

**Progress Report on Improving the Title IV-D
Child Support Program**

**Report to the
Sunset Advisory Commission**

October 2000

**Office of the Attorney General
Child Support Division**

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Progress Report on Improving the Title IV-D Child Support Program

Executive Summary

In 1999, the Legislature enacted SB 368 which, among other things, requires the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to report on its progress toward significantly improving the performance of its Child Support Division. The following report has been prepared to comply with the legislation. It will show that, among other accomplishments, the OAG has:

- Improved the rate at which it responds to customer telephone inquiries, going from 14 percent in 1998 to 95 percent in 2000,
- Collected \$1.029 billion in child support in state fiscal year 2000, a 36 percent increase in production over 1998,
- Transitioned to the Year 2000 with no complaints about computer or telecommunication systems failures due to Y2K unpreparedness,
- Substantially increased the availability of its computer system,
- Successfully implemented the federally mandated State Disbursement Unit (SDU) on time,
- Reached out to other agencies and counties involved in the child support process to involve them in strategic partnerships, and
- Reduced State Office FTEs 19 percent and redeployed them to its field offices to better serve its customers.

These accomplishments are only a small part of a concerted effort to improve the delivery of child support services undertaken since 1999. They are also examples of six major areas in which the program has achieved significant improvement:

- Customer service,
- Program performance,
- Computer system issues,
- Federal welfare reform implementation,
- Business practices and organization, and
- Collaboration with other agencies and counties.

This report is organized around these six broad categories. It details the progress made in each one, paying particular attention to the program's implementation of the Sunset Commission's management recommendations and the statutory mandates found in SB 368.

The Problem

Prompted by numerous complaints about the state's Title IV-D Child Support Program, the Legislature in 1997 instructed the Sunset Commission to conduct a special program review, whose main purpose was to determine whether the OAG should continue to be the state's IV-D agency. After the review, which was conducted for the Commission in 1998 by David M. Griffith and Associates, hearings and discussions were held on its findings. Consequently, the Commission recommended that the OAG continue as the IV-D agency for a two-year probationary period, but that during this time it had to substantially improve performance. In 1999, the Legislature adopted many of the Sunset Commission's recommendations in SB 368, which, among other things, requires the OAG to report on its progress toward improving the delivery of child support services. To do so, the OAG has prepared the following report, which documents the solid improvement achieved by its Child Support Division since 1999. The first section describes the progress made in the program's biggest shortcoming—customer service.

Improving Customer Service

Prior to 1999, the most glaring deficiency of the division was its poor record of customer service. To remedy this problem, newly-elected Attorney General John Cornyn made customer service Child Support's number one priority. These efforts have borne abundant fruit since 1998:

- The telephone answer rate, which was abysmally low, is now comparable to the answer rate of private businesses,
- Customer satisfaction increased by 24 percent,
- An ombudsman was hired to oversee the handling and tracking of customer complaints,
- Legislative inquiries resulting from constituent complaints declined by about 60 percent, and
- A customer service plan developed with staff and customer input has been published on the Child Support Intranet.

In addition, the OAG created decentralized Regional Call Centers to more effectively respond to customer inquiries, made it possible for its Voice Interactive Response System (VIRS) to accurately forecast when a payment will be sent to custodial parents, and established an Employer Call Center to answer employer questions about income withholding.

Improving Program Performance

Being more customer friendly is important, but only half the job. The Child Support Program must also meet rigorous program performance standards set by the Legislature. In 1998, program performance was weak. Four out of seven key performance measures were below acceptable variance levels; however, in 1999 and 2000 program performance rebounded strongly. In 2000, the OAG:

- collected \$1.029 billion, a 36 percent increase over 1998,
- established paternity for 48,481 children, a 21 percent increase over 1998, and
- established or modified 56,423 child support orders, a 23 percent increase over 1998.

In addition it collected more than \$155 million through the new automated administrative income withholding process and met or exceeded all outcome performance standards set by the Legislature except one, which has since been discontinued by the Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office.

The program in federal fiscal year 2000 will also qualify for federal incentives in all five performance categories. Program performance was especially strong in the area of paternity establishment as Texas's paternity establishment percentage exceeded 100 percent in 1999 and 2000.

Resolving Computer System Implementation Issues

The OAG has worked diligently to address concerns about computer related issues raised by the Sunset Commission. As a result, it:

- Successfully analyzed and tested its computer system in order to make it Y2K compliant,
- Embarked on a Financial Process Redesign (FPR) project to simplify disbursement of payments and the order entry process,
- Addressed the "case type" issue so that the case type of all new TANF and Medicaid referrals is correctly coded,
- Reduced held payments by more than \$20 million and began work to resolve issues that keep money from distributing upon receipt,
- Reduced the time it takes to run adjustments and batch processes on the system,
- Reduced system response time from .78 seconds in 1999 to .13 seconds in 2000, and
- Hired an Information Technology (IT) manager with extensive experience in overseeing a large, state agency computer system and consolidated IT operations under her direction.

Implementing Welfare Reform Mandates

In addition to these computer system issues, the Sunset Commission observed that the OAG needed to improve its implementation of welfare reform requirements, mandated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. The OAG since 1999 has taken decisive steps to implement these mandates including the implementation of:

- A State Disbursement Unit (SDU) that met the federal deadline,
- An automated administrative income withholding process,
- An acknowledgment of paternity (AOP) process that has resulted in the voluntary establishment of paternity for more than 56,000 children in state fiscal year 2000,
- An automated process for sending license suspension notices, and
- An access and visitation project that funnels more than \$650,000 to local access and visitation programs.

Additionally it is in the process of implementing other welfare reform mandates including the Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) and automated liens.

Welfare reform also requires extensive changes to the way the OAG disburses arrears collected in former TANF cases. These changes have been divided into three phases. Phase 1 is complete, Phase 2 is in progress with about \$11 million disbursed so far, and Phase 3 has been folded into the Financial Process Redesign project with completion estimated to be March 2001.

Improving Child Support Through Collaboration

The Commission also recommended improvement in the OAG collaboration efforts with other agencies and local governments involved in child support. In response, the OAG:

- Organized a work group on strategic partnerships and information sharing that included staff from other agencies,
- Worked with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to establish a noncustodial parent job referral project and to electronically transfer information to TWC that it will use to conduct Welfare to Work outreach,
- Expanded the SDU advisory group of county officials and established a schedule of regular meetings to ensure that county issues regarding the Child Support Program are addressed,
- Enrolled 148,839 Medicaid children in private health insurance plans,
- Worked with the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) to streamline the handling of foster care child support cases, which resulted in foster care collections exceeding \$1 million for the first time,
- Signed a memorandum of understanding with the DHS to improve the exchange of information between the two agencies and to implement new non-cooperation procedures, and
- Worked with the Office of Court Administration (OCA) to implement a court monitor pilot program.

The OAG has also worked with counties to improve the delivery of child support services. It has implemented online record access projects that are eligible for federal funding at the 66% reimbursement rate and made it possible for counties to receive federal reimbursement for providing child support customer service.

Child Support staff have been meeting regularly with an advisory group of county officials, whose focus has been on the implementation of the SDU. This group has provided valuable insight into the impact that the SDU will have on counties, and the OAG has worked with this group to lessen the impact. In response to county concerns, the OAG succeeded in obtaining an exemption from federal regulations that allows those counties that wish to do so to continue disbursing child support payments through an electronically linked system. The OAG has also signed a contract similar to the Bexar County cooperative agreement with Tarrant County to provide enforcement services in cases that will become IV-D cases by operation of local rule.

Improving Business Practices and Organization

The Sunset Commission recommended ways that the OAG could improve its Child Support business practices and organization. In response the OAG has:

- Downsized State Office by 19 percent since January 1999,
- Decentralized State Office functions,
- Redeployed more than 100 State Office FTEs to field offices,
- Upgraded the management and oversight of its legal resources,
- Strengthened the Program Monitoring section's position within the organization,
- Established a Contracts Administration section,
- Issued an RFP for obtaining Locate and Asset Search System Online (LASSO, a consolidated locate data base),
- Reviewed the functionality of TXCSES in order to automate child support field office tasks, and
- Submitted a Policy Inquiry Question (PIQ), which requested clarification on which locate resources are mandatory under the Expanded Federal Parent Locator Service to the U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE).

The OAG also has begun work on preparing the reports to the Legislature and Sunset Commission required by SB 368.

Conclusion

Even though much has been accomplished toward improving the program, much work remains. The OAG has had to prioritize its initiatives for improvement in order to effectively leverage its resources. However, the complexity of some of the initiatives with high priority, such as implementation of the SDU, has meant that resources had to be diverted from initiatives with lower priority. Work to complete these initiatives will continue; nevertheless, this report shows that the OAG has made genuine improvements to the Child Support Program and established momentum for further improvements in fiscal year 2001.

Introduction

This report documents the progress made by the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) toward improving its Child Support Program. It is a requirement of SB 368, the omnibus child support bill passed during the 76th Session of the Texas Legislature, but it is also an opportunity to demonstrate the solid advances that have been made over the last year and one-half in turning the program around and making it more effective at providing families with the child support services that many so desperately need.

After receiving much criticism about the effectiveness of Texas's Title IV-D child support program, the Legislature in 1997 instructed the Sunset Commission to conduct a review to determine whether the OAG should continue to administer the program. The Commission contracted with David M. Griffith and Associates for this purpose. The findings of the review were issued in October 1998, and hearings on the findings were held by the Commission in November.

Subsequent to the hearings, the Commission's Chair appointed a work group to review the findings and make recommendations. The work group consisted of Commission members' staff, Sunset staff, and the new Child Support management team appointed by incoming Attorney General John Cornyn, who took office in January 1999.

The work group recommended that the OAG continue to administer the child support program for a two-year probationary period. However, the work group also recommended that at the end of this period, the Legislature would decide whether the OAG should retain the program and that the Legislature should base its decision on whether the OAG made significant progress in four areas:

- Customer service,
- Program performance,
- Resolution of computer system issues, and
- Compliance with federal welfare reform mandates.

The 76th Legislature adopted this recommendation as part of SB 368, which among other things, requires the OAG to provide the Legislature by October 15, 2000 with a progress report on improvement in the Child Support Program. The information that follows is designed to provide a comprehensive summary of the program's advancement and the work that remains to be done.

Recommendations for Improvement

In addition to the two-year probationary period, the work group recommended statutory changes and management actions to improve the Child Support Program. These recommendations, described as "solid, workable approaches to fix and strengthen the child support program," by the work group are found in the *Sunset Report to the 76th Legislature, Office of the Attorney General Child Support Division*. Most of the statutory recommendations were incorporated into SB 368, which became effective September 1. The management actions were to be carried out in two phases. Implementation of Phase 1 was to begin immediately and Phase 2 after July 1999.

Structure of This Progress Report

This report is divided into six sections with each one representing a major area that the OAG is working to improve:

- Improving Customer Service,
- Improving Program Performance,
- Resolving Computer System Issues,
- Implementing Federal Welfare Reform Mandates,
- Improving Child Support Through Collaboration, and
- Improving Business Practices and Organization.

The first four sections reflect the four areas specifically identified by the Sunset Commission as requiring significant upgrading. The last two are broad categories used to organize Sunset recommendations that do not fall under the first four sections. Each section contains information about the progress that the OAG is making toward implementing the relevant statutory mandates, management action recommendations, and other work undertaken to elevate the level of child support services provided by the OAG.

Child support inquiries from legislators down by 64 percent

Overview of Sections

Section 1 describes the substantial improvements achieved in customer service since the new Attorney General took office. One of his first moves was to reorient the culture of the Child Support Division toward customer service. One result has been that it is now easier for customers to contact Child Support staff over the telephone to inquire or provide information about their cases. Prior to 1999, this task was nearly impossible. Out of frustration, these callers often turned for help to their legislators, who would then contact Child Support for them. However, as a result of the new emphasis on customer service these legislative inquiries, as the chart below shows, declined sharply going from a high of 526 in March 1998 to 187 in August 2000, a 64 percent drop.

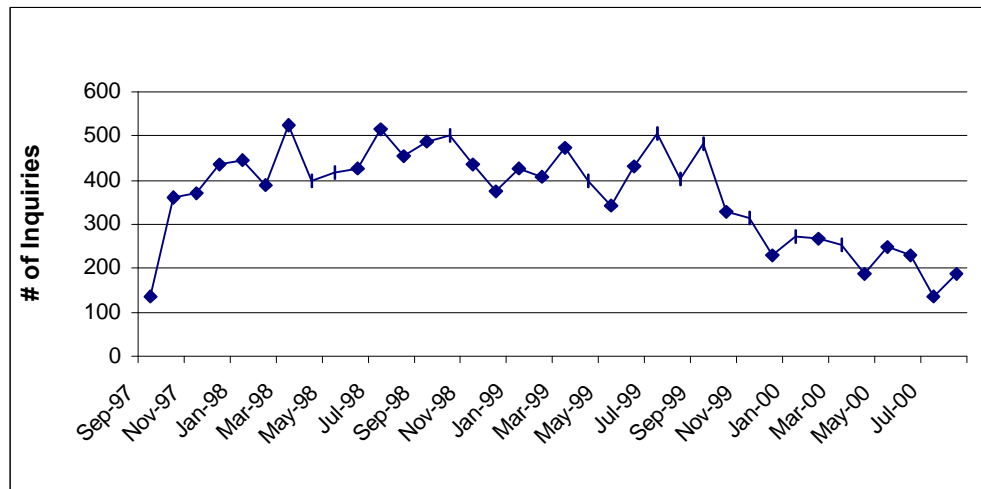


Figure 1: Legislative Child Support Inquiries, FY 1998 - 2000

\$1.029 billion in child support collected

Section 2 documents the advances made in delivering core child support services—establishing paternity and establishing and enforcing child support orders to collect child support payments. In 2000, the OAG collected \$1.029 billion in child support, breaking the billion dollar barrier for the first time and vaulting itself into an elite group of state child support programs. In addition, an analysis of preliminary national data indicates that Texas and California showed the highest rate of collection growth among the states with large caseloads, well above the national average. Paternity establishments also rebounded strongly from 1998, a year when the division failed for the first time in ten years to meet its state paternity establishment performance goal.

Section 3 discusses the progress that the OAG has made in resolving issues of the Child Support computer system, TXCSES. In addition to successfully transitioning to the Year 2000, Child Support has:

- reduced batch processing time
- processed adjustments more efficiently,
- improved computer response time, and
- implemented a Financial Process Redesign project to simplify disbursement of payments to families and the order entry process.

Section 4 examines the progress that the OAG has made toward implementing federal welfare reform mandates in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWORA) of 1996. Providing child support was seen as a key element in helping families move from welfare to work, and PRWORA requires states to make extensive and expensive program upgrades.

Section 5 details the OAG's collaboration efforts with other state agencies and counties. The OAG worked with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Department of Human Services (DHS), the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS), and other agencies whose caseloads overlap with Child Support's to improve communication, align procedures, and establish strategic partnerships. It has also sought and acted on the advise of county officials regarding implementation of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) and will continue to seek guidance from a permanent work group of county officials on matters that affect them.

Section 6 reviews the enhanced business practices and organizational changes that have been implemented since new management assumed leadership of the program in 1999. The major emphasis of the new management has been to redeploy FTEs to the field offices in order to improve direct services to customers. The program is also in the process of re-engineering its field operations, monitoring contracts more effectively, outsourcing functions, enhancing automation, and obtaining a more efficient locate system.

<p>Sunset Recommendation #12</p>

Implementing Sunset Recommendations

Since assuming the leadership of the Child Support Program, the Attorney General and his Child Support management team have focused their attention on making the improvements recommended by the Sunset Commission and legislators. One of the first tasks undertaken was to convene a meeting of judges, county officials, Sunset Commission staff, legislative staff, staff from the Lieutenant Governor's office, family law

experts, and representatives from other state agencies to recommend improvements to the existing administrative processes, the IV-D Masters Program, and the judicial processes for child support cases. The work group recommended slight changes to the existing child support review process, new procedures that streamlined the process for obtaining and enforcing IV-D support orders, and measures for upgrading the management of IV-D Masters. These recommendations were subsequently incorporated into SB 368.

In addition to passing SB 368, the Legislature has assisted greatly in implementing the improvements documented in this report. For example, new FTEs were allotted to the program in order to establish the Regional Call Centers and extra funding was provided for implementation of big-ticket welfare reform mandates such as the SDU. This progress report will show that the OAG is working systematically and methodically to fully implement all of the statutory changes and Sunset Commission management action recommendations. It begins with the progress made in the area of most concern—customer service.

Improving Customer Service

In its report to the Legislature, the Sunset Commission identified Child Support customer service as a major problem area. It raised concerns over the unreliability of payment data requested by customers over the telephone, inability of customers to contact Child Support staff by telephone, inadequate telephone center staffing, and lack of a uniform complaint handling and tracking system. The Commission indicated that a significant improvement in customer service and client satisfaction would be a major determining factor in deciding whether the OAG successfully improved its Child Support Division during the two-year probationary period.

As a result, the Attorney General made improving customer service the top priority for the Child Support Division. During the first months of his new administration, the Attorney General launched a division-wide customer service project to transform the culture of the organization. Major strategies for achieving higher levels of customer services included:

- creating a Child Support customer service plan, which included mandatory customer service training for all Child Support staff and specifications and activities to improve service to customers,
- decentralizing the Child Support Call Center,
- hiring an ombudsman to oversee the handling of customer complaints,
- developing a Child Support interactive web page,
- providing accurate information about when a payment will be sent to a custodial parent on the Child Support Voice Interactive Response System (VIRS), and
- providing employers with a dedicated phone line for calling in child support questions, which most often are about income withholding.

***Customer
satisfaction up 12
percentage points***

Customer Satisfaction Survey

The results of a recent customer service survey show that these steps are paying dividends. The 2000 Customer Service Survey, which contained questions in eleven broad areas, demonstrates an overall increase in customer satisfaction from 51 percent to 63 percent for all custodial parents since the 1998 survey. This is an increase of 12 points, which equals an overall improvement of approximately 24 percent from 1998 to this year. Respondents generally report that staff treat them with courtesy and respect. The other areas that show the most improvement in customer satisfaction according to responses from the survey are:

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- answering the phone and ability to get in touch with the local office increased 16 points, from 39 percent to 55 percent, representing a 41 percent increase,
- information available via VIRS (the automated phone system) increased 12 points, from 68 percent to 80 percent, representing a 18 percent increase,
- staff responses and explanations increased 10 points from 60 percent to 70 percent, representing a 17 percent increase,
- staff action on cases increased 10 points, from 40 percent to 50 percent, representing a 25 percent increase,
- payment forwarding increased 10 points, from 53 percent to 63 percent, representing a 19 percent increase, and
- the computer system increased 12 points, from 72 percent to 84 percent, representing a 17 percent increase.

The survey was mailed to 4,000 custodial and 7,000 noncustodial parents in April 2000. The recipients were grouped according to whether the custodial parent had ever received Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and according to whether the noncustodial parent had ever made a payment in the case. The mailing to noncustodial parents was larger to account for a much lower anticipated response rate, especially among non-paying noncustodial parents. The mailing did in fact produce a satisfactory sample of noncustodial parents and a generous sample of custodial parents. Returns from non-paying noncustodial parents were scant, however, as expected. A truly adequate survey of non-paying noncustodial parents, although valuable, would be challenging, expensive, and beyond the scope of a routine customer satisfaction assessment. The surveys for the custodial and noncustodial parents were slightly different. Both surveys contained two index questions, one about overall satisfaction with customer service, and one about overall satisfaction with child support services. Combined responses for custodial and noncustodial parents were as follows:

<i>Percent Satisfied:</i>	w/ Customer Service	w/ Child Support Services
Custodial parents	63%	63%
Noncustodial parents	52%	48%

Table 1: Overall Customer Satisfaction

Eleven questions, shown in the table below, in the 1998 survey were included in the 2000 survey in an effort to identify areas where changes have occurred in the level of customer satisfaction. The percentage of

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satisfied customers (or customers agreeing with a positive statement) was the same or better for all of these questions. With respect to six of the eleven questions, the percentage of custodial parents who were satisfied increased by ten percent or more. For the other five questions, the percentage of satisfied customers was about the same or only slightly higher.

