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Child Support Agencies as Connectors

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I. INTRODUCTION

Child support, when paid, is an important resource for children who live apart from a parent. Nearly 30% of children in the United States lived apart from one or both parents in 2020 (Hemez & Washington, 2021). Over 30% of children living apart from a parent live in poverty, compared to 11% of children living in two-parent households. Most custodial parents (CPs) do not receive the full amount of child support that they are owed and nearly one-third receive none of the support due to them (Grall, 2020). The child support program is generally successful in collecting payments from noncustodial parents (NCPs) when NCPs have regular employment with adequate earnings to meet their obligation (Cancian & Meyer, 2018); regular employment in the formal labor market facilitates automatic collection of payments through income withholding (Garfinkel & Klawitter, 1990; Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003), and child support order amounts set at realistic levels relative to earnings are more likely to be paid in full and regularly (Hodges et al., 2020). However, the child support program has been less successful in collecting payments from NCPs with limited financial resources and who are unemployed or underemployed (Cancian et al., 2021; Ha et al., 2008).

Traditional child support enforcement tools—such as suspending or threatening to suspend licenses, seizing assets, and judicial enforcement—take a punitive approach to facilitating compliance. However, many NCPs lack the ability to pay ordered support (Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003), rendering these sanction-based approaches ineffective. Prior work identifies that many NCPs experience complex, inter-related barriers to work (Hodges et al., 2020; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020a; Vogel, 2020b), with lack of employment and low incomes as key compliance barriers (Cancian et al., 2021; Eldred & Takayesu, 2013; Ha et al., 2008).

In recent years, policymakers, child support leaders, practitioners, and researchers have suggested that connecting NCPs who experience employment-related barriers to resources that can help them address these barriers is worth considering as an alternative to more traditional, enforcement-oriented approaches (Hahn et al., 2018; Turetsky, 2010). Several programs aimed at improving the ability of NCPs to pay ordered support have been piloted in recent years, and Wisconsin has served as an important innovator in this domain through its participation in demonstration projects such as the Child Support Noncustodial Parent Employment Demonstration Evaluation, or CSPED (Cancian et al., 2022), and more recently, the ELEVATE (Empowering Lives through Education, Vocational Assessment, Training, and Employment) program and evaluation. CSPED (Noyes et al., 2018) and other previous work with child support agency (CSA) staff and leadership in Wisconsin (Vogel, 2021; Vogel et al., 2022), found that as CSAs evolve from a strictly enforcement culture towards a more supportive orientation, some CSAs find connecting NCPs to employment programs and other resources aimed at addressing barriers as potentially helpful for improving compliance—both as a means to help NCPs increase earnings (Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2021; Vogel et al., 2022), as well as to connect NCPs to in the formal employment to facilitate automatic wage withholding (Vogel, 2021). However, an array of factors likely affects CSA attempts to connect NCPs to employment programs and other supportive services, particularly in Wisconsin’s county-administered child support landscape. The local contexts of Wisconsin CSAs vary considerably (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021); prior research indicates that the quality and accessibility of local resources also vary (Vogel, 2021).

Understanding CSA needs, resources, constraints, and practices is important for the state’s ability to provide guidance and resources in support of county efforts. To date, no research has systematically gathered information across Wisconsin CSAs about how they

identify and connect NCPs with employment barriers to employment resources and other services; which partners they work with and how they communicate and collaborate with them; the needs of NCPs and gaps in services available for addressing these needs; and challenges agencies face in connecting NCPs to resources. This project aims to address this gap and provide information in support of future state and local efforts. It attends to the following questions:

1. What barriers to employment do CSA staff observe among NCPs served by their agencies? How do CSA leaders envision their role in connecting NCPs to services that address those barriers?
2. What types of employment programs and other supportive services do CSAs connect NCPs to locally, to help address employment barriers? How do CSAs build relationships with these partners? What partnerships are especially strong and leveraged most frequently?
3. Once relationships are established, how do CSA staff work with these partners? How do they make referrals and share information?
4. What factors impede and facilitate CSA collaboration with community partners?
5. What services do CSA staff think could help NCPs overcome barriers to employment, but are not available in their area?
6. What guidance, information, or resources could help support county efforts to expand connections to these services?

II. BACKGROUND AND POLICY CONTEXT

A. Previous Literature

1. Barriers to child support compliance and traditional tools for addressing barriers

An array of factors can affect NCPs' compliance with child support obligations, including issues related to ability to pay, willingness to pay, and characteristics of the enforcement system (Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003). Most child support in the United States is paid through automatic income withholding (Tollestrup, 2019), making it a particularly useful tool for facilitating compliance, as it regularly collects payments without NCPs making a choice about whether to pay (Selekman & Johnson, 2019; Vogel, 2021).

However, willingness to pay remains particularly salient for NCPs who pay outside of automatic income withholding (Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003). Some NCPs are reluctant to cooperate because they perceive the child support system as unfair or complex (Edin et al. 2019; Lin, 2000; Pate, 2002; Waller & Plotnick, 2001); or avoid the system due to fear of potential sanctions, financial consequences, and previous negative interactions with child support (Vogel, 2020a; Vogel, 2020b); or apprehension about connections between child support and the criminal justice system (Reichert, 1999; Doolittle & Lynn, 1998). Prior research has also identified that child support policies resulting in high arrears balances—including orders outsized to earnings and charging interest—can reduce NCPs’ willingness to comply with obligations, as obligations begin to feel “endless” (Vogel, 2020a, p.6; Maldonado, 2005) and this can negatively impact their participation in the formal labor market (Cancian et al., 2013; Miller & Mincy, 2012) and compliance (Cancian et al., 2013; Heinrich et al., 2011).

Historically, the child support program’s approach to improving compliance has been to use tools aimed at reducing the role that willingness to pay can play in payment of child support. Since the 1980s, federal legislation has expanded the capacity for states to identify information about an NCP’s work and earnings, collect and distribute child support, and use punitive tools to enforce compliance when NCPs do not pay the support that they owe. Tools available to agencies include administrative remedies, such as property liens and levies, license suspension, credit reporting, passport restrictions, intercept of state and federal tax refunds, and judicial enforcement via civil contempt proceedings and criminal penalties (Gentry, 2019).

Sanction-based approaches to compliance, however, rely on NCPs having the ability to pay, and the child support program has struggled to collect payments from NCPs who lack financial resources (Cancian et al., 2021; Ha et al., 2008). Lack of ability to pay is a crucial

problem for child support compliance (Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003; Mincy & Sorensen, 1998; Sorensen et al., 2007; Hodges et al., 2020). Unemployment, underemployment, and low earnings make it difficult for some NCPs to pay the support that they owe while meeting their own basic needs (Bartfeld & Meyer, 2003; Cancian et al., 2021; Chen & Meyer, 2017; Goldberg, 2015; Huang et al., 2005; Eldred & Takayesu, 2013). High burden orders comprising an outsized share of an NCP's income are associated with lower compliance (Huang et al., 2005; Hodges et al., 2020; Meyer et al., 2008; Takayesu, 2011), especially for low-income NCPs (Takayesu, 2011).

2. *Barriers to employment for noncustodial parents*

Given the substantial body of prior research pointing to employment and low earnings as persistent problems for ability to pay, understanding the barriers that can stand in the way of NCPs securing employment can be helpful for formulating policies intended to address these barriers. Previous research has emphasized that for many NCPs who experience barriers to work, barriers often co-occur (Berger et al., 2021; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020b). Some barriers are within the CSA's control; for example, some enforcement actions can create or exacerbate barriers to work, such as driver's license suspension (Meyer et al., 2020). Others, however, are beyond the immediate purview of child support, suggesting that a collaborative approach involving partners who provide services related to NCP needs is necessary for addressing them.

A number of barriers to work directly relate to the type of jobs available to NCPs; for example, low levels of education and lack of work experience are significant barriers to work for many NCPs (Berger et al., 2021; Cancian et al. 2018; Stykes et al., 2013; Garfinkel et al., 1998; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel 2020a, 2020b), as is having a criminal record (Berger et al., 2021; Cancian et al., 2021; Cancian et al., 2019; Eldred & Takayesu, 2013; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020b). Low-earning men and Black men are disproportionately likely to experience criminal

justice system involvement, which exacerbates future inequities in earnings and economic well-being (Pager et al., 2009; Pate, 2016; Spjeldnes et al., 2015), and incarceration is correlated with lower payment after release, with low earnings being just one of many long-run setbacks tied to incarceration (Chung, 2012; Geller et al., 2011; Pettit & Western, 2004).

In addition to these factors directly related to job availability, many NCPs experience other barriers that can affect their ability to obtain and keep work. Berger et al. (2021) identify transportation barriers, having a criminal record, family caregiving responsibilities, and physical health difficulties as barriers resulting in substantially lower rates of employment and lower earnings among NCPs. They found criminal records and transportation issues to be particularly prevalent barriers, with over half of NCPs in the study sample reporting experiencing them. Some barriers to employment can be especially difficult to address because they have stigma attached to them, such as substance use and mental health issues (Berger et al., 2021; Garfinkel et al., 1998; Nepomnyaschy & Garfinkel, 2010; Baron & Sylvester, 2002; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020b). One large-scale survey found that the rates of mental health disorders among NCPs exceed that of the general population (Thomason et al., 2017), a finding echoed by the CSPED evaluation, which identified disproportionately high rates of depression among NCPs enrolled in CSPED relative to the general population (Cancian et al., 2018). Further, many NCPs experience physical health issues that can impede work (Berger et al., 2021; Vogel, 2020b) and lack of insurance can prevent NCPs from accessing physical and mental health resources (Vogel, 2020b); nearly half of NCPs enrolled in CSPED had no health insurance (Cancian et al., 2018).

Additionally, a confluence of society-wide issues can exacerbate NCPs' capacity to work. Limited or lacking public transportation infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, is noteworthy given transportation barriers for NCPs due to license suspension; within the context of the

national housing crisis, lack of stable housing is a foundational barrier for some NCPs (Berger et al., 2021; Cancian et al., 2018; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020b). Further, structural racism contributes to worse outcomes for non-White individuals—and Black Americans in particular—across many domains including but not limited to health, educational attainment, housing, and employment (e.g., Bailey et al., 2017; Merolla & Jackson, 2019; Wiecek & Hamilton, 2013).

3. *Interagency collaboration*

According to CSPED and other research with Wisconsin CSA staff, some CSA leaders and staff members find connecting NCPs to employment resources and other supports as potentially beneficial for helping NCPs address barriers to work and compliance (Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2021; Vogel et al., 2022). Previous research found that collaborations with partners can help overcome NCP trust-related barriers to service engagement (Noyes et al., 2018; Martinson & Nightingale, 2008), and findings from the NCP Choices evaluation suggest that high levels of partner collaboration and ongoing monitoring of NCPs enrolled in program services are associated with increases in child support collections (Schroeder & Doughty, 2009).

Previous research has identified factors that can help or hinder collaborative efforts across service providers. First, specialization can facilitate interagency collaboration, by increasing mutual perceived benefits and motivating each partner to rely on the other's organizational strengths or “technology” (Schmidt & Kochan 1977; Aldrich 1979). Findings from CSPED's implementation evaluation highlight the value of clear delineation of roles and explication of goals and values across partners in order to leverage each partner's particular strengths and cultivate trust across partners (Noyes et al., 2018). Prior research has identified county variation in CSA perceptions of local provider service quality and accessibility (Vogel, 2021), with the potential to erode confidence in the potential value of further collaboration.

Next, frequent and dynamic exchanges of information can foster collaboration (Galaskiewicz & Marsden, 1978) by helping to facilitate participant enrollment in services, progress monitoring, and consistency in service messaging and expectations. Using integrated computer systems, ensuring staff have adequate training to use those systems, and co-location of service provider offices (within the same physical space) also facilitate collaboration (Kakuska & Hercik, 2002; Noyes et al., 2018). Meanwhile, restrictions on data sharing and concerns about privacy can impede the exchange of sensitive but relevant information; Wasserman et al. (2021) highlight the use of release forms and protected online interfaces to allow partners limited access to essential NCP information as useful strategies for addressing these barriers. Insights from the CSPED implementation evaluation additionally highlight the importance of engaging in formal and informal communication to facilitate collaboration across CSAs and partners, including frequent in-person meetings, regular updates on NCP needs and progress, and shared databases to track NCP participation (Noyes et al., 2018).

Additionally, formalizing collaborations across partners, through official recognition or mandate, can help social service providers build relationships (Marrett, 1971). State leaders also play an important role in facilitating collaboration across local providers because they are positioned to foster cross-program awareness, provide training on funding and service coordination, provide financial incentives for successful collaboration, and set guidelines for appropriate information sharing (Kakuska & Hercik, 2002).

B. Policy Context

1. Child support agencies and employment services

In recognition that new approaches to serving NCPs might yield better outcomes for NCPs with limited ability to pay child support, some efforts are underway to connect NCPs to

services aimed at addressing employment barriers. Though a number of states have efforts underway to support NCP connections to employment resources, these programs are generally small in scale and limited in scope, due to federal limitations on using federal child support resources to fund employment services without receipt of a waiver to do so (Landers, 2020). Several important evaluations have examined the effectiveness and implementation of programs to improve employment outcomes for NCPs. CSPED built on earlier efforts, particularly the *Parents' Fair Share* (PFS) demonstration, and used a random assignment model to test the effectiveness of offering NCPs a package of employment, case management, child support, and parenting services. Wisconsin was one of eight state grantees to participate in CSPED.

While the impacts of CSPED were mixed, with no consistent significant effect on compliance, employment, or earnings, CSPED did lead to changes in NCP attitudes towards the CSA, improvements in parenting outcomes, and reduced use of punitive measures. The study's authors note that the modest levels of service provided through the program might not have been adequate for addressing the barriers faced by the NCPs; further, services specifically intended to move NCPs into better-paying jobs were accessed rarely by CSPED participants (Cancian et al., 2019). CSPED's implementation analysis highlighted a number of other key learnings. These included the benefits of implementation using a child support structure—such as direct access to the target population, facilitation of cultural change within CSAs, and maintaining focus on child support outcomes—but also challenges associated with this model, including a lack of trust among some NCPs and resistance to new ways of working among some CSA staff. CSPED's implementation analysis also highlighted the value of strong partnerships with community providers, the need for regular and thoughtful communication across partners, the benefits of co-

location with other service providers, and the importance of developing service strategies to address multiple and complex NCP barriers to work (Noyes et al., 2018).

More recently, the *Families Forward Demonstration* (FFD) aimed to connect NCPs to subsidized employment opportunities and sector-based occupational training, coupling these resources with child support services (e.g., suspension of enforcement tools, consideration for order modification, arrears forgiveness) and case management services. However, FFD's evaluation used a nonexperimental design and results cannot be attributed to FFD definitively. Compared to the pre-enrollment period, FFD enrollees experienced declines in child support order amounts (consistent with bringing orders in line with earnings), increases in payment likelihood and payment amounts, and increased compliance rates (Wasserman et al., 2021).

2. *Wisconsin initiatives connecting NCPs to employment resources*

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) administers federal programs related to NCPs such as child support enforcement and the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, named "Wisconsin Works" (W-2). Most employment services are overseen by two bureaus within DCF's Division of Family and Economic Security (DFES): the Bureau of Working Families (BWF) and the Bureau of Child Support (BCS), which supervises the state's child support program. While these bodies oversee the employment programs, services themselves are provided by government contracted vendors that specialize in these services and operate in regions designated by the Bureau of Regional Operations. Vendors include Forward Services Corporation, Goodwill Industries, and Workforce Connections.

BCS oversees several employment programs exclusively for NCPs: Children First and ELEVATE (Empowering Lives through Education, Vocational Assessment, Training, and Employment). ELEVATE builds on Supporting Parents Supporting Kids (SPSK), which was

Wisconsin's CSPED program. SPSK, which was implemented in two counties (Brown and Kenosha), has been extended to three other competitively selected counties (Marathon, Racine, Wood) with the establishment of ELEVATE in 2019. ELEVATE draws on both state funds and federal cost-sharing that exceeds two million dollars thanks to a federal (Section 1115) waiver that allows the use of child support funds for employment services. Like CSPED, ELEVATE makes enhanced child support services, employment services, parenting resources, and case management available to program participants. Participation in ELEVATE is voluntary. The implementation and evaluation of ELEVATE is currently ongoing.

In contrast to ELEVATE, participation in Children First is mandated by court order. Children First launched in 1987, and has enrolled over a thousand NCPs per year (OCSE, 2021). Children First is currently offered in sixteen competitively selected counties (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2022). The program requires NCPs to make on-time payments for twelve weeks or complete sixteen weeks of participation. Program activities include intensive case management, job search and retention services, skills training, and parenting improvement services to promote responsible parenting. Both ELEVATE and Children First work in close tandem with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funded Job Centers, local W-2 agencies, local government agencies like workforce development boards, and community organizations such as faith-based partners.

The programs administered by BWF are not exclusively for NCPs, but CSAs can refer NCPs to them if they are eligible. Several relevant programs under BWF are Wisconsin Works (W-2), Transform Milwaukee Jobs (TMJ) Program, and Transitional Jobs (TJ) Program. W-2's work-based programs assist custodial parents with children to find and maintain employment; NCPs who have children with a CP who receives W-2 services may use such services. TMJ and

TJ, on the other hand, are transitional employment programs reserved for low-income adults who are *not* custodial parents and hence not eligible for W-2 programs. The goal of these programs is to transition individuals into stable unsubsidized employment and increase child support payments.

