

**Compendium of
Promising Practices and Good Ideas
in Child Support**

2008

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement**

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ALABAMA

FATHERHOOD INITIATIVE - ETOWAH COUNTY

Goal: To help families achieve self-sufficiency through the payment of child support from noncustodial parents (NCPs) with a history of nonsupport or a current inability to pay.

Description: The Etowah County Family Project, a pilot of the Alabama Fatherhood Initiative (AFI), began in 2003 and has become the most successful fatherhood program in the State at this time. It was developed and implemented through a local AFI steering committee, a collaboration of the court system, county public welfare agency's child support enforcement program, community college, local career center, and other community social service agencies and fatherhood programs. Non-paying NCPs are ordered by the court to participate in the program. A fatherhood initiative case manager then assists in assessment, case plan development, and referral to all appropriate resources, including short-term skills training or other services needed to become employed. Employment and payment of child support is monitored by the fatherhood initiative case manager. More child support payments can lead to decreased TANF payments in the long run.

Results: The project targeted NCPs for short-term jobs skills training and job placement, since arrearages of over \$28,000,000 are owed to custodial parents in Etowah County. Less than 50 percent of current support ordered is being paid. As a result of AFI participation last year, statistics show that 78 percent of non-paying NCPs began paying support and collections increased by 165 percent.

Location: This project has been successful in a medium-sized county and has been employed by other larger counties with a good measure of success.

Funding: TANF block grant

Replication Advice: This project can be replicated in any urban or rural area if the presiding judge is supportive, job training programs exist and are community-oriented, the child support enforcement agency is committed to serving NCP's to meet the needs of children, and local fatherhood programs are collaborative.

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ALABAMA
PROJECT FUGITIVE
DEKALB AND CHEROKEE COUNTIES

Goals:

- To get delinquent noncustodial parents (NCPs) to pay child support consistently.
- To create a mechanism which monitors payments, and holds NCPs accountable.

Description: Project Fugitive was started as a pilot project in DeKalb and Cherokee counties in October 2003. The idea was based on successful elements of Drug Court. NCPs are arrested on an outstanding nonsupport writ and upon release are ordered by the court to participate in the project, or they are ordered by the court to participate due to poor payment history. The project manager monitors payment on a weekly basis. Participants are required to bring in a receipt showing payment or call once a week if money is being paid through wage withholding. Participants are required to have and keep a job and are subject to drug screens. The project manager works with each participant to work out a monitoring plan suited to each individual, their work and pay schedules, and any other barriers they may have. Most NCPs participate in the program for 9 months. Initially, participants are monitored on a weekly basis. If they comply, participants move to monthly monitoring before being released from the program after proving they are making regular payments.

Results: From October 2003 to June 2008, 749 writs have been served resulting in \$1,367,376 in collections; \$7,694,846 was posted in cash bonds and \$527,345 was paid through the Parent Accountability Program, which is a part of Project Fugitive.

Location: DeKalb and Cherokee counties are both rural counties with a significant Hispanic population. There are some similar initiatives in other areas; however, this exact project has not been replicated.

Funding: This project is part of a IV-D contract with the District Attorney. Funds are reimbursed with regular Federal matching funds.

Replication Advice: Keep the process simple; get all local child support partners (judges, prosecuting attorneys, DHR) on board early in the implementation process and make it work to fulfill the needs of your jurisdiction.

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ARKANSAS

MEDICAL SUPPORT SERVICES CONSORTIUM

Goal: To increase the number of children in the IV-D caseload with private health insurance coverage by establishing the Arkansas Medical Support Services Consortium (MSSC).

Description: In 2003, the Arkansas Office of Child Support Enforcement made improving medical support performance a top agency priority. Partnering with an outside vendor, the program achieved a significant increase in the number of Arkansas children with health insurance coverage. By 2005, it became apparent that much more could be achieved by working in collaboration with other States. Modeled after other successful child support consortia, the Arkansas Medical Support Services Consortium was created to accomplish four goals critical to any Medical Support program:

- Provide member agencies with a means to quickly increase the number of children who have health insurance coverage with no upfront costs;
- Allow member agencies to comply with Federal regulations more effectively;
- Provide access to a vast pool of insurance carrier data collected from all member agencies, and to a national insurance database of more than 600 million records; and
- Allow members to effectively coordinate medical support efforts across State lines.

The AR MSSC membership is open to any State, Tribal or local child support agency. The standardized agreement makes joining the consortium easy and the cost for services is the same for all members. The consortium's flexible services allow members to choose only those services needed, so every consortium program is the right size for each member. Contingency fee pricing removes all of the risk from the process. Services currently offered include:

- Health insurance identification through powerful data mining match process
 - Commercial carrier data
 - Wage and new hire data
 - DEERS/TRICARE data
 - All match leads are then 100 percent verified directly with the source
- Medical Support Enforcement including National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) generation and response processing
 - Employer web-page
 - Full customer service call centers to employers, plan administrators and custodial/noncustodial parents
 - Web-based tracking of services for member agencies

In July 2008, MSSC expanded the range of services provided to member agencies. The consortium vendor teamed up with a national commercial health insurance carrier

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to create a simple kids-only private health insurance product exclusively for IV-D children. It fills the coverage gap for children under medical support orders. This new solution harnesses the strength of two industry leaders:

- A national commercial insurance company's insurance and national network of providers helps ensure that children have high quality, dependable insurance coverage.
- The consortium vendor's experience in child support and leading-edge technologies helps member agencies to efficiently implement and administer the solution.

This consortium service is provided at no cost to member agencies.

Result: Since 2005, more than 155,000 private insurance policies for IV-D children have been provided to consortium members.

Member agencies vary in size and scope of services.

Member	Scope of Work	Updated Insurance Records as of 09/08
Arkansas	Insurance Data Mining/NMSN	54,797
Louisiana	Insurance Data Mining/NMSN	39,836
Nebraska	Insurance Data Mining	23,302
Ohio	Insurance Data Mining	17,502
Rhode Island	Insurance Data Mining/NMSN	4,053
South Dakota	Insurance Data Mining	7,084
CA Counties	Insurance Data Mining	15,665
Indiana	Insurance Data Mining/NMSN	New

Arkansas recognized that combining the National Medical Support Notice with other resources available through the consortium significantly increased the effectiveness of a medical support enforcement program. Nearly 55 percent of the insurance records provided to Arkansas are the result of verified match results from a national private health insurance carrier database available through the MSSC. This database includes more than 600 million health insurance eligibility records from over 320 private insurance carriers.

The Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Support Enforcement Agency manages their NMSN process internally, but as a member of the MSSC since late 2006, has been provided over 23,000 new dependent insurance policies as of October 2008. Nebraska's reported percentage on form OCSE 157 showed cases ordered child support and cases provided child support grew 5 percent between FFY2006 and FFY2007.

Over the same Federal reporting period, the Louisiana Child Support Enforcement Agency experienced a 10 percent improvement in performance.

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Location: The MSSC was developed by the Arkansas Office of Child Support Enforcement in conjunction with its designated consortium vendor. Services are provided by the consortium vendor directly to member agencies.

Funding: Additional funding was not necessary for the development and implementation of the consortium. There are no start-up costs or membership fees for member agencies.

Replication Advice: Consortium models are not new to the Child Support Enforcement program. Consortia greatly simplify the procurement process and magnify the purchasing power of members. Replication would be redundant as interested Child Support Enforcement programs can join AR MSSC.

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GEORGIA

RAPID PROCESS IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE (RPI)

Goal: To provide faster, friendlier and easier services to customers and improve efficiency within the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) while developing a culture of continuous improvement.

Description: In an effort to meet its strategic goal, Georgia OCSS partnered with the Governor's Office of Customer Service and the Georgia Institute of Technology to learn the lean management concept.

Rapid Process Improvement (RPI), a lean management methodology, is used to streamline existing processes through the elimination of waste. Waste is identified through an exercise called Value Stream Mapping, which identifies each and all sets of required tasks in a specified area of focus. Value Stream Mapping also determines the cycle and processing times required to perform these same identified tasks.

Through the identification and implementation of Rapid Process events, OCSS began to imbed the RPI process into the way it does business. RPI requires the development of standard operating procedures with employee lead ideas. Subject matter experts (employees doing the work), along with RPI Champions, conduct RPI events to develop uniform and standardized processes. These subject matter experts were identified to represent different regions and job duties that affect the RPI area of focus.

A comprehensive plan was developed to outline the timeframe, resources available and curriculum needed to deliver and implement the training statewide. An RPI Implementation team of employees from Georgia's Performance Management Section, a Region Policy Specialist, Training and Staff Development Program Staff, and State Office RPI champions developed the standardized training module. The training material covered five RPI events implemented within a 7-month timeframe.

1. Same Day Service moves a request for services from application to legal filing in one business day, versus the previous 71 business days. On the day the customer applies for services, the following actions are taken:

- The case is registered onto \$tars (Georgia's child support system) while the applicant is in the office.
- The noncustodial parent's (NCP) address or employer is validated through our locate resources.
- The NCP is called, asked to come in that day and if not available, given an appointment (within that business week).
- The legal paperwork is generated and the case is referred to legal.

2. Early Intervention is the educational process that requires OCSS employees to provide early and direct NCP contact through phone calls. These calls are made 10 days before, as well as 10 after, the first payment is due, in an effort to increase the likelihood of consistent child support payments. This hypothesis decreases the NCP adversarial approach, and provides opportunities to respond to changes in circumstances; however, aggressive actions are taken should the NCP fail to respond to these early and soft glove methods. The goal is to increase current support paid by taking proactive actions while reducing the overall enforcement processing time from 126 to 60 days.

3. Locate: Prior to RPI, Georgia verified all information provided using notices to the post office and employers. The new RPI validation process requires a telephone call to employers and other resources which eliminates the waste in waiting for information to move forward. This process determines when a quick or in-depth locate search should be conducted, which in turn assisted Georgia in decreasing the cases in Locate from 17 percent to 10 percent.

4. In the **Legal Secretary** RPI event, five hand-offs (paperwork routed to different employees) and 10 man hours per week were saved with the streamlining of this process. A standard workflow was developed and implemented statewide along with a more proactive process among our Sheriff's offices and judicial circuits.

5. In the **Fatherhood** RPI event, a 30-minute training program and standard operating procedures were developed for OCSS Agents. The new process decreases the NCP's wait time for orientation with our FH agents from 69 to 14 days.

Results: From November 2007 to December 2008, Georgia OCSS has provided Same Day Service (SDS) to 74,022 custodial parents and moved 36,287 Establishment backlogged cases through the SDS process. The Early Intervention hypothesis holds true in 6 out of 9 regions statewide, with the percentage of paying cases that received early intervention being higher than the percentage of paying cases that did not receive early intervention. RPI contributed to the statewide decrease of cases in the Locate function by 7 percent. No additional statistics are maintained or needed for the Legal Secretary and Fatherhood events.

The benefits of RPI lead to quality and improved workflow, and increased customer satisfaction, productivity and employee morale through teamwork required by this methodology. The agency's level of customer satisfaction greatly and quickly increased through our Same Day Service, Locate and Fatherhood RPI events. The remaining RPI events (Legal Secretary and Early Intervention) assist the agency with reducing and eliminating hand-offs in the old process and enhancing customer relationships through early, direct contact and education.

Already OCSS has seen marked improvements. In 2007, the agency collected \$551 million, a 5 percent increase over the previous year. That equates to an additional 17,500 families receiving some child support. Many in OCSS partially credit RPI implementation for these impacts and those numbers alone have propelled Georgia's

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ranking among States in percent of current support paid from 38th to 47th based on Federal Fiscal Year 2007 data. The 3.93 percent increase was the most of any State or territory. Only Pennsylvania, which remained number one in the nation, increased the percentage of current support paid by more than 3 percent.

Location: Currently, the Financial, Enforcement and UIFSA RPI events are being piloted in selected offices pending statewide implementation.

Funding: The Governor's Office of Customer Service funded the initial training of managers/facilitators and the facility where it was held. Regular IV-D funds are used for the continuing implementation.

Replication Advice: RPI represents change and change creates fear, which can lead to resistance. Agencies that implement or consider imbedding these processes should anticipate resistance and proactively prepare for a very "tough road" of organizational change. "Buy in" at every level is vital to the success of this initiative. Many changes to the standard operating procedures occur as a result of feedback received during the piloting process, which is reviewed and later approved by the Executive Leadership Team. Although, reports that identify, track and monitor the correct data elements may be difficult to determine, they are critical.

