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ABSTRACT
                Potential uses of a central registry/clearinghouse
approach in the Child Support Enforcement Program (CSEP) are
described in this publication. The CSEP was established in 1975 under
Title IV-D of the Social Security Act in an effort to reduce federal
monies spent supporting dependent children not receiving financial
assistance from absent parents. A central registry/clearinghouse
operation provides an automated capability that establishes, for a
common purpose, records containing entries of data relevant to cases
serviced within a jurisdiction. The central registry/clearinghouse
allows CSEP users to collect, classify, record, store, track, and
distribute information for child support enforcement activities.
Chapter I of this publication indicates basic characteristics of the
registry/clearinghouse, points out benefits, and discusses
alternative approaches to designing a statewide system. Chapter II
explores issues for state program administrators to consider in
planning to adopt a central registry/clearinghouse. Chapter III
provides program overviews focusing on how Oregon, Missouri, and
Nevada have operationalized the registry/clearinghouse concept and
how programs have addressed many of the implementation considerations
presented in chapter II. Specifically discussed are case initiation
and management, financial management, enforcement, safeguarding
security/privacy, and reporting. A glossary of terms is included.
(RH)

THE CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE:
A TOOL FOR IMPROVING THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Child Support Enforcement
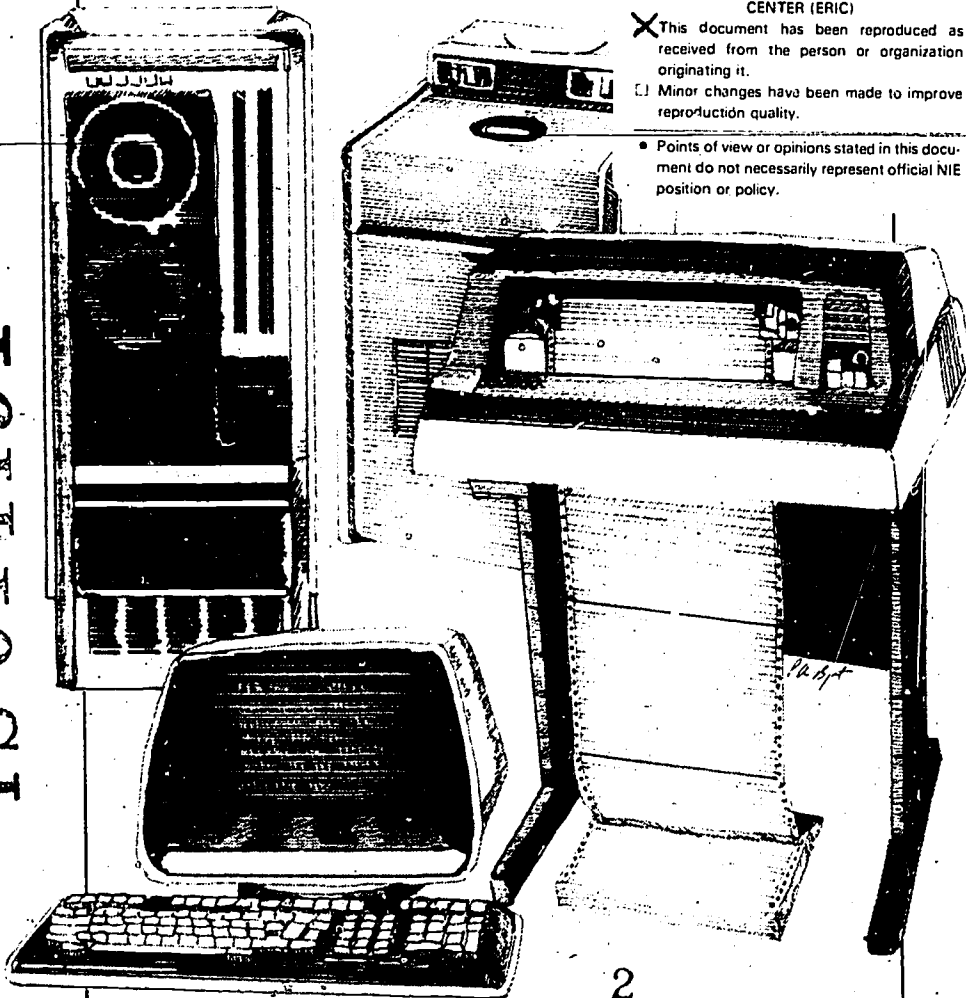. Child Support Technology Transfer Project

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THE CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE: A TOOL FOR IMPROVING THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM

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INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Even though the concept of a central registry/clearinghouse enjoys wide use and acceptance throughout the private sector, until now, very little information on the application of this concept to child support enforcement has existed. This void has made it difficult for policymakers and administrators to evaluate the merits and feasibility of this concept. Consequently, this monograph provides the reader with an increased understanding of the potential uses of a central registry/clearinghouse approach in the Child Support Enforcement Program.

BACKGROUND

Significant increases in divorce rates and out-of-wedlock births have produced a sharp rise in the number of families eligible to receive Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act, and in the number of children eligible to receive child support and child support enforcement services under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. As of spring, 1982, 8.4 million women were living with a child under 21 years of age whose father was not living in the household; 59 percent, or about 5 mil! in of these women were awarded child support payments. Of the 4 million women due child support payments in 1981, only 47 percent received the full amount due.

The Child Support Enforcement Program was established in 1975 under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. Congress created the Program in an effort to reduce Federal monies spent supporting dependent children not receiving financial assistance from absent parents. The Program provides services both to families who are eligible to receive AFDC and to those who are not.

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The goals of the Child Support Enforcement Program are to place primary responsibility for supporting dependent children on the parent rather than on the taxpayer, and to foster a sense of family responsibility. To this end, the Program is charged with locating absent parents, establishing paternity when necessary, and establishing and enforcing the legal, financial obligations owed by parents to their children. While the Child Support Enforcement Program has made significant progress since 1975, better techniques for Program administration are required to address more fully the problem of non-support in single parent households and to increase the effectiveness of Program operations.

Public Law 96-265, effective July 1, 1981, provides 90 percent Federal Financial Participation (FFP) for the planning and implementation of automated systems that incorporate the minimum core functional requirements for effective child support enforcement systems and meet Federal, State, and user needs in a comprehensive, efficient, and cost-effective manner.* Basically, the central registry/clearinghouse concept refers to an automated system that establishes in a master file data which are relevant to child support enforcement case handling, recordkeeping, and management. Automated data processing can increase both the effectiveness and efficiency of the Program by streamlining work associated with the major child support enforcement functions, including case initiation, case management, financial management, security/ privacy, and reporting. The central registry/clearinghouse is a particularly powerful form of automated data processing, because its capabilities enhance not only the effectiveness, but also the management of the Program's work. By increasing the accuracy, timeliness, and comprehensiveness with which data can be

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*If a system does not qualify for enhanced FFP at the 90 percent matching rate, it may well be eligible for the 70 percent FFP for the administrative expenses of child support enforcement operations.

collected and analyzed, the central registry/clearing-
house can provide child support enforcement admini-
strators and policymakers with the information needed
to enhance the ability of State programs to protect
the legal and financial rights of the Nation's children.

CHAPTER I

THE CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE: AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM TOOL

A central registry/clearinghouse operation provides an automated capability that establishes, in a master file, for a common purpose, records containing entries of data relevant to cases serviced within a jurisdiction. The central registry/clearinghouse allows Child Support Enforcement Program (or Title IV-D of the Social Security Act) users to collect, classify, record, store, track, and distribute information for child support enforcement activities. These activities include, at a minimum, case initiation, case management, financial management, enforcement, safeguarding information/privacy, and reporting for the IV-D caseload. The concept of the central registry/clearinghouse can be manifest in various forms; it is important to recognize that there is no one "best" way to structure or implement a central registry/clearinghouse system.

The concept of the central registry/clearinghouse has been widely employed in banking, education, and hospital administration to track and store information and conduct business transactions for participating entities. Though the precise term, "central registry/clearinghouse" has not been applied widely to child support enforcement, the activities described by the term have long been familiar to Program and data processing support personnel.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE

"Central" is the key word in the definition of the central registry/clearinghouse as envisioned by the IV-D Program environment. However, the word "central" has nothing to do with location. There can be more than one location wherein data collection and processing occur, and where components of the database may be stored. Each central registry/clearinghouse must have the ability to interact with similar

systems in a State to collect information that will provide IV-D- officials with the current and accurate status of case activity throughout the State. Also, the central registry/clearinghouse must be able to integrate case activity information obtained from other systems into a statewide profile of program status.

