

OFFICE OF

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

Annual Report 2012

Table of Contents

MESSAGE FROM FRANCES PARDUS-ABBADESSA, OCSE EXECUTIVE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER **3**

HIGHLIGHTS **5**

THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM, A QUICK REFERENCE **6**

OUR COMMITMENT **7**

ESTABLISHING PATERNITY – WHERE IT ALL STARTS **7**

WHO WE SERVE **8**

ESTABLISHING NEW CHILD SUPPORT ORDERS **9**

LOW-INCOME FAMILIES – MOVING OUT OF POVERTY TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY **11**

Cash Assistance Agreement Pilot (CAAP) | Connecting Homeless Families to Child Support | Reaching out to Applicants of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) | Upgrading Client Interview Skills

COLLECTING MONEY FOR NYC CHILDREN **12**

Where the Money Comes From | Where the Money Goes

ENFORCING CHILD SUPPORT ORDERS **13**

Enforcement Success Stories

HELPING LOW-INCOME NCPS MEET THEIR OBLIGATIONS **14**

Employment | Debt Reduction | Modify DSS Order (MDO) | Court-Based Program Removes Barriers to Paying Child Support | Settlement Agreements | Smart Phone App Helps NCPs Fill Out Child Support Paperwork
Customer Services Caseworker finds Success in Customer Service

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT **17**

Community Partners Group

TEEN PREGNANCY PREVENTION – No Kidding: Straight Talk from Teen Parents **17**

Focus on: Jelysa Roberts, Senior Peer Leader | Sharing Information to Connect Families to Child Support
Parent Pledge Project

CONFERENCES **19**

THE YEAR AHEAD - 2013 **20**

Transit Campaign | Early Intervention Program | Child Support Applications Available at Department of Homeless Services (DHS) | Child Support Training for HRA Staff | Partnership with NYC Department of Consumer Affairs
Electronic Petition Filing and New Applications for Cash Assistance Cases | Training Institute for Community Based Providers | Medicaid and Child Support

THE OCSE TEAM **21**

Intake and Court Services | Fiscal Operations | Enforcement Services | Program Integrity & Systems
Administration Management Support & Administrative Services | Parent & Community Engagement

OUR PARTNERS **24**



Message FROM THE OCSE EXECUTIVE COMMISSIONER

We cannot begin this Annual Report for 2012 without discussing Super Storm Sandy and the dedication of OCSE staff towards overcoming the negative effects it could have had on our program. Our Central Office in lower Manhattan was evacuated for several months, and staff worked out of other offices, under crowded conditions and sharing basic administrative necessities, such as desks, computers, and interview space.

Sandy did not prevent us from staying true to our mission and continuing to ensure families received the child support payments they count on and noncustodial parents (NCPs), with child support issues, were responded to in a timely manner. Our staff did this while many were battling their own Sandy housing disasters, some living without electricity or running water. I could not be more proud of our staff and managers for how they worked during this emergency. In addition, I want to thank HRA Commissioner Robert Doar for his support during Sandy, and all year long. His unwavering support of our goal to move families out of poverty and help NCPs manage their child support obligations is important to our success.

Staffs' energy and dedication is a year round effort and is a big reason for OCSE's achievements. With 40 percent of the children in NYC born to unmarried parents and the associated risk of growing up in poverty, our determination to find ways to increase compliance with child support and increase the number of families with orders remains steadfast.

I am pleased to report that collections reached \$739 million, with the vast majority of the money forwarded directly to families and benefiting approximately a quarter of a million NYC children. Both the percentage of parents establishing paternity at the time of birth and the number of orders established each year continue to increase. I am particularly proud of the success we have had working with the Department of Homeless Services where the amount collected on behalf of shelter families increased from \$4m in CY 11 to \$5m in CY 12 and the number of families with child support orders continues to increase. I am convinced that if we wish to reduce child poverty, we need to find ways to increase the number of children who receive consistent on-going financial support from both parents.

We believe NCPs want to support their children and our various programs are designed to help NCPs fulfill this obligation. Our Problem Solving Court and debt reduction initiatives, for example, are showing positive results towards increasing compliance with child support.

Despite this success, there is still a lot of work to do. There are still many poor families not taking advantage of this effective program and still too many NCPs without an order or not paying their child support. Our goal is to explore alternative approaches that may lead to improved outcomes for children. Our first year of the Community Partnership Group has proven to be a good way to elicit feedback from the community on the various initiatives underway and to discuss ideas on how we might make a strong and effective program even better. Our partnership with DHS is a model and speaks to the success we can realize when we partner with other city agencies or community based organizations for the purpose of spreading the message on child support and initiating programs that help both CPs and NCPs.

Child Support income makes a difference. I hope this report conveys this point and encourages you to examine your role as it relates to spreading the child support message and asking is there more that you can do to connect both CP and NCPs to this program for the purpose of supporting their children.

FRANCES PARDUS-ABBADESSA

Executive Deputy Commissioner, Office of Child Support Enforcement
New York City Human Resources Administration / Department of Social Services



Highlights | THE YEAR IN BRIEF

IN 2012, THE OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT (OCSE):

- Collected over **\$739 million** for NYC families, another record-breaking year.
- Worked with the Family Court to establish nearly **16,000** new child support and medical support orders, which is double the number established in 2008.
- Expanded the **Cash Assistance Agreement Pilot (CAAP)** from Manhattan and Staten Island to include residents of all five boroughs. Eligible parents may establish paternity, child support and medical agreements at OCSE's Customer Service Walk-In Center. As of December, 110 CAAP agreements were established. The child support order establishment rate for CAAP cases was 62% compared to 56% for the control group.
- Helped hundreds of noncustodial parents (NCPs), through **debt reduction** programs, to reduce their child support obligations and arrears that were out of line with their incomes. NCPs who qualified for and benefited from debt reduction improved their payment rate to 64% after debt reduction, compared to 57% before.
- Continued our **strong partnership** with the Department of Homeless Services, collecting an average of \$4,001 a year for 1,291 shelter residents, helping them towards self-sufficiency.
- Collected \$35.9 million from NCPs referred to **STEP** (Support through Employment Program) and made significant administrative improvements to its tracking and monitoring system.
- Initiated **settlement agreements** with older NCPs (age55+) who owe child support to the government but were unlikely to ever make payment in full due to their age, health, or financial circumstances.
- Initiated a **Community Partners Group**, consisting of representatives from OCSE and community-based organizations, to discuss child support programs and policies, and developed strategies to connect families to the child support program.
- Added 25 additional sites to **No Kidding: Straight Talk from Teen Parents**, now in its 4th year. Peer educators meet with teens in schools, residential facilities and community-based organizations to discuss the benefits of waiting to have children.
- Entered into **new partnerships** within HRA to connect applicants of cash assistance, SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Benefits Program) and Medicaid to child support through print material and by providing HRA line staff with access to child support case information.

The Child Support Program | A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

ESTABLISHING PATERNITY

- If children are born to unmarried parents, establishing paternity (legal fatherhood) gives them inheritance rights and gives their fathers custody and visitation rights.
- Parents can do this by signing an Acknowledgement of Paternity (AOP) at the time of the child's birth, any time after leaving the hospital, or through a court order.
- Paternity must be established before a child support order can be put in place.

OPENING A CASE

- OCSE Borough Office and Family Court Support Services caseworkers work with custodial parents to collect case information, file petitions and schedule family court hearings. Cash assistance clients must open cases if they are custodial parents and the other parent is absent.
- If a custodial parent cannot or will not provide the NCP's whereabouts, OCSE works to locate the NCP's address, income sources and assets.