Next Steps: The purpose of identifying RPI Champions was to maintain knowledge retention of this lean management methodology for the identification and implementation of future RPI events. Thus far, OCSS has conducted additional RPI events in the following areas:

- Financial (Undistributed funds as an area of focus)
- Enforcement
- UIFSA

Employees as well as management team members have requested RPI events in the following areas:

- Organizing Workloads for Maximum Performance and Efficiency (Completed November 7, 2008)
- Review and Modification (pending)
- Customer Service (pending)

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NEW MEXICO
GOVERNOR'S ARREARS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
"FRESH START"

Goals: The "Fresh Start" Arrears Management Program seeks to:

- Establish a centralized toll-free number for parents to call a single point of contact to inquire about the "Fresh Start" program;
- Implement procedures to reduce or settle principal and/or interest for child support arrears;
- Create an incentive for noncustodial parents (NCPs) to remain current in their child support payments;
- Encourage NCPs to make consistent child support payments;
- Increase child support collections;
- Provide services to both custodial and noncustodial parents during negotiations (as appropriate);
- Reduce or eliminate child support debt owed to the State by forgiving a portion or all of arrearages in exchange for a lump sum payment;
- Reduce the impact of arrearages for low income NCPs; and
- Improve the quality of life for children.

Description: At the time of the program's inception in September 2005, there were 37,320 child support cases in which child support arrears were owed. Payments toward arrears were made in 61% (22,885) of these cases; however, in 38.7% (14,435) of these cases, no payments had ever been made. Further, approximately 39% of these cases in which child support arrears were owed had no ongoing child support obligation since they were arrears only cases.

The "Fresh Start" program negotiated individual settlements on existing uncollectible accumulated debt or arrears, and continued case oversight to ensure that a consistent payment schedule is maintained and arrears do not accumulate.

The rise in New Mexico child support debt is a result of a variety of circumstances primarily related to the inability of the NCPs to meet their court-ordered obligation. Through preliminary analysis, it was determined that excessive outstanding balances result in limited collections for the children and diminish the NCPs' participation with their children.

"Arrears Management" means more than just tracking a debt with interest over the course of several decades. It is a pro-active method of reducing the balance of overdue amounts to ensure that assistance is distributed expediently to children. If not based on sensible and attainable child support payment criteria, the enforcement of child support debts results in a minimal or non-existent support payment and in the lack of the NCPs' involvement in their children's lives.

Also, recent national studies point to a direct correlation between the development of a child and direct parental involvement. This issue of excessive support owed, coupled with the minimal or non-existent involvement of the NCP, continues to contribute to a number of critical problems that feed the cycle of poverty.

Results: As part of the Federal Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General (OIG) report, "State Use of Debt Compromise to Reduce Child Support Arrearages," New Mexico was selected as a test State. In April 2007, a random inspection of 50 of the "Fresh Start" cases revealed:

- \$31,933 was collected in lump sum payments;
- 11 cases entered into a compromise agreement;
- 39 cases were closed;
- 9 cases were receiving regular payments;
- 2 cases were receiving irregular payments; and
- 0 cases had no payments.

As of May 31, 2008, 1,000 NCPs have participated in the "Fresh Start" program resulting in 292 NCPs (29 percent) continuing to make monthly support payments, as well as 618 closed cases (62 percent). Overall, the program has collected over \$1.4 million in lump-sum payments and negotiated the reduction of over \$11.8 million in accumulated arrears.

Location: This project began in the Las Vegas-New Mexico county office. After the successful pilot, it was expanded to the counties of Santa Fe, Roswell, Clovis, Farmington, Silver City, Las Cruces and Hobbs. In September 2006, it was introduced to Albuquerque, the largest city in New Mexico, and to the rest of the State.

Funding: Presently, the "Fresh Start" program is considered an administrative cost which is included in the Department's overall budget approved by the New Mexico State Legislature.

Replication Advice: The "Fresh Start" program has allowed the Division's Child Support Legal Assistance (CSLA) staff to focus attention on processing cases where the children are still minors and living with the custodial parent, instead of enforcing collection procedures in cases where the children have reached the age of emancipation.

In addition, the program has allowed us the opportunity to utilize our resources to better serve children and their families through increased and reliable child support collections.

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NEW MEXICO
IN-HOUSE HEARING PROCESS

Goal: To provide a more efficient and accountable process for resolution of legal actions.

Description: Before the in-house process began, parties often had to wait 5-8 months for a courthouse setting, preventing economical and speedy settlement of issues. The long lead time to schedule a hearing contributed to problems of credibility and public accountability for the child support agency and impeded processing. The in-house process has expedited the legal hearing system, allowing cases to be worked more efficiently. This process has resulted in an increase in court orders, including paternity establishments. The in-house procedure involves conventional pleadings and service, substituting, however, the local child support agency office for the courthouse as the hearing location. The notice is prepared by the agency, but is issued by the court as it would be for any court setting. The only difference is that the setting is located at the CSED office, not the courthouse. The agency is responsible for service of process as it would be for any judicial proceeding. The agency has subpoena power, pursuant to the rules of civil procedure in ongoing litigation for documents and persons, and additional administrative power for documents. This is a judicial process; all rules of civil procedure attach.

Generally, 25 cases are scheduled for in-house hearings per day. This is an increase over the 10 – 15 hearings possible at the courthouse. The agency provides a calendar to the court of all cases set for a given day. The legal unit coordinates checking in the litigants and assigning each case to a child support legal assistant. The actual court files, with all of the pleadings, are physically located at the courthouse, and all files are pulled by court personnel prior to the date of the hearing. In a spacious conference room, the legal assistants meet and confer with the parties, separately and/or jointly, to potentially negotiate an agreement.

CSED attorneys are available to answer questions, help resolve issues, and in many instances, complete the negotiations. In theory, all may require a hearing; in practice, most settle. Pursuant to New Mexico law, attorneys employed by the State represent only the interests of the State. The parties are either represented by counsel or appear pro se. If no agreement is reached, a legal unit staffer contacts the courthouse to arrange a telephonic hearing. The hearing is held in a specially dedicated conference room. The litigants, including the CSED attorney, appear before a child support hearing officer telephonically. The procedure is the same as for hearings held at the courthouse, including the taking of sworn testimony. Exhibits are sent by FAX to the court. Judgments, orders, reports and stipulations are prepared by an attorney and legal assistant. At the conclusion of the hearing day, legal staff delivers these documents to the courthouse for filings and judicial signatures. The staff maintains meticulous records detailing the disposition of each in-house hearing.

Currently, two in-house enforcement days and one establishment day are scheduled each month.

Results: The first in-house hearing at the Albuquerque North CSED office was held on July 11, 2007. As of June 4, 2008, 634 hearings were held, of which 390 have resulted in stipulated settlements. An important benefit is the ability to set hearings within 90 days, or less, which helps to expedite the processing of cases. The first six months of the program resulted in an increase of 22.3 percent in orders compared to the prior six months.