The central registry/clearinghouse entails the use of an automated system that receives and processes information in all of the key activities of child support enforcement for the entire IV-D caseload. The central registry/clearinghouse makes data available on a state- wide basis, whether or not. the program is State- administered. In addition to performing the core functions, the central registry/clearinghouse must satisfy other needs of the Federal Child Support Enforcement Program; it must satisfy all legal require- ments; meet State and local jurisdiction operating regulations; provide a method for ongoing program review and evaluation; and safeguard the privacy of citizens.

The core functions for the central registry/clear- inghouse entail the following activities:

- Case initiation -which involves the ability to accept and uniquely identify child support cases and to prioritize them for action

- Case management--which involves the organ- ization and monitoring of data used to perform a broad range of activities, including:

  - case updating
  - location of absent parents
  - establishment of paternity
  - establishment of obligation
  - aging and tracking the status of cases

- Financial management--which includes the performance of:

  - accounting management
  - billing

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- payment receipt
- collections distribution

- **Enforcement**--which includes generating delinquency notices and triggering enforcement measures permissible under State law

- **Security/privacy**--which involves providing physical, staff, hardware, software, and communication security as well as a contingency plan to handle any user violations or system malfunctions

- **Reporting**--which involves producing standard operational reports on each of the major functions as well as special reports for management decisionmaking, as required.

Certain basics must be in place before these activities can be undertaken: (1) a computer or computers with the capability to process the data and produce information needed by State program personnel at all levels, and (2) procedures to allow for orderly data entry and manipulation. For a central registry/ clearinghouse to function effectively, all child support payments do not have to be paid physically or even transmitted to a central location. The dates and amounts of payments are the only data that must be received centrally or be accessible from dispersed data bases. Several methods are in use today to collect payments. One requires that all payments be made to a single State agency. Another requires that all payments be made to local county agencies or officials. Still other methods employ such private institutions as banks for collecting and processing payments. All these methods are compatible with the central registry/ clearinghouse concept.

BENEFITS OF THE CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE

What makes the central registry/clearinghouse approach particularly desirable for child support enforcement is its potential ability to satisfy Federal Program requirements and perform the core functions efficiently and cost-effectively. A central registry/

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clearinghouse has many advantages over other record-keeping systems. The primary benefit of the central registry/clearinghouse is that it can result in a more effective and efficient Child Support Enforcement Program. Specifically, administrative and operational benefits to be gained from implementing a central registry/clearinghouse can include the following:

- Enhanced ability to accept and identify child support cases

- Wider use of automated and periodic case prioritization

- Reduced duplication and improved efficiency in recordkeeping

- Greater accuracy in recordkeeping, because of the system's ability to edit all transactions and reject erroneous data

- Strengthened locate and enforcement capabilities from automated data exchange with other recordkeeping systems and agencies

- Enhanced capability to identify and respond promptly to delinquent child support payments

- Simplified operation and greater effectiveness of Federal and State tax refund offsets, unemployment compensation interceptions, and wage withholding programs

- Enhanced communication capabilities throughout the statewide child support enforcement program

- Improved accuracy and speed in response to inquiries

- Enhanced capability to monitor cases being processed by the local IV-D unit, agencies under cooperative agreement, and out-of-State jurisdictions

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- Better and simplified handling of interstate child support enforcement actions

- Earlier and enhanced detection of potential program fraud at the State level

- Easier handling of incentive payments because of improved records of collections from other jurisdictions

- Improved internal controls and audit trails ensuring that public funds are disbursed accurately and properly

- Improved efficiency in program operations and administration by automating labor-intensive activities such as manual record-keeping and reporting

- Enhanced capability for system adaptation to accommodate an increased caseload or changes in Federal Program regulations

- Increased program effectiveness at the State level by permitting a greater concentration of agency resources on Child Support Enforcement Program functions other than recordkeeping.

THE FLEXIBILITY OF THE CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE CONCEPT

There are a number of approaches to designing a statewide central registry/clearinghouse system. The concept provides considerable flexibility. At one end of the spectrum is the single, totally centralized system, where all original data are fed directly into a computerized system operated for the entire State. At the other end is the decentralized county-admini-stered system in which the central registry/clearinghouse functions are performed locally with relevant information being reported directly to the State. It is important to understand that variations exist between these points on the spectrum. For example, a group of counties within a region may cluster

together to share a common database housed in a single central registry/clearinghouse operated at the regional level. The concept is broad enough to accommodate, with enhanced performance capability, a variety of State and local administrative arrangements. (See Figures 1-3.)

STATE LEVEL CLEARINGHOUSE
Counties Linked Via Terminal
Figure 1

County Terminals

County Terminals

State Computer

County Terminals

County Terminals
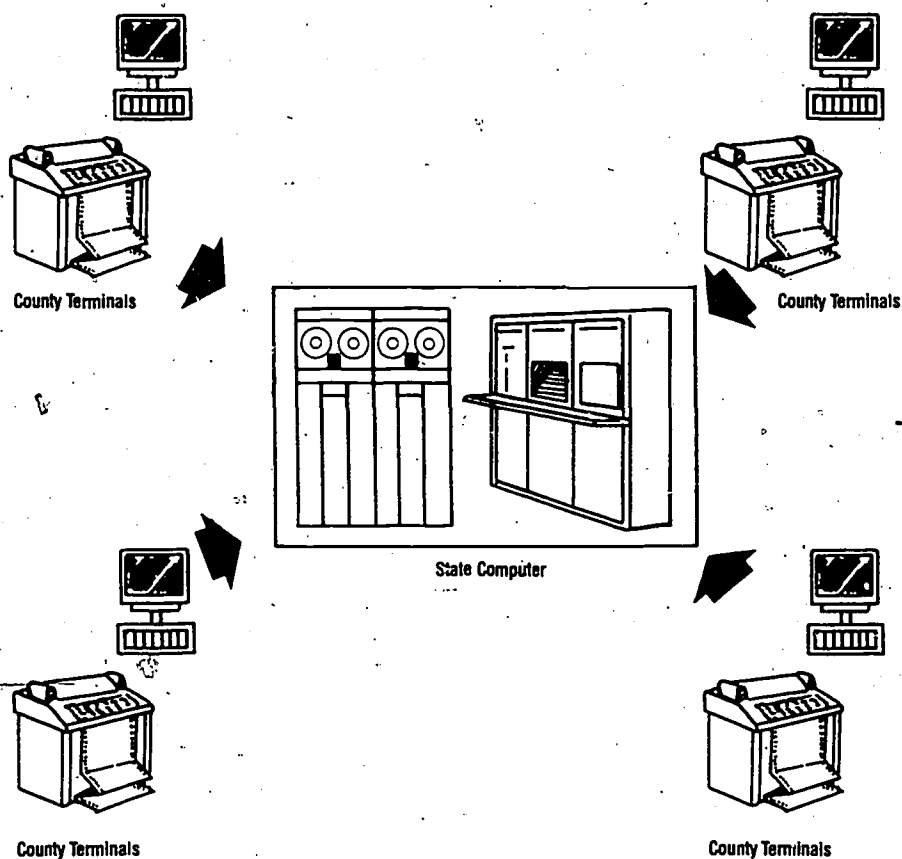
Significant Features
- Detailed transactions flow from local jurisdictions directly into State Computer
- Immediate processing of transactions and inquiries/responses
- Uniform procedures and data elements
- Eliminates multiple systems development, operations, maintenance, and reporting costs

