

Child Support Report



OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT
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Ten challenges for the New Year



Commissioner's
Voice

In my [previous Commissioner's Voice](#) column, I talked about the three generations in our society and three generations of our child support program and how the generational shifts in our society have impacted the way we do business. I gave examples of how you, the managers and staff in child support agencies, are addressing the changes in our caseload in innovative ways.

The members of the rising generation in our society—and in our program—expect clear information. They expect respect. They expect resources. And they expect results. In OCSE, we are beginning a new national strategic planning process for 2015-2019, involving all state and tribal child support directors. We want to use this process to help us position the child support program for the future. We have

challenges ahead, but also a great commitment to our mission and the people we serve.

What do we need to accomplish as we face the third generation of our program? As we start the New Year, please consider these 10 challenges. We need to:

- 1 Modernize our systems, automate as much as we can, maintain strong security controls, and figure out the right balance between data privacy and data sharing.
- 2 Update our communications, customer service, case management, and service delivery approaches for diverse families to get the best results for this generation.
- 3 Plan for generational succession in our offices as the people who built this program retire.
- 4 Improve interstate enforcement, the last frontier, and develop effective federal/state/tribal/international case processing procedures.
- 5 Modernize our laws, guidelines, and judicial processes, including updating our medical support, policies, and routine use of contempt hearings.
- 6 Set accurate orders based on real income, reduce reliance on imputed income, keep orders accurate, and reduce state debt on the books.
- 7 Pay all of the money we collect to families and address the loss of revenue involved in shifting to 100% family distribution policies.
- 8 Figure out how we leverage and coordinate employment, parenting time, health care, and other services for those parents who need help.
- 9 Make the most of the political credibility we've established due to the work of the last two generations by carrying it into the communities and parents we serve.
- 10 Accomplish all of this with constrained resources.

I know we can do it.

Vicki Turetsky



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Community income tax services bring collections back to Texas

Chris Giangreco

Texas Office of the Attorney General
Child Support Division

The Federal Tax Refund Offset program gives state child support agencies an important enforcement tool. The program's success hinges on noncustodial parents filing tax returns so they can claim their refunds and credits. If the parent has child support arrears, the state can garnish some or all of the refund. Since the program's inception, child support agencies have collected more than \$35 billion this way. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the federal tax refund offset causes some noncustodial parents to stop filing tax returns and claiming refunds because the child support program will intercept the money to pay arrears.

Last year the Texas Child Support Division conducted a pilot program to encourage noncustodial parents who were not filing federal income tax returns to file using community-based, free tax preparation services. The *Bring it Back to Texas* pilot program set its overarching goal to increase the number of lower-income noncustodial parents with child support arrears who file their federal income taxes, and increase federal offset collections and subsequent support to children. A secondary goal of the project was to connect eligible noncustodial parents to free tax preparation services as an alternative to commercial, fee-based services.

Targeting and assessing outreach

The division was able to implement the *Bring it Back to Texas* program through collaboration with community-based, free tax preparation services in Lubbock and Fort Worth. The demonstration targeted employed noncustodial parents who met income eligibility criteria for the free tax preparation services and who had child support arrears.

Child support administrative records and Texas Workforce Commission unemployment insurance wage data helped the division develop a research pool of noncustodial parents who had Social Security wages and child support arrears, and whose names were submitted to the IRS for the federal tax refund offset program. The division collected additional data on the research pool's federal offset eligibility and history of federal tax refund intercepts from 2008 to 2013.

The pilot then identified a sample of the research pool for targeted outreach with informational postcards that encouraged the parents to take advantage of the free tax preparation services in their community. The pilot compared the sample to control groups who were also on the federal tax refund offset program list to track rates of federal offset collections during the 2013 tax filing season. A small sample

of noncustodial parents was called to assess their reaction to the postcard and to understand their motivations in the tax filing. The pilot used the data to assess the impact of this intervention and other potential ways to increase tax filings from noncustodial parents.

Evaluation and results

An evaluation of the pilot program shows that noncustodial parents who received a postcard intervention were as much as 10 percent more likely to have a federal offset than noncustodial parents not mailed a postcard.

Though this effect size is small, it indicates that a simple, inexpensive outreach intervention has the potential to increase the number of noncustodial parents who file taxes and claim federal tax refunds, resulting in increased federal offset collections. The pilot test effects, if applied to the entire Texas Child Support Division caseload, have the potential to increase federal offsets by an estimated \$12 million annually (based on a 5.75 percentage point increase in statewide federal offset collections from FY2012).

