



Knowledge WORKS!

Checklist for Employment Services Implementation and Program Planning

Resources for child support-led employment programs

How to use the checklist

This checklist can help a child support program implement a new, or enhance an existing, employment services program for noncustodial parents. It identifies most of the decisions that should be considered during planning and implementation.

The checklist is not intended to be an exhaustive list of everything that program planning should include. It is not necessary to include all items in an implementation plan or in a related employment program, and there is no particular order to the sections.

[Contact an OCSE subject matter](#) expert if you have any questions about this checklist or want help planning or implementing your program.

About *Knowledge Works!*

OCSE believes the option to implement noncustodial parent employment services is a good strategy to increase participation in the workforce, improve compliance with court-ordered child support payments and provide low-income Americans with a path out of poverty to financial self-sufficiency.

If you are a child support agency interested in implementing a new, or enhancing an existing noncustodial parent employment program, OCSE can help!

Knowledge Works! resources for child support-led employment programs highlight what's worked in other jurisdictions and provides access to subject matter experts at OCSE.

FUNDING

Determine funding sources. Examples include:

- Temporary/demonstration grant
- IV-D Incentive funds through the use of an exemption request
- TANF funds
- Workforce related funds
- 1115 waiver
- Other (explain below)

POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Assess policy changes or legislation necessary to allow implementation of an employment services program

Update policy, as needed

Plan integration of employment services program into existing child support operations and policies

Propose or enact legislation as necessary

Determine if the state needs to request an exemption from any mandatory laws and procedures under section 466 of the Social Security Act or a section 1115 waiver of program requirements, as set forth in the Act

PROGRAM DESIGN / STAFFING

Determine whether to operate employment services program statewide or pilot in select jurisdiction(s)

Consider expansion of employment services program in subsequent years

Determine number of noncustodial parents to serve in a year and plans for achieving the desired capacity

Consider inclusion of peer support groups in employment services program

Allocate staff resources to appropriately serve employment services program participants

Designate which agency will provide intensive case management services to assist parents with significant barriers to employment and payment of child support. Examples include:

- Child support staff
- Partner agency staff
- Both child support agency and partner agency staff

Select child support representative to lead the implementation of employment services program on behalf of the child support agency for related aspects

Consider process for naming employment services program and finalizing name

REFERRALS / OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Identify stages of case processing to allow enrollment of targeted noncustodial parents into the employment services program. Examples include:

- Intake
- Establishment
- Review and adjustment
- Enforcement

Establish plans, messaging, and methods to comprehensively target those stages for engagement and consider additional future stages

Establish plans, messaging, and methods to engage custodial parents for acceptance of program and as a potential ally for noncustodial parent enrollment and retention

Identify referral sources, which may include:

- Child support staff
- Tribal child support programs
- Other human/social service agencies such as TANF, Child Welfare, SNAP, Child Care
- Legal staff and attorneys
- Court personnel
- Workforce agency
- Fatherhood programs
- Reentry programs/Probation/Parole
- Other community-based organizations

Consider establishing a partnership with courts or administrative hearing officers to assist with enrollment and monitor employment services program participation

If appropriate, establish partnership for incorporating this into court or administrative hearings. Examples include:

- Offer to any and all qualified parties during any child support related hearing
- Offer only during enforcement related hearings
- Offer only during establishment related hearings
- Offer on a voluntary basis and participation is encouraged
- Use for court-ordered participation as part of show cause or contempt proceedings
- Incorporate a problem-solving court component and include more frequent review hearings than normal
- Incorporate a problem-solving court component and include alternative sentencing options if participant fails to follow through on employment services or referrals

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Determine eligibility criteria, in addition to having an open child support case, for enrollment. Examples include:

- Paternity established
- Child support order established
- Owes a current child support obligation
- Pays only a certain percentage or less of the established order
- Owes arrears
- Owes both current and arrears
- Must live in the state or a specific jurisdiction
- All intergovernmental cases
- Case considered for court or related administrative hearing intervention due to failure to pay
- Court-ordered participation
- Early intervention cases prior to applying other enforcement remedies

Consider using the automated child support system to identify eligible cases, target participants for enrollment in employment services program and establish plans accordingly. Examples include:

- A system-generated specific indicator or flag for applicable cases
- Establishing reporting parameters for cases that meet the target population and producing related reports
- Identifying cases pending automated enforcement remedies
- Identifying newly established cases with no verified employer

Consider using caseload stratification strategies to segment caseloads and isolate appropriate cases for employment services program. Examples include:

- Establishing specialized caseloads based on case characteristics that meet the target population and providing these enhanced child support services
- Assigning child support staff to work on specialized caseloads based on their interests and talents
- Training for staff to develop the skills for working a specialized caseload

Establish plans to market and promote employment services program internally, with stakeholders, and with the community

Establish plans to conduct child support outreach on topics such as income withholding orders and the review and adjustment processes, to employment program customers, partners and providers

PARTNERSHIPS

Identify the key stakeholders to engage for the success of the employment services program.

