

# Intervention Strategies for Working With Low-Income Noncustodial Parents in Minnesota

July 2003

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Minnesota Department of Human Services,  
Hennepin County Child Support Division, and  
Center for the Support of Families, Inc.

## Introduction

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) received a Special Improvement Project Grant (SIP Grant) to implement a demonstration project to evaluate various strategies to achieve better outcomes for the child support program when working with low-income noncustodial parents. The project was implemented in collaboration with the Hennepin County Child Support Division (HCCSD).

The project included three groups that have been the topic of significant research and policy work, specifically, low-income noncustodial parents (NCPs) who:

- Are incarcerated or recently released from prison.
- Have recently established paternity, but do not have evidence of employment to establish a child support order.
- Have accumulated substantial public assistance child support debt and have continuing child support obligations.

Project activities commenced in July 2001, with a series of planning sessions to refine the intervention and evaluation strategies used throughout the project. The project began full-scale implementation, selecting and contacting individual participants, in September and October 2001. Generally, data collection began with full-scale implementation and ended between January and May 2003, unless otherwise noted in the body of the report.

This evaluation report presents the results of the intervention strategies implemented as part of the project. There are also discussions relating important administrative and institutional changes that were implemented during the project and have generally become part of the ongoing operations of the child support program in Hennepin County. The intervention strategies for each NCP group identified above are discussed separately.

## **Part I: Intervention Strategies for Working with Incarcerated and Recently Released Noncustodial Parents**

### **Background**

In 2002, more than two million individuals were incarcerated in the United States. This represents a four-fold increase in inmates from the mid-1970s. At any given time, approximately 12% of African-American men in their 20s and early 30s are incarcerated, with an estimated 28% of African-American men incarcerated in prison or local jail at some time during their lives.<sup>1</sup> Many of these individuals have children and corresponding child support orders that are administered in state child support systems.<sup>2</sup> Child support amounts typically go unpaid when individuals are incarcerated, and child support agencies seldom initiate legal processes to reduce these orders, despite claims that incarcerated individuals by definition are unable to pay their support obligations.<sup>3</sup> When these parents are released from jail or prison, they will typically encounter significant barriers to employment in the formal economy and difficulty with family reintegration. Many also accumulate significant child support arrears, although some believe that significant child support arrears often exist prior to incarceration and that the problem only becomes worse during periods of incarceration.

Generally, if someone with a child support obligation voluntarily quits his or her job, the court will not consider a reduction in the child support obligation. Typically the court will note that such voluntary actions should not diminish the economic support that children need from both parents. Many judges say that criminal activity that leads to incarceration is voluntary and similarly should not reduce the economic support due to children. Others, particularly advocates for incarcerated parents, believe large child support arrears amounts, which are caused or exacerbated by incarceration, are a significant barrier to paying ongoing support and to obtaining employment in the formal economy.

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<sup>1</sup> Fox Butterfield, *The New York Times*, April 7, 2003.

<sup>2</sup> “For instance, a 2001 Massachusetts study found that 21.7 percent of Department of Correction (DOC) inmates and 22.5 percent of inmates in the Suffolk County House of Correction were in the child support caseload.” *Incarcerated Parents and Child Support: A Conversation with Jessica Pearson and Esther Griswold*, **Policy & Practice**, the journal of The American Public Human Services Association (December 2002).

<sup>3</sup> See, Esther Griswold and Jessica Pearson, “Twelve Reasons for Collaboration Between Departments of Correction and Child Support Enforcement Agencies,” *Corrections Today Magazine* (June 2003) at p. 87.