The Texas Child Support Division has expanded its pilot for the 2013 tax filing season from two to five regions in the state in hopes to improve this promising strategy and find a cost-effective way to increase arrears collections.

For more information about Texas Child Support Division's Bring it Back to Texas pilot, contact the author at chris.giangreco@texasattorneygeneral.gov.

... a simple, inexpensive outreach intervention has the potential to increase the number of noncustodial parents who file taxes and claim federal tax refunds, resulting in increased federal offset collections

arrears paid, medical support enforcement, delinquency reports, and required federal reporting forms. Caseworkers may also generate general performance reports, as well as create customized documents based on criteria the worker sets. Phase one was successfully implemented in 2012.

Phase two, implemented in May 2013, provides policy and procedure data on a web-based application. Workers now can access up-to-date policy information and procedures uniformly across the state. When workers make changes, the entire child support agency is aware within seconds. Additional features to the web-based application include providing a change request process and workflow and adding frequently-asked-questions.

Why connect parents with Earned Income Tax Credit?

By John Clark
OCSE Region III

Based on the latest data from the U.S. Census (2009), most custodial parents with earned income qualify for the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). The mean total income for custodial parents is \$31,991, and a custodial parent with income below \$36,990 qualifies for the EITC. Also, many state and local employees are eligible.

The average EITC payment is more than \$2,000. However, 20 percent of those eligible never file. Last year, EITC lifted 6.6 million people (half of them children) out of poverty.

In 2013, more than 26 million people received more than \$60 billion from EITC. The average amount of EITC received nationwide was \$2,355.

For specific state statistics on EITC, see the [IRS web page](#). Information on the [OCSE website](#) can help child support agencies increase participation in EITC. The website also has information about the IRS Voluntary Income Tax Assistance Centers located across the country that can help people prepare their tax returns free of charge.

TAX PREPARER TOOLKIT PARTNER TOOLKIT OTHER REFUNDABLE CREDITS MARKETING EXPRESS

We created this new and improved site for our valued IRS partners, employers, government agencies and office, and tax preparers. You can ensure all EITC eligible workers receive the credit they earned and deserve by keeping informed and using the latest tools for marketing, education, and tax return preparation.

IRS's goals for EITC are to increase participation while reducing error. The resources on this site help balance the goals, assisting you in reaching those eligible workers who qualify for the credit and preparing accurate returns which reduces claims made in error.

We welcome your [comments and suggestions](#) about how we can better meet your needs and on improving this site.



The last phase provides the Electronic Case File and includes electronic scanning of case files so the agency can “go green.” The beginning piece of this project phase is set to go live in October 2014. A worker will be able to scan and index paper documents, and then search, view and print.

Technical staff all in-house

Kentucky's capable technical staff is successfully implementing the modernization project in-house. This is enabling a phased approach so they can implement basic functions and add enhancements later.

There was also no constraint of contract terms, such as deliverables based on payments. The technical staff formed a business analysis team so they could analyze and capture requirements and serve as a liaison between the child support agency and the technical staff. The team set a “core” group of four child support staff from large, medium, and small offices, and one person from central office.

An “expanded” group added nine child support staff with the same statewide sampling system from around the state as the core group. The core team provided initial input for recommendations and then would get buy-in and feedback from the expanded group, which would then validate the recommendations and assist with testing and training.

Kentucky's technical staff is an integral part of the state's child support agency and, as a team, sets a platform for success in the child support enforcement program. All have learned that working toward the same goal is more easily accomplished when their vision of the future is the same.

Child Support Report

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Lessons so far: Collaboration helping to end homelessness among veterans

By Margaret Campbell Haynes, Senior Associate
Center for the Support of Families

On a single night in January 2009, more than 75,000 veterans were homeless, according to a joint report from the departments of Housing and Urban Development and Veterans Affairs. The report said 57 percent were staying in an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, and the remaining 43 percent were living on the street, in an abandoned building, or in some other unsheltered place.

That year, President Barack Obama and Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki challenged this country to end homelessness among veterans by the end of 2015. The child support community can play an important role in meeting that challenge because these veterans and their service providers say that child support is one of the top three unmet legal issues for homeless vets.

