

Child Support Report

OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT



Vol. 33 No. 11 November 2011

Inside This Issue

Commissioner's Voice: Our Growing Tribal Child Support Programs	3
Resources: Native American Heritage Month	3
Perspective: The Ex-Offender with Child Support Barriers	4
Knox County: Inmates Spread the Good Word about Reentry Services	4
Nashville Program: A Tie that Binds Released Inmate to Family	5
California Video for Inmates	6
Jefferson County: Forging Relationships with Law Enforcement Agencies	7
Arizona Parent Paid Two Decades Worth	8
Message of Hope in Arizona	8
Franklin County Touts 'Family Empowerment'	9
Workforce on Wheels in Kansas	9
Tennessee Paternity Forums Add Hispanic Outreach	10



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

See resources for National Native American Heritage Month on [page 3](#).



Native American Heritage Month

Modoc Tribal Child Support Program Taking STEPP in the Right Direction for Children and Families

By Kent Walden, Assistant Director
Meekin Norman, Office Manager
Modoc Tribal Child Support Program

November is National Native American Heritage Month, a time when our tribal child support programs renew our commitment to help our Native American children. We help children receive the support they deserve and protect the heritage of Native American families through the establishment of paternity and enforcement of tribal child support orders.

The Modoc Tribal Child Support Enforcement Program focuses on child support cases that present the most challenge and seeks innovative enforcement solutions. One solution that's proving successful is STEPP—Supervised Tribal Enforcement Payment Program—a project that began to take shape in 2001.

The STEPP Progression

STEPP originated from collaboration between Modoc Child Support Director Jerry Sweet and Judge Phil Lujan, and grew from a major concern that the court offered no alternatives to incarceration for individuals in noncompliance with their child support obligations.

Some of the most challenging cases in the Modoc tribal program are either several months in arrears or involve a noncustodial parent whose whereabouts are unknown. These cases may involve parents who are incarcerated or working for cash, or who frequently change employment or have no contact with the custodial parents or children.

To better enforce these challenging cases, the Modoc child support staff identify the number of nonpaying cases to pursue, and then reduce the number by 25 percent the first year and 50 percent the second year. The judge may also assign a case to STEPP during the parent's contempt hearing for nonpayment of child support.

The STEPP team developed a probation program that has continued to evolve into one of the most effective enforcement tools for the Modoc Tribe and the tribes to whom they provide child support services (listed on page 2).

continued on next page

The Employment Factor

STEPP allows the parent to obtain and maintain employment. The STEPP team supervises and monitors the noncustodial parent's progress in locating employment. The court may order participation in STEPP for the parent who is unemployed or the parent who is employed at the time but not meeting his or her monthly child support obligations and has pled guilty to a contempt charge or has been found guilty by the court. The STEPP officer and child support attorney must first recommend the parent for participation in the program.

Program placement suspends the parent's incarceration period and court penalties pending the compliance with the program.

The Parent's Responsibility

A parent ordered into the STEPP program by the court must abide by a set of rules and regulations that include job searches (if unemployed), continued employment (if employed), weekly contact with the STEPP officer, and payment of the court-ordered child support.

The STEPP officer monitors the case to ensure compliance with the court order. The court reviews the case; if the individual is working and has remained current in paying child support, the court requires no further action. However, if the parent has not cooperated with the STEPP program, the court may revoke the suspended sentence and order jail time. STEPP participation does not reduce or eliminate the parent's child support obligation for past or present child support. Program compliance is the sole responsibility of the parent.

By offering an opportunity to participate in STEPP, the

Modoc tribal program encourages parents to take a step in the right direction toward realizing their financial responsibilities to their children—and to do the right thing. The STEPP program has a 90-percent success rate of the noncustodial parent staying in compliance. It continues to be a major resource to the child support program in monitoring hard-to-enforce cases.

STEPP demonstrates a concept of collaboration familiar to the Modoc program—and the direction of the national child support program—as it works with various Court of Indian Offenses and tribal courts to ensure that all children residing within the jurisdictions of the tribes receive adequate child support services.