Location: Albuquerque CSED office, the largest urban jurisdiction in New Mexico.

Funding: Regular IV-D funds are used.

Replication Advice: A successful in-house hearing program requires clear and detailed guidelines, as well as a high degree of clerical efficiency.

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OHIO

USE BILLBOARDS TO LOCATE FELONY OFFENDERS SUMMIT COUNTY

Goal: To locate child support felony offenders and increase public awareness of the child support program.

Description: Beginning in August 2007, the Prosecutor in Summit County embarked on an aggressive campaign to locate all absent parents who had outstanding criminal felony non-support warrants for failure to pay child support. Since 2001, Summit County has filed 2,455 felony criminal non-support indictments and obtained 2,044 convictions. The county collected over \$13.8 million from all absent parents indicted since the program's onset. With 125 warrants outstanding, the Prosecutor, along with the CSEA's specialized Criminal Non-Support Unit, made the decision to feature 39 felons on eight regular and digital roadside billboards throughout Summit County.

Results: Of the 39 featured individuals, 13 were located and arrested through receipt of anonymous tips, surrendered upon seeing themselves on the billboards, or sent in a payment on their case.

Relying on the success of the first wave of defendants displayed on the billboards, a new set of absent parents was selected for the billboard campaign. For the second round, 25 absent parents were featured on five regular and digital billboards throughout Summit County. As of the summer 2008, 11 of these absent parents had been located and arrested through anonymous tips, surrendered upon seeing themselves on the billboard, or sent in a payment on their case. Of the 64 absent parents depicted, 24 (or 37.5 percent) responded, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Judicial sentences range from several years of probation to incarceration. The total support arrearages at the time of the indictment for the absent parents displayed on billboards totaled \$1,200,172. As of the summer of 2008, \$8,461 in child support had been collected.

The billboards have increased public awareness and have returned impressive results. While the billboards have created controversy among some critics who claim them to be demeaning and/or humiliating, the vast majority of feedback has been positive, and acknowledges that this program is about locating and enforcing child support orders and not about public humiliation. On December 17, 2007, ABC's "Good Morning America" featured the billboard program.

Location: Summit County is the fourth most populous county in Ohio, and urban area with 56,000 child support cases. The practice has not been adopted elsewhere.

Funding: Billboards were funded with Law Enforcement Trust Funds from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office. Indictments, arrests and subsequent prosecution made by CSEA's specialized Criminal Non-Support Unit used regular IV-D funding and a Federal match.

Replication Advice: Implement a dedicated Criminal Non-Support Unit to process all felony cases.

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OHIO
CUSTODIAL PARENT LOCATE PROJECT
SUMMIT COUNTY

Goals:

- Take aggressive efforts to reduce unclaimed, held funds (undistributed collections) first and foremost to get support in the hands of persons entitled to receive it.
- Improve the agency's Federal incentive performance in the collection categories by the disbursement of payments to families.

Description: In March 2008, the Summit Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) had 500 cases with \$154,658 in held support payments. Management decided to assign four Child Support specialists on a temporary basis to dedicate themselves to locating persons with monies on hold. Summit CSEA is one of five divisions of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office, which also includes the Tax Division. The Tax Division is responsible for collecting delinquent county property taxes, and in doing so, utilizes location search resources to which CSEA does not have access. Consequently, Tax Division staff assisted CSEA in this special project by entering the names and Social Security numbers of persons with held funds in their National Public Records Database. The results or location hits were referred to CSEA for analysis.

Results: CSEA was able to release over \$92,000 to families in need and close 47 cases. In addition, CSEA placed the names of all persons with unclaimed funds on the website. Reducing the names contained on the unclaimed funds list for the public to view is a positive public relations effort.

The results of CSEA staff efforts in using the information provided from the Tax Division as well as using all traditional CSEA location resources are as follows:

Number of cases reviewed	500
Number of cases in which funds were released	242
Percentage of cases in which funds were released	48%
Total dollar amount of held funds released	\$92,350.00
Percent of total unclaimed funds released	60%
Largest amount released to one CP	\$9,133.64
Second largest amount released to one CP	\$8,597.00
Persons with held funds found to be deceased	47 (> 9%)

Location: Summit County is an urban area and the fourth most populous in Ohio.

Funding: Regular IV-D funds were used.

Replication Advice: Provide specialized staff dedicated only to locating persons entitled to unclaimed funds.

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OHIO

***INCREASE AGENCY EFFICIENCY IN TIME OF DECREASED
RESOURCES
LUCAS COUNTY***

Goal: Increase agency efficiency in a time of decreased resources through the development of in-house training and the examination of agency work processes.

Description: The Lucas County Child Support Enforcement Agency has experienced some serious financial hardships over the last few years. The staff has decreased from a high of 200 staff members five years ago to about 160 as of the summer of 2008. Caseload size has increased to about 1,350 per case manager. In order to deal with the budget changes, a group of concerned employees, from management and bargaining units (representing all departments) came together to create a committee to form a "Save Our Agency Plan" (SOAP) to address processes, workflows, supplies and attitudes about the Support Enforcement Tracking System (SETS). The committee expects an added benefit will be an increase in collections and a decrease in caseload.

One suggestion made at a committee meeting was to make better use of the automated system's (SETS) down days. After brainstorming, the committee came up with the idea of some short training sessions for all staff and the "Teeny Tiny Training" (TTT) was born. The SOAP committee was further divided into sub-committees to address issues of workflow, SETS review, technology and supplies. Each sub-committee provides a half hour of training on SETS down days.

The training sessions have addressed internet site training, including everything you'd ever want to know about legal child support issues, and particular information about SETS. The TTTs are offered up to four different times throughout the day so staff scheduled for other duties may attend. Presenters are staff members with expertise in the particular areas discussed and not necessarily management or professional trainers. The trainings are by the people and for the people in the agency. Some outside presenters have included representatives from the Social Security Administration and the Director for Psychological Services at the local hospital who came to talk about managing stress. Planned training sessions that will include a representative from Source, a local job placement agency, will provide staff with information to assist noncustodial parents with employment issues.

Staff were surveyed for further suggestions to increase the agency's efficiency from every angle. "SOAP boxes" were placed in each break room. The ten member committee reviews and discusses each idea submitted and addresses each submission in the agency newsletter.

Results: Staff are more aware of how their actions impact others and have become more involved in streamlining the way day-to-day business is handled. Staff are more open to change since they have participated in designing the change, and can see the positive results.