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REGIONAL CLEARINGHOUSE
County Linked Via Terminal to Region
Region Linked for Summary to State
Figure 2
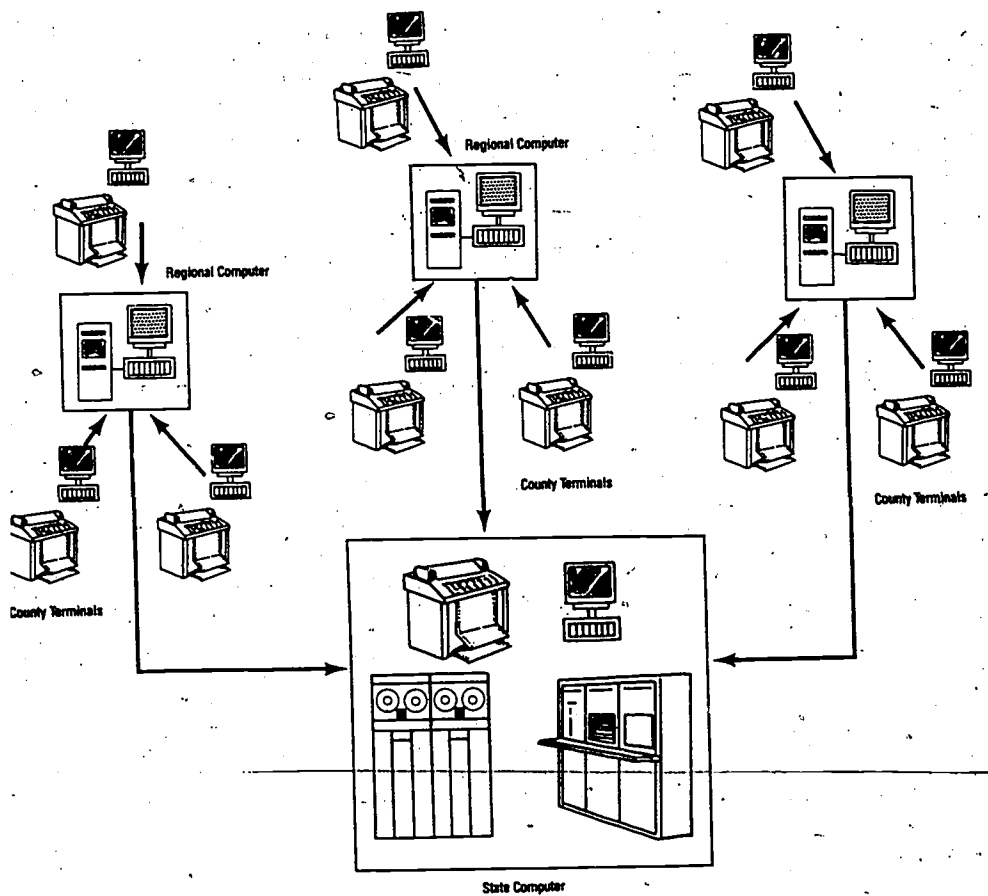
Significant Features
- Distributes workload to intermediate level
- Improved response time for inquiring, updating and reports
- Reduces multiple systems development, operations, maintenance, and reporting costs

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COUNTY CLEARINGHOUSE
Linked for Summary to State
Figure 3

County Computer

County Computer

State Computer

County Computer

County Computer
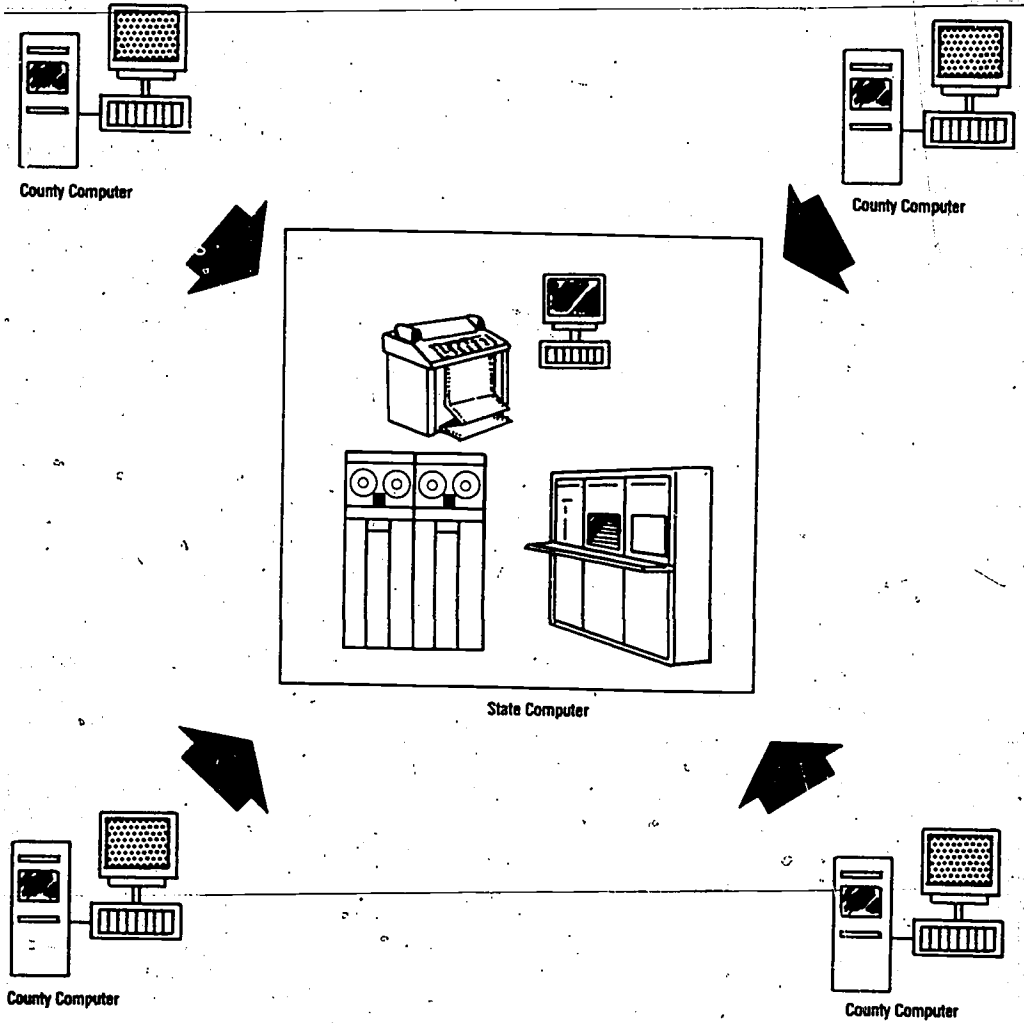
Significant Features
- County control of all data
- Rapid uniform reporting to State via telecommunications

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CHAPTER II

PLANNING TO ADOPT A
CENTRAL REGISTRY/CLEARINGHOUSE

Careful planning is essential if a central registry/ clearinghouse is to operate cost-effectively. States which successfully have implemented central registry/ clearinghouse functions recommend that the planning stage involve a representative group of users, who are prepared to participate in a phased process of design, development, implementation, testing, and refinement. The following section discusses a number of issues that policymakers and administrators might consider as they make plans for adopting a central registry/ clearinghouse.

ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

When adopting a central registry/clearinghouse, the planning process can provide State program administrators with a valuable opportunity to review and simplify procedures. During the planning stage, involved personnel may want to address the following issues:

- #### Passing Enabling Legislation

    Authority can be established for developing and implementing the central registry/clear- inghouse so that sufficient time, money, and resources can be devoted to this effort. Legislation to create an effective central registry/clearinghouse has four essentials: (1) the date and amount of payment must be recorded at the central registry/clear- inghouse (even though the actual payments may be directed elsewhere); (2) orders flowing through the IV-D system should contain names, addresses, birth dates, and social security numbers of the children and parties involved, and the parties should be required to notify the court or IV-D agency of any changes; (3) the central registry/ clearinghouse, if payments go to it, must have authority to forward support money to

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the custodial family without waiting for
checks to clear the banking system; and
(4) adequate funding must be made available
for developing and implementing the central
registry/clearinghouse. Also, legislation may
be necessary which declares the system's
records to be "official" for legal purposes.
The passage of such legislation streamlines
the admissibility of the results into evidence
in court.

Containing Implementation Costs

The development and implementation of any
automated data processing system is a costly
venture, even though the front-end invest-
ment of time and resources can produce such
long-term payoffs as streamlined workflow
and more efficient use of staff time. In
addition to the costs of hardware acquisition
and software development, additional expen-
ditures of staff time will accrue during the
planning, implementation, and transition
stages. For maximum effectiveness and
efficiency, it also is essential that no efforts
to automate commence before a thorough
examination of work process, flow, and
procedures takes place. The process of
developing and implementing a central
registry/clearinghouse can take more than 2
years. The cost of training users and their
supervisors also should not be overlooked.

