

Child Support Report

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COMMISSIONER'S VOICE

Broadening Our Reach in the Gig Economy



Recently, I overheard a younger colleague jokingly complain that his mother, a pediatrician, knew more about trends in music and pop culture than he did. "I need to be able to talk with my teenage patients," she had said. "It's important they see that I understand what's going on in their world." On the surface, she was talking about delivering great customer service using a friendly communication strategy, but beyond that, she was making a point about staying relevant to your customers.

People are more likely to want to talk to you if you find something interesting to engage with them on. It's the effort you put in to building common ground that can make the most difference, especially when one or both of you is dealing with something new.

There's one conversation piece in the child support world that deals with something new to a lot of people: the "gig economy." More specifically, this includes "gig workers" whose employment status, customer base, physical workspace, hours, pay, and access to benefits are radically different than those of us doing the 9-to-5, Monday through Friday routine. If you're unfamiliar with the phrase or would like to learn more about what defines jobs in this corner of the labor market, check out Gretchen Tressler's article "[On the Move in the Gig Economy](#)" in the July-August 2018 *Child Support Report*. As you may have guessed, definitions vary as far as what work counts as non-traditional labor and how much of their primary income workers get from these jobs. It remains difficult to track trends, but we know that some parents in the child support caseload are earning income this way. We still have so much to learn about gig parents' demographic backgrounds, plus when and why they entered the gig economy and how long they remained in it.

For that reason, the child support program is adding to the larger conversation on the gig economy. We're looking at ways to improve our collections from gig parents in the caseload. In the federal office, for starters, we're keeping up with new employer models that maximize new hire reporting and income withholding. And at the state level, [staff are looking at or pushing legislation on employee classification](#) to be able to withhold wages from more types of workers. Increasing interest in the topic over the past year from across the wider child support community shows that we are heading in the right direction. Some viewpoints, I think, presume too much by suggesting that gig parents seek out this type of work to hide their income and not pay on their orders. But most of the conversation is focused on determining scope or planning action and outreach. Figuring out how the gig economy affects parents that are or could be in the caseload is already engaging many of you in thoughtful discussion.

Even so, I've noticed one perspective missing from the larger conversation — that of the gig parents themselves. If we're not engaging with them, we're missing an opportunity for an important dialogue with potential allies who could be willing and able to pay on their orders. And, just as importantly, we're not getting the chance to learn from them about the financial circumstances, constraints (like time or mobility), or career motivations that led them to seek out gig work. Learning about all of these factors will help us stay relevant and better connect with them to collect and deliver support. If we proactively seek out gig parents for their perspectives, we might even draw the interest of other parents from

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August 2018 Child Support Awareness Month Activities

Take a look at what tribes, states, and counties did to increase awareness of their programs starting on [page 12!](#)

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the opt-in work culture especially popular with younger workers. As the economy and technology continue to change our world, a broader perspective may help us weather the transition.

I encourage you to consider the range of experiences that bring people to and keep them working in the gig economy. I've been doing an unofficial listening tour over the past year, chatting with random Uber drivers or talking with coworkers, family, and friends about their "side hustles." Mostly, the stories I heard revealed a deep sense of personal responsibility and a willingness to try new ways to overcome financial hurdles. Gig workers, like any of us, want respect. Now, when I think about gig work, my thoughts form questions. Are they struggling to pay bills during the short term, say, for a major life event like the recession, as a staffer once shared with me? Or do they prefer the more entrepreneurial, independent lifestyle of building up a client base from scratch, like another one mentioned? If the worker is quitting a gig job shortly after starting it, could it be because the gig isn't that great for his situation and he's struggling to make ends meet?

I'd encourage you to flip these questions around, too, and consider who else we need to hear from as we move forward. Consider what new partnerships we need to embark on to pursue better policy on this field of work. But don't forget to also consider the example gig parents are making for their children by being persistent with their efforts. For some of those parents, there's no playbook for what's ahead. We can help make that effort pay off. Let's use every resource to our advantage as we move forward with the gig economy.

Scott Lekan

2017 Annual Infographic

The [2017 infographic: More Money for Families](#) provides a high-level overview of the child support program's success in three areas: collections, caseload, and cost-effectiveness. For example, in 2017, child support offices collected \$32.4 billion on behalf of children and 96% of that amount went directly to families.

75% 
of child support is collected by income withholding from a parent's paycheck

\$32.4 billion 
in child support collected by state and tribal child support programs in FY2017

96% 
went to families

IN FOCUS

San Diego County Walks in Customers' Shoes

Bryanna Fornerod, Supervising Child Support Officer, San Diego County Department of Child Support Services

Good government is built on understanding the people it serves. Earlier this year, the San Diego County Department of Child Support Services put their staff through training called In Their Shoes to shed light on what customers experience when the child support office becomes involved in their lives.

The county recognizes the various difficulties many of our customers face when we engage with them. Our department has shifted its focus from an enforcement-based paradigm to a family-centered services approach. During the workshop, we asked staff to forget their job title, experience, and child support knowledge because a crucial component of this training is an interactive exercise.

We gave each staff participant a copy of a Summons and Complaint form to simulate the service process that customers experience. Each form had different issues that needed to be resolved. We included cases where the children were in foster care, instances where noncustodial parents had dependents they had never heard of, and scenarios where the parents may have already be paying support. We used different types of Summons and Complaints to trigger confusion and the feeling of being overwhelmed.

Staff had to write down the emotions they experienced and the questions they had. Afterwards, they shared their initial feelings and thoughts on how their resources would have been impacted. This experience provided insight into what our customers go through on a daily basis when they receive this notice. The exercise also helped staff realize that their customers may only have a general phone number to call when they receive this initial packet.

This training inspires and drives our department's diverse and thriving workforce to support a community that is healthy, safe, and flourishing. Our ultimate goal for this workshop is to develop a sense of understanding and empathy for families San Diego County child support serves by "walking in their shoes."