ESTABLISHING AN ORDER

- The Family Court establishes child support orders based on New York State (NYS) guidelines, as a percentage of the NCP's income for each case. The court also considers who should provide medical support and cover education and child care costs. HRA attorneys represent OCSE if the order is payable to the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- Through the CAAP program, eligible cash assistance families can sign agreements at OCSE's Customer Service center; these agreements become orders with Family Court approval.

COLLECTING & DISBURSING MONEY

- 92% of the collections are disbursed to parents. The remainder of the collected funds reimburse DSS for cash assistance benefits—but cash assistance families receive the first \$100 (for one child) or \$200 (for two or more) of current support collected on their behalf. 3/4 of collections come from employer wage withholdings.
- Custodial parents can receive payments through a NYS debit card program, direct deposit or their EBT cards.

ENFORCING OR MODIFYING ORDERS

- If NCPs do not pay the support they owe, OCSE's Enforcement, Investigation and Interstate units can find parents and use administrative mechanisms like increasing wage withholdings, seizing tax refunds and suspending driver's licenses.
- If children's needs or NCPs' circumstances change, the Family Court can modify orders. Through debt reduction programs, OCSE can modify certain orders owed to DSS outside court, and reduce debt owed to the government. OCSE can also connect NCPs to employment programs.

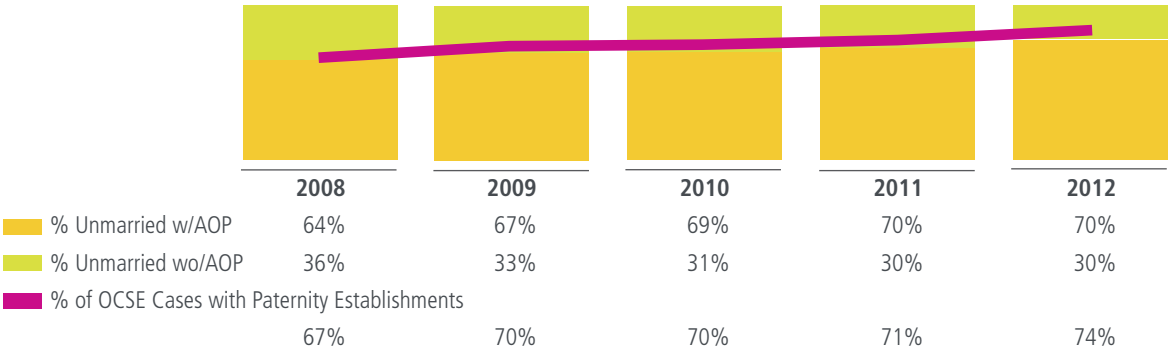
Our Commitment

The Human Resources Administration (HRA) Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) is committed to ensuring that NYC children receive financial support from both parents. Services to custodial parents (CPs) include establishing paternity through a voluntary process, locating the noncustodial parent (NCP), working with Family Court to establish child support and medical support orders and collecting, distributing and enforcing those orders. OCSE serves NCPs through debt reduction and employment programs.

Establishing Paternity | WHERE IT ALL STARTS

In NYC, more than 40% of all children are born to unmarried parents. For those families, paternity must be established before a child support order can be issued. Establishing paternity allows OCSE to fulfill its primary goal of ensuring financial support for the family; it also brings social benefits to the child and works towards building a father / child relationship that lasts a lifetime. Between 2008 and 2012, the number of parents who established paternity in NYC hospitals, at the time of birth, increased by 10.2% and the percentage of the OCSE caseload that established paternity increased by 7%, from 64% to 70%.

Percentage of Unmarried Births in NYC



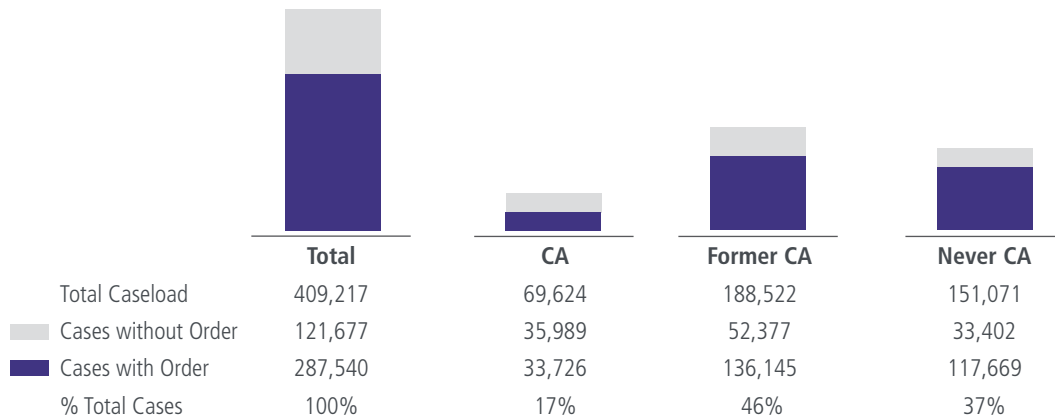
“Case worker was very professional, kind and made me feel calm in this difficult situation.”
CLIENT WHO WAS INTERVIEWED AT THE BROOKLYN BOROUGH OFFICE



Who We Serve

Child Support services are available to all families, regardless of income or immigration status. Cash assistance applicants and recipients are referred automatically to an OCSE office as a condition of eligibility for their benefits. Non-cash assistance clients apply for services on their own in an OCSE office located within each Family Court. 2/3 of the OCSE caseload is low-income and over 80% are currently not in receipt of cash assistance.

Child Support Caseload - December 2012



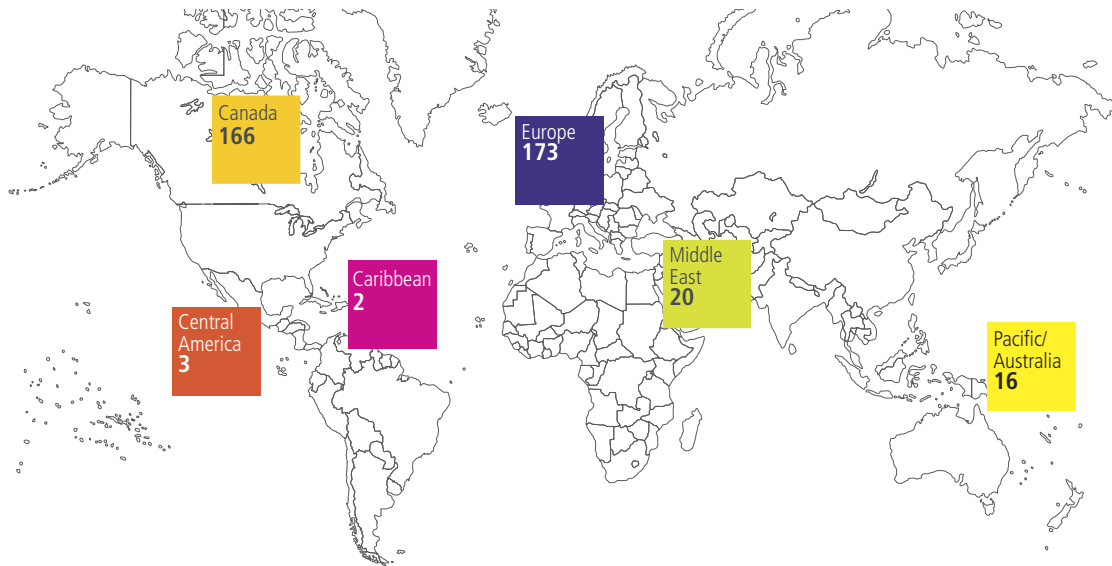
"The staff I dealt with today was excellent and went above and beyond. It was my best visit yet."
CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY COMMENT



INTERSTATE AND INTERNATIONAL FAMILIES | OCSE's involvement in child support is not limited to NYC families alone. Almost 11% (43,693) of our 409,217 cases, involve another state. In general, the state where the NCP lives enforces the order, collects the support, and sends it to the state where the CP lives. The 6 states (Puerto Rico included) with the most NYC cases in descending order are Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, North Carolina and Georgia.