The Modoc tribal program has introduced STEPP to others, including Ponca Nation, Osage Nation, Kaw Nation, and the Eastern Band Cherokee Nation in Cherokee, NC.

Stepping Up Outreach

For cases that need paternity established, the program's Child Support Enforcement team works with the custodial parent to locate the noncustodial parent. Once located, all parties submit to DNA testing, and if results determine paternity of the noncustodial parent, the team notifies the court.

The team continues to look at ways to conduct outreach for the tribal program, including with the Head Start programs. The team recently developed and distributed posters to tribal health centers, Head Start, Day Care and other tribal programs where custodial parents who may need child support assistance will see them.

For more information, contact Kent Walden, kwalden@modoc-cse.org or 888-540-1501.



Pictured (clockwise, from top left) are staff in the Modoc program's Miami, OK, office and its three satellite offices in Tahlequah and Seminole (OK) and Cherokee (NC). The Modoc program has "service agreements" with 14 tribes: the Seminole Nation, the United Keetoowah Band of Indians, the Pawnee Nation of Oklahoma, Seneca-Cayuga Tribe of



Oklahoma, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, Quapaw Tribe of Indians, Wyandotte Tribe of Oklahoma, Shawnee Tribe, Peoria Tribe of Indians, Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma, Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (NC), Absentee Shawnee Tribe, and Citizen Potawatomi Nation.





Our Growing Tribal Child Support Programs



The number of tribal child support programs is growing—and many children are thriving as a result. Today, 42 tribes operate comprehensive programs and another 10 tribes manage start-up programs on their way to becoming comprehensive.

Other tribes have expressed an interest in starting child support programs that meet the needs of Indian families and communities.

Tribes have long understood the value of working in a holistic environment compatible with the “bubble chart” as we see in the many examples of family-centered services in recent *Child Support Report* articles. We’ve read about Osage Nation’s program to help parents avoid incarceration ([April](#)); Albert Pooley’s (President of the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association) perspectives on strengthening families ([June](#)); Nez Perce Tribe’s video in social media to promote a fatherhood training program ([September](#)); and how child support agencies can address the prevalence of domestic violence in tribal families ([October](#)).

Tribal child support programs, like state and county programs, are well-positioned to provide holistic services by forming partnerships with other tribal programs, such as TANF, child welfare, workforce, community colleges, fatherhood, wellness, domestic violence, and

justice programs. These cross-program partnerships can help increase reliable child support payments through expanded work opportunities and stronger family relationships.

With the signing of the ACF Tribal Consultation Policy, we are educating more staff within ACF about working with tribal programs. The Administration for Native Americans distributed a book titled *Working in Indian Country: Building Successful Business Relationships with American Indian Tribes*. OCSE appreciates its ongoing collaboration with ANA to identify innovative cross-program strategies that can support tribal programs.

The MTS (Model Tribal System) testing continues with the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma and Forest County Potawatomi Community tribal child support programs. Once testing is completed later this year, both tribes will load their respective caseloads onto their copies of the system and move into full production mode. Early next year, the MTS is slated to roll out nationwide, and will be available at that time to all interested tribes. To support the MTS project into the future, OCSE secured a contractor to provide ongoing software maintenance support, including both maintenance of the base system and any future enhancement activities.

We continue to engage tribes in a collaborative process to move the program forward in a way that is culturally appropriate so more and more children and families will thrive.

Vicki Turetsky

Resources: Native American Heritage Month

- Website for [National Native American Heritage Month](#)
 - Website for [ACF Native American Programs](#)
- President Obama’s [proclamation](#) for National Native American Heritage Month
 - Online course: Anyone can [register](#) for “Working Effectively with Tribal Governments” to learn about tribal governments and Native Americans, the laws affecting the tribes, and the cultural mores followed by tribes. Sponsored by the Administration for Native Americans, the course will give you a basic understanding of Indian tribes and how to work with tribal governments.