In recent years the fact that so many inmates had child support debts emerged as a public policy issue. Generally, the discussion has focused on whether there are appropriate alternatives to assist incarcerated parents in ensuring that their child support debt and ongoing obligations are affordable. Recently, Jessica Pearson, Ph.D., spoke about the arrears owed by prisoners based on research she conducted in Colorado, Massachusetts, and Illinois.<sup>4</sup> Among the research findings she discussed were:

- In 2001 in Massachusetts, at the time noncustodial parents entered prison, they already owed an average of \$11,180 in child support arrears. At time of parole, arrears had grown to \$16,430. To this sum Massachusetts has the authority to add interest at 1% per month or 12% annually and a penalty of .5% per month or 6% annually if the arrears is 25% or more of the most recent annual obligation amount.<sup>5</sup>
- For the three states studied, the average parolee was between 33 and 36 years old at time of release, had children by two or more women, and owed the majority of his arrears debt to the state, not to the custodial parent.
- In Colorado, the average wage of an ex-offender was \$9/hour, but 40% remained unemployed or worked only part time. The average monthly child support obligation was \$269; and support was owed for more than three children.

As Dr. Pearson indicates, while at any one time only four to five percent of noncustodial parents on the child support caseload are in prison or in jail, Washington State reports that 30% of noncustodial parents on its caseload have been incarcerated during the life of the order. Colorado, meanwhile, has indicated that at least 11% of its child support debt was accrued by individuals who were incarcerated.

Finding appropriate remedies is complicated by federal and state laws, which preclude retroactive modification of child support debt. Generally, a modification is permitted to apply only to the period between filing and serving notice of a petition to the opposing party and the final date of decision by the court. In Minnesota, the court may consider several factors relating to incarceration when determining whether to approve a request for modification of the child support order. Among the factors the court may consider are: (a) the fact of incarceration itself;

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<sup>4</sup> Presentation on 5/30/03 at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Symposium on Children, Courts, and the Federal Child Support Enforcement Program, Chicago, Illinois. This information was subsequently released in the previously noted article in *Corrections Today Magazine* and in the upcoming article to be published in *the Family Court Review*.

<sup>5</sup> *Child Support Profile: Massachusetts Incarcerated and Paroled Parents*, Center for Policy Research (2002), Ester Griswold and Jessica Pearson, "Twelve Reasons for Collaboration Between Departments of Corrections and Child Support Enforcement Agencies," reported in *Corrections Today Magazine*, (June 2003) Table 1 at p. 87.

(b) the fact that the incarcerated individual lacked the financial ability to pay during the required time period; and (c) information regarding whether and when a request was made to the public authority for debt-modification.

Policymakers and administrators in child support programs across the nation are seeking the appropriate balance of services and interventions that will help to create appropriate incentives to noncustodial parents to alleviate debt burdens and provide ongoing economic support to their children. There are many legal, institutional, and administrative challenges to creating effective solutions for incarcerated parents. The strategies implemented during this project are one preliminary step that we hope will be a significant contribution to the discussion of the legal, policy, and operational changes needed to develop effective arrears management strategies for this segment of the child support program caseload.

### **Project Implementation**

Prior to implementing this demonstration project, Hennepin County did not have structured policies for working with incarcerated or recently released noncustodial parents. In most instances, the county was reactive in working with this population, instead of proactively designating it as a caseload requiring intensive administration and assigning staff to work exclusively with these cases. Before the project, cases belonging to incarcerated individuals were grouped with other nonpaying cases in Hennepin County.

Typically, when a noncustodial parent was released from prison, the case would be transferred to the general caseload to enforce the order, without any unique attention to the fact of recent incarceration. Generally, if a noncustodial parent contacted child support staff with concerns about barriers to payment he would be provided the same information relating to managing their support obligation as any parent—for example he would be told that he could file a motion for a review and modification hearing.

With implementation of the demonstration project, all of Hennepin County's child support cases in which the noncustodial parent was identified as incarcerated were separated from the larger pool of nonpaying cases. A child support staff member was assigned to work

proactively with noncustodial parents while they were incarcerated. The basic strategy for working with the incarcerated parents in the demonstration project included the following:

- Providing child support program information to incarcerated noncustodial parents,
- Providing assistance with completing forms to request a review and modification of the child support order, and
- Encouraging active participation of recently released noncustodial parents in managing their support orders to encourage ongoing and timely payment of their child support obligations.

