

**Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Inspector General
Projects**



**ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
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Child Support

Parental Perspectives on Access to Child Support Enforcement Services

We will examine custodial and noncustodial parents' experiences with gaining access to child support enforcement information and services. To meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) created a national Child Support Enforcement Customer Satisfaction Work Group to examine client service. The work group's report emphasized the importance of state-specific approaches for promoting access to child support services. Improving customer service is a goal in OCSE's 2000-2004 strategic plan.

OEI; 06-02-00250

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Child Support Enforcement Automated Telephone Systems

We will examine states' use of automated telephone systems to provide parents with access to child support information and services, as well as opportunities for improving these systems. To meet the requirements of the Government Performance and Results Act, OCSE created a national Child Support Enforcement Customer Satisfaction Work Group to examine client service. The work group's report emphasized the importance of state-specific approaches for promoting access to child support services. Improving customer service is a goal in OCSE's 2000-2004 strategic plan.

OEI; 06-00-00460

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

States' Use of New Hire Data for Direct Interstate Income Withholding

We will evaluate the extent and effectiveness of states' use of new hire information for direct interstate income withholding to determine the impact of this tool on child support collections. Since 1996, OCSE has matched information in the Federal Case Registry to employer-provided information in the National Directory of New Hires. A new hire match should trigger direct income withholding and should allow for the timely initiation of, or a change in, income withholding by the new employer in interstate cases.

OEI; 00-00-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

States' Use of Work Requirements for Noncustodial Parents

We will evaluate how effectively child support agencies and courts use work requirements when dealing with noncustodial parents and the impact of these requirements on child support collections. In 1998, one out of three nonresident fathers lived below the federal poverty level

and only 30 percent paid child support. Child support agencies often refer low-income, underemployed, or unemployed noncustodial parents to job service programs to help them meet their child support responsibilities. Child support agencies are eligible for federal funds for referral, follow-up, and tracking services offered to noncustodial parents who have been ordered by the courts or required administratively by the child support agency to participate in an employment service program.

OEI; 00-00-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Access and Visitation Grants

We will assess the effectiveness of Access and Visitation Grants by examining the extent to which they increase access rights and consequently visitation for Title IV-D noncustodial parents in five states. We will also collect data on the impact of these grants on other outcomes, such as child well-being and increased child support payments, and we will describe any state mechanisms for measuring programmatic outcomes. The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act established Access and Visitation Grants. This legislation placed OCSE in charge of distributing \$10 million in annual grants to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories to establish and administer programs to support noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children.

OEI; 05-02-00300

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Health Insurance for Title IV-D Children Through SCHIP

This multistate review will determine whether children under the Title IV-D Child Support Enforcement Program are eligible to receive State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) benefits when private health insurance is unavailable or unaffordable to noncustodial parents. We will also determine the amount that noncustodial parents could contribute toward SCHIP premiums and the extent that IV-D children use SCHIP benefits once enrolled. A pilot review in Connecticut disclosed that 11,600 uninsured children were eligible to enroll in SCHIP from March 2000 through February 2001 and that noncustodial parents could cover 62 percent of the premiums. A separate sample found that the utilization rate for IV-D children receiving SCHIP benefits was over 90 percent.

OAS; W-00-02-23100; Various CINs

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Noncustodial Parents' Contributions Toward Medicaid Premiums

This review will determine the potential for increasing the number of noncustodial parents who provide medical support for their children while reducing Medicaid costs. States have the opportunity to meet both objectives by requiring noncustodial parents to contribute toward the

Medicaid premiums paid by the states. A pilot review in Connecticut disclosed that about 13,300 Title IV-D children did not receive medical support from their noncustodial parents because employers did not provide health insurance or offered plans that were too costly. Instead, these children obtained their health coverage through Medicaid. We believe that the noncustodial parents could contribute an estimated \$11.4 million (federal and state combined) in annual Medicaid premiums currently covered by taxpayers.

OAS; W-00-02-23070; Various CINs

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Undistributed Child Support Collections

This review will examine state procedures for reducing the amount of undistributed child support collections and for treating them as forfeited. Historically, states have had difficulty in resolving the sizeable amounts of undistributed support payments. The Office of Management and Budget has expressed interest in having this area reviewed.

OAS; W-00-03-23080; A-00-03-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

Challenges in Closing Child Support Cases

We will identify challenges confronting state and local child support agencies in closing cases, taking enforcement actions, and developing strategies for reducing case closure errors. This report, a companion to “Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations” (OEI-06-00-00470), will present findings based on information gathered from state child support agency managers. It will also examine any circumstances that potentially lead to improper closures and state strategies to improve case closure.

OEI; 06-00-00471

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

INVESTIGATIONS

Child Support Enforcement Task Force Model

In 1998, OI and OCSE developed a task force model to create a coordinated effort to identify, investigate, and prosecute criminal nonsupport cases. This model began as a pilot program in three states. By 2002, the program now known as Project Save Our Children had grown to 6 task forces covering 29 states and the District of Columbia. These task forces allow OI, U.S. Marshals, U.S. Attorneys’ Offices, state and local law enforcement, local prosecutors, state child support agencies, and other interested parties to work together in establishing the most efficient methodology to enforce federal and state criminal child support statutes. For FY 2003, we plan to increase the number of task forces to 10 and to have these task forces cover every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Guam.

