



Oregon Department of Justice

Oregon Child Support Program

Supporting Parents to Support Children

Self-Assessment Report



South Sister from Sparks Lake in Deschutes County, Oregon

Federal Fiscal Year 2017

Prepared by the Performance, Budget & Statistics Team

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I. Executive Summary

A. Introduction

The standards and criteria for State self-assessment review and report processes are established in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 45, Chapter III, Part 308 (45 CFR 308). It specifies that states must conduct an annual review of eight required program criteria. Oregon’s self-assessment results are submitted to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Region X Office and to the OCSE Commissioner through the automated Self-Assessment Reporting System no later than six months after the review period.

This is Oregon’s nineteenth annual self-assessment. It covers the 12-month period from October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017. The assessment reviewed the following eight categories:

- Case Closure
- Establishment of Paternity and Support Orders
- Enforcement of Orders
- Disbursement of Collections
- Medical Support Enforcement
- Review and Adjustment (Modification)
- Intergovernmental Services
- Expedited Process

Background

In 1975, the Oregon Child Support Program was established under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The Program consists of two primary partners, the Oregon Department of Justice Division of Child Support (DCS) and 24 county District Attorney (DA) offices. DCS also works in coordination with the Department of Justice Civil Recovery Section on certain judicial actions. The Department of Justice has had oversight responsibility for the Program since 2003. The Program primarily uses administrative processes to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders. The following tables are synopses of Oregon’s child support caseload and staffing as of September 30, 2017. The DCS staff assigned exclusively to work on Oregon’s system project are listed separately:

Table 1 — Program Information

Caseload Size		Types of Cases		Program Staffing	
DCS Caseload	137,524	Current Assistance	19,016	DCS Staff	572
DA Caseload	38,625	Former Assistance	104,591	DA Staff	125
Program Caseload	176,149	Never Assistance	52,542	System Project Staff	22

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 1 – Program Information.

B. Self-Assessment Results

Oregon's efficiency rates and corresponding federal benchmarks are displayed below in Table 2 - Self-Assessment Results.

Table 2 — Self-Assessment Results

Criterion	Cases Where Required Activity Occurred or Should Have Occurred	Cases Where Required Activity Occurred within Timeframe	Efficiency Rate (Confidence Level of Sample)	Federal Minimum Standard	Previous Year's Efficiency Rates
Case Closure	316	299	94.62%	90%	94.74%
Establishment	377	328	87.00%	75%	85.31%
Enforcement	293	275	93.86%	75%	92.41%
Disbursement	2,012,722	1,969,871	97.87%	75%	92.72%
Medical	342	329	96.20%	75%	94.30%
Review & Adjustment	341	328	96.19%	75%	96.35%
Intergovernmental	314	272	86.62%	75%	86.62%
Expedited Process 6-month	304	295	97.04%	75%	92.79%
Expedited Process 12-month	304	304	100.00%	90%	98.43%
TOTAL:	2,015,313				

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 2 – Self-Assessment Results.

C. Summary

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the self-assessment review period. A corrective action plan therefore will not be necessary.

II. Methodology

A. Introduction to Methodology

Oregon reviewed a focused sample group of child support cases in seven categories to determine compliance with the corresponding citations in 45 CFR 302 and 303 and the Social Security Act (Section 454B(c)(1)). For Disbursement of Collections, all payments received were systematically reviewed to determine compliance.

To conduct a statistically valid assessment and select a sample that would achieve a 90% confidence level, Oregon utilized focused samples. Oregon used the statistical equation in Figure 1 – Confidence Level Statistical Equation to achieve the 90% confidence level requirement.

$$n = \frac{(z \cdot \hat{a}/2)^2 \cdot p(q)}{E^2}$$

Figure 2 — Confidence Level Statistical Equation

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Figure 1 – Confidence Level Statistical Equation.

The formula for Oregon’s statistical equation to achieve its confidence level states the following:

- n = the sample size
- z = the z score
- \hat{a} = 1 – confidence interval
- p = probability
- q = 1 – p
- E = tolerable error rate

Oregon’s desired error rate is 5% or less. A presumed probability of 50-50 was used (50% chance the desired outcome would occur and 50% chance the desired outcome would not occur). Utilizing the formula above and assuming a 90% confidence level, a table was created to indicate the number of cases required for review per identified population. A comparative table for a 95% confidence level was also used to determine the number of cases to sample to achieve the 90% confidence level as shown above in Figure 2 – Confidence Level Charts.

