

# Support Our Children Support Our Future

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

www.childsupport.state.co.us

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# **Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program**

# OUR 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



OUR 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**



How did the Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program (CSE) do in their efforts to help Colorado families become self-sufficient in 2008?

CSE collected \$320,690,560.78 in support payments! CSE also arranged for 3,631 additional families to begin receiving health insurance for a total of 30,636 families with health insurance.

Additionally, in 2008 CSE established 9,233 child support orders, including establishing 2,552 paternities and, we arranged for 8,598 modifications of existing child support orders; all this done without imposing any legal fees upon the parents. CSE is proud to have provided assistance on such a large scale to the families and children of Colorado. If you would like to apply for child support enforcement services, including paternity establishment assistance, please contact your local county child support enforcement office.

The Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program will put children first by helping both parents assume their responsibility for the economic and social wellbeing, health, and stability of their children. We recognize that children benefit from positive, ongoing relationships with both parents.

# **Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program**

#### Calculating Child Support Payments

The Colorado Legislature adopted the Colorado Child Support Guidelines for use when a child's parents are divorced, separated or unmarried. The guidelines make sure that a fair share of each parent's income and resources are given to the child.

A basic support obligation is determined using the monthly gross incomes of both parents and information about what intact families spend on their children. The parents share the basic support obligation based upon their gross incomes. The non-custodial parent's share of the obligation establishes the amount of the child support order. The amount of child support a parent pays can also be affected by the amount of parenting time (visitation) with the child. The parents also share the costs for childcare, medical insurance and uninsured medical expenses. The child support amount calculated using the guidelines is accepted as appropriate unless either parent shows a reason for a deviation. If the non-custodial parent's monthly gross income is between \$850 and \$1,850, she/he may be eligible for a low-income adjustment to the amount of child support paid.

- Instructions and guideline worksheets for calculating the amount of child support owed are available by mail or in Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat Reader formats from the Colorado Judicial Department website.
- The Colorado Judicial Department's electronic worksheet is available for use with Microsoft Excel at <u>www.courts.state.co.us/Forms</u> under the Domestic/Family tab.
- A Guideline Worksheet Packet can be sent to you via postal mail by providing your name and address. The number to call is 303.861-1111 or toll free at 800.888.0001.

Legal Authority Section 14-10-115, C.R.S.



# **Colorado Child Support Enforcement Program**

#### **eCSE ANNUAL REPORT**

#### PARENTS

CSE provides real-time case and financial information on its website for parents. In addition to having the child support case and payment information available at any time of the day or night, registered parents can receive an e-mail notification when a child support payment is sent to them. During the year, search features on the site were enhanced to help parents more quickly find information to help them understand the child support enforcement process. A Child Support Enforcement newsletter is now available, as well. The agency continues to work on a number of new enhancements to bring new and useful information to parents.

#### **EMPLOYERS**

The eCSE website provides many interactive on-line features for employers. Employers are able to electronically receive incomewithholding orders (eIWO) for child support by simply registering for secured access to the eCSE website. This allows both the employer and the State of Colorado to avoid mailing costs and delays in processing the IWO's. In addition, a growing number of large employers, who carry on business in multiple states, have begun using a national employer portal where they are able to receive income withholding orders from various states in one central place. Colorado is a participating state in that national employer portal.

#### **PARTNER AGENCIES**

The eCSE website now provides secure interactive on-line features for other Colorado state agencies to obtain real-time information on child support cases. This will help those agencies obtain CSE case information when they need it to qualify CSE clients for other state services.



This past year several agencies were given access, and in the year to come, many other new agencies are expected to be added.

#### **CHILD SUPPORT WORKERS**

Colorado is one of 15 states in the country to participate in 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 participating states, as well. This year has seen the addition of more case information on the QUICK network. CSE Workers within Colorado can also find a knowledgebase of information related to the business of CSE on the website. During the year, an enhanced search feature was brought online to improve workers' ability to find policy and procedure documents. Also, new online training was made available for key CSE business processes for workers to access from their own desktops.

# **Building Support for Colorado's Children**

#### Paternity Establishment Percentage Challenge

The Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP) is a measure of the number of children born out of wedlock in a state for whom paternity has been established. It can be measured on a statewide basis, to include all children born in the state, or on a IV-D basis, which includes only those children in the child support caseload. Colorado has used the statewide PEP since this goal was first initiated over 10 years ago. States are not allowed to switch from statewide PEP to IV-D PEP, or vice versa, unless they go through a two-year audit process first.

