

Right Choice



Noncustodial Parent Program



Child Support Overview

The collection of child support is difficult under the best circumstances, but when a non-custodial parent is unemployed or under-employed, it becomes increasingly difficult.

Contempt powers may not be levied on a non-custodial parent by the Court, but the Court can order an NCP to participate in a program designed to assist the NCP in obtaining employment and may cite the NCP they fail to comply with the program requirements.

Special child support dockets are created by the Court to hear motions concerning the establishment of paternity and the enforcement of child support and/ or medical support.



These 'docket' days are scheduled for the same day and week of each month, with the exact days being determined by Court officials well in advance.

When an NCP has not made a child support payment within a thirty (30) day period or has accumulated arrears equaling a thirty (30) day payment, a Motion for Order and Rule is filed with the Court. The presiding judge signs the motion ordering the NCP to appear at the next child support docket date and to pay a full month's child support obligation.

This Order is then served to the NCP by local law enforcement officials. If the NCP appears with payment, then the NCP is given an Order to Appear at the next month's child support docket date; but if the NCP appears without payment, then the NCP must explain why payment is not available.



The Court may then choose one of the following options:

- Order a wage assignment (if the NCP is employed);
- Allow additional time for the NCP make payment (a bench warrant is issued if payment is not made by the deadline); *OR*
- Set a date for a contempt hearing

At each Court session, the NCP is given an Order to Appear at the next child support docket session to either make a child support payment(s) due or follow the above procedure.

A NCP remains on the Court docket until removed by the judge or until it is verified that the wage assignment is being paid. With this system, the NCP is aware that he/ she must appear in Court or pay the monthly child support obligation in full prior to the scheduled court date each and every month, or face the consequences. This makes it hard to maintain employment for the NCP having to ask off one day per month



Purpose of the Right Choice Program



Right
Choice
Program

West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board



Purpose of the Right Choice Program

The purpose of the Right Choice Program is to give non-custodial parents (NCP's) the opportunity to accept their financial responsibilities by offering assistance and ways to enhance employment efforts for them to financially supporting their child or children. The labor market is increasingly unstable for low-skilled and uneducated workers.

The Right Choice Program helps identify barriers to employment for the NCP's. Many NCP's have barriers such as:

- ❖ lack basic skill credentials and social networks
- ❖ have criminal records and/ or various legal issues that inhibit their employability



Right Choice provides a court advocate to the non-custodial parent to develop a Workforce Assessment Plan to present to Court officials for approval. Referrals are made to career centers and partner agencies to meet the participants needs.

This change in the traditional system helps keep the children affected out of poverty if parents and NCP are given the tools for better jobs through career centers and system partners.



Right Choice Structure

The Right Choice Program is structured to allow for a vast array of resources to be utilized to assist non-custodial parents in obtaining or retaining employment so they can make their child support payment on a regular basis.

The Program has several key partners, including:

Local Judges – The Circuit, District and Family Court Judges provide guidance in the provision of services offered by the Right Choice Program. Their cooperation and desire to implement the program is critical to the successful efforts achieved.

West Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (WKWIB) – This regional organization plays a vital role in coordinating the program and partner agencies. The WKWIB provides oversight to the daily operation of the program and provides staff support to meet the goals and objectives.

Right Choice Assessment Team– This team consists of representatives from various community agencies and workforce agencies, including the West Kentucky Career Center System partners and other community action agencies.



Right Choice Assessment Team–

The team's responsibilities include the assessment of NCPs referred to the program by the Court in an attempt to determine current skill levels, areas of interest and career goals.

Partner resources may include services provided by any of the following:

Easter Seals of Western Kentucky

Experience Works

Job Corps

Kentucky Adult Education

Kentucky Farmworkers Program, Inc.

Office for the Blind

Office for Vocational Rehabilitation

Office of Employment and Training

Pennyrile Allied Community Services

Pennyrile Area Dev. District (WIA Title 1)/West KY Workforce Board

TANF / Community Based Services

Child Support

Family Court System



Right Choice Program Operation

Court Hearing

- The NCP who has failed to pay child support payments for a period of 30 days or who has accumulated arrears equal to 30 days of support is ordered to appear
- If payment is not available due to unemployment/underemployment, the NCP is ordered to participate in the program

NCP Assessment

- The NCP is taken to a room adjacent to the courtroom to complete any needed assessments immediately
- Depending upon the results of those assessments, referrals are made to partner agencies for additional assistance and further assessments, as needed

Child Support Payment

- As long as the NCP is participating and cooperating with the workforce plan, child support enforcement officials cease other enforcement means as long as the NCP continues to make payments

Program Compliance

- The NCP must comply with all requirements and remain active in the Right Choice Program
- Failure to comply with the program results in court-ordered incarceration



Right Choice also includes job search activities, job development, job readiness skills, short-term training services and supportive services to assist the non-custodial parent in becoming responsible for his or her child.



Intake and Initial Interview

Consists of introduction to Case manager who gathers all relevant information through a series of initial assessments and interviews to establish the particular workforce needs based plan of action that will support the NCP service and employment plans.

Job Readiness

Developing a comprehensive plan of various employment seeking skills that are directed specifically to the needs of the NCP and interviewing for a job, e.g. the discussion of lack of work, underemployment, felony background, or identification of valuable work experience that has been established through volunteerism, etc.. Our objective is to assist the client in gaining a real understanding of how to dress, speak to an employer, use transferable and literal skills to find gainful employment.



Program Benefits/Results

In addition to the non-custodial parent benefiting from a varied array of services and resources through this program, the community-at-large also benefits due to the direct and indirect impact within a local community, such as:

- Immediate assessment of non-custodial parent's ability to pay child support
- Increased employment in the local economy
- Decreased Medicaid costs
- Decreased enforcement costs
- Decreased incarceration costs
- Decreased need for TANF and other government support services
- Decreased caseloads for local court systems



The Right Choice Program has been operating in Western Kentucky since July 1999.

It is now offered in the following counties:
Christian County, Crittenden County, Hopkins County, Livingston, Lyon, Muhlenberg County, and Trigg County.



“I have been working with Right Choice and Karen Wallace since I came to work at the Crittenden County Child Support office in April 2010. During this time Ms. Wallace has worked with 34 people in our office.

Out of those 34, 19 currently have full time employment , which enables them to pay their child support on a regular basis. We are very thankful for the opportunity to work with Ms. Wallace and Right Choice Program and for the successful results we have witnessed in our County. We look forward to the future and what it holds with Right Choice. ”

Debbie Brown
CHFS DIS CSE CO
Crittenden Co



Contact Information



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