

Glenda Wiles

From: MACO [MACO@mtcounties.org]
Sent: Tuesday, November 26, 2013 8:20 AM
To: MACO
Subject: Debt offset

Commissioners,

The National Association of Counties and the National Council of County Association of Executives are exploring establishing a cooperative "debt offset" program where counties could collect outstanding debts from residents for any outstanding debts for things such as outstanding court fines and forfeitures and utility bills. The outstanding debt would be "offset" against any refund or other payments to these individuals from state agencies. There is also an effort underway to enact federal legislation to expand this to any federal refunds or payments. This would eliminate counties needing to use a collection service in an attempt to collect these debts. What I am hearing is that collection agencies typically will not expend too much effort to collect because the debts are relatively small so their "share" is not often worth their effort.

I am trying to gauge the magnitude of the problem in Montana, or determine if there is even a problem. Does your county have significant uncollectable debts? Do you use a collection agency to collect? Is what you are doing working? Do you think there would be a value in being able to file a debt offset where you would be paid out of the proceeds of any refunds or payments to individuals would be made prior to the refund or payment being issued?

Thanks for any information you can provide.

Harold

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