

Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program



Annual Report 2006

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Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program



MISSION

The mission of the Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program is to assure children receive financial and medical support from each parent.

This is accomplished by:

- ◇ Locating each parent
- ◇ Establishing paternity
- ◇ Establishing support obligations
- ◇ Enforcing those obligations



VISION

Children can count on their parents for the financial, medical, and emotional support they need to be healthy and successful.

Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program

STRATEGIC VALUES

- ◇ *High quality services*
- ◇ *Partnerships*
- ◇ *Well-being of children*
- ◇ *Equity/Fairness*
- ◇ *Efficiency: good use of resources*
- ◇ *Effectiveness*
- ◇ *Attainment of desired outcomes*
- ◇ *Parental responsibility*
- ◇ *Family Independence*
- ◇ *Continuous Improvement*



The CSE Program will put children first by helping both parents assume responsibility for the economic and social well-being, health and stability of their children. We recognize that children benefit from positive, ongoing relationships with both parents.

Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program

WORKING TOWARD OUR VISION

The Colorado Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program has been busy working toward a 2006-2010 Strategic Plan which encompasses our vision that "Children can count on their parents for the financial, medical, and emotional support they need to be healthy and successful."

There have been several enhancements made to our automated systems. We have added the capability to include joint accounts in our processes for attaching bank accounts to pay for child support arrears.

We have been working in collaboration with the Vital Records Division of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment to develop their new automated system. The new system provides specially-designed child support screens that will provide needed information on the parents and child(ren), along with the capability for electronic reporting and monitoring and new enhanced search capabilities that will assist CSE professionals.

We have completed a two-year initiative to determine the training needs of CSE professionals in each of our 64 county offices. Data was gathered through the use of five web-based surveys and seven focus groups.

The survey questions were tailored toward the needs of new workers, established workers, administrators, supervisors, and CSE Attorneys. We are using this information to develop a prioritized training implementation plan.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2006

- 93.9% of cases have paternity established
- 86.8% of caseload have child support orders
- 3% increase in total collections to \$288 million
- 7% increase in current support collections
- 69.1% of cases with a payment on arrears
- 4% decrease in the total arrears owed compared to the total in 1999, this occurred despite a 7% increase in the number of ordered cases

The significant achievements noted above would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of parents, hardworking and creative child support professionals, and the many partners and stakeholders throughout Colorado, from around the country, and internationally who have contributed to these achievements.

Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program

Support Services

In addition to Starting a Case and Establishing Paternity and Support, Colorado's Child Support Enforcement Program can also assist:

In Finding a Parent

Local, state, and federal information is used to find out where the noncustodial parent lives and/or works. You can help find missing parents by giving as much information as possible to the county CSE Unit.

When Parents Live In Different States

When parents live in two different states or countries, cases are often more complex, and the timeframes associated with case processing are often longer than when both parents live in the same state. In some cases, the law gives Colorado the ability to handle the case the same as an in-state case. In other cases, the local county CSE Unit must request help from the other state to establish paternity and/or support, or to enforce a child support order.

The primary legal tool for interstate cases is the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA). UIFSA gives states the power to reach beyond their borders for the establishment and enforcement of support orders. It also allows states to enforce a support order issued in another state. If legal action is needed to establish or enforce an order in another state, UIFSA makes the process easier, as state child support agencies must help each other. However, the county CSE Unit must rely on the other state's laws, regulations, procedures, and personnel to take action on the case. The other state may assess fees in advance or withhold fees from the collected support.

If the county CSE Unit asks for help from another state to establish or enforce a support order, the local agency maintains control of the case. According to federal regulation, the county CSE Unit is responsible for communicating with both the other state and the party who opened the case. Colorado parents seeking help with obtaining child support from an out-of-state parent should contact their local CSE Unit for case status information rather than the other state.





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OUR INTERACTIVE WEBSITE

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NEW FOR EMPLOYERS and INTERSTATE WORKERS

The eCSE website now provides interactive on-line features for employers. Employers are able to electronically receive income-withholding orders (IWO) for child support. By simply registering for secured access to eCSE, an employer will begin receiving e-mail notification of pending income withholding orders available on-line. The employer can then login to eCSE and download a printable version of the IWO and an electronic file format for loading the withholding orders into their system. This allows both the employer and the State of Colorado to avoid mailing costs and delays in processing the IWO's.

