

**INFORMATION COLLECTION ACTIVITY #3**  
**PROCEDURAL JUSTICE INFORMED ALTERNATIVES TO CONTEMPT**  
**(PJAC)**  
**TOPIC GUIDE FOR PROGRAM STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNER**  
**INTERVIEWS**

**Consent**

As part of the PJAC implementation study, the evaluation team is interviewing staff from various parts of the child support agencies, staff from affiliated court systems, as well as staff from their community partner organizations. These interviews are intended to enhance the evaluation team's understanding of the implementation of typical child support processes, PJAC service delivery, and community partner organization services, as well as contextual factors influencing services. The PJAC program is funded and led by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, part of the US Office of Health and Human Services, and the evaluation is being conducted by MDRC, Center for Court Innovation, and MEF Associates.

I understand that:

- Participation in this interview by child support staff or community partner organization staff is completely voluntary. Refusal to participate will have no influence on my standing within the agency or organization, and I may leave the interview at any time or decline to answer questions.
- Participation and responses will remain private and there is no known risk to participating. Only authorized persons-- a small number of researchers at MDRC-- will have access to information gathered. My identity will not be revealed in any reports or publications resulting from the study. All notes from these talks will be destroyed when the project completes in 2022.

Please contact Melanie Skemer, Evaluation Project Director at MDRC, with any questions. She can be reached at 212-340-8614 or [melanie.skemer@mdrc.org](mailto:melanie.skemer@mdrc.org)

*You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of the evaluation of the Procedural Justice Informed Alternatives to Contempt program, or PJAC for short. You will be asked questions about your job and responsibilities. The information sheet I shared with you outlines the risk and benefits of participating in this interview. If you agree to participate, you can end your participation in the interview at any point and decline to respond to questions that you don't want to answer. Please take a moment to look over the information sheet. I can answer any questions you might have.[PAUSE and*

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*answer questions]. Do you agree to participate in this interview? [PAUSE ]. [If yes] May I audio-record this interview for note-taking purposes? [If yes, turn on recorder and proceed with interview.]*

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<b>Construct</b>	<b>Staff Interview Topics</b>
<b>Staff Characteristics and Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Job title</li> <li>• Years in current position and with agency</li> <li>• Role on PJAC</li> <li>• Relevant prior experience</li> </ul>
<b>Program planning and design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why grantee applied for PJAC grant</li> <li>• Decision making process and the role of child support agency leadership at the state and county levels in deciding to apply</li> <li>• How organizational culture and leadership within the child support agency supports or poses barriers to applying for demonstration grants or proposing innovations in child support procedures and policies</li> <li>• Grantees' prior experience with similar programs and how prior experience informed the PJAC design</li> <li>• Design and planning process for PJAC, including any changes if the program is a continuation or adaptation of past efforts</li> <li>• Involvement of partners and other community organizations in the planning process</li> <li>• Key design decisions made during the PJAC planning year and rationale</li> <li>• Challenges encountered during the planning process and steps taken to address them</li> </ul>
<b>Local Context and Service Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State or local child support structure, processes, and policies</li> <li>• Effect of demographic, economic, or social forces on PJAC operations</li> <li>• Linkages with and influences of public systems (e.g., criminal justice, TANF, court system)</li> <li>• Other state or community organizations providing any PJAC-like services; how the services provided by these organizations differ from the PJAC program; whether and how these services may have affected the PJAC program; and use of these other services by noncustodial parents (in either program or control group)</li> </ul>
<b>Study Participant Selection</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying PJAC eligibility criteria</li> <li>• Description of the process used to select cases for contempt, and the process to randomly assign cases to the PJAC sample</li> <li>• Description of the characteristics of PJAC sample members, anticipated service needs, and barriers to child support payment</li> <li>• Review of specific cases to get better understanding of the study sample</li> <li>• Challenges of study enrollment</li> </ul>
<b>Implementation of PJAC Elements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of case assessment process, including ability to pay</li> <li>• Discussion of process and content of contacts with custodial parent</li> <li>• Description of outreach and engagement strategies and efforts</li> <li>• Description of enhanced investigation use and process</li> <li>• Description of case conferencing process</li> </ul>

