

Child Support Report

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COMMISSIONER'S VOICE

Making the Most of a Second Chance

Scott Lekan, Commissioner



With the [President's Proclamation](#) of April as Second Chance Month, I want to address the role of the child support program in helping formerly incarcerated parents make the most of their second chance. Child support and law enforcement share the common purposes of reducing recidivism, getting people into the workforce, reconnecting individuals with family and community, meeting financial obligations, preventing future crime, and enhancing public safety.

Child support is an important aspect of the criminal justice reform conversation. Unmanageable child support debt is a factor in the cycle of incarceration, reentry, and recidivism. At the same time, effective child support policies and practices, including parental engagement and employment services, can be part of the solution.

Children of Incarcerated Parents

One in five children in this country, and both of their parents, receive child support services. By some calculations, one in 14 children in this country have had an incarcerated parent. Those children are very likely in the child support caseload. Parental incarceration is recognized as an adverse childhood experience and is associated with trauma, shame, stigma, and grief. It results in negative outcomes for children, including aggressive behavior, school suspension, antisocial behavior, and a greater risk of eventual incarceration.

Federal and state policymakers have been part of a national conversation about the value of multi-generational approaches to help families break the cycle of poverty. The same approach could be applied to breaking the cycle of recidivism and generational incarceration. Children with an incarcerated parent are at the highest risk of going to prison. Formerly incarcerated parents are at the highest risk of recidivating when they remain unemployed, disconnected from their children, disengaged from state and federal programs, and overwhelmed with debt and despair.

Returning Citizens

Almost all of the people in prison will one day be released. Jobs and family relationships are keys to their successful reentry to society. We can help create a pathway to success with practices and policies that actively engage parents, minimize debt accrual, promote workforce participation, and reconnect parents to their children when it is safe and healthy to do so.

A parent providing financial support is critical to child well-being, and also to their own correctional rehabilitation process. The federal Bureau of Prisons indicates that child support debt and enforcement actions are contributing factors to recidivism, driving parents back toward the underground economy and crime after release. The combination of limited education, job experience and skills, job availability, and a felony conviction means that reentering parents may need specialized resources and services tailored to their individual circumstances and needs.

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Coping with Incarceration

Children of incarcerated parents can feel overwhelmed by this family situation. Sesame Street in Communities has a toolkit to help caregivers and community members work through difficult conversations.

Visit the [Coping with Incarceration](#) toolkit web page to learn how to help families deal with incarceration.

Subscribe to the *Child Support Report*. Sign up on the newsletter homepage



Practices, Policies, and Partnerships

Second Chance Month is intended to draw attention to the challenges that formerly incarcerated people face and, perhaps more importantly, the steps we can take to ensure they have the chance to become contributing members of society. Child support can be a meaningful partner to those who provide services to incarcerated and re-entering parents, including faith-based and community organizations and employers willing to hire workers with a criminal history.

In this issue, we feature articles from Michigan, North Carolina, and Missouri, describing the specialized services they're providing to help ensure that incarceration produces the desired outcomes of rehabilitation and successful reintegration. I strongly encourage all child support programs to consider practices, partnerships, and policies that help build the capacity of a re-entering parent to find work, pay support, avoid future crimes, and fulfill their role in their child's life.

Collateral Consequences for Families

When a parent becomes incarcerated, the consequences to that family are widespread and long lasting. Family income is lower during the years a father is incarcerated. Even after release, family income remains lower than before incarceration. Formerly incarcerated men are unemployed more weeks per year and earn lower hourly wages than those who were never incarcerated.

Other family consequences may be as simple as figuring out who picks up the kids after school. Over half of fathers in state prisons report they lived with their children in the month before their arrest or just prior to incarceration and shared the responsibility for children's daily care. Incarceration rates of mothers have more than doubled and continue to rise. Nearly half of those mothers report that the father is now caring for the child. This reinforces the importance of father engagement, fatherhood education, and a reasonable remedy for addressing the support order.

