



**State of Alaska
Department of Revenue
Child Support Services Division**

**Self-Assessment Review
FFY 2007**

March 17, 2008

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Executive Summary

CSSD's Internal Auditor conducted the annual Self Assessment Review to measure the division's compliance with federal regulations for federal fiscal year 2007.

CSSD exceeded all federal compliance requirements.

A stable level of performance was found in most areas measured, though Paternity/Establishment and Medical Support Enforcement did decline. The declines in those two areas were substantial. Performance scores still exceeded the mandated minimums of 75%. Staff vacancies, training for new employees and a change in managers and supervisors for several sections in the agency contributed to the decline in establishment; steady improvement over the next year or two is expected. Medical support enforcement also suffered due to staff vacancies, but improvements may be possible with a few procedural changes and allowing the automated system to generate more National Medical Support Notices without case worker intervention.

Using statistics from the OCSE-157 Report, CSSD's active IV-D caseload grew in size from 44,989 to 45120 (.3% larger than in FFY 06). The number of open cases with orders was static at 92%. The agency distributed \$94.3 million in child support in FFY 06. Actual collections increased from the prior year by about \$5 million. We expect a continued, but small growth in collections in FFY 2008.

We have 232 full time employees. No new staff positions were added for FFY 07.

The audit review period was October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007. It included a detailed review of 513 cases (including the hard files). The sample was determined seeking a 90% confidence level and a +/- 2% maximum error of estimate. The review was conducted according to the requirements of 45 CFR 308.

The following table depicts the percent of cases in compliance by category:

Criterion	Cases That Required Action	Cases Compliant With Time Frames	Efficiency Rate: 2007	Federal Minimum Standard	Last Year: 2006
Case Closure	27	26	96% (+/- 6%)	90%	94%
Paternity/Establishment	51	44	86% (+/- 5%)	75%	96%
Expedited Processes within 6 months	12	10	83% (+/- 9%)	75%	95%
Expedited Processes within 12 months	14	13	93% (+/- 9%)	90%	100%
Enforcement	422	399	95% (+/- .5%)	75%	96%
Disbursement	280	277	99% (+/- 1%)	75%	98%
Medical Support Enforcement	67	56	84% (+/- 4%)	75%	95%
Review and Adjustment	317	287	91% (+/- 1%)	75%	88%
Interstate Services, Overall	98	94	96% (+/- 3%)	75%	89%
Initiating Interstate	69	65	94% (+/- 4%)	75%	88%
Responding Interstate	29	29	100% (+/- 6%)	75%	92%
TOTAL CASES	513				

Details of the case results are in the subsequent report text. In addition, we are submitting the optional report categories titled, Program Direction and Program Service Enhancements.

Note that overall audit results have a margin of error of +/- 2%, with a 90% confidence level.

Introduction

The Alaska Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA) was created under the Department of Health and Social Services (H&SS) on July 1, 1976. In its first year of operation, 7 employees managed a caseload of 8,800 child support cases, all of which were established through judicial process. A year later, the agency was moved from H&SS to the Department of Revenue where it remains today. In 1978, the CSEA was empowered with administrative enforcement capabilities. In April 1981 CSEA was renamed the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED). In 2004, the name changed again to Child Support Services Division (CSSD). Today, CSSD has 232 full time employees who manage 45,120 active, IV-D child support cases (of which 41,643 cases have support orders). In federal fiscal year 2007 CSSD distributed \$94.3 million (as reported on OCSE Form 157), of which about \$9.6 million was from the state's Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD).

The PFD is a significant part of the Alaskan economy, paying about \$700 million dollars to the population in FFY 07. In the past, the amount has exceeded a billion dollars in a single year. For FFY 08 the amount of the public dividends will be approximately \$900 million. The money itself helps all families, and for those people owing child support, it helps them pay their child support with money that does not come directly from their paychecks. The money the Fund contributes to the economy significantly affects CSSD's annual collections as it filters through local businesses and turns up as wages and assets for nearly every resident. By matching CSSD information with the data kept by the Permanent Fund Dividend Division we are also able to locate many people who owe or are owed child support. The PFD benefits CSSD on several levels, but even if it is not factored into our statistics CSSD still shows full-spectrum successes in performing our duties.

Sampling Methodology

In accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 308), we extracted a systematic random sample of the statewide caseload. This sample gives a 90% confidence level with a $\pm 2\%$ margin of error. We perform one self assessment review per year and it is oriented on the federal fiscal year. CSSD employs an internal auditor who performs the review. Automated review tools are not used. All records are maintained by CSSD. At this time we have one internal auditor performing the reviews; he has ten years experience with these reviews. The auditor reports directly to the IV-D director.

We did not omit any segment of the IV-D universe from the sampling process. The population, numbering 48,599, consisted of every case that was open as of September 30, 2007, and included every case closed during the audit period, October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007. We excluded all Non-IV-D cases from the population.

A minimum sample of 320 cases was required. To improve our statistical accuracy we took a sample of 513 cases. The skip interval was 95. We used Microsoft Excel to generate a random starting number between 1 and 95. A system programmer extracted the audit sample from the online caseload. Of the 513 cases reviewed, 32 had no measurable actions or were excluded for other reasons. The exclusion rate was 6%.

Scope of the Review

We performed the audit in conformance with 45 CFR 308. As in the past, we held Interstate Initiating to a more restrictive standard. We did so because the CFR only requires that a case be initiated within 20 days of receiving the information needed to complete the interstate forms. It does not set any standards for soliciting that information from the custodian of the children or answering their questions. We determined that we should

measure this preliminary process as a way of determining the quality of the service we provide to the public. The following additional criteria provide a more accurate assessment of the agency's provision of Interstate services:

- A General Testimony packet, or a Registration of Foreign Order packet, should be sent to the custodial parent within a reasonable amount of time (30 days), when required to initiate a case.
- Follow-up actions should occur until we receive the information needed to process the case. (Such actions will include contacting the custodial parent about returning the initial paper work, or supplying any other information if the case was already initiated to another state). The time allowed for these follow up actions varies from 30 to 90 days based on whether the case was already initiated and what type of follow up action can reasonably be expected to produce a positive result.
- Timely responses should be made to other states and case parties to facilitate customer service, not just to meet CFR requirements. The CFR sets a response timeframe for Status Requests and for information requests from other states. We expanded this requirement to include contacts with case parties and attorneys, allowing up to 30 days to make a reply or forward a query to the other state.

The Quality Control auditor reviewed case record information from both online case records and physical case files. We recorded our findings in a Microsoft Access database.

