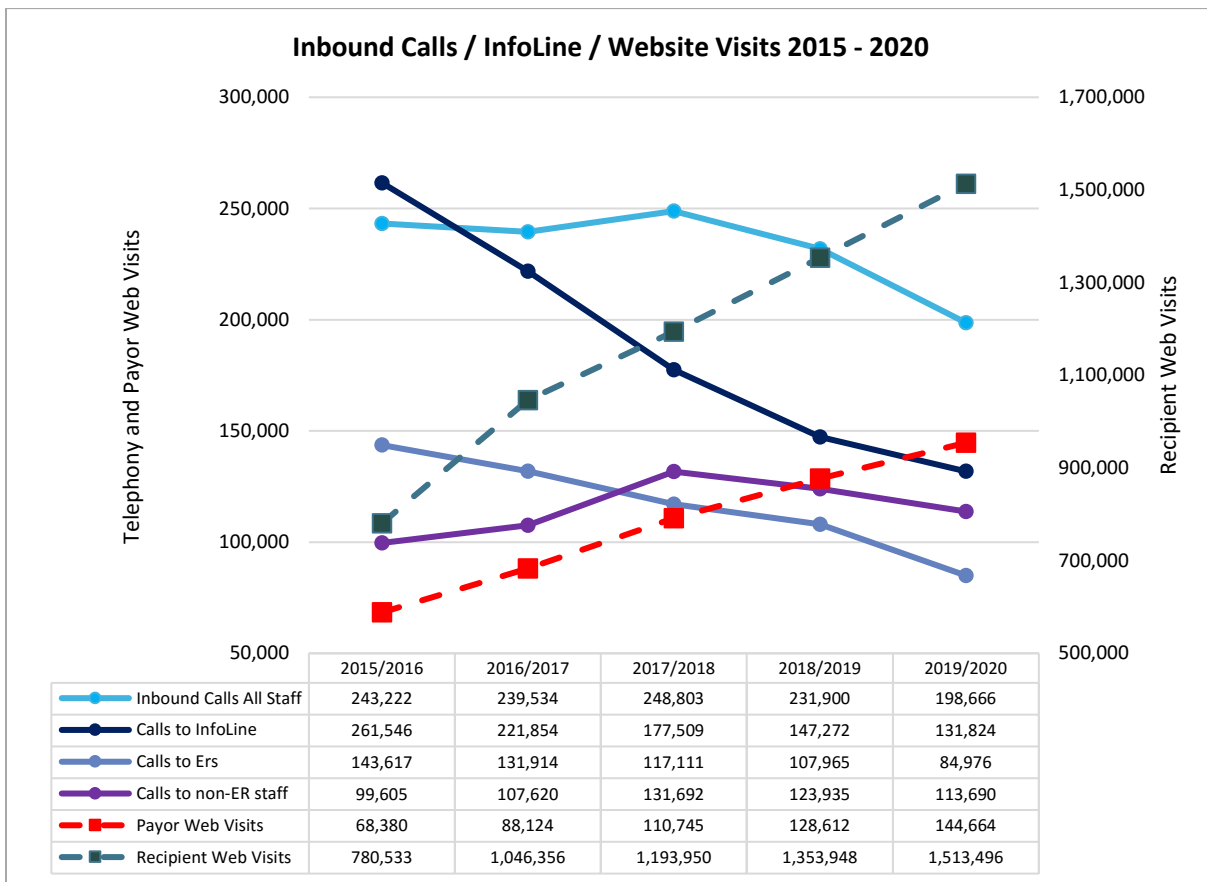
As noted in the charts above – more than 100,000 eMessages were received and actioned by FMEP staff. FMEP clients uploaded over 24,000 documents; employers used the online calculator to determine deductions for garnishments more than 13,000 times, and clients retrieved over 6,600 electronic account statements – helping to lower the usage of printing materials and save on postage costs.



FMEP Call Centers

The FMEP operates three call centres, one in each of the regional offices. Overall call volumes have declined in all three regional offices. This is a result of two factors – first, the overall decline in the caseload and secondly, clients chose to use web services options for communicating with the FMEP instead of contacting our call centres.

The strong increase in clients choosing to use the website over traditional telephony services is quite pronounced since the FMEP launched the new version of the website in 2015. The chart below shows the strong uptick in clients (particularly recipients) using the FMEP website and the corresponding declines in the telephony-based services.



The FMEP experienced significantly longer call answer times in 2019-2020, averaging over four minutes (4m49s). The main reasons for the increased call answer times was due to two factors. Several long-term staff retired and the FMEP faced significant challenges filling the positions due to a tight labour market. The Enquiry Representative position is one of significant knowledge and skill. Training and recruiting new staff for these positions should be completed in the 2020-2021 fiscal year. With this, call answer times are expected to return to more typical levels.



