



U.S. Department of Health
and Human Services
Administration for Children
and Families
Office of Family Assistance

www.fatherhood.gov

NRFC Technical Assistance Webinar



"Promising Practices: Funding & Collaboration Opportunities with Child Support Enforcement"

Moderator: Ron Clark, NRFC Director of Training and Technical Assistance

Presenters:

Debra Pontisso, Program Manager, Federal Child Access & Visitation Grant Program,
Office of Child Support Enforcement

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Grant Program

Thursday, February 7, 2008

Webinar Transcription (provided by Global Crossing)

Operator: Ladies and Gentlemen thank you for standing by and welcome to the National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse Technical Assistance Webinar Conference Call.

During the presentation all participants will be in a listen only mode. If at any time during the conference you need to reach an operator please press the star followed by the zero.

As a reminder this conference is being recorded Thursday February 7, 2008. I would now like to turn the conference over to Mr. Ron Clark Director of Training and Technical Assistance.

Please proceed sir.

Ron Clark: Hello my name is Ron Clark and I serve as the Director of Training and Technical Assistance for the Federal Office of Family Assistance National Responsible Fatherhood Clearinghouse.

I would like to formally welcome you to today's webinar. As you are aware today's webinar is entitled Promising Practices – Funding and Collaboration Opportunities with Child Support Enforcement.

Today we have with us two extremely knowledgeable and experienced presenters who will provide insight into funding and collaboration opportunities with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement for Fatherhood Programs.

I highly encourage you to pay attention, take notes, and send in your questions.

A special note, please consult with your Federal Project Officer prior to making any programmatic changes.

For your information this TA webinar series represents one of many products and services our technical assistance team has to assist your efforts to provide effective and responsible fatherhood program services in your community.

I highly encourage you to contact us for all of your TA needs. The contact number is 1-877-4DA-D411 or email us at info@fatherhood.gov. We stand ready to help you succeed.

At this time we will receive a few important instructions regarding webinar logistics from Jennifer McHenry of ICF Caliber. Welcome Jen.

Jennifer McHenry: Thank you Ron. If you guys look at your screen right now I'm just going to show you really quick how to ask a question during the webinar. So as Debra and Anita say something and it sparks a question in your mind about your program or a question in general. You think to yourself, "I really want this answered right now." What you are going to do is you are going to write it in this bar down at the bottom of your screen. After you've asked the questions what you're going to do is hit the ask button. And someone from our end will submit that to the moderator. And when it comes question and answer time at the end of the presentations we'll make sure that your question gets asked.

If for some reason your question doesn't get addressed during the webinar, it's probably that we just ran out of time. And you can send that question and any other questions you may have later to your Federal Project Officers.

Another note not related to questions but to screen size – if for some reason the slides look too small to you or you would like to get rid of all the other boxes you can hit the F5 button at the top of your keyboard. That will take the presentation full screen for you.

And when you're ready to ask another question or you would like the screen a little bit smaller you can hit the F5 button for a second time or the escape button. And that will take you back to a screen similar to what you are seeing now.

Now again feel free to ask us any questions throughout the presentation. And we will address them once both Debra and Anita have completed. Thanks.

Ron Clark: Okay now we're ready to move forward with our presentation today. We have two excellent speakers. Very knowledgeable about funding and collaboration opportunities with the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement.

I just want to encourage you to send in your questions. I mean this is very valuable, I'm just very excited about this webinar that we have today. So without any further ado I want to move forward with the first presenter. And we'll provide her bio.

Debra Pontisso is a Program Specialist with the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Program Development Branch. During her 17 years tenure with the Office of Child Support Enforcement she has worked on a variety of programs related to unwed parents, fatherhood, and paternity establishment.

She was also Associate Director of the US Commission on Child and Family Welfare during the time period 1994-1997. The focus of this commission was to develop recommendations for congress on child custody and visitation.

For the past 7 years she served as the Office of Child Support Enforcement's Program Manager for child access and visitation grants, a \$10 million per year grant program that since 1997 has served over half million parents nation wide.

Welcome Debra.

Debra Pontisso: Thank you. I'm going to – this is kind of new to me to everyone. I just want to let you know this is the very webinar I've done and I'm very excited about it. Particularly since I'm hopefully reaching so many of you who are working in direct services with parents that are divorced, unwed, and more importantly helping out the children of those families.

I'm going to skip a couple slides and go to the outline of my remarks. I'm going to give you kind of brief over review of child support and then the Child Access Grants Program.

Number two I kind of wanted to raise with you the importance of reaching out to unwed parents. And three I will be giving you some suggestions.

Before we begin I kind of wanted to let you know – and I'm a very visually oriented person – it's like where is Office of Child Support and kind of I just wanted you to visually know where we are in relationship to the Office of Family Assistance where you're getting your grant funds from.

And kind of just so you can see where we are. We are all within the Administration for Children and Families. And under the Office of Child Support Enforcement I wanted to give you a break down of what we do here.

Typically people when they hear that you work in child support always think that you are out to get dead beat dads. Well that kind of is part of the mission of this agency. We're not actually – and there aren't as many dead beat dads as one would think.

But we believe and it's a law that both parents should be financially responsible for the children that they bring into their world. So one part – one arm of the Office of Child Support Enforcement of course is to basically establish paternity for the children who are born outside of marriage.

And as many of you know we are out of wedlock birth rates nation wide are increasing. In fact we've hit an all time high of close to 38% of all births outside of – live births each year are to unwed parents.



And if you follow the trends with the movies Juno and then all the Hollywood kind of, you know, having babies before they get married – I think there is a lot that kind of feeds into that. But that's a whole different discussion.

But that is what we do. We do do paternity establishment and congress made it much easier now for unwed parents – particularly the fathers – to sign an acknowledgement at the hospital. Because most of the dads are at the hospital when the kids are born. And so they can say I am the father and sign their name on the birth certificate.

Number two we also establish child support orders. And that is kind of bases on the income. There are guidelines set in each state in terms of what percentage of the income or what amount the not custodial parent would pay.

And it usually typically is the father. But I want to also be quick to say that 15% of households – single parent households – are headed by dads. So it can go both ways. But as you know the majority of single parents households that have primary custody are mothers.

We also do enforcement if there are not custodial parents that don't want to pay. So that's one arm of it. But we also have another arm of the office in which is just as important. And that is kind of our Discretionary Grants Office.

And for the last I would say 10 to 12 years, contrary to what a lot people might think, we have funded a lot of studies and funded a lot of research demonstrations throughout the country that are focused on working with fathers.

And we've had waivers and everything. I can't and don't have the time to go into all the projects we have funded. But I kind of believe this is why the secretary placed the responsibility for managing the Child Access and Visitation Grant Program within OCSC, because we have done that.

