

# Bulletin

October 1, 2007

Minnesota Department of Human Services □ P.O. Box 64941 □ St. Paul, MN 55164-0941

**OF INTEREST TO**

- County Directors
- Child Support Supervisors
- Child Support Staff

**ACTION/DUE DATE**

Please read for  
information./No due date.

**EXPIRATION DATE**

October 1, 2009

## Report FFY 2007 IV-D Self-Assessment Results; Announce FFY 2008 Self-Assessment Review Process

**TOPIC**

An overview of the Self-Assessment Review process.

**PURPOSE**

To report the results of Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2007 Self-Assessment Reviews and to inform county human service agencies about the FFY 2008 Self-Assessment Review and the changes made from FFY 2007.

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**Background:**

The Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) and the Program Assessment and Integrity Division (PAID) have conducted child support performance reviews in county agencies since 1992. The goals of the review process are to improve the effectiveness of the child support program at the county and state level and to meet federal self-assessment requirements. The review measures county compliance with state and federal child support requirements and identifies for agencies best practices and areas needing improvement.

This bulletin reports on areas reviewed in the counties. The Federal Self-Assessment Report is a compilation of this data and additional data for areas we are required to report on to the federal government. The additional areas covered in the Federal Report are: disbursement of collections; review and adjustment; arrears enforcement; and central registry responding timeframes. The annual Federal Self-Assessment Report is issued by March 31<sup>st</sup> of each year and copies are sent to the counties.

**Summary of 2007 Self-Assessment Results:**

Twenty-five county child support agencies were reviewed in FFY 2007. The federal benchmark for each review area and the average results for the agencies reviewed are shown in the table below.

<b>REVIEW AREA</b>	<b>FEDERAL BENCHMARK</b>	<b>FFY 2007 AVERAGE RESULTS</b>
Case Initiation	75%	96%
Establishment	75%	53%
Expedited Process	75%, 90%	99%, 100%
Enforcement Current Support	75%	91%
Medical Support	75%	84%
Two-State	75%	86%
Paternity Data Accuracy	95%*	97%
Case Closure	90%	83%
Security	Pass/Fail	100% of the 25 agencies reviewed passed this area

\*This benchmark was set by the state.

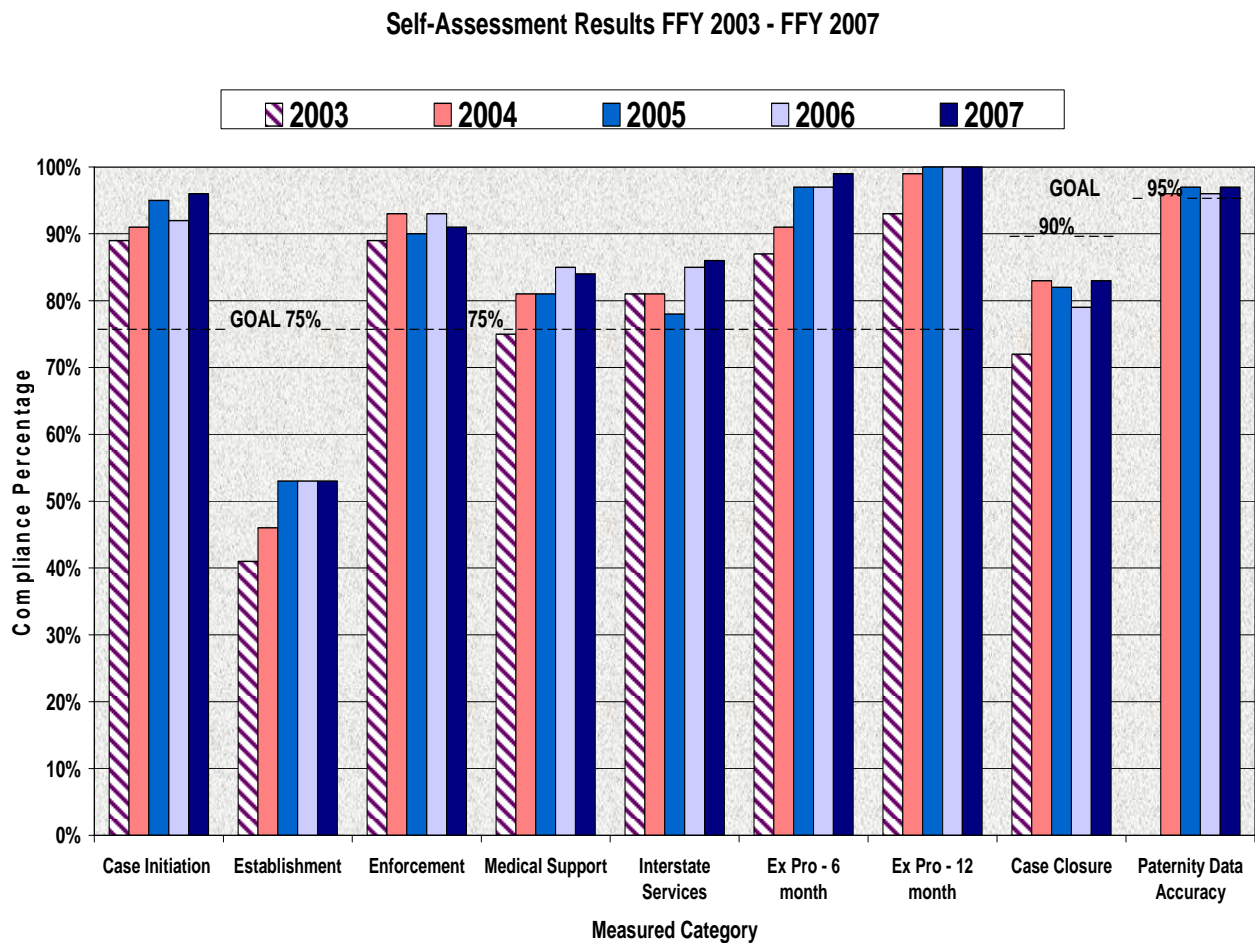
Because of the sampling method used in self-assessment, these results can be used as an indication of performance in all Minnesota counties, providing county agencies a tool to target areas that need attention. The area that continues to show the greatest need for improvement is Establishment. Minnesota continues to not meet the federal benchmark in Establishment and Case Closure.