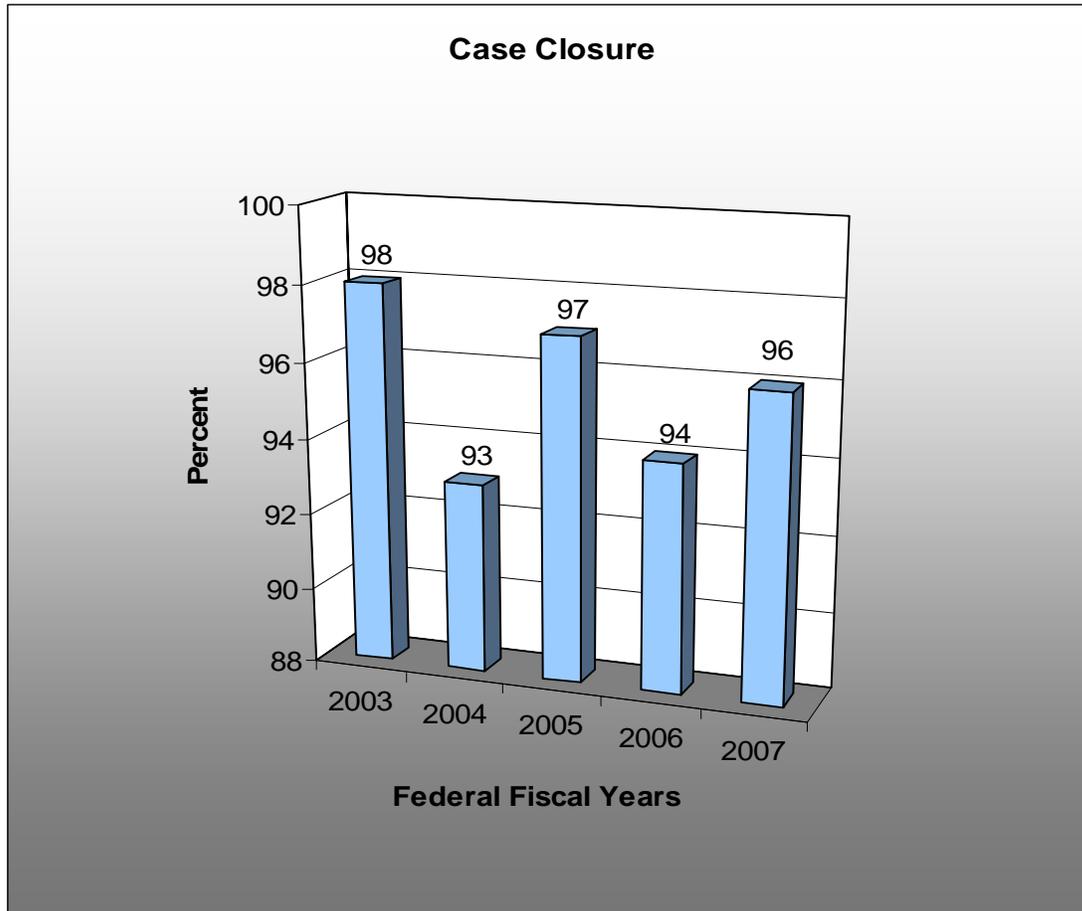
Category 1: Program Compliance

Review Criteria in Compliance

We calculated all percentages by dividing the total-cases-measured for the criterion into the number of cases that had no measurable errors. Fractional numbers were rounded up when the fraction equaled .5 or greater, and were rounded down if it was .4 or less. The charts show five-year histories to better illustrate overall performance.

Case Closure: 96% (Minimum Acceptable: 90%)

Out of 27 cases measured, one had an error. This criterion remains compliant. The five-year average performance is 96%.

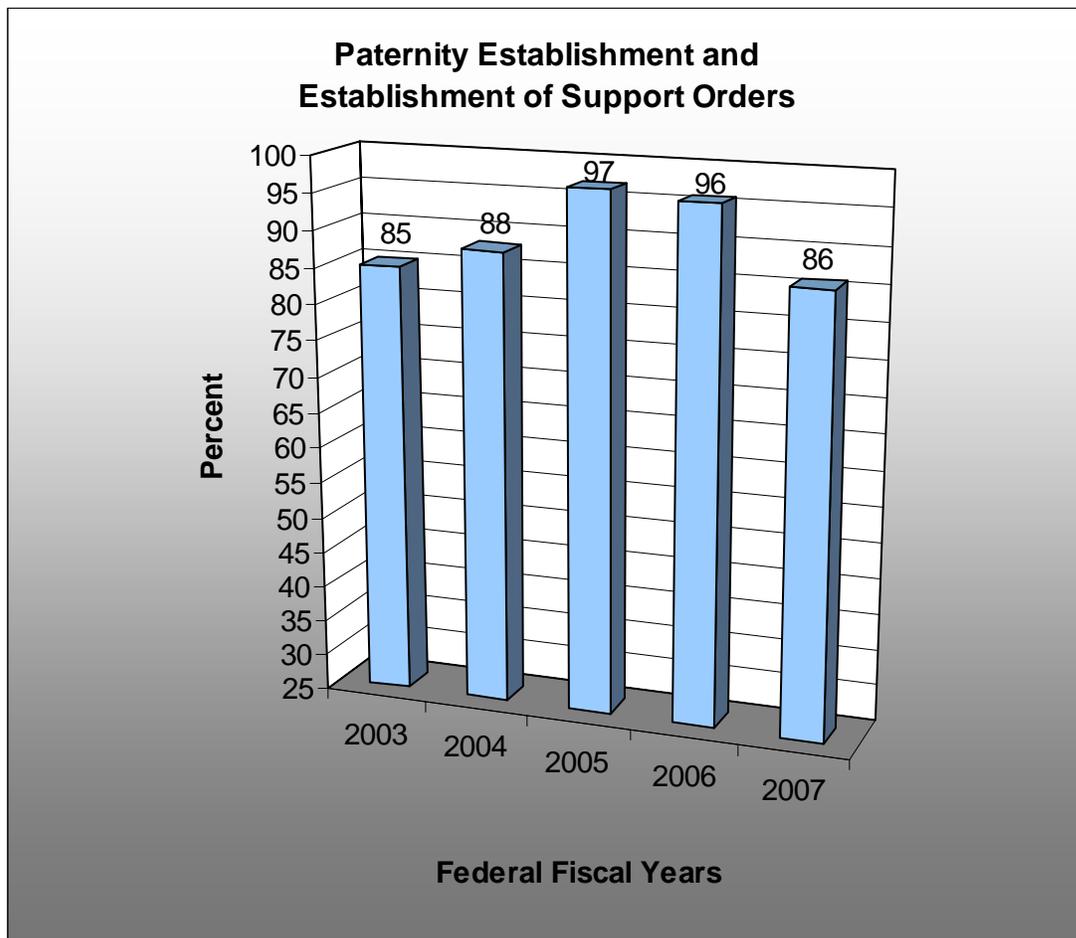


Paternity and Support Order Establishment: 86% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Of the 51 cases measured, 7 had errors. This criterion remains compliant with federal guidelines. The five-year average performance is 90%.

The total number of new orders established for the year was 1,632. For the second year in a row the caseload maintains a 92% level for open cases with orders. CSSD exceeded the performance requirement for this measurement category, but did not reach the 94% target set in the last annual self assessment review.

For 2007 the division should, again, try to achieve the 94% goal for “Cases with Orders” (Line 2 on the OCSE 157).



Expedited Processes: Within 6 months: 83%, 12 months: 93%.
(Minimum Acceptable: 75% and 90% respectively)

These criteria remain compliant.

Altogether, we measured 15 cases for expedited processes. Twelve were measured for the 6-month timeframe. There were 2 errors in this tier of measurement.

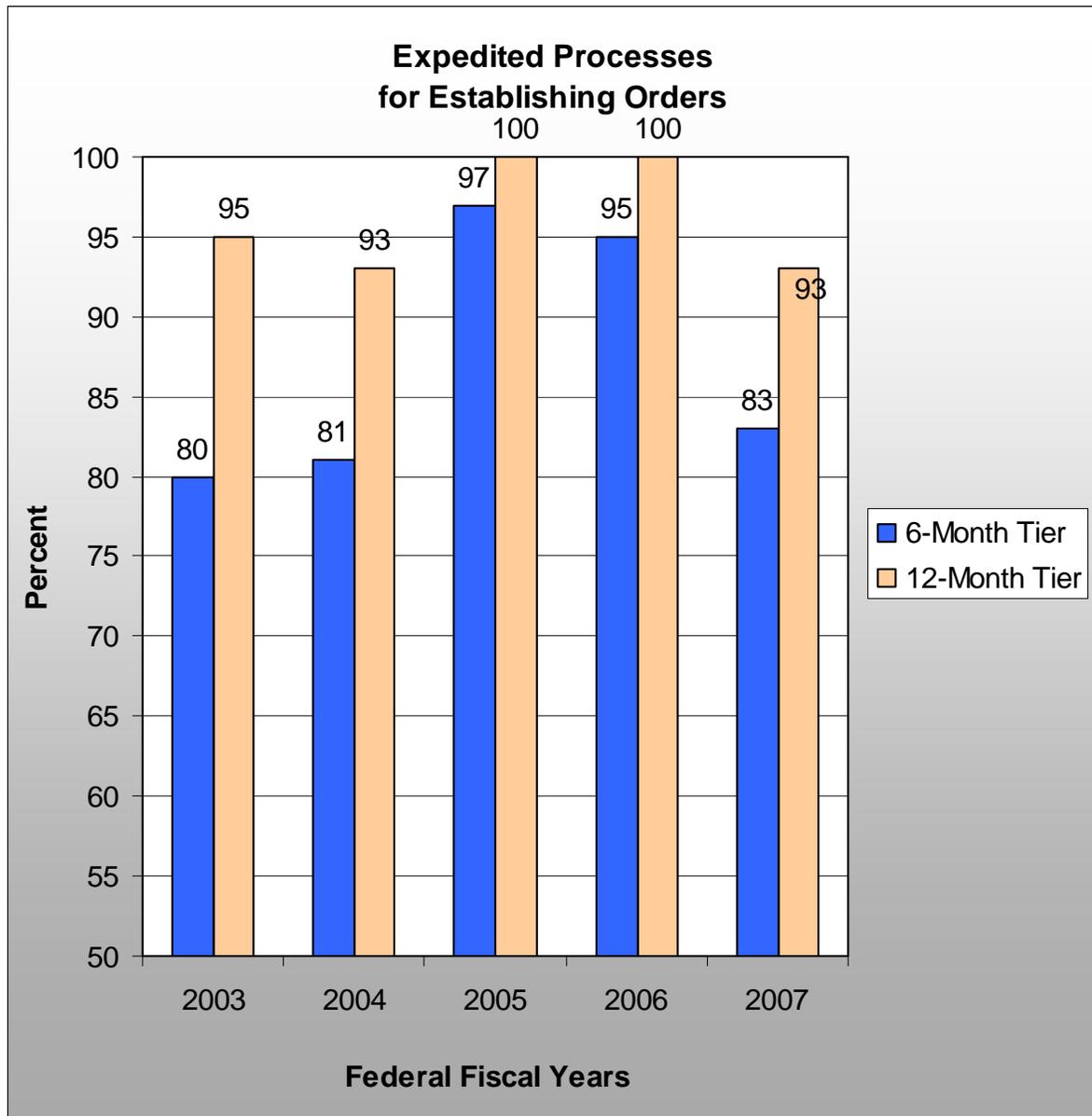
We measured 14 of the 15 for the 12-month timeframe. We found 1 error in this group.

