Increasing Child Support Collections from the Hard to Collect: Experimental Evidence from Washington State

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Executive Summary

The paper discusses two experimental tests of administrative interventions designed to increase child support collections from hard-to-collect noncustodial parents in Washington State. The experiments were relatively low cost and provided the Division of Child Support (DCS) with strong evidence on their impacts. The findings add to the meager research literature on "what works" at the street level of the child support enforcement system.

The interventions: The "TANF 16" intervention targeted noncustodial parents (NCPs) at a late stage of their involvement with DCS. It sought to collect arrears to reimburse the state for TANF benefits paid to custodial parents (CPs) via the creation of a special unit of caseworkers that intensively pursued collections in arrears-only cases with exclusively state-owed debt. The paper presents the impacts of the team's first 22 months. From the full pool of TANF arrears NCPs, DCS randomly assigned 1,955 NCPs to the unit (treatment group) and 2,000 NCPs to the control group in November 2012. As the unit disposed of cases, its caseload was refreshed by randomly drawing further NCPs from those initially unassigned to either the treatment or control group.

The "statement" tested whether sending regular billing statements to NCPs new to the child support system and not subject to wage withholding increased the regularity and amount of payment. Beginning in March 2013, DCS randomly assigned NCPs to receive a monthly statement or no statement. There were 1,384 NCPs in the treatment group and 1,386 in the control group. This intervention lasted 18 months.

How similar are the treatment and control groups?: For practical purposes the treatment and control groups in the TANF 16 experiment are comparable. There were small but statistically significant gender and age differences. In the statement experiment the treatment and control groups were statistically identical on all variables, except treatment NCPs had a lower mean order. We use multivariate methods to control for such differences.

Outcomes: The objective of both interventions was to increase the amount and consistency of payments. The analysis focused on three outcomes in both experiments: 1) whether the NCP ever paid support during the observation period, 2) the number of months when an NCP paid support and 3) the total amount paid. For the TANF 16 analysis we examined a fourth outcome: the percentage reduction in arrears. For the statement analysis we examined a different fourth outcome: the average percentage of the current support obligation that was paid.

Findings, TANF 16: **The TANF 16 intervention improved collections of TANF-arrears**. During the observed intervention period the unit's efforts raised the likelihood of an NCP ever paying by 25 percent compared to the control group. This is a substantial improvement. This increase in ever paying led to an absolute increase in the number of months with a payment of .48 and in actual payments of $75. While modest, these effects respectively represent a 23 and 17 percent improvement over the control group. Among NCPs who paid something, the increase was $152. The intervention led to a reduction in total arrears of 3.4 percent, a 20 percent improvement over the control group. Among NCPs who paid, the reduction was 4.4 percent.

Findings, Statements: **Sending regular statements** to NCPs new to the child support system and not subject to withholding **did not increase the likelihood of making at least one payment, the number of months with a payment, total payments, or the percent of current support paid**. It may be that sending statements antagonized or otherwise dissuaded NCPs from meeting their support orders. Alternatively, this approach may confused NCPs in the treatment group. Given the proportion of the sample that cycled in and out of employment over the course of the intervention, it is possible that receipt of statements was not always directly aligned with a given NCP's current employment (and wage withholding status). The associated delay may have resulted in a hesitancy to make payments at the appropriate time.

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Introduction

In recent years Washington State has collected about 65 percent of current support due. The national average is about 63 percent.[1] With millions of support dollars going collected, there is a premium on efficient use of staff time in pursuing child support collections. In spite of the up-front costs associated with implementing new approaches, state child support agencies have incentives to find innovative ways to do their work. Given limited resources, agencies need to understand whether the interventions in which they plan to invest are effective.

This paper discusses two experimental tests of administrative interventions designed to increase child support collections in Washington State. Under a University Partnership grant awarded by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, a team of academic and applied researchers worked with officials in the Division of Child Support (DCS) to develop experimental research designs to test two interventions in the field, monitor implementation of the interventions, and measure impacts based on administrative data.

The tested interventions reflect the need for DCS, as well as child support agencies in other states, to increase collections and maximize their performance on behalf of custodial parents and their children as well as with respect to federal performance standards. The interventions varied in the amount of administrative resources and staff time involved as well as in the point in the "life cycle" of a case at which the interventions are aimed. The primary objective of both interventions was to increase the amount and consistency of payments.

The **first intervention** targeted arrears-only cases with exclusively state-owed debt. DCS created a special unit of caseworkers dedicated to intensively pursuing collections from these cases' noncustodial parents (NCPs). Collections from arrears-only cases go directly to the state and reimburse it for Temporary Assistance to Needy

[1] National and state figures are from Office of Child Support Enforcement (2014) tables P-83 and P-84.

Families (TANF) benefits paid to the custodial parent (CP). According to DCS's estimates at the time it made the funding request of the legislature, this unit was expected to be cost effective within 18 months of its formation. The paper presents results on the impacts of the team's first 22 months.

The **second intervention** attempted to clearly and consistently inform new NCPs of their support obligations. Currently, NCPs in Washington State receive written notification of their child support obligations when the order is established, but in most cases they do not receive a routine reminder to pay each month. The intervention tests whether sending regular billing statements – "nudges" – to NCPs not subject to wage withholding increases the regularity and amount of payment. Unlike the special arrears-only unit that relies on intensive case work and a substantial investment on the State's part, the generation and distribution of the monthly statements can be largely automated and relatively low cost. The paper provides findings on the impacts of the intervention, which lasted 18 months.

The next section summarizes related research on child support enforcement. We then describe the two interventions in more detail and the experimental designs used to test them, and present the findings from both experiments.

Background and related research on compliance with support orders

In the years since the inception of the Child Support Enforcement Program (Title IV-D), researchers have documented the benefits of child support enforcement. When paid in full, child support payments account for almost half of the income for custodial parents (CPs) below the federal poverty level (Heinrich, Burkhardt, & Shager, 2011). Research suggests that child support payments stabilize incomes, despite payment irregularity (Ha, Cancian, & Meyer, 2011), and that women who receive child support are more likely to leave welfare and less likely to return (Huang & Han, 2012). Stronger child support enforcement systems are associated with decreased non-marital teenage fertility (Plotnick et al. 2004; Hao, Astone, & Cherlin, 2007), as well as decreased non-marital fertility generally (Garfinkel, Huang, McLanahan, & Gaylin, 2003; Plotnick et al. 2007) and lower abortion rates (Crowley, Jagannathan, & Falchettore, 2012). Stronger enforcement has also been associated with an increased likelihood that non-custodial

parents (NCPs) select partners with higher levels of education (Aizer & McLanahan, 2006). For children, better enforcement is associated with a higher likelihood of living in two-parent families (Jagannathan, 2004), increased school attendance, and improved cognitive outcomes, such as test scores (Knox, Argys, Peters, Brooks-Gunn, & Smith, 1998).