The most common error for Establishment was a failure to serve process within 90 days of obtaining a verified address or an employer for the non-custodial parent. For Case Closure, the lack of documentation supporting the reason for closure was the most common error.

Four of the seven areas for which the compliance benchmark was met showed improved performance of up to four percent from FFY 2006 to FFY 2007. The areas showing improvement were Case Initiation, Expedited Process, Two State, and Paternity Data Accuracy. Security results remained the same with all counties passing. There was slight decrease in compliance in Enforcement and Medical Support. Although the benchmark was not met for Establishment, performance remained the same at 53 percent for FFY 2007. Even though Case Closure has not met the federal benchmark, there has been a four percent improvement. The increased results in five areas and continued high compliance results in seven of nine areas are reflective of the hard work of all those involved in administering the Child Support Program at the county level. The Department of Human Services believes that meeting federal compliance levels in all areas is an achievable goal.

The chart below compares statewide results in nine review areas over a five year period. The state averages are informational and should not be used as benchmarks for acceptable performance. The goal is to meet or exceed federal compliance percentages.

### Comparison of Self-Assessment Results FFY 2003 Through FFY 2007:



**FFY 2008 County Review Process:**

The review areas and compliance benchmarks for FFY 2008 will remain unchanged from FFY 2007.

Note for all review areas: If information that would make the case correct is found in the hard file but is not documented appropriately on PRISM, the case will be incorrect for the review. The reason for this is that PRISM must reflect the most current case information for data reliability purposes.

**Changes and Clarifications to the Self-Assessment Review Process:**

Many changes have been made to the review process over the year. General changes and clarifications made to the review process and to specific review areas for FFY 2008 are in Attachment A: Self-Assessment Review Process Overview.

**County Selection Process:**

The federal regulations on self-assessment require states to annually assess the statewide performance of their IV-D program. To address this requirement, while at the same time provide counties with statistically valid results, the department has chosen to do a targeted sample, by county, of Minnesota's child support cases. Counties have been arranged into eight strata based on caseload size. Counties chosen from each stratum are deemed to be representative of the stratum in which they fall. In addition to caseload size, geographical location is considered. For FFY 2008, the number of counties being reviewed is 25. What this means in practical terms for counties is:

- Because counties are selected from each stratum and there are fewer counties in the stratum representing larger counties, larger counties will be reviewed more frequently and in some instances annually.
- Because counties in the northern part of the state are geographically larger than counties in the southern part of the state, counties in the north tend to be reviewed more often than those in the south.

In addition to size and location, other selection criteria used include length of time since last review, recommendations from CSED and/or PAID staff, and county requests.

Contact Cindy Steinberg for more detailed information on the county selection process.

**Counties to Be Reviewed in FFY 2008:**

The twenty-five counties to be reviewed in FFY 2008 are: Aitkin, Anoka, Beltrami, Brown, Carlton, Carver, Chippewa, Clearwater, Cook, Crow Wing, Dodge, Hennepin, Hubbard, Isanti, Kittson, Lac Qui Parle, Le Sueur, Lincoln/Lyon/Murray, Mower, Ramsey, Red Lake, Stearns, Traverse, Washington, Winona.

