



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 2019**

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Prepared by the Program Analysts

March 2020

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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 submits its self-assessment results to the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Region 10 Office of Regional Operations 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 twenty-first annual self-assessment. It covers the 12-month period from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. 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 state legislature established the Oregon Child Support Program as required by Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The Oregon Department of Justice has administered the program since 2003. The Department’s Division of Child Support (DCS) maintains offices around the state and works with the Civil Recovery Section of the Department’s Civil Enforcement Division on certain judicial actions. The Department also contracts with 22 county District Attorney (DA) offices to assist in providing child support services. While active in state courts, 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, 2019. 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	126,616	Current Assistance	20,670	DCS Staff	557
DA Caseload	40,782	Former Assistance	95,338	DA Staff	127
<b>Program Caseload</b>	<b>167,398</b>	Never Assistance	51,390	System Project Staff	21

## B. Self-Assessment Results

Oregon’s efficiency rates and corresponding federal benchmarks are displayed below in Table 2.

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	407	394	<b>96.81%</b>	90%	<b>98.70%</b>
Establishment	438	438	<b>100%</b>	75%	<b>88.22%</b>
Enforcement	452	367	<b>81.19%</b>	75%	<b>99.27%</b>
Disbursement	94,386	94,083	<b>99.68%</b>	75%	<b>97.65%</b>
Medical	380	380	<b>100%</b>	75%	<b>94.76%</b>
Review & Adjustment	393	389	<b>98.98%</b>	75%	<b>94.83%</b>
Intergovernmental	729	709	<b>97.26%</b>	75%	<b>90.63%</b>
Expedited Process 6-month	360	349	<b>96.94%</b>	75%	<b>95.22%</b>
Expedited Process 12-month	360	360	<b>100%</b>	90%	<b>98.98%</b>
TOTAL:	97,905				

## C. Summary

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the self-assessment review period. Therefore, a corrective action plan is not 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)).

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 to achieve the 90% confidence level requirement.

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

Figure 1 — Confidence Level Statistical Equation

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

- 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). Using 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.