Percent of custodial parents who are satisfied/agree:	1998	2000
The Voice Interactive Response System (VIRS) is a good way to get case information.	68%	80%
I can usually get through to the local office.	39%	55%
Letters and notices are easy to understand.	85%	87%
Staff answers questions and explains services.	60%	70%
Staff treats me with courtesy and respect.	76%	77%
Staff takes actions needed for my case.	40%	50%
Computer system has improved.	72%	84%
Satisfied with paternity establishment.	82%	82%
Satisfied with locate services.	49%	52%
Satisfied with establishing court order.	54%	57%
Satisfied with forwarding payments.	53%	63%

Table 2: Comparison of Customer Satisfaction Between 1998 and 2000

Among custodial parents, satisfaction varies greatly with the paying status of the case. Among all custodial parents with paying cases (whether TANF or non-TANF), 77 percent are satisfied with child support services versus 38 percent of parents with non-paying cases.

Percent Satisfied:	w/ Customer Service	w/ Child Support Services
Custodial parents w/ paying cases	73%	77%
Custodial parents w/ non-paying cases	46%	38%

Table 3: Customer Satisfaction, Paying vs. Non-paying Cases

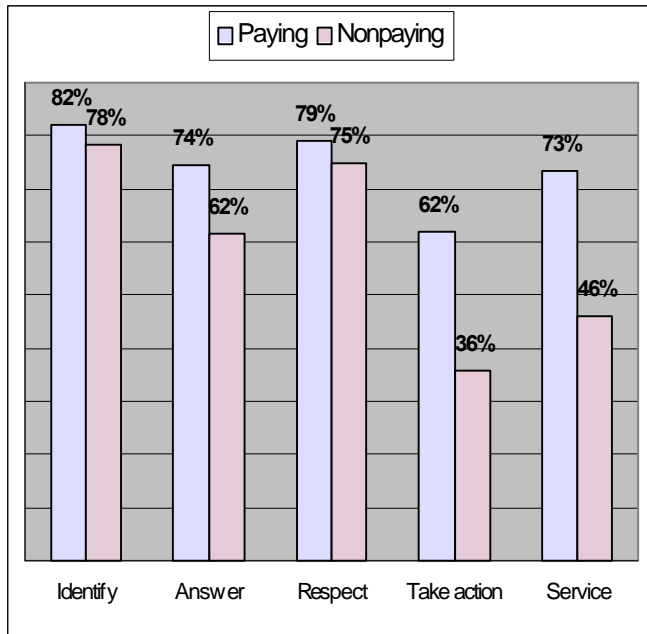


Figure 2: Comparison of Customer Satisfaction between Paying and Non-paying Cases

Custodial parents with non-paying cases are also much less likely to be satisfied with customer service, but this result is a bit misleading. There are four questions about customer service, having to do with staff identifying themselves, answering questions and explaining services, treating customers with courtesy and respect, and taking actions needed for the case. The first three factors are more purely matters of customer service, or behavior of staff toward customers. The fourth is more performance-oriented. And, in fact, it is mainly with respect to this fourth factor that parents differ according to paying status. Figure 2 is illustrative. Custodial parents with non-paying cases are not much less likely to be satisfied with staff

behavior toward them. However, they are significantly less satisfied that staff are taking action in their cases, and this appears to be what they mean when they report that they are dissatisfied with customer service.

To keep the program focused on customer service, the OAG has adopted customer service performance standards that it will be reporting to the Governor’s Office and Legislative Budget Board beginning in state fiscal year 2002. (More is written about these new measures in the next chapter). The higher levels of customer satisfaction are partially due to the fact that it is easier to get through to Child Support staff on the telephone.

Telephone answer rate up 81 points

Improved Telephone Accessibility

The OAG receives about 1.5 million telephone inquiries per month, and many of these callers want to speak to a staff member either to obtain or relay information about their case. Customers most often call about their payment or case status. Today, the OAG answers nearly 95 percent of these calls, 81 points higher than in 1998 when the answer rate was an abysmal 14 percent.

Prior to 1999, calls from custodial parents to local offices were routed to the Child Support Voice Interactive Response System (VIRS), which gave the custodial parent the option of obtaining information through VIRS or speaking to a customer service representative in the centralized Call Center,

located in Austin. Many callers wanted to speak to a person rather than a machine, and as a result, the understaffed Call Center received tens of thousands calls but were only able to answer a tiny fraction. Callers and elected officials expressed their frustration at this backlog, and Attorney General Cornyn heard and responded to their concerns.

**Sunset
Recommendation
26, third bullet**

In order to improve accessibility and local resolution of complaints, a decision was made to decentralize the Call Center. Analysis of call traffic indicated that 60 percent came from Dallas/Tarrant, Harris, Bexar, and Travis Counties. In each of the four areas, Regional Call Centers were set up and fully operational by January 2000. Since then special customer service centers have also been established in Beaumont and El Paso to assist customers with their telephone inquiries. Units not supported by a Regional Call Center have designated customer service staff to handle calls.

**Sunset
Recommendation
#26, fourth bullet**

The OAG requested additional appropriations to improve customer service through implementation of the regional Call Centers. The Legislature appropriated \$6.5 million for state fiscal year 2000 to fund 114 call center staff and the technology to support them. In addition, 83 State Office positions were moved to field positions as designated customer services staff.

Reporting has been developed that allows management to track and analyze the results of this project. Weekly and monthly reports are provided to Child Support executive management and field operations staff. The table below shows the level of performance in the Regional Call Centers from April through August of state fiscal year 2000. It should be noted that even though the volume of calls has increased by 56 percent over this five-month period, the answer rate remained fairly constant.

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Measure	April	May	June	July	August
Total calls received	122,702	149,866	151,173	147,173	191,135
Calls answered by a CIR	118,000	141,842	142,760	132,776	179,871
% answered by CIR	96.2	94.6	94.4	90.2	94.1
Average wait time	:29	:40	:40	NA	:35
Abandoned calls	4,648	7,689	8,109	13,768	10,932
% abandoned	3.8	5.1	5.4	9.4	5.7
Average talk time	3:29	3:31	3:14	3:09	3:08

Note: CIR stands for Customer Inquiry Representative

Table 4: Combined Regional Call Center Statistics

Prior to July, the four Regional Call Centers averaged about 750 calls per hour with peaks of 810 call per hour. However, in July calls increased to an average of 817 calls per hour. Since call center staffing is based on the 750 calls per hour level, performance slipped slightly in July. The Erlang formula, which is used by private companies to calculate staffing levels at their call centers, would require that the Regional Call Centers be staffed at 130 FTEs to maintain a 95 percent answer rate and an average wait time of under one minute.

However, since the Regional Call Center staffing levels are capped, the OAG has chosen to implement two new technologies to boost the answer rate and reduce the wait time. New Graphical User Interface (GUI) screens and screen pops that allow call center staff to access information more quickly will shave about 20 seconds off the time it takes to handle calls. Staff completed implementation of the GUI screens in September 2000. The screen pops will be implemented by the end of December 2000. To maintain performance equal to that of top private sector call centers, it is necessary to employ the same technologies they use to keep their performance high.

If field offices are included, the answer rate remains equally high. The overall, statewide answer rate, which includes field offices, is 94.8 percent, and ranges from region to region from 92.2 percent to 97.5 percent.

Customer inquiries remain high even as service improves

Even as service improves, customer inquiries have not declined, and in fact, have recently increased because of the needs of Child Support customers. One of the main reasons that customers call is to obtain payment information. Seventy percent of the caseload involves families who are current or previous recipients of TANF or Medicaid benefits. Many of these families rely on child support payments as a significant portion of their monthly income and although they know a income withholding order is in place, they still call to determine the date they can expect the payment. Many non-custodial parents not subject to income withholding make sporadic payments and custodial parents call to find out if a payment has been received. The distribution date of the \$50 pass through in TANF cases and IRS intercepts, usually occurs early in the month but varies somewhat from month to month. Parents call to find out when these payments will distribute.

Customers also frequently call to obtain information on the status of their case. The child support process can be quite complex and parents have many questions about how the system works. How an individual case is processed depends on a variety of factors. One case may require the full range of services —locating the parent, establishing paternity and a support order and enforcing the order. Another case may have a divorce decree with an established order, a social security number and an employer for the non-custodial parent, allowing enforcement of payment through an administrative income withholding order. Many parents are unaware that the process can involve a number of other agencies including the court system, county officials, employers and child support agencies in other states.

Other reasons for calls involve various issues like address changes, non-custodial parents providing employment information, and custodial parents providing locate leads for absent parents. Staff also receive calls from other entities involved in the child support process.

The fact that calls remain high is also indicative of the agency's improved performance. In many ways the program's successes drives the high level of calls. In August 2000, there were 77,000 more cases with an order for support and 70,400 more paying cases than in August 1998. This represents a new pool of cases in which parents expect payments. If payments are not received in these cases, parents will call to find out about the status of enforcement efforts. In addition, the successful implementation of automated income withholding has generated more payments and

thus more payment related calls. Answering calls that had previously gone unanswered was a big step toward improving customer service, but it was only the first step. When customers call, they want accurate information or sometimes they have a complaint about the program. To make sure that these complaints are handled and tracked, the OAG created the Ombudsman Program.

**Sunset
Recommendation
#10**

Ombudsman and Complaint Tracking

The 1999 Sunset Commission Report recommended that the OAG's Child Support Division establish an Ombudsman Program and develop a uniform system of tracking complaints. The 76th Legislature enacted legislation (SB 368) that incorporated the Commission's recommendation.

The OAG moved quickly to designate and train staff, develop policy and procedures, create forms, and design a tracking system. In October 1999, OAG management appointed a State Office Ombudsman to oversee the handling of complaints throughout the state and designated local ombudsmen in each of the division's regional administrative and field offices. In conjunction with a two-day customer service training that all OAG staff are required to attend during state fiscal year 2000, field office ombudsmen received an overview of the Ombudsman Program from the State Office Ombudsman. In September and November 1999, policy directives that provided an overview of the program, detailed information on staffing, and procedures for documenting and entering complaints onto the system were issued. In February 2000, the OAG issued Ombudsman Program policy and procedures that detailed procedures for handling complaints. The policy and procedures were modeled closely on the requirements contained in the enacting legislation. The policy requires that designated staff serve as field office, regional office, and State Office Ombudsmen. All complaints are first addressed at the field office level. Complaints that cannot be resolved at that level are referred to the regional office, and then to the State Office, if necessary.

The policy provides staff guidance on the use of complaint related forms, proper documentation, confidentiality of information, and impartiality in handling complaints. Finally, the policy requires that the person filing a complaint be updated every 60 days until the complaint is resolved.

The OAG also developed a uniform complaint tracking system. When a complaint is received, staff enter identifying data from the complaint onto the OAG's automated system, TXCSES. In addition to complaints, this system is used to track all inquiries received by the Public Official Inquiry and Written Inquiries sections of OAG. Communications received by those sections and identified as complaints are referred to the ombudsman process. Using data obtained from the unified tracking system, the State Office Ombudsman monitors pending complaints to ensure that they are processed in a timely manner. When appropriate, the State Office Ombudsman makes recommendations to enhance the complaint process and change agency policy that results in complaints.

**Sunset
Recommendation
#27**

The OAG has taken a variety of steps to make it easier for customers to lodge a complaint. A complaint option has been added to the Child Support Voice Interactive Response Systems (VIRS) menu. If the customer chooses the VIRS complaint option, the call is transferred to a call center or field unit from which the caller can request information on the complaint process.

Furthermore, an interactive complaint form and information about the complaint process have been added to the Child Support web site (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/child/mainchil.htm>) and the Child Support interactive web site (<http://childsupport.oag.state.tx.us>). When customers access the web site to initiate a complaint, they may download the complaint form for mailing or returning it via the internet.

Application packets have been updated to include information about an applicant's right to file a complaint. Pamphlets and posters have been printed and distributed for display in Child Support field offices.

In addition to providing a means by which customers can easily notify the OAG of child support problems, the agency has developed a proactive strategy to reduce complaints. For example, customers can now learn the payment date through VIRS.

**Sunset
Recommendation
#26, first bullet**

Forecasting When a Payment Will Be Sent

In October 1999, the OAG modified its Voice Interactive Response Systems (VIRS), so that it can forecast when a check will be mailed. With this change, all custodial parents who obtain automated payment information using VIRS and call center staff accessing TXCSES are provided the same, accurate information concerning disbursement dates.

Child Support Program and Information Technology staff worked together to make the necessary programming changes to TXCSES that allowed VIRS to accurately forecast when payments are to be mailed. Staff identified and analyzed business and system requirements, prepared needed documentation, and designed and tested the programming.

Usage of VIRS is monitored to determine the volume and nature of the calls. During the last six months, VIRS received more than 6 million calls, of which an estimated 92 percent were from custodial parents. Although both payment and case status information is available through VIRS, most callers seek payment status and less than 3 percent requested case-related information.

**Sunset
Recommendation
#11**

Employer Phone Line

The OAG has also tried to improve customer service by working more effectively with its partners, such as employers who withhold child support from income. More than 60 percent of all payments are made through income withholding. From time to time, employers, especially those withholding for the first time, have questions about the process. To make it easier to obtain information, the OAG established the Employer Call Center on July 14, 1999. The center provides a centralized contact point for employers to call and obtain timely information. Since the center became operational, it has received 51,741 calls. Employers called most frequently to:

- obtain general income withholding information,
- resolve payment and payment coupon issues, and
- update the OAG when noncustodial parents terminate employment.

In order to publicize the availability of this service, the OAG has included the center's toll-free number in income withholding packets and payment coupons sent to employers. The OAG recently negotiated a new contract with TRW to provide this service as part of the New Hire Reporting project.

Improved customer service, including providing answers to employer question, has been the result of the numerous concrete actions described above and because of a new strategic outlook on customer service adopted by the new Attorney General and his Child Support management team.

Adopting a Customer Service Strategy

Shortly after the new management team assumed leadership of the Child Support Program, a project manager was hired to develop a customer service strategy. To assist the project manager, a steering committee made up of Deputy Directors and a Core Customer Service Team composed of representatives from all sections of the Child Support Division was created. As one of its first tasks, the team produced a project charter, which contained a customer service vision statement and project guiding principles. In addition the agency launched a division-wide customer service training program to ensure that all staff received consistent messages and tools to enable them to deliver improved service.

Once the vision had been identified, the team organized internal and external focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups was two-fold: to publicize the agency's commitment to improving customer service and to solicit input from customers and other concerned individuals on ways to improve customer service. The internal focus group consisted of child support staff and the external groups of customers, including representatives from advocacy groups such as Association for Children for Enforcement of Support (ACES) and the Texas Fathers for Equal Rights. A survey was also used to solicit information from participants. Essentially, they were asked to describe how they wanted to be treated as a customer and to provide suggestions for improving customer service.

The data collected from these groups were used in developing a Customer Service Plan. The plan consists of two parts: A Compact with Texans and a Customer Service Action Plan. The Compact with Texans contains the customer service vision statement and guiding principles. It also identifies the following statewide customer service goals and standards:

- By August 2000, the service delivery process will begin within 20 days of receipt of a completed application.
- By August 2000, customers will be able to submit an application via the Internet.
- By August 2000, we will establish and publicize a formal complaint handling process.
- By September 2001, satisfaction with customer services will improve by 25% as measured against customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 1998.



**Child Support
Customer Service
Guiding Principles**

Treat everyone with dignity, respect, honesty and courtesy

- Always do what's best for the child, putting children first
- Walk in the customer's shoes and have empathy
- Be a leader in doing the right thing, not just doing things right
- Participate and contribute to solutions - work as a team
- Maintain objectivity and be non-judgmental
- Respect customer privacy
- The customer's perception of reality is

- By August 2001, 70% of phone calls will be answered: 80% by the end of August 2002; 90% by the end of August 2003.
- Customers will be seen on the same day they request to be seen, if possible, or will be offered an appointment within 10 days of the date requested.

In addition, the Compact provides customers instructions for making a suggestion for improvement or filing a complaint. This Compact has been posted on the OAG web site (<http://www.oag.state.tx.us/agency/compact.htm>) as part of the overall OAG Compact with Texans (See Attachment A for a copy.)

The Customer Service Action plan was developed to improve specific areas of customer service delivery. The plan is designed to improve these areas:

- Customer access to the Child Support Program,
- Information on the Child Support Program ,
- Timeliness of action,
- Accuracy of staff actions,
- Professional and courteous treatment,
- Management accountability, and
- Internal customer (staff) environment.

The plan identifies specific initiatives, the target audience they serve, the staff responsible for implementation, and time frames associated with the initiatives. Highlights of the Action Plan include expansion of the OAG child support web site and VIRS capabilities, publication of the complaint process, distribution of an information packet at the time of application, standardization of response time for written and telephone inquiries, and statewide mandatory customer service training for all staff. Improving customer service is an ongoing part of agency operations, and customer feedback and input will continue to be solicited and used to identify additional improvements.

Child Support Interactive

In order to encourage customer feedback and input, the OAG has developed a Child Support web site—Child Support Interactive (CSI). This web site allows visitors to:

- provide locate information on absent parents,
- obtain information on payments and case status,
- ask specific questions about their child support case,

- submit address changes,
- obtain information about office locations, and
- apply for services over the internet.

Traffic to CSI has exceeded expectations. In August 2000, the web site recorded 69,361 visitors and broke the 3,000 mark on seven separate days. Prior to the month of August, there was only one day in which 3,000 or more visits were recorded since CSI went into production in September 1999. Figure 3 shows how traffic has increased in the year since CSI was implemented.

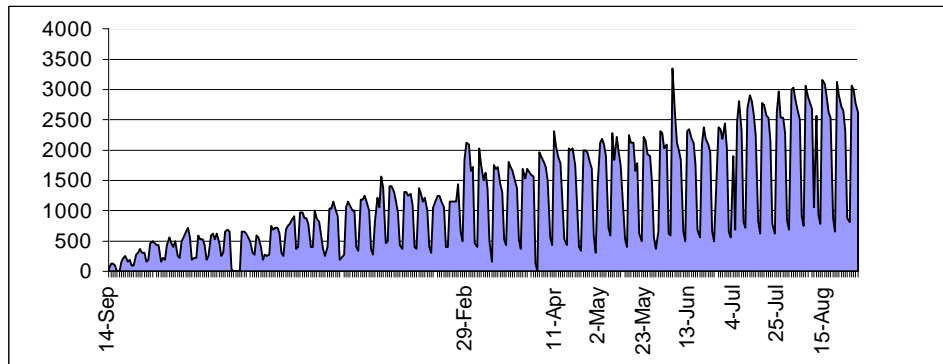


Figure 3: Daily CSI Traffic, September 1999 - August 2000

Improving Program Performance

In 1998, Child Support performance across the board slipped for the first time. The program failed to achieve its goal in all six key performance measures, falling below acceptable variance levels in three: the number of children for whom paternity was established, the number of support orders established or modified, and the number of paying TANF cases that transferred to non-TANF status. Attorney General Cornyn took immediate corrective action to bolster sagging performance measures, appointing a Deputy Attorney General for Child Support with extensive child support experience, who reports directly to him.