**Self-Assessment Review Resources:**

To help prepare for a self-assessment review or to improve your agency's performance, the reference materials and attachments listed below are available. Requests for additional assistance should be directed to Cindy Steinberg.

- CSED has released InfoPac reports designed specifically to improve self-assessment compliance. QW390601 identifies cases where service of process has occurred, but no order has been obtained. QW440201 identifies cases where health care coverage is ordered but not in place.
- Ad hoc data warehouse reports are valuable tools in assisting counties identify PRISM cases that need information either updated or corrected. These reports can be especially helpful for counties preparing for a self-assessment review as well as a tool to use in conjunction with county corrective action plans. See CSED Message #2000-New Data Warehouse Report Forms dated August 20, 2002, for information on how to request an ad hoc report. The form is located in the Department of Human Services – System Information Repository (DHS-SIR) in the Forms Quick Launch link.
- Bulletin #98-75-2, Attachment A has more detailed information on standards, time frames, and benchmarks for each of the review areas. The link for this bulletin is located in DHS-SIR; Directories, Lists, and Manuals bookshelf; Self-Assessment book; Topic1.0 Self-Assessment Review Process in the Self-Assessment Review Process, Bulletins section.
- An excellent resource for self-assessment publications is DHS-SIR, which is updated yearly to include the most current information on the self-assessment process. You will find links to relevant bulletins, an overview of the review elements, and other self-assessment related documents. This information is in the Self-Assessment Review Process document noted above.
- Copies of the worksheets used by the reviewers are available upon request from Kathy Bruen.
- The Technical Quality Review (TQR) process form is available in the DHS-SIR, Forms Quick Launch link and can be used as a tool for internal self-assessment reviews. For further information on the TQR process refer to Bulletin #99-75-1 via the link located in the Self-Assessment Review Process document noted previously and Printer Message 2527 Performance/Technical Quality Review located in DHS-SIR; Child Support Topics bookshelf; Training and Regional Performance book.
- Self-Assessment Review Process Overview and Changes for FFY 2008 (Attachment A)
- Self-Assessment (SA) Review Process Steps (Attachment B)
- Child Support Self-Assessment Review Tips (Attachment C)
- Self-Assessment Review Team Observations (Attachment D)

**Special Needs**

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-3942 (voice). TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.

## **Self-Assessment Review Process Overview and Changes for FFY 2008**

### **Changes to the Final Report Process for FFY 2008:**

- Reviewers will send a copy of the case findings via encrypted email to the county's director and supervisor no later than 15 calendar days after site visit.
- Counties will have 15 calendar days from the date the findings are sent to review them and submit challenges. Contact Cindy Steinberg via the Self Assessment form in DHS-SIR with challenge questions.
- Reviewers will send the final report via encrypted e-mail to the county director and supervisor no later than 45 days after the site visit.
- Reviewers will send the Executive Summary to the county commissioner (or county board chairperson) via U.S. Mail no later than 15 days after the final report has been sent to the county.

### **General Changes for FFY 2008:**

- If there is no reviewable action, such as a case open for medical services only, the case is correct for enforcement since there is nothing to review. (Previously, these cases were dropped.) However, the case will be reviewed for medical.
- For all categories, if there are notes in a case indicating there is a system problem which prevents the Child Support Officer (CSO) from taking a required action, such as the case is stuck on the CRDL screen, the system problem will not excuse the CSO from taking action and make the case correct. However, the county will be exempt from a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) if that one case puts them out of compliance in a category.
- Hard files will not be automatically pulled in all areas. In the areas of establishment, closure, and two-state, if case findings can be determined from information on PRISM and nothing in the hard file could change those findings, the file will not need to be pulled.

### **Case Initiation**

**Desired Outcome:** Case opened timely and a manual referral (MARE) built, when appropriate.

- Was a Non-Public Assistance (NPA) and Non-IV-E Foster Care case initiated within 20 days of receiving a complete application and payment of the \$25 application fee if appropriate?
- Was an MFIP, DWP, MAO or FCC case opened within 20 days of receiving a PA automated referral from MAXIS?
- Was a MinnesotaCare case opened and a MARE screen built within 20 days of receiving a new referral?
- Was a CCC case opened and a MARE screen built within 20 days of the first day of the month following the referral month?
- Was the referral/case processed timely?

