

PROCEDURAL JUSTICE INFORMED ALTERNATIVES TO CONTEMPT (PJAC) STAFF SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

The Procedural Justice-Informed Alternatives to Contempt (PJAC) Evaluation, funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), is examining the effectiveness of incorporating procedural justice principles into child support practices as an alternative to the use of civil contempt to address nonpayment of support. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide information to practitioners and policymakers within multiple levels of government about promising strategies for working with noncustodial parents to increase reliable child support payments. MDRC, in partnership with MEF Associates, is conducting the evaluation on behalf of OCSE.

You are being asked to complete this survey because you work at an agency that is participating in the PJAC evaluation. This survey will ask you about your work experience, participation in training, basic job duties, and your views on aspects of your job and your agency. The survey should take about 30 minutes to complete. Your participation in this survey is important because we want to ensure that we hear a wide range of views from child support staff. Your responses will be kept private to the extent permitted by law and used only for research purposes. There is a small risk that your information would be lost or misused, even though we take great care to protect it. Our study team is trained to follow strict rules to protect your privacy. Your responses will be combined with the responses of other staff and no individual names will be reported. No one from your agency will see your individual responses.

Participation in the survey is completely voluntary. There are no known risks of participating in this survey, except that you may feel uncomfortable answering some questions in the survey. You can skip any questions you do not want to answer. No one from your agency or OCSE will know if you decide to complete the survey or not.

If you have any questions about the survey, please do not hesitate to contact MDRC. You can reach MDRC by calling 1-xxx-xxx-xxxxx or emailing xxxxxxx@mdrc.org.

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average .5 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0505 and it expires xx/xx/xxxx.

Before starting the survey, please read and answer the statement below.

I have read the introduction and understand that the information I provide will be kept private to the extent permitted by law and used only for research purposes. My responses will be combined with the responses of other staff and no individual names will be reported.

Your participation in this information collection is voluntary. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number. The OMB control number for this collection is 0970-0505 and it expires xx/xx/xxxx. If you have comments regarding this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, please send them to Cindy Redcross, 200 Vesey Street 23rd Floor New York, NY 10281; Attn: OMB-PRA (0970-0505).

- ☐ I agree with the above statement and will complete the survey
- ☐ I do not agree with the above statement and will not complete the survey [End survey]

Module A: Survey Eligibility

A1.[For PJAC caseworkers] Do you currently work directly with [PJAC name] parents as a caseworker?

Yes

No

Don't know

A2.[For control caseworkers] Do you currently have noncustodial parents who have been referred for contempt due to nonpayment in the last year on your caseload?

Yes

No

Don't know

Module B: Staff Background, Caseload Characteristics, and Staff Demographics

B1. What is your current job title at [AGENCY]?

B2. How long have you been employed at [AGENCY]?

_____ years _____ months

B3. How long have you been employed in your current role?

_____ years _____ months

B4. How many total years of experience do you have as a child support caseworker (including experience prior to this agency)?

_____ years _____ months

B5. Do you have any of the following job experiences, either in your current role or any of your prior jobs? [List adapted from CSPED staff survey round 1, question A4 and B3 staff survey, question F2g]

	Yes	No	I Don't Know
a. Providing case management	☐	☐	☐
b. Working with people involved in or affected by domestic violence	☐	☐	☐
c. Coordinating supportive services with staff in partner agencies, such as workforce, public assistance, housing).	☐	☐	☐
d. Helping people obtain employment or placing them in jobs	☐	☐	☐
e. Using communication strategies to encourage and support behavior change in people (motivational interviewing)	☐	☐	☐
f. Facilitating negotiations between people (mediation)	☐	☐	☐

B6. Currently, about how many cases are in your caseload?

B7. What kind of cases do you have on your caseload? Select one option.

Establishment cases

Enforcement cases

Both establishment and enforcement cases

B8. Do you have a specialized caseload?

Yes

No

B9. If yes, what kind of cases are on your specialized caseload (example: cases with incarcerated NCPs, intergovernmental cases, cases with domestic violence)?

B10. Which of the following activities do you do for cases in your caseload? Select all that apply.

[If answered Establishment above] Paternity establishment

[If answered Establishment above] Order establishment for current support

Location of parents, employment, assets, or other income

Issuing income withholding orders

Order modifications

Negotiating or adjusting arrears

Initiating license suspensions and other enforcement tools

Administrative levy of financial accounts

Reinstating licenses, or temporarily stopping other enforcement tools

Assistance with parenting time

Contempt referrals

Referrals to services (such as employment services, mediation services or domestic violence services)

Meetings with parents to discuss issues with their cases (case conferences)

_____ Other

B11. Reflecting on the last month you worked, about what percent of your time would you estimate you spent performing the following functions? If you do not perform a particular function, please enter 0 percent. Please only use whole percent values. Also, please note that your values must add to 100.

