

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

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

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

December 31, 2018

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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: Report on the Implementation of Child Support Administration Non-Custodial Parent Employment Pilot Program- Completed Pursuant to Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016

Dear President Miller and Speaker Busch:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is required to submit to the Maryland General Assembly as well as the Department of Legislative Services the Implementation of Child Support Administration Non-Custodial Parent Employment Program report. This requirement is in accordance with Chapter 312 (House Bill 1502), Acts of 2016, pages 6-7.

If you should require additional information please contact the Office of Government Affairs at 410-767-8966.

Sincerely,



Lourdes R. Padilla
Secretary



REPORT REQUIREMENT

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 Services] 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 are in compliance with 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, 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 Services] 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

BACKGROUND

Chapter 312 of 2016 established the Noncustodial Parent Employment Assistance Pilot Program in the Child Support Administration (CSA) within the Department of Human Services (DHS). Chapter 312 of 2016 required CSA to develop and implement a Noncustodial Parent Employment Assistance Pilot Program in Baltimore City. The purpose of the program is to provide eligible unemployed or underemployed noncustodial parents assistance in obtaining employment that will enable the noncustodial parent to achieve economic self-sufficiency and meet their child support obligations.

The bill mandated that employment assistance services provided to a noncustodial parent under the program include: job skills assessment; job search guidance and assistance; job skills placement; career counseling; referrals to educational programs and other employment related needs. Noncustodial parents also 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 and in compliance with program requirements also have the opportunity to earn arrears forgiveness after meeting quarterly milestones. Each quarter, the participant can earn

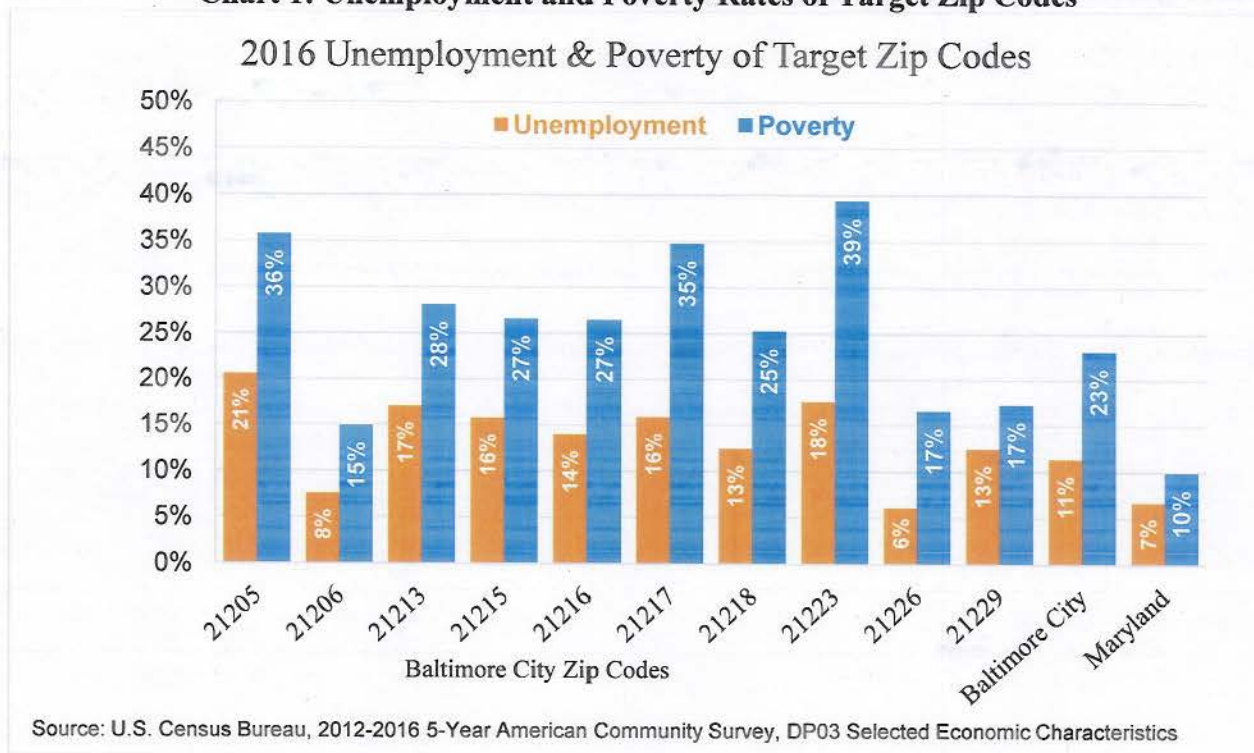
five percent (5%) arrears forgiveness of State-owed arrears for a maximum of twenty percent (20%) earned.