## **Without Orders - Establishment**

**Desired Outcome:** Order established during the review period and entered correctly in PRISM.

- If the case is a Non-IV-E Foster Care case, was an application on file and the \$25 application fee paid if appropriate?
- Was an order addressing child support, medical support and paternity (if applicable) obtained during the review period and child support and medical support information entered accurately and timely in PRISM?
- Was a dismissal order (DEM, DFE, DFP, DSE or DSP) obtained in the last three months of the review period?
- If there is a verified address and/or employer for the Non-Custodial Parent (NCP):
  - Was service of process completed or attempted within 90 days of the verified address/ employer?
  - Was good cause pending? If so, the 90-day time frame begins when either a determination denying good cause was made or 45 days had passed since good cause was claimed, whichever is earlier.
  - If a dissolution order was pending, did the agency document this in CAAD notes along with the date the NCP was served with dissolution pleadings and was the NCP served timely?
- If the case is in full locate:
  - Are automated locate requests being sent and responses being reviewed within 30 days of receipt?
  - Are contacts with the custodial parent completed within the first 75 days of a case going into full locate and once a year thereafter? There must be documentation of an actual conversation, interview, or correspondence.
  - Was a credit bureau (CRB) check completed within the first 75 days of a case going into full locate and once a year thereafter? CRB checks cannot be requested on Alleged Fathers (ALFs).
- If a two-state action case, were two-state requirements met? For example, was a status check conducted in the last three months of the review period? If a Transmittal #1 was sent in the last three months of the review period, was it sent within 20 days of determining the location of the NCP?
- Was the NCP located in the last three months of the review period?
- Did failed service of process (SOP) occur once in the last three months of the review period (RP)?

## **Establishment Comments**

- Non Public Law 280 Tribal cases will be excluded or dropped if they meet these criteria:
  - There is no court order; and
  - The NCP lives and works on the reservation; or
  - The NCP lives on the reservation but the employer is unknown; or
  - The NCP works on the reservation but the residence is unknown.
- The reviewer will look to PRISM for documentation explaining why the county is not pursuing establishing an order and to verify the case meets the exclusion criteria.
- The reservation must be a federally recognized sovereign nation. Most of these cases will fall in Beltrami and the Red Lake Reservation.



- When measuring time frames, reviewers start from the date of the last verified address with an MDA, CNV, or OTH postal code OR an UNKNOWN address.
- If the outcome is met, for example, there is an order in the RP and the NCP's address is out-of-state, reviewers assume long arm.
- If the outcome is NOT met and there is no indication of long arm, reviewers assume a two-state action is the next required action.

## **With Orders - Enforcement**

**Desired Outcome:** Appropriate payment on the case within the last three months of the review period.

- If the case is a Non-IV-E Foster Care case, was an application on file and the \$25 application fee paid if appropriate?
- Is there a reserved or \$0 order on file?
- Has there been an appropriate payment in the last three months of the review period?
- If there is a verified address and/or employer for the NCP, has any enforcement action taken place within 90 days of non-payment? Actions would include, but are not limited to:
  - Loading the employer on PRISM.
  - Sending letters to the NCP.
  - Sending letters to the employer.
  - Sending new AIW papers.
  - Documenting the NCP has been served with contempt papers (this is not limited to the last three months of the review period).
  - Having an active bench warrant.
  - Having a driver's license suspension in process during the last four months of the review period.
  - Documenting that a modification is in process to reduce support to zero in the last three months of the review period.
  - Documenting other appropriate enforcement action by CSO on PRISM.
  - Dismissing contempt action in the last three months of the review period.
  - Documenting a reason for delay of enforcement activities on PRISM.
- If the case is in full locate:
  - Are automated locate requests being sent and responses being reviewed within 30 days of receipt?
  - Are contacts with the custodial parent completed within the first 75 days of a case going into full locate and once a year thereafter?
  - Was a CRB check completed within the first 75 days of a case going into full locate and once a year thereafter?
- If a two-state action case, are two-state requirements being met? For example, was a status check conducted in the last three months of the review period? If a Transmittal #1 was sent in the last three months of the review period, was it sent timely?
- Was the NCP located in the last three months of the review period?

## **Enforcement Comments**

- A bench warrant from another state can make the case correct for enforcement.
- NCP incarceration does not exempt the case from meeting normal review requirements.

- If the outcome is met, for example, a payment in the last three months of the Review Period (RP) and the NCP's address is out-of-state, reviewers assume long arm.
- If the outcome is NOT met and there is no indication of long arm, reviewers assume a two-state action is the next required action.

