

## STRATEGIES TO HELP LOW INCOME FAMILIES SHLIF For The Supervisor

Front end management tips:

1. Review and discuss state policy with your staff-multiple times:
  - ❖ Reinforce the Federal and State policy-arrears aren't the county's dollars-they are owed to the Feds & State.
  - ❖ Discuss, discuss and review and discuss the different philosophical approach from prior years-not purely enforcement, but setting something that the NCP can pay and the CP can learn to count on getting.
  - ❖ Encourage each unit member to share their "feelings" about this philosophy-if they don't believe in it or practice it or get "permission" they will not buy in and do it.
  - ❖ Hit the "Fairness issue head on"-every case is INDIVIDUAL.Many workers are "black and white" and can't deal with gray-SHLIF is GRAY as it is NEVER one size fits all-this will have to be repeated many, many times and almost every case with some workers.
2. Discuss your county policy or "expectations" on arrears creation with new order establishment. and with everyone with emphasis on give "permission" to staff to follow state policy.
  - ❖ What are your expectation of workers when there is not truly a work history or a sufficient evidence of "credible income"-perhaps the last work history is years old?
  - ❖ Each case is to be evaluated on its own evidence and merit .....what do you consider "credible evidence" or your definition of "**recent income**"? For one worker it may be anything in the past 6 years for another it will be anything known in past year.
  - ❖ Share philosophy and facts about the success of current support being more likely to be paid and on time when there is not a huge arrearage at the time the current support is set...with NPA clients as well as PA clients
3. **Brainstorm ideas and get investment from staff:** Are there tools or tips they want to develop right off the bat? Do you need to change how you contact parents, more in-house appointments? More education?
4. **Pregnancy and confinement expenses** are clearly outlined in the state's policy, if that is a huge change-review and reinforce with your staff what your expectations are.
5. **Encourage your staff to USE THE PHONE** and personalize this process. Explain to BOTH parents what the child support unit does, what the parent's responsibilities are and what the worker's responsibilities are. Educated parents are much less afraid of "us" than those that have no clue.
6. **Educate your magistrate**-make sure as you make changes in how you are handling casework, etc that you let your magistrate know.
7. Constantly remember and remind that each phone contact or letter is another chance to make it work "this time" with the NCP-encourage staff to have patience and belief in the NCP, over and over again no matter how many times it takes.
8. **MODIFY ORDERS TIMELY**-stats show clearly that orders modified timely prompt payments!

## **BACK-END ARREARS MANAGEMENT TIPS:**

1. Make a plan on how you are going to approach Arrears only cases, include your County Attorney in all planning if they require approval of any of these type of actions in your counties.
2. How is your caseload distributed-are arrears only cases distributed among all workers, are they in a unit by themselves or with a worker that strictly does arrears only cases?
3. It is important, no matter how the caseload is distributed, to attempt to have one worker handle all of one NCP's cases when the SHLIF back-end arrears management is being considered.
4. How will you (your staff) handle multi-county NCP cases? One worker truly needs to "take the lead" and be willing to coordinate the activities, recommendations and communications between the counties. We have found that works great. THIS TAKES TIME-include suppression of appropriate enforcement remedies-DLS is case based so if you are wanting the driver's license to go to the NCP, all counties must agree!!
5. Assure staff don't strong arm NPA clients-they must be tactful when discussing what they consider to be uncollectable debt. The arrears that are NPA are theirs to decide on. But, many clients we called didn't even realize they had an open case yet-so it never hurts to ask and discuss. They often times consider and will perhaps say no at first and then after thinking about it call the worker back and simply request a case to be closed.
6. Don't promise what you can't deliver-ALWAYS remind your staff that they shouldn't make ANY promises on resolution or strategies without securing approval and commitment from SPVR and in many instances other counties.
7. Quick suggestion for a summary tool when looking at all of NCP cases on PRISM:

Go to NCCB, cut and paste that screen onto a word document. Clean it up some, and print. You can use that as a summary sheet for an "at a glance" for a case and is something you can share with other county supervisors when discussing strategies. (See page 5 of this handout).

