



# Child Support Report

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

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## OCSE Brings Home Individual and Partner Awards

The Department of Health and Human Services and The Administration for Children and Families honored several OCSE employees and contractors, as well as several collaborative groups that include OCSE members, during annual awards ceremonies in August and October. Below is a list of recipients:



Brian Peeler, center, receives ACF's Outstanding Contractor Award for consistent and outstanding performance leading the Systems Operations Team in OCSE. Speaking at the ACF ceremony, Oct. 5, were ACF Assistant Secretary Dr. Wade F. Horn, right, and HHS Deputy Secretary Alex M. Azar II. Leading the ceremony, HHS Secretary Michael O. Leavitt expressed his sincere thanks to all who work for ACF for their commitment to children and families in America.

### ACF Assistant Secretary's Honor Awards

#### Outstanding Contractor Award:

- The Lewin Group
- Brian Peeler

#### Organizational Team Achievement Award:

- ACF Native American Affairs Workgroup

#### Partnering for HHS Excellence Award:

- Medical Support Collaboration Planning Committee
- ACF Hurricane Disaster Response Team
- Hurricane Disaster Leaders: Leon McCowan, Region VI

#### Exemplary Leadership Award:

- James Travis, Region VI



### HHS Secretary's Distinguished Service Awards

#### ACF Individuals:

- Joseph Bodmer

#### ACF Groups:

- OFA/OCSE TANF/NDNH Data Match Team

#### Length of Service Awards:

- 30 years of service – Nancy Bienia, Edna Bohn, Melvin Bracy, Charlene Butler, Michael Fitzgerald, Anne Gould, David Kasriel, John Kersey, Mary Mitchell, Aubrey Morgan, Richard Sternowski, Maxine Williams
- 40 years of service – Alvee Harrison, Claudette Randall

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Child Support Report online:  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse)



## In California and Nebraska, State Conferences Mark Milestones



**CALIFORNIA CELEBRATES CCSAS** — A participant, left, waves raffle tickets at the California Child Support Training Conference, held Oct. 2-6 in Garden Grove. Darryll Grubbs, right, Attorney at Law/Consultant from Dripping Springs, TX, discusses “Non-IV-D: Why Does it Matter to You?” during a break-out session. The conference theme, “Achieving New Heights,” marked a celebration of the completed Statewide Automated Child Support System (CCSAS). In her keynote address, OCSE Commissioner Margot Bean congratulated all attendees for their hard work toward implementation of CCSAS. She also commended child support’s statewide public affairs operation for making it a priority to present accurate information and a coordinated message about the new CCSAS and Statewide Disbursement Unit to the public and media. Funds raised by the raffle each year are donated to a charity by the California Child Support Directors Association; this year’s beneficiary was the Orange County Child Abuse Prevention Center.



**A SILVER SALUTE IN NEBRASKA** — Past presidents of the Nebraska Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) pose for a photo during a banquet in their honor at the association’s annual conference, Oct. 4-6 in Grand Island. The conference theme, “Silver Going for Gold,” signified a celebration of the association’s 25th anniversary, as well as a look at the past and a vision for the future. From left are: Kay Strong, Richard Spencer, Andrea Clark, Misty Sinsel, William MacKenzie, Robert Huston, Dennis Heide, Lori Bengston (current NCSEA President), Sondra Cluck, Andy Hoffmeister, Wesley Nespor, Roberta Coons, Colleen Lembke, and Elishia Kroll. In her keynote address, OCSE Deputy Commissioner Donna Bonar congratulated the State for receiving the Commissioner’s Teamwork Award for Exemplary Customer Service, presented at OCSE’s 16th National Training Conference in September.