Percent of time	Activity
	Case Maintenance: monitoring payment performance, reviewing arrearages, updating employer information and issuing withholding notices, sending reminder notices, calling or texting parents, license reinstatement, arrears compromise, and other maintenance activities.
	Locate services: investigating contact information, referring to locate services, and attempting to contact parents. Note that time spent doing these activities for non-paying cases will be

	recorded separately from time spent for other purposes.
	Developing case action plans: Developing/reviewing/modifying case action plans.
	Case conferences: time spent conducting case conferences/negotiations (in person or telephonically) for non-paying cases and for other purposes.
	Modifications: review modification requests, identify orders eligible for modifications, process modification requests.
	Enforcement of non-paying cases: determine ability to pay, take enforcement actions due to non-payment, suspend licenses, levy financial accounts, prepare case for contempt, appearing at hearings and other enforcement activities.
	Referrals: time spent referring cases to other services, like mediation, domestic violence, parenting time, legal services, employment, housing, education, financial services, mental health, substance abuse, and other services.
	Order establishment: Interviewing applicants and processing paperwork to establish child support cases.
	Paternity: Gathering information and processing paperwork to establish paternity.
	Administration: time spent attending trainings, meetings, filling out timesheets and other administrative tasks not related to managing your caseload.
	State MIS: Entering information and documenting case activities in state data system Note: time spent entering information for the evaluation and conducting random assignment should be recorded in "Research-related activities."
	Research-related activities: Collecting information about the noncustodial parent and their child support case required for random assignment, entering information for the evaluation in the MIS and conducting random assignment, meeting with the research team and OCSE, conducting calls with the research team and OCSE, completing this time study, and other research-related activities.
	Leave: Time off for holiday, vacation, doctor's appointments, lunch, breaks, and other leave.
	Other: time spent in other activities not covered here.

B12. How often do you use the following methods to communicate with noncustodial parents?

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. In-person				
b. Phone				

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
c. Email				
d. Text messages				
e. Social media				
f. Letter sent in the mail				
g. Other (please specify)				

B13. How often do you use the following methods to communicate with custodial parents?

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
h. In-person				
i. Phone				
j. Email				
k. Text messages				
l. Social media				
m. Letter sent in the mail				
n. Other (please specify)				

B14. How often do you have in-person meetings with...

	Never	Monthly	Weekly	Daily
a. Noncustodial parents alone	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Custodial parents alone	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. Custodial parents and noncustodial parents together	☐	☐	☐	☐

B15. What is the highest level of education you have completed? *[Adapted from B3 staff survey, question F11]*

High School: General Education Development or GED

High School: Diploma

Some college/some postsecondary vocational courses

Vocational school diploma

2-year or 3-year college degree (Associates degree)

4-year college degree (Bachelor's degree)

Some graduate work/no graduate degree

Graduate or professional degree (e.g. MA, MBA, PHD, JD, MD, MSW)

_____ Other (specify)

Don't Know

Decline to answer

Module C: Supervision and Training, Technical Assistance

C1. Since [PJAC start date], have you participated in any training activities related to your work?

[Adapted from CSPED staff survey Round 1, question C1]

Yes

No

C2. Since [PJAC start date], have you participated in training activities about the following topics? *[Adapted from CSPED staff survey Round 1, question C4]*

	Yes	No
a. Domestic violence	☐	☐
b. Trauma-informed care	☐	☐
c. Dispute resolution	☐	☐
d. Mediation	☐	☐
e. Motivational interviewing	☐	☐
f. Case management strategies	☐	☐
g. General child support policy and procedures	☐	☐
h. Federal policy changes, including contempt procedures and other changes in policy and practice	☐	☐
i. Screening for ability to pay	☐	☐
j. Procedural justice (not related to the [PJAC NAME] program)	☐	☐
k. Procedural justice related to the [PJAC NAME] program	☐	☐
l. Policy and procedures for the [PJAC NAME] program	☐	☐
m. Implicit Bias	☐	☐
n. Cultural Sensitivity	☐	☐
o. Customer Service	☐	☐
p. Behavioral Economics	☐	☐
q. Other Training Please Specify?	☐	☐

C3.[Asked for each category selected in question C2]. Thinking about the content of [TRAINING ACTIVITY] you have participated in, how helpful was this training in guiding how you do your work? *[Adapted from CSPED staff survey Round 1, question C3]*

	Not at all helpful	A little helpful	Somewhat helpful	Very helpful	Extremely helpful
a. [Training type selected in C3]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. [Training type selected in C3]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. [Training type selected in C3]	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C4.[For PJAC staff] Some program staff get guidance, technical assistance, or coaching from a supervisor or the federal OCSE. For each of the statements below, indicate how much you agree or disagree regarding any guidance you have received or sought out about providing [PJAC NAME] services. *[Adapted from B3 staff survey, question D3]*

