



## MTS History

**2000:** Interim final rule for tribal child support programs published

**2002-2005:** Tribal Systems Workgroup studied feasibility of automating tribal child support programs, developed essential system requirements, and created the general system design

**2004:** Final rule for tribal child support programs published (45 CFR Part 309)

**2006:** Feasibility study, market study and cost-benefit analysis for MTS completed

**2007:** Concurrence of ACF Assistant Secretary to build MTS; software development begins

**2009:** Forest County Potawatomi Community selected to pilot test the MTS

**2010:** Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma joins pilot testing; tribal system regulations published (45 CFR Part 310)

**2012:** MTS Pilot ended

**2013:** EBCI begins installation as the first OCSE-supported tribe

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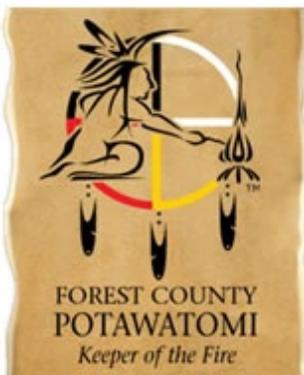
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## Forest County Potawatomi Community Milestone

*By Jacquelyn Pische, Director, FCPC - Tribal Child Support Association*



I was recently speaking with Chris Meike from Sysrad, Inc. on the status of the Forest County Potawatomi Model Tribal System (MTS), and I realized how far we have come since 2004 when the Model Tribal System Workgroup was formed. I learned a lot from the workgroup members and respected the individual IV-D programs operating within sovereign tribal nations as unique. All the workgroup members, including OCSE, ACF and the tribal representatives, had one common vision, which

was to create an automated system that could meet the needs of many tribal IV-D programs.

In 2008, it was an honor for the Forest County Potawatomi Tribal IV-D Agency to be chosen as the first IV-D program to pilot the MTS. The child support, accounting, and IT staff have worked many long hours during the three-year pilot, and on October 1, 2012, the Forest County Potawatomi Tribe went “live” on the MTS. To date the Forest County Potawatomi IV-D Agency has converted 639 cases involving over 1,800 participants and distributed more than \$1,862,600 in child support to our clients in both check and direct deposit formats using the MTS. The Forest County Potawatomi IV-D and accounting staff reported that the MTS has improved the way they do business. For the child support staff, it has freed up time to spend with clients.

As with any automated system, there is always work to be done. The Forest County Potawatomi IV-D Agency, the Modoc child support program, and Sysrad continue to document and fix system errors that are reported by users and meet often to discuss the priority issues. Forest County Potawatomi is working on a design modification, *Manual Bank Reconciliation*, that will allow users to manually accept an item from a bank statement when the item does not match MTS data or comes over incorrectly. The Forest County Potawatomi Tribe is also working on the *Automated Clearing House (ACH)* design and hopes to be testing this enhancement in the upcoming months along with additional testing for the quarterly and annual required reports and potential interfaces.

We at the Forest County Potawatomi IV-D Agency thank the other tribes for their assistance, patience and guidance during the pilot period.





## MTS Spotlight: High-level MTS Cash Flow

The cash flow within the MTS can be described at a high level using the following five steps:



1. The Batch Creation function supports the initial creation of payment batches. A batch is a group of payments (checks, money orders, cash, etc.) that have been received by the child support agency in a single day. There may be one or more batches in a day. The financial worker should count and total each batch, so that the total number of items and the total dollar amount in the batch are entered on the system along with the individual batch items. The MTS will total and reconcile the amounts entered. The system uses the batch number and batch item number to track payments. Batch creation does not automatically associate the payments with cases on the system; it only records the information on the financial instrument used for payment to prepare for posting and depositing the payments.
2. The Deposit Processing function enables a financial worker to create a bank deposit from a batch of received payments, to view the details and status of the deposit, and to print a deposit slip.
3. The Post Collections function enables a financial worker to assign a particular batch item as a collection from a specific noncustodial parent (NCP). The worker can search for existing approved batches and post those collections to the case. The financial worker may choose to distribute payments proportionally across all of the NCP's cases or to a specified case.
4. The Distribution function automatically allocates the posted payments to the various debts owed by the NCP. These debts may include current support, arrears, fees, or other obligations.
5. The Disbursement function combines payments due to an individual payee and allows the financial worker to initiate the check printing process. The MTS also allows for the creation of an Excel spreadsheet called a Disbursement File, which contains information about the payments being made.

## MTS Definitions



**Current Support** – Amount of support due for the current month. Current Support may include child support, medical support, and spousal support.

**Arrears** – The amount of support that is owed for a prior period of time. Occurs when current support is unpaid.

**Allocation** – Describes how a child support payment is divided between cases when an NCP has multiple cases.

**Distribution** – Describes how a child support payment is assigned to current support, arrears, and other debts owed to the family and/or the tribe or other jurisdiction.

**Disbursement** – Describes the process of combining all the debts owed to one payee and generating a check to be sent



to the payee. A disbursement may also refer to the amount of child support sent to the payee. Disbursement is distinct from “Distribution” in that disbursements are the amounts that are actually remitted to the payee where “distribution” describes how a payment is assigned to various obligations and debts owed by the paying parent.

**Batch** – A numbered and totaled collection of financial instruments (checks, cash, money order, etc.) received as payments to be entered on the system together.

**Batch Item** – A single payment in a batch. A single check with multiple payees must be entered as multiple batch items.

**Federal Tax Offset** – Tax refunds seized by the IRS – can only be used to pay arrears.

**Pass-through** – A fixed amount or percentage of child support payments assigned to the tribe that the tribe gives to the CP.

**Payment or Collection Posting** – The act of associating a batch item with a case or cases and an existing payor on the MTS.

**Unreimbursed Assistance (URA)** – The cumulative amount of TANF grants that a CP has received in excess of the cumulative amount of child support paid on a case. Child support passed through to families receiving TANF assistance must be subtracted from the URA balance. A tribe may not retain child support in excess of URA.

## Meet the MTS Team: Bert LaMarche



This month we are pleased to introduce Bert LaMarche who joined the team a couple of years ago. Currently he is working with Sysrad on automating the management of the MTS using scripting languages, and implementing production servers and database improvements. He has supported MTS application development during the past 2 years as a JAVA developer, report writer and DBMS expert using open source toolsets like Flex, Jasper Reports and MySQL in Eclipse. His expertise lies in developing software solutions for the government including child support and new hire reporting. He has 14+ years of experience building enterprise software solutions in the social service sector. Early in his career he was responsible for the development and architecture to create the first state-wide web site used for new hire reporting and continues to build and implement enterprise software solutions.

Bert started working as a software developer and eventually became a shareware author. He wrote a program to calculate fantasy football stats before such software became so popular. He enjoys reading detective novels, writing code to control robots, and adventuring wherever his busy 11-year-old twin boys take him.

For more information or to offer article ideas

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