Reconnection is Restorative

Our mission remains to collect reliable support payments for families, and that expectation is still in place for formerly incarcerated parents. My enforcement-minded perspective would never suggest otherwise. But parents can't pay if they go back to prison. There is recognition of the need for justice reform at the highest levels. The bipartisan [First Step Act](#), enacted in December 2018, acknowledges that family and community ties are key to a positive return to society and provides for placement in facilities closer to home, fostering family visits to maintain connections during incarceration.

The child support mission is aimed at improving overall child and family well-being and capacity for self-sufficiency. I challenge you to consider how your program can develop

and implement practices that foster responsibility and reconnection for formerly incarcerated parents. Your efforts will improve children's economic, health, educational, and social outcomes. Ultimately, your efforts will impact society by reducing recidivism, putting workers back in the labor force, reducing burdens on taxpayers, interrupting the generational cycle of prison, and achieving the goal of justice reform.

Scott Lekan

HHS Highlights Child Support Employment Programs

Noncustodial parents often need help overcoming barriers to jobs that provide a wage robust enough to take care of themselves and their families.

The child support program recently received recognition for its work to promote employment services. HHS Secretary Alex Azar commended these efforts during his February [2019 State of the Department Address](#) and highlighted a recent ACF joint information memorandum that supports the use of federal funds to promote employment programs for noncustodial parents. The ACF Family Room Blog [Improving Child Support Collections through Noncustodial Parent Employment](#) provides more details.

PlainLanguage.Gov

Plain writing is a government requirement. Watch this U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services video, [Put Your Main Message First](#), to see why plain language is so important. Does your organization use plain language?

For more information, visit plainlanguage.gov.

continued collaboration

Project Clean Slate



REENTRY AND INCARCERATION

Michigan Helps Returning Parents Get a Clean Slate

Crissa Blankenburg, Acting Manager, *Michigan Department of Corrections*, and Amy Lindholm, Management Analyst, *Friend of the Court Bureau*

The Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) knows that incarcerated parents face many post-release barriers that make finding employment difficult. To help them out, we've been working with Michigan's child support program on our Clean Slate project, which is part of our Offender Success reentry plan. Our project team focuses on offenders at MDOC's two [Vocational Village facilities](#) to identify barriers to a parent's successful reentry into society and find ways to break those barriers down.

Incarcerated parents face many post-release barriers that make finding employment difficult

The Clean Slate team recognized early that many offenders are parents with child support cases and a limited understanding of how to manage them. MDOC prepares Vocational Village offender-parents for life on the outside through vocational training, job placement, and community supports. However, many quickly find that even with improved employment prospects they still have other employment struggles due to outstanding child support warrants, driver's license suspensions, or unmanageable arrears and income withholding orders.

Path to collaboration

Clean Slate members learned about the benefits of working with child support agencies during a grant-funded pilot project led by the City of Lansing's Office of Financial Empowerment. Other project partners included the Ingham County Friend of the Court (the local IV-D agency); the Michigan Office of Child Support; the State Court Administrative Office; the Ingham County Health Department's "Dads Matter" outreach program; and department of corrections staff from the county probation and parole office.

Erin Frisch, Michigan's child support director, sees practical benefits in working with parents. "When arrears are overwhelming due to an extended period of incarceration, folks tend to shy away from child support and their children. By helping parents deal with their debts and setting orders that are payable within their current circumstances, we focus on what parents can do to support their children today. This is good for families and for the program."

Together, project partners helped 77 returning parents manage their finances, including their child support arrears. The project participants cumulatively paid over 10 times more child support in the six months post-incarceration than in the six months before incarceration — thanks to the help they received from Lansing's financial empowerment caseworkers.

Applying lessons learned

The pilot project partners built a sustainable process that has continued past grant funding. Today, Ingham County child support caseworkers learn about new incarcerations

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more quickly so they can start a timely modification of support. They also continue to meet with parents in the state corrections facility pre-release program.

Brenda Knauf, an Ingham County Friend of the Court caseworker, has seen a clear difference in payer behavior. “The noncustodial parents are contacting us more..., and it’s helping reduce enforcement hearings and issuing warrants. [They] know we’re working with them, not against them.”