Performance remains relatively consistent; three of the last five years have seen similar performance levels to the 2007 numbers (see the chart below). The five year average for the 6-month tier is 87% (the same as last year). The five year average for the 12-month tier is 96% (a slight decline from 2006). These percentages are consistent with the years 1999, 2001 and 2002 as well.

The division should maintain this level of performance for establishing orders at the 12-month tier. However, effort should be expended to shorten the length of time for the majority of orders, and thereby improve the 6-month performance tier. Management should examine current procedures to determine if they are causing any delays in obtaining an order in less than six months.

Note: The Expedited Processes criterion measures the time allowed under the CFR to establish child support orders. The timeframe measured begins with the initial service of documents on the non-custodial parent and ends with the establishment of a child support order. At least 75% of the cases must have an order established within 6 months of serving the non-custodial parent with a notice of a paternity complaint or of a duty to support a child. A minimum of 90% of the cases must have an order established within 12 months.

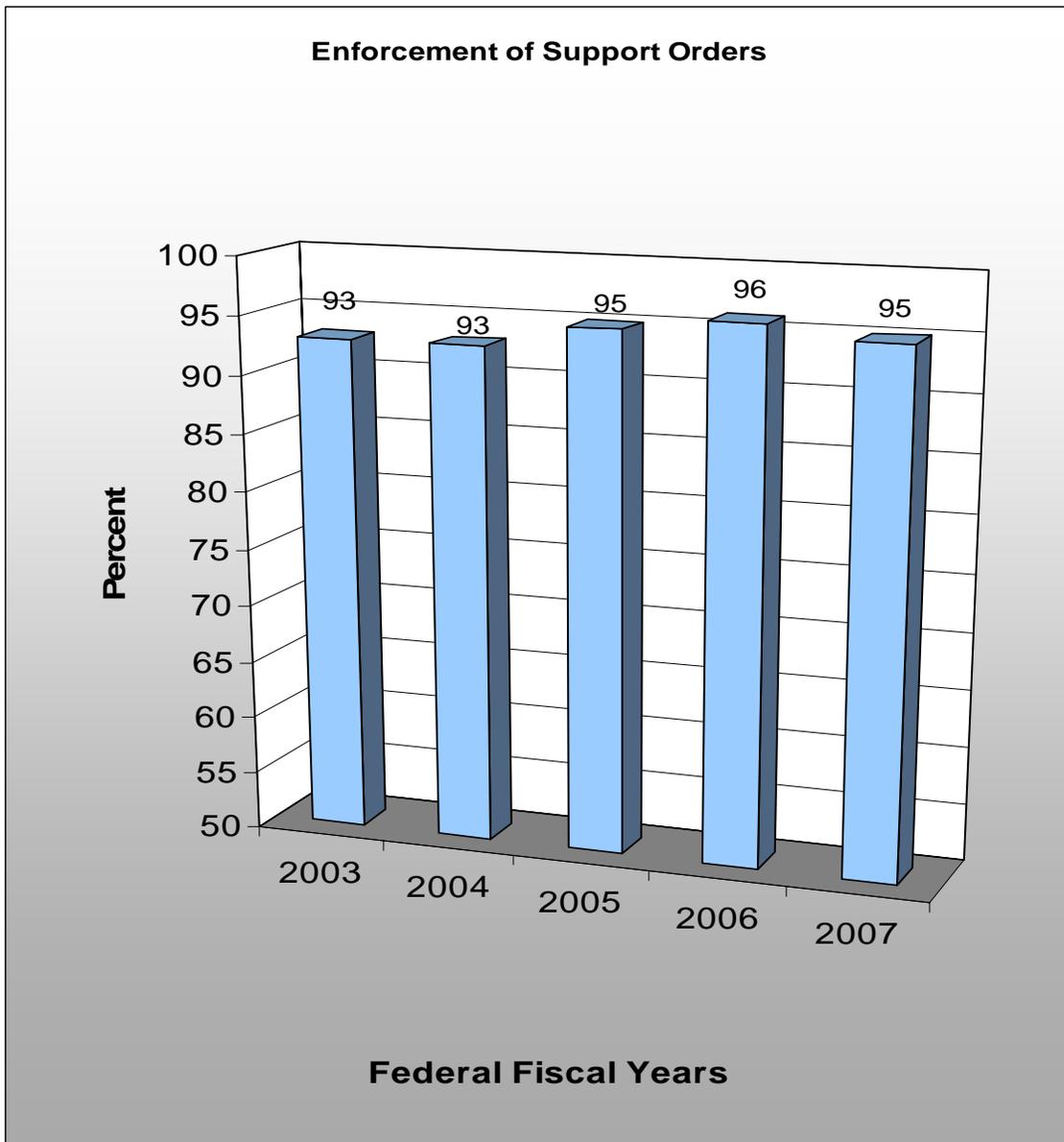
[Chart follows]