## New Electronic Payment Format ‘Adds a Twist’ To Nebraska Child Support Payment Center

By **Troy Reiners, Director**  
*Nebraska Child Support Payment Center*

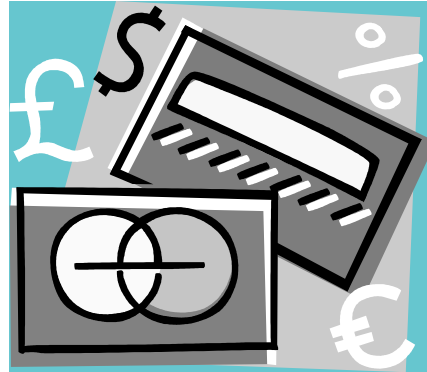
Aug. 22 was a relatively slow Tuesday at the Nebraska Child Support Payment Center. But even days like this can be eventful: Employees could not help noticing that of the \$504,578.36 in payments processed that day, more than 55 percent—over half!—came in electronically.

Just how do we get so many electronic payments?

While we use several familiar formats for electronic payments, we recently began using a new format that’s added a twist to our business: We receive credit card payments through one major credit card company’s Remote Payment and Processing Service (RPPS). These credit card payments are initiated by a noncustodial parent (NCP) when he/she goes online with his/her personal bank to make an online bill payment.

The more familiar formats for electronic payments include credits initiated by an employer and sent to us; or we initiate an ACH debit to an employer/NCP’s bank account. We also receive credits from a credit card company on behalf of NCPs.

Under normal circumstances prior to July 17, we would receive the payments as a paper check drawn on an account set up by the NCP’s personal bank. Just ask those in the processing room or collections—they are not enthusiastic about these types of checks, which can be returned for various banks’ reasons, no differently from other checks.



In July we implemented a pilot program with the bank of our State Disbursement Unit (SDU) to have these payments processed through the RPPS network and sent to us electronically. By doing this, we are actually converting the items into credit card payments, making them more likely to be guaranteed. This helps us avoid returned check fees. In addition, we do not have the paper item to process and image.

We are still working out some issues that will allow these items to pre-fill in our data entry screens. Then we plan to go national and become a bill originator for all the banks across the United States that participate in this program.

Since we implemented this program, we have seen an average of one to three payments per day, with higher numbers at the beginning of the month. This, combined with the outstanding work of our Employer Outreach department, will continue to increase the likelihood that payments come in electronically here at the Nebraska Child Support Payment Center.

*For further information, please contact Troy Reiners at [treiners@treasurer.org](mailto:treiners@treasurer.org) or 402-471-1349. CSR*

## ACF Awards Grants to Improve Child Support Programs, Outcomes

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) recently awarded about \$800,000 for Special Improvement Project grants to nonprofit organizations and a local agency to promote healthy relationships for unwed couples to improve their children's financial security.

ACF also awarded \$696,000 for Section 1115 Demonstration grants in six State child support enforcement agencies for demonstration and research projects.

### Special Improvement Projects

- The Center for Policy Research in Denver—to collaborate with local clinics and child support agencies in San Francisco and St. Louis to present information about paternity, child support, and healthy relationships to low-income, unmarried parents in trusted medical settings.
- The Child and Family Resource Council of Grand Rapids, MI—to provide parenting and life-skills sessions, as well as mediation services, to low-income, single-parent families with young children to test what services and outreach best ensure children receive financial and medical support.
- The Family Service Association of San Antonio—to test strategies that enhance the understanding of unmarried, new parents on paternity establishment, family stability, and healthy relationships.
- The Christian Community Council in Albany, LA, in partnership with the local child support agency and the 21st Judicial District Court—to help noncustodial parents find employment and increase their understanding of the court process and child support.

- The Philadelphia Housing Authority, in partnership with the Department of Public Welfare and Family Court—to provide noncustodial parents with child support and housing eligibility services and referral to job training and placement.

### Section 1115 Grants

Two 2-year projects are designed to reduce the number of cases in which large child support arrearages accumulate by quickly reviewing and adjusting child support orders when the circumstances of a parent changes.

- Maryland—to establish a program for promptly reviewing and, if appropriate, modifying child support orders of incarcerated noncustodial parents.
- District of Columbia—to increase services to incarcerated parents by identifying and offering assistance to those with current support orders.

Two 3-year projects are designed to test significant new procedures to streamline, where appropriate, the interaction of State child support agencies and the courts.

- California—to test alternatives in dispute resolution to increase child support payments, the speed of establishing child support orders and parental satisfaction, as compared with traditional courtroom processes.
- Colorado—to plan, implement, and evaluate a process for electronic filing of child support cases with the court.