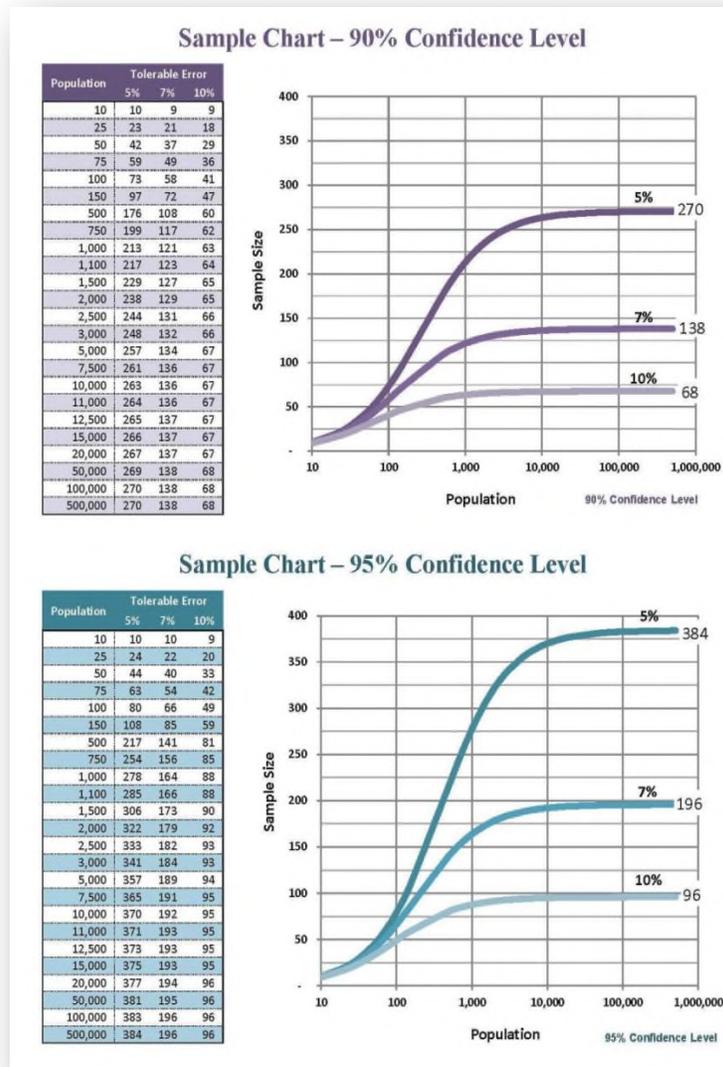


Figure 2 — Confidence Level Chart

To ensure that a case was included in the review for a single category only, except for Disbursement, each category sample was run separately from the others. Cases selected for the first category sample were not considered in the next category sample and so forth until the final category sample was pulled. 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. With the implementation of Oregon's new child support system, Origin, all cases receive an automated review, and all cases receiving an error from Origin go through an additional review conducted by analysts.

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 is 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 is based on five general case-evaluation rules:

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

Cases are initially screened for possible exclusion. A case is 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 in the sample for compliance with case closure criteria.
- Other reasons relevant to unique criteria exist.

### 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 is used every year, providing many benefits to the program:

- 1) The program efficiency rating increases when the field provides sufficient documentation validating a case action that was previously considered not in compliance.
- 2) Program confidence in the reported outcomes improves because of field participation in the determination of the outcomes.
- 3) Program awareness of the review categories and related criteria is increased.
- 4) The understanding of federal requirements is increased in both the Division of Child Support and District Attorney offices.

Prior to field office review, the system reviews the cases and determines whether the outcome qualifies as an “action” (appropriate action taken) or an “error” (failed to take required action or system unable to evaluate). A program analyst reviews the error cases to determine the last required action and whether the outcome can be changed to an action. Cases still labeled as errors after program analyst review are referred to their respective field office representatives for additional reviews. The representatives either concur or do not concur with the analyst’s determination and provide additional information to support their determination.

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

In response to the Concur Case Review Process this year, there were three non-concurrences received. Based on information provided by workers in the field, analysts were able to determine that some processes that crossed between the previous system and Origin did not contain all documentation available digitally in the new system. Documentation was available from other sources, and Origin cases were updated appropriately.

## C. Universe Definition and Sampling Procedures

To obtain focused samples, 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 included cases that were excluded due to definition ambiguity or because of human error during data entry. 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 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 – 2019 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.	37,212	271	407	407	407
Establishment	Any case in which a new administrative paternity-only order or support order was needed, in process, or finalized during the review period.	15,415	268	438	438	438
Enforcement	Any case with an ongoing income withholding in place. Also includes cases where a new or repeated enforcement action was required during the review period.	105,703	272	452	452	452
Disbursement	Any case with a payment during the review period. Analysis is conducted on the last payment received for each case.	94,386	272	94,386	94,386	94,386
Medical	Any case with a support order established or modified during the review period.	5,257	259	380	0	380
Review & Adjustment (Modification)	Any case with an order that can be modified. 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.	6,418	262	394	394	394

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. Also includes any case with a possible need for an initiating reciprocal.	20,373	269	729	729	729
Expedited Process	Any case with an administrative support order established during the review period.	1,592	233	360	360	360

### III. Self-Assessment Results

#### A. Introduction to Self-Assessment Results

Federal regulations require each state to meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 75% for each required program category except for 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, 2018, through September 30, 2019.

#### 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
Case Closure	407	394	96.81%	90%	98.70%
Establishment	438	438	100%	75%	88.22%
Enforcement	452	367	81.19%	75%	99.27%
Disbursement	94,386	94,083	99.68%	75%	97.65%
Medical	380	380	100%	75%	94.76%
Review & Adjustment	393	389	98.98%	75%	94.83%
Intergovernmental	729	709	97.26%	75%	90.63%
Expedited Process 6-month	360	349	96.94%	75%	95.22%
Expedited Process 12-month	360	360	100%	90%	98.98%
TOTAL:	97,905				

## 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 2019 Self-Assessment.

It is important to consider that the error breakdown shows the percentage of errors found in the sampling 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 Case Closure category had a 96% efficiency rate, using the error rate of 4% and multiplying it by the total population of closed cases within the review period (37,212), there is a reasonable potential for 1,488 total case closure 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.

