

# Honorable Mention

## **Area I Independent Living Project**

Blaine County

This project was developed so that every child in Area I leaving OKDHS as an adult would have the best possible chance to succeed by providing them with critical information. The project started in 2008 with the first child getting a folder with their birth certificate and social security card. Today, the project has evolved and each child receives a folder and personalized CD full of documents, information and pictures. Although the Area I project has not impacted a large number of custody children, the numbers cannot reflect how much it means to the individuals who have their personal information carefully and professionally preserved and presented to them.

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Gwen Barker  
Child Welfare Specialist II  
Field Operations Division, Area I

## **Building a Gateway to Interstate Child Support Collections**

OCSS State Office Center for Coordinated Programs

Oklahoma Child Support Services' Center for Coordinated Programs researched its use of automated Financial Institution Data Matching with specific banks. When OCSS' automation issued a levy directly to Wells Fargo to seize the bank account of a child support obligor, it was not honored by the bank resulting in wasted time and money. OCSS explored new ways to work Wells Fargo FIDM cases. OCSS asked the Texas Attorney General's child support office to be a gateway to Wells Fargo, validating OKDHS' FIDM levies with a cover letter to Wells Fargo operating in their state. The cover letter attests the levy complies with Texas levy requirements, and Wells Fargo now honors our levies. This new gateway resulted in \$72,112.37 in collections for 2009, which improved customer service to OCSS' district offices.

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Michelle Center  
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# Honorable Mention

## **Building Stronger and Healthier Families, Family Night Out**

Rogers County Human Services Center

OKDHS workers in Rogers County saw a need for low-income families to have some special family night activities to help them take a break from everyday stresses in their lives. OKDHS workers partnered with YouthCare Counseling Agency and area businesses to brainstorm ideas for activities to include all family members. The group hosted four events that included games and prizes, hourly drawings for food baskets, gift cards, holiday gifts and clothing. Refreshments were provided as well. The goal was to bridge the gap from within, by building stronger and healthier families through focusing on relationships - one child, one parent at a time.

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Glenda Stephens  
YouthCare Counselor

Lisa Lauderdale  
YouthCare Counselor

Mike Crawford  
YouthCare Director/Owner

Debbie Crawford  
YouthCare Owner

Janie Dale  
Social Services Specialist IV  
Rogers County

## **Canadian County Family Drug Court**

Since 2002, the Canadian County Family Drug Court Program has assisted parents whose children have been adjudicated deprived in remaining sober and regaining custody of their children. The program has been successful in graduating 31 participants and achieving reunification with a total of 57 children. In addition, six drug-free babies have been born to participants while in the program. The program length is one year, with participants receiving outpatient or intensive outpatient substance abuse treatment and drug and alcohol screenings at no financial cost, as well as support and services from Comprehensive Home Based Services, the Canadian County CASA program, 12 step programs and other community service providers and organizations. An OKDHS Child Welfare Supervisor serves as the coordinator for the program. This successful collaborative effort has been achieved by the pooling of resources and without any specified funding for operations or staff.

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Associate District Judge

Cheryl Thornton  
County Director III  
Canadian County A

Dawn Bender  
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Canadian County

Diane Pardew  
Child Welfare Specialist II  
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Bill Flanagan  
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# Honorable Mention

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Joan South  
Director  
Gary E. Miller Canadian County Children's Justice  
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Myrna Terry  
Substance Abuse Counselor

Joanne Bush  
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Jennifer Morton  
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Mary Ann Thomas  
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Angela Parsons  
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Tracy Owens  
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Shirley Prim  
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Rebecca Baker  
Director  
Canadian County Caring for Kids

Tracy Brady  
Assistant Director  
Canadian County Caring for Kids

Carolyn Husmann  
Director  
Women's Service and Family Resource Center

## **Creation of a Formalized, Unclassified Pay Schedule** Human Resources Management Division, Classification and Compensation Unit

The goal for the Human Resource Management Division's classification and compensation unit is to ensure selecting officials have accurate salary information to make informed decisions that could impact the budget and for employees to determine their salary upon accepting a new assignment. Determining salaries for employees changing from classified to unclassified service became difficult for administrators and employees. The unit received numerous inquiries to calculate potential salaries for employees changing class or service. The implementation of the unclassified salary schedule created a comparable and easy-to-understand salary schedule for field users and lessened the response time to the field in order to assist administrators and employees in making informed salary and hiring decisions. The pay grades assigned to jobs in the unclassified service are now consistent with the pay band structure utilized by the OPM pay band schedule for the classified service. The time to process salary calculations has decreased by 50 percent.

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# Honorable Mention

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HR Programs Manager I  
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Dale Moore  
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Human Resources Management Division

Diane Haser-Bennett  
Director  
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## **Creation of the OKDHS Grants Team**

OKDHS Family Support Services, Office of Planning, Research and Statistics, Field Operations, Support Services, Office of Client Advocacy, Oklahoma Child Support Services, Office of Faith Based and Community Initiatives, Aging Services

OKDHS is pursuing new grant funding from competitive, discretionary grants. These grants can pose unique challenges for the agency and have unintended consequences. In 2007, three staff members saw a need for increased communication within OKDHS regarding grant-related activity. An agency team was created to work on forms, process and policy, open lines of communication between divisions, share information, circulate grant funding opportunities and assist with tracking and reporting OKDHS grant activity. These activities helped reduce problems resulting from uncoordinated grants activity and helped encourage new grant activity. The grants team has helped lay a solid foundation to successfully increase future grant activity and develop new resources for the agency, its clients, customers and the state.

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**FIDM Customer Service Process Improvement Project**  
Oklahoma Child Support Services Center for Operations

Due to Financial Institution Data Matches' automated process for identifying and matching persons owing child support, there were situations where automated levies could be counterproductive. The automated process was generating more work rather than saving time. By reviewing the process, staff was able to review each levy prior to being issued to ward off any levies that might be deemed inappropriate. As a result, the quality of customer service increased in more than 25 percent of the cases identified by the FIDM analyzer, and the number of complaint phone calls from financial institutions dropped dramatically.

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# Honorable Mention

## **Finding Your True Path within OKDHS**

Human Resources Management Division

During 2008, the Employment Services Unit received more than 500 applications that could not be certified as meeting the minimum qualifications. It was determined that reducing the number of under-qualified applications would benefit employees and the Human Resources Management Division in the long run. This goal started a journey that led to an innovative approach to sharing information to enable employees to take full advantage of opportunities for career enhancement. Through completion of this project, OKDHS demonstrated commitment to supporting the professional growth of its employees.

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Human Resources Management Division

## **The Guymon MegaDocket 2009**

Oklahoma Child Support Services, Woodward District Office

The OCSS Woodward district office turned a massive assignment into an organized group project called the megadocket. The project began by the discovery of a huge backlog of about 400 Guymon establishment cases. Relatively speaking, 400 may seem small, but in rural areas such as Guymon and Woodward, it is a very substantial number. The Woodward district office determined the best solution was to work the cases on one docket. Generally, a Woodward/Guymon docket consists of about 40 cases. The megadocket would consist of as many cases as possible that needed to be established because the goal was to assist the families living without the benefit of child support as quickly as possible. With a clear strategy, determination, and the support and cooperation of the local courthouse staff, the Woodward District Office was able to achieve a positive outcome. There were 21 agreed orders, six default orders, six cases pending, 20 cases dismissed and seven stricken cases due to no service. Most importantly, the office was able to provide service to many deserving families and improve the standing of OCSS in the community.

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Barbara Tarnauskas  
999/Temporary Worker

## **Identifying and Tracking Newly Ordered Child Support Cases**

Oklahoma Child Support Services, Tulsa West Office

As the OCSS Tulsa West office focused on establishing more paternities and orders for child support in 2008 and continuing into 2009, they identified a need to monitor these new orders and take quick action in cases with no payments to encourage non-custodial parents to support their child in the early stages. In addition, they wanted to focus on certain cases where the office was no longer collecting current support but child support arrears or judgments are still owed and get the individuals to pay, work out agreements for lump sum settlements, or review for closure if it was no longer feasible to collect. The office created a system that would identify newly ordered cases and track them to ensure payment was made. The efficient new system also improved federal performance measures.

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**Identifying Common Ground, Improving Customer Service and Efficiency**  
Oklahoma Child Care Services and the Children and Family Services Division

Oklahoma Child Care Services residential and child placing agency licensing staff began this journey after they found they were answering the same phone calls over and over. The Children and Family Services Division resource unit staff was also frustrated with what seemed like an endless array of phone calls asking the same questions. Through brainstorming and research, OCCS and CFSD found that they were repeatedly answering the same questions, making the same referrals and talking to the same people. After careful consideration, common ground which could be relayed to potential contractors/licensees was identified and two collaborative DVDs were created to help build a solid foundation for services provided to children placed out of their homes.

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Genesis Project  
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**Image Cash Letter Processing Implementation**  
Oklahoma Child Support Services, State Office, Center  
for Finance and Budget

Oklahoma Child Support Services (OCSS) receives thousands of child support payments each month and the number has steadily grown. In 1999, OCSS processed 56,135 checks on average per month. In 2009, the number of checks processed more than tripled to a monthly average of 170,932. The Image Cash Letter process had not previously been used by the State of Oklahoma and was implemented to help solve the problem of non-custodial parents using fraudulent checks to pay child support. Changing to this process proved to have other valuable benefits as well as helping decrease the problem of bad checks. Other areas of improvement were more efficient processing of checks, receipt of funds from payers' accounts in less than half the previous time, increased interest paid to state bank accounts, and reduced banking fees for the state.

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## **Information Systems Disaster Recovery Exercise Team** Data Services Division

During 2009, the Data Services Division successfully conducted two integrated exercises for recovery of information systems. This was accomplished at a contracted computer site in Colorado with similar, but not identical computer equipment. These exercises, one in February and one in December, covered basic automated functions of the Children and Family Services Division and Oklahoma Child Support Services. Secure backup tapes from production processing stored outside the primary processing location of DSD were used to perform these recoveries. Each exercise entailed recovery of multiple operating systems, multiple database types and structures, secure network data communications, extreme coordination with vendors and harsh working hours. Validation was conducted by representatives of the program divisions. Feedback provided at multi-state information technology conferences indicates that this achievement is truly remarkable.

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## **InfoNet Content Management Solution**

The team goal was to create a comprehensive Web content management solution based on a technology that ensures accessibility compliance and adheres to Web design and usability standards. The team developed and executed a plan to deliver a content management strategy solution that fit the needs of all of OKDHS. The plan was rolled out in a multi-phase approach to mitigate any risks by providing value to the organization. The program was rolled out successfully last year and the team continues to work to make the system better every day.

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# Honorable Mention

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**Medical Support Enforcement Project**  
Oklahoma Child Support Services, Oklahoma Employer  
Services Center

The Oklahoma Employer Services Center was developed to address the growing needs of Oklahoma Child Support Services in the area of medical support. The OKESC opened in February 2008 and has greatly improved OCSS' performance in medical support. Medical support documents are now processed within a day of receipt, when previously the documents had a backlog of months. External education for employers is being provided through individual contact and through regional workshops. Extremely positive feedback was received on surveys conducted. The Employer Services Center has made a positive impact for OCSS.

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## **Medical Child Support Guideline Implementation Project**

Oklahoma Child Support Services

Recent changes to law and policy regarding medical child support prompted the largest project undertaken by Oklahoma Child Support Services in nearly a decade. The project was spurred by Senate Bill 2194, changing Oklahoma's child support guidelines law and implementing new medical support requirements in response to federal law and regulations. Due to the scope of the project several sub-groups were created and each successfully tackled all components to meet the new law.