Enforcement: 95% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

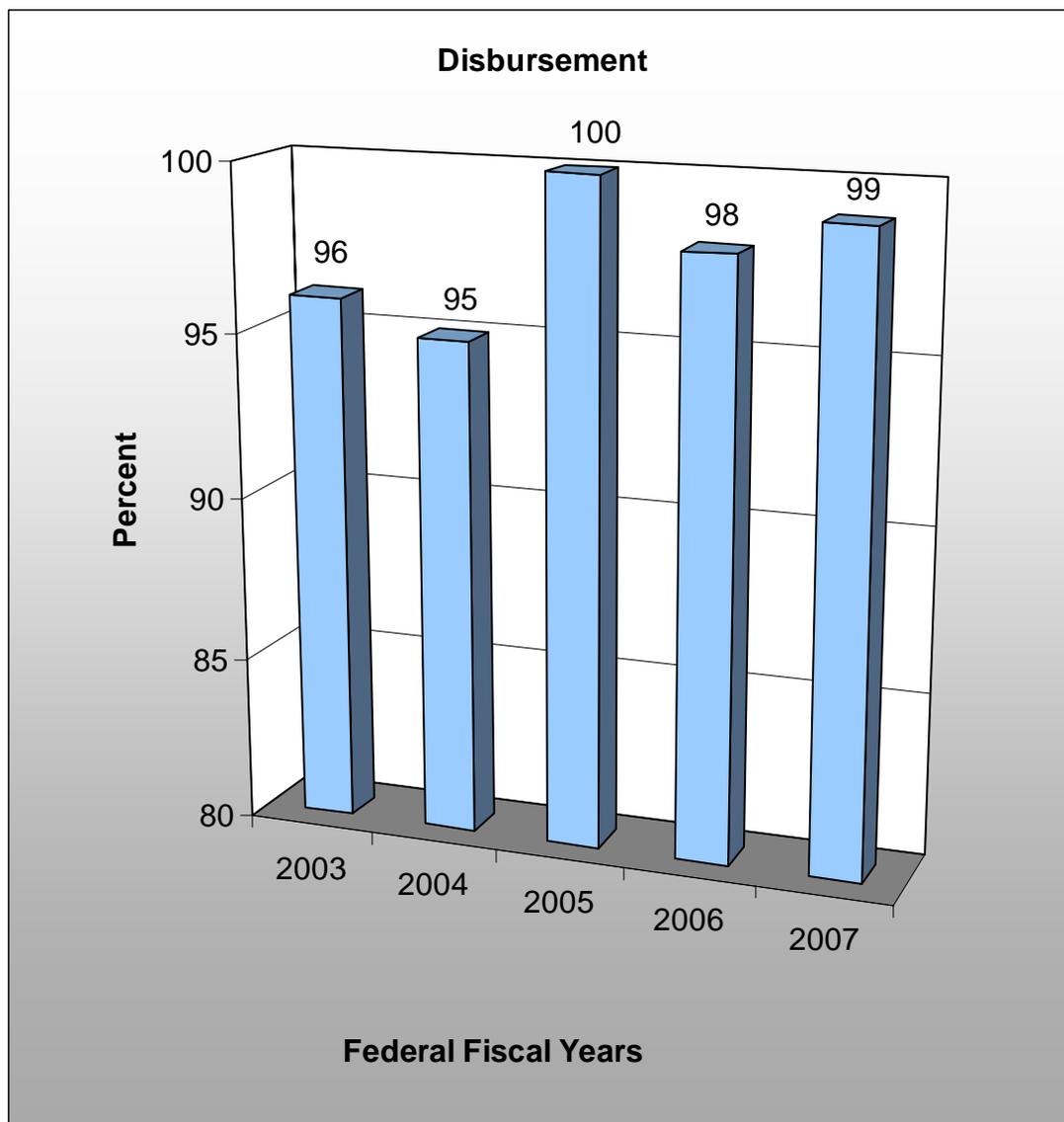
Of the 422 cases measured, 23 cases had errors.

This criterion remains compliant. The five-year average performance is 94%.



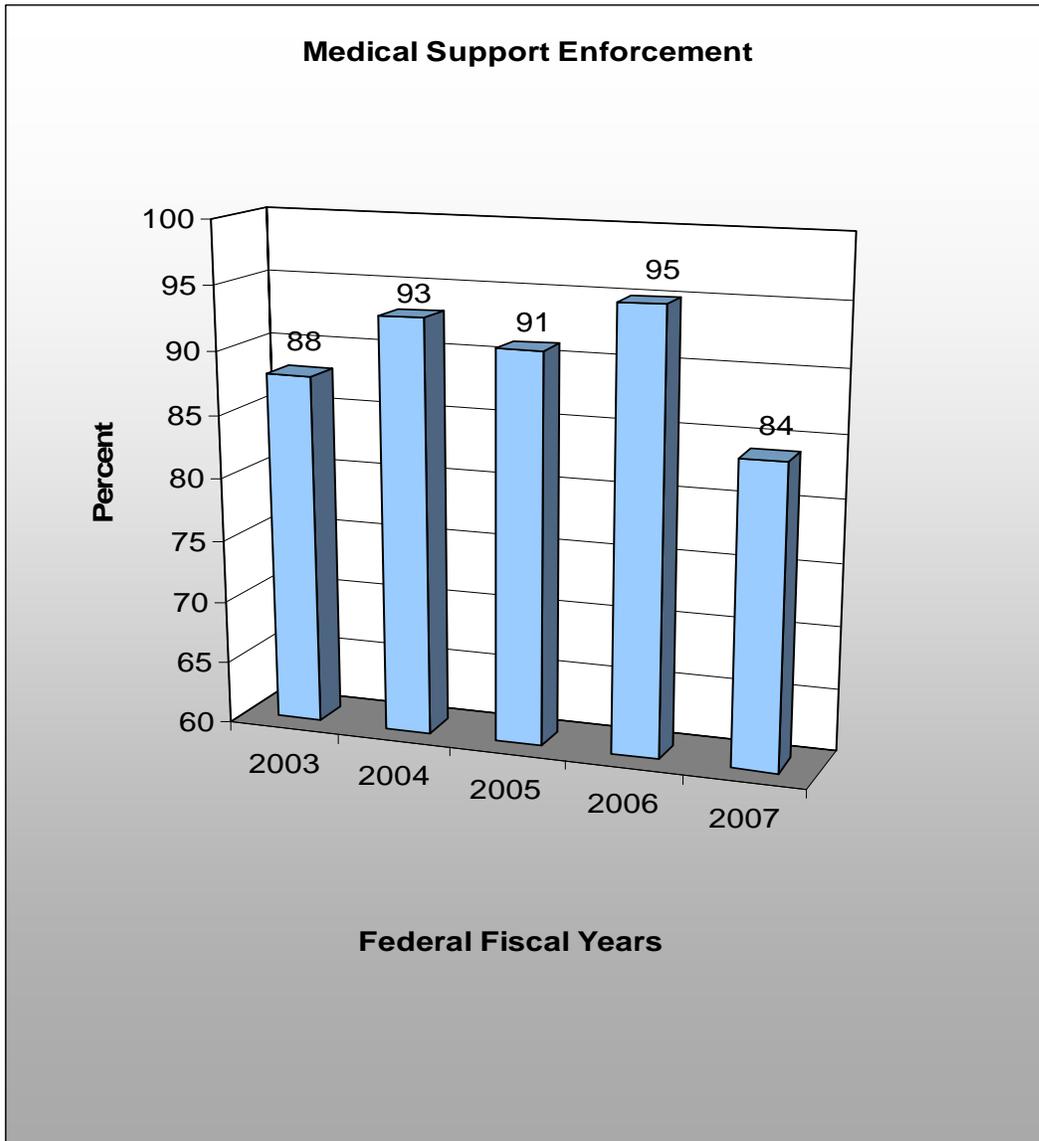
Disbursement: 99% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Of 280 cases measured, 3 had errors. This criterion remains compliant. The five-year average performance is 98%.



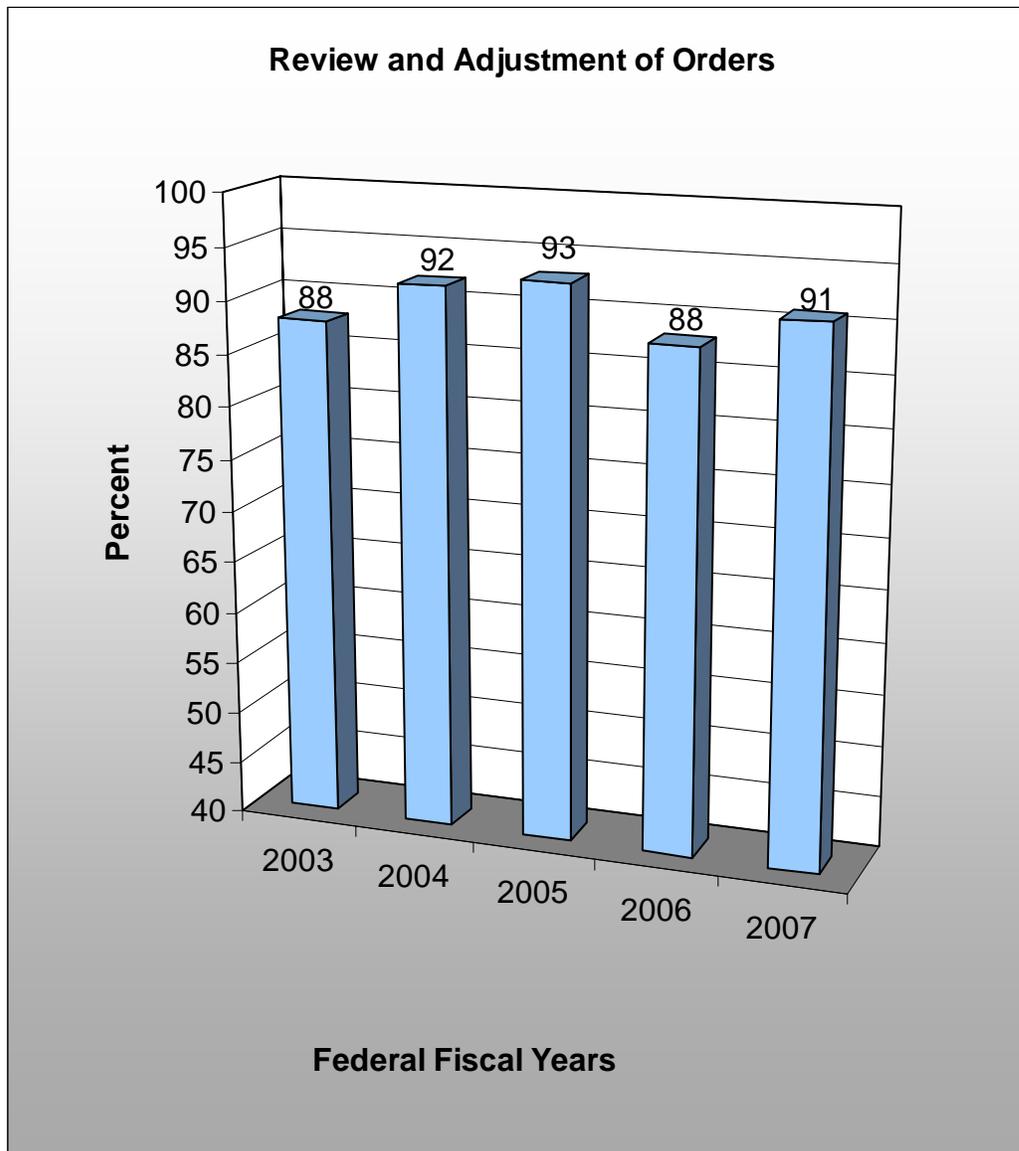
Medical Support Enforcement: 84% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Out of 67 cases measured, 11 had errors. This criterion remains compliant. The five-year average performance is 90%.