Perspective: Ex-Offenders with Child Support Barriers

By Albert Pooley, Founder and CEO

Native American Fatherhood and Families Association

I believe that fatherhood is sacred. In today's society it is extremely important to help those who are returning from prisons to reconnect with their children. The barriers for these ex-offenders may have to do with their location, an ex-spouse, disconnection from the family, or legal issues, such as back child support. It is often difficult to maneuver through the child support system. And some states may have laws regarding

termination of parental rights after a conviction of criminal activity.

Fathers (and mothers) who are required by parole or probation to finish their term of sentencing also face additional requirements by the child support agency. Parole and probation fines and other fees that stack up against the ex-offender make it impossible to



catch up or continue payments for child support.

Employment is the largest barrier in reestablishing after a term of imprisonment. Ex-offenders have a stigma attached to their name, and employers hesitate to hire people with criminal records for reasons having to do with health insurance or legal issues. The barriers begin to build up again for the noncustodial parents, along with the stress of not being able to meet their obligation and function as a law-abiding citizen.

The community and service agencies can provide the much needed core values to the returning parent. They can make a case-by-case evaluation and implement ways to help the parent maneuver through the child support system and other services. As mentors and advocates for the parent, we can often help alleviate the barriers simply by talking or setting goals. The priority goal should be reunification with the family when possible or shared custody. Reaching this goal will help the parent build confidence and have a purpose to continue as a law-abiding citizen.

You can reach the author of this essay at the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (www.aznaffa.org).

Promising Practices

Knox County: Inmates Spread the *Good Word* about Reentry Services



Monica Roush presented at a national child support conference in August.

Inmates in a Tennessee prison want to learn how to be a better parent; they want to learn about child support services, and they want to pay. Two people who appreciate these sentiments are Monica Roush and Martha Deaton, coordinators who work with the inmates in a pilot collaboration project known as TPOPS—Tennessee Partnership for Ongoing Parental Support.

TPOPS is funded by an OCSE “Section 1115” demonstration grant (awarded in 2008) to help offenders who are newly released from prison find work and access other critical services in their communities. TPOPS was created by the Tennessee Child Support Division and the University of Tennessee, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Correction and Knoxville Child Support Office. The project takes a holistic approach to delivering child support services to

men incarcerated at Morgan County Correctional Complex and assisting them with successful reentry.

Coordinators Roush and Deaton begin the process with each inmate by conducting a one-on-one interview to gather information, provided voluntarily, about the inmate's history, children, child support cases, and plans for reentry. They use an intake assessment form created for the project.

Newer Education Component

After the pilot started, the prison's pre-release counselors asked whether TPOPS coordinators could incorporate a parenting component when delivering child support services. They saw a great need for training in parenting skills in the prison, and they believed that men would be more responsive to child support services if they were offered a parenting class during pre-release sessions.

“This has turned out to be a win-win partnership because inmates in pre-release are within 6 to 18 months of parole or release, and the parenting education component fits right in with the reentry services of the program,” says Deaton. “We focus on teaching the men to ask ‘what is in the best interest

of the child?” Both coordinators have experience in teaching as well as delivery of services for child support and parenting education.

The parenting education component of the program conveys the rights and responsibilities of a parent. Sessions with the inmates cover such topics as: the job description of a father; child development and how to parent at each stage; communication with your children and your children’s mother; child support education: your rights and responsibilities; understanding your court order; and successful reentry and goal setting.

“Part of the TPOPS success lies in our commitment to see each person as a human being, meet them where they are, acknowledge them as a parent, treat them with respect, and teach them about their rights and responsibilities,” says Roush.

What are the inmates learning from TPOPS services?

“I learn that I still have a chance to be a father.”

“[I learned] that there are more duties of being a father than I knew.”

“[The project] helped me get more in touch with my feelings toward my children. I’ve kinda put up a wall since I’ve been incarcerated.”

“[I learned] how to interact with my ex-wife in making parenting decisions.”

“I never knew I had rights as a father.”

Positive Experience for Inmates

It didn’t take long for the word to spread around the prison that “the Child Support Ladies” were creating a positive experience for inmates with child support issues. The success of this pre-release program has led to requests to bring the TPOPS child support services to inmates in other areas of the prison, for example as part of the Drug and Alcohol program.

