NEW COMMISSIONER

Scott Lekan Appointed OCSE Commissioner

On July 24, Scott Lekan became commissioner of the Office of Child Support Enforcement. Commissioner Lekan moves into the position from his previous job as Business Development Manager for Informatix, Inc., an information technology and business solutions company.

While this is his first federal role, Commissioner Lekan is no stranger to child support. He joined the Arizona Department of Economic Security in 2012 as the Operations Administrator for the Division of Child Support Services. He became the Deputy Assistant Director in 2014 and Assistant Director in 2015. He eventually went on to become the Assistant Director for Arizona’s Division of Aging & Adult Services where he oversaw a number of programs, including Adult Protective Services, Aging and Disability Services, Community Action Programs and Services, Refugee Resettlement, Domestic Violence and Homelessness Programs, and Finance and Business Operations. In his early career as a senior law enforcement official, he oversaw the daily operations and administrative tasks of a police precinct, including employment, accreditation and training functions; labor and contract negotiations; and public information tasks.

Commissioner Lekan holds a B.S. in Criminal Justice from Northern Arizona University and an M.B.A. from California Pacific University.

IN FOCUS

International Case Processing Questions? OCSE has Training

OCSE International Training Team

Are you looking for training and information on international case processing? As reported in the March-April 2017 Child Support Report, you can find extensive training materials — including recordings of completed training sessions — on the OCSE international website. OCSE’s webinar training series on International Case Processing Under UIFSA 2008 covers:

- Overview of the Hague Child Support Convention
- Central Authority responsibilities and Hague Convention forms
- Recognition and enforcement, establishment, and modification under the Convention
- Implementation issues, such as translation, currency conversion, and payments
- Processing non-Convention cases

You will also find the 14 federally approved Hague Forms in English and several other languages on the OCSE website.

The Policy and Training division will post the final case processing training materials this fall. For questions, contact the OCSE international team at ocseinternational@acf.hhs.gov.
Parents who believe a court system has treated them fairly often feel better about the outcomes of their cases, even when the results are not what they had hoped for. According to this article, *Procedural Justice in Child Support*, in the June 2016 Child Support Report, parents will also comply with orders more willingly if they think the court system was fair.

Assessing cases before taking action
Here in Connecticut, our Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Services Unit has been actively reviewing child support policies and procedures relating to civil contempt actions to see if we could find room for improvement. We reviewed the *Turner v. Rogers* ruling, the Proposed Rule, and ultimately the Final Rule. Then we developed comprehensive training, changed our automated system, revised court forms, and added a new screening process so staff can thoroughly assess child support cases before initiating civil contempt court actions.

Determining ways to make positive changes
The staff studied the National Child Support Strategic Plan FY 2015 for guidance — specifically the principle that a high-performing child support program is evidence-based. They analyzed caseload statistics, collection trends, local office procedures, court volume, and countless other data points. In addition to the quantitative statistics, we wanted meaningful data on the perceived fairness of our court and contempt processes.

Using court surveys
Between April 2016 and May 2017, we held month-long court surveys to get input from Connecticut parents and litigants in child support modification and contempt proceedings. The staff asked custodial parties and noncustodial parents in 11 locations to provide feedback on their overall child support court experience, check-in procedures, and their total court time. The survey also asked about the respondents’ interactions with child support enforcement court staff and whether the parties understood the court decision or outcome in their case.

Many people were initially concerned and skeptical about offering a survey to child support litigants in modification and contempt proceedings. After reviewing 1,155 surveys, they were pleasantly surprised.

### Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>described the check-in procedure as quick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66%</td>
<td>reported meeting with court staff within one hour of arriving at court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93%</td>
<td>stated that court staff treated them professionally and with respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86%</td>
<td>understood what the judge or family support magistrate had decided in their case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Overall child support court experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>24%</th>
<th>36%</th>
<th>12%</th>
<th>20%</th>
<th>8%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Bad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Qualitative and quantitative data
We understand how important it is to consider both the public perception and the empirical data available to child support agencies so we can make evidence-based changes to policies and practices. As leaders, we are continuing to incorporate survey information into training sessions, policies, and practices. Later this year, the Support Enforcement Services Unit will disseminate specific information and local findings to our field offices, state and regional child support partners, family support magistrates, and judicial branch leadership.

