



This issue of Pacific Northwest News Child Support Quarterly Newsletter was published by the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Child Support.

We hope others from the child support communities will be able to assist with the development of future issues of the Pacific Northwest News. Together, we can build a stronger national community of child support and financial recovery professionals.

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WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS?

By Dr. Megan Schoor, BICS Demonstration Grant Project Director

Last fall, Washington State's Division of Child Support (DCS) was one of eight states to receive the federal Behavioral Interventions for Child Support Services (BICS) demonstration grant. This grant promotes the use of behavioral economics, which emphasizes that people don't always behave rationally, and individual circumstances can substantially influence one's financial decisions. For example, parents might delay or avoid contact due to a negative perception of DCS, misunderstanding the forms they receive, and/or hassle factors of the child support establishment and enforcement processes. A related component of the grant is to identify and eliminate workflow bottlenecks that parents and staff might encounter, in hopes that small process changes can improve parents' compliance with their support obligations.

The BICS demonstration grant is a five-year project with the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). Pilot projects will take place at the Seattle, Everett, and Olympia DCS Field Offices. Seattle's pilot will focus on early parent engagement in the administrative order establishment process. Everett's pilot will test early interventions in the enforcement process, paying close attention to noncustodial parents (NCPs) who have missed their first payment, on the verge of license suspension, and who are in the early stages of contempt. Olympia's pilot examines right-sizing orders and the Conference Board write-off process for incarcerated NCPs at Washington Corrections Center in Shelton. Dr. Megan Schoor is the Project Director of the BICS demonstration grant and is responsible for overseeing and coordinating project activities at each of the participating DCS Field Offices.

Washington State DCS also received the BICS evaluation grant, the five-year "umbrella" grant that provides technical assistance and evaluation services to the eight states that received the BICS demonstration grants. Under the evaluation grant, Washington State DCS has partnered with OCSE and three research firms with expertise in social policy and child support programs (MDRC, the Center for Policy Research, and MEF Associates) to form a Technical Assistance and Evaluation (TAE) Team. Each state has a TAE Team of evaluators who will assist in the diagnosis and design phases

of the project. The TAE Teams will also conduct the evaluations and report findings for their demonstration grantees. Donna Collins is the Project Manager of the BICS evaluation grant, supervising the TAE Teams and managing the evaluation services across the eight states.

This first project year is dedicated to identifying workflow and behavioral bottlenecks that our pilots seek to address. Information from this process is used to frame and design the pilot interventions. In years two, three, and four, interventions will be tested on a select sample of parents, and short-term results are compared to a similar parent control group. Interventions might also be refined and retested during this time period, so that by the end of the fifth year, there is ample opportunity to use the lessons learned to inform process and training efforts in DCS field offices statewide. This five-year timeline reflects a "rapid cycle evaluation" style of process improvement, similar to the Plan-Do-Check-Act approach with which many DCS staff are familiar.

Though only a few months into year one, we've made great strides in refining our initial pilot ideas! In February, project staff attended the BICS grantee workshop in Washington, DC, where we connected with staff from other participating states and started discussing potential bottlenecks with our TAE Team.



Kirsten Jenicek



Donna Collins

(djcollins@dshs.wa.gov) or to Kirsten Jenicek, DCS Grant Manager (kjenicek@dshs.wa.gov).



Megan Schoor

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM BEHAVIORAL ECONOMICS? (continued)

For more information about Washington State's BICS demonstration grant, please contact Megan (schoorm@dshs.wa.gov) or Kirsten. We're excited to move forward and learn how behavioral economics can inform our work processes and promote behaviors that benefit parents and their children.

ON THE HORIZON...

By Wally McClure, DCS Director

Strategic planning is a critical business practice for every level of an organization. Planning for the future helps us lay out a clear and deliberate path to rally behind, connect to, and align with.

Locally the Division of Child Support (DCS) uses strategic planning to align our vision and values with our activities. On a broader scale, the State of Washington uses a strategic framework to create a thriving and sustainable future for our citizens.

Our partners at the national level, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), are no different in their business practices. They use strategic planning as a guide to invest in and build a stronger future for families.



