

# OREGON CHILD SUPPORT SELF-ASSESSMENT REPORT FFY 2014



Oregon Department of Justice

**Oregon Child Support Program**

*Supporting Parents to Support Children*



# CSE Program Self-Assessment Report

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. INTRODUCTION

The standards and criteria for State self-assessment review and report processes are established in 45 CFR 308. States must conduct an annual review of eight required program criteria. Oregon's self-assessment results are to be submitted to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Region X Office and to the OCSE Commissioner through the automated Self-Assessment Reporting System no later than six months after the review period.

This is Oregon's sixteenth annual self-assessment. It covers the twelve-month period from October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014. The assessment reviewed the following eight categories:

- Case Closure
- Disbursement of Collections
- Enforcement of Orders
- Establishment of Paternity and Support Orders
- Expedited Processes
- Intergovernmental Services
- Medical Support Enforcement
- Review and Adjustment (Modification)

The Oregon Child Support Program was established in 1975 under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The Program consists of two primary partners, the Department of Justice Division of Child Support (DCS), and 25 county District Attorney offices (DA). DCS also works in coordination with the Department of Justice Civil Recovery Section on certain judicial actions. The Department of Justice has had oversight responsibility for the Program since 2003. The Program primarily uses the administrative processes to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders. The following tables are synopses of Oregon's child support caseload and staffing as of September 30, 2014:

|                          |         |
|--------------------------|---------|
| DCS Caseload             | 195,656 |
| DA Caseload              | 34,570  |
| Total Program Caseload   | 230,226 |
| Current Assistance Cases | 45,661  |
| Former Assistance Cases  | 73,286  |
| Never Assistance Cases   | 111,279 |
| Total Program Staff      | 708     |
| DCS Staff                | 575     |
| DA Staff                 | 133     |

## B. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table A1: Self-Assessment Results

| Criterion                  | Cases Where Required Activity Occurred or Should Have Occurred | Cases Where Required Activity Occurred within Timeframe | Efficiency Rate (Confidence Level of Sample) | Federal Minimum Standard | Previous Year's Efficiency Rates |
|----------------------------|--|---|--|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Case Closure               | 334  | 334   | 100%   | 90%                      | 99.40%                           |
| Establishment              | 357  | 278   | 77.87%                                       | 75%                      | 85.23%                           |
| Enforcement                | 364  | 343   | 94.23%                                       | 75%                      | 95.81%                           |
| Disbursement               | 2,102,546  | 1,924,382   | 91.52%                                       | 75%                      | 94.16%                           |
| Medical                    | 313  | 299   | 95.52%                                       | 75%                      | 97.61%                           |
| Review & Adjustment        | 270  | 255   | 94.44%                                       | 75%                      | 98.80%                           |
| Intergovernmental          | 382  | 343   | 89.79%                                       | 75%                      | 90.28%                           |
| Expedited Process 6-month  | 326  | 305   | 93.55%                                       | 75%                      | 95.72%                           |
| Expedited Process 12-month | 326  | 318   | 97.54%                                       | 90%                      | 100.00%                          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>2,105,218</b>   |   |  |                          |                                  |

## C. SUMMARY

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the Self-Assessment review period; therefore, a corrective action plan will not be necessary.

## II. METHODOLOGY

### A. INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY

Oregon's review process is based on the criteria outlined in 45 CFR 308. Oregon randomly reviewed a focused sample group of child support cases in seven categories to determine compliance with the corresponding citations in the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 302 and 303) and the Social Security Act (Section 454B(c)(1)). For Disbursement of Collections, all payments received were reviewed to determine compliance.

Oregon reviewed the eight required categories:

- Case Closure
- Disbursement of Collections
- Enforcement of Orders
- Establishment of Paternity and Support Orders
- Expedited Processes
- Intergovernmental Services
- Medical Support Enforcement
- Review and Adjustment (Modification)

To conduct a statistically valid assessment and select a sample that would achieve a 90% confidence level, focused samples were utilized. Oregon used the following statistical equation to achieve the 90% confidence level requirement:

$$n = \frac{(z_{\alpha/2})^2 \times p(q)}{E^2}$$

n = Sample size

z = Z score

a = 1 - confidence interval

p = Probability

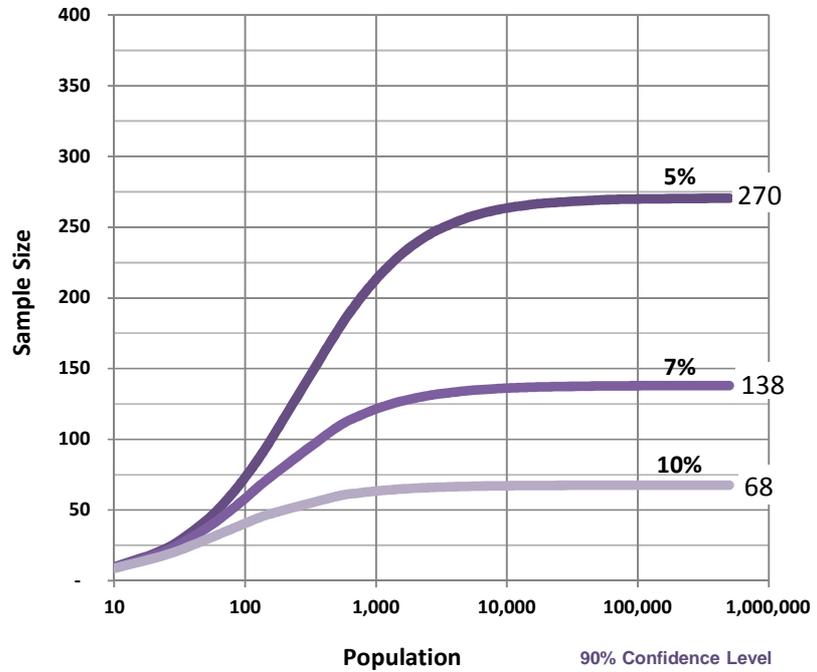
q = 1 - p

E = Tolerable error rate

Oregon's desired error rate is 5% or less. A presumed probability of 50-50 was used (50% chance the desired outcome would occur and 50% chance the desired outcome would not occur). Utilizing a 90% confidence level, a table was created to indicate the number of cases required for review per identified population. A comparative table for a 95% confidence level was also created to determine the number of cases to sample in order to achieve the 90% confidence level (See Confidence Level Charts).

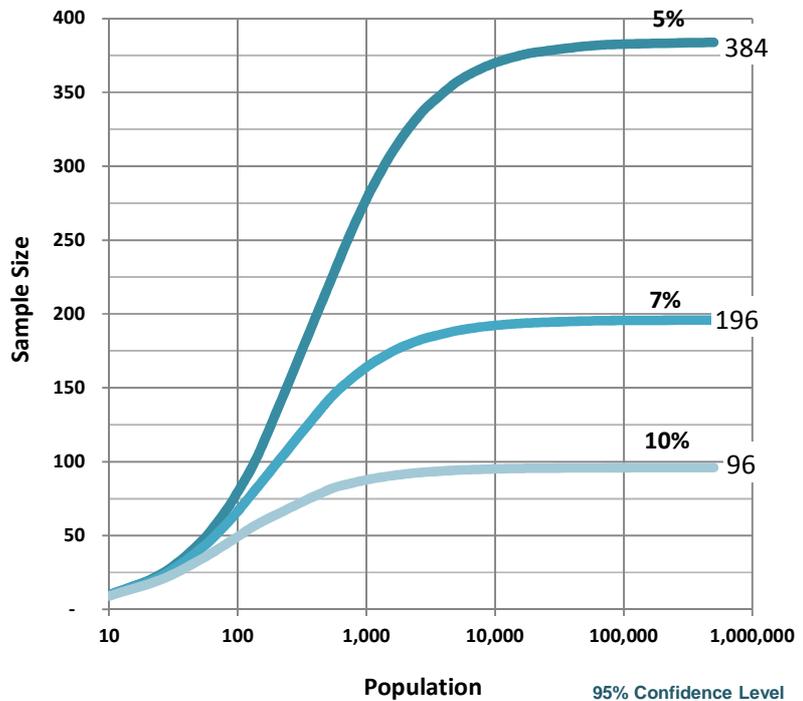
## Sample Chart – 90% Confidence Level

| Population | Tolerable Error |     |     |
|------------|-----------------|-----|-----|
|            | 5%              | 7%  | 10% |
| 10         | 10              | 9   | 9   |
| 25         | 23              | 21  | 18  |
| 50         | 42              | 37  | 29  |
| 75         | 59              | 49  | 36  |
| 100        | 73              | 58  | 41  |
| 150        | 97              | 72  | 47  |
| 500        | 176             | 108 | 60  |
| 750        | 199             | 117 | 62  |
| 1,000      | 213             | 121 | 63  |
| 1,100      | 217             | 123 | 64  |
| 1,500      | 229             | 127 | 65  |
| 2,000      | 238             | 129 | 65  |
| 2,500      | 244             | 131 | 66  |
| 3,000      | 248             | 132 | 66  |
| 5,000      | 257             | 134 | 67  |
| 7,500      | 261             | 136 | 67  |
| 10,000     | 263             | 136 | 67  |
| 11,000     | 264             | 136 | 67  |
| 12,500     | 265             | 137 | 67  |
| 15,000     | 266             | 137 | 67  |
| 20,000     | 267             | 137 | 67  |
| 50,000     | 269             | 138 | 68  |
| 100,000    | 270             | 138 | 68  |
| 500,000    | 270             | 138 | 68  |