Two 3-year projects are designed to improve the collaboration between State child support and child welfare agencies:

*See GRANTS, page 7*



## Electronic Commerce Moves Child Support Collections 'At Speed of Light'

By Neal W. Nelson

*Defense Finance and Accounting Service*

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in cooperation with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) and several States are pioneering a method to send income withholding orders electronically—at the speed of light.

After a pilot program in which several States exchanged orders with DFAS and several other private employers, we can say the program is a complete success! DFAS now has 19 States sending orders electronically. As of July, DFAS is receiving an average of over 3,000 orders per month by electronic means. This represents about 25 percent of the total child support orders DFAS receives each month.

This program is the culmination of what began in 2000. At that time, DFAS implemented the initial version of its *Kids 1<sup>st</sup>* program which allowed States to send individual withholding orders electronically over the Internet.

Then in 2001, DFAS implemented the first version of the batch file process of *Kids 1<sup>st</sup>*. This program allows the States to send DFAS a single batch file containing all of their orders for a particular day. This program includes an acknowledgement file that DFAS sends back to the States to let them know their income withholding order (IWO) has been received and processed. While this program was miles ahead of sending orders by paper, it was unique to DFAS.

In August 2004, OCSE sponsored a working group of representatives from States, government agencies, and other employers to develop

a standard record layout that could be used by States to send orders to all employers, not just government agencies.

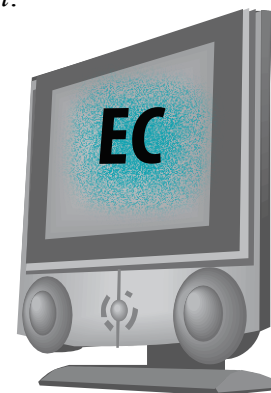
This collaborative effort culminated in what is known today as electronic Income Withholding Order (eIWO). It consists of a standard record layout or *flat file*, as well as a standard acknowledgement file layout that is now being used by a number of States to transmit child support orders to a wide variety of employers.

The benefits to all participants in the process are impressive. DFAS and the States that participate utilize the OCSE network, CSENet, to transmit order and acknowledgment files. This simplifies the connection process since all States are already connected to CSENet. Several States have elected to create a *portal* where employers log in to pick up the orders for their employees. These portals are being used with great success in Texas and Colorado.

In addition to the flat file layout, States can use the XML format, which allows more variable inputs than the flat file.

To get information about the DFAS *Kids 1<sup>st</sup>* program and eIWO, including a Programmer's Guide, contact Megan Huber at 216-204-3375 or [Megan.Huber@dfas.mil](mailto:Megan.Huber@dfas.mil).

*Neal W. Nelson is Deputy Assistant General Counsel, Deputy Director, Garnishment Operations, DFAS. His e-mail address is [Neal.Nelson@dfas.mil](mailto:Neal.Nelson@dfas.mil). CSR*



## Investigations Prompt Full Payments For Four Families Across U.S.

In recent months, OCSE's nationwide Project Save Our Children Task Force led to full child support payments from noncustodial parents for cases in Nevada, Iowa, Virginia, and Nebraska.

### Crossing the Lines

On Aug. 31, the Nevada Child Support Enforcement Program received \$123,000 from a noncustodial father residing in both Alabama and Indiana, after investigations by Federal prosecutors and the Washoe County District Attorney's Office led to his arrest in Alabama. The father has two children; one is emancipated and one resides with the custodial parent in Nevada.

### First Female

In Iowa's first case to proceed to sentencing with a female defendant, a noncustodial mother has paid \$31,000 for her two children—\$25,000 in arrears and \$6,000 toward future payments. She had made payments toward her obligation since her arrest in early 2005, when she had concerns that the debt would interfere with her getting a job as a law enforcement officer. The parent still is paying support for the younger child through mandatory income withholding from her employer in Oklahoma.

### World Traveler

This August, a noncustodial father paid restitution of \$40,000 for his four children and ex-wife in Virginia, and was sentenced to four years of supervised probation with stipulations that he remain current on all child and spousal support orders. Federal agents arrested him in April after receiving a tip that he was traveling from his residence overseas back to the United States.

