



Three-State Intergovernmental Project

Child Support Case Processing
Innovation Demonstration

GRANT SYNOPSIS

Virginia Child Support Enforcement
Maryland Child Support Administration
North Carolina Child Support Services



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Introduction

On September 25, 2019, the Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) was awarded the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) Child Support Intergovernmental Case Processing Innovation Demonstration grant. The purpose of the grant was to test how child support agencies could improve intergovernmental case processing and increase collections.

Although Virginia was the formal awardee, the Three-State Intergovernmental Project (referred to as "Project") was a two-year collaborative effort administered equally among Virginia Child Support Enforcement, Maryland Child Support Administration, and North Carolina Child Support Services, collectively called the "Partner States." There were four goals for the Project:

- Improve the intergovernmental case processing and efficiencies in and between each Project Office in the three Partner States;
- Improve customer service for parents and other child support agencies by increasing case communication and document exchanges;
- Improve the OCSE 157 measures for the intergovernmental caseloads in each of the three Partner States;
- Create a blueprint of procedures and practices that can be shared with other states to improve their intergovernmental programs.

The Project set out to answer two research questions:

1. Do the interventions as described on the following pages allow Project Offices to outperform their peers within the state with respect to processing intergovernmental cases?
2. Do the Partner States experience similar gains?





Implementation

Based on feedback received in the assessment portion of the project, the Partner States created a series of interventions to attempt to address the issues that were discovered in the feedback from the Project Offices. The series includes the five activities described below.

3RG

The 3RG is a collection of tools for all staff in the Project Offices which were modeled after Intergovernmental Reference Guide (IRG) developed by the federal Office of Child Support. It was divided into three sections:

3RG-1: Project Office and Staff Contact List, including the function and assignment of each intergovernmental person in each Project office. Virginia hosts content at this link: https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/dcse/state_collaboration.cgi

3RG-2: Responses from each Project Office to questions about state-specific case processing issues, including procedures and timelines. There are also questions for each Partner State's Central Registry and Project Offices asking what information they require for an incoming interstate referral, categorized by function.

3RG-3: Links to training materials on intergovernmental topics developed by OCSE and regional child support associations with materials on the Partner States organization's website.

Collaborative Dashboard

The screenshot displays the 'Collaborative Dashboard' for the Three State Intergovernmental Project. At the top, a navigation bar includes tabs for ABUSE & NEGLECT, ASSISTANCE, CHILD SUPPORT, COMMUNITY SUPPORT, FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION, and LICENSING. Below this, the 'State Collaboration Resources' section features a welcome message and a list of 'IG Resources' including 3RG-1 Contact List, 3RG-2 Questions, 3RG-2 Document and Examples, 3RG-3 Training Links, and IG References. The 'Events' section lists monthly events from January to June, such as 'Intersect Event Materials-January' and 'January Intersect Event Recording'. The 'Training' section includes 'Interstate Case Closure Training 7.21.21'. A 'THREE STATE INNOVATION MD VA NC' logo is prominently displayed on the right side of the dashboard.



Pledge

This was a promise by all Project Office participants to prioritize intergovernmental work through simple adjustments to work: i.e., direct contact on case documents, turning on out-of-office email notifications and phone settings. It was developed to help educate and train the Project Office staff on the interventions of the Project and to define expectations for cooperation.



Project Office Pledge

I agree to support the Three-State Intergovernmental Project with my time, focus, tenacity, and commitment to the case processing actions below on cases with the Partner States. I believe that I have the power to change the lives of families, and I choose to use my power to respectfully promote the well-being of children and self-sufficiency of families by fairly, effectively, and efficiently using these processes to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders. Therefore, I pledge to:

- ❖ Be cordial and cooperative with my fellow intergovernmental caseworkers in the Project offices
- ❖ Zealously work my intergovernmental cases as I do my local cases
- ❖ Participate in all available intergovernmental and OCSE tools training through the Project
- ❖ Review the file when I learn that the noncustodial parent has relocated to another Partner State, and if there is no certified copy of the order, I will order one immediately (or request the appropriate team member do so) to prepare for the possibility of sending an outgoing referral to a Partner State

For all in



Intersect

Monthly events were scheduled via Microsoft Teams so project participants could network, obtain training and share successes. All Project Office staff were invited to attend. States took turns presenting on topics specific to their state, such as how to read orders or payment histories. We also discussed the Project goals and outcomes, and brought in outside speakers to discuss training methods and topics.





Customer Service Initiatives

Phase One

There were two phases within this intervention. During the first phase, when a state referred an intergovernmental case to another state, the referring state sent a cover letter to the custodial parent to provide information about how intergovernmental cases work.

Notification of Another State's Involvement in Your Child Support Case

We understand that there are many things about child support that are stressful and confusing. We are here to help you understand what is happening with your child support case.