### ***Assignment to Experimental and Control Groups***

The sample included all noncustodial parents with child support cases in Hennepin County that had administrative indications that the participants were incarcerated. Because of resource constraints and a relatively small population, the cases belonging to participants in this component of the demonstration project were not separated into experimental and control groups. However, a sample of convenience emerged during administration of the project, creating a quasi-experimental design. The convenience sample (control group) group includes individuals who did not respond to contacts from Hennepin County offering an opportunity to participate in a research project. Still, the research design is not a true experimental model and comparisons between the experimental group and the control group would not be appropriate. It would also not be appropriate to use the results presented in this report to generalize to the larger population of incarcerated parents. The recruitment goal was to contact 100 individuals and provide services to 50 of them. The project team succeeded in contacting 102 incarcerated noncustodial parents and providing services to 72.

### ***Intervention Strategy***

Together, the project team identified goals for this component of the demonstration project. The specific goals for working with incarcerated noncustodial parents were to:

- Develop a consistent policy for working with incarcerated parents,
- Proactively initiate contact with each noncustodial parent when the Hennepin County Child Support Division becomes aware of the incarceration status,
- Establish a professional, helpful, working relationship with noncustodial parents while they are incarcerated, and
- Maintain contact with the noncustodial parents once they were released from incarceration.

To be eligible to participate in this component of the demonstration project, a noncustodial parent needed to meet the following criteria:

- Noncustodial parents must have a current child support order greater than \$0 in Hennepin County,
- Noncustodial parents must be incarcerated for a minimum of six months, and
- Noncustodial parents can be in any prison, state or federal, in any state as long as they have a Hennepin County child support order.

***Addressing Barriers to Access***

Incarcerated parents may find it difficult to complete the steps necessary to receive a court hearing to review their child support obligation, simply due to the fact that they are incarcerated. Anecdotal evidence in Hennepin County suggested that incarcerated parents might encounter several barriers to obtaining a review hearing, among them:

- Lack of knowledge or information about managing their child support case,
- Complex forms to complete,
- Lack of assistance in understanding and completing the forms,
- Purchasing postage to mail the forms,
- Scheduling difficulty for court appearances (including telephone appearances) if a hearing is granted, and
- Negative stereotypes and perceptions of incarcerated NCPs among staff.

The demonstration project attempted to address these barriers by implementing several new strategies, among them to:

***Create or Revise Correspondence to Incarcerated Noncustodial Parents:*** Several new letters and forms were created to provide information to incarcerated parents about their child support cases and offering assistance with completing a request for a modification. An affidavit was created that includes the information the court needs to determine whether a modification is appropriate.

***Designate Child Support Staff:*** The Hennepin County Child Support Division designated a single staff member to serve as the primary point of contact for incarcerated noncustodial parents. This individual signed the letters and was available to answer questions that parents had about their cases or the process to receive a hearing for a modification request.

***Allow Collect Phone Calls From Participants:*** Most correctional institutions limit telephone access and inmates are often required to pay for phone calls. This presents a barrier to obtaining information about their child support cases. The Hennepin County Child Support Division had a general policy of not accepting collect phone calls. During the demonstration project a dedicated phone line was created to accept collect phone calls from incarcerated noncustodial parents.

***Clearly Identify Child Support Correspondence:*** Correctional facilities screen mail, and if important correspondence is not clearly identified it may not be delivered. Correspondence must also reflect specific information in the address to ensure that it is delivered to the correct facility, section of the facility and inmate. By updating the address components in PRISM (Minnesota Statewide Child Support Enforcement Automated System data) on cases where an individual is incarcerated, and using a stamp to clearly identify child-support-related correspondence, the child support agency was able to increase dramatically the amount of correspondence that was not returned, and presumably properly delivered.