By working together, both agencies realized how much our goals for the offender-parent population overlap. We want to see these individuals become self-sufficient and make a positive impact on their families and communities. We also know the children reap long-term benefits because formerly incarcerated parents show increased parental responsibility and involvement. Coordinating our efforts is efficient and fiscally responsible.

“As a state we’ve become much better at serving the basic needs of our returning citizens, but there are too many hidden barriers that prevent success.”

Moving forward

Clean Slate’s focus is at the two men’s Vocational Villages. Dads released from these facilities have relevant vocational training, probable job placement through direct relationships with felon-friendly employers, and wraparound supportive services including housing, transportation, sober living, and more. Soon that focus will include female offenders served by a Vocational Village under construction.

MDOC Offender Success Administrator Kyle Kaminski would like to see this approach expand statewide. “As a state we’ve become much better at serving the basic needs of our returning citizens, but there are too many hidden barriers that prevent success, which is why efforts like



Clean Slate are so important, as they help us expand the definition of success for the populations we serve.”

Partnerships

We’ve developed a state-level process to streamline child support communications for the Vocational Village population. An MDOC facility coordinator helps offender-parents navigate through the complexities of the child support and court systems. The coordinator connects the parent with the appropriate child support caseworker, and ensures he understands what will happen to his case once he’s released.

Partner agency cross-training has made this collaboration successful. Recently released parents are often the most challenging for child support caseworkers because they don’t understand the hurdles many parents have to overcome to successfully reenter their communities. To help caseworkers understand everyday post-release struggles, we offered a simulation, “Returning Citizens: A Month in the Life.” Simulation participants take on the role of a recently released parent who has to navigate a series of hurdles like getting a driver’s license or modifying a child support order within a certain time. The caseworkers generally walk away commenting on how difficult it was to make all of their appointments without enough money or transportation, and some even give up out of frustration before the 30-minute simulation ends. We strongly recommend that other child support agencies email their [OCSE regional program managers](#) to schedule a simulation for their staff.

We know that continuous learning and communication with our stakeholders is necessary to achieve the best results as we move forward. We plan to keep helping parents navigate the child support system from behind bars by refining our process and expanding it to more offender-parents.

For information about Michigan’s Clean Slate program, contact Crissa Blankenburg at blankenburgc@michigan.gov





Child Support Supervisor Christi Hooper and Captain John Buchanan display the Project of the Year award for Weekender Jail.

Weekender Jail

Christi Hooper, Child Support Supervisor,
Jackson County Social Services

For many years, John Buchanan, captain of the Sheriff's Office in Jackson County, North Carolina, operated a work release program for parents jailed for willfully refusing to pay child support. Then, as more inmates returned from their work release with contraband like tobacco and drugs, he discontinued the program.

Since our child support team is all about collecting money and not so much about punishment, this change was inconsistent with our mission. Our collections from contempt actions were suffering, and that led to frustration for us and our custodial and noncustodial parents.

In collaboration with the sheriff's office, we started a new method of dealing with these offenders called Weekender Jail. They remain in the sheriff's custody until a purge is paid, but they're released from jail on Monday morning to work or look for jobs and return Friday evening. Those who don't have employment must report their number of jobs applications to their agent each week. Once they're employed, the parents bring verification of their employment to our office and start paying toward the purge.

We work closely with our agency attorney to tweak the Weekender Jail consent orders and make adjustments and process improvements as needed. The jail staff is very satisfied with this new arrangement as well. The North Carolina Child Support Council awarded its Project of the Year award to the Jackson County Division of Child Support Services for our collaboration and success. We attribute that to solid teamwork, good brainstorming, and a focus on our mission to strengthen and improve the lives of those we serve.

For information about the Weekender Jail Program, contact Christi Hooper at chooper@jcdsss.org.

