



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

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GOVERNOR

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IV-D MEMORANDUM 2021-002

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: February 11, 2021

SUBJECT: Revisions to Cooperation/Noncooperation Notices to Create
User-Friendly Communications

UPDATE(S):

Manual

Form(s)

ACTION DUE: None

POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon receipt

PURPOSE:

This IV-D Memorandum announces revisions to the following IV-D contact letters:

- *Noncooperation Notice* (OCS1252 and OCS1252A); and
- *Cooperation Notice* (OCS1253).

OCS has redesigned these letters to include icons, more white space, and updated language to make the letters easier for recipients of services¹ to read. In addition, OCS has removed the terms “cooperation” and “noncooperation” from the letters and explains these concepts in a way that recipients will better understand. The letters will still be known as the *Cooperation Notice* and *Noncooperation Notice* in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES); the titles of the letters will not change.

The revised letters will be available February 18, 2021. The MiCSES functionality for these letters (e.g., the criteria and triggers for letter generation) remains unchanged.

The letters encourage recipients to call for assistance if they have safety concerns for themselves or their child(ren); therefore, this memorandum discusses actions for IV-D workers to take when they receive these calls. This memorandum also includes a copy

¹ “Recipient of services” will be referred to as “recipient” throughout this memorandum.

of the *Claim of Good Cause – Child Support* (DHS-2168). OCS is publishing the DHS-2168 with this memorandum so the form will be available on mi-support for review by IV-D staff. There are no changes to the DHS-2168.

DISCUSSION:

A. Background

Recipients with active public assistance cases are required to cooperate with the IV-D child support program. OCS and PA offices send letters to recipients to provide notice of a change in their cooperation status with the IV-D child support program.² These letters include the:

- OCS1252: IV-D workers manually generate and send this letter when a custodial party (CP) has not cooperated with child support services. MiCSES populates the letter with the noncooperation reason that the IV-D worker has selected on the *Case Member Details* (CASE) screen.³ There are two versions of this letter in MiCSES – one that is generated by OCS staff, and one that is generated by PA staff;
- OCS1252A: MiCSES automatically generates and sends this letter when a CP has not responded to the first two contact letters (OCS0015 and OCS0025) or has failed to provide enough information; and
- OCS1253: IV-D workers manually generate and send this letter when a case has returned to cooperation status. It contains an editable field for the IV-D worker to enter the cooperation effective date. There are two versions of this letter in MiCSES – one is generated by OCS staff, and one is generated by PA staff.⁴

Redesigning the above contact letters to make them user-friendly advances the Michigan Child Support Program's Strategic Plan goal to improve the recipient experience. In addition, it will improve the efficiency of the program if recipients are better able to understand the letters and take requested actions as a result. Similar revisions were made to a variety of contact letters in September of 2019.⁵

B. Changes to the Cooperation/Noncooperation Letters

1. Use of Simpler Language and User-Friendly Features

According to recipients and IV-D workers, the language previously used in the OCS1252, OCS1252A, and OCS1253 was difficult to read and comprehend. To

² Ref: [Section 2.15, "Cooperation/Noncooperation/Good Cause," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual](#) for more information about cooperation and noncooperation.

³ Ref: [MiCSES Screen Description: CASE – Case Member Details](#).

⁴ Ref: Section 2.15 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual* for more information about the OCS1252, OCS1252A and OCS1253.

⁵ Ref: [IV-D Memorandum 2019-018, Revisions to Customer Contact Letters to Create User-Friendly Communications](#).

make these letters easier to read and more visually appealing for recipients, OCS has done the following:

- a. Removed unnecessary text (e.g., federal and state laws);
- b. Used plain language, fewer words, and simpler, more direct instructions;
- c. Increased white space; and
- d. Drawn attention to important information with a phone icon, text boxes and bolded and enlarged text.

The formal Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) letterhead on the OCS1252A and the OCS versions of the OCS1252 and the OCS1253 has been replaced by “Michigan Department of Health and Human Services” and “Office of Child Support” in plain text.

2. Changes to Fields

Prior to the OCS1252 being generated, the OCS1252 template will now display only the noncooperation reason the IV-D worker selected on the CASE screen. The previous template displayed all the reasons with a highlighted radio button next to the reason selected by the IV-D worker. The editable fields contained within certain noncooperation reasons will continue to appear on the template. IV-D workers use these editable fields to enter the dates of missed appointments or hearings.

On the OCS1253, the editable text field that IV-D workers use to enter the cooperation date has been changed to a required field. If it is left blank, MiCSES will prompt the IV-D worker to enter a cooperation date before generating the letter. Additionally, the text field has been moved to the end of a sentence. This will require IV-D workers to type the full date (e.g., February 18, 2021) instead of a numerical date (e.g., 2/18/21). MiCSES will display a “tool tip” as a reminder to enter the full date. The text field is limited to 18 characters, which will provide enough space for a full date to be typed.

3. Discontinued Use of the Terms “Cooperation” and “Noncooperation”

OCS has removed the terms “cooperation” and “noncooperation” from the OCS1252, OCS1252A, and OCS1253. The IV-D and IV-A programs continue to use these terms, but they are not easily understood by recipients and can have slightly different meanings between programs. When talking with recipients, IV-D workers will need to explain “cooperation” and/or “noncooperation” in the context of child support services before using these terms.