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Construct	Staff Interview Topics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of development of case action plans</li> <li>• Description of case management process</li> <li>• Description of enhanced child support services, including suppression of enforcement actions</li> <li>• Description of use of enforcement/contempt actions for PJAC cases and decision-making process</li> <li>• Description of grantee’s approach to addressing domestic violence and providing related services</li> <li>• Description of supportive services, including services offered, collaboration with partners, referral and follow-up processes</li> <li>• Description of any formal screening or assessment tools used in delivery of PJAC service elements</li> <li>• For all PJAC components, structure of services and fidelity to intended model</li> <li>• Use of procedural justice-informed approaches in delivering PJAC elements</li> <li>• Review of specific cases to walk through service delivery approaches</li> </ul>
<p><b>Program participation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Typical duration of participation in the demonstration</li> <li>• Criteria used by staff for terminating services to a participant and initiating contempt</li> <li>• Challenges to promoting sustained participation</li> <li>• Strategies used to encourage initial and ongoing participation; perceived success of each strategy; new strategies under consideration to encourage participation</li> <li>• Incentives used to encourage participation in services; types of incentives; timing and frequency of incentives; staff perceptions about which incentives appear to best promote participation</li> <li>• Staff perceptions about particular subgroups of noncustodial parents who appear most and least responsive to PJAC</li> <li>• Strategies used to re-engage noncustodial parents who have stopped participating; which partners are involved; point at which staff cease attempts to re-engage</li> <li>• Any changes to these strategies over time and rationale for changes</li> </ul>
<p><b>Target Outcomes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals for PJAC program</li> <li>• Expected outcomes for noncustodial parents, how planned services will contribute to these outcomes, and anticipated length of program participation needed to achieve outcomes</li> <li>• Program approach to monitoring progress toward goals</li> </ul>
<p><b>Implementation Systems Supporting PJAC (technical assistance)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of PJAC staff roles in delivering services and activities</li> <li>• PJAC staff selection and training, staff development, information system infrastructure</li> <li>• Use of PJAC technical assistance</li> <li>• Organizational climate and culture influence on PJAC implementation</li> <li>• Processes used to adopt or modify existing service components or</li> </ul>

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Construct	Staff Interview Topics
	implementation systems for PJAC <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges associated with the implementation systems for PJAC</li> <li>• Use of data systems (including project MIS) to track program participation and services, monitor progress toward goals, oversee partner performance</li> <li>• Helpfulness of management information system designed for PJAC, helpfulness of technical assistance for using MIS</li> </ul>
<b>PJAC Implementation Challenges and Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best practices and lessons for replication</li> <li>• Challenges in operating PJAC and meeting goals</li> <li>• Strategies to address challenges</li> <li>• Modifications to implementation plans that have occurred since PJAC began; why modification was necessary, timeline for monitoring and roll-out, how changes affected service delivery</li> <li>• Potential future modifications to the implementation plan</li> <li>• Identification of significant gaps between the services participants need and those offered by the demonstration</li> <li>• Lessons learned about facilitators and barriers to making changes in child support policy and practice</li> <li>• Changes informants would make to the demonstration if they were starting over</li> <li>• Most important strengths of the demonstration</li> <li>• Most important lessons learned about implementing the demonstration</li> <li>• Suggestions for how OSCE can best support and encourage child support agency leadership to adopt innovations in child support policy and practice</li> </ul>
<b>Business as Usual for non-PJAC Participants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of non-PJAC staff roles in delivering services and activities, including role of legal and court staff</li> <li>• Description of enforcement and contempt process for non-PJAC participants</li> <li>• Description of services offered by agency to non-PJAC participants, including referral and engagement process</li> <li>• Use review of specific cases to walk through service delivery approaches</li> </ul>
<b>Organizational Characteristics of PJAC Agencies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of organizational structure and management (overall and for PJAC grant) including roles and responsibilities, staffing, supervision, training, etc.</li> <li>• Influence of organizational characteristics in service delivery implementation</li> <li>• Historical experience with procedural justice</li> <li>• Organizational buy-in to PJAC approach, staff perceptions of nature of problem PJAC is designed to address, whether PJAC services are aligned with addressing this problem, perceptions of usefulness of PJAC services for noncustodial parents</li> <li>• Nature of guidance from OCSE on program management; usefulness of guidance and need for additional guidance or support</li> </ul>
<b>Partner agencies/referrals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Description of partner agency, including services offered, mission, history, background, organizational structure, and management</li> <li>• Description of service delivery partnerships, including type of referrals made,</li> </ul>

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<b>Construct</b>	<b>Staff Interview Topics</b>
	frequency of referrals, quality of services <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Challenges, successes, and lessons learned</li><li>• Extent to which services are available and accessible in the community</li><li>• Extent to which participants follow up on referrals and take up services</li></ul>

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