Similar arrangements exist with a number of foreign countries, and there are 380 international cases involving foreign child support agencies in the OCSE caseload. The U.S. has reciprocal agreements with 16 countries to work with their child support programs. The top five foreign countries where parents with open NYC child support cases reside are, in descending order, Canada, Germany, Poland, Sweden, and Israel.

NYC OCSE International Caseload - CY 2012

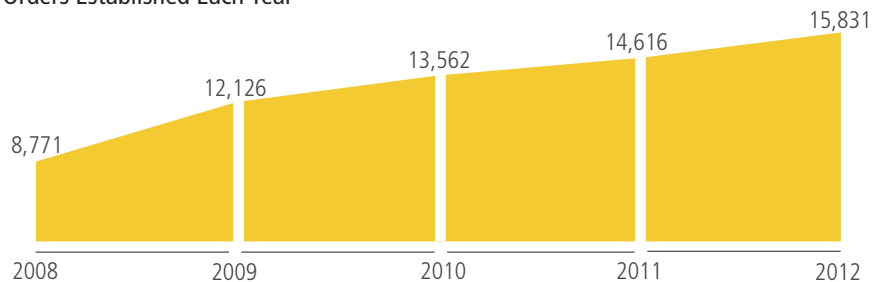


American Samoa 14	Czech Republic 2	Israel 20	Poland 54	Trinidad 1
Australia 2	Finland 3	Mexico 3	Slovakia 2	United Kingdom 12
Barbados 1	Germany 60	Netherlands 2	Sweden 24	
Canada 166	Hungary 4	Norway 5	Switzerland 5	

Establishing New Child Support Orders

OCSE worked with the Family Court to establish nearly 16,000 new child support and medical support orders in 2012. This is almost twice as many as were established in 2008. Even though two-thirds of the families OCSE serves have orders in place, a figure that has remained relatively stable for the past four years, attention is constantly being paid to the other third of the caseload without child support orders. Some are new cases, still in process, which will result in orders in the near future. Other cases cannot go forward because the noncustodial parent has not been located, or properly served with a summons to appear in court. For those cases, computerized searches continue. Once an NCP is located, we move forward to obtain court-ordered child support.

Total New Orders Established Each Year



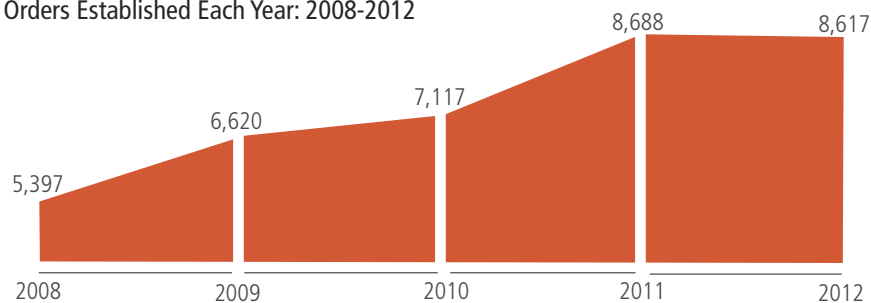
Low-Income Families | MOVING OUT OF POVERTY TOWARDS SELF-SUFFICIENCY

Custodial parents (CPs) applying for and receiving cash assistance (CA) are required to cooperate with the child support program as a condition of eligibility for government benefits. This is important because child support payments, in addition to salary from a job and work supports like Earned Income Tax Credits, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Medical Support, can move them towards the long-term goal of financial independence.

In addition to their cash benefits, CPs receive the first \$100 (\$200 for two or more children) per month of current child support collected in that month. When their cash assistance case closes, CPs receive all of current support. In 2012, the annual collection average for families who had received cash assistance was \$5,842. For all NYC families, with a child support collection, the average was \$5,939 per year, almost 1/3 of the federal poverty level for a single parent with two children. This includes families who receive CA, stopped receiving it, or never received it.

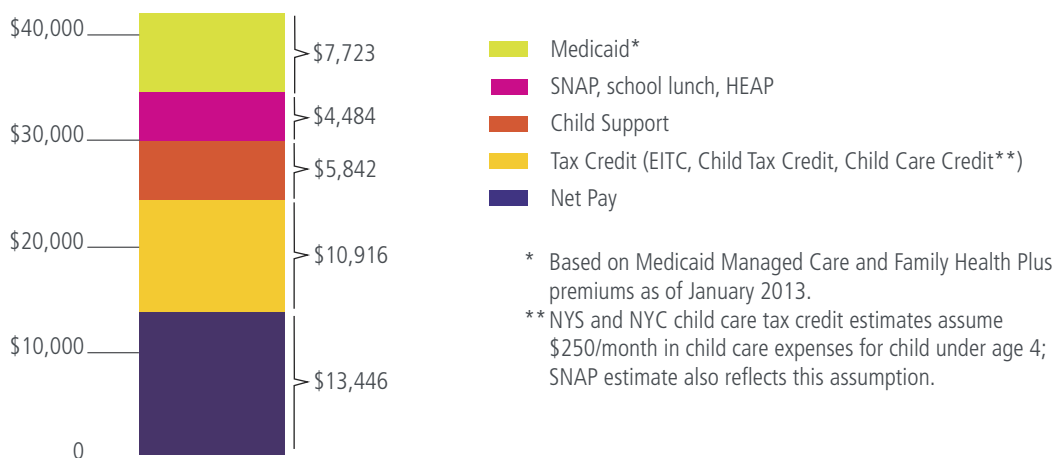
In the last 5 years, the number of child support orders established for CA families increased by 60%. This success is positively impacted by our initiatives designed to increase the number of CA families connected to the child support program with established child support orders.