We have learned that the other parent in your case lives in another state. While this requires us to work your case in a different way, the good news is that our office works with child support offices in every state to coordinate services. This means that the other state's child support agency will help us try to get the monetary support you deserve.

This type of state-to-state case is the best way to get an order entered or to enforce an existing support order. Because this involves working with the other state, however, there may be some extra time needed before an order is entered or payments start coming in.

Please be aware that if an order for paternity or support needs to be established, or if the support order needs to be changed, you will have to answer several questions before we can send your case to the other state. Providing complete answers to those questions will help the other state work your case more quickly. If you already have a child support order, the other state will work to enforce that order for you.

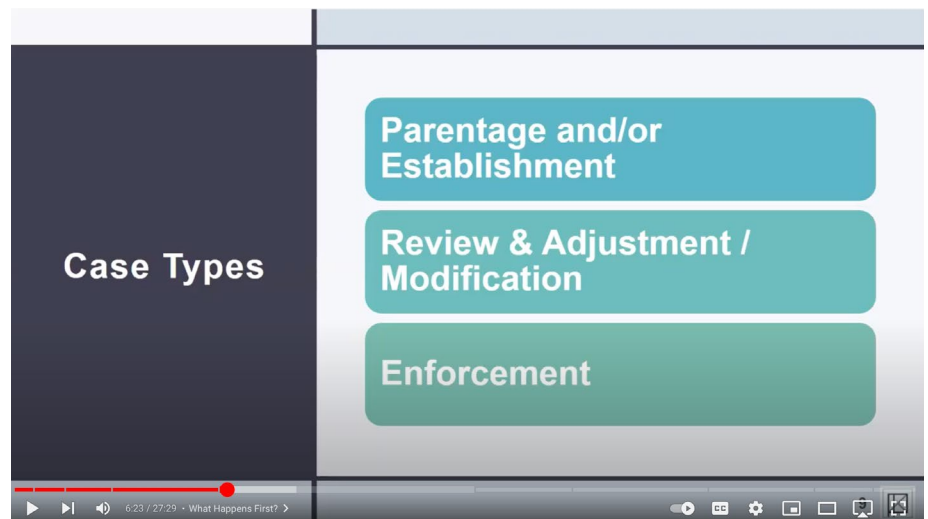
Even though another state is involved, our office will continue to work your case by checking on the progress of your case with the other state and answering your questions. We are here for you! If you have any questions, please contact us at [call center or office number].



Customer Service Initiatives

Phase Two

The second phase was a recorded presentation detailing the intergovernmental case process, which was posted on all Project states' public facing websites.



The presentation can be viewed on [YouTube Video](#)



Other Training

This final intervention covered any other training not part of the other four interventions. Project Office staff were asked to take any available intergovernmental training offered by their in-state training teams. There were also several trainings facilitated during the Implementation period by the project team, such as Electronic Document Exchange and Intergovernmental Case Closure classes.





Evaluation



During the evaluation, we examined two research questions:

1. Did the interventions (as described below) allow Project Offices to outperform their peers within the state with respect to processing intergovernmental cases?
2. Did the Partner States experience similar gains?

These questions guide the evaluation of successes in relation to the projects' data points. Because this is a demonstration grant, we define success as being able to determine whether (and which) interventions were effective. We used the data points below as measures of effectiveness. (We indicate the desired change for each metric as either an increase or a decrease.)

- Increase the collection percentage of current child support due on cases in the Project offices and therefore the Partner States
- Decrease the median number of days between an incoming intergovernmental referral and the establishment of a new order
- Increase the customer service experience for parents on the intergovernmental caseload in the Project offices
- Increase customer service in Project offices



Evaluation

For purposes of data charts, unless noted otherwise, the baseline period was 2019-2020, and the implementation period was 2021.

Virginia and Maryland both registered small performance increases, sometimes indicated by a smaller decrease in collections by Project Offices when compared to the Non-Project Offices as illustrated in the table below. North Carolina experienced performance improvements, with their largest gains made by their Project Offices.

