EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF FAMILY DEVELOPMENT
CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM

We found adequate controls were in place for the program to ensure cases were properly documented in the NJKiDS system, the program was fulfilling its administrative and fiduciary responsibilities to collect and disburse child support funds, and the program was safeguarding the custodial parents’ and government interests. In making these determinations, we noted opportunities where legislation should be considered for the establishment of an age of emancipation and where efficiencies and cost savings could be provided, and creditors’ rights preserved. We also observed that efficiencies could be achieved through additional computer interfaces with other government agencies which would limit the need for manual inputs and increase the accuracy of the data in the NJKiDS system.

AUDIT HIGHLIGHTS

- New Jersey is one of only four states that do not have an established age of emancipation, resulting in additional costs to the state and to the custodial and non-custodial parents and increased child support arrearages. Parents are required to file a motion with the court to have their child declared emancipated. We recommended the Division of Family Development, in conjunction with the Judiciary, request legislation establishing an age of emancipation.

- Child Support Program personnel at county finance offices do not determine if the parties making child support payments have outstanding child support warrants. Our analysis disclosed that non-custodial parents with active bench warrants as of January 30, 2013 made 8,303 payments at county finance offices totaling $1.4 million. Probation office personnel should be alerted of these payments so that they could meet with the non-custodial parent to confirm their demographic information and inform them of their active warrant status.

- Judiciary personnel have replicated data from the NJKiDS system and created their own databases to carry out their Child Support functions. The creation of these databases has resulted in a less efficient work operation while raising information security concerns because the data is stored outside of the NJKiDS system.

- The implementation of an interface between the NJKiDS system and the FBI’s National Crime Information Center’s computer system for the exchange of warrant information in real time would reduce potential keying errors, automate the revalidation process, save resources, and reduce the state’s potential exposure to lawsuits.

AUDITEE RESPONSE

The division generally concurs with most of our findings and recommendations. However, they raised issues in their response that we tried to clarify in our auditor’s followup response.

For the complete audit report, click here.