FOSTER CARE

Foster Care Children's Access to Medicaid Services

We will conduct a number of state studies to describe foster care children's access to and use of Medicaid services. These studies were requested by the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), which expressed concern about the foster care population's access to Medicaid services and the overall health of children in foster care. We will attempt to identify factors that lead to better access to care.

OEI; 02-00-00360, 00-03-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003/2004

Oversight of Subgrantees' Use of Foster Care Grants

We will examine ACF's enforcement of states' accountability for foster care grants and its processes to ensure that states effectively monitor subgrantees and subcontractors. We will also assess the level and nature of state monitoring of foster care entities' compliance with financial and performance requirements. The ACF awards \$6.1 billion to the states, which then distribute the funds to foster care entities to perform child placement services.

OEI; 00-00-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System

At ACF's request, we are considering a review of the developmental and operational costs incurred by one state for its statewide child welfare information system. The state has claimed \$151 million in developmental costs and expects the annual operating costs of \$139 million to dramatically increase. We would examine whether the state allocated operating costs to all benefiting programs and accounted for all county acquisitions and expenditures charged to the Federal Government.

OAS; W-00-03-24050; A-09-03-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System

We will review state implementation of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. States are required to use this management information system to collect case-specific data on all children in foster care for whom the state child welfare agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision. States are also required to collect data and report semiannually on all adopted children who were placed by the state child welfare agency. The department

provides over \$4 billion annually to states to support the Foster Care program. Reliable management data are critical in measuring whether the program is meeting established standards.

OEI; 07-01-00660

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

HEAD START

Head Start Grantee Oversight

This review will examine the effectiveness of Head Start program oversight at the federal and grantee level and determine actions needed to avoid recurring audit findings. In past years, most of the Head Start grantees that were terminated from the program were removed after long periods of noncompliance with fiscal and program requirements.

OAS; W-00-03-25001; A-00-03-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

Head Start Teacher Credentialing

We will examine Head Start grantees' efforts to meet teacher degree requirements specified in the Head Start Act Amendments of 1998 and the effect of teacher turnover on these efforts. We will also identify any problems and vulnerabilities in meeting the academic requirements for 50 percent of Head Start teachers by FY 2003.

OEI; 07-01-00560

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

Asthma Screening and Treatment for Head Start Children

Using Head Start performance standards, this study will evaluate grantees' efforts to address asthma among Head Start children. The rate of asthma for children under the age of 5 has increased more rapidly than for any other age group. The study will also evaluate the usefulness of current performance indicators in guiding grantees' efforts.

OEI; 09-01-00330

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003

OTHER ISSUES

Aid to Families With Dependent Children Overpayments

We will determine whether states have reimbursed the Federal Government for its share of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) overpayment recoveries. Although the AFDC

program has been repealed and replaced by the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, states must return the federal share of AFDC overpayment recoveries. Our reviews in several states disclosed that the Federal Government had not been reimbursed for its share of recoveries. We will determine whether this situation exists in additional states.

OAS; W-00-02-21001; Various CINs

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003/2004

Child Care Expenditures

We will determine if state child care expenditures met program requirements. Based on recent work in one state, there is concern that some expenditures may not be sufficiently documented to enable auditors to determine their allowability. Although child care is funded from a variety of sources, mainly block grants, and although states need the managerial flexibility to use funds from multiple sources, certain eligibility requirements must be met to qualify for federal reimbursement. With the emphasis on helping individuals become more self-sufficient and moving them from welfare to work, most states have expanded the use of child care. In addition to our own efforts, we hope to work in partnership with the National Association of State Fraud Directors on a joint project looking at child care issues.

OAS; W-00-03-22000; Various CINs

Expected Issue Date: FY 2004

Contracted Services

This review will examine grantees' increasing use and oversight of contractors that perform various administrative and program functions in such areas as foster care, child support, and statewide systems. Our prior work in the individual ACF program areas identified abuses in contract performance, service delivery, and costs claimed. We plan to expand that work to determine if these are isolated incidents or indicators of systemic problems that should be addressed through improved control systems.

OAS; W-00-03-27001; A-00-03-00000

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003/2004

Joint Work With State Auditors/Comptrollers

We will expand our partnership with state auditors to cover ACF state-administered programs. The Partnership Plan that we will provide to all state Governors and state auditors will highlight opportunities for joint reviews in critical areas, such as licensing and monitoring child care facilities and foster homes and assessing safeguards for the elderly and people with disabilities. We will also identify areas in which state auditors can help states avoid disallowances and financial penalties due to unallowable costs claimed or noncompliance with federal program requirements. Based on current OIG work, our planned expansion could also cover such issues as increasing child support collections and reducing undistributed collections;

expanding enrollment in SCHIP; and improving oversight of state contracting for services, providers, and systems.

OAS; W-00-03-27002; Various CINs

Expected Issue Date: FY 2003