CA Support Orders Established Each Year: 2008-2012



Child Support: A strong Anti-Poverty Program

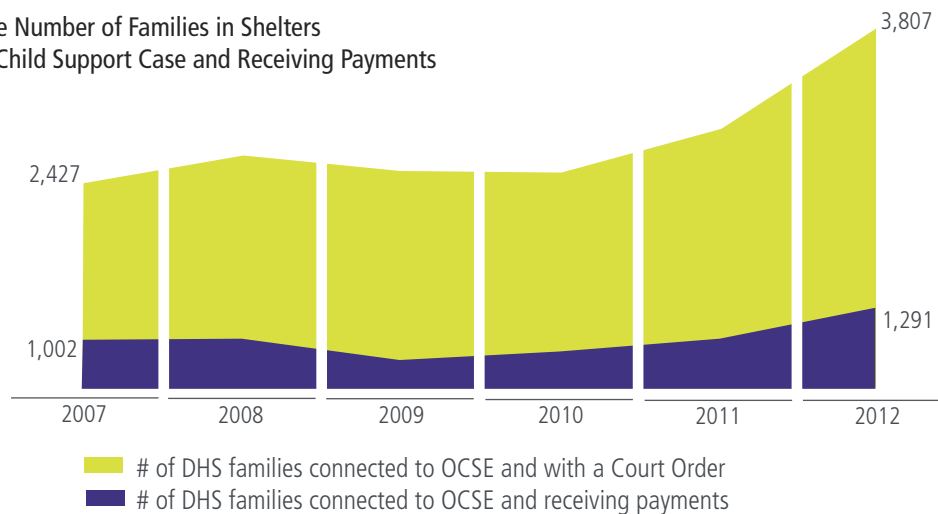
Nationwide, the child support program lifts millions of children out of poverty each year. For poor mothers, child support income can represent as much as 40% of her income.



CASH ASSISTANCE AGREEMENT PILOT (CAAP) | CAAP enables cash assistance families to establish paternity, child support orders and medical support orders at OCSE's Customer Service Walk-In Center. Agreements are signed and forwarded to the Family Court for approval, often without parents having to appear in court. Last year, CAAP successfully expanded from Manhattan and Staten Island to include applicants in all five boroughs. Through 2012, we have established 110 CAAP Agreements. CAAP cases have a support order establishment rate of 62% compared to the control group's rate of 56%. We believe this increased success rate results from the time the parents spend with a child support representative who educates them about their child support obligations and of the many benefits attached to establishing paternity and paying child support.

CONNECTING HOMELESS FAMILIES TO CHILD SUPPORT | The NYC Department of Homeless Services (DHS) and OCSE have been partnering for many years to connect families in shelters, most of whom are CA recipients, to child support. This partnership recognizes that child support income can assist families in their efforts to move out of the shelter system. In calendar year 2012, an average of 1,291 shelter residents received child support payments averaging \$4,000 for the year. The total amount collected for shelter residents for the calendar year was \$5.1 million. As of December, 6,531 of the families residing in a DHS shelter were known to OCSE. This is an increase of 35% compared to 4,833 when the partnership began in May 2007. Of these families, an average of 3,807 had a court order in 2012, an increase of 57% compared to 2,427 in 2007. Decisions coordinated between DHS and OCSE, such as the co-location of the DHS interview office with our Queens Borough Office, permitting the child support interview to immediately follow the interview for shelter services, have facilitated this progress.

**Average Number of Families in Shelters
with a Child Support Case and Receiving Payments**



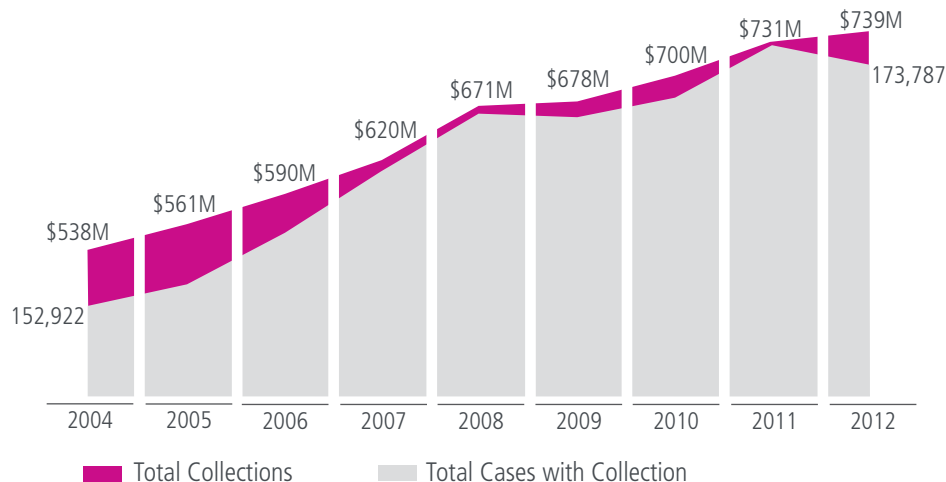
REACHING OUT TO APPLICANTS OF THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP) | OCSE is working with SNAP to ensure that their non-cash assistance applicants are notified of the benefits of child support and where they can apply for services. It is likely that low-income single parent families, who need nutritional assistance, would also benefit from additional financial support from the noncustodial parent.

UPGRADING CLIENT INTERVIEW SKILLS | For several years, OCSE has contracted with the CUNY School of Professional Studies to strengthen staff skills. In 2012 we rolled out an Interview Skills course for over 120 Borough Office staff. This reflects our continued commitment to excellent customer service. The Interview Skills course equips staff with the skills, strategies, and best practices of the professional interviewer. This allows us to obtain information that will help us locate NCPs, refer cases to court and to establish a child support order for cash assistance families.

Collecting Money for NYC Children

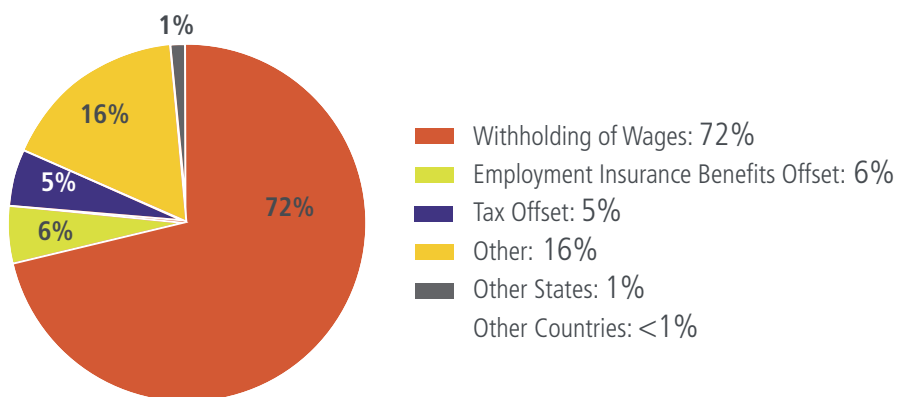
In 2012, OCSE collected over \$739 million, another new collection record, for approximately 174,000 families, including 247,788 children under the age of 18. This record-breaking amount continues a long upward trend: NYC annual child support collections have increased by 37% since 2004. OCSE forwarded nearly \$69 million to custodial parents who do not live in New York City, including \$910 thousand to parents who live outside the United States.

Total Calendar Year Collections (\$Millions) & Total Cases with a Collection



WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM | All employers are required, by law, to garnish the wages of their employees who pay child support. This is the standard procedure for all court-ordered child support and is not based on delinquency. As would be expected, the largest percentage of our collections continues to come from working noncustodial parents: 72% from employer wage withholdings. Nearly \$8 million was collected for New York City families from NCPs who live in other states and more than \$28 thousand from NCPs who live in other countries.

Where The Money Comes From





WHERE THE MONEY GOES

More Money To More Families | The child support program has evolved over time. Unlike the early years of the program, when the caseload was almost exclusively Cash Assistance (CA) families, today over 80% of our caseload is no longer receiving or has never received CA. This can be attributed, in large part, to the effectiveness of both the CA and the Child Support programs in helping families gain self-sufficiency. 92% of all child support collections are distributed to families, and only the remaining 8% is retained by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to offset cash benefits.