DCF's establishment of the W-2 Child Support Liaison (CSL) in 2018 is one of many recent efforts to integrate and connect the different programs and agencies. The CSL, which operates in W-2 geographical areas that can span multiple counties, is responsible for creating direct communication and coordination between the W-2 agencies and CSAs to facilitate more efficient and responsive services for NCPs. They are expected to identify and connect NCPs to employment programs such as W-2, TJ, and DHS's FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET) program (described below) as well as other services that support them in obtaining employment. According to the 2019 DCF's biennial report, 370 NCPs enrolled in an employment program through the referral of a CSL (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2019).

NCPs may also seek employment services outside of DCF, such as the Department of Veteran's Affairs (DVA), Department of Health Services (DHS) and the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). FSET does not target NCPs, though many CSAs connect NCPs to this resource. This voluntary program offers résumé and interview assistance and help finding job leads. DWD's Employment and Training division facilitates employment services through public-private partnerships and Wisconsin Job Centers statewide, as well as Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) employment services for people with disabilities (Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, 2020).

III. THE CURRENT STUDY

A. Methodological Approach

This study uses an exploratory, sequential mixed-methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methods research brings qualitative and quantitative approaches together to leverage the advantages of both approaches and, as a result, provide a more complete understanding of an issue than either method yields alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Johnson et al., 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). We integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches throughout the study’s design, data collection, and analysis phases. In the study’s first phase, we conducted interviews with CSA directors and staff from a subset of counties, to provide a foundational understanding of how CSAs work with NCPs having issues with employment, and how and where they connect these NCPs for support. We used findings from these interviews to inform the study’s second phase: a survey of Wisconsin CSA directors. Information from interviews was used to refine survey topics of interest, questions, and response categories. Quantitative findings resulting from the survey are the primary focus of this report, and we augment the survey results with additional qualitative findings that shed deeper insights into the survey responses. Findings are organized by topic, with qualitative and quantitative findings woven together and discussed throughout each topic’s narrative (Fetters et al., 2013). All study activities were approved and overseen by the University of Wisconsin–Madison’s Institutional Review Board.

B. Interviews

1. Sample

In our study’s first phase, we identified a sample of CSA leaders and staff to participate in interviews. The sample included directors and frontline CSA staff—including child support

case managers and supervisors—in five Wisconsin counties. While CSA directors were the target of the survey effort, we included staff as well as directors in this phase to facilitate a broader understanding of practice and inform the construction of our survey instrument.

The IRP research team selected counties in consultation with BCS leadership, with a goal of maximizing diversity in CSA experiences. Counties were selected based on three criteria:

1. **County size**, as designated by the Bureau of Regional Operations (BRO), as a proxy for caseload size. Sampled counties included three large or extra-large counties, as well as one small county and one medium-sized county.
2. **Geographic location**, as designated by the BRO. We selected one county from each of the five BRO regions: Northern, Western, Southern, Northeastern, and Southeastern.
3. **Whether or not the county offers the Children First program or the ELEVATE program**, as a proxy indicator for prevalence of state programs, and to include perspectives across counties that offer voluntary (ELEVATE) and court-ordered (Children First) state programs. The sample included counties that offer Children First, ELEVATE, or neither program.

2. *Recruitment and data collection*

Prior to initiating recruitment, BCS leadership sent each sampled director an advance email notifying them of the study and informing them of IRP's forthcoming email invitation. The IRP study investigator then reached out directly to the CSA director to describe the purpose and goals of the study; invited them to take part in a research interview; and disclosed the voluntary nature of the study. One initially-sampled director did not respond to the invitation request; a county with similar characteristics was added to the sample in replacement. All other directors (five of the six invited counties) responded to the email and agreed to participate in the study. The research team then scheduled a time for an interview with each director; all interviews occurred by video. At the conclusion of the director's interview, the interviewer asked the director to share contact information for frontline staff members who work directly with NCPs and who might become aware of employment issues in the course of their interactions. The study

team then reached out to these staff members to schedule interviews. In total, 15 staff members participated in interviews (5 directors and 10 staff members). Interviews were completed between December 2021 and February 2022.

We used semi-structured interview protocols to guide the interviews (Appendix B). Protocols used a standard battery of questions for all respondents, with some questions differentiated by role or previous responses. Topics included how CSA staff are organized to do their work; perceptions of barriers to employment among NCPs and perspectives on the CSA's role in addressing barriers; how CSA staff respond upon learning an NCP is having employment difficulties; the types of employment resources and other supportive services available within the county and how leaders and CSA staff partner with, share information with, and refer NCPs to these partners; perceptions of relationships with partners; and service gaps. Interviews also asked about factors that help or hinder collaboration with partners; plans for advancing efforts related to employment services in the future; and areas of support or guidance desired from the state. Interviews lasted 60-90 minutes.

C. Survey

1. Sample

The sample for the survey included the directors from each of Wisconsin's 71 CSAs¹. The IRP team performed searches for email addresses for all CSA directors and, as necessary, reached out to each CSA's office to request missing information.

¹One director serves as the director for three agencies. Survey communications for this director were tailored to encompass all three counties, each of which was treated as a unit of analysis; therefore, the total sample size is 71 (rather than 69).

2. *Instrument*

The web survey instrument (Appendix C) was developed by IRP to address the topics specified in the cooperative agreement. For initial examples, we looked to previous surveys of staff who work with partners—including the CSPED and ELEVATE staff surveys—and refined and added items tailored to the focus of this study. The instrument was also refined by taking into account findings from the qualitative interviews which helped the study team identify important constructs for inclusion, determine appropriate response options and ranges, and decide on the appropriate format for asking questions. The University of Wisconsin Survey Center performed expert review of the draft instrument. Once complete, the IRP team used the refined draft to create the web-based Qualtrics survey instrument; the IRP team programmed and tested the instrument prior to fielding the survey. The Qualtrics instrument presented batteries of questions to the respondent organized by topical area. Some questions asked respondents to choose from lists of responses and others asked for open-text responses. Per Institutional Review Board requirements, respondents were able to skip any questions that they did not wish to answer. The instrument contained the following sections:

- **About You and Your Agency** covered questions relating to the respondent (their own caseload and tenure as director) and how their CSA manages cases.
- **Barriers to Employment Among NCPs** asked about perceptions of barriers to employment faced by the CSA's NCPs, as well as the respondents' perspectives on the role of CSAs in assisting NCPs with employment issues.
- **Identifying and Connecting NCPs with Employment Difficulties** covered whether and how caseworkers become aware that an NCP has lost a job, the steps taken thereafter, and factors that potentially limit making referrals to employment services.
- **Employment Resources in Your Area** asked the respondent about the places where their CSA staff refer NCPs for employment services and the main place (called the primary referral partner) to which their CSA refers NCPs.

- **Referrals** focused on the primary referral partner's service offerings and eligibility criteria, as well as different aspects of how the CSA refers NCPs to this partner and exchanges information with them.
- **Service Access** collected information about the primary referral partner's location, accessibility via public transit, presence of waitlists, and factors that potentially limit NCP engagement in the primary referral partner's services.
- **Strength of Partnerships** asked the respondent to assess their CSA's relationship with the primary referral partner and the extent to which the CSA and partner engage in joint practices such as meetings or case planning.
- **Additional Services** asked about the CSA's use of the W-2 Child Support Liaison, employment-related supports CSAs provide directly, and the CSA's relationship with services that help address *indirect* employment barriers.
- **Reflections** asked respondents about their perspective on the importance and challenges of building connections with programs that provide employment and other supportive services, future plans, and desired areas of support and guidance from the state.

3. *Recruitment and data collection*

The survey period lasted five weeks and ran from April 2022 through May 2022.

Recruitment began with an advance email, sent by the IRP team on behalf of the BCS director, to directors of all of Wisconsin's 71 county CSAs. The advance email notified that an invitation to complete the survey was forthcoming from the research team. An initial invitation email was sent to all sample members shortly thereafter. A series of up to three reminder emails was sent to each director who had not completed the survey through the end of the study's field period, and reminder phone calls were made in the second-to-last week of the study's field period. When email addresses bounced back, the research team searched for new addresses, reaching out to CSAs as needed to correct or replace the information on record. The invitation email and all follow-up emails included a link to the Qualtrics survey instrument, personalized to each sample member. The sample member was prompted to click the link in order to navigate through the questionnaire.

Directors completed surveys on behalf of 59 county CSAs. Two additional surveys were partially completed (but not finished), and one director clicked the survey link but did not begin the survey. Of the remaining sample members, none refused explicitly; all simply did not respond to contact attempts. Using the American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) response rate reporting methods (AAPOR Response Rate 2²), these recruitment efforts yielded a response rate of 85.9%, based on the formula:

$$\frac{(\# \text{ of completed interviews} + \# \text{ of partial completed interviews})}{((\text{Complete interviews}) + (\# \text{ of partial completed interviews}) + (\text{Eligible, non-interview}) + (\text{Unknown Eligibility, non-interview}))}$$
$$(59 + 2) / 71 = 85.9\%$$

D. Analysis

Interviews were professionally transcribed, then imported into NVivo 12 software for coding. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis, a systematic, multi-phase approach that included reviewing the data; generating initial codes; and identifying, reviewing, and naming themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2012; Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). The codebook was refined, and new codes were added when subsequent themes emerged. Survey data were cleaned and analyzed in STATA 16, which was used to construct study measures and generate descriptive statistics for each measure. Because interviews identified county size as a potentially important construct for contextualizing study findings, we also grouped counties by size (into the categories small, medium, and large, the latter of which encompassed all counties

²American Association for Public Opinion Research: Response Rates, an Overview: <https://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/For-Researchers/Poll-Survey-FAQ/Response-Rates-An-Overview.aspx>

designated large or bigger by BRO). Qualitative and quantitative results were then organized by topical area and analyzed and presented together where appropriate.

IV. FINDINGS

In this section, we present study findings from the survey of CSA directors (from the 61 responding counties of 71 counties invited to complete the survey during the study's second phase). We present most findings in aggregate across all responding directors. However, because county size emerged as a key theme in interviews related to the breadth and types of resources available to agencies, for topics with significant differences in response by county size, we note these differences in the body of the report and show them across small, medium, and large or greater county size in Appendix A. Where relevant, we also present additional contextual information derived from interviews with CSA directors and staff (from the five counties that participated in interviews during the study's first phase. We provide illustrative quotes (lightly edited for brevity) from interview participants where appropriate.

This section is organized topically as follows. First, we describe the operational contexts of the CSAs that participated in the survey; share directors' perceptions of NCP barriers to employment; and summarize directors' views on the role of CSAs as potential connectors to employment services and others supportive services. Next, we present findings about the employment services options available locally to CSAs, including the types and extent of employment services options available locally; the employment services providers to which CSAs refer NCPs most often; the directors' views and awareness about the services available through employment partners; their relationship and communication practices with these partners; and the CSA's use of the child support liaison (CSL) program. Then, we share information about how CSA staff connect NCPs to employment services—how they identify

NCPs who might benefit from a referral; and referral processes, information-sharing, and barriers to making referrals. Next, we present findings about other types of service providers to which CSAs refer NCPs for needs beyond employment services, and perceptions of service gaps within counties. Finally, we present findings related to the CSAs' future plans, including the directors' plans and priorities related to service connections, and areas of support or guidance that directors seek to facilitate these efforts.

A. Child Support Agencies and NCPs

1. Child support agency operational contexts

How CSA staff are organized has potential implications for who within a CSA might become aware of an NCP falling behind on support, and staff caseload sizes can affect staff capacity to respond to learning of an NCP falling behind with personalized follow-up (Vogel, 2021). On surveys, directors were asked whether their caseworkers manage cases start-to-finish or specialize by function. Most directors (70%) reported that their agency's caseworkers manage cases start-to-finish, with 30% specializing by function. Interviews revealed that these distinctions are not always completely clear-cut; several counties that manage most aspects of cases start-to-finish described that a designated staff member handles cases through paternity establishment, then hands the case over to a caseworker who manages the case through the rest of its lifecycle. Small counties are significantly more likely to manage cases start-to-finish while in large counties, staff are more likely to specialize (Appendix Table A.1). In counties that manage cases start-to-finish, directors shared in interviews that cases are typically allocated alphabetically to caseworkers, whereas in counties that specialize, staff are generally organized by function, such as enforcement, paternity, order establishment, or interstate coordination.

Director reports of staff caseload sizes also vary significantly according to county size. On average, directors reported that staff have 728 cases on their caseloads, with caseworkers in small counties carrying caseloads approximately half that size, and caseworkers in large counties carrying caseloads more than twice as large. Directors in counties where staff work cases start-to-finish reported average caseloads of 428 per caseworker, whereas directors in counties where staff specialize report 997 cases per caseworker. In just under half (45.9%) of counties, directors reported carrying a caseload of their own, averaging 212 cases. Directors in small and medium counties were significantly more likely to report carrying a caseload at all, and to report carrying larger caseloads, than directors in large counties. In interviews, some directors reported carrying a caseload routinely, whereas others described these arrangements as temporary due to staffing shortages or for new directors temporarily retaining previous cases from their case manager role.

Table 1: Director and agency characteristics

	<i>n</i>	Mean/Percent
Director characteristics		
Years in director role (<i>Minimum/Maximum</i>)	61	8.3 (0–29)
Director carries own caseload*	61	45.9%
Of those with caseload, director caseload size* (<i>Minimum/Maximum</i>)	25	211.6 (3–500)
How agency staff are organized*		
Specialize by function		30.0%
Manage cases start-to-finish		70.0%
Caseworker caseload sizes*		
Across all agencies*	59	727.9 (85–6000)
In agencies where staff specialize by function* (<i>Minimum/Maximum</i>)	28	997.3 (215–6000)
Of those who manage cases start-to-finish* (<i>Minimum/Maximum</i>)	31	484.7 (85–750)

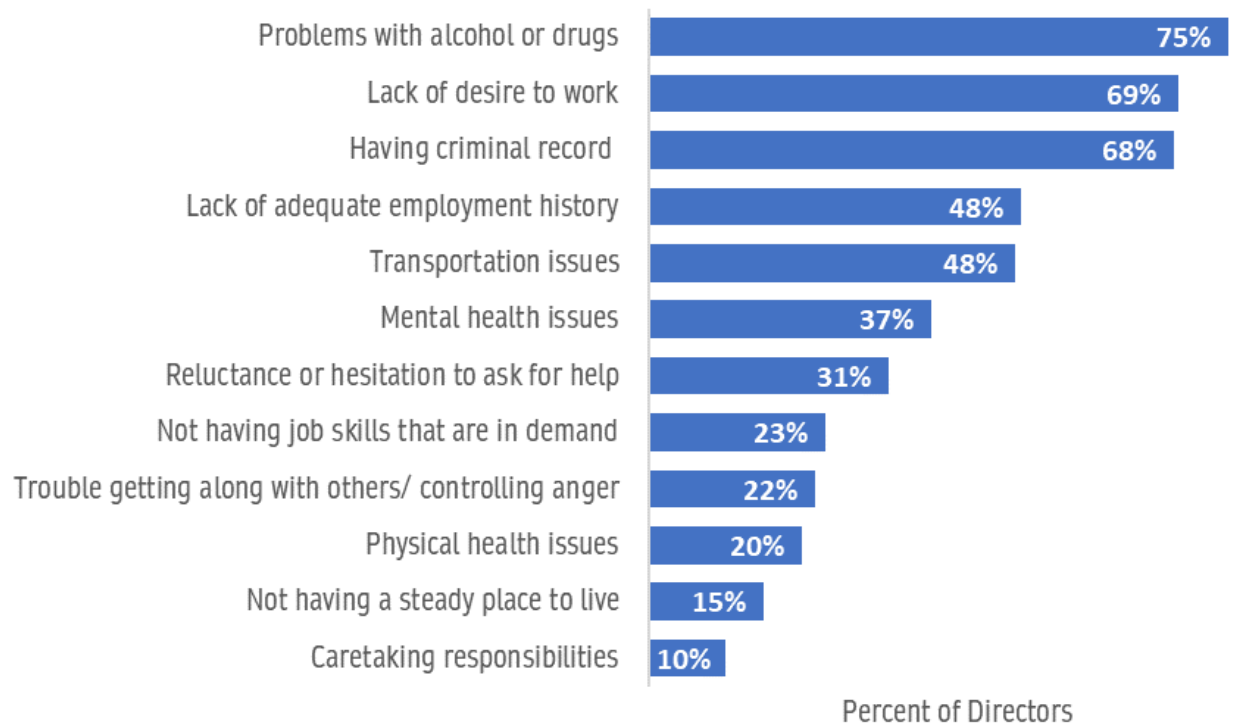
* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$) or a Kruskal Wallis test ($p=0.10$). See Appendix Table A.1 for distributions by county size.