8. Include interstate cases with large arrears whenever you can. Many states have no authority to "adjust arrears-ever", however some do. If we are a responding state with one of our multi-case reviews reflect the case is PA or NPA, we don't hesitate to attempt to contact the other state to see their policy on arrears adjustments-and have asked permission to directly contact CP's as well as NCP's if we are initiating and the other case is responding. Just need to assure you are up-front with the other states on what you are doing and we have found good success with that.
9. Sometimes it is easier to do a project day or two to get started. We used the PRISM arrears only infopac report to identify the highest

arrears cases. \*\*\*\*We actually found we had best success with the smaller arrears cases when we cut some deals.

10. ALWAYS FOLLOWUP in writing to the NCP with overview of the “deal” and what the outcomes will be if payments are made.

### **TRACKING SUCCESS TIPS:**

- ❖ Brainstorm and share case successes or ideas that worked well at unit meetings and with each other. Understanding and knowing this works is truly an incentive to staff to implement.
- ❖ Make SHLIF a standing agenda item at your unit meeting.
- ❖ Create your own Ad Hoc report (s)with the help of Kent VonFischer- use the codes the state has suggested. You can track activity by worker and county depending on what you wish to track. There are suggestions in the state’s policy on the types of Data Warehouse reports you can request
- ❖ Use existing infopac reports to identify potential cases for SHLIF
- ❖ Require your workers to use the CAAD activities noted in the state policy. The activities will provide you with a wealth of information that can be created from the data warehouse. Detailed notes are required when the CAAD activities are entered in our county.
- ❖

One report that I created was based on the use of the E9801 CAAD activity=CASE REVIEW FOR CURRENT SUPPORT/ARREARS MGMT STRATEGY.

Stats for Faribault/Martin:

#### Data Warehouse Report-SHLIF Quarterly Activity

Worker, case number, E9801 date, Case status (open/closed), Arrears balance at the start of the quarter, adjustments made during the quarter, payments made during the quarter and the ending arrears balance at the end of the quarter, with a grand total page.

#### **Infopac reports:**

QW260211-CPAT Current Support Incentive County-(snapshot of % of current support incentives compared to prior 12 months and the state report below to see how you compare with the state)

QW260212-CPAT Current Support Incentive State

QW260215-CPAT Arrearage Incentive County (snapshot of % of arrears incentives compared to prior 12 months)

QW260216-CPAT Arrearage Incentive State

Compare QQ500603-Monthly Financial Obligation Summary – this report shows the % of cases With current Support or Arrears Due and Disbursed  
Compare this report with report from 1 year prior to when you start SHLIF.



**F/M RESULTS –ONE YEAR**  
**JUNE 2006 – JUNE 2007**

- 1.** Started with the project of SHLIF in June 2006.
- 2.** Reviewed cases with largest arrears owing-some as high as \$68,000 for 1 case and the Non Custodial parent has multiple cases.
- 3.** We have applied front end strategies to assure we are setting appropriate orders, not asking for large amounts of retroactive child support, not Seeking reimbursement for birth expenses for children.

- We are spending more time on the phones with both parents and have found that has helped with understanding fully the entire program from the start.
- We attempt to serve as many parents as possible in our offices so we can explain legal processes.
- We are assuring as we establish new orders we are providing materials to the parents on what to expect at hearings and after the order is entered.
- The percent of cases with current support and arrears cases with a collection have both increased:

% of cases with current support disbursed on IVD cases 7-1-06= **73.13 %**  
7-1-07= **76.94.%**

% of cases with current support or arrears disbursed 7-1-06= **67.32%**  
7-1-07= **70.82%.**

- 4.** We have reviewed all of our cases with the largest arrears and adjusted many arrears off and have administratively stopped interest from accruing on cases where payments have been made more than 12 consecutive months. We have had NPA clients request their cases be closed, as they weren't even aware we had an open case any longer and they don't want the arrears collected.
- 5.** We have worked with several other counties where the NCP has multiple cases. Case examples-attached.
- 6.** Total caseload right now for our counties is 1,900, & arrears = 9.7 MILLION
- 7.** Arrears on 122 SHLIF cases effective 6-30-07- \$1.3 MILLION
- 8.** Total we have adjusted off over 12 months= \$402,021
- 9.** Total payments on 12 SHLIF cases over 12 months= \$259,481



**SHLIF examples for SCOTT COUNTY. Most of these are arrears only cases.**

Arrears management scenario's.