Addressing Child Support Issues for Incarcerated Parents

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL), an estimated one-quarter of the [1.57 million people](#) in federal and state prisons have a child support case, affecting potentially 2.7 million children. OCSE published the [Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs final rule](#) in December 2016 that provided states guidance on how to handle cases where the noncustodial parent is incarcerated for failure to pay child support.

The rule specifically addresses the modification procedures states should use in these cases:

- **Incarceration for Failure to Pay Child Support:** The rule provides guidance on the factors to be considered when determining which cases should be referred to the court for civil contempt, including a determination of the noncustodial parent's ability to pay.
- **Incarcerated with a Child Support Order:** The rule prohibits states from treating incarceration as voluntary unemployment for purposes of modifying a child support order.

Since the rule, the NCSL reports that "at least 20 states introduced 34 bills to prohibit incarceration from being treated as voluntary unemployment, allowing child support orders to be modified or suspended during periods of incarceration. Nine states have enacted legislation. As of 2019, 40 states and the District of Columbia allow for modification or suspension of child support orders during incarceration."

The NCSL [Child Support and Incarceration](#) page provides an overview of these issues and legislation that states have introduced since the rule change.

Missouri Connections to Success Program Expands

Jeff Stocks, OCSE

Kathy Lambert's success as co-founder and CEO of [Connections to Success](#) began with dedication and the loan of a pair of shoes. Years ago, Lambert provided interview-appropriate attire to women living in poverty. A young woman, who we'll call Doris, was referred to the program. They had sized and selected all of her clothing, but Doris was missing the shoes. Lambert asked her what size she wore. When Lambert learned they wore the same size, she removed her shoes, gave them to Doris, and sent her on her way. Two hours later, Doris called with great news. She landed the job!

Changing lives since 2001

Connections to Success is a Missouri-based organization that helps individuals like Doris living in poverty move to self-sufficiency. Kathy and her husband, Brad, founded Connections to Success after combining two existing non-profits: Dress for Success Midwest and Wheels for Success. These programs filled specific needs such as interview-appropriate clothing and donated transportation. By adding a curriculum focused on workforce readiness, healthy parenting and relationship skills development, and education and employment skills training, they've evolved into one holistic and comprehensive program that has helped over 25,000 men and women.

