

Child Support Practices in Three Areas that Improve Outcomes

Arrears Forgiveness/Debt Compromise

As of September 2011, 44 states and D.C. have some type of policy to compromise child support debt owed to the state. For details on individual state programs, please see: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-child-support-agencies-with-debt-compromise-policies>

A recent OCSE grant-funded study of arrears forgiveness programs in five states found the following:

- Child support paid by non-custodial parents enrolled in arrears forgiveness programs increased in each state by a range of 7% to 32%, with an average increase of 21%.
- During 24 months following enrollment, 688 participants generated \$1.5 million in child support collections

For more detailed information, please see the *Debt Compromise Programs: Program Design and Child Support Outcomes in Five Locations* and *Colorado Compromise and Cooperation: Project Evaluation* Final Reports via this link:

<http://centerforpolicyresearch.org/Publications/tabid/233/Default.aspx>

Parenting/Fatherhood Programs

OCSE has offered many grant opportunities for states to establish parenting and fatherhood education programs. Through these grants, it is apparent that engaging fathers results in positive outcomes by these important metrics – more involvement with the children, more and consistent child support payments, and less arrearages. Examples of outcomes include:

- For those who paid child support, the average child support payment was \$1,569 for the first year following enrollment and \$2,296 for the second year after enrollment.
- When coupled with employment programs, average quarterly earnings improved from \$1,501 at enrollment to \$2,470 two years after enrollment.

For detailed information on various programs and results, please see these links:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/engagement_of_fathers.pdf

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ocse/dcl_09_26a.pdf

In 2012, OCSE awarded five four-year grants to allow child support agencies to develop, implement, and evaluate service delivery models to establish parenting time orders along with child support orders. These grants will provide additional valuable information on outcomes and serve to further reinforce this promising practice. For additional information, please reference:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/fy-2012-ocse-grant-awards>

Modifications/Right Sized Orders

States are increasingly enacting safeguards to ensure that order amounts are set at appropriate levels. As of September 2011, at least 22 states and the District of Columbia are operating at least 35 programs to ensure that child support orders reflect current earnings at establishment and are modified when earnings change. State program details below:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-child-support-agencies-with-programs-to-ensure-that-child-support>

Please see the links below for additional detailed information:

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-child-support-agencies-with-programs-to-ensure-that-child-support>

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/providing-expedited-review-and-modification-assistance>