



## Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies (PAID) In Full Practices Guide

*This Guide is intended for use by States, Tribes, and Territories as a tool to foster discussions of policies and practices, along with implementation criteria, that may be employed to increase the collection of current support and prevent and reduce arrears. The questions under each topic are intended to assist readers in looking for methods to optimize their processes.*

*Future topics will be distributed as separate documents and numbered accordingly.*

*The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) hopes you will find this material useful in thinking about new approaches you might take in your jurisdiction to improve your program results. . If you would like more information about PAID, please contact your Regional Program Specialist or email [PAID@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:PAID@acf.hhs.gov) to join the PAID Workplace to learn more and share your ideas.*



# IN FULL #1

## *Income Withholding*

**PAID In Full is a compilation of early intervention, order establishment, locate, enforcement, and arrears management practices, along with implementation criteria, that facilitate successful outcomes. The questions under each practice are intended to assist readers in looking for methods to optimize their processes. The questions are organized into three categories for consideration: Organizational, Process, and Automation.**

### **Organizational Considerations**

- √ Will your State system issue an automated income withholding order (IWO) even though the noncustodial parent (NCP) or custodial party (CP) has a Family Violence Indicator?
- √ Has your State developed a policy for dealing with an NCP who has a second job? For example, when income is reported from a new employer and payments from a current employer are still being received, what action is performed by the caseworker/system?
- √ Does your State have a process for identifying and handling reports of self-employment income? Is self-employment income handled differently if regular wages are already being withheld and collected?
- √ Has your State identified a means for identifying and attaching bonuses paid to the obligor?
- √ Policy Interpretation Question PIQ 03-10 (see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/PIQ/2003/piq-03-10.htm>) permits use of debit authorization (automatically withdrawing payments from NCP financial account) in lieu of wage withholding. In addition, the programming code from Washington State's web-based debit authorization is available on the OCSE website. Has your State considered debit authorization as a collection method for self employed?
- √ When the obligor falls behind in current support payments, does your State have a policy that provides for automatic issuance of an IWO that will increase the child support obligation to include an amount to be applied toward arrears? Are there legal barriers or system barriers that could prevent such an automatic process?
- √ Does your State centralize processes or have a specialized unit to handle IWO?



## **IN FULL #1**

### ***Income Withholding***

- √ Has your State held discussions with your State Workforce Agency (SWA) to ensure all available data is being submitted to the National Directory of New Hires (NDNH)? For example:
  - Does the SWA send in Quarterly Wage (QW) reports from prior quarters?
  - Does the SWA submit the IWO address (ADDRESS 3) in addition to the physical address (ADDRESS 1) of the employer?
  - Does the SWA send in full names of employees so that the Social Security Number (SSN) name combination can be verified? Does the SWA report a phone number for the employee?
  - Does the SWA have a process in place to contact employers when a wage report sent to the NDNH returns results that the SSN is unverified?

### **Process Considerations**

- √ Have you recently reviewed the selection criteria that is applied to reported income or New Hire reports to determine whether to automate the IWO or to alert the caseworker so that you can ensure you are making the best use of automation and staff resources?
- √ Does the State system notify the caseworker of the cases that do not meet the automated IWO criteria and track the case action for compliance?
- √ Does your State have processes in place to ensure all available data is captured from the New Hire reports? For example:
  - Does the State Directory of New Hires (SDNH) have a process in place to contact employers when a New Hire report sent to the NDNH returns results that the SSN is unverified?
  - Does your new hire system have edits to ensure all necessary data is reported by the employer? Is the wage report still sent to the NDNH, even with some missing data?
  - Can employers readily report the IWO address (ADDRESS 3) or the employer's contact phone number?
  - Are you monitoring employer compliance with the new hire reporting requirements? If so, what processes are in place?
  - Have you identified an effective strategy for encouraging employer compliance?



# IN FULL #1

## ***Income Withholding***

- √ Does your State system monitor employer compliance with IWO? Is there an automated process in place to detect an employer's notification that the IWO cannot be enforced?
- √ How do caseworkers deal with income reported via the FPLS Annual Wage Record (AWR) response from the Social Security Administration (SSA) match? This information is reported to States as a result of an SSA external locate request and is returned in the Federal Case Registry (FCR) Locate Response record as Agency Code E01.
- √ Do you have a way to ensure that payment for a non-IV-D order can be recognized at the State Disbursement Unit (SDU)?
- √ Does your State have a policy for how to handle arrears only cases? Do you use the same enforcement techniques in arrears only cases as in cases that owe current support?