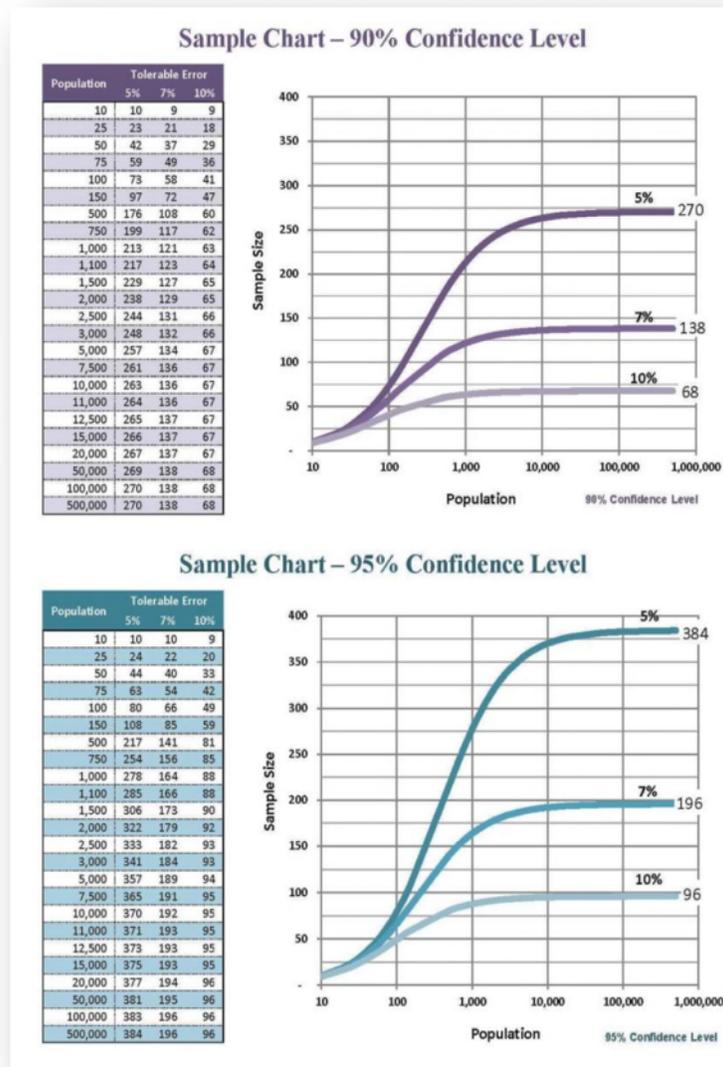


Figure 1 — Confidence Level Chart

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Figure 2 – Confidence Level Chart.

To ensure that a case was included in the review for a single category only, before the samples were selected, the population of cases was compared for each category and duplicates removed. The comparisons were completed incrementally, with the largest population of cases selected first and the second largest population selected next. The second population was compared to the first and the duplicate cases were removed. This process repeated for each subsequent category, with the priority order based on the historical size of each category's population. This process resulted in a reduction of the total available population for the subsequent categories; therefore, the population sizes for most categories do not reflect the actual number of cases.

B. State Self-Assessment Coordination

Program Compliance Criteria

Oregon continues to use the March 1998 Self-Assessment Core Work Group Report model to conduct case assessments. Flowcharts were created for the seven non-automated categories. A database was created with data input forms designed around the flowcharts. Macros eliminated manual calculations and determinations, increasing the efficiency and accuracy of the data and case outcomes.

To establish an efficiency rate, Oregon used the formula specified in the Self-Assessment Core Workgroup Report:

Efficiency [Cases with appropriate action/Total number of cases with required action]

Case Review – General Rules

The assessment is performance-based, focusing on outcomes rather than processes. Each category was reviewed for compliance with corresponding federal regulations established in 45 CFR 308. The following relevant definitions apply:

- An *outcome* is the result of case action within a specific category.
- An *action* is an appropriate outcome within a specific category.
- An *error* is either a failure to take a required action or taking an incorrect action within a specific category.

The assessment of a case was based on five general case-evaluation rules:

- A case was reviewed only on the criteria for which it was sampled.
- A case received only one action or error in the category for which it was sampled.
- Compliance timeframes for initiating reciprocal and responding reciprocal interstate cases were reviewed separately.
- If an outcome was pending or not successfully completed due to the timeframe expiring after the review period, the previous required action was evaluated.