Since the passage and implementation of Chapter 312, CSA has worked diligently to fully develop the Baltimore City Noncustodial Parent Employment Pilot Program, known as *STEP Up!* (Supporting, Training and Employing Parents). *STEP Up!* officially launched on October 1, 2016.

TARGET POPULATION

CSA used data compiled in August 2016 to better understand unemployment and poverty in Baltimore City. This data was used to determine where the most need existed. The review of the data also showed a total of approximately \$147,507,390 owed in arrears by 12,233 noncustodial parents. Based on this analysis CSA concentrated 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*. There was no change in the target population between year one and year three of the pilot program

Chart 1: Unemployment and Poverty Rates of Target Zip Codes

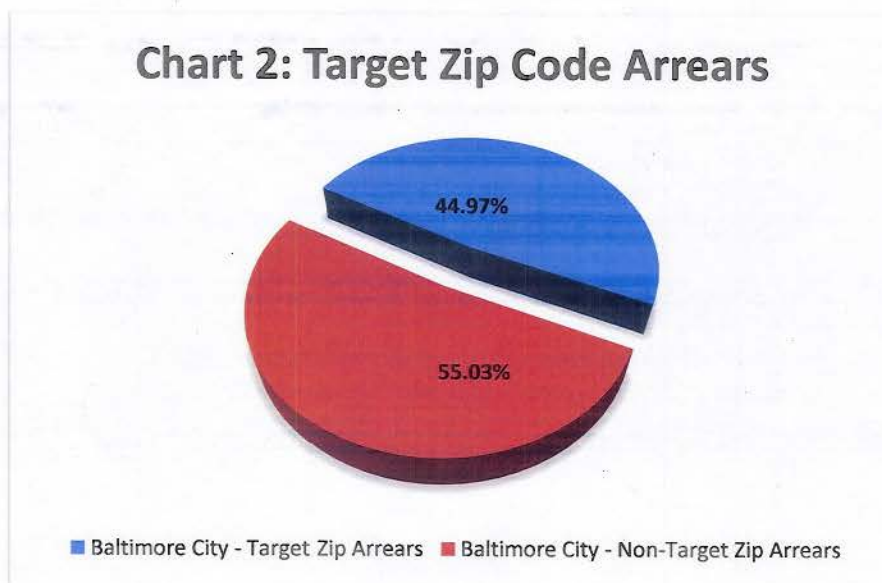


The aforementioned zip codes represent approximately 25,000 cases or forty-five percent (45%) of Baltimore City’s active child support cases and account for 48% of the arrears in Baltimore City.

See Chart 2

	Arrears		Cases	
	Arrears	Percentage	Cases	Percentage
Baltimore City - Target Zip Arrears	\$187,467,156.75	48.40%	24,823	44.97%
Baltimore City - Non-Target Zip Arrears	\$199,836,209.06	51.60%	30,376	55.03%
Baltimore City - All	\$387,303,365.81	100.00%	55,199	100.00%

Chart 2: Target Zip Code Arrears



PROGRAM EVALUATION BASED ON THE REQUIRED MEASURES

Evaluation Outcomes

Between January and September 2018, there were 151 noncustodial parents enrolled in the *STEP Up!* program representing 263 cases. Nearly half (46% or 121 cases) of these cases have received child support payments since the noncustodial parent enrolled in the *STEP Up!* program.

Chapter 312 requires the Department to report on the outcome measures below.

Outcome	#
1 THE NUMBER OF NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM	151
2 THE NUMBER OF NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS WHO SIGN CONSENT AGREEMENTS AND ENROLL IN EMPLOYMENT SERVICES UNDER THE PROGRAM	151
3 THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE IN COMPLIANCE WITH THEIR PLANS	103
4 THE PERCENTAGE OF PARTICIPANTS WHO COMPLETE ALL PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS	1.3%
5 THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO RECEIVE AN OCCUPATIONAL LICENSE OR CERTIFICATE	N/A ¹
6 THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO OBTAIN EMPLOYMENT	31
7 FOR EACH EMPLOYED PARTICIPANT, THE JOB TYPE AND LOCATION, WAGE OR SALARY AMOUNT, AND LENGTH OF TIME THE JOB IS RETAINED	N/A ¹
8 THE NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS WHO CONSISTENTLY MAKE THE REQUIRED CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS AND THE AMOUNTS OF THE PAYMENTS	92; Average monthly payment: \$348
9 THE AMOUNT OF CHILD SUPPORT ARREARAGES PAID BY PARTICIPANTS WHO ENTERED THE PROGRAM WITH ARREARAGES	\$43,985

¹ The accuracy of the information for two of the prescribed outcomes (Numbers 5 and 7 above) is dependent on participant self-reporting. Further explained in Evaluation Outcome Limitations/Challenges.