We've also – there's been a real paradigm change we believe fathers are just of course as important as mothers. And that both parents should be bringing financial as well as emotional resources to the lives of their children.

So we have a Discretionary Grant and so I'm going to talk about that to you a little bit later in the presentation. I'm going to be focusing on the Child Access and Visitation Grants. But before I forget I do want you to know that we are fully aware that most fathers aren't dead beat. A lot of fathers however – because I think we've got more of an out of wedlock birth population coming into the fore – are probably dead broke.

And from some studies that we've funded in the past on fragile families we came out - and this is a lot of research plus demonstrations – and I'm summarizing this. But most of the fathers of these fragile families who are either low income or unwed – most of the fathers really want a job. They want to be a better parent and they want help with custody and visitation.

Okay now there are some important distinctions. I went through those already, you know, about the establishment of paternity. The child support part of the office here. Anyway, and then we have – I'll go down to the bullet four underneath Child Support Enforcement. And we do have a discretionary program resources. Not a whole lot of money but we, you know, try to make the best use of about \$3 million annual each year.

On the other side of this slide we have a Child Access and Visitation Grant Program. There is a very important distinction that everyone needs to know. We administer it but it's not a child support program per se. That does not mean that only child support agencies could manage this money at the state level, all right?

When this program started in – when it was passed by congress and started in 1997 – the then governors of the states decided who – which entity in the state would be responsible for administering this grant program.

Now the goal of the program is provide funds to states that will help them assist non custodial parents gain increased access and visitation with their children. And as Ron had mentioned to you previously its \$10 million is distributed to states annually. And it's based on a funding formula described in the statute.



However there is a \$100,000 minimum for those small states who don't have a lot of people. Because you can't do a whole lot with anything less than that. But there is that in the statute which guarantees a base grant amount. Of course states like California which have lots of people and lots of single parent households gets close to \$1 million of that \$10 million.

I think I will also say that this has been such a successful program that the administration for the last four years has proposed to congress to double the amount of money for this program. It has not been approved by congress however but it does show you the success of the program and the support that it has within the administration.

Next slide okay I kind of covered a lot of this. At the bottom of the left hand part of the slide to date I'm so proud to say that we've served over 1/2 million parents nation wide. And that includes the mothers and the fathers. Because in a lot of services - as noted on the right hand of this slide - you need two people for mediation. Okay, to work out a parenting plan.

But those are the kinds of services that they can fund. So we've go mediation, development of parenting plans which is like the development of a custody or visitation agreement. Parent education, we've got counseling, visitation enforcement which could include - it could pay for services for enforcing a child custody and visitation order. Or it can also pay for monitored or supervised visitation, neutral drop off and pick up - which is really important when you've got two high conflict parents who can't stand to be in the same room with each other.

But yet, you know, it provides a forum for where a mom could bring the kids to a neutral exchange site and leave the children with, you know, a professional staff. And then the dad comes about 20 minutes later and picks up the child.

And then last the state could use the money for development of alternative custody arrangements or visitation guidelines.

Okay now how the funding works. Because I kind of think this is what you are interested in. So as I said before back in 1996 -97 the states - because it was the

start of a new federal grant program – the governors of the states decided who was going to manage the program. But that doesn't mean it's set in stone. If a governor wants to change the designation they can, he or she can.

They have to submit it to us but anyway so what we do each year – the state submits a plan for how they are going to use the money. Okay and as I explained earlier and then we review the plan to make sure that what they want to use the money for is in concert and aligned with the goal of the program, which is to help non custodial parents get increased access to their kids, okay?

And then they get the grant awards based on their part of the \$10 million that's awarded for each year. And then the states in turn award the grants to local service provider in most cases.

And the direct service providers obviously provide the access and visitation services. The states however are the ones who decide who will receive the funds, what type of services will be provided, and who will be served.

Okay and that's important if you're by chance interested in making an inquiry in your state to see, you know, how the funding process works. I can say that in the majority of the states – just like in the federal government – they usually prepare a request for proposals. And so – but I think what I want to make a point to you if you are interested in seeing what process is used by the states for awarding the funds they get each year, I'm going to give you a link to a website. And you can contact them directly, all right?

So but we on the right hand side of the screen is just kind of a diagram as to how the money flows down to the local level. And the state grant awards we have 50 states – all states are participating in this program and receive funds – plus the District of Columbia, Guam, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

And then with local organizations we probably have roughly probably 300 plus community based or local organizations nation wide.

Okay while I said that the governors designated those state agencies back in 1996-97 I can say roughly it kind of split between the state offices of the courts have responsibility for administering this grant program. Or the state child support agency.

We also have a survey that the states have to complete each year submit to us. And this provides us a key management tool in determining how states are performing. And also local service providers. How the money is being spent and how many people they are serving.

And they have to – both locals feed the information into the states and the states prepare the report. But I just wanted to let you know we do collect quite a bit of information. And it gives us a good profile. And then we develop a report internally here that we put on our website. That is called the State Profile Report for the Child Access and Visitation Program.

So every year we put out and do a nation wide analysis of the data. That's why we can say with some certainty that nation wide say for example we are serving the majority of parents served are low income. We can tell you that there is an even split between the number of fathers and mothers being served. We can tell you that unwed parents slightly surpass the divorce population in terms of being served in the program. So anyway we can tell you a lot of those things. I just wanted to give you an idea.

And so this is kind of good for reporting back to the public. It's a good management tool and also as you know the low income - and unweds in particular – are the ones who do not have – and I hate to overuse the word access – but to the kinds of legal services that they would need if there is a custody or visitation dispute. If for any of those kinds of services or even to establish a parenting time order for the dad. So this kind of begins to fill in a gap that probably exists nation wide among that population.

So I'm just giving you an example of just – well I just already did that didn't I? Kind of, you know, what a profile of those parents were served based on our 2006 data.

We still get most of the referrals through the courts. Although our child support agencies are doing more of that referral. And you know we come in contact with a



whole lot of people. And so we're beginning to share that information with our 4D clients which is good.

All right now I do have to tell you what the reality is. In terms of competition for access and visitation dollars at the state level. As this program has developed over the course of a decade. You know, and like I said it depends on how the state decides to use the money. Some states use the money for child support clients only. Particularly if they are a child support agency administering this grant. And they probably most likely use it for unwed parents who don't have any other resources for getting a parenting time order.

I have to tell you that just because an unwed father signs a paternity affidavit at the hospital and gets his name on the birth certificate does not guarantee him parenting time rights with his children. But yet that is also that basis that child support needs and is established. You have to have that to establish a child support order.

