Partners in a Winning Team

State and federal partnerships have once again proved to be a winning team for Texas and the families served. The Texas Office of Attorney General (OAG) worked in tandem with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) and its partner, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) of the Department of Defense (DOD), to successfully implement the issuance of electronic wage-withholding orders.

Representatives in Texas worked closely with OCSE and DFAS to streamline the wage-withholding process and increase automation. OAG coordinated with other employer initiatives to consolidate employer records. Now, wage-withholding orders are created and exchanged electronically via the DFAS Kids 1st Application on the OCSE Network.

Phase 1 of the Kids 1st Application was successfully implemented on January 23, 2003. The benefits realized through August 2003 include:

♦ $9.9 million in new collections received from 5,400 initial FPLS changes, as well as the daily Administrative Income Withholdings (AIW).

♦ Savings of $8,150 in mailing costs of AIWs.

♦ Annual savings of $14,670 resulting from the elimination of an average of 1,000 Verification of Employment Letters (VOEL) issued monthly.

♦ More timely payments to custodial parents, since DFAS is now processing AIWs two to four weeks faster than the former manual method.

♦ Automatic generation of an AIW when the Quarterly Wage (QW) or National Directory of New Hires (NDNH) interface indicates that a noncustodial party (NCP) is employed by the military. As a result, the worker interaction formerly required to confirm employment and generate AIWs has been eliminated.

Phase 2 encompassed developing AIW Production and Collection Reports, which are generated monthly at the statewide summary level and by office. In addition, the CSE system employer screen was changed to prevent duplicate entry of DFAS employer records and to expedite user action.

Phase 2 was successfully migrated on May 22, 2003. The benefits gained include:

♦ Users can quickly choose the correct military employer.

♦ Duplicates that have been entered in the past are now prevented.

♦ AIW Production Reports are generated that detail each AIW issued to DFAS and the amount of obligation to be withheld.

♦ Collections Reports are generated monthly that specify collections received for each AIW issued to DFAS.

♦ These reports can be exported into Excel to allow for analysis or sorting by various criteria.

Based on the initial gains already realized, we anticipate that implementation of automated AIWs will help to continually increase child support collections from DFAS for years to come.

For additional information about the Texas implementation, contact:

Ruben Barbosa
State of Texas
Office of Attorney General
Child Support Enforcement Division (038)
PO Box 12017
5500 East Oltorf
Austin, TX 78711-2017
(512) 460-6570
Ruben.Barbosa@cs.oag.state.tx.us

If you would like additional information so you can begin to reap the benefits of increased automation, contact Karen Anthony at kanthony@acf.hhs.gov or Helen Smith at hsmith@acf.hhs.gov.