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Agree strongly
a. If I need guidance or direction about [PJAC NAME], I know who to ask.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I am comfortable seeking guidance or direction about implementing [PJAC NAME].	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. In general, my questions about [PJAC NAME] are answered promptly by my supervisor.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Responses to my questions about [PJAC NAME] are helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. In general, I have found support from OCSE (such as the regular calls and other guidance) helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. In general, I have found the monthly learning community calls helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. In general, I have found the annual cross-site conference helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C5.For each of the statements below, indicate how much you agree or disagree regarding any guidance or direction you have sought out or received about child support policies and procedures in general at your agency. *[Adapted from B3 staff survey, question D3]*

	Disagree strongly	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Agree strongly
a. If I need guidance or direction about child support policies, I know who to ask.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. I am comfortable seeking guidance or direction about implementing child support policies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. In general, my questions about child support policies are answered promptly.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. Responses to my questions about child support policies are helpful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I collaborate with other caseworkers to discuss challenges with my cases.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

C6.Is there at least one person at [AGENCY] whom you regard as your supervisor? *[Adapted from CSPED Staff Survey Round 1, question D1]*

Yes

No

C7.In the past 3 months, how often did you have formal, one-on-one supervision meetings? *[Adapted from CSPED Staff Survey Round 1, question D2]*

Never	Monthly
Daily	Once every few months
Weekly	Don't know
Bi-Weekly	

C8. In the past 3 months, how often did you participate in team meetings, other than trainings, with other caseworkers? *[Adapted from CSPED Staff Survey Round 1, question D3]*

Never	Monthly
Daily	Once every few months
Weekly	Don't know
Bi-Weekly	

Module D: Views on the Child Support Agency.

D1.How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

At my agency.....	Disagree strongly	Disagre e	Don' t know	Agre e	Agree strongl y	Declin e to answe r
a. Case workers here are able to spend enough time on their cases. <i>[From Texas Christian University Survey of Organizational Functioning, Staffing Question #111]</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. Frequent staff turnover is a problem. <i>[From Texas Christian University Survey of Organizational Functioning, Staffing Question #110]</i>	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. It's easy for parents to navigate the child support system (such as: ask for a modification or adjustment to parenting time).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. We do our best to address noncustodial parents' barriers to paying child support.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. Decisions about when to pursue contempt are driven by custodial parent complaints.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. Most people who come through the child support system are treated with dignity.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Contempt is the primary tool we use to get noncustodial parents to meet their obligations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. We wait too long to pursue contempt for noncustodial parents who are not paying child support.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. We try to find out why noncustodial parents are not meeting their obligations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. We are too easy on noncustodial parents who do not meet their obligations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Module E: Procedural Justice

E1. Please indicate how often you do each of the following. If the statement is not relevant to your job, you can check Not Applicable. In this section, “customers” means both noncustodial and custodial parents.

[Questions adapted from Center for Court Innovation PJAC Training Survey]

	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always	Not Applicable
a. At the beginning of each meeting with customers, I provide a summary of what will happen during the session.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. At the end of each meeting with customers, I verify that they understand what is expected of them going forward.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. I provide customers with written reminders about future meetings, court dates, and other court requirements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. I provide customers with verbal reminders about future meetings, court dates, and other court requirements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. I ask open-ended questions (versus yes/no questions) to solicit information from customers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. When customers are waiting at our office, I explain to them why there may be delays and how long they might have to wait.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. When speaking to customers, I acknowledge unfair or difficult prior experiences they may have had with regard to their child support case.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. I explain to customers the process by which decisions will be made.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. I communicate in the same way to custodial parents as I do to noncustodial parents.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. I ask customers if they understand the legal language that has been used for their case.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. I ask customers how I can be helpful to them.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. I provide customers with an opportunity to express their views, concerns, or experiences.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. I let customers know about relevant services that could help them make their child support payments.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Module F: Job Satisfaction and Stress

This section asks questions about your job experience day to day. As a reminder, data will only be reported in aggregate and your individual responses to these questions will not be shared with your supervisor or anyone else at your agency or the federal OCSE.

[Adapted from TCU Survey of Organizational Functioning - Selected subscales: stress, burnout, satisfaction.]

F1. How strongly do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements?

	Disagree strongly	Disagre e	Uncertain	Agree	Agree strongly	Decline to answer
a. You feel overwhelmed by paperwork or data entry.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. You are satisfied with your present job.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. You would like to find a job somewhere else.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. You feel appreciated for the job you do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. You are under too many pressures to do your job effectively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
f. You like the people you work with.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
g. Staff members often show signs of stress and strain.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
h. You feel like you aren't making a difference.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
i. You feel that it is a real effort to come into work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
j. The heavy workload here reduces agency effectiveness.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
k. You feel depressed.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
l. You give high value to the work you do here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
m. Staff frustration is common here.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Disagree strongly	Disagre e	Uncertain	Agree	Agree strongly	Decline to answer
n. You feel tired.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
o. You are proud to tell others where you work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
p. You feel disillusioned and resentful.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