Examples include:

- Child support staff
- Tribal child support programs
- Other human/social service agencies such as TANF, Child Welfare, SNAP, Child Care
- Agency leadership
- Department leadership
- Governor's office
- IT services
- Legal staff and attorneys
- Court personnel
- Workforce agency
- Fatherhood programs
- Reentry programs/Probation/Parole
- Other community based organizations
- Parents

Consider providing referrals for the employment program that specifically help noncustodial parents who have a history of incarceration or who are on probation or parole

Consider plans to use and promote the bonding program for employers who accept new hires with a criminal record

Establish referral partnership with vocational rehabilitation, fatherhood, parenting time, access and visitation, domestic violence, substance use, and mental health service providers in the local community

Establish plans to build consensus and obtain buy-in with these key stakeholders

Consider, and if appropriate, establish plans to have an employment services program representative present at child support court hearings

Develop plans to include employment services partners in staffing meetings to discuss parent progress and related engagement strategies

SERVICE DELIVERY

Identify enhanced child support services to incorporate to maximize success. Examples include:

- Expedited review and adjustment of orders for program participants
- Reinstatement of driver's licenses that have been suspended for nonpayment
- Suppression or suspension of certain child support enforcement remedies while a participant is actively engaged in the program
- Compromise state-owed arrears in exchange for program participation, employment, or payment of child support
- Gradient income withholding if appropriate and allowable
- Intensive child support case management
- Facilitate dialogue with the parent who's owed arrears

Establish plans to develop these enhanced services for the employment services program

Identify and establish plans to secure the provider(s) of the employment services. Examples include:

- Local workforce agency/American Job Center
- Community college
- Local nonprofit agency
- Local for-profit agency
- Child support agency
- Other

Determine key deliverables from the employment services provider

Consider and, if appropriate, determine types of transportation assistance to provide through the employment services program. Examples include:

- Bus or train passes
- Driver's license reinstatement fees such as for when the driver's license was suspended for nonpayment of child support
- Gas cards or gas vouchers
- Gift cards or other forms of payment for ride share apps
- Shuttle service – partner organization provides transportation to and from related services

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Identify methods to tailor employment services to meet the needs of rural areas, if needed

Identify the employment related services that will be provided. Examples include:

- Job search assistance
- Resume writing
- Interviewing skills, including how to address periods of unemployment or incarceration during interviews
- Work supports such as interview clothing, work clothes, or tools
- Job placement including short-term paid work experiences
- Job placement
- Job retention
- Partnership for short-term training
- Other

Establish plans for developing and providing the services from the above list

Consider including a financial education component

Determine if the program provides child support and employment services in a one-stop approach by co-locating child support agency and employment services program staff.

Examples include:

- Co-located at the child support agency
- Co-located at the workforce agency or other community location
- Co-located at court or administrative hearings

Identify procedures to gain consent for information to be shared among employment services program partners

Determine communication strategies so all project staff, partner organizations, and the courts can readily exchange information about employment services program participants, receiving updates on parent activities and progress (or lack thereof)

Define successful completion of the employment program to cue exit and maximize participation and service capacity

Determine a point to stop providing employment services due to noncompliance or to pursue court or administratively ordered participation or other sanctions

PROGRAM EVALUATION

Determine an evaluation component that measures the impact of the employment services program on any of the five incentive-based performance measures. Examples include:

- Paternity and order establishment outcomes
- Arrears payment rates or reduction of arrears balances
- Payments toward percent of current support obligations
- Cost effectiveness

Decide whether to include a comprehensive cost-benefit analysis in the evaluation of the employment services program

Consider and if appropriate, establish plans to evaluate the effectiveness of the employment services provider, case management contract providers (if different), and the overall success of the employment services program