One major challenge for the IV-D program has been enforcing child support orders so that children and their custodial parents receive the portion of the non-custodial parents' income to which they are entitled. To combat large-scale non-compliance, the federal government has created national databases for locating NCPs and provided administrative funding and technical support to the states, while states have implemented a variety of enforcement mechanisms, including garnishing wages, imposing liens, revoking licenses, and contempt. Recently, combined federal and state spending on enforcement has been nearly $6 billion per year (U.S. Administration for Children and Families, 2013).[2]

While studies show that strict legislation and high spending on enforcement are associated with better child support performance, many NCPs still fail to comply with support orders (Huang & Han, 2012). In 2011, the latest year for which data are available, only 43.4% of CPs received the full amount of child support they were owed. Roughly three in ten CPs (30.4%) received partial support. The remaining 25.9% of CPs received no payments at all from NCPs. Despite increased enforcement efforts, these percentages have been fairly stable since 1993 (Grall, 2013).

Research on the determinants of NCP compliance with support obligations has examined four broad categories of factors: 1) NCP ability to pay; 2) NCP willingness to pay; 3) the needs of the CP and the child; and 4) characteristics of the child support enforcement system. We focus on the fourth category, which is most closely related to our study.

Most research on the relationship between collections and characteristics of the child support enforcement system has examined indicators of enforcement stringency.

[2] Federal and state agencies have also sought to improve paternity establishment and rationalize the process of setting order amounts. These aspects of the child support system are beyond the scope of this review.

Some studies examine specific aspects of the enforcement process, such as enforcement expenditures per case, presumptive guidelines, wage withholding or liens (Argys et al. 2001, Bartfeld and Meyer 1994, Beller & Graham, 1991, Garfinkel & Klawitter, 1990, Lin 2001, Sorensen and Hill 2004). Others create indices of enforcement stringency derived from multiple indicators (Freeman and Waldfogel 2001).

A second, limited line of research has addressed how case manager characteristics affect compliance. Support enforcement officers (SEOs) – the street-level bureaucrats of the child support system – possess a wide range of enforcement tools to support compliance. These include extensive data sets for locating NCPs and their income and assets, as well as punitive actions such as revoking licenses, placing liens, and seizing assets, IRS refunds and unemployment benefits. Interviews with SEOs, conducted as part of the project design phase, revealed substantial variation both in how they deploy these tools and in how they generally approach their caseloads. As the street-level bureaucracy literature suggests, much of this variation was a function of differences in either caseload characteristics or individual working styles.

To our knowledge, only two quantitative studies have looked the relationship between case manager characteristics and compliance. Wilkins (2007) finds a relationship between gender and use of time in child support agencies. Huang et al. (2010) indirectly assesses the importance of training and professional knowledge on enforcement effectiveness by comparing exam results before and after a training program. But the study did not examine differences in actual enforcement outcomes among case workers with more or less training.

Another line of research examines administrative interventions that seek to indirectly raise compliance by increasing NCPs' ability or willingness to pay their support obligations. For example, offering Earned Income Tax Credits to NCPs who fully pay their obligations provides extra incentive to comply (Wheaton & Sorensen 2010, Nichols, Sorensen, & Lippold, 2012). Increasing the pass-through amount for NCPs

with CPs who are receiving TANF similarly encourages greater compliance (Cancian, Meyer, & Caspar, 2008; Lippold, Nichols, & Sorensen, 2013).[3]

The line of research most closely related to our study examines the effect of changes in specific administrative policies and practices that alter how front-line staff manages cases, CPs, or NCPs. While some states have piloted initiatives that allow administrative staff to target cases in unique ways to encourage collections, there has been a dearth of rigorous evaluation of these initiatives.

The one rigorous study of such interventions (Heinrich, Burkhardt, and Shager 2011) examined a gradual debt forgiveness program tested in Racine County, Wisconsin. Participating NCPs with both a large arrears debt and current support obligations were forgiven $0.50 for each dollar of current support paid.[4] Forgiveness could apply to either or state-owed or CP-owed debt (if the CP consented to the debt modification). Eligible NCPs could participate in the program for up to two years but lost eligibility if they went two consecutive quarters without making any payment. Results suggest that individuals responded to the program as intended. Participating NCPs paid more toward their child support obligations and arrears, made more frequent child support payments, and reduced their state- and CP-owed child support debt.

In an intervention very similar to one we test in Washington, the Franklin County (Ohio) Child Support Enforcement Agency, in conjunction with MDRC, has tested the impact of different kinds of monthly notifications (written notices, robocalls, clearer messaging, etc.) on collections. At this time the findings are not publicly available.

A recent randomized control trial in the United Kingdom tested the efficacy of a novel communication strategy – text messages – for collecting delinquent fines (Haynes et al. 2013). While not focused on collecting child support from delinquent NCPs, the results of the trial provide evidence of the value of reminding persons to pay delinquent

[3] Job training for NCPs seeks to improve earnings capacity and, hence, the ability to pay (Miller & Knox, 2001). Programs to enhance the familial relationships between a CP and NCP parent, and fatherhood programs that encourage ties between a NCP and his children operate on the premise that fathers with stronger relationships with their children and ex-partners are more likely to contribute financial and in-kind resources for their children's well-being (Cowan, Cowan, & Knox 2010, Schroeder & Doughty, 2009). These sorts of interventions may indirectly raise compliance, but are far more complex and ambitious than specific changes to administrative practices and regulations.

[4] Lump-sum forgiveness is a more common support enforcement intervention.

obligations. The trial clearly demonstrated that text messages from a judicial agency greatly increased the average amount paid.[5] Messages were more effective if they specifically addressed the person by name.

This study adds to the meager literature on "what works" at the street level of the child support enforcement system. It used field experiments to rigorously test the impact of two administrative interventions over a medium length period (18-22 months).

The interventions and experimental designs

This section describes the two experimental interventions and the research designs used to evaluate their impacts on child support payments and arrears.

Intervention 1: Targeting arrears-only cases with exclusively state-owed debt

In April 2012 the Washington legislature approved funding for 16 new FTEs for DCS to pursue collections from arrears-only cases with exclusively state-owed debt.[6] Collections from arrears-only cases go directly to the state and reimburse it for TANF benefits previously paid to the CP. The funding was premised on the expectation that the increase in collections would exceed the cost of operating the new effort.

To carry out this activity DCS established a new unit housed in the Olympia Field Office – dubbed the "TANF 16" team – but with a statewide caseload. After several months devoted to filling the new positions and training staff in intensive collection methods, the unit began operations in November 2012.

Overview of the TANF 16 model

DCS designed the TANF 16 model to concentrate the efforts of a select group of staff on the collection of past due support owed to the state from cases where there is no current support obligation. These are cases where, historically, it has been especially difficult for DCS to make collections. Without a current support obligation and with money owed exclusively to the state, NCPs often have little incentive to make

[5] The article did not report how much of the increase reflected a rise in the percentage of delinquent persons who paid something, and how much was due to a rise in the average payment by those who chose to pay.

[6] A summary of DSHS's appropriations for 2012, including funding for the TANF 16 unit can be found at http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/2012dshs.pdf. Page 20 documents an increase of $405,000 for funding a unit to focus on retained child support.

payments. The funds do not go directly to the children of the NCP, and many NCPs may believe that they have already fulfilled their obligation to their child and the CP. Moreover, large debt amounts among this population may make smaller, incremental payments seem futile to NCPs.