Consequences of arrears

Many find it very hard to move into permanent housing because they have legal judgments over them related to nonpayment of child support. Some homeless veterans face possible jail time because they have misdemeanor warrants against them for failure to pay child support. Often, veterans incurred the arrears while they were homeless, in a phase of active addiction, or had a serious, untreated mental illness such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. These unresolved child support debts can result in liens against bank accounts, an inability to obtain credit, suspension of driver's licenses, and a disincentive to obtain gainful employment.

Building a partnership

In 2010, the American Bar Association, the VA, and the Department of Health and Human Services (through the Office of Child Support Enforcement) teamed up to establish pilot sites where partners would address the child support issues of homeless veterans. These problems included veterans having suspended driver's licenses, lacking an understanding of the child support order review and modification process, facing large arrears with unrealistic



payment plans, and encountering frustrations with interstate cases when trying to work with different agencies. Even though there was no funding for this, the partners established sites in nine cities: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, San Diego, Seattle, and the District of Columbia.

Deciding who to help

Initially, the teams targeted veterans enrolled with VA specialized homeless services. This method offered continuity by drawing from a population of homeless veterans who were connected to ongoing rehabilitation and support services. This also gave team members better odds of reaching the veteran for follow-ups.

As the project developed, some of the sites could decide whether to expand the target population to include homeless and at-risk veterans from other referral sources. Even though the services model varied among the sites, each one had a hand in the same goal—to help veterans achieve economic stability, which would increase the likelihood that they could get housing.

Lessons learned

The sites have operated for more than two years. Since other locales are interested in developing similar initiatives, OCSE conducted interviews at the pilot sites to identify promising practices and lessons learned. Based on that information, OCSE plans to develop a toolkit to help new locations get started. While it is in progress, the following identifies some of the early recommendations.

The child support community can play an important role in meeting the challenge to end homelessness among veterans because these veterans and their service providers say that child support is one of the top three unmet legal issues for homeless vets.

continued



Learn about your audience: The military has its own culture and lingo. A useful document for child support workers is [A Support and Resource Guide for Working with Military Families](#), published by the National Resource Center for Healthy Marriage and Families. When working with homeless veterans, you also need to understand the dynamics of individuals who “live in the shadows”—whether that isolation is by choice. For more information about veterans who are homeless, visit the VA website (<http://www.va.gov/homeless/>).

Take the temperature of the community: Identify existing service providers to veterans. You may be incredibly passionate about helping veterans with their child support issues; however, if veterans are not accustomed to working with the child support agency, you might be more effective using a trusted service provider, rather than the child support agency, as the “gateway” to child support.

Determine your scope and goals: Pilot sites initially targeted homeless veterans enrolled with VA homeless services. Over time, some of the pilot sites expanded to serve all veterans who are homeless. Pilot site participants also recommend that agencies consider serving all veterans, not just homeless veterans, if they are thinking about starting a veteran initiative and have the resources.

Identify funding sources: The Seattle legal partner, the Northwest Justice Project (NJP), creatively funded legal services through federal, state, and private sources. An Equal Justice Works AmeriCorps legal fellowship grant allowed NJP to hire a recent law school graduate to work solely on veterans issues. A King County, Washington, Veterans and Human Services Levy provided funding toward the Veterans Project attorney. During the first year, NJP also received a state start-up grant from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs and financial support from the Washington State Bar Association’s Legal Assistance to Military Personnel section. Finally, the program developed a private funding stream with a small family foundation that had members with military service.

Ensure your reach does not exceed your capacity to deliver: Credibility is critical because veterans often distrust the government. Don’t promise something you can’t deliver. For example, be realistic about the options your state offers for arrears management. If you hold monthly legal clinics, make sure they are consistently offered.

Conduct outreach based on your target audience: If you target homeless veterans, make sure that not only specialized VA coordinators, mental health workers, and social workers know about the initiative, but also other key service providers. These include homeless shelters, private service providers such as the Salvation Army, faith-based community organizations, and legal clinics that serve low-income individuals and the homeless.

Identify partners and make sure each partner designates a contact point: The VA has many programs that can help homeless veterans. Child support agencies at the pilot sites worked with several VA programs, including the Mental Health Homeless Program, the Grant and Per Diem program, Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing, Veterans Justice Outreach, and Compensated Work Therapy. Pilot sites gave veterans legal assistance through a variety of means, including a Legal Services funded entity, a local law school clinic, and pro bono attorneys; one pilot site provided legal services through the state’s attorney’s office.