## **Automation Considerations**

- √ Does your State system receive matches from your SDNH and the NDNH and determine, without staff intervention, which matches are eligible for automated IWO based on your State's criteria?
- √ Does your State system generate IWO notices without caseworker intervention within two business days of receiving matches eligible for IWO, or track to ensure caseworkers have taken timely action?
- √ Will your State system implement electronic income withholding orders (e-IWO), or are you making plans for e-IWO? What actions remain before your State can participate in e-IWO?
- √ Does your State system automatically generate IWO notices when the court ordered amount is modified? Does your State system generate a "stop IWO" when the case is closed?
- √ Does your State system use ADDRESS 3, which is specifically designated for income withholding, from the QW and New hire (W4) reports from the NDNH for IWO notices?
- √ Does your State system generate IWO notices for out-of-state employers?
- √ Does your State system automate income withholding when the SSA/State Verification and Exchange System (SVES) Title II income is reported?



## **IN FULL #1**

### ***Income Withholding***

- √ How does your State system determine the SSA address to use for sending the IWO notice?
- √ Does your State system send an IWO to the Prison when SVES Prisoner data is reported?
- √ Does your State system automatically generate IWO notices to other States' Unemployment Insurance (UI) agencies that accept direct IWO? How do you maintain the list of States that will accept direct IWO for UI benefits?
- √ Does your State system compare the employment data on the QW report to data resident in your State system to determine if increased /decreased income is being reported? Is an automated IWO or review and adjustment notice issued?
- √ Does your State system recognize that the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) on QW records changes for Reservists when they have been activated, and automatically issue the IWO?
- √ Does your State system process SVES Title XVI information to pick up on reduced Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments due to employment or other income? Does your State try to set up income withholding on unearned income?
- √ How is an employer linked to a person in your State system? Does your State system maintain an employer table?

#### *Employer Table Considerations:*

- Does your State system uniquely identify the employer using the FEIN as a searchable attribute, or use the FEIN as the unique identifier?
- How does your State system identify an employer as a duplicate of one already reported? Are there processes in place to prevent adding a duplicate employer?
- Does your State system allow multiple addresses for an employer? (e.g., site, IWO, medical support, etc.)
- Is your State aware that some employers, for example, Department of Defense (DoD), require documentation be directed to different addresses based on purpose (e.g, IWO, NMSN)?
- Does your State system allow more than one employer for a specified FEIN?



# IN FULL #1

## *Income Withholding*

- Does your State system allow multiple FEINs for a single employer?
- Does your State system have sufficient data elements to indicate that income being reported has been previously reported so that duplicative information is filtered? (e.g., FEIN, Unique identifier, Zip code)
- Does the employer data include an “effective date”? Is this date updated when the same employment is reported in successive quarters?
- Does your State system (and caseworkers) distinguish among NDNH data returned from the different matching processes: NDNH-to-FCR, FCR-to-NDNH, NDNH locates? Do they recognize that current data is returned from the first and more historical data in the latter two?
- Does your State system have sufficient data elements to indicate that income being reported has already been previously end-dated (e.g., FEIN, End-Date, Unique identifier)?

### **Benefits:**

Automating IWOs

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/library/training/tipstechniques.htm>

### **Additional resources:**

Employer Database Conference call

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/DCL/2002/dcl-02-11a.htm>



## **IN FULL #2**

### ***Review & Adjustment***

**PAID In Full is a compilation of early intervention, order establishment, locate, enforcement, and arrears management practices, along with implementation criteria, that facilitate successful outcomes. The questions under each practice are intended to assist readers in looking for methods to optimize their processes. The questions are organized into three categories for consideration: Organizational, Process, and Automation.**

#### **Organizational Considerations**

- √ Has your State considered the option of Cost of Living Adjustments (COLAs) for review and adjustment of child support orders?
  - Does your State permit COLAs if both parties agree?
  - For States opting to use COLAs, does your State system use indexes such as CPI to re-calculate the COLAs?
- √ Does your State require personal service of process for the non-requesting client or can a notice be sent to the last known address?
  - If personal service of process is required, does your State have no or a low fee for personal service of process and other costs related to review and adjustment?
- √ Does your State publicize the criteria for modification of orders to reduce the number of requests that don't meet the minimum criteria?
  - Has your State considered a web-based Qualifying for Review and Adjustment calculator tool to assist clients in determining if their case is eligible for modification? (e.g., Iowa)
- √ Has your State worked with your courts to develop a streamlined process for review and adjustment?
- √ Does your State allow consideration of downward modifications for incarcerated individuals?
- √ Have you provided training to staff on review and adjustment policies and procedures?
- √ Have you considered paying incentives (e.g., \$100) to counties or local offices for every support order reviewed? Minnesota paid an incentive and saw an increase from 204 orders reviewed before incentives to 1596 orders reviewed after incentives of which 70% were on TANF cases.