Location: The TTTs take place in the agency conference rooms and training centers. This is a grassroots effort created by the agency for the agency.

Funding: There has been very little funding needed. The expense for the outside presenter on managing stress came out of the county's wellness budget, and that particular TTT was open to any county employee, not just CSEA staff.

Replication Advice: It is crucial to ensure that all staff who wish to participate in the planning and implementation of the training sessions are welcome.

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PENNSYLVANIA
BENCH WARRANT INITIATIVE
LANCASTER COUNTY

Goals:

- Reduce the number of outstanding Domestic Relations Section (DRS) bench warrants
- Obtain collections on unpaid child support cases
- Identify/utilize new technologies to facilitate operation
- Leverage enforcement actions to gain voluntary compliance

Description: Lancaster County Domestic Relations sorted warrants by zip code so the Sheriff's Office could identify geographic areas with a concentration of warrants. The noncustodial parents (NCPs) with outstanding bench warrants were identified in particular zip codes and DRS provided the Sheriff's Office with a current address.

The address locations were mapped using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technology. This allowed the deputy sheriffs to develop patterns and group the warrants within geographic locations. For example, the sheriffs noticed a very high concentration of warrants within a two block area.

The sheriffs began executing outstanding warrants using the mapping technology in early September 2007. The DRS prepares child support contact information. The deputy sheriff provides this information to the other members of the household.

This was followed by providing information to the media about the bench warrant sweep. A typical headline was, "Sheriff targets deadbeat parents – 18 nabbed for failing to pay child support."

The next step involved a two-day amnesty period, which included letters to NCPs with warrants and media coverage on the theme, "Amnesty offered to 'deadbeats' who pay."

Amnesty notices (English and Spanish) were mailed to 398 defendants.

- 27 defendants voluntarily complied.
- \$7,807.00 was collected in cash payments.
- 10 income withholding orders were issued.
- There were 4 job program referrals.

The amnesty was followed by another round of bench warrant sweeps to arrest the non-payers and those who did not voluntarily comply, and additional media coverage. As a result of media coverage related to the sweeps and amnesty initiatives, a significant number of defendants voluntarily complied.

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Results: Between 9/1/07 and 1/25/08, 238 defendants were targeted in the sweeps. During that period:

- 105 defendants were arrested.
- 38 warrants were dismissed as a result of voluntary compliance.
- 61 percent of the warrants in the target group were resolved.
- \$105,633.50 was collected on target cases.

Location: Lancaster County, Pennsylvania

Funding: Regular IV-D funds are used.

Replication Advice: There are many child support offices with hundreds or thousands of outstanding bench warrants. Serving these warrants by geographic area is much more cost effective.

Also, the combination of the bench warrant sweep, media coverage, and amnesty/voluntary compliance initiatives, followed by another bench warrant sweep and additional media coverage, appear to be very effective.

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TENNESSEE *PAYMENT PREDICTOR MODEL*

Goal: Increase payments and decrease likelihood of noncustodial parents (NCPs) debts by stratifying NCPs by:

- a system that predicts likelihood of paying,
- taking steps appropriate to the classification, and
- taking prompt action.

Description: The Tennessee Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services, adopted the case assessment and early intervention techniques successfully used in Australia.

The first step involved assessing and sorting cases. Stratification is the sorting of cases into categories to determine what services or enforcement techniques will be used for the case. The initial case assessment was completed prior to the order being established. It required the caseworker to collect information on relationship and compliance (including financial) characteristics of the case. The relationship and compliance indicators are predictive of compliance (based on Australian research) and were used for the case assessment.

The relationship indicators gather information regarding the amount of contact the NCP had with the children, whether or not the parents had been married or lived together, age of the youngest child, etc. The compliance or financial indicators focused on the NCP's salary, employment history, contact information, etc. The caseworkers received training on how to gather the information to complete the assessment questions.

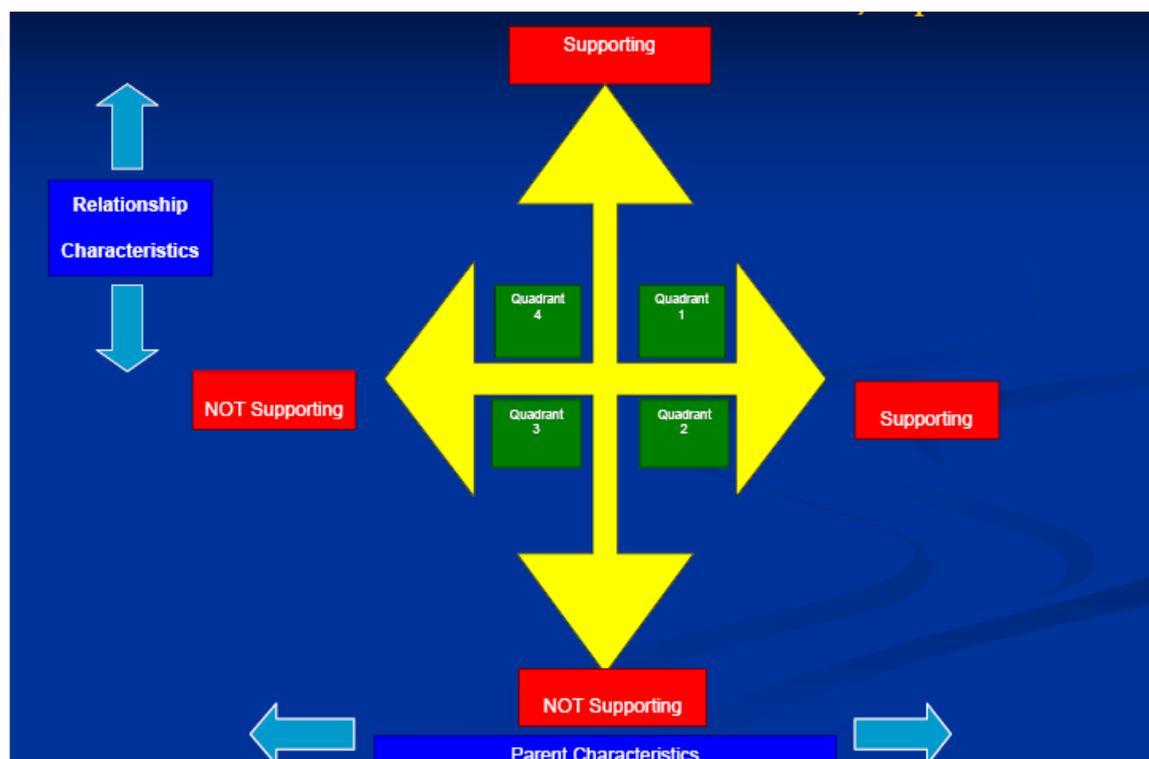
The stratification categories are:

- 1. NCPs have different motivations for making child support payments.** Some NCPs make payments voluntarily but others need to be compelled. Motivations for meeting child support obligations are often tied to relationship issues between the NCP and the CP and the NCP and the child.
- 2. NCPs have different financial abilities to pay support.** NCPs vary in their financial ability to meet child support obligations. Furthermore, financial abilities change over time.
- 3. NCPs may need different sets of services.** Some parents need services that can help them deal with relationship issues (such as counseling, parenting classes, mental health, substance abuse), while others need assistance with financial issues (like job training, job retention, budgeting). Because knowledge and understanding of the child support system and expectations vary tremendously from parent to parent, each parent's child support needs and services must be addressed according to their particular situation.

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<u>Relationship Indicators</u>	<u>Compliance Indicators</u>
Consider the Relationship Indicators and determine whether they support or do not support the likelihood of compliance and sustainability	Consider the Compliance indicators and determine whether they support or do not support the likelihood of compliance and sustainability
Does the NCP have contact with the children at least every two weeks or substantial, major or shared care of the children?	Does the NCP earn a salary or wage?
Do the parents currently cooperate? (Effective communication, little conflict, child focus, CS payment made to CP, etc.)	Is there Quarterly Wage Data available for the NCP for the past year?
Have the parents been married?	Is the NCP's income greater than \$16,000?
Have the parents lived together?	Has the NCP been consistently employed for the past 3 years?
Length of relationship > 5 years?	Do we have current contact information for the NCP?
Is the youngest child 4 years or older?	If the NCP has an existing or previous case, is it up to date?

Based on the answers to these assessment questions, the family was placed into one of four quadrants as shown in the next chart.



The second chart shows the summary of the cases and how they were stratified for the project. The cases were divided along the lines of Relationship characteristics and Parent/Financial characteristics, as well as whether they were in a supporting or non-supporting category.

Quadrant 1: 15 percent of the project cases were in this category. There are supporting elements in both Relationship and Compliance (Financial) characteristics – NCPs in these cases should be able and willing to pay.

Quadrant 2: 37 percent of the project cases were in this category. NCPs in these cases should be able to pay, but they may have relationship issues.

Quadrant 3: 33 percent of the project cases were in this category. Non-support in both areas means NCPs in these cases are at a high risk of noncompliance.

Quadrant 4: 15 percent of the project cases were in this category. NCPs in these cases do have relationship support but lack compliance support so may have difficulty paying.

Results: Case Assessment and Stratification is a promising strategy to assist child support programs in identifying NCPs in need of services and in targeting services and enforcement techniques to individual cases. The Australian model, tool, and assessment questions were generally a valid predictor of compliance.

- The project had the greatest impact on public assistance cases. Fifty percent of the project's public assistance cases had orders established; in contrast, the percent of control public assistance cases under order was only 22.1 percent.
- Project cases had better payment rates than control cases. For ordered cases that remained open after a year, the percentage of project and control cases with any payments was 78.1 and 73.0 percent, respectively.
- Project cases paid more than control cases on average. Payments, which are measured as a percent of current support due, averaged 85.9 percent among all project cases and 72.8 percent among all control cases.
- The difference was greatest for public assistance cases. The percent paid among project cases receiving public assistance averaged 80.7 percent, compared to 44.2 percent for control cases.
- Project cases made more progress toward paying arrears than control cases. Arrears were ordered to just over half of both the project and control cases at the time of order establishment. After a year, there were 10.3 percent more project cases with arrears and 29.1 percent more control cases with arrears. About 7 percent of project cases and 0.5 percent of control cases reduced their arrears debt within the first year.
- In all, after a year there were fewer arrears among project cases than control cases. The median (or middle case when data were arranged from high to low) amount of arrears was \$942 among project cases and \$2,442 among control cases. There was a larger gap between the mean (or average amount) of arrears: \$1,365 among project cases and \$4,002 among control cases.

Replication Advice:

Since the project used a variety of early intervention strategies, it is not possible to determine which specific individual strategies contributed to the positive outcomes. However, information gathered from interviews as part of the evaluation process for the project was useful in identifying the following strategies:

- Additional phone contact with CPs and NCPs
- Early (establishment) appointments with NCPs
- More friendly and understandable introductory letter
- Courtesy phone call reminders prior to appointments and court hearings
- Expanded efforts to obtain agreed orders/stipulations by conducting an introductory telephone interview with NCP
- Reserving retroactive support; NCPs would not owe support prior to order
- Minimizing initial build-up of arrears by requiring a later start date for the first payment
- More frequent payment monitoring, including making a courtesy call 10 days prior to the first payment
- More frequent payment reminders and phone calls if payment is missed
- Additional efforts to obtain current and multiple telephone numbers for NCPs
- In person appointments with enforcement officers
- Swift enforcement action for non-payers

An important part of early intervention efforts is the ability to contact CPs and NCPs by phone. However, clients, especially NCPs, may not have a listed phone number or are difficult to reach by phone even if the child support agency has a valid phone number. Providing caseworkers with the legal authority to subpoena cell phone numbers along with the use of automated telephone reminder systems should be considered to facilitate phone contact.

Case assessment and stratification were generally useful for caseworkers in identifying NCPs to be referred to the program. The early intervention strategy was helpful in targeting services and getting workers to think about what other services might be appropriate.

For enforcement, the strategy was useful in determining how to approach cases. Participation was low for NCPs referred to the Child Support Employment Program. Alternative strategies may need to be explored to work with unemployed or underemployed low-income NCPs in order to ensure that they contribute to the support of their children. The relationship indicators and compliance indicators used in the model were generally valid at predicting compliance. Further refinement of the model through development of additional indicators seems warranted.

Location: Originally funded with Section 1115 funds in Knox County. Stratification continues to be used in a more limited capacity taking into account lessons learned from

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the grant project. Plans are being made to expand some of the practices to the State-run laboratory in East Tennessee.

Funding: Initially, Section 1115 funds were used. Components of the project continue using regular IV-D funds.

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TEXAS

MENTORING AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM (M&M) LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING

Goals:

- Ensure continuity of leadership
- Retain child support program knowledge
- Identify individuals with potential to assume new roles and higher levels of responsibility
- Build talent from within
- Create opportunities for professional growth through voluntary mentoring and tailored training
- Facilitate the transfer of job knowledge.