## Sample Chart – 95% Confidence Level

| Population | Tolerable Error |     |     |
|------------|-----------------|-----|-----|
|            | 5%              | 7%  | 10% |
| 10         | 10              | 10  | 9   |
| 25         | 24              | 22  | 20  |
| 50         | 44              | 40  | 33  |
| 75         | 63              | 54  | 42  |
| 100        | 80              | 66  | 49  |
| 150        | 108             | 85  | 59  |
| 500        | 217             | 141 | 81  |
| 750        | 254             | 156 | 85  |
| 1,000      | 278             | 164 | 88  |
| 1,100      | 285             | 166 | 88  |
| 1,500      | 306             | 173 | 90  |
| 2,000      | 322             | 179 | 92  |
| 2,500      | 333             | 182 | 93  |
| 3,000      | 341             | 184 | 93  |
| 5,000      | 357             | 189 | 94  |
| 7,500      | 365             | 191 | 95  |
| 10,000     | 370             | 192 | 95  |
| 11,000     | 371             | 193 | 95  |
| 12,500     | 373             | 193 | 95  |
| 15,000     | 375             | 193 | 95  |
| 20,000     | 377             | 194 | 96  |
| 50,000     | 381             | 195 | 96  |
| 100,000    | 383             | 196 | 96  |
| 500,000    | 384             | 196 | 96  |



## B. STATE SELF-ASSESSMENT COORDINATION

### **Program Compliance Criteria**

Oregon's review process for all eight categories is based on the review criteria outlined in 45 CFR 308. Oregon continues to use the Core Work Group Report model to conduct case assessments. Flowcharts were created for the seven non-automated categories. A database was created with data input forms designed around the flowcharts. Macros eliminated manual calculations and determinations, increasing the efficiency and accuracy of the data and case outcomes.

### **Case Review – General Rules**

The assessment is performance based, focusing on outcomes rather than processes. Each category was reviewed for compliance with corresponding federal regulations established in 45 CFR 308. The following relevant definitions apply:

- An *outcome* is the result of case action within a specific category.
- An *action* is an appropriate outcome within a specific category.
- An *error* is either a failure to take a required action or taking an incorrect action within a specific category.

The assessment of a case was based on six general case-evaluation rules:

1. A case was reviewed only on the criteria for which it was sampled.
2. A case received only one action or error in the category for which it was sampled.
3. No credit was given for an action completed prior to, or after, the review period.
4. Time standards for initiating reciprocal and responding reciprocal interstate cases were reviewed separately.
5. If an outcome was pending or not successfully completed due to the time frame expiring after the review period, the previous required action was evaluated.

Cases were initially screened for possible exclusion. A case was excluded if:

1. No action was necessary during the review period.
2. There was insufficient time to take the last required action and no other actions were previously required.
3. The case qualified for closure pursuant to 45 CFR 303.11.
4. The reviewers were unable to locate the case or case file.
5. Other (cases falling into this category are explained individually).

Oregon compared efficiency rates within each category to the federal benchmarks. To establish an efficiency rate, Oregon used the formula specified in the Self-Assessment Core Workgroup Report:

$$\text{Efficiency} = \frac{\text{Cases with appropriate action}}{\text{Total number of cases with required action}}$$

## C. UNIVERSE DEFINITION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

### **Samples**

To obtain focused samples, the seven non-automated categories were broadly defined to avoid the systematic exclusion of a population subset. Separate populations of cases were identified for each category based on the specified definitions. The population samples include cases that were excluded due to coding errors and ambiguity in definitions used by the Child Support Enforcement Automated System. For this reason, an exclusion rate was anticipated within each sample. Samples sizes were based on the number of cases required to achieve 95% confidence level in order to obtain the minimum number of cases needed to achieve 90% confidence level.

## D. SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

### **Sampling Criteria**

**Case Closure:** Any case closed during the review period, even if it was subsequently reopened. A population of 34,801 cases was identified. A total of 381 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 269 cases.