4. List of Available Child Support Services

The OCS1252 and OCS1252A provide an opportunity to remind recipients of the child support services offered by the IV-D program. OCS added a list of child

support services to the OCS1252 and OCS1252A to highlight the services available to recipients in cooperation status.

5. Updates to the PA Versions

OCS has changed the address hierarchy of the mailer page for the PA versions of the OCS1252 and OCS1253 to use the CP's verified mailing address ahead of the verified residential address. Previously, the address hierarchy for these letters began with the verified residential address followed by the verified mailing address. PA staff will no longer need to manually change the mailer page to ensure the CP receives these letters at the verified mailing address.

On the templates for the OCS1252 and OCS1253, the names of the children will be selectable and editable. A checkbox will appear next to each child's name. PA staff can deselect the checkbox of the child(ren) they do not want to appear on the generated letter. Also, PA staff can edit the name of a child as it will appear on the generated letter. These updates will allow PA staff to customize these letters to the CP.

6. Emphasis on Concern for Recipient Safety

Providing good cause⁶ and family violence⁷ information to recipients during the child support process can help individuals determine what is best for their family based on their situation. Educating families on good cause and family violence is the key to helping ensure recipient safety.

The OCS1252, OCS1252A, and OCS1253 emphasize the IV-D program's concern for recipient safety with a bold text box and an exclamation point graphic. The text box directs recipients to call the IV-D office⁸ if pursuing child support may result in harm to themselves or their child(ren). The previous versions of the OCS1252 and OCS1252A directed recipients to contact their MDHHS caseworker and complete a *Claim of Good Cause – Child Support* (DHS-2168) form when this concern existed. The previous version of the OCS1253 did not have a statement regarding recipient safety. MDHHS and the IV-D program must assist survivors of family violence by providing the most direct path to receive help. The new text box on the contact letters demonstrates the IV-D program's commitment to informing recipients about safety and good cause.

⁶ Ref: Section 2.15 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual* for more information on good cause.

⁷ Ref: [Section 1.15, "Family Violence," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual](#) for more information on family violence.

⁸ The PA versions of the OCS1252 and OCS1253 include the phone number of the IV-D office. The OCS1252A and the OCS versions of the OCS1252 and OCS1253 include the OCS phone number.

Note: Recipients must still contact their MDHHS caseworker to request and file a DHS-2168. The contact letters offer recipients an additional resource and opportunity for assistance if they have a concern for their safety.

The next section of this memorandum discusses IV-D worker actions in response to calls from recipients who are concerned for their safety or the safety of their child(ren).

C. IV-D Worker Responses to Recipients With Safety Concerns

Because of the emphasis on recipient safety in the letters, IV-D workers can expect an increase in calls requesting assistance. If a IV-D worker receives calls from recipients who indicate they are concerned for their safety or the safety of their child(ren), the IV-D worker will work with the recipient to determine if good cause and/or family violence protections are appropriate.

1. Claims of Good Cause

When a recipient tells a IV-D worker (s)he would like to claim good cause and the reason meets the criteria outlined in Section 2.15, Subsection 3.1, “When to Consider Good Cause,” the IV-D worker will:

- Explain the DHS-2168 and direct the recipient to contact an MDHHS caseworker to request the form. The CP must obtain the form from an MDHHS caseworker; and
- Set the good cause status on the CASE screen to “pending.” This will suspend paternity and/or order establishment and enforcement activities until a final good cause determination is made. When the status is set to “pending,” MiCSES will notify Bridges of the pending good cause status.

IV-D staff will review the copy of the DHS-2168 attached to this memorandum so they will be in a better position to explain its purpose and the procedure around it.

2. Family Violence Protections

When recipients tell a IV-D worker they are concerned that disclosure of their address or other identifying information may result in harm, the IV-D worker will discuss the suppression of identifying information. The IV-D worker will explain what identifying information is and the ways it can be suppressed.⁹

IV-D workers should also refer to the [Resource Guide](#) discussed in [IV-D Memorandum 2020-020](#).¹⁰ The Resource Guide lists community services

⁹ Ref: Section 1.15 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual* for more information on identifying information and the suppression of identifying information.

¹⁰ IV-D Memorandum 2020-020 is titled *Introduction of the Resource Guide for Referring Child Support Customers to Available Resources*.

available to non-custodial parents (NCPs) and CPs in need, including resources for survivors of domestic violence. IV-D workers can suggest available services and resources to NCPs and CPs as needed.

Note: When good cause is set on a case in MiCSES, it does not automatically set family violence for that case. The IV-D worker must set the family violence indicator and reason code (family violence code) separately.

NECESSARY ACTION:

Retain this IV-D Memorandum until further notice.

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Case Management Work Improvement Team
Program Leadership Group

CONTACT PERSON:

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ATTACHMENTS:

OCS1252 (two versions):	<i>Noncooperation Notice (OCS-generated)</i>
	<i>Noncooperation Notice (PA-generated)</i>
OCS1252A:	<i>Noncooperation Notice (MiCSES-generated)</i>
OCS1253 (two versions):	<i>Cooperation Notice (OCS-generated)</i>
	<i>Cooperation Notice (PA-generated)</i>
DHS-2168:	<i>Claim of Good Cause – Child Support</i>

EPF/AMC