TPOPS coordinators have delivered 31 child support and parenting education sessions to 601 inmates and have administered child support services and intakes to 366

inmates. Child support services that sprang from the initial intake interviews with inmates have included order modifications, DNA testing, driver’s license reinstatement, the ability to make payments while incarcerated, and connection to their individual child support offices.

Communication Bridging the Gap

The grant award also created a clearinghouse to ease the flow of information and bridge the communication gap between the Department of Correction and child support offices. TPOPS coordinators get a report when a participating inmate is released from any correctional facility in Tennessee, and then they notify all Tennessee child support offices of the release and location of the inmate. This communication allows the child support offices to more efficiently manage follow-up activities.

The clearinghouse fills a critical need because the Department of Correction and child support office computer systems do not communicate with each other. Many child support administrators have expressed appreciation for the effectiveness of TPOPS in relaying information.

Roush and Deaton, too, are bridging the gap between the agencies and the prison and also between the prison staff and inmates. “Parenting isn’t easy; it’s one of the hardest things we do,” says Roush. “It takes a community coming together to help these parents.”

For further information, contact Monica Lynn Roush, TPOPS Coordinator, University of Tennessee, mroush1@utk.edu.

Philosophy for Tennessee Partnership for Ongoing Parental Support:



If dad feels emotionally invested in his children, he will follow through on his financial investment in them as well...IF he develops hope and possibility

Nashville Program: A Tie that Binds Released Inmate to Family



In Nashville, TN, more than 4,000 inmates are spread among six locations—which keeps the *Family Ties* program quite busy. Family Ties helps individuals recently released from prison who have one or more child support cases. Working alongside the Davidson County child support office, the Juvenile Courts and other local agencies, the program educates and provides case management for inmates going through the often difficult reentry process.

Family Ties is funded by an OCSE “Section 1115” demonstration grant under the Prisoner Reentry Initiative. The role of the three-year (through 2012) grant project is to work with individuals who have recently been released from prison so that they can make it through the child support process more easily.

David Teasdale manages Family Ties, with help from a part-time child support office employee, through Project Return Inc., a local nonprofit that has been helping the city’s ex-offenders get back on their feet for over 30 years. As Child Support Liaison for Family Ties, Teasdale constantly gives presentations



David Teasdale manages the Family Ties program.

to groups of new clients, meets with existing clients and attends court hearings.

The program begins for the clients during their “pre-release” process, when they receive education and information. Once released, clients go into the Family Ties office to get information about their cases, the status of any actions, and advice and help in completing forms,

updating information and general support to get them through the process.

“Clients often start with basic questions, and once they realize this program is there to help them, the questions come flooding in,” says Teasdale.

Tying Services Together

After clients get help with child support issues, Family Ties refers them to other grant projects within Project Return, or beyond, for help with financial management, job readiness, employment referrals, relapse prevention and housing. Virtually everything the individual needs is just a referral away.

In addition, Davidson County Juvenile Court uses its monthly “problem-solving docket” to deal with

Family Ties clients. If court action for nonpayment poses a risk for further incarceration, the court allows time for clients to work with agencies in town to find housing and employment before the risk of further incarceration affects their lives.

Exceeding Expectations

The number of inmates helped by Family Ties has exceeded expectations. “Within the first 14 months, we were able to help more than we expected to assist in three years,” says Teasdale. And news about the help offered by Family Ties has spread like “wildfire” throughout the prison system, as Teasdale receives letters daily asking for help. “Some individuals ask little, while others have sent letters asking for more information.”

Teasdale notes that presentations in the facilities allow time to answer questions. This means he can spend an extra 15 minutes to 2 hours in the prison facilities making sure that clients get as much assistance as possible on each visit.

The opportunity to make a difference in people’s lives is clearly appreciated by many who have been through the program, according to Teasdale. “Some have written to say how well life is now going for them, while others still drop by the office to keep me informed of new jobs, new homes or just to say thanks.”

For more information, contact David Teasdale at dteasdale@projectreturninc.org.