Review and Adjustment of Support Orders: 91% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

317 cases were measured and 30 had errors. This criterion remains compliant. Average performance over the last three years was 90%.



Interstate Services: 96% (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

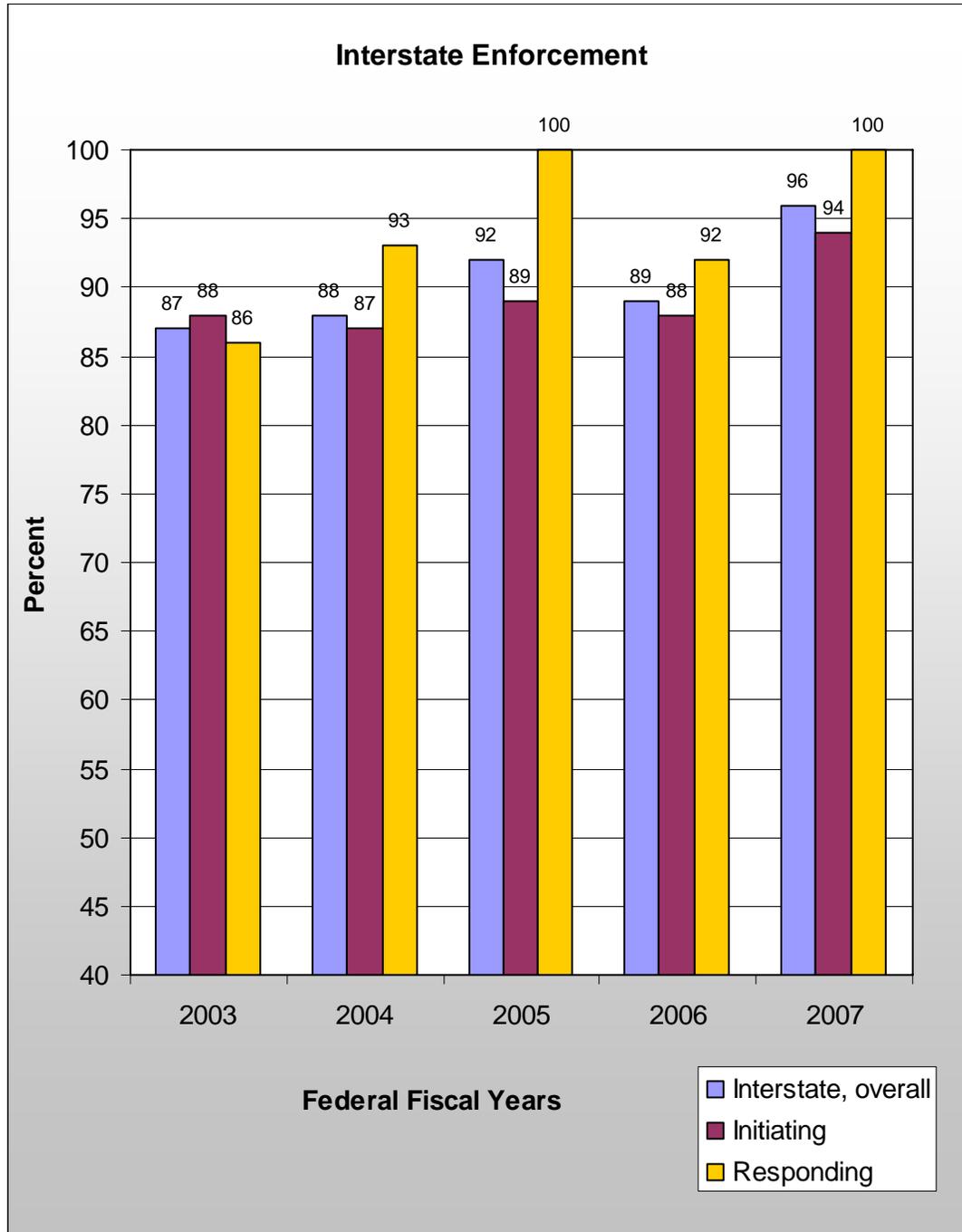
We measured a total of 98 cases, of which 4 had errors. This criterion remains compliant. Ninety-six percent is a performance composite for Central Registry, Initiating and Responding actions. For the review period we found no errors in issuing general testimonies to custodians, or soliciting necessary information from case parties. Timely transmission of new information and replies to status requests were all within time frames and CSENET appears to be helping the case workers keep up with their assigned priorities.

The **Initiating** subcategory is 94% in compliance. There were 69 cases measured. Four had errors. Three errors were due to taking too long to initiate the case to another state. One case failed because we did not supply requested information to the responding state in a timely manner.

The **Responding** subcategory is 100% in compliance. Of the 29 cases measured, we found no errors.

In addition to the criteria in 45 CFR 308, we measured actions that are necessary to process an initiating case successfully. Such actions include sending appropriate documents (such as the General Testimony, and Paternity Affidavits) to the custodial parent within a reasonable timeframe (30 days is considered a reasonable span of time to take such actions). The team must also provide follow up support as necessary, and respond to inquiries from case parties to facilitate customer satisfaction.

[Chart Follows]



Category 2: Program Direction

Introduction

A detailed discussion of the review criteria follow. We include the level of performance, prior audit findings and the current audit findings in this section. Goals and targets are also laid out here. In the event a criterion falls below the mandated minimums, a corrective action plan will also be included here.

Certain areas of endeavor have ongoing challenges to meeting the requirements. For example, Review and Adjustment of court orders frequently sees delays caused by court processes and legal filings. We regularly work with our staff attorneys to get paperwork done in the shortest reasonable time frames, to anticipate delays and to work with opposing counsel and the court to help get orders modified in less than 180 days. Being aware of the potential for delays in judicial proceedings and cognizant of the immobile 180 day deadline helps to ensure that our attorneys are doing everything they can to expedite the Review and Adjustment process.

Management regularly examines new ways to achieve our goals. To that end we started an imaging project in 2006 that would allow us to scan in documents and then view them on any workstation. By reducing the amount of paper we store and handle we expect to see cost savings in staff time and storage space. Development continues and progress is good. About 15,300 of our cases have orders that are now viewable online. Other documents will come later.

In the past we automated an account summary audit worksheet so we can readily issue detailed account statements to individuals looking for an audit or to other states when we initiate a case for enforcement in another jurisdiction. This frees up our accounting staff for full scale audits, case balance adjustments and other reconciliations.