Enforcing Child Support Orders

OCSE is committed to using every means available to enforce child support orders and collect payments for the families we serve. When full payments are not received on a regular basis, administrative enforcement processes are automatically set in motion. This can mean driver's license suspension, seizing tax refunds, lottery winnings, and bank accounts; reporting debt to credit reporting agencies, denial of new and renewed passports and NYC business and professional licenses. If administrative enforcement proves unsuccessful, cases can be referred for judicial enforcement. That said, we are also committed to assisting NCPs in complying with their child support orders by connecting them to employment, offering debt reduction programs and educating them on how to avoid debt in the first place.

Enforcement Success Stories

RECORD COLLECTION FROM NCP'S INHERITANCE | OCSE collected more than \$251,000 from one NCP who was residing in Canada and became heir to an estate. This satisfied his arrears to his family. His two children are now over 21, but up until this point the NCP had not made any child support payments and probably thought that he had nothing more to worry about. Until he came into this inheritance, the NCP had no identifiable employment or assets. This is an example of how the constant location efforts and attention to delinquent NCPs eventually can pay off. OCSE's administrative enforcement processes allowed us to place a lien on the inheritance and collect what was owed to his family.

ENFORCEMENT COORDINATOR SAVES DENTIST'S PROFESSIONAL LICENSE | A self-employed Brooklyn dentist accrued arrears that subjected him to enforcement measures. Most significantly, his NYS professional license to practice dentistry was in danger of suspension. Bronislava Shmayenik, of OCSE's Enforcement Division, called him, and learned that he had never updated his address with OCSE, was not receiving notices regarding pending enforcement, and was unaware of the actions taken and pending.

He immediately paid \$13,510, eliminating his arrears and releasing him from the enforcement measures. What's more, he provided an updated address, and he ensured that future payments would be made through the Income Execution that was sent to his office.

When she works on professional license cases, Ms. Shmayenik attempts to contact the NCP. In this case, by taking this extra step, she ensured that the family received payments and the NCP stayed licensed to work.

Helping Low-Income Noncustodial Parents Meet their Obligations

Administrative enforcement tools are generally very effective in collecting payments from NCPs who have sufficient means but find ways to avoid making payments. For some low-income NCPs, enforcement measures can cause hardship. OCSE has implemented programs to assist NCPs, who, for a myriad of reasons, have orders and arrears above their current ability to pay. These initiatives aim to connect NCPs to employment and to identify and resolve barriers that may prevent them from paying child support.

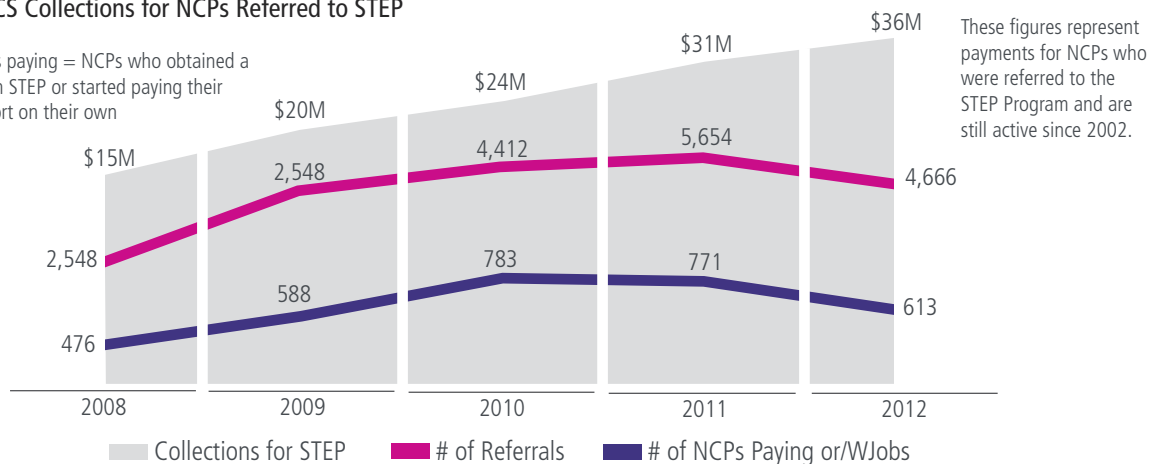
EMPLOYMENT

Support Through Employment Program (STEP) | In 2012, *The Support Through Employment Program (STEP)* reached its tenth anniversary helping unemployed and underemployed NCPs join the workforce and support their children. NCPs often find employment in fields such as janitorial, maintenance, transportation, security or food services at an average wage of approximately \$9 per hour. In addition, OCSE is in the process of automating the tracking of the entire STEP life cycle. This new system enhancement will allow us to better manage the program and better understand NCP case situations.

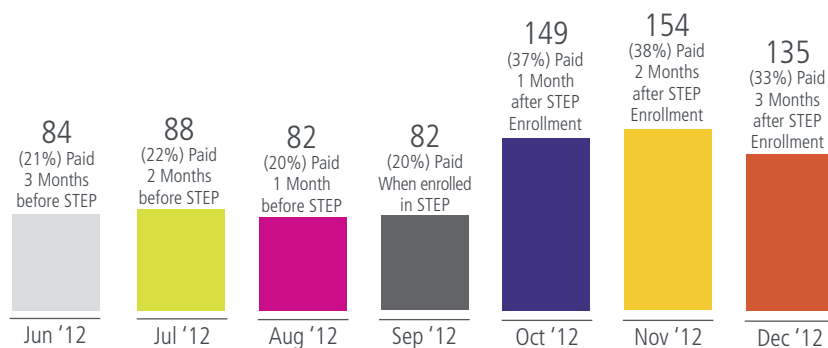
The following two charts illustrate the effectiveness of the program. The first chart shows overall performance with collections from NCPs who have been referred to STEP, since the inception of the program, doubling over the last 5 years. The decline in referrals and by extension job placements in 2012 is due to fewer hearings scheduled during the year. The second chart examines a cohort of 406 cases referred to STEP in September, 2012. It shows that prior to being referred into STEP, about 20% of the NCPs paid their child support compared to about 35% after.

Annual CS Collections for NCPs Referred to STEP

Note: NCPs paying = NCPs who obtained a job through STEP or started paying their child support on their own



Monthly Child Support Payments Comparison of 406 NCPs who were referred to STEP in September 2012



Families W.O.R.K. | In 2012, OCSE, partnering with HRA's Family Independence Administration's Business Link and individual employers, introduced Families W.O.R.K. (Work Opportunities and Resources Kit). The primary goal of WORK is to connect NCPs to jobs. A Families W.O.R.K. representative at the OCSE Customer Service Walk-in Center, meets with NCPs to ensure they understand that a future employer will garnish their wages. They review child support rules with the NCPs and assess their qualifications for debt reduction and employment programs. During this first year, 143 NCPs were connected to jobs and \$72,000 was collected from participants.

DEBT REDUCTION | OCSE continues to help low-income NCPs, who have obligations that exceed their ability to pay, by reducing child support orders and debt owed to the Department of Social Services (DSS). In 2012, our debt reduction programs continued to serve more NCPs, and the data suggest that, aligning orders and debt with current income, increases compliance with child support.