**Table 5 — Self-Assessment Errors by Category**

<b>Total Number of Cases Requiring Action within the Review Period</b>		<b>3,519</b>
<b>Case Closure – 96.81%</b>		
<b>Error Description</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Did not attempt contact with at least two different methods	45 CFR 303.11(b)(15)	2
Did not send closure notice to parent/person who receives support	45 CFR 303.11(d)(4)	11
<b>Total Case Closure Errors</b>		<b>13</b>
<b>Disbursement – 99.68%</b>		
<b>Error Description</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Did not disburse collection within two working days after receipt	45 CFR 308.2(d)(1)	303
<b>Total Disbursement Errors</b>		<b>303</b>
<b>Enforcement – 81.19%</b>		
<b>Error Description</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Did not complete other enforcement activities within required timeframe	45 CFR 303.6(c)(2)	1
Did not complete locate activities within the required 75 or 90 calendar days	45 CFR 303.3(b)(3) and 303.3(b)(5)	81
Did not issue withholding within required timeframe	45 CFR 308.2(c)(3)(iv)(B)	3
<b>Total Enforcement Errors</b>		<b>85</b>
<b>Expedited Process – 6-month 96.94%, 12-month 100%</b>		
<b>Error Description</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
6-month federal timeframe to establish paternity and to establish, modify, and enforce support orders	45 CFR 303.101(b)(2)(i) and 308.2(h)(1)(i)	11
<b>Total Expedited Process Errors</b>		<b>11</b>

<b>Intergovernmental – 97.26%</b>		
<b>Error Description – Initiating Intergovernmental</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Did not notify responding state of case closure and provide reason for closure within required timeframe	45 CFR 303.7(c)(11)	1
Did not notify responding state of new information within required timeframe	45 CFR 303.7(a)(7)	1
<b>Total Initiating Governmental Errors</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Error Description – Responding Intergovernmental</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Did not notify initiating state of new information received	45 CFR 303.7(a)(7)	4
Did not disburse payment within required timeframe	45 CFR 308.2(g)(2)(iv)	1
Did not close case or withdraw AOW within required timeframe	45 CFR 308.2(g)(2)(vii) 45 CFR 303.7(d)(9)	8
Did not respond to inquiries from initiating state within required timeframe	45 CFR 303.7(b)(4)	5
<b>Total Responding Governmental Errors</b>		<b>18</b>
<b>Total Intergovernmental Errors</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>Review and Adjustments (Modification) – 98.98%</b>		
<b>Error Description</b>	<b>CFR Reference</b>	<b>Errors</b>
Modification not completed within required timeframe	45 CFR 303.8(e)	4
<b>Total Modification Errors</b>		<b>4</b>
<b>Total Number of Errors for all Categories</b>		<b>133</b>
<b>Overall Percentage of Cases with Errors</b>		<b>3.8%</b>

Actions were required on 3,519 cases within the review period. There were 133 errors across the categories. Based on the ratio of errors to cases requiring actions, Oregon experienced a 1.9 percentage point decrease in overall errors compared to last year (2018=5.7%; 2019=3.8%). This makes FFY 2019 the third year in a row to show an error rate decline. The new automated features of Origin and case cleanup efforts employed prior to Origin rollout contributed to the continuing decrease in errors.

## D. Summary of Self-Assessment Results

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight required program areas. Six categories showed an increase in efficiency from the prior review period, and two categories showed decreases. Prior years of program efficiency rates by FSA category are displayed below in Table 6.

Table 6 – Self-Assessment Results over Five Years

Criterion	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Change from Previous Year
Case Closure	97.24%	94.74%	94.62%	98.70%	<b>96.81%</b>	-1.89%
Establishment	88.77%	85.31%	87.00%	88.22%	<b>100%</b>	11.78%
Enforcement	91.94%	92.41%	93.86%	99.27%	<b>81.19%</b>	-18.08%
Disbursement	95.43%	92.72%	97.87%	97.65%	<b>99.68%</b>	2.03%
Medical	96.23%	94.30%	96.20%	94.76%	<b>100%</b>	5.24%
Review & Adjustment (Modification)	95.54%	96.35%	96.19%	94.83%	<b>98.98%</b>	4.14%
Intergovernmental	76.97%	86.62%	86.62%	90.63%	<b>97.26%</b>	6.63%
Expedited Process 6-month	93.23%	92.79%	97.04%	95.22%	<b>96.94%</b>	1.72%
Expedited Process 12-month	97.94%	98.43%	100%	98.98%	<b>100%</b>	1.02%

The largest decrease in efficiency was in Enforcement, with an 18.08% decline. While analyzing errors in the enforcement category, the program analysts discovered that periodic locate was happening every 91 days instead of every 90 days. The cause was the timing of jobs run in Origin. The program addressed the issue immediately, and programming has been updated. Figure 3 below demonstrates that, although performance dropped, the program continues to perform well above the 75% benchmark in enforcement.