***Provide Return Postage:*** To address the fact that some incarcerated individuals have difficulty saving sufficient money to purchase postage, the child support agency began providing postage-paid envelopes. This was perceived by participants as helpful and enhanced their ability to provide necessary information to the child support program.

***Create Easy-to-Use Forms:*** The Hennepin County Child Support Division worked with the Hennepin County Attorney's Office to create an affidavit that contained the essential information needed by the court to complete a review and modification request—often without an appearance by the requesting party. The County Attorney successfully worked with the courts to accept this affidavit. The affidavit and outreach to the courts was instrumental in achieving the number of completed modification requests that occurred during the demonstration project.

***Staff Training:*** Hennepin County Child Support Division had to work with members of its staff to overcome preconceived notions about incarcerated noncustodial parents. Biases toward these parents existed among those Hennepin County Child Support Division staff members responsible for conducting the review and modifications of child support orders. Training to raise awareness about the unique needs of incarcerated parents was helpful in reducing the incidence of negative commentary.



## **Evaluation Findings**

### ***Response to Initial Contact and Modification Requests***

In October 2001, letters were sent to 102 incarcerated noncustodial parents who each had a child support case in Hennepin County.

The letters described the demonstration project and the resources available to assist participants in requesting review hearings for their child support cases. Seventy-two individuals responded to the letter. These 72 respondents were assigned to the experimental group and the remaining 21 non-respondents were assigned to the control group. Nine other participants were excluded from the research project for administrative reasons. The 102 participants had a total of 133 cases with child support orders in Hennepin County.

**Table 1: Summary Results**

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Average age	33	33
Average child support obligation	\$174	\$174
Response to contact letter	72/102 (71%)	21/102 (21%)
Average number of cases per respondent	1.3 cases	1.3 cases

**Table 2: Summary of Requests for Review and Modification (as of 4/30/03)**

Number of NCPs who submitted a request	72
Number of cases belonging to NCPs who submitted a request	94
Number of NCPs who received a modification (number of orders modified)	36 (45)
Number of NCPs who had their modification request denied (number of cases)	22 (30)
Reasons for denial of modification request:	
No response to request for additional information	12 cases
Miscellaneous	9 cases
Released prior to action	7 cases
NCP filed own motion	2 cases
Number of NCPs whose request was pending at end of research project (number of cases)	14 (19)
Time elapsed from request to final determination	219 days (7 months)

One goal of the effort to work with incarcerated NCPs is to enhance cooperation with the child support program. One of the initial goals is to establish a relationship with the participants. The project used responses to the initial contact letter as an important indicator of two-way

communication. Cooperation was, at this point, defined as responding to the contact letter. Using this measure, 71% of the participants cooperated with the request for information needed to initiate the review and modification process.

As is shown in Table 2, 72 participants submitted requests for review and modification. These participants had a total of 94 child support cases among them. Most participants received a resolution of their request for a review; fourteen individuals (19 cases) had requests pending when data collection terminated. These requests were subsequently completed. Several individuals did not receive a modification, mostly because they did not provide sufficient documentation.

There was significant contact between participants and child support staff throughout the period of the demonstration project. Each contact from a participant was recorded along with the nature of the contact (phone call, written correspondence, etc). There were 426 recorded contacts from the participants in the experimental group, while the control group made contact with the child support staff 71 times<sup>6</sup>. This level of contact suggests that having a child support staff member assigned to the incarcerated NCP caseload may be of significant value to individual participants and to the child support program, given that communication with these individuals is essential to managing their child support cases adequately.

### **Arrears Accumulation**

Advocates for incarcerated noncustodial parents often point to arrears accumulation as a significant barrier to payment of ongoing child support obligations. There is ongoing debate about whether child support debt occurs during incarceration or whether noncustodial parents already have significant debt when they are initially incarcerated. While our data do not directly address this question, they do indicate that incarcerated parents have significant amounts of child support debt and the debt increases substantially during even brief periods of incarceration.