Evaluation Outcome Limitations/Challenges

- Outcome #5 – there is no information available in the Automated Child Support Enforcement System (CSES) pertaining to occupational licenses or certificates. The program must rely largely on self-reporting by the participant for this measure. While the Department has the ability to obtain information for occupational licenses, the data does not include certifications.
- Outcome #7 – the Department does not have a way other than self-reporting to obtain this level of detail. The data source used to obtain wage data (the Department of Labor, Licensing, and Regulation’s Quarterly Wage Data report) does not identify the length of time the job is retained or provide wage or salary information. It only tells us how much an individual earned in a specific quarter. The only way to obtain this information would be from self-reporting by participants, which is not considered reliable for evaluation purposes. Additionally, the wage data does not include employer information so there is no way to know the location of the job site. Finally, the current practice of employment partners is to indicate only a “yes” or “no” regarding a participant’s compliance.

PARTNERSHIPS

Based on the needs of the target population, the Department has continued to leverage the existing partnership with the Baltimore City Mayor’s office of Employment Development (MOED) as outlined in the 2017 report on this program. 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 in:

- **Manufacturing & Welding:** Civic Works, Humanim, and Jane Addams Resource Corporation (JARC);
- **Construction Training:** Job Opportunities Task Force (JOTF) and City Life Community Builders;
- **Automotive Training:** Associated Catholic Charities, Vehicles for Change;
- **Business administration and Customer service training:** Maryland New Directions; and
- **Healthcare Training:** BioTechnical Institute of Maryland, Bon Secours Baltimore Health Systems, Caroline Fries Center, and New Pathways.

The Department’s Family Investment Administration (FIA) via the Department’s Food Stamp Employment & Training (FSET) program continues to provide 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

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retention), Civic Works (green construction, solar, weatherization), Humanim (case management, support services, job placement and retention, customer service and deconstruction training), JARC and JOTF.

- **Multi-medical technician and Warehouse logistics:** Baltimore City Community College;
- **Case management, support services, job placement and retention:** Center for Urban Families and Humanim;
- **Green construction, solar, weatherization:** Civic Works; and
- **Deconstruction training:** JARC and JOTF.

In January 2017, FIA revised the eligibility criteria of its Travel Assistance Program (TAP) to include NCPs with current or former connections to Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). Program participants benefit from this resource given the fact that transportation is often the main barrier to employment for our noncustodial parents.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