Collections up 36 percent over 1998

As a result, over the last two state fiscal years, Child Support performance has rebounded strongly. In 1999, collections increased over the prior year by \$111 million, a 15% increase, and up until then, the Child Support Division's largest single year increase. In 2000, collections were \$1.029 billion, a 36 percent increase over 1998. This substantial increase put Texas in a league with the country's elite child support programs. In fact, in some ways Texas outperformed these child support powerhouses. An analysis of preliminary national data indicates that Texas and California showed the highest rate of collection growth among the states with large caseloads, well above the national average. The \$1.029 billion collection was \$161.2 million more than was collected the previous year, the largest ever single-year increase for the program.

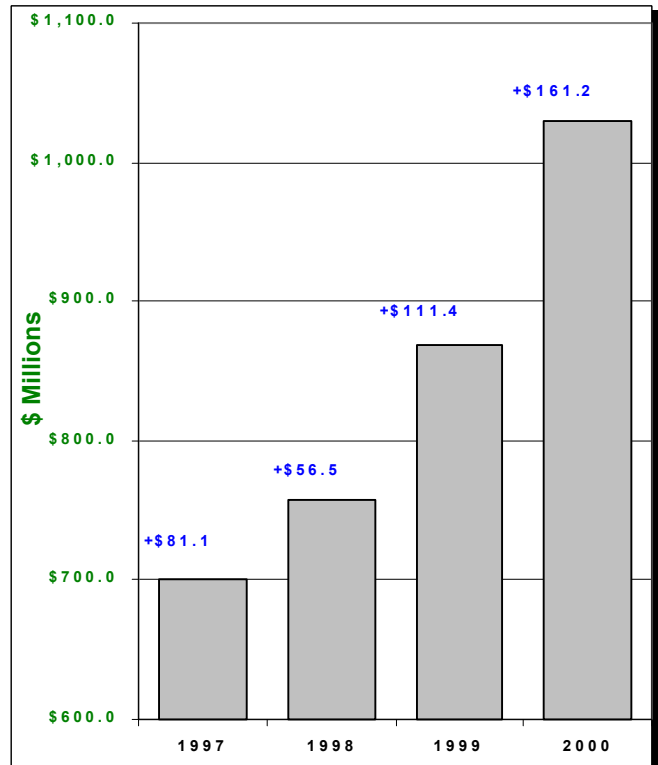


Figure 4: Child Support Collections, 1997 - 2000

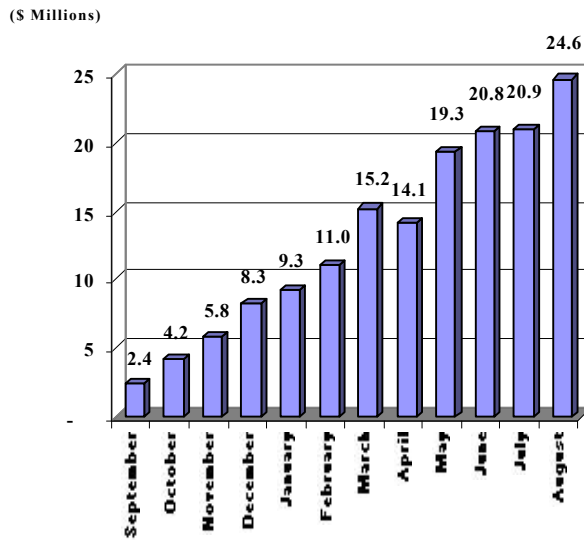


Figure 5: Monthly AIWA Collections, FY 2000

Administrative Income Withholding-Automated (AIWA) has contributed substantially to record collection gains. States are required to initiate income withholding within two business days of receiving notice of a new employer. Recognizing the significance of the AIWA remedy, the Child Support Division devoted resources to fully automating the process. TXCSES, the Child Support automated system, was modified so that an income withholding writ can be automatically sent to an employer when an employee reported to the New Hire Directory matches a noncustodial parent with a Child Support obligated case.

AIWA was implemented in the summer of 1999. Initially, matches were run against a limited number of cases to identify and correct system problems prior to full implementation. In August 1999, full volume matching through the State Directory of New Hires began, and in December 1999 this was expanded to include the National Directory of New Hires.

Another automated enforcement remedy, Unemployment Insurance Benefits (UIB) offset, relies on collaboration with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and has proven to be extremely effective. The OAG is able to intercept UIB through an automated interface with TWC. This interface, in place for the first full year in 1999, resulted in state fiscal year 1999 collections of \$15 million, nearly five times the UIB amount collected in 1998. In 2000, the OAG collected \$12.8 million. Foster care collections have also been a management priority, approaching \$1 million for the first time in 1999 and exceeding \$1 million in 2000.

Collections are not the only performance measures that have shown improvement. The number of children who had paternity established in 2000 totaled 48,481, a 21 percent increase over 1998 and the number of orders established and modified was 56,423 a 23 percent increase over 1998. The table below contrasts program performance in 1998 and 2000.

Child Support Progress Report

PERFORMANCE MEASURES	State Fiscal Year			Percent of change since 1998
	1998	1999	2000	
Amount of child support collected (in millions)	757.0	868.2	1,029	36%
Number of children for whom paternity has been established	40,173	46,556	48,481	21%
Number of child support obligations established or modified	45,994	50,423	56,423	23%

Table 5: Percent of Change in Performance Measures

Further evidence that program performance has surged ahead can be found by comparing the percentage of outcome goals achieved by the program in 1998 and 2000. While the program failed to achieve 100 percent of its goal in every one of its key performance measures in 1998, it exceeded 100 percent in all of its measures, except one in 2000. It achieved 113 percent of its collection goal, 111 percent of its number of children for whom paternity was established goal, 124 percent of its orders established or modified goal, and 126 percent of its cost effectiveness goal. The one goal in which performance did not exceed 100 percent of goal, Paying TANF Cases Transferred to Non-TANF, has subsequently been dropped as a performance measure by the Legislative Budget Board and the Governor’s Office.

Texas will qualify for federal incentive payments in all five measurement categories

The program also has done exceptionally well with regard to federal performance measures. For the first time in federal fiscal year 2000, state programs can earn incentives based on performance in five areas: the paternity establishment percentage, the percent of cases with court orders, the percent of current support collected, the percent of cases with collections on arrears, and cost effectiveness. The federal fiscal year does not end until September 30, so federal fiscal year data is not complete; however, estimates based on 11 months of performance data lead us to project that Texas’s performance will qualify for incentives in each one of these categories. Its estimated paternity establishment percentage, 111 percent, is especially impressive. For the last two years, the Texas federal paternity establishment percentage exceeded 100 percent, which means that more children had paternity established through the judicial, administrative, and acknowledgment of paternity processes than were born out-of-wedlock in the state in each of these years.

Customer Service Performance Measures

Agency efforts to improve customer service are documented extensively in the previous section, and in order to track agency progress in this area, beginning in state fiscal year 2002, customer service performance measures will be reported. The agency will report six measures, five of which will be based on results from the agency's biennial customer service survey. The measures to be reported are:

- Percentage of Surveyed Respondents (Custodial and Noncustodial Parents) Expressing Overall Satisfaction with Child Support Services Received,
- Percentage of Surveyed Respondents (Custodial and Noncustodial Parents) Identifying Ways to Improve Service Delivery,
- Number of Customers (Custodial and Noncustodial Parents) Surveyed,
- Number of Customers (Custodial and Noncustodial Parents) Served, and
- Cost Per Customers (Custodial and Noncustodial Parents) Surveyed

The sixth measure reports Child Support's success in answering phone calls to the four Regional Call Centers. This measure was developed because the agency received a specific appropriation for the call centers' implementation and they represent a cornerstone of the agency's efforts to improve customer service.

**Sunset
Recommendation
15C**

Performance Measures

The OAG has taken a number of steps to respond to the Sunset Commission recommendation to "redesign the internal agency reporting system to shift the current administrative monitoring focus from outputs to effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service." For example, the OAG recommended to the Legislative Budget Board and Governor's Office revisions to child support state performance measures that align these measures with federal performance measures and include for the first time customer service measures. The changes were included in the "Request for Revisions to Strategic Planning and Budget Structure" submitted in March 2000.

Federal incentives will be based upon performance in the categories described above in the section that outlines performance improvement. All of these measures are now included as state outcome measures. The new federal incentive structure is being phased in beginning in federal fiscal year 2000. In 2002, federal incentives will be entirely dependent on performance in these categories. Although the incentive pool is capped at the national level and Texas incentives are based on performance relative to all other states, the new structure is expected to yield greater federal incentives for Texas than the old structure which was capped by TANF collections.

Child Support management also made a concerted effort to shift the focus of Field Operations to performance as measured by the indicators cited above. This effort has included presentations at the annual meetings of the statewide managers in 1999 and 2000 and the creation of a new management report that includes measures of program effectiveness as recommended by the Sunset Commission. Regional Administrator evaluations have been adjusted to include the new federal and state outcome measures and telephone response rates.

The shift in reporting capability has as its cornerstone the design and coding of a new federal report, the OCSE 157. The new federal performance measures are calculated from data reported on this federal report. The OCSE 157 was first generated in October 1999 to meet an annual federal deadline. Federal auditors are in the process of reviewing this report for data reliability.

Work is underway to enhance reporting capabilities for internal management purposes. Specifications have been completed for reporting the new federal incentives monthly at the unit and regional levels. A prototype report format has been developed for internal posting on the Child Support Division Intranet. Currently, reporting capability for four of the federal measures is available at the regional level. However, automation changes are needed to generate monthly reports down to the unit level. Once these automation changes are complete, Field Operations managers can monitor program effectiveness at the office level. Child Support management remains committed to shifting the focus of internal reports from traditional outputs to comprehensive indicators of program success.

Child Support Review Process

The Child Support Review Process (CSRP) provides the OAG with the ability to take expedited administrative actions to establish, modify and enforce child support and medical support orders, to determine parentage, or take any other authorized action. SB 368 amended CSRP to make it more streamlined and effective. In order to identify any problems with the new process, it was piloted in two field offices prior to statewide implementation. Results from the pilots were positive and provided useful input for the development of procedures and training. Procedures have been revised and are available to all staff on the internal agency web site. The CSRP training module has been updated and statewide training completed.

**Sunset
Recommendation
25**

The Child Support Division has the authority to allow alleged fathers the option of voluntarily submitting to paternity testing to avoid attendance at a court hearing. Voluntary testing helps expedite the paternity establishment process in cases where the parties are agreeable to this approach. It is an established part of the CSRP which utilizes an administrative process for establishing paternity. The option to use CSRP is emphasized whenever appropriate. In addition, the CSD has the authority to issue an administrative paternity testing order without the need for a court hearing. As in all cases involving paternity testing, the state pays the initial up-front costs. However, the CSD routinely asks all alleged fathers who are determined to be the biological father to repay the testing costs as part of the order. No distinction is made between fathers who opt for a voluntary blood test and those that submit to testing pursuant to a court order. Charging only fathers who opt to attend a court hearing acts as a penalty for those fathers and brings up basic issues of fairness. In addition, there are situations where the mother is reluctant to submit to testing and the father is compelled to attend a court hearing to request testing.

Resolving Computer System Implementation Issues

The OAG has been working diligently over the last two years to address the computer system issues raised by the Sunset Commission. In its assessment of the program, the Commission raised warning flags about Child Support's vulnerability regarding transition to the Year 2000, its lack of high-level planning, technology planning, the problems with adjustments, and the time it was taking to complete batch processing. The Commission also recommended improvements in the receipt and distribution of child support payments and the disbursement of held collections.

**Sunset
Recommendation
13B**

Work began on resolving these issues shortly after the new management assumed leadership of the program. In March a new Deputy Director of Information Technology (IT) with more than 22 years experience in the field was hired and the core Child Support technology functions were consolidated under her leadership. The new deputy became a member of the Judicial Committee on Information Technology.

**Sunset
Recommendation
24**

Subsequent to the hiring of the new IT deputy, the OAG was taken off the state Director of Information Resource's (DIR) list of state agency's that were at risk of not being Y2K compliant. Also, an IT Steering Committee consisting of executive management was established to prioritize and plan implementation of IT projects, batch process time has shrunk, and adjustments are running more efficiently. Moreover, a Financial Process Redesign project that will simplify order entry and disbursement of payments is well underway. The remainder of this section describes in more detail the work that has been completed and the plans for resolving all of the issues raised by the Sunset Commission.

Y2K Compliance

In 1998, the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) identified the OAG child support computer system, TXCSES, as being at risk of not being Y2K compliant. However, between the beginning and the end of 1999, the OAG completed all the work required to enable its computer and telecom systems to function properly after the transition to the Year 2000. As a result of its work, there were no reports of computer or telecom system disruption from either its customers or staff, nor did DIR, the governor, or the U.S. Administration for Children and Families (ACF) receive any complaints.

Child Support IT paid considerable attention to assessing and correcting Y2K deficiencies within the TXCSES program and worked with contractors to evaluate more than 1.5 million lines of code. IT first reprogrammed affected TXCSES modules and then contracted with SAGA Corporation to perform an Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) of the work. The IV&V found only a few deficiencies, and all were promptly corrected.

Careful analysis was given to planning requirements for the calendar change so that a smooth transition could be achieved. Staff developed and executed a Day Zero Plan, which included mainframe operations, system software, wide and local area network hardware and software, and PC applications and involved approximately 6,600 hours in Y2K readiness. A Command Center was also established to monitor the progress of work being performed by the major IT sections at critical times around the beginning of the new year. The center received status information from field offices and documented results.

A Contingency Planning Group was formed with representatives from major Child Support sections. DIR's Criticality Assessment identified two areas in which disruption of service could seriously affect Child Support customers—payment processing and direct services provided in the field, including paternity establishment and support order establishment and enforcement. The Contingency Planning Group determined the software applications that the OAG would need to acquire to assure continued service in the event TXCSES was not available in the Year 2000.

As a result of the group's planning, contingency applications were prepared. A payment processing application was produced to create pay tapes so that child support payments could continue if there were any disruptions. An off-line diary was developed to assist field offices with providing basic services. The diary made it possible for staff to enter notes, which could later be uploaded to TXCSES when it became available on a case being worked. Caseload summaries, which contained basic case information, were also produced and were available for inquiry purposes.

Internal and external communications were also emphasized. Y2K materials were published on the Child Support Intranet, so that Field Operations could be advised of progress made on Y2K preparations and participate in Y2K activities, including contingency drills. Press releases

were issued and communication to customers distributed to inform the public on Y2K readiness. The Voice Interactive Response System (VIRS) was also programmed to provide summary case information to the public over the internet.

Reporting requirements were satisfied with quarterly progress reports made to ACF. The OAG also participated in ACF's on-site review of the Y2K project. DIR was provided with daily Y2K crossover reports during the last week of 1999 and the first few days of 2000. The information was then summarized and distributed to the federal Y2K project office. In addition, a monthly report was also provided to the House Subcommittee on Major Information Systems.

**Sunset
Recommendation
5**

Information Technology (IT) Steering Committee

The IT Steering Committee began meeting in August 1999, and a charter was completed in September. The committee meets regularly to provide executive oversight for all IT resources and initiatives, including the prioritization of work requests for changes to the system, development and approval of IT strategic and tactical plans, and technical direction and architecture.

The committee is chaired by the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support. Also included on the committee are the Deputy Directors for Administrative Operations, Program Operations, Field Operations, and Information Technology, and the General Counsel.

A subcommittee meets frequently to recommend priorities, matching all requests with Child Support Division initiatives in order to maintain a global agency perspective. The focus has changed from individual prioritization efforts to an agency concerted effort. The following criteria are used to determine the prioritization of projects: state/federal mandates, Sunset Commission recommendations, executive mandates, monetary impact, customer service impact, and business improvement. All recommendations are subject to the approval of the IT Steering Committee.

Each IT initiative is aligned with an executive sponsor and a program project manager, called the owner. Owners manage the development of business requirements, as well as test and implementation plans.

The IT Steering Committee represents an ongoing process, with reviews taking place on a continual basis. Expansion in scope, additional mandates, and new competing projects are assessed repeatedly. Solutions are offered on realignment or additional resources, technical alternatives, and phased approaches. These solutions are submitted and, as needed, resubmitted to the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support. Establishment of the IT Steering Committee has improved IT planning by producing well-defined goals with more realistic expectations and an improved ability to meet automation commitments.

**Sunset
Recommendation
14**

Financial Process Redesign

On February 15, 1999, the OAG reported in a letter to the Appropriation and Finance Committees on its action plan for improving receipt and distribution of child support payments. The plan included changing the:

- Adjustments and external batch performance tuning
- Support order correction process
- Reconciliation and financial reporting
- Roll back/roll forward design for processing payment adjustments, and
- USAS payment expedite process.

This plan became the heart of the Financial Process Redesign (FPR) project; however, as it became clear that other initiatives were related to these, the scope of FPR expanded. Consequently, initiatives such as the correction of case type issues and changes to the distribution system mandated by welfare reform were folded into FPR. The welfare reform distribution mandates are discussed in the next chapter, Implementing Welfare Reform Mandates, but the other major components of FPR are discussed below.

**Sunset
Recommendation
13A**

Case Type Project

The OAG reported on the successful completion of the first phase of the case type project in its letter of May 11, 1999 to the Sunset Commission. The letter stated that changes to the automated system were implemented on the weekend of May 1, 1999, assuring that new cases and recertifications referred through the automated interface with the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS) would be coded accurately. The efforts since that time have focused on correcting case type data within TXCSES. Current activities include:

- an in-depth analysis of all of the interface processes which create new cases or update case data on TXCSES,
- an analysis of all existing policy and current procedures to ensure that the interpretation of incoming data is accurate,
- a re-engineering effort to increase data integrity, thereby reducing case issues, and
- an analysis of current data within TXCSES against public assistance records to ensure accuracy of historical data. Completion of the analysis is anticipated by early calendar year 2001.

**Sunset
Recommendation
26, second bullet**

Disbursement of Delayed Payments

The OAG has become more pro-active in seeking out and disbursing delayed payments. In the same letter referred to above, the OAG stated it would develop strategies to reduce payments that were not distributed because of collection holds, arrearage overages, address holds, and future pay holds. In an effort to distribute these payments, the OAG in June 1999 began sending work lists to field offices. The work lists identified cases with money held in the aforementioned scenarios. Management instructed field staff to update information on these cases to enable distribution of held money.

More than \$20 million was disbursed to families through this process; however, this action did not address the systemic problems that prevent disbursement. One of the major goals of FPR is to make the system changes that will allow these held payments to be disbursed upon receipt. One change that became effective on August 4, 2000 was the automated release of undistributed IRS collections in excess of arrearage obligations. This enhancement reduced collection holds by more than \$4.2 million. This amount will grow because this enhancement is an ongoing component of the batch process. Other short-term solutions are underway, and the fruit of these efforts will soon be realized:

- C Enhancements to allow IRS federal tax refund offsets to process more expeditiously to the family are underway, pending completion of analysis regarding potential risks. These enhancements are intended to enable swifter processing of IRS intercept payments to families.
- C Modifications to the income withholding process to ensure that only the current amount owed is collected on a monthly basis will aid in reducing collections on hold for future support obligations by approximately \$6 million.

Additional enhancements to process funds received immediately upon receipt for future support are underway. This change will reduce collections on hold by an additional \$2 million.