Data was collected to determine how much arrears accumulated for the participants during the course of the research project. Arrears data are presented in Table 3. This data shows

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<sup>6</sup> T-tests were not performed to determine whether the intervention caused a higher rate of contact with the child support staff between the experimental group and the control group. The sample sizes in the two groups were too disparate (experimental group contact  $n = 426$ , control group contacts  $n = 71$ ) to accurately perform a t-test.

the amount of arrears when the project began and ended, a total of 14 months. Generally, the data indicates that accumulation of arrears during incarceration is substantial. Overall, NPA or not assigned arrears for participants, increased about seven percent and PA, or assigned arrears, increased about nine percent. Interest on PA arrears is increasing much faster than principal amounts or interest on NPA debt. This could reflect the distribution order for payments, whereby interest on assigned debt is virtually last in line for any type of collection. To the extent that the state would like to minimize the growth in arrears for the entire caseload and the number of cases with no payment toward arrears, it appears that an opportunity exists in working with incarcerated individuals to provide assistance in managing support obligations and arrears.

**Table 3: Arrears Amounts by Assignment Status**

	Arrears Principal	Arrears Interest	Total Arrears
NPA/Not Assigned 10/1/01	\$752,773	\$92,996	\$845,769
NPA/Not Assigned 12/31/02	802,986	\$99,621	\$902,607
Amount of Change	\$50,213	\$6,625	\$56,838
Percentage Change	7%	7%	7%
PA/Assigned 10/1/01	\$824,172	\$136,354	\$960,526
PA/Assigned 12/31/02	\$887,580	\$161,957	\$1,049,537
Amount of Change	\$63,408	\$25,603	\$89,011
Percent Change	8%	19%	9%

**Obtaining Information About Incarceration Status of NCPs**

Timely and accurate information regarding the incarceration status of individuals is essential to successful efforts to provide parents assistance in managing their child support obligations during periods of incarceration. While the child support program has automated processes to provide information about incarcerated individuals, anecdotal reports suggested that information gaps existed. To study this issue, data was collected on the source of information on individuals' incarceration status in the Hennepin County child support caseload. Virtually all (87%) information about the incarceration status of individuals with child support cases normally comes to the agency through the automated process with the Minnesota Department of Corrections. For the participants in the project, other sources of information about incarceration status included the custodial parent (three percent) or other sources (10%). Staff report that the information available to them is generally accurate and timely.

### **Intensive Case Management for Recently Released Noncustodial Parents**

The demonstration project also sought to sustain the communication and individual attention begun during the period of incarceration to the post-incarceration period. Intensive case management regarding child support issues for recently released parents may help to ensure that child support amounts are affordable when an order is reinstated or modified to reflect earnings upon release from incarceration. In addition, many individuals have difficulty with other issues, and during the demonstration project the child support staff had some resource information available to assist participants in finding services.

While the project design anticipated greater numbers of individuals being released during the demonstration project, data was collected for participants who were included in the initial caseload, had some contact with the child support staff, and who were released during the demonstration project.

Of 102 noncustodial parents included in the project, 25 were released during the demonstration period (10/1/01 – 12/31/02). Eleven participants (44%) remained in contact with the child support officer after their release from a correctional facility. These noncustodial parents contacted the child support officer at least once after being released from prison. Of these eleven participants:

- Two participants had received a modification to \$0 while incarcerated (one of those participants later had a modification to increase the order and the other still has an order with a \$0 obligation).
- Two participants returned to court after being released and received a modification (increase) of their obligation.
- One participant returned to prison with no modification of the original order (the order was not modified during the initial period of incarceration).
- Six participants never received any modification.

Only two participants who were released during the demonstration project and who maintained contact with the child support staff paid something toward their child support obligations. The outcomes for these two participants demonstrate the many facets of a successful transition and the efforts needed to ensure payment of ongoing support obligations.