So what I sometimes get concerned about and everybody knows this about me – I have a little bit of a passion, feel passionate about this. Is that most of our dads are doing the right thing at the hospital and signing the paternity affidavit and signing the birth certificate. Unfortunately the research shows that for unwed dads two years down the line the dads are kind of no longer in the picture in the lives of their children for whatever reasons. And there are lots of reasons actually they are documented.

And yet because they signed the paternity affidavit at the hospital and mom needs help obviously taking care for the finances and supporting their child. She usually files for a child support order. That there is no guarantee that dad – there is no legal basis for dad's involvement in the lives of his children.

And I'm skipping ahead just some other slides but we do know – and we've got lots of research now to back it – that if an unwed father has access to his child that he is more likely to be involved in the child for the duration of the child's life. And pay child support.

And I think we also know there is a lot of research going on now with the involvement of both parents on child well being outcomes, etcetera.

So but anyway back at the AV level – because of the kinds of range of services – Oh I’m sorry. Other states only fund non child support cases. And the majority of the states probably provide services for a mix of child support and non child support clients.

Now because of the kinds of services that we provide there’s different other program communities that have become interesting in the Access and Visitation Grant funds at the state level.

We have the domestic violence people that are interested in it for the mere fact that we can use the money for supervised visitation. And if you don’t know what that is - and I’m not going to go into it now – make sure you ask me that question at the end of this webinar.

Clearly our child support people are interested in it because they know that the unwed parents don’t have any resources. Particularly the unwed fathers for establishing their parenting time rights to their children.

Child welfare protection cases are also interested in it now. They are kind of the new kids on the block. Because they technically say for example they like to use the money to support supervised visits between the mothers whose children have been taken out of the home and put in foster care. To facilitate visits between until a court decides whether or not they can go back with the parent.

And technically the mother is not custodial because the state has become awarded the children. And then the courts are interested in this too. All family courts would be interested in this. So there is lots of competition for these scarce dollars.

Okay reaching out to unwed parents. I think that’s something we’ve got to all take a look at. Once again, you know, we’ve got almost 1 in every 3.5 births each year to unwed parents. It’s going up. The teen pregnancy rate had dropped down but it’s back up again.

So this is – I'm not sure but I do know that in the child support community with some states that I interviewed years ago mostly tanf cases made up our case load. Then the divorced population kind of came in there. But it's surprising to know that of the state that I interviewed almost 2/3 of their caseloads now are made up of unwed parents. So I think we need to take a look at – I mean that is a concern to us.

And also I explained before why – and I'll kind of skip through this because my concern is that the unwed not custodial parents are out of the loop. There is no hook as there is for divorcing parents to get the kind of services, parenting education, parenting plan services, working out a child visitation order. Because they have to go to the court to get a divorce. There is no such hook – there is no on ramp for unwed fathers.

And so in child support, you know, we cannot use money to establish parenting time orders or work out anything with custody and visitation. It doesn't mean that child support workers can't refer parents to this. But we cannot use 4D money for that.

So there is a disconnect. And there is a huge number of unwed fathers out there that really don't have a legal base to see their children. So say if mom and dad had an informal arrangement right after the kid after born that dad could take Johnny on the weekends and everything was okay. But then, you know, dad gets a new girlfriend, mom gets upset so she won't let dad see Johnny.

And Johnny says well I'm a legal father and maybe he will even call the legal – I mean he just doesn't have the legal basis. Even if he even calls law enforcement to come out and say I had an arrangement with her. I'm her legal father, she's not letting me see the dad. And if he did not have a custody or visitation order there would be nothing that, you know, that could be enforced. So this why it's important that – this is why we are concerned about that.

Okay and as I've said before not custodial parents – dads without access to their kids – pay less child support. And of course that's part of why child support people are interested in it. And it does make sense that if they don't see their kids they are less connected, they are less emotionally involved. They are not motivated to pay their

child support. It kind of makes them mad. I have to pay child support and I can't see my kid, you know.

And so a lot of the research that we've – there was a dearth of information on this about 6 – 7 years ago. And now we've got a pretty good body of evidence that shows there is a direct correlation between that. But we have to provide interventions. You know, points along the system that will help them get that assistance or information and parenting time orders.

So once again, you know, this is just – I've just kind of cited one of many studies that we've done in our Office of Inspector General. This was actually kind of got the ball rolling back in 2002. It shows you once again more the data that supports the notion that if you help unwed non custodial parents get access to their kids they are much more willing to pay child support. Because there is a reason, they have a bond with the child.

And OCSC has funded a lot of studies as well. So if anybody is interested in that let me know.

Okay these are my suggestions. For those of you who I assume that I'm speaking to are the Healthy Marriage Grantees or the Responsible Fatherhood. We have like I said if you want to find out who in your state is managing this grant program I've provided you the contact.

The first thing would be to do is to contact that person find out how they use the money. Also on this site that I've given you, you can go onto the site and find out there is a whole range of topics that you can click onto. Okay? One is the names of the State Access and Visitation Program Coordinators. But if you want go to the state profiles report and find out what the state was funding. I think we've got a report that was on from two years ago. So that might give you a heads up before you contact the state.

I have got – in here we have OCSC Discretionary Grant RFPs. Each year we – you know that roughly \$3 million that we put out and we have in discretionary grant funds. It's awarded underneath two kind of distinct programs. One is – and I know I'm going

to say this wrong – State Improvement Project. And what it is we put an RFP out on that and it will have some priority areas. It's smaller grant money usually about \$50,000. And anybody can apply for that. But, you know, that's a non profit community based or faith based or public agency.

We have another one which is called the Section 1115 somehow is sided in the Social Security Act. Now that is more money, they are larger grants. But there is a catch on that one. The only agencies that can submit applications for that money had to be a state child support agency. However that does not mean that – and there is priority areas set out on that as well.

But all you have to do if you want to partner with the state child support agency talk to them ahead of time. Or say I have an idea for a project and maybe you can partner on it. And I don't know which one – I think that site that I gave you might be the 1115 but we just had a SIP go out, the smaller grant program. And one of those was doing outreach kind of paternity establishment outreach and education for young adults. So that may be of interest to you.

All right and then we have reports once again related to access and visitation under this link that I've given you. So those are the kind of resources we have here. I would also suggest to everyone if you haven't done it already subscribe to the online federal list serve. And I do it everyday. I go through it and sometimes I see stuff that our office might be interested in sharing with our states. And it is www.grants.gov and sign up and it usually comes each day. You will get a list serve with all the discretionary grants that have been posted. All right? And it's discretionary and so, you know, there may be something in the Department of Labor, there maybe something Department of Justice, you never know. I mean it's just really good to see.