While Washington (WA) DCS is in mid-stream with our Strategic Plan (2013-2018), and we are participating in the update of the Economic

ON THE HORIZON...

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Services Administration (ESA) Strategic Plan for 2015-17, OCSE is at the beginning of a new four year National Child Support Strategic Plan (2015-2019). The five primary themes of the national plan tie nicely into many of the goals WA DCS is striving to achieve.

The primary themes include:

- National Strategic Plan: Children need reliable and consistent support.
 - * WA DCS: Goal 1 Deliver services adapted to individual customer needs and circumstances.
- National Strategic Plan: A wide range of partnerships is essential to effective and efficient child support programs.
 - * WA DCS: Goal 3 Strengthen partner and stakeholder relationships.
- National Strategic Plan: Effective outreach and communication are critical to increasing the level of understanding among child support programs, our partners, the community and families.
 - * WA DCS: Goal 4 Communicate effectively and timely.
- National Strategic Plan: Policy, program, and system flexibility is key to successful, sustainable child support programs.
 - * WA DCS: Goal 2 Continually improve DCS operations and performance.
- National Strategic Plan: Functional and affordable systems are the backbone of the child support program.
 - * WA DCS: Goal 5 Sustain a highly skilled and engaged workforce.

For more information about DCS' strategic plan, contact Jeannie Bowen at 360-664-5040 or bowenjm@dshs.wa.gov or Loan Tran at 360-664-5325 or ltran@dshs.wa.gov.

SEATTLE DCS AND UNION GOSPEL MISSION'S MODIFICATION WORKSHOP

By Sylvia Flores, DCS Seattle Field Office District Manager

In November 2014, the Seattle Division of Child Support (DCS) Field Office hosted a Modification Workshop, fulfilling one of the dreams of Wally McClure, DCS Director. Working closely with Seattle's Union Gospel Mission, Open Door Legal Services, King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPA), KCPA Navigators, Northwest Justice Project, DCS's Policy Unit, Conference Board Chairs, Alternative Solutions Program, University of Washington, and Seattle University Schools of Law; the first of hopefully numerous Modification Workshops assisted clients from the Aged, Blind, or Disabled (ABD) program with their child support cases.

DCS invited ABD clients to the workshop to receive assistance from both DCS staff, as well as legal advice regarding their individual cases from our partners. We assisted approximately 15 clients throughout this initial three hour workshop. Some of the clients had previously avoided speaking with DCS for years. Clients left the workshop pleased with the results and thanking DCS.

"Multiple agencies worked together for several months to plan the logistics and build a solid plan for pulling off this event" said Sylvia Flores, District Manager for the DCS Seattle Field Office. "It was a great first time event that allowed us to learn from the experience. We now have a strategy for planning future workshops to help clients in need of assistance and we have developed a great relationship building opportunity between organizations."

Seattle's Union Gospel Mission and DCS look forward to creating additional ways to help our mutual clients. Thank you and congratulations to all who were involved in this successful endeavor!

For more information about this workshop, contact Sylvia Flores at 206-341-7247 or by e-mail at Sylvia.Flores@dshs.wa.gov.

OFFICE OF FINANCIAL RECOVERY (OFR)

COLLECTIONS FOR THE FIRST SIX MONTHS OF SFY2015

By Brice Montgomery, OFR, Chief



Cost Effectiveness
For every \$1 spent, OFR returns \$39.93

The Office of Financial Recovery (OFR) collects, bills and accounts for debts so that Washington's most vulnerable citizens can get the services they need in order to transform their lives. Working with service programs, clients, and customers, OFR focuses on maximizing collections for DSHS, the Health Care Authority (HCA), Department of Early Learning (DEL), and state taxpayers. Funds recovered are returned to the originating programs to provide financial aid, medical care, and a host of other services or to the general fund.

- * Cost of Care: Estate Recovery, Mental Health, Juvenile Justice and Rehabilitation Parent Pay and Developmental Disabilities.
- ** Cost Recovery: Client and Vendor overpayment recovery and Interim Assistance recovery.
- *** Billing: Medical Premiums and Fees.

