



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

CSA, CSEA AND FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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TO: Directors, Local Departments of Social Services
Deputy/Assistant Directors for Family Investment and Adult Services
Administrators, Child Support Enforcement Agencies

FROM: Joseph A. Jackins, Jr., Acting Executive Director, CSEA
Kevin M. McGuire, Executive Director, FIA
Rev. John Heath, Executive Director, CSA

SUBJECT: Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program

PURPOSE: The purpose of this transmittal is to provide local agencies with information regarding the Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program, including guidelines for implementing the program in local jurisdictions.

SUMMARY: The Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program (NPEP) is a departmental initiative involving the collaborative efforts of the Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA), the Family Investment Administration (FIA), the Community Services Administration (CSA), the Office of Technology for Human Services (OTHS) and the University of Maryland School of Social Work (UMSSW). The purpose of this initiative is to operate a program in each local jurisdiction that provides employment services to non-custodial parents who are unable to meet their child support obligation. Employment services and related job readiness training will be provided using the same resources available to custodial parents as part of the Welfare to Work program. Welfare reform has demonstrated that with appropriate services and support, custodial parents can achieve self-sufficiency. With the provision of appropriate employment services, the program should achieve similar outcomes for non-custodial parents, enabling non-custodial parents to become a reliable source of income for their dependents.

FUNDING: Program funding for FY 2006 will come from FIA P-10 funds and from \$429,000 in State general funds allocated by the department for the program. An additional \$500,000 in State general funds is expected to be allocated for FY 2007. CSEA will pursue federal grants and the department will seek additional funds for future operations from DBM and the Legislature.

INQUIRIES:

For CSA inquiries, please contact Karen Simpson at 410-767-8840. For CSEA inquiries, contact Dianna McCulloh at 410-767-7887. For FIA inquiries, contact Marilyn Lorenzo at 410-767-7333.

Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program (NPEP)
Guidelines for Implementation

Local Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Agencies will identify non-custodial parents (NCPs) appropriate for participation based on the following criteria:

- NCP has an active IV-D TCA, Former-TCA within the past twelve months, Former TCA prior to the past twelve months or Never-TCA child support case
- NCP is unable to pay support due to unemployment
- NCP is able to work
- NCP has no assets identified through Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) or other sources that may be available to pay support
- NCP is currently under an order to pay support and is in arrears, or is unemployed and without other resources at the time the CSE agency establishes the court order

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT:

Participation in NPEP may be court ordered or voluntary:

- If participation is court ordered, the order should provide the conditions of participation and what action will be taken if the NCP fails to cooperate.
- If participation is voluntary, the CSE agency shall prepare an agreement to be signed by the NCP that provides for the conditions of participation and the consequences, if any, for failure to complete program activities. The CSE agency shall also advise the NCP that by signing the agreement, the NCP agrees to allow personal information, including the NCP's SSN, to be shared with the employment service providers so that the case may be properly tracked. The Child Support Enforcement Administration is developing an agreement form and plans to have it available to local CSE agencies for distribution before the NPEP implementation date.

ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES WHILE NCP IN NPEP:

The CSE agency may suspend certain enforcement activities during the NCP's participation in the NPEP program.

- The CSE agency may delay contempt action pending successful completion of the program by the NCP who volunteers to participate in the program.
- Professional or driver's license suspension may be delayed or, in cases where suspension has occurred, the license may be restored if lack of the license would be an impediment to participation in the program or obtaining employment.
- Enforcement remedies that may result in obtaining child support collections, such as the Treasury Offset Program's (TOP) federal tax refund and administrative offset, State tax refund intercept, or State lottery intercept, may not be suspended even when the NCP successfully participates in the program.

LOCAL DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS:

Local departments must develop a plan for the NPEP program using the Special State Initiated Project (SSIP) plan format from the Family Investment Program (FIP) Plan Guidelines. (See attached sample) You may have submitted your first NPEP plan as part of your FIP Plan or you may submit it as a stand-alone plan. (FIP Plans were submitted to FIA in January.)

