ABSTRACT
        Designed specifically for state and local managers
and supervisors who plan, direct, and operate child support
enforcement programs, this workbook provides a four-part,
step-by-step process for identifying needed information and methods
of using the information to operate an effective program. The process
consists of: (1) determining what information is needed to monitor
and evaluate each function; (2) ascertaining what data must be
collected to obtain the desired information; (3) displaying the
information in a format which can be understood by staff; and (4)
analyzing the data. The workbook is organized in two parts. Part 1,
including chapters 1 through 5, describes a process for identifying
the types of information that should be collected for intake,
location, establishment, enforcement, and collection and
distribution. Part 2, consisting of chapters 6 through 11, discusses
how that information can be used by management to assess the overall
performance of an office in the areas of collections, expenditures,
cost benefit analysis, and caseload and staffing allocations. Each
chapter contains exercises and worksheets which provide practical
experience in applying the concepts learned. (RH)

Improving Program Performance Through Management Information

A WORKBOOK

Improving Program Performance Through Management Information

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For further information, additional materials, or assistance in the use of these materials, contact the:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

- *Do you find yourself buried in stacks of computer printouts and still don't have the information you need?*

- *Do you panic whenever you are asked for information about your office because you haven't been collecting the information, or because it will take the entire staff 3 days to compile it?*

- *Have you ever found yourself in an appraisal session with one of your employees wishing you had objective documentation on his or her performance?*

- *Did your State legislature pass child support legislation and a year later ask you for information to document the effect of the legislation?*

If some of these scenarios describe your office, this <u>Workbook</u> is for you.

THE INCREASING NEED FOR MANAGEMENT INFORMATION

Since its inception in the mid 1970s, the Child Support Enforcement Program has increasingly become more complex and sophisticated. The purpose of the Child Support Enforcement Program is to enforce support obligations owed by absent parents to their children, to locate absent parents, to establish paternity and to obtain child support. Across the country, child support enforcement budgets have increased dramatically and the passage of progressive child support legislation has provided States with new enforcement techniques to enhance the Program. Also, changes in the level of Federal financial participation have required jurisdictions to assess their performance in relation to collections critically. These increasing demands make it more difficult and more important than ever for managers to provide the leadership needed to operate a successful child support enforcement program. Part of the answer to this dilemma is <u>information</u>.

The 1980s have been called the decade of information and in child support, as in any other field, information is the key factor that will allow managers to handle the increasing complexity of doing business today successfully. Unfortunately, many managers do not have the information they need to make critical decisions and to operate cost effective programs. Without an effective management information system, managers will not be able to meet the challenge of operating efficient child support programs in the decades ahead.

This publication does not assume to present a "model" management information system for child support offices. Nor is it a guide to assist managers in assembling the required State and Federal reports. Rather, it offers a process for identifying what information is needed, what data need to be collected, and how this information can be used to help operate a more efficient office.

UNDERSTANDING MANAGEMENT INFORMATION: BASIC CONCEPTS

Before we get started, let's review some basic concepts pertaining to management information.

What is a Management Information System? A management information system (MIS) is an organized method of providing past, present, and projected information on an organization. It provides information to support the day-to-day operation of a program and assists managers in decisionmaking by providing feedback on the status of the program. Based on this feedback, the manager can initiate changes in the operation of the office when necessary.

A child support MIS can provide information on a caseload from intake through distribution. For example, it can track how many cases the office has located or enforced each month. It can track the amount of collections received, thereby providing a monthly indicator of the office's performance.

Is a MIS a Computer System? A MIS is not an automated data processing (ADP) system. As a rule, an ADP system deals with storing, retrieving, sorting, duplicating, and classifying data. In contrast, MIS takes data and transforms it, through calculation and/or summarization, into information that can be used to manage an office. This information can be obtained through either a manual or computerized system. For example, a MIS can track the total amount of collections received by an office, as well as by each caseworker. Also, a MIS can indicate how much money was collected through each enforcement mechanism.

This distinction between an ADP and MIS system is important because it allows a manager to actively participate in the design of a MIS without fear that technical data processing know-how will be overwhelming or intimidating. A MIS can be developed with or without the aid of a computer. The main advantage to an automated system is the speed and accuracy of producing reports.

Why is the distinction between an ADP and a MIS important? Unfortunately, many managers have less than a positive attitude about the whole concept of management information. This attitude exists because many managers think of management information as synonymous with data processing—complete with disc drives, storage capacity, and bytes. Since many managers do not fully understand computers, many feel that they cannot contribute to the development of a management information system for their office. As a result, often the data processing staff determines the format and information a manager receives.

The distinction between an ADP and a MIS system is important because a Child Support Enforcement Program manager can develop and define information needs without having a computer background.

What is the purpose of a MIS? The purpose of a MIS is to record and report on the past and present status of a program. The reports provide a basis for assessing program performance. Specifically, a MIS can assist managers in determining backlogs or problem areas and in planning future activities for the office.

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Who should be involved in developing a MIS? A MIS should be developed by the people who will use the system or be affected by it. Therefore, various levels of staff should be involved in the development of the system. Although this will vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, it will probably include office managers, unit supervisors, enforcement officers, clerks or data input operators, accounting clerks, investigators, attorneys, and systems analysts. In addition to having insight into information needs and problem areas, their early participation in the project will facilitate in an easy transition and will assist in overcoming resistance to change.

What type of MIS problems do managers encounter? Most managers complain that they are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of information they receive. The old saying about the importance of quality versus quantity is particularly true in the area of management information. Too many offices have fallen victim to the "more is better" concept. A key question to ask when determining whether to collect a piece of information is: "Is the cost of collecting, storing, and retrieving the information worth the benefit to be derived from it?" If the answer is a definite "no" or even a "maybe"--then the staff should discontinue collecting this information.

What are the benefits of a good MIS? A good MIS can facilitate coordination within and between child support units. It can assist in tracking performance and can provide relevant and accurate information for rational management decisionmaking. In addition, by selectively determining what data are needed for an organization, the amount of staff time spent on collecting unneeded information can be reduced significantly.

Who will use the MIS? The term "Management Information System" infers that the system will be used primarily by management. Actually, a MIS is used by staff at all levels throughout the organization. Specifically, a MIS can be viewed in terms of three levels of reports: program-wide reports primarily for top management; functional reports for supervisors; and individual reports for the staff members.

HOW A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM SHOULD WORK

In developing a MIS, managers need to define key result areas, that is, they need to decide what it is they want to accomplish. For example, the office may want to increase collections by 20 percent or increase the number of paternities established by 10 percent. Deciding what it is you want to accomplish is important since as the saying goes "you can't get there if you don't know where you are going." With the key result areas defined, the office knows where it is going.

The next step is to decide how to get there. This direction is provided by breaking down the key result areas into activities, which are measurable, and will indicate performance. These "key indicators" in turn determine what activities must be performed by each functional unit and individual staff in order to achieve the desired accomplishments. For example, if the office wants to increase collections by 20 percent, it may require that each caseworker execute 10 additional wage assignments each month.

As the staff is working toward these goals, the MIS will provide information to the manager on the performance of the office. Based on this feedback, managers can make changes, as necessary, to ensure that the office is working toward the key result areas. For example, a MIS can indicate if each caseworker is executing the 10 additional wage assignments each month. If an employee is not working up to this goal, the manager can inquire into the reason and make any necessary changes or adjustments to correct the situation.

There are numerous courses and books on how to implement a results-oriented approach to managing an office. The Bibliography lists several publications on this subject that may be helpful.

PURPOSE OF THE WORKBOOK

Over the years, both manual and automated systems were developed by States and localities for locating absent parents, establishing and enforcing support orders, and processing collections more efficiently. However, today many managers of child support enforcement programs still do not have the management information necessary to make informed decisions and to operate cost effective programs.

The purpose of this Workbook is to take the mystery out of developing and using management information in a child support enforcement office. The Workbook has been specifically designed for State and local managers and supervisors who must plan, direct, and operate child support enforcement programs. The Workbook provides a step-by-step process to identify what information is needed and how this information can be used to operate a more effective program.

ORGANIZATION OF THE WORKBOOK

The Workbook is organized in two parts. Part One (Chapters 1-5) provides the reader with a process for identifying the types of information that should be collected for the Intake, Locate, Establishment, Enforcement, and Collection and Distribution functions. Part Two (Chapters 6-11) discusses how this information can be used by top management to assess the overall performance of an office in the areas of collections, expenditures, cost benefit analysis, and caseload and staffing allocations.

Each chapter contains exercises and worksheets that provide you with practical experience in applying the information presented. The Workbook can be used selectively, i.e., you can read the entire Workbook or only those chapters that apply to your office. In doing the exercises, it is suggested that you use actual data obtained from your own office and State. In this way, the Workbook can be tailored to the specific needs and responsibilities of your office.[1]

1/ The Workbook also can be a valuable tool when performing a needs analysis, which is required when developing or enhancing a child support enforcement automated system.

PART ONE
Assessing Your Child Support Enforcement Management Information Needs

Child support enforcement programs across the country vary from fully integrated programs in which all activities are under one director, to highly fragmented programs in which functions are split among three or more different organizations. Additionally, the definition of what constitutes the case functions of Intake, Locate, Establishment, Enforcement, and Collection and Distribution can vary according to the jurisdiction. For example, in some offices the Intake function may consist of staff conducting the initial interview with the recipient or attempting to locate the absent parent, while in another office, Intake may consist of setting up the physical file and prioritizing the case. Regardless of how programs or functions are organized, each function is always performed and the general tasks are consistent throughout the Child Support Enforcement Program. Therefore, it is possible to generalize about the type of information that is needed to manage a child support enforcement program and its units.

Another important aspect to consider is that the six child support functions are interrelated. The total performance of a child support enforcement program will depend on how well each function performs independently and in relation to the rest of the office. The Intake function—the point at which cases enter a child support enforcement office—sets the child support enforcement process in motion. The number of referrals, indicates the composition of the caseload, the quality of the referrals, and the presence of any backlogs will indicate how many and what types of resources a manager will need. The location of an absent parent is needed before the caseworker can establish or enforce a case. Establishment is an essential step in the child support enforcement process for without an order or stipulation the child support enforcement agency has no legal authority to collect child support. The amount of collections received by an office is dependent upon the number of cases established as well as the number of cases enforced.

How does a manager determine what information is needed to monitor and evaluate the performance of each function? Figure 1 illustrates a four-step process that can assist managers in determining these needs. The first step in this process is referred to as **Information Needed**. A manager needs to ask, "What do I really need to know about this function?" and, "What are some key indicators of performance which should be monitored?" This first step is the most critical step in the process. All too often, managers interpret this to mean that they should collect more information when in fact they should collect only what they really need. Determining what information is needed leads to the second step in the process, **Data Collection**. The manager decides what data must be collected in order to obtain the desired information. Once the data have been collected, the third step is to determine how to display this information in a format that can best be understood by the staff. This is referred to as **Reporting**. The fourth and final step is **Data Analysis**. Based on the information that has been collected, a manager can objectively assess the operation, identify any problems, and take remedial action if necessary.

Figure 1
Four-Step Process for Developing and Using Information

MANAGEMENT
INFORMATION
SYSTEMS

STEP 4
DATA ANALYSIS

STEP 3
REPORTING

STEP 2
DATA COLLECTION

STEP 1
INFORMATION NEEDED

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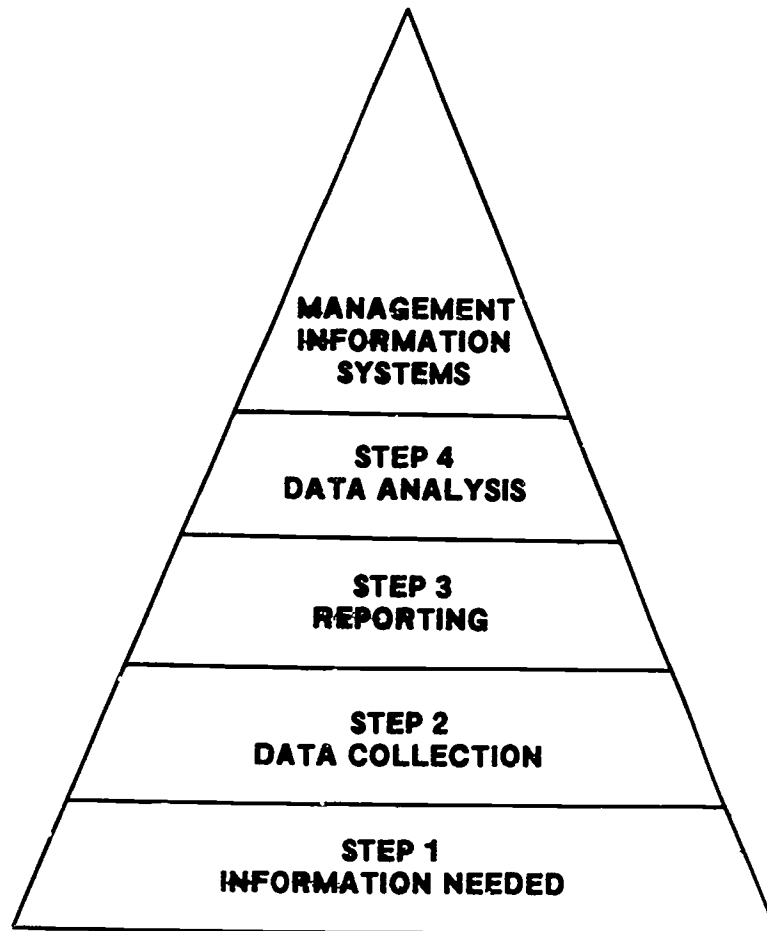
How can this four-step process assist a manager in operating a more effective office?

- It reduces the amount of staff time spent on collecting unnecessary information.

- It provides management with feedback on the performance of the units and individual staff.

- It eliminates "information glut," i.e., too many reports that are either unnecessary or are in the wrong format to be useful.

- It reduces computer costs by reducing the amount of data that need to be stored, sorted, and retrieved.

Now, let's see how this process can be applied to a child support enforcement office. It is suggested that you first read the section on Intake since it provides the most comprehensive description of the process. Then you can proceed to those sections which apply to your office.

CHAPTER 1
Intake

As indicated previously, the definition of Intake may vary. However, for the purpose of this Workbook, Intake will consist of the following activities:

- Obtaining the referral document (from the Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program, foster care, non-AFDC client, etc.)

- Screening the referral to determine if the information is complete and accurate.

- Determining if the case is a new referral or a reopening.

- Establishing a physical file.

- Routing the case to the appropriate unit or individual responsible for processing the case.

STEP 1: INFORMATION NEEDED

What kind of information should a manager know about Intake? Although the answer depends upon the specific jurisdiction, the following are some questions a manager may want to ask:

- How many cases is the office receiving each month?

- How many and what type of cases are being referred to the office?

- How many cases are being returned to IV-A due to incomplete information on the referral?

- Is there a backlog of cases at the Intake level? How long have the cases been in Intake?

- How long do clients and absent parents have to wait to see a caseworker?

- How much money has been collected through application fees?

Why is this information important? What does it tell a manager? What does it indicate about the office? How can this information be used to improve the performance cf the unit? There are several immediate benefits that a manager with this information can realize.

First, by tracking the number of referrals received each month, a manager can develop a referral trend for the office. This will indicate if the office has enough staff to process the caseload. For example, if the number of referrals continues to increase each month, a manager may consider hiring additional staff. This information can then be used to justify additional positions. However, if the prospect of additional staff is not feasible, a manager may need to evaluate how resources are being used, realign staff, or perhaps reassess the case prioritization system in the office. On the other hand, trend analysis

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may indicate that the fluctuation in the number of referrals is seasonal and additional full time staff is not required.

Second, the composition of the caseload determines the staffing allocation in an office. Therefore, it is important to know not only how many, but also what types of cases are referred to the office. For example, in some offices, non-AFDC cases are handled separately from AFDC cases. Therefore, a shift in either the number of AFDC or non-AFDC cases may require that staff be shifted to accommodate the fluctuating caseload. Also, a manager may want to know how many paternity and incoming URESA cases have been referred since these cases require different staff resources and often take longer to process.

Third, if there appears to be a problem with the quality of referrals, a manager may want to monitor the number of cases returned to IV-A. By monitoring the number of returned cases, a manager can determine if the IV-A interface needs to be improved.

Fourth, if there is a backlog of cases in Intake, a manager can monitor the extent of, and determine the reasons for, the backlog.

Fifth, as the manager of a public service program, you may want to know if the office is providing fast and efficient service to clients and absent parents. To do this, you can monitor how long people must wait to see a caseworker.

Exercise. Are you collecting information that will allow you to evaluate the Intake unit? We have provided some ideas on the type of information a manager might want to know about Intake. In the space provided below, write down the information or key indicators you feel your office needs to know about Intake.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                           │
│                    Information Needed--Intake                             │
│                                                                           │
│      1.  _____  _____    │
│          _____      │
│                                                                           │
│      2.  _____      │
│          _____      │
│                                                                           │
│      3.  _____       │
│          _____      │
│                                                                           │
│      4.  _____      │
│          _____      │
│                                                                           │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

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STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION

Now that you have determined what information you need, the next step is to determine what data need to be collected to provide this information.

Let's suppose that you want to know how many and what types of cases the office is receiving and if there are any backlogs. What data need to be collected in order to obtain this information? One way to find out is to break down the information needed into basic questions and then list the data that are needed to answer these questions as illustrated in Figure 1-1. For example, to determine how many and what types of cases the office is receiving, you would first need to know the number of AFDC and non-AFDC cases that have been received. Of these cases, how many are paternity, URESA, establishment, and enforcement cases? To determine if there are any backlogs, you would need to know the date the cases were received in the office and the date the cases were transferred to the next function.

Figure 1-1
Intake Data Collection Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now? Yes	No
• How many and what types of cases is the office receiving?	• No. of AFDC cases	X	
	• No. of non-AFDC cases	X	
	• Total no. of cases	X	
	• No. of enforcement cases		X
	• No. of establish-ment cases		X
	• No. of URESA cases		X
	• No. of paternity cases`		X
• Is there a backlog of cases at Intake?	• Date case received in Intake	X	
	• Date case referred to next function		X

With this data, a manager can determine not only how many cases have not been processed, but how long they have been in the office.

Exercise. In the Information Needed section, you identified specific information on Intake that was needed by your office. Now complete the "Intake Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 1-2) to determine what Intake data you need. Then indicate in the last column whether you are currently collecting that information.

Figure 1-2
Intake Data Collection Worksheet

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No

What additional information or data are you currently collecting at Intake? Is the information being used and is it really needed? To help answer this question, let's assess what additional information you are currently collecting at Intake. The "Intake Data Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 1-3) can assist in this effort. List the information you are currently collecting on Intake in the left-hand column and then answer the following questions:

Figure 1-3
Intake Data Analysis Worksheet

What Data Are You Currently Collecting?	Who Is Using This Information?	Why Is This Information Needed?	Continue To Collect?	
			Yes	No

- Who uses this information?

- Why is this information needed?

- Is it really necessary to collect this information?

If your answer to the last question is no, you may consider not collecting this information.

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STEP 3: REPORTING

Now that you have determined the data that need to be collected for Intake, the next step is to present this data in a format that can be used by the staff. Essentially, three levels of reports will be needed. A report will be needed for the manager, the supervisor, and the Intake caseworkers. The format and content of the data will vary based on the needs of these three positions. For example, while caseworkers need detailed case information to process cases ffectively, supervisors and managers need collective information to maintain and evaluate the performance of a unit or office.

Let's take our example of the manager who wants to know how many and what type of cases were being received in Intake and if there were any backlogs. What information does the manager, the unit supervisor, and the caseworker need? The "Sample Intake Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 1-4) illustrates one way to determine this.

Figure 1-4
Intake Report Format Analysis Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker
• No. of AFDC cases	X	X	X
• No. of non-AFDC cases	X	X	X
• Total no. of cases	X	X	X
• No. of Paternity cases		X	X
• No. of URESA cases		X	X
• No. of other Interstate cases		X	X
• No. of Establishment cases		X	X
• No. of Enforcement cases		X	X
• No. of Locate cases		X	X
• Total no. of cases in backlog	X	X	X
• No. cases in backlog 1 week		X	X
• No. cases in backlog 2 weeks		X	X
• No. of cases in backlog 3 weeks or longer		X	X

In the left column we have listed the data that are needed. In the columns to the right we have illustrated what data are needed by the manager, supervisor, or caseworker. As indicated, the manager and the supervisor would need to know the total number and types of cases received by the office. The caseworker would probably not want or need to know this information. However, the manager, supervisor, and caseworker would all want to know if there is a backlog. Additionally. the caseworker would need a detailed report indicating exactly which cases need to be worked.

Exercise. In the previous section, you identified the data you needed to collect. Now, continuing with that example, fill out the "Intake Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 1-5). This exercise will ensure that your staff has the information they need to do their jobs and that they are not being burdened with irrelevant and costly reports.

Figure 1-5
Intake Report Format Analysis Worksheet

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker

Now that you have determined who needs what data, the next step is to arrange the data in a report format. Illustrated below are two sample report formats based on the previously identified data: one for the manager or supervisor of the unit (Figure 1-6) and one for the Intake caseworker (Figure 1-7).

Figure 1-6
Intake Unit Report
(Sample)

Date: _____

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total no. of cases received	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of non-AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total no. of cases processed	_____	_____	_____	_____
No. of cases referred to:				
• Locate	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Establishment/Paternity	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Enforcement	_____	_____	_____	_____
• URESA	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Other Interstate	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cases not processed within 14 days of receipt	_____	_____	_____	_____

Figure 1-7
Intake Worker Report
(Sample)

Caseworker: _____ Date: _____

Intake cases not processed

<u>Past due (Days)</u>   **Number of Cases**

14-20   _____

21-28   _____

29 or more   _____

                          Name of Absent Parent   Social Security Number or ID#

14-20 days   _____   _____
                          _____   _____
                          _____   _____
21-28 days   _____   _____
                          _____   _____
                          _____   _____
29 or more   _____   _____
                          _____   _____
                          _____   _____

Exercise. Using Figures 1-8 and 1-9, develop two Intake report formats that illustrate the information you have previously identified. The first report should be one that can be used by the Intake supervisor and the second report should be developed for the caseworkers.

Figure 1-8

Intake Unit Report Worksheet   Date:_____

Figure 1-9

Intake Worker Report Worksheet   **Date:**_____

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Report Production. As a manager, you need to ensure that your staff members have the information they need to perform their jobs. All too often, however, employees receive more information than they can possibly use. As a result, many reports are produced and never used by the staff. Also, the reporting needs of an office continually change. Periodically a manager should reassess the reporting needs of the office by meeting with the staff and deciding who really needs a report and how often a report should be produced. The "Intake Report Production Checklist" (Figure 1-10) can assist a manager in determining this information.

Figure 1-10
Intake Report Production Checklist

Name Of The Report	Who Needs The Report?	How Many Copies?	How Often?

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

The fourth and final step in the information development process is to analyze the data that have been collected. The primary purpose of collecting this data is to monitor the performance of the office in key result areas. Collecting the right kind of data will give you this information. However, sometimes data and charts define situations that require further research to determine the exact cause of a problem. Charts, such as those illustrated in this section, indicate problems or trends. However, it is the manager's responsibility to determine what factors are producing these problems or trends. In the following section we provide sample Intake data and charts and discuss the implication of the data. Sample exercises are provided that will allow readers to analyze data from their own offices.

Figure 1-11 is a chart that illustrates the number of referrals received by a county over a 2-year period.

Figure 1-11
Comparison of Incoming Referrals
(Sample)

□ Year 1   + Year 2
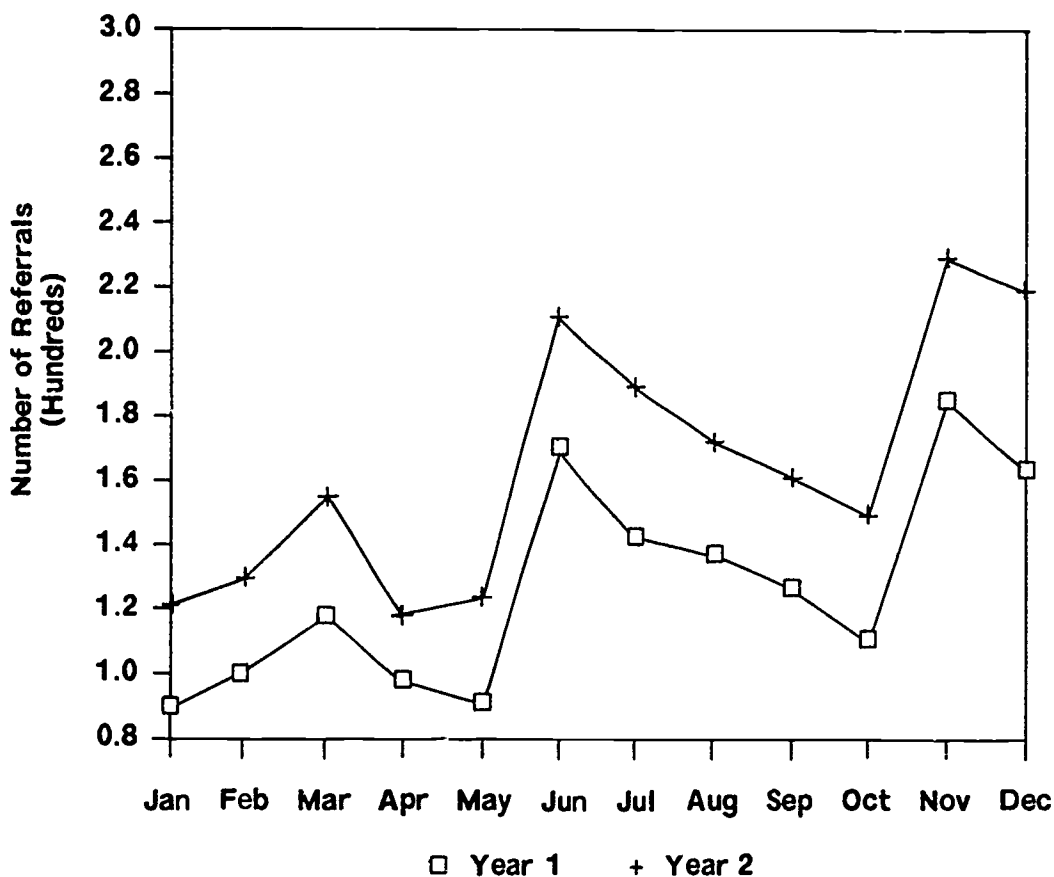
What does this chart tell us about this office?

- Yearly trends approximate each other.

- The number of referrals increased sharply in June but declined for the next 4 months.

Exercise. In the graph below, Figure 1-12, chart the total number of referrals your office received each month during the previous year. With a separate line, chart the number of referrals received each month this year.

