



December 31, 2016

The Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.  
President of Senate  
State House, H-107  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable Michael E. Busch  
Speaker of the House  
State House, H101  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: Noncustodial Parent Employment Program Pilot Report – MSAR #10834**

Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

The Department of Human Resources (DHR) hereby submits this annual report in accordance with Family Law Article §10-112.2(h)(2). Since the passage of Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016, DHR's Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) has diligently worked to fully develop the Baltimore City Noncustodial Parent Employment Pilot Program, known as *S.T.E.P. Up!* (Supporting, Training and Employing Parents).

HB 1502 requires the Department to report "on the effectiveness of the program based on evaluations." While the Department has made significant progress in the development of the program functions and partnerships, *STEP Up!* officially launched on October 1, 2016. Therefore, very limited effectiveness data is available for this initial report.

As always, if there are any questions or if additional information is needed, please contact Leyla Layman, Executive Director for the Child Support Enforcement Administration at 410-767-7375.

Sincerely,

Gregory S. James  
Acting Secretary

**REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT  
ADMINISTRATION NONCUSTODIAL PARENT EMPLOYMENT PILOT PROGRAM**

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**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

*Completed pursuant to Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016*

December 1, 2016

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## REPORT REQUIREMENT

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This report is hereby submitted in response to the following reporting requirement found under Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016:

*“(H) (1) The Secretary [of Human Resources] shall conduct evaluations of the program using the following measures:*

- (i) The number of noncustodial parents who are eligible to participate in the program;*
- (ii) The number of noncustodial parents who sign consent agreements and enroll in employment services under the program;*
- (iii) The number of participants who attend the meetings, classes, or workshops specified in their employment plans;*
- (iv) The percentage of participants who complete all program requirements;*
- (v) The number of participants who receive an occupational license or certificate;*
- (vi) The number of participants who obtain employment;*
- (vii) For each employed participant, the job type and location, whether the job is full-time, wage or salary amount, and length of time the job is retained;*
- (viii) The number of participants who consistently make the required child support payments and the amounts of the payments; and*
- (ix) The amount of child support arrearages paid by participants who entered the program with arrearages.*

*(2) On or before December 31 each year, the Secretary [of Human Resources] shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article, on the effectiveness of the Program based on the evaluations.”*

*Source: House Bill 1502, pages 6-7*

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## BACKGROUND

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Since the passage of Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016, the Department of Human Resources/Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA) has diligently worked to fully develop the Baltimore City Noncustodial Parent Employment Program Pilot, known as *S.T.E.P. Up!* (Supporting, Training and Employing Parents). While the Department has made significant progress in the development of the program functions and partnerships, *STEP Up!* officially launched on October 1, 2016. Therefore, very limited effectiveness data is available for this initial report.

In addition to employment services, participants are referred to services to assist them with removing barriers to employment (e.g. child care, substance abuse treatment, education, transportation) and they are also provided with intensive case management and case conferencing. Case conferencing is a more holistic and coordinated effort to address the needs and goals of a program participant across service agencies. Participants also automatically qualify for a review of their child support case to ensure the existing support order is based on his or her actual income. Noncustodial parents actively participating in the program will be

exempt from the driver's and professional license enforcement remedies provided they remain compliant with their program agreement. Participants also have the opportunity to earn arrears forgiveness after meeting quarterly milestones. Each quarter, the participant can earn five percent arrears forgiveness of State-owed arrears for a maximum of twenty percent earned.

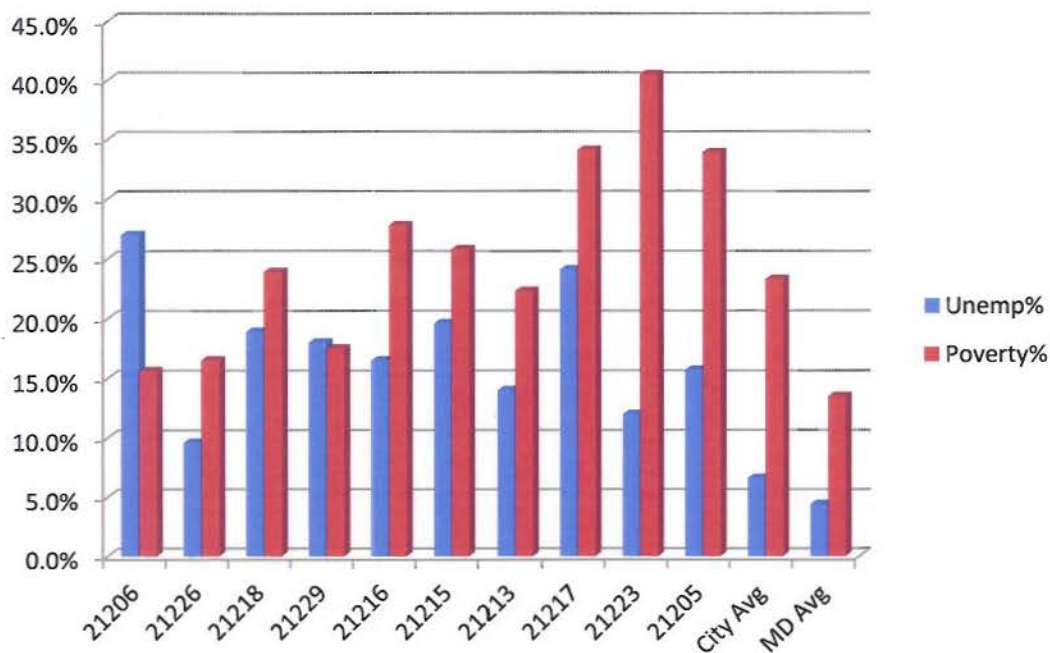
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### TARGET POPULATION