Establish regular organizational meetings: Each of the partners at the pilot sites stressed regular, in-person meetings. They gave the partners an opportunity to share their program’s goals with each other, develop a shared mission, identify successes and barriers to the initiatives, and brainstorm about ways to improve services to veterans.

Give information to partners about referral results:

Many VA and legal partners expressed frustration that they didn’t receive much feedback on their child support referrals. Most had the veteran sign authorizations that let the partners exchange case-specific information, so the lack of information was not due to confidentiality concerns. Even if the agency was not able to provide specific case results, the partners would have liked ongoing information about such things as how many orders were modified, the average amount of modification, how many driver’s licenses were reinstated, how many cases were closed, and how much arrearage was “forgiven.”

Identify what you want to measure, who will measure it, and how: All of the pilot sites reported limited collection of evaluation data. Reasons varied but included lack of administrative support, funding to conduct an evaluation study, and clarity among the partners as to what to measure and who was in the best position to collect information.

Collect stories: Statistics are great, but what resonates is the personal impact. Did the initiative help the veteran reconnect with his or her family? Did the child support assistance help the veteran obtain employment or housing? Is the veteran less anxious now that his or her child support concerns have been addressed?

Learn more

Information from the pilot sites offers insight into how other child support programs can develop collaborations that remove barriers and improve veterans’ abilities to address outstanding child support issues. For more information, contact OCSE’s Michael Ginns at michael.ginns@acf.hhs.gov.

Veterans can get information about the Affordable Care Act at the VA website at <http://www.va.gov/health/aca/>.



Washington partners with statewide services to connect veterans to wealth of resources

By June Johnson
Washington State Department of Social and Health Services
Division of Child Support

The Washington State Division of Child Support frequently has contact with customers who served in the military and may be eligible for federal and state services and benefits. Often, these individuals do not even know that these potential benefits exist.

The division's ongoing partnership with the state Department of Veterans Affairs identifies resources for education, training, and financial and professional development programs. Washington has about 603,000 veterans and 2 million family members. By improving child support processes and experiences, the partnership is improving the economic stability of these families.

"Helping those who have served our country in the military is not only the right and noble thing to do, it is also good business practice in the world of child support," says Washington Division of Child Support Director Wally McClure. "Working to help veterans find employment not only benefits them, but also gives former service members the ability to help support their children financially."

The division's efforts to serve veterans and their families include:

- Assigning 13 experienced support enforcement officers throughout the state as veteran liaisons to enhance access to the child support program and be a resource and connection to the military community.

- Dedicating an internet page that lets s connect with state VA and division activities as they relate to veterans or the military community. The site can help them locate employment and educational opportunities as well as resources. The site also offers guidance on how to register an out-of-state custody order in Washington.
- Developing a brochure to help veterans get all the benefits that they have earned and assist them with their child support issues.
- Joining the Washington Finance Alliance, a group facilitated by Army OneSource. Army OneSource created the state-level alliance to improve services and support for the service members, veterans, and their families. The alliance members are state agencies and associations, educational institutions, and first responders. They provide education, prevention workshops, and resources that establish lifelong responsible financial behaviors.
- Facilitating community partnership meetings with Veterans Affairs and community-based organizations such as Consejo and El Centro De La Raza that serve predominately Hispanic veterans.
- Conducting outreach to correctional facilities that include incarcerated veterans.
- Working with veteran service organizations, including the National Association for Black Veterans, American Legion, VFW, AMVETS, Blinded Veteran Association, Disabled American Veterans, VET Centers, and RallyPoint6.

"Working to help veterans find employment not only benefits them, but also gives former service members the ability to help support their children financially."

Wally McClure, Director Washington Division of Child Support

continued ►

- Participating in veteran Stand Down events throughout the state and attending training through Army OneSource Resource Center and the Veteran Training Center. The division also attends service provider conferences, Women Veteran conferences, and task force meetings, and has developed contacts with the Small Business Administration-Veteran Business Outreach Center.
- Attending events such as the Hire America's Heroes Career Day at Safeco Field, community job fairs, and participating in the Lilac/Armed Forces Parade in Spokane, that honors our fallen soldiers and their families.
- Providing real-time access to child support case records during outreach events, which provide case specific assistance to the veterans and family members.
- Routinely attending Veteran Court sessions and receiving referrals from the VA representative to the court on participants who have child support issues in Washington. The court contacts the division's child support liaisons directly if they become aware of any participants with child support issues.