The OAG is also participating in a federal Office of Child Support Enforcement work group of states to reduce undistributed collections. As one of the five most aggressive states on reducing undistributed collections, Texas is recognized for leadership in this effort.

**Sunset
Recommendation
14**

Other FPR Initiatives

As part of the FPR project, a Technical Efficiencies Team has been formed to evaluate additional opportunities for improving TXCSES processing and maintenance, prioritizing these opportunities, and implementing the items with highest impact by December 2000. The team is developing a Request for Offer (RFO) for Application Architecture Analysis, Design and Implementation Services. Through this RFO, the OAG is seeking assistance from a vendor to:

- conduct an analysis of the current application architecture
- design an application architecture, for the short-term and for the long-term,
- implement the short-term design,
- implement the long-term design, and
- develop and deploy an application using the implementation application architecture.

An important goal of FPR is to simplify the financial portion of TXCSES and make it more user friendly. Enhancements on this front completed to date include:

- Improved methods for moving multiple receipts from one case to another. This improvement has reduced the number of multiple adjustments on a single case by more than 80 percent and monthly adjustments by approximately 10,000.
- C A change in the sort capability driving the adjustment process to allow shorter running adjustments to process during on-line time as opposed to former first-in/first-out methodology. This change increased overall capacity by approximately 25 percent.
- C Modifications to prevent the creation of additional receipt identifiers in certain circumstances significantly reduced the amount of data processed on cases when payment amounts exceeded obligation amounts.

- C Multiple efforts were completed which significantly improved the system batch run time, reducing processing from multiple nights to a single night run.
- Modifications to case type changes to prevent an adjustment process from occurring when certain conditions have been met and could reduce the overall number of adjustments run on a monthly basis by approximately 10,000.
- C The implementation of a streamlined order entry process enabling a worker to enter data in a continuous, sequential flow, with more flexibility and user friendly terminology is anticipated to reduce court order data entry errors by approximately 18 percent.

Staff assigned to FPR have begun an analysis of the financial sub-system fiscal controls, reconciliation processes, general ledger processing and interaction with the Comptrollers' office. This analysis will culminate in state fiscal year 2001/2002 with enhancements to ensure seamless reporting and reconciliation. FPR will be implemented in four phases. Phase 1, Analysis and Design, projected completion by March 2001, Phase 2, Implementation of Short-term Recommendations, by August 2001, Phase 3, Implementation of Long-term Recommendations, by August 2003, and Phase 4, Application Development, is intended to demonstrate the success, viability, and usability of the application architecture implementation and project implementation either after either Phase 1 or Phase 2.

**Sunset
Recommendation
13C**

Improved Adjustments and Batch Processes

The OAG has made significant progress toward improving batch processes and adjustments. The average end-of-month batch time has declined from about 30 hours to 12, and the nightly batch routinely finishes with three to four hours to spare. The rate of daily adjustment completions also increased substantially between state fiscal years 1999 and 2000. In August 1999, the daily completion rate was 22 percent, but in August 2000 the rate surged to 89 percent, a fourfold increase. Figures 6 and 7 compare the daily completion rates for August 1999 and 2000 and show that on 23 out of 27 days on which TXCSES processed adjustments, the completion rate was 80 percent or better. Moreover, on nine of these days the completion rate was 100 percent. In 1999, the system met or exceeded the 80 percent rate only

twice. By making batch processing and adjustments more efficient, TXCSES staff increased the amount of time that the system is available for use by field staff to process cases and provide information to customers. In 1999, the system was available for use by field staff 88 percent of the time, but improved by 9 percentage points to 97 percent in 2000.

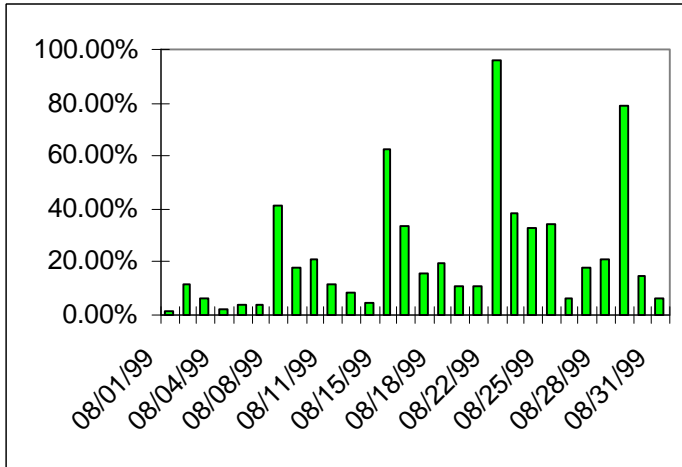


Figure 6: Percent of Daily Adjustments Completed, August 1999

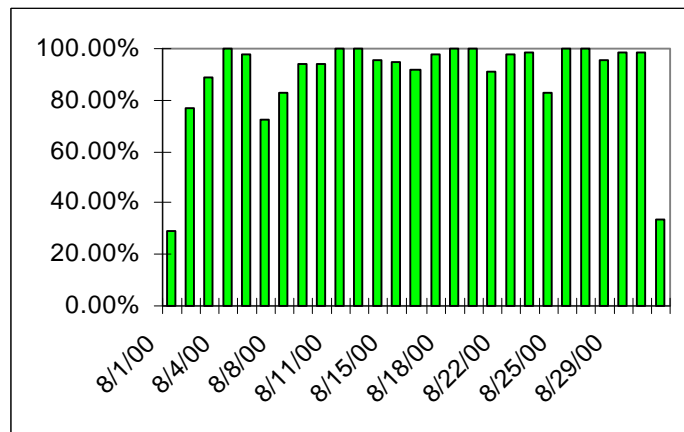


Figure 7: Percent of Daily Adjustments Completed, August 2000

Implementing Welfare Reform Mandates

In 1996, Congress passed and the President signed the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). This law redesigned the nation's welfare system. Aid to Families with Dependent Children was transformed into Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) and welfare was no longer considered an entitlement. States were encouraged to establish innovative programs for moving welfare recipients from public assistance to work, and child support was determined to be a key element in helping poor families leave the welfare rolls.

Thus, PRWORA contains a section that requires states to make extensive changes to their Title IV-D Child Support Programs. Among the changes are big-ticket items such as the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). These items required states to make extraordinarily large capital outlays to implement them. Other mandates required states to alter policies and procedures or pass new statutes, such as the requirement that states have laws making the signing of a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity a legal finding of paternity. The breadth and depth of these required changes have made them difficult to implement. However, the OAG has successfully implemented many of them, such as the SDU, and is making good progress toward implementing the others. SDU has been by far the biggest challenge.

***SDU implemented
on time***

State Disbursement Unit (SDU)

PRWORA requires states to have an SDU that maintains accurate identification of payments, delivers prompt disbursement of payments, furnishes to any parent upon request a timely record of all payments made through the SDU, and disburses all payments within two business days after receipt of the payment, if sufficient information identifying the payee is provided. The SDU is to receive all IV-D child support payments and non IV-D payments that result from income withholding orders issued on or after January 1, 1994.

There was some concern that Texas would be subject to sanctions because its SDU would not be operable by the April 1, 2000 federal deadline. However, on April 1, 2000 the Texas SDU began operations, and OCSE approved its operation plan. As a result, the OAG does not expect any SDU sanctions.

On July 1, 2000, the OAG transferred operations of the SDU to Lockheed-Martin, which opened an SDU facility in San Antonio at the former Kelly Air Force Base site. Lockheed-Martin has taken over the processing of IV-D payments that formerly went directly to the state registry. New orders have been redirected to the SDU since July 7, 2000. After November 1, 2000, the vendor is scheduled to begin redirection of non IV-D orders to the SDU on an employer-by-employer basis.

The mandate to create an SDU posed the greatest challenge to the OAG in terms of resources and existing relationships with county payment registries. The OAG and Lockheed-Martin have been meeting regularly with a county work group to address outstanding county related issues. Internal Control Documents (ICDs), which lay out the technical interfaces which will connect the counties to the SDU have been developed and approved by the work group. Planning is underway to implement local disbursement in the counties that were approved in the federal exemption request. The OAG, Lockheed-Martin, and the county work group will continue to meet in work sessions to address and resolve operational issues to help ensure an integrated state-county approach to SDU implementation in Texas.

Prior to implementation, the OAG obtained a federal waiver to allow local disbursement in certain counties. The waiver allows the OAG to establish an electronically linked system so that counties may continue to disburse payments received by the SDU. The OAG received word from OCSE in February that a limited waiver had been granted and has worked with interested counties to make local disbursement possible. Many of the counties that originally expressed interest in disbursing locally have indicated that they will not pursue this option.

Administrative Income Withholding - Automated (AIWA)

PRWORA mandates that states establish new hire directories to which employers will report within 20 days the name and Social Security number of all new employees. The directory in turn is to match automatically the names it receives against the state Child Support case file, and when a match occurs, the agency is to issue automatically an employer's order for income withholding. Texas has complied with this requirement, and it has turned out to be an extremely effective enforcement tool. About \$155 million was collected in state fiscal year 2000 as a result of this process.

**Sunset
Recommendation
8**

The OAG implemented AIWA in the summer of 1999. Initially, matches were run against a limited number of cases to identify and correct system problems prior to full implementation. In August 1999, the Field Operations work group determined that the system was ready for full volume matching through the State Directory of New Hires (Texas data). In December 1999, the National Directory of New Hires (reported to states other than Texas) was added.

Implementation of Acknowledgment of Paternity

PRWORA mandates that a new acknowledgment of paternity (AOP) process be developed in order to expedite the voluntary establishment of paternity. An AOP process in Texas existed prior to implementation of the welfare reform requirement, but until the law changed in 1999, a signed acknowledgment was not a legal finding but rather only evidence of paternity. In order to comply with this federal mandate, the Texas Legislature in 1999 made a signed acknowledgment of paternity a legal finding. The OAG implemented this new law as soon as it became effective, obtaining more than 56,000 acknowledgments in state fiscal year 2000.

Unmarried fathers are given the option of signing an acknowledgment in the hospital or birthing center shortly after their children are born. In order to ensure that these fathers understand their rights and responsibilities and because an acknowledgment is now a legal finding, hospital and birthing staff had to be trained in the proper method for obtaining acknowledgments. Hospitals and birthing centers are required to be certified and then re-certified each year.

In the summer prior to the effective date of the statute, the OAG's Paternity Opportunity Program (POP) and the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) began administering training throughout the state. In 1999 training was provided to more than 1,800 staff of 1,400 hospitals, birthing centers, local registries, and foundations. Because re-certification is required every year and because employee turn over in the health care industry is high, training has continued in fiscal year 2000. To date about 2,000 staff have been trained in fiscal year 2000.

In addition to training, POP has published a paternity handbook on the acknowledgment process, created a 1-800 number with a recorded message in English and Spanish on rights and responsibilities, produced a rights and responsibilities video that institutions can show new parents, and published new brochures that institutions can use for the same purpose.

**AOP forms
available online to
OAG employees**

OAG and BVS developed the new acknowledgment form, which was distributed by BVS. OAG funded staff and equipment for BVS to scan and enter birth records, so that acknowledgments could be processed in a timely manner. A new system was developed for interfacing BVS records with the OAG caseload and notifying the OAG when acknowledgment forms are filed on IV-D cases. In September 2000, BVS made completed and signed acknowledgment forms available online to the OAG.

A survey has been developed that will assess compliance on acknowledgment provisions by hospital and birthing center staff and midwives. Parents will have an opportunity to respond to whether they had an opportunity to sign an acknowledgment and have access to the rights and responsibilities associated with signing an acknowledgment. The completed surveys will be filed in medical records and will be available for program review and audits by the Joint Commission of Accreditation of Health Care.

Liens

PRWORA requires states to establish and use administrative and judicial procedures that impose liens to enforce child support obligations. A lien attaches to a noncustodial parent's nonexempt real and personal property.

The OAG files lien notices manually on real property in the appropriate county on cases with arrearages of \$5,000 or more. The OAG is in the process of implementing technical enhancement to the process. The business requirements document needed for these technical enhancements is complete, but programming to effect these changes is not expected to be complete until summer 2001 because it is competing for Information Technology resources with other projects that have a higher priority.

Presently, information on liquid assets in institutions such as banks and credit unions is received from the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement as part of the Financial Institution Data Match project and the

business requirements document for automating the lien process on these assets has been completed. Like the automation of lien process on real property mentioned above, programming is expected to be complete in the summer of 2001.

Several alternative approaches are being considered to streamline the legal process requirements. Information is being gathered and analyzed on other states' approaches, and in particular, those that use a more administrative child support lien process. When all issues and contingencies have been identified, management will make a decision on the appropriate administrative approach and prepare proposed legislative changes to implement that approach.

Financial Institution Data Match

PRWORA requires states to enter into agreements with financial institutions doing business in the state for the purpose of securing information leading to the enforcement of child support orders. In coordination with these financial institutions, a data match system will be developed in which each financial institution will provide quarterly the name, record address, and Social Security number or other taxpayer identification number for each noncustodial parent who maintains an account and who owes past-due support. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement has been authorized to assist states in conducting data matches with multi-state institutions, and the OAG is receiving transmissions from the federal matching system.

For some time, OAG staff have participated in meetings focused on the creation of an alliance of states to address in-state financial data matching. The purpose of such an alliance is to provide the most cost effective means to perform the data matching, standardize the data matching process, outsource in-state operations, and oversee the related contracts. The OAG decided at the end of fiscal year 1999 to participate in the consortium during the procurement phase of this development effort.

The OAG participated in what is now referred to as "the Alliance," a consortium of 15 states jointly seeking a vendor service contract to provide the financial data matching solution. The formal contract award was made to Tier Technologies on March 23, 2000, and on March 29, 2000, contract

negotiations began with Michigan, the Alliance lead state. The vendor will negotiate a separate contract with each of the Alliance states. Contract negotiations for the State of Texas are expected to be concluded and a contract awarded by November 1, 2000.

OAG staff continue to develop the software requirements necessary to modify TXCSES. Completion of this analysis is scheduled for December 2000, provided that adequate resources can be made available for programming changes and contract negotiations with the vendor are successfully completed.

**Sunset
Recommendation
21B**

License Suspension

PRWORA requires states to revise their automated systems to withhold or suspend drivers', professional, and recreational licenses of individuals owing overdue child support. The OAG has re-automated mass mailing of the License Suspension Delinquency Notice, a system generated letter mailed to noncustodial parents. The first batch of 10,000 letters was sent in June 2000, and two subsequent batches followed for a total of 27,000 letters. The Delinquency Notice is automatically sent monthly to noncustodial parents who have:

- a valid Texas license that does not expire in 60 days,
- at least 90 days of child support arrears,
- an address known by Child Support to be correct,
- a court order or written agreement to pay arrears, and
- not followed the repayment schedule for the past three months.

Data from two important source agencies for license suspension, the Department of Public Safety and Texas Parks and Wildlife, have been successfully matched and uploaded. The number of loaded, fully functioning data tapes received from other agencies has grown to 42. As of August 31, 2000, ten agencies have not responded to the OAG's request to share data, four have sent data that was incomplete or that incurred matching problems, and one has been unable to send data in an electronic format.

A six month manual pilot on judicial suspensions was completed by four field offices in March 2000. The program was generally well accepted by all the Court Masters with no major problems. Approximately 700 cases were filed, and some large lump sums resulted, for example, a \$35,000 payment from a fishing license case.

The analyses required for administrative and judicial suspension remedy tracking along with the automated case referral function have been completed. November 2000 is the scheduled date for the completion of programming and implementation.

Distribution Changes

PRWORA requires states to change the way that collections on arrears to post-TANF families are distributed. Under pre-PRWORA federal regulations, the state in post-TANF cases retained collections made on all arrears and split the retained collections with the federal government as reimbursement for public assistance payments to the family. The family received payments on these arrears only after, the state and federal government had been completely reimbursed.

Under the new regulations, collections made on arrears that accumulate after a family leaves TANF (a post-TANF family) go to the family. Only after all of these arrears are satisfied does the state retain any money. After October 2000, states are to disburse to families all collections on arrears, both those that accumulated before and after the family received TANF.

States were given two options for implementing these changes. The first option, referred to as Plan A, allows states to phase in the distribution changes over a period of time. The second option, Plan B, allows states to implement these changes all at once. Texas opted for phasing in the changes.

There are three phases to the OAG's implementation plan. Phase 1 was implemented April 1, 2000, and payments on arrears received after April 1, 2000 are being distributed correctly. Phase 1 consists of TXCSES daily distribution modifications to prospectively satisfy post-TANF arrears for former TANF cases.

Phase 2 consists of processing retroactive adjustments to redistribute collections received between October 1, 1997 and April 1, 2000. For Phase 2, the PRWORA distribution team has completed the requirements for accomplishing the retroactive adjustments. Retroactive adjustments began processing on April 17, 2000. Since mid-April, approximately \$11 million has been disbursed to families as a result of the retroactive adjustments, and completion of Phase 2 is now estimated to be October 2000.

Phase 3 consists of additional modifications and redesign of TXCSES to support expanded PRWORA distribution priorities to be effective October 1, 2000. When this phase is complete, payments on arrears that accumulated prior to the custodial parent receiving TANF will be disbursed to the custodial parent before the state retains any money as reimbursement for public assistance. Phase 3 is being addressed in the Financial Process Redesign project.

Access and Visitation Grant Program

PRWORA authorizes the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services to make grants for access and visitation programs available to states. These grants fund local access and visitation programs. The OAG administers this grant program for the state and in this capacity receives, reviews, and determines which proposals should be funded. Presently there are 20 local access and visitation programs in Texas receiving these federal funds.

The purpose of the grant is to enable states to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. Eligible grant activities include mediation, counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop off and pickup), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements.

As the grantee, the OAG may utilize the funding to carry out program objectives within the agency or make subgrants to eligible entities. Federal law indicates that states may give grants to courts, local public entities or private, non-profit organizations. Subgrantees are only eligible for reimbursement. No advances are made. Invoices for reimbursement are approved by the Child Support staff and submitted to OAG Accounting for payment. Accounting submits requests to HHS to draw down federal money as appropriate.

A broad spectrum of service delivery organizations are represented among the grantees and are geographically dispersed across the state in both large and small communities. Most of the organizations are private and non-profit, while a few are divisions within county governments. Among the subgrantees are advocacy groups, social service organizations and legal service entities.

In federal fiscal year 1997, thirteen entities were chosen for funding; in 1998, thirteen twelve-month grants were awarded; and in 1999, fourteen subgrantees were chosen. Collectively, the fourteen 1999 subgrantees delivered approximately 23,400 hours of supervised visitation, 3,500 parental exchanges, 5,400 hours of parental education and 800 hours of counseling, including the development of parenting plans.

Improving Child Support Through Collaboration

The delivery of government services has changed dramatically over the last five years. Agencies can no longer think of themselves as compartmentalized units providing discrete services. The Texas Legislature recognized this need back in the early 1990s when it began urging and in some cases mandating that agencies provide "one-stop shopping" for different government services. The requirements of PRWORA that emphasize making work pay and moving people from welfare dependence to welfare independence also demand that agencies look for ways to provide services that cut across individual domains of different agencies.

For example, in order to help welfare recipients become self sufficient, it is important that they receive ongoing and regular child support. But in many cases, the noncustodial parent cannot pay child support because he does not have regular employment or the skills to obtain regular employment. In such cases, the OAG and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) through collaboration can bring the special services that each provides to bear on the problem. The OAG can establish and enforce a child support order and refer those who cannot pay support to the TWC for job placement services. But this process cannot work effectively unless collaboration between these two agencies becomes part of their organizational culture and unless concrete steps are taken to ensure that ideals of collaboration are put into practice. Since 1999, the OAG has made extensive advances in collaborating with other agencies.

