



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ROBERT GORDON
DIRECTOR

IV-D MEMORANDUM 2020-015

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: June 1, 2020

SUBJECT: Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Child Support Initiatives and Operations Continuity

ACTION DUE: Contact your OCS Contract Manager if your office is unable to provide IV-D services to child support customers

POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon receipt

PURPOSE:

Delivery of Title IV-D child support services has been compromised during the COVID-19 pandemic for a variety of reasons. Because child support services are essential, it is necessary to provide these services while considering the health and safety of families and IV-D employees. There are many new challenges to OCS's traditional way of doing business that require thoughtful responses and creative solutions. For at least the next year, OCS anticipates the child support program to be shaped by the timeline set by COVID-19. The IV-D community faces difficult choices between conflicting needs and imperatives.

OCS, along with the Program Leadership Group (PLG), has created six Operations Continuity Teams to help ensure Michigan's child support operations continue while considering social distancing, CDC¹ guidance, and the governor's orders. The teams, which will be temporary, will identify and address challenges, recommend solutions, and establish communication plans – efforts that began prior to the formalized creation of the teams.

¹ CDC is the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

UPDATE(S):

Manual

Form(s)

This IV-D Memorandum provides an overview of the six Operations Continuity Teams. It also identifies some of the COVID-19-related challenges OCS currently faces and how those challenges are expected to affect child support work going forward.

DISCUSSION:

A. Background

OCS issued [IV-D Memorandum 2020-013, Partner Operations During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), on May 12, 2020. That memorandum provided instructions for IV-D offices to contact their OCS Contract Manager via email if they are experiencing barriers or obstacles to providing IV-D services. That memorandum also briefly introduced the Operations Continuity Teams, which will be responsible for addressing those barriers and obstacles.

B. Operations Continuity Teams

1. Purpose

The Operations Continuity Teams are expected to identify and confront barriers best addressed centrally and regionally through collaboration with other offices. Each team will receive issues reported by the OCS Contract Managers, the OCS Executive Management Team (EMT), and members of the team.

If there are barriers at the local level that limit OCS's ability to assist an office (e.g., union issues, local orders, hardware challenges, or funding), the team will communicate them to the EMT.

Each team will conduct a monthly evaluation to determine whether its work is complete.

2. Membership

The Operations Continuity Teams consist of representatives from OCS, the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO), the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) team, the Michigan Department of Technology, Management and Budget (DTMB), the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), and FOC and PA offices.

Each team includes at least one member of the OCS EMT who will advise which team actions require executive support and liaise with other members of the EMT and the PLG as needed.

3. The Individual Teams

There are six Operations Continuity Teams:

a. Legal

This team will identify legal authority and options to provide IV-D services in alternate ways.

b. Technical Support

This team will work to provide technical assistance to local offices and consult with local IT experts as necessary.

c. Centralize/Regionalize Activities

This team will determine how to provide services if local offices are unable to do so.

d. Customer Remote Interaction

This team will explore methods to remotely interact with parents and the public.

e. Paternity Order and Establishment Barriers

This team will explore court rule, legal or other authorization; operational flexibility; and best practices around various establishment issues.

f. Liaison and Support

This team will collaborate and communicate with local offices, advise the OCS training team, and undertake other significant tasks.

4. Communication

The Operations Continuity Teams will communicate to all OCS staff primarily via email notification. The teams' communications may be listed on mi-support as well. Any additional locations for accessing team information will be announced in an email notification.

5. Additional Information

The [Operations Continuity Teams Charter \(Exhibit 2020-015E1\)](#) provides more information about the teams, their membership, and their goals.

C. Impacts on Initiatives and Other Work

As the child support program shifts its focus to vital COVID-19 responses and business continuity, other activities will be temporarily suspended or delayed. Additionally, in reaction to the state budget crisis caused by the pandemic, the majority of OCS staff are currently working four-day weeks and will continue to do so through at least July 2020. The days off have been staggered to help with availability and continuity; however, there will be impacts because OCS is working at 80 percent capacity.

1. Work Improvement Teams (WITs) and Workgroups

Co-leads of WITs and Workgroups have been authorized to slow activity and postpone meetings as appropriate and necessary. Many of the professionals on those teams now have critical roles to serve on the Operations Continuity Teams. OCS will continue to refer to team members for policy input and review as needed.

2. Training Services

OCS's Training Services Unit is now dedicating time and capacity to reworking its training delivery model (see the Liaison and Support team description above). For many critical educational needs, Training Services traditionally has relied on classroom training, which requires travel and up to 14 participants. In light of the current environment, such an approach must be temporarily revamped; this will take significant consideration and effort. Training Services is particularly interested in making sure hands-on learning is still possible.

Consequently, typical in-classroom training (e.g., New Employee Training, Enforcement Training) will not be offered for the time being. This is a fresh opportunity to use evolving technology to train and inform IV-D staff. More information will follow in the coming months.

3. Help Desk Conversion

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, OCS and DTMB had established plans to convert the MiCSES Help Desk from a DTMB-administered team to an OCS-administered team. IV-D staff may have learned of these plans through a variety of speaking engagements and other announcements. Conversion of the Help Desk has been placed on hold due to ongoing state budget constraints as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Going forward, OCS and DTMB will look for opportunities to reinstate those plans.

4. MiCSES Releases

For the past few months, MiCSES resources have been dedicated to technology and functionality needs associated to the IV-D program's COVID-19 response. Additionally, state budget constraints will limit or suspend some technology initiatives. Both of these constraints have affected and may continue to affect MiCSES' previously planned schedules and releases. As these changes occur, OCS will notify the IV-D community.

NECESSARY ACTION:

Offices will continue to contact OCS Contract Managers via email if they are unable to provide IV-D services to child support customers.

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Operations Continuity Team Leads
OCS Executive Management Team
Program Leadership Group

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ATTACHMENT:

Exhibit 2020-015E1: Operations Continuity Teams Charter

EPF/JJV