Media Matters

California Video for Inmates

Inmates in 33 men’s prison institutions in California can watch a **video** to learn how child support services can help them. The video was produced by a video production workgroup, with members from the California State Directors Association, California Department of Child Support Services and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The workgroup casted child support workers as the actors and filmed in one of the prisons. The collaboration also developed other outreach resources (on the CSDA website) to help incarcerated men navigate services. Their current project: a video for women inmates. For more information, contact workgroup chair Laura Roth (director of El Dorado County Department of Child Support Services) at lroth@edcgov.us or 530-642-7363.



Screenshot from California **video**



Jefferson County: Forging Relationships with Law Enforcement Agencies

By **Katie Smith, Court Team Supervisor**
Jefferson County Child Support Services
Ray Washington, Noncustodial Specialist
Jefferson County Responsible Fatherhood Program

A few years ago, if a judge in Jefferson County, CO, sent a child support obligor to jail, families wouldn't receive child support payments. Today, Jefferson County Child Support Services is connecting hundreds of noncustodial parents with an array of services through collaboration with the courts, law enforcement agencies, the county fatherhood initiative and other human services agencies.

An essential component to our county's collaboration: Child Support Services and the Responsible Fatherhood program are forging relationships with law enforcement agencies. Through a grant program called **Colorado Dads**, we partner with the county sheriff's office, jail, and community correction programs to provide participants with parenting classes, individual coaching, peer-based support groups, employment readiness, and help with navigating the workforce center.

While it wasn't obvious to us a few years ago, we now know that without these relationships, we wouldn't have the means to work with noncustodial parents to create positive outcomes for children and families. Yet the success of our program is defined not only by our relationship with the law enforcement agencies, but also with the inmates themselves. This program may be the first positive relationship obligors have had with any child support program.

Implementing the Collaboration

In 2007, Jefferson County Child Support Services met with officials at the sheriff's office to discuss how the two programs could work together to help families with an incarcerated parent so they could expect to continue receiving child support payments, or maybe receive their first payment.

One way we were able to achieve this outcome was to reduce an incarcerated obligor's rent to \$1 a day as long as he pays his monthly child support obligation. Obligor could come to the workforce center to search for a job or participate in activities that improve their job skills.

Fatherhood classes are part of the incentive for participating in the work-release program. According to counselor Deborah Aludo with the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office, "The

fatherhood classes are one of the most sought after classes in the facility."

Child Support Services has designated specialists to work with obligors on parole, probation and community corrections and may connect them with additional support services, such as fatherhood and community programs. Child Support Services also administers automatic modification requests for incarcerated parents, lessening the accumulation of arrears and subsequent enforcement actions.



Katie Smith and Ray Washington

Positive Results

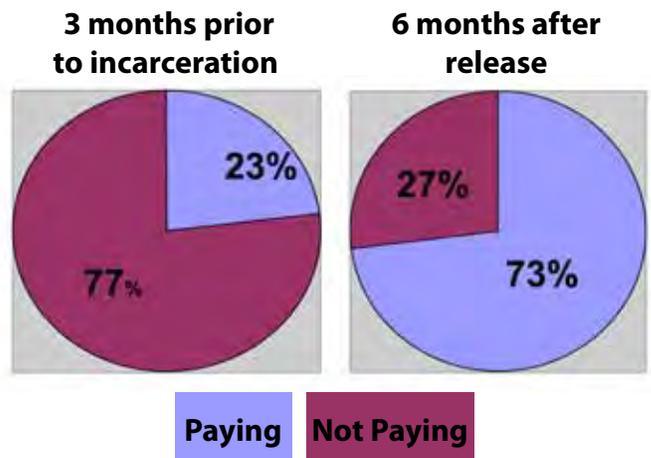
This program essentially began as an effort to address obligors who were sent to jail for noncompliance with their court ordered child support obligation. Today, thanks to the county's problem-solving court, fewer than 10 obligors a year are sentenced to jail. The work-release

program has expanded to include about 12 inmates a month who have a child support case, regardless of their reason for incarceration. The work-release program for inmates results in child support payments—and more than offsets the costs associated with jail (\$70 a day per person).