**Sunset
Recommendation
2**

Strategic Partnerships to Improve Delivery of Service

The OAG shares a common customer base with a number of state agencies and relies on the cooperation of these agencies to provide child support services to these people. For example, the Department of Human Services (DHS) refers those who apply for TANF and Medicaid to the OAG for child support services. The OAG and DHS also work together to ensure that those receiving TANF carry out their legal responsibility for cooperating with the OAG for the purpose of establishing paternity or enforcing a child support order. In the same vein, the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS) must closely coordinate its legal efforts on behalf of children placed in foster care, so that child support can be collected in these cases. The OAG also works with the Comptroller, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Youth

Commission and other state agencies to collect and disburse child support. Recognizing the interagency coordination needed to effectively work child support cases, the Sunset Commission recommended that the OAG set up an interagency work group that would develop an interagency partnership strategy among agencies involved with the OAG in working child support cases.

The legislature passed SB 368 and HB 3271, both of which require the OAG to establish work groups to improve service and the flow of information between agencies involved in the child support process. SB 368 requires the OAG to organize an interagency work group to develop an interagency partnership strategy. The bill states that the strategy will

- identify methods to improve the exchange of data between agencies,
- develop procedures to coordinate the child support efforts of each agency in the group,
- identify the benefits of contracts in which an agency could provide child support services to the OAG based on the agency's core competencies,
- identify ways to improve customer intake and referral,
- increase Medicaid recovery, and
- examine the benefits of contracting out the receipt and disbursement of child support payments.

HB 3271 requires approximately the same agencies to work together to find ways to share data and resources.

The OAG initially planned to organize two work groups, but after Child Support Executive Management conferred with DHS Executive Management, it was decided to combine these two into one work group. In November, the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support contacted PRS, DHS, the Department of Health, the Texas Workforce Commission, the Comptroller, the Department of Public Safety, the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to ask if they would participate in the work group.

Subsequently, the first meeting of the Interagency Work Group on Strategic Partnership and Information Sharing was held in December 1999. The work group divided into two subgroups. One group, the self-sufficiency group,

was to examine the legal and policy issues surrounding welfare clients and the welfare to work effort. Its focus was to improve child support and foster care collections and Medicaid recovery. The other dealt with the technical aspects of information exchange among the agencies.

The self-sufficiency group met on January 28 and decided on a mission statement and identified problems and barriers that the agencies faced. It decided to gather information and make recommendations in three areas:

- state and federal laws, rules, and regulations that are barriers to interagency partnership,
- steps that could be taken to improve cooperation among agencies, and
- agency policies and procedures that needed to be revised.

Toward this end, the subgroup spent the spring of 2000 gathering information. It surveyed other states with comparable population and with high levels of performance in TANF child support collections and paternity establishment to obtain information on their policies and procedures with the intention of seeing which ones might be applicable in Texas. It also surveyed field staff from the different agencies to develop suggestions for improving cooperation.

The information exchange subgroup met on February 2, 2000. It discussed a PRS proposal to develop a data broker system for all agencies to use. The group agreed that PRS would put its proposal in writing and circulated it. Another meeting took place two weeks later and discussed a list of proposed options for improving the exchange and access to information. The group agreed to another meeting that would be led by a trained facilitator. The object of the meeting was to complete a business requirements document for a data broker system.

The self-sufficiency subgroup met again in March for a status report on the three items mentioned above. As a result of this meeting a letter was developed and sent to participating agencies that requested input from staff of each agency regarding barriers to providing good client services. Some members of the group met again in June to analyze the results of the responses to the letter.

This subgroup also conducted the survey of the other states during this time. In April, a letter was sent to 12 states asking for information on their policies and procedures. Half the states responded, and the results were presented to the work group when it convened in July.

This subgroup is also gathering information on confidentiality issues. In February, it was recommended that since there were so many confidentiality laws governing the respective agencies, further work should be tabled until the technical group compiles a list of data or information that each agency will need. After the data is compiled, the subgroup will convene again to identify confidentiality provisions affecting the information that is identified.

A subgroup tasked with identifying the data needs of each agency has been meeting weekly. Once it completes its work a Confidentiality and Legal subgroup will work toward resolving these issues. The group has renamed itself Interagency Data Exchange and Sharing (IDEAS).

***NCP job referral
project underway***

OAG/TWC Job Referral and Welfare to Work Data Base Project

The OAG is collaborating with the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in two related projects. In the first, the OAG refers unemployed or under employed noncustodial parents with adjudicated orders to local workforce development boards for job training and placement services. In the second, the OAG provides to TWC by electronic means a data base of noncustodial parents with TANF and former TANF cases and an adjudicated order. The TWC uses the information in the data base to conduct outreach concerning services available through the Welfare to Work program.

The noncustodial parent job referral program was implemented for a number of reasons. It is a requirement of PRWORA and state legislation that passed in 1995 and 1997. But perhaps more important is the fact that field staff and other experts in child support have come to realize that there are two different kinds of people who do not pay child support: those who can but refuse to pay and those who cannot pay because they do not have adequate resources. Among those in the latter category, many could become regular child support payers if they received help in finding work and/or upgrading their work skills. Therefore, it makes sense to help them either find work or training that will lead to work, and Child Support staff have been setting up such referral programs since 1996.

The goal of the job referral program is to provide noncustodial parents with resources needed to improve their economic situation so that they can pay child support regularly, accept their responsibility as a parent, and participate in their children's lives. This project refers noncustodial parents whose children receive or recently stopped receiving TANF to local job placement and training service providers. In some cases, referrals are made for a wider array of service depending on the needs of the noncustodial parent. In some cases, these parents qualify for Welfare to Work services and in others they qualify for other services provided by local workforce development boards.

The program first began on a pilot basis with referrals taking place in Bexar and Harris counties, but because of its success has been expanded to include Collin, Dallas, Tarrant, Tom Green, Uvalde, Val Verde, Maverick, Jefferson, Victoria, and Walker counties. Work has begun in establishing referral projects in Travis, Willacy, Cameron, Hidalgo, El Paso, and Williamson counties. The referral projects with the longest history are the ones in Bexar and Harris counties. As early as 1996, child support staff in the State Office and in field offices began to work with local providers to establish programs that would help noncustodial parents who did not have the means to pay child support. They met with local service providers in San Antonio and Houston to lay the foundation for what was to become the noncustodial parent referral project. In 1998, local service providers in San Antonio and Houston received federal Welfare to Work grant money to provide job services to some of these noncustodial parents. The first pilot project opened in Bexar County in March 1999 and was followed shortly by another in Harris.

The projects vary somewhat, but the essential procedures are the same. The OAG identifies noncustodial parents with children on or recently off TANF to Court Masters, who refer the parent to a service provider. (In some cases, OAG staff make the referral directly.) The service provider conducts an initial interview and assesses the needs of the noncustodial parent. In addition to job placement and training services, these noncustodial parents may be referred to fathering support groups, dispute resolution mediation, substance abuse counseling and/or mental health counseling when necessary.

When the project began in Bexar County, only one San Antonio field office was identifying referrals for the Court Master. Today the referral project has been expanded to include all six OAG Child Support field offices in the city, and about 1,700 fathers have been referred to services in fiscal year 2000, more than double the number referred in fiscal year 1999. Fathers are referred by the Court Master to the Dixon Clinic for assessment of their individual needs and then to peer support groups affiliated with Mutual Enrichment through Learning and Discovery (MELD) for ten weeks. Parents who participate do so as part of their probation conditions. The Dixon Clinic also makes referrals to the local workforce development board or to the Welfare to Work grantee, Goodwill Industries, for job services. The goal of the project is to provide a holistic approach to the family and provide the noncustodial parent with a full range of services.

In Harris County, the OAG works with the local workforce development board's contractor, Houston Works, to provide referral services to noncustodial parents. Like Bexar County, OAG staff identify noncustodial parents who may need job referral services for the Court Masters, who then determine if referral is appropriate. If it is, the Master makes participation in the job placement or training service a condition of probation and sets a 30 day limit for the noncustodial parent to comply with the court order. The contractor provides regular and timely progress reports on the noncustodial parent's participation. About 1,400 noncustodial parents have been referred for job services.

Referral programs in other counties are just getting underway, but they are beginning to have an impact. In Child Support Area 4, which encompasses Dallas, Tarrant, and surrounding counties, more than 100 fathers were referred for services in fiscal year 2000, even though the program did not become operational until late in the fiscal year.

The OAG and TWC are also collaborating to implement a Welfare to Work data base referral system for noncustodial parents. The OAG provides TWC with an automated, monthly data transfer of noncustodial parents with adjudicated delinquencies. TWC then sorts the list by local workforce development board area and makes it available online for Welfare to Work grantees to access. This information is used for outreach to verify that noncustodial parents are eligible services funded by the U.S. Department of Labor.

In the future, the TWC envisions a referral system that would allow OAG Child Support offices, the TWC, and local courts to collaboratively identify, refer, and track noncustodial parents eligible for Welfare to Work services. TWC would like to develop prototypes in Bexar and Tarrant Counties that could be replicated statewide at a later date.

Enhance Medicaid Recovery

The OAG has for many years been working with the Texas Department of Health in order to enroll Medicaid children in private health care coverage plans where this coverage is available to the children's noncustodial parents. Recently the work in this program, known as Medical Support, has improved significantly.

***Medical Support
Program obtains
private insurance
for 148,839
children on
Medicaid***

The OAG has a contract with a private vendor, the Public Consulting Group (PCG), to provide this service. PCG contacts private employers of noncustodial parents on the OAG caseload to determine if health care coverage for dependents is available through the employer. If it is, PCG notifies the employer to enroll the dependents of the employee in the health care plan. When a dependent is also a Medicaid recipient, the OAG notifies the Health Department, which then either seeks reimbursement from the private health care plan for medical expenses paid by Medicaid or, when appropriate, has the private health care plan pay the medical provider. There are now 148,839 children with OAG cases who also receive Medicaid who have been enrolled in private health coverage plans through the Medical Support Program. In 1998 there were about 105,000.

This program has been good for the OAG and the Health Department. By finding private health coverage plans to pay for the medical expenses the Health Department saves Medicaid money. The Health Department pays the OAG for providing this service, and this money is used to partially fund the state IV-D program. In 2000, the OAG will receive about \$3 million from the Health Department as a result of the Medical Support Program. This money draws down about a two for one match in federal participation. By adding the federal money generated by Medical Support money, the Child Support will reap a total of about \$9 million.

The OAG also collects cash medical support when dependent health coverage is not available through an employer. When cash medical support is collected in a child support case in which the children are on Medicaid,

that money is distributed to the Health Department and goes to reimburse Medicaid. This year, the OAG collected about \$790,764 in cash medical support that has gone to reimburse Medicaid, nearly double the amount of \$450,000 collected in 1999.

Working with the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services

Working foster care cases has always been problematic. Unlike other child support cases, the child in these cases has been removed from his or her home, and the mother and father are both noncustodial parents. Furthermore, a state agency, the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services (PRS), becomes the child's custodial parent. PRS and the OAG coordinate providing legal services in foster cases with PRS establishing child support orders when necessary and the OAG enforcing them. The OAG also provides assistance when paternity needs to be established. At times, legal action relating to the foster care situation that must be taken by PRS disrupts enforcement actions that the OAG has already taken on the case.

To overcome these obstacles, the OAG and PRS must work together closely. Since 1999, the OAG and PRS have taken steps to enhance their collaboration, and progress has been made toward streamlining procedures for establishing paternity, preventing the mistaken closing of foster care child support cases, giving PRS employees access to TXCSES, and increasing foster care child support collections. The OAG also has maintained a special foster care unit in field office 613, located in Houston, and is planning to contract with Travis County to centralize foster care case work in Austin. However, problems, such as the incorrect disbursement of collections, still need to be resolved.

There are three different kinds of foster care child support cases: Title IV-E, state paid, and relative care cases. The type of program that a foster care case falls under is related to the funding mechanism for each case.

Foster care collections exceed \$1 million for the first time

Perhaps the area where the OAG has shown the most improvement is in foster care collections. In 2000, the OAG has collected and disbursed more than \$1.1 million in foster care, child support payments, a 20 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. As Figure 8 shows, there has been steady improvement in this area over the last six years, but improvement in 1999 and 2000 is especially significant.

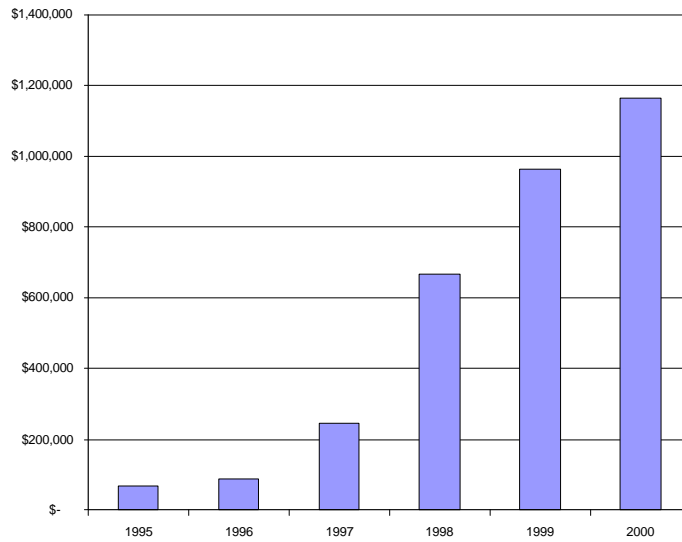


Figure 8: Foster Care Disbursements, 1995 - 2000

In addition to increasing collections, the OAG has worked closely with PRS to improve foster care case processing. For instance, when the Legislature passed a new law, effective in 1998, requiring PRS to expedite the process for final disposition of children in foster care or face automatic dismissal, it became essential for PRS to obtain prompt paternity testing. To expedite the paternity establishment process in these cases, the OAG changed its policy and procedures to require field staff to open a child support case as soon as the manual referral was received and schedule paternity testing as soon as the case was opened on TXCSES.

Manual referral is necessary in paternity cases because the PRS automated system cannot electronically refer them as it does all other foster care child support cases. Manual referrals from the Department of Human Services and PRS are the exception rather than the rule because of the high volume of these referrals. As a result, many of these manual referrals could have easily fallen through the cracks if the OAG had not implemented these special case handling procedures and expedited the scheduling of paternity testing.

Another example of successful collaboration is the action taken to prevent the improper closing of foster care cases that switched from one program to another inside PRS. When a program switch occurs, the PRS system closes the case and reopens it using a different program code. When this information is communicated to TXCSES, it appears that a case has been closed,

and TXCSES prompts field staff that case closure is recommended. To prevent action, the OAG sent an informational memo to field staff explaining the problem and directing them to contact PRS or obtain program effective dates from SAVERR to verify case status at PRS before closing such a case on TXCSES.

Despite progress on many fronts, there are still areas where cooperation between the OAG and PRS needs to improve. For example, both PRS and the OAG agree that PRS is better equipped to disburse foster care payments correctly. The OAG even obtained a waiver from the U. S. Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) that would allow PRS to do so.

However, the OAG has been unable to complete the programming needed to make this happen. While this lack of action may appear to be unresponsiveness, it is instead the result of too many projects competing for scarce Information Technology (IT) resources. Simply put, the OAG has been unable to complete this project because so much of its programmers' time is taken up with implementing higher priority projects, such as SDU and the Sunset Commission's recommendations.

Even though much room remains for improvement, significant steps have been and will continue to be taken to improve collaboration between the two agencies. PRS staff have been given access to TXCSES and have received training on how to use it. The two agencies have been working on a Memorandum of Understanding for locate services and ways to improve interaction between the two agencies on other matters. More importantly, lines of communication between the OAG and PRS have been established for discussing problems and resolving issues and are being used when needed.

**Sunset
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6**

Agreement on Non-cooperation Sanctions

Establishing and enforcing child support orders and establishing paternity in TANF cases requires the cooperation of the TANF recipient. The recipient is a valuable source of information needed to locate the alleged father or noncustodial parent and, of course, when paternity needs to be established, it is essential that the recipient provide basic information about the alleged father. However, since TANF recipient participation in the IV-D program is mandatory rather than voluntary, cooperation is not always forthcoming.

To deal with this problem, federal statutes require TANF recipients to cooperate with state efforts to obtain child support or risk losing a portion of their TANF grant. Prior to PRWORA, the IV-D agency referred cases of non-cooperation to the IV-A agency, which then decided whether or not to impose sanctions and reduce the recipient's TANF grant. The statute allowed for non-cooperation when good cause existed.

After PRWORA was enacted, the job of determining non-cooperation fell to the IV-D agency while the IV-A agency retained responsibility for the appeals process. In order to shift the responsibility for non-cooperation sanctions, it was necessary for the OAG and the Department of Human Services (DHS) to agree to terms establishing non-cooperation responsibilities for each agency. In fact, SB 368 requires the agencies to formally come to an agreement on non-cooperation responsibilities through a memorandum of understanding.

When the non-cooperation changes became effective, the OAG and DHS worked out measures by which the new duties would be effected. In September 1999, the OAG began determining when a TANF recipient was not cooperating, and DHS began to impose sanctions in a timely manner after being notified by the OAG. In March 2000, the OAG published new non-cooperation rules in the *Texas Register*, and a memorandum of understanding that formalized the practice in place was signed in September 2000.

The memorandum calls for measures that will improve the flow of information between the two agencies in order to facilitate the sanctioning of those who refuse to cooperate and respect the rights of those who cannot cooperate for good cause. It requires DHS at the time a person applies for TANF to collect the vital information that the OAG needs to establish or enforce a support order and forward it to the OAG expeditiously. In order to accomplish this, the two agencies agree to develop training that will enhance the collection of this information. The memorandum of understanding also:

- requires DHS to initiate a sanction on a case within 30 days of receiving a request from the OAG,
- allows the OAG to participate in sanction appeal hearings,
- establishes performance measures regarding the timeliness and the number of sanctions resulting from OAG requests,

- prescribes the time in which DHS is to forward child support information gathered at the time of application for TANF, and
- defines what constitutes complete child support information.

Court Monitors

The Office of Court Administration (OCA) administers a system in which 36 Court Masters, through a contract with the OAG, hear Title IV-D child support cases in approximately 40 areas of the state. Although TXCSES monitors these cases to make sure that court-ordered support is being paid, it was determined that regular monitoring by an employee of the court could enhance the ability of the system to prevent child support delinquencies from occurring. As a result, HB 3272 was enacted in 1999. This bill requires the OAG and OCA to collaborate in establishing and evaluating a court monitoring pilot program. After the bill became effective, the OAG and OCA went to work setting up this program. The first task was to develop a description of the job duties and performance plan for the monitors. The two agencies also had to develop a budget for the pilot and identify technology needs. At the same time, TXCSES needed to be modified so that legal actions that occurred as a result of the pilot could be identified, and to this end, new disposition codes for the legal action screens of TXCSES had to be developed and incorporated into the system. As part of this process, reports that could track the cases referred to monitors and be used to evaluate the pilot had to be created.

In conjunction with developing the infrastructure for the pilot, the OAG and OCA had to determine where the pilot would be implemented. It was determined that the best way to judge the effectiveness of the pilot would be to hire two monitors, one who would manage an urban caseload and the other a rural caseload. Dallas County was selected to be the site of the urban pilot and Bell, Coryell, Lampasas, Falls, Milam, Comanche, and San Saba were to be overseen by the rural monitor.