Figure 1-12
Comparison of Incoming Referrals Worksheet
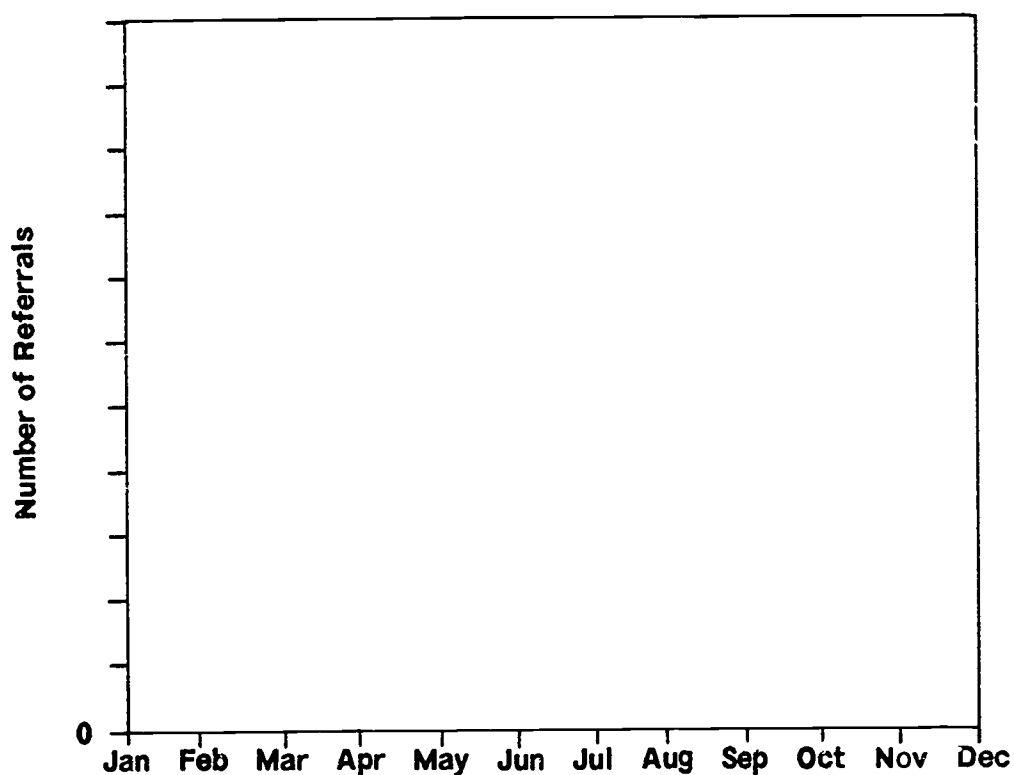
What does this chart indicate about your office? Have the number of referrals increased, decreased, or remained the same over the years?

-

-

-

Figure 1-13 is a chart which compares the number of AFDC and non-AFDC cases received in a county.

Figure 1-13
AFDC and Non-AFDC Cases Received
(Sample)
January - December
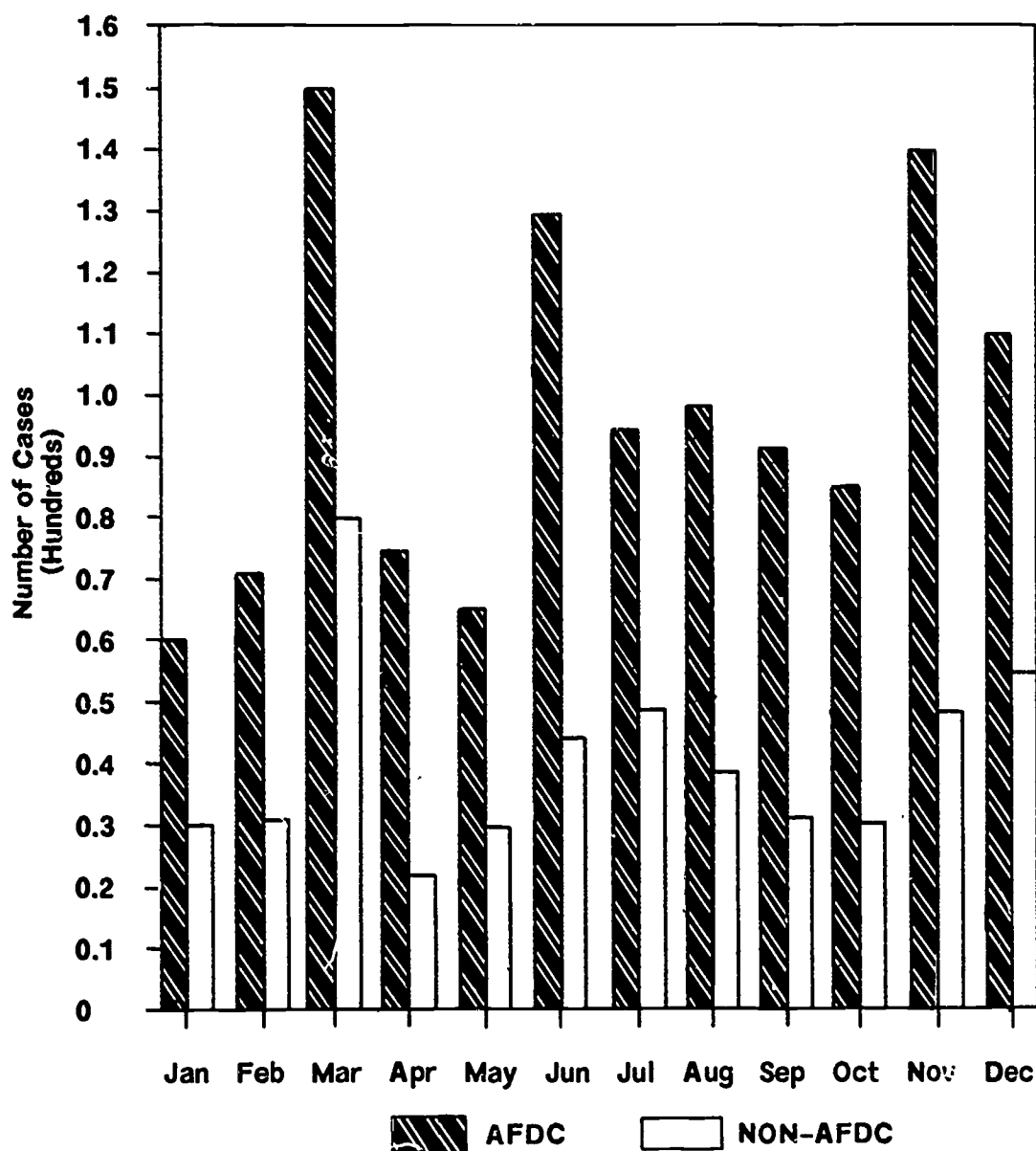
What does this chart indicate about the office?

- Each month approximately twice as many AFDC as non-AFDC cases are received.

- The rate of AFDC cases appears to be increasing at a greater rate each month than the non-AFDC cases.

- More staff may be needed to process the increasing AFDC caseload.

Exercise. Now using Figure 1-14, plot the number of AFDC and non-AFDC cases received in your office in the past year.

Figure 1-14
AFDC and Non-AFDC Cases Received Worksheet
January - December
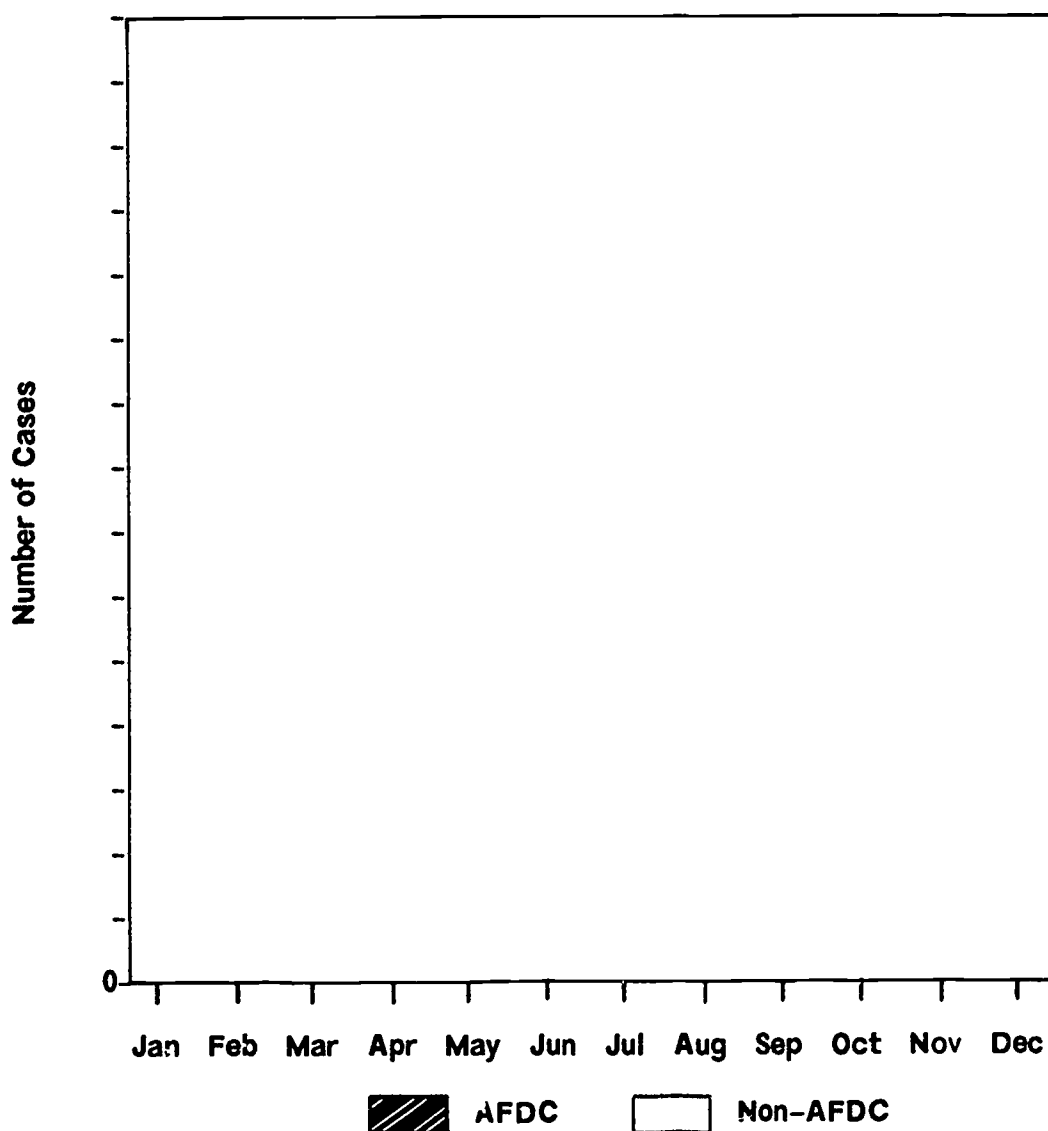
What does this chart indicate about your office?

-

-

-

SUMMARY

Intake is the point at which cases enter a child support enforcement office and case processing actually begins. The Intake function is important because it indicates how many and what types of resources will be needed to process the caseload. Information obtained at Intake will enable a manager to increase or shift staff to the various functions that will insure a smooth flow of cases through the office. To do this, a manager needs information on the number of referrals, the types of cases received, the composition of the caseload, the quality of the referrals, and the presence of any backlogs.

By tracking the number of referrals received each month, a manager can develop a referral trend for the office. A referral trend can indicate if the caseload is increasing or decreasing. Identifying the types of cases received will assist a manager in determining the proper staffing allocation for the office. For example, if the majority of referrals have court orders, staff resources should be shifted into the Enforcement function. By monitoring the number of referrals returned to IV-A, a manager can determine if more training or meetings are needed with the IV-A staff. Finally, a manager needs to monitor the development of any backlogs. Backlogs indicate that a problem in staffing or performance exists.

CHAPTER 2
Locate

Locate is generally defined as the process of verifying the residence and/or the place of employment of the absent parent (AP). In many ways, the success of a child support enforcement program depends on how effectively the staff is able to locate absent parents. Unfortunately, due to the transient nature of APs, Locate can be difficult and often requires frequent relocating.

STEP 1: INFORMATION NEEDED

From a management perspective, what information would a manager want to know about the Locate process? Specifically, a manager might want to know the following:

- How many cases are currently in Locate?

- How long have these cases been in Locate?

- How many cases required locate this month?

- Of the cases processed last month, how many Locates were made? How many cases were closed or placed in an inactive status?

- How many cases have been referred to State Parent Locator Service (SPLS) and the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS)?

- What methods are most successful in obtaining successful Locates?

- What is the Locate caseload per employee?

- How many successful Locates were made by each employee in the unit last month?

Why is this type of information needed? Without careful monitoring, hundreds of cases with good collection potential will remain unworked. The critical factors used to monitor Locate activities are timing and the type of Locate sources used.

Timing is important because the sooner you find an AP the sooner he can be brought into the child support enforcement process. Therefore, it is important to know how long a case has been in Locate. All too often, Locate becomes the graveyard for hundreds of cases staying in this function indefinitely. After a certain amount of time, if a case cannot be located, it should be placed in an inactive status for review at a later date. This will reduce the number of active cases in the caseload and will allow the caseworker to concentrate on those cases with the greatest potential. The **sources** of the Locate information are also important because some sources are more effective than others and therefore should be used first.

Exercise. In the space provided below, write down the information you feel your office should know about Locate.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                     Information Needed--Locate                        │
│                                                                       │
│   1.    _____              │
│         _____              │
│                                                                       │
│   2.    _____              │
│         _____              │
│                                                                       │
│   3.    _____              │
│         _____              │
│                                                                       │
│   4.    _____              │
│         _____              │
│                                                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION

Let's suppose that a manager has decided that the following information is needed to monitor the Locate function:

1. How many and which cases are in Locate?

2. How long have these cases been in Locate?

3. How many cases have been processed and located by each employee each month?

As can be seen on the "Sample Locate Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 2-1) in order to know how many cases are in Locate, a manager must know the total number of active and inactive Locate cases. To determine which cases are in Locate, you need to be able to identify specific cases. To do this, you would need, at a minimum, a case identifier (SSN, IV-D number, etc.) and the AP's last and first name.

By assigning a worker identification number for each case, a manager can track the number of cases assigned to each employee. And finally, to determine the total number of cases processed, you would need to know the number of cases located, closed, inactivated, and referred to FPLS or SPLS.

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Figure 2-1
Locate Data Collection Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	**No**
• How many cases are in Locate?	• No. of active locate cases	X	
	• No. of inactive locate cases	X	
	• Total no. of locate cases	X	
• What cases are in Locate?	• Case identifier–SSN	X	
	• AP last, first name	X	
• What is Locate caseload for each worker?	• Worker ID No.	X	
• How long have cases been in Locate?	• Date received in Locate		X
• What is the total number of cases processed?	• No. of cases located		X
	• No. of cases inactivated		X
	• No. of cases to FPLS		X
	• No. of cases to SPLS		X

Exercise. Now that you have determined what information you need, fill out the "Locate Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 2-2) illustrated below.

Figure 2-2
Locate Data Collection Worksheet

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No

What additional information are you currently collecting at Locate? Is the information being used and is it really needed? To help answer these questions, let's assess what additional information you are currently collecting at Locate. The "Locate Data Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 2-3) can assist in this effort. List the information you are currently collecting in the left-hand column and then answer the following questions:

- Who uses this information?

- Why is this information needed?

- Is it really necessary to collect this information?

If the answer to the last question is no, stop collecting this information.

Figure 2-3
Locate Data Analysis Worksheet

What Data Are You Currently Collecting?	Who Is Using This Information?	Why Is This Information Needed?	Continue To Collect?	
			Yes	No

STEP 3: REPORTING

Now that you have determined the data that need to be collected, you must decide what information does the manager, the supervisor, and the caseworker need?

Let's take our example of the manager who wanted to know how many and which cases are in Locate, how long they have been in Locate, and how many cases have been processed by each employee. The "Sample Locate Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 2-4) illustrates what information each person will need. For example, a manager needs to know very generic information such as the total number of cases that need Locate services or how many cases have already been processed and/or located. The supervisor and the caseworker need more specific information on the status of the cases in Locate.

Figure 2-4
Locate Report Format Analysis Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker
• No. of active Locate cases		X	X
• No. of inactive cases		X	X
• Total no. of cases	X	X	X
• Case identifiers		X	X
• Date received in Locate		X	X
• Worker ID no.		X	X
• No. of cases located	X	X	X
• No. of cases inacti- vated		X	X
• No. of cases to FPLS	X	X	X
• No. of cases to SPLS	X	X	X
• No. of cases closed	X	X	X
• Total no. of cases processed	X	X	X

Exercise. In the Data Collection section, you identified data that were needed in Locate. Now, complete the "Locate Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 2-5) illustrated below to help you determine what data are needed by your staff.

Figure 2-5
Locate Report Format Analysis Worksheet

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker

Now that you have determined who needs what information, the next step is to develop a report format to present this information. The following are examples of reports that have been developed to present Locate information. The "Sample Locate Unit Report" (Figure 2-6) provides an overview on how the entire unit is performing, whereas the "Sample Locate Unit Performance Comparison Report" (Figure 2-7) compares the amount of work performed by each employee in the Locate Unit. This is particularly helpful when performance standards have been developed for the office, and in performing employee evaluations. The "Sample Locate Worker Report" (Figure 2-8) provides the caseworker with specific information on which cases should be worked.

Figure 2-6
Locate Unit Report
(Sample)

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Locate Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of active cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of inactive cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Cases Processed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of Locates made	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of cases closed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of cases to inactive status	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cases in Process				
• Referred to FPLS	_____			
• Referred to SPLS	_____			
• 0–30 days	_____			
• 31–60 days	_____			
• 61–90 days	_____			
• 91 days or more	_____			

Figure 2-7
Locate Unit Performance Comparison Report
(Sample)

	Caseworker A	Caseworker B	Caseworker C	Caseworker D
Total No. of Locate Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of active cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of inactive cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total Cases Processed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of Locates made	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of cases closed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of cases to inactive status	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cases in Process				
• Referred to FPLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Referred to SPLS	_____	_____	_____	_____
• 0-30 days	_____	_____	_____	_____
• 31-60 days	_____	_____	_____	_____
• 61-90 days	_____	_____	_____	_____
• 91 days or more	_____	_____	_____	_____

Figure 2-8
Locate Worker Report
(Sample)

Caseworker: _____   Date: _____

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Cases Located	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total No. of Locate Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total No. of Inactive Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total No. of Active Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____

Active Cases in Process	AP Name	Identifier	Status
• 0-30 days	_____	_____	_____
• 31-60 days	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
• 61-90 days	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
• 91 days or more	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figures 2-9 and 2-10), develop some Locate reports for the Locate unit and the Locate caseworker that will illustrate the information that you have identified.

Figure 2-9

Locate Unit Report Worksheet	Date:_____

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Figure 2-10

Locate Caseworker Report Worksheet   Date:_____

Report Production. In the space provided below (Figure 2-11), indicate how many copies of the Locate reports should be produced, who gets each copy, and how often they should be produced.

Figure 2-11
Locate Report Production Checklist

Name Of The Report	Who Needs The Report?	How Many Copies?	How Often?

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Figure 2-12 illustrates how Locate information can be compared. In this Figure, the number of monthly locates performed in year 1 is compared with the number of monthly locates performed in year 2. Information like this can be developed for an office, a county, or an entire State. By plotting this type of data, a manager can evaluate how well the Locate unit is performing.

Figure 2-12
Comparison of Locates
(Sample)
Year 1 vs. Year 2

□ Year 1   + Year 2
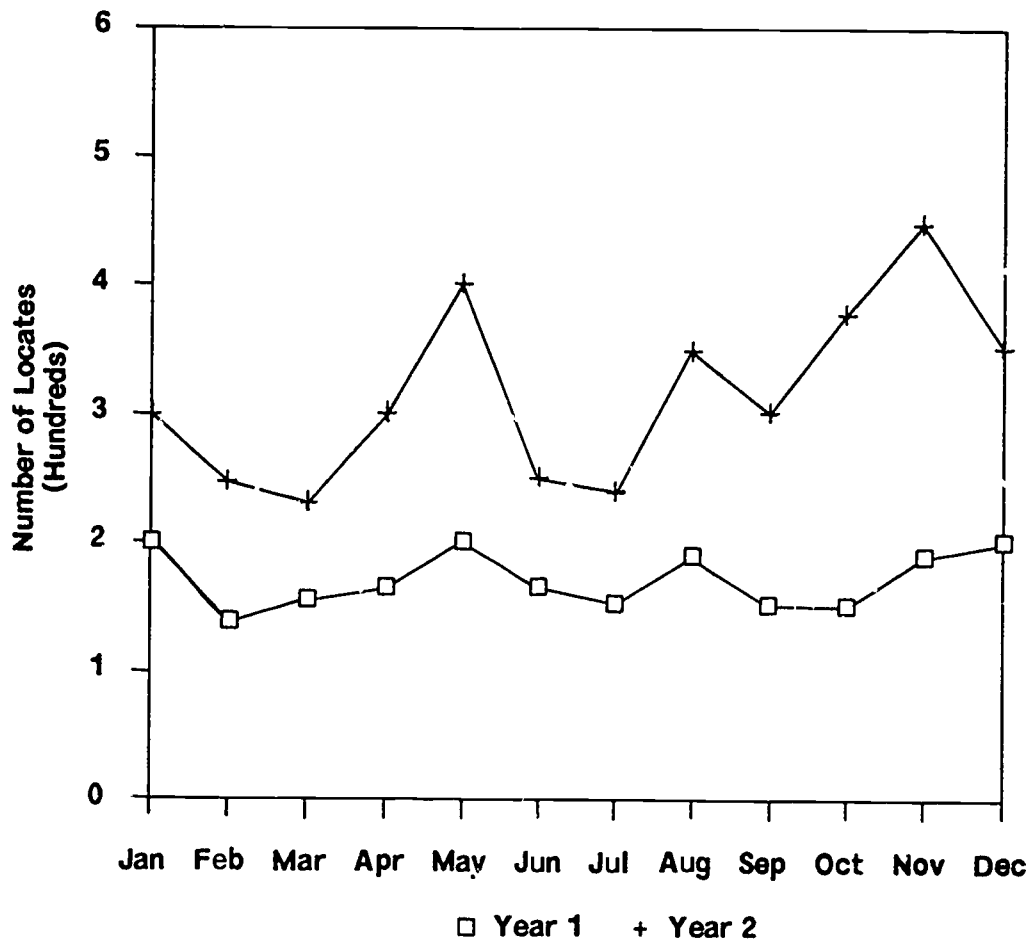
What does this chart indicate about the office?

● The office was locating approximately 100 more cases each month in year 2 than in year 1.

● There also has been a monthly fluctuation in the number of cases located in year 2 compared to year 1.

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A manager should determine what is causing these fluctuations. Are they due to additional staff or perhaps the introduction of new Locate techniques into the office?

Exercise. In the space below (Figure 2-13), chart the number of Locates performed by your office for the past 2 years.

Figure 2-13
Comparison of Locates Worksheet
Year 1 vs. Year 2

□ Year 1   + Year 2
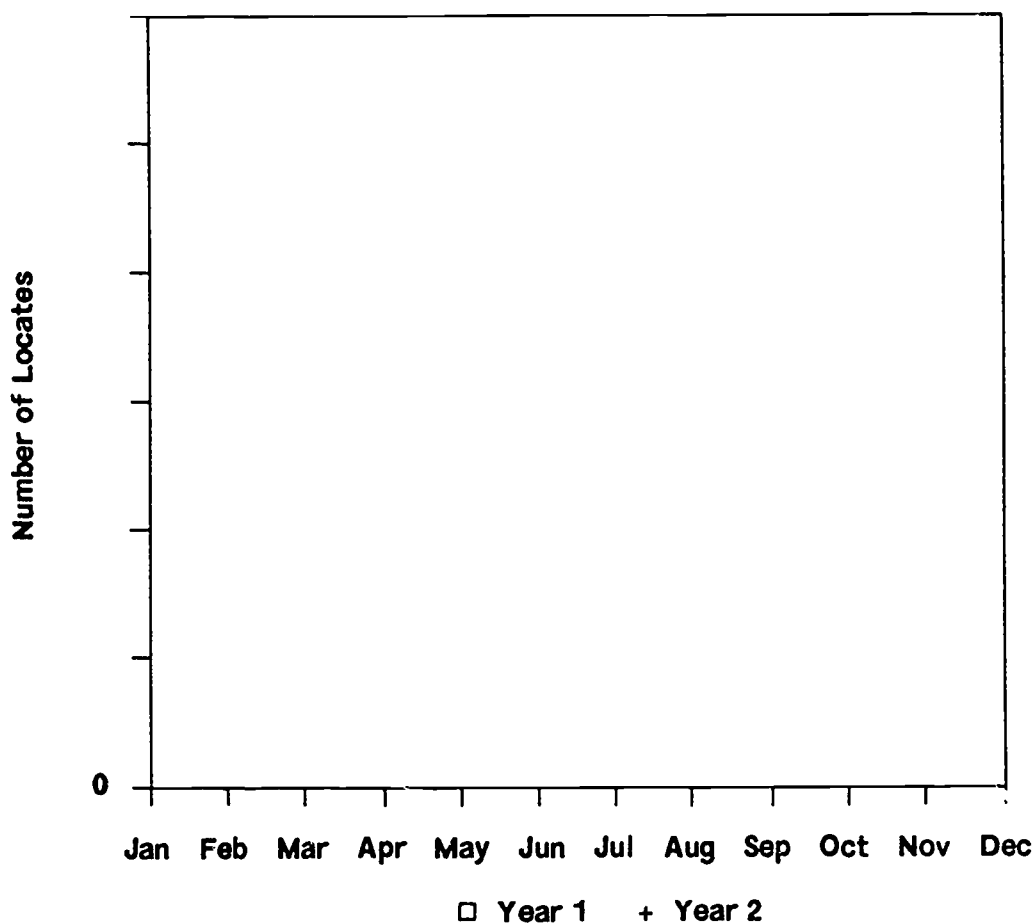
What does this chart indicate about your office? What types of changes, if any, are needed to improve the Locate operations in your office?

●

●

●

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Since time is money, a manager may want to know which Locate sources are the most successful. Figure 2-14 illustrates the number of attempts that were made through a specific Locate technique and how many of these attempts actually resulted in locating an absent parent.