## **IN FULL #2**

### ***Review & Adjustment***

- √ If your State is judicial-based, have you looked for opportunities to administratively streamline parts of your process?

#### **Process Considerations**

- √ Does your State send more frequent notices to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients of the right to review than the required notices sent to clients once every three years?
- √ If there are differences between how you handle review and adjustment for TANF and non-TANF clients, have you reassessed if those differences are needed?
- √ Does your State have a policy of only processing downward adjustments upon request by a client or are downward adjustments processed automatically if the State system notes a change in earnings?
- √ Does your State provide any specialized training or guidance to the caseworker related to processing downward adjustments to the child support order?
- √ Does your State law or process permit downward modifications for incarcerated parents?
  - If State law permits it, do you have an automated way to perform these downward modifications?
  - Does your State offer pro se services to low-income individuals to assist in the modification process?
- √ Have you analyzed the ease of access for an NCP to modify an order based on a change in circumstances? Do you provide a pro se option to the NCP that does not meet State criteria?

#### **Automation Considerations**

- √ How is the review and adjustment process triggered in your State?
  - Does the State system automatically review updated wage information for the case to see if it exceeds State triggers for upward or downward modification?
  - Does the State system search State New Hire and Quarterly Wage information or use national databases such as the NDNH (e.g., for



## **IN FULL #2**

### ***Review & Adjustment***

seasonal workers)? What other sources are used to verify changes in income?

- Does the State system automatically review your database (monthly batch runs) for cases that meet review and adjustment criteria?
- Does the State system look for criteria that may result in downward as well as upward adjustments?
- √ Does the State system have screens for caseworkers to enter requests for review and adjustment from a party to the case?
- √ Does the State system automatically generate the right to review notice or does the caseworker first have to enter a code into the system?
- √ Does the caseworker have to customize the letter informing parties of their right to review?
- √ How does your State system select a case for potential modification?
- √ Does the State system conduct preliminary data analysis or coding?
- √ Does the State system enter codes for TANF cases to monitor timelines?
- √ How are non-TANF cases selected for potential modification? How are caseworkers notified about potential adjustments in support amounts?
  - Does the State system send an alert? Generate a report?
  - If not automated, does the worker enter a code to the State system to have the system generate notices to parties or employers regarding the potential for the order to be modified? To request financial data from case parties?
- √ How does the State system support guideline or COLA calculations?
  - Does the State system use imported wage data and then re-calculate?
- √ How does the State system support modifying the support order?
  - Is there a difference between administrative (e.g., enter a code) and judicial orders (e.g., caseworker must prepare a package)?
  - Does the State system determine if the case in question has been submitted to automated locate sources? Or does the caseworker have to conduct a manual assessment?
  - Does the State system or caseworker generate the notice of intent to close the case?



## IN FULL #2

### ***Review & Adjustment***

- Does the State system generate letters for submission to manual locate sources or does the caseworker have to generate letters to nonautomated locate sources?
- Does your State system support notification of worker, parties, courts, and employers about guideline calculation results?
- √ If the decision is not to modify the order, how are the parties informed?
- √ Does your State system update the case with the new order amount?
- √ Does your State system match prison files and child support cases and automatically send a notice to the custodial party (CP) and noncustodial parent (NCP) that the order will be modified unless the CP objects?

### **Benefits:**

Alaska had a Special Improvement Project (SIP) grant for Electronic Modification of Orders (ELMO). Prior to this enhancement, the State reviewed 7,000 orders annually. After implementing ELMO, they reviewed 23,655 annually. More than 68% of these reviews resulted in modification. Most (90%) are upward modifications. The average percentage change between prior and modified support award was 181%. Alaska reduced the number of days to complete their administrative process from 130 days to 85 days. Judicial reviews were reduced from more than 180 days to 160 days.