And also I think and Ron perhaps I'm sure some people in OSA can also subscribe to that Healthy Marriage community based online that I get notices on about. And they send out information on training as well as our program announcements they think that you might be interested in. And I don't have the website here but I subscribe to that one too, so. I strongly encourage you to do that.



In terms of client recruitment problems we were – I know that sometimes with community based organizations doing fatherhood programs - or even I manage actually child support fund and Healthy Marriage grant and project up in Baltimore. And I know that recruitment is sometimes a problem to get parents to come participate in the programs and then for retention.

And just based on my limited involvement with particularly the one up in Baltimore my recommendations would be to establish partnerships with national, state, or local fatherhood organizations. Another possibility would be the state offices of the courts or local family courts for referrals. And state or local child support agencies and I've got a listing on the back page.

All right let me see, okay. I would also say I kind of believe too of empowering parents with user friendly information. I'm an unwed parent and maybe not your typical one because I work for the government and, you know, I'm lucky enough to have a good income and that sort of thing. And I have resources but I always feel going through this process as I have, you know, I went through and everything to have paternity establishment. You know, visitation order. You name it, I've gone through it.

I really feel that if more unwed – and you know I had all the resources at the time – available to me because I was in ACF. But there is so much we don't as an unwed parent – particularly for the first time – that you don't know. And I really truly believe in and I hope it's not too Polly Anne-ish but if you have the information and you know what to expect I believe that in most cases unwed parents will make the right decisions for their children.

So all I'm saying is that I think that information materials that are user friendly that look at the big picture – that explain the big picture situation for unwed parents in particular – is so important.

Number two I also believe in not reinventing the wheel. And I'm just giving you one resource here that I think has done a tremendous job in developing pamphlets on co parenting, unwed parents, consequence of divorce on children, etcetera. And that's the Association of Family Conciliation Courts.

And they are an inter disciplinary association with family court judges, lawyers, mediators, health professionals that really believe in helping families. And that going to the court is the last resort. And that we should help parents work out their differences so they don't have to go to court and have a judge decide. They are a wonderful group and they've got an expertise in the area.

Also we have at OCSC clearly our state child access visitation program coordinators can use some of the money for the videos, information materials. And there is a whole lot out there. But we have does something if any of you are working with say unwed fathers and mothers. We have developed the Power of Two paternity establishment video. It's kind of a pro father video. It's on its second – what do I say – it's been revised twice.

But anyway it's been very popular. The first version of it we made copies available and gave to all the Head Start sites through out the country. So it's a good thing on the importance for unwed parents to establish paternity. But also the importance of co parenting and that sort of thing.

Is that my five minute? That is? Okay hold on. Thank you. I'm almost done anyway.

So if you are interested in that you can contact (Rayette Byrd). And also we have child support handbooks if you feel that your clients might be interested in that so you know where to go.

But the one thing that I'm really excited about is that I am proofing a new publication that OCSC intends to get clear with the department first. But it's called Parenting – based on my experiences and feeling that I really felt that if unwed parents kind of had a parenting guide or a resource guide. That I think they could become more informed and make better decisions. So Parent this is a handbook that we are working on right now and hope to get it out soon. But it's called Parenting Connections a Resource Guide for Unmarried Mothers and Fathers.

And then the next is – this is just a sample of the draft contents. It's trying to provide a big picture, a more comprehensive picture of what it means to be a single parent.

Okay and what's important. The kind of information that will encourage them to make decisions that are in the best interest of their children. And this something for fathers too so it's real important. So anyway.

I think I'm – okay and these are the resources at the end that I thought you might want to click on and check out. I'm skipping because I think that's it. Thank you.

Let me just say too that I've kind of moved on within the agency and so I'm not responsible now anymore for the management of the Access and Visitation Grant Program. I'm doing some other stuff here. After 7 or 8 years it was time to pass the baton off. So Tracie Pogue is the program manager now for the Child Access and Visitation Grant Program. I don't have her – unfortunately I don't have her phone here but I will give you her email message. It's tracie.pogue@acf.hhf.gov so if you have any questions about the program please get hold of Tracie.

And also make sure you check – go on to the OCSC website that I provided you that has underneath Access and Visitation it will give you everything you need to know about the program.

But thank you very much and I really appreciate the opportunity to speaking to you today.

Ron Clark: Thank you very much Debra. Great presentation, very informative, insightful, and extremely clear. And I'm sure that many of our programs will definitely benefit from the great information resources that you discussed.

I know a number of individuals may not have been able to get the email address I believe on this post. So if you just email us that info@fatherhood.gov again info@fatherhood.gov or dial our toll free number. We'll get that email address to you.

But again Debra great, great, great presentation.

Debra Pontisso: Thank you Ron.

Ron Clark:

And what we're going to do now is just to move forward to the second presentation. Anita Stuckey she is the Shared Parenting Projects Coordinator for the Texas Access and Visitation Grant Program which provides grants for 12 communities / faith based organizations in units of local governments to provide a wide range of family friendly services promoting non custodial parents access to their children.

Services include dispute resolution, court enforcement, supervised visitation, parent education, and online directory of shared parenting programs. Plus the Texas Access and Visitation Hotline, a unique service where attorneys provide legal information and assistance about parenting issues as well as paternity and child support information.

Anita has mediated over 3000 domestic disputes since 1984. Administered and helped develop innovative dispute resolution programs for the Colorado Judicial Department for many years. And has experience as case manager supervising child support and visitation enforcement officers in Texas.

You've to a lot of experience Anita, welcome.

Anita Stuckey:

Thank you I'm feeling old. And thank you everybody for inviting me today. And congratulations to all of you who have received your grants. And I'm sorry now there is an announcement here, hold on. So we know this is a live presentation.

So what I wanted to talk to you about is what do you do with these grant dollars once you get them. And we set up access and visitation programs is my main job. I work in a small area called Family Initiatives within the Child Support Division of the Office of the Attorney General.

Debra had mentioned earlier that sometimes groups did mixed sources. And we do both child support cases and no child support cases. So our focus is to encourage and support family formation. And responsible fatherhood to improve the efficiency and the effectiveness of the Child Support Division, which in turn would decrease long term cost to governments.

Where do we get our motivation from? It's from the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement plan talks about providing both financial and emotional support to their

children. So we address these emotional support issues through all of our programs. Because we really like dads and we want to work closely with them.

As Debra mentioned earlier the research supports that involved fathers contribute to positive outcomes for children on many levels. And we concur that many dads are dead broke but not dead beat.

And I've also seen many, many times that as fathers get closer to their children the child support payments will increase overall. So what we want to do through all of our programs is to help dads by reducing conflict by giving them those skills to deal with conflict when it comes up.

To help parents making informed decisions and to offer services to help temporarily absent parents to reconnect with their children. And I'll go into that supervised visitation service a little bit later.