## **With Orders - Medical Support**

**Desired Outcome:** Court ordered medical support provisions entered on PRISM and enforced.

- If the case is a Non-IV-E Foster Care case, was an application on file and the \$25 application fee paid if appropriate?
- If medical language exists and health care coverage is ordered for the minor children:
  - Is there verification on file that the person ordered to carry health care coverage has insurance in place and is this information on PRISM in NCPD/NCKD and CPPD/CPKD?
  - If there is NO verified health care coverage, has any enforcement action taken place during the last three months of the review period? For example, was there documented communication with the employer or the NCP, or employer verification in the hard file indicating health care coverage is not available?
- If medical support is unenforceable and is:
  - PA, (MFIP, DWP, MAO, MNC, CCC or FCC) with an order at least three years old, is a modification in process? Is there a CAAD note explaining that the current medical support situation has been reviewed and a modification isn't appropriate?
  - NPA; has the CP requested a modification? If so, is a modification in process?
- If medical support payments are ordered, have any payments been made on this case in the last three months of the review period?
- Is contempt action pending?
- If the case is in full locate, were the latest federal locate requirements met and all leads pursued?
- If this is a two-state action case, were two-state requirements met?
- Was the NCP located in the last three months of the review period?
- If additional information on health care coverage is needed from a CP, did the CSO follow up to get that information?
- Was the National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) (F0946) sent within two days of verified employer if PRISM does not automate (applies to the obligated party, which could be either NCP or CP)?

## **Medical Support Comments**

- If the health care coverage information on file is associated with employment that has been terminated for more than 18 months and there is no documentation that insurance coverage continued past 18 months (under COBRA provision), the case is incorrect.
- If information in the case file clearly states health care coverage has expired, the case is incorrect.
- If a modification is needed for medical, and the case is in full locate and the NCP is located in Minnesota within the last three months of the RP, the case is correct. If the NCP is located in another state, review for generation of a two-state action.

- For NPA cases, if the NCP is ordered to obtain health care coverage and does not; and the county has documented it is pursuing collection of uninsured medical expenses OR a modification is in progress, the case is correct.
- As in the same scenario above, but the case is PA (MA or MinnesotaCare), the court-ordered language would be considered unenforceable and the case would require a modification if the order is over three years old.

## Locate Comments for FFY 2008

- A Social Security number (SSN) for the NCP is required to do a CRB check
- Assuming the NCP has been lost less than one year:
  - If 75 days have expired prior to the RP and the CRB check and CP contact were done prior to the RP, another CRB check and CP contact is not required within the RP.
  - If CRB check and CP contact is ever completed in the RP, it must be timely unless the outcome is met.
  - If the NCP was lost prior to the RP and the CRB check and CP contact were not done, the case must meet an outcome to be correct.
- If the CP is the agency, requirements for CP contact are waived.

## Two-State Actions

**Desired Outcome:** Two-state activities completed timely and data elements accurately entered on PRISM.

- **Initiating** cases are reviewed for the following:
  - If a Transmittal #1 was required in the review period, was it sent within 20 days of determining the location of the NCP?
  - If new information was obtained, was it forwarded to the other state within 10 working days?
  - If the other state requested information, did the agency respond within 30 days?
  - If there was a request for modification was it forwarded to the other state within 20 days of the request?
- **Responding** cases are reviewed for the following:
  - If there is a request for a status update, did the agency respond within five days?
  - If new information was obtained, was it forwarded to the other state within 10 days?
- **Initiating and Responding** cases:
  - Were CSENET messages reviewed within 30 days?
  - Were the following data elements accurate on INCM:
    - Two-state case number.
    - Status.
- Were all status updates/requests in the RP processed timely?
- If the NCP was located in the last three months of the RP with an out-of-state address, and the county has not documented long arm, was the case (Transmittal #1/interstate paperwork) correct for time frames?
- If the last required action requires initiating a two-state action, was a Transmittal #1 sent timely counting from the date the out-of-state address was verified?

## Two-State Comments

- The 20-day initiating time frame begins with the date there is a verified out-of-state address for the NCP or documentation that long arm jurisdiction is no longer applicable. This date is compared to the date of the CSESNet transaction on INTL indicating the initial documents were sent to the other state or to the date a CAAD activity documents the initial documents were sent.
- If the original case was an initiating two-state case, and then the child moves into a different household, the second case requires the initiating interstate paperwork be sent again to the second state.
- If communications are flowing via CSESNet between the two states, assume the case number is correct. If there are no CSESNet transactions, match the case number on INCM with that in the hard file and disregard leading zeros.

## Expedited Process

**Desired Outcome:** Resolution of legal action to occur in 75% of cases within six months of service of process (SOP) and 90% of the cases within 12 months of SOP.

Counties will be given data on the percentage of cases that had an order established within 0-6 months, 0-12 months, or over 12 months from service of process.

## Paternity Data Accuracy (PDA)

**Desired Outcome:** Paternity data elements on PRISM reflect the most current information available.

CHPA will be reviewed to determine the accuracy of the data entered for the oldest and youngest active children on the case. The elements being reviewed are:

- Was the born in wedlock indicator coded correctly?
- Is the paternity basis coded on CHPA correctly and consistent with other case record information?
- If the case converted from CSES and has a paternity basis code of ADJ it will be considered correct for paternity basis coding.