Cases were initially screened for possible exclusion. A case was excluded if:

- No action was necessary during the review period.
- The action was completed prior to, or after, the review period.
- There was insufficient time to take the last required action and no other actions were previously required.
- The case qualified for closure pursuant to 45 CFR 303.11, and it was not being reviewed for compliance with case closure criteria.
- Other reasons relevant to unique criteria.

Concur Case Review Process

Oregon implemented the Concur Case Review Process during the 2004 Self-Assessment as an enhancement to the case review process. This process has been used every year since then, benefiting the Program in a number of ways:

- 1) The Program efficiency rating has increased when the field has provided sufficient documentation validating a case action that was previously considered noncompliant.
- 2) Program confidence in the reported outcomes has improved because of field participation in the determination of the outcomes.
- 3) Program awareness of the review categories and related criteria has increased.
- 4) The understanding of federal requirements has increased in both the Division of Child Support and District Attorney offices.

Prior to field office review, a Program Performance Analyst reviews the cases and determines whether the outcome is an action (appropriate action taken), error (failed to take required action), or excluded (does not meet the criteria to be reviewed). A second Analyst then reviews the error cases, gaining consensus on the outcome. Following analyst review, the error cases are referred to their respective field office representatives to review using applicable federal regulations. These representatives either concur or do not concur with the analyst's determination, and provide additional information for reconsideration of the outcome.

The analysts consider any additional information provided by the field office and make a final determination of compliance. This determination takes into account the applicable federal regulations associated with each of the review categories. The outcome of the determination is shared with the respective field representatives. Upon completion of this process, the outcomes are finalized and the report is published and submitted to OCSE.

In response to the Concur Case Review Process this year, there were 10 non-concurs received. Because of the additional information provided, the analysts updated one Medical category error to an action. There were also two cases excluded, one in the Intergovernmental category and the other in the Modification category. These changes increased efficiency in the respective categories.

C. Universe Definition and Sampling Procedures

To obtain focused samples, the seven non-automated categories were broadly defined to avoid the systematic exclusion of a population subset. Separate populations of cases were identified for each category based on the specified definitions. The population samples include cases that were excluded due to definition ambiguity or because of coding errors within the Child Support Enforcement

Automated System (CSEAS). For this reason, an exclusion rate was anticipated within each sample. Sample sizes were based on the number of cases required to achieve 95% confidence level ensuring that the final review resulted in the minimum sample size required for a 90% confidence level.

D. Summary of Methodology

Table 3 – 2017 Self-Assessment Sample Details provides descriptions of the unique sample data extracted for each criterion. The population size varies each year and determines the minimum number of cases needed to achieve the 90% confidence level. For each criterion, the Program exceeded the minimum number of cases required.

Table 3 – Self-Assessment Sample Details

Criterion	Sample Data Description	Case Population	# Cases to Achieve 90% Confidence Interval	Sample Size	System Reviewed	Total Cases Reviewed
Case Closure	Any case closed during the review period.	30,460	269	322	0	316
Establishment	Any case in which a new administrative paternity-only order or support order was needed, in process, or finalized during the review period.	10,332	264	450	146	377
Enforcement	Any case with an ongoing income withholding in place. It also includes cases where a new or repeated enforcement action was required during the review period.	81,002	270	304	177	293
Disbursement	All payments received during the review period.	2,012,722	270	2,012,722	2,012,722	2,012,722
Medical	Any case with a support order established or modified during the review period.	4,084	257	371	0	342
Review & Adjustment (Modification)	Any case with an order that can be modified. It also includes cases with a modification action initiated no more than 6 months prior to the review period, or the modification was finalized or denied during the review period.	83,220	270	350	0	341

Criterion	Sample Data Description	Case Population	# Cases to Achieve 90% Confidence Interval	Sample Size	System Reviewed	Total Cases Reviewed
Intergovernmental	Any case coded with a responding or initiating state Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) code other than Oregon during the review period. It also includes any case with a possible need for an initiating reciprocal.	34,693	269	450	0	314
Expedited Process	Any case that has an administrative support order established during the review period.	3,240	257	326	0	304

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 3 – Self-Assessment Sample Details.