The division is also involved with active service personnel, especially those returning from overseas deployment. Through the Army Career and Alumni Program on Joint Base Lewis-McChord, the division provides employment information, attends Fort Lewis and VFW job fairs, and conducts informational interviews for interested service members.

Staff members are active on Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, WA, where they attend Yellow Ribbon Events, and work with Army One Source and the Fairchild Family Support Service. The division will also start giving presentations to the Fairchild Readiness Center Transition Assistance Program later this year.

"We remain committed to serving those who have served," says McClure, "especially when it results in connecting parents with their children and enhancing their ability to support them financially and emotionally."



44%

The Washington State Division of Child Support thanks veterans, active duty service members, and their families for their sacrifice and service to our country.

For further information, contact Adolfo Capestany at acapestany@dshs.wa.gov

Maine's success story

During a recent collaborative event at a VA hospital, the Maine Division of Support Enforcement had an opportunity to assist a veteran obligor with a complex arrears issue involving two cases and two custodial parents, with orders from two venues.

The veteran had posed case-specific questions to the division during the joint child support presentation. She was clearly aggravated by the continuous turn-a-round and the backlash of homelessness she equated to her arrears. The division invited her to chat off-line after the meeting about her case. Initially, she was very apprehensive and even a bit defensive; however, both Jeff Young and Tracy Quadro from the state child support division engaged her intently and politely while she told her story.

Bottom line: On further investigation, Maine will adjust the parent's debt from roughly \$19,500 to \$3,000 following review of a 2009 Probate Order that included erroneous accrual calculations tied to her divorce in 2002. Both the custodial and noncustodial parents are satisfied with the results.

—*Rochelle Phillips, OCSE Region I*

44% Of active duty members are parents and 43% of Reserve and National Guard members are parents.

San Francisco serves those who served our country

By Catherine Sachs, Child Support Professional
San Francisco Department of Child Support Services Outreach Unit

Military members who are transitioning to veteran status frequently face decreased income and a high risk of unemployment. According to OCSE's [Child Support Participation in Stand Down Events](#) fact sheet, veteran noncustodial parents are likely to have higher child support arrears than their non-veteran counterparts—27 percent higher on average.

Facts like these prompted the director of the San Francisco Department of Child Support Services, Karen Roye, to challenge the staff of the department's Outreach Unit to find ways to connect with and help local veterans with child support issues.

As a member of the outreach unit, I began to look for ways to make the connection. An internet search led me to Elizabeth Brett, Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. I asked for a meeting, and within about a month teamed up and began collaborating on a monthly child support workshop at the San Francisco VA Downtown Clinic.

The workshop takes place on the third Thursday of each month. The VA helps advertise the workshop by sending out announcements to VA staff, who then tell their clients and patients about it.

Challenge of child support debt

Many of the vets I see are homeless and suffer from—by their own admission—mental and physical challenges and histories of drug and alcohol abuse. Very few receive veterans' pensions. Nearly all those who seek help have large arrears balances, and some have ongoing current orders.

John (names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals), a vet I saw in November 2013, must pay \$3,200 per month under an order established many years before he became unemployed, homeless, and living off food stamps.

Ricardo, a vet I saw in late 2012, was seeing half of his \$1,200 Social Security Disability Insurance benefits garnished for arrears owed to the government, leaving him with only \$600 for food, clothing, shelter and transportation.

I help vets like John and Ricardo by assisting with applications for the state's "compromise of arrears" program, referring them to the local Family Law Facilitator's Office for legal help, and serving as a liaison between the vet and the child support agency (when out-of-state) handling the case.



Branching out

In April 2013, the San Francisco Superior Court established a special court calendar for veterans who are going through the criminal justice system. Allyson West, the coordinator for the San Francisco Community Justice Center, contacted us to find out if we would be interested in providing onsite services for vets at the newly established court calendar proceedings. In early December, we visited the courthouse and observed the proceedings. We expect to begin offering onsite services this month.

Lessons learned

Now more than a year since we began outreach to the veteran population, we have learned some lessons.

The biggest one for me is to always be upfront with veterans about the work they will have to put in themselves. In some cases, matters can be resolved with very little work on the part of the veteran; at other times the veteran must make the effort to see the attorneys at the local Family Law Facilitator Self-Help Center and attend court hearings.