## PDA Comment

A Recognition of Parentage (ROP) is not considered official until the interface with the Department of Health occurs.

## Case Closure

**Desired Outcome:** Case closed appropriately and notice of action sent if required.

- Does the case meet federal case closure criteria and is there documentation to support this?
- Was the 60-day notice sent, if appropriate?

## Case Closure Comments

- A “written request” can also be typed, e-mailed, or faxed, as long it is clearly from the CP and a copy is in the file.

- No review of the child's active/inactive status (on CAST) is necessary when the case loses the child. Reviewers will not verify the child is active on another open case.
- A Department of Economic Security/Department of Employment and Economic Development (DES/DEED) check on CP lost contact cases is no longer required.

## **Security**

The security review is a pass/fail category. Counties answer general questions regarding their security practices. The goal of the security questions is to raise awareness in the counties of good security practices and to gather information on where counties are regarding security practices. Individual cases are not reviewed for this area.

## Self-Assessment (SA) Review Process Steps

### 1. County selection process (December through February):

- **Solicit recommendations** from CSED & PAID staff.
- **Prepare the list** of potential counties based on:
  - representative sampling of the state
  - length of time since the last review
  - county requests
  - CSED/PAID referrals.
- **Obtain assurance** from the statistician that the list is a representative sampling of the state's population.
- **Present the list** to the Self-Assessment (SA) Committee for approval.
- Once the list is approved:
  - PAID selects the regional performance staff, assigns reviewers and assigns the 6-month review period.
  - PAID & the CSED Federal Reports and Compliance Unit notify the counties by joint letter.
  - Distribute the listing of review counties, regional performance staff, reviewers, and timelines to:
    - Federal Reports and Compliance Unit, Help Desk, RPA, reviewers, and SA Committee. Inform all CSED staff of counties selected for review.

### 2. Review and modification of self-assessment process (March through August):

- **Solicit input** regarding changes to the review process for the upcoming year from PAID, SA Oversight Committee and CSED Management Team.
- **Review proposed changes** with SA Committee representatives, determining recommendations for change.
- **Finalize changes**, review with PAID, and modify forms.
- **Present information** on changes to counties.
- **Prepare bulletin** announcing findings and informing counties of changes to the process.
- **Publish** updated documents on eMILO.

### 3. Review Process – Prior to the on-site visit:

- **CSED conducts regional meetings** to inform counties up for review on the details of the review process.
- **CSED provides PAID** with data necessary to conduct review.
- **Reviewer contacts the county** to briefly explain the process, firm up site visit time, and request any information in addition to the case files that may be needed.
- **Reviewer sends the confirmation letter** to the director. The SA coordinator and regional performance staff are notified of review dates.

- **Identify the cases** for review by random selection and conduct an electronic review.
- **Reviewer mails the case list** to the county approximately one week before visit.

#### 4. Review Process – Site visit:

- **Reviewers' site visit (usually 2 days) to the county includes:**
  - **entrance interview** - reviewer(s) and county staff (at county request)
  - **hard file review**
  - **exit interview** (notify SA coordinator when scheduled). SA coordinator attends in person, by phone or videoconference (usually the last day of the site visit).
  - **sending a survey** to county director and/or supervisor(s) requesting feedback on site visit.
- PAID does the final assessment of data and drafts the report. The draft report is circulated to SA coordinator and PAID supervisor.
- **Send preliminary findings** to the county. The time frame to bring forward questions on calls and have an impact on the final results ends 15 days after the date of the preliminary findings.
- **Publish the final report.** Full report is sent to the county and CSED staff within 45 days of the site visit. The Executive Summary is sent to county board chairperson 15 days later.

#### 5. Corrective Action Plan (CAP) Development:

- **SA coordinator contacts county to offer assistance** developing CAP (shortly after receipt of the final report).
- Do a follow-up **visit to the county** to assist in reacting to review results, instruct the county on Corrective Action Plan (CAP) development, offer assistance in developing the plan, assess any related performance support or training needs, and gather promising practice information.
- **When the county submits the CAP:**
  - **Log receipt & due date** of effectiveness review results.
  - **Distribute copies** to PAID and CSED.
  - Regional performance staff **assists county** with any CAP implementation on as needed basis.
  - SA coordinator **monitors** for return of CAP effectiveness review.

#### 6. Drafting the Federal Self-Assessment Report (October through March):

- **SA coordinator prepares** Federal SA Reports (Due by March 31 of each year).
  - **Category 1 (mandatory)** Required Program Compliance Criteria - this section reports the findings of the county SA reviews and the automated compliance results.
  - **Category 2 (optional)** Program Direction - this section explores the relationship between the results in Category 1 and performance and program outcome indicator, including corrective action planning.
  - **Category 3 (optional)** Program Service Enhancements - this section discusses best practices that impact performance in a positive way.
- **Circulate draft** to Federal Reports And Compliance Unit manager and PAID supervisor.