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) provides incentives to states for their performance in the PEP. This pertains to all children born in the state, not just those in the Child Support Enforcement caseload. The maximum incentive payment states can receive is when they establish paternity for 80% of the children born out of wedlock. However, due to an interesting but contradictory federal regulation, states must reach a PEP of 90% or risk federal sanction. The sanction is taken against the federal TANF Block Grant, starting with a 1% reduction in the grant and increasing each year the state fails to reach the PEP goal. Colorado consistently exceeded a PEP of 90% until Federal Fiscal Year 2007, when we dropped to 84.5%. As a consequence, we needed to increase our PEP to 86.5 during FFY '08 or risk the immediate loss of \$1 million to our TANF Grant.

State CSE staff worked diligently with all of the state's birthing hospitals, the Health Statistics and Vital Records Division of CDPHE, county departments of human services, pre-natal clinics, schools, and a number of other entities around the state to increase the PEP. In concert with Vital Records, we conducted a mass mailing to mothers who had children during the last two years where no father was listed on the birth certificate, explaining to them the benefits of establishing paternity and offering our assistance to them to do so. Most of the staff in our Division played some role in this effort.

At the end of the fiscal year (September 30), we had achieved a PEP of 95%, thereby meeting our goal and avoiding the potential fiscal sanction. In addition, we laid the groundwork to ensure that Colorado will not face this potential sanction in the future. In particular, our work with the hospitals has resulted in 69% of the children born out of wedlock having their fathers' names on their birth certificates at the time of delivery. This is the highest percentage we have ever had in our state, and is one of the higher rates nationally.

And, although it can get lost in the discussion of incentives and sanctions, our efforts ensured that 17,351 Colorado children who were born out of wedlock now know whom their fathers are and can benefit from the emotional and financial support and love of both of their parents.



# **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	000/
with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of IV-D One-State Interstate Cases	000/
with Support Orders:	80%
Percent of Current Support Paid:	68%
Percent of Current Support Paid on	E00/
IV-D Initiating Interstate Cases: Percent of Current Support Paid on	58%
IV-D Responding Interstate Cases:	68%
Percent of Current Support Paid on	0070
IV-D One-State Interstate Cases:	68%
Percent of IV-D Cases with a Payment	0070
on Arrears:	70%
Percent of IV-D Cases with Support Orders	1070
(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

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# **Building Support for Colorado's Children**



COLORADO'S CHILDREN ARE THE <u>REAL</u> WINNERS!



# **Gambling Intercept**

Colorado became the first state in the nation to intercept gambling winnings when someone is delinguent in his or her child support payments. When someone wins \$1,200 on slot machines or \$600 at a horse or dog track, their names are compared against a database of those who owe child support. If there is a match, the individual's winnings are withheld, up to the amount of support owed, and that money is re-directed to the family owed the support. This realtime interface is a result of an effective inter-governmental collaboration between the Departments of Revenue and Human Resources and www.colorado.gov. The law took effect July 1, and the first intercept took place at 1:30 pm that afternoon. During the month of July 2008, there were 42 intercepts for almost \$61,000. By year end, there were 210 intercepts totaling \$314,166.94.

Colorado does not gamble when it comes to our children, who are the real winners because of this new law!

# **Building Support for Colorado's Children**

### Sharing the Results of Our Research

Colorado's Child Support Program is nationally recognized for its willingness to continually experiment with new processes to see whether they will increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our program and, in turn, other programs across the country. Our partners in this effort are the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, which provides grant funding for this research, and our county child support offices, which serve as excellent laboratories. Over the years, this research has enabled us to develop a nationally recognized CSE website, and to institute policies that enable us to review and modify child support orders more timely. We have also been able to substantially reduce the number of child support orders established by default when the non-custodial parent fails to appear for a negotiation conference; this has led to an increase in that parent's involvement in the process and the amount of support they provide to their children.

In April 2008, the Division conducted a one-day session with key county, state, and federal CSE professionals to disseminate the results of our most recent grants.