The next most important lesson I learned is: "Don't reinvent the wheel." Others out there who have been working with veterans longer than I have possess a wealth of experience. To tap into that knowledge, I joined a network hosted by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement called the Veterans and Military Liaison Network—a nationwide association of 160 (and growing) child support staff members who are interested in learning ways to increase the child support program's services to military families and veterans.

continued



I recently participated in the network's conference call and spoke about my experiences and the struggles some vets are facing in child support. I got some great feedback and new ideas on how to better assist these vets. If you are interested in joining the network, please contact Thom Campbell at thom.campbell@acf.hhs.gov.

When it comes to veterans and the child support program, we have the difficult task of balancing the financial needs of families with the limitations and challenges some vets face. Tailored outreach and onsite services can go a long way to gaining the trust and cooperation of the veterans who bravely served our country. For me, it's been a privilege and a pleasure to be able to help these vets, and by doing so, help their families.



Catherine Sachs helps a veteran at the San Francisco VA Downtown Clinic

Community Perspectives

New approach to reduce reincarceration and joblessness among adults with criminal histories

By Henry Rosen and Phoebe Potter
Council of State Governments Justice Center

Each year, millions of adults leave prison and jail or begin probation or parole lacking the supports they need to find and keep a job. Corrections, reentry, and workforce professionals have long recognized the critical role of employment in helping these individuals avoid future involvement with the criminal justice system, yet have lacked an integrated, evidence-based strategy for improving both job readiness and successful transitions from correctional facilities.

“Large numbers of individuals with criminal histories come through the doors of public employment service agencies every day,” says Denise O’Donnell, Director of Bureau of Justice Assistance. “If we want to ensure our resources are used effectively to keep these individuals out of prison and jails and in the workforce, we have to reexamine the way the corrections and employment fields work together to prepare these people for reentry to their communities after incarceration.”

Eric Seleznow, Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor, says, “Working together to ensure formerly incarcerated individuals have access to effective workforce services that help them obtain and retain good jobs will strengthen local communities, offer them a new chance at success and contribute to reducing the rate of recidivism.”

Best use of scarce resources

To help corrections, reentry, and workforce service providers forge strategic partnerships, the Council of State Governments Justice Center published a white paper titled [“Integrated Reentry and Employment Strategies: Reducing Recidivism and Promoting Job Readiness.”](#) The document provides guidance on how systems can make the best use of scarce resources by using objective, assessment-based approaches that take into account individuals’ risk of future criminal behavior, levels of job readiness, and their need for services. The paper includes:

- An overview of the “Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) principles,” which are used by criminal justice professionals to identify individuals’ risk of recidivism and to allocate resources and deliver tailored services accordingly.
- A summary of workforce development program components for improving employment outcomes for hard-to-employ individuals, particularly for adults with criminal records.
- Five principles of effective service delivery that can be applied to employment programs to address the distinct needs of adults involved in the corrections system.
- A new “Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool” to help guide the decision making of workforce and corrections policymakers and practitioners.

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This tool is based on two key dimensions—the risk of reincarceration and job readiness—to assess individuals being released from prison or jail or who are under community supervision. Four groupings result from these two assessments, and each can be tied to a combination of corrections and supervision policies, employment program components, and service-delivery strategies.

Complementing the paper’s findings, the Justice Center unveiled its new one-stop online toolkit on reentry and employment, which houses the latest information on legal, policy, and other common barriers faced by the reentry population, as well as tools and resources to help policymakers and practitioners understand how to address these barriers.

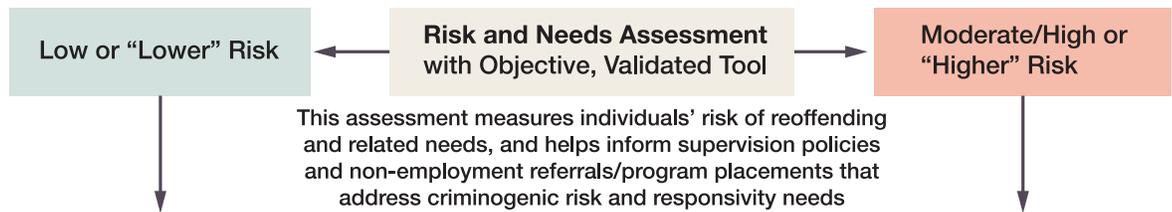
By taking an integrated approach to reducing recidivism and joblessness, public and private entities can work together to link individuals who have been involved with the corrections system to jobs. Helping them succeed can

support families and children, promote public safety, reduce the staggering costs to taxpayers for reincarceration, and increase contributions to the tax base to support the cost of community services.