For more information about the survey or its results, contact Paul at Paul.Bourdoulous@jud.ct.gov or SES Training Manager Zarin Kapur at Zarin.Kapur@jud.ct.gov.
GRANTS

San Diego Finds Parenting Time Orders Successful

Anne Kelly, Child Support Manager, San Diego County Department of Child Support Services

In 2012, the San Diego Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) received a federal Office of Child Support Enforcement Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC) grant to develop a process to establish no-cost parenting time orders at the time they establish child support orders. Historically, these two functions have been handled separately by different processes and government agencies. DCSS leaders recognized they needed to join these functions to help parents improve their relationships with their children as well as increase family self-sufficiency.

**Custodial parents with parenting time orders reported that they felt more positive about their co-parent compared to the comparison group.**

The staff hypothesized that providing no-cost parenting time orders would increase the amount of time noncustodial parents spent with their children, and that would directly affect how consistently they provided financial support to the family. To test this theory, DCSS worked with an outside evaluator to track and analyze differences between a group of parents who received a no-cost parenting time order (treatment group) and a group who did not (comparison group).

**Improved payments and relationships**

During the grant period, DCSS established 381 parenting time orders for local families. The San Diego Association of Governments examined customer feedback questionnaires that parenting time order recipients submitted immediately after they received their orders and six months later. Noncustodial parents who received the no-cost parenting time order reported the following:

- An increase in the amount of time they spent with their children
- Improved relationships with their children
- More positive attitudes toward their co-parent (as compared to the comparison group who did not receive parenting time orders)

Custodial parents with parenting time orders reported that they felt more positive about their co-parent compared to the comparison group.

To determine whether there was a difference between payment rates when a noncustodial parent had a visitation order, the association analyzed monthly payments of the treatment cases and the comparison cases. They found that cases with a visitation order did have a higher payment rate. That suggests that parents provide consistent financial support when they have access to time with their children. In addition to identifying an increase in time spent with their children and more consistent payments, the association also discovered that customers were more satisfied with the program and the department as a whole.

**Secondary benefit — increasing safety**

The grant required that the agency develop and implement domestic violence safeguards for the protection of customers and staff. Working in partnership with domestic violence experts from the YWCA of San Diego, DCSS staff implemented a more in-depth screening process that identified domestic violence in 30 percent of child support cases opened between October 2013 and September 2015. Getting more accurate disclosure of domestic violence situations helped staff make sure cases were appropriately flagged. Staff could also provide helpful resources and refer customers for a wide range of supportive services. Many agencies had viewed DCSS as simply a debt collection agency; but the department was able to demonstrate how they work with families and community partners, through the parenting time program, to mitigate family violence.
Checklist for Representing a Reentry Client

Many child support offices work with social service organizations that help parents who are reentering their communities after dealings with the criminal justice system. While child support offices cannot represent customers in court, they often work with legal aid and community-based organizations that do. The Sargent Shriver National Center on Poverty Law offers some tips for legal aid lawyers on how they can help individuals who have been involved with the justice system — Legal Aid with Conviction: How to Combat Barriers to Reentry by Using the Law.

How to start a parenting time program

DCSS offers these suggestions based on feedback from key staff and stakeholders:

- Ensure that court staff and judicial officials support the project beforehand so they can prioritize cases and waive filing fees.
- Designate trained staff to handle domestic violence cases (not all staff will be comfortable with these types of conversations).
- Incorporate parenting time into existing structures when feasible.
- Provide specialized training for teams that will be implementing the parenting time program.
- Ensure staff commitment to the parenting time model by sharing successes as they occur.

For information about this PTOC grantee, contact Anne Kelly at anne.kelly@sdcournty.ca.gov. For general parenting time grant information, email OCSE Grant Officer Michael Hayes at michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov.