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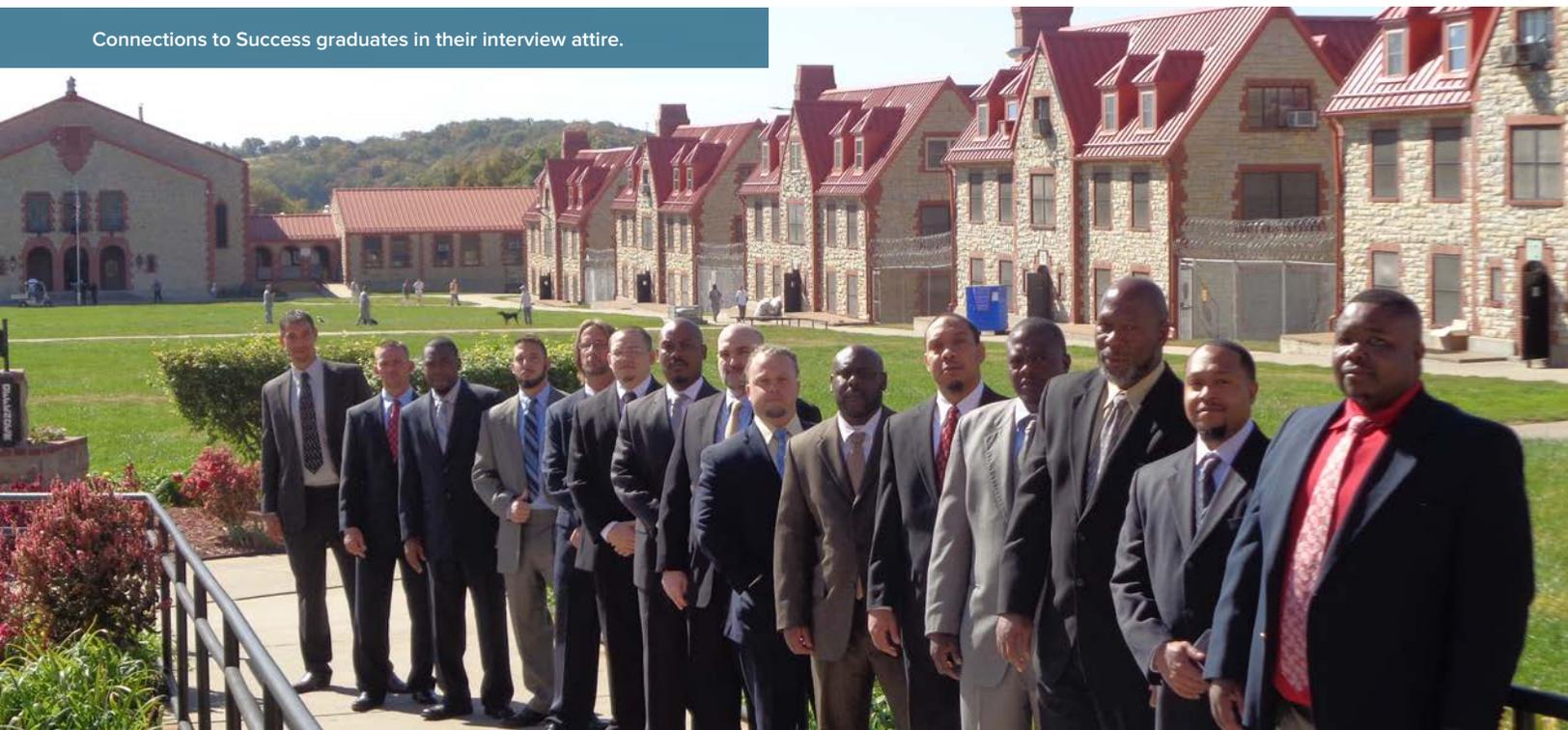
Fulfilling Needs beyond Employment

During Connections to Success, the men can meet with representatives from Missouri social service agencies such as child support, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and housing to set up services as quickly as possible. "The sooner we can get them these benefits, the sooner we can get them *[to be self-sufficient]*," Lambert offered. The program attempts to have SNAP benefits available as soon as the inmates leave the facility.

Missouri's child support agency, the Family Support Division (FSD), offers an opportunity for men with child support cases to meet with caseworkers for a one-on-one case review. For many, child support has been an issue in their past. When appropriate, caseworkers remove license sanctions and offer other pre-release help such as order modifications. They consider this partnership invaluable.

Child Support Enforcement Deputy Director John Ginwright shared, "FSD is proud to be a part of this groundbreaking project. Individuals reentering society often face child support barriers prior to release. This distinctive approach allows those reentering society to get a head start on a successful reentry process. FSD is expanding its collaboration efforts with agencies like Connections to Success to meet individuals where they are to provide our services. This is what success looks like."

Connections to Success graduates in their interview attire.





A program representative (left) talks with a participant about his future.

A recent graduate takes his children to the zoo.

After being appointed to the Missouri State Workforce Development Board, Lambert recognized the importance of developing the talent and skills of inmates who'd eventually be released back into their communities. "For employers wanting to grow, they need people," Lambert said. "They can't find people." With 19,000 adults released from prisons in Missouri every year, working to develop these men and women was a response to a need.

July 2018 — taking services to inmates

With strong partners from the Missouri Central Region Workforce Investment Board and state departments of Corrections and Social Services, they launched a pilot program at the Algoa Correctional Center in Jefferson City using core Connections to Success curriculum focused on personal and professional development. "Rather than wait until an individual is released to provide workforce development support, we've started working with individuals who are still incarcerated," Lambert said.

After inmates saw how successful the first group was, over 70 men were eager to volunteer for a future class.