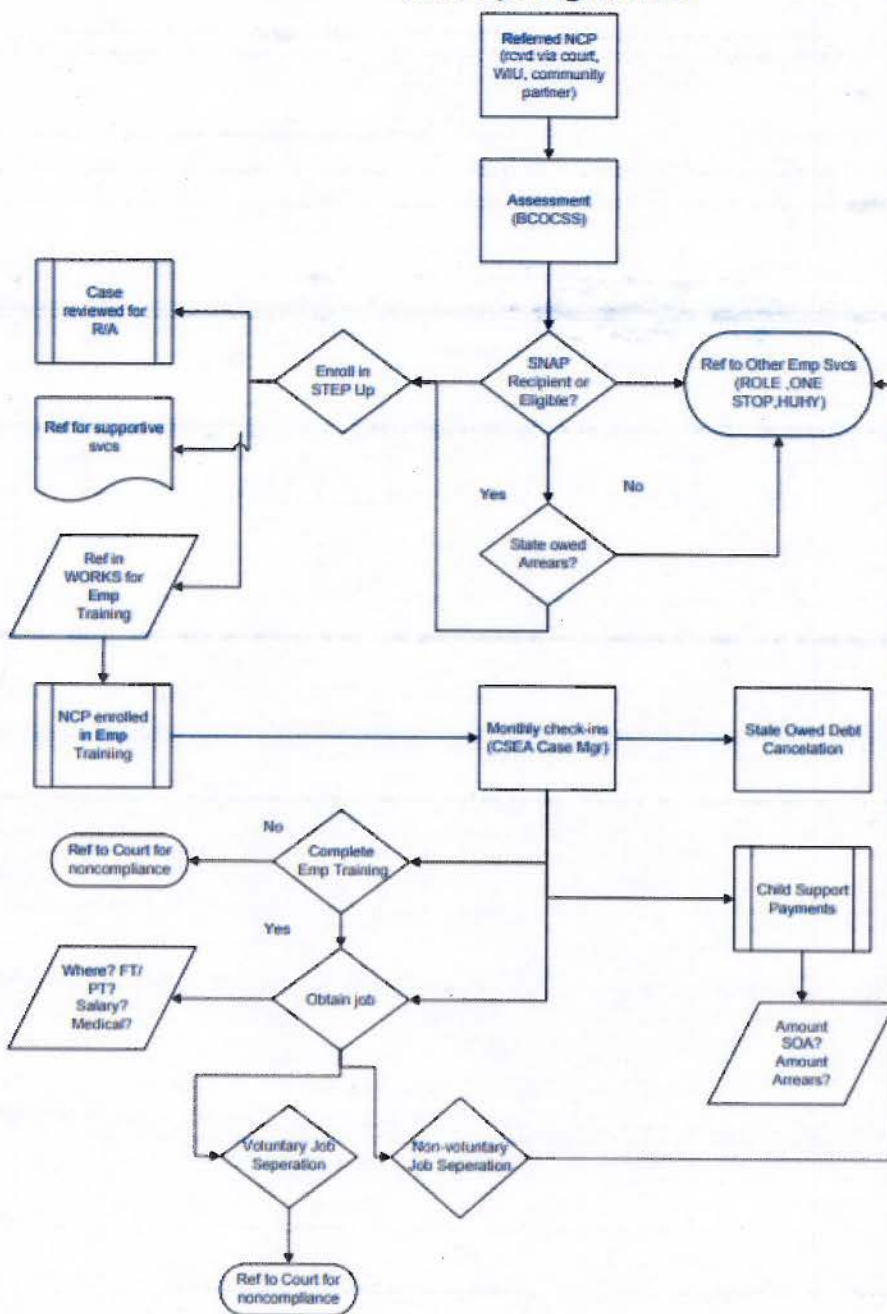
Enrollment

The Baltimore City Office of Child Support Services (BCOCSS) is responsible for recruitment, enrollment and service referrals for the *STEP Up!* program. Participant enrollment occurs at the BCOCSS 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 CSA case worker 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. CSA's case workers coordinate the intensive case management to ensure participants are actively engaged in training, receiving any needed supportive services and remaining compliant with child support.

Case Management

Within thirty days after BCOCSS completes the *STEP Up!* program enrollment process, the noncustodial parent is required to meet with the case manager. If a case manager is unable to reach the participant or the participant has not made contact with the case manager thirty days after the check in appointment he/she will be terminated from the program. If the participant is terminated from the *STEP Up!* program, he/she must wait 20 days before he/she is eligible to enroll again.

STEP Up Program Flow



Outreach

The Baltimore City Office of Child Support Services’ (BCOCSS) Outreach Team along with CSA continues to attend community events and community association meetings in the targeted zip codes to make the public aware of the *STEP Up!* program. The Outreach Team participated in several community events and have upcoming events scheduled until the end of September 2019.

Date	Events
April 4, 2018	One Stop Reentry Resource Fair
April 20, 2018	Resource Day with Jane Addams Organization
April 28, 2018	JOTF Outreach Event
May 12, 2018	Child Support Workshop - Glorious Ministries Worldwide
June 9, 2019	CFUF Fatherhood Expo
June 30, 2018	Men's and Family Health Center Outreach Event
July 25, 2018	Back to the Neighborhood Event
April 17, 2019	Baltimore responsible Fatherhood Program - Child Support Night
July 10, 2019	Baltimore responsible Fatherhood Program - Child Support Night
September 25, 2019	Baltimore Responsible Fatherhood Program - Child Support Night

BCOCSS also provided a one-page information document to all partners about the *STEP Up!* program for dissemination to their clients. DHS’s Communications Department has developed a web presence at <http://dhr.maryland.gov/stepup>. <http://dhr.maryland.gov/child-support-services/paying-support/step-up/>

Next steps

CSA is in the process of designing a database to track and monitor job type, job retention, wage or salary amounts and program compliance. In May 2018, CSA began meeting with program partners, the BCOCSS, the University of Maryland School of Social Work and the Baltimore City Circuit Court to discuss program enhancements and reporting requirements. The purpose of the meetings was to explore ways to enhance current practices for data repository and to look at ways to expand the program.