**Disbursement of Collections:** Any payment received and disbursed between October 1, 2013, and September 30, 2014. A total of 2,102,546 payments was reviewed using automated methods.

**Enforcement of Orders:** Cases in which ongoing income withholding is in place and cases in which new or repeated enforcement actions were required during the review period. A population of 124,660 cases was identified. A total of 384 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 270 cases.

**Establishment of Paternity and Support Orders:** Any case in which a paternity or support order was needed, in process, or established during the review period. A population of 30,134 cases was identified. A total of 650 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 269 cases.

**Expedited Process:** Cases that have an administrative order established during the review period. A population of 6,008 cases was identified. A total of 365 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 261 cases.

**Intergovernmental Services:** Cases coded with a responding or initiating state Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code other than Oregon during the review period. A population of 33,571 cases was identified. A total of 475 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 269 cases.

**Medical Support Enforcement:** Cases with orders established or modified during the review period. A population of 9,859 cases was identified. A total of 371 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 263 cases.

Review and Adjustment (Modification): Order cases with a modification action initiated or completed during the review period. A population of 20,564 cases was identified. A total of 377 cases was randomly selected to meet the minimum required 269 cases.

### III. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

#### A. INTRODUCTION TO SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Federal regulations require each state meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 75 percent for each required program category with the exception of Expedited Processes (12-month) and Case Closure. These two program categories must meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 90 percent.

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the review period October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014.

#### B. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table A2: Self-Assessment Results

| Criterion                  | Cases Where Required Activity Occurred or Should Have Occurred | Cases Where Required Activity Occurred Within Timeframe | Efficiency Rate (Confidence Level of Sample) | Federal Minimum Standard | Previous Year's Efficiency Rates |
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| <b>TOTAL</b>               | <b>2,105,218</b>   |   |  |                          |                                  |

#### C. DISCUSSION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

This is addressed under Section D, “Summary of Self-Assessment Results”.

#### D. SUMMARY OF SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight program categories for the Federal Self-Assessment (FSA) review period October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014.

The results of this year's Self-Assessment show increased efficiencies in Case Closure. This is the third year the Program has increased in the category of Case Closure, topping out at 100 percent accuracy this fiscal year.

Decreased efficiencies in the remaining categories varied between 0.49 and 7.36 percentage points with Establishment having the most substantial decrease when compared to the 2013 Self-Assessment. The lower efficiencies in most categories likely resulted from three contributing factors: duplicate cases and inappropriate case referrals from IV-A programs, significant changes in the child support guidelines, and changes to the criterion for the case review sample that narrowed the population of establishment cases.

One of the primary impacts to this year's performance was the changes made to the child support guidelines that became effective July 2013. Major changes to medical support and the parenting time calculator, as well as the need for manually generated proposed orders until November 2013, were the primary contributing factors to the decreases in performance in several areas. The Program anticipates performance will improve in the coming year in several categories as we catch up and regain efficiency in our work.

#### IV. SELF-ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Does not apply.

#### V. PROGRAM DIRECTION

None.

#### VI. PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

##### A. INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Improving services to Oregon families is an ongoing commitment of the Oregon Child Support Program. Below are some examples of the creative and innovative ways the Program meets this commitment.

##### B. DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

###### **Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC) Grant**

The Program was awarded the Parenting Time Opportunities for Children (PTOC) grant and started the first year of this four-year grant in October 2012. The goal of the grant is

to provide states with best practices when they begin to provide parenting time plan services. The over-arching premise is a holistic approach to child support because the family is viewed as a unit and provided complete services to ensure parents support their children.

The first task was to develop strategies for handling domestic violence and other family safety issues. Therefore, the first year of the grant (development year) the Program worked with key partners— Oregon Judicial Department, Domestic Violence Advocates, Legal Aid, and court connected mediators—to develop a Family Violence Action Plan. The Plan details how all family safety issues are handled and, as a result, the Domestic Violence Evidence Based Screening Tool was developed. The Tool is used to assess parents at the first mediation to determine if mediation can proceed and if the parents need specialized family safety parameters during mediation.

The second and largest task of the grant is for the Program to ensure new parenting plans for at least 300 children are established by the end of September 2015. To promote this opportunity to parents, Program staff were encouraged through monthly and quarterly incentives to refer parents to resources when the pilot was rolled out in May 2014. Incentives for individual employees are issued monthly for the greatest number of referrals, and the field office with the most completed parenting time plans within a quarter also receives a reward. As of December 2014, Program staff had referred a total of 613 parents under the grant and 130 of those referrals resulted in completed parenting time plans for a total of 146 children. There have been 28 couples who participated in mediation and 33% of them already had some type of parenting time agreement, and most of those agreements (72%) were verbal agreements.