Comprehensive Child Support Service (CCSS)

Since 2000, the FMEP has operated an outreach program in conjunction with the Family Justice Services division of the Ministry of Attorney General. This has provided an opportunity for the two services to work together in assisting mutual clients who need assistance obtaining/changing court orders or repaying their arrears. In addition, this service ensures that the FMEP has a means of providing access to all clients, particularly those in marginalized populations with barriers to telephone or web communication who may require an in-person appointment.

The FMEP operates this service from four locations: Vancouver, Surrey (West Fraser), Kelowna and Nanaimo.

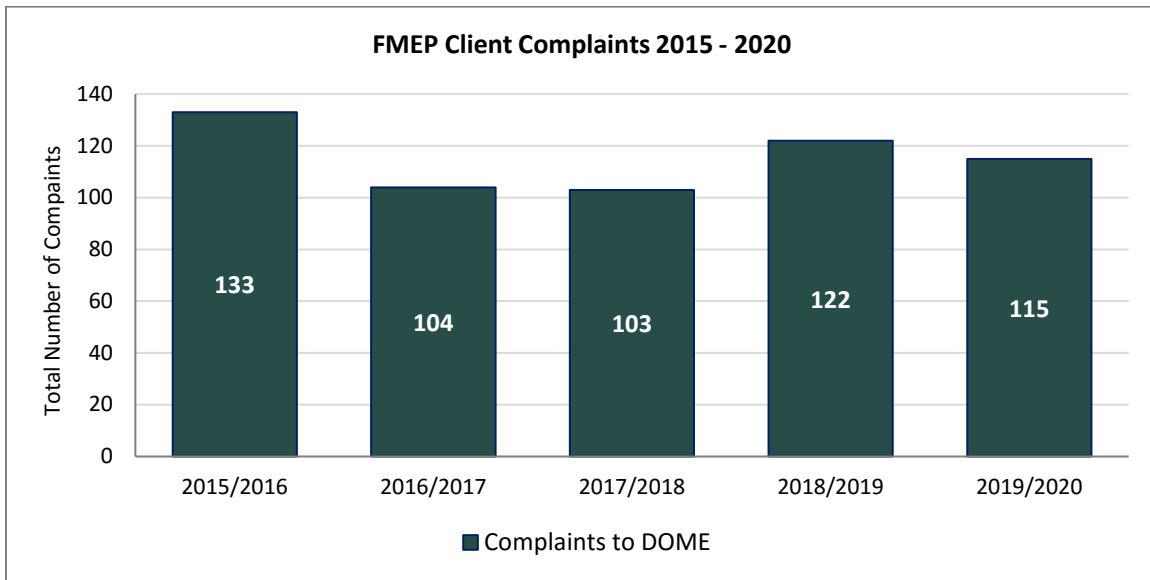
Designated FMEP staff provided three to four days a week services at the main locations between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., and on an as-needed basis in Nanaimo every two weeks. Client referrals were based on walk-in requests and referrals from the judiciary/family justice, as well as direct referrals from within the FMEP.

Typically this service serves over 2,000 clients which includes those currently enrolled as well as those seeking assistance.



CLIENT SERVICE AND COMPLAINTS

The FMEP deals with significantly complex social and family issues. One might expect that this would lead to large numbers of complaints. However, the client-centric approach used by the FMEP ensures clients are able to obtain information they need regarding their case. As a result, complaints to the Director of Maintenance Enforcement (DOME) have remained very low, averaging 115 per year for the past five years. The chart below shows the number of complaints registered with the Director for this period.





PROGRAM INITIATIVES

Staff and Program Costs

The total number of FMEP staff for 2019-2020 was 196 (establishment FTE) across the three regional offices. This was consistent with the previous fiscal year. The total cost for FMEP enforcement was \$17.7 million, with just over \$216.3 million collected.

The FMEP continues to be one of the most efficient child support organizations in North America. Over the past five years,

- FMEP collections per dollar have increased from \$11.69 (2015-2016) to \$12.25 (2019-2020);
- FMEP now collects over \$1 billion every five years;
- FMEP collected \$200 million or more for the past seven consecutive years.

Collections per dollar spent for the past five years are noted in the chart and graph below.

Fiscal Year	Collections Per Dollar Spent
2015/2016	\$11.69
2016/2017	\$11.84
2017/2018	\$12.74
2018/2019	\$12.77
2019/2020	\$12.25



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