Figure 2-14
Attempted and Successful Locates
(Sample)
Year to Date
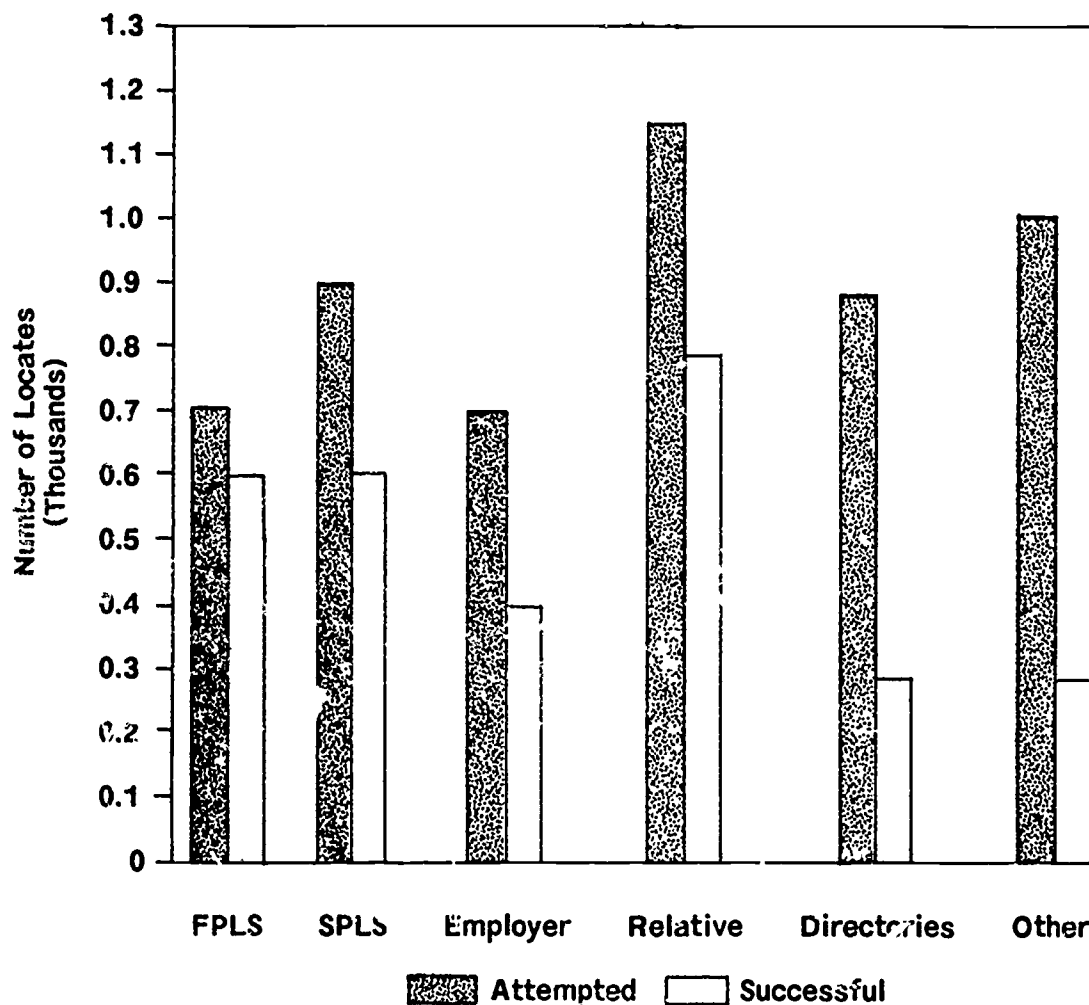
What does this chart indicate about the various Locate techniques used in this office?

- The three most successful techniques used were the FPLS, the SPLS, and contacting relatives.

- Although directories and other Locate techniques had been frequently used, they did not result in a large percentage of successful locates.

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Based on these data, the manager should encourage the staff to contact relatives and use the SPLS and FPLS as the primary Locate techniques since they appear to be the most successful. The Locate unit supervisor also may want to monitor the performance of each employee in the unit. Figure 2-15 charts the number of successful Locates performed by four caseworkers in a 6-month period.

Figure 2-15
Successful Locates by Worker
(Sample)
January – June
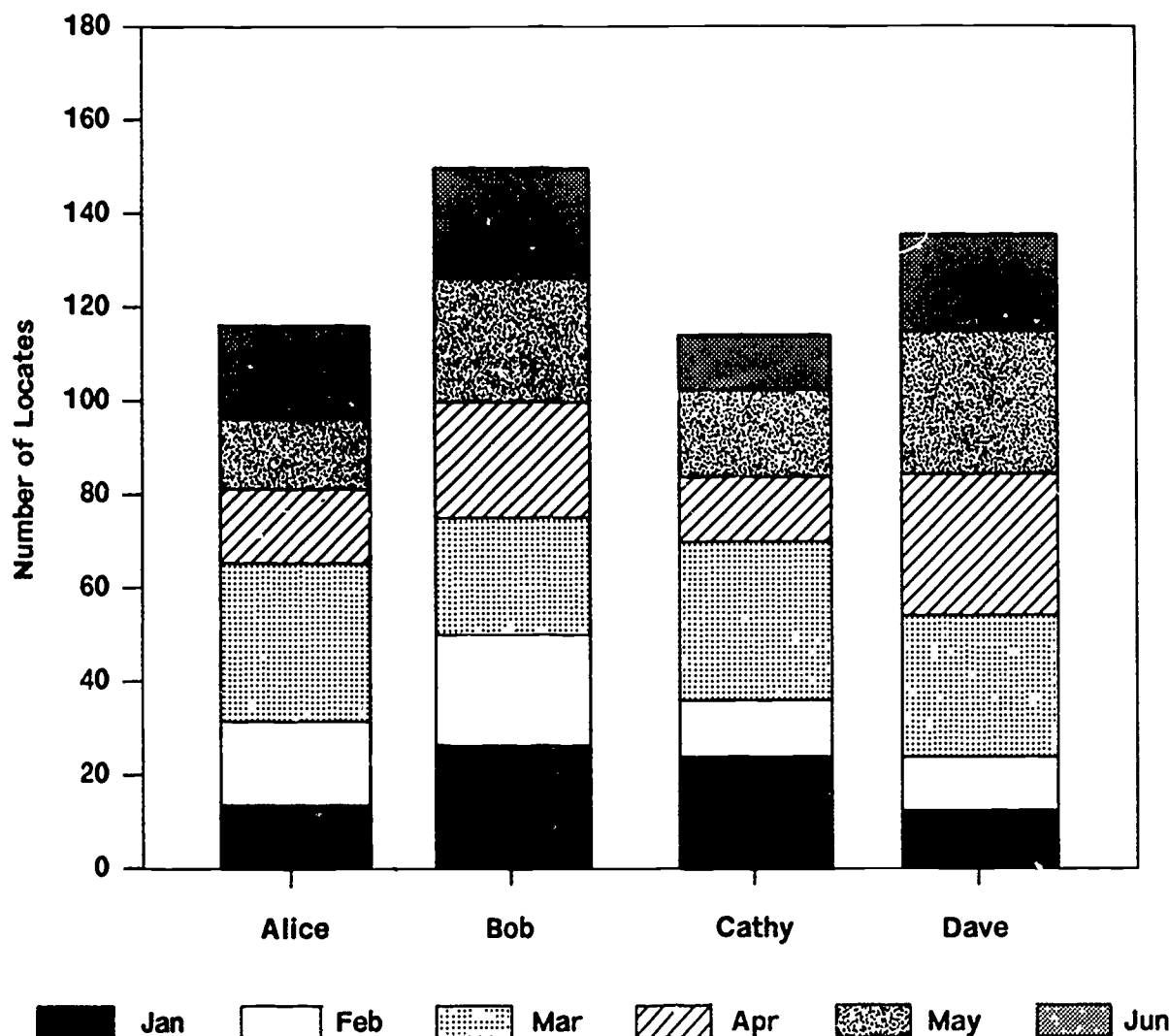
What does this chart indicate about the number of successful locates performed by each worker?

- In January, Bob and Cathy located almost twice as many absent parents as Alice and Dave.

- Bob continually locates more cases each month than the rest of the caseworkers.

SUMMARY

Locate is defined as the process of verifying the residence and/or place of employment of an absent parent (AP). Monitoring the Locate process is critical since the location of an AP is needed before the caseworker can establish or enforce a case. However, due to the transient nature of APs, Locate can be difficult and often requires frequent relocating. To monitor the Locate activities in an office a manager needs to know how many cases need Locate, how many new cases are referred to Locate each month, which Locate techniques are the most successful, and how many cases are being located each month.

Tracking the number of cases that need Locate and the number of new Locate cases received each month will enable a manager to determine if the appropriate number of staff are assigned to the Locate function. Identifying which Locate techniques provide the best Locate information will enable the staff to process more cases in a shorter amount of time. Monitoring how many cases are located each month will enable the manager to assess the productivity of the Locate unit and each staff member.

CHAPTER 3
Establishment

Each child support enforcement program agency (or its designated agent) is required to establish paternity and child support obligations through the court or other legal means such as administrative process. The establishment of a legal obligation is essential because without an order the child support enforcement agency is not authorized to collect child support payments. The establishment of a support obligation also is important in that it legalizes the amount of the support payment. In addition, an essential part of this process consists of performing a financial assessment, i.e., determining the financial ability of absent parents to pay.

STEP 1: INFORMATION NEEDED

What types of information does a manager need to monitor the establishment of cases within the office? The following are some examples:

- What is the status of the Establishment caseload?

- Of the cases that need Establishment, how many are paternity cases and how many are nonpaternity cases?

- Of the paternity cases, how many are voluntary and how many are contested?

- How long have cases been in the Establishment function?

- How many cases have required blood tests?

- Of these cases, how many have resulted in the exclusion of the absent parent?

- How many court or administrative orders are established by the staff each month?

- What is the average amount of support ordered in both types of procedures?

- How long does it take to establish a paternity case? What is the cost of establishing paternity?

Why is this information needed? What does it tell a manager and what does it indicate about the office?

First, a manager should know how many and what types of Establishment cases have been referred to the office. Assuming that the location of the absent parent is known, separation and uncontested paternity cases are generally easier to work and require fewer staff resources. A manager should, however, ensure that enough staff are allocated to these cases. Knowing how long cases have been in the Establishment function will indicate how well the unit is performing. Is there a backlog? If so, perhaps additional staff is needed. Is the staff working in the most effective manner? Perhaps the establishment process is too cumbersome. What can be done to streamline the process and allow staff to work more effectively?

Second, blood tests, although necessary, can be extremely costly. Therefore, a manager may want to monitor how many blood tests are being performed. Tracking information on these blood tests will allow the manager not only to keep a running account of the costs but also will indicate if blood testing has been an effective tool in establishing paternity. For example, if a high percentage of the blood tests result in excluding defendants, perhaps the staff needs to reevaluate the criteria they are using in submitting cases.

Third, determining how many orders are established each month provides the manager with a way to evaluate not only the performance of the unit, but also the performance of each staff member. Also, by monitoring how the orders were established and the amount of the orders, a manager can determine which method is more effective and results in higher support amounts.

Finally, a manager may want to know how long and how much it is costing to establish a paternity case. This can be of particular interest to offices in which the legal aspect of Establishment is contracted to attorneys outside of the Child Support Enforcement Program. By monitoring this type of information, a manager can project how long and how much it will cost to establish orders on a certain percentage of the caseload. Also, by comparing the average amount of time each attorney spends on each case, a manager can develop performance standards for the legal staff.

What type of information would best help you manage the Establishment part of your office? It is important to remember that you may not want or need all of the items mentioned previously.

Exercise. In the space provided below, list the information you want to know about Establishment.

Information Needed--Establishment

1. _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____

4. _____
   _____

STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION

Now that you have determined the information you need, the next step is to determine what data to collect to provide this information.

Let's suppose a manager wants to know how many cases need to be established, and, of the cases that were established, how they were established, how many were established by each employee, and the average amount of support ordered for each case. What data are needed to obtain this information? In the "Sample Establishment Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 3-1), we have listed the basic information needed and then indicated what data are needed to obtain this information. In the third column, we have indicated if the data are currently being collected.

Figure 3-1
Establishment Data Collection Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No
• How many and what types of cases need establishment?	• No. of nonpaternity cases		X
	• No. of paternity cases		X
	• Total no. of cases	X	
• Which cases need establishment?	• AP name	X	
	• AP SSN or ID no.	X	
• How were cases established?	• No. through court		X
	• No. through administrative process		X
	• No. through stipulation		X
• How many were established by each worker?	• Worker ID no.		X
• What is the average amount of support ordered?	• Actual amount of each order	X	

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For example, to determine how many and what type of cases need Establishment, a manager needs to know the number of paternity and nonpaternity cases. To determine how cases were established, a manager would need to know if the cases had been established through the court, administrative process, or stipulation. In order to obtain the average amount of support ordered, a manager would need to know the actual amount of each court order. By assigning a worker identification number for each case, the performance of each employee can be tracked.

Exercise. In the Information Needed section, you identified what information was needed regarding the Establishment of cases in your office. Now, complete the "Establishment Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 3-2) to determine what data are needed to obtain this information.

Figure 3-2
Establishment Data Collection Workshee

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	Nc

What additional information are you collecting in Establishment? Is the information being used and is it really needed?

Exercise. Assess the information you are collecting in Establishment by filling out the "Establishment Data Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 3-3).

Figure 3-3
Establishment Data Analysis Worksheet

What Data Are You Currently Collecting?	Who Is Using This Information?	Why Is This Information Needed?	Continue To Collect?	
			Yes	No

STEP 3: REPORTING

Now that you have determined what data need to be collected, let's determine what information the manager, supervisor, and the caseworker need. As indicated in the "Sample Establishment Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 3-4), the manager and the supervisor need to know generic information, such as the total number of cases that need Establishment. The caseworker needs to know specific information such as which cases need Establishment and whether they are paternity or nonpaternity cases.

Figure 3-4
Establishment Report Format Analysis Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker
● No. of nonpaternity cases		X	X
● No. of paternity cases		X	X
● Total no. of cases	X	X	X
● AP name			X
● AP SSN or ID no.			X
Cases established through:			
● Court		X	X
● Administrative Process		X	X
● Stipulation		X	X
● Worker ID no.		X	X
● Actual amount of order		X	X
● Total no. of cases processed	X	X	X

Exercise. In the previous section, you identified what data you needed to collect. Now fill out the "Establishment Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 3-5) to determine what data are needed by the manager, supervisor, and caseworker.

Figure 3-5
Establishment Report Format Analysis Worksheet

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker

Now that you have determined the data that are needed by the various staff, you need to arrange this data in a for.nat that can be easily understood by the staff.

The following are examples of reports that have been developed based on the data identified in the previous section. The "Sample Establishment Unit Report" (Figure 3-6) provides an overview of how the entire unit is performing, whereas the "Sample Establishment Unit Performance Comparison Report" (Figure 3-7) compares the amount of work performed by each employee in the Establishment unit. The "Sample Establishment Attorney (Caseworker) Report" (Figure 3-8) provides an attorney or caseworker with specific information on the cases assigned to his or her caseload.

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Figure 3-6
Establishment Unit Report
(Sample)

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Establishment Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Total No. of Paternity Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Total No. of Nonpaternity Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____

	Balance From Previous Month	Average Amount	This Month	Average Amount	Year to Date	Average Amount
Total No. of Cases Established	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Court	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Administrative Process	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Stipulation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Figure 3-7
Establishment Unit Performance Comparison Report
(Sample)

	Attorney/ Caseworker A	Attorney/ Caseworker B	Attorney/ Caseworker C	Attorney/ Caseworker D
Total No. of Establishment Cases				
• Total No. of Paternity Cases				
• Total No. of Nonpaternity Cases				
Total No. of Cases Established				
• Court				
• Average Amt. of Order				
• Administrative Process				
• Average Amt. of Order				
• Stipulation				
• Average Amt. of Order				

Figure 3-8
Establishment Attorney (Caseworker) Report
(Sample)

Attorney (Caseworker) _____   Date: _____

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Cases Established	_____	_____	_____	_____
● Total No. of Paternity Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
● Total No. of Nonpaternity Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____

Active Cases in Process	AP Name	Identifier	Status
● Paternity Cases	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
● Nonpaternity Cases	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figures 3-9 and 3-10), design Establishment reports for your Establishment unit and for your caseworkers or attorneys.

Figure 3-9

Establishment Unit Report Worksheet   Date:_____

Figure 3-10

Establishment Caseworker (Attorney) Report Worksheet   Date: _____

Report Production. In the space provided below (Figure 3-11), indicate how many copies of the Establishment reports should be produced, who should get a copy, and how often they should be produced.

Figure 3-11
Establishment Report Production Checklist

Name Of The Report	Who Needs The Report?	How Many Copies?	How Often?

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Now let's take a look at some sample information on the Establishment of cases within the office.

Figure 3-12 compares the number of cases established through court action, administrative process, and by stipulation. By analyzing data like these, a manager can determine which methods of establishing support are the most effective and, therefore, should be used most often.

Figure 3-12
Number of Cases Established
(Sample)
January – June
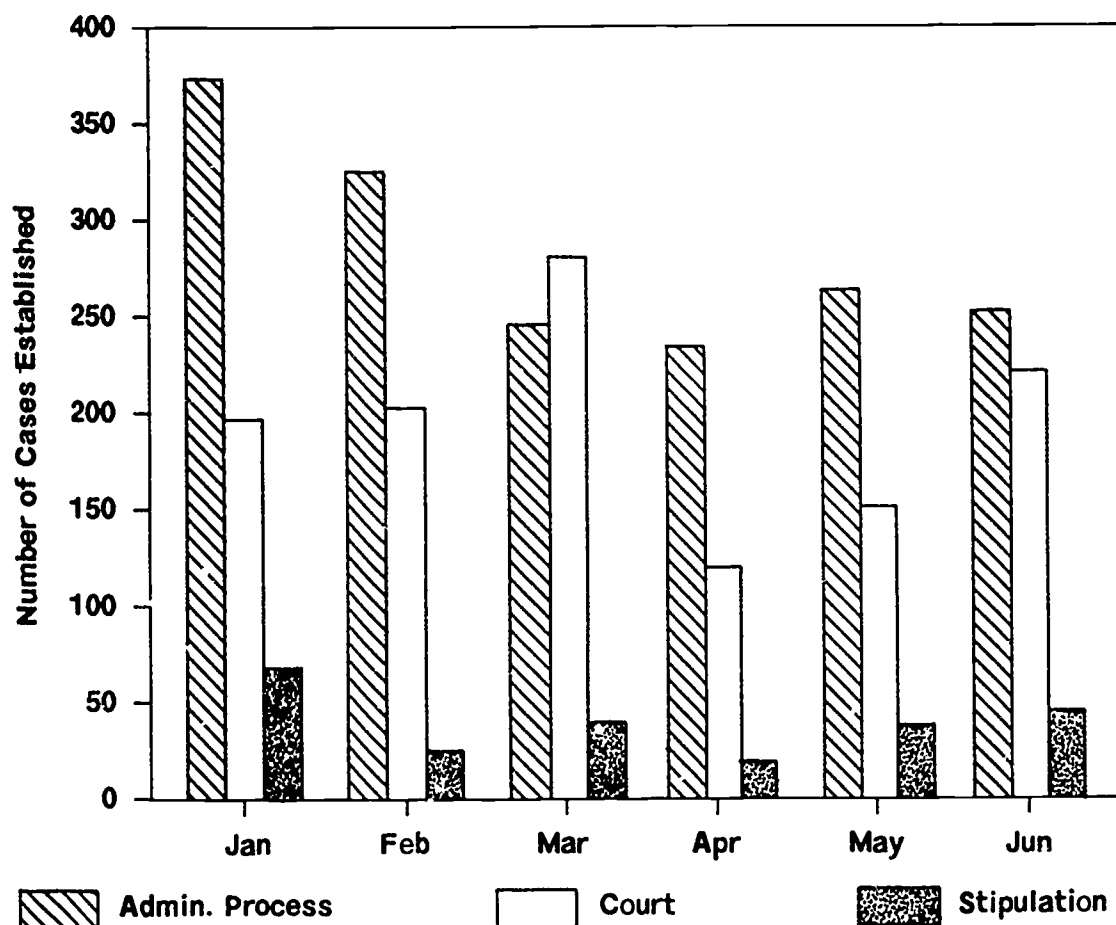
What does this chart indicate about this office?

● The majority of cases are established through administrative process.

● Very few cases are established by stipulation.

Based on this information, a manager may want to question why so few cases are established by stipulation. Have the staff had adequate training in processing stipulations? Do they feel comfortable interviewing and negotiating with the absent parent?

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 3-13), chart the number of cases established in your office through the administrative process, court, or stipulation.

Figure 3-13
Number of Cases Established Worksheet
January - June
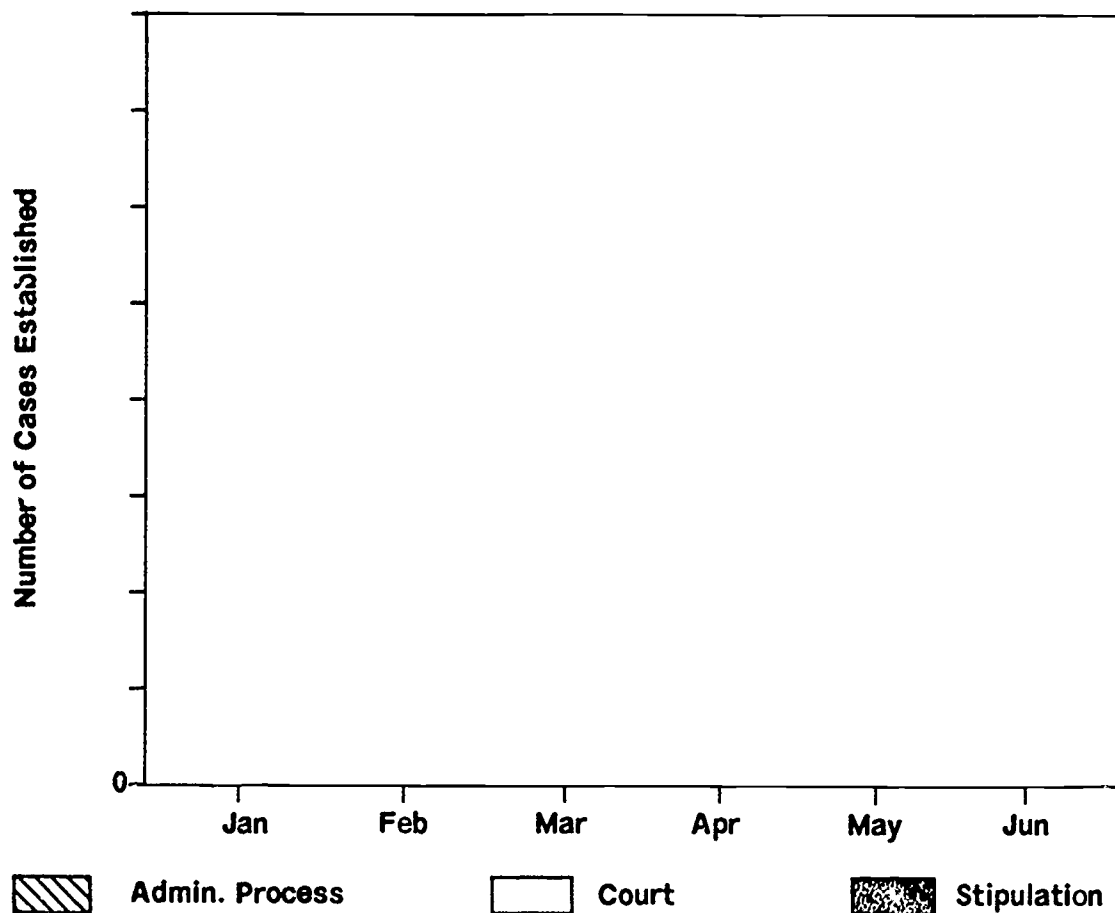
What does this chart indicate about your office? Are you still processing most of your cases through the court?

-
-
-

Figure 3-14 compares the total number of cases established over a 2-year period. Data such as these can indicate how the office is performing compared to the same period during the previous year. In so doing, a manager can identify trends or problem areas and take steps to correct the situation.

Figure 3-14
Number of Cases Established
(Sample)
January – June
Year 1 vs. Year 2

□ Year 1   + Year 2
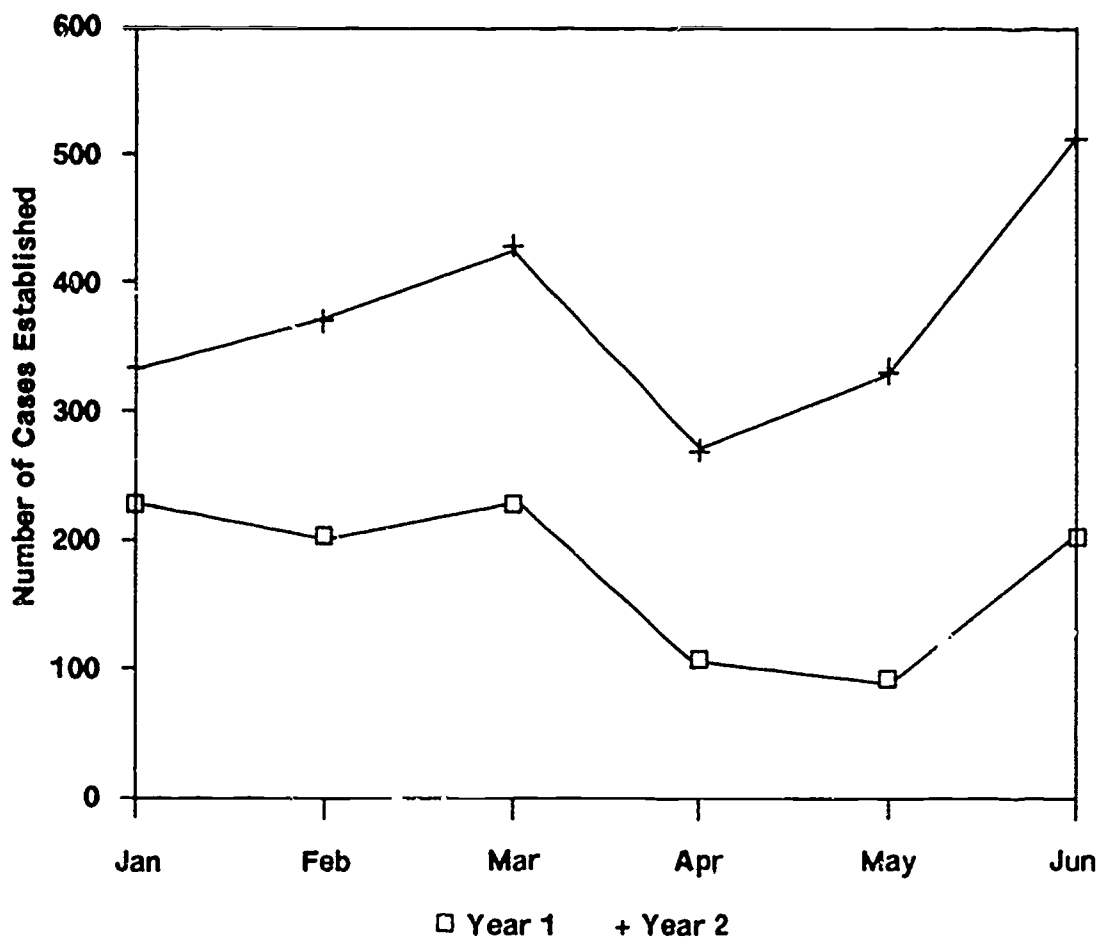
What does this chart indicate about this office?

- In year 2, the office established at least 100 more cases each month than during the previous year.

- In both year 1 and year 2, there was a substantial drop in the number of cases during the month of April.

Based on this information, a manager may want to know the reasons for the increase in orders established in year 2, and why did the number of cases established decline between March and April.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 3-15), chart the number of cases your office has established over the past 6 months.