Percent Change of Average Reported CSUP Collected for Initiating (I) and Responding (R) Caseloads During Baseline and Implementation			
State/Office	Average Reported CSUP Collected		Change
	Baseline	Implementation	
I - VA - PO (MD)	56.64%	54.81%	-1.84%
I - VA - NPO (MD)	57.38%	55.61%	-1.77%
R - VA - PO (MD)	58.07%	57.25%	-0.82%
R - VA - NPO (MD)	58.07%	57.83%	-0.24%
I - VA - PO (NC)	55.24%	53.51%	-1.73%
I - VA - NPO (NC)	52.09%	54.23%	2.14%
R - VA - PO (NC)	59.74%	58.17%	-1.57%
R - VA - NPO (NC)	58.73%	56.75%	-1.98%
I - MD - PO (VA)	61.18%	60.16%	-1.03%
I - MD - NPO (VA)	58.35%	57.11%	-1.24%
R - MD - PO (VA)	60.93%	56.59%	-4.34%
R - MD - NPO (VA)	66.88%	61.89%	-4.99%
I - MD - PO (NC)	52.54%	53.30%	0.76%
I - MD - NPO (NC)	54.18%	56.34%	2.17%
R - MD - PO (NC)	62.95%	58.22%	-4.74%
R - MD - NPO (NC)	71.78%	67.04%	-4.73%
I - NC - PO (VA)	59.34%	57.72%	-1.62%
I - NC - NPO (VA)	57.97%	56.97%	-1.00%
R - NC - PO (VA)	58.01%	60.59%	2.59%
R - NC - NPO (VA)	61.59%	62.09%	0.50%
I - NC - PO (MD)	63.14%	67.62%	4.48%
I - NC - NPO (MD)	64.19%	63.66%	-0.53%
R - NC - PO (MD)	53.33%	55.50%	2.17%
R - NC - NPO (MD)	58.69%	63.36%	4.67%

Bold indicates positive results.



Evaluation

The second criterion, days between referral and order establishment, clearly follows the same state-by-state trend indicated in the previous criteria.

Virginia's Project Office performance clearly outperforms the Non-Project Offices in both the initiating and responding caseloads interactions for Maryland, and are mixed with regard to their improvement rate for the responding caseload with North Carolina. Maryland's Project Offices frequently outperformed their own Non-Project Offices, with the only exception being the initiating caseload with North Carolina. North Carolina's Project Offices were largely successful in outperforming their Non-Project Office counterparts, with the initiating caseload with Virginia being the only exception.

Change in Average Median Number of Days Between Order and Establishment for Initiating (I) and Responding (R) Caseloads During Baseline and Implementation			
State/Office	Average Reported Median Days		Change
	Baseline	Implementation	
I - VA - PO (MD)	189.25	269.00	79.75
I - VA - NPO (MD)	238.29	517.10	278.81
R - VA - PO (MD)	265.53	248.08	-17.45
R - VA - NPO (MD)	224.15	280.17	56.02
I - VA - PO (NC)	305.64	502.57	196.93
I - VA - NPO (NC)	170.85	251.68	80.83
R - VA - PO (NC)	382.93	444.31	61.38
R - VA - NPO (NC)	267.35	309.00	41.65
I - MD - PO (VA)	545.07	744.22	199.15
I - MD - NPO (VA)	366.83	766.20	399.37
R - MD - PO (VA)	490.76	607.83	117.07
R - MD - NPO (VA)	340.10	441.00	100.90
I - MD - PO (NC)	762.00	868.50	106.50
I - MD - NPO (NC)	652.32	634.50	-17.82
R - MD - PO (NC)	438.21	624.91	186.70
R - MD - NPO (NC)	213.67	324.67	111.00
I - NC - PO (VA)	256.59	337.85	81.26
I - NC - NPO (VA)	147.70	178.29	30.59
R - NC - PO (VA)	291.15	162.82	-128.33
R - NC - NPO (VA)	147.52	130.08	-17.44
I - NC - PO (MD)	370.85	322.33	-48.52
I - NC - NPO (MD)	249.15	649.79	400.64
R - NC - PO (MD)	316.43	297.57	-18.86
R - NC - NPO (MD)	207.10	245.95	38.85

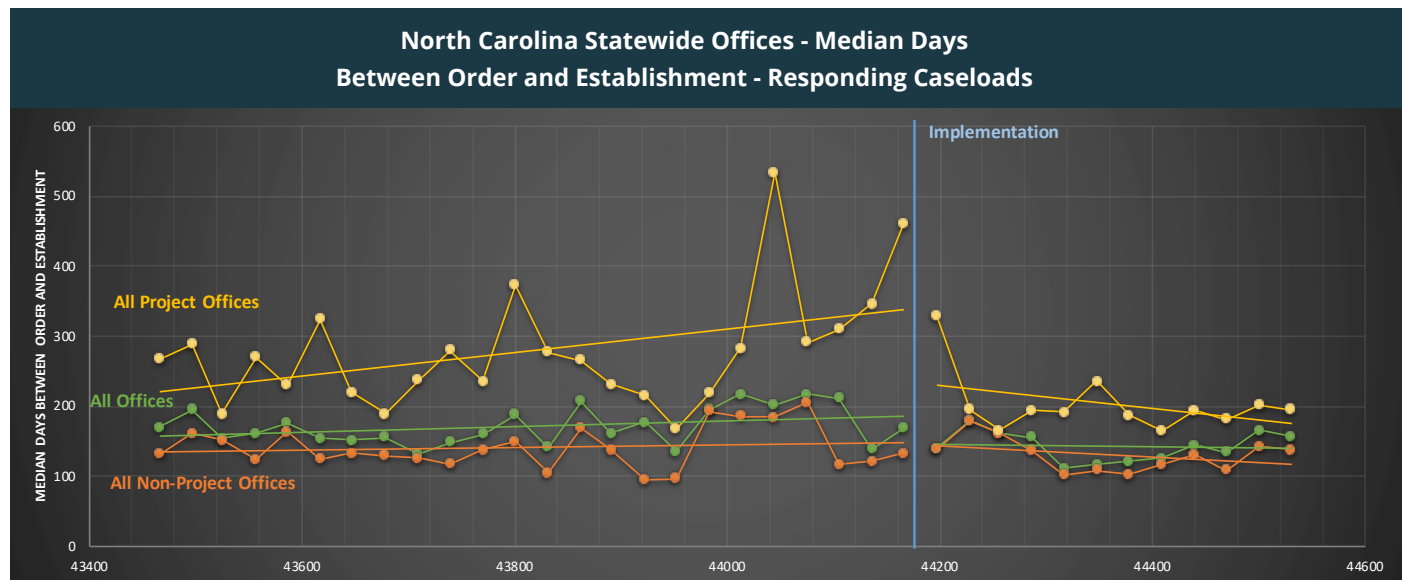
Bold indicates positive results.