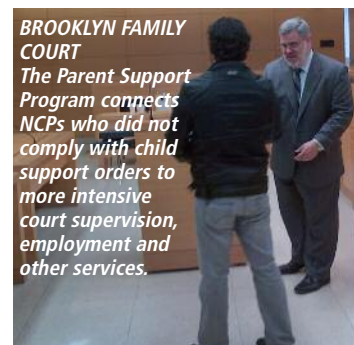
Through December, 125 low-income NCPs had their orders reduced through the Modify DSS Orders Program (MDO, by 84% from an average of \$388 per month to an average of \$63 per month. 64% of MDO participants paid child support after enrolling, compared to the 57% who did before they enrolled. Through Arrears Cap, 944 NCPs had arrears owed to DSS lowered, by a total of approximately \$10 million. Nine months after the adjustment, 65% (320) of Arrears Cap participants paid their current child support, compared to only 58% who did before. 47.5% (448) have now paid their outstanding debt in full, allowing us to collect over \$840,000 from these participating NCPs. Participants of the Arrears Credit Program (ACP) can earn up to a \$15,000 credit over a three year period if they remain in good standing on their current or arrears only support orders (a 2012 expansion), 42 NCPs have signed up for ACP and 5 cases have received credits.

COURT-BASED PROGRAM REMOVES BARRIERS TO PAYING CHILD SUPPORT | The Parent Support Program is a partnership between OCSE, the Family Court, and the Center for Court Innovation (CCI). This initiative targets low-income NCPs who have been summoned to Brooklyn Family Court for violation of their child support orders. These NCPs are connected to employment, mediation, education, and other services designed to address their specific needs. They must attend frequent compliance hearings, maintain employment, and make child support payments to avoid court imposed legal penalties, and to graduate.

The program currently has 152 participants, and 64 graduates. 86% of the previous non-payers have made child support payments, with total collections of nearly \$320 thousand. It is unlikely that this much child support would have been collected absent the attention given to these NCPs in the Problem Solving Court.



SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS | OCSE implemented a project that offers older NCPs (age 55 plus) an opportunity to enter into settlement agreements for their child support debt owed to the Department of Social Services (DSS). These NCPs may now be living on fixed incomes and saddled with arrears that they cannot afford to pay. The goal is to offer these NCPs a chance to either eliminate or significantly reduce their arrears by making a lump sum payment. To date, OCSE has been able to successfully negotiate over 50 cases with NCPs, and as a result, close their child support cases. Collections on these cases have reached approximately \$85,000, with an additional \$150,000 expected from cases currently under review.





Caseworker Finds Success In Customer Service Walk-In Center

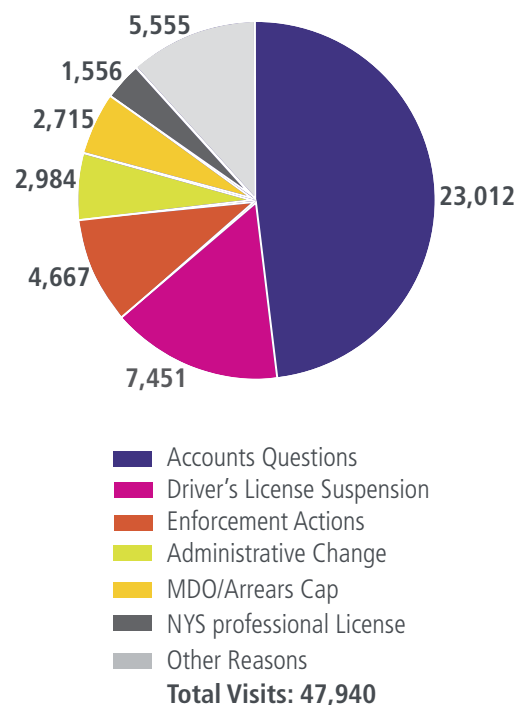
Caseworker Loretta Franklin enjoys client contact and the OCSE Customer Service Walk-in Center is a perfect match for her skills. She is known for her success in getting NCPs to understand the importance of eliminating their arrears by making lump sum payments. In November, an NCP was trying to get his passport released for renewal so he could travel out of the country. After meeting with Ms. Franklin, he returned the next day with a receipt from Western Union showing that he had paid all of his child support arrears \$16,289. When asked what she attributes such success to, Ms. Franklin said, "I tell NCPs that it is their responsibility to pay child support, not their employer's.... I am always honest with the customers and I don't let them leave until they understand what they need to do.... When I help one person, I am helping the whole family."

SMART PHONE APP HELPS NCPs FILL OUT CHILD SUPPORT PAPERWORK

NCPs are required to bring a completed Financial Disclosure Affidavit to their child support Family Court hearing, but often have difficulty understanding the questions on the form and how to respond to them. Legal Information for Families Today (LIFT) developed a guide to filling out the Financial Disclosure Affidavit and posted it to their website, www.LIFTonline.org. To increase access and help ensure NCPs fill out the affidavit completely and accurately, OCSE partnered with LIFT to create a QR (quick response) code. This code allows the guide to be scanned into a smart phone by using a QR reader. Information about accessing the guide on smart phones is now included in summons packages served on NCPs prior to their court appearances. OCSE and LIFT expect an increase in the number of Financial Disclosure Affidavits filled out correctly, which is a key step in establishing NCP's income. child support order.

CUSTOMER SERVICE WALK-IN CENTER | Both CPs and NCPs are welcome to come to the OCSE Customer Services Walk-in Center to resolve issues relating to their child support cases. The next chart demonstrates the top reasons for their visits.

Top Reasons Clients Made Customer Service Visits: 2012



Community Engagement

COMMUNITY PARTNERS GROUP | OCSE invited representatives from community-based organizations to participate in a Community Partners Group that would meet on a quarterly basis with OCSE. It would give them an opportunity to share their thoughts about child support programs and policies currently in place and help OCSE develop substantive strategies for connecting with and engaging the NCPs and CPs that need assistance. To date, meeting topics have included connecting NCPs to employment, improving arrears management and reduction programs, improving outreach, and seeking ways to link CPs and NCPs to child support services.

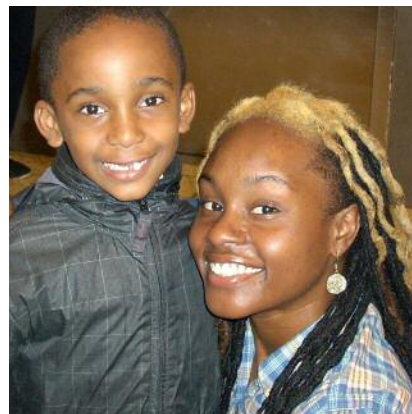
Participating Organizations:

- The DOE Fund
- Federation Employment & Guidance Service, Inc. (FEGS)
- Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern NJ, Inc.
- Greater Allen Cathedral of New York
- Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ)
- Harlem Congregations for Community Improvement (HCCI)
- New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NYSPCC)
- Northern Manhattan Improvement Corporation (NMIC)
- STRIVE International/East Harlem Employment Services, Inc.
- The Urban Institute
- Women, Housing, & Economic Development Corporation (WHEDco)

Teen Pregnancy Prevention | NO-KIDDING: STRAIGHT TALK FROM TEEN PARENTS

OCSE's pregnancy prevention program, No Kidding: Straight Talk from Teen Parents, is now in its 4th year. Peer Educators present to teens in schools, community-based organizations and correctional facilities to emphasize the importance of waiting to have children until they are older, in a committed relationship, and emotionally and financially prepared for the responsibility. No Kidding added 25 additional sites since the last school year ended, and is reaching out to more programs. To date, the No Kidding program has conducted over 394 presentations for more than 9,000 participants.