Figure 3-15
Number of Cases Established Worksheet
Year 1 vs. Year 2

□ Year 1   + Year 2
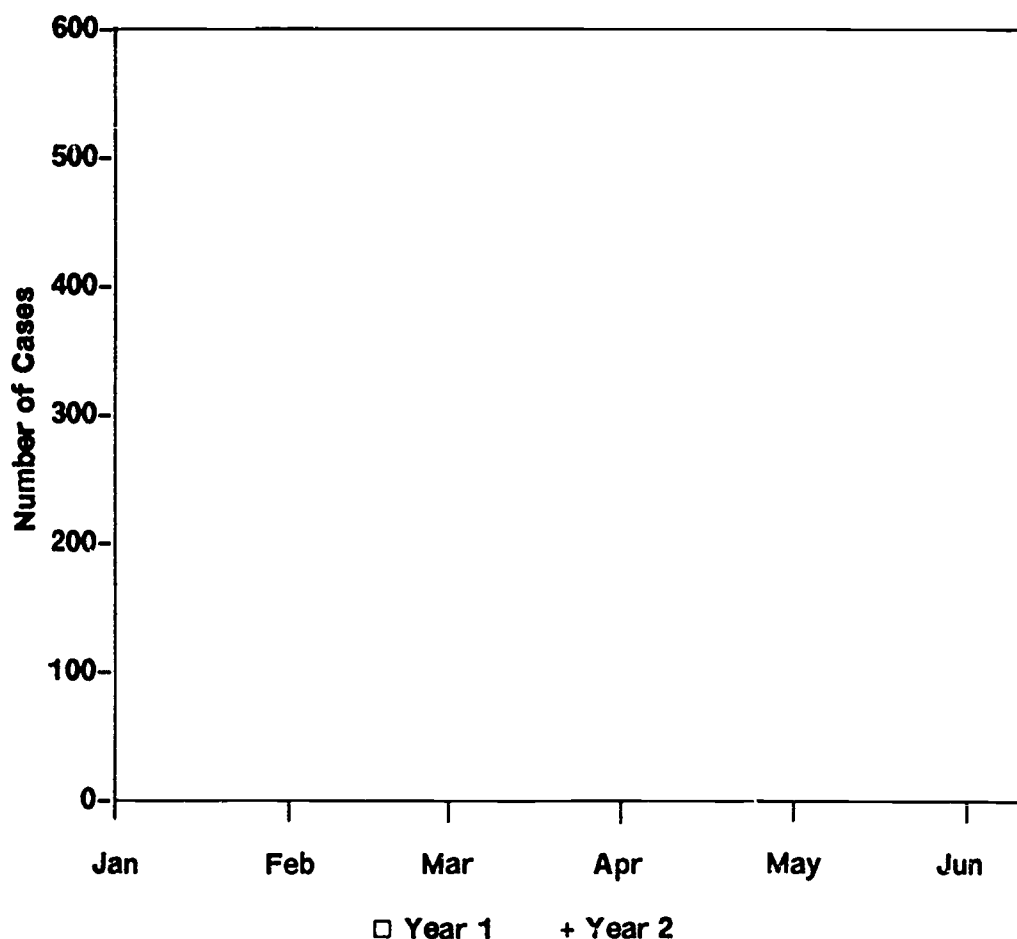
How many orders does your office establish each month? Is your office establishing approximately the same number of cases each month or are some months higher than others? Do you think the staff could be establishing more cases each month?

-
-
-

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SUMMARY

The Establishment function consists of determining paternity and support obligations through the court or other legal means. Establishment is an essential step in the child support enforcement process, for without an order or stipulation the child support enforcement agency has no legal authority to collect child support. To monitor Establishment activities in an office, a manager needs to know how many and what types of cases (paternity/nonpaternity) need to be established and how many cases are being established each month. Also, a manager needs to know if blood tests are being used effectively and how long it is taking to establish a case.

Tracking the number and types of cases that need to be established can help a manager determine if enough staff have been allocated to work these cases. Monitoring the number and how the cases were established will assist a manager in evaluating the performance of the unit and each caseworker. In addition, it can identify which Establishment method (court order, stipulation, etc.) is the most effective and results in higher support amounts. Monitoring blood testing activities will enable a manager to determine if blood tests are being used in the most efficient manner. Finally, by monitoring how long it is taking to establish cases, a manager can project how long it will take to establish orders or stipulations on a certain percentage of the caseload.

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CHAPTER 4
Enforcement

Enforcement consists of all activities associated with securing child support payments. All too often, however, these payments become irregular or cease altogether. When this happens, the child support agency must begin Enforcement procedures. Enforcement procedures often begin with initiating nonlegal activities such as sending dunning notices or making phone calls to the absent parent. However, when these attempts fail the child support enforcement office must rely on legal enforcement, such as wage assignments or garnishments, to obtain the ordered support.

In this chapter, we will discuss the various types of actions which can be taken to enforce a case. In the following chapter on Collection and Distribution, we will discuss how successful these actions have been as measured by the amount of collections received.

STEP 1: INFORMATION NEEDED

What type of information does a manager need to know about Enforcement? A manager would probably want to know the following:

- How many cases need Enforcement?

- How long have these cases been in Enforcement?

- What kinds and how many Enforcement actions have been made by the office and by each caseworker?

- Which Enforcement actions have been the most successful?

Why is information like this important? What does it tell a manager? What does it indicate about the office? And, how can this information be used to improve Enforcement activities in the office?

First, whether Enforcement activities are performed in a IV-D office or are contracted to private or State attorneys, a manager needs to know how many cases need Enforcement. This information will indicate if the manager needs to allocate more staff to this function. This is particularly important since studies have shown that collections per caseworker tend to decline as the size of their caseload increases.

Second, the aging of Enforcement cases also is important because the sooner Enforcement action is taken on a case the better the chances of obtaining regular collections. Additionally, there is a psychological advantage to enforcing orders before the arrearage becomes too large.

Third, monitoring how many and what type of Enforcement actions have been taken will allow the manager to assess how well the office and each caseworker is performing.

Exercise. What type of information are you collecting about Enforcement? Are you collecting information that will allow you to evaluate the performance of the unit?

In the space provided below, write down the information your office should be collecting to help enforce child support cases.

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                                                                       │
│                    Information Needed--Enforcement                    │
│                                                                       │
│   1. _____       │
│      _____       │
│                                                                       │
│   2. _____       │
│      _____       │
│                                                                       │
│   3. _____       │
│      _____       │
│                                                                       │
│   4. _____       │
│      _____  _____       │
│                                                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```

STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION

Now that you have determined what information you need, the next step is to determine what data need to be collected to provide this information. Let's suppose that a manager wants to know the following:

● How many and which cases need Enforcement, and is there a backlog of cases that need Enforcement?

● What kinds and how many Enforcement actions have been made by the office and by each caseworker?

In the following "Sample Enforcement Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 4-1) we have indicated what data are needed to obtain this information.

Figure 4-1
Enforcement Data Collection Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No
• How many and which cases need Enforcement?	• No. of AFDC cases with support 30 days past due	X	
	• No. of non-AFDC cases with support 30 days past due	X	
	• Total no. of cases with support 30 days past due	X	
	• AP name and SSN	X	
• How long have cases been in Enforcement?	• Date support due	X	
• How many and which type of Enforcement actions have been taken?	• No. of wage assignments		X
	• No. of liens		X
	• No. of garnishments		X
	• No. of offsets		X

To determine how many cases need Enforcement, you need to know how many AFDC and non-AFDC cases are 30 days past due. To determine which cases these are, you need to know the absent parent's name, Social Security number, or other identifying numbers. Finally, in order to determine how many and what types of Enforcement actions have been taken, you need to determine how many wage assignments, liens, garnishments, etc., have been executed.

Exercise. In the Information Needed section, you identified the information that was needed regarding the enforcement of cases within your office. Now, complete the "Enforcement Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 4-2) to determine what data elements are needed in your office.

Figure 4-2
Enforcement Data Collection Worksheet

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No

Exercise. What additional information are you currently collecting? Is the information being used and is it really needed? To help answer these questions, let's assess what additional information you are collecting about Enforcement. Complete the "Enforcement Data Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 4-3).

Figure 4-3
Enforcement Data Analysis Worksheet

What Data Are You Currently Collecting?	Who Is Using This information?	Why Is This Information Needed?	Continue To Collect?	
			Yes	No

STEP 3: REPORTING

Now that you have determined what data are needed, the next step is to determine what information the manager, the supervisor, and the caseworker need. Let's take our example of the manager who wanted to know how many cases needed Enforcement and how many and what types of Enforcement actions had been taken. The "Sample Enforcement Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 4-4) below indicates what information is needed by the manager, supervisor, and caseworker.

The manager would primarily be interested in knowing the total number of cases that need Enforcement and the total number of Enforcement actions that have been taken. The supervisor and caseworkers, however, would need to know more specific information such as how many AFDC and non-AFDC cases need Enforcement.

Figure 4-4
Enforcement Report Format Analysis Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker
● No. of AFDC cases with support 30 days past due		X	X
● No. of non-AFDC cases with support 30 days past due		X	X
● Total no. of cases 30 days past due	X	X	X
● Date support due		X	X
● Case name/identifier		X	X
● No. of wage assignments		X	X
● No. of garnishments		X	X
● No. of liens		X	X
● No. of offsets		X	X
● Total number of Enforcement actions taken	X	X	X

Exercise. In the Data Collection section you identified the information needed to monitor Enforcement activities. Now, fill out the "Enforcement Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 4-5) to determine what information is needed by the manager, supervisor, and caseworker in your office.

Figure 4-5
Enforcement Report Format Analysis Worksheet

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker

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Now that you have determined the information that the manager, supervisor, and caseworker will need, the next step is to arrange these elements in a report format that can be used by the staff. Three sample report formats have been developed based on the previously defined information. The "Sample Enforcement Unit Report" (Figure 4-6) provides an overview of how the entire Enforcement unit is performing, whereas the "Sample Enforcement Unit Performance Comparison Report" (Figure 4-7) compares the amount of work performed by each person in the Enforcement Unit. The "Sample Enforcement Worker Report" (Figure 4-8) provides the caseworker with specific information on which cases need to be worked.

Figure 4-6
Enforcement Unit Report
(Sample)

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Enforcement Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of non-AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total No. of Cases Processed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Wage Assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Garnishments	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Liens	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Offsets	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cases in Process				
• 0–30 days	_____			
• 31–60 days	_____			
• 61–90 days	_____			
• 91 days or more	_____			
	_____			
	_____			

Figure 4-7
Enforcement Unit Performance Comparison Report
(Sample)

	Caseworker A	Caseworker B	Caseworker C	Caseworker D
Total No. of Enforcement Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of non-AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
Total No. of Cases Processed	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Wage Assignments	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Garnishments	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Liens	_____	_____	_____	_____
• Offsets	_____	_____	_____	_____
Cases in Process				
• 0-30 days	_____			
• 31-60 days	_____			
• 61-90 days	_____			
• 91 days or more	_____			
	_____			
	_____			

Figure 4-8
Enforcement Worker Report
(Sample)

Caseworker: _____   Date: _____.

	Balance From Previous Month	This Month	Year to Date	Last Year To Date
Total No. of Enforcement Cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____
• No. of non-AFDC cases	_____	_____	_____	_____

Active Cases in Process	AP Name	Arrearage Identifier	Amount
• 0–30 days	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
• 31–60 days	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
• 61–90 days	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
• 91 days or more	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

In the space provided (Figures 4-9 and 4-10), develop some reports for your Enforcement Unit and for your Enforcement caseworkers based on the information you want to know about Enforcement.

Figure 4-9

Enforcement Unit Report Worksheet   Date:_____

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Figure 4-10

Enforcement Worker Report Worksheet   Date:_____

Report Production. In the space provided below (Figure 4-11), indicate how many copies of the Enforcement reports should be produced, who should get copies, and how often the reports should be produced.

Figure 4-11
Enforcement Report Production Checklist

Name Of The Report	Who Needs The Report?	How Many Copies?	How Often?

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Now let's take a look at some sample Enforcement data. Figure 4-12 charts the number of cases enforced compared to the office goal. Plotting this type of information will enable the manager to see how well the office is performing in relation to its goals.

Figure 4-12
Number of Enforcement Actions Initiated
(Sample)
January – June

Number of Actions (y-axis: 0 to 600)

Months (x-axis): Jan, Feb, Mar, Apr, May, Jun

□ Enforcement Actions   + Enforcement Goal
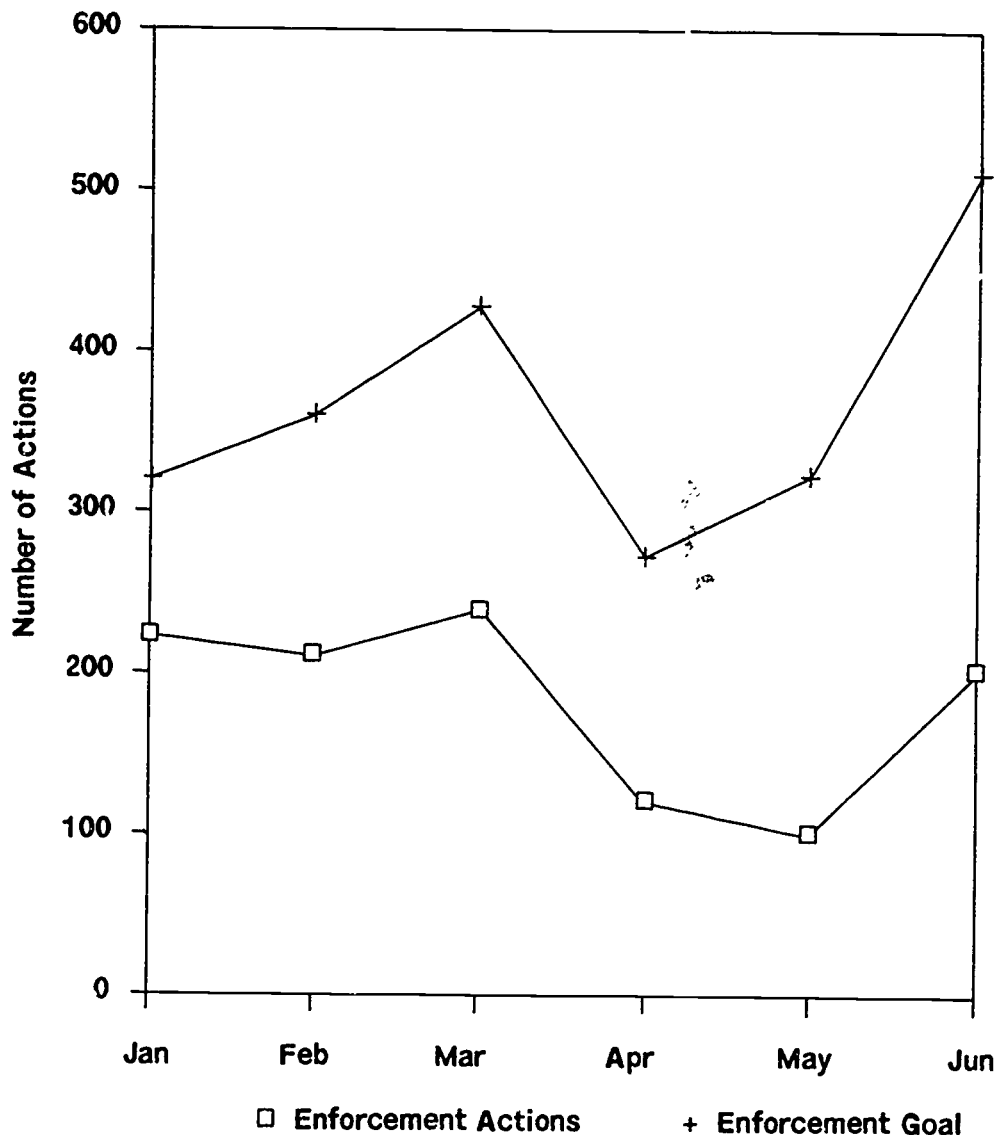
What does this information indicate about this office?

• The office has not been able to meet its Enforcement goal for any month.

• The number of Enforcement actions decreased from March through May.

Based on this information, a manager should question why the office isn't reaching its goals. Are the goals unrealistic? Or perhaps the staff needs to reassess how it is processing cases. Also, why did the number of Enforcement actions decrease from March through May?

Exercise. In the space provided (Figure 4-13), chart the number of Enforcement actions initiated in your office during the past 6 months. What does this information indicate about the success of the various Enforcement methods used in your office?

Figure 4-13
Number of Enforcement Actions Initiated Worksheet
January - June

□ Enforcement Actions   + Enforcement Goal
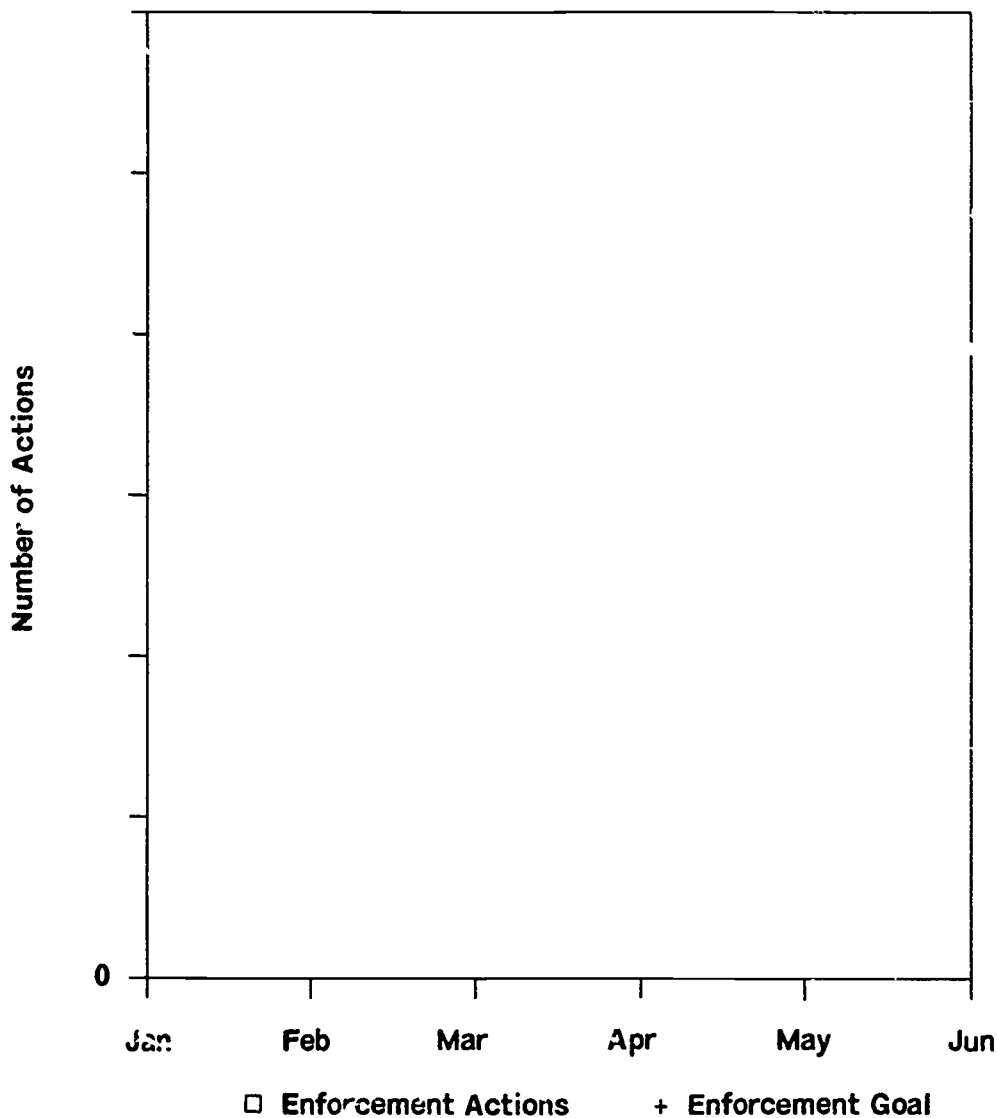
Figure 4-14 illustrates the number of cases enforced through the various Enforcement techniques. This type of chart can be developed for an entire office, a county, or even a State, to determine which Enforcement techniques are the most successful.

Figure 4-14
Number of Cases Enforced
Through Various Enforcement Techniques
(Sample)
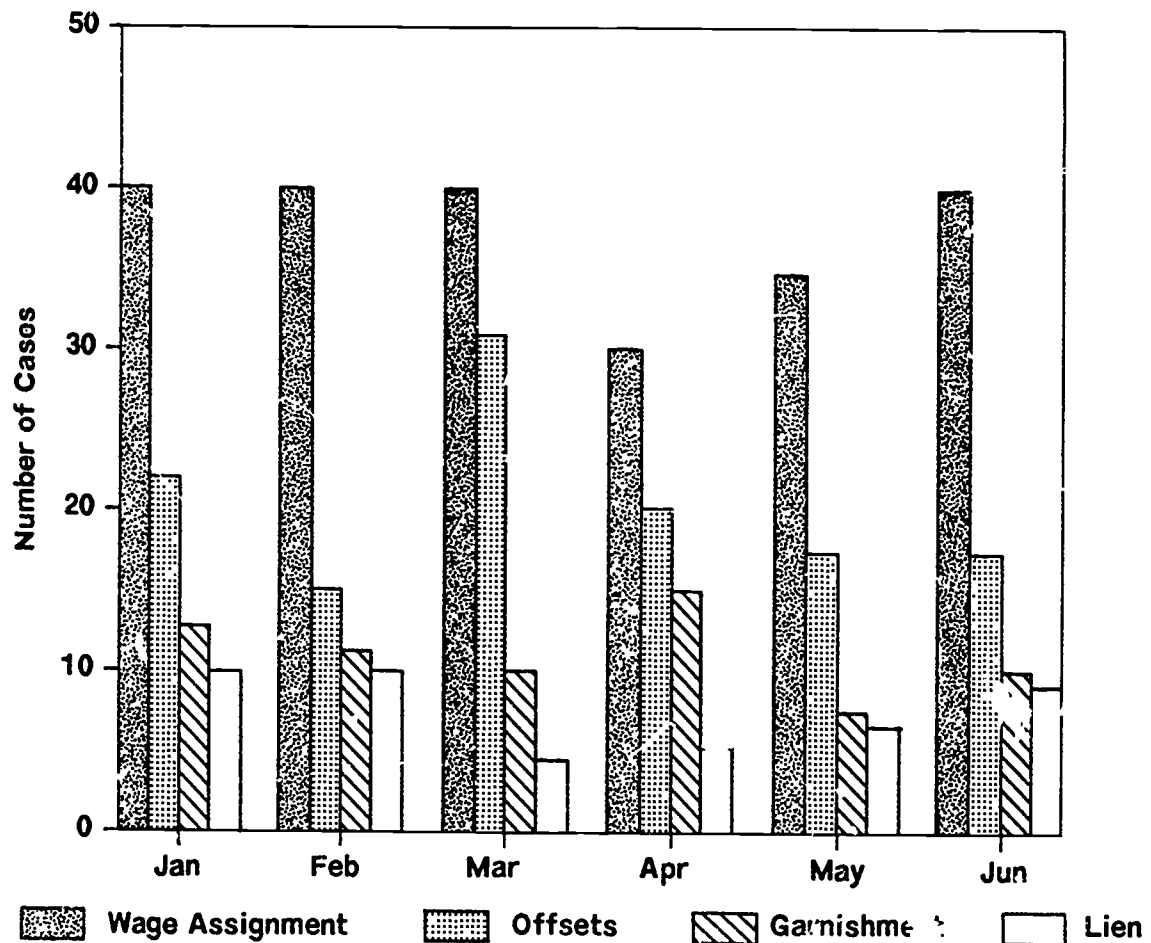
What does this chart indicate?

- Wage assignments continue to be the most effective Enforcement technique, followed by offsets.

- Liens appear to be the least successful of the four Enforcement mechanisms.

Knowing this, what should a manager do? Perhaps the manager should urge the caseworkers to use wage assignments and offsets whenever possible.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 4-15), chart the number of cases enforced through the various methods available to you. What does this information indicate about the success of the various Enforcement methods?

Figure 4-15
Number of Cases Enforced Through
Various Enforcement Techniques Worksheet
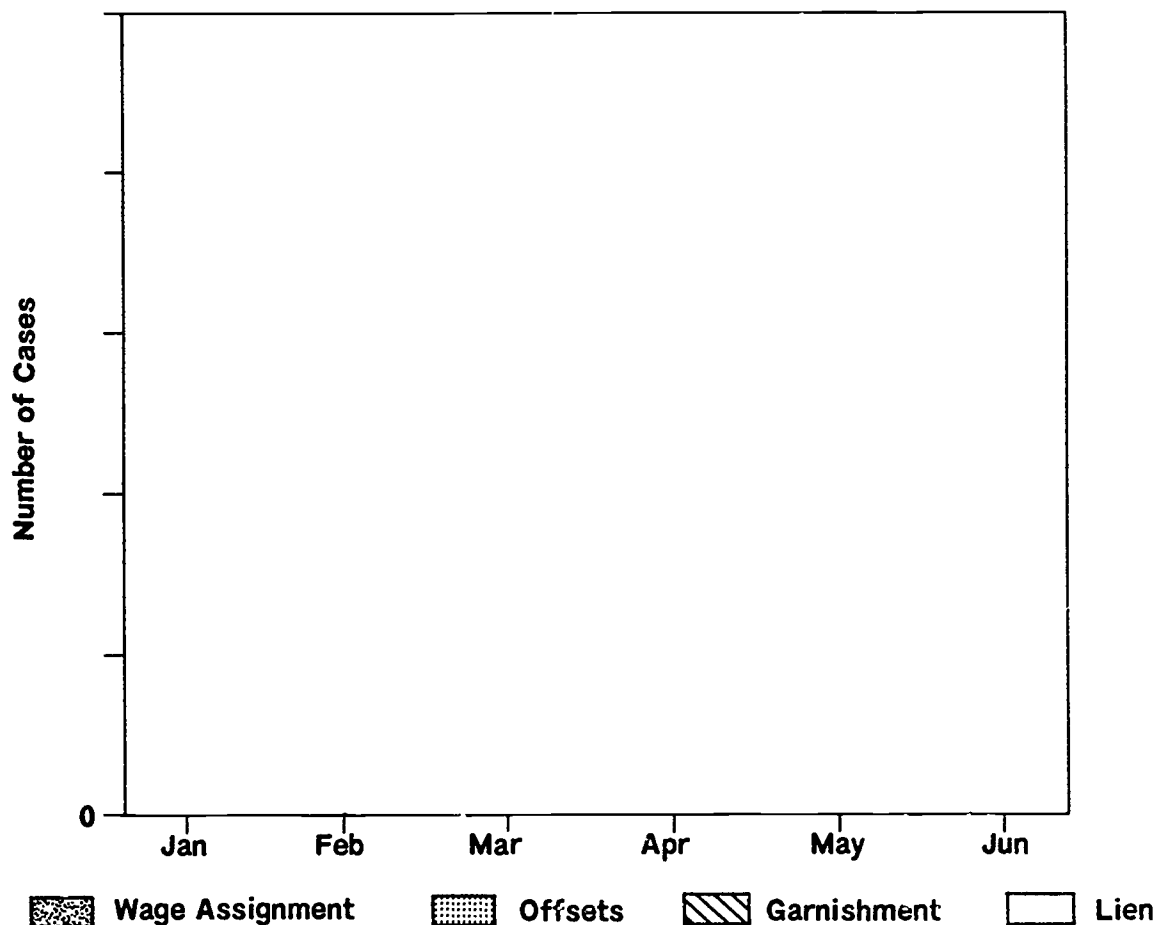
SUMMARY

The Enforcement function consists of all activities associated with obtaining child support payments. These activities consist of nonlegal remedies such as issuing dunning notices or making phone calls to the absent parent. When these techniques do not work, caseworkers must rely on legal remedies such as wage assignments, garnishments, or court action.