- NCP had an arrears only case in Scott County. NCP resides in a homeless shelter in Iowa. NCP had recently obtained employment and payments were being received through income withholding. The children on this case are emancipated. The previous order was for \$450.00 per month. Arrears on this case were \$103,988.52. \$64,842.95 of which were PA. Ncp has two other cases with ongoing support ordered and arrears totaling \$732.98 and \$1,390.87. NCP filed a motion in Feb. 2006 to reinstate his DL, decrease his monthly payment, decrease his arrears payments and requested interest to stop. NCP's current income at time of filing motion was \$162.00 net per week. The hearing was held and we agreed to reduce his payback amount, staying interest. We also agreed that if the NCP makes his payments for 6 consecutive months we would forgive \$10,000.00 of PA arrears. His DL was also reinstated per the court order. In 9/2006 we forgave the first \$10,000.00 and again in 3/2007 an additional \$10,000.00 was forgiven.
- Client had not made a payment on PA arrears since 7/2005. Sent ncp letter asking him to contact our office to discuss a possible lump sum settlement. Ncp called after receiving the letter. He was not interested and was not able to come up with any money. He mentioned that he was receiving RSDI. Because of that we were able to do IW to Social Security. We previously did not know he was receiving this benefit.
- Contacted NCP about possible debt compromise on pa money. About \$6000.00 was owed. NCP agreed and made a one time payment of \$3000.00. County forgave the rest.
- Wrote off PA amount of \$1061.80. Discovered NCP was receiving SSI with no chance of collecting. Last payment had been 9/2002. Interest had been charging at about \$5.00 per month.
- Had brought NCP in on contempt. CP agreed to forgive all NPA arrears in the hearing. We agreed to a lump sum payment of \$2000.00 and closed the case. The last payment the NCP had made prior to the contempt hearing was in 2002.
- We contacted a CP on an NPA arrears case. Last payment made by the NCP had been in 2001. CP was interested in working with NCP. We contacted NCP and he agreed to pay \$12,124.00 lump sum. CP agreed and forgave \$329.12. Case was then closed. CP sent her agreement to us in writing.
- Interstate case with WI. \$900.00 owed to MN. WI was collecting current support for CP and Child. We wrote off the \$900.00 as NCP is paying to current support. NCP had not made any payments to MN arrears. They were from 1997.

- Old arrears only case. PA money of \$2800.00 owing and NCP paying \$23.00 per month thru IW. CP and NCP reconciled and have been living together for years. We received a joint tax intercept of \$500.00, all from NCP's income. CP called and asked if they could have that money back. Ncp income for 2006 was \$26,160.00 for a family of 7 including one disabled child. CP does not work but stays home to take care of the disabled child. We informed her that we could not release the funds but that we were willing to take the \$500.00 as payment in full and forgave \$2300.00 in PA money.
- CSO discovered that NPA arrears on a case were just paid off. In checking the case and moving the non monthly accrual to the pa arrears (which totaled over \$41,000.00) she saw that NCP has been paying regularly for over 5 years. We administratively stopped interest charging of \$152.00 per month and sent ncp letter.
- CSO discovered old arrears only case with pa arrears of \$17,076.33 of which \$7639.75 was interest. Received a new hire match, sent out IW and NCP called. NCP had not contacted agency since 1997. We discovered that NCP had been receiving SSI since 2/1/04. Child had been receiving RSDI Disability benefits since 1990 based on NCP disability. Original order was from 1989.
- NCP contacted us and provided proof that he has been living in a homeless shelter in Arizona. We agreed to forgive the pa interest. IW started and for every 6 payments we will forgive 6 payments.
- NCP SSI recipient based on disability since 6/2000. Medical statement confirms that he is unable to work in any manner of competitive employment or become gainfully employed due to his illness which is persistent in nature and with no indication of support potential. PA Arrears uncollectible. \$10,364.61 (\$5976.22 principal and \$4399.39 interest). Closed case.