Before the monitors could be hired, the OAG and the OCA had to agree to duties and responsibilities of each agency. An agreement was negotiated and the contract implementing the agreement was signed by both agencies in March. One of the things that the OAG agreed to do was to train the Court Monitors on the use of TXCSES and the agency's child support policies and procedures.

Although the monitors are to become familiar with the OAG child support system, they are to be employees of OCA. Once the infrastructure was in place, the OCA posted the monitor positions, and in May 2000, two Court Monitors were hired, trained, and began performing their duties. OAG staff were subsequently informed that the monitors were hired and that the new disposition codes for the pilot were in place.

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22B**

Access to Automated County Records

Information in county records is extremely important to the child support process. County registries are often the best source for obtaining official copies of court orders that have already been issued, and when a case with an adjudicated order is new to the IV-D system, the county registry is the only source of payment history. County records can also be a good source for obtaining locate information on noncustodial parents whose whereabouts are unknown. In order to make this information more accessible, the OAG has continued its efforts to allow online access to automated county records. These records include jail, voter, marriage and divorce registries. Online access assists child support staff during desktop searches in order to locate noncustodial parents.

In fiscal year 1999, there were 36 field unit-to-county access projects. Five additional counties willing to allow OAG field staff access to child support records have been identified. OAG technical staff will determine technical feasibility in each county by the end of October 2000, and implement approved projects during fiscal year 2001. The OAG generally pays all costs associated with the start-up and operation of these projects. Federal funding at the 66 percent reimbursement rate is provided to the OAG to help defray costs.

Internet set-ups that will allow two-way communication of child support information between the Lockheed-Martin operated SDU and counties will be provided to counties that have given authorization. This developmental project is the most far-reaching and promising of county automation projects developed to date. This will enable utilization of the STRADUS-WEB connection which will allow:

- Collections information to be reported daily by Lockheed-Martin to the counties and Lockheed-Martin to receive updated collections information from the counties.

- Local disbursement information to be sent and received for those counties approved by the federal OCSE to do local disbursement of child support. Federal financial participation and state dollars will be available to counties providing local disbursement of SDU child support.
- New projects which will bring federal financial participation to the counties and improve coordination of child support services throughout the state including:
 - < State Case Registry: Counties will be able to collect new support order information and supply it to the SDU for transmission to the OAG to populate state and federal case registries.
 - < Local Customer Service: Counties will provide customer service on payments related to their jurisdictions that are being processed by the SDU, thereby expanding customer service resources for child support recipients, employers, and parents.
 - < Data Gathering: Counties will provide data to assist the SDU in properly identifying and disbursing payments.

A document imaging system access project is also under development. This project will allow access from the Midland child support field unit to Midland County's document imaging system and is targeted for implementation in December 2000. Access by the San Angelo child support field office to a planned document imaging system in Tom Green County has been approved by the District Clerk. Dallas County proposed access by the Dallas area child support field offices to a planned document imaging system in the county if OAG funding could be made available to the county for system procurement. It was determined by OAG legal staff that the OAG does not have the authority to fund this project, and Dallas County has been informed of this decision.

**Sunset
Recommendation
3**

County and Judicial Work Group

OAG Child Support staff have been meeting regularly with an advisory group of county officials, whose focus has been on the implementation of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). This group has provided valuable insight into impact that the SDU will have on counties and the OAG has worked with this group to lessen the impact. In response to county concerns, the OAG succeeded in obtaining an exemption from federal regulations that

will allow those counties that wish to do so to continue disbursing child support payments. This disbursement will be effected through an electronically linked system, that the SDU vendor and the OAG will establish for participating counties.

As a result of the advice provided by this group, the OAG also sought other ways to fund child support services provided by counties. It will pay counties that wish to do so for providing customer service information on child support. In order to do so, the OAG and the SDU vendor will provide counties with the hardware and software needed to access the SDU data base operated by the vendor. These expenses will qualify for federal financial participation. The OAG has also arranged to reimburse counties for providing information to the State Case Registry on newly established and modified orders. In August 2000, this group expanded to included members of the judiciary and county judges and became a permanent advisory group that in addition to continuing to provide advice on SDU operations, will assist with planning for improved state-county cooperation for providing child support services, advise Child Support management on the impact to counties that changes to the program will have, explore ways to increase monetary incentives for counties, look for ways to expand agreements with counties for enforcement services, and work with various statewide associations on a model partnership agreement.

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Expand Bexar County Cooperative Partnership

The OAG has signed a contract similar to the Bexar County cooperative agreement with Tarrant County to provide the enforcement services in local cases that are made IV-D cases by local rule. Currently, the OAG has an agreement with Bexar County, which provides federal funding to county staff performing collections and enforcement tasks on local-rule child support cases.

Tarrant County has hired employees to staff this project. An enforcement office supervisor was hired on June 6, 2000. The DRO hired enforcement staff in July and training of these staff in OAG policy and procedures was completed in August 2000. On-the-job training for the new Tarrant County project staff continued through September. Project implementation is scheduled for October 16, 2000.

Improving Business Practices and Organization

The OAG decentralized appropriate Child Support functions and downsized State Office in response to Sunset Commission recommendation. The OAG has developed and implemented an outsourcing plan, a decentralization plan and a plan for State Office staff reduction.

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15A**

Outsourcing Plan

Two areas were identified for outsourcing: Payment Processing and Central File Maintenance. With the implementation of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) in July, 30 FTEs have been redeployed to Field Operations. With the outsourcing of Central File Maintenance, which is tied to the Employer New Hire contract, 10 FTEs will be reallocated to other functions, such as the Centralized Liens Unit, SDU Contract Management group, etc.

Decentralization Plan

The Central Call Center was decentralized into four regional call centers and 53 FTEs were sent to the field. Two field budgets for the Special Enforcement Officers (15 FTEs) and the Regional Outreach Coordinators (14 FTEs) were created in order to accurately reflect staff working in the field.

Central Office Downsizing Plan

Between January 1999 and August 2000, the number of State Office FTEs declined from 613 to 502, a reduction of 19 percent. These positions were by-and-large reassigned to field offices. In addition, OAG Internal Audit at the request of the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support is examining the 64 positions in the Administrative and Legal Divisions funded by Child Support to identify whether the work being performed is appropriately assigned to that division and whether the staff is adequate or could be reallocated. In addition to these milestones, State Office deputy directors are looking at reallocation of positions among their own divisions in order to streamline and increase efficiency in State Office operations. In addition to downsizing, decentralizing, and privatizing functions of Child Support State Office, the OAG has implemented other Sunset recommendations to improve its work.

**Sunset
Recommendation
19**

Improve Management of Legal Resources

The Sunset Commission recommended that the OAG improve its statewide management of its Child Support legal resources and restructure the Special Counsel and Managing Attorney positions. To do so, the OAG appointed a Field Operations Counsel to oversee the statewide delivery of legal services and to provide guidance to the Special Counsels, now called Senior Regional Attorneys.

One of the first things that the Field Operations Counsel did was to redefine the duties and responsibilities of the Senior Regional Attorneys. These duties now uniformly include:

- evaluation of the Managing Attorneys' performance of their legal duties,
- monthly reports on docket observations and activities of the Managing Attorney in the field offices to be submitted to the Field Operations Counsel and their respective Regional Administrators,
- provision of guidance on implementation of new policies and procedures to Assistant Attorneys General,
- participation in the hiring of new Assistant Attorneys General in their respective regions,
- participation in all determinations of merit raises and promotions for Assistant Attorneys General in their regions,
- regular contact with county officials who impact CSD legal practice,
- direct supervision of the Bankruptcy Specialists and Special Litigators, participation in Child Support special projects (e.g., the Texas Fragile Families Initiative), and
- additional legal coverage to Special Litigators and units as needed, due to attorney vacancies, unusually large dockets, complex cases, and other situations that arise.

In addition to these duties, the Senior Regional Attorneys are involved in reviewing dockets in their respective regions with an eye toward maximizing both judicial and administrative remedies and Child Support legal resources.

The Senior Regional Attorneys worked with the Field Operations Counsel to develop a new standard salary schedule that will attract new legal talent and at the same time, fairly compensate experienced Assistant Attorneys General. Under the old salary schedule, experienced Assistant Attorneys General were paid much below the schedule, and it was impossible to hire new attorneys at a fair salary using the old schedule. Consequently, the

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schedule was not followed and new Assistant Attorneys General were sometimes hired at a below-schedule salary level. This problem needs to be addressed with the possibility that a request may need to be made to the Legislature to fund the new schedule.

Re-engineer Field Office Business Practices

The Model Office project is an integral part of implementing recommendations made by the Sunset Commission. Recommendations include determining the agency's mission, clarifying the field office objectives, reviewing TXCSES specifications, developing model business processes for the field, and, based on the process models, designing model operating plans, including a customer service plan, organizational structural, operating budget and space plan. In addition, the agency has been tasked with piloting the model field office processes in operating plans, making appropriate adjustments, and rolling out the model to the remaining field offices. Several of the project goals have been accomplished:

- The San Antonio-North field office has been selected as the model office site.
- The agency's vision statement created and disseminated.
- Customer Service Plan activities are already underway in the model office including:
 - < a computer in the lobby for customer inquiry/information
 - < the OAG web site has been publicized on correspondence and lobby posters,
 - < the Ombudsman Program and complaint process have been publicized,
 - < the information available via the Voice Interactive Response Systems (VIRS) has been expanded,
 - < the plan to ensure that telephones are answered,
 - < implementation of the requirement that all staff identify themselves on the phone and wear name badges,
 - < customers are seen the same day requested or an appointment is scheduled within ten days, and
 - < the revised Regional Administrator performance plans have been implemented.
- The functionality of TXCSES has been reviewed in order to automate tasks. (Refer to “Review TXCSES and Automate Tasks” on page 98.)
- The organizational structure and current procedures that need improvement have been identified.

The Model Office will incorporate improvements from the Financial Process Redesign project which includes making the financial portion of TXCSES less complicated and more user friendly, reducing the amount of held money by sending work lists to the field and enhancing reporting capabilities for internal management purposes.

Privatization opportunities have been examined. Nine field visits have been conducted to study the present and proposed child support enforcement scope of services, federal mandates, statutory requirements, and legislative directives. From the information gathered, recommendations regarding the feasibility of privatization will be made. Other work underway includes:

- Developing a prototype report for internal posting on the intranet. (The report was developed and distributed to Regional Administrators to help evaluate the region. In the future, it will be used at the unit level as well.)
- Improving the management of legal resources. (Refer to “Improve Management of Legal Resources” on page 84.)
- Identifying counties that have online access to records that would be feasible. (Refer to “Automation of County Records” on page 77.)
- Releasing an RFO on LASSO, an online locate system which will consolidate locate data bases and expedite locate procedures, and is expected to be implemented by January 2001 (Refer to “Improve Locate by Accessing Utility and Phone Data Sources” on page 95).

Next steps include:

- Complete planning documents that detail the agency's reengineering of field office business process and restructure field office jobs consistent with the model field office program.
- Convening a statewide work group to develop and incorporate additional best practices and process improvements.

**Sunset
Recommendation
23**

Training

The OAG has taken action to enhance Child Support training to:

- improve locate by using online and phone inquiry techniques and existing authority to gain online access to Department of Public Safety (DPS) drivers' license records,
- implement the established administrative and judicial procedures to encourage and reach stipulated agreement between the parties, and
- improve use of all the enforcement tools.

A three-phase curriculum targets OAG Locate Specialists. The first phase involves instructor-led locate classes, emphasizing the "Locate Links" tool as well as other locate interface tools and desktop locate techniques. The second phase features customized in-house computer based training (CBT) and Intranet courses designed to teach basic job skills including, but not limited to, learning the TXCSES automation subsystem, interpreting locate interfaces data, and processing locate data in the most efficient manner. Classes are scheduled for the first part of 2001. The third phase involves ongoing intranet forum discussion sessions to reinforce the locate information taught in the first two phases.

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22D**

Implementation of the Phase I Locate training curriculum has been delayed pending the procurement of an automated online locate system, known as LASSO (Locate and Asset Search System Online). Field Operations management requested that LASSO and two other new locate tools be integrated into the curriculum. Child Support Training has moved forward with the purchase and installation of web development software to support the Locate training effort. The intranet web page entitled "Locate Links" has been designed to augment instructor-led classes. This web page contains internet links to demographic data bases that assist staff in locating missing persons and/or assets. An intranet "Forum Discussion" web page has been designed and implemented as an online interactive communication medium where users can discuss post-training topics and receive responses from subject matter experts. Online access to DPS drivers' licences data has been available since March 25, 2000. This file contains information on all licensed drivers and ID card holders in Texas.

Training efforts have also focused on the existing administrative process for securing stipulated agreements between the parties. A two-part training course was developed by Child Support Training. The CSRP course

provides an overview of the Child Support Review Process and the CSRO course is specifically directed at Child Support Review Officers. Statewide CSRP and CSRO training was completed August 31, 2000.

In order to maximize the potential of the considerable number of tools that the OAG has at its disposal for enforcing child support orders, the Sunset Commission recommended that the Child Support Division provide advanced training to its field staff. The development of the Advanced Enforcement training module is complete. Statewide training was completed August 31, 2000 and this training module has been added to Child Support training curriculum. In addition, new employee enforcement training was expanded to provide more in-depth information on enforcement tools. Emphasis was placed on license suspension, liens and other post judgment remedies that are not used as frequently. Design and development of the new training module for new workers was completed April 2000.

**Sunset
Recommendation
15B**

Strengthen Program Monitoring and Implementing Self-Assessment

The OAG enhanced the Child Support Division's Program Monitoring section, strengthened the administrative monitoring of the Child Support Program, and implemented a self-assessment process to satisfy federal requirements as recommended by the Sunset Commission in its report.

Federal requirements for program self-assessment were mandated by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). Under the authority of the director of Program Monitoring in the Child Support Division, Self Assessment Reviews were undertaken for fiscal years 1999 and 2000. Reviews of required program compliance criteria were based on a statistically valid sample of cases in the Texas Child Support Program. The Program Monitoring section, utilizing available resources, completed the reviews and filed timely reports in March 1999 and March 2000.

The purpose of the self-assessment reviews is twofold: first to comply with the PRWORA legislation and second to inform management about program compliance with requirements found in Office of Child Support Enforcement Action Transmittal, OCSE-AT-98-12, and in 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 303. The reviews assess whether the State of Texas met the 75 percent compliance standard in the following areas: Paternity and Support Obligations, Enforcement of Support Obligations (including income withholding), Securing and Enforcing Medical Support

Orders, Review and Adjustment of Orders, Interstate Services, and Disbursement of Collections. Assessment also included the 75 percent and 90 percent compliance standards for Expedited Processes, and the 90 percent compliance standard for Case Closure.

Under PRWORA, the rules for auditing state child support programs were changed to emphasize performance outcomes instead of process. Program Monitoring staff from Texas played an integral part in the development of guidelines for states to use to conduct the self-reviews. The director of Program Monitoring participated in the national Self-Assessment Core Work group which convened in May 1997 and issued its report in March 1998. The contributions made by Texas staff were recognized by OCSE in its March 1998 "Report for State Use in Implementing Self Assessment Study Results," which noted that "Massachusetts was able to significantly speed up the development of its self assessment process by using Texas check sheets and spread sheets as a starting point." Program Monitoring staff have taken the lead in presentations on self-assessment in a number of national workshops and audio-conferences.

Program Monitoring staff report to the Child Support Director, but work in close collaboration with Field Operations staff to carry out ongoing case reviews. Early in the development of the self-assessment process, field staff were paired with Program Monitoring staff to create regional review teams. A structured training component was created, using Program Monitoring staff and federal regional audit staff as technical advisors. This approach has proven effective in helping field management gain first-hand knowledge of compliance standards. The self-assessment reviews rely on statistical sampling valid down to the regional level. Findings are reviewed with regional administrators who are required to develop corrective action plans for areas in which improvement is needed.

**Sunset
Recommendation
18**

Establish a Contracts Management Group

A Contracts Administration section was formed in August 1998 to develop contract monitoring standards, and to assist the OAG's Child Support Division with monitoring compliance on existing and future contracts. A manager and three program specialists form the section that receives regular reports from contract managers. The reporting process has been in place for more than a year and a half.

Before a contract is awarded, Contracts Administration assists the requesting Child Support section with pre-procurement analysis including financial analysis to make the most cost-effective decision. In addition, an Executive Review Committee:

- authorizes impact assessments to determine project feasibility,
- reviews assessments to select a solution, and
- develops and approves contracts.

The committee consists of the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support, the Deputy Directors for Program Operations, Administrative Operations, Field Operations and Information Technology, and the General Counsel.

After a contract is awarded, Contracts Administration works with the contract manager to develop monitoring standards for vendor compliance that are specific to each contract and conducts a risk analysis to promote the development of effective and reasonable performance measures.

A risk analysis is also conducted with contract managers to assign a priority rating to all contracts and assess which contracts to begin with. Risk determinations are made based on the following:

- mission criticality,
- funds budgeted and expended,
- asset liquidity or convertibility for personal use,
- complexity of procurement,
- history with contractor or similar goods and services,
- flow of information,
- quality of internal controls and monitoring resources,
- effectiveness of contractual terms,
- internal impact, and
- external interest.

Procedures are in place that define specific responsibilities and establish a process for the development of procurement and executable contract documents, a legal review to assure compliance with federal and state law and regulations, the efficient use of resources and effective communication, management and administration of contracts, and accomplishment of acquisition objectives.

The procedures apply to all goods or services purchased by a Request for Offer, Request for Purchase, or Invitation for Bid when the total contract costs exceed \$10,000, and for Information Technology procurements that have a direct service impact on Child Support staff and are in excess of \$1 million.

In regular reports received by Contracts Administration, contract managers raise compliance issues for assistance with monitoring and legal matters. Contract managers also report if they are unable to monitor their contracts and need help.

**Sunset
Recommendation
22C**

Improve Locate by Accessing Utility and Phone Data Sources

The Sunset Commission recommended that management action be taken by the OAG to "integrate utility and phone company records into the data sources accessible through the automated locate process, and more aggressively pursue such records at the local level by exercising existing statutory authority." Based on this recommendation, the OAG has taken action to make the locate process more efficient.

The OAG has plans to procure an automated online locate system, known as LASSO (Locate and Asset Search System Online). A Request for Offer (RFO) was released in September 2000. This procurement would meet a business need for locating individuals and their assets for the purpose of establishing and/or enforcing child support obligations. The vendor would be required to consolidate data from more than 20 sources in response to locate inquiries. The LASSO project will meet the requirements of the Sunset Commission recommendation, but go well beyond the scope of integrating utility and phone records.

The LASSO system allows staff to access a wide range of locate information from one source rather than submitting a number of requests to different sources. A Child Support Officer or locate specialist submits the following basic data elements: name, address, date of birth and/or Social Security number to the LASSO system, which would then provide data from the identified sources and assist the user in populating any of the four basic data elements that might be missing. The LASSO system would utilize client server technology, limit access to authorized individuals, and provide an audit and tracking system to pinpoint every transaction. Child Support staff would access the system through a web server.

Currently, locate specialists must submit requests to different data sources individually. The work is labor intensive and highly repetitive. Under the LASSO system, a response from multiple data sources would be available from a single request transaction. Currently, tape exchanges with agencies such as the Texas Department of Public Safety are received on a monthly basis and loaded into the Child Support automated system, TXCSES, through a batch process. Locate "hits" will prompt a morning mail message to the locate specialist but may be 30 to 60 days old. Under the LASSO system, the data bases would be refreshed by the vendor and accessible to child support staff upon demand.