To monitor Enforcement activities in the office, a manager needs to know how many cases need Enforcement action. This information will enable a manager to allocate or redistribute staff since studies have shown that collections per caseworker tend to decline as the size of his or her caseload increases. It is also important for a manager to monitor how many and what types of Enforcement actions have been initiated. This information will enable the manager to assess how well the office and each caseworker is performing. This information also can indicate which Enforcement techniques have been the most successful.

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CHAPTER 5
Collection And Distribution

The Child Support Collection and Distribution functions generally consist of the following activities: collecting child support payments; matching these payments to the correct cases; distributing the AFDC and disbursing the non-AFDC payments: billing the absent parent; and maintaining the payment history on each case.

Support payments collected on IV-D cases are disbursed according to Federal law. In AFDC cases, the State retains an amount for reimbursement of all or part of the current and past AFDC assistance that has been paid to the family. From this amount, the State will determine the Federal Government's share of the collection. From the Federal share the State will pay the amount of any incentive payment due the State or locality that makes the collection. In non-AFDC support cases, payments are recorded and passed on to the client.

STEP 1: INFORMATION NEEDED

What kind of information should a manager know about the collection process? The following are some types of information a manager may want to know:

- How much money is received each month on AFDC and non-AFDC cases by each caseworker, office, county, and the entire State?

- How many cases are being collected on by each caseworker, office, county, and the entire State?

- How much money is being distributed on behalf of AFDC families and disbursed to non-AFDC families each month at the office, county, and State levels?

- What is the balance of the undistributed AFDC and undisbursed non-AFDC collections at the end of each month at the office, county, and State level?

- What is the nature of the undistributed and undisbursed collections (i.e., future payments, unidentified payments, etc.)?

- How much money is being collected through the various Enforcement techniques: wage assignments, garnishments, State and Federal tax offsets, unemployment compensation offset, cash payments, etc.?

- How much money is being issued to the client through the $50 disregard provision?

- How much money is being distributed to the Federal, State, and county governments and, if applicable, to a responding State?

- How much of the collections is sent to other States and counties, and how much is received from other States and counties?

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Why is information like this important? What does this information tell a manager? What does it indicate about the office? Some important answers to these questions include:

- Effective October 1, 1985, States will be able to collect incentives on both AFDC and ncn-AFDC collections. Since these incentives will be calculated separately, managers will need to maintain separate accounts on these collections.

- By tracking collections, a manager will be able to monitor collection trends in the office. For example, if collections begin to decline, the manager should discuss the problem with the staff and determine what actions need to be taken to reverse this trend. By monitoring the amount of support each caseworker collects, a supervisor is able to assess the performance of each employee in relation to the rest of the staff.

- Monitoring the amount of collections received through the various Enforcement mechanisms will enable the manager and the staff to identify the methods that result in the highest collections and those which are the most cost beneficial.

- A manager would want an accounting of the $50 disregards issued to eligible AFDC family units.

- Effective October 1, 1985, States must report on a yearly basis the amount of support collected on behalf of the AFDC recipient.

- A manager should monitor any undistributed and/or undisbursed collections, since a State cannot obtain incentives on a collection until it has been distributed or disbursed.

What information are you tracking on your collections? Are you collecting information that will allow you to evaluate your office?

Exercise. In the space provided below, write down the information you believe your office needs to know about its collections.

Information Needed-- Collection and Distribution

1. _____
   _____

2. _____
   _____

3. _____
   _____

4. _____
   _____

STEP 2: DATA COLLECTION

Now that you have determined the information you need, the next step is to determine what data you need to collect. Let's suppose a manager wants to know how many collections are being received monthly and how much has been received through each Enforcement mechanism.

As indicated in the "Sample Collection and Distribution Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure ⌣ -1), in order to determine the total amount of money received, you would need to know the amount of AFDC and non-AFDC collections and the total of both amounts. In order to determine how much money has been obtained through an Enforcement mechanism, you need to know how much money has been collected through wage assignments, garnishments, cash payments, Federal and State tax offsets, unemployment compensation offsets, other Enforcement actions, regular payments and other States.*

Figure 5-1
Collection and Distribution Data Collection Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No
• What is the total amount of support received?	• Amount of AFDC collections	X	
	• Amount of non-AFDC collections	X	
	• Total amount	X	
• How much money has been collected through the various Enforcement techniques for both AFDC and non-AFDC cases?	• Amount collected by:		
	Wage assignments		X
	Garnishments		X
	Cash payments		X
	Federal tax offsets		X
	State tax offsets		X
	Unemp. comp. offsets		X
	Other Enforcement techniques		X
	Regular payments	X	
	Other States		X

*Management should also consider including other local, State and/or Federal reporting requirements.

Exercise. In the Information Needed section, you identified the information you wanted to know about your collections. Now complete the "Collection and Distribution Data Collection Worksheet" (Figure 5-2) to determine the data needed to provide the information you want.

Figure 5-2
Collection and Distribution Data Collection Worksheet

Information Needed	Data	Collected Now?	
		Yes	No

What additional information are you currently collecting regarding collections? Is this information being used and is it really needed? To help answer this question, fill out the "Collection and Distribution Data Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 5-3).

Figure 5-3
Collection and Distribution Data Analysis Worksheet

What Data Are You Currently Collecting?	Who Is Using This Information?	Why Is This Information Needed?	Continue To Collect?	
			Yes	No

STEP 3: REPORTING

Now that you have determined the data that need to be collected, the next step is to present these data in a format that can best be used by the staff. The format and content of the report will vary based on the needs of the staff. The "Sample Collection and Distribution Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 5-4) will assist in the effort. In the left column, we have listed the data that are needed. To the right, we have indicated whether the information is needed by the manager, supervisor, or caseworker. For example, a manager needs to know the total amount of AFDC and non-AFDC collections received by the office. Additionally, the manager may want to know the amount of collections received through Federal, State, and unemployment compensation offsets. The supervisor and caseworkers may want to know how much money was collected through each Enforcement mechanism.

Figure 5-4
Collection and Distribution
Report Format Analysis Worksheet
(Sample)

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker
• Amt. of AFDC collections	X	X	X
• Amt. of non-AFDC collections	X	X	X
• Total amt. of collections	X	X	X
• Amount collected by:			
Wage assignment		X	X
Garnishments		X	X
Cash payments		X	X
Federal tax offsets	X		
State tax offsets	X		
Unemp. comp. offsets	X	X	X
Other Enforcement techniques		X	X
Regular payments		X	X
Other States		X	X

Exercise. In the previous section, you identified the information and the corresponding data that were needed to monitor and track your collections. Now complete the "Collection and Distribution Report Format Analysis Worksheet" (Figure 5-5) to determine the data needed by the supervisor, the manager, and the caseworker.

Figure 5-5
Collection and Distribution
Report Format Analysis Worksheet

Information Needed	Manager	Supervisor	Caseworker

The following are examples of reports that have been developed based on the data identified in the previous section. The "Sample Collection Report" (Figure 5-6) provides an overview on how the entire unit is performing, whereas the "Sample Collection Performance Comparison Report" (Figure 5-7) compares the amount of work performed by each employee in the office.

Figure 5-6
Collection Report
(Sample)

	Collections from Previous Month		This Month		Year to Date		Last Year to Date	
	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC
Total Amount of Collections	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Total Amt. of AFDC	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Total Amt. of Non-AFDC	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Type of Collection								
• Wage Assignment	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Garnishments	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Cash Payments	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Federal Offsets	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• State Offsets	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Unemployment Compensation Offsets	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Other Enforcement Techniques	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Regular Payments	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
• Other States	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

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Figure 5-7
Collection Performance Comparison Report
(Sample)

	Caseworker A		Caseworker B		Caseworker C		Caseworker D	
	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC	AFDC	Non-AFDC
Total Amount of Collections	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Total Amt. of AFDC	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Total Amt. of Non-AFDC	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
Type of Collection								
• Wage Assignment	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Garnishments	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Cash Payments	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Federal Offsets	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• State Offsets	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Unemployment Compensation Offsets	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Other Enforcement Techniques	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Regular Payments	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____
• Other States	____	____	____	____	____	____	____	____

Exercise. In the space provided on the next pages (Figures 5-8 and 5-9), develop two reports: an Office Collection Report to show officewide performance and a Team or Unit Collection Report that will illustrate the information your supervisors and staff should know about the collections received in the office.

Figure 5-8

Office Collection Report Worksheet   Date:_____

Figure 5-9

Team or Unit Collection Report Worksheet　　　　　Date:_____

Report Production. In the space below (Figure 5-10), indicate how many copies of the collection reports should be produced, who should receive copies, and how often the reports should be produced.

Figure 5-10
Collection and Distribution Report Production Checklist

Name Of The Report	Who Needs The Report?	How Many Copies?	How Often?

STEP 4: DATA ANALYSIS

Now that you have the data you need, the last step is to analyze this information to determine how well the office is performing. Figure 5-11 compares for two years the collections received in the office for the same period. By tracking this type of data a manager is able to determine trends and monitor any changes in the amount of support received.

Figure 5-11
**Comparison of AFDC Collections**
(Sample)
January - June
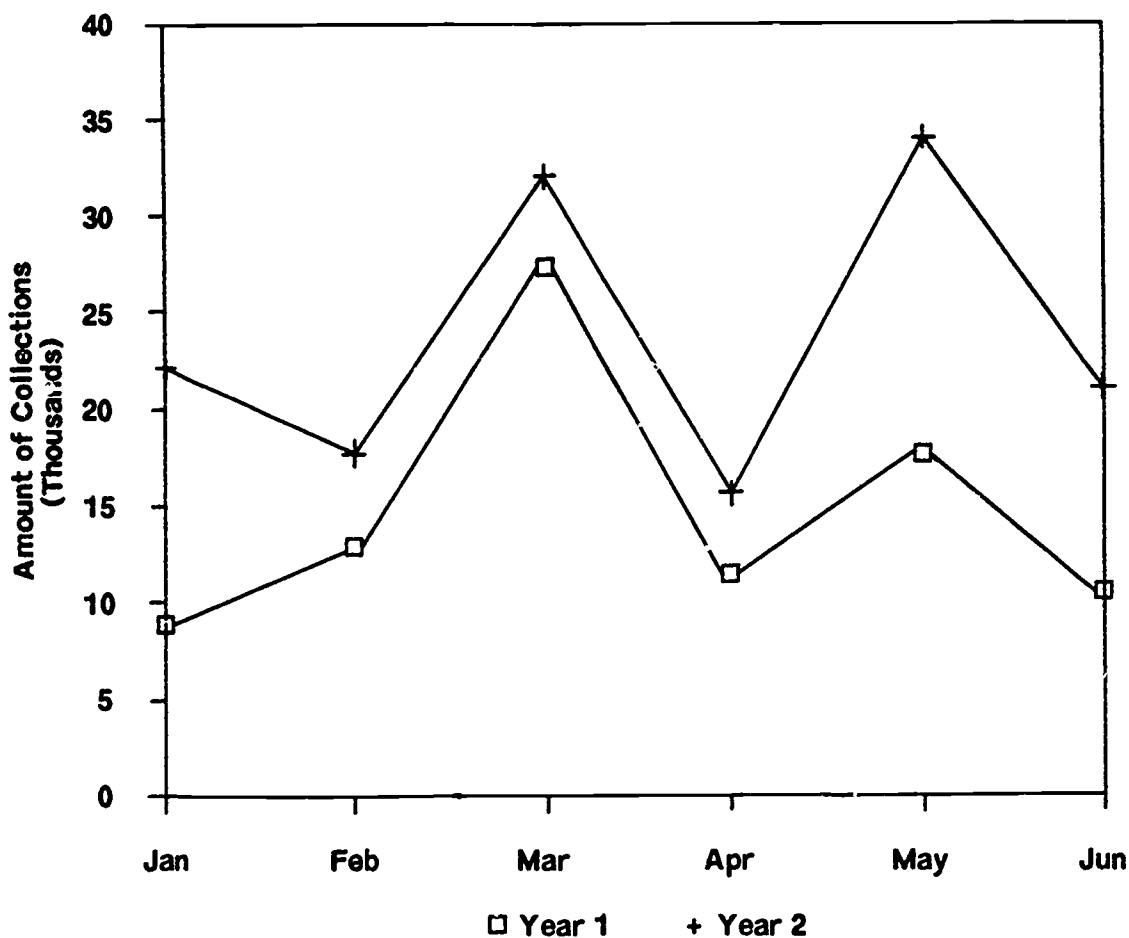
What does this chart indicate?

- The amount of collections received from January through June in Year 2 were consistently higher than in Year 1.

- During the month of May in Year 2 over $34,000 was collected. This is $16,000 more than the amount collected during the same month in the previous year.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 5-12), chart the collections received in your office over the same 6-month period in each of the last 2 years. What is happening to collections in your office? Are collections increasing or decreasing? What factors may be affecting the rate of collections in your office?

Figure 5-12
Comparison of AFDC Collections Worksheet
**January - June   Year 1 vs. Year 2**
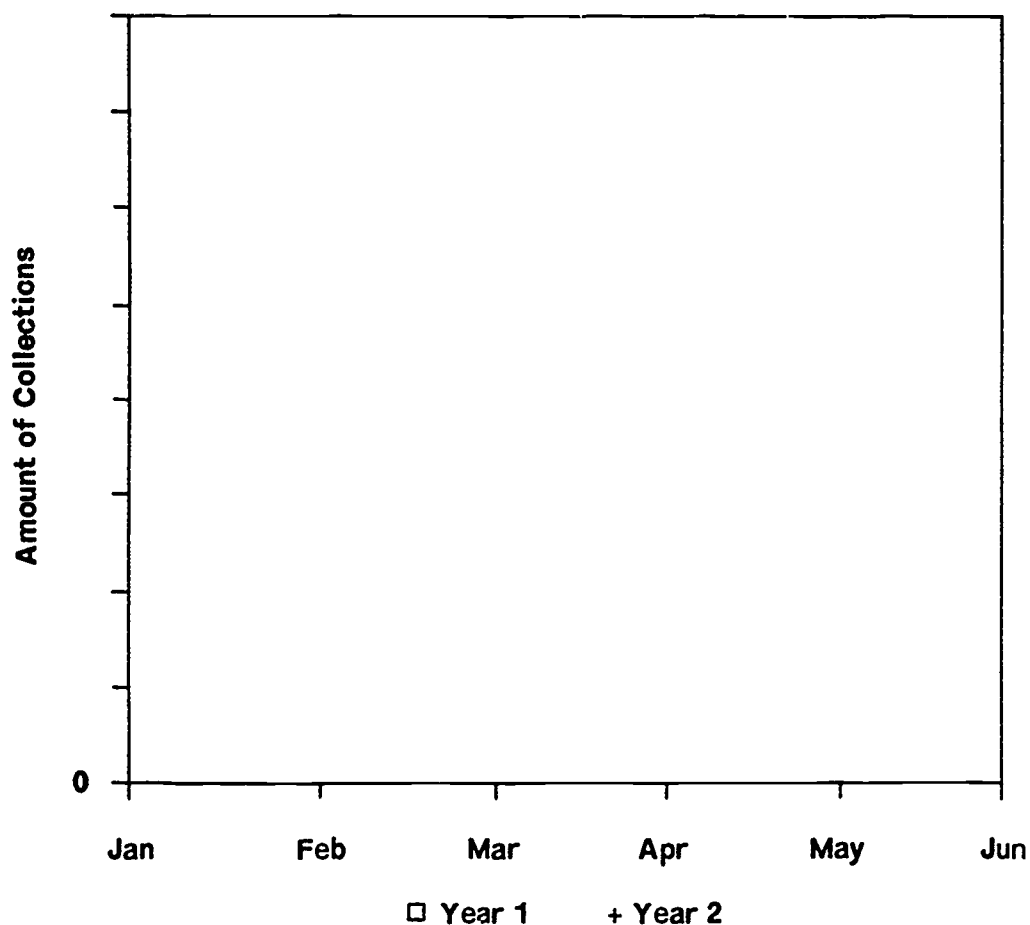
What does this information indicate about your office?

●

●

●

Effective October 1, 1985, States will be able to collect incentives on both AFDC and non-AFDC collections. Since these incentives will be calculated separately, managers will need to maintain separate accounts on these collections. Figure 5-13 compares the amount of AFDC and non-AFDC collections received by an office, a county, or a State.

Figure 5-13
AFDC vs. Non-AFDC Collections
**(Sample)**
January – June
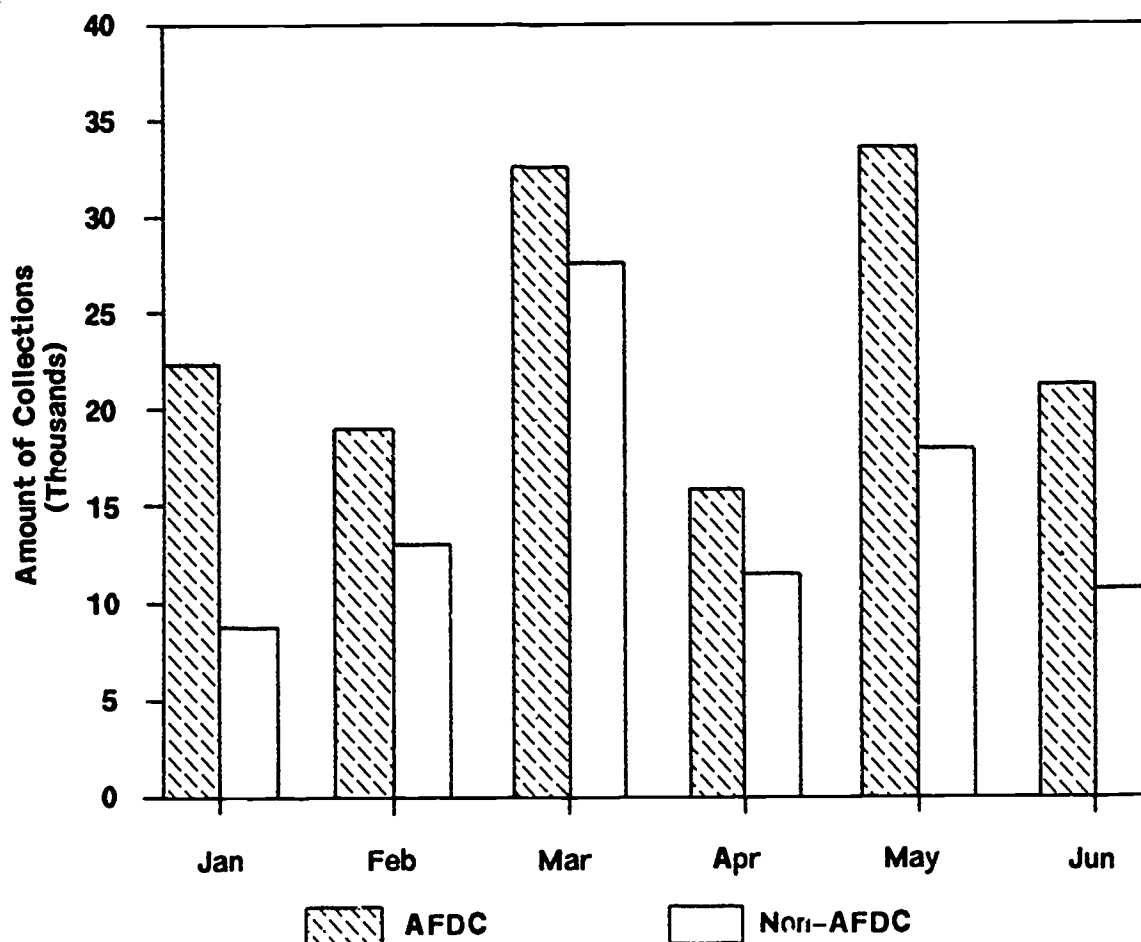
What does this chart indicate?

- Each month the office continued to collect more AFDC than non-AFDC collections.

- During March there was a substantial increase in both the AFDC and non-AFDC collections; however, collections declined drastically in April.

Exercise. In the space provided (Figure 5-14), chart the amount of AFDC and non-AFDC collections made by your office during the past 6 months.

Figure 5-14
AFDC vs. Non-AFDC Collections Worksheet
January – June

Non-AFDC ▨   **AFDC** ☐
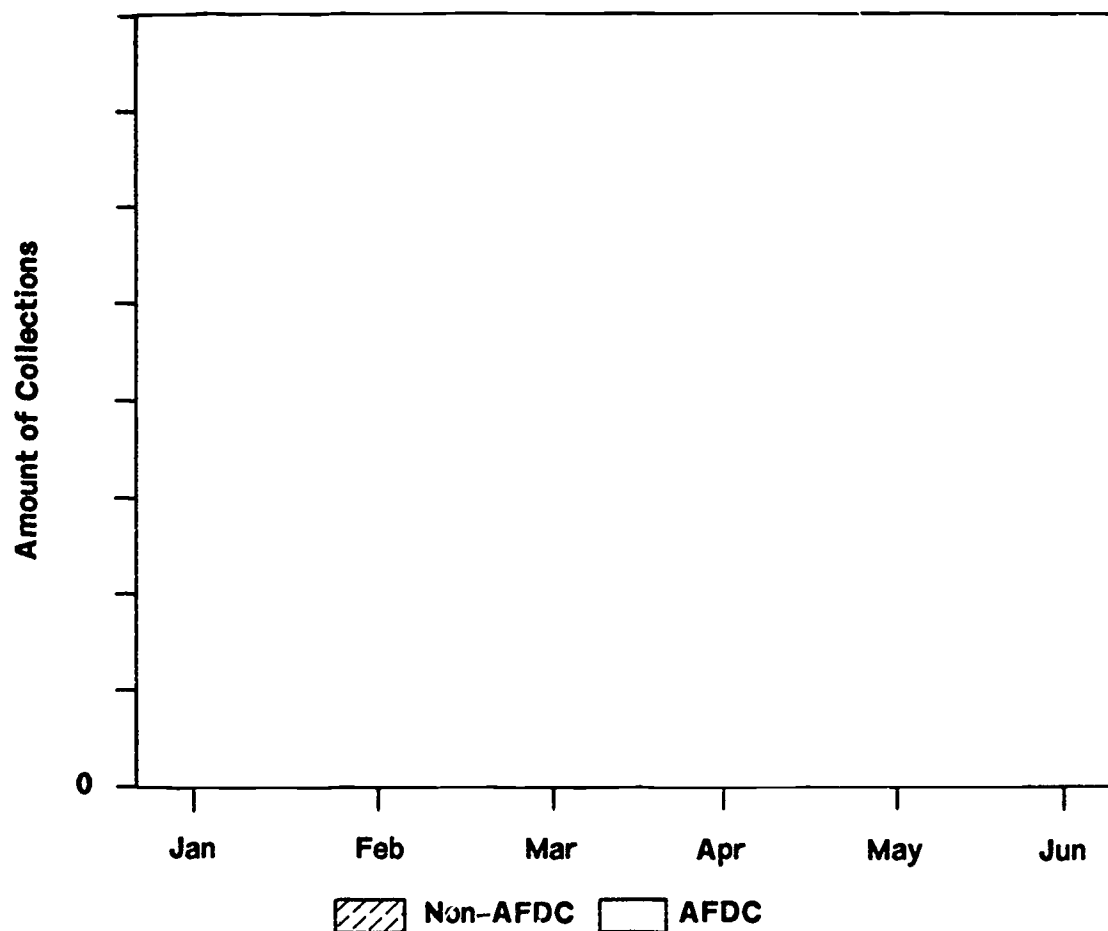
What does this chart indicate about your office?

-

-

-

SUMMARY

The Child Support Collection and Distribution functions generally consist of collecting child support payments; matching these payments to the correct cases; distributing the AFDC and disbursing the non-AFDC payments; billing the absent parent; and maintaining the payment history on each case.

Effective October 1, 1985, States will be able to collect incentives on both AFDC and non-AFDC collections. Since the incentives will be calculated separately, managers will need to maintain separate accounts on their collections. By tracking collections, a manager will be able to monitor collection trends in the office. By monitoring the amount of support each caseworker collects, a manager is able to assess the performance of each caseworker.

It also is important that a manager monitor the amount of collections received through the various Enforcement mechanisms. This will enable the staff to identify which Enforcement methods result in the highest collections.

Also, the 1984 Child Support Amendments require that a State monitor and report annually the amount of AFDC support collected on behalf of the AFDC recipient. Finally, a manager should monitor any undistributed and/or undisbursed collections since a State cannot obtain incentives on a collection until it has been distributed or disbursed.

PART TWO
Using Management Information
To Evaluate Program Performance

In the Introduction, we discussed the importance of identifying key result areas and performance indicators. These serve to give the office direction, since they indicate where the office is going and what needs to be done to get there. In Part One, you determined the operational information needed to operate and monitor the Intake, Locate, Establishment, Enforcement, and Collection and Distribution functions effectively.

In this section, we will discuss ways to measure office performance. This information can be used to help a manager assess the overall performance of the office, to determine if the office is achieving its goals, and to determine future growth areas.

There are many ways to measure the performance of an office. However, for the purpose of this Workbook, we will address the areas of collections and expenditures, cost benefit ratios, distribution of caseload, obligations, collections, percentage of paying cases, impact of caseload size on collection, and potential growth areas.

CHAPTER 6
Collections and Expenditures

The key to an effective cost benefit ratio is high collections combined with low expenditures. Therefore, a manager needs to watch these two key indicators closely. Tracking collection and expenditure data enables a manager to monitor how well the office is achieving its goals and to identify problem areas that could be affecting the productivity of the office.

TRENDS IN COLLECTIONS AND EXPENDITURES

Most child support enforcement offices can obtain specific collection information on their operations. This information often consists of a breakdown between AFDC and non-AFDC collections as well as collections per caseworker, team, or unit. Unfortunately, the same is not true for expenditures. Often IV-D expenditures are recorded by a unit of the umbrella agency other than the IV-D unit. Because of this, many IV-D managers either do not have their expenditures reported to them or, if they do, they are not reported in sufficient detail to permit the manager to analyze them. With the new emphasis on cost effectiveness, managers need detailed monthly/quarterly expenditure reports for their programs. Only then will managers be in a position to adequately monitor and control both their collections and expenditures.

What types of expenditure data should a manager collect? These will vary according to the jurisdiction.* Ideally, a manager may want to monitor the following expenditure items:

- Payroll

- Fringe Benefits

- Training

- Office Rent

- Equipment

    - Rental
    - Purchase

- ADP Costs

- Control Costs

    - Blood Testing
    - Service of Process

- Indirect Costs

- Travel

- Postage

- Supplies

Exercise. Many managers do not have detailed expenditure information on their offices. However, if this information is available for your office, fill out the "Itemized Expense Summary Sheet" (Figure 6-1). This chart will assist you in monitoring expenditures on a monthly basis in order to control costs.

*Management should also consider including other local, State, and/or Federal reporting requirements.

Figure 6-1
Itemized Expenses Summary Sheet

	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
Payroll						
Fringe Benefits						
Training						
Office Rent						
Equipment						
–Rental						
–Purchase						
ADP Costs						
Contract Costs						
–Blood Testing						
–Service of Proc ss						
Indirect Costs						
Travel						
Postage						
Supplies						

Let's assume that you have the basic collection and expenditure information for your office. How can this information help you monitor and evaluate your office? Figure 6-2 is a line chart that compares both collections and expenditures over a 6-month period.