**Participant #1:** This individual paid about 84% (paid \$2,975 of \$3,542 due) of his child support obligation after being released. The payments were made through income withholding and at the end of data collection the individual was making regular payments, an indication that stable employment had been attained.

**Participant #2:** This participant paid only 28% (paid \$475 of \$1,715 due) of his child support obligation after release from prison. None of the payments were received through income withholding, which probably indicates that the participant did not find stable employment.

Seven participants who were released during the demonstration period did not remain in contact with the child support staff after their release. These individuals did not receive a modification of their child support order during the demonstration project. Table 4 portrays the payments received from these seven participants and the method of collection for those payments.

**Table 4 – Payments Made by Participants Not in Contact with Child Support Officer**

Noncustodial Parent	Amount Due	Amount Paid	Percent Paid	Method of Payment
Participant #1	\$624	\$23	4%	Income Withholding (Discontinued payments)
Participant #2	\$1,194	\$744	62%	Income Withholding (Discontinued payments)
Participant #3	\$327	\$22	7%	Income Withholding (Discontinued payments)
Participant #4	\$2,244	\$634	28%	Income Withholding ( <b>Continues payments</b> )
Participant #5	\$816	\$61	7%	Income Withholding (Discontinued payments)
Participant #6	\$452	\$125	28%	Income Withholding ( <b>Continues payments</b> )
Participant #7	\$3,600	\$2,131	59%	Income Withholding ( <b>Continues payments</b> )

Of the seven recently released participants who did not remain in contact with child support staff but made some child support payments, three continued to make payments through December of 2002. All of the payments received were from automatic income withholding, which suggests that these individuals obtained employment and continue to work. Conversely, the remaining four noncustodial parents have paid some child support through a wage assignment, but discontinued payment. This suggests that the participants did not maintain their employment.

These small samples are not sufficient to reach robust conclusions about payment patterns or the importance of income withholding. The results do suggest that income

withholding is important when individuals find stable employment. They also suggest that individuals who do not initiate proceedings to obtain a modification may find it difficult to meet their ongoing current support obligations.

### **Reported and Actual Release Dates**

The Hennepin County Child Support Division, like other programs in counties throughout Minnesota, uses anticipated release dates to determine when to contact incarcerated noncustodial parents. The county child support agencies may make this contact prior to the noncustodial parents' release from prison to assist with their transition by providing assistance with child support services and prevent further arrears accumulation. The anticipated release date is provided through the automated interface with the Department of Corrections. Prior to the demonstration project, anecdotal reports suggested that child support workers had little confidence in the dates reported from the Department of Corrections. Workers reported trying to contact a particular individual and learning that they had been released before the date indicated on the PRISM system.

To analyze this issue and provide guidance on its impact, data were collected on the reports of release. The data for the 25 incarcerated noncustodial parents who were released from prison during the demonstration period show that the Department of Corrections reported the release date within an average of 20 days to the child support staff. It was determined that this automated reporting and the relationships developed with the staff of the Department of Corrections to query release dates on individuals, provides the information necessary to work the child support case. During the research project child support staff indicated confidence that the release dates shown in PRISM were generally accurate.

### **Conclusions and Policy Implications**

***Efficiency of Administration:*** Hennepin County officials and staff believe that significant administrative efficiency was gained by consolidating all cases belonging to incarcerated individuals and assigning them to a single staff member. Also, there appears to be much more contact between staff and participants by assigning a designated staff member to this caseload.

***Proactive Contact is Essential:*** Hennepin County officials and staff learned that initiating contact with incarcerated noncustodial parents can help to promote participation of the parent in managing their child support obligations. Sixty-eight percent of the participants responded to the contact letter offering assistance with managing the child support obligation.

***Administrative Changes Enhance Results:*** While an agency-wide policy allowing for collect calls would be problematic, it was manageable to establish a single phone line for this purpose. Working with other agencies—state and local—helps to develop new tools and strategies to provide meaningful assistance to individuals who have difficulty with completing forms and providing sufficient information to allow courts to make important decisions regarding child support obligations. The affidavit developed in consultation with the county attorney is a primary example, as is the practice of providing postage-paid envelopes to return documents.