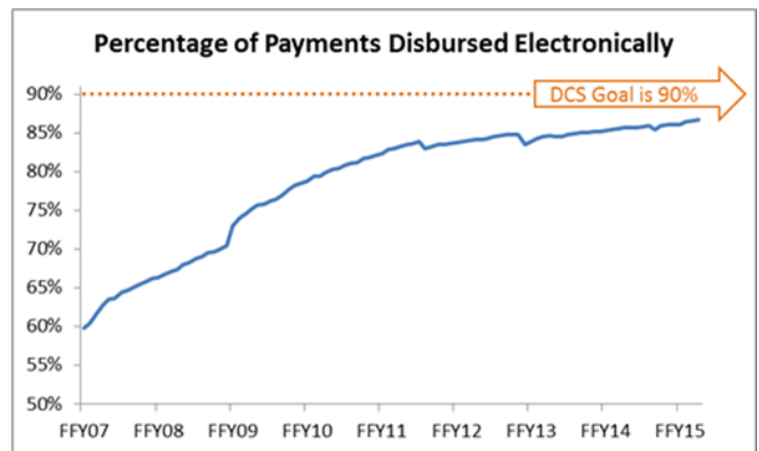
THE FEEDING AND GROWTH OF DCS ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER PROGRAMS – THEN AND NOW

By Wendy Cole-Deardorff, EFT Manager

The Washington State Division of Child Support (DCS) has been actively pursuing and growing its Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)/ Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) Programs since the early 1990s. The original EFT/EDI Project Team was formed to pursue and develop electronic options for processing both incoming and outgoing child support payments. Electronic payments are safer, more convenient, and less expensive to process.

DCS began Direct Deposit for disbursements to custodial parents (CPs) in February 1994. Within six months, 30% of the payments were by direct deposit. There was slow but steady growth to about 37% in 2000. In 2001, to expand electronic payments to more families, DCS piloted a DCS Stored-Value Debit Card program which was then offered to the entire caseload in 2003. By the end of that year, 50% of payments sent to CPs were EFT, either by direct deposit or electronically loaded to DCS Cards.

In 2006, DCS began to automatically default the CP payment method to the DCS Card if the CP did not authorize direct deposit. DCS also began enrolling customers in the card program when they requested a stop pay or when locating customers who had checks on hold. Strong emphasis continues to be made on EFT, and in 2014 DCS made Direct Deposit and DCS Card Authorizations available on-line through the DCS On-line Services website. DCS now disburses over 86% of all payments by EFT!



Also in 2001, DCS launched its Child Support Internet Payment Service (CSIPS) website for employers and non-custodial parents to pay child support electronically on-line.

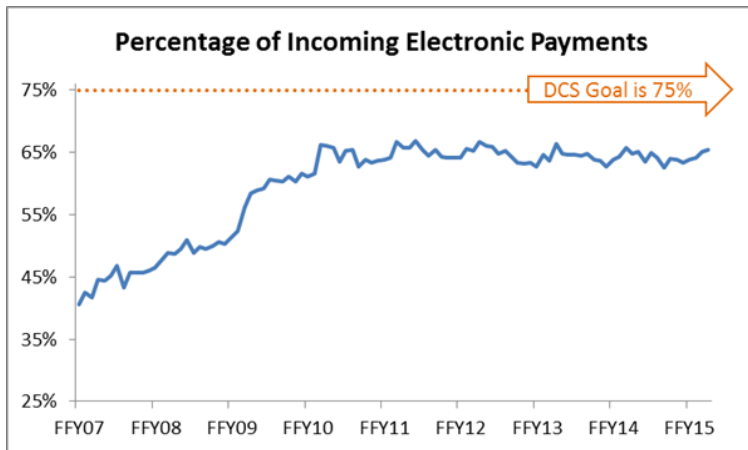
Account registrations began immediately, grew rapidly, and have steadily increased over the years. A strong DCS Employer Outreach program has also helped get the word out about our various EFT payment options available to employers.

THE FEEDING AND GROWTH OF DCS ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER PROGRAMS – THEN AND NOW

(continued)

Several states have laws in place that require employers to remit child support electronically. Washington State does not yet have a law mandating electronic child support payments.