At all times our intent is to refine our processes and develop new business tools so our workers can better manage their ever more complex tasks.

Case Closure: 96%. (Minimum Acceptable: 90%)

Of 27 cases measured, 1 case had an error.

Prior Audit Findings. Of the 36 cases measured two had errors. In both we issued the closure notice, but we closed the case before the 60 day waiting period mandated by CFR. Otherwise, they were appropriate for closure. Ongoing training should continue in order to maintain the present compliance level. The five-year average performance is 96%.

Current Audit Findings. Ongoing training should continue in order to maintain the present compliance level.

Paternity and Order Establishment: 86%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Of 51 cases measured, 7 cases had errors.

Prior Audit Findings. We found 2 error cases. Both errors were due to not opening the case within 20 days of the application or referral. We measured 8 cases for ‘case opening within 20 days’. Both error cases were processed between late July and early August. During this period certain staff were reassigned from normal case opening duties in order to in-process interstate cases for a special enforcement technique we call “Permanent Fund Dividend Intercept Only.” This is an ongoing practice for CSSD as it is very effective and has a “low cost.” These PFD Only cases have a very high likelihood of getting a collection. We give them a higher priority than regular cases during late July, August and early September each year. Approximately 1,000 such cases are handled each year. (The initiating state simply transmits an interstate referral asking for a one-time enforcement remedy. These cases are otherwise handled by direct withholding orders between the other

states and the employers so a full interstate case is not opened. It is a more effective way of handling such cases.)

We still consider service of process one of our most important functions. It is the first step in obtaining a paternity or child support order. Consequently, we are always looking for ways to improve our rate of service. In total, counting certified mail and all service methods, about 89% of our orders are served on the first attempt. For certified mailings we continue to use **The UPS Store** as a 'Return Address' mail-service for all of our certified mailings. We list the return addresses on our letters as being one of several UPS Stores and we do not use official envelopes. We consider these measures to be "best practices."

Establishment of orders is a significant success for Alaska. Between 2001 and 2005 we moved up the national rankings for IV-D agencies from 12th to 2nd. At present over 92% of all open, IV-D cases have an enforceable order.

The number of new orders established in the fiscal year was down to 2,175 from 2006's 2,878 (as stated on the OCSE-157 Report). This is a continuing trend for the agency since we eliminated our backlog of new cases, and more child support orders are handled as Non-IV-D matters. The number of Non-IV-D Case Registry, Payment Services only and Non-Federal Foster Care cases grew to about 11,900 in 2007.

For the future, the establishment teams should ensure that backlogs do not rebuild. The supervisors should continue with their current internal quality checks to ensure that all training needs are met.

Current Audit Findings. FFY 2007 is the first full year measured following a change in supervision for the establishment section and the rebuilding of the section (the change in supervision occurred in May 2006). In 2005-06 several procedures were changed and staff reassigned. Several vacancies remained unfilled in 2006-07 and the combination of circumstances led to a decline in production that was only fully addressed in 2007. At

this time the section is essentially fully staffed and training is proceeding well. A significant backlog in case referrals from the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) persists. During the review period some cases took 5 months to be set up. This problem is the main issue facing the section at this time. It should be pointed out that in spite of the backlog of DPA cases, non-welfare case applications are not backlogged (and are being set up within time frames). Procedural changes and a full staff seem to be addressing the performance issues. If a significant improvement is not made in the next audit period, a corrective action plan will be developed for the section.

Expedited Processes: 6-month tier 83%; 12-month tier 93%.
(Minimum Acceptable: 75% and 90% respectively)

CSSD passed both criteria in this audit. We measured 12 cases for the 6-month timeframe and 14 for the 12-month timeframe. Despite the declines for 2007, the overall numbers are consistent with past years. The size of the sample this year was less than last year but that is reflective of two years of substantial declines in order establishment: there were simply fewer cases available for measurement.

Prior Audit Findings. Performance remains consistent. The one error case was measured in the 6-Month Timeframe criterion. This case took 10 months from service of the paternity paperwork on the non-custodial parent until the administrative order was final. The main reason for the delay was due to the difficulty in serving the second set of order paperwork on the custodial parent. It is less common for the mother of a child to avoid service of process, but in this case it added substantial time to the overall establishment action. The order was final after the end of the audit period.

The total number of cases measured for these criteria was less than in 2005, but this was likely a factor of the 25% decline in the number of orders produced and a statistical anomaly. Even though only 21 cases were measured, we believe they show an accurate representation of CSSD's performance%.

Current Audit Findings. The small sample size may account for the fluctuation in the performance scores. The five-year averages however are consistent and should be looked at as the true indicators of success.

The five year average for performance at the 6-month tier was 87% and at the 12-month tier it was 96%.

Note: The Expedited Processes criterion measures the time allowed under the CFR to establish child support orders. The timeframe measured begins with the initial service of documents on the non-custodial parent and ends with the establishment of a child support order. At least 75% of the cases must have an order established within 6 months of serving the non-custodial parent with notice of a paternity complaint or of a duty to support a child. A minimum of 90% of the cases must have an order established within 12 months.

Enforcement: 95%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

We measured 422 cases, and found 23 errors. Performance was stable compared to 2005-6. Average performance over the past 5 years was 94%.

Prior Audit Findings. Out of fifty-one cases measured for locate, there were eight errors (16%). As a percentage of total errors for enforcement, these eight amounted to 44% of the eighteen. Four cases took longer than two days to issue a withholding. Six cases were not submitted for federal tax refund intercept due to coding errors. Case opening was not a problem for enforcement cases. The performance goal of 96% was met for the 2006 review period. Since 2002, Alaska has been in the top ten nationally for collections on arrears.

The enforcement teams should maintain this high level of performance in the future. Team supervisors should emphasize in training that the IRS submission codes should be checked whenever routine casework is performed.

Current Audit Findings. Automated locate, employer reporting and withholding order issuance systems are responsible for maintaining a high level of compliance. Most actions measured focus on location efforts and issuing withholding orders which are not affected by continuing shortages of staff since the computer manages these actions with little case worker intervention. The main problem is not measured here, in fact: it is the failure to increase collections on monthly current support. The OCSE-157 report points out a stagnant growth rate for this critical component of child support. Management should continue exploring ways to increase collections on ongoing monthly support. It is expected that the new distribution rules effective in October 2009 will have an impact on these collections, but the size of the impact is not yet known.

Disbursement: 99%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

We measured 280 cases, and found 3 errors. Average performance over the past 5 years was 98%.

Prior Audit Findings. There were 4 errors out of 261 measurable disbursements. Over the past five years performance has averaged 97%. All four errors were due to a system feature that prevents a check of less than \$5.00 being sent out automatically. This is a cost-efficiency matter.

The staff is well trained, and supervisors continue regular training throughout the year. The amount of money on hold on the last day of the federal fiscal year continues to decline. For 2006 the amount was \$422,646 (when future holds, bad-address holds and IRS

holds are not counted), which is a 12% decrease from FY 05. The amount on hold has been nearly halved in the last three years.

Current staff is adequately maintaining control over distribution and disbursement of child support.

The imaging system for receipting continues to perform as intended.

CSSD continues to increase the use of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).

Current Audit Findings. The staff maintained control over distribution and disbursement of child support, and further reduced undistributed collections to \$324,545 (a 23% reduction from 2006). In FFY 04 the undistributed collections amounted to about \$1 million. We do not count future holds, bad-address holds and IRS holds in these figures.

Medical Support Enforcement: 84%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

We measured 67 cases, and found 11 errors. Average performance over the past 5 years was 90%.

Prior Audit Findings. The division's long term project to review and 'clean up' medical insurance data involved generating computer lists of suspect cases and having case workers review all cases on the lists. (Some older cases have an X code that prevents normal enforcement actions; the X was an exclusion code in our prior system and it converted as an X to the new system in 1998. This project was undertaken in multiple stages and is now complete. The workers also issued notices to case parties wherever necessary, to alert them to the requirement to provide insurance. In some cases enforcement actions were taken to pursue coverage for the children. Procedures were changed so case workers would update medical data when a payor parent changed employment and insurance lapsed.

