

EFFECTIVE PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PRACTICES

TECHNICAL REPORT

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **PURPOSE**

This report describes effective State and local paternity establishment practices, barriers to a successful paternity establishment program, and perceptions of the program's cost/benefit.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Congress, concerned by the increasing costs of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, amended the Social Security Act in 1975, 1984 and 1988 to create and then to strengthen the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) program. The 1988 amendments required State CSE programs, for the first time, to meet a specific paternity establishment percentage.

Two recent evaluations of States' performance in child support enforcement conducted by a U.S. House of Representatives subcommittee and the General Accounting Office show that many States are not pursuing paternity establishment vigorously and successfully. These findings have serious cost implications for the States because States are subject to fiscal penalties if they cannot meet their paternity establishment percentage goal, and most paternity suits are brought in behalf of single mothers applying for AFDC.

We interviewed 77 managers, supervisors and legal personnel at 13 effective practice sites about barriers and key improvements to the paternity establishment process. We defined effective practices as procedures which improve the number of paternities established, case decision accuracy and/or case management efficiency.

### **EFFECTIVE PRACTICES SUMMARY**

States should consider adopting the following seven effective practices to improve paternity establishment in their Child Support Enforcement programs.

### **SOLICIT SUPPORT**

Actively solicit the support and commitment of top management, the judiciary, legislators and the community for the paternity establishment program. Through them the effective practice sites were able to increase program resources, streamline adjudication, increase paternity establishments and change paternity laws.

## **CLARIFY RESPONSIBILITY**

Decide whether AFDC, Child Support or other staff should be responsible for obtaining necessary intake information about the putative (alleged or supposed) father so that paternity establishment can be pursued. Then provide the needed resources and hold the staff accountable.

## **PROMOTE COOPERATION**

Develop better techniques for convincing parents to cooperate with the process. Effective practice sites have proven strategies for overcoming parental resistance, a major barrier to paternity establishment.

## **STREAMLINE ADJUDICATION**

Simplify adjudicative procedures whenever possible under State law and try to minimize time spent in court. The effective practice sites have achieved this, and the Congress, in amendments to the Child Support Enforcement program has encouraged streamlining of adjudication.

## **INSTITUTE CASE CONTROLS**

Institute a case control system to identify, age and monitor the status of the paternity establishment caseload. Whether automated or manual, systematic case management is crucial to processing all cases in a timely and accurate manner.

## **SIMPLIFY CASE PROCESSING**

Evaluate case processing to simplify it, increase efficiency and reduce duplication of effort. The effective practice sites improved in several ways, e.g., computer-generated documents, elimination of overlapping staff duties, and at intake screening out clients who cannot use Child Support Enforcement services.

## **IMPROVE STAFFING**

Re-evaluate the number, duties, capabilities and division of labor of present staff. Hire enough staff to do the job; consider improving staff capability by specializing staff functions and/or contracting for paternity establishment services.

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**INTRODUCTION**

**PURPOSE**

This report describes effective State and local paternity establishment practices, barriers to a successful paternity establishment program, and perceptions of the program's cost/benefit.

**BACKGROUND**

**Increasing Program Costs**

Beginning in 1967, the Congress, concerned by the increasing costs of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, amended the Social Security Act to require States to attempt to establish paternity and obtain support for AFDC children.

Other amendments in 1975, 1984 and 1988 created, and then strengthened, the current Child Support Enforcement Program (CSE). Participation in the Child Support program became a condition of AFDC eligibility. The 1988 amendments will require States, for the first time, to meet a specific paternity establishment percentage beginning in fiscal year 1992. States not meeting their percentage goals will be subject to fiscal penalties.

In addition, according to a "The New York Times" article (July 21, 1989) nearly 285,000 paternity suits are filed nationwide every year. Most of these paternity suits are brought by CSE agencies in behalf of single mothers who have applied for AFDC. Women receiving AFDC have assigned their support rights to the CSE agency. If regular child support payments were made following paternity establishment, AFDC program costs for these families may be reduced.

**Important Benefits of Paternity Establishment**

Beyond the value of reduced welfare costs, Congress, as well as researchers and social work professionals, also recognize that many other social and financial benefits

may accrue from paternity establishment. These include the child's access to government benefits such as social security, health care through the father's employer-provided plan, inheritance rights, important genetic and medical history information, and strengthened emotional growth and development through a sense of identity.

### Recent Evaluation of States' Performance

Two recent evaluations of States' performance in child support enforcement show that many States are not pursuing paternity establishment vigorously and successfully. In October 1988, the House Subcommittee on Public Assistance and Unemployment Compensation released a report card of performance. The mean State paternity establishment rate was 31 percent (paternities established in fiscal year 1987 divided by births to unmarried mothers in 1985). Thirty-two States scored below 30 percent; 45 scored below 50 percent.

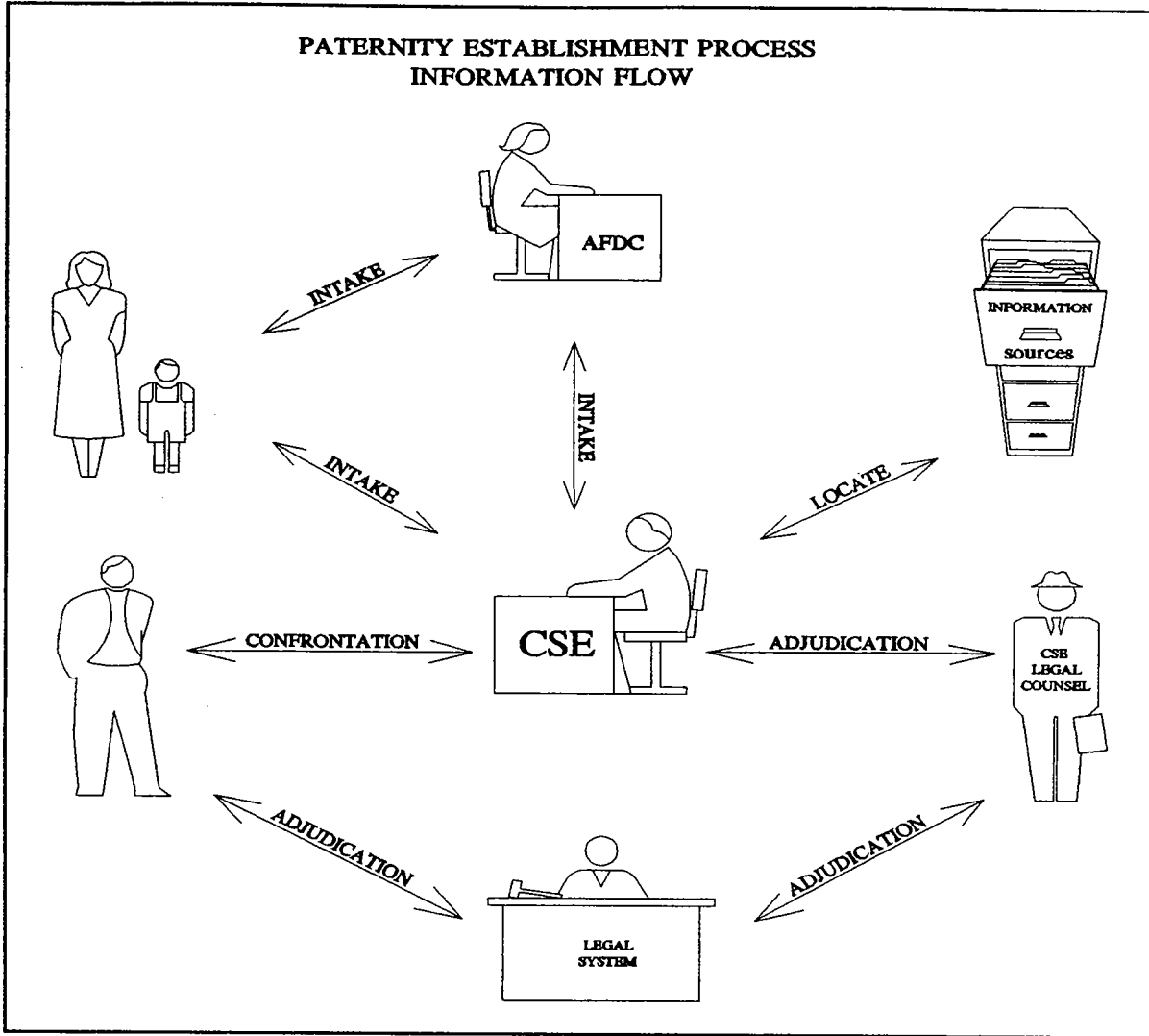
In April 1987, the General Accounting Office (Child Support: Need to Improve Efforts to Identify Fathers and Obtain Support Orders, GAO/HRD-87-37) found that 4 of every 10 AFDC sampled children who needed paternity determinations for support orders (61 percent) or just support orders (39 percent) did not receive them because their cases were never opened, were closed prematurely or remained open but unattended.

National data reported by the CSE program does show that, in fiscal year 1987, a total of 269,000 paternities was established. This was a 10 percent increase over the prior fiscal year.

### Organization and Function

The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) within the Family Support Administration (FSA), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is responsible for establishing Federal program standards and ensuring effective State programs. Their activities include promulgating regulations, ongoing reviews of program operations (paternity establishment performance is a specific component), disseminating program information through training conferences and professional publications, and funding demonstration projects for program improvement.

States have oversight responsibility, but use a variety of organizational models to administer their operations. Whatever the model, child support enforcement typically consists of three major steps: establishing paternity, obtaining a support order, and collecting/enforcing support payments. Paternity establishment, however, is the fundamental first step from which the others follow.



**A Typical Paternity Establishment Process**

There are **four sequential steps** in the typical paternity establishment process: intake, location, confrontation and adjudication. (See exhibit "Paternity Establishment Process Information Flow" above.)

1. **Intake** begins with an interview of the mother to learn the identity of the child's father, his address and his willingness to admit paternity. Failure of the AFDC mother to cooperate here, or at other points in the process, may result in financial sanctions to her.



2. **Location.** A CSE caseworker tries to establish a location and address for the putative (alleged or supposed) father based on the information obtained from the mother.
3. **Confrontation.** The putative father is notified of the paternity allegation, often through legal service of a summons and complaint. He is also informed of his rights and responsibilities.
4. **Adjudication** is the legal disposition of the paternity allegation for the putative fathers that voluntarily admit paternity or could be confronted. Procedures for this phase vary greatly among jurisdictions due to differences in State laws. Due process is a key concern.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This inspection focused on effective practices of paternity establishment up to, but not including, the issuance of the child support order. We defined "effective practices" as procedures which increase the number of paternities established, case decision accuracy, and/or case management efficiency.

Our sample, selected by a 3-tiered screening process based on literature review, experts' recommendations and national data, is judgmental and consists of 77 respondents at 13 effective practice sites in 12 States: Pulaski County (**Little Rock**), Arkansas; San Francisco, California; Santa Barbara County (**Santa Barbara**), California, New Castle County (**Wilmington**), Delaware; Fulton County (**Atlanta**), Georgia; Cook County (**Chicago**), Illinois; Marion County (**Indianapolis**), Indiana; Prince George's County, Maryland; Wayne County (**Detroit**), Michigan; Dakota County, Minnesota; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Shelby County (**Memphis**), Tennessee; Salt Lake County (**Salt Lake City**), Utah. (See Appendix A for details of the study methodology.)

During the site screening, we also derived a set of characteristics for an ideal paternity establishment process to serve as a reference in describing effective practices. (See exhibit "An Ideal Paternity Establishment Process" on the next page).

# AN "IDEAL" PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

- \* AFDC intake workers have been trained in and understand the need for paternity establishment.
- \* Intake caseworkers have been trained to obtain all the information needed to identify and locate the putative fathers.
- \* Intake caseworkers have been trained to convince the mother of the advantages for the child of paternity establishment.
- \* To avoid misinformation, the local site counsels the unmarried parent(s) using standard written and oral presentations on the benefits and responsibilities of paternity establishment.
- \* The local agency has an outreach program to other family members to involve them in the paternity establishment. They also use other techniques to involve the fathers in the paternity process.
- \* AFDC and CSE staffs coordinate their efforts so that paternity cases are handled efficiently, accurately and to the best advantage of the child needing paternity establishment.
- \* There is skill, emphasis and persistence in **locating** and **confronting** the absent parent. For example, there are data matches with other State agencies such as Department of Motor Vehicles or Department of Revenue.
- \* There are multiple attempts to contact the putative father.
- \* Resources outside the agency are used effectively to augment the locator services, e.g. hiring of locators, using credit card investigative agencies.
- \* Once the alleged father has been located and confronted, there are timely, streamlined processes established to verify and legally **adjudicate** paternity.
- \* Blood tests are available and accessible. Court personnel specialize in paternity/child support adjudication.