Among No Kidding participants, post-workshop surveys consistently show positive results-improved knowledge of child support responsibilities and re-assessment of early parenthood. There is also a high degree of "buy-in" from teachers, administrators, and program directors, as almost all participating organizations have invited No Kidding back. This has enhanced its reputation as a popular program for schools.



Focus on Jelysa Roberts, No Kidding Senior Peer Leader

Jelysa Roberts believes strongly in No Kidding's mission and message to young adults. "I had my son Kyjé when I was 16 and I had to grow up fast" says Jelysa.

As a 19 year old mother, working full time and attending College, Jelysa joined No Kidding when it started in 2008, as a Peer Educator (PE) going out to NYC public High Schools and sharing her story with her contemporaries. In 2010, she was promoted to Senior Peer Leader, and now cultivates new relationships with No Kidding's partner agencies and develops the team's presentations skills. "She has since earned an Associate Degree and would like to continue her education in nursing or business management. At 24, Jelysa chooses to stay with No Kidding because, as she puts it: "I have grown along with the program and consider myself a role model for the other PEs. I am No Kidding and am living the message. I know what needs to be in place before I have any more children. This program is my passion."

SHARING INFORMATION TO CONNECT FAMILIES TO CHILD SUPPORT

Inmate Re-Entry | OCSE provides information, workshops, and counseling at NYC prisons and the Department of Probation (DOP) as part of a program to discourage recidivism and promote compliance with child support. In 2012, 2,049 inmates at the Rikers Island and Queensboro Correctional Facilities participated in child support orientation sessions and 473 worked one-on-one with OCSE staff regarding their child support cases. 245 probation officers attended a 90 minute child support session given by OCSE Outreach staff.

OCSE and DOP completed a WEB-based Application Project that gives probation officers in the Bronx access to current child support data for their probationer clients. In alignment with the Mayor's Young Male Initiative, these probation officers now have the tools necessary to have a full discussion with their clients about child support and responsible parenting. Custodial and noncustodial parents involved with the criminal justice system will have better access to on-site child support information, individual consultations, and resources for jobs.

HRA Paperless Office System (POS) | POS is now being used by Job Centers, and other HRA programs, to determine if a client is an NCP who is known to the child support program, has an existing order and if arrears are owed. Based on the case information, NCPs receive a document summarizing the OCSE services available and are referred to the Customer Service Walk-in Center where they are informed about the next steps to take in order to be in compliance with child support. Depending on their situation, NCPs may be referred to employment, debt reduction, and mediation services. This case information also affords HRA the opportunity to reinforce the responsible fatherhood message, especially for those NCPs not connected to the child support program. Last year 25,787 NCPs were referred from Job Centers to OCSE for follow-up.

Noncustodial Parent Engagement Program (NCPEP) | NCPEP was implemented at the St. Nicholas Job Center in Harlem in October to give single NCPs, applying for, or in receipt of, Cash Assistance and/or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), an opportunity to meet with an on-site representative from OCSE to develop a plan to meet their child support obligations. Since the program's inception in October, the on-site OCSE representative provided consultations to nearly 200 low-income NCPs. Approximately 40% were eligible for an order modification or debt reduction, and had their arrears reduced by an average of nearly \$18,000.

PARENT PLEDGE PROJECT | The Mayor's Fatherhood Initiative, OCSE, the NYS Family Court, and community-based organizations are partnering in the Parent Pledge Project which allows parents to create child support and co-parenting agreements in a comfortable community setting. The agreements are prepared and facilitated by a trained mediator who may recommend parents be referred to parenting classes, if appropriate. While parents are encouraged to file their agreement with the court so it becomes a court order, these agreements are not subject to OCSE's enforcement tools unless the custodial parent requests child support services. Our hope is that, through a mediation process, parents will partner to support their children financially and emotionally. This will lead to better communication between parents, improve their relationships with their children, and more children receiving financial and emotional support from both parents.

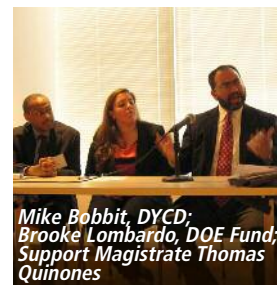


Conferences

On May 21, OCSE hosted its annual Support Magistrate Conference. Subjects included employment services (such as STEP and HRA's Back-To-Work program), support available to NCPs who are struggling to pay the court-ordered amount, how domestic violence is handled by the Court if it becomes an issue in a child support hearing, the Problem Solving Court, and the statistical data available to evaluate programs.

On September 6, OCSE hosted over 200 leaders and representatives from government, academia, and non-government organizations across the nation for the 2012 Policy Conference held at the City University of New York's (CUNY) Graduate Center. The theme was "Child Support: Achieving Better Outcomes for Children." The agenda was designed to review and identify alternative ways to establish and enforce child support orders, while promoting communication, mediation, compliance, and family and child well-being. Distinguished speakers included HRA Commissioner Robert Doar, Federal Child Support Enforcement Commissioner Vicki Turetsky, and, as Keynote Speaker, President and CEO of the Children's Aid Society Richard R. Buery Jr. Panel participants included Alicia Key, Director of the Texas child support program, and Robert Prevost, Division Manager, Arapahoe, Colorado Child Support program, who shared their alternative approaches to establishing child support orders. Tangular Johnson, Director of Operations for the Georgia Office of Child Support and Sarah Reckess, Deputy Director of the Syracuse Office, Center for Court Innovation, presented their Problem Solving Court approaches to increasing compliance with child support. You can find the 2012 Conference Report on the OCSE website: www.nyc.gov/hra/ocse

The Annual Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA) Conference and Expo took place on August 6-8 in Denver, CO. The conference theme was "Moving Mountains for the Modern Family" and provided an opportunity for HRA to hear the latest information on current issues, challenges and opportunities in child support across the nation. OCSE Executive Deputy Commissioner Frances Pardus-Abbadessa, a first term board member, organized a workshop on improving performance to better serve the children and parents despite the challenges of limited resources and time.



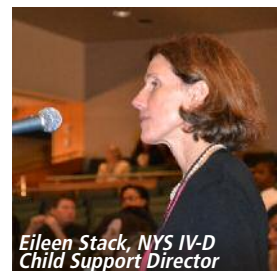
*Mike Bobbit, DYCD;
Brooke Lombardo, DOE Fund;
Support Magistrate Thomas
Quinones*



Judge Dennis Duggan



*Mike McLoughlin, County
Clerk Specialist, NYC Family
Court*



*Eileen Stack, NYS IV-D
Child Support Director*

The Year Ahead – 2013

TRANSIT CAMPAIGN | NYCDADS is pursuing a poster campaign in NYC subways and buses that will spread the message of the emotional and financial cost of having a child while still a teen.

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM | A new Case Management Initiative will be piloted to provide improved, more customer-friendly support to noncustodial parents who are identified as high risk for non-payment of child support. In this model, NCPs will be assigned to specific caseworkers who will contact them shortly after the issuance of their orders and take a proactive approach with them regarding their child support cases. This direct contact is expected to provide case continuity and, ultimately, increased compliance.

CHILD SUPPORT APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE AT DEPARTMENT OF HOMELESS SERVICES (DHS) | DHS and OCSE have embarked upon a new initiative to make it easier for homeless custodial parents to apply for child support services. Child support applications will be made available electronically at DHS family shelters. Working with shelter case managers, clients can complete the application which will be forwarded to OCSE, along with supporting documentation. OCSE will then open a case and begin the process of establishing court-ordered child support.