SEOs typically carry a mixed caseload that reflects the more general distribution of DCS cases – a large portion are paying regularly through wage withholding, a smaller portion are paying DCS themselves regularly through monthly payments, with the remaining cases paying either sporadically or not at all. TANF arrears cases make up a small portion of an SEO's caseload; overall they represent just 2.2 percent of all DCS cases. Additionally, SEOs handle all aspects of the case, from paternity and order establishment through collections. This means that, when carrying a caseload of roughly 600 to 800 cases, SEOs routinely make decisions about how to prioritize their workload across a wide array of enforcement activities and a diverse set of cases.

Given the array of responsibilities facing SEOs and the diversity of their caseload, DCS leadership found that TANF arrears cases were often receiving especially low priority. Conversations with SEOs in two Field Offices reinforced this finding. Staff indicated that their efforts are largely demand responsive and focused on those cases most urgently requiring action. On a typical day this translates into SEOs spending a substantial portion of their time responding to mail and phone calls as well as automatically generated prompts – review codes[7] – informing them of cases where action is required (e.g., case where collections need to be stopped due to the child aging out, wage withholding order received, IRS actions, employer noncompliance with a wage withholding order, notification of a debt write-off). The TANF 16 eligible cases typically are often less active (e.g., there is not a custodial parent contacting DCS to inquire regarding the status of their child support) and therefore end up receiving less attention than the typical case. Moreover, conversations with typical case-carrying SEOs indicated that there is often a perception among staff that these cases are less likely to yield payments and require a greater level of effort. Staff indicated that the data

[7] These are automated prompts that appear at a set interval to trigger future actions based on the circumstances of the case.

on such cases is more likely to be incorrect or outdated and that there are reduced incentives for NCPs to meet their support obligations.

By creating a dedicated unit within the agency to focus on these cases, DCS leadership hoped to refocus efforts on these cases and to improve collections to the point where the endeavor could be, at the very least, cost neutral.

The approach and composition of the TANF 16 unit differs dramatically from what is typical for DCS. DCS's decision to implement the TANF 16 model necessitated a shift in the agency's typical approach to staffing and caseload management. Under TANF 16, SEOs carry caseloads exclusively comprised of arrears only cases with debt owed only to the state. In addition, SEO's sole responsibility on these cases is collections; the cases do not require any action regarding paternity or order establishment. The end result is a much narrower set of SEO responsibilities that place a premium on skills related to the location of NCPs and the collections of support from individuals with limited payment history and a lack of steady employment that would allow for wage withholding.[8]

DCS decided to staff the unit with a combination of SEOs and Support Enforcement Technicians (SETs). While SETs are typically responsible for more administrative functions,[9] DCS saw the TANF 16 as an opportunity to expand their responsibilities to allow more direct support of SEOs. In particular, DCS management believed that the SET skill set would be well-suited to some of the upfront work that helps prepare cases for enforcement. This includes verifying case status, updating contact information, and using various public and proprietary databases to attempt to locate NCPs and their assets.

[8] If there are changes to the status of a TANF 16 case, the SEO does become responsible for other aspects of the case. For example, if a new case opens where an NCP on the TANF 16 caseload is the father, the TANF 16 SEO would be responsible for paternity and order establishment. More generally, the TANF 16 approach segments the caseload, not the role of staff. While the result of the segmentation is generally that TANF 16 staff focus on only one function – collection of state-owed debt – it does not preclude them from taking on other SEO responsibilities if the status of their caseloads changes.

[9] Examples of typical SET functions include data entry related to support orders and related documents, application processing, coordinating and conducting paternity locate interviews, and provision of general program information to DCS customers.

By increasing the involvement of SETs in the front end of the enforcement process, DCS hoped to allow SEOs to focus on the investigative work, debt calculations, and negotiations associated with collecting on the TANF 16 cases. In addition, it provided an opportunity to more directly expose SETs to the type of work conducted by SEOs as a potential means of supporting staff advancement among those who were interested.

In addition to redefining staff roles to maximize collections efficiency, DCS leadership also sought to standardize the enforcement approach for these cases. While typically SEOs have wide latitude in how they approach these cases, DCS felt that the teaming of SEOs and SETs required a more structured work flow.

After opening the case and verifying that it met the eligibility criteria for the unit (i.e., that it was arrears only with exclusively state-owed debt), DCS sent all NCPs with new cases assigned to the unit a "Welcome Letter." The letter explained that the NCP's case had been assigned to the TANF 16 team and urged NCPs to contact the team to avoid more aggressive collections actions. (A sample letter is in Appendix A).

After sending the letter, SETs continued a prescribed set of steps, including:

- Requesting data from Federal Case Registry
- Checking basic identifying information (name/DOB/SSN)
- Reviewing records for valid contact information
- Setting review codes[10]

SETs were then expected to locate NCPs and their assets through federal and state databases, proprietary databases, and internet searches.

If a SET is successful in locating a given NCP, he or she will notify the SEO, who can then initiate enforcement actions or attempt to negotiate payments. Given the constraints of the SET job classification, SETs are not able to provide information to NCPs about their cases or to engage in any negotiation regarding payment.

In addition to direct referrals from SETs, SEOs take action when information emerges through automated channels. In particular, DCS's automated system is

[10] SETs were instructed to set the initial review code to trigger SEO review 30 days following mailing of the "Welcome Letter."

designed to generate notifications for SEOs when automated tools identify potential assets (e.g., the Financial Institution Data Match).

Core SEO casework responsibilities for every case include:

- Reviewing case history to ensure that the debt amount is correct
- Verifying the integrity of the child support data DCS has on a case
- Reviewing cases for possible legal actions (e.g., license suspension, liens)
- Assessing collectability by becoming familiar with a case's characteristics, including incarceration, employment, credit report, disability, TANF history

SEOs are also responsible for initiating collections on cases with identified seizable assets in suspense,[11] answering mail, and responding to review codes set on cases.

While we observed a range of enforcement approaches among SEOs, DCS management consistently emphasized that the goal was to secure consistent payments from NCPs, even if the amounts were relatively small. Staff members were encouraged to begin with a positive, non-confrontational approach to collections, especially in those cases where the NCP responded to the initial "Welcome Letter." That being said, SEOs had wider latitude in the specific approach they took after initial contact was made, based on the circumstances of the case.

Experimental design for the TANF 16 intervention

DCS staff and the research team agreed to conduct a randomized field experiment to determine the impact of the new unit. They recognized that an experiment would avoid bias that might occur if staff attempted to focus on the "more promising" cases and then compared outcomes to the arrears-only cases it did not treat.

DCS estimated there were about 21,000 NCPs with exclusively state-owed debt and no current support obligation in fall 2012. Because the TANF 16 team can work with a limited number of cases at any one time, conducting a randomized experiment was straightforward. From the full pool DCS randomly assigned 1,955 NCPs to the unit (the treatment group) and 2,000 NCPs to the control group in December 2012. Control group cases remained in the caseload of their current support enforcement officers and were subject to the usual enforcement methods for the duration of the experiment. The

[11] "Suspense" refers to an electronic account where DCS temporarily places payments that cannot be immediately applied to a case.

analysis in this paper includes 22 months of treatment data (December 2012 through September 2014).

Intervention 2: Clear and regular communication regarding current support obligations with noncustodial parents

Currently, NCPs in Washington State receive written notification of their child support obligations when the order is established, but do not receive a routine reminder to pay each month unless they request monthly statements about their obligations.[12] The "statement intervention" provides regular, clear communication with NCPs about their support obligations by automatically sending monthly statements to all NCPs without wage withholding, starting the month after a support order is established and continuing until the case closes or the system indicates that wage withholding has been implemented. The key premise of the intervention is that a subset of NCPs without wage withholding have the means to pay support but are non-compliant because they need regular, formal reminders, or are unsure of the payment.