One of my grantees mentioned that he had heard my talk about this vision. And he realized that some of his staff just didn't like men. And that he was going to have to do something about that. So he talked to his office, he brought them around and he brought to the fore front men and women who were comfortable working with men who weren't getting to see their kids and could be more supportive of them Because that attitude really carries forward as you are working through with your customers here.

So I want to talk a little bit about the balancing act. When the welfare reform law established child support to go to Families First back in 1996 as part of the Welfare Reform Act, they created the Access and Visitation Program.

And our goal and our sole goal is to increase non custodial parents access to their children. Being clear about that as a goal and as our mission is very helpful to me in setting up our programs. Because Texas doesn't receive the largest Access and Visitation Grant but we have one of the largest case loads for child support. We have about one million child support cases in our 40 case load. About 95% of these are fathers. So this is one reason that we focus on fatherhood programs.



So let's talk a little bit about some of the challenges that parents face. In Texas we're a little unique in that the Texas Family Code requires us when we establish a paternity order to also establish the parenting orders as well. But most states don't do that. And they don't permit federal funding to be spent on custody and visitation disputes.

So parents have to apply separately for parenting orders and pay an additional filing fee. I know in Colorado that filing fee is like \$176. So for those of you who are starting up your programs you might want to find out what are some of the fees that parents have to pay to get services. Especially if they are related to parenting time conflicts. And how would they go about enforcing parenting orders once they get them.

So once you get your grant dollars I know you probably think you never have enough grant dollars and what are you going to do with them? So how do you stretch those grant dollars? And what I try to work with is as many people within our agency and with community and faith based organizations who can provide end time services, who offer low cost services that we collaborate with to stretch those dollars just as far as we can.

So one of the ways we identify our partners was by learning who our audience is. So we did a poll with the child support agencies and the courts and find out what areas need our assistance the most. And kind of when you know what people need you for then you can plan services to fill those gaps.

In Texas in our million plus case load 65% to 68% of the parents were not married at the time their child was born. So they have very specific needs related to family formation, learning about long term relationships, and learning what are their roles and responsibilities as parents.

And they are going to need help with inter generational issues, communication issues, and conflict resolution skills. So once we kind of know who we are focused on, what gaps exist and what services they need to fill those gaps and what's the education. That then directs us in finding our fathers and serving our fathers.

So my Access and Visitation Grant dollars solely go to community and faith based organization and local governments. With this goal as I said earlier of increasing non custodial parent contact with their children.

Currently I have 10 grantees plus on grantee for a state wide hotline. And they offer a whole range of services for non custodial parents that include co parenting education. And this education can be directed towards parents who were in a long term relationship who maybe were married and getting divorced, or who may never have been in a relationship at all.

And they are especially going to need help with how do you resolve all these conflicts? How do you set aside your personal grieving process about the break up of your relationship and move forward to working productively as parents? Much easier said than done.

They also offer mediation services, some supervised visitation services, and some visitation enforcement. Just a little bit about visitation enforcement. That encompasses a whole variety of services which range from co parenting education to sending parents into therapy. And it may even be group therapy to understand – here's what has happened to your family, here is your family dynamics, and here is how you can work together productively as parents for your children.

Some of Texas cities have what are called Domestic Relations Offices. These are units of local government that can enforce an existing visitation order. So if you are lucky enough to have your order when you establish paternity, it's not being followed through and you live in one of these towns, you can go to court to get that order enforced. And that's a rarity.

So in Texas, you know, we have to provide the parenting orders at the time of the establishment. But there is this prohibition against using 4D funds to enforce those orders. So you want to make sure the orders you do put out are very good, very well thought out. Because enforcing them is way an uphill battle for parents.

It will also fund various publications and shared parenting projects. We have a shared parenting video. This video has won an award. It was filmed using children whose

parents are in the Access and Visitation Programs. And these aren't actors. They are just kids talking about what their parents' conflict has done to them. What it means to them and how they feel about it.

And they also offer parents a little truth bomb. Go to your room to fight. Don't fight in front of us. Here is how you can work it out without us. So the shared parenting video and its companion guide *The Cooperative Parenting Program* is distributed through the child support offices, through courts, through community programs. I want to say I distributed about 40,000 last year.

One of my grants is the Access and Visitation Hotline. And this is a hotline that operates everyday Monday through Friday from one to seven pm. It's a legal service with attorneys experienced in family law who answer questions from all callers about any parenting issues, child support, medical support, and access and visitation issues. It receives about 1800 calls a month and is answered in English and in Spanish. It has a companion legal website and I've got that web address up for you. And that's accesses around 3700 visits a month.

Where you can go on there and find out what are your visitation rights. If you are being denied your visitation you can keep a visitation log. It gives you the forms for modifying your visitation order, modifying your child support order. It's just a wealth of information in English and in Spanish. And I encourage you to go on and check that out.

Then I have the Access and Visitation Online Directory. And this is entirely separate. And this is part of the collaboration with the child support office. This little directory website is on every child support officer's laptop or desktop. So if they get a call from a parent saying, "I'm having a visitation issue". Instead of saying, "No thank you I can't handle that, you know, because it's not a child support matter." Then they can look up where is an Access and Visitation Service Provider in your community. And give them that number and link them up with a local service.

That is accessed over 10,000 times per month. So these are just little ways in which we provide support to the child support agency. My hotline attorneys use this Access

and Visitation Online Directory when they get calls from across Texas to find out who are the local providers.

I know I'm zipping through this but I'm just trying to be aware of your time. And here is a very special pilot that we just ending January 31. But I'm about to start it up again in another facility. This works really well because you can have an on sight facilitator which is generally a person with mediation training. Who is familiar with child support processes come on sight at two child support offices.

What happens in the child support world is a letter is sent out to all these parents to come in and establish their paternity order. And when you establish paternity you are setting up child support, medical support, your possession orders. So in some offices especially in the larger cities it's almost like a cattle call. Where you may have 30 or 40 people show up.

So we though it would be a good idea to pop in some people who offer some access and visitation services to those who are interested. And this has gone extremely well. So what happens is the parents show up, the facilitator shows the For Our Children video which kind of acts like the marinade. It helps parents see that really it's about the kids.

These children are so emotional in explaining to them the harm that's been done to them through their parents arguing. And so that kind of sobers up the audience a little bit. They explain a little bit about what you are here for. You are here to set up your possession orders, your child support orders, and your medical support orders.

And if you have any questions about access and visitation or if you can't agree on everything step in here and meet with a facilitator and let us help you work it out. And once they work it out the parents then take the agreement back to the child support officer and then it gets entered into an administrative order. And then into a court order. So it's a very effective process.