Through our outreach efforts, however, incoming EFT payments (from all sources) have grown to over 65% and Washington State ranks one of the highest states for incoming EFT with or without a mandate!



EFT payments, incoming and outgoing, are more efficient and less expensive for DCS to process and they get to families faster and in a safer manner. EFT payments helps DCS transform lives in a fiscally responsible manner.

If you would like additional information about DCS's Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)/Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) programs, please see the [DCS Website](#) or contact Wendy Cole-Deardorff at 360-664-5160 or by email at wcoledea@dshs.wa.gov.

Continually looking for ways to do things better or faster is not new to the Division of Child Support (DCS). DCS' mission is to transform lives by providing child support and revenue recovery services that lead to economic stability and financial self-sufficiency for individuals, families and communities.

SUMMER INSTITUTE REENTRY CONFERENCE

By Georgia Payne

The Community Partnership for Transition Services of King, Pierce, and Snohomish Counties will hold their annual Institute/Regional Reentry Conference on July 23rd and 24th at Edmonds Community College in Lynnwood, Washington. This conference offers an opportunity for reentry service providers; state, county and tribal staff; educators; and faith-based and community organizations to network, share expertise, identify and refine best practices, and foster sustainable partnerships to better serve individuals and families of incarcerated, transition, and reentry populations. For more information, [Click Here](#).

DCS USES LEAN TO TRANSFORM LIVES

By Janina Oestreich, Performance and Process Improvement Manager

Since the establishment of DCS Business Services in October 2013, DCS has been working hard to develop a systematic approach to applying tools and methodologies such as Lean to improve operations, performance, customer service, and employee satisfaction. DCS Business Services manages the Division's budget, grants and strategic planning efforts, as well as focuses on educating staff about Lean tools and principles, and developing DCS capacity to leverage resources in the most efficient way possible and improve services for individuals, families and communities.

To help support a continuous improvement culture, the first order of business was to create an internal SharePoint site for staff to access. This site provides information about Lean, including videos, best practices, links to other valuable resources and Lean projects underway or completed. Staff also has the ability to request Lean trainings and present their Lean Improvement ideas for consultation by certified Lean Practitioners from this site. DCS Lean Practitioners assist staff and managers in coordinating efforts to improve processes for customers and staff.

To better serve DCS staff and encourage process improvement, four DCS staff recently earned their Lean Six Sigma Black Belt certification through studies at the University of Washington. Utilizing this knowledge, DCS is taking a multi-faceted approach of trainings and pilots across the state to further develop capacity. To maximize staff exposure while minimizing the use of resources, DCS has developed on-line Lean trainings.

In January 2014, DCS initiated a Lean Team Pilot program that focuses on a team-based approach for Lean education and the practical application of tools. The outcomes from the pilot program were astounding! Some outcomes were tangible and measurable like turning a manual paper process into an electronic one, saving time, resources, reducing backlog, and allowing DCS to provide a financial determination for its customers faster – this means that families are now getting their money faster! Another pilot group was able to reduce the number of corrections needed in complex debt calculations by more than 10%. Other outcomes were less tangible but equally important. Feedback received from both teams indicated that the pilot helped strengthen their working relationships and created an environment of support and encouragement!

Looking at Lean across the Division, DCS selected a strategy of implementing Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA), a core process improvement principle, as a standard expectation for all levels of project management. This PDCA principle was used when a request from the Governor asked that every Division increase their employee satisfaction survey results by at least 3%. DCS responded by using a variety of Lean tools to help identify root causes of dissatisfaction within each of its offices and facilitated the creation of action plans to address the areas of concern. DCS is now "checking" the efficacy of this process and what results were achieved to continually adjust its approach and reach maximum employee satisfaction.

DCS' ultimate goal is to create a culture where staff are empowered to identify waste and impact their daily work in an effort to make our processes more efficient for individuals, families and communities.

You may contact Janina Oestreich at 360-664-5071 or oestrijm@dshs.wa.gov, or Loan Tran at 360-664-5325 or ltran@dshs.wa.gov for more information about how DCS uses Lean.