## MANAGEMENT FACTORS

- \* The responsible caseworkers act to establish paternity as early as possible relative to the birth of the child or AFDC application.
- \* There are adequate case tracking and monitoring systems to ensure that the paternity caseload is identifiable and attended properly, i.e., all required case actions are done on time.
- \* There is sufficient staff, organized in an efficient way, to properly handle all required tasks for the caseload.
- \* All cases requiring paternity are treated alike without regard to ease of parent location or current collectability of child support.
- \* Advertisement or public relations campaigns are used to educate the public about paternity establishment.
- \* Top management is truly committed to paternity establishment/child support as evidenced by such factors as: adequate staffing, other resources made available to manage the caseload, goal-setting, accountability.

## SUMMARY OF SITE DATA

Each study site, while generally perceived as effective in paternity establishment, is still seeking to improve its process.

All thirteen sites were selected because they were perceived by people knowledgeable in the field as effective in paternity establishment. Each site, however, is also unique in its administrative procedures, staff size and duties, population, paternity laws, and perceptions by their management and legislators. (See Appendix B for individual site profiles.)

Compared to the "ideal" model and even by their own assessment none of the sites has a perfect paternity establishment system. The sites see a need to improve performance, and most have plans for future refinements. Compared to each other, the sites are in different stages of evolution. Some had instituted just one or two changes that had made a marked difference in their effectiveness; others had made many changes over several years.

Program barriers and key improvements greatly affect paternity establishment success.

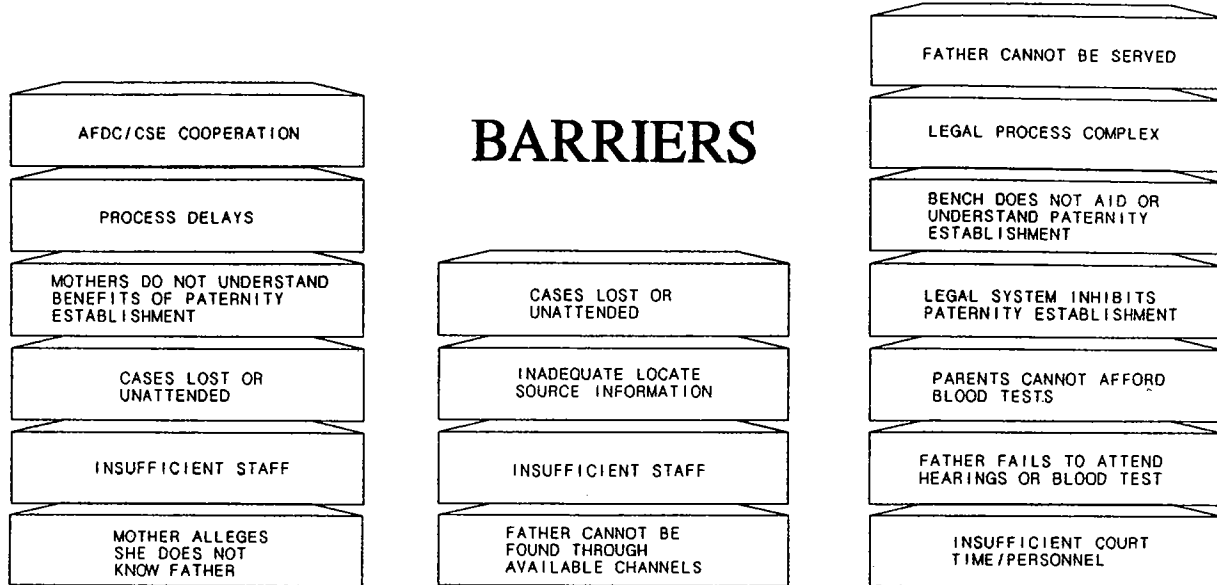
The greatest and most frequently reported barriers to effective paternity establishment are the parents and the adjudication process.

- o The mothers provide incomplete or no information about the putative father due to a lack of understanding of the benefits of paternity establishment and other factors.
- o The fathers do not want to accept parental responsibility.
- o The adjudication of paternity cases is restrained, delayed and complicated by State laws and procedures.

Other less frequently mentioned barriers are: difficulties in locating the putative father, lack of community interest, and belief that paternity establishment is not important, not cost effective or too difficult to adjudicate.

The most frequent key improvements made in sites' paternity establishment procedures included improved case processing and management, and streamlining of case adjudication. Additional staff and staff specialization were also listed as positive

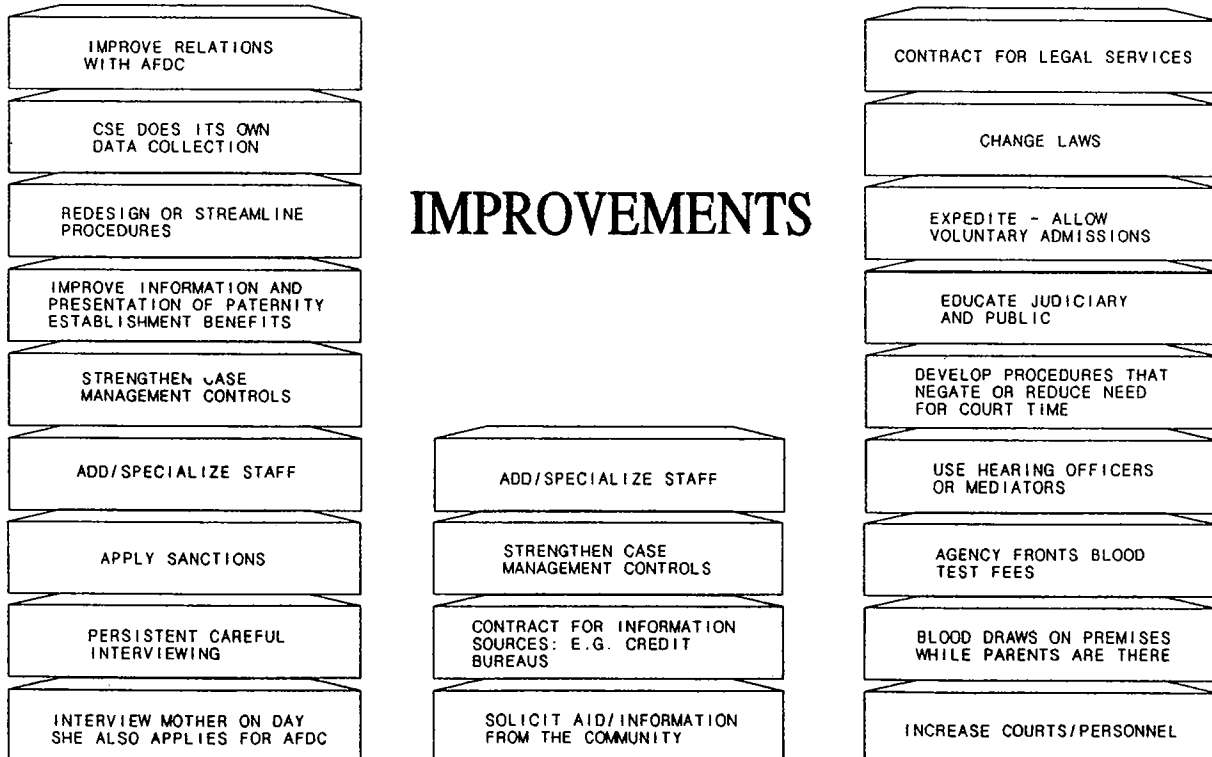
# BARRIERS AND IMPROVEMENTS TO THE PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS



### INTAKE

### LOCATE

### CONFRONT/ADJUDICATE



changes by many respondents. Support from the community, legal groups and private agencies, as well as legislative interest, were also important.

A summary of barriers faced by Child Support programs in establishing paternity and improvements made to overcome these barriers are summarized in the exhibit "Barriers and Improvements to the Paternity Establishment Process" on the prior page.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### INITIAL INTAKE PROCEDURES

Ideally, caseworkers are trained to obtain information essential to paternity establishment, such as the name and address of the putative father. The effective practice sites have devised solutions to the major initial intake barriers:

- 1) unsatisfactory AFDC performance in obtaining basic intake information, and
- 2) the mothers' non-cooperation with the paternity establishment process.

**AFDC is seen as ineffective in obtaining basic information for Child Support cases.**

AFDC generally has the first contact with the unwed mothers. Most Child Support staffs (10 of 13) believe that AFDC staffs are ineffective in obtaining even basic information about the putative father. Some respondents are quite critical ("AFDC just doesn't seem to care"), and some see AFDC as having its own problems and different program concerns. One respondent pointed out that AFDC picks up more information than is passed on to Child Support.

#### Child Support staffs gather their own information

Child Support staffs solve the problem of incomplete AFDC intake information primarily by gathering the data themselves. Three sites do not rely on AFDC for information. Seven routinely do a follow-up interview to the AFDC intake interview, and two do a follow-up interview when needed. Respondents at these same two sites added that AFDC does not consistently obtain the needed information. Several which do follow-up noted they can get what they need by telephone.

The CSE respondents listed, on average, 12 basic pieces of information they try to collect, other than a name, such as aliases, physical description and birth data. All staffs, but one, agreed that some items are more critical than others. Frequently mentioned were: address, place of employment, social security number and date of birth.

### More training of AFDC staff to improve intake information

When asked about cross-training for the AFDC staff, nine Child Support staffs said they have done some, but most do it less than yearly. The content and purpose are basically intended to improve rapport between Child Support and AFDC staffs, and to explain CSE's need for the information on the putative father.

Prince George's County CSE intake/locate unit told us that in September 1988 they started to work with AFDC to clear cases for the work program.

"We got together with AFDC and explained if they gave us good information, we could work the cases much quicker. We also checked cases and returned those that were incomplete. We ended up with a better working relationship.... The main barrier was the negative attitude of what we thought AFDC did and what AFDC thought we did.

In 1989 Wilmington trained its AFDC workers on how to view clients differently. The AFDC workers are encouraged to see welfare as something temporary, clients as competent, and paternity establishment as helping them. This approach changes the workers' perceptions of clients and improves intake information quality.

### Conducting AFDC and Child Support intake interviews on the same day

Under an ideal process, staff take action to establish paternity as early as possible in the life of the case. Prince George's County, Santa Barbara and Wilmington each had positive experiences with coordinated intake interviews and prompt paternity establishment actions.

For 1 year Prince George's County sent CSE workers to the AFDC office to do the intake interviews. "We got fantastic information. We knew what we needed, and the clients were a lot more cooperative because they felt their grants depended on it. Unfortunately, we did not have enough money to continue funding [the project]."

At all three Santa Barbara intake offices CSE now coordinates with AFDC staff to conduct intake interviews on the same day. Prior to mid-1989, the site had 1 office which did follow-up intake interviews 6 to 10 weeks after AFDC's. CSE staff believed they obtained better information about the putative father when they conducted same day interviews because the mothers were more impressed then with the seriousness of the process.

Wilmington physically co-locates Child Support caseworkers with AFDC staff. The advantages of co-location are, "It saves time and gets the cases processed much

faster. AFDC and Child Support have a much better relationship. The key thing is that we are able to conduct more interviews. There were no barriers to this."

### **Child Support Enforcement needs the mother's cooperation for paternity establishment.**

The other major intake barrier is convincing the mother to cooperate in establishing paternity. Failure to cooperate is defined almost uniformly by the respondents as refusal to keep appointments for intake interviews, legal hearings and blood tests, and refusal to divulge information about the putative father. Refusal to divulge information is the aspect of cooperation which concerns respondents the most.

### Explaining paternity establishment benefits to mothers

All the sites provide the mother with information on the benefits of establishing paternity as a tool to obtain her cooperation. All the site staffs explain them to her verbally, six give her written material, usually pamphlets, and Santa Barbara uses a prepared audio/visual presentation of which child support enforcement services is a segment. Most of the site staffs explain the future legal and financial benefits to the child if the father is known, or just generally stress the importance of identifying the father. Several stress the importance to the child of knowing both parents.

Chicago, funded by DHHS, is also piloting Project Advance which targets the needs of young mothers. At least once a week a family support specialist interviews the mothers at the pilot offices after the mothers have participated in a workshop to discuss what child support is, the advantages of paternity establishment and the untruth of popularly believed myths such as, "If you name the father, he will be locked up." Although findings are preliminary, the workshop participants seem to view the process as less adversarial, are better prepared for the intake interview, and are more willing to cooperate.

When we specifically asked the staffs how they reduce non-cooperation, eight said they explain the future benefits available to the child. Other approaches were making an emotional appeal to the mother about her child, reminding her the father has a responsibility to the child and convincing her that the CSE program can help.

### Financial penalties as incentives for mothers to cooperate

The penalty for non-cooperation at all sites is the removal of the mother from the AFDC grant, thereby reducing the amount of cash assistance she receives. Two sites, at which AFDC and CSE do intake interview on the same day, can exclude the mother for non-cooperation with CSE intake early in the process. Many of the sampled site staffs would like to have this option. Four of these sites also designate

a new grant payee. Salt Lake City and Dakota County make vendor payments for the mother, which means she receives no check from AFDC; instead the site pays her bills on her behalf.