One rationale for this intervention comes from observing the private sector. Credit card issuers and telephone, cable, electric and other utilities routinely send customers monthly (or bimonthly) statements to elicit payments. We assume this practice is beneficial because of its ubiquity. Customers become accustomed to receiving monthly statements and pay in response to the bill instead of proactively making a payment in anticipation of the amount owed. A monthly statement from DCS mimics the process of responding to a company's statement, which most NCPs are already familiar with. In addition, a number of other states currently send statements to NCPs, although none has tested whether statements are effective at increasing collections.[13]

The content of the statement was generated by DCS's management information system. It contains information on order obligation amounts (including medical support if any), total arrears, and payment options. Appendix A has a copy of a blank statement.

Experimental design for the statement intervention

[12] NCPs may opt to receive monthly statements about their obligations. Generally, these reminders are intended for self-employed NCPs. Additionally, SEOs have the discretion to initiate statements.

[13] Of the 18 states that responded to a 2012 query from DCS and reported that they send statements, 15 send them monthly, two send them quarterly, and one sends them twice a year. None had tested the efficacy of such statements.

The intervention targeted NCPs with no prior experience with the child support system because such experience may affect their compliance with the new case and their reactions to receiving the statement, a communication from DCS they would not have received for prior cases. DCS chose to exclude NCPs initially subject to automatic wage withholding from the intervention, reasoning that there is no reason to send them a statement and that doing so would not affect their payments. Thus, we restricted the sample to NCPs with:

- New child support orders
- Only one support order in force[14]
- No employer at the point of order establishment
- Known addresses, excluding those incarcerated
- Children who will not "age out" of the child support system before the experiment ends. Since we expected the experiment to run for 18 months, the samples only include cases with children age 16.5 or less.

With these sample restrictions, the experimental intervention mimics the one that NCPs would face, should Washington choose to implement it.

Beginning in March 2013, DCS began randomly assigning NCPs meeting these criteria to receive a monthly statement or no statement. Because new NCPs meeting the criteria accrued gradually, it required nine months to reach the full sample size. As a result, some treatment group members received larger doses than others. Ultimately, DCS assigned 1,384 NCPs to the treatment group and 1,386 to the control group. The experiment continued through August 2014, which provides 18 months of data.

If an NCP in the treatment group became an employee subject to automatic withholding, DCS stopped sending statements. If the NCP later lost that job and was no longer subject to withholding, DCS began sending statements again. NCPs who no longer met the sample criteria for another reason were treated similarly. Hence, in every month except the first one (March 2013), the number of statements sent was always less than the number of NCPs in treatment. For example, in November 2013, when assignment to the treatment group ended, 61 percent (839) of the 1,384 treatment

[14] If an NCP already has an order in place, sending statements only about the new order would not test the impact of routinely sending statements for all orders. And sending statements about the old order as well as the new would not test the impact of sending statements soon after each order is issued.

group members actually received a statement. In later months, as more NCPs went on withholding, the percent receiving statements steadily decreased and was only 39 percent at the end of the experiment.[15] Treatment NCPs who stop receiving statements remain in the treatment group.

Figure 1 tracks receipt of statements for each monthly cohort of NCPs in the treatment group. It clearly shows for each cohort that the fraction of NCPs receiving statements declined in an irregular manner as time passed.

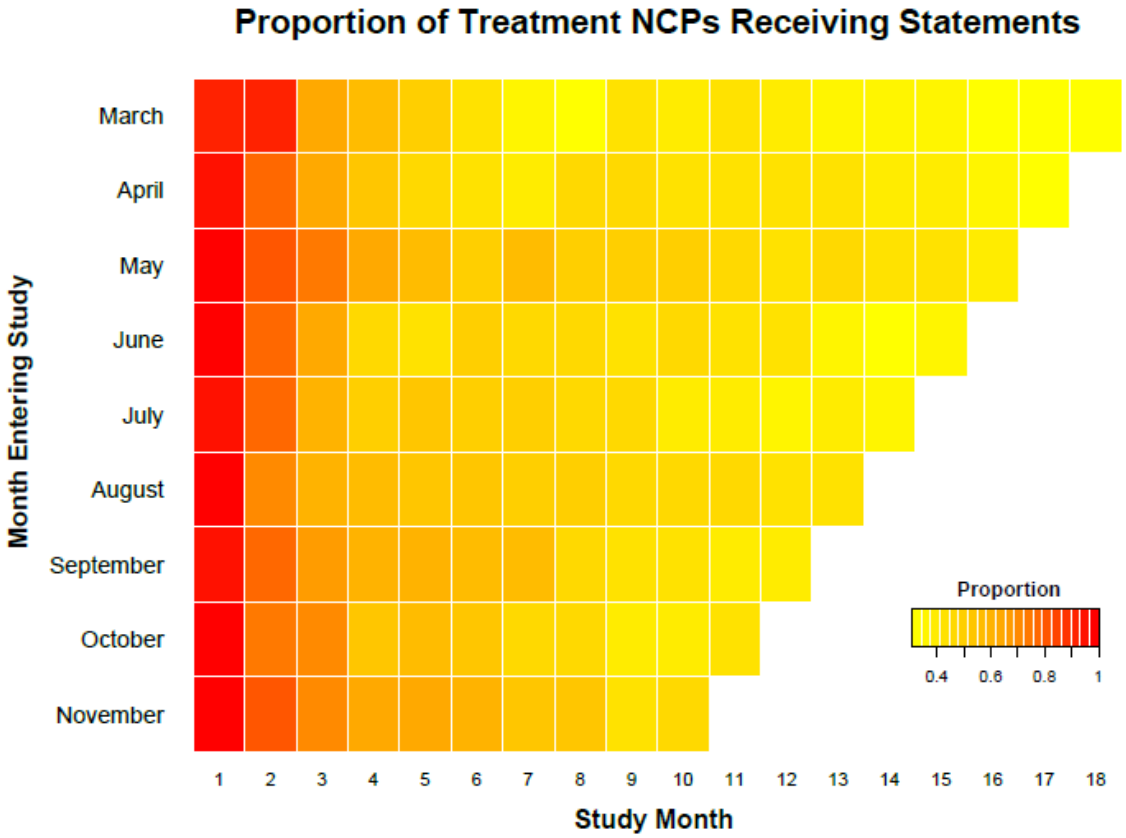
We observe that not receiving a statement does not constitute attrition. The intervention was designed to operate as if it were part of a permanent system that routinely starts sending statements to all new NCPs not on withholding. In such a system, NCPs who begin withholding would stop receiving statements. That is, stopping is part of the treatment protocol.

How similar are the treatment and control groups?

Before comparing outcomes for the treatment and control groups, we report on the characteristics of both interventions' the treatment and control groups. Because of the randomization process, we expect them to be very similar. The empirical findings here and on the impacts derive from DCS administrative data purged of identifying characteristics and augmented by an indicator for treatment or control status.