The program is intensive, so participation is voluntary. Inmates must be within 30-60 days of release and remain free of any disciplinary actions while they're enrolled. A group of 15 men participated in the first 10-day, 60-hour program. The Algoa facility provided Lambert with a classroom-style meeting space and modified its check-in and meal policy to allow inmates to remain with the group for the full six hours per day.

The initial part of the course focuses on 'cognitive restructuring' and offers skills development to navigate interpersonal relationships in healthy ways, including parenting. "They really want to take care of their kids,"

Lambert said. The group then goes through a skills assessment to determine their strengths to help match the individual with the right type of job.

Finally, the men complete a resume workshop and are fitted with interview-appropriate business suits, which they keep when released. "I thought the only time I would wear a suit was at my funeral," said one class participant. "You can see how their posture changes when they see themselves in a suit," said Lambert. The men can then participate in a mock interview with actual central Missouri employers, many of whom say they would hire the men after their interview.

Success rate

Connections to Success has offered the course twice and had 29 men complete the full curriculum. The one individual who had to leave the course because of disciplinary issues sought out Connections to Success once he was released and completed the curriculum voluntarily. Of the 26 graduates who've been released from prison, 20 are earning an average wage over \$12 per hour.

After inmates saw how successful the first group was, over 70 men were eager to volunteer for a future class. "The warden told us he is seeing a new calmness in the prison because of people wanting to get into the class," Lambert said.

The men who graduate have a new approach to their lives, new skills, and new opportunities. They leave the facility wearing the suit the program provided along with a plan to be better. Connections to Success is still changing lives, one garment at a time.

For more information about Connections to Success, contact the staff at info@connectionstosuccess.org.

GRANTS

Behavioral Interventions Grant: A Continual Evolution

Matthew Sautter, BICS Evaluation Grant Project Manager, Washington State Division of Child Support

In fall 2014, seven states and the District of Columbia embarked on a five-year journey called [Behavioral Interventions for Child Support Services](#) (BICS). While these grantees may have expected that agency operations would return to normal after the grant ended, something different is happening.

As the evaluation grant project manager, I've seen BICS evolve over the past several years as I've worked closely with the OCSE project officers, our evaluation contractor MDRC, and the grantees. Although the grants are almost complete, I have a feeling that this work is just beginning.

The expansion: Peer learning sites

We've seen a lot of interest in behavioral interventions from across the child support community. Last year, OCSE invited interested state and tribal child support programs to join the BICS community as peer learning sites. Ten diverse volunteer agencies committed to developing and testing a behavioral intervention in about 15 months. The seven states included Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, and North Dakota, and the tribes were the Chippewa Cree Tribe, the Delaware Tribe of Indians, and the Nez Perce Tribe. These sites weren't given any funds; what they have received is technical assistance and hands-on support from the OCSE grant officers, the BICS grantees, and me. We've all helped the peer learning sites define, diagnose, design, and refine their intervention plans.

The Chrysalis: An end and a beginning

In February, grantees, peer learning sites, and BICS project staff from OCSE and MDRC came together in Washington, D.C., for the BICS Chrysalis meeting. While this meeting provided grantees a chance to share some accomplishments from the previous four years, the focus was on the future and how the lessons that BICS has provided could be integrated into their agencies' standard practices. Grantees shared their plans to "BICSIFY" their programs, make communications materials more "BICSY," and train other staff on BICS concepts.

On the second day, the 10 volunteer peer learning sites presented their planned interventions. Attendees provided feedback and suggestions on their plans so that the peer sites could make adjustments before getting started. Their interventions began launching in March and will run through the summer. These peer sites have proven that

the concepts from BICS can be widely applied and easily understood. It has been awesome to see very different agencies — with caseloads ranging from over half a million to less than 50 — apply these principles to address their challenges.

Finding the meaning

At the Chrysalis meeting, this quote said it best, "You [BICS grantee staff] don't want to become a club within your organization." The ultimate goal of BICS is that the practices learned from participating in this grant are deliberately integrated into child support programs and become an essential part of program improvement at all levels.

I look forward to seeing the integration of the BICS concepts throughout the child support community. It's been a great experience to see the grant evolve firsthand and participate in spreading the knowledge we've gained.