III. Self-Assessment Results

A. Introduction to Self-Assessment Results

Federal regulations require each state meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 75% for each required program category with the exception of Expedited Processes (12-month) and Case Closure. These two program categories must meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 90%.

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the review period October 1, 2016, through September 30, 2017.

B. Self-Assessment Results

Table 4 – Self-Assessment Results

Criterion	Cases Where Required Activity Occurred or Should Have Occurred	Cases Where Required Activity Occurred within Timeframe	Efficiency Rate (Confidence Level of Sample)	Federal Minimum Standard	Previous Year's Efficiency Rates
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Enforcement	293	275	93.86%	75%	92.41%
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Expedited Process 12-month	304	304	100.00%	90%	98.43%
TOTAL:	2,015,313				

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 4 – Self-Assessment Results.

C. Discussion of Self-Assessment Results

The following section provides a detailed breakdown by review category of the population, sample size, cases reviewed, and errors found during the 2017 Self-Assessment.

It is important to consider that the error breakdown shows the percentage of errors found in the sampling that was reviewed. When the percentage of errors is compared to the total population of cases, the resulting figure represents the number of errors that would reasonably be found if the entire Program caseload had been reviewed. For example, if the Establishment category had an 87% efficiency rate, using the error rate of 13% and multiplying it by the total population of establishment cases within the review period (10,332), there is a reasonable potential for 1,343 total establishment errors within the Program caseload. However, since duplicate cases are removed from the populations prior to the sample extraction, not all populations are representative of an accurate error rate. Category error types are detailed in Table 5 – 2017 Self-Assessment Errors by Category.

Table 5 — Self-Assessment Errors by Category

Total Number of Cases Requiring Action within the Review Period		2,287
Case Closure – 94.62%		
Error Description	CFR Reference	Errors
Did not qualify for closure.	45 CFR 303.11(b)-(c)	16
Did not send contact letter to unreachable custodial parent.	45 CFR 303.11(b)(10)*	1
<i>*Note: Citation is the rule version prior to the January 19, 2017 changes.</i>		
Total Case Closure Errors		17
Disbursement – 92.72%		
Error Description	CFR Reference	Errors
Did not disburse payment to the other state within the required timeframe.	45 CFR 308.2(b)(1)	42,851
<i>** Note: All Disbursements were reviewed.</i>		
Total Disbursement Errors		42,851**
Enforcement – 93.86%		
Error Description	CFR Reference	Errors
Did not issue withholding timely.	45 CFR 303.6(c)(1) & 303.100(e)(2-3)	1
Did not complete other enforcement activities timely.	45 CFR 303.6(c)(2)	17
Total Enforcement Errors		18
Establishment – 87.00%		
Error Description	CFR Reference	Errors
Did not complete service timely.	45 CFR 303.4(d)	29
Did not complete locate activities timely.	45 CFR 303.3(b)(3)	6
Did not complete case opening procedures timely.	45 CFR 303.2(b)(1)	14
Total Establishment Errors		49
Expedited Process – 6-month 97.04%, 12-month 98.43%		
Error Description	CFR Reference	Errors
6 – month federal timeframe to establish paternity and to establish, modify, and enforce support orders.	45 CFR 303.101 (b)(2)(i)	9
Total Expedited Process Errors		9
Intergovernmental – 86.62%		
Error Description – Initiating Intergovernmental	CFR Reference	Errors

Did not refer case to responding state's central registry timely.	45 CFR 303.7(c)(4)	1
Did not notify responding state of new information timely.	45 CFR 303.7(a)(7)	19
Total Initiating Governmental Errors		20
Error Description – Responding Intergovernmental		
	CFR Reference	Errors
Did not notify initiating state of new information received.	45 CFR 303.7(a)(7)	21
Did not notify initiating state of case closure.	45 CFR 308.2(g)(2)(vii)	1
Total Responding Governmental Errors		22
Total Intergovernmental Errors		42
Medical – 96.20%		
	CFR Reference	Errors
Steps not taken to determine if reasonable and accessible private health care available.	45 CFR 303.31(b)(1)	4
National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) not sent to NCP's new employer.	45 CFR 303.32(c)(1)	9
Total Medical Errors		13
Review and Adjustments (Modification) – 96.19%		
	CFR Reference	Errors
Parties not notified of their right for modification every three years.	45 CFR 303.8(b)(6)	13
Total Modification Errors		13
Total Number of Errors for all Categories		161
Overall Percentage of Cases with Errors		7%

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 5 – Self-Assessment Errors by Category.