[15] The treatment group cohorts of March-August 2013 received the intervention for at least 12 months. For those cohorts, the percentage still receiving statements after 12 months ranged from 37 to 46, with a mean of 42.

Figure 1



TANF 16 experiment: Table 1A shows summary statistics on basic NCP characteristics and arrears balances for the treatment and control groups in the TANF 16 experiment. Treatment group NCPs average 1.35 support cases.[16] The average for control group NCPs is virtually identical – 1.37 cases. Gender is similar across groups: about 76% of NCPs in either group are male and 24% are female. The mean age of NCPs is also similar across the two groups. The distribution of ethnic origin is statistically identical between the groups. The mean starting arrears balance was $6,169 for the treatment group and a statistically indistinguishable $6,135 for the controls.

Summary statistics on case characteristics (not shown) indicate that the treatment and control groups are statistically identical in terms of number of children and whether

[16] An NCP can have multiple cases if he or she has children with more than one partner.

they were former TANF cases. Interstate cases were equally prevalent between the two groups.

Monthly statements experiment: Table 1B reports summary statistics on basic characteristics of NCPs in the monthly statement experiment. Gender, age and ethnic origin are statistically the same between the treatment and control groups. The gender composition is about 62 percent male and 38 percent female. The mean age of treatment NCPs is 31.0, or a statistically insignificant 0.3 years less than the mean for control NCPs. A plurality of NCPs has missing data on ethnicity.

The average number of cases per NCP and number of children per case do not differ between treatment and control groups. Mean starting arrears balances were about $1,400 for both groups and did not statistically differ. Surprisingly, the mean monthly order amounts statistically differ at the .01 level. Treatment NCPs had a mean order of $247, control NCPs a mean of $276. Hence, controlling for this characteristic may be especially important when estimating impacts.

Outcomes examined in the analysis

The primary objective of both interventions was to increase the amount and consistency of payments. Thus, for both interventions we focused on three outcomes: 1) whether the NCP ever paid support during the observation period, 2) the number of months when an NCP paid support and 3) the total amount paid. For the TANF 16 analysis, we examined a fourth outcome: the percentage reduction in arrears. This is a useful alternative to total amount paid because, for example, an NCP who started with low arrears and fully paid them may still have paid less than an NCP with high arrears who made a partial payment. For a similar reason, we examined a different fourth outcome for the statement analysis: the average percentage of the current support obligation that was paid.

Methods for estimating impacts of the interventions

The simplest way to measure the impact of a randomized experimental intervention is to compute the difference in the mean outcome between the treatment and control groups. The difference is an unbiased estimate of the experimental impact.

Regression models with control variables provide a check on the simple differences in means and yield sharper estimates.

For both experiments we also need regression based impact estimates because, as noted above, the treatment and control groups are not statistically identical on some observable characteristics that potentially may have affected behavior. In the TANF 16 sample gender, age and interstate status are unbalanced. In the statement sample, the mean monthly order amount differed for treatment and control NCPs. Regression models adjust the impact estimates for such sample differences.

The basic regression model for both treatments is simply a dummy variable set to one for members of the treatment group, and to zero for the controls, plus a constant term. Because there are no other variables, the results will be identical to the simple comparisons of means. The second model added the available demographic and caseload characteristic to the basic model. This expanded model also included baseline arrears for each intervention's analysis, and also current order amount for the statement analysis.[17] Appendix B provides a summary of the relationships between the control variables and the outcomes.

The regression analyses for the ever paid outcome use both logit and linear probability models. Because the findings are similar for both estimators, we present the linear models for ease of interpretation. For the number of months with a payment, the appropriate statistical model is a negative binomial regression.[18] For the total amount paid, the percentage reduction in arrears, and the percentage of the current support obligation that was paid, we use both ordinary least squares (OLS) and Tobit models because many observations have a value of zero for these outcomes.

Findings on impacts – TANF 16 intervention

[17] Baseline arrears may affect an NCP's willingness to pay anything because the higher the arrears, the more an NCP may conclude: it is hopeless to ever pay them, so why pay at all? Also, in the TANF 16 intervention, baseline arrears set the upper bound on the amount an NCP can pay. We do not include this variable in the model of percent of arrears paid.

A third specification further added dummy variables for the region within Washington where the NCP lived (or for living out-of-state). The results were essentially identical to the models with only demographic and caseload variables, so we do not report them.

[18]. We use negative binomial regression instead of Poisson regression because the variance of months paid is much larger than the mean in both interventions.

Comparisons of means

Table 2 presents simple comparisons of means for the four dependent variables for the TANF 16 experiment. For the treatment group, row 1 in the top panel shows that 50.1% ever paid on their arrears. This is a statistically significant 10.1 percentage points higher than for the control group (fully 25 percent greater). Substantively, this is a large impact. The significant positive impact on ever paying is stronger for male NCPs (10.9 percentage points) than female NCPs (7.1 percentage points).

We would expect intensive collection efforts to be more successful for in-state cases, and the impact estimates bear this out. The likelihood of any payment by treatment NCPs without interstate cases is a significant 12.0 percentage points higher than similar control NCPs. For interstate cases there is also a positive impact, but about half as large.

The second panel compares the number of months when an NCP paid any support. The treatment increased months of payment from 2.00 to 2.48. While small in absolute value, the difference is strongly significant and represents a 24 percent increase over the control NCPs. For males the increase is slightly larger – 55 months. For females there is no significant difference. As in panel 1, the increase is significant and larger for in-state cases and insignificant for interstate cases.

The greater likelihood and frequency of paying do not translate into much larger total support payments. Row 1 in the third panel shows that mean total payments by treatment NCPs - $509 – are a marginally significant $73 higher (a 17 percent increase) than control NCPs. Among the subgroups the only significant difference is an increase of $134 for in-state cases (a 34% increase over the controls).

Panel 4 compares the percent of baseline arrears paid. Row 1 shows that treatment group NCPs paid 19.7% of their arrears versus 16.4% for controls. The difference is statistically significant and, in percentage terms, a sizeable 20 percent. The difference is significant and larger for males and in-state cases, and insignificant for females and interstate cases.

Regression findings

Table 3 reports the impacts of the TANF 16 intervention using outcomes observed over the entire study period for the control NCPs and the initial cohort of treatment NCPs. Row 1 presents estimates of the intervention's impact on ever paying on arrears. Column 1 confirms the finding in table 2 – receiving the treatment raised the likelihood of ever paying by .101. Column 2 shows that adding demographic and caseload characteristics does not affect the estimate.

Row 2 examines whether the intervention affected the number of months that an NCP paid support. Column 1 confirms the finding in table 2 that treatment NCPs paid about half a month more often. Adding controls reduces the estimated impact to 0.4 months.

Rows 3 and 4 report results for the total amount of support paid over the observation period. Column 1 of row 3, which uses the standard linear regression approach (OLS), shows exactly the same estimate as in table 2, as it should – all treated NCPs paid $73 more on average. Column 2's estimate is nearly identical. Both coefficients are marginally significant.

Given that only 40% of the control group and 50% of the treatment group ever paid, we estimate Tobit models that adjust for the large number of observations at $0. The Tobit coefficients in row 4 show the effect of the treatment **among NCPs who paid something**. With this modeling approach column 1 shows that, among payers, treatment group NCPs paid $152 more. Adding control variables yields the same effect. Both estimates are strongly significant.