And this really helps parents feel like they have an active say so in what is going to happen with their parenting plan. And just instead of fitting into a one size fits all plan. So it's very hands on, very friendly. The facilitators have time to spend with the

parents to maybe help reassure them about what is normal. It's all done in a very simple parent friendly way.

And we found it to be very successful. Unfortunately funding has ended for two sites. But we are about to pick it up in another very busy site. We are going issue a request for proposals for our grant process for next year. And we are hoping to open it up in several more sites too.

And that's one example of a program. And another program, the Focus Program which is a 10 week curriculum working with fathers on probation for not paying their child support. And in this program which essentially becomes a support group for these men. They learn what is your role as a dad, what your responsibility as a dad.

They have a curriculum that they follow that walks them through exercises for what was their history with their father. What is their ideal father? What kind of father do they want to be? And just how important their role is. And the memories that they are creating with their children really are. So it kind of gives these fathers some choices.

And then as I mentioned earlier I have several sites where Domestic Relations Offices offer parent education classes, mediation, therapy, and court enforcement too.

Then I have one site which is in the same building as the child support building which is handy. So when parents are coming in for their establishment hearing or their paternity court hearing then they go down and they explain to them this is what a court order is. This is kind of where you have choices. This is what happens if you don't follow your court order. And they are available to answer any questions.

So our hope is that if we can explain the legal process, demystify the legal process a little bit and answer all their questions then parents are more likely to comply. And the response we have gotten back from court order – or excuse me from the child support system – is that essentially we are a blessing to them.

It improves their customer service. It improves their public image. And it makes the workers feel better about the work they are doing they are doing with their parents.

So we go to all of this after going through a strategic planning process. And we decided that it was more important for us to focus on low to medium level conflict parents instead of the high conflict parents.

After we went through this strategic planning process in 2002 we added the hotline and we added the Access and Visitation Directory. We went from serving 900 families in fiscal year '02 to 22,000 in fiscal year '06. So I highly recommend doing that.

So essentially everything I've talked about – one program supports another. Our publications, our materials, our clinics, all our websites, they are all inter related here.

Here is one of the publications that is paid for through this grant which is the Shared Parenting video and Parenting Guide. And this is a relatively new addition. We developed this about a year ago as a mediator it was very helpful to me. Where I'm working with the parent to be able to explain what are you going to be doing. Here is what your possession order is. And in Texas for example it is the first, third, and fifth weekend. Which means that some weekends kids see their dads two weekends in a row.

This calendar was the artwork was done by children of child support workers. We have this wonderful contest to pick out the best art work. And then we design stickers so that kids can see at a glance if they are at mom's house, if they are dad's house, if they have a dental appointment. All sorts of things.

So all of this, the calendars, all of our programs, etcetera, etcetera comes out of our Access and Visitation Grant. Everything I have talked to you about in this is all paid for through the grant.

And here is my contact information. And let me just explain to the – I run the Access and Visitation Program here in Family Initiatives. I have many coworkers who work on other programs such as incarcerated parents programs. NCP choices which works closely with the Texas workforce commission on helping parents get jobs or get better jobs.

So and we are going to partner with them in the future to offer Access and Visitation services as well. So we offer a variety of programs here. So if you go online click on child support and Family Initiatives and you can learn about our other programs and publications too.

Thank you so much.

Ron Clark: Thank you very much indeed. You have really given us a great picture of kind of how the funding and resource collaboration opportunities with child support enforcement looks in the community. So I really appreciate you kind of giving us that perspective.

As a former director of an entity in Virginia that actually gave out funding to local fatherhood programs a lot of them use this funding – Child Access and Visitation funding and sustainability funding beyond the seed funding we had provided to them. So I know first hand experience that this is an excellent resource for fatherhood programs.

So again both Debra and Anita, you know, great presentations. Great information and I'm sure we will all use this information. I also want to thank you for giving us contact follow up information. So that will be helpful to us.

As we know now we move forward with the question and answer session. And I just want to encourage you just to continue to send those questions in. We are getting a lot of great questions. And just take advantage of the opportunity we have here with two excellent presenters who are very deep in knowledge about the funding and collaboration opportunity here.

So I really want to encourage you to send those questions in.

The first question I just want to ahead and jump in here so we can answer as many questions as possible. And as always every month we tell you that if your question is not answered during this webinar forward your question to your Federal Project Officer and we will make sure you get that the appropriate response and information.

First question for Debra and Anita you can always chime in. Do unwed parents have equal rights when it comes to custody of a child? If not why does one parent presumable the mother, get custody rights automatically over the child?

Debra Pontisso: Well when you are unwed parents versus being – compared to say a child born to married parents. It's automatically they, you know, and the married parents of course haven't divorced. Of course both parents have equal rights to that child.

And even if they divorce they have to go through court and usually part of the divorce decree is setting up a custody – is determining custody and visitation. And that is hammered out between the parties and the judge.

Each state has different judicial statutes on basically custody and visitation guidelines. But for unwed parents the fact – if well first of all if dad does not sign a legal acknowledgement of paternity. Okay and that's what that paternity establishment is. He has not legal basis to having a relationship with his child.

So when congress passed a law in 1993 and said all right states you have to have hospital based paternity programs. And what that means now because it's federal law that if any unwed parent that is giving birth to a child in a hospital or birthing center. And they are required to provide those parents at the time of the birth information on the rights and responsibilities of establishing legal paternity for their child. And provide the opportunity for them to sign an affidavit which is a legal piece of paper saying yes mom agrees that Joe Jones is the father. And Joe Jones says yes I am the father. And they sign it.

And then that piece of paper goes to the Vital Records Office in the state and dad's name is put on the birth certificate. However in most states and this is where there is a disconnect in the system. But what most dads do not know that to get to have parenting time rights with their child – even though the paternity has been legally established – he will have to go to court separately – I'm sorry about my phone – he will have to go to court and file a motion for a custody or visitation order.

And until that is done he really doesn't have any legal parenting time rights to his child. He is the legal father but he doesn't have legal parenting time rights. And the

problem is that unwed fathers either do not have the resources to hire an expensive family attorney to then hammer it out.

I know that in my personal case – and this was before paternity for my child was established before this law was passed. That my daughter's father paid an attorney over \$17,000 to basically negotiate with child support people once paternity was established. And he was identified. We had to go through the old blood test. Now all it takes is a little cotton swab inside the mouth and the DNA test confirmed paternity if you need that.

You know and fathers do have a right to do it. If there is any doubt they should probably not sign that paternity acknowledgment. Okay so but basically or if fathers want to do it on their own and don't have the money to hire an attorney. As Anita said a filing fee just to file a motion for a paternity order or a custody and visitation order can run anywhere from \$175 to \$250.