The chart below illustrates the program's success with pre- and post-incarceration support payments. Three months prior to an obligor's incarceration, only 23 percent were meeting their child support obligation; with participation in Colorado Dads, 73 percent are paying their child support six months after their release from incarceration.

For more information, contact Katie Smith, ksmith@co.jefferson.co.us.

Work Release Program Participants



Arizona Parent Paid Two Decades Worth

The Arizona Division of Child Support Enforcement delivered \$231,362 to a very happy custodial parent in late September after 20 years of unpaid child support.

The parent used to believe that she and her children would never receive the money they were owed by her ex-husband. But she decided to look into her options and found DCSE.

She stayed in touch with her ex-husband's parents, who tried to help a little bit, providing information and the all-important "grandparent pressure" that often helps a custodial parent receive the court-ordered support they deserve, according to Veronica Ragland, DCSE Assistant Director.

In addition, Ragland said that the "communication was very good" between the custodial parent's attorney, the custodial parent and child support staff, represented by Janet Sell of the Attorney General's Office (AGO). The custodial parent was helpful and never vented her frustration on the staff that was trying to help her. "She truly followed the saying, 'help us help you,'" Ragland added.

While the family wants to move on with their lives, they did want to thank DCSE and AGO staff. "We are so appreciative of you," said one of the children, now a young adult. "My mom is a single mother and gets no gratification other than having great kids and being a good mom so we are very thankful for this; I'm proud of my mom."



(From left) Veronica Ragland, DCSE Assistant Director, congratulates Andrew Wangrycht, Jr., State Disbursement Unit Manager; Barbara Lynn, North Region Supervisor; and Janet Sell, Assistant Attorney General, who were all instrumental in delivering the payment to a custodial parent.

And the parent herself hopes other custodial parents follow her lead. "There are lots of other people out there in this situation who are owed this amount or more," she said, "but it's not about the money. There is no dollar amount that compares to not having the noncustodial parent in the child's life."

Message of Hope in Arizona

This August, the Arizona Division of Child Support Enforcement partnered with Convoy of Hope at eight events in the state. Convoy of Hope is a faith-based organization that carries out children's feeding initiatives, community outreach, and disaster-response partnership efforts. The division staffed information tables for one site in Pima County (Tucson) and four sites in Maricopa County. Child support partner Pinal County Attorney Child Division staffed three sites in Pinal County (Casa Grande, Maricopa and San Tan Valley). The workers disseminated literature and answered general questions about child support services. All agreed the events were successful; one reported, "The visitors seemed impressed that Child Support had a booth, and for that reason alone, they slowed down to look at the literature and ask questions."

—Marjorie Cook, Arizona Division of Child Support Enforcement





Franklin County, Ohio, Touts 'Family Empowerment'

The Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency in Columbus, Ohio, welcomed more than 350 families to its third annual Family Empowerment Day on Aug. 17, at St. Stephen's Community House. The agency co-sponsored the event with the Columbus Urban League to help empower families by offering access to community resources and valuable child support services. "One great feature of Family Empowerment Day is that parents are able to make a payment on a support case," says Director Susan Brown. The agency collected \$2,051, a 55-percent increase from last year.

Parents also were able to take care of other child support-related business: 89 obtained new hearing dates to have their civil warrant lifted; 49 made a \$50 child support payment to

have their driver's license reinstated (and another 100 signed an agreement to do so); and 22 requested an "administrative adjustment review" of their case. Parents gathered information from agencies including Action for Children, Goodwill, the Legal Aid Society of Columbus, Ohio Job & Family Services, and Columbus State Community College. Children played in a kids' area.

Director Brown attributes the event's success to the hard work and dedication of staff, volunteers and community partners, and strong support of the County Commissioners, courts and public leaders.

For more information about Family Empowerment Day, contact Michael Miller at millem13@odjfs.state.oh.us.