The parent has been a self-employed businessman and real estate entrepreneur for the past 16 years in Florida and overseas. He wrote in a journal that he had grossed over \$100,000 per year for almost 20 years.

### A Win-Win

This May, nearly a year since his arrest in Las Vegas, a father of two paid restitution of \$38,000 to Douglas County, Nebraska. He had made few payments since a court order in 2000, and none since 2003. He continues to maintain contact with his children.

For further information about Project Save Our Children, contact Project Supervisor Nick Soppa at [nsoppa@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:nsoppa@acf.hhs.gov) or 202-401-4677. **CSR**

## QUICK FLASH: On Its Way

Six State child support agencies now participate in Query Interstate Cases for Kids, better known as QUICK, a web-based application that's improving interstate communication by allowing States to exchange case information in just seconds. Six more States are developing QUICK, and 19 others are considering participation.

More information about this exciting, innovative project will be shared through bi-monthly updates called *QUICK FLASH* and will come to you through the eflash process. Look for it soon! If you would like direct access to QUICK resource information, please contact your CSENet/QUICK service desk at 1-800-258-2736.

# Our Good Ideas for Improvements: Are They *Perceived* or *Real*?



By Richard Ordowich  
OCSE

Everything we do in our daily lives involves some degree of work. We can break this work down into discrete steps, called *workflow*. For example, getting up in the morning and going to work can be described as a work package and defined as a series of discrete activities: turn off alarm, shower, get dressed, prepare breakfast, eat breakfast, catch the train, and so on.

If we wish to get to work faster, we could set our alarm earlier, shower faster, eat prepared breakfast foods, and run to the train. But if there is only one train at the same time every day, we would not make it to work any earlier. The train schedule is a constraint on the improvement we wish to make.

Speaking to a nationwide group of child support systems employees this June, OCSE's Linda Keely introduced a problem-solving technique that can help determine whether good ideas for improvements will have a per-

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GRANTS, from page 4

- North Dakota—to develop and implement automation and other processes to better serve children and families, including expedited referral of child welfare cases to child support agencies for improved case coordination.
- Nebraska—to improve coordination of child support and child welfare services.

For further information, visit the OCSE site:  
[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/grants/](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/grants/) CSR

ceived or real impact on the child support program. The problem-solving technique is called The Theory of Constraints, from the book of the same name by Eliyahu M. Goldratt.

When we deliver a form electronically, we perceive it to be a worthwhile improvement. But as in the example of the train schedule constraint, if the electronic version on the form is not processed by the receiving party any faster than the paper form, there is no real impact. That is not to say that improving the form is not a benefit, but the overall work performance may not be improved.

To determine the real impact, you apply The Theory of Constraints. Which step in the process is constraining the work package from improving? Identifying the constraints and determining what improvements can be made to address the constraints are more effective at achieving the real impact you desire.

The first step in applying The Theory of Constraints is to prepare a workflow showing each task along with the time duration to complete the task and the resources needed. When assessing an improvement you wish to make, apply it to the workflow and measure the results before and after the suggested improvement. Will the work package be done faster, more accurately, or using less resources? Will it have a real impact? Perhaps other changes would have a greater impact and should be considered.

As you can see, applying The Theory of Constraints provides a way to measure the real impact an improvement or change may have and can help to prioritize which projects should be supported. CSR

## Tech Talk

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***Military Matters***

**Military Paydays for 2007**

Below is a list of active duty military paydays for calendar year 2007. These dates may be helpful for child support enforcement agencies with cases involving military noncustodial parents with payments out of DFAS (Defense Finance and Accounting Services) in Cleveland. For further information, contact Larry R. Holtz, OCSE's military liaison, at 202-401-5376 or [lholtz@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:lholtz@acf.hhs.gov).

<b>Month</b>	<b>Pay Date</b>
January	Feb. 1
February	March 1
March	March 30
April	May 1
May	June 1
June	June 29
July	Aug. 1
August	Aug. 31
September	Oct. 1
October	Nov. 1
November	Nov. 30
December	Dec. 31

***Child Support Report***

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