

State of Alaska
Department of Revenue
Child Support Services Division



SELF-ASSESSMENT REVIEW
FFY 2015

October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015

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March 25, 2016

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

This Self-Assessment Review measures the Alaska Child Support Services Division's (CSSD) compliance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015. The standards and criteria for State Self-Assessment Review and report processes are established in 45 CFR 308. This audit review covered the period from October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015, and included the following eight categories:

- Case Closure
- Establishment
- Enforcement
- Disbursement
- Medical
- Review and Adjustment
- Intergovernmental
- Expedited Processes at both 6 and 12-Month Tiers

Case Closure, Enforcement, Disbursement, and Intergovernmental Responding were all stable compared with recent years. Medical and Expedited Process at the 6-Month Tier measured higher than last year. Establishment, Review and Adjustment, Intergovernmental Initiating and Expedited Process at the 12-Month Tier decreased but remained compliant.

The Alaska Child Support Program was established July 1, 1976 under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act and operates within the Department of Revenue. The program uses administrative processes to establish, modify, and enforce child support orders. The following table is a synopsis of Alaska’s child support caseload and staffing as of September 30, 2015:

Total Program Caseload	49,023
Current Assistance Cases	6,462
Former Assistance Cases	22,899
Never Assistance Cases	19,662
Total Program Staff	230

The active IV-D caseload decreased by 24 cases. The number of staff increased by three. For this audit period, CSSD surpassed federal compliance requirements for all measured criteria.

B. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table A1: 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	76	72	95%	90%	98%
Establishment	58	52	90%	75%	94%
Enforcement	398	386	97%	75%	97%
Disbursement	312	298	96%	75%	96%
Medical	167	155	93%	75%	92%
Review & Adjustment	201	192	96%	75%	99%
Intergovernmental	113	104	92%	75%	96%
Expedited Process 6-Month	23	20	87%	75%	76%
Expedited Process 12-Month	24	22	92%	90%	96%
TOTAL	1,372				

C. SUMMARY

Alaska surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight program areas for the Self-Assessment review period; therefore, a corrective action plan is not necessary.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. INTRODUCTION TO METHODOLOGY

Alaska's review process is based on the criterion outlined in 45 CFR 308. Alaska reviewed a sample of child support cases in eight categories to determine compliance with the corresponding citations in the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 302 and 303) and the Social Security Act (Section 454B(c)(1)).

B. STATE SELF-ASSESSMENT COORDINATION

In accordance with 45 CFR 308, the auditor extracted a systematic random sample from the statewide caseload. Alaska maintains responsibility for and control of the results and contents of the annual report. The audit review period was October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. A Self-Assessment review is performed annually based on the federal fiscal year. Automated review tools are not used. All records are maintained by CSSD.

C. UNIVERSE DEFINITION AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The complete IV-D universe was sampled including every case that closed during FFY 2015. The population consisted of every IV-D case that was open as of September 30, 2015, and every case closed during the audit period, October 1, 2014 through September 30, 2015. All cases that changed from IV-D to Non-IV-D during the year were included. All Non-IV-D cases in the population and all limited-services cases associated with intercepting the Alaska Permanent Fund Dividend instead were excluded.

The audit sample was extracted from the online caseload. For this audit, it was determined that Alaska needed to sample 500+ cases in order to compensate for cases that were excluded during the audit. The skip interval was 109. The start point was 73. The process yielded a sample of 527 cases.

D. SUMMARY OF METHODOLOGY

Alaska conducted its annual Self-Assessment Review per requirements of the Social Security Act and CFR for FFY 2015. No segments of the IV-D universe were omitted from the sampling process. Alaska is in compliance in the methodology used to perform the self-assessment audit and obtained precise, accurate and complete results.

III. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

A. INTRODUCTION TO SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Federal regulations require each state to meet a minimum compliance benchmark of 75 percent for each required program category with the exception of Expedited Processes (12-Month Tier) and Case Closure, both of which require 90 percent.

Percentages were calculated by dividing the number of cases with no measurable errors by the total-cases-measured for each criterion. Fractional numbers were rounded up when the fraction equaled .5 or greater, and down if it was .4 or less.

Alaska surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all program areas for the review period October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015.

B. SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Table A2: 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	76	72	95%	90%	98%
Establishment	58	52	90%	75%	94%
Enforcement	398	386	97%	75%	97%
Disbursement	312	298	96%	75%	96%
Medical	167	155	93%	75%	92%
Review & Adjustment	201	192	96%	75%	99%
Intergovernmental	113	104	92%	75%	96%
Expedited Process 6-Month	23	20	87%	75%	76%
Expedited Process 12-Month	24	22	92%	90%	96%
TOTAL	1,372				

C. DISCUSSION OF SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Findings were recorded in the Child Support Enforcement Self-Assessment Questionnaire in a Microsoft Access database. Of the 527 cases reviewed, 48 had no measurable actions, were Non-IV-D or were excluded for other reasons.

For FFY 2015, multiple cases were coded in error as IV-D for at least part of one month during the year. The coding was corrected to Non-IV-D in the year. Inadvertently, some of these cases were picked up in the audit sample due to having been erroneously coded IV-D at a point in the review period. These cases were excluded from the audit. Coding cases with the correct IV-D status should eliminate this error in the future.

D. SUMMARY OF SELF-ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Alaska surpassed the required federal compliance benchmarks in all eight program categories for the Self-Assessment review period October 1, 2014, through September 30, 2015.