Figure 6-2
Trends in Collections and Expenditures
(Sample)
July – December
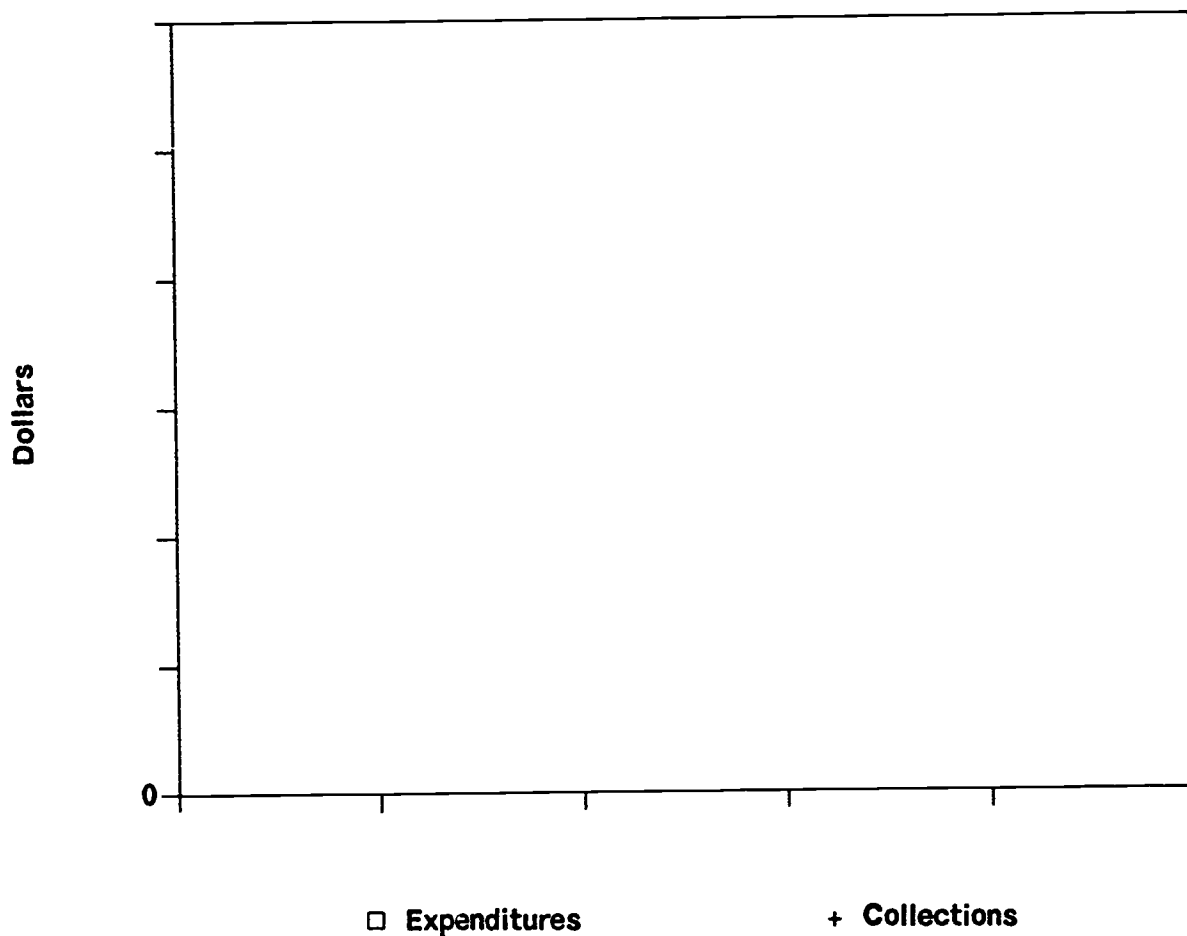

□ Expenditures   + Collections
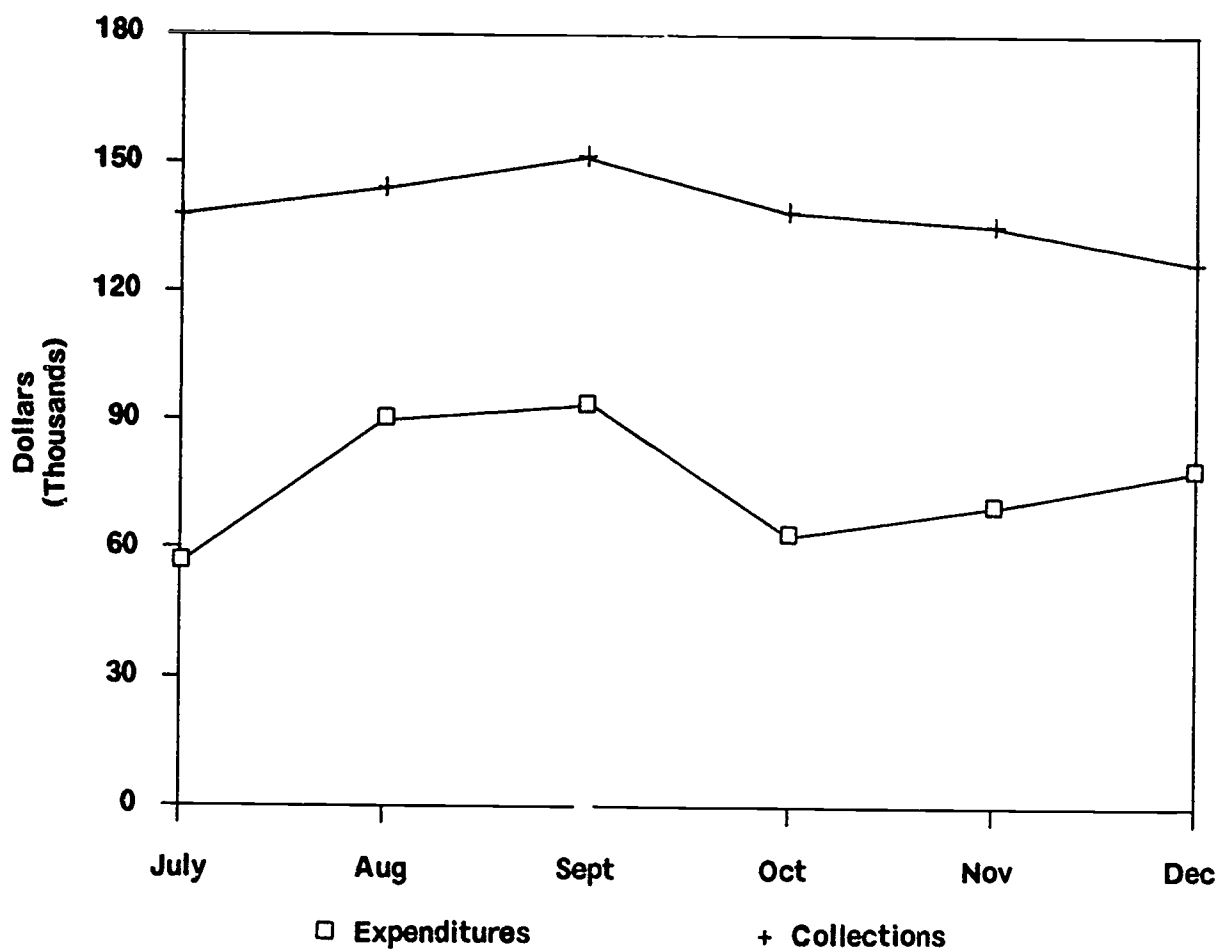
What does this chart indicate?

● Although collections have remained fairly constant, there has been a slight decrease in collections during the last 3 months.

● Expenditures increased by $30,000 durir the first 3 months; however, from September to October, expenditures dropped by almost $30,000.

Based on this information, a manager should identify what is causing the decline in collections and the fluctuation in expenditures.

Exercise. In the space provided (Figure 6-3), chart your office's collections and expenditures over the past 6 months.

Figure 6-3
Trends in Collections and Expenditures Worksheet

Dollars

0

□ **Expenditures**   + **Collections**

What does this chart indicate about your office? Are your collections increasing each month? What about your expenditures: are they increasing or decreasing?

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-
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TRACKING OFFICE PERFORMANCE

Using a bar chart is one way to track office performance. For example, if an office is organized into teams, a manager could track each team's progress toward their collection goal. The solid bar in Figure 6-4 represents a collection goal a team is expected to achieve from June through December. The empty bar indicates the actual amount of the collections received.
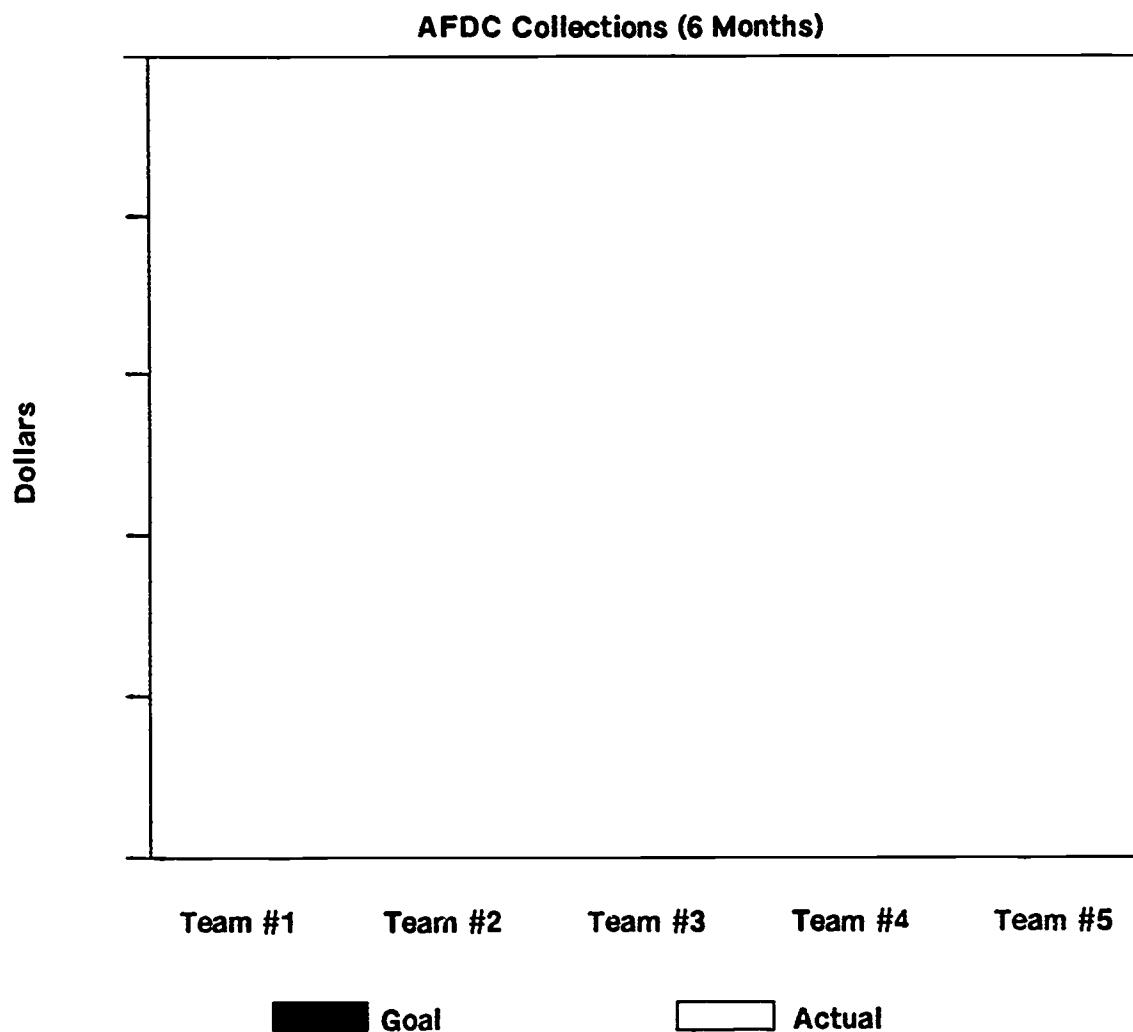
Figure 6-4
Team Progress Towards Collection Goals
(Sample)

AFDC Collections (June-December)
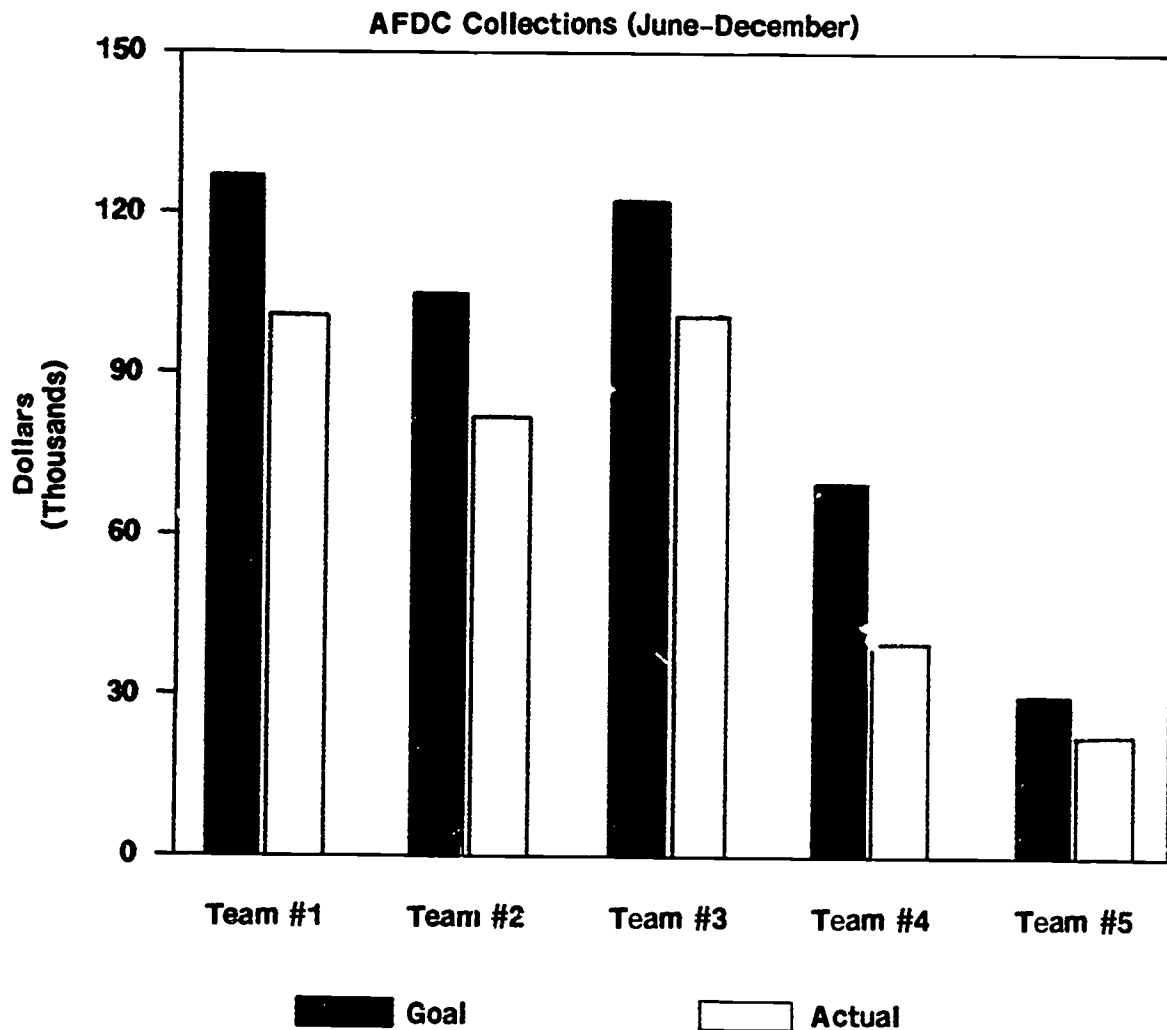
As indicated in Figure 6-4, Teams 3 and 5 come closest to achieving their goals with approximately an 83 percent success rate although none of the teams met their established goals. In reviewing why collection goals are not being achieved, management should consider the entire process from goal-setting techniques to collection procedures. For example, were the goals realistic? To determine this, evaluate how the goals were set. Were they based on historical data such as trends or past team performance? Further, were there factors the teams could not control that influenced collection performance? This type of analysis can be useful in the decision-making process to readjust goals or implement changes to the collection process.

Exercise. If this information is available, fill in the "Team Progress Towards Collection Goals Worksheet (Figure 6-5). This chart will assist you in monitoring progress toward defined collection goals.

Figure 6-5
Team Progress Towards Collection Goals Worksheet

AFDC Collections (6 Months)

Dollars

Team #1   Team #2   Team #3   Team #4   Team #5

■ Goal   □ Actual
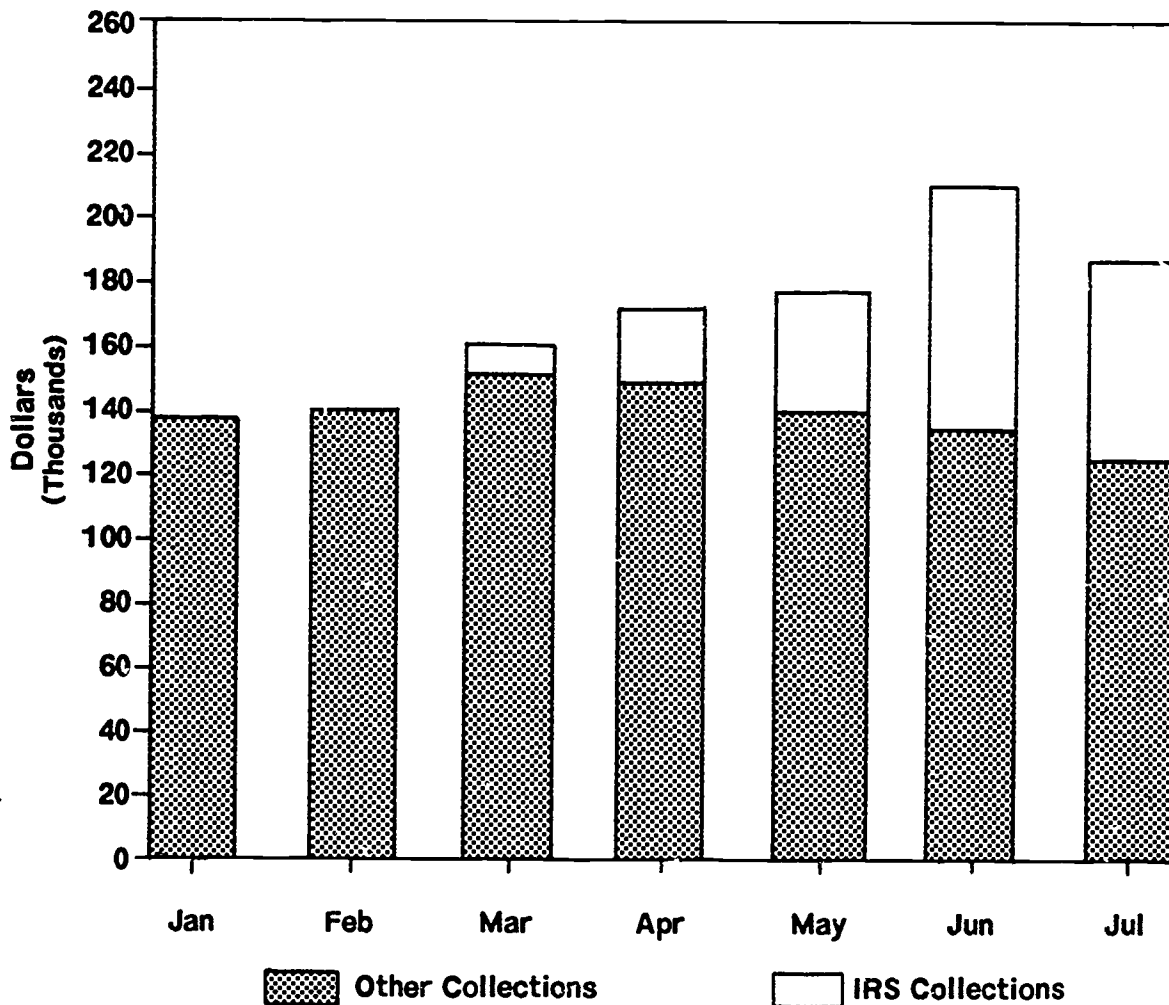
What does this chart indicate about the office?

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IMPACT OF COLLECTION SOURCES

Another important aspect a manager should monitor is the impact of the IRS and State offset collections. Figure 6-6 illustrates the impact of IRS collections on the collection performance of an office.

Figure 6-6
**Impact of IRS Collections**
(Sample)

What does this chart indicate about the office?

● Overall collections from January through June have increased.

● However, discounting the impact of IRS collections, the collections have actually decreased from April through July.

Although the Federal and State offset projects have helped many offices maintain their collection goals, offices cannot rely on debt offset collections to boost collections each month. Other Enforcement measures must be strengthened to ensure collections.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 6-7), chart the collections received by your office from January through July separating out IRS collections. Is your office depending on IRS payments to increase collections?

Figure 6-7
Impact of IRS Collections Worksheet
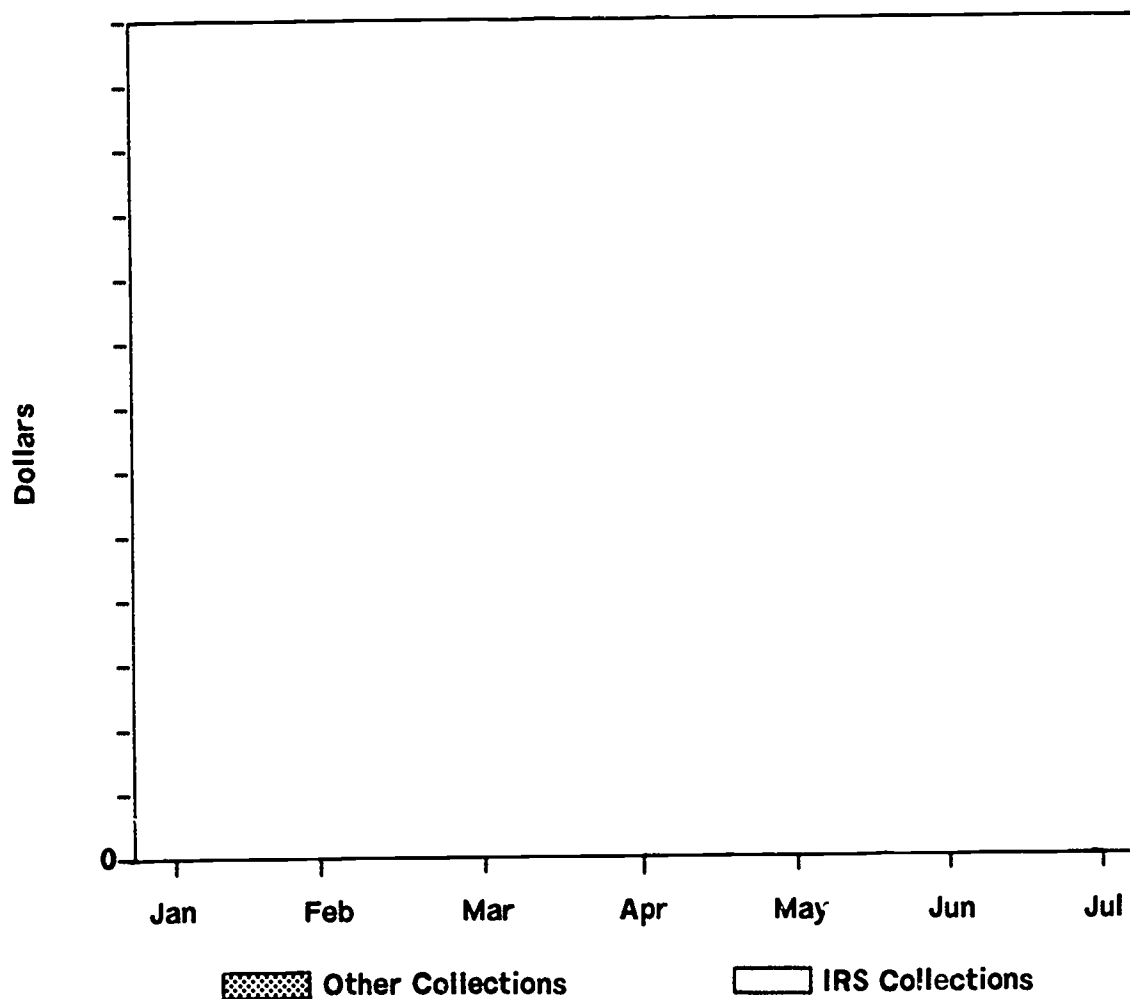
What does this information indicate about your office?

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SUMMARY

In order to operate an effective child support enforcement program, a manager needs to monitor expenditures as well as collections. Often IV-D expenditures are recorded by a unit of the umbrella agency other than the IV-D unit. However, if possible, a manager should obtain a detailed listing of monthly expenditures. This will enable a manager to monitor expenses associated with: payroll, fringe benefits, blood testing, service of process, training, travel, postage, equipment rental or purchase, and indirect costs.

Conversely, a manager needs to track how much money has been collected each month and, of that amount, how much was collected through the State and Federal offset programs and through each of the other Enforcement techniques. Finally, a manager needs to determine if the office is meeting its collection goals.

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CHAPTER 7
Cost Benefit Ratio

What exactly is a cost benefit ratio? A cost benefit ratio indicates the amount of collections received for each dollar spent. This ratio is computed by dividing the collections by total expenditures for a given period. Cost benefit ratios are particularly important to a manager in that they measure the efficiency of the program. If data are available, cost benefit ratios can be developed for an individual office, a county, or an entire State.

In the past, incentives to the States were based on a fixed percentage of their AFDC collections. Effective October 1, 1985, States will receive incentives on both their AFDC and non-AFDC collections. These incentives, however, will be based on percentages derived from the separate cost benefits for AFDC and non-AFDC collections. Therefore, it is critically important that managers monitor and track both cost benefit ratios.

Let's take a look at some cost benefit data and see how collection and expenditure information can help a manager monitor and evaluate an office's efficiency. Figure 7-1 is a bar graph showing the AFDC and non-AFDC cost benefit ratios.

What does this chart indicate about the office?

- The cost benefit ratio for the AFDC caseload peaked in March, followed by the low point in April.

- The cost benefit ratio for the non-AFDC caseload exhibited peaks in March, June, and November.

As a manager, you would need to ask: "Why did the cost benefit ratios fluctuate?" The first step would involve identifying if the ratio fluctuation was due to changes in the collection amounts or in the expenditures.