Rows 5 and 6 contain results for the percentage of starting arrears paid during the intervention. Row 5, estimated over all NCPs using OLS, shows statistically significant but substantively small impact of the intervention – a reduction in arrears of 3.3 or 3.4 percent. The Tobit estimates in row 6 show larger impacts among those who paid – a 4.4 percent reduction.

Were there differences by subgroup? Table 2 suggested that the TANF 16 intervention was more effective for male NCPs. To explore this further, we estimated separate impacts for men and women for the six models in table 3. The point estimates for men were consistently larger. However, statistical tests showed that five of the six

differences in estimates were not statistically significant. Among NCPs who paid something, male NCPs paid significantly more ($462 versus $142).

Table 2 also showed that the TANF 16 intervention was more strongly associated with compliance among NCPs with in-state cases. To explore whether TANF 16 had stronger impacts on in-state cases, we interacted the treatment dummy with the dummy for being an interstate case. We found that TANF 16 raised the likelihood of ever paying arrears by .123 for in-state cases. For interstate cases the estimated impact of .056 was much smaller and not statistically significant. We also found that for interstate cases, TANF 16 had no significant effects on any of the other outcomes.

Conclusion on the TANF 16 intervention: The TANF 16 intervention clearly improved collections of TANF-arrears. Five of the six impact estimates are statistically significant at the .01 level; the sixth is marginally significant. Over 22 months of operation the efforts of the unit raised the probability of an NCP ever paying on arrears by .101, a 25 percent increase over the control group's probability of .40. In practical terms this is a substantial improvement. The intervention raised the number of months with a payment by about .45, and raised average actual payments by about $75. While these are modest in absolute terms, they respectively represent a 23 and 17 percent improvement over the controls. Among NCPs who paid something, the increase was a more substantial $152. The intervention led to a modest reduction in arrears of 3.4 percent, a 20 percent improvement over the control group. Among NCPs who paid something, the reduction, of course, was larger – 4.4 percent. The TANF 16 intervention only affected payment behavior of NCPs with in-state cases. There were no significant impacts on interstate cases.

Findings on impacts – Statement intervention

Comparisons of means

Table 4 suggests that the statement intervention had no positive effects on behavior. The likelihood of every paying was 57 percent for treatment NCPs and a nearly identical 58 percent for control NCPs. On average, treatment NCPs paid support for 3.61 months, or .25 months less than the controls. This difference is not statistically significant. The differences are also insignificant for male and female NCPs considered

separately. Treatment NCPs paid an average of $1,326 over the study period or $289 (18 percent) *less* the controls; this difference is statistically significant. This difference is mainly attributable to male treatment NCPs, who paid an average of $406 less than their controls. Last, we cannot reject the hypothesis that treatment and control NCPs paid the same percent of current obligations (about 20 percent).

Regression findings

Table 5 reports the impacts of the statement intervention using outcomes observed over entire period that each NCP was in the sample. Row 1 presents estimates of the intervention's impact on ever paying on during the study period. The impact estimates with or without demographic and caseload characteristic are statistically insignificant. Row 2 examines whether the intervention affected the number of months that an NCP paid support. Here, too, both estimates are insignificant.

Rows 3 and 4 report results for the total amount of support paid over the observation period. Column 1 of row 3, which uses the standard linear regression approach, confirms table 4's significant estimate that treated NCPs paid $289 less on average. Including controls, however, reduces the difference to $84 and it is *not* statistically significant. We believe this is the more valid finding because the model controls for average order amount, which significantly differed between the treatment and control groups.

The Tobit coefficients in row 4 show the effect of the treatment **among NCPs who paid something**. With this modeling approach column 1 shows that among payers, treatment group NCPs paid $227 less. Adding control variables reduces the difference to $72. Both estimates are not significant.

Rows 5 and 6 contain results for the percentage of current obligations paid during the intervention. Row 5, estimated over all NCPs, shows a statistically insignificant reduction of merely 1.1 percent with both models. The Tobit estimates in row 6 show the same impacts among those who paid, and again statistically insignificant.[19]

[19] We also estimated separate impacts by gender. For all six models there were no statistically significant differences between the impacts for male and female NCPs.

Conclusion on the statement intervention: While DCS and the research team hypothesized that sending statements to new NCPs would help socialize them to their new financial responsibility, there is no evidence that the treatment elicited the expected reaction. Rather than increasing compliance, statements are associated with a lower likelihood of ever paying, fewer months with a payment, lower total support paid, and a lower percentage of the order paid. *All of these associations are statistically insignificant*. Hence, the credible conclusion to draw from the evidence is that the intervention had no impact on NCP compliance.

While receiving a reminder to pay support may encourage compliance, other reactions to statements may have led to less willingness to comply. Perhaps the sending of statements served to antagonize or otherwise dissuade NCPs from meeting the requirements of their support order. Alternatively, this approach may have added to the confusion of the NCPs in the treatment group. Given the proportion of the sample that cycled in and out of employment over the course of the intervention, it is possible that receipt of statements was not always directly aligned with a given NCP's current employment (and wage withholding status). The associated delay may have resulted in a hesitancy to make payments at the appropriate time. These explanations are not mutually exclusive. All may have contributed to the disappointing empirical results.

Conclusions

Washington's Division of Child Support successfully implemented experimental field tests of two new approaches for increasing collections. They varied in the amount of resources and staff time involved as well as in the point in the "life cycle" of a case at which the interventions aimed. The TANF 16 intervention targeted NCPs at a late stage of their involvement with DCS and aimed to collect arrears that reimburse the state for TANF benefits paid to CPs. The statement intervention focused on NCPs as they first enter the child support system. By sending regular statements listing the current payment order and any arrears, the intent was to raise the likelihood that new NCPs meet their child support obligations, thereby increasing the amount of current support collected on behalf of CPs' families.

The TANF 16 intervention improved collections of TANF-arrears. Models estimated for the initial treatment cohort of 1,955 NCPs and the control group of 2,000 NCPs show that the efforts of the TANF 16 unit raised payments on arrears modestly in absolute terms but large in percentage terms when compared to the control group. The intervention raised the likelihood of ever paying, the number of months with a payment, and total actual payments, and increased the percentage reduction in total arrears.

Given the structure of the federal performance measures for collections on arrears – the percentage of cases with arrears with any payment – the TANF 16 approach has some potential benefit to the state. The results suggest that there is the potential for marginal improvement in collections for these cases with concerted enforcement efforts. This benefit may be offset by the labor-intensive nature of these collections efforts. A cost-effectiveness analysis of the TANF 16 and the business-as-usual approaches would be informative. It is also possible that the resources used by the TANF 16 unit to collect on these cases would be better spent enforcing current support orders, both due to the higher potential yield and the more immediate benefit to families.

Sending regular statements to NCPs new to the child support system and not subject to withholding did not change the likelihood of making at least one payment, the number of months with a payment, total payments, or the percent of orders paid. We earlier suggested some mechanisms by which statements could have had no impact. With the data at hand, we cannot discriminate among these, and possibly other, hypotheses.

The findings suggest that sending billing statements should not be the default approach for this population. States considering alternative approaches to regular messaging with NCPs who do not have wage withholding in place may want to consider both the content of this messaging and the timing in light of the current employment situation of a given NCP.

