IV-D MEMORANDUM 2016-032

TO: All Friend of the Court (FOC) Staff
All Prosecuting Attorney (PA) Staff
All Office of Child Support (OCS) Staff

FROM: Erin P. Frisch, Director
Office of Child Support

DATE: October 18, 2016

UPDATE(S):
☐ Manual
☐ Form(s)

SUBJECT: Mandatory Usage of the MiChildSupport Calculator[1] for IV-D Workers and Necessary Preparations for the 2017 Michigan Child Support Formula (MCSF) Revisions

RESPONSE DUE: None

POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon receipt

PURPOSE:

This IV-D Memorandum provides advance notice of upcoming changes that will affect the support determination processes (order establishment, court-referred support investigations, and review and modification) in PA and FOC offices. The changes announced in this memorandum include:

- A requirement for IV-D workers to use the MiCSES Calculator on or before March 13, 2017;
- Enhancements to training materials for the public Calculator; and
- The transition from the 2013 MCSF to the 2017 MCSF, and IV-D staff preparations for those changes.

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[1] There are two versions of the MiChildSupport Calculator. The MiChildSupport Calculator that IV-D workers access through the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) will be referred to throughout this memorandum as the "MiCSES Calculator." The MiChildSupport Calculator that is available to the public on the MiChildSupport portal will be referred to as the "public Calculator." Ref: Section 1.35, "MiChildSupport Portal," of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual* for more information on the public Calculator.

The enhancements to the public Calculator training materials will be implemented with a MiChildSupport Portal Release in November or December 2016. The changes related to the 2017 MCSF revisions will be implemented in the MiCSES 9.3 Release on December 2, 2016. Additional policy materials will be published in November 2016.

DISCUSSION:

The MiCSES Calculator was implemented in November 2015[2] to improve the overall efficiency and accuracy of calculating child support for IV-D workers. In August 2016,[3] the public Calculator was released to provide the public with the ability to create a support calculation and help those most directly affected by the calculation to better understand and increase their confidence in the calculation results. Public users will obtain the same results from the public Calculator as IV-D workers who use the MiCSES Calculator if both calculations use the same inputs.

A. Requirement for IV-D Workers to Use the MiCSES Calculator

Federal regulations require IV-D workers to document and maintain information concerning established support orders,[4] as well as to use a single statewide automated data processing and information retrieval system.[5] The MiCSES Calculator satisfies this requirement by providing electronic access to a complete history of calculations for each child support case. In addition, the MiCSES Calculator:

- Creates a streamlined order-entry process by allowing IV-D workers to import calculation results directly into MiCSES;
- Allows for electronic access to complete case histories for carrying out IV-D activity (e.g., auditing);
- Aids in identifying cases needing review and modification activities; and
- Assists in tracking information that can be used for future MCSF revisions or MiCSES improvements.

For these reasons, OCS will require IV-D workers to use the MiCSES Calculator to calculate child support on or before March 13, 2017.

OCS recognizes that in the past there were deficiencies with MiCSES that deterred IV-D workers from using it to calculate support. Specifically, there were issues that could occasionally lead to inaccurate results, remote access was limited or unavailable for IV-D workers to run a calculation in the courtroom, and the public did

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[2] Ref: IV-D Memorandum 2015-027, *Updates to Support Order Determination Policy Accompanying the Introduction of the MiChildSupport Calculator and the Calculation Results (CALCRSLT) Template*.
[3] Ref: IV-D Memorandum 2016-028, *Introducing the Public Version of the MiChildSupport Calculator and Accompanying Policy Updates*.
[4] Ref: 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 307.10(6)(4)(iv).
[5] Ref: 42 United State Code (USC) 654a.

not have access to the same calculator as IV-D workers. Therefore, OCS did not require the use of a standard method for calculating support.

Since that time, OCS, with the help of IV-D partners, has made significant progress in addressing the identified issues and improving the MiCSES Calculator. That has led to OCS's requirement for all IV-D workers who conduct support calculations to use the MiCSES Calculator.[6] In an effort to make the support calculation process more transparent, the Program Leadership Group (PLG) endorsed OCS's decision to require IV-D workers to use the MiCSES Calculator.

IV-D workers who do not currently use the MiCSES Calculator and are responsible for support calculations should start the transition now to become familiar with it prior to the requirement going into effect. OCS encourages IV-D workers involved in the preparation of support calculations to review training materials that are currently available on mi-support, including:

* [MiChildSupport Calculator Web-Based Training](#);
* *[MiCSES Screen Description: CALC – MiChildSupport Calculator](#)*;
* *[MiChildSupport Calculator Clarifications](#)*;
* [MiChildSupport Calculator Basics Webinar](#); and
* [MiChildSupport Calculator Advanced Webinars](#).

There will be additional MiChildSupport Calculator training webinars offered on November 29 and December 6, 2016 that will address IV-D workers' questions. Further information regarding the webinars will be provided via an email notification.

B. Enhancements to Training Materials for the Public Calculator

The implementation of the public Calculator was accompanied by several training documents to provide IV-D workers and public users with support in navigating through the public Calculator. Links to these documents are located on the MiChildSupport portal *Contact Us* page.

OCS is working to develop and provide additional materials as feedback from users is received. New materials and enhancements to the *Contact Us* page from the public Calculator will be implemented with a MiChildSupport Portal Release in November or December 2016. Further information regarding the release will be provided via an email notification prior to the release.