Actions were required on 2,287 cases within the review period and 1,964 were manually reviewed by the analysts. There were a total 161 errors, a 1.7 percentage point decrease in overall errors when compared to last year (2016=8.7%; 2017=7%). This can be attributed to the Program's case cleanup efforts that began in late FFY 2016 and continued throughout FFY 2017. The Data Cleanup Project is an effort to increase the quality and transferability of data during conversion to Origin, Oregon's new child support system in FFY 2018. By the end of first phase of the project (March 2017), the Program met significant milestones that had a direct, positive impact on overall Self-Assessment efficiencies:

- More than 26,000 cases were updated and moved through the automated case closure because of corrections made on cases that had previously contained account balances that were not accurately stored which prevented the completion of the case closure process.
- More than 6,000 cases began billing the proper amount, after fixing discrepancies between the ordered amount and billing amount.
- Hundreds of families may receive access to health care coverage more quickly, after completion of several tasks that included adding the appropriate indexing number for obligee employers.

D. Summary of Self-Assessment Results

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight required program areas. Five categories showed an increase in efficiency from the prior review period, one category showed no change, and two categories showed decreases. Prior years of Program efficiency rates by FSA category are displayed below in Table 6 - Self-Assessment Results over Five Years.

Table 6 – Self-Assessment Results over Five Years

Criterion	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Change from Previous Year
Case Closure	99.40%	100%	97.24%	94.74%	94.62%	-0.12
Establishment	85.23%	77.87%	88.77%	85.31%	87.00%	+1.69
Enforcement	95.81%	94.23%	91.94%	92.41%	93.86%	+1.45
Disbursement	94.16%	91.52%	95.43%	92.72%	97.87%	+5.15
Medical	97.61%	95.52%	96.23%	94.30%	96.20%	+1.90
Review & Adjustment (Modification)	98.80%	94.44%	95.54%	96.35%	96.19%	-0.16
Intergovernmental	90.28%	89.79%	76.97%	86.62%	86.62%	0.00
Expedited Process 6-month	95.72%	93.55%	93.23%	92.79%	97.04%	+4.25
Expedited Process 12-month	100.00%	97.54%	97.94%	98.43%	100.00%	+1.57

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Table 6 – Self-Assessment Results over Five Years.

The results of this year’s Self-Assessment show the most significant increased efficiency was in Disbursement with a 5.15 percentage point improvement and a 72% reduction in errors over last year (2017=42,851; 2016=151,560). Figure 3 – Disbursement Efficiency Rate: 2008-2017 demonstrates that the Program continues to perform well above the 75% benchmark in that category.