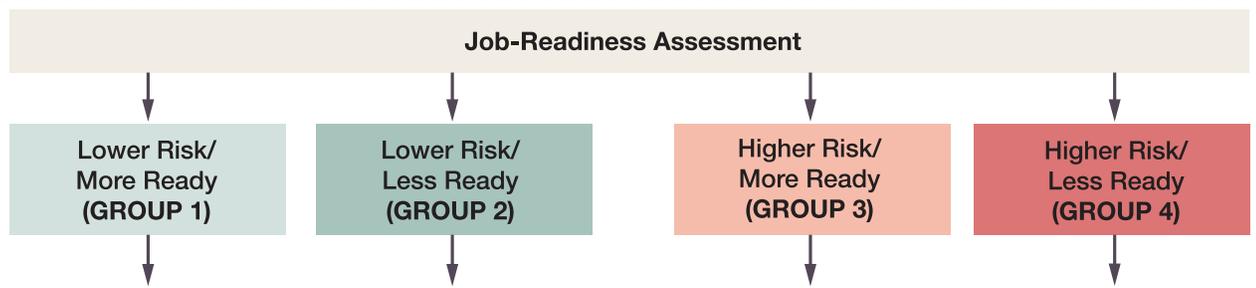
The white paper and tools were developed in partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, and the Annie E. Casey Foundation, with additional guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration, the Center for Employment Opportunities, and Public/Private Ventures. For more information, visit the Justice Center website for the [reentry and employment project](#).

The Resource-Allocation and Service-Matching Tool

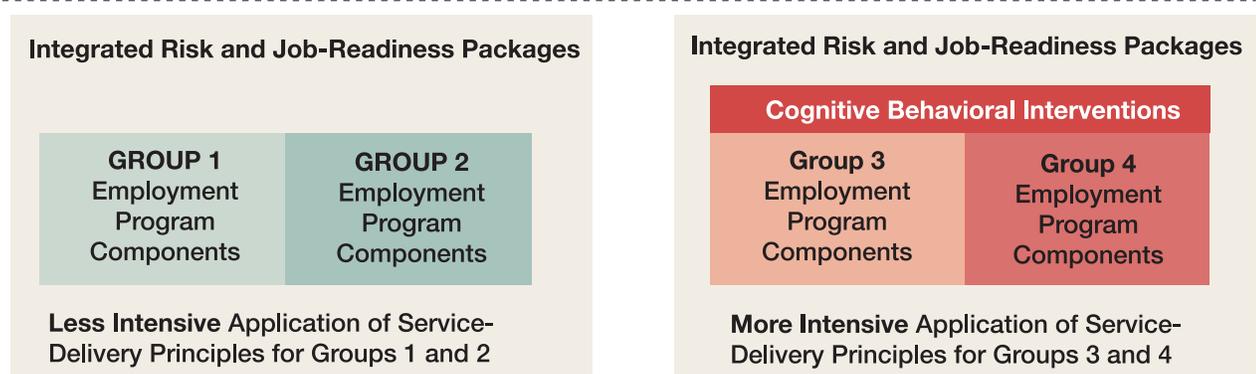
Step 1: Assess Risk and Needs



Step 2: Assess Job Readiness



Step 3: Deliver Targeted Services



OCSE partners with Bureau of Prisons

Several regional OCSE locations are partnering with the Bureau of Prisons to help parents in prison manage their child support arrears; pay consistent support; improve their involvement with their children, family and community; and reduce recidivism.

This partnership with the North Central Region of Bureau of Prisons began in late 2012, with OCSE's Region VII (Kansas City) and parts of Regions V (Chicago) and VIII (Denver). OCSE regional staff has shared OCSE research

and guidance documents to help the Bureau of Prisons staff understand child support. The material included the *Turner v. Rogers* Supreme Court case, OCSE fact sheets, and Judicial Bench Cards. OCSE and the Bureau of Prisons staff have collaborated on integrating basic child support information into the pre-sentencing orientation sessions hosted by the Bureau of Prisons and U.S. Probation for federal offenders and their families.

State child support staffs are playing a vital role as they implement order modification or debt compromise programs, work closely with Bureau of Prisons reentry managers, and share best practices with each other and with prison officials. Several states, including Illinois, Indiana, and Minnesota have active prison programs and provide services to parents on-site at federal and state correctional facilities.