For information about BICS results, contact Matt Sautter at matthew.sautter@dshs.wa.gov. For publications, see the [BICS project page](#). For other BICS information, contact Michael Hayes at michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov.



National Child Abuse Prevention Month

There are many ways that child support professionals and community members can work together to keep children safe. Raise awareness during National Child Abuse Prevention Month. Follow the [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) and [#NCAPM2019](#) to share resources and strategies that help communities strengthen families.

here's how you can support

NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE PREVENTION MONTH 2019

Help raise public awareness about preventing child maltreatment and enhancing child well-being in your community.

SPREAD THE WORD

Use social media to raise awareness. Follow [#NCAPM2019](#) and share!



CREATE INTEREST

Update your email signature with a #PreventionMonth badge from the website.

<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/spread-the-word/outreach-materials/>



ENCOURAGE THOSE IN YOUR NETWORK TO GET INVOLVED

Plan or support an event where you live. Use the 2019 Prevention Resource Guide to strengthen families and keep them thriving.



<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/preventing/preventionmonth/spread-the-word/>



Improving Collections Through Noncustodial Parent Employment – What Works?

Without a job, paying child support is difficult, if not impossible. Over the last several decades, there have been efforts to provide employment services to unemployed noncustodial parents to increase collections. In [Information Memorandum-18-02](#), Commissioner Lekan reinforced the importance of work promotion and encouraged states to implement and strengthen employment programs for noncustodial parents. That memo focused on using IV-D incentive funds to support these programs, which is one of several funding mechanisms states are using for these activities. In the [November-December 2018 Child Support Report](#), we launched this series to feature [noncustodial employment efforts in the child support community](#) and share successes and lessons learned. In this edition, we're focusing on a program in Kansas.

Kansas Initiative Connects Dads to Employment

Jon McLallen, Program Administrator,
Kansas Child Support Services

The Kansas Child Support Services program began using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program dollars to fund employment services for noncustodial fathers in 2013. Under our Fatherhood Initiative, we promote self-sufficiency to ensure families get critical financial support.

Grantees and participation

We awarded grants to five organizations throughout the state. With \$1.4 million of TANF funds in state fiscal year 2019, the organizations will provide services to 655 noncustodial fathers in 17 of Kansas' 105 counties (see map). This incorporates most of the more populous regions of the state.

While participation in the program is voluntary, grantees successfully engaged 719 fathers in 2018. We anticipate that enrollment will continue to surpass the required program minimums. One way we encourage participation is by creating incentives for noncustodial fathers by offering arrears reduction on state-only debt once they complete the program. For the first 15 hours attended, they receive a \$50-an-hour credit. For each additional hour, they get a \$25 credit, with a maximum arrears reduction of \$2,500.

Services beyond job support

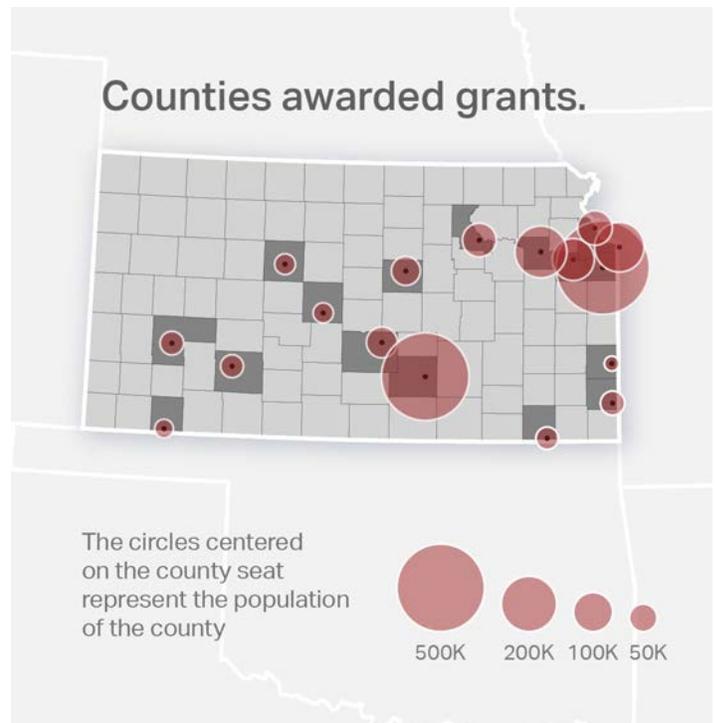
At first, Fatherhood Initiative activities were limited to work-related supports and job placement. When the program was renewed in 2016, we expanded activities to include promoting healthy relationships and responsible parenting. Currently, grantees provide job coaching, job readiness, and skills development, as well as ongoing mentoring with the participants. The grantees also work with employers to address employment barriers some participants encounter, such as their criminal records.