Taken together, these interventions demonstrate the difficulty Washington and other states face in dramatically improving collections from the hardest to serve cases. Despite strong success in collecting current and past due support from NCPs with assets or stable employment, states will continue to struggle to make collections from

harder to serve populations. These findings suggest that enforcement efforts alone may be insufficient if states want major gains in collections. Efforts that focus more on assisting NCPs in transitioning to financial stability may generate larger and longer term financial benefits to state child support agencies and the families they serve.

Regardless of the specific interventions examined by this study and the results, the two tests demonstrate the value that rigorous research can play as state child support agencies seek to improve the efficiency of their operations. The experimental designs were relatively low cost and provide DCS management with strong evidence on the impact of these interventions.

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Table 1A: NCP characteristics in the TANF 16 experiment, by treatment and control groups

		All		Treatment		Control		Is the difference between treatment and control significant?
		#	%	#	%	#	%	
NCP count		3,955		1,955		2,000		
Cases per NCP		1.36		1.35		1.37		No
Gender	Male	2,993	75.7%	1,483	75.9%	1,510	75.5%	
	Female	950	24.0%	470	24.0%	480	24.0%	No
	Unknown	12	0.3%	2	0.1%	10	0.5%	
Age (at study entry)	Mean	41.1		41.2		41.0		No
Ethnic Origin	American Indian	95	2.4%	45	2.3%	50	2.5%	No
	Asian	39	1.0%	22	1.1%	17	0.9%	
	Black	386	9.8%	172	8.8%	214	10.7%	
	Caucasian	1,455	36.8%	745	38.1%	710	35.5%	
	Hispanic	341	8.6%	174	8.9%	167	8.4%	
	Other	40	1.0%	19	1.0%	21	1.1%	
	Unknown	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	
	Missing	1,598	40.4%	778	39.8%	820	41.0%	
Average starting arrears		$6,152		$6,169		$6,135		No

Table 1B: NCP characteristics in the monthly statement experiment, by treatment and control groups

		All		Treatment		Control		Is the difference between treatment and control significant?
		#	%	#	%	#	%	
NCP count		2,675		1,338		1,337		
Cases per NCP		1.04		1.03		1.04		
Gender	Male	1,650	61.7%	836	62.5%	814	60.9%	
	Female	1,016	38.0%	497	37.1%	519	38.8%	No
	Unknown	9	0.3%	5	0.4%	4	0.3%	
Age (as of March 2013)	Mean	31.1		31.0		31.3		No
Ethnic Origin	American Indian	47	1.8%	20	1.5%	27	2.0%	
	Asian	34	1.3%	18	1.3%	16	1.2%	
	Black	130	4.9%	68	5.1%	62	4.6%	
	Caucasian	591	22.1%	289	21.6%	302	22.6%	No
	Hispanic	172	6.4%	95	7.1%	77	5.8%	
	Other	22	0.8%	13	1.0%	9	0.7%	
	Unknown	1	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	
	Missing	1,678	62.7%	835	62.4%	843	63.1%	
Cases per NCP		1.04	1.03		1.04			
Average monthly order amount		$261	$247		$276		*t*	**Yes ****
Average starting arrears		$1,417	$1,389		$1,445		*t*	No
Active case months		12.93	12.99		12.88			
Statements sent/Eligible for statement				7.49		7.37		

** = p < .01

Table 2: Comparison of mean outcomes between TANF 16 treatment and control groups

Outcome		Treatment	Control	Difference
Percent making payment during study		50.1%	40.0%	**10.1% ****
Gender	Female	49.8%	42.7%	**7.1% ***
	Male	50.2%	39.3%	**10.9% ****
Interstate	Yes	43.8%	37.5%	**6.3% ***
	No	53.5%	41.5%	**12.0% ****
Number of months with payment		2.48	2.00	**0.48 ****
Gender	Female	1.87	1.63	0.24
	Male	2.67	2.13	**0.54 ****
Interstate	Yes	2.10	2.00	0.10
	No	2.69	2.00	**0.69 ****
Total payments during study		$509	$436	**$73 #**
Gender	Female	$350	$326	$24
	Male	$559	$473	$86
Interstate	Yes	$464	$494	$-30
	No	$534	$400	**$134 ****
Percent of baseline arrears paid during study		19.7%	16.4%	**3.3% ****
Gender	Female	22.1%	19.9%	2.2%
	Male	18.9%	15.4%	**3.5% ****
Interstate	Yes	15.5%	12.5%	**3.0% #**
	No	22.1%	18.8%	**3.2% ***

= p < .10; * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

Table 3: Impacts of the TANF 16 intervention from regression analysis

	Regression model	
Outcome	Treatment indicator only	Treatment indicator and control variables
1. Probability of ever paying support	.101 **	.101 **
2. Number of months with payment [a]	.48 **	.40 **
3. Amount paid, OLS	$73 #	$76 #
4. Amount paid, among payers, Tobit	$152 **	$152 **
5. Percent of baseline arrears paid during study, OLS	3.3 **	3.4 **
6. Percent of baseline arrears paid during study, among payers, Tobit	4.4 **	4.4 **

a. The coefficients from the negative binomial models are in logarithmic form. To convey their substantive importance, we converted those estimates to show the change in the number of months attributable to the intervention.

N = 1,955 in treatment group, 2,000 in control group

= p < .10; * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

Table 4: Comparison of mean outcomes between statement treatment and control groups

Outcome		Treatment	Control	Difference
Percent making payment during study		57.3%	58.3%	-1.0%
Gender	Female	45.1%	46.4%	-1.3%
	Male	64.8%	66.0%	-1.2%
Number of months with payment		3.36	3.61	-0.25
Gender	Female	2.04	2.15	-0.11
	Male	4.16	4.55	-0.39
Total payments during study		$1,326	$1,615	**-$289** **
Gender	Female	$450	$617	**-$167** **
	Male	$1,853	$2,259	**-$406** #
Percent of current obligation paid during study period		19.3%	20.4%	-1.1%
Gender	Female	10.5%	11.8%	-1.3%
	Male	24.5%	26.0%	-1.5%

= p < .10; * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

Table 5: Impacts of the Statement intervention from regression analysis

	Regression model	
Outcome	Treatment indicator only	Treatment indicator and control variables
1. Probability of ever paying support	-.009	-.003
2. Number of months with payment [a]	-.25	-.19
3. Amount paid, OLS	- $289 *	- $84
4. Amount paid, among payers, Tobit	- $227	- $72
5. Percent of current obligation paid during study period, OLS	-1.1	-1.1
6. Percent of current obligation paid during study period, among payers, Tobit	-1.1	-1.1

a. The coefficients from the negative binomial models are in logarithmic form. To convey their substantive importance, we converted those estimates to show the change in the number of months attributable to the intervention.

N = 1,338 in treatment group, 1,337 in control group

* = $p < .05$

Appendix A

Sample letter sent to NCPs in the TANF 16 treatment group

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
Division of Child Support (DCS) Olympia District Office
P. O. Box 11520
Tacoma, WA 98411-5520
(360)664-6448

DATE

Re:

Dear,

Your case has been reassigned to the Special Collections Team due to the extreme delinquency of your case(s). You haven't made any payments for some time for unknown reasons. This is **your opportunity** to discuss your situation and circumstances with us. Perhaps you have limited income or resources, we can help! We will explore your options and alternatives to avoid a large unreasonable withhold of your pay or even prevent a referral to the Prosecuting Attorney's office on a charge of criminal contempt. We may also be able to release a previously suspended driver's license.