***Quality Data is Critical to Success:*** Child support staff are more confident that data relating to incarceration and probable release dates are accurate. The research indicates that, generally, these data provided through an administrative database matching process are adequate to ensure that efforts to provide targeted assistance can be properly timed.

***Communication With Correctional Facilities:*** The presence of a Department of Corrections representative on the project Advisory Board was essential in communicating information about the project to administrators of individual correctional facilities. This helped to ensure that some aspects of the project were successful—for example, mail delivery. It may be helpful to establish and maintain state-level contacts between administrators of the Corrections Department, or perhaps individual correctional facilities, and the child support agency.

***Collaboration Opportunities:*** While the intervention strategies implemented for incarcerated noncustodial parents seem to enhance communication and participation in managing child support obligations, there is little to suggest that the child support program alone can provide adequate assistance to individuals who need to find stable employment, housing, and transportation. Because these factors are serious barriers to ongoing payment of child support obligations, there is a genuine opportunity for the child support program to build upon existing relationships in order to help connect noncustodial parents to appropriate resources for finding employment and housing.

The results presented in this section may be of particular interest to the research community. In considering success or failure in working with incarcerated noncustodial parents, it is interesting to consider the interventions conducted by Robert Huston, Project Manager for the Paternal Involvement Project at two Adult Transition Centers in Illinois run by the Safer Foundation.<sup>7</sup> This program offers an array of options to reduce child support debt and works cooperatively with the Illinois child support program. In the Illinois work, considerable time and effort was expended to inform inmates and newly released ex-offenders about the programs available to reduce child support debt. Yet, even at work-release centers with significant case management activity, it was the *post*-incarceration enforcement activity of the child support programs that triggered the offenders' efforts to seek help and to volunteer for the program. Mr. Huston noted that three actions in particular motivated recently released noncustodial parents to seek his help – a tax intercept notice, a letter from child support, or receipt of the first paycheck where a child support order was withheld.

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<sup>7</sup> *Supra*, fn 15.



## APPENDICES

Information Letter for Incarcerated Noncustodial Parents



# Hennepin County

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

[www.co.hennepin.mn.us](http://www.co.hennepin.mn.us)

Date

Case #

Dear :

You currently have a child support case in Hennepin County and your current child support order is \$ per month. We are writing to inform you that you will continue to owe child support while you are in prison unless you change or stop your order.

To change or stop your child support order while your are unable to make payments, you may do either of the following:

1. Contact Lamp (Legal Assistance for Minnesota Prisoners). You may be eligible to obtain their legal assistance .To do this, please call, or write Lamp at:

LAMP  
95 Law Center  
University of Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-625-6336.

2. Contact Hennepin County Child Support to request a review of your child support case by our office. To do this, write a letter asking that your child support order be changed or stopped and send it to me:

Linda Bible  
Principal Child Support Officer  
110 S 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55401  
612-348-4301 **Please call collect**

Hennepin County Child Support is conducting a special project over the next 18 months on how we can better work with you while you are in prison. This means you may be asked questions about your case. This project will have no affect on your Hennepin County case.

The enclosed form, “Your Privacy Rights” gives you information about your privacy rights.

Sincerely,

Child Support Officer  
612-348--

Enclosed is a return envelope:

**Target Group I Review and Adjustment Letter**



# Hennepin County

*An Equal Opportunity Employer*

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Case # \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_ :

You currently have a child support case in Hennepin County and your current child support order is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per month. We are writing to inform you that you will continue to owe child support while you are in prison unless you contact us about changing or stopping your order.

You have a legal right to have your child support case reviewed by our agency to be sure you are paying the correct amount while you are in prison and are unable to work. If we find the amount of child support is not correct, it will be changed upward, downward or stopped.