- The CSED Director approves and certifies the report.
- **Mail the report** to OCSE.
- **Distribute** copies of **report** to counties, CSED managers, advisory board, PAID, and SA coordinator staff.



## **Child Support Self-Assessment Review Tips**

### **Introduction**

The following tips are aimed at improving results in county self-assessment reviews. Most of them are based on the most common errors found in the reviews. This information is current as of August 2007. Because the review is a process, review elements will change from year to year. Also, some of the tips have direct impact on review results while others are hints about good business practices, which, if implemented, should lead to better review results.

### **Plan in Advance for the Self-Assessment Review**

Remember that self-assessment reviews examine only those actions taken within a designated six-month time period. Therefore, actions taken after the end of that review period cannot be considered. Because of this, counties wanting to prepare for a self-assessment review need to move in that direction well in advance of a review to have the biggest impact on the review results. Feel free to ask any of the self-assessment personnel about your specific review period, or to ask any other questions you might have regarding this process. Attend the regional self-assessment informational meetings offered annually to counties up for review.

### **Use PRISM as Designed**

The self-assessment review process is based on current policy and how PRISM is designed to be used. A case would be incorrect for an action if the county did the work, but did not document it in the appropriate place on PRISM. An example of this might be when a county receives a locate response, reviews the response, but fails to update PRISM appropriately that the message was reviewed. Even though CAAD or the hard file might show evidence that the response was reviewed, this case would be found in error as the appropriate PRISM screen is not updated. The reason for this strict practice is that reports and any resulting incentives will be based on automated reports, pulling information from the various designated areas in PRISM.

### **Business Practices**

#### **Statewide Self-Assessment Performance Plan**

Review statewide self-assessment performance plans. These documents identify common barriers to meeting compliance expectations and solutions for overcoming those barriers. Look for barriers that may be an issue in your county and implement recommended solutions.

They can be found in the PRISM documentation section on Department of Human Services – System Information Repository (DHS-SIR).

#### **Centralize Data Entry Tasks**

Look for ways to centralize data entry functions with support staff. Specializing of certain data entry functions could increase overall accuracy of data entry. This practice could also work to free up some CSO time.

**Technology Based Training (TBT)**

Take the TBT courses available on the Child Support Student Center. The security and case closure TBT courses are especially helpful in preparing for a self-assessment review.

**Maintenance of Paper Files**

It is a good idea to get your case filing up-to-date prior to the site visit of the PAID reviewers.

**Hold Periodic Staff Meetings**

Staff meetings are an excellent opportunity to review new information and discuss unusual case scenarios.

**Provide Good Customer Service**

Counties with a strong emphasis on good customer service indicate that it benefits them by increasing customer cooperation.

**Streamline Your Processes**

Take a step back periodically and examine the steps involved in processes. Look for ways to improve the efficiency of routine tasks.

**Conduct Special Projects**

Look for areas of casework that would benefit by a targeted project aimed at either improving the quality of PRISM data or increasing compliance. Conducting TQR and/or reviewing self-assessment results can assist in identifying areas that would benefit from this activity.

**Review the Annual Self-Assessment Federal Report**

In March of each year, CSED prepares the Federal Self-Assessment Report. This is a summary of the findings of individual county reviews conducted in the previous federal fiscal year. It has been Minnesota's experience that results tend to be consistent across counties. Counties not scheduled for review can use the findings in this report to identify potential issues in their county.

**Daily Practices****Make a Working Checklist**

Create a checklist of the most common areas on PRISM where you are finding that data is either incorrect or incomplete. Check these items on each case you work. Some common errors found in the self-assessment process include medical support information, end dates for employment, and SEPD information. Many counties use TQR for their checklist.

**Build Non IV-E Cases Correctly**

Be sure you have a completed application and the application fee has been paid prior to loading Non IV-E foster care cases as IV-D (NPA) cases.

### **Visit the Case Worklist**

While visiting a case for one worklist message, it is efficient to resolve any other worklists on that same case. Doing so will also help to keep the larger USWT worklist more manageable.

### **Locate Activities**

Work the locate worklist messages. Set up tickler messages so that custodial parent contact and header credit bureau checks are conducted in accordance with time frames.

### **Review Support Order Detail (SUOD)**

Review SUOD for medical insurance information and update to reflect the requirements of the court order.

### **Verify INCM Information**

Be sure the information on INCM is accurate and complete. Work CSENet worklists and send interstate status updates as required.

