



STATE OF MICHIGAN

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

IV-D MEMORANDUM 2023-003

TO: All IV-D Staff*

FROM: Erin P. Frisch, Director
Office of Child Support (OCS)

DATE: February 2, 2023

UPDATE(S):

Manual

Form(s)

SUBJECT: Availability of Customer Service Training in the OCS Learning Management System (LMS)

ACTION DUE: None

POLICY EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon receipt

PURPOSE:

OCS has purchased an online customer service training course that is now available in its Learning Management System (LMS). This course aligns with the Michigan Child Support Program's operating principles to support parents, be service-oriented, and win, rather than enforce, compliance. The training is specific to child support, so it will be especially helpful to IV-D staff in certain customer service situations. IV-D staff may take this training to fulfill their yearly customer service training requirement for the Contract Performance Standards (CPS) Training Measures.¹

OCS conducted a pilot of the online course to gauge its relevance and value. The results from a survey of the training participants illustrated its broad support, acceptance, and value. In fact, all survey respondents indicated that they would recommend the training to other staff.

¹ For more information on the CPS, reference [Section 1.25, "Contract Performance Standards \(CPS\)," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual.](#)

DISCUSSION:

A. Introduction

The Cooperative Reimbursement Program (CRP) agreement has several program requirements for IV-D Prosecuting Attorney (PA) and Friend of the Court (FOC) staff to meet.² These include a set of CPS performance measures that consist of IV-D training and customer service training. Local IV-D staff will take a minimum of four hours of IV-D training and one hour of customer service training each fiscal year. Eighty percent of an office's IV-D staff are expected to complete this training each fiscal year, even if they do not have direct interaction with families.

Offices may continue to seek the customer service training of their choosing. OCS wanted to offer web-based training that provides child-support-specific customer service information as another viable option in addition to the numerous customer service training offerings already available in the LMS.³ OCS believes Michigan IV-D staff will find the training beneficial and relevant to the child support program's unique relationship with its case participants.

OCS is offering this training to all IV-D staff to provide consistent customer service training throughout the child support program. Although the CRP contractual provisions apply only to PA and FOC staff, IV-D staff throughout the program are expected to provide quality customer service and to contribute meaningfully to the program's Strategic Plan, which includes "(d)esign(ing) customer interactions that support compliance and encourage positive participation." In an effort to meet that goal, all OCS Operations Division staff, including all support specialists, will take this training.

B. Course Details

1. Course Title and Description

The course is titled *Effective Child Support Customer Service*. It consists of five modules. Local offices may decide how to complete the training; OCS provides a recommendation in Section C below.

The course is self-paced and very interactive. It includes many child-support-specific scenarios⁴ to promote comprehension and learning.

² For more information on the CRP agreement, reference [Section 1.23, "Cooperative Reimbursement Program \(CRP\) Agreements \(Contracts\)," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual](#).

³ This training product was developed by Public Knowledge, a professional organization with a history of providing service and support to state IV-D programs. Public Knowledge works with agencies to improve child support service delivery at local, regional and state levels. Its expert consultants design training that child support staff need to do their work effectively. For more information, reference the [Public Knowledge Child Support page](#).

⁴ Since this training product was created with a national child support audience in mind, the scenarios may differ from Michigan procedures.

2. Course Modules

When IV-D staff complete a module, the LMS will automatically record it on their transcript. This ensures it will be credited for CPS purposes.

The five course modules are listed below, along with a brief description and the approximate length.

a. Module 1: *Basics of Effective Child Support Customer Service* (Approximate length: 60 minutes)

This module is designed to guide staff toward positive and constructive interactions that will prevent undesirable outcomes with child support participants. This module will allow IV-D staff to:

- Learn the benefits of effective customer service;
- Explore how effective customer service is delivered;
- Use practical tools to measure the quality of their interactions with child support participants; and
- Practice delivering and measuring customer service by participating in scenario-based activities.

b. Module 2: *Communication Skills for Effective Child Support Customer Service* (Approximate length: 30 minutes)

This module is designed to affirm and strengthen the communication skills that IV-D staff use to deliver customer service. It emphasizes that the connection with child support participants is the basis of child support services. Building a positive relationship with participants encourages their engagement with the program. This module will allow IV-D staff to practice communication techniques with various types of case participants using scenario-based interactions.

c. Module 3: *Elevating Communication and Rapport Building Skills* (Approximate length: 45 minutes)

Child support matters are personal and often very complex. IV-D staff need communication skills beyond the ability to actively listen and ask open-ended questions. They need to build relationships and trust with child support participants. This module expands upon the basic communication skills discussed in Module 2. IV-D staff will advance from engaging in interactions with participants to building relationships with them. The module will use scenarios for staff to apply what they've learned.

- d. Module 4: *Unintended Bias and Cultural Competence*: (Approximate length: 45 minutes)

This module introduces staff to the principle and meaning of unintended bias. Unintended bias is part of the human experience; however, it must be recognized and transformed into cultural competence in order to negate its effect on the delivery of child support services. In this module, IV-D staff will:

- Identify their own unintended bias by considering how seven types of bias can affect the delivery of child support services;
- Reflect on how each of these types affects their work as service providers;
- Learn the concept of cultural competence – the healthy acknowledgement of a person’s own cultural viewpoint coupled with an awareness of its influence on the person’s own attitude and behavior and the impact this has on others; and
- Practice using cultural competence through scenario-based activities.

- e. Module 5: *Child Support Customer Service in Action* (Approximate length: 30 minutes)

This module reinforces learning objectives from the four previous modules and allows staff to apply their knowledge and skills. It uses realistic and familiar child-support-specific scenario-based activities. The module will provide supportive feedback from these activities.

3. Additional Features

- a. Reflection Journal

Each module has an optional Reflection Journal that IV-D staff may use to answer questions, reflect on the scenarios, and take notes during the training. IV-D staff may download and save and/or print the journal, if needed.

- b. Leadership Guide

For supervisors or designated IV-D staff, each module has an optional Leadership Guide that provides sample team activities and discussion questions. It may be used to debrief the concepts from each module and to continue building customer service skills in the weeks and months following the training. OCS encourages its use.

C. Recommended Learning Schedule and Debrief Sessions

IV-D offices will decide whether their staff will take the *Effective Child Support Customer Service* course to fulfill their required minimum one hour of customer service training each fiscal year. IV-D offices will also decide how their staff will take

the training. OCS recommends that IV-D offices take Module 1 in the first year, Module 2 in the second year, and so on. OCS also recommends that IV-D offices consider pairing each module with a debrief session using the Leadership Guide (Ref: Section B[3][b], above) to enhance the learning from the training.

OCS Training Services may also host periodic debrief sessions online if there is enough demand. IV-D staff and/or an office may request a debrief session by submitting a Child Support Help Desk ticket.

D. Obtaining CPS Credit for Debrief Sessions

For attendees to get CPS credit for a debrief session, group leaders will follow the process below.

1. The group leader will submit a request to OCS Training Services at least two weeks in advance of the session. The request will include the session's date and planned length.
2. The group leader will receive an email confirming training credit from OCS Training Services.
3. On the day of the session, the group leader will be responsible for submitting the attendees' names and email addresses to OCS Training Services. Offices have two options for submitting the attendee information:
 - a. Complete the attendance roster using the existing Excel template and email it to OCS Training Services;⁵ or
 - b. Ask attendees to sign in for the session online using the QR code (or link) provided by OCS Training Services.⁶

OCS Training Services will enter the names from the roster or online sign-in sheet into the LMS to give credit.

E. Course Pilot

To prepare for implementation of the course, OCS conducted a pilot with about 30 staff members from the Kent PA and Macomb FOC offices from August through October 2022. The pilot assessed reactions to the first module of the training, including staff's readiness to use the skills learned. The chart on the next page provides results from the written evaluations.

⁵ Ref: [Exhibit 1.25E19, Contract Performance Standards Attendance Roster Template](#). For more information, reference Section 1.25 of the *Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual*.

⁶ OCS Training Services will include the QR code and link when emailing the group leader with CPS credit confirmation in Step 2. For more information, reference the [Job Aid: Using QR Codes to Collect Online Sign-In Sheets for Training](#).

Questions	Results
The eLearning module was easy to navigate.	83% strongly agreed 17% agreed
Training was organized in a way that was easy to follow.	72% strongly agreed 28% agreed
The knowledge checks provided an opportunity for me to understand and apply the concepts learned in the course.	83% strongly agreed 17% agreed
The scenario examples helped me understand the importance of building meaningful, healthy relationships with our internal and external customers.	67% strongly agreed 22% agreed 11% neutral
Would you recommend this training to others? (Y/N)	100% yes
How able are you to put what you've learned into practice in your work?	28% indicated they can perform at an expert level after the training 67% indicated they can be successful now (even without more guidance/experience) 6% indicated they need more experience to be good at using what they learned Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

NECESSARY ACTION:

Retain this IV-D Memorandum until further notice.

REVIEW PARTICIPANTS:

Program Leadership Group
 Collaboration Workgroup
 Customer Service Workgroup
 Performance Management Workgroup

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CC:

None

ATTACHMENTS:

None

EPF/KT

* Ref: the [Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual Introduction and Table of Contents](#) for a definition of IV-D staff.