2. *Director perspectives on NCP barriers to work and paying support*

On surveys and in interviews, respondents shared their perceptions of the types of challenges that can make it difficult for NCPs to find and keep work, and therefore to meet their child support obligations (Figure 1). On surveys, directors were asked about the extent to which a number of issues make it difficult for NCPs served by their agencies to find and keep a job (using a 5-point scale ranging from “not a problem at all” to “an extremely large problem”).

Two-thirds or more of directors reported substance use, a lack of desire among NCPs to engage in work, and having a criminal record as “very” or “extremely” large problems; nearly half of directors described inadequate employment histories and transportation barriers this way. These findings were underscored broadly in interviews, with one caseworker citing substance use disorder as the primary barrier to employment among NCPs on their caseload, and a director stating, “the drug epidemic is out of control.”

Figure 1: Director perceptions of employment barriers among NCPs served by their agency



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated that the barrier made it *Very* or *Extremely* hard for NCPs served by their agencies to find or keep a job (versus *Not at all*, *A little*, or *Somewhat*). The sample sizes for these items range from 60 to 61.

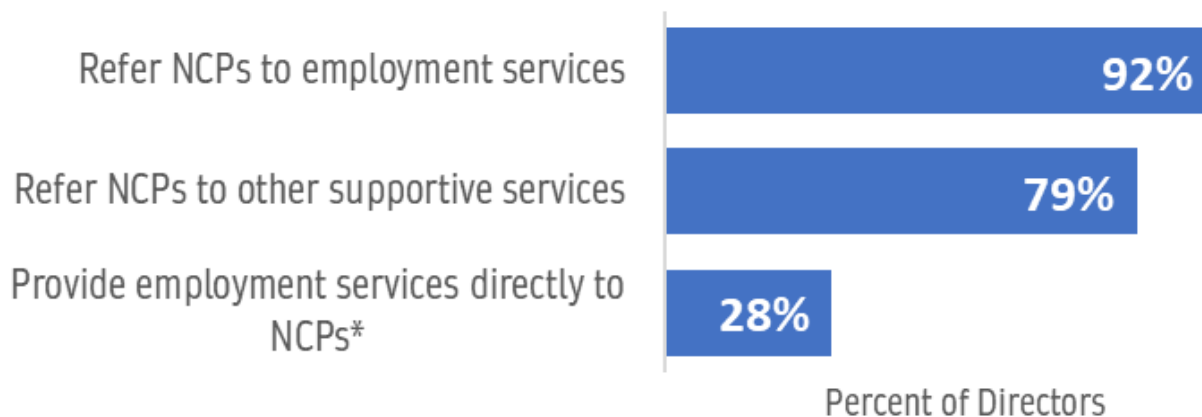
Interview participants also expanded upon reasons why NCPs might lack motivation to find or keep work, citing factors such as low-wage jobs; high child support order amounts relative to earnings resulting in some NCPs having very little money left to spend on their own basic necessities once the child support amount is deducted; and high levels of child support arrears compounded by mounting interest making it hard for NCPs to “see a light at the end of that tunnel” and therefore choosing to give up on formal employment. With regards to criminal records, directors and staff described that many employers are reluctant take a chance on someone with a criminal record, particularly for certain types of crimes and better-paying jobs. Interview participants stressed that many NCPs experiencing such difficulties often have multiple barriers to work that are inter-related; for example, substance use issues can result in a

driver’s license being taken away, which can result in transportation barriers to work—suggesting a need for multifaceted solutions and resources.

3. *Director perspectives on the child support agency’s role*

In order to understand how CSA directors view the role agencies should play in helping NCPs with employment barriers, directors were asked whether they believe CSAs should be expected to provide employment services directly to NCPs, refer NCPs to local employment providers, and refer NCPs to other supportive services beyond employment services, such as services for mental health, substance use, parenting supports, or access and visitation (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Director perspectives on the child support agency’s role



Note: These percentages include directors who answered *Yes* to a question asking whether CSAs should be expected to perform each of these roles. The sample size for these items is 61.

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$). See Appendix Table A.2 for distributions by county size.

Broadly, most directors perceived making referrals to employment services and other supportive services as within the CSAs domain. Nearly all (92%) directors reported that CSAs should be expected to refer NCPs to employment services. In interviews, directors said that such brokering by CSAs “makes sense” and is a “part of our job to some extent” because employment

assistance helps NCPs subject to contempt actions to meet purge conditions and ultimately can help them earn wages to pay their child support obligations. Thus, some see this more supportive role for CSAs as both sensible and strategic, because doing so helps CSAs become more “successful” in collecting child support, whereas a more traditional strictly punitive approach “usually doesn’t work,” as two directors noted in interviews. One staff member observed that the task of connecting “has to start on the child support side,” rather than on the part of employment partners or other providers, because the CSA knows which NCPs have fallen behind on their obligations and is best situated to connect NCPs to employment services. However, interview participants in most counties noted that large caseload sizes can make it difficult to provide personalized service and play this connector role consistently, which can result in the underutilization of employment resources.

Most, but fewer, directors (79%) reported that CSAs should be expected to refer NCPs to other supportive services. In interviews, CSA staff and directors provided some insights into why some consider these referrals outside of the CSA’s purview. Some believe “establish[ing] relationships with outside services for mental health, the DMV, etc.... is not the CSA’s job” while others are more concerned about “crossing boundaries” and the “fine line of what’s within the CSA’s scope.” One case manager alluded to a potential ethical issue of CSAs playing this broader role, citing the risk of backlash and how it may compromise the CSA’s “neutrality”:

If we’re making that referral to send them somewhere, then we’re saying, “this is the best place for you.” Is that something that we should be doing as a neutral party? We aren’t even allowed to tell somebody what attorney that they should go get... I think that that could come back to bite us in the end if we’re giving those sorts of referrals to people and it didn’t work out for them.

In contrast to this broad support for CSAs playing a connector role to services, only 28% of directors reported that CSAs should be expected to provide employment services directly to

NCPs, with larger counties significantly more likely to endorse this perspective than smaller counties (Appendix Table A.2). In interviews, directors and staff who felt that this role was not appropriate for CSA staff cited having limited time and staff available to manage caseloads already and a lack of capacity for this additional responsibility. As one case manager described,

I don't have a lot of time to be doing research for people, so I don't go in that direction... [M]y job is not to help them find work, as much as I want to... That's why I refer them to the jobs programs because I can't be doing that kind of thing for them, even though I'd like to if I had the time.

Beyond capacity issues, some staff members in interviews also shared concerns about lack of expertise in this domain relative to other organizations that focus specifically on employment. As a director stated, "We're not going to be specialists in all areas. But we certainly can link people to specialists. As long as we can continue exposure, we can at least give our clients an option."

4. *Collaboration challenges*

In interviews, directors described factors that can make it difficult to collaborate with other service providers, even when they aspire to do so. Directors were asked on surveys, using a five-point rating scale, to indicate the extent to which these factors identified in interviews impeded their abilities to do so over the past year. Nearly half of directors cited "insufficient time for getting to know other providers in my area" (47%) and "lack of financial resources, or restrictions on how my CSA can use financial resources" (46%) as limiting their collaborative efforts "a lot" or "a very great deal" (Figure 3). Some challenges were statistically related to size (Appendix Table A.3). Small counties cited the physical distance with other providers as a particular collaboration challenge (many noted in open-ended responses that a scarcity of services precludes any such efforts). Small and medium-sized counties were also likely to cite financial constraints as a collaboration challenge. Meanwhile, larger counties more often

described the struggle for buy-in from staff as a challenge. Directors from several counties noted in interviews and on open-ended questions on surveys about concerted efforts underway within agencies to shift their agency’s culture toward a more help-based approach. Wrote one director, “Veteran staff are resistant to changing their aggressive, hard-handed past practices. Those practices have not boded well for the perception of the CSA/program.”

Figure 3: Challenges collaborating with employment and other supportive service providers



Notes: These percentages include directors who indicated answered *A lot* or *A very great deal* to a question asking how much each of these factors has made it difficult to collaborate with other agencies or programs (versus *Not at all*, *A little bit*, or *Somewhat*). The sample sizes for these items range from 56 to 57.

*Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10). See Appendix Table A.3 for distributions by county size.

Directors and staff noted that these collaboration challenges sometimes co-occur. For example, a caseworker described how infrequent communication with an employment services provider, staff turnover at both agencies, and pandemic-related office closures made it difficult to forge connections last year, with lack of time being the foremost barrier. Noted the caseworker:

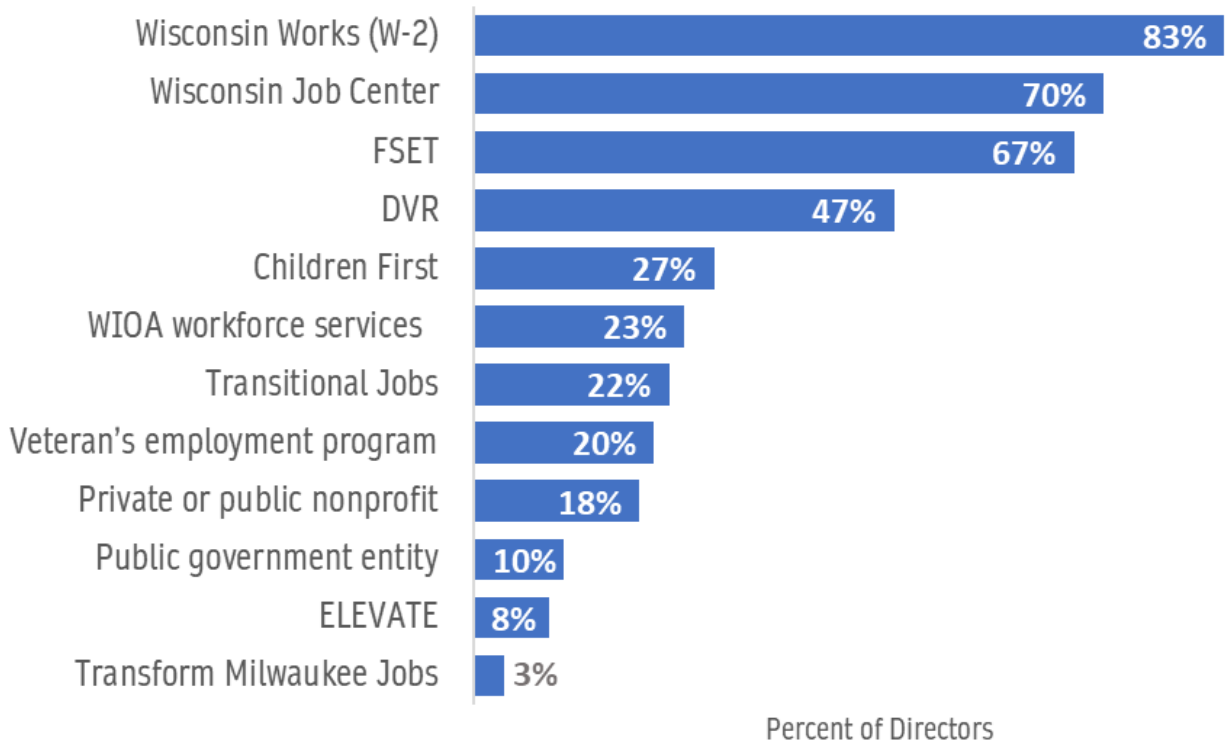
It would be helpful to have one liaison [from the employment partner] that would come in and meet with us from time to time to just give us an update, or if we could work together to come up with new ideas. We could email, [but] the problem is, we don't know who we're emailing because the person we used to talk to is no longer there. It's hard to keep track of who our point of contact is. I could go to my manager, and she could probably tell me, but...when you're in the middle of working your cases, it's like, 'Oh, she's busy in a meeting. I'll catch her later.' And then you just never do.

B. CSAs and Relationships with Employment Services Providers

1. Employment services referral partners

To provide a more complete picture of the types of employment services providers to which CSA staff refer NCPs, the survey asked directors to first list *all* employment services providers within the county to which their staff refer NCPs having difficulty finding or keeping work, and then to indicate the employment services provider to which CSA staff refer NCPs *most frequently* (hereafter referred to as the “primary referral partner”). When asked to list *all* employment service referral partners, directors reported referring NCPs to an average of four providers, with Wisconsin Works (W-2) programs, the Wisconsin Job Center, FoodShare Employment and Training (FSET), and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) emerging as common places for referral (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Director reports of places where agency staff refer NCPs for employment services

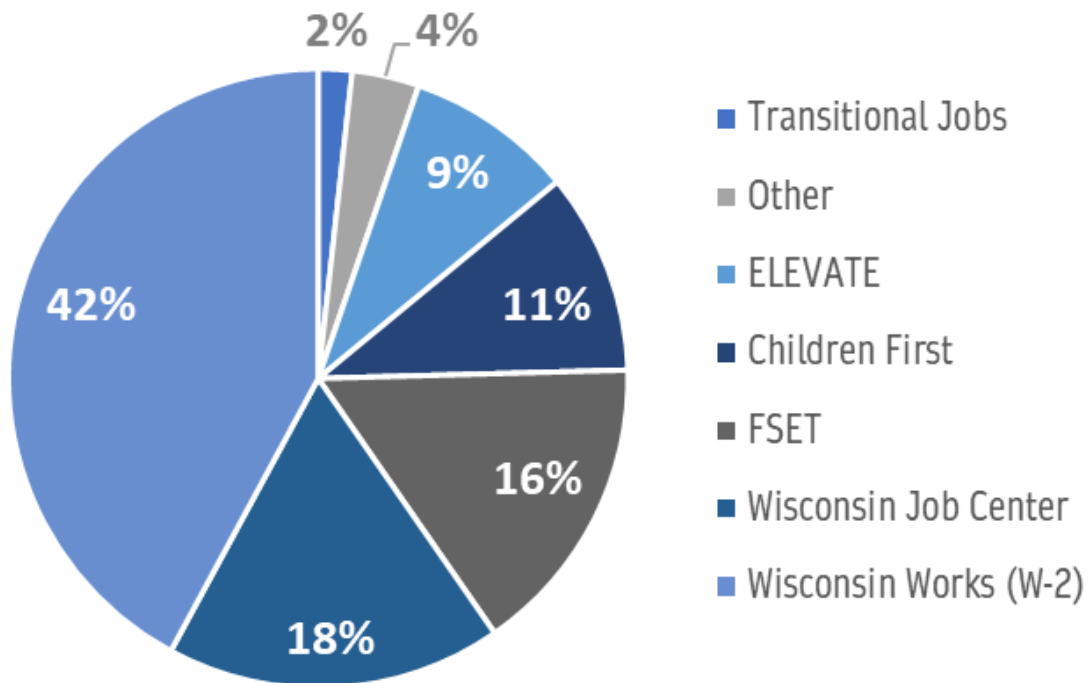


Note: These percentages include directors who checked *Yes* to a question asking whether their CSA's caseworkers refer NCPs having employment difficulties to each. The sample size for these items is 60. Respondents had the option to write in answers that did not appear on the list. Nonprofit and government entities were written-in answers that were back-coded by the authors while the rest were presented as answer options to respondents. Nonprofits entered by respondents included Urban League, United Way, and Northwest CEP. Written-in places that are also the county's local W-2 agency, such as UMOS or Forward Services, were classified as a W-2 resource.

When asked to identify their *primary* referral partner, directors most often selected W-2 programs, the Wisconsin Job Center, FSET, and Children First (Figure 5). The primary referral partner reported by directors varied significantly based on the county's size, with small counties most frequently referring NCPs to W-2 programs, medium counties to FSET and the Job Center, and large counties to ELEVATE and Children First (Appendix Figure A.1). In interviews and on surveys, an issue that surfaced repeatedly related to the availability of employment services providers in small counties, particularly in the northern region of the state. Directors noted that

some counties have no within-county employment provider at all and sometimes only one option, limiting CSA referral options and posing barriers to access for NCPs.

Figure 5: Primary referral partner for NCPs in need of employment services, as reported by directors



Note: These percentages indicate the provider to which the director selected as the place where their caseworkers refer NCPs in need of employment services *most often*. The sample size is 60. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Figure A.1 for distributions by size.