The county received a national award for the In Their Shoes training program. For more information, read [San Diego County Child Support Program Awarded by National Association of Counties](#).

Domestic Violence Training Spurs Action

Susanne Dolin, Bureau Chief for Policy, Planning and Training, New York State Division of Child Support Services

Making sure children have the support of both parents is our main goal as New York child support professionals. When families have experienced domestic violence, receiving child support is especially vital because financial resources can help victims leave an abusive relationship.

Handling these cases while maintaining the safety of victims, children, and child support staff can be challenging. Training delivered by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) — to more than 200 New York child support program staff, attorneys, and representatives from state and local domestic violence programs — has given us a roadmap to better address these issues.

Reconsidering policies and procedures

This federal training raised our awareness. As a result, we are reviewing all of our child support policies, practices, and procedures to ensure we are safely delivering child support services to survivors of domestic violence.

New York is committed to continuing to update our procedures and policies to strengthen access to child support services for victims of domestic violence.

Applying what we learned

Our four days of federal training in March also had an immediate impact on the participants. In fact, one found herself using the tools and information the very next day when she was working with a custodial parent.

Dyanne Crotty, Hamilton County's child support coordinator, said she normally informs applicants of all the steps she'll be taking, but made doubly sure the custodial parent understood everything that day.

"Halfway through the interview, he asked me if he would be in harm's way by doing this, so I asked him several more in-depth questions and made sure he wanted to proceed," Crotty said.

She once again covered everything in detail and reminded him that they could always stop and revisit his concerns at any point in the process. Understanding domestic violence, the impact of trauma on survivors, and methods to communicate more effectively with victims were key elements of the training sessions.

"I feel I was much better prepared for this situation after attending the training," Crotty added.

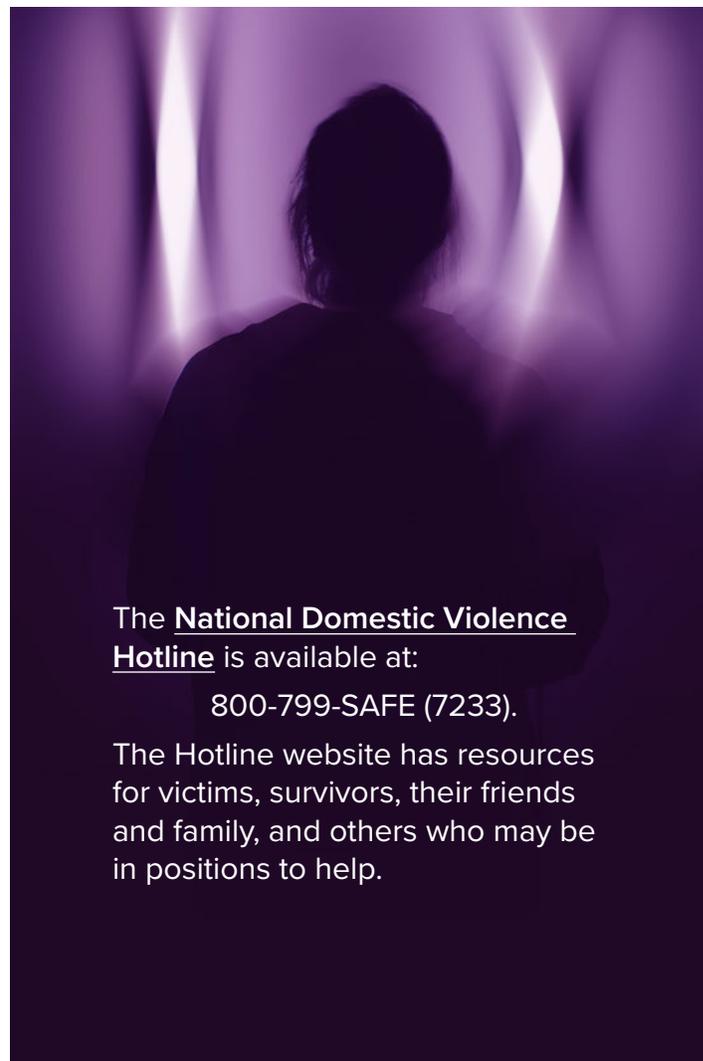
Partnerships and future plans

The OCSE training also emphasized the importance of building relationships between child support professionals and domestic violence advocates and service providers. These relationships help strengthen ties and improve our collective work to ensure survivors have safe access to child support.

We're also working with the New York State Office for the Prevention of Domestic Violence to develop training designed to raise domestic violence awareness for all of our child support professionals. This month, we're offering eight regional trainings to coincide with Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In 2019, the training will expand to focus more specifically on strategies to keep families safe as they apply for and receive child support services.

We are grateful to the federal office and OCSE Senior Program Manager Michael Hayes for the initial training. It has inspired us to evaluate and enhance our approach to serving families with a history of, or at-risk for, domestic violence.

For more information, contact Susanne Dolin at susanne.dolin@otda.ny.gov.



The **National Domestic Violence Hotline** is available at:

800-799-SAFE (7233).

The Hotline website has resources for victims, survivors, their friends and family, and others who may be in positions to help.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement provides more services than people generally see. This column highlights tasks that federal child support staff handle. To read previous articles, visit [A Look Inside OCSE](#) on our website.

A LOOK INSIDE OCSE — DOMESTIC VIOLENCE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Promoting Safe Access to Child Support Services

Michael Hayes, OCSE

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, so it's a good time to highlight the work that OCSE is doing with states and tribes to enhance [safe access to child support services](#) for victims of domestic violence. According to studies by the [Center for Policy Research](#), as many as 90% of domestic violence victims say they would like to get child support if they could do so safely. We are responding to the needs of victims, as well as child support professionals, by providing training and technical assistance, partnering with national and state domestic violence experts, developing resources, and identifying model child support policies and procedures to increase safety for survivors.