However, several factors mitigate the State's
implementation costs. First, development
costs for the central registry/clearinghouse
can be recovered through Federal financial
participation. Implementation costs may be
contained by selecting computer equipment
with care, making sure that all system
components are integrated and compatible,
and seeing that uniform standards, policies,
and procedures are developed for their use.
Possibilities for sharing hardware can be
explored, as can opportunities for tying into

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existing systems within the State, and using data already collected by States in their operation of other programs. Another consideration is the potential use of micro-computers, especially in sites that cannot support mainframe computers of their own. States also may wish to explore the option of contracting out to a service bureau some or all of the central registry/clearinghouse functions. This option can be extremely cost-effective; it can save the Child Support Enforcement Program time, money, and staff resources.

- ## Maintaining Control Over Revenue

  Some States will prefer having all payments made directly to the jurisdiction, to ensure proper crediting of revenue to that jurisdiction. Others may prefer having all payments made directly to the State, to enhance the efficiency of bookkeeping. Still others may prefer to employ already existing institutions, such as banks, to handle receiving and accounting for payments. The central registry/clearinghouse can accommodate any of these alternatives.

- ## Maintaining Control of the Automated System and its Contents

  Because the central registry/clearinghouse can only be as effective as those controlling and operating it, it is imperative that efforts be made during planning and implementation to educate State and local personnel about the need for, and value of, the central registry/clearinghouse functions. Those responsible for designing and implementing the central registry/clearinghouse should be prepared to explain and support the priority that should be granted the central registry/clearinghouse within the State government's hierarchy of services.

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Ensuring Accuracy and Timeliness of Data

A key factor to be considered when planning the implementation of a central registry/ clearinghouse is the maintenance of data. To achieve maximum utility, and gain the confidence of its users, a system must produce data that are both correct and current. While the correctness of data depends heavily on the skill and commitment of those who input it, data accuracy can be promoted and verified through use of a series of on-line edits. To ensure that data are current, revisions and updates should be scheduled at regular intervals. In many jurisdictions, these tasks occur on a daily basis. For example, all transactions and payments received by 4 p.m. can be reported back to the originating jurisdictions for verification by the next morning, along with tapes, reports, and if desired, notices and checks.

Managing the Transition Period and Training Users

If a central registry/clearinghouse is to be implemented successfully, careful attention must be paid to introducing the system to its users. States which already have such systems in place recommend strongly that users be involved in the planning stage, in a steering or advisory capacity, and that they participate actively both in system development and in a phased-in implementation allowing for the gradual conversion of data and the adjustment and enhancement of the system's architecture.

Training is another means for encouraging users to accept the central registry/clearinghouse. Regular followup is essential to ensure that user questions are resolved. It also is necessary to verify that workers are using the central registry/clearinghouse

correctly, and to its fullest advantage. The
maintenance of paper files throughout the
transition period is a sensitive issue to many
users and their supervisors. Balance must
be struck between continuing to work
effectively while a large-scale reorientation
takes place, and encouraging staff to rely
less on cumbersome paper files, and more
on their computer terminals.

● Safeguarding Information

Like any automated system containing per-
sonal information about citizens, the central
registry/clearinghouse must include proce-
dures to maintain the security of data and
preserve confidentiality. A number of
procedures can be implemented to safeguard
security and privacy without sacrificing the
efficiency of case processing and record-
keeping. Such procedures include bonding
IV-D employees; using sanctions to prevent
employees from divulging information to non-
authorized personnel; maintaining locked
files and a secure physical environment;
using mandatory identification codes for data
review, entry, and change; restricting
access to certain classes of information
within case files; and restricting information-
sharing across jurisdictional lines.

CHAPTER III

STATE-SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS: OREGON, MISSOURI, AND NEVADA

As discussed in the Introduction, the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) provides 70 or 90 percent reimbursement of the cost to States for the planning and implementation of automated systems that perform the minimum core functions for effective child support enforcement. Requirements are established for the system to meet Federal, State, and user needs in a comprehensive, efficient, and cost-effective manner. Since the passage of Public Law 96-265, which authorizes 90 percent funding, the systems approved for the higher funding rate have demonstrated the capability to perform the central registry/clearinghouse functions, even though they were not designed specifically for that purpose. The manner in which States perform the functions differs, demonstrating the flexibility of the central registry/ clearinghouse concept.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how three States--Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada--have operationalized the central registry/clearinghouse defined in Chapter I, The Concept of the Central Registry/Clearinghouse, and how they have addressed many of the implementation considerations presented in Chapter II, Planning to Adopt a Central Registry/ Clearinghouse. The discussion is divided into two parts: Program Overviews, and System Operations. The first section describes how the three States resolved many of the implementation issues which must be examined prior to establishing a central registry/ clearinghouse system. The second section discusses how each State's central registry/clearinghouse system performs the core functions of the Child Support Enforcement Program. The strength of all three systems is the way in which they have been generated from, and tailored to, the specific needs of their users.

PROGRAM OVERVIEWS

Implementing the central registry/clearinghouse concept effectively requires careful examination of each State's program characteristics, requirements, needs, and resources. Some of the implementation issues faced by the States of Oregon, Nevada, and Missouri include maintaining control of the automated systems, containing implementation costs through the adaptation of already-existing systems and other means, maintaining control over child support enforcement program revenue, passing enabling legislation, managing the transition period, and training users. The overviews which follow illustrate some of the ways in which these planning and implementation considerations have been addressed by the three States. Other considerations such as controlling the automated system and its contents, and ensuring the accuracy and timeliness of the data, are addressed in the System Operations section.

Oregon. Currently, the State of Oregon maintains a comprehensive, centralized child support and support enforcement system including approximately 165,000 Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and non-AFDC cases. The Department of Human Resources is the State's child support enforcement agency under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. Oregon's IV-D Director is the assistant administrator of the Adult and Family Services Division of the Department of Human Resources. The IV-D agency contracts with the Support Enforcement Division, which is supported by 13 field offices for establishment and enforcement of AFDC cases statewide. The Support Enforcement Division is part of the State's Department of Justice. Non-AFDC cases are handled by the district attorneys' offices.

Oregon's system consists of two components: The Child Support System (CSS), and the Support Enforcement System (SES). The CSS is responsible for billing, receipt, distribution, and accounting. Payments are both received and distributed at the State level. The SES is responsible for case management. The locus of control for both systems is in the

State offices of the Department of Human Resources in Salem, where the State's mainframe computer is located. If warranted by the size of the caseload, there is one cathode ray tube (CRT) terminal for each pair of support enforcement agents. Generally, the large counties have CRT terminals for non-AFDC case enforcement. The smaller counties do not.

The CSS and SES use both International Business Machines (IBM) and Amdahl Corporation hardware. Most of the programs are written in Common Business-Oriented Language (COBOL). There are several small programs written in one or more other languages, but these are currently being converted into COBOL. The system's software is transportable since it has been applied to more than one kind of hardware.

Legislation was passed in the State of Oregon in 1975 requiring the central recording and maintenance of child support data. This legislation laid the groundwork for the CSS, which was put into operation in 1976. Before 1976, each county clerk established and maintained child support records for his or her own county. The SES began operations in 1981.

The CSS was established over a 6-month period, involving approximately 10 individuals--including systems analysts, programmers, and others--and cost approximately $500,000. The SES was created in phases after full implementation after the CSS, and represents essentially a large-scale enhancement of the first system. The SES was established over approximately a 1-year period, involving five professionals and costing roughly $500,000. This illustrates the flexibility of Oregon's system, which has adapted successfully to new needs.

Formal training in the use of the SES was provided to all Support Enforcement Division offices. CSS users learned primarily through on-the-job training.