Then if they don't have the finances as I said before to hire an attorney. They could go with what they call through a pro se process. Pro se basically means doing it on your own. Now I don't know how many of us as educated as we are would even know how to run that through the system.

Some courts are better than others. They have pro se clinics and they work with the dads on it. But as you can imagine walking through a court kind of unnerves most people anyway. So there is a lot of obstacles to this.

And you have to remember that with the unwed population a significant percentage of them are cohabitating at the time of birth. So it really isn't an issue and as those of us in the child support community say, "It's a Kodak moment." You know, baby's here everyone is excited. Everyone's happy, you know, who cares about this thing. We're in love and we're living together and we'll take care of this. Well, you know, raising your child is a little harder than all of us even imagine. It's a wonderful thing believe me but it's – but anyway.

So that's the short answer is that there is no guarantee and that in terms of a lot of state have adopted – their courts have adopted shared parenting rules. Where they

try and give equal time but it depends on the child's chronological age and a lot of other factors.

Ron Clark: Okay thank you very much Debra. And again you are sending in these great questions and we are going to try go get through as many as possible here. But again if your question is not answered during the webinar please forward your question to Federal Project Officer in charge of your grant. And we will make sure you get the appropriate timely response.

Our next question has to do with the Power of Two video. Is it possible and Anita you can handle this one. Is it possible to get copies of the video and what is the cost?

Anita Stuckey: It's free and you can ...

Ron Clark: Wow free?

Anita Stuckey: And you can download it. It's on the child support website I sent you to. And I would happy to send you a DVD.

Ron Clark: Okay thank you.

Anita Stuckey: It's paid for with federal dollars so certainly it's going out there.

Ron Clark: Next question is based on your experience – and again both Anita and Debra you can chime in here – with regard to fatherhood programs applying for this type of funding, what types of services have fatherhood programs provided in the context of this grant?

So again based on your experience working with this grant. What are the typical services provided by fatherhood programs in the context of this grant?

Debra Pontisso: I guess I am a little unclear. Are you talking about community based fatherhood organizations applying for this money?

- Ron Clark: Correct. Yes exactly the ones that have been successful in receiving this funding. What type – I know you Debra had a gave a description of different types of reliable services under the grant. Where do fatherhood programs specifically fit? And what have you looked at?
- Debra Pontisso: Okay I think there is going to be two perspectives. Mine being the federal perspective and then Anita's being closer to what I call the ground level. And to be quite honest you which I have been a little disappointed not to see is that to be quite honest you would think that responsible fatherhood organizations – community or faith based organizations, responsible fatherhood groups- would be likely recipients of the money.
- I have not seen that in the time that I have been managing this grant program. I don't very many – and I think primarily it's because not because the states are resistant to funding. I just don't think that responsible fatherhood programs are applying.
- Because I think primarily if they didn't even know it was there. They really didn't.
- Ron Clark: But now we know.
- Anita Stuckey: I don't think I've seen an application from a responsible fatherhood group. I think that we certainly provide those activities for example the Focus Program I was talking about. It's solely for fathers, to support fathers to bring them around for that.
- But, you know, we did a request for proposals two years ago and we didn't get one application from a responsible fatherhood group.
- Debra Pontisso: Yeah I support that. I just don't think they have even known this has been out there. And certainly at the federal level when we've talked to some of the national fatherhood groups, I mean they are all aware of this.
- I just don't think it was communicated down the line to the responsible fatherhood groups in the community. It doesn't guarantee because you are a responsible fatherhood group however that you will get the money. Because you have to have the same criteria that any applicant has to meet. Whatever the state puts in the RFP.

I mean, you know, but certainly I have never seen. The only thing I've seen a little bit is a smattering of Children's Rights Councils. Some community based organizations get the money. But to be quite honest with you when I went through and kind of did an analysis of all the local service providers about four years ago. Out of maybe 250 to 300 local service providers, maybe six were children's rights councils. You know, fatherhood organizations.

So I just think once again the word isn't out there.

Ron Clark: But again just another question knowing what you know in terms of the type of services that fatherhood programs provide is there one a possibility for them to fit within the context of the grant? And two under what areas. Anita talked about developing parenting plans for a number of these fathers are not custodial parents.

So and I can see a lot of that happening. You know would you just kind of elaborate?

Debra Pontisso: Okay and I think that Anita needs to get her perspective too. My perspective would be definitely parent education. Okay and then two just counseling. Because those are broad categories. You define those programs as they fit your clients.

Just as long as I think those two are definitely you could fatherhood organization. Well I'm not sure usually I was thinking of the neutral exchange sites where. You know, but those are usually with supervised visitation centers. And those are kind of run more by your mental health family therapy kind of professional.

I think helping them develop parenting time orders. Or motions to go to court to establish a parenting time order. So that's my guess.

Anita Stuckey: And we're shifting, you know, I'm about to put out my RFP in the next two to four weeks. Where we want education for never married families. And so certainly I could see a fatherhood group offering insights into preparing for fatherhood. How are you a dad in a never married family situation? How do you stay involved? What are your roles, your rights, your responsibilities? And how best to communicate with all members of the family.

So I think there is a crying need for that type of information.

Debra Pontisso: And I would just echo guiding unwed fathers through the court process. If they are going to file a motion is basically a request. Saying I would like to have parenting time rights with kid. And I think that is huge need that needs to be addressed.

Anita Stuckey: And to just clarify that when in Texas when you come in to establish your paternity order there is the presumption that parents have equal rights. Now how the visitation is divided up has a lot of variables for that. But Texas laws presume both parents have equal rights.

Debra Pontisso: Although they may not spend equal time with the child.

Ron Clark: Just another question here that's kind of tag along to the previous question we just asked. What is the general dollar amount of the grants to local programs?

Debra Pontisso: I couldn't begin to tell you what the average would be. I couldn't begin because it's determined by the state. Depending on how much money they have. I don't know if Anita if you could even say that either.

Anita Stuckey: I could give you a range. I don't really have an average amount because it varies program to program. I have one for \$15,000 and one for over \$100,000. So it depends on the size of your city, the size of your program, how many parents are you serving, and the types of services offered. So there's a lot of variables in determining that grant amount.

Ron Clark: And these are one year grants?

Anita Stuckey: They are one year contracts with option to extend for the second year if everybody is satisfied.

Ron Clark: Okay got you. Anita a question, does Texas have any hospital based at birth co parenting planning services?

Anita Stuckey: We do have a new parent outreach program. It's called Parenting Together. We have a very successful I think it's called the In Pop Program where we work with new parents in what Debra calls the Kodak moment. We are calling the Magic Moment.

So where we go out and we are working with hospitals to catch parents right then and there. So yes we have a variety of programs on that. And if you go on that website it will give you the link. And it would also link you to the program specialist who handles those hospital programs and their contact information.