Training child support professionals

We conduct direct domestic violence training for child support workers, attorneys, and judicial officers, and we can also work with 'train the trainer' models. We design our trainings to focus specifically on the intersection of domestic violence and child support, providing child support professionals with the skills and knowledge they need to deliver safe, effective services to victims and also maintain safety for staff. Trainings range in length from 90 minutes to a full day.

Reviewing policy and procedure

Another way that we work with state and tribal child support programs is by reviewing their existing domestic violence policies and procedures to identify gaps. We then provide technical assistance to help them develop comprehensive domestic violence plans for program operations.

OCSE has a related tool — Enhancing Safe Access to Child Support: IV-D Program Inventory and Planning Resource — attached to [Information Memo-15-02](#). This step-by-step guide helps state and tribal programs assess their current approach to providing services to domestic violence survivors and offers suggestions for improvements.

Collaborating with experts

Partnerships are critical to these efforts, both at national and local levels. We work closely with national leaders on domestic violence, and we help state and tribal programs connect and collaborate with state and local domestic violence experts.

Through these collaborations, we've been able to disseminate model practices to child support and domestic violence professionals broadly through webinars, conference presentations, and national roundtables. We facilitate meetings with state child support and domestic violence leaders to identify opportunities for cooperation, and we establish ongoing partnerships to promote safe access to child support for victims.

Identifying tools and resources

Our work with domestic violence experts and state and local child support programs has created a set of tools. These resources include caseworker desk cards, judicial bench cards, family violence indicator model practices, domestic violence screening guides, and public education materials.

Additionally, OCSE gathers sample materials and resources from state and tribal child support programs to share with others, and we promote dissemination of promising domestic violence-informed child support practices.

For more information, contact Michael Hayes at michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov or visit the [OCSE Family Violence webpage](#).



Grandparent Caregivers in the PJAC Program

Will Williamson and Lisa Hall, *San Bernardino, CA*; Caitlin Campbell, *Franklin County, OH*; Ann Durkin, *Stark County, OH*; Michelle Knowles, *VA*; and Tanya Johnson, *OCSE*

Our observance of Grandparent's Day on the first Sunday after Labor Day gives us an annual opportunity to celebrate and honor the contributions grandparents make in the lives of children. At OCSE, we've been hearing from our grantees about grandparent and great-grandparent caregivers, and we want to highlight some of those stories.

All of these anecdotes come from our [Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt](#) (PJAC) grantees. Case managers are using new approaches to engage noncustodial parents at risk of referral for contempt, as well as custodial parents or guardians, which include grandparent caretakers. All of the names have been changed.

A truly great-grandmother

When Hanna retired in 2009, her plans did not include caring for young children. However, a visit to her granddaughter's home in 2013 changed that. Hanna's granddaughter was having challenges caring for her four children. Hanna became the caregiver for her great-grandchildren: a 4-year-old, a 9-year-old, and a set of 10-year-old twins. Hanna keeps the older kids busy in activities such as sports and gymnastics, and the youngest is in preschool. Although Hanna feels like a taxi sometimes, she says the kids are her number one priority and she's learning a lot from them.

This case entered California's PJAC program because the children's father has not made a recent payment on this case. Hanna reports that her granddaughter, who is also ordered to pay support, is getting herself back on track — she works, attends school, pays her monthly support obligation, and visits with the children on the weekends.

New hope for father and son

In Virginia, Raymond, a grandfather who is caring for his son's child, is feeling optimistic. After more than a year, the father, Sam, just recently made his first support payment. Raymond says that he has seen a significant change in his son. Sam was baptized and is focused now. He's much happier with how his life is going. Raymond is thankful that PJAC has allowed Sam to get back on track and that child support staff have kept Raymond informed along the way.

Ohio grandmothers stepping up

Some of the grandparents in Ohio's PJAC program have been thrust into caregiver roles by the opioid epidemic. Angela is the greatest advocate for her daughter, Denise, a noncustodial mother struggling with addiction issues. When Franklin County PJAC staff could not reach Denise to provide resources and community partner connections, Angela would forward the information, thank them, and then ask for more. After Angela saw the services and partnerships that were available, she asked about getting help for the noncustodial father who also owes support. Staff have also offered Angela resources to help her care for her grandchild until she is able to receive steady support payments from mom and dad.

Aimee, a 34-year-old mother of four, lives near Columbus. It's over an hour away from Stark County, OH, where her 14-year-old autistic son, Ellis, lives with Aimee's mother, Vanita. She has custody of Ellis because he prefers to be the only child in the home, and he attends a school in the Stark County area for children with autism. Vanita doesn't want Aimee to get in trouble; she wants to help Aimee out, but she also needs help supporting her grandson. After working with Stark County PJAC staff, Vanita waived the arrears Aimee owed her. Both parties have also agreed to reduce Aimee's monthly child support obligation. Vanita and Aimee both thought this would be the best for Ellis because it would allow greater interactions between him and his mother. Ellis is thriving, and Aimee is enrolled in an IT program and paying her monthly obligation.

Based on stories like these, the PJAC demonstration is helping multiple generations of families by increasing reliable payments, reducing arrears, and raising parents' trust and confidence in the child support agencies.

For more information, visit the [PJAC webpage](#) or contact OCSE PJAC project officers Tanya Johnson, tanya.johnson@acf.hhs.gov, and Michael Hayes, michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov.



GRANTS

OCSE Awards \$2.2 Million for Digital Marketing Grants

Michelle Jadczyk, OCSE

According to the Pew Research Center [Social Media Fact Sheet](#), nearly 80% of 30- to 49-year-olds and 88% of 18- to 29-year-olds actively use at least one social media site. To try to reach these digitally connected parents, OCSE is providing 14 new grants to state and tribal child support agencies. They'll be testing digital marketing approaches to reach parents under the new "Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program" demonstration grants.