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[6] While OCS acknowledges that a IV-D worker is unable to calculate spousal support within the MiCSES Calculator, the benefits of having a standard and streamlined process for calculating child support outweigh this absence. Additionally, calculating spousal support is not a IV-D activity.

C. Transition From the 2013 MCSF to the 2017 MCSF Functionality in MiCSES

The State Court Administrative Office has published the 2017 MCSF Manual to replace the current 2013 MCSF Manual; however, it will not be effective until January 1, 2017. The 2017 MCSF and its supplement (MCSF-S) will be implemented in MiCSES on December 2, 2016 with the MiCSES 9.3 Release.

Both the MiCSES Calculator and public Calculator use the MCSF to calculate current child support amounts, which are then included within recommendations and orders. Because both versions calculate child support in accordance with the MCSF, both will be updated to reflect the changes made with the 2017 MCSF.

1. Transition to the 2017 MCSF

   The transition to the 2017 MCSF will affect **all** IV-D workers involved in order establishment, court-referred support investigations, and review and modification activities. The PLG decided that the 2013 MCSF will no longer be maintained in the MiCSES Calculator and the public Calculator; therefore, the 2013 MCSF functionality will not be available after the implementation of the 2017 MCSF. The PLG's decision was based upon:

   - The high cost of maintaining two versions of MCSF functionality within the MiCSES Calculator and the public Calculator;
   - The volume of calculations using the 2013 MCSF decreasing over time; and
   - The fact that the functionality for previous MCSF versions has never been maintained within MiCSES.

   On December 2, 2016, both the MiCSES Calculator and the public Calculator will begin calculating in accordance with the 2017 MCSF. As a result, IV-D offices should prepare for this transition in the weeks prior to the release.

   Following the MiCSES 9.3 Release, support calculations created using the MiCSES Calculator prior to the release will still exist in the MiCSES Calculator and in MiCSES on the *Order Preparation and Entry* (OPRE) screen (if imported prior to the release). Although these calculations will still exist in the MiCSES Calculator, they will be read-only and archived. A few factors will have been removed or changed with the implementation of the 2017 MCSF; therefore, data entered for factors removed will not appear when IV-D workers are viewing a 2013 MCSF calculation.[7] The **results** of a 2013 MCSF calculation will not be changed and will remain the same, despite the fact that IV-D workers will be unable to view all of the data entered when reopening the calculation in the MiCSES Calculator.[8]

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[7] Records that existed on the OPRE screen prior to the 9.3 release will not be changed by the 2017 MCSF revisions.
[8] Details about the specific changes implemented with the 2017 MCSF will be announced via a IV-D Memorandum prior to the 9.3 release.

2. Preparation for the Transition

There are three strategies a IV-D office may use to handle 2013 MCSF calculations that are prepared but not imported before the implementation of the 2017 MCSF changes. An office may choose to use any combination of these strategies, depending on office business practices. These strategies will help smooth the transition to the 2017 MCSF.

a. Immediately Import Completed Calculations Using the 2013 MCSF to the OPRE Screen Before the Release

Some offices wait for the completion of the 21-day objection period or transfer the calculation to another IV-D worker for importing calculations to the OPRE screen.

To prepare for the transition, IV-D workers in these offices may **immediately** import support calculations that use the 2013 MCSF to the OPRE screen upon their completion rather than wait for the objection period to elapse. This may require that the IV-D worker later edit the OPRE record if there are changes to the recommendation or if a new calculation is necessary. However, this option will eliminate the need for IV-D workers to manually enter the provisions of the support calculation after the release.

Offices that immediately import the calculation to the OPRE screen and do not wait for the objection period to elapse would not need to make any changes to their business process.

Refer to Section 4.20, "Support Recommendations and Order Entry," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual, and to the MiCSES Quick Reference Guide: OPRE – Prepare a Support Order for more information on importing support calculations to the OPRE screen.

b. Manual Entry After the Release

IV-D workers may wait and manually enter support calculations that used the 2013 MCSF on the OPRE screen after the release. Workers could manually enter the provisions of each support calculation (e.g., parenting time overnights, support amounts for each tier, medical provisions, etc.) on the OPRE screen and then manually associate the Calculation ID to the OPRE record so the link between the calculation and the recommendation and order is preserved. This option may involve substantial manual work, especially for more complex support calculations involving multiple IV-D cases.

c. Temporarily Stop Work on Support Calculations

IV-D workers may temporarily stop running support calculations, unless they know that the calculation will be imported to the OPRE screen prior to the release. This option would likely cause a delay in an office's review and modification, court-referred support investigation, and order establishment work. For cases in which an office chooses this option, IV-D staff should consider the current step in the process and the remaining steps and time period to complete those activities based on federal requirements.[9]

NECESSARY ACTION:

Retain this IV-D Memorandum until further notice.

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Enforcement Work Improvement Team (WIT)
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State Court Administrative Office

SUPPORTING REFERENCES:

Federal
42 USC 654a
45 CFR 302.56(a)
45 CFR 303.4(d)
45 CFR 303.8(e)
45 CFR 307.10(6)(4)(iv)

State
MCL 552.519(3)(a)(vi)

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[9] 45 CFR 303.8(e) requires that a review be completed within 180 days of receiving the review request or locating the non-requesting parent, whichever occurs later. 45 CFR 303.4(d) requires that an order be established, or service of process be completed, within 90 days of locating the non-custodial parent.

ATTACHMENT(S):

None

EPF/MEB