- The SSIP plan must be developed in coordination with the local Child Support Enforcement (CSE) agency.
- The SSIP plan must:
 - provide a description of the program,
 - identify the category and estimated number of NCPs to be served,
 - identify measurable objectives,
 - identify the organization through which services will be directly provided,
 - identify the procurement method, and
 - indicate what priority the project meets.
- The plan must also include procedures for:
 - transmitting referrals and case information from the CSE agency to FIA and from FIA to the CSE agency
 - providing status updates to the CSE agency regarding participation or lack of participation by the NCP in program activities, and
 - providing employment information in the event that the NCP is placed in a job.
- The estimate of NCPs to be served may be made based on current available funding. Program 10 funds may be used to serve TCA and Former TCA NCPs within the past twelve months. State general funds allocated to each jurisdiction may be used for Former TCA prior to the past twelve months and Never-TCA NCPs. Local agencies will be advised of the funds available for their jurisdiction in a separate memo.
- While we encourage local flexibility, the local department plan must make available to the NCP the appropriate services that are currently available to TCA custodial parents as part of the Welfare to Work requirement.
- Operation of NPEP does not preclude the local agency from operating supplemental programs that provide employment or other supportive services to NCPs
- At the local agency's discretion, the local plan may include procedures for referring the NCP to other agencies or community-based organizations that provide NCPs with education in the area of job readiness, parenting, healthy relationships, personal development or any other support services.
- Local departments must evaluate the services provide by local vendors to determine if contracts will need modification to serve the NCP customers.
- Local CSE and FIA agencies must agree on a method of referral and the maximum volume of referrals based on available funds.
- Submit the SSIP to FIA for approval.

WAIVERS:

A local agency currently operating a program that provides employment services to NCPs may request a waiver to operate that program in place of NPEP.

- The request for a waiver must contain the same information requested in the SSIP plan.
- The program must serve the same population served by NPEP, collect the same statistics for reporting and evaluation purposes, and be cost effective.
- The jurisdiction's allocation of P-10 and State general funds may be used to operate a waiver program.
- The waiver must be submitted to FIA for review and approval by FIA and CSEA.

REFERRAL PROCESS:

Once the CSE agency selects a participant for referral, the CSE agency shall refer the NCP to the local DSS via form *DHR/FIA OWO 1390 Work Opportunities Registration Form*. This form collects data required for registration of the NCP in the Work Opportunities Management Information System (WOMIS). In addition to the data required for completion of Form 1390, the CSE agency shall include under "Family Status" data, the appropriate code to designate the type of case being referred as follows:

- "N" for Never-TCA case;. The child for whom the NCP owes support never received TCA.
- "C" for current TCA case; The child for whom the NCP owes support currently receives TCA.
- "F" for Former-TCA case within the past twelve months; The child for whom the NCP owes support currently does not receive TCA, but the child received TCA within the twelve months immediately preceding the referral; and
- "P" for Former TCA prior to the past twelve months. The child for whom the NCP owes support received TCA in the past, but not within the twelve months immediately preceding the referral.

Note: This paper referral will be used as an interim process until CSES, WOMIS and CARES can be enhanced to support an electronic referral. Also, because CSES is not currently capable of identifying NCPs who were referred to NPEP, the CSE agency must maintain information regarding referrals made, including the NCP's case number, IRN, date of birth, and SSN. This information is necessary to create ad hoc reports and to collect information to evaluate the program at a later date.

TRACKING:

Once a referral is made, it is necessary to track the NCP's status in the program, including:

- The date the NCP was placed in a program,
- The types of services or activities the NCP is engaged in,
- Whether the NCP successfully completed the requirements, and
- Any employment including employer and pay information.

Enter NCP data into WOMIS, including, including coding for “Family Status” to identify the type of case with which the NCP is associated, i.e. TCA, Former-TCA, or Never-TCA so that funding streams can be properly identified and accounted for. Due to limitations of the WOMIS system, access to WOMIS may be limited to current users.

CSE AGENCY FOLLOW-UP:

If the NCP is successful in obtaining employment, the CSE agency takes the following action:

- Enter employer information into CSES to generate an earnings withholding notice to the employer
- If the NCP is under an order to provide health insurance coverage, take appropriate action to enroll the children in a health care plan offered by the employer, or document that health insurance is not available.
- If appropriate, review the support order for possible modification based on the NCP’s current income.

TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

NPEP presents challenges as well as opportunities to local staff. The Community Services Administration (CSA) will offer training and technical assistance to local staff and vendors to identify ways to deal with those challenges and to recognize opportunities to positively affect families beyond employment services. CSA’s training will include *Integrating Fathers into the Human Service Delivery System* and the *Maryland Fatherhood Academy*, a personal capacity curriculum for non-custodial parents. Local agencies will be notified of the date, time and place the training will be offered.

COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION POLICIES:

Community Services Administration has incorporated the following policies to align itself with the Department of Human Resources Healthy Relationships Initiatives:

- Community Services Administration strives for Program Excellence to achieve positive treatment outcomes for its recipients;
- Safety First- Effective strategies focus on the safety of all family members;
- CSA is committed to develop and monitor programs that sustain healthy relationships and help build the skills to maintain strong relationships;
- CSA is committed to building a diverse coalition of state and local partners, including our faith-based community and domestic violence prevention organizations so we may gather around the same table to promote healthy relationships for children, develop family communication skills and promote the value of marriage to our community;
- CSA has zero tolerance for gender-based bias or any other bias;
- CSA supports and empowers non-custodial fathers to develop healthy relationships on behalf of their children, and advocate for their child’s growth and development; finally

- CSA provide dedicated full-time staff to educate the public about the benefits of healthy relationships through the success of our program participants.

COMMUNITY SERVICES ADMINISTRATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Community Services Administration -Office of Community Initiatives (OCI) will provide the following Technical Assistance to public and private partners:

1. **Funding Information:** Identification of potential sources of funding, guidance about accessing key funding streams, and grant writing;
2. **Strategic Planning:** Through the *Integrating Fathers into the Human Services Delivery System* regional training OCI will provide assistance to service providers in establishing program goals, objectives and appropriate action plans;
3. **Coalition Building:** Through the *Integrating Fathers into the Human Services Delivery System* regional training OCI will provide assistance to service providers to build coalitions with community partners for successful outcomes;
4. **Service Capacity Building:** Through the *Integrating Fathers into the Human Services Delivery System* regional training OCI will provide assistance to service providers to recruit, train and retain volunteers to deliver program services;
5. **Evaluation and Performance Measurement:** Through the *Integrating Fathers into the Human Services Delivery System* regional training OCI will provide assistance to service providers to develop performance measures and evaluation plans to measure, record and share program success; and
6. **Program Monitoring:** OCI will monitor statewide program success through regular statistical and expenditure reports submitted to OCI; and by site visits by OCI staff.

DATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

- 3/1/2006 – target for submitting SSIP plan to FIA for formal approval
- 3/1/2006 – target for submitting waiver request to FIA for formal approval
- 3/15/2006 – target for FIA approval of plan or waiver
- 4/1/06 – target for implementation of NPEP.

BASE ALLOCATION PROJECT DESCRIPTION OUTLINE

Provide the following information for each Base Allocation proposal.

LDSS Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Phone # _____

Fax # _____

E-mail _____

Base Allocation Descriptions (Details):

- a. Provide the name of each project. Is this project continued from last year?
Y__ N__
- b. Provide the start and end date for each project.
- c. Briefly describe each Project.
- d. Provide a Work Opportunity Management Information System (WOMIS) Activity Sub-Code for each project (vendor) that provides employment, education, training, and/or retention services, etc. directly to customers.
- e. Indicate each category of customers to be served by each project:
 - Current TCA Customers
 - Diversion Customers
 - Retention Customers
 - Non-Custodial Parents of TCA Customers
 - Others (please describe)

For example, the Work Experience Project serves:

Current TCA Customers	435
Diversion Customers	0
Retention Customers	0
Non-Custodial Parents of TCA Customers	<u>0</u>
TOTAL	435

- f. Indicate and enumerate the measurable objectives for each project that provides direct services, *for example*:
- Total customers to be served - 435
 - Customers to be placed in jobs - 283
 - Estimated cost per participant - \$1,149
 - Cost per job placement - \$1,767
 - Others (please describe)
- g. Indicate the name and type of organization through which direct customer services will be delivered. (Note: If vendor name is unknown at the time of plan submission, provide the name when known.)
- Private-for-profit vendor
 - Private-non-profit vendor
 - Local Department of Social Services
 - Other governmental agency
 - Other (please identify)
- h. Include procurement method, such as:
- Grant
 - Exempt
 - Small procurement
 - Large procurement
 - Competitive proposal
- i. List the priority that each project meets:
1. Achieve federal work participation rates; and
 2. Other.
- j. Budget:
- Use the FIP Work Program Budget Summary to provide budget information.