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Figure 7-1
AFDC and Non-AFDC Cost Benefit Ratios
(Sample)
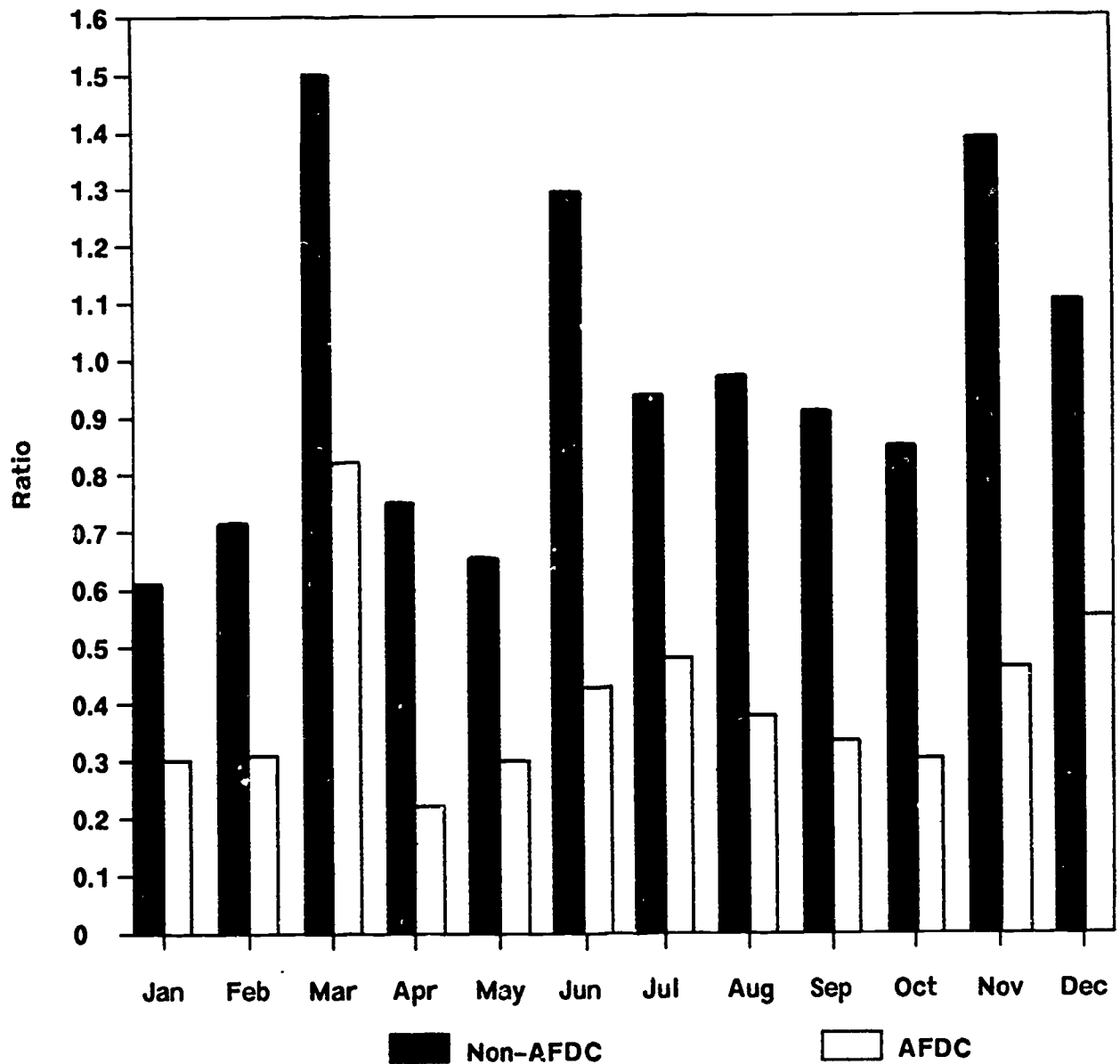
Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 7-2), determine the AFDC and the non-AFDC cost benefit ratios for your office during the past 6 months.*
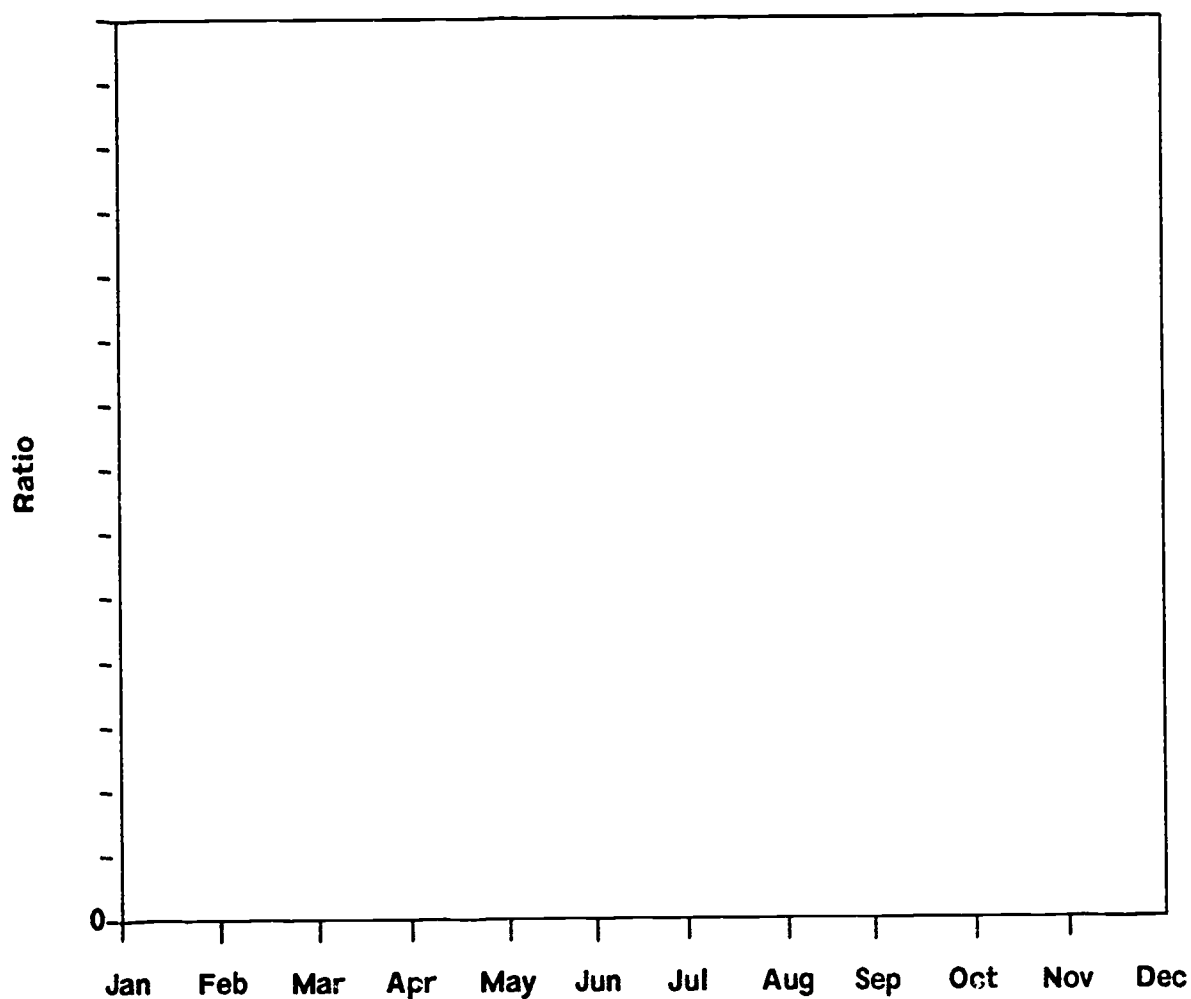
Figure 7-2
Cost Benefit Ratio Worksheet

	Collections	Expenditures (Total)	Cost Benefit Ratio
January			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____
February			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____
March			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____
April			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____
May			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____
June			
AFDC	_____		_____
Non-AFDC	_____	_____	_____

*Although we separate AFDC and non-AFDC expenditures, for internal management purposes, we compare total expenditures separately with AFDC and non-AFDC collections when calculating Federal AFDC incentives, effective October 1, 1985.

Exercise. Now, in the space below (Figure 7-3), chart the AFDC and the non-AFDC cost benefit ratios in your office.

Figure 7-3
Comparison of
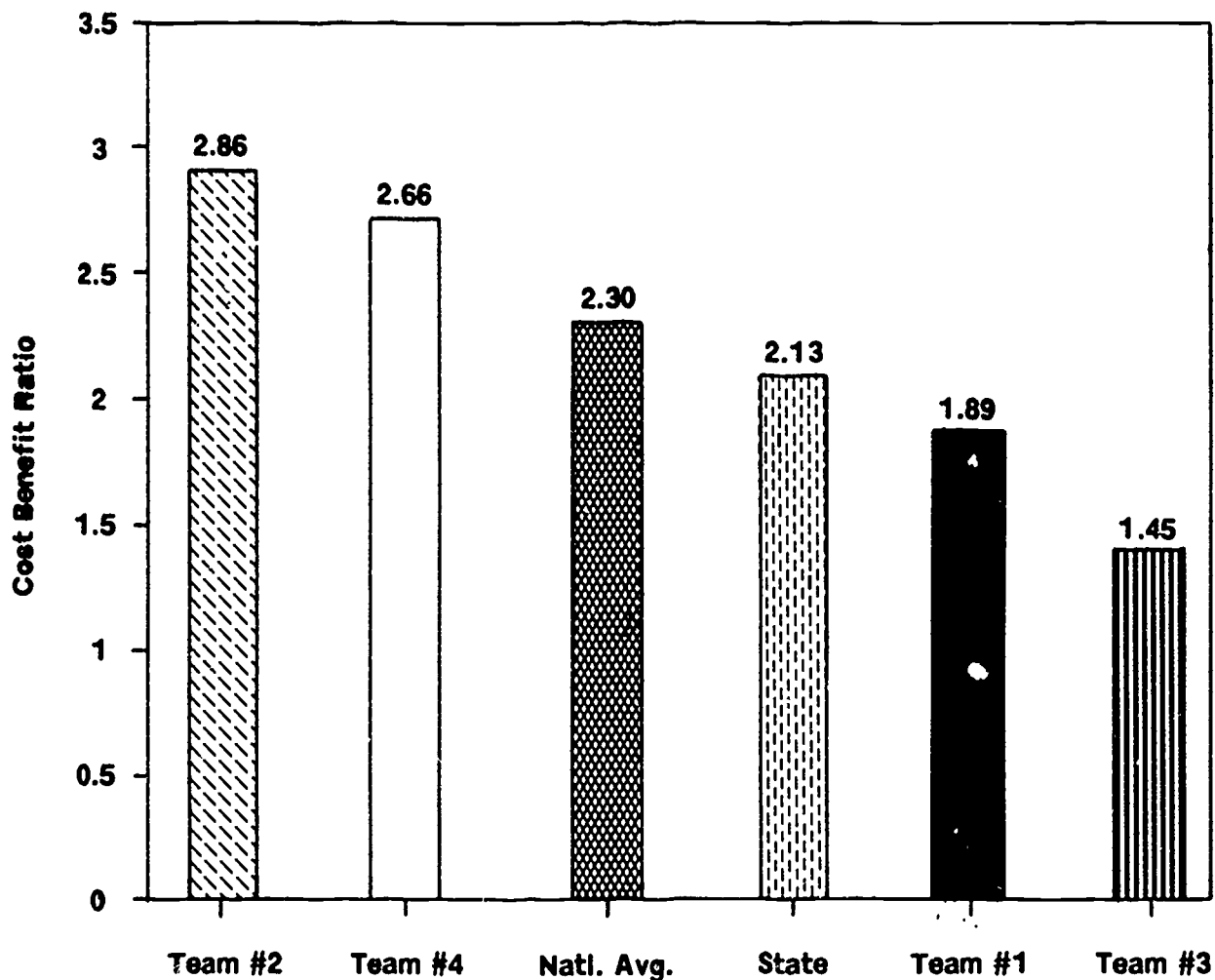**AFDC and Non-AFDC Cost Benefit Ratio Worksheet**

What does this chart indicate about your office?

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Figure 7-4 compares the cost benefit ratios of four teams. The performance of the counties is compared to both the State and national average.

Figure 7-4
**Cost Benefit Ratio**
(Sample)
July - September

What does this chart indicate?

● As illustrated, Teams #2 and #4 are performing above both the State and national average, whereas Teams #1 and #3 are performing below both of the averages.

Exercise. In the space provided (Figure 7-5), chart the national cost benefit ratio,* your State's cost benefit ratio, and the cost benefit ratio for your office and several other offices within your State.

Figure 7-5
Cost Benefit Ratio Worksheet
July – September
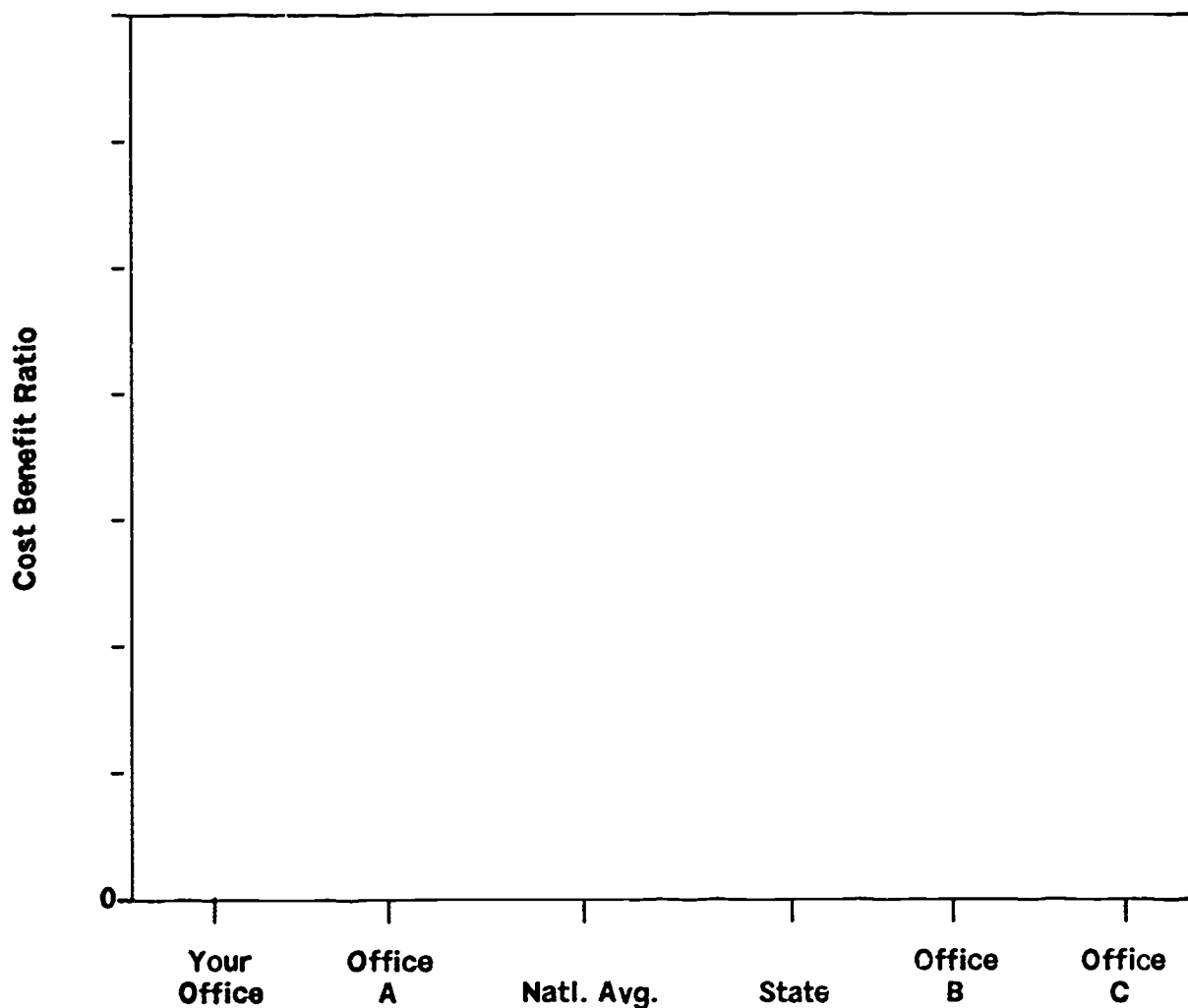
What does this information indicate about your office?

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*This information can be obtained from the Child Support Enforcement Annual Report to Congress published annually by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, Rockville, Maryland.

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SUMMARY

A cost benefit ratio indicates the amount of collections received for each dollar spent. Cost benefit ratios are important in that they measure the efficiency of an office.

In order to monitor the effectiveness of an office, a manager should calculate both the AFDC and the non-AFDC cost benefit ratios. This is particularly important since effective October 1, 1985, incentives will be based on by collection to cost ratios. Also, a manager should compare the cost benefit ratio of his or her office with the State and national average. This information will enable a manager to assess whether the office is performing above or below the State and national averages.

Distribution Of Caseload, Obligations, And Collections

Another way to assess the effectiveness of an office is to compare the size of the caseload with the number of current obligations and the amount of current collections. Why is this type of analysis important and what does it indicate about an office? Ideally, if an office has 20 percent of the State's caseload, you would expect the office to have approximately 20 percent of the obligations and to generate approximately 20 percent of the State's collections. Unfortunately, this relationship does not always correlate due to such factors as variations in the absent parent population. Nevertheless, this comparison does provide valuable comparative information.

Let's look at some collections, obligations, and caseload data and see how this information can help you evaluate your program in relation to the rest of your State. Figure 8-1 is a bar chart which tracks the percent of caseload, obligations, and collections for five counties during a particular month.

Figure 8-1
County IV-D Caseload, Obligations, and Collections
As a Percentage of the State's
(Sample)
January
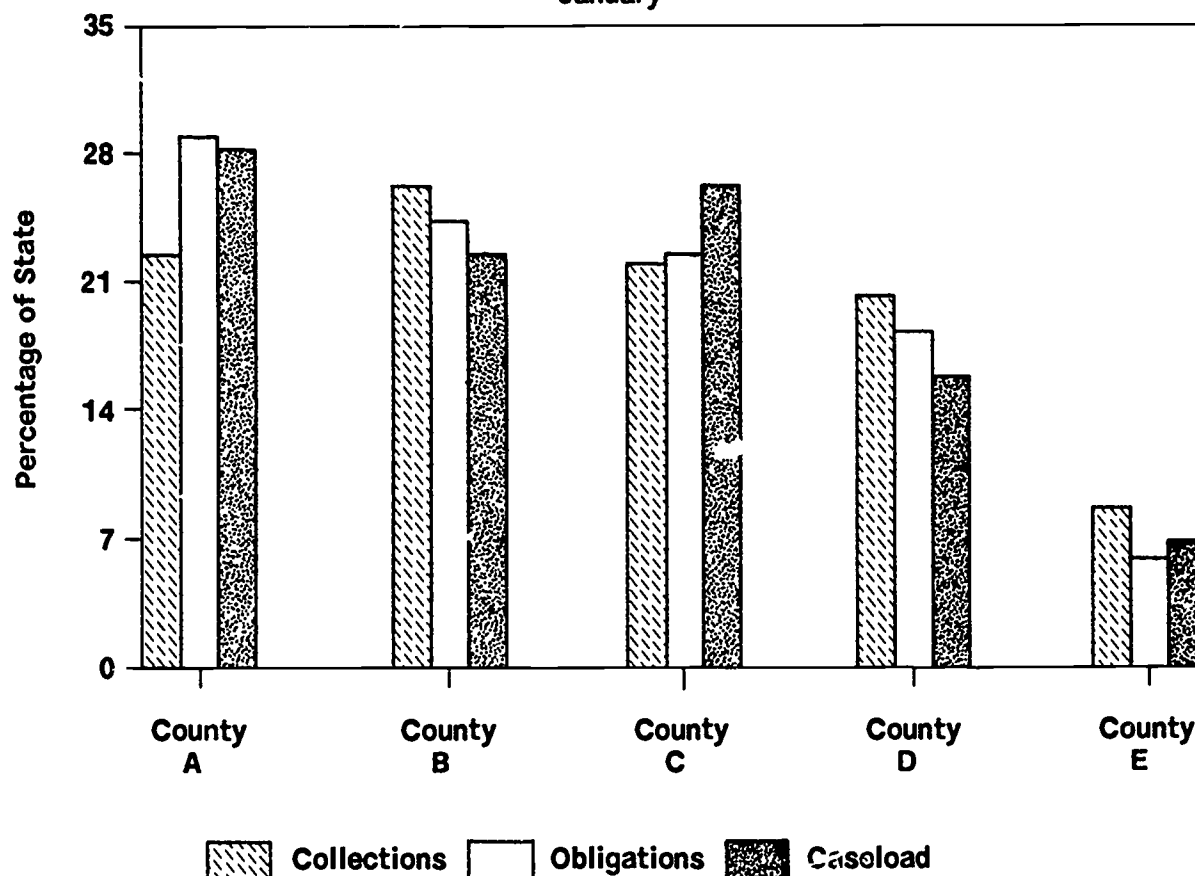
What does this indicate about the performance of the various counties?

● Counties B, D, and E account for a larger share of the collections than would be expected with their relative caseload size.

● Counties A, B, and D exhibit ability to obligate their caseload; however, county A is not as successful in moving the cases into a paying status.

How does your office compare in these areas to the other counties or districts in your State? In order to determine this information, you must first calculate the percent of caseload, obligations, and collections for your office below.

CASELOAD, OBLIGATIONS, AND COLLECTIONS CALCULATIONS

CASELOAD $\longrightarrow$ $\dfrac{\text{Your Office Caseload}}{\text{Total State Caseload}}$ = _____%

OBLIGATIONS $\longrightarrow$ $\dfrac{\text{Your Office Obligations}}{\text{Total State Obligations}}$ = _____%

COLLECTIONS $\longrightarrow$ $\dfrac{\text{Your Office Collections}}{\text{Total State Collections}}$ = _____%

In the space below, calculate the caseload, collections, and obligations percentages for your office.

CASELOAD, OBLIGATIONS, AND COLLECTIONS CALCULATION WORKSHEET

CASELOAD $\longrightarrow$ _____ = _____%

OBLIGATIONS $\longrightarrow$ _____ = _____%

COLLECTIONS $\longrightarrow$ _____ = _____%

Exercise. In the space provided (Figure 8-2), chart the percentages of caseload, obligations, and collections for your office. If possible, develop the same percentages for other offices in your organization.

Figure 8-2
Caseload, Obligations, and Collections Worksheet
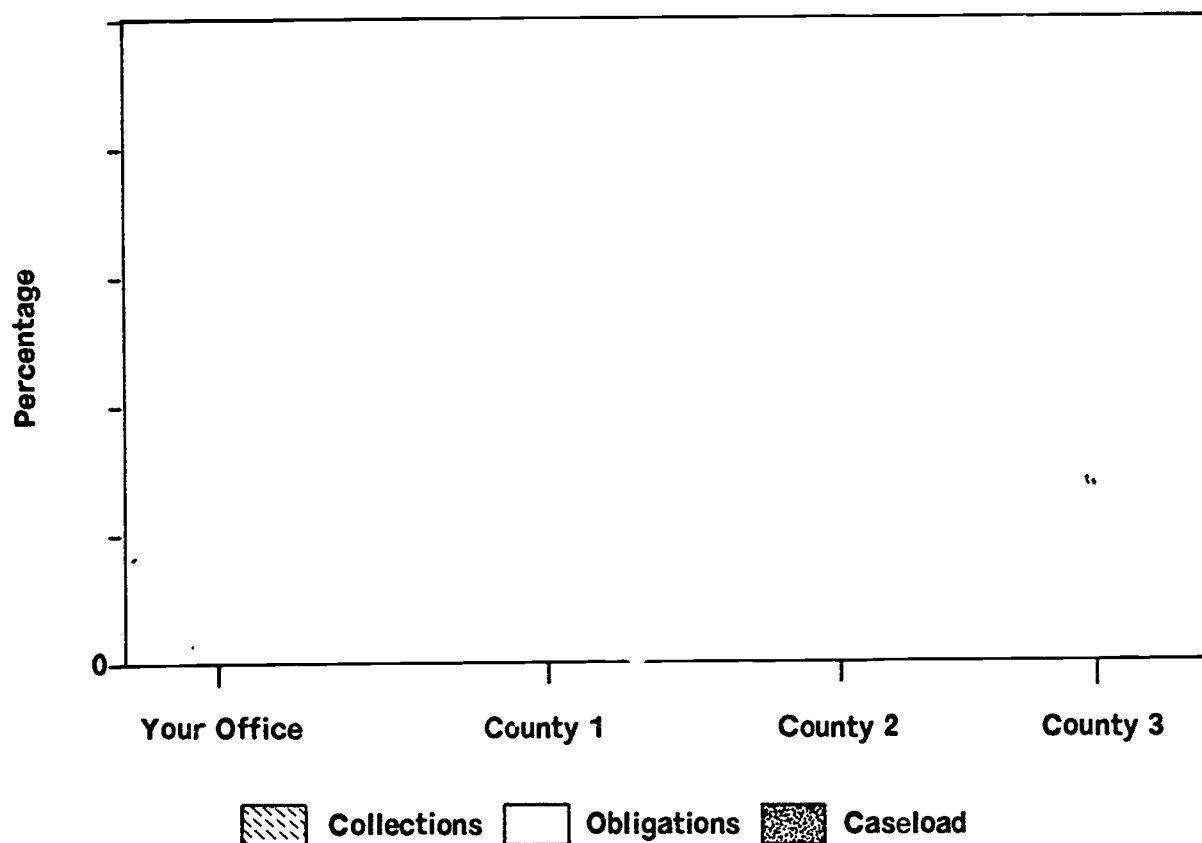
What does this information indicate about your office? How is your office performing in relation to the rest of the State?

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SUMMARY

An additional way to assess the effectiveness of an office is to compare the size of the caseload with the number of obligations and the amount of collections. Ideally, these percentages should be the same; however, major differences in these percentages can provide valuable information on how the office is performing and where improvements need to be made. For example, information such as this can indicate if the office needs to establish more cases or if they should concentrate on keeping the cases they currently have in a paying status.

CHAPTER 9
Percent Of Paying Cases

Ideally, a manager would like to receive regular collections on every child support enforcement case. In reality, however, IV-D offices collect on only a small percentage of their actual caseload, and the collections that are received are often irregular and demand constant monitoring. Monitoring the percent of paying cases, however, is an effective way of tracking the effectiveness of the office in collecting child support payments. Also, managers can compare the percent of paying cases in their office with those in other jurisdictions or against the State and national average.

Let's look at some percent of paying cases data and see how this information can help a manager evaluate the office. Figure 9-1 is a line graph comparing the percent of paying cases for both AFDC and non-AFDC cases.