Evaluation

The overall trend was an increase in the average of median days between referral and order, with a few exceptions.

For example, North Carolina saw a reduction in their overall responding caseload, the largest being a 27% decrease in time for the Project Offices.





Evaluation

Electronic Document Exchange (EDE): Electronic document exchange allows a faster form of communication than mailing documents. Because it is a relatively new technology, the grant focused on increasing usage by increasing staff awareness and providing training. If the interventions were successful, the data should show an increase in unsolicited documents sent.

Average Percent Change from Baseline to Implementation Periods for Reported Unsolicited Documents Sent via EDE	
State/Office	Average Percent Change
VA - Statewide	115.15%
VA - All PO	75.80%
VA - All NPO	167.74%
VA - PO (NC)	-7.38%
VA - NPO (NC)	22.82%
NC - Statewide	349.04%
NC - ALL PO	420.00%
NC - All NPO	417.07%
NC - PO (VA)	284.62%
NC - NPO (VA)	253.85%

The implementation period presents a consistent positive trend in utilization with minimal exceptions. In both North Carolina and Virginia, not only were these effects visible in the Project Offices, but there was a statewide increase in EDE usage overall. Maryland does not currently use the EDE program during the project, so Maryland results are not included in this report.



Evaluation

Did the Partner States experience similar gains?

As evidenced by the intrastate performance analysis in the prior research question, Partner States did not experience similar gains. While North Carolina experienced improvements in nearly every category, Virginia's and Maryland's improvements were much narrower and often in specific categories.

Both Maryland and Virginia experienced statewide decreases in intergovernmental collections and increases in median days between referral and order establishment. This result suggests that the state-specific context may influence the success of these interventions, and the interventions may provide less benefit to some states. North Carolina's improvement in their Project Offices compared to their state average adds weight to this conclusion.

While we were able to answer our research question, further research could be helpful to study the disparate outcomes. Maryland and Virginia could have experienced smaller gains because they had existing procedures or policies in place that had already captured most of the intervention benefits; therefore, the interventions did less to move the needle for them. An opposing hypothesis, however, could be that North Carolina had procedures or policies in place that led to greater adoption of the interventions and therefore increased effectiveness. As these opposing hypotheses reveal, further research could examine the disparate outcomes.

Increasing intergovernmental communication can provide benefits to participating states; while it could be difficult to know which state would benefit the most, increased communication and cooperation benefitted the region as a whole, which likely will have long-term benefits outside the scope of this grant.



Conclusion

What did we learn?

The Project Team would like to recognize that there was substantive success in this Project owing that three states, 12 offices, and hundreds of intergovernmental workers successfully collaborated to complete this grant project. There were challenges overcome, lessons learned, and experiences shared, all of which culminated in a broad array of accomplishments.

Any of the behavioral changes that resulted as promised in the Pledge, were executed through the 3RG, or were shared at an Intersect counted as positive events. Each of those singular positive events rippled throughout the Project Offices, proving to be dynamic changes such as increased efficiencies in intergovernmental case processing, enhanced agency customer services, and improved morale and mission of intergovernmental caseworkers between everyone who shared a case.





Special Thanks

State Project Managers:

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Maryland:

Sharon McEachern, Central Registry Supervisor

Virginia:

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Project Director:

Mariellen Keely, Grants & Initiatives Consultant Senior

Vendor:

Public Knowledge®

All the participating staff in the Project Offices and the leadership from all three states.



Child Support Intergovernmental Case Processing Innovation Demonstration Grant Synopsis



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF CHILD
SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT