



# AN ALTERNATIVE TO INCARCERATION

## PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS IN GEORGIA



BY: MICHAEL SCHULTE | JULY 2015



**GEORGIA**  
CENTER for OPPORTUNITY

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July 2015

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Georgia Center for Opportunity (GCO) is an independent, non-partisan think tank dedicated to increasing opportunity and improving the quality of life for all Georgians. We research ways to help remove barriers to opportunity, promote those solutions to policymakers and the public, and help innovative social enterprises deliver results on the ground. The primary pathways to opportunity – strong families, quality schools, and stable employment – which historically gave people a chance to succeed, regardless of social and economic background, have experienced a rapid decline in recent decades. We study and understand the obstacles along these pathways to success and work to break through the barriers that keep Georgians from thriving.

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## SUCCESS STORY

Charles Stokes, a middle-aged man from South Bend, Indiana, found himself in a troublesome situation in 2011. He had an order to appear before the Henry County Superior Court for failure to pay child support for six of his children. Although he was supporting several other of his children who were living with him at the time, Charles had failed to pay any child support for these six other children from the time he arrived in Georgia eight years prior. He owed as much as \$80,000 in back child support payments and faced the possibility of going to prison.<sup>i,1</sup>

Despite what his track record of non-payment suggested, Charles wanted to do better. He knew the man portrayed on paper was not whom he truly was. He had several barriers to overcome, but he believed that with a decent job and little extra help he could provide for his children consistently.

Two days before his court hearing, Charles decided to visit his local child support office to seek help. Through meeting with an agent, he was referred to Ms. Tina Brooks, the coordinator for Henry County's Parental Accountability Court (PAC), who assessed his situation and ran it by the PAC judge, Brian Amero, who accepted him into the outreach program. His agreement to participate in the PAC prevented him from having to appear before court later that week and face a likely sentence of imprisonment. Charles was relieved by this alternative and resolved that he would do whatever it took to avoid going to jail or prison.

Charles' time in the PAC was challenging. He was required to actively search for a job 40 hours a week, maintain weekly communication with Ms. Brooks, and appear before Judge Amero to assess his progress. He was having great difficulty securing a job because of a pair of arrest charges on his background. Nonetheless, Ms. Brooks worked tirelessly to help him find job leads, receive job readiness training, get his driver's license reinstated, and even receive legal assistance from an advocacy organization in Atlanta.

Charles recalls, "Tina helped me out a lot...just giving me the chance to be in the program might have been the biggest thing. She accepted me when no one else would. But it was not a picnic; she was not trying to be my friend. She was a true advocate for the children."

After having been in the program for some time, but still not paying child support consistently, Charles received a warning from Judge Amero that he would be removed from the program if he did not find a job - any job - and begin regularly paying child support soon. This pressure from the judge caused Charles to ramp up his efforts, and within a few days he was able to find a job with a moving company through the help of Urban League of Atlanta. However, he did not want to settle with this job and was determined to find something better.

Within two days he called a friend who was a principal of a high school in DeKalb County and applied for a job as a kitchen supervisor for this school – a position which provided a foot in the door of a school system in which he would like to become a teacher. Charles had been working to earn his teaching degree from Mercer University while participating in the PAC, and this job had the potential of opening up future job opportunities within the school system. Charles told his plan to Judge Amero who commended him saying, "You are the type of person this program is for." He was permitted to stay in the program and he left the courtroom with a renewed sense of motivation.

Within two weeks Charles was hired for the job as kitchen supervisor. He began consistently paying child support each month – never missing a payment – all the while attending school at Mercer. Charles

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<sup>i</sup> A person who has knowingly and willingly failed to support his or her child while having the ability to pay may be found guilty of a felony offense and face a sentence of imprisonment under both Indiana and Georgia law.

eventually graduated from the PAC after paying the full amount of his child support orders for six months in a row. It had been three years since he first entered the program - a testament to his perseverance and determination.

Since graduating, Charles has continued to faithfully pay child support. He decided to change his degree from teaching to social work after having a conversation with Ms. Brooks that helped him realize his dream job is really to be a school counselor. He considers it a calling to help kids move down a positive path and learn to take responsibility for their actions, which he has already begun to do as a coach and mentor. In addition, he plans to launch an initiative called “Take Back the Reins,” which aims to empower young men involved with the child support system to respect themselves, become responsible, and avoid the struggles and pitfalls that come with the lack of discipline and knowledge.

Charles’ time in the PAC was not a cake-walk, but it was what he needed to get back on his feet and support his kids. Reflecting on his experience, Charles says, “It was pressure. As a coach, I know pushing my players past their limits is how they get better. That’s what this program did. It pushed me when I was not able to push myself. Accountability is good.”

## A PROMISING IDEA

Charles’ story is just one of many success stories that have come through the Parental Accountability Court program since first being introduced to Georgia in 2009. These courts, originally called Child Support Problem Solving Courts,<sup>ii,2</sup> have been effective in helping parents address the underlying barriers that prevent them from being gainfully employed and consistently paying their child support obligation. They accomplish this through the accountability of a judge and the assistance of a coordinator.

The idea to introduce PACs in Georgia came from former Chief Justice Leah Sears who noted the success that a judge in North Carolina was having in running such a court. She recommended to former Director of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS), Keith Horton, to visit the North Carolina court and observe its effectiveness. Upon observing the court, former Director Horton quickly became convinced of the program’s potential to assist chronic non-payers of child support in Georgia and help them become regular payers of child support. DCSS adapted the model and worked with Judge John Simpson in the Coweta Judicial Circuit to spearhead the first PAC in October 2009. The pilot showed considerable promise that first year, which led DHS to recruit more judges from around the state and fund coordinators to manage these new courts.<sup>3</sup>

Since that time, the program has expanded to 18 courts with four additional courts pending.<sup>4</sup> DCSS goal is to have 24 courts in place by 2016.<sup>5</sup>

## WHY PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURTS ARE NEEDED

PACs serve non-custodial parents who face a contempt action for failure to pay child support and require additional accountability and services to overcome their barriers to supporting their children. Some of the barriers these parents face include having a suspended driver’s license, a substance abuse or mental health issue, inadequate education or job skills, and a criminal record.<sup>6</sup>

An estimated **80 percent** of PAC participants have a criminal record, which severely impacts their ability to become employed and consistently provide for their children.<sup>7</sup> Many parents with these barriers have gone through repeated cycles of unemployment (or underemployment), non-payment, and incarceration,

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<sup>ii</sup> Recently, the Division of Child Support Services changed the name of the court from Child Support Problem Solving Court (PSC) to Parental Accountability Court (PAC) because the new name more accurately reflects the nature of the court and the work that it does in holding parents accountable to supporting their children. These courts do not solve all of non-custodial parents’ problems, but they do work to help parents overcome barriers to paying child support and become self-sufficient.

which has left them feeling discouraged and defeated. Many want to provide for their children but often feel powerless to overcome the obstacles they are facing.

DCSS has identified **55,529 cases** in Georgia who could benefit from participation in a PAC or the Georgia Fatherhood Program (FHP).<sup>iii,8</sup> This figure represents **14 percent** of Georgia's 396,640 child support cases, which means both programs have the potential of positively impacting as many as **70,000 children**.<sup>iv,9</sup>

## CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

To understand why PACs offer such a positive alternative to non-custodial parents who have cycled in and out of jail for non-payment of child support (due to willful non-payment or failure to appear before the court when ordered), it is helpful to look at the way child support enforcement works from the point an order is first established:

1. A custodial parent (most often the mother) applies with the DCSS to get financial and medical support from the noncustodial parent (usually the father) to help care for her child.<sup>v,10</sup>
2. Once the assumed non-custodial parent has been properly identified as the biological parent or father through a paternity test or through voluntary consent, a child support order is put into place. The amount of the order is determined by an Income Shares Model that considers a variety of factors, such as the income of both parents and other children whom the non-custodial parent is supporting.<sup>11</sup>
3. The non-custodial parent is then required to pay the support order every 30 days. If he or she fails to do so, the DCSS case management system (\$TARS) automatically sends the non-custodial parent a notice and alerts an agent.
4. After 90 days of non-payment pass,<sup>vi,12</sup> the case is eligible for the initiation of the automated driver's license suspension process.<sup>vii,13</sup> The non-custodial parents' other licenses, including professional licenses and other state licenses such as hunting, fishing, and state-issued identification may also be affected.<sup>14</sup>
5. Continued non-payment results in DCSS taking further action, which may include intercepting federal and/or state income tax refunds, garnishing worker's compensation benefits, intercepting lottery winnings of more than \$2,500, filing liens and levies on tangible or intangible property, seizing bank accounts, denying passports if more than \$2,500 is owed, and reporting parents to credit bureaus.
6. After these actions, failure to willingly pay results in DCSS filing a contempt of court action against the non-custodial parent, which can result in incarceration if the non-custodial parent is found to be in contempt of the court.<sup>viii,15</sup>

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<sup>iii</sup> DHS currently has two Community Outreach Programs for which non-custodial parents can volunteer to participate: The Georgia Fatherhood Program (FHP) and PACs. The FHP was created by DCSS in 1997 to work with non-custodial parents who owe child support but lack the ability to pay. This program helps participants find gainful employment and overcome barriers to paying support. The FHP takes three to six months to complete and participants are required to work at least 20 hours per week while enrolled in the program. The FHP differs from PACs in that it provides services for non-custodial parents who have similar barriers but do not have a contempt action in place. As such, the FHP does not require judicial supervision.

<sup>iv</sup> In 2014, Georgia had 396,640 child support cases representing 533,252 children – 21 percent of children statewide. Nationally, nearly one in four children is served by a state child support program.

<sup>v</sup> In Georgia, 91 percent of non-custodial parents owing child support are fathers and 9 percent are mothers.

<sup>vi</sup> The time-frame for being out of compliance with a child support order recently changed from 60 to 90 days. In other words, account balances on all active cases must be equal to or greater than three times the current and arrears support amounts for a non-custodial parent to be considered in compliance. DCSS also recently revised processes surrounding driver's license suspension to give non-custodial parents adequate notice of alternatives to avoid having their driver's license suspended.

<sup>vii</sup> After 90 days of non-payment have passed, DCSS sends an automatic request to the Department of Driver's Services (DDS) recommending suspension of the non-custodial parent's license. Once this request is sent, four notices are then sent to the non-custodial parent – three by DCSS and one by DDS – over the next 105 days. If the non-custodial parent still has not complied with his or her order at the end of this time period, then DDS suspends the license.

<sup>viii</sup> If the non-custodial parent is found by the judge to be in civil contempt of the court, he may serve time in jail until a purge payment is made of the amount set by the judge. A purge payment consists of a portion of the total amount of child support arrears owed. If it



In light of these enforcement actions, the PAC program stands as a welcomed alternative for someone who has significant barriers to paying child support and faces the possibility of incarceration.

## THE PARENTAL ACCOUNTABILITY COURT PROGRAM

PACs are relatively simple in structure, especially compared to other accountability courts. They are run by a superior court judge and a coordinator provided by DCSS who jointly serve as the public face of the program.

The judge ensures that participants receive appropriate services and oversees their progress, providing incentives and sanctions that encourage participants to meet their individual goals. He or she leads the PAC team in development of all protocols and procedures and ensures they are carried out effectively.

The coordinator is the chief administrator of the program and acts as a liaison between participants and the judge, treatment providers, and employers. The coordinator sets up evaluations, manages services for participants, connects them to employers, and provides the judge a weekly update regarding each participant's progress. The success of the program depends largely upon the effort of the coordinator and the leadership of the judge.<sup>16</sup>

Other members of the PAC team include the assistant district attorney (ADA) for the county or the special assistant attorney general (SAAG) who represents DCSS at staffing meetings and PAC hearings, and a DCSS representative who helps identify potential participants for the program and protects the children's right to support.<sup>17</sup>

To be eligible to participate in a PAC, a non-custodial parent must be in one of the following situations:

- A contempt action has been filed against him or her by the state to appear before the court for non-payment of child support;
- A warrant has been issued for his or her arrest for failure to appear in court for non-payment of child support;
- The parent has appeared before the judge and found to be in contempt of court for willful non-payment of child support; or
- The parent is currently in jail for having been found in contempt of the court.

Once a non-custodial parent has been identified for the program by the judge, coordinator, or DCSS representative, and they agree that the program is a good fit, the judge can offer the program to the non-custodial parent as an alternative to jail. The non-custodial parent is then given the opportunity to voluntarily accept or reject the program. Those who choose to enter the program must demonstrate a willingness to work and overcome their barriers to paying child support. Failure to do so will eventually result in dismissal and the potential of facing jail time for future contempt actions.

The program generally takes 12 to 18 months to complete and consists of three stages: Intake, Phase I, and Phase II.

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is found that he cannot pay the purge payment after exhausting all of his options, he will be released. Thirty days has become a common practice around the state as the maximum amount of time for a non-custodial parent to be jailed before reviewing whether he has tried all of his options to pay the purge amount. The trial court may not continue incarceration for civil contempt when the respondent lacks ability to purge himself. Imprisonment under civil sanctions is always conditional and the person found in contempt may apply for release at any time upon showing his inability to pay. Since the purpose of civil contempt is to provide remedy and to obtain compliance with trial court's orders, justification for imprisonment is lost when that compliance is impossible.

**Intake** – This stage involves a comprehensive assessment of a participant’s issues by a Community Service Board (CSB), such as identifying a substance abuse or mental health issue.<sup>ix,18</sup> Participants receive an explanation of the program guidelines and expectations, sign terms and conditions, and undergo review for driver’s license reinstatement.<sup>19</sup>

**Phase I** – Once admitted into the program, Phase I consists of the coordinator helping the participant to become work-ready and find employment. Based on the assessment conducted by the CSB, participants may receive services related to substance abuse, mental health, literacy, and employment-readiness. Upon getting a job, participants must begin paying current child support according to their ability. The coordinator closely manages each participant and the judge uses a system of graduated incentives and sanctions to promote compliance with paying support. Incentives may include such things as praise from the judge, certificates and medals of recognition, and getting to appear before the judge less, so long as the parent is working and paying their child support in full. Sanctions range from having to report to the coordinator more frequently during the week to spending a few days in jail (for the most serious cases of non-compliance).<sup>20</sup>

**Phase II** – Promotion to Phase II may vary from one court to the next, but it generally occurs once the non-custodial parent has demonstrated consistency in paying child support from month-to-month. Often coordinators will give the participant a certificate or medal when promoted to this phase. The goal for participants in Phase II is to pay 100 percent of their current order and a portion of their arrears for six months in a row, which makes them eligible for graduation. Some participants may stay in the program even after meeting this requirement if additional services and supervision are needed.<sup>21</sup> During this phase, some courts also provide parenting classes, visitation, and monitoring to increase the parent-child bonding. In addition, legal services for legitimation and mediation are provided as needed.<sup>x,22</sup>

**Graduation** – This final ceremony is a special time for participants. They are commended by the judge and coordinator for their hard work and perseverance in the program before their family, friends, and other participants. Certificates of completion are awarded, short speeches are given, and a small celebration is held with cake and punch. For many participants, this is the first time they have experienced a graduation ceremony of any kind and it marks an important milestone in their life.<sup>23</sup>

## SUCCESS

Parental Accountability Courts have proven to be very successful since their commencement in 2009. Just this past year [State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2014], PACs collected a total of **\$840,592** from **1,091 non-custodial parents**, many of whom did not pay anything in the months (and sometimes years) leading up to their participation.<sup>xi,24</sup> This amount represents a **54 percent increase** in child support collected by PACs from the previous year and a **287 percent increase** from two years prior.<sup>xii</sup>

The increase can be attributed in large part to a growing number of participants being served by the program, which increased more than twofold since SFY2013 and more than fivefold since SFY2012. This growth occurred as PACs expanded from eight to eighteen courts in a matter of two years.

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<sup>ix</sup> DCSS contracts or forms an agreement with local Community Service Boards to conduct the comprehensive assessment for participants. The services provided by CSBs are vital to the success of PACs. In some of the more rural counties where CSBs are not available, participants may have to travel to another county in the judicial circuit to receive services, or be referred to another local service provider within the community who can provide the service they need, such as substance abuse treatment.

<sup>x</sup> Legal services for legitimation and mediation are offered through contract or agreement.

<sup>xi</sup> See the chart titled “Parental Accountability Courts – State Fiscal Year 2014 Data” in the appendix for a breakdown of child support collected for each of the 18 PACs.

<sup>xii</sup> In SFY2012, 207 non-custodial parents paid a total of \$217,014, and in SFY2013, 471 non-custodial parents paid a total of \$545,997. See the chart titled “Parental Accountability Court Data Highlights – SFY2012-2014” in the Appendix.

Another reason for the increase in aggregate amount of child support collected is that PACs are helping more and more participants pay at least some portion of what they owe. Between SFY2012 and SFY2014, **68-73 percent** of participants paid a portion of their child support order while enrolled in the program.<sup>25</sup> Based on data from this year (SFY2015), participants are paying **over one-third** of the total amount of current support due by all non-custodial parents in the program.<sup>xiii,26</sup> This is remarkable given that the percentage paid by these same non-custodial parents prior to entering the program was close to zero.

Further, the program has had considerable success in helping non-custodial parents obtain employment. At any given time, between **51-53 percent** of participants are employed while in the program, which fluctuates based on the number of new people admitted into PACs.<sup>27</sup> This percentage is fairly significant given that most participants carry a criminal record which has shown by one study to reduce the likelihood of a person receiving a job callback or offer by nearly **50 percent**.<sup>28</sup>

Over the past two years, PACs have graduated a total of **248 participants**, indicating these non-custodial parents obtained gainful employment and consistently paid their child support order in full. The Administrative Office of the Courts and DCSS are working to develop a system that will begin tracking participants' employment status in the months and year(s) following graduation.<sup>29</sup>

### PAC Spotlights:

The PAC in Macon recently had a group of five participants who graduated from the program in March 2015. During the twelve months prior to their enrollment, these participants paid a collective total of \$16,570.19 in child support. While participating in the PAC program, these same non-custodial parents contributed a total of \$32,320.80 – a **95 percent increase** from their previous performance.

In Hall County, child support payments from non-custodial parents **increased by \$45,000** during the PAC's first year of operation in 2011, while the cost to incarcerate them was reduced by **\$178,000**.<sup>30</sup>

## COST

The cost of operating a PAC primarily involves supporting a coordinator to run the program, which includes his or her salary and benefits, office supplies and travel, and computer charges and telecommunication. This amounts to DCSS spending **\$70,380 per court**, or **\$1,266,840** for all 18 PACs across the state.<sup>xiv,31</sup>

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<sup>xiii</sup> Between July 2014 and February 2015, participants paid \$494,936, which represents 36 percent of the total amount of current support due by all participants

<sup>xiv</sup> It is important to note that DCSS receives 66 percent of its budget through federal grants that are based on the division's adherence to seven core services: Intake, locating non-custodial parents, establishing paternity, establishing and enforcing child support orders, establishing and enforcing medical support orders, collecting and distributing support payments, and reviewing and modifying orders. The PAC program is not funded directly by the federal grants given to DCSS since "outreach" is not considered part of the division's seven core services. Instead, the program is funded by DCSS allotting state and federal funds that would otherwise go toward hiring regular child support agents, and re-designating these funds to hire PAC coordinators. DCSS makes the sacrifice of having fewer agents in the field in order to fund the PAC coordinator positions because it believes in the value and success of the program. However, it will be difficult for DCSS to expand these courts to cover all 49 judicial circuits in Georgia without receiving additional funding from the state to hire more coordinators, as doing so would take away too many agents from DCSS core service responsibilities, on which the bulk of its funding hinges.

## BENEFITS

PACs benefit a variety of stakeholders in Georgia.

From a fiscal perspective, PACs save counties a considerable amount of money in reduced costs of incarceration. The amount of savings has ranged from **\$6,000** to **\$77,000** in a given month.<sup>32</sup> In SFY2014, 18 PACs saved 37 counties a total of **\$4.9 million** through incarcerating fewer non-custodial parents.<sup>33</sup> Savings over the last three fiscal years amount to **\$9.9 million**.<sup>34</sup>

PACs have resulted in the state collecting as much as **\$840,592** in SFY2014 and **\$1,603,603** over the past three fiscal years in current child support and arrears from non-custodial parents who have had a history of non-payment.<sup>35</sup> The result is that more money is going directly to the children of Georgia to provide for their needs. In SFY2014, **1,600 children** were served by the program.<sup>36</sup>

Additionally, PACs result in the state spending less money in:

- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) for custodial parents who are not receiving support from the non-custodial parent
- Medicaid for the non-custodial parent
- DCSS enforcement actions
- Recidivism<sup>xv</sup>

All of this ultimately results in taxpayers saving money.

From a human perspective, PACs benefit children by ensuring non-custodial parents provide financial and emotional support that their children desperately need. When this support is absent, the child is much more likely to live in poverty and to suffer emotional, mental, and physical distress.<sup>37</sup>

PACs benefit custodial parents by ensuring they receive financial assistance from non-custodial parents to care for their children, reducing the burden of providing for and raising them day-to-day. Reduced stress and improved interactions with non-custodial parents can, in turn, improve custodial parents' interaction with their children.

Finally, PACs benefit non-custodial parents by providing them with professional assessment, treatment, and services that address their underlying issues and help them to become employed and pay their child support regularly. As a result, they enjoy the happiness and dignity that comes from providing for their children and meeting their needs, as well as contributing to their community through working and paying taxes.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>xv</sup> Non-custodial parents who are reentering the community from prison face tremendous financial pressure from having to pay various debts and obligations, not the least of which is paying current child support and arrears that have accumulated while they were in prison. Such pressure may lead non-custodial parents to work underground as a way of avoiding having their income withheld by employers, may lead them to avoid paying fees associated with their probation or parole, or may lead them to commit a new crime, all of which can result in their re-incarceration. PACs have the potential of providing returning citizens the supervision and assistance they need to pay their obligations and successfully reintegrate into society.

## COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The following is an analysis of the costs and benefits of the state choosing to expand PACs to all 49 judicial circuits in order to serve a greater number of the 55,529 cases that DCSS has identified as potential beneficiaries of the PAC program.

Costs	Benefits
Salary for 49 coordinators and one statewide program evaluator: \$1,636,588	Potential amount of child support collected by 49 PACs per year: <sup>xvi</sup> \$2,058,000
Fringe benefits: \$1,028,170	Estimated savings from not incarcerating per year: <sup>xvii</sup> \$13,365,722
Office supplies: \$16,000	
Travel: \$195,000	
Computer charges: \$602,950	
Telecommunication: \$285,280	
<b>Total cost:</b> <sup>xviii</sup> \$3,763,988	<b>Total benefit:</b> <sup>xix</sup> \$15,423,722
	<b>Net gain per year:</b> \$11,659,734

## CONCLUSION

Parental Accountability Courts promote one of the most basic goods for society: parents providing for their children. These courts may not reverse the trend of family fragmentation, but they do an excellent job of alleviating some of its effects through helping non-custodial parents obtain steady employment, consistently support their children, and become more involved in their children’s lives. Given all the good they provide and the success they have shown, they deserve a closer look as a solution to be further funded and implemented across the state.

<sup>xvi</sup> The potential amount of child support collected by 49 PACs per year is based on a conservative estimate of \$42,000 collected per court. This amount was chosen based on the average amount of child support collected among the 18 PACs in SFY2014 (\$46,700), the average amount of child support collected among the 18 PACs in SFY2014 minus outliers (\$43,920), and the average amount of child support collected by these same courts from July 2014 – February 2015 (\$37,000).

<sup>xvii</sup> The estimated savings from not incarcerating as many non-custodial parents is based on the average amount of money saved by each of the 18 judicial circuits with a PAC in SFY2014, which was \$272,770 (\$4,909,857 / 18 PACs). See the chart titled “Parental Accountability Court Data Highlights SFY2012-2014” in the appendix.

<sup>xviii</sup> The total cost does not factor in an estimated cost for the judges or DA/SAAG’s time.

<sup>xix</sup> The total benefit does not factor in estimated savings from reduced TANF disbursements, reduced Medicaid enrollment, reduced recidivism, or taxes paid by working non-custodial parents.

## APPENDIX

### Parental Accountability Courts – State Fiscal Year 2014 Data

Judicial Circuit	Judge	Total Child Support Collected	Graduated	Removed	Non-Custodial Parent Count
Alcovy	Johnson	\$25,785.00	3	4	38
Appalachian	Worcester	\$123,353.59		3	52
Augusta	Craig	\$24,602.58		15	45
Coweta	Simpson	\$137,664.25	57	175	395
Dublin	Flanders	\$4,687.50	0	5	14
Enotah	Miller	\$50,314.14	0	10	33
Flint	Amero	\$56,537.31	15	4	56
Fulton	Wright	\$30,448.28	6	2	50
Gwinnett	Schrader	\$10,606.71	0	2	40
Macon	Raymond	\$38,052.72	5	17	60
Mountain	Caudell	\$26,843.67	6	9	39
Northeastern	Oliver	\$68,341.23	5	4	19
Northern	Hodges	\$214.32	0	1	12
Pataula	Bishop	\$96,226.48		16	105
Rockdale	Mumford	\$1,952.72	0	2	9
Southwestern	Smith	\$13,307.25	0	4	30
Stone Mountain	Scott	\$88,709.40	9	9	42
Towaliga	Fears	\$42,945.09	0	10	52
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$840,592.24</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>1,091</b>

Source: Division of Child Support Services<sup>39</sup>

### Parental Accountability Court Data Highlights – SFY2012-2014

	SFY2012	SFY2013	SFY2014
Number of PACs	8	11	18
NCP's Served	207	471	1,091
Children Served	539	757	1,600
Support Paid	\$217,014	\$545,997	\$840,592
Percentage of NCPs Who Paid	73.48%	68.48%	69.60%
Graduates	90	52	106
Incarceration Savings	\$277,700	\$4,723,813	\$4,909,857

Source: Division of Child Support Services<sup>40</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> IC § 35-46-1-5; IC § 35-50-2-6; O.C.G.A. § 15-6-8(5).

<sup>2</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, Email message to author, June 25, 2015; B. Chan Caudell, Superior Court Judge, Mountain Judicial Circuit, Email message to author, June 25, 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Horton, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Testimony heard by the author at a Problem Solving Court Subcommittee meeting held at the Department of Human Services' office in Atlanta on February 18, 2015; Division of Child Support Services, *Problem Solving Court Express*, Georgia Department of Human Services, Volume 2, Issue 4, March 2015, 2, Received in an email from Ashley Cooper, Executive Assistant to Director & Deputy Director, Division of Child Support Services, April 21, 2015.

<sup>4</sup> Clarence Burge, Service Delivery Manager, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "Problem Solving Court – SFY14 Data – Updated Information," Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services, February 4, 2015, Received in an email from Brian Amero, Superior Court Judge, Flint Judicial Circuit, February 13, 2015.

<sup>6</sup> Applied Research Services, Inc., "Logic Model – Problem Solving Court," AOC-CCCSC Logic Model, Revised March 27, 2009, 3, Received in an email from Ashley Cooper, Executive Assistant to Director & Deputy Director, Division of Child Support Services, April 21, 2015.

<sup>7</sup> Estimate provided by Susan Cosby during a conversation at the DeKalb County Problem Solving Court, Stone Mountain Judicial Circuit, May 19, 2015.

<sup>8</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "Problem Solving Court – SFY14 Data"; Division of Child Support Services, "Georgia Fatherhood Program – Fact Sheet," Georgia Department of Human Services, Office of Communications, March 2010, [http://ocse.dhr.georgia.gov/sites/dcss.dhs.georgia.gov/files/imported/DHR-OCSE/DHR-OCSE\\_About\\_OCSE/DCSS%20DHS%20Fatherhood%20fact%20sheet%20FY2010.pdf](http://ocse.dhr.georgia.gov/sites/dcss.dhs.georgia.gov/files/imported/DHR-OCSE/DHR-OCSE_About_OCSE/DCSS%20DHS%20Fatherhood%20fact%20sheet%20FY2010.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> Georgia Department of Human Services, "Division of Child Support Services," Fact Sheet, Revised November 2014, <http://dhs.georgia.gov/sites/dhs.georgia.gov/files/2014%20DCSS%20Fact%20Sheet%20Rev%20November%202014%5B1%5D.pdf>; The United States Census Bureau estimates that 24.9 percent of Georgia's population of nearly 10 million people in 2013 consisted of persons under 18 years. Therefore, the more than 533,000 children that comprise the child support caseload in Georgia represent 21 percent of the total number of children statewide. See <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/13000.html>; Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, "Georgia Child Support 2014," Infographic, Based on data from the FY2014 Preliminary Report, Received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>12</sup> Division of Child Support Services, *Peach State Dispatch*, Volume 15, Issue 4, April 2015, 3, Received in an email from Angelo Bonito, Acting Communications Manager, Division of Child Support Services, April 29, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Tangler-Gray Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>14</sup> Clarence Burge, Service Delivery Manager, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid; O.C.G.A. § 15-6-8(5); Charles Cash, "Civil Contempt and DCSS," Paper received in an email from Brian Amero, Superior Court Judge, Flint Judicial Circuit, June 29, 2015; 269 Ga. 587, Supreme Court of Georgia, *Hughes v. Department of Human Resources et al.*, No. S98A0813, July 13, 1998.

<sup>16</sup> Administrative Office of the Courts, "Problem Solving Court Standards," Draft, October 27, 2014, Received in an email from Ashley Cooper, Executive Assistant to Director & Deputy Director, Division of Child Support Services, April 21, 2015.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015; William Fears, Superior Court Judge, Towaliga Judicial Circuit, Information received during a meeting at the Monroe County Courthouse on June 2, 2015.

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<sup>19</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "A Helping Hand to Self-Sufficiency: Problem Solving Court," Division of Child Support Services, PowerPoint presentation to Department of Human Services Board Members, July 17, 2013, <http://dhs.georgia.gov/sites/dhs.georgia.gov/files/DCSS%20PSC%20TGJ.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> The author received this information through observing several Parental Accountability Courts and talking to the respective coordinators in the following judicial circuits: Gwinnett, Flint, Stone Mountain, and Towaliga.

<sup>21</sup> Stacey Sitten, Problem Solving Court Coordinator for the Towaliga Judicial Circuit, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Monroe County Problem Solving Court, June 2, 2015.

<sup>22</sup> Applied Research Services, Inc., "Logic Model – Problem Solving Court"; Tangler Gray-Johnson, "A Helping Hand ."

<sup>23</sup> Susan Cosby, Problem Solving Court Program Evaluator, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the DeKalb County Problem Solving Court, May 19, 2015; Clarence Burge, Service Delivery Manager, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015.

<sup>24</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "Problem Solving Court – SFY14 Data."

<sup>25</sup> Division of Child Support Services, *Problem Solving Court Express*, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Patricia Smith, Director of State Operations, Division of Child Support Services, Email message to author, May 10, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Susan Cosby, Problem Solving Court Program Evaluator, Division of Child Support Services, Email message to author, May 13, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Devah Pager, Bruce Western, and Naomie Sugie, "Sequencing Disadvantage: Barriers to Employment Facing Young Black and White Men with Criminal Records," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 623 (2009): 195-213, Retrieved from the U.S. National Institute of Health, National Library of Medicine, National Center for Biotechnical Information, NIH Public Access, Author Manuscript, 4, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3583356/>.

<sup>29</sup> Susan Cosby, Problem Solving Court Program Evaluator, Division of Child Support Services, Email message to author, May 13, 2015.

<sup>30</sup> Division of Child Support Services, "New Courts Launch in Dublin and Gwinnett Circuits," *Problem Solving Court Express*, Volume 2, Issue 2, April – June 2014, Received in an email from Brian Amero, Superior Court Judge, Flint Judicial Circuit, June 9, 2014.

<sup>31</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, "Problem Solving Court Budget," Email message to author, July 14, 2015; Keith Horton, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Human Services, Testimony heard by the author at a Problem Solving Court Subcommittee meeting held at the Department of Human Services' office in Atlanta on February 18, 2015; Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, Information received during a meeting at the Division of Child Support Services' office in Atlanta on July 7, 2015; Georgia Department of Human Services, "Division of Child Support Services."

<sup>32</sup> Susan Cosby, Problem Solving Court Program Evaluator, Div. of Child Support Services, Email message to author, May 13, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> Division of Child Support Services, "Problem Solving Court Data Highlights – SFY 2011-2014," Revised July 15, 2015, Received in an email from Tangler Gray-Johnson, Director, Division of Child Support Services, July 17, 2015; Division of Child Support Services, "DCSS Problem Solving Court – Courts are listed from date of implementation to currently pending courts," Received in an email from Patricia Smith, Director of State Operations, Division of Child Support Services, May 13, 2015.

<sup>34</sup> Division of Child Support Services, "Problem Solving Court Data Highlights – SFY 2011-2014."

<sup>35</sup> Division of Child Support Services, "Problem Solving Court Data Highlights – SFY 2012/2013/2014," *Problem Solving Court Express*, Volume 2, Issue 4, March 2015, Received in an email from Ashley Cooper, Executive Assistant to Director & Deputy Director, Division of Child Support Services, April 21, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "Problem Solving Court – SFY14 Data."

<sup>37</sup> Office of Child Support Enforcement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, "Custodial Parents Living in Poverty," *The Story Behind the Numbers*, Fact Sheet Series, Number 3, January 2014, [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/sbtn\\_custodial\\_parents\\_living\\_in\\_poverty.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/programs/css/sbtn_custodial_parents_living_in_poverty.pdf); American Psychological Association, "Effects of Poverty, Hunger and Homelessness on Children and Youth," Accessed June 26, 2015, <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/poverty.aspx>.

<sup>38</sup> Randy Hicks, "From Welfare to Opportunity," Presentation at a special luncheon with Jennifer Marshall, Vice President for the Institute for Family, Community, and Opportunity at the Heritage Foundation, at the Buckhead Club in Atlanta on April 8, 2015.

<sup>39</sup> Tangler Gray-Johnson, "Problem Solving Court – SFY14 Data."

<sup>40</sup> Division of Child Support Services, "Problem Solving Court Data Highlights – SFY 2011-2014."