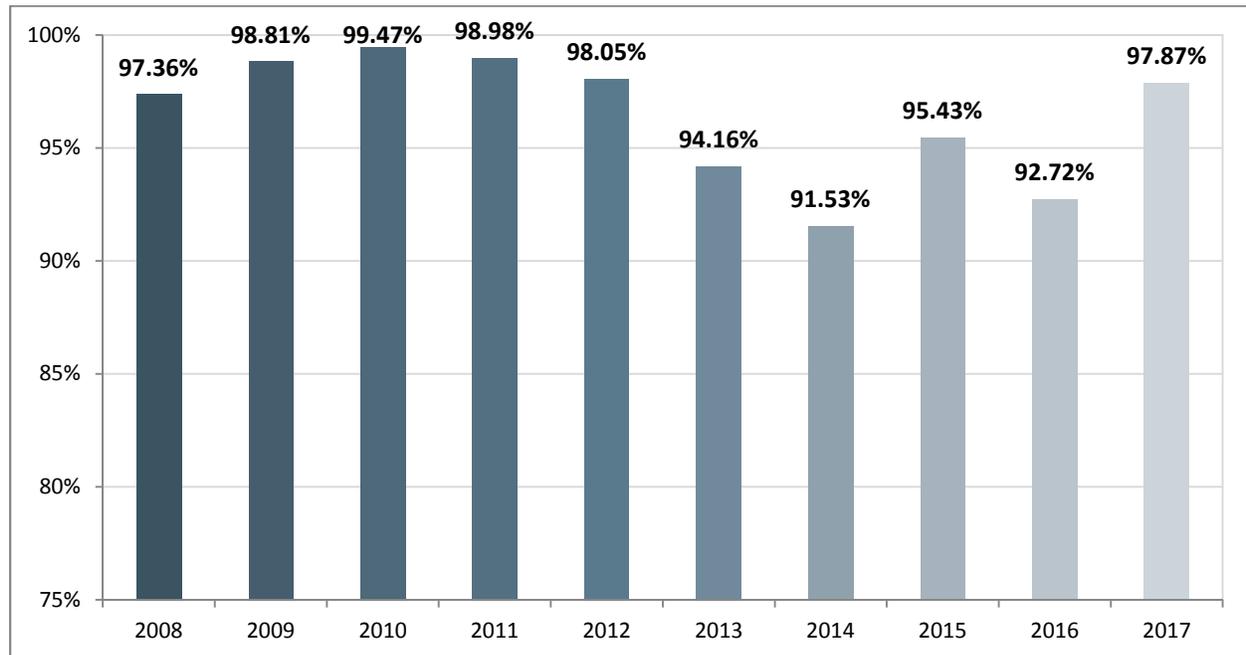


Figure 3 – Disbursement Efficiency Rate: 2008-2017

See also Appendix 1 – Tables and Figures (DM# 8715960), Figure 3 – Disbursement Efficiency Rate: 2008-2017.

Disbursement's increased performance can be attributed to stabilized staffing and fewer technology-related issues, which often delay processing. Those combined factors resulted in significantly fewer errors, especially for Other Receipt types. Those receipt types include all cash payments, money orders, checks, cashier checks, and foreign checks. These receipts require manual receipting, a time-consuming, and less consistent receipting process. There were 76% fewer Other Receipt errors this year (2017=28,539; 2016=117,962), but there was only a 6% drop in the Other Receipts processed (2017=673,271; 2016=719,233). There was also a drop in errors occurring the days before or after the holidays with only two days with higher than normal error rates. For example, there were 14,358 errors the first working day of 2016 (January 4, 2016). However, on the first working day of 2017 (January 3, 2017), there were 7,508 errors, a 48% reduction.

Increased efficiencies also were realized in other program categories: Establishment, Enforcement, Medical, and Expedited Process (12-month). This is the greatest number of categories with improvements since at least 2012. This can be directly attributed to the Data Cleanup Project, which has improved case data reliability and made it easier for field staff to keep current on their work. Spot training, which was provided for teams or individuals when analysis showed a majority of certain errors come from isolated workers or teams, further increased the quality of case data and little recurrence of errors.

There was a slight efficiency decrease for Case Closure and Modification categories but performance in both categories remained well above the compliance thresholds. All of the Modification category errors occurred on medical-only enforcement cases where the Program failed to send out notices to the parties of their right to modification within three years of the last notice. Currently, those cases are not programmed to automatically send notices on those types of cases, but they will be in Origin.

Case Closure efficiencies remain below the 10-year average (97.85%) by 3.23 percentage points for the second year in a row. This can be attributable to an increase in closing appropriately referred cases prematurely. Errors resulting from premature closure totaled 94% (16 of the 17 errors). Oregon adopted and enacted into law all of the new mandatory and optional closure rules from the *Final Rule: Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs* (published on December 20, 2016, in the Federal Register, on page 93492, Volume 81, Number 244). Full implementation began in October 2017, and it is anticipated that the expanded flexibility in closing cases will result more cases being closed and more of them will be closed appropriately in the coming year.

IV. Conclusion

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all of the program areas, including the six-month benchmark for Expedited Process. The Program is committed to maintaining this efficiency while testing and transitioning to Origin (Oregon's new child support system) over the coming two years. The challenge to accomplishing that successfully is the consistent number of child support staff assigned to the system project. A total of 22 DCS staff were assigned to the Project throughout the last two fiscal years. That number will increase by at least 30 staff when User Acceptance Testing begins in January 2018, an increase to DCS project staffing by 136%. To stabilize efficiencies, the Program is backfilling field-office positions and processes are being streamlined. The Program recognizes the complications that come with a phased roll-out of the new system. Straddling two systems may result in decreased

performance in some categories, but with the continued commitment to success, the Program expects to meet the benchmarks in all categories for the coming year.

V. The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average four hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

VI. Attachments

A. Appendix 1 - Tables and Figures

- File size: 409 KB
- Uploaded on: January 16, 2018