Minnesota automated its COLA and has seen an increase in order modifications every year since 2001. The average annual increase in obligations ranged between \$163 and \$319

### **Additional resources:**

For a more detailed automation discussion guide, please see *Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for Enhancing Review and Adjustment Automation*.

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/stsys/dsts\\_auto\\_review.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/stsys/dsts_auto_review.html)



## **IN FULL #3**

### ***Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), Freeze & Seize***

**PAID In Full is a compilation of early intervention, order establishment, locate, enforcement, and arrears management practices, along with implementation criteria, that facilitate successful outcomes. The questions under each practice are intended to assist readers in looking for methods to optimize their processes. The questions are organized into three categories for consideration: Organizational, Process, and Automation.**

#### **Organizational Considerations**

- √ Have you considered the benefits of centralizing the Financial Institution Data Match freeze and seize process?
  - If your local offices are reluctant to agree to a centralized freeze and seize process, have you considered centralizing just the issuing of notices, customer service, or the processing of FIDM freeze and seize responses?
- √ Do you provide a centralized point of contact for Financial Institutions related to the FIDM process?
- √ Do you have training for workers to help them determine which matches are appropriate or require action to initiate freeze and seize?
- √ Have you considered asking for additional legislative authority? For example, after its pilot, Florida requested early levy authority for noncustodial parents who were willing to waive the statutory wait period between lien and levy.

#### **Process Considerations**

- √ Have you considered eliminating or lowering your threshold for freeze and seize action? Twenty-six percent of States/Territories have no minimum delinquency threshold. Another 26 percent have a threshold between \$100 and \$500.
- √ Have you reviewed the types of financial accounts that you initially exempted from FIDM freeze and seize or the threshold you have set to determine if these thresholds or exemptions are still valid?
- √ Has your State developed a process with those States that do have laws requiring financial institutions to process out-of-state notices to have the financial institutions' resident State affirm that your notices meet the due process requirements of those States?



## **IN FULL #3**

### ***Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), Freeze & Seize***

- √ Does your State accept and process a Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) Transmittal #3 or an Automated Enforcement of Interstate (AEI) request from a State that is requesting assistance in the FIDM freeze and seize process?
- √ Does your State send Transmittal #3 requests to facilitate freeze and seize actions when financial institutions are not doing business in your State, not required by law to accept out-of-state notices, nor on the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE's) report of financial institutions that accept out-of-State notices?
- √ Were your staff initially reluctant to process FIDM freeze and seize because of concern over the accuracy of the arrears balance? If so, have you considered using the same thresholds as offset which have certified arrears? If you initially required an audit of arrears balances, have you re-visited this requirement?
- √ If your State exempts joint accounts from freeze and seize, have you considered requiring the joint account holder to appear in Court in order to obtain a release after the 2<sup>nd</sup> freeze and seize action to discourage using the joint account to hide NCP assets?
- √ Does your FIDM process require one or two steps for issuing the notice? Do you have to send a notice to freeze and a separate notice to seize? If two steps are required, is this by State law or based on State process?
- √ Have you considered the ability of the customer service unit and/or caseworkers to handle the influx of calls when you schedule sending Freeze and Seize notices?
- √ If capacity to handle an influx of FIDM related inquiries is not a factor, have you considered increasing the frequency of your FIDM freeze and seize processing?

### **Automation Considerations**

- √ Does your State system maintain a table indicating whether financial institutions outside the State will accept a direct levy?
- √ Does your State system receive matches from your in-State or the Federal multistate match process and determine, without staff intervention, which matches are eligible for freeze and seize based on your State's criteria?



## **IN FULL #3**

### ***Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), Freeze & Seize***

- √ Does your State system generate freeze and seize notices without caseworker intervention as quickly as possible after receiving eligible matches in order to avoid changes in the arrears and account amounts?
- √ Have you automated the “back-end” of the FIDM freeze and seize process?
  - Does your State system automatically search to determine if payment(s) has been made on the case?
  - Does your State system automatically remove the case from the FIDM match file, release the freeze action and/or stop the seizure based on changes in the NCP’s circumstances?
- √ Does your State system track compliance of in-state financial institutions and generate notices to those out of compliance and a tickler for staff follow up if the financial institution is unresponsive to the notice?
- √ Does your State system electronically transmit freeze and seize notices to financial institutions?
- √ Does your State system generate freeze and seize notices for financial institutions doing business in your State with out-of-state freeze and seize addresses?
- √ Does your State system generate freeze and seize notices for financial institutions not doing business in your State, when the State the financial institution resides in requires them to process out-of-state notices?
- √ Does your State system generate freeze and seize notices for financial institutions not doing business in your State if the financial institution is listed on OCSE’s report of financial institutions that accept out-of-state notices?
- √ If the other State where out-of-state FIDM assets have been located does not accept a direct notice and levy, do you use an AEI process? If so, is this automated?
- √ Have you developed a filtering mechanism to ensure that your AEI FIDM freeze and seize request meets the criteria of the State in which the assets are located?
- √ Have you considered using the FIDM match data for other purposes such as locate of delinquent obligors? This has proven cost effective for States that are required to pay the financial institution a fee for each match.
- √ Have you considered having your State system save every FIDM document generated as a PDF file to avoid having the caseworker make hard copies of the document for the official file?