The grantees will collect and analyze data on how digital marketing may help the child support program more effectively reach and serve families. They will test digital marketing approaches and partnerships to reach families that could benefit from child support services.

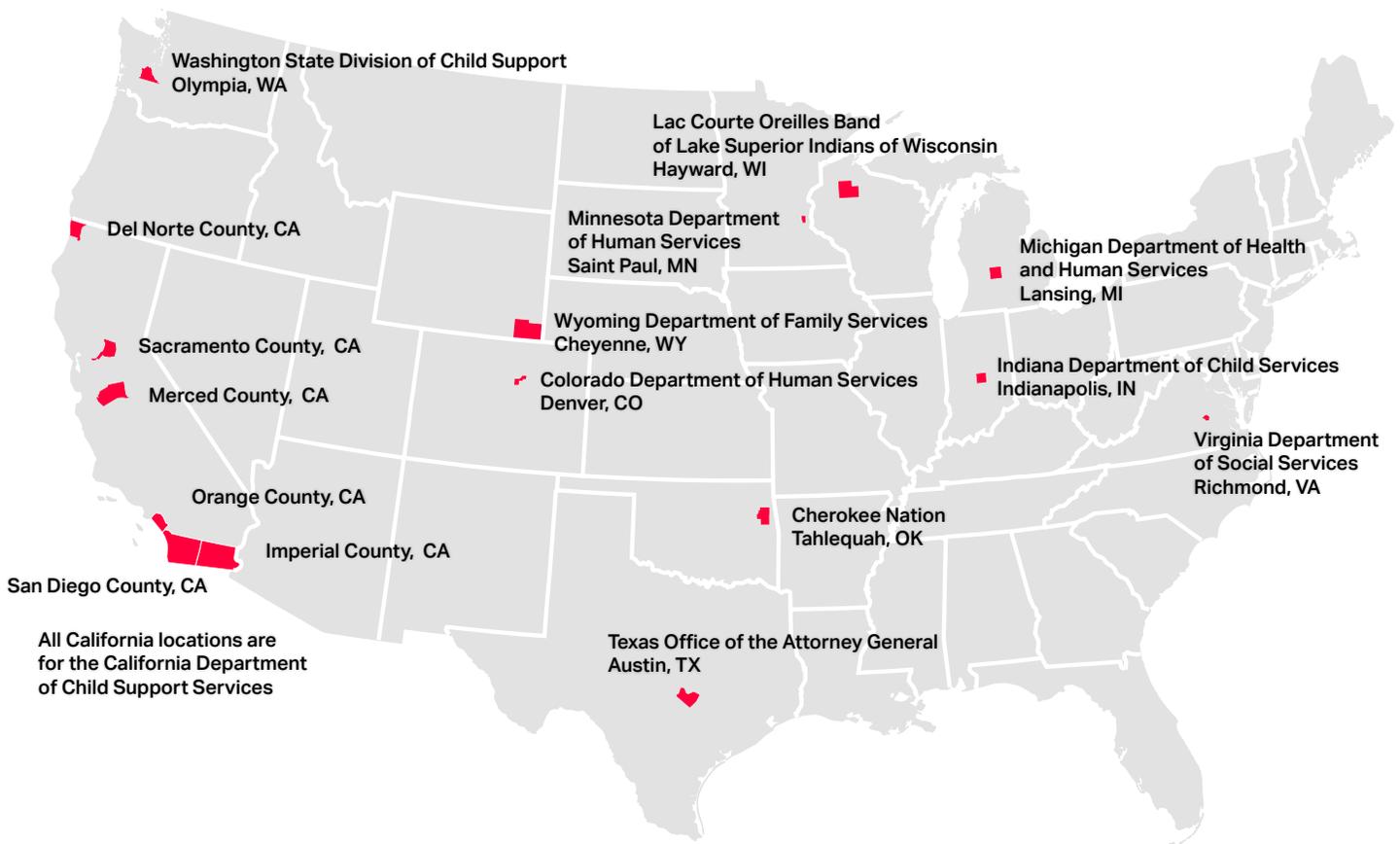
With this funding, grantees will design at least three digital marketing interventions during the two-year project period. Examples of proposed interventions include launching new digital media campaigns, testing specific approaches to internet advertising and search engine optimization, and communicating through digital mediums like texting. Grantees will prepare a communications plan



for each intervention and evaluate projects using analytics from digital marketing tools they use in the campaigns as well as child support program data. Additionally, over the course of this project, grantees will create technical assistance documents from their program materials to share with other child support agencies who are interested in implementing similar projects.

These grants are funded by Section 1115(a) of the Social Security Act. While state child support programs have been able to receive this funding for years, Congress amended the statute in 2014 making tribal child support programs eligible as well. This year's awardees include two tribal child support programs; these are the first grants ever made to a tribal program under this funding authority.

For information, visit [Using Digital Marketing to Increase Participation in the Child Support Program](#) or contact Michelle Jadczyk at Michelle.Jadczyk@acf.hhs.gov.



GRANTS

Did It Work? Parenting Time Grant Results

Michael Hayes, OCSE

Custodial parents in Miami-Dade and San Diego counties reported improved relationships with their children's noncustodial parents. In Indiana, noncustodial parents were twice as likely to have a parenting time order. All of these parents participated in an OCSE-funded demonstration called the [Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program](#) (PTOC), launched in 2012. This multiyear demonstration directly aligned with language in the [Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act](#), that “establishing parenting time arrangements when obtaining child support orders is an important goal which should be accompanied by strong family violence safeguards.”

Under PTOC, five child support offices tested and evaluated strategies to create formal parenting time arrangements at the same time that they established a child support order. These offices are diverse and span the nation. Some have large caseloads, while others are smaller. Both judicial and administrative child support models were represented, as well as a range of parenting time frameworks that include both standard plans and mediated agreements.

