

INFORMATION COLLECTION ACTIVITY #2
NEXT GENERATION OF CHILD SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
DEMONSTRATION EVALUATION
TOPIC GUIDE FOR PROGRAM STAFF AND COMMUNITY PARTNER
INTERVIEWS

The NextGen implementation study will include one multi-day site visit to each participating program. Visits will occur in 2026 or 2027. The team will interview NextGen child support case workers, administrators, and service provider partners who are directly involved in the implementation of NextGen demonstration services. Interviews with staff will be either one-on-one or small group, depending on staffing structure, availability, roles, and the number of individuals in a role.

Purpose and use of information: The goal of the implementation study is to provide a detailed description of the NextGen demonstration programs – how they are implemented, their participants, the contexts in which they are operated, and their promising practices. The purpose is to understand the specifics of each of the programs and provide information to practitioners and policymakers involved in federal, local, county, state, or tribal child support programs and their service partners. The information collected will be used to document the actual operational experiences of agencies and participants over the course of the project.

Privacy: The information provided during these interviews will be used for research purposes only. It will only be discussed in combination with other people’s responses and reported together as a group. No information that identifies the individual will be disseminated outside the evaluation team, except as required by law.

Voluntary Participation: Providing information for the purposes described is voluntary. Verbal informed consent will be obtained.

Estimated time: Each interview is expected to take an average of 60 minutes.

Topic Category	Staff Interview Topics
Staff Characteristics and Background	• Job title • Years in current position and with agency • Role on NextGen • Relevant prior experience
Program planning and design	• Why grantee applied for NextGen grant • Decision making process and the role of child support agency leadership at the state and county levels in deciding to apply • 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 • Grantees' prior experience with similar programs and how prior experience informed the design of the NextGen demonstration program • Design and planning process for NextGen, including any changes if the program is a continuation or adaptation of past efforts • Description of planned program components and rationales for each component • Selection process for employment service provider partners and other community organizations • Role of employment service provider partners, other community organizations, and other relevant parties in the planning process • Selection of service population focus and eligibility criteria • Key design decisions made during the NextGen planning year and pilot phase and rationales • Challenges encountered during the planning process and steps taken to address them, any changes to design or eligibility • Challenges encountered during the pilot phase and steps taken to address them, any changes to design or eligibility
Local Context and Service Environment	• State, county, local, or tribal child support structure, processes, and policies • Effect of demographic, economic, or other local factors on NextGen operations • Linkages with and influences of public systems (e.g., criminal justice, TANF, court system) • Availability and quality of employment and other services in local community • Other state or community organizations providing any NextGen-like services; how the services provided by these organizations differ from the NextGen demonstration program; whether and how these services may have affected the NextGen demonstration program; and use of these other services by noncustodial parents
Study Participant Selection	• Applying eligibility criteria and identification of participants for NextGen and rationale • Description of the processes and strategies used to recruit and enroll NextGen participant, changes over time, challenges, and effective strategies for recruitment • Description of the characteristics of NextGen participants, anticipated service needs, and barriers to child support payment • Challenges of study enrollment

Topic Category	Staff Interview Topics
Target Outcomes	• Goals for NextGen program • Expected outcomes for noncustodial parents, how planned services will contribute to these outcomes, and anticipated length of program participation needed to achieve outcomes • Program approach to monitoring progress toward goals • Program approach to communicating with partners about goals • Program approach to using data to improve performance and service delivery
Organizational Characteristics of NextGen child support agencies	• Description of organizational structure and management (overall and for NextGen grant) including roles and responsibilities, staffing, supervision, training, etc. • Influence of organizational characteristics in service delivery implementation • Historical experience with employment services and other community service partnerships • Organizational buy-in to NextGen approach, staff perceptions of nature of problems NextGen are designed to address, whether NextGen services are aligned with addressing these problems, perceptions of usefulness of NextGen services for noncustodial parents • Nature of guidance from OCSS on program management; usefulness of guidance and need for additional guidance or support
NextGen services	• Description of NextGen child support related actions, including case review, needs assessments, action plans, enforcement actions, suppression of enforcement actions, support with parenting time orders, referrals, and participant engagement with NextGen • Description of NextGen employment services, including job readiness assistance, job search, job placement, application support, job retention services, and other employment services • Description of data tracking and performance management, ongoing communication or case staffing between child support, employment service providers, and other service providers • Description of other supportive services, including legal services, parenting or fatherhood support, physical or mental health services, financial supports, benefits or other social services, and other services • Description of specific adaptations for NextGen service population and any changes over time
Child support/partner provider relationships	• Description of partner agencies, including services offered, mission, history, background, organizational structure, and management • Description of service delivery partnerships, including type of referrals made, follow-up processes, frequency of referrals, reverse referrals when applicable • Description of overall partnership between child support and employment service providers • Description of overall partnership between child support and partner agencies; benefits and challenges of partnerships; successful strategies for developing partnerships • Challenges, successes, and lessons learned • Extent to which services are available and accessible in the community

Topic Category	Staff Interview Topics
	• Extent to which participants follow up on referrals and take up services • Any specific approaches in delivering program components • Review of specific cases to walk through service delivery approaches
Implementation Systems Supporting NextGen (technical assistance)	• Description of NextGen staff roles in delivering services and activities • NextGen staff selection and training, staff development, information system infrastructure • Use of NextGen technical assistance • Organizational climate and culture influence on NextGen implementation • Processes used to adopt or modify existing NextGen service components or implementation systems • Use of data systems (including project MIS) to track program participation and services, monitor progress toward goals, and oversee partner performance • Helpfulness of management information system designed for NextGen, helpfulness of technical assistance for using MIS
Program participation	• Criteria used by staff for terminating services to a participant and any follow-up actions, including enforcement actions • Challenges to promoting sustained participation • Strategies used to encourage initial and ongoing participation; perceived success of each strategy; new strategies under consideration to encourage participation • 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 • Staff perceptions about particular services that appear most and less effective or engaging to parents • Staff perceptions about particular subgroups of noncustodial parents who appear most and least responsive to program services • Strategies used to re-engage noncustodial parents who have stopped participating; which partners are involved; point at which staff cease attempts to re-engage • Any changes to these strategies over time and rationale for changes

Topic Category	Staff Interview Topics
Implementation Challenges and Lessons	• Best practices and lessons for replication • Challenges in operating NextGen demonstration program and meeting goals • Strategies to address challenges • Modifications to implementation plans that have occurred since NextGen began; why modification was necessary, timeline for monitoring and roll-out, how changes affected service delivery • Potential future modifications to the implementation plan • Identification of significant gaps between the services participants need and those offered by the demonstration • Lessons learned about facilitators and barriers to making changes in child support policy and practice • Changes informants would make to the demonstration if they were starting over • Most important strengths of the demonstration • Most important lessons learned about implementing the demonstration • Suggestions for how OSCE can best support and encourage child support agency leadership to adopt innovations in child support policy and practice