This child support review will look at the amount of child support, medical/dental insurance, unreimbursed medical/dental expenses, and childcare expenses in your order. However we cannot review or change custody or visitation.

To request a review please check off the box, complete the information below and return this letter to me in the enclosed envelope.

I am requesting that Hennepin County review my case to change the amount of child support I pay.

Prison Release Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

You will receive forms from our office when we receive your request. You may call me collect with any questions at: 612-348-4301.

Hennepin County Child Support conducting a special project over the next 18 months on how we can better work with you while you are in prison. This means may be asked questions about your case. This project will have no affect on your Hennepin County case.

The enclosed form, "Your Privacy Rights" gives you information about your privacy rights.

Sincerely,

Linda Bible  
Child Support Officer  
612-348--4301

**Affidavit for Incarcerated Noncustodial Parents**

STATE OF MINNESOTA

DISTRICT COURT

COUNTY OF HENNEPIN COUNTY

FOURTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT  
FAMILY COURT DIVISION

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Plaintiff,

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF MOTION  
TO MODIFY/SUSPEND CHILD  
SUPPORT AND SUSPEND ACCRUAL  
OF INTEREST**

vs.

Defendant,

D.C. File No.  
C.A. File No.  
IV-D No.  
CSO No.

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STATE OF MINNESOTA     )  
  ) ss.  
COUNTY OF HENNEPIN    )

, being sworn on oath, says:

1. I am the Plaintiff in this proceeding.
2. I am submitting this affidavit in support of my motion for modification/suspension of my child support obligation and for suspension of accrual of interest on my unpaid arrears.
3. I am ordered to pay \$            per month as support for my minor child(ren) born            .
4. My earnings have substantially decreased since the support order was entered, making the terms of that order unreasonable and unfair.
5. I have been incarcerated at            continuously since            until the present.  
I received jail credit of            days for this conviction.  
I did not receive jail credit.
6. My scheduled release date from prison is            .
7. The conviction resulting in my incarceration is not related to my child support obligation.
8. I have a job assignment at the prison and have been making \$            per hour.  
I don't have a job assignment yet but when I do, I expect to earn \$            per hour.  
I will not have a job assignment.  
I am not eligible for work release.
9. I have not been incarcerated before.  
I have been incarcerated before during the following periods:
  - a. From            to            at            .
  - b. From            to            at            .
  - c. From            to            at            .

- d. (There are more dates on the back of this page: yes no.)
10.  None of my prior convictions were related to my child support obligation.
11. My assets are as follows:  
Checking account:  no  yes, at ; amount \$ .  
Savings account:  no  yes, at ; amount \$ .  
Automobiles, boats, snowmobiles:  no  yes  
(Model, year and estimated value: )  
Real estate (other than homestead): no yes  
(Location and estimated value: )  
Pension:  no yes, at ; amount \$  
Investments:  no yes  
(Description and estimated value: )  
Per capita payments from a tribe:  
SSI:  
Any other type of monthly payments:  
Source: Amount:  
Source: Amount:  
Other assets of value:  no  yes  
(Description and estimated value: )
12.  I am now and have been at all times since my incarceration financially unable to make my child support payments.
13.  I do not expect to ever earn more than a nominal subsistence wage during the entire period of my incarceration and thus I will remain financially unable to make child support payments during the remainder of my incarceration.
14.  While incarcerated, I am still responsible for various personal expenses such as soap, shampoo, stamps, papers, pencils, and additional clothing.
15.  My sentence includes an order to pay restitution in the amount of \$ .  
 My sentence does not include restitution.
16. I owe approximately \$ in unpaid arrears for my child support.
17.  Since I have been in prison I have contacted to request assistance in getting my child support obligation modified/suspended.  
 I have not contacted anyone for assistance.

**FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NOT.**

Except that this Affidavit is made for the purpose of requesting a modification/suspension of my child support payments and suspension of accrual of interest.

Subscribed and sworn to before me this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2002.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

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