2. *Perceptions of employment services providers*

In interviews with CSA directors and staff during the study’s first phase, directors and staff highlighted that the types of services an employment provider offers, as well as their perceptions of the quality of those services, can shape their decision to refer NCPs to that provider. However, interviews also revealed that even when thinking of the employment service providers to which they refer NCPs most often, many directors and staff were uncertain about the specific services offered by those programs and felt that they lacked information about the quality of those services. Directors and staff in several agencies described that historical “silo”-

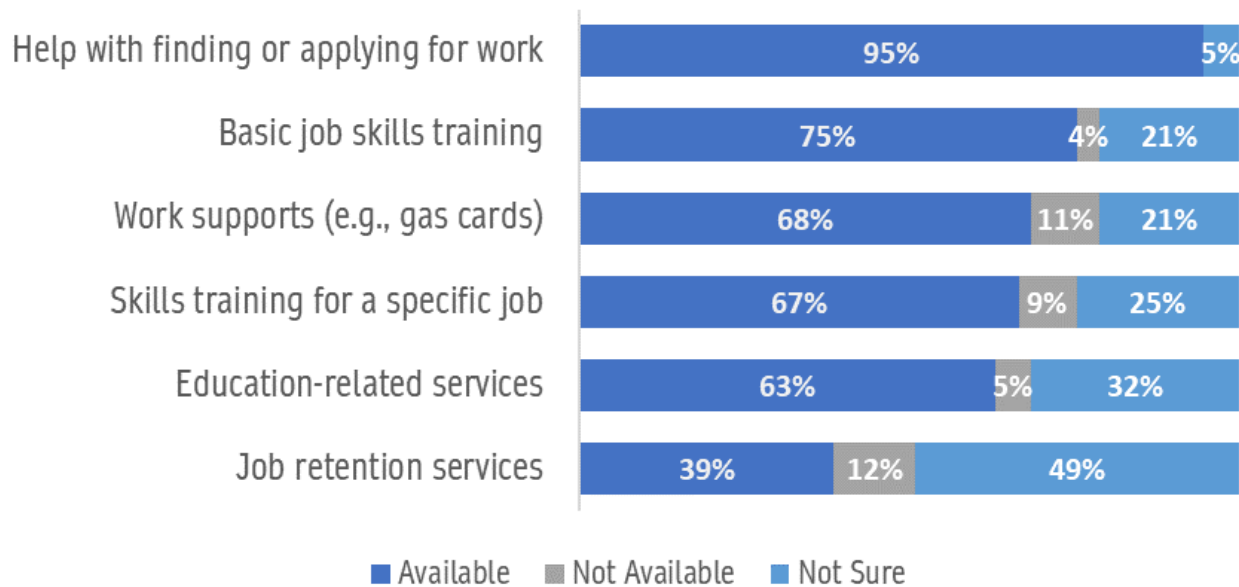
ing of child support agencies from other human service providers, lack of time to build relationships with local service providers or learn about their offerings, and lack of clarity about how to approach making these connections locally contributed to this uncertainty.

To help understand director perceptions and awareness of the kinds of employment services available through local employment providers, the survey asked directors about the services available through their primary referral partner. Most commonly, directors reported that the primary referral partner provides basic job-search and job-skill training, with nearly all (95%) indicating that their primary referral partner helps NCPs with job searches and 75% reporting that their primary referral partner trains in basic job skills (Figure 6). About two-thirds of directors reported that their primary referral partner provides work supports (e.g., gas cards, uniforms, or other resources to overcome barriers to participating in work), skill training for a specific job, and education-related services. Fewer than half (40%) reported that the referral partner provided job retention services, or services intended to help NCPs keep a job once obtained. Though somewhat uncertain about offerings related to job retention services, interview participants described them as important for facilitating an NCP's success in finding and keeping work by reducing job instability. One staff member noted their benefit in helping NCPs navigate conflicts or new situations that are likely to arise, and in helping struggling NCPs understand "...that you have to get to work on time and you have to be prepared to work... [Y]ou might not like what you're asked to do every day, but you have to do that if you want to keep your job."

Notably, many directors were uncertain about what specific services the partner to which they refer NCPs most often provides; while few (5%) were unsure if their primary referral partner provides job-search searches, half were uncertain if their primary referral partner offers job retention services, and 21% to 32% were uncertain if their primary referral partner offered

each of the other categories of services. This uncertainty highlights a potential opportunity for facilitating future knowledge-sharing and collaboration, to help CSA staff to explain to NCPs the benefits and services available through employment partners when making referrals.

Figure 6: Services available through primary referral partner

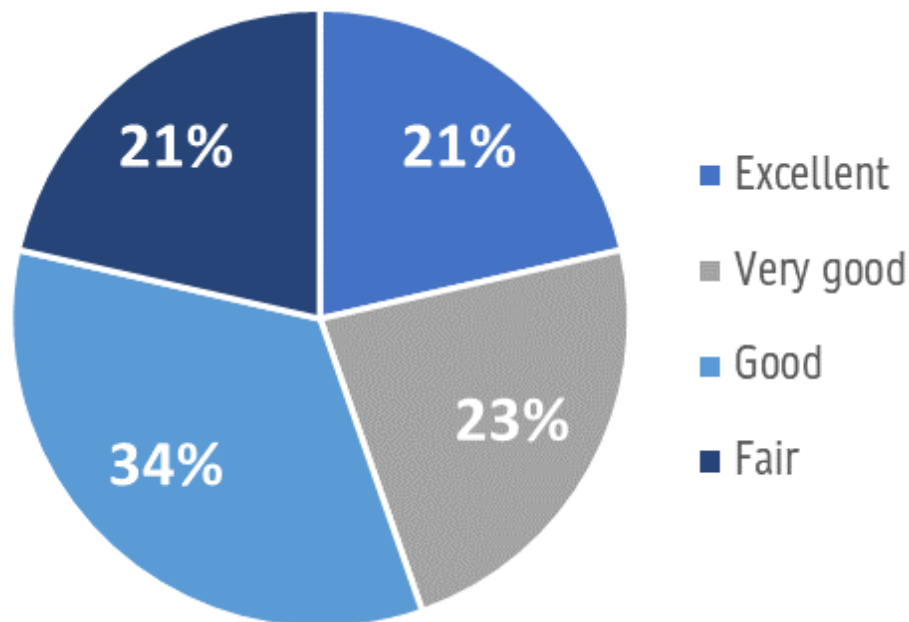


Note: These percentages indicate whether the director answered *Yes* (available), *No* (unavailable), or *Not sure* to questions asking whether the primary referral partner offers each of these services. The sample size for these items is 57.

When asked about their perceptions of the *quality* of their primary referral partner’s services, directors reported a mixed but overall positive view (Figure 7). In interviews, a staff member described feeling unable to comment on the quality of services because they had not experienced the services themselves and, moreover, relatively few NCPs participate in these services while even fewer share feedback with the CSA afterwards. Several interviewees expressed frustration about this lack of engagement and indicated that they hesitated to comment on service quality because they generally attributed lack of positive results to NCP reluctance to participate in services rather than service quality. One staff member described it as “hard” for any program to address all barriers that can hamper an NCP’s job prospects, elaborating:

I think the programs are great but I think it's hard to know every single parameter and ways to help all different individuals in all different situations... A person can't find employment because they're a felon. And they have addiction issues. And they've gone to a rehab of some sort and then dropped out. So, when you actually get into it, it gets to be more complicated.

Figure 7: Perception of quality of services available through primary referral partner



Note: The response options presented to directors were *Excellent*, *Very Good*, *Good*, *Fair* and *Poor*. No directors answered *Poor*. The sample size is 56.

3. *Communicating with employment services referral partners*

Communication is an important aspect of understanding another organization's service offerings and establishing processes for working together to serve clients. Directors reported more informal communication than formal communication strategies with their primary referral partner, with nearly all (91%) directors reporting that their CSA and primary referral partner communicate through telephone calls and email, and far fewer directors reporting more formal communication strategies such as regular meetings across leadership (42%) or frontline staff (38%) or convening information sessions on services provided by each group (43%). One out of five of directors (20%) reported that staff from the CSA and partner engaged in collaborative

case staffing, or case planning across the two agencies (Figure 8). Large counties were significantly more likely to report engaging in the more structured communication methods with their primary referral partner than smaller counties (Appendix Table A.4). In interviews, several directors of small and medium-sized county CSAs expressed frustration about a lack of regular communication across agency leaders, whereas the director of a large county CSA described:

[Our partner is] really good about reaching out and saying, ‘Hey, what can we do to help with referrals? Would you have any ideas? We’re open to that conversation.’ They’ve always been very good about that.

Figure 8: Communication practices with primary referral partner



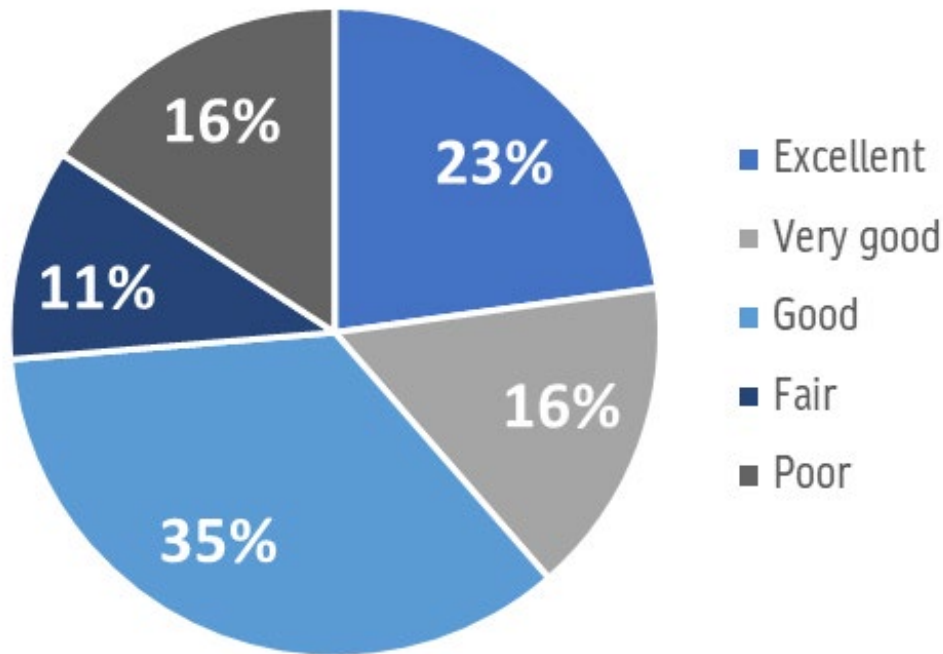
Note: These percentages include directors who checked *Yes* to questions about whether CSA engages in any of these practices with their CSA’s primary referral partner. The sample size for these items range from 55 to 57.

*Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.4 for distributions by size.

4. *Perceptions of relationships*

When asked their opinion about the strength of relationship with their primary referral partner, 39% of the directors considered it as “very good” or “excellent,” 35% described it as “good,” and 27% described it as “fair” or “poor” (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Director perceptions of relationship quality with primary referral partner



Note: The sample size is 57.

5. CSAs and the W-2 child support liaison program

The W-2 child support liaison (CSL) program is a resource designed to help connect NCPs to employment services; as such, the survey asked directors about their use of and experience with a CSL. In interviews, many directors and staff reported perceiving an expectation from DCF (communicated through memos and directives) that CSAs collaborate with the CSL program. Consistent with this expectation, most directors (78%) reported that their agency works with a CSL in some way, with nearly all (94%) reporting that their staff refer NCPs to the CSL; 83% of directors reporting that their CSL shares progress updates back to their CSA about the NCP's the CSA has referred; and 26% reported working with the CSL in "other" ways, including in meetings, at job fairs, and through the CSL's regular attendance at court hearings (Table 2). In interviews, small counties with limited employment service options locally reported that NCPs often receive *direct* case management support from the CSL while in larger

counties with many NCP resources already in place, the CSL supports the staff (rather than the NCP directly) by sharing information about other resources available.

Table 2: Agency use and director perceptions of the child support liaison (CSL) program

	<i>n</i>	Percent
Agency works with their region’s CSL	58	78.3%
Agency staff refer NCPs to the CSL (of those working w/ CSL)	46	93.5%
CSL shares updates about NCPs with agency (of those working w/ CSL)	46	82.6%
Agency and CSL work together in other ways (of those working w/ CSL)	38	26.3%
Perceived helpfulness of having CSL for connecting NCPs to employment services (of those working w/ CSL)*	45	
Not at all		2.2%
A little		37.8%
Somewhat		28.9%
Very		20.0%
Extremely		11.1%

*Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10); see Appendix Figure A.2 for distributions by size.

The CSL program is relatively new, and some agencies expressed uncertainty about the program’s purpose or how to best make use of the program. On surveys, several directors noted being unsure if their agency worked with the CSL or a lack of clarity about the CSL’s role; this uncertainty arose during several interviews as well, with one staff member describing: “I’m unsure what their connection is with us. I know they’re supposed to work with agencies to try to help clients find jobs and stuff. But that’s where my knowledge ends.” In interviews, some staff and directors from larger, resource-rich counties shared that knowing how to use the CSL can be a challenge when the CSA has already built relationships with other local providers, or when the CSA has so many referral resources available that the challenge is not a lack of employment resources, but developing clear processes for “using the right one at the right time” and providing straightforward communication channels for NCPs across providers. Finally, interviewees cited the broad territory served by the CSLs, which provide services to regional areas rather than for

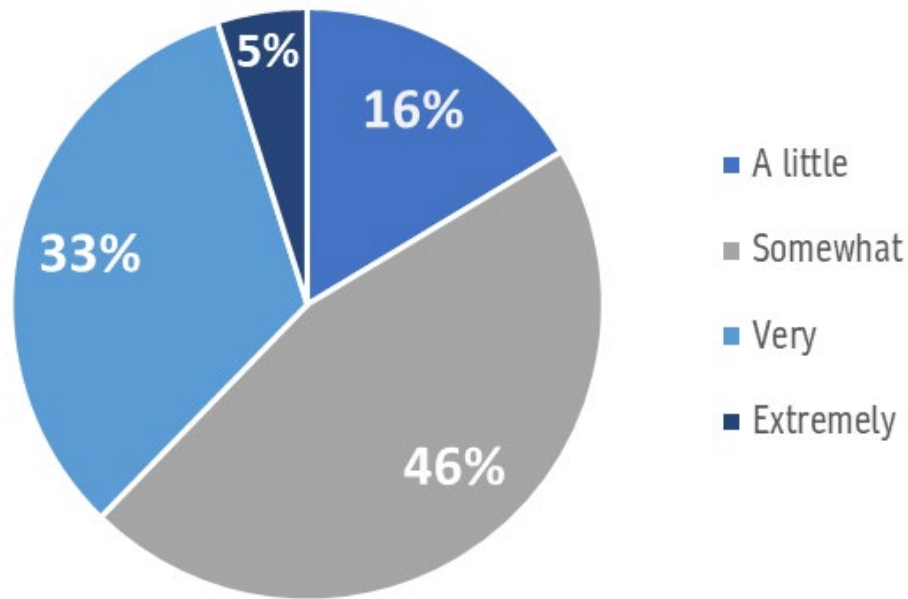
each county, as both a challenge and a potential benefit. On one hand, some interviewees felt having the CSL's attention divided across different counties can reduce the CSL's availability. On the other, this broad geographical reach, as one staff member noted, makes the CSL a useful resource for assisting clients who live or work outside the county in which the CSA is located. Among directors who reported that their agency uses the CSL program, about a third described having the CSL as "very" or "extremely" helpful resource, with directors of small counties reporting a significantly higher satisfaction (Appendix Figure A.2).

C. Connecting NCPs to Employment Services

1. Identifying the need for employment services

Before a CSA caseworker can refer an NCP experiencing difficulty with work and paying their support to services for assistance, the caseworker first must become aware that an NCP has encountered these issues. The survey asked directors how likely caseworkers are to become aware that an NCP has lost their job and how caseworkers might learn of a job loss, and whether caseworkers are expected to take particular steps upon learning that an NCP has lost a job. On average, 38% of directors reported that caseworkers are "very" or "extremely" likely to become aware when an NCP has lost their job (Figure 10), with directors of in medium-sized counties significantly more likely to report this than other directors (Appendix Table A.5).

Figure 10: Perceived likelihood that caseworkers become aware of NCP job loss



Note: The response options presented to directors were *Extremely*, *Very*, *Somewhat*, *A little* and *Not at all*. No directors answered *Not at all*. The sample size is 61. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.5 for distributions by size.

Regarding how caseworkers learn that an NCP has lost a job, nearly all directors reported on surveys the custodial parent (100%), the NCP’s employer (95%), and CSA reports that track employment and payments (93%) as sources of information; many reported that caseworkers learn of job loss through NCPs themselves (87%), other staff within the CSA (72%), and staff from other agencies (49%) (Table 3). In interviews and on open-ended survey items, respondents also mentioned less frequently used sources, including community members, social media, court hearings, and through other means in the course of locate efforts.

Table 3: Agency responses to NCP job loss

Sources from which caseworkers become aware of NCP job loss	<i>n</i>	Percent
Custodial parents	61	100.0%
Employers	61	95.1%
Worklists or reports that track employment or payments	61	93.4%
Noncustodial parents	60	86.7%
Other CSA staff members, including call center staff	61	72.1%
Staff who work outside of child support	61	49.2%

Given the large caseloads shouldered by CSA staff, staff and directors noted in interviews that reports, system alerts, and “tips” and alerts, were crucial for case management. As one caseworker said in an interview, “When you have 1300 cases, you rely pretty heavily on the system to let you know those things.” Moreover, when staff become aware of an NCP job loss from a source other than the NCP, they must expend considerable time towards reaching out to the NCP to follow-up. Despite the importance of these mechanisms for providing clues about potential job loss, and made more difficult when caseloads are large, staff and directors also noted in interviews that proactive outreach from caseworkers to NCPs is crucial for identifying, confirming, and following up on a suspected job loss. They described that caseworkers are most likely to know when an NCP loses their job when staff are proactive in their outreach to families, and when their relationship with the NCP and CP associated with a case is strong, because these conditions are more likely to result in an NCP being proactively forthcoming upon losing a job. NCPs’ reluctance to ask for help, particularly when they perceive risk of punitive consequences or shame in response to CSA interaction, surfaced repeatedly in interviews. Described a director:

Some of the staff are more proactive in reaching out and making phone calls to say, ‘Hey, what’s going on?... I’ve noticed that you haven’t made payments.’ [Other] staff might just be waiting for that incoming call... If someone is behind in child support, and they don’t really have a relationship with their child support worker, or they don’t know who their worker is, or they’re intimidated to call, you miss that opportunity [to find out].

Several directors described closing the communication gap between caseworkers and NCPs as a vital component of shifting towards a more service-oriented approach. In interviews, directors shared intentional efforts they have made in this direction, such as hiring staff with backgrounds in social work, trauma informed care, and customer service. Stated a director:

[We hired] two individuals [having] that communication, engagement kind of philosophy, more so than just ‘processing paperwork’... That’s a different type of work. People years ago were hired for the paperwork or computer processing

work and then some grew into being able to do the engagement, that higher level activity, and then had better success with [the client].

To help understand likely caseworker responses to job loss, directors reported on surveys whether caseworkers within their agencies are expected to take specific steps upon learning that an NCP has lost a job (41% of directors), or whether caseworkers determine the next appropriate steps on their own (56% of directors) (Table 4). One director elaborated in an interview:

We give people the flexibility to manage that caseload however works best for them because people have different styles. We just say, ‘Here are the parameters. Here are our performance outcomes that we would like to hit. Here are the reports that you need to monitor every month.’

Among counties with expectations for how caseworkers respond, 76% reported expecting caseworkers to reach out directly to NCPs for more information, and nearly all (85%) reported expecting that caseworkers share information with the NCP about employment services (with fewer—62%—reporting expecting a caseworker to share information about the NCP to an employment program). More than three-quarters reported expecting the caseworker to take steps to include participation in employment services in a court order.

Table 4. Caseworker next steps upon learning of NCP job loss

	<i>n</i>	Percent
Upon learning of an NCP losing their job...		
It is up to caseworkers to <u>decide</u> what steps are appropriate.	61	55.7%
Agency expectations depend on case circumstances	61	3.3%
The agency <u>expects</u> all caseworkers to take specific steps.	61	41.0%
Caseworkers are <i>expected</i> to:		
Directly reach out to the NCP for more information	21	76.2%
Share information about employment services with the NCP for NCP follow-up	20	85.0%
Share information with an employment provider for provider follow-up	21	61.9%
Take steps to include employment services participation in a court order	21	76.2%

2. *Referrals and information sharing*

a. *How caseworkers make referrals*

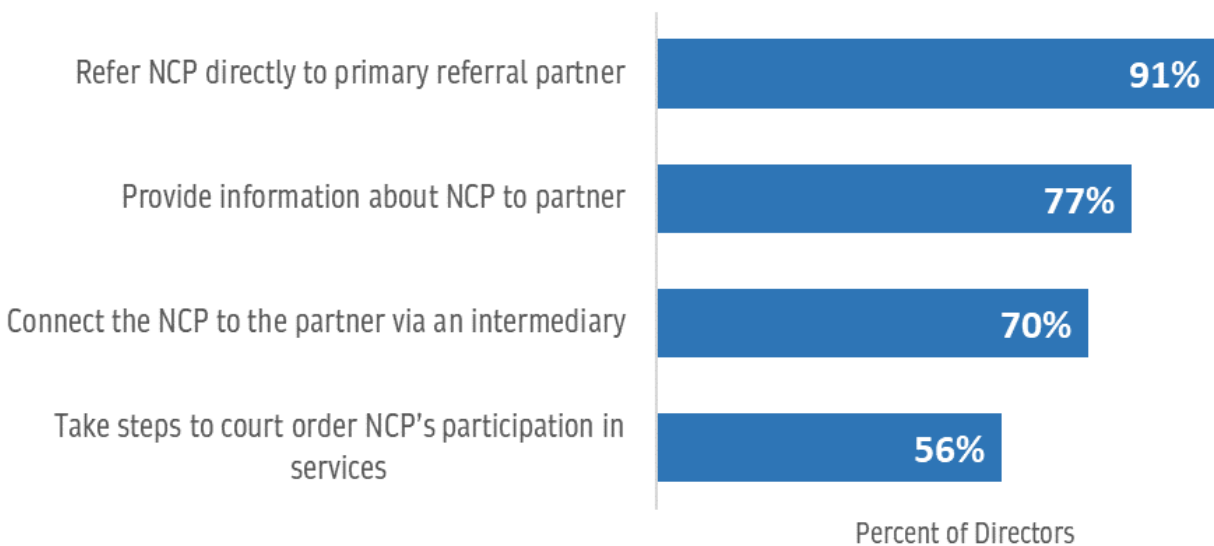
In the first phase of the study, interviews participants revealed that directors use the term “referral” to mean a range of strategies that vary in formality as well as format, and that application of these strategies and formats sometimes varies depending on how behind an NCP is on ordered support and response to previous referrals. For example, a caseworker might mail information about an employment program to NCP who they learn has recently lost a job, but not yet fallen behind on ordered support, for the NCP to pursue voluntarily; however, if in the next few months, the NCP falls behind on support, does not pursue referrals for employment resources shared by the agency, and stops communicating with their caseworker about efforts to obtain employment, the agency might then pursue a court-based referral by recommending participation in employment services as a purge condition. In total, across modalities, directors survey estimates of the number of referrals made by their CSA’s comprise .33%³ of the county’s IV-D caseload size per month (with a range from .01% and 1.8% of the caseload per month). Because referrals have many facets, the survey asked directors about referral practices (focusing on practices with the CSA’s primary referral partner) across multiple domains.

First, directors were asked *who* (or to what actor) they communicated with to refer an NCP to their primary employment partner—whether case managers recommended to the NCP that they reach out to the primary referral partner to express interest in services (with 91% of directors reporting that their case managers do so); whether they asked the primary referral

³Directors reported total number of referrals per month or year to their primary referral partner. To account for differences in county IV-D caseload size, we generated a standardized estimate per county by dividing the reported number of referrals to the primary referral partner per month, divided by the county’s 2021 IV-D caseload size (Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, 2022). The average shown (.33%) represents the total number of referrals reported by all directors, divided by the IV-D caseload sizes of all counties for which the director provided an estimated number of referrals.

partner to contact the NCP and provide information about services (77%); and whether they used the help of an intermediary (such as the CSL) to connect NCPs to the primary referral partner (70%); and whether they took steps to initiate court-based referrals (56%) (Figure 11), with some differences by county size (Appendix Table A.6).

Figure 11: How agency staff refer NCPs to their primary referral partner



Note: These percentages include directors who checked *Yes* to a question asking whether their CSA staff refer NCPs having employment difficulties to the primary referral partner. The sample size is 57.

As one director described:

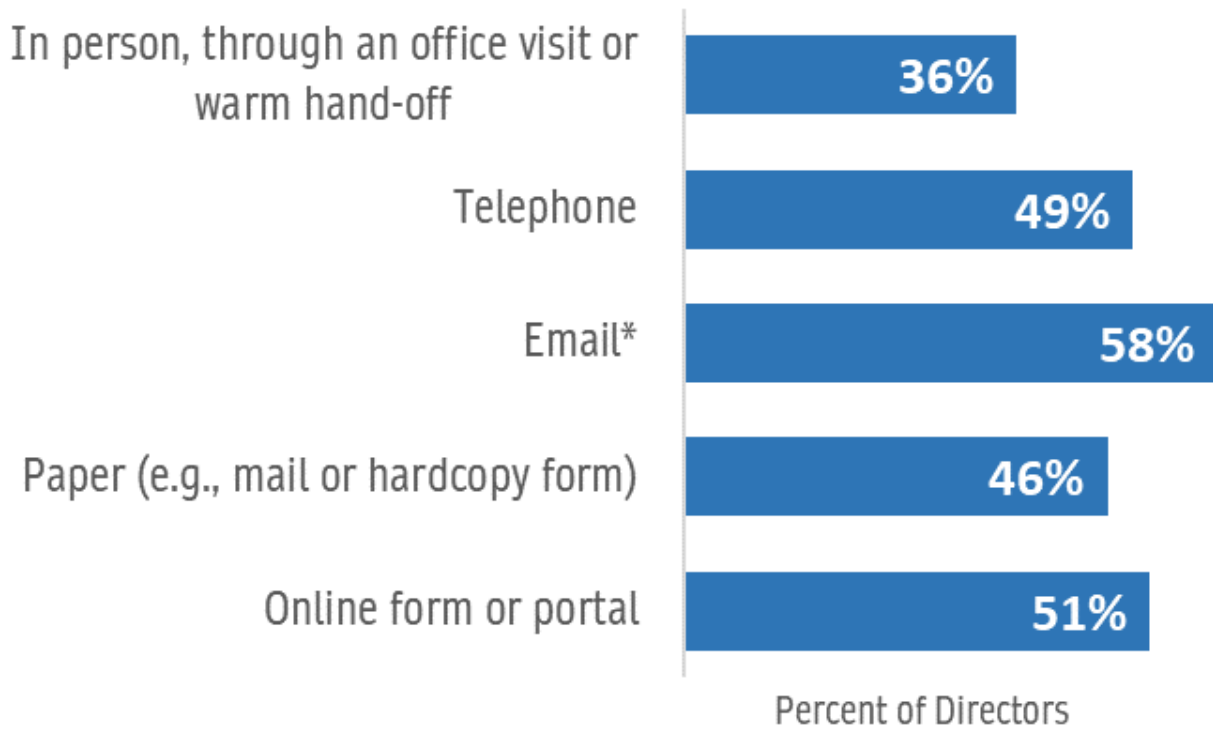
We'll say, 'Hey, here is this person that you can just contact directly. We work with this person all the time. They are familiar with child support.' It's [harder for an NCP] going in and saying, 'I'm supposed to come in and talk to somebody about this,' versus going in and saying, 'Hey, I'm here to talk to Bill.' That overcomes that anxiety of going in and being like, 'I don't really know who I'm supposed to talk to or what I'm here to talk to them about'... It makes [the connection] a smaller task for people.

Among those who reach out to both the primary referral partner and to NCPs, about over half (56%) report usually making such referrals one-way ("separately"), as opposed to two-ways simultaneously ("together"), with the rest reporting sometimes making referrals separately and other times together. In open-ended responses to the survey, directors explained that they further

try to encourage NCP participation in services through voluntary stipulations and by disseminating information about them on their website and through people or organizations in contact with NCPs. In interviews, directors also highlighted the value of “warm hand-offs,” or physically escorting an NCP to an employment services staff member, to facilitate an in-person connection, or calling that staff member on the phone with the NCP. Similarly, interviewees spoke about the advantage of having an employment services worker physically available inside the courthouse to meet an NCP immediately after a court-based referral; however, they also noted that these opportunities for in-person connections were disrupted by the pandemic.

Next, directors were asked about the *format* used to refer NCPs to their primary referral partner. Directors reported that staff use a variety of formats to make referrals (Figure 12), with over half using emails or an online form or portal, which directors described in interviews as very convenient. Despite directors mentioning the effectiveness of warm hand-offs in interviews, this was the least cited format for making referrals (36%). Larger counties reported making referrals by email significantly more often than small and medium-sized counties (Appendix Table A.6).

Figure 12: Format of caseworker referrals to primary referral partner



Notes: These percentages include directors who checked *Yes* to a question asking their caseworkers CSAs refer NCPs having employment difficulties to the primary referral partner using each of these methods. Sample sizes for these items range from 54 to 55.

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.6 for distributions by size.

On surveys, directors were also asked about whether their CSA or primary referral partner has requirements in place about sharing information with staff from their primary referral partner about the NCPs they refer. Most (62%) reported that their CSA's caseworkers did not need explicit permission from the NCP to share information with the primary referral partner, though directors elaborated in interviews and open-ended survey responses that such requirements vary substantially across partners and can further depend on whether an NCP's participation in services is court-ordered (with courts requiring explicit releases of information in some counties and precluding a need for it in others).

b. Following up on referrals

Directors were also asked how often their agency and the primary referral partner follow up with one another on NCP engagement and progress after making a referral. About 42% of directors reported that staff follow up with the NCP “always” or “most of the time” (Table 5)—with directors in large counties reporting that staff do so significantly less often than small and medium counties (Appendix Table A.6)—and with the primary referral partner nearly two-thirds (62%) of the time. Nearly 80% of directors reported that the primary referral provider initiates providing CSA case managers with feedback on NCPs’ progress, and of those who report receiving such feedback, 70% characterize this information as “very” or “extremely” helpful.

In interviews, directors noted that the quality and detail of information provided by employment partners can vary widely across partners and sometimes points of contact within partners, with some partners providing regular (usually monthly) and helpful information, and others providing basic and sporadic (“as needed”) information. Interviewees from several counties with multiple provider options noted that receiving poor communication and inadequate feedback from one provider could lead to the agency leveraging a different, more communicative, partner as their primary employment partner as caseworkers rely on these updates to monitor court orders and provide updates to CPs and other stakeholders. Inadequate feedback or updates impede the caseworkers’ ability to move a case forward, compelling them to step in and “do the digging themselves” as one caseworker described:

Typically [we don’t hear from the provider] unless we reach out. They’re not going to reach out to us unless there’s a concern... I’ve never had anybody reach out to me with questions. It’s just me reaching out to them and wondering, ‘What’s going on? Have they been showing up? Have they done their job searches?’

Table 5: Sharing and following up on information with primary referral partner

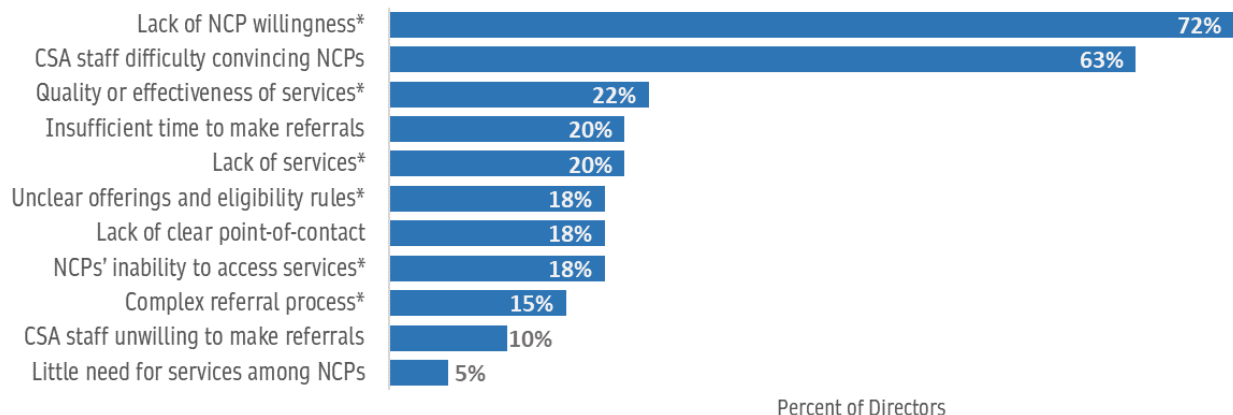
	<i>n</i>	Percent
Referral partner provides agency with updates on NCP participation and progress	56	
Yes		77%
No/Not sure		23%
Helpfulness of updates from primary referral partner for case planning (of those who receive them)*	43	
Not at all		0.0%
A little bit		14.0%
Somewhat		16.3%
Very		37.2%
Extremely		32.6%
How often caseworkers follow up <i>with the NCP</i> after making a referral to primary referral partner*	56	
Never		3.6%
Rarely		19.6%
Sometimes		33.9%
Most of the time		23.2%
Always		19.6%
How often caseworkers follow up <i>with the primary referral partner</i> after making a referral	55	
Never		5.5%
Rarely		3.6%
Sometimes		29.1%
Most of the time		21.8%
Always		40.0%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$). See Appendix Table A.6 for distributions by county size.

c. Barriers to making referrals

In interviews, directors and staff described an array of factors can impede referrals from CSA case managers to employment services programs, and directors were asked about the extent to which these factors limited the number of referrals that their CSA case managers make to any employment services programs (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Barriers to making employment services referrals



Note: Percentages include directors who indicated that the factor limiting caseworkers from making referrals is a *Very* or *Extremely* large problem. Sample sizes for these items range from 59 to 60.

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.7 for distributions by county size.

Directors of small counties especially expressed concern about the lack of services in the area, about their effectiveness, and about their clients' ability to access those services (Appendix Table A.7), compelling some small counties to refer their clients to services or employers outside their county despite transportation challenges faced by smaller counties such as a lack of public transit options and scattered, distant service providers and employers. Relatedly, in interviews and open-ended responses, some directors noted the distinct challenge faced by counties that border other states; some directors in small counties bordering other states highlighted that a scarcity of services and jobs in their own county compels some NCPs to seek services across the state border, but poor communication with out-of-state partners and state-specific eligibility rules can impede these much-needed referrals.

Resoundingly, however, directors cited lack of willingness on the part of NCPs to engage in services as a key barrier for making referrals; directors described NCPs' unwillingness to participate in such services (72%) and staff difficulties convincing NCPs to engage in those services (63%) as "very" or "extremely" large problems. In interviews, directors and staff cited

lack of motivation among some NCPs a significant impediment to their willingness to engage in services. From the perspective of some, this lack of motivation was driven by lack of desire to work; some felt that in the current economy, any individual who wanted to work would be able to find a job. One director said, “From my experience, people who want to work, find a job and work and pay their obligations. And the ones that don’t, don’t.” Added a staff member:

My biggest problem is [employment programs] come to us, and they tell us to refer, refer, refer, but we know that the people we’re referring don’t want to work, and they’re not going to cooperate. And there’s just—there’s just those people that—I have never in all the nine years I’ve been here, I have not come across one person who legitimately wanted to work and could not find a job. If they want to work, they find work. Especially now, more than ever. And since COVID, it seems like every employer is hiring...[Employment programs] can come in and say, ‘Hey, send us these people. Send us these people.’ That’s all great, but if they don’t want to work, they’re not going to—they’re not going to reach out to you. They’re not going to answer that phone call. They’re not going to do anything. So, that’s the hardest part for us if you want us to refer.

Other directors and staff expounded upon some of the reasons that they perceived might underlie an NCP’s motivation to engage in employment services. First, some directors and staff perceived that some NCPs believe that they cannot make enough money to meet their basic needs even with the help of an employment program, due to having a criminal record or after child support is withheld from a paycheck. They felt that for some NCPs, this perspective demotivated them from wanting help with finding a job or led to a preference to work for cash. One staff member added that NCPs with low incomes sometimes fear becoming ineligible for public benefits because of obtaining a better-paying job, as losing these benefits could negatively impact their overall well-being. Described the staff member:

Criminal backgrounds make it very difficult for some people to, you know, find jobs where they feel that they can make enough money to survive. That’s a complaint I hear quite often is just, you know, ‘I have a background, the only jobs I can get pay a little, and then you guys come in and take up to 60% of that.’ So that they just feel that it’s not worth their time if they’re not going to have any

money to even live off from. And sometimes that job might be enough to bump them from getting certain benefits.

Additionally, directors and staff noted in interviews that some NCPs already have jobs, such as part-time work or self-employment. Though potentially inadequate for meeting their obligations, they perceived that some NCPs preferred to keep the jobs they had rather than participate in services to find a new job, feared losing that job as the result of program service participation requirement, or had limited availability for participating in services due to their work schedules.

Directors and staff also perceived that for many NCPs, feelings of pride—or conversely, of shame for receiving help—led them to prefer to seek employment on their own, rather than with the help of a service provider. One staff member described the biggest challenge associated with referring NCPs to employment services as, “I guess trying to convince them it’s in their best interest to accept help, that there’s nothing wrong with help.” Another stated, “A lot of the times when I mention our job programs and resources, I’ll get responses like, ‘Well, I think I have some things that are coming down the line. I’ll figure it out myself.’ I wonder sometimes if it’s an element of pride.” A third staff member described how competing obligations and feelings of pride, among other factors, can intersect to create barriers to engagement:

I do try to stress to people that with child support orders, it’s different than other bills. You could potentially go to jail, if you’re not following your order. It’s not like a normal bill. I also think that there’s a bit of pride because not only is it hard for people to ask for help, but then when they think about the extra work that they have to do for a program, [like] coming in for an interview, [they cannot] set aside time to do this. And we stress to folks that we’ll be as accommodating as possible. If they can’t come in person, we’ll do something over the phone. We’ll try to work with them according to their schedule. It can still be very difficult. And part of that might be busyness, but also a sense of pride.

Another frequently-cited factor interview participants perceived as affecting motivation was a lack of trust among NCPs. They felt that some NCPs mistrust the CSAs intentions in connecting them to services, particularly when these referrals result from a recent contempt

action filed by the CSA. One caseworker described that some NCPs fear interacting with the child support agency on any topic, describing, “There’s some innate fear of even dealing with the child support agency, thinking that if they even talk to me, they’re going to get in trouble.”

Another caseworker elaborated that some NCPs perceive that CSA staff hold negative perceptions about them, reducing their willingness to engage, stating:

I’ve heard a couple of child support workers say that they hear from their noncustodial parents, ‘You probably think I’m a bad parent’ or ‘You probably think I’m a bad person...’ I think a lot of people think that. Like, ‘I’m not calling my caseworker because they’re taking me to court and they think I’m a bad parent.’

From the perspective of some staff, when child support agencies make referrals to employment providers, particularly through court-based enforcement actions, this mistrust carries over to the employment provider as well. Described one staff member:

It seems like they [also] see these services as an extension of the child support agency, not as a separate body. I think they see anything in their contempt paperwork as all child support... They’re coming after me, they’re making me do all this stuff.

Beyond or exacerbated by mistrust, several staff and directors perceived that some NCPs are unwilling to participate due to resistance to or anger about “being told what to do,” particularly when court-based enforcement is involved; they perceived that some NCPs view these referrals not as help, but as a means of further control. Described a staff member, “I think with Children First being a court-ordered program, some people don’t want to be told what to do. They don’t want to be told ‘I have to be a part of this program;’ ‘I have to search for a job.’” A director characterized ordering participation in employment services as part of contempt as “not as motivating as you would think,” and another director added:

Some people are angry with us because we’re making them do something they don’t want to do. We’re making them pay child support. We’re making them go into Children First. We’re ordering them to this and that. We all know from the

past two and a half years how people don't want to be ordered to do anything. They don't like it. They want to have their freedom, and we are pretty much infringing on it by saying you have to do this. Sometimes they comply but other times they just don't want to at all because they're angry.

Some staff and directors also noted that when NCPs have had previous negative experiences with job search or employment services, this can lead to mistrust that services will be effective and reduced motivation to engage. Described one staff member,

The ones that don't seem to follow through on [employment services] have a negative viewpoint. It's not necessarily their fault. Maybe they've had bad luck in the past. Maybe with having something on their background, they just haven't had much luck in finding things. I think they have that attitude already, like, 'I've tried it all' or 'Why bother' or 'I've applied at every job in town, and nobody wants me, so, just throw me in jail.'

Other directors noted that NCP feelings of mistrust extend to government-provided services more generally; as one expounded on their survey, "Most of our consumers are looking to not participate with government providers due to lack of trust, [and] we have limited for-profit providers in the area to meet mental health, skill building and employment needs."

3. *Eligibility criteria*

Some employment services options have criteria that an individual must meet to be considered eligible for services. While only 18% of directors described lack of clarity about eligibility rules as a very or extremely large problem for making referrals (Figure 13), eligibility rules do affect where CSAs refer NCPs and can present barriers to service participation. On surveys, over half (51%) of directors reported that their primary referral partner had specific eligibility criteria for participation, with eligibility for or receipt of certain public benefits cited as the most frequent criteria (Table 6), with significant differences reported in criteria by county size (Appendix Table A.8).

Table 6: Director reports of primary referral partner’s eligibility criteria

	<i>n</i>	Percent
Primary referral partner has eligibility criteria (vs. serving any NCP)	57	50.9%
Primary referral partners require NCP to:		
Be eligible for or receive certain public benefits*	28	53.6%
Have a child with a CP who is eligible for or receives certain public benefits*	28	21.4%
Be under contempt or have a pending contempt action	28	7.1%
Have a child living at home	28	7.1%
Be co-enrolled in another program	28	3.6%
Pass a drug screening	27	11.1%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$). See Appendix Table A.8 for distributions by county size.

Directors noted several challenges related to public benefits-related criteria. First, one director noted in an interview that an issue with such requirements is that NCPs are sometimes reluctant to take benefits like FoodShare even if they are eligible, and the stigma associated with these requirements can inadvertently “cut off a good chunk of people.” Additionally, requirements related to the CP’s public benefits status, cited particularly by those whose primary referral partner is W-2, characterized these criteria especially prohibitive due to the generally strained relationship between NCPs and CPs. As one caseworker described:

It’s very unfair that his participation in [the W-2 NCP] program is tied to the CP’s participation. When hers ends, his ends. When we were initially selling this opportunity to clients, we didn’t want to share that their participation was dependent upon the CPs.

Additionally, several directors noted that when programs have a requirement for a current support order, that can preclude NCPs who owe arrears only from receiving services, while these NCPs can also need employment help. More broadly, respondents cautioned that a partner may deliver multiple programs with different criteria, so any given partner may not always have uniform and fixed eligibility rules. This confusion led one director in an interview to propose a “computer database [where] you’d punch all the information for somebody, and then it would tell them what they’re eligible for.” As one director noted:

It can be hard to keep all the State initiatives and programs straight. There always seems to be something new but then they have a bunch of eligibility issues that exclude our NCPs in the end. Seems like lots of change I can't keep up with and it's just...not worth the time when there [is] very little by way of results.

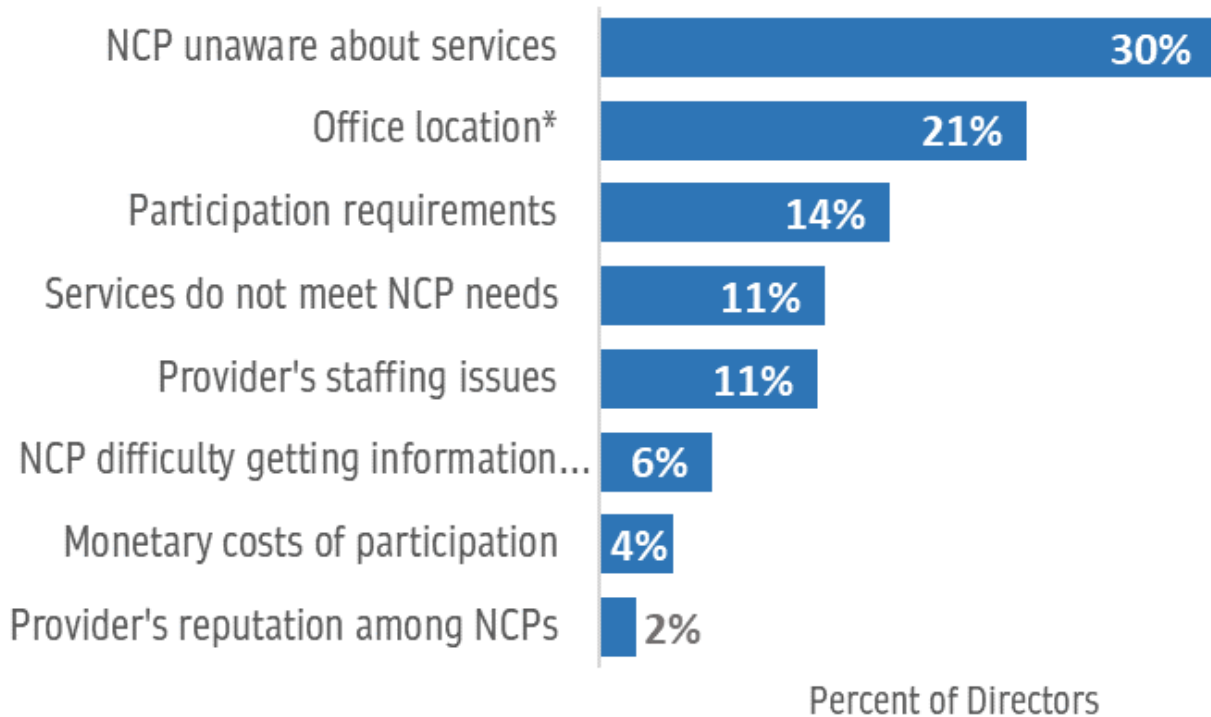
Added another director:

There are so many hoops that one has to go through when running through these programs. It's [not] easy for them to just go apply. [W-2 contracted program] is a lengthy drawn-out process that some NCP's are not willing to go through. We hear in court quite a bit 'Yea, I tried [the program] and it didn't work out' or 'I wasn't eligible so I'm not doing that again'.

4. *Barriers to accessing services*

After a caseworker initiates a referral for employment services, many factors can prevent an NCP from ultimately engaging with the provider. Drawing on insights from interviews, the survey asked directors about their perceptions of the extent to which a number of potential barriers affect NCP to access their primary referral partner's employment services, ranging from "not at all" to "a very great deal" (Figure 14). Among factors that the directors ranked as limiting access by "a lot" or "a very great deal," lack of awareness of service offerings among NCPs surfaced most frequently, with staff observing in interviews the crucial need to raise awareness about the benefits of employment services among NCPs. Described by one caseworker as such: "When I'm reaching out with my first phone call to most of my non-payers...and I mention [the employment partner], a lot of them don't even know anything about it."

Figure 14: Factors limiting NCP engagement in primary referral partner’s services

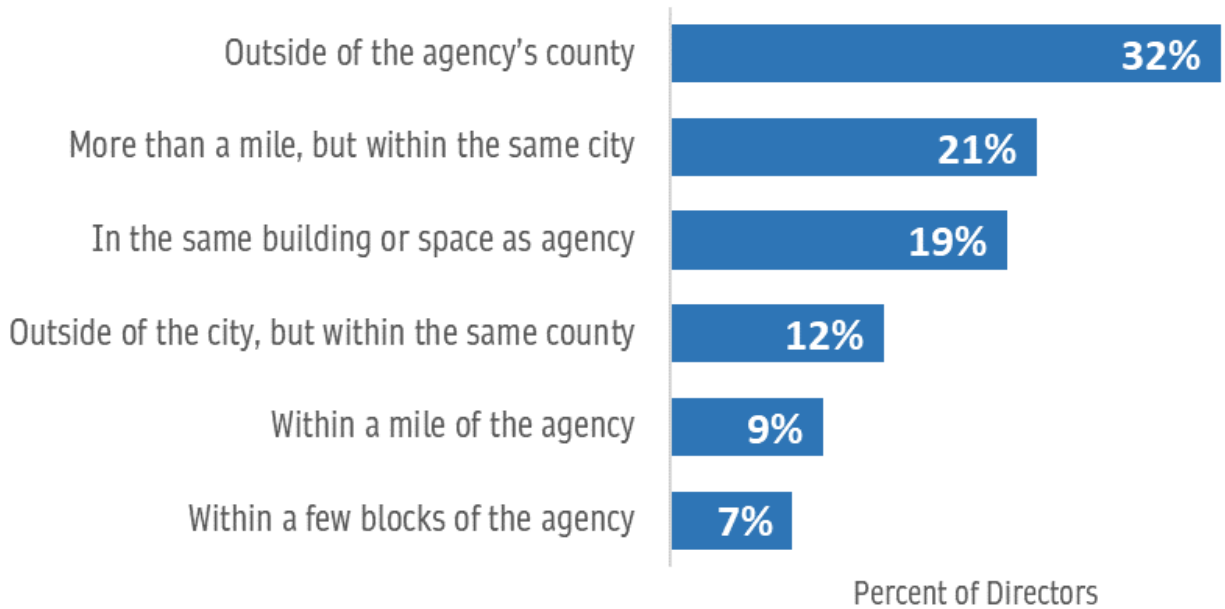


Note: These percentages include directors who indicated the factor limits NCP engagement by *A lot* or *A very great deal* (versus *Not at all*, *A little bit*, or *Somewhat*). The sample size for these items range from 54 to 57.

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Figure A.3 for distributions by size.

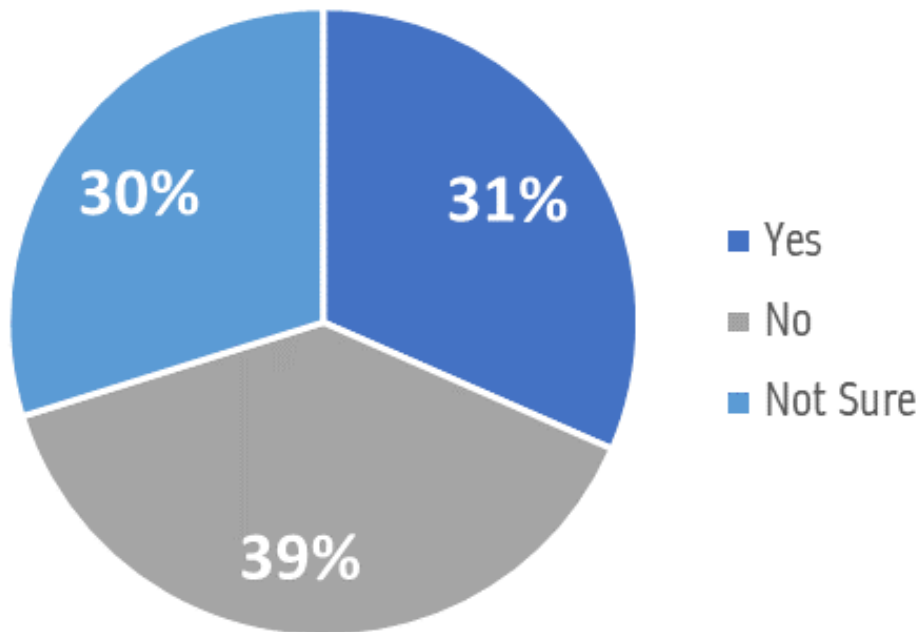
The next most common barrier identified by directors the primary referral partner’s office location, with small counties significantly more likely to report office location as a barrier to NCP service engagement than other counties (Appendix Figure A.3). Approximately a third of directors revealed that their primary referral partner is located *outside* of the county (Figure 15), and only one third of directors indicated that their primary referral partner is located along a public transit route (with 39% describing the partner as *not* along a public transit route and 30% unsure), (Figure 16). Unsurprisingly, the challenge of distance is statistically concentrated in the small counties, where 43% of directors report that the primary referral partner is located outside the county and 67% describing it as *not* on a public transit route (Appendix Table A.9; Appendix Figure A.4).

Figure 15: Location of primary referral partner relative to child support agency



Note: The sample size is 57. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.9 for distributions by size.

Figure 16: Accessibility of primary referral partner via public transit



Note: The sample size is 57. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Table A.9 and Appendix Figure A.4 for distributions by size.

In interviews, staff and directors noted this distance from employment options increases the likelihood that NCPs are not aware of employment resource options. These challenges prompted one director to raise in an interview the need for a statewide database of information about employment programs that could be searchable by geographic area. In areas with limited or no transit infrastructure, work supports such as bus passes or taxi vouchers can prove futile and owning a car becomes paramount for an NCP's work commute, but this too can be hampered by driver's license suspensions enacted by the CSA; fines, fees, and license restrictions due to civil or criminal driving violations; and the expense of owning a car. In contrast to small counties, nearly all the directors of large counties (92%) noted that their primary referral partner is located within the same city as the CSA or even in the same building or space, and 92% of them also said that the partner is located on a public transit route.

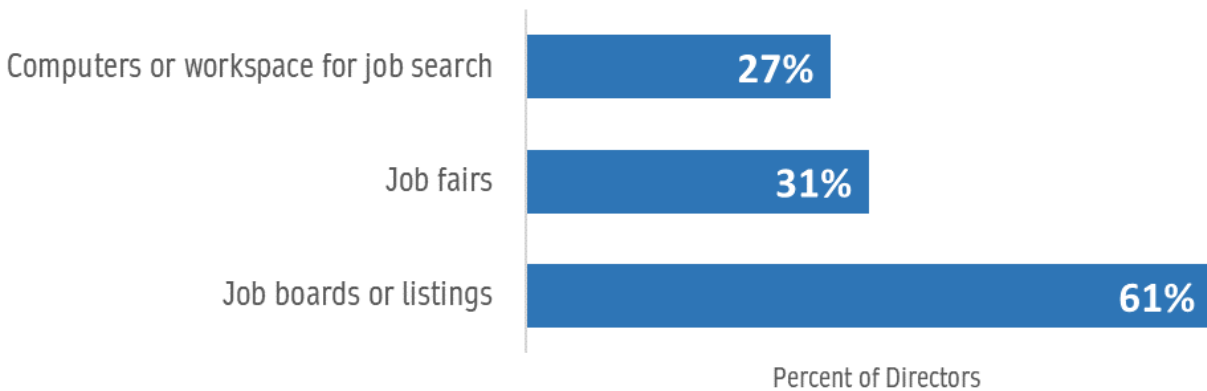
Replying to open-ended questions on the survey and in interviews, directors also highlighted technology barriers—such as lack of internet service, lack of a phone, or frequently changing telephone contact information—that can also affect NCP service access, particularly in areas where NCPs reside at a large distance from employment services options. This issue was heightened at the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic when many in-person services providers were closed or offered only virtual options.

D. Employment Supports Provided by CSAs

Broadly, directors reported connecting NCPs to employment services to meet NCPs' employment-related needs. However, in interviews and on surveys, directors highlighted that CSA staff and leaders currently take some steps within their agencies to help connect NCPs to employment opportunities. Several CSAs provide employment services directly to NCPs through the ELEVATE program. More broadly, nearly two-thirds of directors reported that their CSA

posts links to job openings on the CSA’s website, social media pages, or in lobbies (Figure 17). Nearly a third reported CSA participation in or organization of job fairs (often in tandem with a local employment provider); directors generally described these events as effective for connecting attendees to local employers, but staff resource-intensive for what sometimes results in very low turnout. About one-quarter of directors reported that their agency makes computers available within the CSA, for job searches or for NCPs to apply for jobs.

Figure 17: Employment resources provided directly by child support agencies

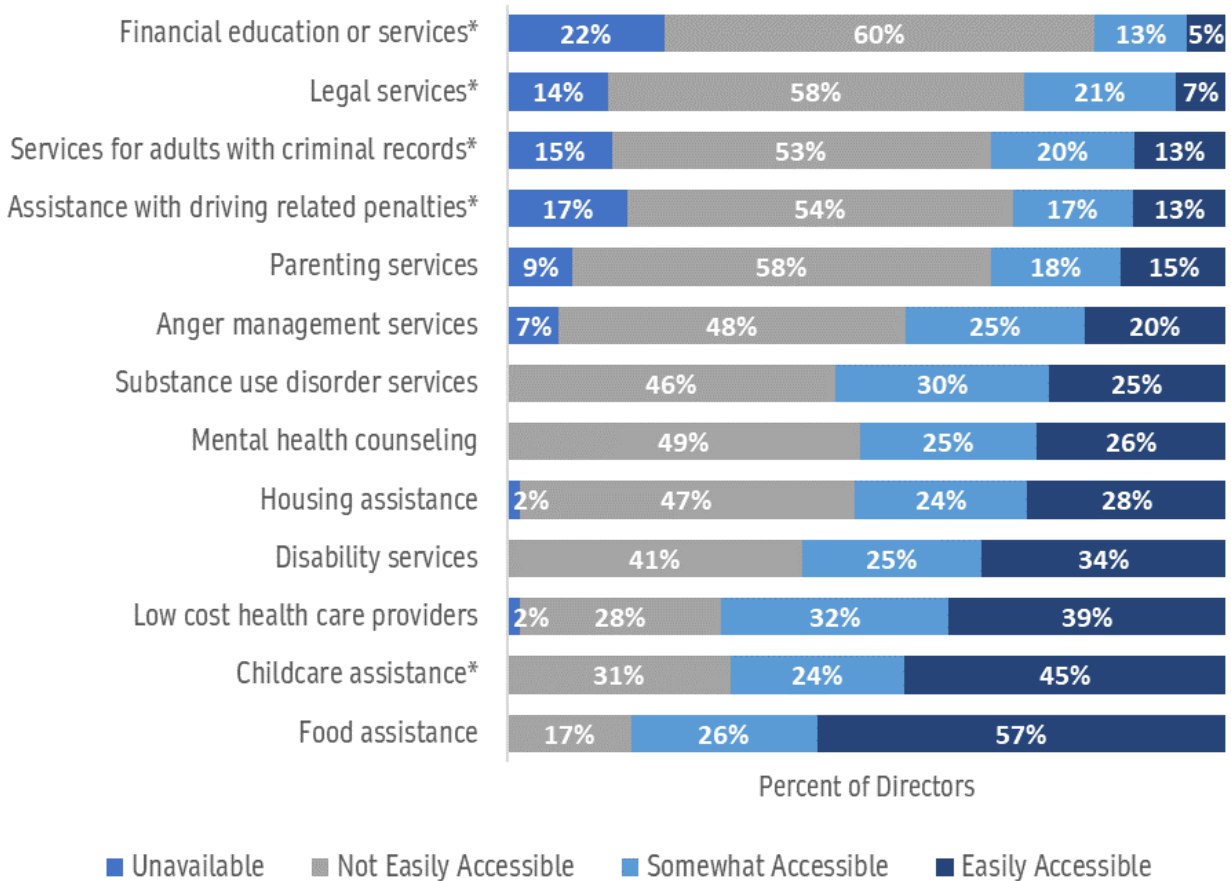


Note: These percentages include directors who answered *Yes* to a question asking whether their CSA directly provides each of these to NCPs. The sample size for these items is 59.

E. Other Supportive Services and Unmet Needs

In light of growing awareness about barriers beyond those directly related to employment that can make it difficult for NCPs to find or keep work—and taking into account insights from interviews—directors were asked to rank how accessible these services are for NCPs served by their CSA, using a five point scale ranging from “not at all easy” to “extremely easy,” with an option to indicate that the service category is not available in their area (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Director perceptions of service gaps within their area



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated that the service is *Not available* in their area (“Unavailable”), *Not at all* or *A little bit* easy for NCPs served by their CSA to access (“Not Easily Accessible”), *Somewhat* easy (“Somewhat”) and *Very* or *Extremely* easy for NCPs to access (“Easily Accessible”). Sample sizes for these items range from 46 to 58.

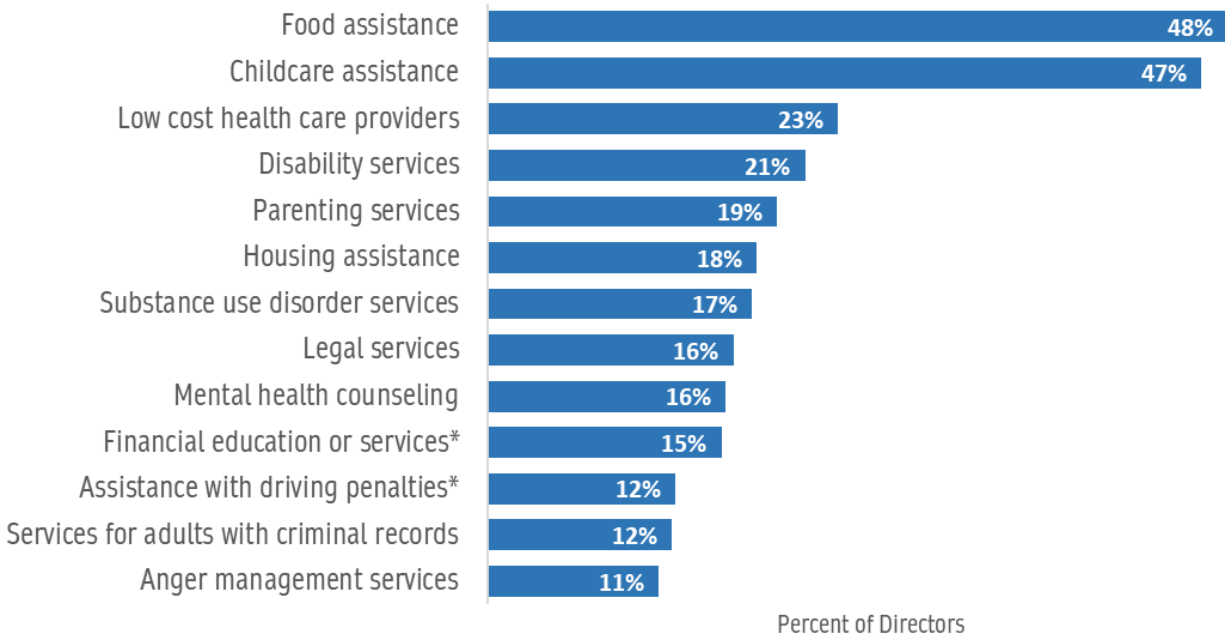
* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Figure A.5 for distributions of reported “Unavailable” services by size.

Nearly half or more directors described childcare assistance (45%) and food assistance (57%) as easily accessible (that is, “very” or “extremely” easy for NCPs to access) in their communities. In contrast, half or more of directors described the following services as either “unavailable” or not easily accessible: financial education or services (82%), legal services (72%), services for adults with criminal records (68%), assistance with driver’s license reinstatement assistance or help with DMV fines and fees (71%), parenting services (67%), and anger management services (55%). Financial education, legal services, services for adults with

criminal records, and assistance with driver’s license reinstatement assistance, or help with DMV fines and fees were most often described by directors as unavailable in their communities. Nearly half described substance use disorder services (46%) and mental health services (49%) as available, but not easily accessible. In interviews, staff and directors described low-cost legal services as a significant need for child support issues such as custody and placement as well as other criminal and civil legal matters; such services, one staff member said, is “huge, because we can’t give legal advice.” These findings parallel director reports of NCP barriers to work. For example, nearly half or more directors reported substance use, criminal history, and transportation issues as “very large” or “extremely large” barriers to employment for NCPs, and directors reported significant gaps in accessibility for these services within their communities. Director reports of the types of service gaps faced by their communities varied significantly by county size (Appendix Figure A.5).

When asked to describe the strength of partnerships with providers of these services (Figure 19), the strongest relationships identified by directors were with childcare assistance and food assistance—the two categories directors were least likely to describe as “not available” in their communities. Larger counties reported stronger relationships with services that provide financial education and help with driver’s license issues, and DMV fines and fees (Appendix Figure A.6). Overall, relationships were considered *weakest* with services that address stigmatized issues like anger management, criminal records, and driving penalties. The need for help with driving-related issues weighs heavily on small counties, given limited public transit options.

Figure 19: Director perceptions of supportive service provider relationship strength



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated a *Very* or *Extremely* strong relationship with the provider (versus a *Not at all*, *A little*, or *Somewhat* strong relationship). The sample size for these items range from 46 to 58. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$); see Appendix Figure A.6 for distributions by size.

In contrast to expectations for referrals to employment services, 75% of directors reported on surveys that their counties do not expect caseworkers to make referrals to other types of supportive service providers if a need is identified (Table 7). Described one director on a survey:

We do not establish relationships with outside services for mental health, DMV, etc. or any of the aforementioned services as it is not the CSA’s job to do that. We would just refer to social services for them to check on any services/benefits that might be available to them.

Perceptions about whether staff make such referrals in practice upon identifying a need was mixed, with about 40% describing it “very” or “extremely” unlikely that staff would make such referrals, and 26% describing it “very” or “extremely” likely.

Table 7: Agency practices for referrals to other supportive services

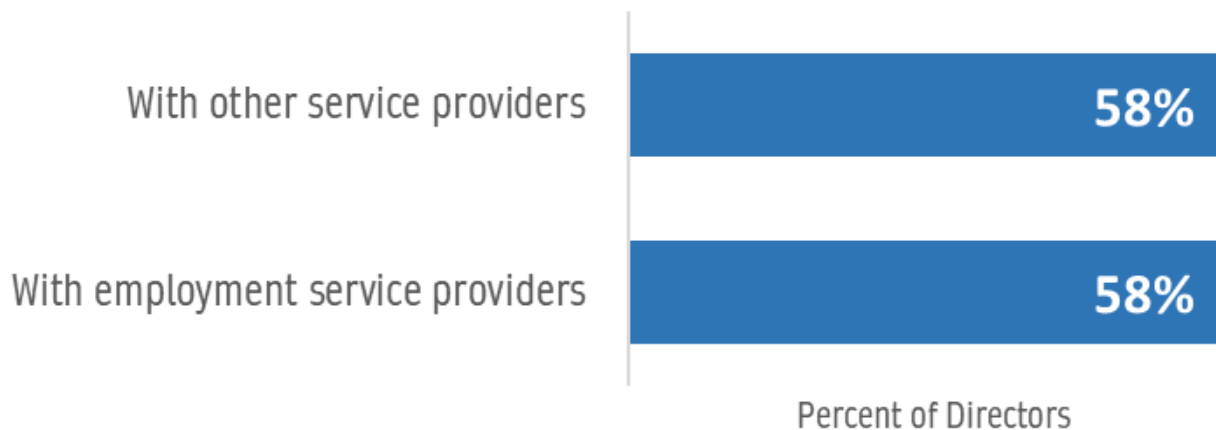
	<i>n</i>	Percent
Agency expects caseworkers to make a referral if another supportive service need is identified	59	25.4%
Director’s perceptions of likelihood that caseworker will make a referral if another supportive service need is identified:	58	
Not at all likely		24.1%
A little likely		15.5%
Somewhat likely		34.5%
Very likely		13.8%
Extremely likely		12.1%

F. Looking Forward

1. CSA plans and priorities

In interviews and on surveys, directors were asked about their plans and priorities for building and strengthening relationships with employment and other services providers as they look to the future. On surveys, using a five-point response scale ranging from “not at all” to “extremely” important, over half of directors characterized building or strengthening these relationships as “very” or “extremely” important for their agency in the year ahead (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Director perspectives on the importance of building or strengthening connections



Note: Percentages include directors who indicated that building or strengthening connections is *Very* or *Extremely* important (versus a *Not at all*, *A little*, or *Somewhat* important). The sample size is 61.

During interviews, staff members also articulated specific plans related to building or strengthening employment services referral connections and other activities. Some of these plans involved resuming activities that paused during the pandemic. For example, some directors wish to address staffing gaps and refill open positions within the CSA to lower caseloads and give staff more time to engage with struggling NCPs. Many interviewees also shared a desire to resume job fairs—often suspended during the pandemic—to connect NCPs with local employers in a physical in-person setting. Several counties plan to collaborate with employment partners to bring employment specialists back to contempt hearings as court hearings resume in-person, as a way to quickly connect contempt-involved NCPs with employment services; one staff member highlighted the importance of employment agency staff serving as this initial point-of-contact for NCPs in court rather than CSA staff because for some NCPs, employment services staff appear more neutral or are more readily trusted by NCPs. Described a director:

“If they have that in-person contact, it seems like we have much better luck... some of them might back out afterwards... but then we’ve got the hold on them through the court. But if we can explain to them face-to-face or the another person can come to them and it’s not a child support person, and say, ‘We can help you. We can help you find a job’ and explain things to them, then it seems to make a difference.”

Some CSAs are also eager to re-establish relationships with jails and probation and parole to help provide information about employment resources to NCPs soon after their release from jail.