From left, AAMI Director Glenn A. Harris, Ohio Commission on Fatherhood Executive Director J. Tracy Robinson, and Office of Child Support Deputy Director Jeffrey Aldridge

Susan Brown, Director of the Franklin County Child Support Enforcement Agency, partners with the Columbus Urban League Fatherhood Programs to assist



noncustodial parents. At the podium with Brown is Glenn A. Harris, Director of the African American Male Initiative (AAMI) and leader of the Father 2 Father Program at the Columbus Urban League.

Workforce on Wheels in Kansas

The Kansas child support enforcement program and Court Trustees in the Kansas City, KS, metro area teamed up to host the third annual Amnesty Day event, collecting \$17,936 in child support from 77 attendees. The event focused on improving economic stability for



parents, offering a Mobile Workforce Center (pictured) to assist noncustodial parents with job searches, online applications, and a schedule of classes for job-readiness training. The center is equipped with 10 work stations and three staff to assist job-seekers.

Tennessee Paternity Forums Add Hispanic Outreach

By **Katricia Finch, Paternity Coordinator**
Tennessee Child Support Division

For the second year, Tennessee Child Support Services held forums across the state to help partners learn about one another's role in the paternity establishment process. Attendees at the "ParTners in Paternity" forums walked away with a clear understanding of how each partner contributes to improving the paternity establishment process for the parents and children of Tennessee.

This year, attendees at two forums (Memphis-Shelby County and Knoxville-East Region) also walked away knowing the need for Hispanic outreach. Another forum was held in June (Chattanooga) and more are taking place this fall.

The August forums were the first to focus on reaching out to the local Hispanic community, as prenatal outreach has become an important part of the agency's paternity program.

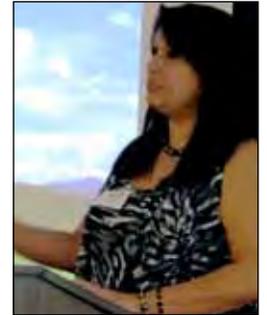
Attendees at all forums represent licensed birthing facilities, health departments, state and local child support offices and the Office of Vital Records, and include local court clerks and child support magistrates and referees. Their roles in the paternity process vary from the birthing facility that gives parents the opportunity to sign the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form, to the health departments and child support offices that assist parents in completing the acknowledgment outside of the hospital, and the court process that involves genetic testing and contested paternity.

At the Memphis forum, Cheryl Reid-Drayton of OCSE (Region IV) stressed reaching populations that use Spanish as a primary language, and said, "We acknowledge the confusion among Hispanic communities regarding who is eligible for services based on documentation status."

Representatives from local Hispanic agencies suggested ways that child support agencies could help Hispanic families overcome barriers to assessing services, so attendees could understand the importance of partnering with community agencies that the Hispanic community can trust.

One presenter from a Hispanic community agency shared his personal experience: When he and his wife gave information in the hospital for their children's birth certificates, no one

Silvia Calzadilla, Director of Centro Hispano de East Tennessee shares best practices for conducting outreach to local Hispanic families.



requested that they show an ID. However, Hispanic parents routinely tell him that the hospital would not put the father's name on the birth certificate because the father did not have valid ID. He wondered why these Hispanic fathers had to show ID but he did not.

What he learned at the forum was that Tennessee's "presumption of parentage" statute presumes that when a man is married to the mother, he is the child's father and his name automatically goes on the birth certificate. However, when the mother is not married, she and the biological father must sign the Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity form in front of a notary (the notary statute requires a valid ID).

For more information, contact katricia.finch@tn.gov or 731-364-2366. See an article about a California paternity forum in the [August Child Support Report](#).

Next month's issue will focus on Veterans in the child support program.

Child Support Report



Child Support Report is published monthly by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Consumer Services. We welcome articles and high-quality digital photos. We reserve the right to edit for style, content and length. OCSE does not officially endorse the practices or individuals in this newsletter. You are welcome to reprint an article in its entirety (or contact the author or editor for permission to excerpt); please identify Child Support Report as the source.

George H. Sheldon
Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families

Vicki Turetsky
Commissioner, OCSE

Gabrielle Pagin
Director, Division of Consumer Services

Elaine Blackman
Editor
202-401-5353
elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov