

Request for Public Comments from the Region VI Office of Child Support Enforcement

January 15, 2015

Dear ONAC Constituents and Friends,

The Office of Child Support Enforcement, Region VI office, based out of Dallas, TX, has requested ONAC's assistance in getting the word out about a request for public comments related to cost-effective improvements to the child support enforcement program, funded under title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

These improvements were part of the **Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act** signed by President Obama on September 29, 2014. Public comments are due by February 27, 2015, and may be submitted through an email address- OCSEreport@acf.hhs.gov. The notice about public comments was published in the Federal Register on December 29, 2014 (79 FR 78092). Here is a link to the notice in the Register: <https://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2014/12/29/2014-30285/request-for-information>. Also, here is a link to the Act: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ183/html/PLAW-113publ183.htm>.

In terms of the child support connection to this Act, child support noted such information in the attached memo:

- Effectiveness and performance of the child support program;
- Analysis of program practices;
- Identification of possible new collection tools and approaches; and
- Identification of strategies for holding parents accountable for supporting their children and for building the capacity of parents to pay child support, with specific attention given to front-end services, ongoing case management, collections, tribal-state partnerships, interstate, and intergovernmental interactions, program performance, data analytics, and information technology.

Why is ONAC sending out this message, as an aspect of partnering with the Office of Child Support on asset building efforts?

Child Support, like other Administration for Children and Families programs, is interested in helping those they serve to build assets. **As a Native asset building coalition, ONAC recognizes that the request for**

public comments, related to this Act, allows for the public to comment on a range of cost-effective improvements to the child support program, including the promotion of asset building resources for those in the child support system. Thus, for example, as a cost-effective improvement, state and tribally administered child support program could share information with their customers/clients about Native financial education programs and Voluntary Income Tax Assistance sites as well as Children's Savings Account, Individual Development Account, housing, credit builder/credit repair, and family emergency savings account programs that are offered by tribes, the state, or nonprofits in their area. Additionally, child support programs could also directly administer and make available, for example, financial education and Children's Savings Account programs for their clients. There are numerous opportunities for information sharing and asset building program development/implementation related to child support.

During the past few years, ONAC was invited, and presented, information about the intersection of asset building and child support to state and tribal child support directors on a webinar (as part of the Administration for Children and Families ASSET Initiative). We have also shared information with Oklahoma tribal child support directors about ways to make tribally administered Children's Savings Account (CSA) programs work for custodial and non-custodial parents (such as by promoting a private arrears forgiveness component to a Children's Savings Account as a way of incentivizing participation in a CSA program...doing so via mediation between willing noncustodial and custodial parents, etc.). Currently, ONAC is serving on an Oklahoma child support working group exploring asset building options for those in the child support system.

ONAC is sending this information to help raise educational awareness about the intersection of asset building and child support. This request for comments would allow you, if interested, to share any comments you have about child support. For those of you wanting to promote the link between asset building and child support, you could mention that, if you wish, in your comments as well.

Questions? You may reach Carl Rich, Tribal Team Leader, Region VI-Dallas, at [214-767-8095](tel:214-767-8095). ONAC is also available to respond to general questions related to this message.