CHALLENGES

Evaluation Outcome Limitations/Challenges

The Department was unable to monitor certain program reporting requirements. Chapter 312 established reporting requirements using specified measures to determine the effectiveness of the program. The statute was amended effective October 1, 2018 by Chapter 412 of 2018 to streamline the evaluation criteria by requiring the program’s evaluation to be measured in part by the number of participants who are in compliance with their employment plans, instead of by the number of participants who attend the meetings, classes, or workshops specified in their employment plans.

The requirement that included “documentation of the noncustodial parent’s compliance status at 14 days after the effective date of the consent agreement” was unnecessary because it takes an average of one to two weeks after enrollment for participants to connect with an employment

partner, and does not afford the participant enough time to be compliant with the referral. Therefore, the statute was amended to remove the 14-day requirement to document the noncustodial parent's compliance status at 14 days after a consent agreement is effective.

Program Capacity/Enrollment

Prior to October 2016, there was an outreach campaign to spread the word about the program. Ten zip codes were specifically targeted based on levels of SNAP receipt among noncustodial parents with high arrears. Fewer than 20 noncustodial parents enrolled in the program. Therefore, CSA decided to increase the enrollment due to the number of SNAP participants. The courts and community partners began to refer more noncustodial parents in January 2017 in order to get to the maximum of 200 participants. CSA expects to reach 200 participants by December 31, 2018.

Staffing

The *STEP UP!* program has limited assigned staff. There is one full-time state employee assigned to monitor compliance and two part-time Veritas-HHS employees assigned to coordinate events and conduct participant assessments. The two part-time Veritas-HHS employees have other assigned duties and therefore, their time devoted to the program is limited.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

A Success Story

Samantha* enrolled in the *Step Up!* program in 2017. In October 2017 Samantha was employed with Goodwill her child support payments were being received via wage garnishment. Samantha continued to seek further employment opportunities, but she was not interested in training at the time. On December 18, 2017, she reported for her 60-day check-in, she was still employed, and payments were being received. Samantha was still looking for a job actively and diligently. On March 5, 2018, she reported for her 90-day check-in still employed with payments still being received via wage garnishment. At this time Samantha reported that she was seeking possible employment with the State of Maryland.

On July 10, 2018, Samantha was offered a job and began working with the State of Maryland on April 11, 2018. Payments are being received via wage garnishment. Samantha completed the *Step Up!* program on July 10, 2018.

* Name of participant has been changed to honor confidentiality of the participant.

SUMMARY

In conclusion, the *STEP Up!* program has proven to be successful in facilitating noncustodial parents to obtain employment that enabled them to achieve economic sufficiency and meet their child support obligations. Data received from the University of Maryland School of Social Work documents the success of the program. National data reported by the Urban Institute shows that a majority of the unpaid child support is owed by parents with no and very low income and that the number of parents complying with child support obligations dramatically increases as their

income increases. Due to this correlation increases in income and employment in the target population should continue to result in more consistent and reliable child support payments to custodial parents.

The Department has determined that successful completion of the program is increased if when 1) child support workers who support the employment program's goals are working with parents; 2) services developed take into account the challenges faced by parents; 3) services that quickly engage and are easily accessible to parents were designed; and 4) strong partnerships are built and regular communication with community resources are part of the strategies.

Baltimore City has Maryland's largest child support caseload, representing approximately one-third of the child support cases in the state. Only 34% of noncustodial parents paid more than 75% of their child support obligation. Of greater concern is the fact that more than one-third (36%) of noncustodial parents in Baltimore City did not make any payments toward their current support obligation largely due to unemployment. The Baltimore City Noncustodial Parent Employment Assistance Pilot Program has proven to be successful for participants enrolled in the program as compared to participant employment and payments before enrollment. The total collection rate increased by 4.20%.

Total Current Support Collected in Prior Year

Total Collections	\$361,587
Total Due	\$1,477,761
Total Collection Rate	24.5%

Among Participants Enrolled from October 2016 to March 2018

Total Current Collections	\$470,420
Total Due	\$1,638,058
Total Collection Rate	28.7%

The Department is focused on creating opportunities for and addressing the financial needs of both parents to achieve economic self sufficiency. The Department's strategy is to reduce poverty by connecting noncustodial parents with employment and job training and other tools to achieve financial stability. The Department is looking forward to any needed enhancements to the program before it is expanded to other surrounding counties, such as the development of the new database to track and monitor program requirements. CSA will also continue to explore different funding avenues to expand the program.