Missouri. Missouri maintains a State-operated, automated child support enforcement system handling a current caseload of approximately 200,000. (The

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system's "full function" capacity is about 250,000 cases.) Missouri's child support enforcement program is State-administered, although in a few counties the Department of 'Social Services has chosen to delegate the entire child support enforcement function to the county level. 'This variation affects approximately 20. percent of the caseload. In the remaining counties, the Department handles investigation, case mainten-ance, establishment of paternity and support orders, and some support enforcement. .Establishment and enforcement also may be accomplished by referral to local prosecuting attorneys, whose participation in the State child support enforcement program is mandated by statute.

The Department's child support enforcement automated data processing system, called the Model II, maintains records on all Missouri IV-D cases regardless of the location of case activity. .The sys-tem was adapted from the OCSE Model II system, which was developed under contract by Bradford Corporation. . Missouri tailored the Model II System to its departmentwide data base and included a child-specific filing capability. (Every individual served by the Department must have a separate file.) Missouri's software is written in COBOL and was designed for use on the State's existing IBM hardware.

Existing Missouri statutes require that all support payments in IV-D cases, both AFDC and non-AFDC, be made through the court clerk. AFDC payments are forwarded to the State's central office. Non-AFDC payments go from the court to the payee. Further, the clerks are required to forward the payments promptly, and submit reports to the IV-D agency "in the manner specified by the agency." Because this procedure was already in place when the new system was made operational in November of 1982, it was not necessary for the agency to enact additional legislation.

The system in Missouri was developed by a task force, comprised of IV-D staff, OCSE personnel, outside data processing personnel, and Department data processing staff. The IV-D administrators had constant control over the planning and development

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process. A high level staff member was assigned permanently to the project, and the Department assigned several data processing staff exclusively or principally to the task.

The implementation stage. began in November, 1982, and is continuing as of this date. Missouri administrators hope to complete the implementation process in early 1984. Training was performed at each local office by IV-D program trainers, in conjunction with task force members. In addition, the task force developed written training manuals for IV-D caseworkers, IV-D clerical staff, terminal users, and Department data processing staff. Development costs were in the neighborhood of $1 million.

Nevada. The State of Nevada maintains a centralized automated Child Support Enforcement System located at the State level. Currently, Nevada's system handles all AFDC cases, totalling approximately 14,000. Nevada has three regional offices that oversee various county offices handling AFDC cases. These offices are: the Reno program office which includes 12 counties; the Elko program office which includes 4 counties; and the Las Vegas program office which is composed of 1 county. The actual enforcement of child support obligations and handling of non-AFDC cases are done by the county district attorneys, who are elected officials. The court clerks or district attorneys receive the support payments and distribute them to the custodial parents and appropriate States. The State IV-D office distributes support collections made on behalf of AFDC recipients.

Of the 12 counties, only 2 counties, Washoe County and Clark County, have computerized systems for non-AFDC cases. The Washoe County computer system also performs all of the minimum core functions, thereby qualifying it as a central registry/clearinghouse. Clark County has a financial system. The system's hardware is IBM and its transportable software includes Virtual Storage Access Method (VSAM) files, Centralized Information Control Systems (CICS), and COBOL.

●   No new legislation was needed to develop Nevada's system. Nevada's Child Support Enforcement System was developed in cooperation with State IV-D staff, OCSE personnel, and outside data processing personnel. The system was implemented in two phases. The case management component was implemented in July 1983; the financial management component was installed in October, 1983 during the second phase. It took two State personnel 2 to 3 days to train staff at each regional office which is equipped with two or three CRT terminals with printing capabilities. The system now being "converted" cost the State approximately $500,000.

SYSTEMS OPERATIONS

The System Operations section illustrates how Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada installed automated data processing systems meeting central registry/clearinghouse criteria and accommodating local requirements, needs, and resources. The systems that operate in the three States perform the following activities, or "minimum core functions," inherent in child support enforcement:

- Case initiation

- Case management

- Financial management

- Enforcement

- Safeguarding of security/privacy

- Reporting.

How these activities are executed is best understood by examining how the systems work to conduct each of the functions.

Case Initiation

Case initiation is the process of collecting and organizing the data necessary to open a case. The

case initiation function also involves uniquely identi-
fying each new child support case and prioritizing it
for action within the overall caseload. Case initiation
can occur automatically or through a combination of
automated and manual procedures. Often, case initi-
ation data are obtained through automatic interfaces
between the IV-A and IV-D systems. For example, a
rudimentary case file can be established automatically
in a State's IV-D system as soon as a case is opened
in the IV-A system. Additional case initiation data
can be obtained by interfaces with data bases
involving other agencies. Basic case initiation data
also can be collected manually, entered into the IV-D
system, and supplemented with data obtained both
manually and as a result of automatic interfacing
with IV-A and other systems. How a State program
performs the case initiation function using a central
registry/clearinghouse capability depends upon the
degree to which its program functions are automated
and coordinated with other agencies, as well as on
the State's procedures for conducting IV-D activities.

Oregon. One of the most innovative and efficient
aspects of the Oregon system is the manner in which
the IV-D cases are opened. For AFDC cases a
"skeleton" IV-D case file is established automatically
by the CSS when the IV-A agency opens a case file
in its data processing system. Such information as
name, address, social security number, and AFDC
grant amount are captured in this manner. Next, the
system automatically interfaces on a nightly basis with
the data banks maintained by the State Employment
Division and the Food Stamps Agency. This process
is called "trolling," and the data sought on the absent
parent include address, name of employer, and
earnings. (The social security number must be pre-
sent to troll.) In addition to creating a case file and
conducting initial data collection activity, the system
assigns the case to a support enforcement agent, and
places it into a "matrix" of activities and priorities
within his or her caseload. The non-AFDC cases are
not carried in the SES unless they formerly were
AFDC cases.

Missouri. Case initiation for both AFDC and non-AFDC cases in Missouri is a combination of manual and automated data processing activities. A case is opened in the IV-A computer system based on two case initiation forms: a written assignment of support rights, and an initial support enforcement unit information document. The IV-A office forwards these forms to the IV-D office, thereby notifying the IV-D office that a IV-A case has been opened. The IV-D staff check to determine if a case already exists in the child support enforcement system, assign the case a number, and ask the system to print out two basic IV-A information screens. (Screens are data display formats which appear on the CRT terminals.) The information is then given to an intake worker, who reviews the current case information for completeness and accuracy. The intake worker is responsible for obtaining missing information and preparing four input documents, which are forwarded to a keypunch operator who enters the data online. Once this is accomplished, the data are batch entered into the main system and edited. The case is opened in the IV-D system overnight.

Nevada. Case initiation in the Nevada system is similar to the Oregon system in that cases are automatically brought into the system through an automated interface between the IV-A and IV-D systems. The cases are automatically assigned to the proper regional office. For those offices which assign cases to workers alphabetically, the system has the capability to make the assignments. Absent parent data are entered into the system using forms which are designed to represent images of system screens. Nevada's system is capable of interfacing with the data bases maintained by such agencies as Employment Security, Motor Vehicles, and Food Stamps.

Caseworkers prioritize new cases manually. However, as new data are entered into the system, case prioritization is automatically updated and reported to the workers as part of their caseload report.

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Case Management

Case management is the collection, organization, monitoring, and updating of data required to perform a wide range of IV-D activities, including updating cases, locating absent parents, establishing paternity, establishing obligations, and aging and tracking the status of cases. The case management function depends upon the ability to enter and manipulate easily and reliably data regarding thousands of cases as tasks relative to each case are completed by caseworkers. For States which have established central registry/clearinghouse capabilities, case management means effective data management. How an individual State elects to handle its caseload using a central registry/clearinghouse capability involves a variety of issues, such as system design preferences; the nature of State program's established work flow and IV-D procedures; and the degree of automation characterizing the system.

To facilitate case management and to accommodate program needs, the Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada systems are modular by design and vary in terms of the number and content of the modules. A module is a combination of individual computer programs designed to accomplish a particular function, or a number of related functions. Modular design allows a system to be implemented in phases, and makes subsequent modifications to accommodate program improvements easier to accomplish. For example, the three State systems handle such IV-D Program enhancements as mandatory wage assignments, Federal tax refund intercepts, and unemployment compensation intercepts.