We wanted three key questions answered through the PTOC demonstration.

1. Can parenting time orders be established as part of the child support process in a cost-effective and efficient manner?
2. Can child support offices develop and implement appropriate domestic violence safeguards as part of the parenting time order process?
3. Do parenting time orders offer a real benefit to children and parents?

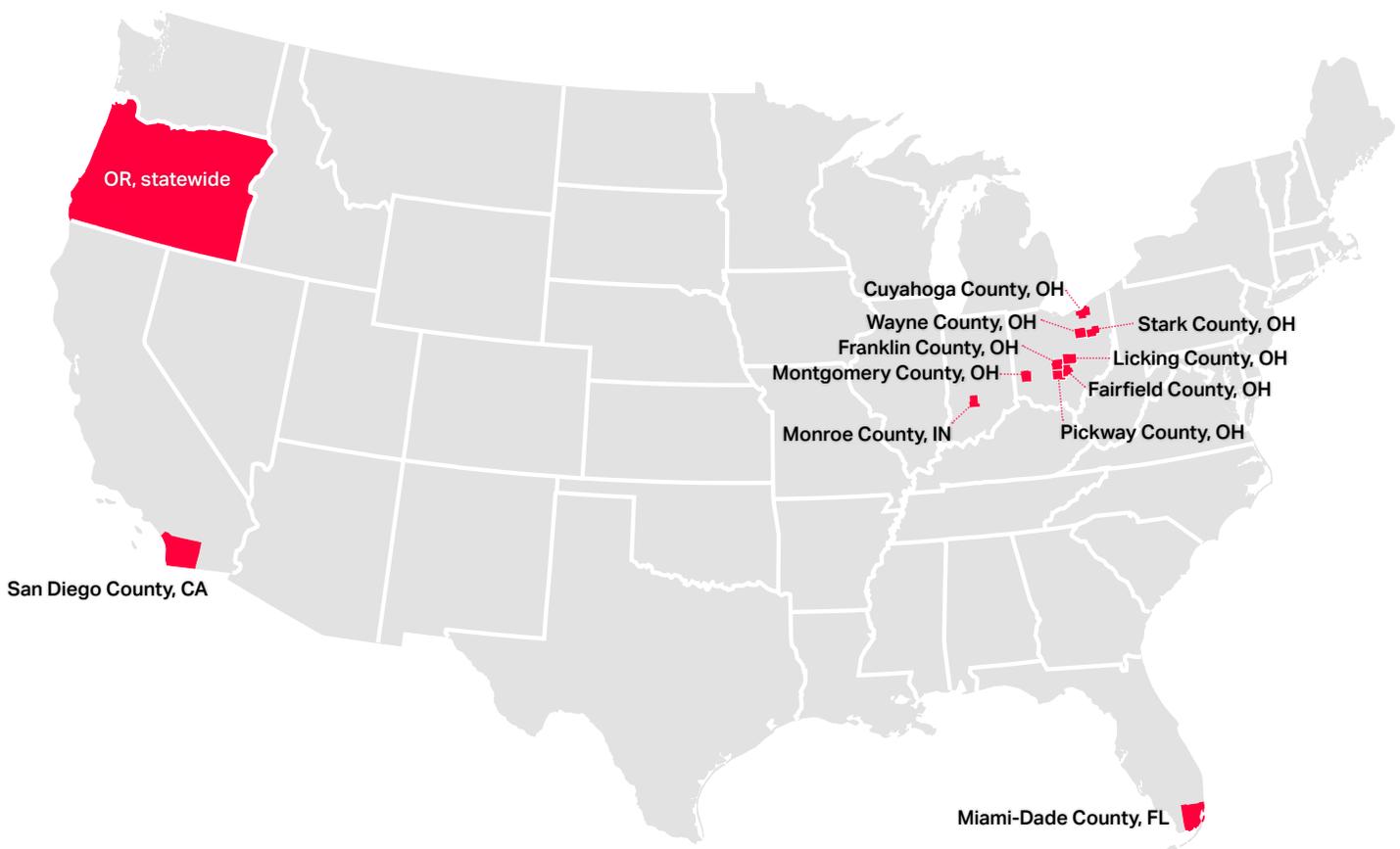
The evaluations are in, and the short answers to these questions are: 1) Yes, 2) Yes, and 3) We think so. Let's look deeper into these answers.

Cost effective and efficient

Sites were able to implement parenting time successfully with minimal costs to the child support order establishment process. Most sites continued offering parenting time orders after their grant funding ended in 2017.

Many of the problems that child support and judicial staff anticipated — parents will be confused, it will take too long, child support workers don't want to talk with customers about parenting time — didn't materialize.

continued



We identified several essential elements for successful implementation. They include training child support staff to explain parenting time orders and options, and creating an agency environment where parenting time orders were seen as the norm instead of a special or extra service. We found that it was essential to provide a limited menu of options described in simple, easy to understand terms along with educational materials explaining parenting time order options and processes.

Ensuring everyone's safety

There were two big takeaways for PTOC sites related to domestic violence. First, they learned that they hadn't been doing much, if any, screening for domestic violence prior to PTOC. Once they started, sites discovered their second takeaway: Parents in their child support caseload disclosed a lot more domestic violence than the sites had estimated. With proper screening, slightly more than one in three parents disclosed domestic violence involving the other parent. These two lessons led all of the sites to adopt domestic violence screening and safety informed processes for all cases, not just the cases with parents interested in parenting time.

Sites found it essential to partner with domestic violence experts when developing effective screening strategies. These partnerships also helped PTOC staff build their skills for responding to disclosures of domestic violence. Developing this in-house expertise was beneficial for everyone involved. Parents were extremely grateful for the safeguards put in place, helping them get both child support and parenting time orders. Caseworkers appreciated having a new understanding of parents' safety concerns and possessing skills to respond effectively when parents disclosed domestic violence.