## **IN FULL #3**

### ***Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), Freeze & Seize***

- √ Have you considered automating the process of sending Freeze and Seize notices to avoid the caseworkers having to fold, stuff and postage each letter?
- √ Does your State system accept Electronic Funds Transmittal/Electronic Data Transmittal (EFT/EDI) from Financial Institutions?
- √ Have you considered using the core programming for FIDM freeze and seize for other enforcement remedies? For example, MS-FIDM is based on the offset process and in Florida, both lottery intercepts and driver's license suspensions are based on the core programming for FIDM.

#### **Benefits:**

Significant efficiency to the collections of arrears can be realized by maximizing the technology available and streamlining the use of the functional processes of FIDM freeze and seize. This has been accomplished using a variety of approaches. Colorado has enhanced automation of the match and accompanying freeze and seize process within their Automated Child Enforcement System (ACSES) which also provides obligor locate information to the Child Support Enforcement program. The system has provided over \$6.5 million in collections since inception. Notable enhancements to the system provided freeze and seize actions on joint accounts, sole proprietorship accounts, and adjustment of the target arrears threshold to \$1,000 across all orders. Another enhancement excluded obligors who were currently paying from the process, thereby minimizing the appeals process on Freeze and Seize actions. These enhancements alone provided a 65% increase in collections after implementation over the previous highest monthly collection totals.

New York contracts with a vendor to conduct Financial Institution (FI) matches with a state-supplied weekly inquiry file prepared by the State's Child Support Management System (CSMS). This file is built using front end selection criteria. The vendor conducts matches with FIs via Method 1 and Method 2 practices, handles all FI outreach efforts, agreements and customer service. New York has 100% instate FI participation and over \$50 million in collections since inception. New York ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in average quarterly returned matches through MSFIDM and 1<sup>st</sup> in voluntary reported collections in 3Q2006 though 2Q2007. Collections totaled \$14.6 million in that time frame.



## **IN FULL #3**

### ***Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM), Freeze & Seize***

#### **Additional Resources:**

The Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement is developing additional guidance on enhancing the level of automation related to FIDM freeze and seize processes. We have conducted on-site case studies of the process in Florida and New York and plan additional case studies. The guidance document will be available in Fall 2007. Please contact Robin Rushton at [Robin.Rushton@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Robin.Rushton@acf.hhs.gov) for additional information.



## **IN FULL #4**

### ***Case Closure***

**PAID In Full is a compilation of early intervention, order establishment, locate, enforcement, and arrears management practices, along with implementation criteria, that facilitate successful outcomes. The questions under each practice are intended to assist readers in looking for methods to optimize their processes. The questions are organized into three categories for consideration: Organizational, Process, and Automation.**

#### **Organizational Considerations**

- √ Does your front line staff have access to training on case closure? Is there clear guidance provided on what the acceptable criteria are and the requirements for each criterion before a case can be closed?
- √ Do you concentrate your training and/or automation on the case closure reasons used in the majority of the cases? According to the Office of Inspector General, 95 percent of cases that are closed fall under only 6 of the Federal criteria, and they represent 96 percent of the errors. The number one case closure criterion, (i.e., no longer an order and arrearage less than \$500) represents 26 percent of the closed cases. It is also the most easily automated.
- √ Do you concentrate your training and/or automation on the most frequent case closure errors? According to OIG, the most common error is failure to provide the mandatory 60 day notification prior to case closure. An analysis of the State self-assessment reports for case closure indicate that other common errors are caused when staff use inappropriate reason codes, cases do not meet all of the requirements for closure, and there is insufficient documentation.