The Oregon system's modules are designed to correspond to IV-D program functions. The SES (the management arm of the system) contains six modules: locate, assessment, establishment, collections, enforcement, and remedial locate. The CSS (the financial arm) includes modules performing the tasks of billing, payment receipt, and distribution. The Missouri system's modules are organized around system functions, as opposed to program functions. Modules

are devoted to: online inquiry/ update capability, batch processing, table maintenance, case maintenance, accounts receivable, distribution, monthly reporting, Federal reporting, report and document printing, and billing. Nevada's system combines system functions and program functions in six modules: billing, distribution, reporting, case tracking, IV-A interface, and file maintenance.

Such systems store a wealth of data, in addition to performing many assigned functions. In order to enhance the user's ability to access this information from the computer system, the data are organized into files. To manipulate more easily data repeated across numerous files, master files are created. Master files contain specific, relatively permanent, historical data which are common to a large number of files. The master files are shared with a wide range of more specific files. The user can access the master files to obtain current data regarding specific events. For example, if a custodial parent's name changes, the name can be updated in the appropriate master file, and will appear in the new form in all other files containing data on that individual. File data can be generated, stored, copied, corrected, changed, retrieved, and destroyed. To enable the user to display the information in an organized fashion, the files are broken down into a series of screens. These screens structure the data in each file according to preset criteria and contain the variables and constants needed to monitor and update case status.

The Oregon system is structured around a single master file. Cases move automatically within a matrix of functions and priorities depending on their status and on the progress made by the support enforcement agent. For example, a case for which all locate data have been obtained would be placed automatically in the next sequential operation--the assessment function. The case is worked by the agents using the CRT terminals from initial intake until the last support payment is made and the case is closed. In Oregon, the computer has replaced the conventional paper file system in daily child support enforcement operations.

Missouri and Nevada both employ multiple master file systems. In Missouri, files are structured around the client or recipient, the absent parent, the individual child, and a case identifier. In addition, information on potential absent parents can be accessed or entered, using a unique "sounds like" file, when the client/recipient cannot spell the absent parent's name. Caseworkers have at their disposal over three dozen commands, which may be used to call up 15 screens of information. Although the Missouri system is not "paper-free," many traditional filing functions are performed by the system through automated retention of system-generated documents in lieu of actual paper copies. During system implementation, Missouri also instituted an administrative process for establishing and enforcing support obligations. The system has eased the process by providing readily accessible AFDC grant histories (needed to determine support due during the period prior to the entry of an administrative order) and by identifying cases for which administrative establishment is appropriate.

The Nevada system contains five master files: events (case status, tracking, and monitoring); parent locate; payor obligations; payee/ dependent; and payment. As is true regarding Oregon and Missouri, these master files interface with tables that identify or verify the worker identification number, valid codes, and other data.

As mentioned previously, the system file structure is designed to allow orderly entry and updating of data on an existing case. In Oregon, data on already opened cases are collected in several ways. When there is a court order, data are drawn manually from the divorce decree, and/or from the support order abstract which all attorneys are required to complete. The decree and the support order abstract contain such data as the names, addresses, social security numbers, and employers of the obligee and obligor.

On AFDC cases, some data regarding the absent parent are obtained through the automatic interface between Oregon's IV-A and IV-D systems. Updating

data regarding the absent parent's location and employ-
ment occurs daily by way of the "trolling" process
described in the Case Initiation section. Other data
are collected by the support enforcement agents and
entered into the system online.

In Missouri data also are collected from multiple
sources. The Missouri IV-D system is linked to a
departmentwide data base and is capable of interfacing
with the systems of a limited number of other State
agencies. Most data are entered and updated by field-
level staff through computer terminals. These entries
and updates are batched and then processed into the
system each night. Many tables maintained in the
system also can be updated through the terminals by
staff with high level security clearances.

In Nevada, data on the AFDC recipient and the
dependent child(ren) are collected and updated through
IV-A interface; absent parent information is entered
into the State's program files through the CRT termi-
nals in the regional offices. To input case data, the
workers fill out a data entry form. The data on the
forms are entered into the appropriate screens. Then,
the data entries are batched and updated nightly.
Accounting personnel enter adjustments and balances
and are given special access codes to change financial
data.

All three States purge data to control case volume.
Oregon purges data annually, but maintains permanent
records on microfiche. In Missouri, the only purging
that presently occurs is when an inactive case is paid
in full, or when a non-AFDC client asks that his or
her case be closed. The purge/ retrieval capability
of Nevada's system involves transferring a file from
the master file to magnetic tapes, which are kept in
the program's library as well as in its security
storage.

Financial Management

Financial management encompasses the activities
of billing, payment receipt, account management, and
distribution. All three systems under discussion are

capable of sending periodic bills to absent parents as payment reminders. For instance, the Missouri system's billing module automatically activates in the third week of each month to send out bills to all absent parents, except those who have been deleted from the billing process by the child support worker. As is true with the Nevada system, the bill includes a stub which acts as a turnaround document and serves two purposes. First, the document requests the absent parent to update his or her address. Second, it identifies the case to which the payment applies for accounts receivable personnel. The turnaround document is an integral part of the return envelope.

As noted above, the Oregon system is built around a central payment locus in Salem. Child support enforcement payments, both AFDC and non-AFDC, are made to this location for receipt and distribution. In Missouri, the court clerks act as payment trustees. The Missouri system is programmed to identify non-AFDC payments inadvertently forwarded to the central office, and to generate automatically a pass-through check to the obligee the same day the payment is received. In Nevada, the court clerks and district attorneys act as payment trustees, and periodically forward the collections, in AFDC cases, to the central location together with system input documents. The Nevada system is capable of distributing payments on non-assistance cases at any interval, but Nevada personnel have opted to do so weekly for cost considerations.

All three systems have virtually taken over the distribution process. The systems automatically calculate arrearages as payments fall due. Payments are posted to the proper obligation upon receipt, and an automatic arrearage adjustment is made. The systems compare the relationship of the obligation amount, the AFDC grant amount, and the payment made, and then determine if a portion of the payment needs to be passed through to the AFDC recipient pursuant to Federal regulations. Next, the Federal, State, and local shares of the collection are calculated and actual distribution to the proper funds is made. Incentive payments to local jurisdictions can be

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accompanied by a report identifying the cases for which the incentive payments apply.

Enforcement

Sophisticated systems can enhance the enforcement process in many ways. Many of the data collection and location capabilities discussed above in the Case Management section clearly result in more efficient collection activity. In addition to these enhancements, a central registry/clearinghouse system can participate in the process of choosing cases for which enforcement activity is necessary or appropriate, in notifying the absent parent of impending action, in generating the necessary correspondence and legal documents, and in monitoring the success of ongoing collection activity.

Oregon's Child Support and Support Enforcement Systems facilitate the conduct of enforcement activities in a variety of ways. The Support Enforcement System's matrix, which summarizes the status of all cases in its six modules, automatically moves appropriate cases to the enforcement module and prioritizes them. This enables support enforcement agents to know at a glance which cases require enforcement action. The State's Child Support System bills absent parents, and automatically generates delinquency notices based on preset criteria.

Quarterly, the Support Enforcement Division updates absent parents' earnings by interfacing automatically with the Employment Division's files. This helps the Support Enforcement Division decide whether to seek wage assignments. When the Division has secured a wage assignment on an individual case, the Child Support System monitors the wage assignment and the arrearages. This enables the Division to notify employers when to cease withholding arrearages and withhold only current support, thereby preventing over collection by the individual's employer.

The Support Enforcement System automatically selects cases which meet criteria for unemployment compensation intercept. Nightly runs are performed,

generating lists of all absent parents who are receiving unemployment compensation or who have recently filed a new claim. This helps the State's Support Enforcement Division obtain withholding orders to intercept unemployment benefits. Similarly, the system automatically selects cases meeting criteria for Federal tax refund intercepts, and generates case data in the format required by OCSE. The system is able to complete processing for close to 30,000 intercept cases in a single nightly run.

To support a State law indicating that a judgment for child support constitutes a lien on real property, the Child Support System routinely responds to telephone inquiries from title insurance companies seeking to determine if individuals selling property owe child support. The system also provides the title insurance companies with printed verification by generating computer listings with the absent parent's name, obligation amount, and amount past due.