VA — Prevent Overdoses through Training and Access to Life-Saving Drug

Editor’s Note: HHS Secretary Thomas Price, M.D., has made combating this country’s opioid crisis one of his main priorities. First responders can often save the victim of an overdose if they administer the lifesaving drug known as Narcan in time. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) recently ran the article, Nationwide opioid epidemic prompts VA to implement life-saving idea, in its Vantage Point Blog. The article describes how leaders at both the Boston VA Health Care System and the regional Veterans Integrated Service Network are training employees to administer Narcan. We have republished part of the blog below to raise awareness around this important initiative. If you have other ideas on ways to help curb the opioid epidemic, contact the Child Support Report editor.

Through VA’s Diffusion of Excellence Initiative, innovators are helping VA prevent Veteran opioid-related deaths by making it easier to deliver life-saving medication.

Opioid overdoses take the lives of thousands of Americans each year, claiming nearly 30,000 in 2014 alone. To complicate matters, Veterans are twice as likely to die from accidental opioid overdose than non-Veterans.

Fortunately, there is a drug, Intranasal Naloxone, known as Narcan, that can effectively reverse opioid overdoses. But Narcan is not typically available at the time of an overdose. A Boston VA Health Care System employee saw an opportunity to improve reaction time, by training nearly 700 Veterans, staff members and VA Police to administer Narcan. They also made Narcan readily available in automated external defibrillator cabinets placed throughout the facility so staff could access it quickly.

Boston VA’s Pam Bellino-Rivera submitted this practical solution and has overseen its implementation at all Boston sites … and the region’s outpatient clinics.

“We saw a number of events where patients were experiencing an opioid overdose,” she said. “There was a delay in administering Narcan while waiting for the ambulance or the medical team to arrive. We needed first responders to have Narcan readily available.”

The results? Since 2014, 98 Veteran lives have been saved as a result of this practice.
Free Books Promote Co-parenting

Adam Fohlen, Services Integration Manager, Montgomery County Child Support Enforcement Agency

Since 2016, United Way of the Greater Dayton Area and the Montgomery County, Ohio, Child Support Enforcement Agency have distributed free, age-appropriate books to families participating in the county’s Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC) program. PTOC is a federal grant program that enables unmarried parents to establish a parenting time order at their administrative support hearing.

Benefits for parents

The FirstBook initiative is a free, convenient service that promotes collaborative co-parenting. Every child participating in Montgomery County PTOC receives a complimentary book each month for 12 consecutive months. We mail copies of the book to each parent to make sure moms and dads see that we treat them equally and to reduce conflict during transitions. FirstBook gives both parents the opportunity to bond and engage with their children during parenting time, and it helps build bridges in their co-parenting relationship.

Proven developmental advantage

FirstBook reading materials are also important for the children’s future success. According to the U.S. Department of Education, children who have parents who read to them at home enjoy a substantial developmental advantage over children who do not. Children between 4 and 5 years old whose parents read to them three to five times a week develop a six-month advantage. Children read to six to seven days a week were almost a year ahead!

Both Montgomery County and United Way are strong proponents of early childhood reading. Our investments, including the FirstBook initiative, are a major reason the Dayton/Montgomery County area was one of only 15 communities nationwide to receive an All-America City Award for helping low-income children achieve early school success.

Additional programs

In addition to FirstBook, United Way of Greater Dayton has provided books to kids in low-access areas through book drives at all Dayton public elementary schools. They also coordinate a “Freedom Schools” summer program that emphasizes an integrated reading curriculum, and they have placed 50 Book Box Libraries throughout the community.

Our agency has also started a new and related book program with Dayton Metro Library. The library provides free Love Them Out Loud boxes (see photo below) to all of our PTOC families with children up to 2 years old. The set includes free books and a library card application so the child can get their own card because it’s never too early to start learning!