There were sessions that explained our Healthy Marriage, Early Intervention and CSE/Judicial Data Information Sharing projects. The Healthy Marriage Grant involved five Community Resource Centers across the state that provide couples counseling and other services to help build stable relationships and promote better outcomes for both parents and children. In instances where marriage is not the outcome the couple agrees to, a foundation is laid for both parents to be actively involved in the emotional, medical, and financial support of their child(ren), which is where the child support program comes in.

Our Early Intervention project looked at ways to proactively involve the non-custodial parent at every stage of the child support process through the use of personal contact at appropriate points in the process. This represented a cultural shift in the CSE program that has previously relied on automated remedies to compel child support payments rather than outreach to non-custodial parents to assess what might be behind their failure to pay and responding to those issues.

The CSE/Judicial Data Information SHaring (DISH) project will revolutionize the way data is shared between child support offices and the courts. It will improve the timeliness and accuracy of information and vastly reduce the amount of paper that is prepared and shared between the two entities. While we were only at the programming stage of the data exchange in mid-2008, what we learned about how the courts and agencies can work together more effectively has produced significant short- and long-term benefits. This project is being watched nationally as a way to bridge differences between the courts and child support, and we have been asked to present our progress to several national audiences—both child support and judicial.

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### 2008 Program Performance

### Calendar Year 2008 Quick Facts

#### Collections

Total Collections	\$320,690,561
Non TANF Collections	\$291,006,918
TANF Collections	\$29,683,643
Collections Sources	
Income Assignments Federal Tax Refund Intercepts State Tax Refund Intercepts Collections from other states Workers Compensation Benefits Unemployment Compensation Financial Institution Data Match Other (Lottery Intercepts, Credit Reporting, License Suspension, Voluntary Payments, etc.)	\$173,621,862 \$33,345,583 \$3,326,985 \$28,026,263 \$2,571,148 \$5,179,211 \$2,297,379 \$72,322,130
Cases	
Total Caseload	140,256
Current TANF	10,112
Former TANF Caseload	23,583
Never Assistance Caseload	106,561

### Service Performance

Paternity Establishment Percentage	93.2%
Percent of Caseload with Orders	88.2%
Percent of Cases Paying on Arrears	71.5%
Percent of Current Support Paid	61.9%
Cost Effectiveness Ratio	\$4.56

#### NEW PUBLICATION

A Parent's Guide to Child Support 06/01/08 - Colorado Department of Human Services - Division of Child Support Enforcement - The handbook was designed to help parent's understand how child support works. We all agree children have the right to support from both parents and do not lose this right when a parent is not in their home. This basic belief is why we have child support laws.

#### BECAUSE WE CARE ABOUT KIDS

During November and December of 2008 the State CSE office erected a "Giving Tree" in our elevator lobby, and the staff was asked to decorate the tree with winter gear (i.e., hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, etc.) for kids. Then CSE teamed with the State's Food Assistance staff who were collecting toys and books for needy children. Together we collected an entire truck full of items. and we delivered them to CASA-Court Appointed Special Advocates for Abused and Neglected Children.

Within a week of our delivery, CASA held an open-house for all CASA volunteers, Guardians Ad Litem, and caseworkers, and the items we donated were distributed to children in need. Our generous staff also donated school supplies earlier in the year, and those items were also distributed to needy children. We do this because, at the State Office of Child Support Enforcement, we really do care about kids.

# **Previewing 2009 Program Highlights**

#### SOLUTIONS IN TOUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

It seems we are confronted daily with news of companies filing for bankruptcy protection, layoffs, and other visible signs of the challenges to our economy. But, Colorado is weathering the economic storm much better than in other areas of the country.

The financial struggles that many families are facing can impact the payment of child support; however, the CSE program has some unique features to ensure that children continue to receive the support of both their parents even as the economy falters. When an individual receives unemployment benefits, there is an immediate automated match with the CSE program, and a portion of their benefit is withheld to meet their support obligation, just as it would be if they were employed.

The child support program also understands that the loss of one's job can affect one's ability to meet their child support obligation, and we have a couple of approaches to deal with that concern: First, most county child support offices have developed linkages with fatherhood and employment and training programs they can refer unemployed and underemployed non-custodial parents to for services. And, if it becomes clear that the non-custodial parent's income is not going to rebound quickly, the individual can have their order reviewed and adjusted as appropriate. Colorado adopted laws that went into effect last July that helped streamline and speed up this process.