Description: The Texas Child Support Division developed the Mentoring and Management Program (M&M) to ensure leadership continuity, program knowledge retention, and talent development in key or critical task positions. M&M offers employees a chance to network with more experienced staff, gain skill in a specific functional area, and explore potential career options outside their current responsibilities. As of the summer of 2008, 17 percent of child support staff were enrolled in the program.

M&M is structured with a central program liaison, on-line materials, suggested readings, a monthly e-newsletter, training opportunities, and a flexible framework that allows field offices to customize the program to fit their needs in one-on-one, or buddy system models.

Program resources and tools include:

- Web site with policies and resources
- Tailored leadership training in on-line and traditional formats
- Interactive participant database and skill set inventory
- Monthly newsletter, highlighting critical business practices
- Regional libraries of current business and management books
- On-line mentoring journal to track progress

Participation in the M&M program as either a mentor or a mentee is voluntary. Some employees participate as both. Mentors share leadership and child support program expertise with mentees to help develop their skills. Mentoring partners meet regularly to discuss job experiences, goals, plans, and skills; attend meetings and conferences; work together on activities to practice skills; and interact with others who may benefit from the relationship. Together, both parties engage in activities that foster professional growth and leadership development.

Planning is the key to achieving a successful mentoring relationship. Mentoring partners are encouraged to meet face-to-face and connect via the telephone or email at least once a month. Mentees are also encouraged to prepare for meetings by planning an agenda, choosing topics, and following a mentoring plan.

Anticipated Results:

- Development of future leaders
- Increased number of staff with specialized program expertise
- Improved understanding of the Texas Child Support Program's policies, goals, and resources
- Effective and efficient knowledge transfer
- Improved organization climate and job satisfaction
- Increased productivity and decreased turnover
- Effective communication increased

Location: Statewide. The pilot was completed in 2005 and the project was implemented statewide in 2006.

Funding: Regular IV-D funds are used.

Replication Advice:

- Understand and address potential barriers to mentoring before designing and initiating the program. One of the barriers is time. Due to heavy casework loads, it can be difficult to find time for mentoring. However, anecdotal reports indicate that as a result of mentoring, skills and performance improve, thus easing time constraints. Another barrier is geographic; field offices are spread throughout this large state. Some staff who would like to mentor with a particular person or in a particular specialty area may need to mentor remotely, using telephone and email communications and web-based training courses.
- Ensure that executive management support and encourage participation.
- Focus on manageable goals tailored to the participants.
- Identify critical skills and recruit motivated and experienced leaders.
- Consider budgeting costs associated with communication, travel expenses, training, etc.
- Organize agendas and types of interactions (e.g., face-to-face meetings, Web site visits, listserv, workshops, etc.) based on needs of the group.
- Identify metrics that can be used to measure progress.

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TEXAS

PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT (PI) PROGRAM EXCELLENCE INDICATOR SYSTEM

Goal: To develop a program excellence indicator system that assists program reviewers in determining the effectiveness and efficiency of each field office in performing key duties.

Description: PI and its systems are designed to provide the field offices with the tools needed to identify best practices that enhance their overall efficiency and effectiveness in meeting Federal incentives. Identified in this system are:

- Best Practices
- Challenges
- Reports to assist the field office managers to better support their staff.

Field offices can constantly change staff, policies, general procedures and quality control mechanisms while at the same time being asked to maintain their goals (Federal Incentives) and production. With the introduction of the Program Excellence Indicator System, some of these best practices will make it possible for field staff offices to consistently meet these goals.

Any field, regional or State office employee with direct knowledge of a successful field-related program, process, or practice can submit a best practice or make a suggestion for improving process.

One of these best practices is the use of the Texas Regional Call Centers to better enhance the probability of the obligor and the obligee to appear for a Child Support Review Process (CSRP) or conference that has been scheduled. Many of these participants will make a greater effort to comply if they know that someone is keeping in contact with them to move their case along.

In Field Office 702 (located in Austin, Texas), CSRP conferences are held all day on Tuesdays and Wednesdays by the establishment child support officers (CSOs), and all day Thursday and on Friday afternoon by the enforcement CSOs. Not all Regional Call Centers perform this function, but the Austin Field Office 702 manager had good results from this practice.

While collection of child support is still one of the main objectives for any field office, obtaining a court order obligation is vital because it begins the process of collecting the child support for the children. Many obligors will take a greater responsibility once a court order is entered, knowing that they now have a legal and moral obligation to support their child or children.

Results: The attendance rate for Field Office 702 CSRP conferences has increased. The data shows a 27 percent change in CSRP attendance from December 2006 to December 2007 and a 56 percent increase from April 2007 to April 2008. In addition,

paternity and new obligation performance goals were exceeded for February, March, and April 2008.

Location: The Program Excellence Indicator System is used statewide.

Funding: Regular IV-D funds are used.

Replication Advice: The Program Excellence Indicator System was developed by Program Improvement at the request of the Director of Field Operations. The Director oversees the operation of all field offices. A key factor in the success of the program is having direct Field Operations support. This support ensures field staff not only participate in the project, but understand how their ideas can help other field offices improve performance.

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UTAH

AUTOMATE PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

Goal: Automate the process for electronically providing paternity establishment information on administrative, judicial and interstate court orders to the Office of Vital Records and Statistics and thereby improve Utah's paternity establishment rate.

Description: This is a cooperative effort between Utah's Office of Recovery Services (ORS) and the Office of Vital Records and Statistics (OVRs). It is intended to: create a process to query the OVRs Birth Master System for information used in working child support cases; access birth certificate information used in working child support cases; access birth certificate information in place of using birth-look-up; gather information on a regular basis from OVRs for compilation of the OCSE-157 and other reports to determine the effectiveness of meeting grant goals; automate the process for electronically providing paternity establishment information to OVRs on administrative, judicial, and interstate court orders; and provide a way for ORS IV-D workers to view images of OVRs information.

The approach contained two main components:

- **Paternity Matters Activities** – Hospital birth certificate specialists were surveyed by an independent research group to identify attitudes toward paternity issues that may affect a hospital's success rate. Paternity Matters focused on educating hospital birth certificate specialists about all the methods of paternity establishment and services offered to parents by Utah's IV-D program; updating the documents associated with the in-hospital paternity establishment process; determining if the hospital had the equipment to show the video "The Power of Two"; and developing new educational materials geared to single parents before hospitalization. Fourteen hospitals were targeted for additional attention. Through frequent contact by the Paternity Matters Outreach Specialist, customized materials to meet specific needs were developed, hospital workers were acknowledged for their efforts, and hospitals had the equipment and knowledge required to make in-hospital paternity establishment work.