One goal of the OCSE and Bureau of Prisons partnership is to replicate these programs by facilitating local staff introductions and partnership-building.

To learn more about collaborating with corrections facilities, please contact Diane Degenhart, Michael Vicars, or Barbara Lacina.

Barbara Lacina, OCSE Region VII



Federal Interagency

REENTRY COUNCIL

Why is OCSE involved?

A parent in prison is likely to have a child support obligation because the majority of federal and state prisoners have a minor child. Improving services for incarcerated, reentering, and unemployed parents can help make child support a reliable source of income for children.

For this and many other reasons, HHS is a participating agency on the [Federal Interagency Reentry Council](#), and OCSE is involved in its staff work group and leads a child support subcommittee.

Find out more about the child support subcommittee in a [Snapshot report](#) at the Council of State Governments Justice Center. It explains that "one priority project moving forward is the creation of a simple, accessible state-by-state guide to child support

modification processes." A project to create this resource is well underway with help from OCSE regional offices as well as states and territories. Look for its release soon.



New SSA reentry website

SSA launched a reentry website, [Benefits After Incarceration: What You Need to Know](#), to help people successfully transition back into the community. The homepage includes links to [resources for children of incarcerated parents](#) and [Sesame Street toolkits](#) to help children cope.

New Hampshire law brings child support guidelines closer to income shares model

By Timothy Frazier
New Hampshire Division of Child Support Services

July 1, 2013, made history for the New Hampshire Child Support Guidelines; it was the effective date for one of the most significant legislative changes since the guidelines' 1989 enactment.

Unlike several other states, authority over the guidelines rests with the legislature rather than an administrative agency or the court system. The original guidelines legislation was based on recommendations by a Governor's Commission to create an income shares model formula that would include the obligee's income in the support calculation. However, the percentage of income devoted to child support would depend on the number of children.

Throughout its history, the original legislation was considered an income shares model, but in reality the formula more closely resembled a percentage of income model because it applied a flat percentage of net income devoted to support based on the number of children of the parties—25 percent for 1 child, 33 percent for 2 children, 40 percent for 3 children, and 45 percent for 4 or more children. The obligee's income had minimal impact.

The July 2013 changes establish guidelines more consistent with the income shares philosophy that is based on the premise that a child should receive the same percentage of total parental income the child would receive in an intact household. The formula considers the combined income of the obligor and obligee in determining the total amount that should be spent on a child and then divides that amount in proportion to each parent's share of the total income.

Earlier recommendations

In 2008, the New Hampshire Division of Child Support Services contracted with University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension to conduct the federally required four-year guidelines review of whether the application of the support guidelines resulted in "appropriate child support award amounts." The university team of economists and graduate students performed extensive research including stakeholder interviews, site visits to other states, and reviews of various guideline models and data. They submitted their report, 2009 New Hampshire Child Support Guidelines

Review and Recommendations (the "UNH Report"), on March 20, 2009.

The report recommended six amendments to the guidelines, but because the recommendations were not addressed within any comprehensive legislation, only three have been enacted into law. Along with the guidelines change, the "self-support" reserve was increased, and the cap on the work-related childcare deduction was eliminated in 2010.

The primary recommendation was to change to a formula more consistent with the income shares philosophy. The university developed a table that outlined how the percentage of net income devoted to child-rearing expenditures would decrease as the total combined income increased. The sliding scale amounts devoted to support were based on economic data studies of actual family expenditures rather than a flat percentage of income based on the number of children. The UNH Report team concluded that its guideline table reflected the recent studies of child-rearing expenditure, which show that a decreasing percentage of total income was expended on children as the total income increased. The report showed that the new formula would reduce the need for court deviation from the guidelines, as the percentages were based on actual estimates of child-rearing expenditures.



The legislative change

The university's argument was that their numbers were supported by economic studies that reflected actual child-rearing expenditures. The table, however, was not enacted as proposed. Many of the percentages of combined income devoted to support were modified during the legislative process. It is not clear what impact, if any, the legislative modifications will have, especially on the issue of court deviations.

The end result

The new formula, with its underlying income shares philosophy, has made the obligee's income more relevant in the support calculation, but the changes have generated little reaction among the population served by the Division of Child Support Services. The university's recommendations that have yet to be enacted in law may be the subject of future legislative action.

See the [National Conference of State Legislatures website](#) to learn more about child support guideline models.