Getting results

In state fiscal year 2018, 67% of the Fatherhood Initiative participants secured employment or increased their wages or hours. During the same period, 67% of participants were also making child support payments, reinforcing the point that working noncustodial parents are paying noncustodial parents.

One key lesson we've learned from operating the initiative over the last six years is the importance of community buy-in. We rely upon a variety of stakeholders, such as employers, judges, and attorneys, who understand and support the program. Grantees who have built strong partnerships with local stakeholders have been the most successful in engaging noncustodial fathers, helping them overcome barriers to work, and placing them in employment.

For more information, visit the [Kansas Department for Children and Families website](#) or email Jon McLallen at jon.mclallen@dcf.ks.gov.



COORDINATION POINTS

More than 300 Get Budget Tools Training

Gretchen Lehman, OCSE

Last spring, OCSE announced a new training opportunity for child support caseworkers (read [Train Your Staff to Help Parents](#) in the May 2018 *Child Support Report*). In partnership with the [Consumer Financial Protection Bureau](#), we taught 11 OCSE employees to be staff trainers on cash flow budget tools from the bureau's [Your Money, Your Goals](#) financial empowerment materials.

Caseworkers can integrate these tools into common conversations with parents whether they're paying or receiving child support. For example, these tools can be helpful when talking with noncustodial parents striving to find a way to make their payments or with custodial parents trying to figure out how to manage their budgets after their payments get reduced. We offer this training to provide caseworkers with an additional resource for serving their customers.

Our 2018 goal was to train at least 135 caseworkers by December 31. We proudly report that 330 child support professionals attended our sessions last year, more than twice our goal. We held trainings in Montana, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Maryland, Oklahoma, and Missouri. We generally held sessions at state or tribal conferences, but we also conducted a virtual training for case managers working on the [Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt](#) grant program.

In response to interest from the field, we continue to provide Your Money, Your Goals this spring, including training to staff in North Dakota and the District of Columbia. We just led a session at the New Jersey state conference, and we will be at upcoming conferences in California and West Virginia.

This is part of OCSE's overall effort to provide tools and resources that help the child support community provide better services and improve the financial well-being of the families we serve.

If you are interested in [Your Money, Your Goals](#) training at your agency or training conference, please contact Sharon Henderson at sharon.henderson@acf.hhs.gov.

Did you know?

OCSE has a resource that compiled last year's BICS article series. The PDF document includes six articles that states shared about lessons learned through behavioral interventions.

[Check it out!](#)



Checking in on the Child Support Performance and Incentive Act

The HHS Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation and MEF Associates have released a report, [The Child Support Performance and Incentive Act at 20: Examining Trends in State Performance](#), that examines federal performance measures and use of federal incentive payments across states over the last 20 years. Performance measures include paternity establishment, order establishment, current support collections, arrears collections, and cost-effectiveness of the child support program.

The report finds that states are making progress on order and paternity establishment. However, collecting current support and arrears owed remains a challenge. Meanwhile, child support programs are some of the most cost-effective programs nationally. In 2016, 26 state child support programs had a cost-effectiveness ratio at or above \$5 for every dollar spent.

Child Support Report

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