



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Family Assistance

National
Responsible
Fatherhood Clearinghouse



NRFC Webinar Series

Working with Child Support – Continuing the Conversation

Response to Questions

April 15, 2015

Moderator:

- Nigel Vann, National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse (NRFC)

Opening Remarks:

- Lisa Washington-Thomas, NRFC COTR, Office of Family Assistance

Presenters:

- Nicolette Bennett, Kansas Department for Children and Families, Child Support Services, Topeka, KS
- Patty Hunt, Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services, Martinez, CA
- Barbara Lacina, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Washington, DC
- Brad Lambert, Connections to Success, Kansas City, KS
- Rhody McCoy, Rubicon, Richmond, CA

This document addresses questions presented, but not addressed, during this NRFC Webinar. For questions addressed during the webinar, please refer to the Webinar Transcript. For more information contact the NRFC via email at info@fatherhood.gov.

Question

Any ideas about integrating responsible fatherhood initiatives with Head Start?

Response Provided by Brad Lambert

Our project office in St. Louis city is co-located in a much larger facility that has a Head Start program. We partner with them in identifying parents of Head Start children to enroll in our work-readiness program (both men and women). The agency offering Head Start also provides housing, medical and other forms of assistance for families. We have linked our data systems together and are creating “family outcomes” for both children and adults. Other partners in this initiative are the local public school system and mental health and substance abuse service providers.

Question

Where is a good place to begin locating programs in your area that assist fathers with child support?

Response Provided by Barbara Lacina

Most states have their own websites where more specific information can be found regarding the location and contact information of local child support offices. See the [OCSE website of state and tribal child support agencies](#) for state contact information.

Take Time to Be a Dad Today

Toll-free: 877-4DAD411 (877-432-3411) | Fax: 703-934-3740 | info@fatherhood.gov | www.fatherhood.gov

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Response Provided by Brad Lambert

You can also visit your local child support services office and get a list of agencies they may outsource services to.

Additional Information from NRFC

The [NRFC State Profiles](#) provide information on state and federally funded programs in each state. You can also call the Clearinghouse Parent Help Line at 1-877-4DAD411 (1-877-432-3411) for additional information.

Question

Were there grants provided for the programs participation? If so, how was this approached?

Response Provided by NRFC

The programs represented on the webinar (Connections to Success and Rubicon) have federal Responsible Fatherhood grant from the Office of Family Assistance.

Question

How did the idea of denying someone the ability to drive become a tool to recover welfare costs? Is it expected to continue?

Response Provided by Barbara Lacina

The possibility of driver's license suspension or revocation was intended to motivate parents to make child support payments in order to avoid losing their driver's license. Like many conventional enforcement tools, this works in some cases while in others it does not. If you are working with a parent whose driver's license has been suspended for nonpayment of child support, encourage him/her to contact the child support office and find out the options for license reinstatement. Sometimes a minimum payment arrangement (e.g., \$10 per month) or documented efforts to find a job are sufficient. The use of this tool is expected to continue and, in some places, has been expanded to include professional and recreational licenses as well.

Question

Where did the funding for lawyers to be present at Child Support agencies come from? RF grant or CS or the lawyers themselves?

Answer Provided by Barbara Lacina

Child Support agencies have attorneys, either on staff or on contract, as part of the functions of their agency.

Answer Provided by Nicolette Bennett

Kansas Department for Children and Families Child Support Services (CSS) follows a judicial process so all of our CSS offices have child support attorneys for establishing and enforcing child support orders as part of our Title IV-D services. In partnering with Connections to Success and the pilot program *Work For Success*, Kansas CSS staff make a presentation and are available to discuss case specifics with fathers in this program. As some of these fathers have multiple barriers, we look at arrears forgiveness options and ways to modify the amount of child support (both the order and the Income Withholding Order) as appropriate.

Question

What do you do if wages will be garnished when father finds employment?

Answer Provided by Barbara Lacina

"Income withholding" or "payroll deduction" is the correct terminology for child support that is paid directly out of wages. Garnishment was the predecessor to income withholding and is a separate legal action that was once required to accomplish what is now automatically implemented from the onset of a child support obligation. Like federal taxes, health insurance premiums, and union dues, there are virtually no alternatives to income withholding for child support payments, so this is a very important thing fatherhood practitioners can help parents be prepared for.

If the child support amount is not correctly aligned with the amount of a parent's income, the first step is to contact the child support agency to request a modification. The following link below provides state-by-state details regarding how parents can go about changing their child support amount, or at least requesting that it be reviewed: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/state-by-state-how-to-change-a-child-support-order>
A modification may not always be possible, depending upon individual case circumstances.

Question

Can you speak further to how the fathers are recruited into these programs? Are they court ordered? What are the specific steps taken to get the dads in the door?

Answer Provided by Brad Lambert

Connections to Success has a staff position, "Recruitment Coordinator," responsible for identifying eligible participants for our program. This is in addition to a monthly postcard mailing done together with child support services to all non-custodial dads having an active child support case. We routinely visit barber shops, churches, half-way houses, transitional living centers, churches, probation & parole offices, family courts, city bus stops and others. We leave behind project flyers describing the project and upcoming dates, times and locations for orientation meetings.

Enrollment is voluntary. We do provide a \$10 gift card to attend an orientation and complete enrollment.

Question

Would you go over the specific benefits for children and fathers of having the father's name on the birth certificate?

Answer Provided by Barbara Lacina

In addition to more positively positioning a father to have legal standing for parenting time (visitation/shared custody), there are several additional and important benefits to both the parents and the child, including but not limited to:

- The child has two legal parents, and a sense of identity and family connection, including grandparents and extended family.
- The child has increased access to the medical/genetic history of both sides of his/her family, which can improve the diagnosis and treatment of certain health issues.
- The child may legally qualify for certain benefits from both parents, such as Social Security or Veterans benefits.
- The child may legally be considered for inheritance from both parents or from members of their extended families.
- Either parent may put the child on their health insurance coverage.
- Either parent may legally claim the child as a dependent for tax purposes.
- The father may be considered for temporary or permanent placement of the child if protective services becomes involved, or other members of the father's family may be considered.