Finally, developing stronger domestic violence protocols and modifying child support and parenting time services to increase safety for survivors also helped improve the office's image in the community. These practices led to positive recognition and increased trust from local social service agencies.

Benefits to children and parents

The results for the third PTOC research question aren't as definitive as for the others. PTOC site evaluators attempted to look at the impacts parenting time orders had on parents' relationships with each other and with their children and the amount of child support paid.

Evaluators in each site constructed comparison groups to attempt to assess PTOC impacts. However, the evaluations were limited by several factors, including relatively low numbers of parenting time orders at each site and low response rates to follow-up surveys. In all but one site, parents opted into PTOC services, and so they do not represent a random sample of parents receiving new child

support orders. All of these factors make it impossible to be certain that the PTOC program is responsible for any changes to outcomes for participants.

With those caveats in mind, the evaluation suggested that there were some benefits to parents and children:

- PTOC participants were much more likely to have a parenting time order than nonparticipants. In Indiana, PTOC participants were twice as likely to have an order.
- The amount of time that noncustodial parents spent with their child was up to 17 hours more per week for PTOC participants.
- Overwhelmingly, parents in PTOC reported that they appreciated the time and cost savings they experienced when offered a parenting time order at the same time they were establishing child support.
- Participating custodial parents in Miami-Dade and San Diego reported improved relationships with noncustodial parents, and noncustodial parents in those sites reported significantly improved relationships with their children.
- Also in San Diego, noncustodial parents in PTOC paid child support at a statistically higher rate (approximately 4 percentage points) than noncustodial parents in the comparison group. Other sites did not find a statistically significant impact.

What we learned

PTOC demonstrated that child support agencies can incorporate parenting time orders into the child support establishment process with appropriate family violence safeguards. We also confirmed that parents appreciate the opportunity to address parenting time and feel that it increases the fairness of child support. And PTOC seemed to help some parents improve their relationships, increase the time they spent with their children, and increase their child support compliance.

Our experience with PTOC confirms that parents value help with parenting time orders. Parents, like Congress, see this as an important goal for the child support program and PTOC demonstrates that it's an achievable goal.

For more information, see the [PTOC webpage](#) or contact Michael Hayes at michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov.

ANALYSIS

Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research

Carly Morrison, Research Analyst, *MEF Associates*

Child support is a data rich program. As a partnership between federal, state, local, and tribal governments, there are opportunities for experimentation at various levels of program coordination and service delivery. Over the years, researchers and program staff have sought opportunities to leverage these data to inform program operations and enhancements and allow for experimentation.

The Department of Health and Human Services Office of the [Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation](#) (ASPE) funded a project last fall to build an agenda for future research. In October 2017, ASPE brought child support practitioners, researchers, and policymakers together for a Roundtable on Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research (see sidebar at right). Participants discussed where the child support research field stands and generated ideas about where it could go in the future.

Using the commentary and discussions from the roundtable as a starting point, MEF Associates developed a research agenda that highlights eight key issues facing the child support community. The agenda describes potential research questions and ideas for future research opportunities in each issue area. We designed it so that federal, state, tribal, and local child support agencies, as well as their partners in academia, philanthropy, and civil society, can use it as a guiding document for their investments in child support policy research.

Issue areas with potential research examples

- The Declining Child Support Caseload: Description of characteristics of families in the child support caseload and of families who are not engaging with the child support program, examining differences across states and localities.
- Participation in the Child Support Program Among Families Receiving Public Benefits Other than TANF: Test the effects of child support cooperation requirements on number of orders established and amount collected.
- Establishing Child Support Orders that Reflect both the Costs of Raising Children and Parents' Ability to Pay: Understand the relationship between order amount and nonresident parent rates of compliance and overall payments.

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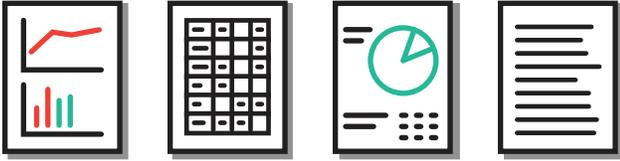
The Roundtable on Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research

In October 2017, ASPE and MEF Associates convened a group of child support practitioners, researchers, and policymakers for a roundtable meeting to discuss the current state of child support research and priorities for the future. ASPE and MEF identified five key focus areas to set a framework for the meeting:

- Child Support as a Source of Income
- Employment for Noncustodial Parents
- Operational Issues in Child Support Programs
- Parent Engagement
- Leveraging Data to Improve the Child Support Program

For each topic, three to four expert panelists gave short presentations identifying key research and policy issues. Attendees used an online interactive presentation platform to record individual responses to discussion questions regarding research gaps, and then broke off into small groups to discuss the topic. The meeting ended with a large group discussion. These fruitful conversations during the roundtable set the foundation for the research agenda.





- Establishing Initial Orders for Cases where Parents have Unstable Income or where Limited Income Information is Available: Description of data available to state child support agencies to accurately document parents' financial circumstances and opportunities to leverage additional administrative data, such as wage and IRS statistics, and public benefits receipt information.
- The Role of the Child Support Program in Facilitating Co-Parenting Arrangements or Relationships: Test the effectiveness of family strengthening programming on engagement and compliance in the child support program.
- How to Adjust Child Support Orders in Response to Changing Family Circumstances: Explore the frequency of child support order modifications outside the typical three-year review period that occur due to changes in parents' income.
- How to Best Use Enforcement Mechanisms to Increase Compliance: Test the effect of enforcement tools, such as license suspensions, for noncompliant cases with different payment profiles or other variations in case characteristics.
- Supporting Employment for Noncustodial Parents: Use case studies to describe the different ways child support programs partner with workforce agencies to support parent employment.