#### **Process Considerations**

- √ What is your self assessment compliance score for closing cases? If you aren't meeting the target, do you have a corrective action plan to address deficiencies?
- √ Do supervisors review cases before or following closure to determine if the case was properly closed?

#### **Automation Considerations**



## IN FULL #4

### **Case Closure**

- √ Have you considered convening a focus group with stakeholders from policy, systems, training, self-assessment and field staff to pool their caseload and business practice knowledge and experience to identify the most desirable and feasible case closure criteria for automation?
- √ How does your State search for cases that meet the regulatory case closure criteria?
  - Does the State system automatically review your database (monthly batch runs) for cases that meet certain case closure criteria?
  - If your case closure process is not automated, and your caseworkers determine readiness for case closure through case review, interviews and other manual procedures:
    - Can the caseworker enter a case closure reason code into the State system?
    - Does the State system provide a look up table of applicable closure criteria and its requirements?
    - Does the caseworker need to enter information about the review and interview into the State system? One screen or multiple screens?
- √ How does your State generate and mail a notice of intent to close the case?
  - Does the State system automatically generate and mail the notice of intent to close?
  - If the case closure process is not automated, does the caseworker have to first enter a code into the State system before the system generates the notice of intent?
  - If the case closure process is not automated, does the caseworker have to customize the letter for notice of intent to close the case?
  - Does the State system search for valid Custodial Parent (CP) mailing addresses?
- √ How does your State track case closure criteria timeframes?
  - Does the State system track the required 60 days or longer notice timeframe before closing the case?
  - Does the State system prevent the case from being closed if the 60 days (or longer) notice timeframe has not been met?
  - Does the State system check to determine that the client has not responded to the notice before closing the case?



## IN FULL #4

### **Case Closure**

- Does the caseworker have to re-review the case after the 60 day timeframe has elapsed before submitting for closure?
- √ For the most commonly used case closure criteria (i.e., no current order and arrears less than \$500) how does your State close the case?
  - Does the State system search for cases with no support order and arrearages under \$500? If so, does the State system automatically start the case closure process or does it send an alert or report to a central unit, supervisor, or individual caseworkers?
  - If the case closure process is not fully automated, does the caseworker have to review his/her caseload for cases that meet these criteria? Is there any ad hoc reporting capability available to the caseworker to assist in the review of his/her caseload?
  - Does the State system or the caseworker search for additional State criteria (e.g., \$0 balance, child over 18 or emancipated)?
  - Does the State system or caseworker verify that no other notice of intent to close has been sent on this case?
- √ For the 2<sup>nd</sup> most commonly used case closure criteria [i.e., unable to locate noncustodial parent (NCP)] how does your State process the case closure?
  - Does the State system review all cases where location of NCP (residence or employment) has been unsuccessful for at least a 3-year period and flag those cases for possible case closure?
  - Does the State system review all cases in which information on the NCP is insufficient to submit to automated locate sources and flag those cases for possible case closure?
  - Does the State system or the caseworker determine if a case has been submitted to automated locate sources?
  - Is there a requirement in your State for the caseworker to submit to un-automated manual locate sources before closure?
- √ Does your State system conduct matches to determine if the NCP or putative father is deceased?
- √ Does your State system check to see if a genetic test or court process has excluded a putative father?
- √ Even if case closure is automated in your State, can a caseworker manually initiate case closure? For what reasons is manual closure allowed?



## IN FULL #4

### **Case Closure**

- √ Have you considered giving caseworkers a “veto” providing a “do not close” code for use on a case by case basis that overrides automated closure procedures for one year? For another period of time?

#### **Benefits:**

The Commonwealth of Virginia conducted an analysis that showed a high number of inactive child support cases in 1999. In response, the Commonwealth using a combination of manual and automated case closure processes closed 472,000 cases from December 1999 through September 2006. Workers' individual caseloads dropped from an average of 1,400 to 1,000 cases. Benefits include improving self-assessments and reducing the denominator in performance incentives calculations.

Oregon automated the case closure criteria in 2002 when the case closure regulations were finalized. In the first five months after programming, the system closed five times the number of cases than it had the previous year. In 2006, 50,841 cases were closed. This has saved labor hours for caseworkers.

#### **Additional Resources:**

For a more detailed automation discussion guide, please see *Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for Automating Case Closure*. Additional resources include an OIG report and PowerPoint presentation at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/stsys/dsts\\_auto\\_closure.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/stsys/dsts_auto_closure.html)