The Missouri system compiles a monthly list of delinquent absent parents. This information aids the child support worker in selecting cases for enforcement activity, and forms the basis for tax intercept actions. The system has been programmed to generate monthly payment reminders to absent parents, complete with payment instructions and remittance stubs. Many other enforcement documents are computer generated. When AFDC recipients assign their support rights to the State of Missouri, the system automatically notifies the absent parents of the assignment's effect on their obligations. In addition, if a court order exists, the court which entered the order likewise is notified and provided with information updates.

The system calculates interest and monitors garnishments, wage assignments, and referrals to prosecuting attorneys, and supports other ongoing collection activities. Further, it can automatically generate many legal documents. For instance, Missouri's real property lien statute requires that an application be filed with the rendering court in order to create the lien. The system is capable of gene-

rating the applications and compiling a listing of cases on which a lien has been created.

The Nevada system has the capability of generating documents, and is presently being used to track referrals to district attorneys -and to send reminder letters when an undue period of time passes between reports of enforcement activity on the case. As in Missouri, bills and payment instructions are automatically sent to absent parents.

Safeguarding of Security/Privacy

System security or backup is a critical aspect of any automated central registry/clearinghouse, and involves establishing procedures for recovering data in the event of system failure or user error. Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada have all developed backup procedures ensuring that data can be retrieved. These procedures entail the routine duplication of case and financial management data onto tape, magnetic disks, and/or microfilm and microfiche. The backup data are maintained offsite, and can be readily called up to compensate for any data loss.

In Oregon, data are converted to microfilm or microfiche by a separate organizational unit, providing a backup historical file which may be tapped should data be lost, or when purged data need to be referenced. In addition to creating tape backup files, Missouri generates microfilms of its financial records. Nevada's system also stores its financial data on microfiche, but transfers files to magnetic tapes for backup purposes. The tapes are maintained in Nevada's program library, as well as in its security storage. In addition, system users are required to maintain their original data entry worksheets in their case files.

In addition to preventing data loss and system overloading, the automated central registry/clearinghouse must ensure the privacy of support recipients and absent parents, and preserve the integrity of the system against unauthorized use. Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada all have established security measures to protect both individuals and the overall system.

In Oregon, security is maintained in three ways. First, the physical location of the terminals provides a measure of protection. The terminals are located only in the support enforcement offices or in the local district attorneys' offices. This limits access to the terminals to Title IV-D personnel. Second, security identification codes must be entered before most data in the system can be accessed. This is the case for all transactions, with the exception of very simple inquiries. The third measure of security is restricted access by other computerized systems. Other units in Oregon's Human Resources Department which use the same mainframe computer cannot access the Child Support and Support Enforcement Systems, except for routine inquiry. No updating can be done.

Missouri limits access to its system by using a multi-tiered code/security clearance system. The capability to make inquiries against records in the system is provided to other Missouri agencies and to prosecutors' offices. Within the State's program, some workers are authorized to enter data into case records. Other users are limited to entering data only on their own cases or on cases assigned to their offices. Still other users may be subject to more severe restrictions. A few individuals can update some of the tables via terminals. An even fewer number of individuals control the issuance of code numbers necessary for accessing the system.

In Nevada, all workers must use individual identification codes and passwords which allow them to enter data on their caseloads only. The system limits access to screens based on assigned codes. Accounting personnel are the only IV-D staff authorized to enter adjustments and change financial data in the system. Other agencies such as IV-A and Food Stamps have "inquiry-only" access to the system. All identification codes, passwords, and screen access capabilities are table driven. This allows program management to assign and reassign access codes, as security requirements or staffing patterns change, without making major programming modifications.

Reporting

As discussed in Chapter II, an enhanced reporting capability is one of the major advantages provided by the central registry/clearinghouse. The capacity to collect and aggregate data rapidly and accurately can dramatically improve both financial and case management. Reports generated by the registry/clearinghouse can:

- Support overall State program administration by producing updated records of the status of all financial and case management activities

- Str amline the management of individual, tea and regional caseloads by generating accurate data on the number and status of cases

- Facilitate case-by-case decisionmaking by enabling immediate access to all available information on a particular case

- Simplify the filing of required Federal and State reports by providing a current and complete financial and operational data base covering county, regional, and/or statewide caseloads

- Support the maintenance of reliable case and accounting audit trails by generating comprehensive records of all transactions.

The systems in Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada all generate numerous reports which can be classified in four categories: administrative/fiscal, management, operational, and systems reports.

Administrative/Fiscal Reports. Administrative/ fiscal reports document billings, payments received and applied, delinquent payments, and amounts distributed. These reports provide information concerning incentive payments to local jurisdictions, as well as monthly statistical analyses and other

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quarterly and annual reports. Oregon generates daily'
accounting and balancing reports, as well as other
administrative/fiscal reporting documents. Missouri
and Nevada produce reports that list collections passed
through to recipients in the distribution process,
compare collections broken down by county, and
identify AFDC cases on which collections have been
received. The report on collections received enables
the IV-A agency to redetermine the eligibility of AFDC
recipients.

Management Reports. Management reports pro-
vide information on the status of support enforcement
activities by individual caseworker, county, region,
or State. These reports monitor the aging process,
profile caseloads, record productivity levels, and
provide audit trails. They are often used by program
managers and supervisors to support planning activ-
ities. Oregon's Support Enforcement System reports
new support orders, the number of paternities estab-
lished, the number of orders modified, and the number
of wage assignments taken on a monthly basis.
Missouri and Nevada generate similar documentation.
The two systems also report on pending referrals to
prosecuting attorneys, create statistical profiles of
active cases, produce a case review reminder, and
generate other documents.

Operational Reports. Operational reports contain
information needed on a daily or weekly basis by
front-line workers and supervisors for effective case-
handling. These reports often include case listings,
status profiles for individual caseloads, and document
aging lists. Oregon's Support Enforcement System
reports the number of cases each support enforcement
agent is working, the number of orders obtained, and
the status of each case. Missouri's and Nevada's
systems generate daily case opening reports, case
profiles, active and inactive case lists, and produce
allied documentation.

Systems Reports. Systems reports, or control
reports, provide information for IV-D management and
data processing personnel which allows them to monitor
the operation of the automated data processing system.

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Examples of reports generated by all three State
systems include daily accounting and balancing
reports, table reports, and billing reports.

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SUMMARY

Congress created the Child Support Enforcement Program in 1975 in an effort to reduce Federal monies spent supporting dependent children not receiving financial assistance from absent parents. While the Program has made significant progress since its inception, better techniques for program administration are required to address more fully the problem of non-support in the steadily increasing number of single parent households nationwide.

The central registry/clearinghouse concept is a powerful tool which offers the potential to enhance significantly Program efficiency and effectiveness. The concept refers to an automated system that collects and updates in a master file data which are needed to conduct and manage child support enforcement activities. The importance of the central registry/clearinghouse was recognized by the passing of PL 96-265, effective July 1, 1981, which provides 90 percent Federal funding for the planning and implementation of automated systems that incorporate the minimum core functional requirements for effective child support enforcement systems. These core functions are: case initiation, case management, financial management, enforcement, maintaining security/privacy, and reporting. The central registry/clearinghouse can perform effectively all of these functions, which require the timely and accurate collection and manipulation of large amounts of demographic and financial data concerning the dependent child and his or her parents.

"Central" is the key word in defining the registry/clearinghouse as envisioned in the IV-D Program environment. "Central" does not refer to location, but rather to the registry/clearinghouse capacity for interacting with other data systems to collect statewide case information and for integrating this information into a State profile of program status. The concept of the central/registry clearinghouse can be manifested in various forms. It is important to recognize that there is no one "best" way to structure or implement a central registry/clearinghouse system. The concept

can accommodate a wide range of needs, resources, and capabilities, as demonstrated by the many States which already have successfully implemented central registry/clearinghouse functions.

Some of the administrative, operational, and management benefits to be gained from implementing a central registry/clearinghouse include:

- Enhanced ability to accept and identify child support cases

- Wider use of automated and periodic case prioritization

- Reduced duplication and improved efficiency and accuracy in recordkeeping

- Strengthened locate and enforcement capabilities from automated data exchange with other recordkeeping systems and agencies

- Enhanced capability to identify and respond promptly to delinquent child support payments

- Simplified operation and greater effectiveness of Federal and State tax refund offsets, unemployment compensation interceptions, and wage withholding programs

- Enhanced communication capabilities throughout the statewide child support enforcement program

- Better and simplified handling of interstate child support enforcement actions

- Earlier and enhanced detection of potential program fraud

- Improved internal controls and audit trails to ensure that public funds are disbursed accurately and properly

- Improved efficiency in both program opera-
  tions and administration by automating labor-
  intensive tasks such as manual recordkeeping
  and reporting

- Enhanced capability for system adaptation to
  accommodate increased caseloads or changes
  in Federal Program requirements.