The agenda offers ideas for future research that public, private, and civil society partners could implement. The agenda is not a comprehensive summary of all issues described at the meeting, nor a description of every potential area for research. It identifies opportunities that the broader child support community could use to collectively build the evidence base and inform the policies and operations of child support programs over the next 10 years.

For more information, read [Building the Next Generation of Child Support Policy Research](#).

Tribal News

The Sokaogon Chippewa Community Tribal Child Support Agency became the newest federally recognized comprehensive tribal program on July 1, 2018. Their staff is excited to begin working on cases and is taking new applications for services as well as working on transfers from Forest County, Wisconsin.

The tribe has a current enrollment of nearly 1,600 people, with over 400 members residing on the reservation. The Sokaogon (Mole Lake) reservation lies in an area of rural northeast Wisconsin that includes three lakes — Rice, Mole, and Bishop.

Their tribal child support mission is to effectively manage the cases of its tribal members, ensure they meet the needs of their children, and strengthen tribal sovereignty by administering their own child support program. The Sokaogon Chippewa agency strives to build relationships with community partners and the families they serve, empowering clients to overcome barriers and provide financially for their children.

For more information, visit the [Sokaogon Chippewa Community Tribal Child Support Agency webpage](#) or contact Director Regina Williams at 715-478-7600.

Sokaogon Chippewa Tribal Child Support Staff



Tribal Agencies

Currently, 60 tribes operate federally recognized child support programs. They provide services to Native American families consistent with tribal values and cultures. To find out more about these programs, visit the [OCSE Tribal Agencies webpage](#).



Recovery After Natural Disasters

Charla Long, OCSE

On a site visit to Texas this summer, I asked about the impact of Hurricane Harvey — how it affected establishment, locate, and all the other services provided while some of the child support offices and courthouses were closed for a period of time. Small towns like Port Aransas, Ingleside, and Rockport were almost completely destroyed, so what about the relocation of people whose jobs and homes had been swept away? I was assured that the system operated well during the storm and most internal goals were on track. I wondered how that could be possible amidst the devastation and the exhaustion that residents must have experienced.

Sobering statistics

[With about \\$125 billion in damage](#), Harvey ranks as the second-most costly hurricane to hit the U.S. mainland since 1900. Adjusting for inflation, only Hurricane Katrina in 2005 caused more damage at \$160 billion. Harvey impacted an estimated [13 million people](#), [damaged or destroyed nearly 135,000 homes](#) in historic flooding, and [totaled up to a million cars in Houston](#).

Harvey dumped more than [27 trillion gallons of rain](#) over Texas, making it the [wettest Atlantic hurricane ever measured](#). Some parts of Houston received more than 50 inches of rainfall. Hurricanes [Irma](#) and [Maria](#) followed within a month causing \$50 billion and \$90 billion in damages respectively.

Processing before automation

When Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, it displaced 1.2 million people. The Louisiana Department of Social Services assigns its employees to work where needed during a disaster, and in this case, shelter was the

priority. Robbie Endris, executive director of Louisiana's Support Enforcement Services at the time, had 48 hours to marshal her troops before the hurricane hit land. Ninety percent of her staff went to work in the shelters, leaving a skeleton crew of five to run the state's child support program.

After Katrina, Louisiana had to get over 40,000 child support checks to parents, many of whom had fled the state. With no mail service, checks kept stacking up. The staff and their central disbursement unit contractor ended up using two commercial delivery companies as well as hand delivering 100,000 checks to displaced custodial parents.

Resiliency and preparation

Even though many regions have suffered crippling wild fires, floods, and storms, child support programs continue operating. Disaster recovery takes time, but all the work put into automating the child support system is never more apparent and appreciated than in times of crisis.

We are already into another hurricane season, and unfortunately, officials predict that 2018 will produce a near- or slightly above-average number of hurricanes, so the sobering reality of disastrous disruption is upon us again. At least we know that all the work dedicated to automating the child support program has been well worth the effort.

A shout out to all of you who work for the amazing [Texas child support program](#). When distribution flows seamlessly, that parent — exhausted from the drudgery of rebuilding — has one less worry. They can depend on getting their child support income. Please remember, the work you do matters!

For tips on preparing for natural disasters, visit [Ready.Gov](#). For help afterwards, read [Healing and Hope for Children After a Hurricane](#).



Child Support Awareness Month 2018

August is an important month for the child support program. On August 16, 1984, President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 98-378, [The Child Support Amendments of 1984](#), which required state and local child support offices to make specific, significant program improvements. President Bill Clinton proclaimed August 1995 as “[National Child Support Awareness Month](#)” in honor of the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the federal child support enforcement program. Many states, counties, and tribes continue to hold recognition events in August to bring awareness to the importance of child support and celebrate families. These are some of the programs that held events across the country this past August.

California, Riverside County

Roughly 90 minutes before opening the doors for our annual Department of Child Support Services August Open House, eager families were lining up for backpacks filled with school supplies. The event helps connect customers with various resources. We opened both county offices on Saturday, Aug. 11, to provide child support services to the public. We also worked with other county agencies and local organizations to provide additional resources such as childcare assistance, counseling, job support, and family law assistance. We helped roughly 500 people — the highest amount ever for this annual event. We gave out over 450 bags and backpacks filled with school supplies. We helped over 120 cases, and family law assistance had our lobby area full of customers awaiting our help.



California, San Diego County

The Division of Child Support Services held many events to get information to families throughout the month of August. One highlight was producing new posters to decorate office areas. We used our own staff and family members as subjects! A young boy and his mother are featured in one poster. The little girl in the scene with the dad is the daughter of one of our employees, so even the little ones were our people. We have 16 designs in our theme, They Don't Need Perfect, They Just Need You — We Can Help. Each design is available in both English and Spanish. We placed the posters in public facing office spaces. The feedback we received from customers was very positive.