The LASSO system will consolidate data from phone and utility companies, county tax records, criminal history records, marriage, divorce, birth and death records, professional, hunting and fishing licenses, motor vehicle driving records, and more. Through consolidated searches, locate work can be expedited. By securing mailing and residential addresses, establishment efforts can proceed by mail or service of court papers. At the time court ordered support is set, the LASSO system may be used to provide asset and credit payment data to assist the court in determining the noncustodial parent's ability to pay. By identifying assets, home address or place of employment, the LASSO system can expedite remedies to enforce payment, including income withholding, liens against property, and suspension of licenses.

The LASSO system strategy builds upon the Sunset Commission recommendation, but goes well beyond the scope identified. Locate work is central to all child support services. Through vendor procurement, use of client/server technology, and consolidated data bases, not only can the locate function be streamlined and expedited, safeguards to ensure privacy rights and limit use to the specific purpose of child support collection can be tightly controlled.

**Sunset
Recommendations
21A & B**

Review TXCSES and Automate Tasks

The functionality of TXCSES has been reviewed and the automation of tasks is underway in order to assist child support field staff. Work has been focused in the following areas:

- Data matching with data bases to locate absent noncustodial parents
-TXCSES currently matches against data bases of 42 agencies in an effort to locate absent noncustodial parents. The major data bases include the Texas Workforce Commission, Department of Public

Safety, Comptroller of Public Accounts, Department of Human Services, State and National Directory of New Hires, and Federal Case Registry.

- Issuing automated location and employment verification letters and collection letters - Address and employment verification letters continue to be issued automatically whenever locate information is received from an unverified source. The automated collection letter path can be initiated by field office staff, and the system will send a series of three collection letters to the noncustodial parent. When initiated, the first letter goes out immediately, and two letters follow ten days apart. After the series of collection letters are issued, the system prompts the user in ten days, suggesting further action.
- Automating wage withholding notices to employers as a result of data matching against state and federal new hire reporting - Details on the progress of this initiative can be found in the Administrative Income Withholding - Automated section on page 34 .
- Automating the attachment of financial institution accounts - The progress on this initiative is reported in the Financial Institution Data Matches section on page 37.
- Automating the suspension of driver and professional licenses - The OAG has re-automated the License Suspension Delinquency Notice. Details on this initiative are reported in the License Suspension section on page 38.
- Reporting delinquent accounts to credit bureaus - The federal mandate for this initiative requires states to have laws and procedures under which the names of delinquent child support obligors and the amounts of support delinquencies are reported periodically to consumer credit bureaus. The OAG reports cases to credit bureaus every month along with delinquent amounts. A change in transmission format is being made, but this alternative format will not interrupt the transmission of data.

**Sunset
Recommendation
22A**

Request Federal Clarification on Locate Sources

The OAG has submitted a Policy Inquiry Question (PIQ) for the U.S. Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). The request asks for clarification on which locate sources are mandatory under the Expanded Federal Parent Locator Service and explains the need to streamline case processing by eliminating unnecessary checks.

The OAG has proceeded on locate clarification in order to assess unproductive checks on data sources during the automated locate process. Federal guidance is being sought, and it is hoped that burdensome processes not specifically required can be eliminated.

Prior to submitting the request, the Child Support Information Technology (IT) section reviewed active and inactive sources to determine the data received from each source. IT worked with field staff to identify and prioritize critical data elements from locate sources. Field staff have been consulted as interfaces are added or reactivated.

Federal requirements are no longer clear on which locate sources are mandatory for automation. The federal publication, *Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for States* (the Certification Guide), provides a list of sources that should be accessed. Regulations at 45 CFR § 303.3(b), provide a list of sources that must be accessed, along with time frames for accessing them. Given the numerous sources available and the tremendous volume of data now being added to the IV-D caseload, clarification is needed on which sources must be accessed within the 75 day case processing time frame when a case requires locate.

**Sunset
Recommendation
16**

Outsourcing

The OAG has examined and proceeded on privatization opportunities. To assure that the highest quality of services can be provided, a Contracts Management Group has been established. The status of major OAG contracts follows.

State Disbursement Unit (SDU)

The State Disbursement Unit (SDU) is a centralized payment processing unit that was transferred to Lockheed Martin, effective July 1, 2000. Lockheed-Martin opened the SDU facility in San Antonio, Texas at the former Kelly Air Force Base site. (Refer to “SDU” on page 33 for detailed information.)

Private Collection Contract

The full office privatization will be considered following the Financial Redesign and Model Office projects' completion in 2002. In March 2000, the OAG issued a Request for Information on a pilot private collection contract. Based on the responses, a decision was made to postpone the pilot. It was also decided that a private collection contract would not be feasible

until progress was made in the Financial Process Redesign project. Implementation of a private collection contract will occur no earlier than November 2001. The OAG is reviewing other states' experiences with collection privatization as well as the Lockheed collections contract with the OAG during the period of 1993 to 1997.

Employer New Hire Reporting

The Employer New Hire data base was established and is maintained by TRW. The original contract term was from September 1, 1997 to August 31, 1999 with four one-year extensions possible through August 31, 2003. Employers must submit a notice to the state new hire directory on all new employees no later than 20 days from the date of hire. The employee information is entered into a data base and compared with a state registry of open child support cases. If there is a match, an administrative income withholding order must be issued by the OAG. The state is also required to send new hire information to the national new hire directory. The same comparison is made with the national case registry to find interstate matches. After the contract is signed, the new hire vendor will also be responsible for the following functions that are currently performed by Central File Maintenance:

- employer call center to handle employer telephone inquiries,
- employer data base and registry to assist in the state's efforts in issuing wage withholding orders to employers, and
- data entry of completed TXCSES generated forms, documents generated from the U.S. Postal Service and other miscellaneous documents received by the OAG

Medical Support Enforcement

The OAG entered into a contract with Public Consulting Group (PCG) for medical support enforcement services. PCG is responsible for operating a statewide medical support enforcement unit in Austin, Texas that provides an automated method of identifying all children on the OAG's caseload who are covered by an existing health insurance plan. The unit also provides administrative enforcement of medical support orders in cases where the absent parent is under court order to enroll the children in a health insurance plan.

An interagency agreement with the Texas Department of Health is also maintained that provides for the sharing of information obtained from medical support efforts. The Texas Department of Health in return shares

part of the savings realized from the OAG medical support efforts with the child support program.

This new collaborative approach to medical support enforcement eliminates most of the time-consuming manual tasks associated with identifying the availability of group insurance. The process offers promise to significantly increase the number of children enrolled in a health insurance plan.

Genetic Testing

The OAG contracts with three vendors that provide DNA paternity testing services and litigation support including testimony. The three vendors are Fairfax Identity Laboratories, Laboratory Corporation of America Holding, and the University of North Texas Health Science Center. During fiscal year 1999, the OAG spent about \$2.4 million on paternity testing.

Automated Mail Contract

The OAG contracts with Compass Print and Mail Services of Dallas, Texas to distribute approximately 800,000 pieces of mail per month in efforts to collect child support. This includes applications for enforcement services, locate letters, court notices, license suspension letters, administrative income withholding letters and more. In all, there are about 300 different combinations of letters and forms printed and mailed in this effort. Nearly all of this mail is delivered to the U. S. Postal Service and postmarked the same day that the requests are generated on TXCSES. To perform these services, Compass must also provide extensive forms development and programming services related to the high speed print production of OAG forms.

Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM)

The OAG is required to enter into agreements with financial institutions doing business in the state for the purpose of securing information leading to the enforcement of child support orders. In coordination with these financial institutions, a data match system will be developed in which each financial institution will provide quarterly the name, record address, Social Security number or other taxpayer identification number for each noncustodial parent who maintains an account and who owes past-due support. (Refer to “Financial Institution Data Match” on page 53 for more information.)

Locate and Asset Search System Online (LASSO)

The OAG plans to procure LASSO, an automated online locate system. A Request for Offer was released in September 2000. This procurement would meet a need for locating individuals and their assets for the purpose of establishing and/or enforcing child support obligations. (Refer to “Improve Locate by Accessing Utility and Phone Data Sources” on page 95 for more information.)

**Sunset
Recommendations
4, 7, and 9**

Reports

SB 368 requires the OAG to prepare a report on the progress and impact of privatization issues. The OAG has gathered information on the subject and will submit the report by the end of calendar year 2000. At the same time, the OAG will submit a report on the effectiveness and use of enforcement tools. A request has been submitted to Child Support MIS for data that will be used to evaluate various enforcement tools.

SB 368 also requires that the OAG submit a report that evaluates alternative sources of revenue. The OAG has begun gathering information for this report. It has sent a survey to other states requesting reports prepared on fees, conducted an initial literature review, and obtained statistics on insufficient funds. The report will be submitted on October 15. The report will examine the impact of the new SDU on the insufficient funds process, finalize assumptions for cost estimates, complete cost estimates, finalize a cost benefit model, and survey advocacy and interest groups.

Conclusion

As this report shows, remarkable progress has been made toward improving the Child Support Program; however, much remains to be done. A major focus of our efforts over the coming years will be to increase the percentage of the caseload with enforceable child support orders. Currently, the program opens about 15,000 new cases per month, about three-fourths of which are referred by the Department of Human Services. Of the new cases, more than 80 percent require the establishment of a child support order. However, the order establishment process remains a labor intensive endeavor. Child Support staff must locate the absent parent, verify income or assets, prepare legal filings, request that parties be served, and take the case to court before obtaining an enforceable order.

The program has taken actions that should make more resources available for establishing orders. The automation of some enforcement tasks such as sending employer writs automatically when a child support case with a support order matches a reported new hire should make it possible for field offices to devote more resources to the establishment process. The Field Operations Attorney is working with Senior Regional Attorneys to increase the size of dockets in certain areas of the state. And since January 1999, the Child Support Division has been redeploying staff by downsizing the State Office and putting the FTEs in the field offices where they can provide direct services to the people who need our services. In addition, the OAG in its Legislative Appropriations Request requested a change to Rider language regarding temporary staff that would allow temporaries currently used to provide direct child support services to be converted to full time equivalent positions. An exceptional item also addresses the authority to add 210 staff to meet the growing need for services. A recommendation was also made to fund these additional positions by moving forward unexpended balances and eliminating the need for the OAG to fund the state portion of the TANF Supplemental payments.

Even as the program intensifies its efforts to increase the rate of cases with established orders, it has not lost sight of the need to continue to improve customer service. The performance of the new Regional Call Centers have surpassed our expectation, but we will need to continue to pay close attention to them if we are to maintain the high level of customer service achieved during fiscal year 2000. For a number of reasons, inquiries to the call centers have increased substantially from April to August 2000, but call

center staffing has remained constant. In order to maintain the current 95 percent answer rate, new production enhancing technologies have been or will be installed in the call centers.

The Financial Processing Redesign (FPR) project should produce some short-term solutions to the problems that cause customers to make inquiries to the call centers. Under the umbrella of the FPR, a number of efforts are underway. So far, work completed has reduced the number of multiple adjustments on a single case by more than 80 percent, increased efficiency in the adjustment process, and significantly improved batch run time. Other improvement will increase the amount of held money that is disbursed to families. The bulk of the benefits from this project, however, will be seen in the coming fiscal years.

Implementation of the federal welfare reform mandates will also have an impact on the demand for customer service. Implementation of the Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) should make the location of financial assets more efficient and the link between the New Hire Reporting Directory and automated income withholding has already had a huge impact on collections. But even as these innovations lead to more and better service, they are also likely to lead to more inquiries from customers, who for the first time begin receiving child support payments on a regular basis.

The successful implementation of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) could also increase the volume of customer inquiries as non IV-D cases that had formerly been received and distributed locally are sent to and disbursed from a centralized location in San Antonio. In anticipation of this new demand for information, the SDU contract with the vendor, Lockheed-Martin requires it to answer inquiries regarding the payments, and Child Support has made it possible for counties to receive federal financial participation for answering customer inquiries about child support payments, many of which will be generated by implementation of SDU.

Implementation of SDU will reshape the role of counties in the child support process. Eventually, all child support payments will be directed to the SDU, but the OAG has taken steps to ease the impact of this transition for counties. It successfully obtained an exemption from the federal government that will allow counties that wish to do so to disburse payments locally through an electronically linked system. The exemption applies to 38 counties that expressed interest in participating in a system of local

disbursement in a survey conducted by the OAG in 1999. Other counties that want to disburse payments locally may be allowed to do so after the first wave of counties are set up, but their participation will depend on the federal government granting another exemption.

To give counties a voice in implementing the SDU, the OAG set up a county advisory group. In response to concerns raised by this group, the OAG applied for and obtained the exemption mentioned above and won approval from the federal government to allow federal financial participation for customer service efforts also referred to above. The group will continue to meet on a regular basis and its composition has been expanded to include more county officials and representatives of the judiciary. This group will advise the OAG on how to improve county relations and how to implement program changes that have an impact on counties.

Counties were leery of SDU implementation in part because of the experience that they had with another big-ticket, technology project, Child Support's new computer system, TXCSES. Frankly, implementation of TXCSES caused problems not just for counties but for customers and staff alike. However, in 1999 the OAG began to take steps to address these problems. It improved the software and purchased new hardware which in turn increased the availability of TXCSES to staff. Child Support management also became more involved in setting priorities and planning new Information Technology projects.

Over the last five years, implementation of federally mandated projects such as the development of the new computer have resulted in major upheavals to the program, especially to its infrastructure. At the same time that these changes were being implemented, the role of the federally funded child support program also has changed under welfare reform. The Title IV-D program was launched in 1975 as a cost recovery program aimed at recouping public assistance costs from absent parents. As public assistance rolls have declined, the program's ongoing contribution to family self-sufficiency has become more prominent. Under federal law, child support services must continue for former TANF and Medicaid recipients. Child support collections become a central component for families striving for

independence from welfare. TANF cases are no longer the majority type of cases handled by the OAG. Former TANF cases make up 48 percent of the caseload and cases with no public assistance history 26 percent. TANF cases have declined dramatically to 17 percent of the caseload and cases involving Medicaid benefits but no TANF history comprise 9 percent of the total caseload.

But amid these drastic changes, the program was able to surpass a major milestone in state fiscal year 2000. For the first time in program history it collected more than \$1 billion in child support. This amount represents an increase of more than 30 percent over 1998 and comes at a time when caseload growth has remained static. This billion dollar year has set a new benchmark for program performance expectations and establishes momentum for further improvement in the years to come. The Child Support Program is justifiably proud of the advances that it has achieved over the last two years, but it is not complacent. New challenges are on the horizon and old problems demand constant attention. The eyes of the program are fixed on implementing the recommendations made by the Sunset Commission and the Legislature and providing our customers with efficient and timely services.



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL "CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION
JOHN CORNYN

Office of The Attorney General Child Support Compact with Texans

The Attorney General's Child Support Division is committed to providing excellent service to all customers (internal and external) while meeting its vision — Support: Children deserve it! The division's primary customers are the children of Texas. Other customers include both custodial and non-custodial mothers and fathers along with many other officials, agencies, organizations and individuals involved in the child support process. In serving all their customers, Child Support staff will be guided by these principles:

- Always do what is best for the child, putting children first.
- Treat everyone with dignity, respect, honesty, and courtesy.
- Walk in the customer's shoes and have empathy.
- Be a leader in doing the right thing, not just doing things right.
- Participate and contribute to solutions - work as a team.
- Maintain objectivity and be non-judgmental.
- Respect the customer's privacy.
- The customer's perception of reality is their reality.

The Child Support Division conducts focus groups across the state to ensure continuing input and feedback from external and internal customers on our program operations and performance. Based on customer input, the Child Support Division is developing a customer service plan to make improvements in the following areas:

- Access to services and staff.
 - Information that is comprehensive, accurate, easily obtainable and easily understood.
 - Promptness in acting on new case information and in responding to customer requests and inquiries.
 - Accuracy, quality, and correctness in all work products.
 - Professional, courteous, and respectful treatment for all customers.
-

External customer service goals and standards for the Child Support Division are:

- By August 2000, the service delivery process will begin within 20 days of receipt of a completed application.
- By August 2000, customers will be able to submit an application via Internet.
- By August 2000, we will establish and publicize a formal complaint handling process.
- By September 2000, all staff will be trained in customer service.
- By August 2001, satisfaction with customer services will improve 25% as measured against customer satisfaction surveys conducted in 1998.
- By August 2001, 70% of phone calls will be answered; 80% by the end of August 2002; 90% by the end of August 2003.
- Customers will be seen on the same day they request to be seen, if possible, or will be offered an appointment within 10 days of the date requested.

If you have a concern or a suggestion for improvement, you may:

- Discuss the concern or suggestion with the person who served you.
- Speak to the unit manager or ombudsman in the local child support office. Names and addresses of unit managers and ombudsmen are posted in the offices.
- Send an inquiry to the Child Support Interactive Page.
- Use Complaint Form 1600, which is available electronically and at all child support offices.

If after consulting the local and regional ombudsman you are still not satisfied, your complaint will be forwarded to the State Office Ombudsman.



Child Support Complaint Process/Acknowledgment

The Child Support Division of the Office of the Attorney General recognizes each customer's right to prompt and courteous assistance. We are dedicated to maintaining the highest level of professional commitment and personal service to those served, particularly the parents and children of Texas. We have received your complaint and are providing this document in an effort to help you understand the Child Support Division's complaint process.

What Happens After I Submit My Complaint?

These are the basic steps that will take place:

- your complaint will be documented on our computer system to maintain a record
- an investigation will take place, which may include:
 - < discussing the issue further with you
 - < researching our computer records
 - < talking to other persons who are subjects of the complaint
- you will be provided with quarterly updates until resolution
- once resolved, you and other persons who are subjects of the complaint will be notified
- the resolution will be documented on our computer system

Who Will Handle My Complaint?

A special program has been established to handle complaints, which is called the Ombudsman Program. This consists of a child support staff member in each child support field office and regional office that have been designated to handle complaints. The State Office Ombudsman in Austin is responsible for overseeing the program. We hope to resolve your complaint at the field office level. If unable to resolve the issue at this level, it will then be forwarded to the regional or State Office level.

What Records Are Kept?

A record of your complaint that contains the following information will be kept by the Child Support Division:

- your name
- date the complaint was received
- nature of the complaint
- name of each person contacted in relation to your complaint
- summary of the results of the review or investigation

Your complaint will be documented and tracked on the Child Support Division’s computer system to ensure a timely response. All information regarding this complaint will be kept confidential in accordance with the Child Support Division’s policies.

How Will I Know If Anything Is Being Done?

You, along with any other persons who are subjects of the complaint, will be provided with quarterly updates as to the status of the investigation until it is resolved. You will also be notified at the time the complaint is resolved.

Your complaint will be handled by:

_____ () _____
Field Ombudsman Name Phone Number

Please contact us if you have additional information or any questions about the complaint process.