### **Date Stamp Applications and Referrals**

Date stamp all incoming non-public assistance applications and non-automated child support referrals with the date the materials were received by the child support unit. If non-public assistance applications are received without the fee, be sure to note the date the fee is paid on PRISM. Payment of the fee and a completed application start case initiation time frames.

## **Routine Practices**

### **Unusual Case Circumstances**

Note any unusual case circumstances that prohibit you from complying with requirements in CAAD. This practice will not guarantee these cases will be called correct, but it could provide necessary information for compliance determinations.

### **Review for Case Closure**

Review automated case closure assists carefully and take appropriate action.

### **Work Data Warehouse Reports**

Review the standard reports available on DHS-SIR. A number of these have been created in response to common errors found in self-assessment reviews. Periodically review the reports and use them to clean up data entry errors or omissions on your cases.

### **Use InfoPac Reports**

Review the InfoPac Reports Guide and look for reports that might be helpful. Pay particular attention to reports that specifically reference self-assessment.

**Be Sure about Addresses**

Make sure addresses are on PRISM and that they have the correct status and verification information entered. If you are updating residential addresses to match mailing addresses be sure to change both when one or the other changes, if appropriate. Change “address known” to “No” for both mailing and residential addresses on PRISM when appropriate.

**Conduct Technical Quality Reviews**

Conduct Technical Quality Reviews (TQR) to catch data entry errors that might negatively affect self-assessment. Updated guides and forms can be found on DHS-SIR.

**Properly List Self-Employed NCPs**

Make sure you have properly documented self-employed non-custodial parents on NCIL in PRISM.

**Record Service of Process Information**

Be sure to record service of process information on SEPD as soon as possible after successful or unsuccessful service. Serve non-custodial parents at work if you do not have their residential address. Document unsuccessful attempts at service on CAAD.

**Remember Manual (Non-PRISM) Actions**

Don’t forget to do the manual things that can be so effective, such as contacting the custodial parent for locate information (at least annually).

**Remember to Follow Time Frames****Time Frame Requirements**

Familiarize yourself with the federal time frame requirements (see Bulletin 98-75-2).

**Remember End Dates**

Put end dates on employers for non-custodial parents when appropriate. Be sure to verify continued coverage of health insurance if it was available through employment.

**Do CRDL Lists on Time**

Work your CRDL lists within time frames.

**Medical Documentation****Enforce All Medical Support Provisions**

Enforce all medical support provisions. Take action to review public assistance cases for medical support modifications when the medical provisions have not been addressed or are unenforceable.

**Record Hard File Health Insurance Information**

If you have health insurance policy information in the hard file, enter it on PRISM. Screens that are commonly used for this are NCPD, CPPD, NCKD and/or CPKD.

**Send Health Insurance Inquiry Letters**

If health insurance is ordered, and you have no information on insurance, send out the letters requesting the information and record results. (Note any unusual circumstances in CAAD.) Conduct projects to obtain updated and/or missing insurance information from the parties by sending out health insurance verification letters. This is a proactive way to stay on top of the many changes in this area.

**Send National Medical Support Notices**

If health insurance is ordered but not provided, send the National Medical Support Notice to the obligated party's employer.

**Code Court Ordered Medical Support Provisions on PRISM**

Be sure that the SUOD panel on PRISM accurately reflects medical support provisions as addressed in the court order. Remember to code the reserved indicator to "Yes" if any portion of medical support is reserved

*Thanks for your efforts in working towards improved performance in Minnesota's Child Support Enforcement Program!*

## **Self-Assessment Review Team Observations**

### **Most Common Errors Found in Self-Assessment:**

- Actions to establish support and/or paternity are not served within 90 days of locating the NCP/alleged parent.
- There is a lack of enforcement of current support and/or medical support obligations.
- Hard file documentation supporting the case closing is missing.
- There is unenforceable medical support language and no modification is pending.
- Data on PRISM for court-ordered medical requirements is incomplete.
- Information on NCP addresses/or employer is outdated.
- Interstate communication time frames are not met.
- Health insurance available through employment is not reverified or ended when the associated job terminates.

### **General Profile of Counties that Perform Above Average as Measured in Child Support Self-Assessment Reviews:**

- PRISM is used as designed.
- Reports are used regularly.
- Corrective action plans are carried out.
- Staff is very familiar with self-assessment procedure.
- Response deadlines for customers are short but reasonable.
- Work distribution has had a recent reorganization.
- Case reviews are conducted regularly.
- Good customer service skills are practiced.
- Workflow is streamlined and efficient.
- There is heavy emphasis on good data entry accuracy and completeness.
- Special projects targeting error prone areas are conducted periodically.
- Case files are uniform and filing is up-to-date.