Figure 9-1
Percent of Paying Cases
(Sample)
January - August
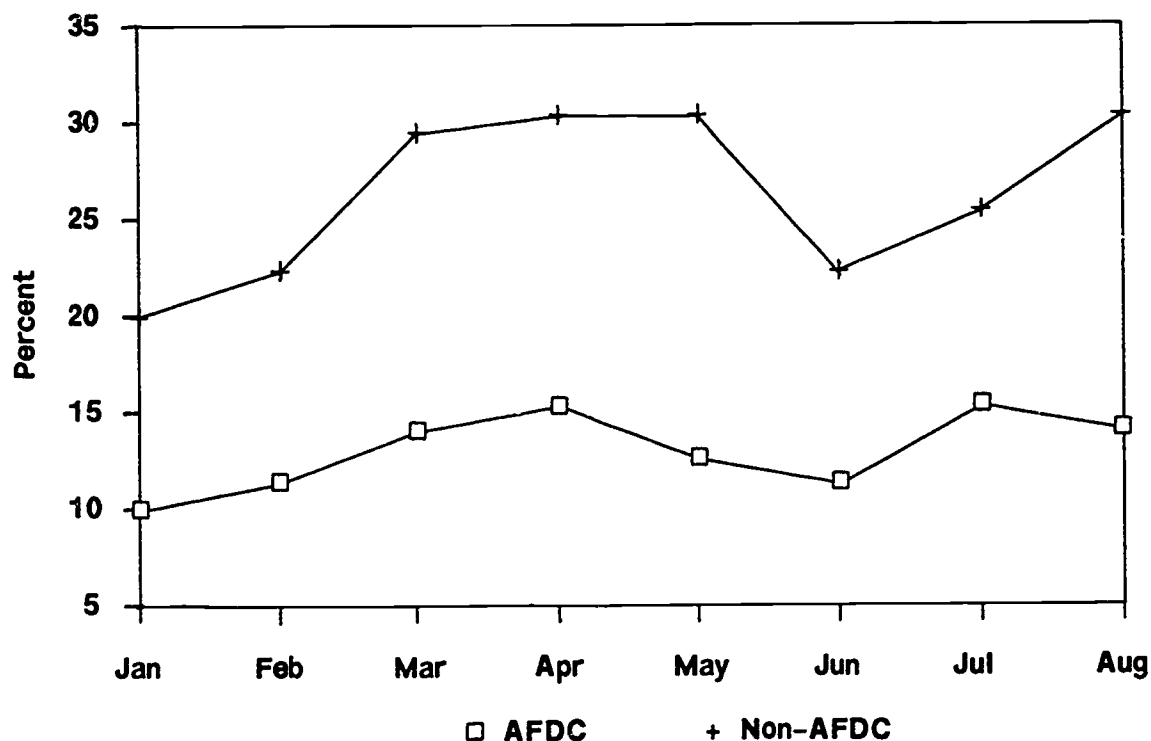
What does this chart indicate about the office?

● As would be expected, the percent of non-AFDC paying cases is consistently higher than the AFDC percent of paying cases.

● The graph does display monthly fluctuations of paying cases as a percentage of the total cases.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 9-2), determine the percent of paying AFDC and non-AFDC cases in your office.

Figure 9-2
Percent of Paying Cases Worksheet
January – August
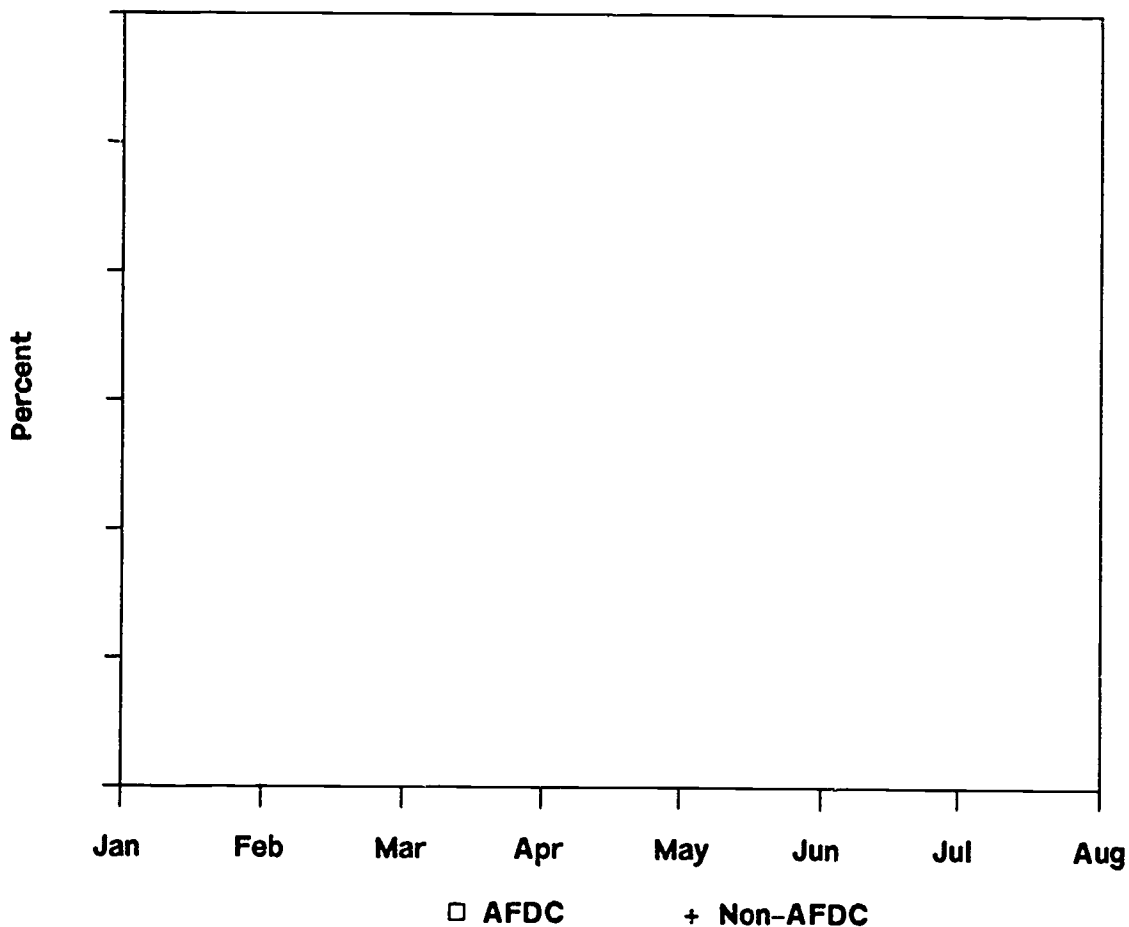
What does this chart indicate about your office?

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Figure 9-3 is a line graph which compares the percent of AFDC paying cases with either a State or a national average. This chart is useful in determining how an office is performing in relation to the rest of the State.

Figure 9-3
Percent of Paying Cases
Compared to State Average
(Sample)
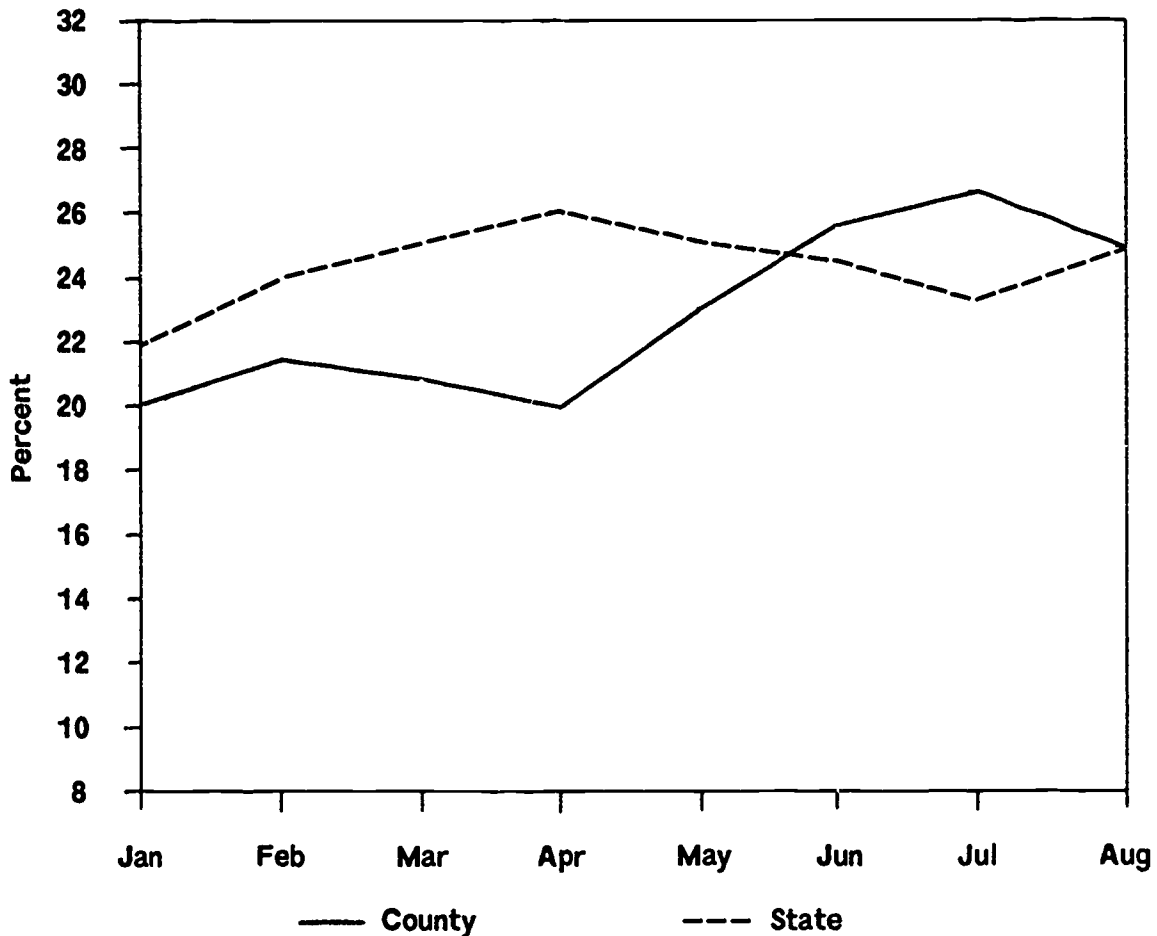
What does this chart indicate about the county?

● January through May the county performed below the State average.

● Between April and June the county had a major increase in the number of paying cases while the State average declined slightly.

● In June and July, the county performed above the State average.

Exercise. In the space provided below (Figure 9-4), chart the percent of paying AFDC and non-AFDC cases in your office. With a dotted line indicate the percent of total cases being collected by your entire State. What does this chart indicate about your office? How does your office compare to the rest of the State?
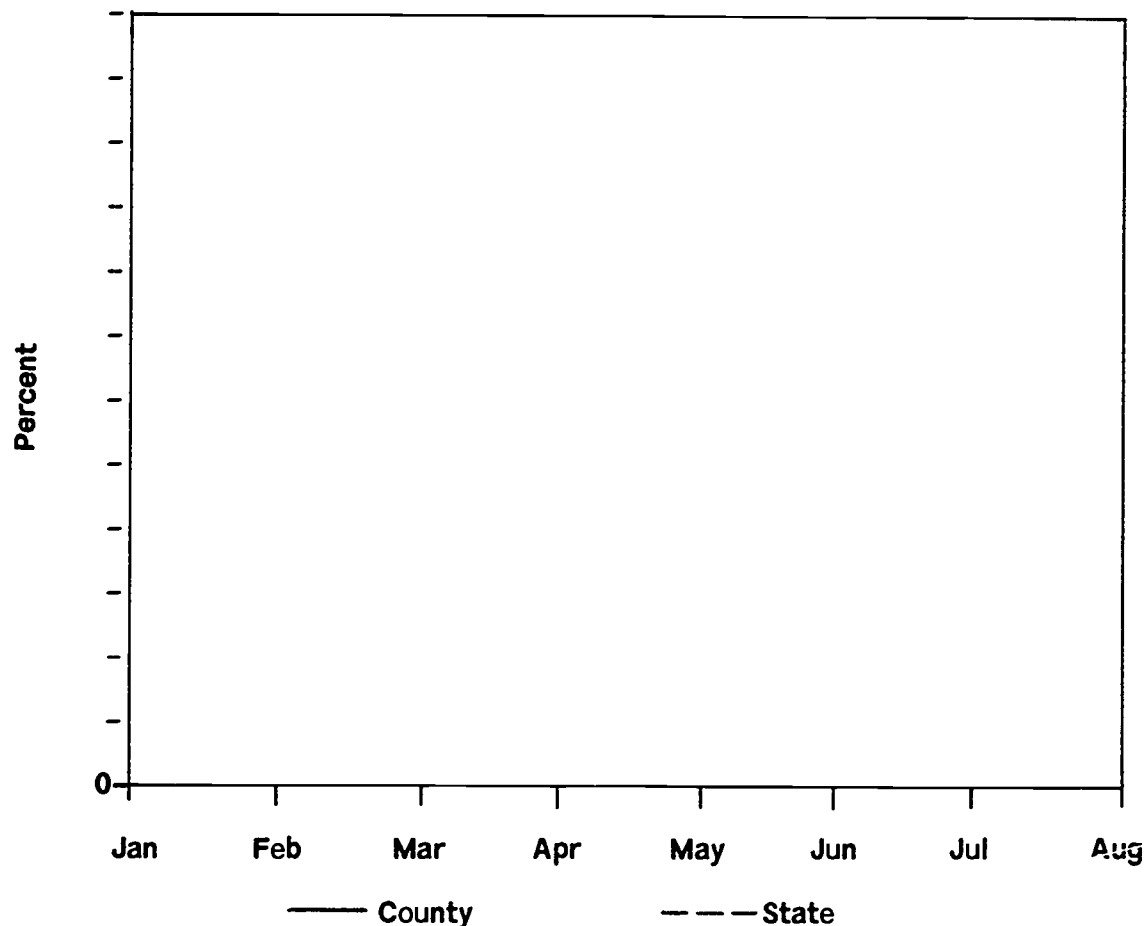
Figure 9-4
Percent of Paying Cases
Compared to State Average Worksheet

Jan   Feb   Mar   Apr   May   Jun   Jul   Aug

———— County   — — —State

SUMMARY

Monitoring the percent of paying cases is an effective way of evaluating how well the office is monitoring and enforcing its caseload. As a manager, it is important that an office maintains a good percent of paying cases since it is cost-effective to enforce a case that already has a court order. A manager also should compare his or her office to the State and national average. This information will enable a manager to assess whether the office is performing above or below these averages.

CHAPTER 10
Impact Of Caseload Size On Collections

An additional way a manager can assess the performance of an office is to study the effect of caseload size on the amount of support collected. The size of an investigator's caseload is only one of the factors affecting collections. However, it is important since the larger the caseload, the less time the investigator can devote to each case. Therefore, using this model as an indicator of performance, a manager can compare the relative standing of various units, teams, or offices.

How do you determine the impact of caseload size on collections? First, you need to determine the collections per case. This is determined by dividing the collections by the caseload for a specific period. Second, you need to determine the caseload per investigator, which is the number of cases divided by the number of employees. Now that you have determined this information, the next step is to plot it. Figure 10-1 illustrates how this is done. The vertical axis represents the collections per case and the horizontal axis represents the caseload per investigator. The diagonal line (trend line) represents the average relationship between the two. This chart can be prepared for the AFDC caseload, the non-AFDC caseload, or the combination of both. The example illustrated in Figure 10-1 shows that collections in the various offices decreased as the caseload per investigator increased.

Figure 10-1
Impact of Caseload on Collections
(Sample)
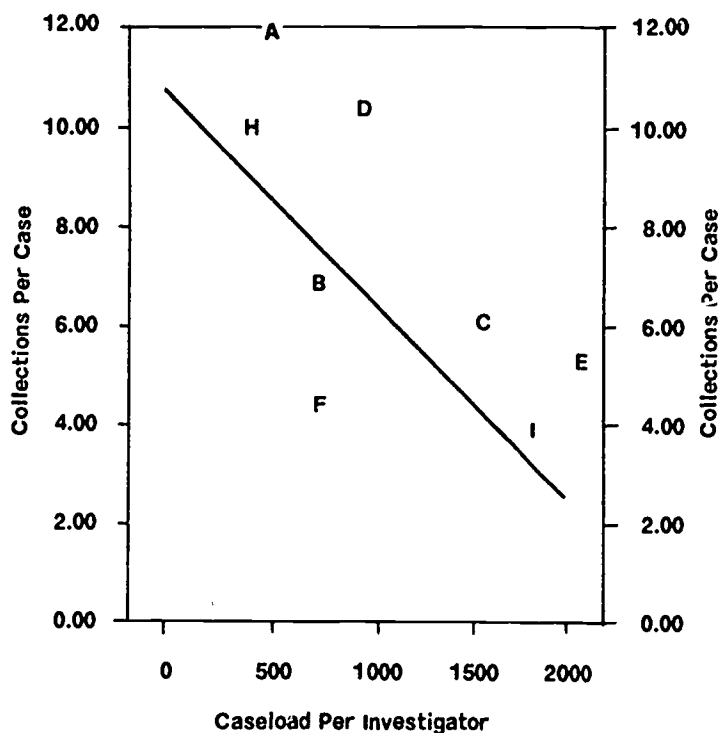
Exercise. In the space provided, determine how collections in your office are affected by the size of a worker's caseload. First, determine the collections per case (Figure 10-2) and the caseload per employee (Figure 10-3).

Figure 10-2
Collections Per Case Worksheet

COLLECTIONS PER CASE ⟶	$\dfrac{\text{TOTAL NO. OF COLLECTIONS}}{\text{TOTAL NO. OF CASES}}$	=	$ _____
YOUR OFFICE	_____	=	$ _____
COUNTY A	_____	=	$ _____
COUNTY B	_____	=	$ _____
COUNTY C	_____	=	$ _____
COUNTY D	_____	=	$ _____

Figure 10-3
Caseload Per Employee Worksheet

CASELOAD PER EMPLOYEE ⟶	$\dfrac{\text{TOTAL NO. OF CASES}}{\text{TOTAL NO. OF EMPLOYEES}}$	=	_____ Cases
YOUR OFFICE	_____	=	_____
COUNTY A	_____	=	_____
COUNTY B	_____	=	_____
COUNTY C	_____	=	_____
COUNTY D	_____	=	_____

Exercise. If possible, determine this information for several of the offices in your State. Then plot this information on Figure 10-4.

Figure 10-4
Impact of Caseload on Collections Worksheet

Collections Per Case

Caseload Per Employee
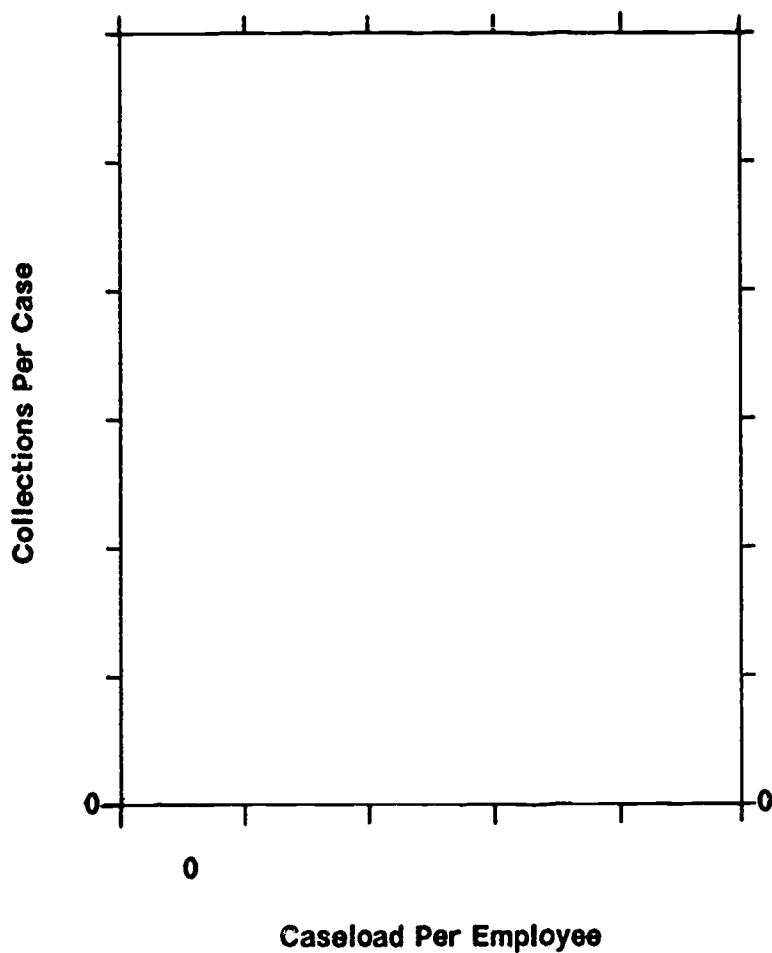
How is your office performing in relation to other offices?

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SUMMARY

Another way to assess the performance of an office is to study the effect of the caseload size on the amount of support collected. The size of the caseload appears to be a major factor affecting collections since caseworkers have less time to monitor and follow-up on cases. It is important that managers monitor the size of the caseload so that they prevent them from becoming so large that they cannot be worked effectively.

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CHAPTER 11
Potential Growth Areas

Two important indicators which measure areas of potential growth and increased collections for an office are the Establishment of Support Obligation Index, and the Enforcement Index. The Establishment of Support Obligation Index is the percent of the caseload which has support orders or stipulations. This index reports how successful an office has been in establishing support orders, and is important because it provides insight into the future growth potential of an office. Specifically, an increase in the percent of support orders can enhance the collection potential of an office.

The Enforcement Index measures the rate at which collections are made on cases with orders or stipulations. This figure indicates the amount of untapped collections that could potentially be derived from those cases witn orders.

Figure 11-1 lists the Establishment and Enforcement Indexes for five counties. What does this chart indicate about the performance of the five counties? County C, for example, has the highest Establishment of Support Index with over 30 percent of the caseload obligated. In comparision, County D has obligations on only 6.9 percent of its caseload. Looking at these data, a manager needs to question why one county has been able to establish more obligations than the other counties. What practices are contributing to their success? Could these practices be used in the other counties?

When assessing the performance of an office, it is equally important to evaluate the Enforcement Index. For example, although Figure 11-1 indicates that County C has more than 30 percent of its cases obligated, it is only collecting on 10 percent of its obligated caseload. A manager would want to know what caused this situation. For example, has the office placed too much emphasis on Establishment and not enough on Enforcement, or is there a problem with the performance of the Enforcement staff?

Figure 11-1
Comparison of Establishment
of Support Index and Enforcement Index
(Sample)

Jurisdiction	Establishment Of Support Index	Enforcement Index
COUNTY A	15.5%	8.7%
COUNTY B	18.3%	12.3%
COUNTY C	30.1%	10.0%
COUNTY D	6.9%	16.8%
COUNTY E	22.4%	10.2%

In the space provided below, determine the Establishment Index for your AFDC and non-AFDC cases.

ESTABLISHMENT OF SUPPORT OBLIGATION INDEX WORKSHEET

Establishment of Support Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{Cases with Support Orders}}{\text{Total No. of Cases}}$

Example:

AFDC Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{No. of AFDC Cases}}{\text{Total No. of Cases}}$ $\dfrac{(8,250)}{(20,500)} = 40\%$

Non-AFDC Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{No. of Non-AFDC Cases}}{\text{Total No. of Cases}}$ $\dfrac{(4,175)}{(20,500)} = 20\%$

Your AFDC Index ⟶ _____ = _____%

Your Non-AFDC Index ⟶ _____ = _____%

Now, determine the Enforcement Index for your AFDC and non-AFDC caseload.

ENFORCEMENT INDEX WORKSHEET

Enforcement Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{Total Amount of Support Collected}}{\text{Total Amount of Support Obligations Established}}$

AFDC Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{Amount of AFDC Collections}}{\text{Total Amount of Obligations}}$ $\dfrac{\$100,000}{\$500,000} = 20\%$

Non-AFDC Index ⟶ $\dfrac{\text{Amount of Non-AFDC Collections}}{\text{Total Amount of Obligations}}$ $\dfrac{\$250,000}{\$500,000} = 50\%$

Your AFDC Index ⟶ _____ = _____%

Your Non-AFDC Index ⟶ _____ = _____%

What do these percentages indicate about your office?

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Now that you have determined these indexes, it is possible to project future increases in collections. Let's look at the following example. Suppose that your office has 1,500 AFDC cases of which 500 cases have established orders and are paying regularly. If you increase the number of cases with support orders by 2 percent how much additional money could you expect to collect, assuming the average AFDC support payment is approximately $100 per month?

No. of Cases with Support Orders	=	500
Total No. of AFDC Cases	=	1,500
2 Percent Increase in Cases With Support Orders	=	10 Cases
10 Cases x $100	=	$1,000/month or $12,000/year

A 2 percent increase in paying cases would be 10 cases. At $100 per month, the office would increase its collecti is by $1,000 per month, or $12,000 per year!

Although it is unrealistic to assume that these new established orders will result in 12 full payments over the year, it is important to realize how essential it is to obtain additional support obligations and keep them in a paying status. Both of these factors are critical to maintaining and increasing your collections.

SUMMARY

The Establishment of Support Obligation Index and the Enforcement Index are two indicators which measure potential growth areas. Determining these indexes can assist a manager in projecting where additional staff resources should be placed. For example, if the Establishment of Support Index is low (i.e., few cases have orders) then a manager may want to allocate additional staff to establishing more cases.

Finally, these indexes can be helpful in projecting anticipated collections, assuming additional cases are established or enforced.

CONCLUSION

Since its inception in the mid-1970s, the Child Support Enforcement Program has become increasingly more complex and sophisticated. Budgets have increased and more people than ever are working in child support enforcement offices across the country. This growth in the Child Support Enforcement Program poses a unique challenge to those involved in managing IV-D offices. For example, how do you monitor the Intake, Locate, Establishment, Enforcement, and Collections and Distribution functions? How do you determine staffing allocations? How do you assess staff performance? How do you increase collections? These are only a few of the problems facing IV-D managers today. Part of the solution to this problem is an effective management information system.

In the past, developing management information was often considered the responsibility of the data processing staff. This attitude is beginning to change as managers realize that the data processing staff often do not have the time or expertise to develop the type of management information needed to operate an effective child support enforcement program.

This Workbook describes a four-step process that can be used by managers to identify and develop management information for child support enforcement offices. The first step is referred to as "Information Needed." This step consists of determining what information is needed to monitor and evaluate each function. This first step is the most critical and requires that managers carefully evaluate and select information that will enable them to monitor key performance areas. After determining what information is needed, the next step is to determine what data need to be collected to obtain the desired information. This is referred to as "Data Collection." The third step is "Reporting." This step requires the manager to determine how to display this information in a format that can be understood by the staff. The fourth and final step is "Data Analysis." Information developed in the previous steps can be used to evaluate a program, identify problems, and take remedial action if necessary.

By following this four-step process, a manager can develop a management information system to monitor and control the Intake, Locate, Establishment, Enforcement, and Collection and Distribution functions. Equally important, an MIS can provide relevant and accurate information for rational decisionmaking. With limited staff and budget resources, it is critically important that child support enforcement managers make the most informed and cost-effective decisions possible. However, making a good management decision depends upon having good information, and the only way to obtain this information is through an accurate and efficient management information system.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For further information on Management by Objectvies, see:

1. Morrisey, George L., <u>Appraisal and Development through Objectives and Results</u>, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1972.

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PUBLICATION EVALUATION

Improving Program Performance Through Management Information
A WORKBOOK

YOUR RESPONSES TO THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WILL ASSIST US IN PRODUCING PUBLICATIONS WHICH ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT FIELD.

1. Indicate your assessment of the material contained by rating the following items. (Circle the number which represents your opinion; 5 being high and 1 below low.)

   a) Clarity of the information presented (i.e., was the language clear and easy to understand; were the major concepts easy to identify?)

Very Clear	6	5	4	3	2	1	Not Very Clear

   b) Sequence in which topics were discussed

Very Logical	6	5	4	3	2	1	Not Very Logical

   c) Usefulness of Information

Very Useful	6	5	4	3	2	1	Not Very Useful

   d) Relevancy of Information provided to your work needs

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——OVER——

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