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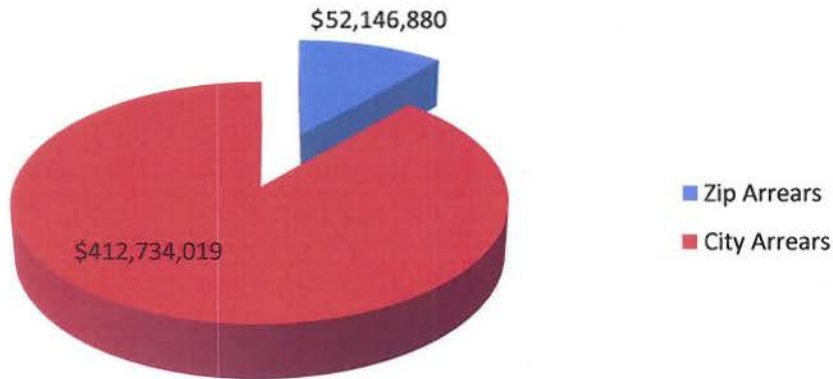
Based on a data report compiled in August 2016, Baltimore City had 12,233 noncustodial parents (NCPs) with active child support cases who were also currently receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) services. A total of approximately \$147,507,390 is owed in arrears by those same NCPs. Clearly, there was an abundant need for *STEP Up!* services in the City. Therefore, CSEA decided to concentrate its initial outreach efforts on ten zip codes determined to be most at need based on unemployment, poverty, and child support arrearage data within those zip codes. See *Chart 1*. Those zip codes are 21205, 21206, 21213, 21215, 21216, 21217, 21218, 21223, 21226, and 21229.

**Chart 1: Unemployment and Poverty Rates of Target Zip Codes**



The aforementioned zip codes represent just over 4,000 (or 7%) of Baltimore City’s active child support cases but account for almost 13% of total arrears in Baltimore City. *See Chart 2*

**Chart 2: Target Zip Code Arrears**



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## PARTNERSHIPS

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Based on the needs of the target population, the Department has leveraged partnerships, such as the one with Baltimore City’s Mayor’s Office of Employment Development (MOED). MOED via One Baltimore For Jobs (1B4J) provides access to employment and employment placement programs, as well as access to legal counseling and expungement services for ex-offenders. 1B4J provides employment training opportunities through Civic Works, Humanim, Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC) (manufacturing and welding) and the Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) (pre-apprenticeship construction training) as well as with Associated Catholic Charities and Vehicles for Change (automotive training); Maryland New Directions (business administration and customer service training); City Life Community Builders (construction training); and BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Bon Secours Baltimore Health Systems, Caroline Fries Center and New Pathways (healthcare training).

The Department’s Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET) program is providing noncustodial parents enrolled in the *STEP Up!* program with access to a variety of education, employment, training and support services options. Program participants via the FSET partnership can enroll in the following programs: Baltimore City Community College (multi-medical technician and warehouse logistics), Center for Urban Families (case management, support services, job placement and retention), Civic Works (green construction, solar, weatherization), Humanim (case management, support services, job placement and retention, customer service and deconstruction training), JARC and JOTF.

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## PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

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Over a series of ten meetings, between May 2016 until the October 1, 2016 launch of *S.T.E.P. Up!*, CSEA took several key actions to ensure the successful implementation of the program.

CSEA met with partners to develop the program workflow, processes, and forms as well as divided responsibilities among agencies. The Baltimore City Office of Child Support Services (BCOCSS) is responsible for recruitment, enrollment and service referrals. Participant enrollment occurs at the City office and includes an assessment to identify existing employment skills as well as barriers to employment. BCOCSS uses this information to determine the appropriate training program and service referrals for the participant. Participants leave their enrollment meeting with an appointment for an employment training provider as well as a follow-up appointment with the CSEA Enforcement Specialist for the intensive case management. Additionally, during enrollment participants are provided their rights and responsibilities related to child support and participation in the *STEP Up!* program.

FSET and MOED are responsible for employment training and placement. Through their training programs, participants will receive detailed work plans. Training programs range from six to twenty-four weeks depending on the program. During the training period, participants have the opportunity to learn more about employment opportunities within the field and meet with employers. Training partners are connected with many employers and are able to connect the majority of participants with employment placements upon completion of training.

CSEA's Enforcement Specialist coordinates the intensive case management to ensure participants are actively engaged in training, receiving any needed supportive services and remaining compliant with child support.

Also during the planning phase, CSEA revised its Driver License Suspension and Professional License Suspension policies to be inclusive of requirements in House Bill 1502 and the program. Likewise, CSEA developed, in accordance with Maryland Family Law Article §10–112, an arrears forgiveness plan for the program. Participants will earn arrears forgiveness after meeting quarterly milestones. Each quarter, the participant can earn five percent arrears forgiveness of State-owed arrears for a maximum of twenty percent earned.

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## OUTREACH

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In September 2016, the BCOCSS Outreach Team began and continues attending community events and community association meetings in the targeted zip codes to make the public aware of the *STEP Up!* program. As of October 27, 2016, the Outreach Team participated in six community events and have four additional events scheduled by the end of the calendar year. CSEA and BCOCSS also provided a one-page document to all its partners about the *STEP Up!* program to share with their clients. DHR's Communications Department is developing a web presence and printed materials to further outreach efforts.