Colorado has also expanded its reach by being one of the first six states in the country to join the 'Query Interstate Cases for Kids' (QUICK) network.

QUICK is a Federal-sponsored internet portal that allows child support workers in other states to obtain real-time information on cases they share with Colorado, and Colorado CSE workers can access real-time case information in other states, as well. This is a vast improvement over the process of getting information by mailed requests.



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NEW FOR PARENTS

CSE continued to enhance its website for parents. Now, in addition to having the child support case and payment information available at any time of the day or night, registered parents can now receive an e-mail notification when a child support payment is sent to them. When activated, this allows custodial parents to know when payments are on the way without having to place a call to the Family Support Registry's voice response unit, or without even logging on to the website.

During the year, we also added a Review and Adjustment request form for parents who want to request a modification to their child support order.



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**BUILDING SUPPORT FOR
COLORADO'S CHILDREN**

Building Support for Colorado's Children

ARREARS MANAGEMENT

The question facing the Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) in early 2006 was: How to increase the amount of child support paid and to decrease the amount of arrears owed statewide? Statistics showed that improvement was needed. In 2005, 57.9% of the total current support owed on Colorado child support cases was actually paid, and 67.8% of all cases with arrears balances received an arrears payment.

As an early step in increasing these figures, CSE established performance measures for 2006 of 59.9% of current support owed and collect arrears on 68.2% of cases with an arrears balance. To help realize these measures, the Division concluded that county CSE staff would need to be educated to look at the cases and the obligors in their caseload in a different light. It was further determined that any training should cover caseload management from the beginning of the case to the finish. Research indicated that the principles of early intervention, as developed and touted by national child support experts, and as implemented in numerous high performing states, were the keys to effectively collecting support and creating an environment that would result in a steady stream of income upon which children could depend. It should also result in a reduction in the arrears balances owed.

ARREARS MANAGEMENT TRAINING "From Start to Finish"

The arrears management training created by the State and delivered to county CSE staff in late 2006 demonstrated a better way of managing caseloads and interacting with obligors. The training featured the principles of early intervention, which highlight regular, early contact with obligors to educate, encourage and to develop a cooperative relationship. Also included was the idea of helping to remove the barriers to the steady payment of current support. This includes establishing fair and realistic orders in a process that includes the obligor, referrals to helping agencies, encouraging appropriate review and adjustment of existing orders, and arrears compromise where appropriate. The principles of early intervention are applied from the very beginning of the child support case at the point the case is first opened, and the training showed how that could be accomplished.

Some county CSE staff began implementing these principles in the final months of 2006 and reported some early success, particularly in the way that obligors viewed CSE, resulting in a more cooperative relationship. Also, county CSE staff reported improvement in paying behavior. However, it has become apparent that more training is necessary, especially in the use of caseload management reports and techniques, and in how to interact with obligors once contact has been established. Additional training in these two areas is planned for 2007, along with an increased push for county CSE staff to adopt the principles of early intervention in their caseload management.

Building Support for Colorado's Children

Performance Targets for 2010

Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP):	90%
Percent of IV-D Cases with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of IV-D Initiating Interstate Cases with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of IV-D Responding Interstate Cases with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of IV-D One-State Interstate Cases with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of Current Support Paid:	68%
Percent of Current Support Paid on IV-D Initiating Interstate Cases:	58%
Percent of Current Support Paid on IV-D Responding Interstate Cases:	68%
Percent of Current Support Paid on IV-D One-State Interstate Cases:	68%
Percent of IV-D Cases with a Payment on Arrears:	70%
Percent of IV-D Cases with Support Orders (excluding arrears-only cases) in which Medical Support is Ordered:	*
Percent of IV-D Cases with Support Orders (excluding arrears-only cases) in which Medical Support is Ordered and Provided:	*
Percent of IV-D Cases (excluding arrears-only cases) in which Medical Coverage is Provided from Any Source:	*
Cost Effectiveness Ratio (CER):	\$3.50

*Pending adoption of Federal Performance Measure

Building Support for Colorado's Children

Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM)

FIDM is the federal mandate requiring the State to do periodic matches of noncustodial parents who owe arrearages to accounts maintained at financial institutions.

In October 2006, the Colorado Division of Child Support Enforcement implemented the second phase of an expansion of this process, lowering the arrears threshold for cases to be eligible for the remedy, and included joint accounts for the first time in the lien and levy process.