We know the down turn in our economy has left many without jobs or lower paying jobs. I'm anxious to discuss your current situation and work with you to set up a realistic payment plan. A payment of ANY amount shows good faith effort on your part. That can make the difference in releasing the certification on your driver's license or preventing the need for additional more aggressive collection methods. Payments can be made at any time on line by an electronic payment from a bank account or via touch pay at www.childsupportonline@dshs.wa.gov. Or can be mailed to:

Washington State Support Registry (WSSR)
PO Box 45868
Olympia, WA 98504-5868

Be sure to include your social security number and case number on all payments to ensure payment is credited to the proper account.

Please contact me within 20 calendar days to discuss how the Division of Child Support can assist you in making a fresh start and taking the first steps to getting your life back on track. You can reach me Monday –Friday, 8:00AM – 5PM at (360)664-6884.

Sincerely,

Support Enforcement Officer

Appendix A

TANF 16 intervention: Summary of the typical workflow for new cases

SETs are the first to work with new cases brought in to the sample. The TANF 16 manager developed a "scrub" process intended to gather as much relevant information as possible to ready the case for enforcement action. This process includes the following steps:

- Opening cases
- Verifying that it is an arrears-only case
- Requesting data from the national registry
- Checking basic identifying information (name/DOB/SSN)
- Reviewing records for valid contact information
- Setting review codes[20]

Support enforcement technicians (SETs) then locate NCPs and their assets through federal and state databases, locate programs (CLEAR and Accurint), and internet searches. Once this is completed, SETs send welcome letters and call NCPs to obtain information, determine how compliant and honest the NCP is being, and begin the conversation about collecting payments. However, they may not negotiate payments or send legal papers.

If a SET is successful in locating a given NCP, he or she will notify the SEO, who can then initiate enforcement actions or attempt to negotiate payments. In addition to direct referrals from SETs, SEOs get cases through automated channels. In particular, DCS's automated system is designed to generate notifications for SEOs when automated tools identify potential assets (e.g., the Financial Institution Data Match).

Core SEO casework responsibilities for every case include:

- Review case history to ensure that the debt amount is correct
- Verifying the integrity of the child support data DCS has on a case
- Reviewing cases for possible legal actions (license suspension, liens, etc.)
- Assessing collectability by becoming familiar with a case's characteristics, including incarceration, employment, credit report, disability, TANF history

At the same time, the SEOs are responsible for initiating collections on cases with identified seizable assets in suspense, answering physical and electronic mail, and responding to review codes set on cases.

[20] These are automated prompts that appear at a set interval to trigger future actions based on the circumstances of the case.

Appendix A

Child Support Billing Statement

DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT
PO BOX 11520
TACOMA WA 98411-5520

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

STATE OF WASHINGTON
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT (DCS)

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
DCS Division of Child Support

CHILD SUPPORT DEBT AS OF:

All balances subject to adjustment.

Child Support Billing Statement

Accounts Included In This Billing

NAME	CASE #	TOTAL ARREARS	CURRENT SUPPORT	MEDICAL PREMIUM SHARE	ARREARS PAYMENT	PAY THIS AMOUNT

Please Pay This Amount Due For All Cases Listed On This Billing

If you have questions about this statement, contact DCS at the address above. DCS must receive your payment by the last day of the month.

When you pay by paper check, you authorize DCS to either use the information on your check to make a one-time electronic fund transfer from your account or to process the payment as a check transaction. When DCS uses information from your check to make an electronic fund transfer, funds may be withdrawn from your account the same day we receive your payment and you will not receive your check back from your bank. For more information about this or other electronic funds transfer options, call 800-468-7422.

DETACH AND RETURN THIS STUB WITH YOUR PAYMENT TO:

Washington State Department of Social & Health Services
DCS Division of Child Support

DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT
WASHINGTON STATE SUPPORT REGISTRY
PO BOX 45868
OLYMPIA WA 98504-5868

☐ If address is incorrect, check here and make corrections

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY **STATE**

ZIP **PHONE**

NAME:

ACCOUNT NUMBER:

PLEASE PAY

FIELD OFFICE:

AMOUNT ENCLOSED: _____

Make checks payable to WSSR

THE FOLLOWING ELECTRONIC PAYMENT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE:

The Division of Child Support Internet Payment Service:
www.dcsonline.dshs.wa.gov

OR

Automatic deduction from your bank account.

☐ Send me information on automatic bank account deduction.

CHILD SUPPORT BILLING STATEMENT
DSHS 18-441 (REV. 01/2010)

Appendix B

Relationships between the control variables and the outcomes

This appendix provides a summary of the relationships between the control variables and the outcomes. Though these findings do not provide evidence on the interventions' impacts, they inform us on the determinants of compliance among the NCPs studied in the two interventions.

The controls in both analyses were age, male (female as the omitted category), child count, and baseline arrears. The TANF 16 analyses also included address type at end of study period (home as the omitted category), interstate case (non-interstate as the omitted category) and whether the case was a TANF case at some point. The statement analysis also included the order amount and whether the case was a current TANF case. Tables C-1 and C-2 summarize the pattern of coefficients on the control variables by showing whether a coefficient was positive or negative, and its statistical significance.

TANF 16 intervention

Table B-1: Results for control variables, TANF 16 intervention

	Outcome					
Control variable	Ever pay	Number months paying	Amount paid, OLS	Amount paid, Tobit	Percent arrears paid, OLS	Percent arrears paid, Tobit
Age	— **	—	—	— **	— **	— **
Male	+ #	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ *
Child count	—	—	+ #	+	— **	— *
Address = institution	— **	— *	— **	— **	— **	— **
Address = unknown	— **	— **	— **	— **	— **	— **
TANF/former TANF	+	+	+	+	+	+
Interstate	— **	— **	—	— #	— **	— **
Baseline arrears	+ #	+ **	+ **	+ **	Not included	Not included

= p < .10; * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

The relationships in table B-1 between the outcomes and control variables are clear. Older NCPs are less likely to pay on arrears, as are NCPs lacking a home address and NCPs with interstate cases. Male NCPS and NCPs with higher baseline arrears are more likely to pay. Child count and whether the case was ever TANF case are not systematically related to paying.

Statement intervention

Table B-2: Results for control variables, Statement intervention

	Outcome					
Control variable	Ever pay	Number months paying	Amount paid, OLS	Amount paid, Tobit	Percent arrears paid, OLS	Percent arrears paid, Tobit
Age	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **
Male	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **	+ **
Child count	+		+	+	+	+ #
TANF	— *	—	— **	— **	— **	— **
Baseline arrears	— *	—	—	—	— **	— **
Order amount	+ **		+ **	+ **	Not included	Not included

= p < .10; * = p < .05, ** = p < .01

The relationships in table B-2 between the outcomes and control variables are also clear. Older and male NCPs and NCPs with higher order amounts are more likely to pay current support. NCPs with TANF cases are less likely to pay. NCPs with higher baseline arrears are also less likely to pay, but the strength of this relationship is weaker than the others. Child count is not systematically related to paying.