Paternity Matters used existing staff, readily available desktop publishing and graphic design programs, cost-conscious design techniques, and careful comparison of printing options to maximize the number of new materials created within a limited budget. In addition, a new website and four filmed public service announcements were produced thanks to resources provided by the umbrella agency – the Department of Human Services.

- **PATER** (PATERnity Establishment Registry), the technology system shared between ORS and OVRs for the storage and retrieval of paternity establishment information. The PATER project was divided into four main components to meet the differing needs of ORS and OVRs:

- OVRs Fax-to-Imaging System: designed to facilitate collection, database update, and imaged storage of completed in-hospital establishments from all hospitals;
- BMI Query/Viewer: designed to allow IV-D employees remote access to imaged paternity documents stored by ORVS;
- ORS to OVRs Automated Data Exchange: designed to allow IV-D employees to search for birth records from a new screen within the child support computer system, and to automate the process of reporting new paternity establishments by judicial, administrative or out-of-state orders; and,
- ORS Imaging: designed originally to image ORS paternity establishments and documentation, the project was expanded to image the entire child support caseload due to the powerful capabilities of the software selected.

The design process of each component started by examining the pathway followed by each type of paternity establishment from the beginning (e.g., finalization by a judge) to storage in the Utah State Registry, OVRs. The analysis identified several potential problems, such as the possibility of losing paper documents during transfer from worker to worker, the possibility of human error when manually entering data, the lack of electronic prompts and edits to remind workers to take appropriate steps, the possibility of increased errors or dropped processes when switching computer systems mid-process, and the lack of audit trails.

Results:

The Paternity Matters project resulted in overall increases for in-hospital paternity establishment rates in 11 of the 14 target hospitals, and resulted in upward trends in the monthly statistics at 10 of the 14 target hospitals. Those increases were mirrored in the statewide hospital completion rate, which was 51.47 percent between June 2007 and June 2008. The number of targeted hospitals increased to reach hospitals with the greatest proportion of out-of-wedlock births. Utah will maintain the Paternity Matters program permanently.

Utah's statewide PEP ratio was reported in August 2007 as 108.23 percent. As of September 2008, the PEP is estimated to be 105.37 to date. Adoptions were included in the FY 2006 rate for the first time.

Location: This practice is utilized statewide in Utah. Additionally, it has been adopted by Colorado, Nebraska, West Virginia, Missouri, Delaware, North Dakota and Rhode Island.

Funding: Regular IV-D funds are used.

Replication Advice: States that have implemented automated interfaces with the Vital Records office have reported positive results, including the overall increase in support collected and improved process consistency and fairness.

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WASHINGTON

EMPLOYER OUTREACH TO INCREASE ELECTRONIC NEW HIRE REPORTING AND E-PAYMENTS

Goal: Maximize employer new hire reporting, and increase electronic data exchanges and Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) through enhanced communication with employers.

Description: In the spring of 2006, the Division of Child Support (DCS) launched an aggressive effort to reach out to the employer community throughout Washington State. DCS hired an Employer Outreach Program Administrator to lead the effort. The position is responsible for educating employers and for promoting the use of EFT and New Hire Reporting programs throughout the employer community through a variety of avenues.

The Employer Outreach Manager works closely with field and headquarters staff to provide in-depth training to Washington State employers. Employer workshops are held statewide from Seattle to Spokane. These half-day workshops give employers the training they need to report New Hires, withhold and send child support payments and enroll kids in medical insurance. Trained employers reduce the number of phone calls child support staff members receive. For the payroll professional, the agency was instrumental in obtaining Certified Payroll Professional credit through the American Payroll Association (APA) for these workshops. As a result, workshop attendance has increased over 25 percent since the class became APA-certified.

A new workbook has been created to give employers a tool to comply more easily and cost effectively with child support requirements. DCS is also reaching out to employers through influential professional organizations. Important program information was added to Chamber of Commerce and business association websites. Employer outreach staff also speak at payroll and tax business conferences.

DCS staff work closely with the State's Department of Labor and Industries, Employment Security and Department of Revenue to educate and inform employers through seminars and news releases. Employers receive New Hire Program information through the State's Labor and Industries and Employment Security Departments.

DCS staff appeared on the Association for Washington Business radio show to discuss the benefits of New Hire Reporting and electronic payment methods. DCS has also begun a statewide marketing campaign to increase awareness and the use of its Child Support Internet Payment Service and New Hire Reporting program by employers. Part of the effort includes radio and television Public Services Announcements (PSAs), which were distributed to media outlets around the State.

Results: Employers are responding to the division's efforts. From the beginning of the outreach campaign in April 2006 through April 2008, 5,500 more employers sent child support payments electronically, which helps get child support to families faster. Many

employers have commented that they didn't realize how important they are in getting child support to families.

Highlights:

- Increase of 49 percent in employer EFT participation from April 2006 through April 2008.
- Increase of 74 percent in the number of Internet payments from April 2006 through April 2008.
- 83 percent of employers who attend a child support training class switch to electronic New Hire Reporting, saving employers time and money and helping DCS operate a cost-efficient program.
- Partnered with influential professional organizations, school districts and State agencies.
- Increase of 25 percent in seminar attendance through professional certification program.
- Produced and distributed an employer training DVD.
- Produced PSAs and distributed them to media outlets statewide.
- Developed a professional training workbook.
- Established a new website for employers: www.childsupportonline.wa.gov

Location: DCS headquarters is the lead with staff in all regions and offices participating in outreach events.

Funding: Regular IV-D Federal match.

Replication Advice: The key element to a successful employer outreach campaign is to fully commit to a long-term and comprehensive effort. Since employers remit more than 70 percent (nationally) of child support payments, it is vital that this outreach is seen as a permanent part of the agency's operation versus a short-term or one-time campaign. The first year of such an effort is primarily earmarked for conducting the research and developing the strategies for outreach. As momentum is created, it begins to pay dividends during the second year of the activities as the result becomes more visible.

It is also important that the effort utilizes a variety of strategies to reach employers, including the news media, external organizations, conferences, direct contact, and a responsive customer service and employer ombudsman program. Finally, risk-taking and innovation are tantamount to successful results. Be willing to branch out and contact employers and industries traditionally considered unresponsive or difficult by child support agencies. This includes construction, fishing and other seasonal industries.

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