Seven staffs specifically said they try to reduce non-cooperation by explaining the penalty and using it if necessary. The San Francisco director, however, said the Agency "rarely" penalizes. Here a welfare advocacy group had complained that the agency was too aggressive in asking about the putative father and in using non-cooperation sanctions. The site modified its procedure by offering the mothers an opportunity to sign a declaration about the putative father under penalty of perjury. The procedure is now required State-wide.

The use of the penalty for non-cooperation ranged among the sites from 1 case in 10 to 1 in 50. Two site respondents qualified their answers by saying that they recommend penalties at a certain frequency, but the actual penalty rate is smaller since many mothers apparently think it over and do eventually cooperate.

Prince George's CSE staff (most sites rely on AFDC staff) has had the authority for a year to sanction the uncooperative mothers. The benefit has been, according to the respondent, "the mothers saw we meant business and some of the pressure was taken off AFDC."

Persistent, careful interviewing of mothers alleging they don't know who the father is

If the mother says she doesn't know who the father is, most of the Child Support intake staffs, nevertheless, continue aggressive and persistent interviewing. Respondents told us they ask her to explain why, ask her to name the men who are the most likely, tell her they don't believe her and ask again, ask detailed questions concerning the time frame when she became pregnant, or have other staff interview her.

Some sites may interview collaterals. Memphis has the custodial parent supply them with the names and telephone numbers of people who can verify her circumstances. The workers find these contacts very useful in supplying information about the absent parent that the mother might not divulge.

Salt Lake City sometimes requires the mother to document, as part of cooperation, that she doesn't know who the father is. This may include her obtaining sworn statements from bartenders, friends, or neighbors saying they saw her with a man at a particular time, but they didn't know who he was, nor had they seen her with him before. A caseworker estimates that initially 20 percent of the mothers say they don't know the father, but, based on experience, the real percentage is substantially lower.



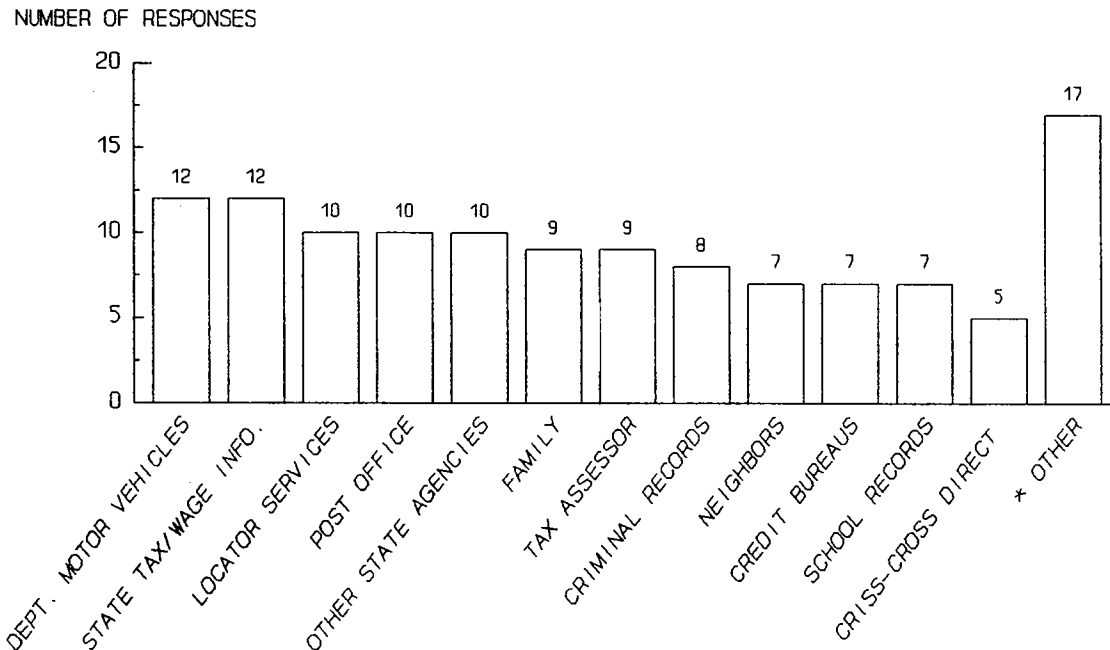
## LOCATION OF THE PUTATIVE FATHER

Effective practice sites commonly use a wide variety of information sources and techniques to locate putative fathers.

### A wide variety of information sources

A good location effort requires skill and emphasis by the Agency. This frequently translated into using a wide variety of information sources. Those used by the majority were locator services (State and Federal), interviews with family members and other collaterals such as neighbors, the post office, the department of motor vehicles, State wage or taxation information, other programs managed by the same State agency, the tax assessor and prison/criminal records.

SOURCES OF LOCATE INFORMATION  
USED BY THE 13 SITES



\* OTHER CATEGORY: BANKS-3; VOTER REGISTRATION-3;  
COURT RECORDS-2; EMPLOYERS-2; MILITARY-2; DEPT. OF  
LABOR-2; PROFESSIONAL BOARDS-2; UNIONS-1

### Specialized staffs, follow-up interviews and community public relations efforts

Four sites have specialized location units: Atlanta, Prince George's County, Philadelphia and Wilmington. Philadelphia, which also locates missing children, has investigators that locate about 500 fathers a month. In addition to the links (many automated) to the information sources already mentioned, they also work, if required by the case, neighborhood churches, bars and grocery stores to obtain information about the father.

Atlanta sends custodial parents a computer-generated form letter to solicit information on absent parents as part of an annual Federal report on cases where paternity has not been established. They achieve a 75 percent response rate with 15 percent of returns providing good location information.

A Salt Lake City worker does presentations to large companies in the area to explain the work of Child Support Enforcement. As a result, Child Support staff has successfully obtained the companies' help in checking records for location and wage information on the putative fathers.

As a one-time project, Memphis CSE published a list of men that it was trying to locate for open, but unworkable, paternity establishment cases. Businessmen, relatives and private citizens called in information that led to the location of absent fathers. A Memphis respondent rated it "a moderate success" that they would try again.

### **CASE CONFRONTATION/ADJUDICATION**

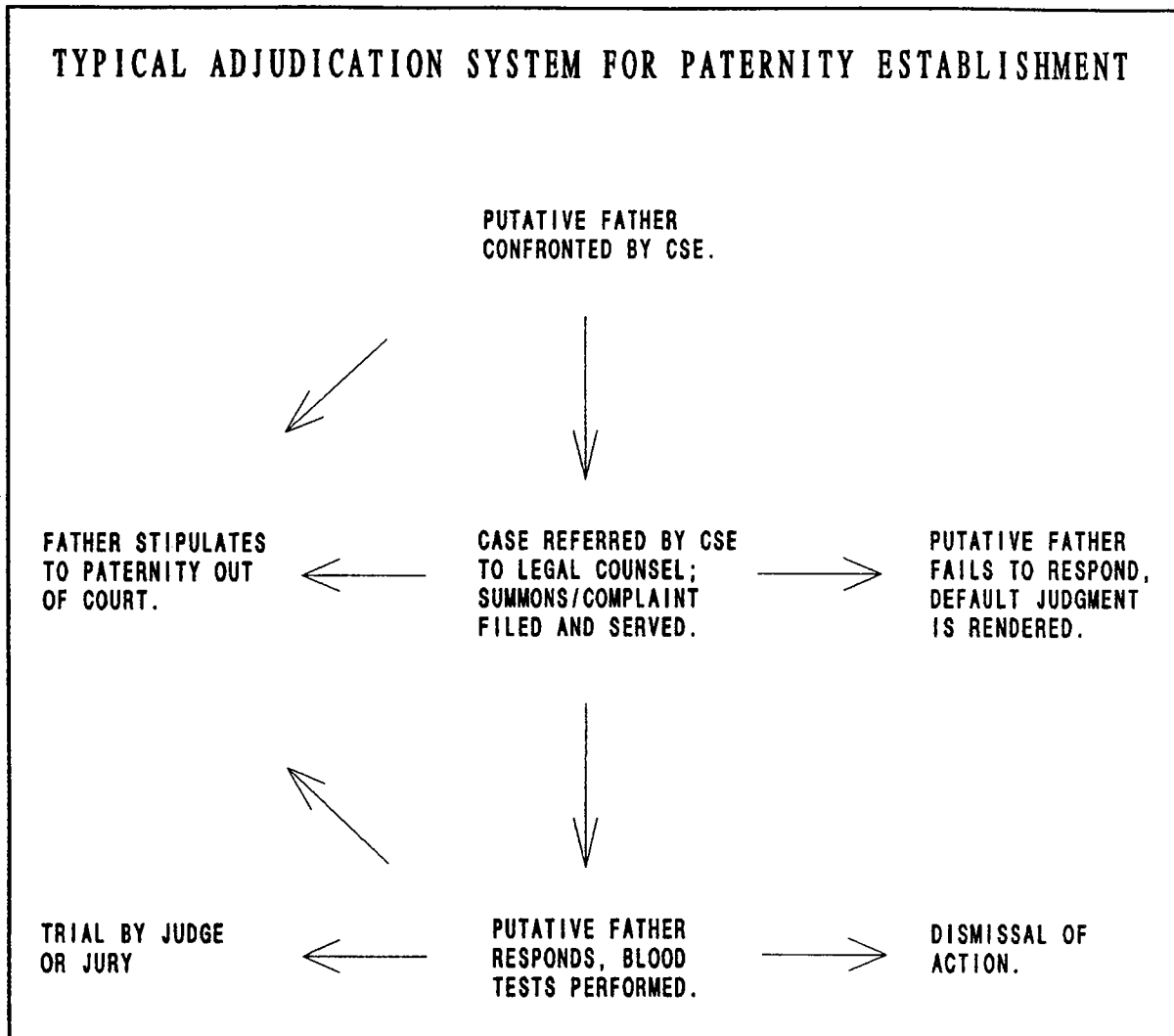
The adjudication system, often perceived as a complicated barrier to effective paternity establishment, is usually dictated by State laws. Within the legal framework, the effective practice sites try to use simple approaches when possible and to streamline the required procedures. Twelve site staffs believe their systems work well, citing: 1) expedited processes, 2) specialized courts and personnel, 3) supportive public policy, or 4) a committed judiciary. (See exhibit "Typical Adjudication System for Paternity Establishment" on the next page.)

Effective practice sites simplify adjudicative procedures whenever they can and try to minimize time spent in court.

#### Simplifying confrontation

In confrontation, seven sites use telephone calls, the mother's help or form letters to make appointments with the putative father in the hope he will voluntarily admit

(stipulate) paternity. Failing that, they next issue a formal summons and complaint. The other sites, given their more exacting legal processes, cannot or prefer not to use informal methods. For example, State law requires service of a summons and complaint even if the man stipulates paternity, or a stipulated judgment is not permissible without judicial involvement.



Establishing paternity without court involvement

Eleven sites have a mechanism whereby a man can legally admit paternity without court involvement (stipulated judgment, expedited process, consent decree, voluntary acknowledgement). Atlanta and Indianapolis, which have implemented their stipulation procedures in recent years, agree that the benefits have been cost savings and improved timeliness in adjudication.

Salt Lake City and Prince George's County have provided special interview training to caseworkers who negotiate for voluntary admissions of paternity. In both instances, the training improved performance. Attorney time was saved, and fewer cases went to court for hearings.

Philadelphia, Memphis and Detroit, in addition to voluntary admissions of paternity, use special negotiators to work out agreements before formal court appearances. In Philadelphia, even when a case is scheduled for trial because an agreement can't be reached, the District Attorney, who has the results of the blood tests in hand, tries one last time in the courtroom, before the judge enters, to reach a settlement.

Chicago and Wilmington: Increasing paternity adjudications by adding courts or legal personnel

Because State law requires that all paternity establishments occur in court, Chicago's key improvement was to add more courts and the personnel to staff them. Implemented in 1986 and 1987, Chicago now has three full day parentage courtrooms, four suburban courtrooms, and a larger legal staff. Facing large case backlogs, the County successfully competed for a funding increase by convincing the Chief Judge and others of the seriousness of the problem and the potential public benefit. Their trend data shows a 44 percent increase in the number of paternitys established in 1988 compared to 1987.

Wilmington does not use voluntary stipulations because their legal counsel anticipates a violation of due process. Instead, Wilmington uses court-based hearing officers, called mediators and masters, to explain the man's rights to him and to negotiate paternity and support agreements. As with the other sites, the putative father can still contest paternity before a judge.

Accelerating adjudication by efficient blood testing, use of default judgments and arrest warrants

Blood tests are often required when the putative father denies or is uncertain about the paternity allegation. Easy access to blood tests promotes timely adjudication.

Seven sites authorize blood draws at the Child Support office or court while the parents are there for hearings or by regularly scheduled appointments. Memphis staff commented this saves them money in wasted time on postponements and finding a reluctant putative father a second time to blood test him. Philadelphia negotiated a two-sample blood draw with its contractor to combat the problem of redraws when samples are lost or misplaced. Generally, they are now assured of having analysis results in 4 to 6 weeks.