In preparation for the new medical enforcement incentive measurements, the division's auditor performed a focused audit on medical enforcement cases in March and April, 2006. One hundred forty-seven cases were reviewed to a standard 90% confidence level with a +/- 3% margin of error. 27% of the cases had no minor children and no requirement for medical enforcement under the order. There were 3 unarguable coding errors but nine others that might be found in error depending on the final auditing guidelines employed by the federal auditors. Six of the nine errors were addressed by pulling computer runs of cases with the problematic "X" code, and correcting those cases. Three other possible errors were found where either Medicaid was not informed of the insurance or where insurance was in place by one parent, but not provided by both parents as ordered. The main problem of improper "X" codes should now be fixed. The next self assessment audit will review cases with that issue in mind.

Current Audit Findings. All the errors in medical enforcement stemmed from the agency failing to issue National Medical Support Notices (NMSN) when employers were known. Withholding orders were issued in each case. One common occurrence was the case having a medical enforcement exclusion code on it that prevented the NMSN's issuance. The exclusion codes are usually used for cases where the custodian is ordered to provide insurance or the children are eligible for Indian Health Service benefits. The eleven error cases had other reasons for having been excluded however. The recommended course of action is for management to review the use of and reasons for the exclusion code. The safest use we can recommend is to reserve the code only for cases where the custodial parent is ordered to provide health coverage.

Review and Adjustment: 91%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Of 317 cases measured, there were 30 errors (all for the failure to send Notices of Rights to Request a Review triennially). All 30 errors were due to exclusion codes left on cases from past years. This is a repeat finding, and one that is gradually being corrected as the "old cases" are reviewed by case workers. At present, the number of cases negatively

impacted is small enough that management feels a special project to clean up the codes is not warranted. The number of errors of this type decreased for 2007 so no additional action is needed, at this time, to address the matter.

Average performance over the last five years was 90%.

Prior Audit Findings. All 35 error cases found in this audit were “old cases” still coded to exclude the NRRR. This is an increase of 15 errors over the 2005 audit. It is expected that over time the number of errors for this reason will continue to decline as case workers gradually correct the system codes. Additional training of staff will be performed to ensure these “old cases” are found during the course of normal case work and corrected.

In addition, we examined 23 of the 292 cases for complete reviews of the orders. We completed 14 of those order reviews within 180 days for a compliance rate of 61%. However, the sample had a skewed proportion of court modifications (90%). Only four cases were administrative, when normally the division is about 50/50 for case types. This is almost certainly a statistical anomaly as we would expect to find the overall compliance rate at around 80-84% as was found in our focused audit in 2004. The reviewer expects to find a more “normal” number in the future, but will watch this performance measure closely.

The division needs to monitor this performance indicator each year as the inherent problem is always that the courts press the 180 time frame to the limits. If court actions begin to routinely take over 180 days, the division will need to consider procedural or staff remedies. About 35% of court modifications take longer than 180 days to complete (according to our 2004 focused audit).

Current Audit Findings. Twenty-two of the cases had orders modified or reviews that resulted in denials of a modification. Three of the cases were done by the courts and the length of time to complete the review could not be determined from the record at hand. Of the other 19 cases, 16 were done in less than 180 days. Three cases took over 180 days and

each of those were conducted by judicial process. Looking only at those 19 cases, we can say that 84% of the cases were reviewed in 180 days or less. The current findings are consistent with historical findings.

Interstate Services: 96%. (Minimum Acceptable: 75%)

Ninety-six percent is the performance composite for Central Registry, Initiating and Responding cases. Of the 98 cases measured, 4 had errors.

The failures were as follows:

- Acknowledge receipt of Interstate Transmittal: 0
- Reply to a status request within 5 days: 0
- Forward new information within 10 days: 0
- Reply to a more complex inquiry within 30 days: 1
- Send out the General Testimony to the Custodian 0
- Transmit a new case to another state within 20 days: 3
- Forward a request for review to the other state: 0

Prior Audit Findings. Incoming mail proved the problem with the replies to status requests: delays in handling or giving the requests the wrong priority when distributing the mail apparently caused the delay in both error cases. Responses to telephonic, email and fax requests are timely in all of the observed cases. Overall performance has declined slightly, which means the goal of a 2% improvement for 2006 was not met.

As a performance goal, the division should aim to improve compliance by at least 2% for 2007. Refresher training on mail handling and prioritizing should be performed.

- Average performance for all Interstate functions over the past 5 years was 89%.
- Average performance for the Initiating functions over the past 5 years was 87%.
- Average performance for the Responding functions over the past 5 years was 93%.

2006 performance, when compared to the 5-year average, appears to be either static or a slight improvement (though the numbers are so close together we can't say with statistical certainty).

Current Audit Findings. Overall performance improved across the board. Case work should be maintained at or near this level for the next review period.

The **Initiating** subcategory is 94% in compliance.

Of the 69 cases measured, 4 had errors. Not sending an interstate transmittal to another state within 20 days happened in three cases. These errors appeared to be the result of the case worker not following up on an action or not handling new information promptly (e.g., new-mail handling). Internal prioritizing of the workload appears successful in other regards. Case workers are soliciting required information from custodians in a timely manner, and processing most requests within 30 days. The compliance target of 90% was achieved. The agency should work to maintain this level of performance.

The **Responding** subcategory is 100% in compliance.

Twenty-nine cases were measured, four more than in 2006. CSENET is widely used for status replies and has shown itself to be fast and reliable for those states fully active on the network.

Management Issues:

CSSD resolved all management issues from prior audits.

Preparations for reporting medical support numbers are complete. CSSD has reported them for 2007 and is confident they will pass the next data reliability audit. The computer system currently tracks which parent provides insurance, which children are covered, what insurance company provides the coverage and the dates coverage is in effect. These are the main items required for system certification. The programming for the annual OCSE 157 Report was completed in 2006 and the new medical data the agency reported passed the 2007 Modified Data Reliability Review performed by OCSE.

Management should consider the procedures in use for enforcing health coverage. If changes can be made to increase the number of cases where NMSNs are issued, especially by reducing the instances when an exclusion code is used, it is likely that the number of children covered by insurance will increase.

Category 3: Program Service Enhancements

CSSD took several steps to improve services to Child Support clients:

- During FFY 07 our Anchorage Customer Service Reception area and our Phone Bank handled 70,101 phone calls (down about 13% from last year) and 10,222 walk-ins (down about 10%). Our field offices in Juneau, Fairbanks and Wasilla handled approximately 18,300 phone calls (no change from last year) plus 11,100 walk-ins (down about 2%). Division wide (including all of our caseworkers not already counted above) we normally handle around 140,000 phone calls per year.
- People within the Division who speak, read or write foreign languages, and are willing to volunteer their skills, were organized into an in-house translation service (for informal needs, not for court testimony). At present, we have 10 people who can communicate in Cebuano, French, German, Hindi, Ilocano, Laotian, Polish, Russian, Samoan, Tagalog, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.
- Our Outreach Program is still in place and is working well. CSSD staff traveled to seven communities and met with people who have little or no opportunity to meet a caseworker. Staff flew or drove approximately 10,000 miles (7,650 miles were by air) to visit these towns. Outreach is especially valuable in Alaska where cultural differences and isolation make it harder to help case parties. In past years we visited more than a dozen remote towns and villages, and will serve many of them again in 2008. The towns visited in 2007 were:
 - ⇒ Barrow
 - ⇒ Dillingham
 - ⇒ Fairbanks
 - ⇒ Homer
 - ⇒ Juneau
 - ⇒ Kenai & Soldotna
 - ⇒ Nome

- CSSD's outreach program is our first point of contact for all 236 federally recognized tribes in Alaska, and for all Tribal Programs that affect Child Support. CSSD presently has one person working outreach to remote areas. That person is the primary face we can show to many of our clients (some of whom have little contact with modern life and may speak English poorly or not at all). This type of direct contact is far more effective with village residents than trying to do business over the phone or by mail. It is an essential tool for drawing people in from the service fringe to the core of our process. We are presently offering our assistance, as needed, to the following tribal entities.
 - ⇒ Bristol Bay Native Association, Cook Inlet Tribal Corporation, Tanana Chief's Conference, Tlingit-Haida Association and Association of Village Council Presidents all operate Tribal TANF programs.
 - ⇒ Federal funding was granted for comprehensive IV-D program operation by Tlingit-Haida Association. Cooperation between CSSD and this tribe is improving and we referred about 230 cases to them by the end of 2007.
 - ⇒ Aleutian-Pribilof Island Association was approved for their 2-year startup funding. This process is ongoing.
 - ⇒ The Association of Village Council Presidents and Tanana Chief's Conference continue to develop their IV-D programs.
 - ⇒ Tribal Courts - we track tribal child support orders that affect our cases.

- Recurring local outreach meetings in and near Anchorage help address the needs of civic and military organizations, and case parties in Alaska's core population area. The primary places we target for outreach services are:
 - ⇒ Brother Francis Homeless Shelter
 - ⇒ Operation Stand Down (for veterans who need help)
 - ⇒ Alaska Federation of Natives annual Conference (in Fairbanks)
 - ⇒ Indian Child Welfare Conference

- ⇒ Rural Small Business Conference
 - ⇒ Wellness Court (focusing on men released from jail and helping them move back into society)
 - ⇒ Family Care Court (focusing on women and their children)
 - ⇒ Alaska Public Defender Agency
 - ⇒ AWAIC (for women in crisis)
 - ⇒ Alaska Family Law Self Help Center (where the public gets help with child support matters without needing an attorney)
 - ⇒ Matanuska Susitna Family Services Fair
 - ⇒ Chugachmuit Fatherhood Program
 - ⇒ Cook Inlet Tribal Council's (Correctional Center) Bridge to Success Reentry Program
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- In 2007 CSSD formed or maintained partnerships with agencies and individuals in the private sector to present "Town Hall" like clinics in rural areas and around Anchorage. Getting more of our stakeholders involved in their child support cases and making them aware of the vital issues is critical to improving services to the many children of those parents. The following are partners with CSSD:
 - ⇒ Alaska Native Justice Center
 - ⇒ Disability Law Center of Alaska
 - ⇒ Alaska Legal Services
 - ⇒ Alaska Division of Vital Statistics (In Hospital Acknowledgment Program)
 - ⇒ Alaska Business Development Center
 - ⇒ Veteran's Administration Domiciliary (for homeless or in-need veterans)
 - ⇒ Various local shelters for people in need
 - ⇒ Various private attorneys who deal in Family Law

- State correctional facilities are on our list of places to visit as often as is practicable (which may be once per year or once every other year):
 - ⇒ Anvil Mountain in Nome
 - ⇒ Fairbanks Correctional Center
 - ⇒ Lemon Creek in Juneau
 - ⇒ Yukon-Kuskokwim in Bethel
 - ⇒ Palmer Correctional Center in Palmer
 - ⇒ Highland Mountain Women's Facility in Eagle River
 - ⇒ Cook Inlet Correctional Complex in Anchorage
 - ⇒ Point MacKenzie Correctional Farm at Pt. MacKenzie
 - ⇒ Matanuska-Susitna Pre-Trial Facility
 - ⇒ Wildwood Correctional Center in Kenai
 - ⇒ Anchorage Correctional Center

- CSSD continues to circulate specialized booklets, brochures and a video for the public. Most were revised during 2007. Materials distributed include:
 - ⇒ Child Support for Children in State Custody
 - ⇒ OCSE DVD explaining paternity establishment (provided to hospitals & birthing centers)
 - ⇒ Video produced by Alaska CSSD: "Building a Healthy, Happy Child"
 - ⇒ Electronic Funds Transfer for Employers
 - ⇒ Child Support If You Are Incarcerated
 - ⇒ Employers' Guide to Wage Withholding (including a special section on the National Medical Support Notice)
 - ⇒ Judicial Reference Guide for Judges, Magistrates and Masters in Alaska Courts
 - ⇒ Direct Deposit of Child Support, For Individuals
 - ⇒ Review and Adjustment of Orders (including the forms to make a request for a modification)
 - ⇒ How to contact and do business with CSSD (by phone, on line or in person)

- ⇒ Brochures about establishing paternity and why it is important to children
 - ⇒ Child Support a Guide for Parents
 - ⇒ New Hire Reporting Informational Guide (for employers)
 - ⇒ How non-custodians can make child support payments via Western Union
 - ⇒ Child Support Services FAQ and list of contacts.
- CSSD and the Alaska Court System continued to maintain the *pro se* support order modification process by disseminating forms and answering basic questions. The service is very successful. CSSD and the courts created the *pro se* forms in FFY 2001. This collaboration enables the public to take a more direct hand in getting their support orders modified in court. The court system maintained their customer service center in order to help people help themselves. Anecdotal evidence indicates the public continues to be very happy with this service. The clerk of court also thinks it is worthwhile. The biggest benefits of this program are that the public who use it feel more involved in their cases and at the same time take some of the work load off of CSSD staff.
 - CSSD cooperates with state and local police agencies to get child support collections from people who are arrested. Following the arrest, and if the person is carrying a sum of cash, the police contact CSSD to see if a child support debt exists. Then CSSD serves a withholding order on the police department for the money being held. In 2007 over \$58,700 was collected via cash and property withholding orders.
 - The division has three investigators who work on criminal and difficult to enforce cases. Criminal investigations resulted in one conviction. The reduction in the number of cases with convictions was the result of the federal prosecutor's work load and not due to inaction on CSSD's part. The investigators also processed cases for passport revocation and in those cases they were able to compel parents to pay over \$616,000 (about double what we took in during 2006).

- Two years ago we created a Special Collections Unit to work on those cases where the obligor parents had the worst record of making their support payments. This was part of the Special Collections Grant Project funded by the federal government. In that two year span we reviewed 1224 cases and got 670 non custodial parents to start making payments (55%). Collections amounted to \$1.6 million, of which \$1.2 million went to families and \$400,000 was retained to reimburse Alaska for public assistance expended.
- Outgoing EFT payments increased 7.1% during FFY 07 to 65.8% of all disbursements.
- Nine hundred fifty-three individuals currently use debit cards issued by JP Morgan as their means to receive child support payments. This is about 10% less than last year (1,062), but since EFT involvement went up, the loss is offset. In FFY 04 a few more than 100 individuals used debit cards.
- In 2007 the agency finished implementing an imaging system called Stellent that allows orders and other documents to be scanned and then viewed online by all caseworkers. CSSD's implementation plan is to complete the scanning of all orders first, and then move on to other documents. Eventually it is expected that we can reduce the amount of space taken up by stored documents, either making room for new files or reclaiming office space. Either way it is expected to save money in that we will have less need to handle physical files, and less time will be taken requesting files from and returning them to the file storage room. Future enhancements to the imaging system should facilitate organizing the imaged documents so they are easier to find and access by caseworkers. It is too early yet to place a dollar value on the savings we expect to see as a result of implementing our imaging system.
- CSSD maintains a web site with numerous features including:
 - ⇒ Links to state and federal web sites
 - ⇒ A directory of employees to help clients contact us by fax or email
 - ⇒ A summary of CSSD services
 - ⇒ News covering child support related events and issues

- ⇒ Online forms availability where numerous forms, including an application for services, may be ordered from a home computer
- ⇒ A support guidelines calculator (to estimate child support)
- ⇒ Recent case payment information (individuals may inquire on their own case)
- ⇒ Information for employers about new Hire Reporting, child support laws and income withholding orders
- ⇒ Frequently asked questions
- ⇒ Employer information
- ⇒ Press releases
- ⇒ CSSD regulations
- ⇒ CSSD publications
- ⇒ News about CSSD staff visiting remote towns and villages

Our web site, <http://childsupport.alaska.gov>, continually evolves to provide more and better service to the public and to agency workers. It currently gets about 70,000 page views per month, with the most to a single topic being 3,500 looking for forms and 3,400 looking for payment information. The increase in internet traffic is the most likely explanation for the decline in phone calls we received in the past two years.

- We also have an Intranet Homepage for our staff to use in downloading work related information and news, as well as an online phone directory for workers. The page also has a link for CSSD policies and regulations. This intranet asset helps answer questions that would otherwise go to administrative staff or system support workers.

Conclusion

Alaska's Child Support Services Division can once again report that it has met all the federal requirements for basic performance. The self assessment review also shows that improvements in some areas are consistent and that goals, plans and expectations for all sections of the office are likely to be met in the future.