Ron Clark: Thank you. Next question Debra do you ever intersect – and Anita you can chime in also – do you ever intersect with agencies working to prevent and resolve parental child abduction?

Debra Pontisso: No I have not.

Anita Stuckey: I know that the Texas child support agency has an active parent locator function. And they do quite well. So I can't really go into any of the child support area very much given my role. But I know that the child support locator service which is also on the website works closely with that.

And that is a very interesting topic. But then you get into interstate compact issues as well.

Debra Pontisso: I will say and this really has nothing to do really with the Access and Visitation Grant Program. But switching over to the child support side that a lot of family court judges are aware or maybe need to be reminded that in a location case where maybe someone has taken the kid out of state. And dad has visitation rights to see him.

That in child custody and visitation cases a family court judge can submit a request to the Federal Office of Child Support for to what Anita had just mentioned the Federal Parent Locator Service to get information on maybe tracking down the other parent.

So they can use that service but it's not connected to the grant program.

Anita Stuckey: And our focus is to prevent it from getting that far. Work together.

Ron Clark: Okay understood. Next question how does a father initiate support for a child living in another state? How does a father initiate support for a child living in another state?

Debra Pontisso: Anita?

Anita Stuckey: I'm just trying to think.

Debra Pontisso: I'm assuming then that the parent doesn't have custody. So you would have to file – jurisdiction typically lies with wherever the child is residing. So once you know where the child resides then you could file for child support in that state. And I would say contact the child support office in the state where the child resides.

Can they contact say if it's a situation where dad or mom is living in Texas. And oh you are talking about how does a father initiate support? You mean where a father wants to pay for support for a child living in another state which is kind of nice to see. It's usually the other way around.

Anita Stuckey: It's not that uncommon because if you file for that child support order the hope is concurrently you will do the parenting order as well.

Debra Pontisso: So I mean could they go to their own local child support office and say, "My daughter and her mother live in Nebraska. I want to pay child support for my daughter. Can I initiate the proceeding here?"

And then they would in turn contact Nebraska?

Anita Stuckey: No they don't act as an agent for you. You would have to contact.

Debra Pontisso: Oh okay you would have to contact the Nebraska child support agency. Okay.

Anita Stuckey: Their child support laws are entirely different than those in Texas. And we wouldn't want to give them misinformation.

Debra Pontisso: Yeah okay.

Ron Clark: Okay next question – if a dad has a court order for visitation but the mother is not obeying what can be done?

Debra Pontisso: Well in my experience the short answer is that the dad would have to go back to the court and file a motion of contempt. A contempt order. And it really kind of – of course Anita may be able to shed a little more light since she worked in the court system. But it's outside the Access and Visitation Grant unless some of the money is being used for visitation enforcement.

So the short answer is that the father would have to go back to court. And either with a lawyer or file a motion that, you know, asks for a contempt order to be issued. Because it really comes down to the court trying to enforce that order.

And second to that there is kind of a new group of professionals that has evolved over the last 6 to 7 years. And the Association of Family Conciliation Court are the one who are really promoting this.

And certainly if a state wanted to funds could be used out of the grant to fund what they call Parent Coordinators. They work with the courts. They monitor orders and serve as mediators in a way between the moms and the dad, particularly if mom is not letting dad see the kid.

And that's the type of enforcement. And it's like can we work this out because if you don't the last resort is going back into court and having a contempt order issued.
Anita?

Anita Stuckey: I would say that you contact a local law library and talk with them. Because there may be for example Texas has an Interference With Child Custody Statute. There is also criminal avenue to follow under that. It's not used that often but it's an enforceable court order.

The law librarian can help in filing the motion to enforce that order. If there is something like we have in Texas in the larger cities, a Domestic Relations Office acts

as a friend of the court. And as a friend of the court they start up these services to get everybody complying with the court order. They don't modify the court order.

But the court can enforce the order. You just have to let the court know it's not being followed and file your motion. But a law librarian is excellent at helping you with that.

And then certainly I would invite them to on to the Texas Access.org website because it has forms for filing for enforcement of those orders. So at least you could get a sample of kind of what is out there and what is available for you to do.

Debra Pontisso: I would just add as a tag along that why it's so important to do the front end work with these parents. And that's why parenting education is so important. And to educate these parents on the importance of co parenting.

So it doesn't dissolve into the situation where you have it come down to, you know, one parent not letting the other parent see the child. Unless there is some valid reasons for domestic violence or child abuse. But that's a whole different ball game.

Ron Clark: Okay one last question here. We have about two minutes for you to answer this here. And I just want to make sure we get this one in because this person submitted their question early an on time.

Does a parent's credit bureau report reflect that there is a child support order if the parent is no delinquent on the order? Does an absent parents credit bureau report reflect that there is a child support order even if the parent is not delinquent on the order?

We got about two minutes to answer this.

Debra Pontisso: This is Debra I don't know the answer to that question.

Ron Clark: Okay.

Anita Stuckey: It's Anita I don't think it does unless there is a delinquency and a judgment has been filed. But I am not 100% sure on that. But I don't know why it would be out there because its not a debt unless it's not been paid.

Ron Clark: Okay so the person they would need to go to is their local child support official to get the correct information?

Anita Stuckey: Or contact a credit bureau.

Ron Clark: Contact a credit bureau, okay.

Anita Stuckey: And ask them, you know, do they routinely list those.

Ron Clark: Okay got you. I just want to thank both of you again. Just excellent presentations. Very insightful and again just gave us a lot of depth and breadth of information.

Each week folks as we conclude the Q&A session we move forward to the post webinar survey. And at this time we are going to move forward to the post webinar survey for you to inform us on ways we can improve. And give us feedback about today's webinar.

The first question is I have a clear understanding of the funding opportunities available through the office of child support enforcement. Strongly agree, agree, unsure, disagree, strongly disagree.

No vote please mark accordingly.

Next I feel more knowledgably about collaboration opportunities with the office of child support enforcement. Please mark accordingly.

Next I have a better understanding of the office of child support enforcements child access and visitation grants. Please mark accordingly.

Next the advice and suggestions given regarding the office of child support enforcements funding opportunities will be helpful to my organization. Please mark accordingly.

Finally the advice and suggestions given regarding the office of child support enforcements collaborations opportunities will be helpful to my organization. Please mark accordingly.

Okay we want to thank you for participating in today's webinar. Again for any future TA needs you may have I highly encourage you to email that info@fatherhood.gov again info@fatherhood.gov or call us at 1-877-4DA-D411. And thank you and have a nice day. The operator will now speak with you.

Operator: Ladies and Gentlemen that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your line.

END