Chickasaw Nation

More than 330 people attended our 10th annual Child Support Awareness Day at the Chickasaw Nation community center on Aug. 4, in Ada, Oklahoma. Our child support services staff organized the event to highlight the importance of supporting children both financially and emotionally. We had carnival-style activities and provided school supplies, toothbrushes, educational information, and more to attendees. About 60 staff members and volunteers served at resource booths and activity stations to give families a memorable experience. To learn more about Chickasaw Nation Child Support Services, visit [Chickasaw.net/ChildSupport](#) or call 580-436-3419.



Kansas

Kansas Governor Jeff Coler, M.D., designated August as Child Support Awareness Month in a signing ceremony on July 19. Various state officials and contract leads were on hand to witness his signature. The child support office also held a child support amnesty day on August 31 so parents could pay a partial amount and have their warrants withdrawn. Of the 64 parents who participated, 59 had bench warrants recalled and the state collected over \$21,000 in arrears.



Maryland

During Child Support Awareness Month, the Maryland Child Support Administration offered noncustodial parents whose driver's licenses were suspended because of child support arrears an innovative way to have them reinstated. Noncustodial parents who paid one full month of ordered child support plus \$5.00 toward arrears could get their licenses reinstated. For noncustodial parents with arrears-only cases, they could pay one full month of ordered arrears for reinstatement. We collected more than \$420,000 and reinstated over 1,000 driver's licenses! We also worked with the Baltimore City Sheriff's Office to conduct a one-day event that allowed select noncustodial parents with active child support warrants to voluntarily walk into the sheriff's office and courtroom with a "good faith payment" to have their warrants removed without fear of arrest.



Missouri

Family Support Division Regional Manager Carrie Broniac's son inspired a contest to design the logo for their new Awareness Month t-shirt. Broniac's son has taken several graphic design courses through a local career center. She remembered that his class had developed logo designs for a pamphlet and T-shirt for a Columbia event. Broniac asked her son's teacher if the classes would work on something for Missouri's Child Support Awareness Month. They provided the instructor with the theme and gave them an example of last year's logo. The division's Child Support Awareness work group chose the winning design from 45 entries and gave the winning student-designer a gift card and one of this year's T-shirts. The school also received a T-shirt to display in the classroom.



Nez Perce Nation

The Nez Perce Tribe Child Support Enforcement Program took a different route for Child Support Awareness Month. Instead of having the focus be on our program or staff, we wanted to assist foster children. We started a "Community Change For Our Children" coin drive that ran through September 21. We set up a table at different locations around our reservation and had jars in our office to collect donations. Several community members and staff from various tribal programs donated in support of our youth. In the end, we donated over \$260 to our Tribal Children's Home.



Penobscot Nation

The Penobscot Nation Child Support Agency located in Maine values community outreach. Our Child Support Awareness events kick off the first weekend of every August. We dedicate the month to highlighting child support awareness by focusing on children and families. We start with a community outreach table that includes various educational materials about the child support program, continue with an event each week, and conclude with a Parent Appreciation Gathering to acknowledge and celebrate the hard work parents do. Many families attend the events each year and that's great because we can answer all of their child support questions.



Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe

The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Child Support Program, located in New York along the Canadian border, hosted our 2nd Annual Family Fun Day in recognition of National Child Support Awareness Month. Over 230 children and their parents came out on Thursday, August 23, so the event was a huge success. We offered back to school supplies and free books from our Early Childhood Development Program. There were two obstacle courses, water toy fun, and yard Yahtzee at the Generations Park in Akwesasne. The Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police provided hot dogs, chips, and water. We were joined by many of our tribal partners including the Three Sisters Stop Domestic Violence Program, the Alcoholism/Chemical Dependency Prevention Program, and the Iakwa'shatste Youth Fitness Program.



Shoshone-Bannock Tribes

Our Title IV-D Child Support Services Program held a variety of events in recognition of Child Support Awareness Month. This year's theme was "Raising Tribal Leaders Takes Positive Parenting." We chose this theme because children watch and learn by the behavior of their parents. A local casino donated \$1,000 so we could purchase items that are not allowable for awareness month. Other tribal departments also donated to our Fatherhood is Sacred and Motherhood is Sacred Workshop. Tribal programs sponsored the snacks, lunch, and T-shirts. Our staff did a lot of work to make sure the community became more aware of child support. Many of our people don't want to ask for child support, but we want them to know that it's ok to ask us for help so that they may be able to support their children.



Virginia

The Charlottesville and Fishersville district offices combined forces and hosted a booth from July 31 to August 3 at the Augusta County Fair to kick off the first of many events to recognize [Child Support Awareness Month](#). Fifteen staff volunteers provided information, gave out Virginia's Every Child Needs Support brochure, and answered questions regarding our services and family engagement opportunities.



Interstate Case Processing Training Series

OCSE continues our webinar training sessions covering interstate case processing requirements and principles. Our target audiences are state trainers, central registry staff, interstate managers and caseworkers, and other interstate professionals. These webinars run from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m. Eastern Time.

November 15: Interstate Payment Processing

January 10: Interstate Case Closure

February 28: OCSE's Interstate Tools and Resources

Training resources from prior sessions are on the OCSE [Interstate Case Processing Training Materials webpage](#). We will add other sessions soon.

OCSE emails registration invitations before each session. If you have questions, contact the OCSE Division of Policy and Training at ocse.dpt@acf.hhs.gov.

Child Support Report

Child Support Report is published monthly by the Office of Child Support Enforcement. We welcome articles and high-quality digital photos to consider for publication. We reserve the right to edit for style, content and length, or not accept an article. OCSE does not endorse the practices or individuals in this newsletter. You may reprint an article in its entirety (or contact the author or editor for permission to excerpt); please identify *Child Support Report* as the source.

Lynn Johnson
Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

Scott Lekan
Commissioner, OCSE

Shawyn Drain
Director, Division of Customer Communications

Kim Danek
Editor
CSR.Editor@acf.hhs.gov