The second phase increased collections for calendar year 2006 by 28%.



Colorado's Family Support Registry Services

The Family Support Registry (FSR) is the central processing center for the State of Colorado for child support and maintenance payments. The FSR services have been outsourced to a private vendor since August 1991. In 2006, the FSR processed over \$357 million.

On March 17, 2006, the CSE Division issued a Request for Proposal to re-procure the FSR's services. Four prospective respondents submitted written proposals. An evaluation committee of cross-disciplinary experts, including program personnel, evaluated the technical and cost proposals to determine which vendor could most effectively meet the State's goals and requirements.

On July 25, 2006, the receipting and customer service functions of the FSR were awarded to Systems and Methods, Inc. (SMI). A contract has been executed and the transition phase is underway, with an operations start date of July 1, 2007.





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**PROGRAM
PERFORMANCE**

2006 Program Performance

Calendar Year 2006 Quick Facts

Collections

Total Collections	\$287,907,500
Non TANF Collections	\$259,156,771
TANF Collections	\$28,750,729

Collections Sources

Income Assignments	\$135,969,315
Federal Tax Refund Intercepts	18,456,217
State Tax Refund Intercepts	\$3,132,558
Collections from other states	\$27,964,997
Workers Compensation Benefits	\$1,986,264
Unemployment Compensation	\$2,633,162
Financial Institution Data Match	1,810,596
Other (Lottery Intercepts, Credit Reporting, License Suspension, Voluntary Payments, etc.)	\$95,954,391

Cases

Total Caseload	142,489
Current TANF	12,280
Former TANF Caseload	27,261
Never Assistance Caseload	102,948

Service Performance

Paternity Establishment Percentage	93.9%
Percent of Caseload with Orders	86.8%
Percent of Cases Paying on Arrears	69.1%
Percent of Current Support Paid	59.3%
Cost Effectiveness Ratio	\$4.13

New Publication

In March 2006, through the use of grant funds from the Federal Office of Child Support, the State Office published *A Parent's Guide to Visitation — How to Establish Parenting Time*. This booklet is a guide for non-custodial parents who have an order to pay child support but do not have a parenting time order that allows them to visit their children. Although Federal law does not allow the child support program to help establish such an order, the child support program knows that in most cases children benefit from having a relationship with both parents.

Download a copy from our website—www.childsupport.co.us. Click on *Publications* under the Quick Links section of the home page.





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**Previewing 2007 Program
Highlights**

Previewing 2007 Program Highlights

A Glimpse of What's Ahead:



RESEARCH



Colorado's CSE Program has a rich history in conducting Demonstration Grants to test and analyze techniques to improve the collection of child support. In 2007, two grants will have run their course. The "Reducing Default Orders" grant has begun testing the effectiveness of a variety of procedures aimed at reducing the number of default orders participating in the federal demonstration projects to improve the effectiveness of the Child Support program. This grant will conclude in the fall of 2007.

The "Access and Visitation" grant is testing the integration of a Child Access Specialist (CAS) housed in a CSE unit. The CAS' key role is to address parenting time issues that were deemed as barriers to child support payments. The final results of this grant will also be released in the fall of 2007.

Three other demonstration grants will be running throughout 2007. The "Partner Up" grant, which will end in December 2008, is testing the offering of two research tested curriculum designed to improve communication, commitments and parenting between parents, that could possibly result in healthy marriage or, at least, improved responsibility by the parents towards their children. The "Early Intervention" grant, also ending in 2008, is testing the use of techniques designed to address barriers to child support payments, such as unemployment, orders that are too high, parenting time issues, etc. The objective is to address issues before child support arrears build.

Finally, the latest grant, awarded to Colorado in the fall of 2006 and scheduled to end in 2009, is entitled the "Data Information Sharing (DISH)" grant. This grant will allow for initial and subsequent child support orders and modifications to be electronically sent to the courts through a system-to-system exchange. In a like manner, the court system will send back the needed information, such as a docket number, for the enforcement of the order to begin. Such an exchange will allow for quicker turnaround time from both sides, thus getting child and medical support to families quicker.

The Colorado CSE program has begun an analysis of the early findings of these grants, and has already implemented many of the proven findings. We are already beginning to see the benefits of these actions in increased collections.



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