Eleven sites pay for the tests initially, and then, may try to recover their costs from the parent(s). Several site directors said this decreases delays and stalling tactics. Chicago paid initially for more blood tests in 1988 when they were able to increase their budget for the tests. They said, "Discovery was started sooner. The benefits were improved timeliness, elimination of backlogs and more settlements."

If the putative father does not respond to the formal paternity allegation, he can be named as the legal father by a default judgment. Twelve sites are authorized to use a default judgment; five invoke it soon after the deadline for responding to the summons and complaint is passed, seven somewhat later in the adjudicative process. Prince George's County has no defaults, but they do issue arrest warrants for men who fail to appear for their hearings.

Memphis includes default language in all papers served to the putative father, e.g. summons and notices of continuance, so that he has received due process regarding defaults. Implemented to end stalling and avoidance tactics, the procedure reduced waste of court time by defendants who failed to appear for hearings or blood tests.

#### Efficient case scheduling improves timeliness of adjudication

Detroit uses a "docket-driven" system that dictates all actions and timing of paternity procedures. When their attempts to obtain a voluntary acknowledgement fail, the Child Support staff refer cases to the Wayne County Friend of the Court (FOC). The FOC computer system immediately schedules the case into the court docket for every possible action with due dates. The schedule includes blood testing which the court orders routinely for contested cases. Letters advising the putative fathers of the scheduled dates are also sent.

The legal documents needed for each court appearance are produced automatically as actions fall due. The FOC system provides data on each case's age, current status and future actions as well as summaries of specific types of actions that are scheduled for upcoming months.

For Detroit, the streamlined case scheduling instituted in 1988, combined with improved tracking and the Chief Judge's certification of the FOC to negotiate and accept paternity acknowledgements in 1986, have made a substantial difference. Detroit had 3984 paternities established in 1987. In 1988 this number rose to 5800 and is projected to reach 6600 in 1989.

Five other sites also efficiently schedule their cases. Chicago uses its automated system to notify clients and putative fathers of all court dates. Prince George's County and Philadelphia schedule and notify the putative father of the next court date when he is blood tested. Memphis will sometimes arrest putative fathers if they

fail to appear in court. When the man is picked up, he has a hearing the next day. He may either stay in jail overnight or post bond.

In Indianapolis, all contested cases must go to court, but under their system there are gradations of "contested" cases: the man admits paternity, but does not agree on other issues such as the child support amount; the man disagrees with the paternity allegation; the man disagrees with the paternity allegation and is represented by counsel. These cases are grouped by type and scheduled for court on specific days.

### Legislative and judicial support

Seven site directors believe legislative or judicial support is a factor in their success. Memphis and Prince George's County are especially complimentary of the strong leadership and support they receive from two judges, one per site, that guide paternity adjudication. In Chicago, staff from CSE and the State Attorney's office brief individual judges on the specific requirements and problems of child support enforcement law.

## IMPORTANT MANAGEMENT FACTORS

### **SYSTEMATIC CASE MANAGEMENT**

Systematic case management, whether automated or manual, is critical to effective paternity establishment. It promotes efficient movement of cases through the process, identifies the paternity establishment caseload, and helps assure that required case actions are completed timely.

**Effective practice sites systematically control the paternity establishment caseload and streamline case processing for efficiency.**

### Automated case management systems

Automated case management systems can be very effective, but their implementation requires funding and long-range planning. Wilmington, Prince George's County, Chicago and San Francisco have automated systems that can identify, track, age and obtain information for paternity cases as they are processed. For Wilmington and San Francisco, almost anything that is done for the case, including document generation, is done through the automated system. Little Rock and Atlanta also do some automated document generation.

Funding was a major consideration addressed by long range planning and by convincing senior management of the need for and benefits of the system. Wilmington used a steering committee, that formed a plan to consolidate several agencies under an umbrella, to assess whom they were servicing and to study what was available to them. Prince George's County installed a system designed by a private company whose owner was familiar with the already operational New York child support enforcement system.

San Francisco: A successful conversion from a manual to an automated case management system

Between 1986 and the summer of 1989, San Francisco converted from an entirely manual system to a fully automated system by implementing three major procedural improvements.

Beginning in the summer of 1987, the Child Support office started to use a "stand alone" system application maintained at the site for document generation. The application can generate up to 40 different documents including a summons and complaint, default judgments, stipulated judgments, and various form letters such as a locate inquiry. Prior to this time individual correspondence and documents were typed manually.

Also in 1987, San Francisco CSE initiated on-line intake with twice weekly updates of the case information data base. Finally, early in 1988 they added another system application that tracks age, actions and status of paternity cases. Previously, caseworkers kept personal ticklers and color codes to track needed actions, with the result that cases often exceeded time limits or were left unattended. The automated system, however, greatly improved processing times and individual case management.

Paternity establishments for San Francisco increased from 482 in fiscal year (FY) 1986 to 848 in FY 1987, and to 2576 in FY 1988. Other cumulative effects were: 1) the elimination of a clerical typing backlog of 4 to 6 months, 2) the elimination of a case action backlog of 2 months, and 3) the elimination of 28 clerical positions (salary range \$23,000 to \$25,000) over 3 fiscal years.

Santa Barbara: Manual case management systems work effectively with the proper controls in place

Santa Barbara and Memphis have primarily manual systems. The other sites are a combination, with the system frequently limited in its case tracking and aging capacity. Nevertheless, site staffs properly manage their cases by using manual tracking and "tickler" procedures. Most would prefer, however, to have fully automated systems.

Santa Barbara established 173 paternities in 1985, 1185 in 1986, and slightly more than 600 in each of the next 2 years. They also won an "Outstanding Program Award" for 1986 from the National Child Support Enforcement Association. Part of their work that year was the completion of their "Default Project" which culminated 2 years of case management improvements.

Faced with an extremely disorganized system in 1985, the Santa Barbara staff manually inventoried the entire caseload to determine the status of individual cases and actions needed to complete them. By 1986 they had identified the cases in which the putative fathers had been legally served with a summons and complaint, but no other action had been taken. After notifying the court and the public of their plans and soliciting cooperation, the staff processed their backlog of 450 default cases, about 5 years worth, in 10 working days. Paternity was legally established for each case, and the father was obligated to pay to child support.

The barriers to the case management changes were no overtime money and staff who resisted the change. Santa Barbara overcame these by completing the work within regular working hours. Staff goals were stated clearly, and caseworkers were expected to comply. Some staff left, but the remaining staff were involved and their improvement suggestions utilized.

For the current caseload, Santa Barbara instituted case tracking and quality controls: 60-day case reviews for actions taken and actions needed, individual case control sheets, daily caseworker log sheets summarized by supervisors, supervisory review of all caseworker initiated legal actions, and written standards describing caseworker responsibilities. Every 6 months supervisors review 10 percent of each caseworker's caseload to ensure compliance with the 60-day review procedures and to identify additional training needs.

#### Improved intake, status tracking, processing time standards, and other methods for improving case management

Little Rock improved its case management at intake by scheduling specific times for clients' appointments. Intake procedures were written; caseworkers with good interpersonal and writing skills were trained in them. The site also set a 60-day time limit after intake for some type of case resolution, e.g., adjudication started, case hold for future location attempts. After 180 days, they attempt another locate or possibly make a case closure referral to the supervisor. Since they made these changes, case processing time has improved noticeably.

In Philadelphia, approximately 2500 cases per month are referred from AFDC intake to the Child Support agency prior to eligibility determination. Site personnel stated, based on experience, that many clients, who are denied public assistance, do not wish to pursue child support. A pilot project at two AFDC district offices specially



trained AFDC caseworkers to complete the entire intake interview (screening, verification, location). Clients who are not authorized to receive AFDC and who do not wish to pursue child support once public aid is denied, about 30 percent, are not referred to the CSE office. Clients who are referred have already been interviewed for the needed CSE information. As a result, case processing becomes faster and concentrates on paternity establishment tasks.

Small changes can also improve case management:

- o Salt Lake manually sorts cases received from AFDC. Cases needing paternity establishment are color coded to indicate their status. They also standardized their forms for uniformity, and used simpler language and formats for a more "client friendly" document.
- o Santa Barbara physically divides each case into color coded information sections. The caseworker "saves 20 to 40 minutes every time the case is handled" because (s)he can quickly find or enter the information. Also at intake, clients sign a non-welfare CSE application for services which permits the Child Support staff to immediately pursue paternity establishment even if AFDC assistance is denied.
- o Since 1987 San Francisco has had a supervisor trained to legally file summons/complaints, default judgments and stipulations with the court. This eliminates backlogs and expedites the process of filing legal documents generated by the site's computer system.

## **MORE EFFECTIVE STAFF UTILIZATION**

An effective paternity establishment process requires sufficient staff organized in an efficient way to properly complete all casework tasks.

Effective practice sites improved staff utilization with additional personnel, staff specialization, contracts for services, and use of clericals for routine case tasks.

### **Hiring additional staff for existing caseload**

Hiring additional staff just to handle the existing caseload was a basic, but key, improvement at six sites. Even though they were backlogged or experiencing other serious difficulties, each of the six site directors had to convince management of the need for additional staff.

Techniques they used were demonstrating their efficient use of staff currently on board, tracking the correlation of staff overtime to improved performance, setting goals for worker-to-case ratios, projecting future cost efficiencies and emphasizing compliance with Federal requirements. Five of these six site directors also perceive that their top managements' commitment is a factor of their effectiveness.

Little Rock began its improvement plan in 1987 by setting caseload goals, adding staff and tracking the results. According to FSA data, Arkansas established paternities increased from 2941 in 1985 to 5903 in 1988. Little Rock is the major population center for the State, and the site director believes the staff increases were a major reason for their improved performance.

### Staff specialization

Whatever their specific division of labor, the nine site directors using specialization, told us its benefits are faster and smoother case processing, more consistent and accurate case decisions, backlog reductions, and greater client and caseworker satisfaction.

Specialization schemes are: welfare/non-welfare cases, teams, or functional divisions, i.e., intake, location. Combinations of the schemes are common. For example, a caseworker may only do intake interviews with AFDC clients. Two sites have specially trained caseworkers to act as paralegals. One of their attorneys said 80 percent of case adjudication problems can be anticipated; therefore, caseworkers can be trained in advance to deal with them. He believes the site staff produces "high quality cases that meet legal standards." Another site director upgraded one position type so that he could hire better qualified employees.

### One-of-a-kind positions, contracts, and use of clericals for routine case tasks

Some sites create unique positions to facilitate paternity establishment: a paternity coordinator to act as liaison between courts and attorneys, a blood test consultant to schedule appointments and negotiate payments, an ombudsman to handle difficult clients or sensitive cases. Prince George's County uses a court liaison officer to arrange transportation for clients with volunteer drivers so they will not miss court hearings.

Blood testing is the most common contracted service. However, 10 sites contract for additional paternity establishment services: legal process servers (private or sheriffs' departments), legal counsel (private or public), and credit bureaus for location information. One site respondent noted that, as they gained experience, they had changed contractors for legal counsel in order to attain better service.

Five sites train clericals to do routine casework tasks such as document searches, status verifications and case completeness reviews. By using clericals for routine tasks the sites gain professional staff time for more complex tasks.

Dakota County: A convincing example of the positive effects of staffing changes

In 1986 and 1987 Dakota County established 18 and 19 paternities respectively. In 1988 they established 226, and they project 324 establishments for 1989. They attribute their success to hiring additional staff and realigning personnel duties.

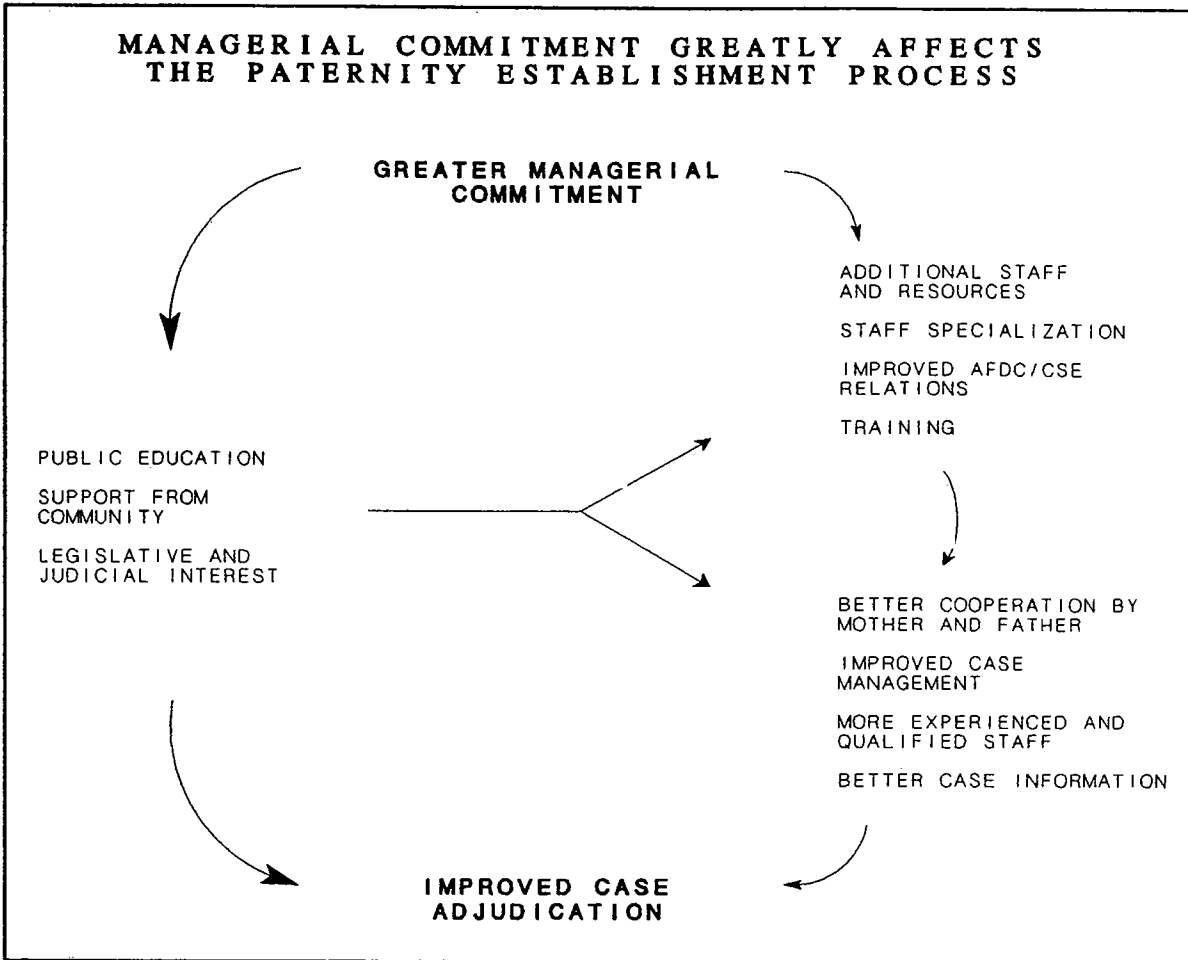
In July 1987 two paralegals and one attorney were added to the County Attorney's existing child support enforcement staff of just two attorneys. The paralegals assumed many paternity establishment duties formerly done by Child Support staff and attorneys, such as interviewing the mother and father, and preparing routine legal documents. The attorneys, as a result, had more time to work complicated cases.

In January 1988 the County added the second piece of its improvement plan -- the expedited administrative process. Placed in the CSE office, child support officers present cases before administrative law judges to establish binding support orders for certain case types, typically default judgments and summary judgments, and to conduct case reviews for support amount changes. Prior to this, the County Attorney did all paternity and support order work; the attorneys had to attend the child support hearings.

The combined effect of these changes was to add specialized staff, reassign some duties, train staff for new duties, and eliminate process duplication where possible. Now Child Support staff does intake, location, routine child support orders and collections. The County Attorney handles all paternity work and more legally complicated child support cases. As a result, numbers of court orders produced, collections, paternities finished and time frames have all improved.

## **TOP MANAGEMENT COMMITMENT**

Many effective practice sites identify top management commitment as a critical factor supporting their efforts to initiate needed system and procedural changes and to improve performance in paternity establishment. One site respondent said, "Child Support is now a management priority. We are budgeted separately. We can't have our money touched by other agencies when times are tough."



## PERCEPTIONS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

### IMPORTANCE OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT

Site managers and supervisors express strong, positive attitudes and commitment toward paternity establishment.

When asked, "Should paternity establishment be a high priority?" managers and supervisors at all but one site, where opinion was split, said, "Yes, it should."

Some answers related to cost reduction issues:

"Paternity cases are good collection cases."

"Paternity establishment is the first step towards a support order and controlling AFDC costs."

The majority expressed genuine concern for the children:

"Children deserve to be supported."

"A child is entitled to know who his father is."

"Paternity establishment is necessary to future benefits for the child."

"Non-marital children should not be discriminated against."

The site staff we interviewed are strongly committed to their work, emotionally involved, and believe the work is important.

"Paternity establishment is a worthy process that will pay for itself."

"We need to give workers credit for establishing paternities and put more emphasis on this than just on establishing support."

"All cases deserve to be developed and to have paternity established. Cost effectiveness is not the appropriate measure for paternity establishment."

## **COST EFFECTIVENESS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT**

Prior study indicates that paternity establishment may be cost effective over time.

In February 1985 the Center for Health and Social Services Research (funded by a grant from the Office of Child Support Enforcement) published Costs and Benefits of Paternity Establishment. They selected study sites that could be expected to be successful in processing paternity cases and where such cases comprised a meaningful portion of their overall caseload.

Although their findings "should not be seen as representative of paternity cases nationwide," they do indicate that in the jurisdictions studied "it is possible for collections on paternity cases with obligations established to exceed costs for all paternity cases, regardless of income, over time."

They also found: 1) a key to increased cost effectiveness is successful paternity establishment, 2) improving location and confrontation increases paternity establishment success, and 3) paternity cases may pay as well as other cases.

According to recent analysis by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), States can expect to spend \$40 million each year for fiscal years 1991 through 1993 to meet the paternity establishment goals required by the 1988 amendments. Since the CBO believes child support collections will lag behind paternity establishment, it estimates no savings for 1991, and net costs of \$25 million and \$15 million for the following 2 years. No projections are available for years beyond 1993.

Most sampled site directors believe paternity establishment is cost effective, but they indicate it takes time to achieve a positive dollar return.

Seven directors believe, for their sites, paternity establishment is cost effective overall. Four emphasized they are cost effective right now with three having aggressively improved their processes for at least 3 years. Three stressed future payoff, and one said they could be more cost effective if they "could pick and choose" their cases, which they currently don't do.

Five believe they aren't yet cost effective overall, but two of them predict they will be. One respondent said they aren't cost effective because they don't "prioritize" their cases.

Chicago described a frustration in achieving cost effectiveness. "Although we establish paternity, we don't always get cash support orders. Judges will not establish them if the father is unemployed." Their solutions are to review these cases regularly against State wage and employment data or to try proving perjury against the father concerning his employment status. In addition, a newly enacted State law requires a minimum \$10 monthly support order for all cases.

Eleven site directors think increases in paternity establishment have contributed to reductions in AFDC payments and to more closures of AFDC cases, at least "somewhat" (five directors) or "minimally" (four directors). Seven told us that implementing improved paternity establishment practices resulted in increased administrative costs. Four thought administrative costs stayed about the same.

Seven, reporting administrative cost increases, attributed them to start up costs, e.g. automated systems or additional personnel for improving their case processing/management, or increased legal costs. Five of those experiencing increased costs believe these will be mostly or more than offset by increased collections.

Finally, 12 sites have experienced increases in child support collections. Nine of 12 believe that increased paternity establishment only "somewhat" influenced the increases in collections. Eleven site directors think, however, that collections will increase in the future, influenced more strongly by the effect of increased paternity establishment.

## RESPONDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT COST EFFECTIVENESS

	<u># of Sites</u>
o Paternity establishment is cost effective overall.	7
o Paternity establishment is cost effective now (4 sites) or will be cost effective in the future (5 sites).	9
o Increases in paternity establishment have contributed "somewhat" or "minimally" to reductions in AFDC payments and to more closures of AFDC cases.	11
o Administrative costs have increased due to implementation of improved paternity establishment practices.	7
o However, at sites with increased administrative costs (7), the costs will be offset by increases in collections.	5
o Collections will increase, influenced more strongly by the effect of increased paternity establishment.	11

### EFFECTIVE PRACTICES SUMMARY

Based on the study sites' descriptions of major barriers to an effective program and the key improvements they have made, we identified seven effective practices that improve paternity establishment in the Child Support Enforcement program. States should consider adopting these practices.

### **SOLICIT SUPPORT FOR THE PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROGRAM**

Sites improved performance when they actively solicited the support and commitment of top management, the judiciary, legislators and the community for the paternity establishment program.

Commitment by top management and support from judges and lawmakers were key factors of successful paternity establishment at many of the effective practice sites. Through such support, the sites were able change paternity laws, streamline adjudication, increase program resources, and increase numbers of paternities established. Support from the immediate community also assisted in locating more putative fathers.

## **CLARIFY RESPONSIBILITY FOR OBTAINING INTAKE INFORMATION**

Deciding whether AFDC, Child Support or other staff should be responsible for obtaining the necessary intake information about the putative father would improve intake and the site's ability to pursue paternity establishment. Then management should provide the needed resources and hold the staff accountable.

Information about the putative father is critical to paternity establishment. AFDC is often expected to collect the information, but they are generally perceived by the Child Support respondents as ineffective. While they usually have first contact with the mothers, AFDC may not, in fact, be the best choice in view of their primary focus and program concerns. Options for improvement are co-locating AFDC and Child Support staffs, same day intake interviews by both staffs, delegation of the primary responsibility to CSE staff, or better training of AFDC in what information Child Support needs or in more effective interview techniques.

## **PROMOTE IMPROVED PARENTAL COOPERATION**

Developing better information or techniques for convincing the parents to cooperate with Child Support improves the paternity establishment process.

The mothers and fathers are perceived as major barriers to paternity establishment. Convincing them of the benefits to the child, giving them better information about their responsibilities and the establishment process, and more skillful interviewing by the caseworkers are proven strategies for overcoming the problem.

## **STREAMLINE ADJUDICATION OF PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT**

The effective practice sites simplify adjudicative procedures whenever possible under State law and try to minimize time spent in court.

The effective practice sites achieve this by encouraging voluntary admissions of paternity, taking default judgments, providing easy access to blood testing, and efficient scheduling of cases for hearings.



The Congress has promoted these procedures through amendments to the Social Security Act. Concerning paternity establishment, the 1984 amendments urged States to establish expedited processes within the State judicial system or under administrative processes. The 1988 amendments encourage implementation of a simple civil process for voluntarily acknowledging paternity, and a civil procedure for determining paternity in contested cases. Beginning on October 1, 1988, the 1988 amendments also provide 90 percent Federal matching payments for the cost of blood and other laboratory tests to establish paternity.

### **INSTITUTE EFFECTIVE CASE MANAGEMENT CONTROLS**

Effective case control systems allow sites to identify, age and monitor the status of the paternity establishment caseload.

Whether automated or manual, systematic case management is crucial to processing all cases in a timely and accurate manner. It also assures that cases are not lost or left unattended.

### **SIMPLIFY CASE PROCESSING**

Evaluation of case processing helps sites to simplify it, increase efficiency and reduce duplication of effort.

The effective practice sites were able to improve their case processing with simplified procedures. Computer-generated documents, simpler forms, color-coding of case types or information sections, elimination of duplicative or over-lapping staff duties, and at intake, screening out clients who cannot use child support enforcement services are examples of efficiency improvements at these sites.

### **UPGRADE AND IMPROVE STAFF UTILIZATION**

Re-evaluating the number, duties, capabilities and division of labor of present staff can improve the paternity establishment process.

A key improvement at six effective practice sites was hiring enough staff to do the job. Nine sites specialize staffs because it improves program knowledge and case processing. Ten contract for paternity establishment services such as legal service, legal counsel or locate information.

## STUDY METHODOLOGY

### Scope

The inspection focused on effective practices for paternity establishment up to, but not including, the issuance of the child support order. The reasons for this were: 1) the standards for paternity establishment under the Family Support Act of 1988 do not include requirements for support orders, and 2) our research indicated that paternity establishment and obtaining a support order can be two, independent processes.

The inspection sample is judgmental and consists of 77 respondents at 13 sites in 12 States. In addition, since the inspection sites were perceived to be effective by those knowledgeable in child support enforcement, we did not validate cause/effect relationships between the effective practices and the paternity establishment achievements of the jurisdictions. Rather we accepted what respondents reported concerning the impact of their effective practices.

Finally, we did not attempt to calculate a cost/benefit ratio of paternity establishment for our sample sites, but we did question the site directors about their perceptions of their cost effectiveness. We also asked them about their motivations and attitudes regarding child support enforcement.

### Site Selection:

These sites were selected using a careful screening process based on literature review, analysis of national statistics for out-of-wedlock births and numbers of paternities established, and on recommendations from various national special interest groups, Federal, Congressional and regional OCSE staffs, State and local Child Support directors, attorneys and researchers.

From the screening, we also derived a set of characteristics for an ideal paternity establishment process. (See exhibit "An Ideal Paternity Establishment Process" on page 5.)

The final sites selected were those jurisdictions that rated above average by the "ideal" model, the data or the experts' recommendations, and that have sizeable target populations. The sites provide a mix of county and State supervised programs and also include a variety of paternity adjudication systems.

### Data Collection/Analysis

Data for 12 jurisdictions was collected on-site through interviews with the local director, legal personnel, case supervisors and other knowledgeable staff. Interviews for one jurisdiction were conducted by telephone. The interview topics were site/staff description, intake, location, confrontation, adjudication, case management, perceptions of effective practices and cost effectiveness, and trend data.

We analyzed the data for trends among the sampled sites. We defined "effective practices" as procedures which improve the number of paternities established, case decision accuracy, or case management efficiency. We also used the characteristics of an ideal paternity establishment process as a reference for developing the descriptions of effective practices.

### Study Sites/Number of Respondents

1. Pulaski County (Little Rock), Arkansas (8)
2. San Francisco, California (5)
3. Santa Barbara County (Santa Barbara), California (4)
4. New Castle County (Wilmington), Delaware (10)
5. Fulton County (Atlanta), Georgia (6)
6. Cook County (Chicago), Illinois (4)
7. Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana (5)
8. Prince George's County, Maryland (3)
9. Wayne County (Detroit), Michigan (5)
10. Dakota County, Minnesota (4)
11. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (8)
12. Shelby County (Memphis), Tennessee (8)
13. Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City), Utah (7)

**INDIVIDUAL SITE PROFILES  
PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCEDURES**

Study Sites

1. Pulaski County (Little Rock), Arkansas
2. San Francisco, California
3. Santa Barbara County (Santa Barbara), California
4. New Castle County (Wilmington), Delaware
5. Fulton County (Atlanta), Georgia
6. Cook County (Chicago), Illinois
7. Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana
8. Prince George's County, Maryland
9. Wayne County (Detroit), Michigan
10. Dakota County, Minnesota
11. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
12. Shelby County (Memphis), Tennessee
13. Salt Lake County (Salt Lake City), Utah

Summary of Site Demographics

Four of the sites are counties of less than 500,000; 3 are more than 1.5 million. Nine of the sites are State administered; four, county administered. The estimated percentage of Child Support staff time spent on paternity establishment ranges from 17 percent to 75 percent with 2 staffs below 20 percent and 4 above 50 percent. The Child Support caseload for 12 sites is primarily AFDC, varying from 55 percent to 90 percent. One site has only a 30 percent AFDC caseload.

The population served by the Child Support Enforcement program is predominantly black for seven sites, predominantly white for two sites, equally divided black/white for three sites, and white/hispanic for one site. The ages of the custodial parents (usually female) range from 16 to 40, with the most common span being late teens to early 30's.

### Notes for Profile Data

1. County out-of-wedlock births are estimated from 1986 data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics, DHHS. Their data are reported either by city or by standard metropolitan statistical area.
2. County population is from July 1, 1988 Bureau of Census data.
3. The CSE caseload description information was reported by the study sites for their entire caseload, not just those requiring paternity establishment.

The Office of Child Support Enforcement told us a CSE case is defined by the absent parent, often the father. A CSE caseload is, therefore, a count of absent parents and reflects both AFDC and non-AFDC cases. The AFDC and non-AFDC caseload percentages used here are estimates by the site CSE directors.

## **PULASKI COUNTY (LITTLE ROCK), ARKANSAS**

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 8,246

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 1,783  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 356,900

#### **CSE Caseload Description:**

The caseload is 60% to 70% AFDC; the other 30% to 40% have earned incomes of \$10,000 - \$15,000 a year. The custodial parents' age range is 22 to 35. Racial composition is 80% black, 15% white and 5% other.

### **PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS**

#### **Method of Intake:**

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC gathers some information on the putative father; CSE routinely does a follow-up interview. AFDC was reported as not consistently obtaining basic paternity information, e.g., names of all potential fathers, address, employment, Social Security number. Key improvements were scheduling specific times for appointments, putting intake procedures in writing for the staff and then training them, and setting time limits for some type of case resolution.

#### **Penalty for Non-Cooperation:**

Removal of the mother from the grant.

#### **Blood Tests:**

Blood is drawn at a local laboratory although the site is trying to move the procedure to its local office. The site recently began to require the putative father to pay for the blood tests within 30 days, not 60 as before. Failure to pay could result in contempt of court. If the putative father agrees to pay and to abide by the results should they indicate 95% probability of paternity (Agreed Order), CSE may agree to pay for the tests up front. Before, the test was paid for by whomever requested it.

#### **Method of Adjudication:**

In some cases the putative father will come to the Child Support office to admit paternity, at which time the child support investigators will explain his legal rights. The CSE attorney prepares the documents, and the acknowledgement is entered into the court records.

At the time of the on-site visit, cases were heard in a county court before a judge who specialized in paternity establishment. Shortly afterwards, State

Chancery Courts were given jurisdiction over paternity cases. There are no longer preliminary hearings and other procedures were streamlined.

In contested cases, a complaint is filed and served to the putative father. He must file an answer within 20 days or a default judgment is entered. If evidence regarding income is available, support may be set at that time.

If the putative father responds by denying paternity, he signs an Agreed Order for blood test payment. The Agreed Order also stipulates that positive results with a probability greater than 95% may be entered as evidence without further proof and that the results shall be dispositive of the issue of paternity. Upon payment, the blood tests are scheduled. If the results are positive, an attempt is made to enter into an agreement with the father. Failing that, a court date is set.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

Case management is a combined manual/automated system. Information transferred by computer from AFDC to CSE is printed out at State Office, and the documents are sent to CSE. Some documents are computer generated, but notices to mothers and case tracking are done manually.

Staffing:

Caseworkers are assigned to AFDC or non-AFDC cases. The work is then assigned by function: location, collection, enforcement, intake and adjudication. Adding staff in 1987 and tracking the results was reported as a key improvement.

Clerical workers do case related data search on payment histories at the courthouse, obtain docket numbers and orders, prepare case openings for investigators, close cases and verify case contents are complete.

Contract for Services:

Roche Biomedical Labs for blood analysis

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ms. Judy Jordan, Manager  
Child Support Enforcement Unit  
105 Main Street  
Little Rock, AR 72201

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## SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 127,683

1986 City Out of Wedlock Births: 2,707  
(estimated)

1988 City Population: 731,600

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is 80% AFDC. The custodial parents' age range is 17 to 35. Racial composition is 51.6% black, 21.2% Asian, 13.3% white, 11.5% hispanic, 2% Philippino, and 0.4% American Indian.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC collects no information on the putative father; CSE has the primary responsibility for the paternity data which they collect on the same day as the AFDC intake interview.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Mothers must talk to CSE before their AFDC application is approved. Non-cooperation at CSE intake or later means removal of the mother from the grant. Use of the penalty at intake is now "rare" due to complaints from a welfare advocacy group about the penalty's use. The site implemented a procedure which offers mothers an opportunity to sign a "Declaration" about the putative father under penalty of perjury. This procedure is now required State-wide.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Child Support office. CSE pays for the tests initially and later collects from the putative father on any judgment for repayment of those costs.

#### Method of Adjudication:

If a man wishing to admit paternity comes to the CSE office, staff can computer-generate a summons/complaint, file it and serve him right there. They also explain his rights and responsibilities with his signed verification the information was given to him.

The man is given the choice to wait 30 days or formally admit paternity then. If he agrees to do it then, he signs and receives a stipulated judgment which is generated from the automated system. The attorney signs it, the document is filed, and a judge signs to finalize the paternity establishment.



If a man is served with a summons/complaint and formally denies paternity, then blood tests are ordered and a hearing date is set. If the tests do not exclude him, he can either admit paternity or proceed to trial. If the man does not answer the complaint, a default judgment of paternity is rendered.

CSE is able to file legal documents (summons/complaint, default judgments, stipulations) quickly because an on-site CSE supervisor has been trained as a deputy county clerk.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: County

Case Management:

The site has an automated case management system that can identify, track, age and obtain information for paternity cases as they are processed. Document generation is completely automated. Changing from a manual system to an automated one over several years was a key improvement. Conversion of paper files to an automated data base was scheduled for completion by summer 1989.

Staffing:

Caseworkers are now generalists and handle all phases of the process. The Director believed specialization caused downtime. As a case moved through the process it "would go to the bottom of the stack" in the next phase or would go nowhere if the responsible staff member was out of the office.

Contract for Services:

ABC Legal Services to serve summons/complaints.  
Genetic Design for blood analysis.

## CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Family Support Bureau  
District Attorney's Office  
291 Tenth Street  
San Francisco, CA 94103

Telephone: (415) 553-4286

# SANTA BARBARA COUNTY (SANTA BARBARA), CALIFORNIA

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 127,683

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 1,007  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 343,100

### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is approximately 60% AFDC. The custodial parents' age range is late teens to early 20's. Racial composition is about evenly divided between white and hispanic.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. At all 3 intake sites CSE now coordinates with AFDC staff to conduct intake interviews on the same day. CSE has the primary responsibility for collecting information on the putative father. Prior to mid-1989, the site had 1 office which did a follow-up intake interview weeks after AFDC's. CSE staff believed AFDC did not consistently obtain the information needed and that CSE obtained better information about the putative father from the same day interview.

For informing clients about available services, the County uses an audio-visual presentation of which the benefits of paternity establishment is a segment.

### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Mothers must talk to CSE before their AFDC application is approved. Non-cooperation at CSE intake or later means removal of the mother from the grant. A required State-wide procedure offers mothers an opportunity to sign a "Declaration" about the putative father under penalty of perjury.

### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at a local pathology laboratory. The CSE program initially pays for the tests, and later seeks a judgment for reimbursement against the putative father -- for all 3 tests if he is proven the father, for just his own if he is not.

### Method of Adjudication:

The mother, as noted, completes a "Declaration" naming the putative father. This declaration supports a default judgment and/or CSE's pursuit of paternity establishment without the mother's presence if she leaves the area. The putative father, once located, is served with a summons and complaint. If he does not respond to it, a default judgment is sought based on evidence and allegations made in the complaint.

If the putative father voluntarily admits paternity, he signs a stipulation of paternity. Although a court appearance is not needed to obtain an order, the father is routinely scheduled to appear in court at which time the judge reviews his rights with him. This appearance simplifies enforcement subsequent to entry of the order.

If the putative father responds to the summons and complaint, but denies paternity, blood tests are ordered. If he still denies paternity after the blood tests do not exclude him, there is a trial before a judge and/or jury.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: County

Case Management:

Case tracking and quality controls are manual: 60-day case reviews for actions taken and actions needed, individual case control sheets, daily caseworker log sheets summarized by supervisors, supervisory review of all caseworker initiated legal actions, and written standards describing caseworker responsibilities. Every 6 months supervisors review 10 percent of each caseworker's caseload to ensure compliance with the 60-day review procedures and to identify additional training needs. Each day Family Support Officers must identify 10 cases that have had no action/review in the last 60 days and take the necessary action to update the case.

In 1986 the site conducted a "default project". The prior year they had inventoried the entire caseload to determine the status of individual cases and actions needed to complete them. As a result, they identified cases in which the putative father had been served, but no other action was taken. After notifying the court and the public of their intention, the CSE staff processed a backlog of 450 default cases in 10 working days.

Staffing:

Staff is assigned to either the welfare or non-welfare team. Within the teams caseworkers specialize in enforcement, intake/locate, or establishment. Establishment officers have been trained by the legal staff to handle routine defaults and voluntary stipulations. There is also an ombudsman to handle difficult clients or sensitive cases. Clerical workers schedule blood testing, view the blood draw and process legal documents.

Contract for Services: None.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Santa Barbara Family Support Division  
1114 State Street, Room 308  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101  
Telephone: (805) 568-2328

## NEW CASTLE COUNTY (WILMINGTON), DELAWARE

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 2,621

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: not available

1988 County Population: 435,300

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is 90% AFDC; the 10% non-AFDC has a weekly income of approximately \$180. The custodial parents' average age ranges from 17 to 24. Racial composition is 50% black and 50% white.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

CSE intake workers are located in the AFDC office. AFDC collects some information on the putative father. CSE does a follow-up interview that same day which is their preference.

To improve intake and to change their perceptions, AFDC workers were trained on how to view clients differently: to see AFDC as something temporary, the client as competent, and paternity establishment as helping the client.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

At intake, AFDC assistance is not approved until the mother completes an interview with CSE. Later non-cooperation means removal of the mother from the grant.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Family Court. CSE pays for the test initially, but, if the man is proven the father, then he must pay.

#### Method of Adjudication:

The putative father is served with a summons and complaint. If he does not respond after two services, and possibly a bench warrant for his arrest, a default judgment of paternity is entered.

At this site, voluntary paternity acknowledgements must occur in Family Court. If the man wishes to admit paternity, a court Mediator explains his rights to him and negotiates a support amount, thus completing the case. If he agrees to paternity but not to a support amount, a court Master conducts a final negotiation. No court appearance before a judge is necessary in either case.

Putative fathers who deny paternity have a hearing with a Mediator who schedules blood tests. A default judgment is possible if he fails to appear for the test. If the blood test has not excluded him, the putative father is given an opportunity to voluntarily admit paternity. If he doesn't, the Master will hear witnesses and make a decision on paternity and support amount. The man may request a trial before a judge if he will not accept the Master's decision. Delaware does not allow jury trials in paternity cases.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

CSE uses an automated system which identifies cases which need paternity establishment, alerts staff when specific case action is required or overdue, counts the number of paternity establishment cases they have at any specific time and generates needed documents.

Staffing:

CSE workers are specialized by welfare or non-welfare which improves their expertise. CSE has a specialized locate unit that is responsible for tracking absent parents if the intake unit cannot obtain the needed information. They also have separate units for intake and enforcement.

They hired 4 additional attorneys in 1986 which increased their case processing and smoothed out the adjudications.

Contract for Services:

Process servers to serve legal notice.

Family Court to provide the services of Mediators and Masters (hearing officers).

State Justice Department to interview and select attorneys for CSE legal casework. Pay for the attorneys is part of the CSE budget. The Justice Department retains firing authority.

## CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Ms. Barbara Paulin, OCSE Director  
Office of Child Support Enforcement  
1901 DuPont Highway  
Post Office Box 904  
New Castle, Delaware 19720

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## FULTON COUNTY (ATLANTA), GEORGIA

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 26,701

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 9,877  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 640,800

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is 80% AFDC and is predominantly black. The custodial parents range in age from 18 to 25.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC gathers some information about the putative father with CSE routinely doing a follow-up interview, either in the office or by telephone. CSE has also obtained information from questionnaires sent by mail.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the AFDC grant and designation of a new grant payee. CSE will close non-AFDC cases after 30 days.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Child Support office by appointment. Payment is often split by CSE and the putative father. CSE may pay all the cost if the man is excluded. CSE's payment depends on the availability of matching funds.

#### Method of Adjudication:

First, a form letter, advising the man of the paternity allegation and his rights, is sent. He may voluntarily admit paternity at this time, or he may first request blood tests, and then voluntarily acknowledge paternity after the results are known.

The father can sign a paternity statement to acknowledge paternity only. This statement is notarized by an agent and requires a subsequent court appearance to set child support. The man may execute a "consent order" (signed by a superior court judge) or an "administrative consent order" (signed by a fair hearings officer) to both acknowledge paternity and set child support. Neither requires a court appearance by the father; the methods for enforcing the support order, however, are different. The majority of paternitys are established by voluntary procedures which were implemented in recent years.

If the putative father does not respond to the form letter, the sheriff legally serves him in person. At this point also, he may voluntarily acknowledge

paternity. Only the attorneys attend the preliminary hearing to discuss what further actions are needed, e.g., completion of interrogatories. Once these preliminary actions are completed, a court date is set, at which time, the putative father may deny the allegation. The judge orders blood tests and subsequently makes a paternity determination. Failure of the putative father to appear for set hearings or blood tests results in a default judgment of paternity.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

Case management is a combination manual/automated system. There is an automated data base of case information, but site personnel must also maintain paper files for information the automated system does not capture as well as for backup. Case tracking is partly a manual procedure performed by the caseworkers and partly an automated procedure which tracks a series of case action codes. The system can do some automated document generation.

Staffing:

CSE staff are specialized by function: intake, obligation (includes locate and voluntary acknowledgement), enforcement, legal (for contested cases), URESA, and probation (for women who claim abandonment).

The site improved staffing effectiveness and the locate function by upgrading a clerical position to a "locate agent". Then they were able to hire additional locators from a pool of more qualified people. They also have a specialized position of a blood test agent which has enabled them to save time in completing the tests.

Contract for Services:

District Attorney's office to provide assistant DA's for paternity establishment cases. Special Assistant to the Attorney General for legal services involving some cases where the putative father does not respond to CSE notification letters.

Equifax Credit Bureau for location information on putative fathers.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Office of Child Support Recovery  
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Mr. Russell Eastman, Manager  
College Park Office  
Office of Child Support Recovery  
1568 Willingham Dr., Suite G  
College Park, GA 30337  
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## COOK COUNTY (CHICAGO), ILLINOIS

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 47,843

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 26,304  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 5,284,300

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The majority of the caseload is AFDC. The average age of the custodial parents is mid-20's. Most clients are black although the hispanic case population is increasing.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC collects some information on the putative father; CSE routinely does a follow-up interview 3 to 4 weeks later. The site has 5 pilot project offices where CSE workers are co-located with AFDC and interview mothers the same day they apply for AFDC. Responses indicated that CSE believes AFDC gathers useful information that is not passed on to CSE. The site has proposed, with Federal approval pending, a system change which would allow AFDC and CSE to share a common client/responsible relative data base.

The site, funded by DHHS, is also piloting Project Advance which targets the needs of young mothers. At least once a week a family support specialist interviews the mothers at the pilot offices after the mothers have participated in a workshop to discuss what child support is and the advantages of paternity establishment. Although findings are preliminary, the workshop participants seem to view the process as less adversarial, are better prepared for the intake interview, and are more willing to cooperate.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the grant.

#### Blood Tests:

Beginning in 1988 when their funding for blood testing increased from \$90,000 to \$200,000, CSE paid for more tests initially, and then tried to collect from whomever requested the test. Because "discovery" could begin sooner, timeliness and numbers of settlements improved. Effective October 1989 the site changed blood testing from a Cook County hospital to an agreement with Genetic Design. Legal representatives were informed they could order blood tests in all contested cases at the time of the first hearing.



### Method of Adjudication:

State law requires that paternity establishments must occur in court. First, a summons is sent telling the putative father to appear in court with proof of employment/wages. If he appears, he is read his rights and questioned regarding the paternity allegation. If he does wish to admit paternity, court staff interview him and set a support amount. The judge then signs the order.

Procedures for a contested case are the same until the putative father denies paternity. Then, a blood test is ordered, a public defender is assigned to represent the father, interrogatories/depositions are done and the case is ready for court. The putative father may admit paternity after the blood test results or he may request a jury trial. During this process, if he misses two court dates, a warrant for his arrest is issued.

A key improvement was to increase their legal staff and courts to three full day courtrooms and four suburban courtrooms. Also staff from CSE and the State Attorney's Office brief individual judges on the specific requirements and problems of child support enforcement law. In July 1989, CSE began a pilot project with the Illinois Task Force on Child Support for expedited paternity adjudication at the courts serving the Project Advance participants.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### CSE Administration: State

### Case Management:

Case management is a combination manual/automated system. Case information, tracking and appointments are automated. After data entry of legal actions, generation of certain legal documents is automated.

### Staffing:

CSE paternity establishment staff are not specialized. An improvement was to increase their intake and legal staffs. The benefits were quicker case processing, backlog reduction and better service to the mother since CSE legal staff was available to meet her before court.

### Contract for Services:

Cook County State Attorney's office to serve as legal representative of the CSE office and the Sheriff's office for legal service.

## CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Division of Child Support Enforcement  
Illinois Department of Public Aid  
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## MARION COUNTY (INDIANAPOLIS), INDIANA

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 16,657

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 4,894  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 791,900

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is 80% AFDC with custodial parents under age 25. Racial composition is 50% white and 50% black.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC collects some information on the putative father. CSE reported that its staff frequently has to re-do the interview because the information from AFDC is incomplete or inaccurate.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the grant.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at a local laboratory. The site uses 4 different labs for blood analysis depending on what needs to be performed and what price the lab offers.

AFDC pays for the tests initially for welfare cases. If the putative father is proven the father, the site tries to collect costs from him. A successful practice has been to issue contempt citations for his failure to reimburse AFDC.

#### Method of Adjudication:

Beginning in 1986 the site established paternity and support orders without a court appearance by using a "consent decree." Handled by paralegals, a consent decree formalizes prior agreements between the parties regarding paternity, visitation, support amount, wage withholding, medical insurance, and name change. The Deputy Prosecutor reviews/files decree with the court where a judge signs it. This process improved their timeliness and eliminated the judicial backlog.

Voluntary paternity court is held for men who acknowledge paternity but do not agree on support amounts or other issues. Final decisions are made by a judge. Putative fathers who do not admit paternity are legally served with a summons, and blood tests are scheduled. If blood analysis includes him, and

he still denies paternity, a trial date is set. They always use DNA tests for tried cases.

They do not have a default judgment "per se". If a man doesn't respond to the summons, they cannot issue a default judgment. However, if he has appeared in court once, the court may determine paternity in his absence.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

Case management is a combined manual/automated system. Pleadings and court cases are reviewed manually by managers or attorneys. Case tracking data and review for required actions is computer generated with manual follow-up by the staff.

Staffing:

Paternity teams, composed of functional specialists, handle cases from intake through adjudication. Respondents believe the client gains a sense of continuity and familiarity with the CSE workers. Site respondents also believe it increases the efficiency, program knowledge and accountability of the workers.

A blood test consultant, acting as a liaison between the blood laboratories and CSE clients, coordinates appointments and negotiates payment. Paralegals are trained to prepare legal documents, thus giving the Deputy Prosecutor more time for adjudication.

Contract for Services: None.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Child Support Division  
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# PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY, MARYLAND

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 21,198

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: not available

1988 County Population: 701,000

### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is 30% AFDC and 90% employed. The custodial parents' age range is 17 to 28. Racial composition is 80% black and 20% white/hispanic.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. For non-AFDC cases, CSE has the sole responsibility for collecting information on the putative fathers. For welfare cases, however, AFDC is the primary information gatherer. CSE reported that follow-up interviews were necessary because AFDC does not consistently obtain the needed information.

### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the grant and designation of a new grant payee. CSE has the authority to apply the penalty.

### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn in the Court building. CSE pays for all blood tests initially. They then seek reimbursement from the parents: from the putative father if the tests did not exclude him; from the mother for non-AFDC cases if the putative father was excluded.

The site contracts for blood testing through open bidding. The contract lengths were shortened and provided for other services such as the availability of expert testimony at no additional charge. Test costs decreased from \$550 to \$185.

### Method of Adjudication:

Default judgments are not permissible. Putative fathers are first notified of the allegation by a letter sent through the mail. It includes information about voluntary consent and the court date. If he wishes, the putative father may voluntarily acknowledge paternity at the CSE office without a court appearance or at the first hearing (arraignment). He may sign a short form (admitting paternity only) or a long form (admitting paternity/agreeing to support). The father's rights are explained verbally and are printed on the form he signs. His acknowledgement is then entered into the court records.

If the putative father does not respond to the letter or appear for the arraignment, he is served with a summons (if he cannot be served, the case is returned to locate). If he ignores the summons, a warrant is issued for his arrest. As soon as he denies paternity, blood is drawn immediately in the Court building and he is notified of the next court date. After the results are received, the judge rules on the findings. A putative father can request a jury trial, but few do. For AFDC cases, if the putative father denies paternity and the mother does not appear at the hearing, the case is continued. CSE will sanction the mother for non-cooperation and try to convince her to appear with the child for the next hearing and blood test.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: County

Case Management:

The county CSE case management system is automated with the ability to track, age and identify needed actions for individual cases.

Staffing:

Staff are specialized by function. The State CSE staff performs intake and locate. County CSE is concerned with confrontation, adjudication (including blood testing), support orders and URESA cases. In 1987 County CSE increased their staff by two case workers and one clerical which helped to reduce their backlog and to improve case processing time.

AFDC has a Court Liaison Officer who arranges transportation for clients with volunteer drivers so they will not miss their court hearings. A Blood Test Coordinator arranges test appointments and checks for billing errors.

Contract for Services:

Maryland Medical in Baltimore for blood analysis.  
Sheriff's Department for legal service.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Child Support Enforcement  
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Ms. Meg Sollenberger, Exec. Director  
Office of CSE  
14701 Governor Oden Bowie Dr., Ste. 406  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
Telephone: (301) 952-5453

Judge David Ross  
Courthouse  
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772  
Telephone: (301) 952-3896

## WAYNE COUNTY (DETROIT), MICHIGAN

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 26,620

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 10,213  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 2,122,800

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The majority of the caseload is AFDC with the custodial parents in their late teens to early 20's. Racial composition is 50% black, 50% white.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

AFDC collects no information on the putative father; CSE has the primary responsibility. CSE workers are located in each AFDC office. The mother is initially interviewed by CSE the same day she applies for welfare benefits or at the second interview when she brings in supplemental case information.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of mother from the grant and designation of a new grant payee.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Friends of the Court (FOC) building. CSE pays for blood tests on AFDC cases. If the putative father is capable of paying, they will seek reimbursement from him.

#### Method of Adjudication:

The County is empowered to act as the AFDC applicant's agent, so the mother never has to appear after the initial CSE interview, except for blood tests. At intake the mother is asked to telephone the putative father and to request that he join her there to discuss paternity. Failing that, a letter notifying him of the allegation is sent. If he wishes, he may then voluntarily acknowledge paternity to a support specialist in the CSE office. Both parents sign an acknowledgement which is filed with probate court. No court appearance is necessary. Hospital admissions of paternity are also acceptable to enter a probate judgment.

For putative fathers who still have not responded, the next step is to forward the case to FOC for legal action beginning with a notice of paternity action. The FOC automated system also schedules the case into the docket for every possible hearing/action with due dates. The putative father is advised in writing of the preliminary hearing, the schedule and his option to admit paternity.

If the man wishes to deny paternity he appears at a preliminary hearing without a judge. He is advised of his rights and set up for blood tests. If he refuses a blood test, he confers with a referee (hearing officer) and possibly a judge whose ruling is final. After a blood test does not exclude him but he still denies paternity, the case is scheduled for trial.

After failing to appear for a preliminary hearing and after "good service" is achieved, a putative father, who does not appear at other mandated hearings, will have a Default Order of Filiation/Order for Support entered against him. This is also true for defendants who appear for the preliminary but miss subsequent hearings. A defendant cannot be defaulted, however, for failure to comply with an Order for Blood Testing, although he can be held in contempt.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

Case management is a combined manual/automated system. As noted above, their automated FOC system will schedule cases for every possible action and produce legal documents. For tracking and aging paternity cases before they reach FOC, their process is primarily manual. The site is in a transition period, however, where they are building an automated database which will eventually support totally automated case management.

Staffing:

CSE staff are generalists and are not specialized by function.

Contract for Services:

They have a cooperative agreement with the Friends of the Court to handle both establishment and enforcement procedures. If CSE does not obtain a voluntary acknowledgement, the case is sent to Friends of the Court for additional location work, legal service and paternity establishment.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mr. Fred Goddard, Area Manager  
Michigan Department of Social Services  
Office of Child Support  
1200 6th Street, Suite 660  
Detroit, MI 48226

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# DAKOTA COUNTY (SOUTH OF ST. PAUL), MINNESOTA

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 10,721

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: not available

1988 County Population: 253,400

### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload as of December 1, 1989 was 61% AFDC. The AFDC custodial parents are primarily in their early 20's with 30% to 40% of them working, at least part-time. The racial composition is 80-85% white with some black, hispanic and southeast Asian clients.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC is the primary information gatherer on the putative father. CSE does a follow-up interview when needed, usually by telephone. CSE reported that AFDC does not consistently obtain all the information needed.

### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Mother is removed from the grant. A protective payee is assigned, and the site pays her bills in her behalf

### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at a local hospital. CSE pays for the blood tests initially. Sometimes, if the man is proven the father, CSE will try to collect from him, but usually the debt is forgiven.

### Method of Adjudication:

Putative fathers who wish to admit paternity are informed verbally and in writing by the paralegals (County Attorney's Office) of their rights and responsibilities. Paralegals also prepare the necessary documents. The parties subsequently meet with the assistant County Attorney. If they can agree to all terms, including support, the father stipulates, and the judgment is entered through the court. Court appearance is not required.

Putative fathers who do not admit paternity are legally served with a summons/complaint. No response to the complaint or appointment for blood tests leads to a default judgment. No response to requests for information after the blood test is completed can lead to a summary judgment. Full but contesting responses require a hearing. Support orders for default and summary judgments are negotiated separately by specialized CSE staff.



## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

### CSE Administration: County

#### Case Management:

Case management is a combined manual/automated system. CSE uses an automated database which contains case information and the site's collection mechanism. The database is used for statistical analysis of the caseload and of the individual caseworkers. Tracking of paternity cases is primarily a manual procedure performed by the caseworkers.

#### Staffing:

The CSE staff is not specialized by function although the entire CSE staff, including its contracted personnel, does have an efficient division of labor created by 2 key improvements. CSE does intake, location, routine child support orders and collections. The County Attorney handles all paternity work and more legally child support complicated cases.

In 1987 two paralegals and one attorney were added to the County Attorney's staff for a total of 2 paralegals and 3 attorneys. This staff spends the majority of their time on paternity establishment. Use of paralegals for routine paternity work freed up attorney time for more complex cases. Early in 1988 the responsibility for negotiating support orders for certain case types was moved from the County Attorney to the CSE office. Numbers of completed case actions and timeliness improved for both offices.

#### Contract for Services:

Dakota County Attorney's Office (3 FTE attorneys and 2 paralegals) for CSE legal services including paternity.

Blood analysis for paternity establishment done by Genetic Design, North Carolina.

County sheriff's office for personal service of summons/complaint to the putative fathers.

## CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

Mr. Phil Dalseth  
Collections Services Supervisor  
Dakota County Human Services  
33 East Wentworth Avenue, Ste. 166  
West St. Paul, MN 55118  
Telephone (612) 450-2628

Ms. Diane Anderson  
Dakota County Attorney's Office  
1560 West Highway 55  
Hastings MN 55033  
Telephone: (612) 438-4438

# PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 39,298

1986 City Out of Wedlock Births: 14,671  
(estimated)

1988 City Population: 1,647,000

### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is primarily AFDC with custodial parents ranging in age from 16 to 40. Racial composition is 90% black with the other 10% being mostly hispanic.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC collects some information on the putative father with routine follow-up interviews by CSE. Clients must see a CSE worker before they are approved for AFDC. Since approximately 2,500 people apply for AFDC services per month, the initial CSE interview is usually brief.

Two AFDC offices are piloting a project where AFDC workers are trained to conduct the entire intake interview with the mother. Clients who are not authorized to receive AFDC and who do not wish to pursue child support once public aid is denied are not referred to the CSE office. The quality of the information is improved as well. Case processing becomes faster and concentrates on paternity establishment tasks. The site hopes to expand this project.

### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the grant.

### Locate:

Philadelphia, which also locates missing children, has investigators that locate about 500 fathers a month. In addition to the links (many automated) to a wide variety of information sources, they also work, if required by the case, neighborhood churches, bars and grocery stores to obtain information about the father.

### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Family Court building. CSE pays for the blood tests initially. If the putative father is proven the father, CSE will seek reimbursement from him.

In March 1989, the site negotiated a two-sample blood draw with one contractor to combat the problem of redraws when samples are lost or misplaced. Redraws caused time delays in case adjudications.

#### Method of Adjudication:

The putative father is informed of the paternity allegation either by certified mail or by legal service. A pre-trial conference with a hearing officer is mandatory. The putative father may admit paternity at this time by signing an acknowledgement form which becomes an approved order after a judge's signature. A court appearance is not necessary for the father.

If the man fails to appear for the initial pre-trial conference, he is personally served with an Order to Appear for a rescheduled conference. His failure to appear a second time after successful personal service may result in a warrant for his arrest.

If he denies paternity at the conference, the putative father is advised of his rights and scheduled for blood tests. When the blood is drawn, he is served with a subpoena to appear in court on a specified date. The District Attorney pre-tries every case. The DA discusses blood test results and tries for a voluntary acknowledgement. Many cases are resolved before trial this way. If this effort fails, the case is tried before a judge or a jury if requested. If the man fails to appear for trial, a default judgment is ordered.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

#### Case Management:

Paternity cases are indexed manually with welfare cases separated from non-welfare cases. Case tracking and aging are done manually. The enforcement part of the child support process is automated. Late notices, appointment letters, amounts owed and contempt letters are computer-generated.

#### Staffing:

CSE staff is specialized by function: intake, locate, pre-trial hearings and enforcement. Clerical workers are trained to process the paperwork for voluntary acknowledgements and to prepare other needed forms.

#### Contract for Services:

DA's office serves as the prosecutor in contested cases.

Blood analysis is done by Genetic Design.

The State contracts with the Family Court of Philadelphia to do paternity establishment, support enforcement, collections and all other facets of the process.

**CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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Court of Common Pleas  
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Ms. Mary Lou Baker, IV-D Director  
Court of Common Pleas  
1600 Walnut Street, Room 1010  
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## SHELBY COUNTY (MEMPHIS), TENNESSEE

### DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 16,767

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 5,527  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 819,800

#### CSE Caseload Description:

The majority of the caseload is AFDC. The custodial parents' age range is 15 to 65 with most in the 20 to 42 range. Racial composition is 85% black and 15% white.

### PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

#### Method of Intake:

CSE and AFDC are not co-located. CSE reported that AFDC is the primary information gatherer on the putative father with follow-up interviews by CSE only when needed. CSE also reported, however, that AFDC does not consistently obtain the needed information, such as the full name and address of the putative father.

Some AFDC workers are located in the hospitals to explain services available to the mothers, including Child Support services.

#### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

Removal of the mother from the grant and designation of a new grant payee.

#### Location:

As a one-time project, a local newspaper published a list of men CSE was trying to locate for open but unworkable cases. Businessmen, individuals and relatives called in information that led to the location of absent fathers. The site respondent believed they had "moderate success" with it and said they may try it again.

#### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at the Juvenile Court building. CSE program pays if the putative father is excluded or indigent. If he was not excluded, the putative father pays for the test; the site allows monthly installments as low as \$10. In some non-AFDC cases the mother pays. Local agencies bid for blood tests. This lowered the cost from \$600 to \$240 and the elapsed time to receive results dropped from months to 2 weeks.

#### Method of Adjudication:

Putative fathers are informed of the paternity allegation first by letters sent through the mail. CSE makes two attempts in this way. If a putative father

wishes to admit paternity voluntarily, he may do so at the Child Support office where he is advised of his rights verbally and in writing by a CSE attorney. He signs a parental consent which is then notarized, and formally entered into the court records. A court appearance is unnecessary. He may also come to CSE to deny paternity; he is then served and given a court date.

If a putative father does not respond to the first letter(s), he is next served with a summons to appear on a specific date either by certified mail and/or in person. Failure to appear can result, at the Court's discretion, in a warrant for his arrest or a default judgment of paternity. When the putative father appears, but denies paternity, a blood test is immediately ordered and performed. Also, the man is then informed in writing of his next court date and that failure to appear will mean a default judgment. If the tests do not exclude him, the putative father may request a jury or non-jury trial.

The Court specializes in Child Support cases, and thus, CSE does not have to compete with others for docket time. In addition, the site uses mediators in the CSE office and referees for paternity hearings.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

At the time of the on-site visit, the system for tracking and aging paternity cases was totally manual. In June 1989, installation of an IBM System 36 allowed them to begin some basic automated case tracking.

Staffing:

Caseworkers, mediators and supervisors are not specialized. Specialized staff are: 1) process servers who serve subpoenas, summons, make or assist in making arrests; 2) female call assistants who are used to work with non-cooperative mothers to obtain information; 3) a paternity coordinator that acts as a liaison between the attorneys and the court.

Contract for Services:

Local hospitals for blood tests. Private attorneys to handle paternity cases. They were selected by a staff attorney to assist in reducing case backlogs. They have also assisted in improving timeliness in case processing and in providing better service to the client. Credit bureau for locate information sharing.

### CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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# SALT LAKE COUNTY (SALT LAKE CITY), UTAH

## DEMOGRAPHICS

1986 State Out of Wedlock Births: 3,575

1986 County Out of Wedlock Births: 1,988  
(estimated)

1988 County Population: 720,000

### CSE Caseload Description:

The caseload is approximately 75% AFDC with the custodial parents between the ages of 16 and 25. The racial composition is about 80% white, 15% hispanic and small percentages of blacks and Asians.

## PATERNITY ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

### Method of Intake:

AFDC and CSE are not co-located. AFDC collects some information on the putative father with routine follow-up interviews conducted by CSE. CSE believes that AFDC does not consistently obtain the needed information. CSE has tried to improve intake by designing the forms used by AFDC to interview the mother regarding Child Support information.

A woman, who says she doesn't know who the father is, is sometimes required by CSE to obtain sworn affidavits from people who will attest that the father is unknown to them or to her.

### Penalty for Non-Cooperation:

The mother is removed from the grant. In addition, she does not receive a check; the AFDC office instead pays her bills in her behalf.

### Blood Tests:

Blood is drawn at several local laboratories. CSE pays for the test initially and later seeks reimbursement from the putative father if he wasn't excluded or from the non-AFDC mother if the putative father was excluded. In early 1990 the site plans to have blood draws in the Salt Lake CSE office.

### Method of Adjudication:

The putative father is usually notified of the paternity allegation first by telephone and then by letter. If he wishes to voluntarily admit paternity, he can do so without a court appearance at the CSE office. There he is advised of his rights and asked to sign a voluntary acknowledgement which generally includes a support amount. This acknowledgement is then reviewed and signed by the attorney and entered into the court records by a judge's signature.

If the putative father does not respond to the telephone call or letter, he is served with a summons. Failure to answer results in a default judgment of paternity. When he responds with a denial, the Attorney General's office orders blood tests which the putative father cannot refuse. If the blood tests have not excluded him, and he still denies paternity, the case is tried, with a jury, if so requested. A father may sign a voluntary acknowledgement at any time during this process.

## PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

CSE Administration: State

Case Management:

Case management is a combined manual/automated system. Case narratives, some locate information and some forms are computerized. Case referrals from AFDC are manual, as is tracking for paternity cases. An improvement was revision of forms for greater standardization and simplicity.

Staffing:

Paternity teams work only paternity establishment cases. There is some specialization by function within the teams. Team members can provide backup for each other and still provide expertise in certain program areas, e.g., location. The site respondents believe this has increased efficiency and timeliness of the workers.

Teams that were successful with voluntary paternity acknowledgements trained less successful teams on interviewing techniques. The site was also able to hire additional locate staff. One worker does presentations to large companies in the area to explain the work of CSE and to solicit location information from company records. Their improvement goal was to increase voluntary acknowledgements, which they achieved.

Contract for Services:

They contract for blood analysis primarily with Genetic Design of North Carolina and Associated Regional and University Pathologists in Utah. The Attorney General's office has the contract to file stipulations and to handle contested cases. Constables provide legal service to the putative fathers.

## CONTACT FOR MORE INFORMATION

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