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# Honorable Mention

## **RAPT - Resource Approval Process Team**

Office of Planning, Research and Statistics

The project began with a vision to help families who want to become foster or adoptive parents more easily navigate the approval process with OKDHS in Tulsa County. The team identified two distinct problems. First, there are not enough families successfully navigating the Bridge Resource Family application process from inquiry to approval to meet the placement and permanency needs of custody children. Second, customer service and support for families in the approval process did not always meet the needs of families. This led to families dropping out of the process prior to approval. The RAPT team sought to identify, document, analyze and improve the approval process for these parents. Overall, specific gaps were identified and solutions were implemented in the form of new tools and processes to ensure quality customer service interactions and better communication to inform resource parents during the process.

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# Honorable Mention

## **School Nutrition Program Reimbursement Project**

OKDHS Finance and Support Services Divisions

OKDHS administers the School Nutrition Program which includes the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program and After School Snack Program, and reimburses schools and residential child care institutions for providing meals to children participating in one or more program. This project resulted in greatly reducing the time it takes to reimburse the entities providing meals to children, which increased their monthly cash balances.

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Commodities Unit  
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Claims Unit  
Finance Division

Systems Unit  
Finance Division

Business Transformation Office  
Finance Division

## **Streamlining HR Services Team Workflow**

Human Resources Management Division, HR Services

In order to better serve customers and help co-workers, HR Services sought a way to more efficiently store and recall information while streamlining the team as a whole. The team believed this could be accomplished through a unified desk reorganization project to advance daily operations. Using this uncomplicated system allows the team to work in a more cohesive manner when there is an absence or when assisting one another. The new desk organization system has helped the team maximize time with customers, eliminate errors and enhance each individual's personal work performance by operating in a greater capacity whether fully staffed or not. This has reduced the level of energy expended to accomplish the same tasks as before resulting in a less stressful work environment. Customers were more satisfied due to reduced friction between HR Services staff and field contacts as communication improved with better organization.

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## **Together Everyone Achieves More** TEAM Area IV

Together Everyone Achieves More started in 1993 with a staff member from each county in Area IV. Although the TEAM initially came together to provide continuous improvement in timeliness and accuracy in the Food Stamp Program, it now reviews all Family Support Services Division cases. Last year the TEAM's challenge was to maintain high performance and address the continuing need to monitor and support staff through third party review of casework and developing and maintaining quality staff. With help from TEAM, Area IV has been able to maintain a high level of performance consistently for the last three years.

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Anthony Harjo  
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Brian Mixon  
Social Services Inspector II  
Field Operations Division, Area IV

# Honorable Mention

## **Tulsa West Fast Track Paternity Team**

Oklahoma Child Support Services, Tulsa West Office

Child support offices are evaluated on five federal performance measures. The Tulsa West Child Support Services Office decided to target two of these areas to improve its standing: paternitys established and support orders obtained. These two areas were chosen because if more paternitys and support orders are established, the additional performance measures would also be impacted. A paternity and establishment Fast Track team was established to schedule appointments for non-custodial parents to come in voluntarily and work out an agreement amicably rather than being served and attend a court hearing. The implementation of the Fast Track process saved the state \$18,150 in service costs alone, and brought in 242 non-custodial parents voluntarily to settle their cases.

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# Honorable Mention

## **Working Together to Improve Paternity Establishment**

Oklahoma Child Support Services, State Office

When a child is born to unmarried parents, the parents can choose to establish paternity without court involvement by completing an acknowledgement of paternity form. Parents often complete the form along with the birth certificate at the hospital. Establishment of paternity at birth encourages parental responsibility and simplifies later issues of child support, custody and visitation. AOP forms are then filed with the Oklahoma State Health Department and Oklahoma Child Support Services. In 2009, the State Health Department unveiled an Internet-based system for preparing and filing birth certificates. OCSS and the University of Oklahoma's Center for Public Management collaborated to develop an online AOP training course. OCSS trains hospital and health department staff in the AOP process and the result of this collaboration greatly simplified the process.

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