Montgomery County’s PTOC initiative and the FirstBook and Love Them Out Loud programs are exceptional examples of how child support agencies and their partners can achieve success by working together to serve their community as one! For more information, contact Adam Fohlen at MCPTOC@jfs.ohio.gov.
Humans now have shorter attention spans than goldfish. We zone out at 8.25 seconds; goldfish will at least give you 9 seconds before they move on. That means we need to know our audience. Who are our customers? Why are they coming to us? Are we giving them the information they need as quickly as possible? Here are two things you can do to learn more about your customers.

Create personas
A persona is a fictional profile you create about a segment of your customers. Through these personas, you gain insight into your customers' needs, wants, goals, frustrations, and feelings they may experience as they interact with your program. Personas can range from simple, high-level profiles to complex, detailed information about your customer.

Personas can help you think about the reasons customers contact you. Parents paying child support have different needs than parents receiving child support. As you build your personas, think about the types of customers you serve. For instance, parents paying child support might want to know how much money they need to pay each month, how to pay it, and what they should do to modify the amount if their circumstances change. Parents receiving support might want to know how much child support to expect every month, how they will receive it, and what to do if it doesn't arrive.

As you think about each persona, ask yourself if the answers to these questions are easily accessible to your customers. If these parents went to your website, how long would it take them to find this information? When parents interact with your office in person, do caseworkers review and update the most commonly asked questions?

Use these sample templates to help develop your personas. After creating the personas, you'll have a better understanding of who your customers are, what they need to accomplish, the challenges they face, and how your program can help mitigate those challenges. For more information on personas, read the Personas 101 article from DigitalGov.

Map the customer journey
In journey mapping, you draw out your customer's experience so you can visually see the highs and lows of their interactions with your program. Journey mapping can help you see inefficiencies or delays with service delivery. Mapping can also show you the before, during, and after experience of your customer's interaction with your program.

For instance, if you were going to map a parent's experience trying to establish a child support order, what would that look like? Think about the before, during, and after experience. The parent might start by looking up the steps online. Is that information easily accessible? Can customers apply online or do they have to visit a child support office to get started?

continued
Once the order is established, does someone explain what happens next? How does that experience influence the parent’s perception of the child support office?

After mapping the experience, you’ll be able to identify possible service delays or pain points, and then prioritize your efforts to improve your customer’s experience with your program. To learn more about journey mapping, read the case study by USA.gov.

The San Francisco Human Services Agency released a study in 2017 that is also a good reference document. It examines low-income families’ experiences with the child care process. Even though it’s not specific to child support, it’s an example of how other human service providers are learning about their customers and making changes to improve their experiences. The study offers six persona templates starting on page 13. Half of the profiles are examples of positive interactions with the service provider; the others are examples of negative experiences.

You’ve seen several examples to get you thinking about this process; however, each child support program is different and customer needs vary. It’s important to do some research and involve others to do this right. Look at your web analytics to see where people go for information, speak with program staff, and interview parents and frontline workers who work closely with your customers. You can even become a customer for a day. Pick up the phone or go to your website and try to complete a task as if you are doing it for the first time. Take notes and see what you discover.

If your child support office has created personas or conducted journey maps for custodial and noncustodial parents, we’d like to hear from you. What were your takeaways? What changes did you make in your process to improve their experience? What insights would you offer other programs?

Contact the Editor at CSR.Editor@acf.hhs.gov to share your story with the child support community.

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**Back-to-School Time — Are the Kids Covered?**

Most school systems across the country have strict vaccination requirements for school-age children. When parents cannot afford medical coverage, children can suffer. The InsureKidsNow.Gov website has a fact sheet called 5 Things Cities Can Do to help families enroll their children in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The fact sheet – developed from a partnership that included Medicaid, CHIP, the Connect Kids to Coverage National Campaign, and the National League of Cities – offers five ways to help reach and enroll children into Medicaid and CHIP by engaging city and local leaders as partners:

- Engage local officials to help educate and direct families to agencies and organizations that can help them enroll.
- Integrate cities into the effort so they can connect organizations and coordinate partnerships.
- Involve cities in marketing and outreach efforts.
- Target outreach through city agencies.
- Have city staff directly enroll families and share information broadly.

For more information on connecting kids to Medicaid and CHIP, visit the InsureKidsNow.Gov website.