

OVERVIEW

Study of the Automated Child Support Enforcement System (KEIKI)

January 2003

Summary

This report is submitted in response to Section 41 of Act 259, Session Laws of Hawaii (SLH) 2001, which directed the State Auditor to conduct a comprehensive study of the automated child support enforcement system (KEIKI) of the Department of the Attorney General. Act 259 also required that the study include the status and measures of effectiveness of KEIKI's implementation, effectiveness of the department's Child Support Enforcement Agency in addressing client problems, a review of other states' successfully implemented automated systems, and recommendations on an action plan to improve the agency.

The Legislature requested the study to explore ways to make KEIKI more responsive and accurate. In addition, the Legislature wanted to examine ways to improve and streamline the Child Support Enforcement Agency's organizational structure and balance the agency's customer service requirements with the primary responsibility of making payments to custodial parents. Through a competitive bid process, Experio Solutions was selected as the consultant to conduct the study. This is a report of the consultant's findings and recommendations.

The consultant found that KEIKI's effectiveness is limited by the manner in which it is designed and used by the Child Support Enforcement Agency. The consultant stated that KEIKI has capabilities that are not being fully exploited by the agency and the agency is not converting data being captured into information to support management, planning, and operational control. For example, the agency has not developed a strategic plan and workflow planning and control information are not used effectively.

The consultant also found that the agency has made improvements in customer service but has not yet established a culture of customer service; customer service still needs numerous improvements. The agency administrator has not defined what constitutes adequate or excellent customer service or measures of effectiveness for customer service. In addition, telephone customer support continues to be unacceptable. Fewer than 60 percent of callers entered the telephone queue and under 50 percent eventually talked to an agency representative.

The consultant further found that other states face similar challenges in information systems but some of these states are able to use their automated systems effectively to improve child support enforcement services. The consultant stated that Hawaii may benefit from adopting the best practices used by these states. These best practices primarily concern the use of automation to streamline formerly manual processes and with interfaces and access to data, such as Federal Case Registry, that was previously unavailable.



The consultant found that although the agency has attempted to address recommendations made by the Auditor in prior reports, the agency has yet to address key recommendations relating to leadership, strategic planning, information technology, and organizational and customer service strategies. The consultant concluded that the agency's failure to implement the Auditor's recommendations has perpetuated many of the problems the agency currently faces.

Finally, the consultant identified three root causes within the Child Support Enforcement Agency that inhibit it from achieving its mission and goals.

- *Root Cause 1:* Lack of focus on strategic definition;
- *Root Cause 2:* Lack of full exploitation of system capabilities; and
- *Root Cause 3:* Deficiencies in training.

Recommendations and Response

The consultant recommended an action plan to provide the agency a road map for reducing or eliminating these root causes. The action plan includes recommendations, action steps, proposed completion dates, and estimated costs. In general, the consultant recommended that the agency establish an executive steering committee, reorganize the KEIKI steering committee under the executive steering committee, and establish a customer service committee. The consultant also recommended that each committee develop strategic plans with defined missions, roles, responsibilities, and performance expectations relevant to each committee's areas. The consultant also recommended that the agency develop a training program, use industry best practices to implement a decision support system and replace its voice response system, install a new tape backup system, and identify greater use of the Internet.

The department responded that overall it was pleased with the outcome of the report. The department concurred with the consultant's findings and recommendations relating to strategic planning, the majority of the consultant's action plan, using other states' best practices, formalizing a training program, replacing its voice response unit system, and gathering more detailed information on customer service needs. The department also provided clarifying information regarding conditional certification, certification statuses of other states, and the agency's cost-effectiveness ratio. However, the department did not agree with statistical data cited in the background section of the report relating to addresses and with the audit finding that only 50 percent of callers received responses. Agreeing with the agency's methodology of calculating missing addresses, the consultant adjusted the data in the report related to missing addresses of custodial and noncustodial parents. However, the consultant stands by its numbers in reporting the percentage of telephone callers who receive responses from the agency.

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