Sunset Recommendations Status Report

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
1	<p>Retain the child support program within the OAG for a two-year probationary period. Four determining factors to decide whether the OAG has successfully re-engineered and revived the program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved customer service • improved performance • resolve computer issues • comply with federal welfare reform mandates 	NA	Howard Baldwin	Substantial progress is being made on all four fronts and in implementing statutory changes found in SB 368 and the management action recommendations found in the Sunset Commission's report.
2	Mandate the state agencies involved with the child support program to participate in the development of a statewide interagency partnership strategy. Establish a standing child support executive workgroup to address coordination efforts.	4.2	Alicia Key Kathy Shafer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group convened in January 2000 • Planning issues identified • Information gathering conducted during the spring • Regular meetings are being held <p>Improvement of data sharing is the focus of the group. Program staff are identifying data elements that each agency needs. The next step will be to determine the impact that each agency's confidentiality requirements will have on sharing this information with other agencies.</p>
3	Establish a county work group to be integrally involved in CSD's development of programs that affect counties	4.1	Gloria Hunt Linda Swedberg	<p>A group of county officials advised CSD on implementation of the State Disbursement Unit. As a result, CSD obtained a federal waiver to allow counties that choose to do so to continue to disburse child support payments through a linked, electronic system of local disbursement. CSD also ensured that federal funding would be available for counties that want to provide SDU disbursement customer service.</p> <p>This group has subsequently been expanded to include other county officials and meets regularly to advise CSD.</p>
4	Report to the legislature on the progress and impact of privatization	7.12	Cheryl Kabler Alice Embree	Information is being gathered for this report and a final draft should be complete before the legislature convenes in January
5	Require CSD to establish an Information Resources Steering Committee	6.3	Diana Williamson	This committee has been established and meets regularly.
6	Require DHS/OAG interagency agreement to set timelines and data exchange standards for information needed by CSD and to delineate standards to ensure that TANF recipients that fail to cooperate are quickly sanctioned	4.4	Alicia Key Kathy Shafer	An Memorandum of Understanding covering these issues has been signed. DHS and CSD have been implementing the new non-cooperation procedures since last year.

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
7	Require CSD to maintain and report data sufficient to evaluate the use and effectiveness of all enforcement tools	7.12	Cheryl Kabler Alice Embree	Information is being gathered for this report and a final draft should be complete before the legislature convenes in January
8	Modify Texas law to provide that a man who voluntarily signs an acknowledgment of paternity is the legal father of a child born out of wedlock	3.2	Alicia Key Kathy Shafer Joan Hutcheson	The law has been implemented. The OAG funded positions at the Bureau of Vital Statistics to input acknowledgment data and make it available to OAG staff. OAG can access this information online. The OAG and BVS worked together to train staff from hospitals, birthing centers, and local registries throughout the state. In FY 2000, BVS registered more than 56,000 acknowledgments of paternity.
9	Require CSD to conduct a cost-effectiveness evaluation of alternative sources of revenue	7.14	Cheryl Kabler Alice Embree	The report has been completed and submitted to OAG executive management for final review.
10	Institute and publicize a single complaint system that responds to, tracks, and helps resolve client complaints and institute an ombudsman program	1.1	Cheryl Kabler John Green	A state ombudsman was hired in October 1999. Ombudsmen were appointed in each field and regional administrative office. TXCSES was modified to track complaints and procedures were established for staff to correctly enter data about complaints into the system. The state ombudsman monitors the complaints. If a complaint is not resolved within 60 days, a notice is sent to the person who initiated the complaint.
11	Require CSD to provide a toll-free customer service number for employers	1.5	Gloria Hunt Thomas Neal	An employer's toll-free number was established in July 1999.
12	Establish a work group to evaluate recommendations made by DMG and the OAG	NA	Alicia Key	A work group was convened and the recommendations of the group were sent to the legislature February 15, 1999.

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
13A	Resolve, not later than May 1, 1999, the child support computer system's (TXCSES) ability to correctly identify and code TANF and Medicaid cases referred to child support enforcement as "public assistance" or "non-public assistance."	2.5	Gloria Hunt Laura Secondo Bowden Hight	<p>The Child Support Division sent a letter on May 11, 1999 to the Sunset Commission reporting the successful completion of the first phase of the 'case type' project. The letter stated that "on the weekend of May 1 [1999], the changes to the automated system were implemented [which]...will ensure that new cases and re-certifications referred through the automated interface with the Texas Department of Human Services will be coded accurately."</p> <p>The efforts since that implementation have focused on correcting case data within the TXCSES system. Current activities include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An in-depth analysis of all of the interface processes which create new case or update case data on TXCSES, • Analysis of all existing policy and current procedures to insure that the Child Support Division's interpretation of incoming data is accurate, • A re-engineering effort to increase data integrity, thereby reducing case issues, and • An Analysis of current data within TXCSES against public assistance records to insure accuracy of historical data. <p>The completion of the analysis portion of the on-going activity is anticipated by early calendar year 2001.</p>
13B	Improve effectiveness of systems operation, planning and development by consolidating all systems activities into a system section under the direction of a qualified Information Resource Manager, not later than March 1, 1999.	NA	Diana Williamson	<p>On March 1, 1999, the OAG hired Diana Williamson and named her the Deputy Director for Information Technology. Ms. Williamson previously served as Deputy Commissioner for Management Information Systems (MIS) at the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS). She was with DHS MIS for 22 years. She has an extensive background in mainframe systems development, computer operations, telecommunications and client/server systems development. She was responsible for more than \$80 million of Information Technology services and projects in fiscal year 1999 with an IT staff of 500 state workers and approximately 150 contractors.</p> <p>All core Child Support technology functions were consolidated in the IT organization. These functions include systems maintenance and development, computer operations, network and telephone support, IT planning, and state and federal approval for automation.</p>

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
13C	Develop a plan to enhance response time and improve batch processing of child support payments.	6.2	Diana Williamson Stan Clements Laura Secondo Bowden Hight	<p>In a letter dated March 31, 1999, the OAG outlined a plan for short- and mid-term batch performance improvement. The letter also contained a long-term plan for the financial process redesign project.</p> <p>Batch processing time has been substantially reduced. Batch runs now routinely finish 3 to 4 hours ahead of schedule. Adjustments processing has also improved.</p> <p>Response time has also been significantly reduced, going from an average of .78 seconds to .13 seconds.</p>
14	Develop an action plan to improve the Division's process for receipt and distribution of child support payments.	2.5	Gloria Hunt Laura Secondo Bowden Hight	<p>In a letter to the Sunset Commission dated February 15, 1999, Child Support explained the plan to the Appropriations and Finance Committees for improving the receipt and distribution child support payments. The plan includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the adjustments and external batch performance tuning ☐ Support order correction process ☐ Reconciliation and financial reporting ☐ Roll back/roll forward design for processing payment adjustments, and ☐ USAS payment expedite process. <p>The letter states that the Child Support Division will develop strategies to reduced undistributed collections due to collection holds, arrearage overages, address holds and future pay holds.</p> <p>Since then the Child Support Division has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Initiated a financial process redesign project to make the financial portion of TXCSES less complicated and more user friendly, and ☐ Worked to reduce the amount of held money by sending work lists to the field.
15A	Examine decentralizing appropriate division functions and downsizing the central office by developing an outsourcing plan, a decentralization plan, and analyzing central office staff reductions	5.1	Howard Baldwin and Deputies	<p>The OAG decentralized appropriate Child Support functions and downsized State Office in response to Sunset Commission recommendation. The OAG has developed and implemented an outsourcing plan, a decentralization plan and a plan for State Office staff reduction. The OAG reduced the Child Support State Office by 110 FTEs, re-deploying most of these positions to the field.</p>

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
15B	Strengthen administrative monitoring by enhancing the Program Monitoring Unit’s capabilities and implement a self-assessment process that will satisfy federal requirements.	5.3	Jeff Lewis	<p>The Director of Program Monitoring reports directly to the Deputy Attorney General for Child Support and works more closely than ever with Field Operations.</p> <p>Program Monitoring has developed a monitoring plan, which includes a self-assessment process to evaluate both compliance and performance by merging self-assessment mandated criteria with corresponding federal incentive measures. The monitoring plan includes opportunities for Program Monitoring to serve in a consultant capacity by conducting efficiency studies per requests from individual field office managers and county government units.</p> <p>Since 1999, Program Monitoring has conducted two self-assessments. During these self-assessments, Program Monitoring were paired with field staff in each region, creating regional review teams. This approach has proven effective in helping field management gain first-hand knowledge of compliance standards. Texas’s approach has won national recognition by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement..</p>
15C	Redesign the internal agency reporting system to shift the current administrative monitoring focus from outputs to effectiveness, efficiency, and customer service.	3.6 and 5.10	Jerome Lindsay Victor Mantilla	<p>To date the OAG has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Created a work group • Determined which parts can be produced using SAS reporting and which must be produced by TXCSES <p>Four of five federal measures have been adopted as key measures in LBB reporting. The following reports are being distributed at the regional level: percent of cases obligated, percent of support collected, and cases with collections on arrears.</p> <p>Work remaining includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing the Business Requirements Document (BRD), • Programming the new federal incentives monthly report at the unit / regional level, and • Putting existing Goals and Production report data and new incentives data on the OAG intranet in graphical format.

#	Sunset Recommendation	CSD Strat. Init. #	CSD Executive & Program Lead	Status
16	<p>Examine privatization opportunities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • awarding a contract to a private vendor, • contracting with a private vendor to perform collections on delinquent accounts, • outsourcing payment processing to a qualified vendor, and • using a payment processing contractor to generate child support checks. 	3.15	Jerome Lindsay Jim Bishop	<p>Child Support contracted with Lockheed Martin to operate the SDU and to take over receipt and disbursement of IV-D payments.</p> <p>The full service office privatization will be considered following completion of the Financial Processes Redesign and Model Office projects in 2002. In March 2000, the OAG issued a Request for Information on a pilot private collection contract. Based on the responses, a decision was made to postpone the pilot. It was also decided that a private collection contract would not be feasible until progress was made in the Financial Processes Redesign project. Implementation of a private collection contract will occur no earlier than November 2001.</p> <p>The OAG is reviewing other states' experiences with collection privatization as well as the Lockheed collections contract with the OAG during the period of 1993 to 1997 and will issue a report on its findings in November 2000. In addition work is continuing to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • assess the Field Operations Task Force, • create a link to Financial Processes Redesign to monitor and coordinate, • complete five-part feasibility study and issue a report to CSD management, and • develop an RFP if management decides to establish a private collections project.
17	The Child Support Division should expand the Bexar County cooperative partnership model to at least one other county during the FY 2000-2001 biennium.	3.9	Gloria Hunt Linda Swedberg	In 1999, the OAG and Tarrant County negotiated a contract to extend the ICSS model to Tarrant County. The project will be fully implemented by October 16, 2000.
18	Establish a Contracts Management Group to develop contract monitoring standards and to monitor compliance with existing and future contracts.	NA	Cheryl Kabler Harvey Davis	A Contracts Administration section was formed in August 1998 to develop contract monitoring standards, and to assist the OAG's Child Support Division with monitoring compliance on existing and future contracts. A manager and three program specialists form the section that receives regular reports from contract managers and reports to the General Counsel on a monthly basis. The reporting process has been in place for more than a year and a half.

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19	Improve statewide management of legal resources	5.4	Jerome Lindsay Jo Kirkel	<p>The OAG appointed a Field Operations Counsel to oversee the statewide delivery of legal services and to provide guidance to the Special Counsels, now called Senior Regional Attorneys.</p> <p>Senior Regional Attorneys had their duties and responsibilities redefined. These duties include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evaluating Managing Attorneys, • reporting every month on docket observations and activities of the Managing Attorneys in the field offices and submitting standard reports to the Field Operations Attorney and Regional Administrators, • providing training on new policies and procedures to Assistant Attorneys General, • participating in the hiring of new Assistant Attorneys General in their regions, • participating in recommending merits and promotions for Assistant Attorneys Generals in their regions, • maintaining contact with county officials, supervising special attorneys (e.g., bankruptcy specialists), in their regions, and handling difficult cases that involve complex legal issues.

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20	Re-engineer field office business processes, develop a model field office program, and restructure field office jobs consistent with the model field office program.	5.5	Jerome Lindsay Linda Franco	<p>Several of the project goals have been accomplished:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The San Antonio-North field office has been selected as the model office site. • The agency’s vision statement created and disseminated. • Customer Service Plan activities are already underway in the model office including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> < a computer in the lobby for customer inquiry/information < the OAG web site has been publicized on correspondence and lobby posters, < the ombudsman program and complaint process has been publicized, < the information available via VIRS has been expanded, < the plan to ensure that telephones are answered, < all staff identify themselves on the phone and wear name badges, < customers are seen the same day requested or an appointment is scheduled within ten days, and < the revised Regional Administrator performance plans. • The functionality of TXCSES has been reviewed in order to automate tasks. (Refer to that section for more information.) • The organizational structure and current procedures that need improvement have been identified. <p>The Model Office will incorporate improvements from the Financial Process Re-design project which includes making the financial portion of TXCSES less complicated and more user friendly, reducing the amount of held money by sending work lists to the field and enhance reporting capabilities for internal management purposes.</p>
21A	Review the functionality of the TXCSES system to automate additional tasks currently being performed manually by CSOs	5.11	Jerome Lindsay Karen Clements	<p>Work Completed:</p> <p>Data matching with data bases to locate absent NCPs. We are currently matching against many data bases including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> < Texas Workforce Commission < Department of Public Safety < Comptroller < Department of Human Services < State and National Directory of New Hires < Federal Case Registry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issuing automated location and employment verification letters and collection letters. • Automated income withholding notices to employers • Automated license suspension notices <p>Work Remaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automate the attachment of financial institution licenses, • Automate the suspension of driver and professional licenses, and • Automate the reporting of delinquent accounts to credit bureaus.

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21B	<p>Program TXCSES to re-automate the license suspension process, including the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify when payments are not received and cases become delinquent • automatically send quarterly license suspension notices to delinquent obligors, and • match drivers license and professional license data bases with delinquent obligors. 	3.4	Jerome Lindsay Rick Gillham	<p>Work Completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TXCSES now identifies delinquent obligors, • TXCSES now matches drivers license and professional license data base with delinquent obligors, and • License suspension notices are sent automatically to delinquent obligors. <p>Work Remaining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a delinquency letter work list, • Modify locate screens on TXCSES, • Complete CCD for administrative and judicial tracking system, • Complete CCD for a previous enforcement action search, • Complete CCD for an ALPS notice to match automated notice, and • Complete CCD for License Suspension Reports.
22A	<p>Request formal clarification on federal requirements for unproductive checks on data sources during the automated locate process by initiating a Policy Inquiry Question and eliminate those burdensome processes not specifically required.</p>	5.12	Alicia Key Kathy Shafer	<p>This initiative is complete. The OAG is awaiting a response from OCSE.</p>
22B	<p>Identify counties where automation of county records will allow online access via desktop searches and be most cost effective and when feasible, seek federal funding to defray the costs of establishing such access.</p>	5.13	Jerome Lindsay Linda Swedberg	<p>Online record access projects totaled 25 in fiscal year 1999. Nine of these projects were county- to TXCSES access, and 14 were field unit- to county access. Five additional counties willing to allow OAG field staff access to child support records have been identified. OAG technical staff will determine technical feasibility in each county by the end of fiscal year 2000, and implement approved projects during fiscal year 2001. The OAG generally pays all costs associated with the start-up and operation of these projects. Federal funding at the 66% reimbursement rate is provided to the OAG to help defray costs.</p>

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22C	Integrate utility and phone company records into the data sources accessible through the automated locate process, and more aggressively pursue such records at the local level by exercising existing statutory authority	5.7	Jerome Lindsay Kerbey Spruiell	<p>A Request for Offer (RFO) for the LASSO system has been drafted for release in state fiscal year 2000. This procurement would meet a business need for locating individuals and their assets for the purpose of establishing and/or enforcing child support obligations. The LASSO system allows staff to access a wide range of locate information from one source rather than submitting a number of requests to different sources. More than 20 sources of data are identified in the RFO.</p> <p>Currently, locate specialists must submit requests to different data sources individually. The work is labor intensive and highly repetitive.</p> <p>The LASSO system will consolidate data from phone and utility companies, county tax records, criminal history records, marriage, divorce, birth and death records, professional, hunting and fishing licenses, motor vehicle driving records, and more. Through consolidated searches, locate work can be expedited. By securing mailing and residential addresses, establishment efforts can proceed by mail or service of court papers.</p>
22D	Use existing authority to gain online access to Department of Public Safety (DPS) drivers license records.			See 22C and 23
23	<p>Enhance training of child support workers in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • locating absent parents by using online and phone inquiry techniques, • effectively using established administrative and judicial procedures to encourage and reach stipulated agreement between parties • effectively using each enforcement tool available to the division 	5.6.1 and 5.6.2	Cheryl Kabler Mamie McPhaul	CSRP and enforcement training is complete. Locate training is underway
24	The Office of the Attorney General’s Child Support Division should be included as a participating member on the Judicial Committee for Information Technology.	4.9	Diana Williamson	The Deputy Director for Information Technology has become a member of the committee.

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25	Provide alleged fathers served with a notice for a paternity establishment hearing the option of voluntarily submitting to paternity testing at the state's expense and avoiding attendance at a hearing	NA	Alicia Key	<p>The Child Support Division has the authority to allow alleged fathers the option of voluntarily submitting to paternity testing to avoid attendance at a court hearing. Voluntary testing helps expedite the paternity establishment process in cases where the parties are agreeable to this approach. It is an established part of the Child Support Review Process (CSRP) which utilizes an administrative process for establishing paternity. The option to use CSRP is emphasized whenever appropriate. In addition, the CSD has the authority to issue an administrative paternity testing order without the need for a court hearing.</p> <p>As in all cases involving paternity testing, the state pays the initial upfront costs. However, the CSD routinely asks all alleged fathers who are determined to be the biological father to repay the testing costs as part of the order. No distinction is made between fathers who opt for a voluntary blood test and those that submit to testing pursuant to a court order. Charging only fathers who opt to attend a court hearing acts as a penalty for those fathers and brings up basic issues of fairness. In addition, there are situations where the mother is reluctant to submit to testing and the father is compelled to attend a court hearing to request testing.</p> <p>In the initial court hearing to establish paternity the issue, before the court is the establishment of paternity, not just paternity testing. In many cases, the appearance before a judge helps influence the alleged father to settle the issue by admitting paternity.</p>

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26	<p>Improve customer service by improving the point at which the mailing of a check can be forecast by VIRS and/or the call center staff, becoming more pro-active in serving clients and seeking delayed payments, assessing the total demand on the customer service center and make staffing plans based on the results, analyzing individual office call handling processes and staffing; change all offices to the patterns employed by successful offices.</p>	Goal 1	Cheryl Kabler Jerome Lindsay	<p>Forecasting disbursement of payments: All work has been completed on this project and VIRS and call center staff can accurately forecast when payments are to be distributed.</p> <p>Becoming more pro-active in serving clients: Conducted external and internal customer service focus group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required customer service training of all CSD staff. • Conducted customer service survey. • Published reports from survey and focus groups on CSINTRA. • Completed Compact with Texans. • Developed customer service action plan. <p>Seeking delayed payments: Beginning in the summer of 1999, the OAG began sending payment hold work lists to field offices. The purpose was to inform field staff of the cases with held money and to explain the information that was needed in order for the payment to process. Staff were then instructed to update where possible those cases that needed additional information in order to disburse money being held.</p> <p>This was a labor intensive task, and it was clear that a more systemic approach would be needed. As a result, this initiative has been made part of the Financial Process Redesign project.</p> <p>Assessing total demand for customer service center The Central Call Center has been dispersed into four Regional Call Centers. Staffing patterns for the Regional Call Centers are based on the nationally recognized Erlang C methodology. As a result, the Regional Call Centers are meeting nationally recognized performance standards (defined by Giga Information Group).</p>
27	<p>CSD should assess the capacity of the customer service phone inquiry system to register or forward complaints to a centralized complaint handling division</p>	1.8	Cheryl Kabler John Green	<p>CSD developed a uniform and centralized complaint tracking system and added a complaint option to its Child Support 1-800 number. Complaints can also be made at the Child Support web site.</p>