Careful planning is essential if a central registry/
clearinghouse is to operate cost effectively while
performing th six minimum core functions mandated
for the Child Support Enforcement Program. States
which successfully have implemented the central
registry/clearinghouse functions recommend that the
planning stage involve a representative group of users
who are prepared to participate in a phased process
of design, development, implementation, testing, and
refinement. Considerations which can be addressed
during the planning stage include:

- Passing Enabling Legislation--This is neces-
  sary to establish authority for allocating
  resources to establish the central registry/
  clearinghouse, and for using the system to
  conduct child support functions.

- Containing Implementation Costs--To control
  the considerable expenses involved in setting
  up an automated system, several factors and
  several options exist. First, development
  costs can be recovered through Federal
  funding. Second, there are a variety of
  strategies for reducing system implementation
  costs: a) equipment should be selected with
  care; b) uniform procedures and standards
  should be established for its use; c) sharing
  hardware and databases with other State
  government agencies is often possible; d)
  microcomputers can be used in sites which
  cannot support large computers of their
  own; and e) some or all system functions
  can be contracted out to a service bureau.

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- **Maintaining Control Over Revenue--Specific** decisions should be made as to how revenue will be collected. Payments can be made to jurisdictions within a State, directly to the State, or to existing institutions such as banks. The central registry/clearinghouse can accommodate all of these alternatives.

- **Maintaining Control of the Automated System and its Contents--Because** the system is only as effective as those controlling it, efforts must be made during planning and implementation to educate State and local personnel about the need for, and value of, the central registry/clearinghouse functions.

- **Ensuring Data Accuracy and Timeliness--An** effective and efficient system produces data that are both correct and current. Although these qualities depend largely on the skill and commitment of those who input the data, steps can be taken to protect data quality, such as scheduling revisions and updates at regular intervals.

- **Managing the Transition Period and Training Users--Successful** implementation can occur only if the system is carefully introduced to its users. One way to help ensure a smooth transition is to enable users to participate actively in system development and in a phased implementation allowing for gradual data conversion and system adjustment. Other critical considerations are providing user training, as well as regular followup, to verify that user needs are met, and that the system is being used correctly and to its fullest advantage.

- **Safeguarding Information/Privacy--Like** any automated system containing personal information about citizens, the central registry/clearinghouse must include procedures to maintain client confidentiality and preserve

data integrity by preventing unauthorized access or use. A variety of safeguarding techniques exist, including bonding employ- ees, maintaining a secure physical environ- ment, using mandatory user identification codes, restricting access to certain classes of information, and limiting information- sharing with other jurisdictions or automated systems.

Many States such as Oregon, Missouri, and Nevada already have implemented successfully some or all of the central registry/clearinghouse core functions by taking into account these issues during the planning stage. For other States considering system implementation, the central registry/clearinghouse offers a variety of capabilities which can improve noticeably the ability to conduct and manage child support enforcement activities.

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GLOSSARY

administrative process	Refers to procedures established within a State agency for the setting and enforcing of child support obligations, pursuant to a specific grant of authority by statute.
AFDC assistance	The monetary support payment to a welfare client and/or her children which is provided under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. This assistance also is referred to as the "IV-A grant," the "AFDC grant," or the "welfare grant."
aging process	The automatic movement of a case from one priority or function to another based on preset criteria.
Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC)	A category of public assistance paid on behalf of children who are deprived of one or both of their parents by reason of death, disability, or continued absence (including desertion) from the home; also known as Title IV-A of the Social Security Act; formerly referred to as "ADC" (Aid to Dependent Children).
backup	The provision of duplicate records for use in case of loss. Provision of duplicate computing capability for use in case of equipment malfunction or system overloading.
batch processing	The processing of an accumulation of data activities in batches, usually at night or on weekends when computer time is more readily available.

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cathode-ray tube (CRT)	An electronic vacuum tube, similar to a television picture tube, that can be used to display data in visual form.
Child Support Enforcement System (CSES)	Computerized software and hardware used to support Title IV-D Program activities.
CICS	Centralized Information Control System. A computer program is used for data file control and access.
Common Business-Oriented Language COBOL	COBOL is a high-level programming language designed for business data processing.
Comprehensive statewide CSES	A system in a State and all localities thereof, which controls, accounts for, and monitors all functions of the program.
Computer system	Refers to the entire hardware package and also generally includes all software.
County-level CSES	Decentralized, county-administered system in which the central registry/clearinghouse functions are performed locally with relevant information being reported directly to the State level.
core functional requirements	The six child support enforcement system activities prescribed by Federal guidelines for the development of a CSES. Activities include case initiation, case management, financial management, enforcement, safeguarding information and privacy, and reporting.

data base	A comprehensive collection of data or the data library necessary for the operation of an organization. Also, a single file accessed by many processing applications.
data processing	The execution of a systematic sequence of operations performed on data, e.g., handling, merging, sorting, and computing. Synonymous with information processing.
disk drive	A device that reads or writes data on magnetic disks.
Federal financial participation (FFP)	Federal financing for various IV-D Program activities; 70 percent FFP available for necessary expenditures under a State IV-D plan for child support enforcement services and activities including the acquisition, development and operation of IV-D programs and systems; 90 percent FFP available for the costs of developing or enhancing and implementing a computerized CSES that meets requirements in Federal regulations which implement Section 405 of Public Law 96-265.
field	An assigned area in a record used for a particular category of data.
file	A collection of related records treated as a unit.
hardware	Physical equipment used in data processing, as opposed to software, which consists of computer programs, procedures, rules, and associated documentation.
IV-A	Title IV-A of the Social Security Act covering the Federal public assistance program.

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IV-D	Title IV-D of the Social Security Act is that portion of the Federal law that discusses the Child Support Enforcement Program.
IV-A/IV-D interface	The communication and exchange of data between the IV-A and IV-D systems for: case referrals, demographic data changes, AFDC grant status and composition information, AFDC grant amounts (dollars), and the handling of AFDC eligibility redeterminations as a result of IV-D collections.
list processing	A programming technique used to write programs that process listed data.
mainframe computer	The central processing part of a computer generally housing the four primary elements--memory; arithmetic; control; and input/output sections.
magnetic tape	Tape with a surface on which data is recorded in the form of magnetized spots.
master file	File maintained in a computer system used for a variety of data processing applications. This file retains relatively permanent information for use in subsequent processes.
microfiche	A sheet of microfilm containing microimages in a grid pattern, and usually including a title that can be read without magnification.
microfilm	A high resolution film for recording microimages.

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module	A combination of individual computer programs designed to accomplish a particular function,. or a number of related functions. Modular design allows a system to be implemented in a step-by-step sequence, and makes subsequent modifications easier to accomplish.
Non-public assistance case (non-AFDC)	Child support cases in which the custodial parent is not receiving public assistance.
offline	Not directly computer-accessible. This usually pertains to data processing steps which can be completed by the computer without user intervention.
online	An online application is one in which the user program shares a portion of the main computer memory. Contrasted usually with batch processing, in which data is collected for subsequent processing.
regional-level CSES	A cluster of counties sharing a common data base housed in a single central registry/clearinghouse and operated at the regional level.
software	The programs or instructions that cause data to be processed in a computer, and their associated documentation. Contrasted with hardware, which is the physical equipment used in data processing.
software transportability	The ability to take a program written and working on one computer and to run it without modification on a different computer.

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table driven	Programs or routines running items that may change variables without changing the program itself.
table maintenance	A technique used to restore and update information maintained in tables.
terminal	A special-purpose input and/or output device--often using a keyboard and sometimes a CRT-- which receives and/or transmits data.
transaction file	File containing new data used to update an existing master file.
Virtual Storage Access Method (VSAM)	VSAM is a file control overlay technique.