Case Closure

Current efficiency rate was 95%. Federal minimum standard is 90%. Out of 76 measured, there were 4 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate remained at 98%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Establishment

Current efficiency rate was 90%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Out of 58 measured, there were 6 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate remained at 92%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Enforcement

Current efficiency rate was 97%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Out of 398 measured, there were 12 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate increased to 96%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Disbursement

Current efficiency rate was 96%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Out of 312 measured, there were 14 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate remained at 97%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Medical

Current efficiency rate was 93%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Out of 167 measured, there were 12 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate increased to 88%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Review and Adjustment

Current efficiency rate was 96%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Out of 201 measured, there were 9 errors. The five-year average efficiency rate increased to 95%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

Intergovernmental

The composite performance for Central Registry, Initiating and Responding actions was 92%. Federal minimum standard is 75%. There were 9 errors in the 113 cases measured. The five-year average performance remained at 92%. This overall criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

The Initiating subcategory decreased to 86% compliant. Federal minimum standard is 75%. Of the 56 cases measured, 8 errors were found. The five-year average efficiency rate decreased to 89%. This subcategory criterion remained compliant.

The Responding subcategory remained at 98% compliant. Federal minimum standard is 75%. There were 57 cases measured, 1 error was found. The five-year average efficiency rate increased to 97%. This subcategory criterion remained compliant.

Expedited Processes

There were 23 cases measured for Expedited Processes for the 6-Month Tier and 24 cases measured for the 12-Month Tier.

The 6-Month Tier was 87% compliant. Federal minimum standard is 75%. There were three errors. The five-year average for the 6-Month Tier increased to 80%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

The 12-Month Tier decreased to 92% compliance. Federal minimum standard is 90%. There were two errors. The five-year average for the 12-Month Tier decreased to 96%. This criterion remained compliant with federal guidelines.

IV. SELF-ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PLAN

Does not apply.

V. PROGRAM DIRECTION

None.

VI. PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS**A. INTRODUCTION TO PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS**

The Alaska Child Support Services Division is focused on examining processes and procedures to reduce costs and increase efficiencies while continuing to provide quality customer services to Alaska's families. Below are some examples of creative and innovative solutions in a challenging fiscal environment.

B. DISCUSSION OF PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

Current Enhancements

Green cards—

In August of 2015, CSSD started using an electronic return receipt program for processing outgoing certified mail. Instead of using paper mail stickers and manually completing green cards, caseworkers log into the program and enter information electronically. Our document center scans, processes and prints an e-certified bar code and mails the document. Caseworkers can track the mail and save the electronic signature (green card equivalent) directly to the case file. The new process is simple, user friendly, and saves \$1.35 per each piece of certified mail.

Upcoming Enhancements

Direct Deposit Program—

In November of 2015, CSSD stopped issuing paper checks for support payments. Custodial parents now receive their child support by prepaid debit cards or electronic direct bank deposits. The prepaid card is free to the agency and there are very few fees for the card holder. Clients can receive one free replacement card per year and are only charged for withdrawals if they are out-of-network. In 2016, custodial parents will be able to enroll and change their own direct deposit bank information which will cut back on additional paper processing. This enhancement mitigates fraud, provides custodial parents quick access to funds and reduces the number of stale dated checks, and money holding. Significantly, monthly savings of approximately \$6,000 in postage costs have been realized, in addition to an estimated \$125,000 yearly savings in check stock purchases.

MyAlaska Access—

Payment histories can be obtained by clients through the state's web portal, MyAlaska, or from online statements. CSSD recently expanded access to MyAlaska to serve mortgage companies, rental and housing programs and assistance programs, providing instant access to information they need, instead of waiting for an agency response. This initiative frees up resources to focus on other customer services, and greatly assists clients.

Electronic Income Withholding Orders—

Implementation of the Electronic Income Withholding Order (e-IWO) interface was completed and approved by OCSE in December of 2015. Income withholding orders can now be sent and received electronically. Further, all e-IWOs are uniform and ready to image. The process will reduce the bulk of withholding order mail processing, and increase accuracy and reliability, saving time and money. Additionally, families should receive their child support sooner.

E-Bill Web-based Payment Platform—

CSSD partnered with the state's contracted bank to create a web based payment platform to allow non-custodial parents to pay their child support by credit/debit card or by a debit to their bank account. Employers will be able to remit payments online for one or multiple employees. Providing alternate methods for making payments will improve receipt and distribution processes, ensure accuracy of posted payments, and save the agency time and money.

Positive Pay Check Project—

The state moved to standardized check stock and envelopes in July of 2015. For the remaining checks still issued by the agency, CSSD has almost completed the programming work to move to the standard. The new check stock and envelopes are available under the state contract for a reduced rate. The agency will be able to retire its old endorser and significantly cut handling time and efforts.

Chat—

The Customer Service automated phone system is being updated to provide clients the option to "live chat" with a CSSD representative on the agency website.

Case Management System Re-platforming Effort—

CSSD plans to re-platform the case management system (NSTAR) pending capital funding approval from the Alaska Legislature. This effort will move NSTAR off of the mainframe and update the programming language to newer code. In preparation for this move, the agency has been cleaning up system glitches and work-arounds. One effort enhanced an existing screen to identify case issues and reduce research time; bringing immediate attention to important pending or urgent codes such as bankruptcy, payment agreements, stays-of-enforcement and more. Future enhancements will include dropdown menus, a relational back-end and a user-friendly front-end. Re-platforming keeps the agency moving forward by upgrading the system incrementally.

C. SUMMARY OF PROGRAM SERVICE ENHANCEMENTS

The Child Support Services Division continues to improve services and modernize. Despite fiscal challenges, our agency continues to maintain high performance standards

VII. CONCLUSION

Child Support Services Division exceeded federal compliance requirements for all measured criteria. The Medical and 6-Month Tier of Expedited processes categories showed an increase in efficiency from the prior review period. Enforcement and Disbursement categories reported the same compliance rate and the other categories showed decreases. Because efficiencies were above the federally established benchmarks, there is no corrective action plan associated with this year's self-assessment.