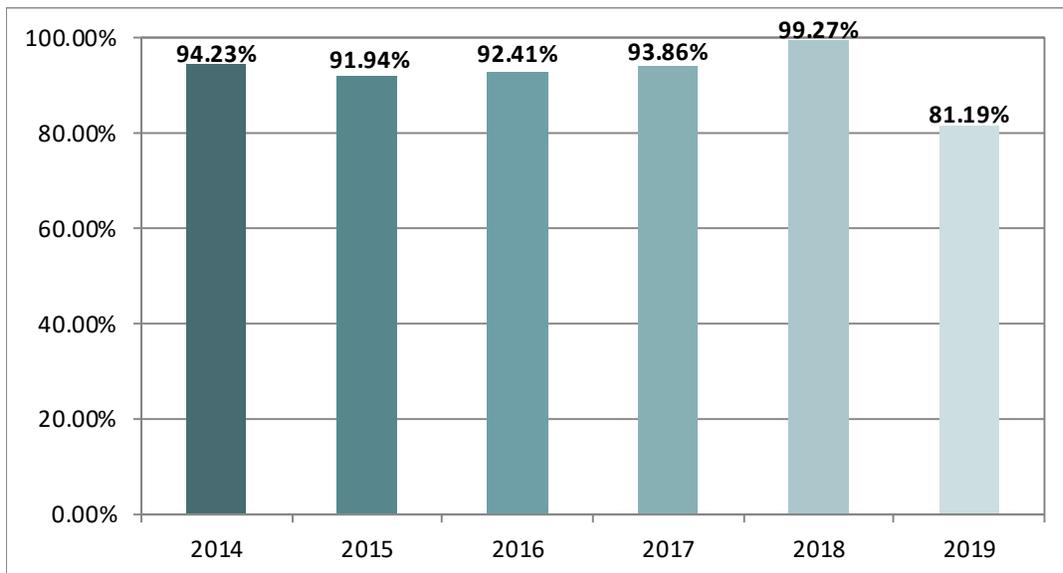


Figure 3 — Enforcement Efficiency Rate: 2014-2019

The largest increase in efficiency was seen in the establishment category. Since Oregon had not previously achieved 90% or greater in this category, additional analysis of case selection was conducted.

All cases in the evaluated sample had the same last required action, so to ensure all actions were being pulled for evaluation, the program analysts obtained a second list of cases evaluated by Origin. The second list contained examples of each possible required action, so the original sample was determined to be correct. As an additional check, cases awarded an action by Origin were randomly selected for analyst review. Those cases qualified for an action during the review period.

The intergovernmental category also saw a large increase in efficiency and reached the highest level seen. Origin directly led to the increase in this category. The previous system often failed to submit CSENET messages due to coding issues. Staff expected the messages to be sent automatically and did not always catch a missed message during the appropriate timeframes. Messages are now being sent automatically as expected.

Efficiency rates for Oregon also increased for disbursement, medical, review and adjustment, and expedited process categories. Improved automated processes and staff procedures related to the new system contributed to the increases. Origin is more reliable and completes more tasks for staff, allowing them to focus on complex tasks and personal contact with customers.

Oregon decreased in efficiency rates for the categories of case closure and enforcement, although performance in these categories remains well above the compliance thresholds. For both categories, staff identified defects in Origin that negatively affected performance. A defect, related to notifications not being sent before a case closed, was identified and fixed prior to the self-assessment process. As noted, the locate defect that resulted in the majority of enforcement errors was identified and corrected during the self-assessment process.

## **IV. Conclusion**

Oregon surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all the program areas, including the 6-month benchmark for Expedited Process. The program remained committed to maintaining a high level of efficiency throughout the transition from the former system to Origin. As employees continue learning and understanding the nuances of Origin's functionality, efficiency and performance are expected to remain strong and show growth where performance fell in prior years.

## **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: 205 KB
- Uploaded on: March 17, 2020