CHILD SUPPORT TRAINING FOR HRA STAFF | OCSE will train HRA line staff about the child support program - specifically about how it helps CPs and their children to become self-sufficient and about the services available to assist NCPs to meet their child support obligations. As a result, parents receiving services from other HRA program areas will be able to receive child support assistance and referrals to OCSE programs from knowledgeable program staff.

PARTNERSHIP WITH NYC DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS | OCSE will strengthen its partnership with the New York City Department of Consumer Affairs to provide parents, who visit our Customer Service Walk-in Center, with financial planning assistance on-site. This service is expected to help NCPs to fulfill their child support obligations while stabilizing their overall financial situations.

ELECTRONIC PETITION FILING (E-FILING) AND NEW APPLICATIONS FOR CASH ASSISTANCE CASES | OCSE will be re-engineering its business processes in the Borough Offices, serving Cash Assistance clients, by rolling out E-filing as well as New York State's new application for child support services. After interviewing the custodial parent, caseworkers will file petitions directly into the Unified Court Management System (UCMS), which will result in the Family Court hearing being automatically scheduled. This eliminates the need to make a paper referral from the Borough Office to the Family Court and allows the client to leave with a court hearing date. This service is already available to non-Cash Assistance clients.

TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY-BASED PROVIDERS | OCSE will be designing a training program for the staff of community-based organizations to learn about child support policies and regulations. We hope that with training CBOs will integrate a discussion of the child support program into their service delivery models and advise their clients about how the child support program benefits children and has safeguards and programs in place to assist low income NCPs. With better informed CBOs, OCSE will be able to reach more parents and hopefully engage them in the program and improve outcomes for children.

MEDICAID & CHILD SUPPORT | OCSE and HRA's Medical Assistance Program (MAP) are collaborating on an initiative to reach out to applicants and recipients of Medicaid only (non-Cash Assistance), to explain the requirement of cooperating with OCSE to seek a medical support order. Information about the benefits of applying for medical support and child support will be placed in the Medicaid application and recertification packets and sent to single parent households newly accepted or re-certified for Medicaid.

The OCSE Team

INTAKE & COURT SERVICES | Borough Office Operations is the point of entry into the child support system for Cash Assistance families, who are required to cooperate with OCSE as a condition of eligibility for cash benefits. Staff interview custodial parents, open or update child support cases, attempt to locate missing noncustodial parents, and prepare and submit court referrals to Family Court for establishing paternity (when necessary), cash support, and medical support orders. Family Court Support Services (FCSS), located in the Family Courts in each borough, is the point of entry into the child support system for families who are not receiving Cash Assistance. They assist families with opening a child support case, locating missing non custodial parents, and filing a petition.



Central Court Services, located within Manhattan Family Court, is responsible for initiating the legal process that leads to support orders for Cash Assistance families. Staff schedule court hearings, prepare legal summons for mail and personal service on the noncustodial parent through the Sheriff's Office, and prepare case files for our attorneys.

FISCAL OPERATIONS | Fiscal Services staff establish, monitor and update child support accounts once a court order has been put in place. In addition to ensuring that accounts accurately reflect how much child support was owed, paid and disbursed to families, staff also verify balances on child support accounts for the courts so accurate and fair decisions can be made on child support cases.

ENFORCEMENT SERVICES | Administrative Enforcement oversees automated, administrative enforcement tools (e.g., employer wage withholding, driver's license suspensions, tax refund offset, and bank account seizures). They respond to the legal challenges filed by NCPs prior to implementation.

Special Investigations identifies and prepares appropriate cases for local or federal prosecution based on egregious non-payment situations.

The Interstate unit coordinates NYC's child support actions with other jurisdictions (another NYS county, another state, or another country) when one of the parents lives outside of NYC.

PROGRAM INTEGRITY AND SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATION | The Program Integrity unit reviews and updates cases to ensure accuracy and proper functioning of automated case processing systems. It also conducts staff training and writes and maintains OCSE policies and procedures.

The Systems Administration unit manages our operational computer applications and network infrastructure.

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT & ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES | Management Support & Administrative Services directs and coordinates overall support services for OCSE management. This includes Management Planning and Control, Personnel, Office and Facilities Services, Budget, Contracts, and Internal/External Audits.

PARENT & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT | Parent and Community Engagement is comprised of several units. Outreach and Paternity Services administers programs and coordinates events that build awareness, educates the public on child support services and establishes and maintains relationships with community organizations as well as other government entities. They offer employment services to connect low-income NCPs with employment programs (either voluntarily or court-ordered). They also work with NYC hospitals, clinics and medical centers to increase rates of paternity establishment. The Customer Services Walk-in Center assists CPs and NCPs with child support related issues, responds to client mail and helps NCPs access services to manage their child support debt, child support order or begin job search. No Kidding, our Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program utilizes peer educators to speak to high school students about the challenges of being a child parent. The Strategic Partnerships unit works with community leaders to create relationships and determine effective strategies for intervention to resolve child support issues and better serve the public.





OCSE staff climbs 22 flights to retrieve critical mail after Hurricane Sandy



OCSE Command Center after Hurricane Sandy



Our Partners

We thank all of our local, state, and federal partners (listed below) for their collaboration and support. We also thank the numerous community and faith-based organizations throughout the city that assist us in bringing special programs and our message of responsible parenting to NYC families.

Borough Presidents Office
City University of New York
Greater New York Hospital Association
NYC Comptroller's Office
NYC Corporation Counsel
NYC Department of Correction
NYC Department of Education
NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
NYC Department of Homeless Services
NYC Department of Probation
NYC Department of Youth and Community Development
NYC Division of Consumer Affairs, Office of Financial Empowerment
NYC Family Court
NYC Housing Authority
NYC Human Resources Administration
NYC Office to Combat Domestic Violence
NYC Office of the Mayor, Citywide Fatherhood Initiative
NYC Police Department
NYC Sheriff's Office
NYS Division of Child Support Enforcement
NYS Division of Parole
NYS Office of Court Administration
NYS Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance
US Department of Health and Human Services
US Federal Bureau of Prisons
YMS Associates

For Additional Information

New York State Child Support Helpline
To speak to a representative
8:30 AM - 5:00 PM Monday - Friday: (888) 208-4485
TTY (Hearing Impaired): (866) 875-9975

New York State Information Line
(800) 846-0773 for automated information
24 hours/7 days a week

Visit

New York City OCSE Customer Services Office
151 West Broadway, 4th floor
New York, NY 10013
8:00 AM - 7:00 PM Monday - Friday (walk-in)
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM Saturday (by appointment)

For Saturday appointment,
call weekdays (212) 274-6482 or (212) 274-4920

Websites

New York State DCSE: www.newyorkchildsupport.com
(View account information with
Social Security number and PIN)
New York City OCSE: www.NYC.gov/hra
(Choose child support enforcement)

Websites

New York City Office of Child Support Enforcement
P.O. Box 830
Canal Street Station
New York, NY 10013

Send Payments

NYS Child Support Processing Center
P.O. Box 15363
Albany, NY 12212-5363



Michael R. Bloomberg
Mayor

**Human Resources
Administration**
Department of
Social Services

Robert Doar
Commissioner



NYC DADS



NYCHRA



NYC DADS



HRANYC

© Copyright 2013, The City of New York, Human Resources Administration/Department of Social Services.
For permission to reproduce all or part of this material contact the New York City Human Resources Administration.