Parents may gain access to the free parenting time resources in two ways: through an online form offered on the Oregon Judicial Department's website, or through a referral to mediation, usually offered by the case manager. Parenting plans may be established independently by the parties or through a mediator. The grant pays for the cost of working with a contracted mediator for parents to develop a parenting plan. When appropriate, completed plans are used in determining the child support award.

Parenting plans help obligors to see and be more involved with their children on a regular basis. Studies show that when parents see their children regularly, they are more likely to pay their child support. Children also benefit when they can spend time with both parents. Research supports the premise that these children do better in school and in life.

#### **Discovery Fold-Over Letter Pilot**

In the past, the case managers attempted "cold calling" the parties to a case or sending a 10-15 page discovery packet when a new referral was received. In an office with a large percentage of the child support caseload, this means mailing out approximately 15-20 discovery packets every day at a cost of about \$1.00 in postage for each, or about \$600 per month for a single office and \$4,100 Program-wide. With a dwindling response rate and in an effort to streamline and improve the discovery process, a pilot project launched in January 2014 using a new process and letter. The procedure was to send a one-page

letter on a piece of folded yellow card stock to the parties requesting them to contact the case manager for participation and input during the establishment process. If no response was received, the case manager made a follow-up phone call, when possible.

Responses to the new fold-over letter and subsequent call from the case manager resulted in the parties becoming more engaged during the discovery process. Additionally, the single-page letter reduced the Program's cost for printing and postage by 50% (or \$2,000 each month). It also increased staff efficiency since they were now only preparing a single-page document rather than a multi-page discovery packet. As a result, the pilot project was adopted statewide in October 2014 and is now an integral part of the regular discovery process.

### **Alternative Payment Project – Expanded Electronic Payment Withdrawal**

On August 1, 2014, the Program launched an expansion of the existing Electronic Payment Withdrawal method. Electronic payment withdrawal enables qualified customers to pay support electronically through regularly scheduled withdrawals rather than by income withholding or by sending checks or money orders. Through this service, the Program auto-withdraws the obligor's monthly support from a financial institution account on an established recurring day each month. Prior to this expansion, services were limited to active cases that qualified for an income-withholding exception. The case had to be current (no arrears), and the party receiving support had to consent. Withdrawals could be set to recur on a set date up to two times per month. The criteria prevented many obligors from using the service, limiting the overall impact on collections.

Now, the majority of obligated parties qualifies for some use of the service. Under the new design, electronic payment withdrawal is available for all case types (active or judgment), with or without arrears, and as an exception or in addition to income withholding. Payment scheduling has been expanded to enable up to four payments in a month, scheduled on set dates or rotating days, and consent is not always required.

Expanded Electronic Payment Withdrawal is just one phase of a multi-faceted Alternative Payments Options Project focused on making it easier for those owing child support to make their payments. The project goal is to increase child support collections by providing available and easily accessible options that meet all the needs of our customers.

### **“To Be” Process Legal Review Project**

In 2012 the Program undertook a business process reengineering (BPR) project in advance of implementing the new IV-D child support automated system. Part of the BPR project was to develop the desired “To Be” business processes that the new system will support. Launched in mid-2014, “To Be” Process Legal Review Project members are conducting a formal review on the “To Be” processes of the BPR to determine legal authority and current form association with each process. This step will ensure that changes needed to statutes, rules, or forms are identified early in the development cycle of the new system.

The objectives of the project are to:

- Identify legal authority information (rules, statutes, etc.).
- Identify forms that are currently used.
- Make recommendations on modifications needed to rules or statutes.
- Make recommendations as to what forms can be kept, combined, or obsolete.

Information compiled during this project, along with recommendations, will assist in long-term planning and implementation of the Program's new IV-D child support automated system.

### C. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

The Program continues to seek out technological advances and creative and innovative ways to provide services to families. The Program is successfully meeting the federal requirements for performance while also planning for and making changes in advance of implementing a new child support system.

### VII. CONCLUSION

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight program categories. One category showed an increase in efficiency from the prior review period, and six categories showed decreases, although not substantial. Because efficiencies were well above the federally established benchmarks, there is no corrective action plan associated with this year's self-assessment.

### VIII. THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 4.0 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

### IX. ATTACHMENTS

Uploaded Files

| <b>File Name</b>               | <b>File Size</b> | <b>Date Uploaded</b> |
|--------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|
| Confidence Interval Charts.pdf | 78.5888671875 KB | March 25, 2015       |