

## Missouri's Approach to Family Violence for Non-TANF Applicants

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193 or PRWORA) required each State to establish a State Case Registry (SCR). Each SCR is to contain certain information about public child support (IV-D) cases and the people involved in them. In addition, these SCRs are to include information about private child support (non IV-D) orders that have been entered or modified since October 1, 1998 and about the people involved in them. (42 U.S.C. §654A)

One of the required data elements in each SCR is the Family Violence (FV) Indicator. Although States may use different names for this indicator, this field is used both to identify a person who may be at risk of harm from domestic violence or child abuse and, at a minimum, to communicate that safety concern to the Federal government. [42 U.S.C. §654(26)(D); 45 CFR 307.11(f)(1)(x)] This notice permits the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to join States in providing safeguards for people who are in need of protection but who also are a part of child support cases or orders. [42 U.S.C. §653(b)(2)]

The development and implementation of the FV Indicator has raised a variety of issues for States and for OCSE. One issue for States has been how to find out whether people have safety concerns that should prompt the activation of FV Indicators. For a number of States, securing this information for the non-Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) portion of their IV-D populations has presented a unique challenge. The Missouri Department of Social Services, Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE) has shared its approach to collecting information from non-TANF case participants.

Missouri's DCSE developed a new form—*Notice to Non-TANF Applicants: Domestic Violence Services* (CSE-11)—for inclusion in the child support application packets given to people who do not receive public assistance. This notice, shown below, introduces the applicant to the State's domestic violence program. It also allows the person to identify the method of communicating with DCSE that is least likely to jeopardize his/her safety, or that of a child in his/her care.

Dear Parent,

Have you had problems with your current or past spouse or significant other? Are you afraid that person will hurt you or your children if you receive services from the Division of Child Support Enforcement (DCSE)?

If the answer to one of the above questions is "Yes," DCSE may be able to help you.

If you would like more information, please check the appropriate box(es) below and return this form with your completed application for services.

I want to know more about other DCSE services.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_.

My Social Security Number is \_\_\_\_\_.

If you checked the box above, please choose one of the following options:

It is safe for you to call me during the day at:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

You can leave a message for me at:  
\_\_\_\_\_.

It is not safe for you to call me. I will contact you within **seven** days.

I understand that if I do not contact you within seven days, you will enter the address shown on the *Referral/Information for*

Missouri's Procedural Manual gives staff clear instruction about proceeding with the family violence aspects of non-TANF cases after the applicant receives the packet with the above form.

When the applicant does *not* return the notice, the IV-D case proceeds as usual. DCSE assumes that the applicant does not have a safety concern.

If an applicant does complete the form and offers a safe way for DCSE to communicate with him/her, the intake staff will open a case. The intake staff will forward the case to the appropriate unit, and will include a notation to follow-up with the applicant regarding the State's domestic violence program. An FV Indicator also is set for the applicant. However, staff will not enter the applicant's address in the system.

Missouri follows a slightly different course of action when the person indicates that it would be unsafe for DCSE to contact him/her. In these instances, the intake staff person forwards this case to the appropriate unit with a notation about the person's concern. The caseworker sets a tickler for the end of the seven-day period. If the applicant communicates with the caseworker within this time period, they will work together to devise a way to pursue paternity or child support with minimal risk of harm. However, if the applicant fails to contact the caseworker during the seven-day period, DCSE instructs the worker to delete the alert, enter the person's address in the system, set the FV Indicator, and proceed with regular case activities until the participant contacts him/her regarding the domestic violence program.

For more information on the Missouri DCSE policy regarding family violence, contact:

Brenda Waters  
Program Development Specialist  
Missouri Department of Social Services  
Division of Child Support Enforcement  
P.O. Box 2320  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-2320  
(573) 751-4301.

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) offers ongoing technical support for States in various areas related to family violence. For information regarding State and Federal efforts related to child support and domestic violence, contact uSusan Notar at (202) 401-4606 or [snotar@acf.dhhs.gov](mailto:snotar@acf.dhhs.gov). For information related to the Family Violence Indicator and related processes, contact June Melvin Mickens at (301) 847-9495 or [jmickens@tier.com](mailto:jmickens@tier.com).