While there is no question that the current economic situation has and will continue to impact the collection of child support, those involved in the CSE program believe that we can continue to improve our performance, as we have every year, and the benefits that accrue to Colorado's children as a result of those efforts.

#### The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)

The ARRA contains two provisions that affect the Child Support Program. The first re-instated the match on federal incentives that was eliminated in FFY 07-08 for two years, FFY 08-09 and 09-10. This will enable counties to receive an additional \$3.2 million this year and the next to support their CSE programs. Efforts continue at the federal level to make the restoration of the match permanent. These efforts have the support of the Obama Administration.

The ARRA also allows states to intercept the \$250 one-time Economic Recovery Payments (ERP) going out to individuals who receive SSA, Railroad Retirement, SSI, and certain Veterans' benefits if they owe child support. It is estimated that around 4,000 Colorado residents who will be receiving these payment are delinquent in paying their support.



# **Previewing 2009 Program Highlights**

### Child Support and State Judicial Collaborative Grant Project

The Division of Child Support Enforcement (CSE) has reached a long awaited milestone to begin the statewide rollout of the **D**ata Information **SH**aring (DISH) system. DISH was developed in a three-year collaboration project with the Judicial Department (Judicial), to provide statewide automated data exchange between both entities for the purpose of developing a streamlined, automated process to establish child support orders through administrative process (APA). APA is used to establish approximately 70% of Colorado child support orders, and this rollout will make Colorado one of only a handful of states with this automated capability.

CSE and Judicial completed the majority of their respective systems development and systems testing. During each phase of testing, both CSE and Judicial had end user staff dedicated to the project for the purpose of end user testing and end user feedback. In the final phase of the development, both entities agreed to add an additional innovative testing methodology whereby they conducted exhaustive side-by-side, real time systems testing. This was done with two staff members from each development team testing pre-determined features in a live test environment where each team could see the system and output effects of their action on the other side. This allowed developers the opportunity to collaborate and address in real time any fixes or changes needed. Both development teams found this collaborative testing process to be so valuable and successful that the side-by-side concept was added to the design and delivery of training. The training concept was also tested with staff from both entities and was found to have the same level of satisfaction by providing the opportunity to see how the actions of each affected the other.

Using a staged system implementation plan, the first system rollout will occur on April 4, 2009 in Weld County, with the second rollout scheduled for Jefferson County on June 29, 2009. The remaining multi-county implementations will occur in five stages set from August 24, 2009 through November 23, 2009.



## **CSE County Offices**

Adams County 7190 Colorado Blvd. Commerce City, CO 80022 Tele (303) 227-2233 Fax (303) 227-2239

**Baca County** 772 Colorado Street Springfield, CO 81073 Tele (719) 523-4131 Fax (719) 523-4820

**Chaffee County** P.O. Box 1007 Salida, CO 81201 Tele (719) 539-6627 Fax (719) 539-6430

**Costilla County** P.O. Box 249 San Luis, CO 81152 Tele (719) 672-4131 Fax (719) 672-4141

**Denver County** 1200 Federal Blvd. Denver, CO 80204 Tele (720) 944-2960 Fax (720) 944-2660

Elbert County P.O. Box 6 Simla, CO 80835 Tele (719) 541-2369 Fax None

**Gilpin County** 3500 Illinois Street, Ste 1300 P.O. Box 204 Golden, CO 80401 Tele (303) 271-4300 Fax (303) 271-4091

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Alamosa County P.O. Box 1310 Alamosa, CO 81101 Tele (719) 589-2581 Fax ((719) 589-9794

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**Grand County** Hot Sulphur. Spgs, CO 80451 Gunnison, CO 81230 Tele (970) 725-3331 Fax (970) 725-3696 metro (303) 572-3821

Jackson County P.O. Box 204 Hot Sulphur Spgs, CO 80451 Golden, CO 80401 Tele (970) 725-3331 Fax (970) 725-3696

Arapahoe County 14980 E. Alameda Dr., #38 Aurora, CO 80012 Tele (303) 752-8900 Fax (303) 752-8901

**Boulder County** 529 Coffman St, Ste 190 Longmont, CO 80501 Tele (303) 678-6300 Fax (303) 678-6309

**Clear Creek County** 3500 Illinois Street, Ste 1300 Golden, CO 80401 Tele (303) 271-4300 Fax (303) 271-4091

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