Other plans involved visions for new processes and new ways of working. Nearly all counties mentioned a desire to intervene with NCPs early, before they fall substantially behind on their orders. Some would like to engage in efforts to intervene as early as the time of paternity or order establishment, such as by connecting with NCPs immediately after a court hearing to explain follow-up steps, responsibilities, and what to do if their employment or income changes. However, some directors noted the logistical challenges associated with these efforts, as the rush

of short court hearings that take place one-after-another make individualized connections after court challenging. Interviewees described that many NCPs leave court with questions or an incomplete understanding of the expectations and legal procedures. Staff in one county are tackling this issue by proactively reaching out to CPs and NCPs after an order establishment with a friendly greeting and an “orientation guide.” Using graphics and simple language, the guides present helpful information such as their assigned caseworker’s name and phone number, the method of paying or receiving child support, and available services.

Staff and directors from several counties also expressed a desire to follow up with NCPs after contempt hearings because NCPs can leave these hearings without a complete understanding of expectations for purge conditions that include employment services. One director noted that court paperwork can be very overwhelming and described many NCPs as bewildered after court, stating, “They don’t even know what to do or where to even begin.” A caseworker added:

It would be helpful if we have one employment specialist go sit in [the courtroom] and wait for the people coming out. That way, they can just come out when that person comes out and lets us know, ‘OK, purge conditions for this one are...’ That way I can touch base with that person right away before they take off and we never hear from them again. We really want to get those people when they’re there and when everything’s fresh... I know a lot of them have questions, because they don’t necessarily understand the court process, or what was ordered.

Several counties expressed a goal of working more closely with judicial partners to route court-involved NCPs into employment services more systematically. These efforts include incorporating participation in employment services into purge conditions, which directors perceive as more supportive and helpful than jail—which one director noted “helps nobody”—or repeated court hearings without offers of service. One county is engaged in efforts with their court commissioner to broaden the pool of NCPs who are ordered into Children First, to increase

the program's participation rate. This county found that only the hardest-to-employ NCPs were being referred to Children First, and as a result, the program's performance in helping NCPs to obtain employment was very low. To increase the program's utility and participation rate, one county worked with their court commissioner to include a provision that makes participation in Children First contingent upon losing employment in the original court order.

Most counties expressed a desire to raise awareness about employment service offerings among NCPs and CSA staff. Directors and staff suggested ideas such as open houses, resource fairs, flyers, and email alerts. One caseworker described:

It's really sad that... people in our community do not know that [the employment provider] is even there. Given all the resources they have, it's a shame that they're not being used by people who need those resources so badly.

As doubly evident from the survey results, CSA staff themselves are unsure about the surrounding providers' service offerings and what "they do from start to finish with a customer." As noted by staff themselves, they too could benefit from such outreach events.

Finally, several counties expressed as priorities to improve coordination of processes across the CSA and employment partners. These included goals of improving communication across partners, but also streamlining program options and communication from programs to NCPs to reduce confusion among NCPs and particularly NCPs co-enrolled in multiple programs having different criteria. A staff member in the county engaged in these efforts explained, "Sometimes it's very confusing for the clients as to what they're doing with each program." Another county described efforts underway to understand what NCP experiences with employment services are like, in an effort to improve engagement in the future, by planning a survey of NCPs about employment services and suggestions for improvement.

2. *Areas of support and guidance desired*

In surveys and interviews, CSA directors and staff shared their perspectives on how the state could potentially help support their efforts related to employment services by providing guidance or resources. One theme that arose across many counties was a desire for the state to expand employment service offerings, and other supportive services available, for NCPs. Across counties of all sizes, directors and staff cited a need for more mental health and substance use service providers—especially those available at low or no cost to NCPs—and expressed a wish for the state to help facilitate connections or provide funding for low- or no-cost legal assistance, expungement services, and parenting or fatherhood classes. Smaller and more rural counties, in particular, expressed a need for more employment and training programs within their counties; one director characterized the area “north of Highway 29” as especially lacking in employment services accessible to NCPs. Several counties also expressed a desire for expanded eligibility for services provided through W-2, and expansion of the types of services available through W-2 programs, to provide more training and education for skilled positions with higher wages.

CSA directors and staff also cited a need for expanded infrastructure. Smaller and more rural counties expressed a particular desire for state child support leadership to work with other agencies in advocating for more robust transportation options as well as accessible broadband internet. Staff and directors from counties of all sizes emphasized a desire for a modernized KIDS system—to improve system functionality and automate manual, day-to-day data entry tasks—to allow staff more time and resources for case management issues. One director expressed that the outdated nature of the KIDS interface makes it difficult to recruit and hire new staff such as recent graduates, who are not used to working with older technology.

Many directors and staff also expressed a desire for increased funding from the state, particularly to allow CSAs to hire more staff and reduce caseload sizes. From their perspective,

reduced caseloads would help facilitate more intensive and support-oriented case management by allowing staff more time to reach out directly to NCPs and spend time identifying and addressing their barriers to paying support. Several directors also specifically cited a wish for continued and broadened funding for ELEVATE, to both provide supports for staff on supportive, family-centered service delivery strategies, as well as to connect NCPs with work supports, training, and personalized case management. These directors noted the importance of ELEVATE's voluntary, supportive approach in facilitating CSA cultural shifts.

Across interviews and surveys, staff and directors also expressed a desire for state-facilitated training and resources to help support local efforts connecting NCPs to employment services. These included requests for training guides and policy documents for CSA staff about how to provide services using a more customer-centered approach, as well as best practices for connecting NCPs to services. Directors and staff in several counties expressed that training and outreach related to how CSAs, employment partners, and the courts can work together to connect NCPs to employment services would be helpful not only for facilitating consistency among staff, but also for stakeholders beyond CSA staff such as courts, employment services providers, and other service providers. Several directors described that state resources would help reduce the inefficiencies that can result from each county having to create resources locally and to increase consistency in practice across counties through the formalization of expectations. Several counties suggested that the state host regular information seminars or webinars about employment services options and programs for NCPs, as well as for staff who serve NCPs.

Directors and staff also expressed a desire for the state to help facilitate information-sharing and streamline communication about employment services across counties. Several counties described that a publicly-available, state-facilitated, centralized database of employment

services searchable across a number of characteristics—such as county, region, service type, eligibility criteria or NCP needs—could help CSAs and NCPs to understand the employment services locally available. Directors and staff noted that such a database could help staff make connections and could also make it easier for NCPs to identify and connect to resources on their own. Several counties also expressed a desire for the state to commission the development of secure databases for service providers to help keep track of NCP participation across employment services and other types of supports. Several directors noted that NCPs often assume that service provider systems are in communication with each other already, and so do not (or forget to) disclose all other service systems they are engaged with; directors felt improved back-end coordination could provide opportunities to lessen NCPs’ reporting burden and facilitate improved communication across agencies.

V. CONCLUSIONS

This study aimed to provide insights into CSA experiences and perspectives related to connecting NCPs to employment services and other supports to help address barriers to work and complying with child support obligations, with an overarching goal of supporting state initiatives and local practice. It describes both the operational challenges associated with connecting NCPs in need of resources to services, as well as the broader challenge of providing services to populations who experience barriers to work. At the national and state level, efforts are underway to connect NCPs to employment supports, through demonstration projects like CSPED and, here in Wisconsin, the ELEVATE program and evaluation. In recognition that punitive enforcement actions alone are not the solution to compliance problems, many CSAs and policymakers are thinking creatively about how agencies might help position NCPs facing barriers to work to meet their child support obligations. This study aimed to help support

Wisconsin's future efforts in this realm, by providing insight into practices related to connecting NCPs to employment services currently underway across Wisconsin counties. It aimed to provide insight into directors' perspectives on NCP needs and barriers to work; the role CSAs might play in connecting NCPs to employment services and other supports; current practices, challenges, and opportunities related to making these connections; and areas in which additional support or resources could help support local efforts.

Wisconsin's CSAs operate in a broad array of contexts; they vary by, among other attributes: size, resources, local economic conditions, family needs, and CSA features and practices. To represent perspectives statewide, we aimed to hear from as many CSAs as possible. Thanks to broad willingness of CSA directors to engage in these efforts, a unique benefit of this study is that it represents directors from nearly all (85.9%) of Wisconsin's county CSAs, providing insights into practices, innovations, and perspectives statewide.

The input shared by directors through this study suggests that CSAs, and the way that they interact with families, are changing. Findings indicate that Wisconsin's CSAs see connecting NCPs to supports that can help address employment barriers as logical and valuable. They see the potential benefits of helping NCPs access resources that can help address barriers to work, and therefore paying child support, given the connection between employment and regular payment of child support through automatic income withholding. Many also consider building relationships with community partners who provide services to address barriers as an important priority for the near-term future. These findings also suggest that CSAs are already broadly engaging in efforts to connect NCPs to resources with the potential to help NCPs address barriers, to varying extents and using different approaches.

Results from this study align with previous IRP work highlighting the interrelated, complex nature of barriers to employment for NCPs (Hodges et al., 2020; Noyes et al., 2018; Vogel, 2020a; Vogel, 2020b). This study builds on the evidence base suggesting that addressing barriers directly related to employment alone are insufficient, as many NCPs face foundational challenges that are essential to being in a position to find and keep regular work. Further, these findings highlight a fundamental disconnect between many of the issues directors identify as key barriers to NCP employment—such as substance use, mental health, housing, and having criminal records—and services available through their primary referral partners or other community providers. This study’s findings underscore that the issue of helping NCPs who struggle to find and keep employment requires addressing challenges across individual as well as institutional levels; many NCPs face personal challenges compounded by the lack of services available through systems aimed at addressing these challenges.

Findings from this study also indicate that despite a broadly-held desire to connect NCPs to supportive services, a number of factors can present barriers to collaboration across CSAs and other service providers, and barriers to NCPs participation in these services. One of these challenges is sorting out where to send NCPs for help. For CSAs—which have historically operated in a “siloes” manner from other human services agencies—knowing which service providers are available within their community, and what services those providers offer, can be a challenge. In areas with plentiful service options, navigating the landscape of providers can be challenging, and takes time—a resource CSAs note is constrained, particularly given large caseload sizes. Once a potential resource is identified, developing communication and collaboration processes, understanding program eligibility criteria, and navigating turnover within partners presents challenges. CSAs also highlighted challenges related to engaging NCPs

in available services, including overcoming mistrust of CSAs and reluctance to engage in government provided services among some NCPs, a potential lack of desire to engage in services or employment among some NCPs, and barriers to NCPs' abilities to access services. Findings emphasize that geography matters in the experiences county CSAs have related to connecting NCPs to employment services and other supports. Smaller and more rural counties face unique barriers to collaboration due to geographic separation from providers in their area as well as scarcity of community resources. These CSAs are doubly challenged as these constraints affect not only their own abilities to build relationships and collaborate with service providers, but also can affect NCPs' participation in services with potential referral partners, especially given transportation-related barriers to work and service engagement faced by many NCPs.

A. Limitations

While findings from this study provide useful insights into county experiences and practices, this analysis has several important limitations. First, data for this study come from self-reports by CSA directors. Future analyses could consider potential opportunities to gather or connect with data tracking referral practices, to use in combination with survey responses. Additionally, while frontline staff provided important insights during the interview portion of the study, the survey was limited to director perspectives and reports on practice. It is possible that director reports of staff practice might differ from staff perspectives, or that perspectives on the role of CSAs in connecting NCPs to services (which might shape the practices staff engage in) might differ from director perspectives. The perspectives of employment service providers and other support service providers are also not reflected here, nor are the perspectives of NCPs. NCP perspectives on their needs, services available locally to address their needs, and barriers to service participation, could be particularly helpful as previous work (Vogel, 2020b) has

identified that NCP and staff perspectives on parent barriers-to-work sometimes diverge; NCP insights could potentially identify a broader array of factors impeding their engagement than might be known to agencies and staff. Additionally, while these findings represent the perspectives of most Wisconsin CSA directors, not all directors participated in the survey, and it is possible that the perspectives and practices of agencies that did not take part differ systematically from the agencies that did. Next, while this analysis identifies statistically significant relationships between county size and survey items, the small size of the overall sample limits what differences can be detected. Further, this analysis focused on county size differences in particular interview findings, but meaningful differences may also exist across other subgroups not explored as part of this analysis. Finally, this analysis presents only descriptive findings, rather than causal relationships.

B. Potential Implications

Despite these limitations, findings from this study offer several potential implications for consideration, particularly related to providing supports and resources that could help CSAs serve as connectors to employment services and other supports. The openness of CSAs to serving in this connector role represents a potential opportunity, should Wisconsin aim to expand engagement in “connector” activities and CSA engagement with NCP-specific programs.

Potential means of supporting CSAs in this role are described below.

First, CSAs have expressed a desire for additional support in understanding what options are available across their local service landscape and beyond. This could help CSAs target referrals for NCPs in need of assistance and also help CSAs communicate to potentially eligible NCPs the value of engaging in services through a given provider. A centralized way to search for information about resources available within their county or another county could help meet this

desire. To the extent that the state could consider the feasibility of engaging in resource mapping—and creating centralized databases with information about service providers, their eligibility rules, service offerings, and points of contact statewide—such infrastructure could help increase CSA (and potentially NCP) awareness of service options and reduce barriers to making referrals. Related to technological supports, CSAs in this study also identified that developing systems to coordinate information about NCP participation in services across providers, and modernizing state systems in such a way that reduces burden on CSA staff, could potentially improve efficiency and information-sharing while freeing up caseworker time for case management activities.

Next, findings from this study suggest that CSAs could potentially benefit from state- or regionally-led initiatives providing information, training, and support to CSAs and other stakeholders about connecting NCPs to employment services. On the CSA side, training and technical assistance about expectations related to referring NCPs for supportive services, and best practices for serving in a “connector” role, could potentially help facilitate greater consistency in practice while preparing staff to work in new ways. Additionally, to the extent that the state can facilitate opportunities to engage employment service providers, courts, and other community providers in discussions and strategic planning related to connecting NCPs to specific employment-related resources, such connections could potentially help foster local collaborations and coordinate stakeholder efforts. Further, DCF could support county efforts by using up-to-date technology to facilitate communication and outreach with NCPs. Directors and staff cited lack of NCP awareness about services as a key barrier to engagement in services. The state could consider opportunities to share more NCP-facing information about local services on the DCF website, facilitating webinars for NCPs and staff about accessing employment services

and other supports, and providing local CSAs with NCP-facing information and templates about employment resources to incorporate into local practice.

Additionally, findings from this study highlight that staffing and resource constraints limit CSA leadership and staff bandwidth for connecting NCPs to supportive services, due to the time-intensive nature of proactive, personalized outreach and follow-up. Considering opportunities to provide additional funding for county CSA staff could potentially help reduce caseload sizes and free up staff time for more personalized case management. Directors who participated in this study identified lack of staff time as a significant barrier to getting to know and collaborating with other providers; identifying and following up with NCPs behind on their obligations; and connecting NCPs to resources that might help them comply with their obligations. In addition to resources for staff within CSAs, expanded state funding for NCP-specific programs could help CSAs broaden capacity for serving NCPs with employment barriers—both by providing a place to send NCPs for employment-related supports, particularly in areas with limited other service options, and for connecting CSAs to funding resources for staff specifically focused on helping NCPs with employment barriers. Several counties noted in interviews the unique benefit of voluntary service options, such as ELEVATE, specifically targeted at NCPs.

Next, findings from this study highlight that many NCPs face complex, interrelated barriers to employment that go beyond the realm of child support alone, and encompass both individual-level challenges and system-level resource gaps. Local practitioners can seek to learn about, build relationships with, and streamline processes for connecting NCPs to locally available opportunities. The state could potentially help support these efforts by providing counties with resources and technical assistance to identify and foster such connections. This

study's findings also identify, however, that while nearly all directors perceive CSA connections to employment services as important and appropriate, CSAs appear slightly less comfortable in the role of connecting NCPs directly to other supportive services. To the extent that the state can provide information to CSAs to showcase the potential benefit of these connections in addressing barriers beyond those immediately related to employment, and training and technical assistance related to how CSAs could help foster such connections (such as learning exchanges featuring counties that have successfully engaged in these collaborations, resource guides, and guidelines for information-sharing with partners), such efforts could help facilitate greater comfort among CSA directors and staff with this role.

Additionally, results from this study emphasize the challenge that local CSAs face when services and infrastructure are lacking within an area, and the unique challenges rural and small-sized counties experience in this regard. For system-level barriers, such as lack of transportation infrastructure and lack of service providers within communities, local, state, and even federal collaboration is likely required to implement solutions. County CSAs cannot solve these problems on their own. To the extent that the state can advocate for the expansion of services and infrastructure—particularly in areas with significant areas of unmet need—and lead efforts to partner with other key stakeholders whose participation is needed to foster such initiatives, these efforts could help address barriers to service accessibility and connection.

Finally, consistent with prior research, these findings highlight ways in which the child support system itself has the potential to create barriers to engagement in work and services for some NCPs. Practices such as license suspension and policies that result in orders outsized to wages can result in significant arrearages and charging of interest on arrears. To the extent that the state and counties can continue to explore and pursue program and policy alternatives to

strategies that can make compliance harder, such changes could help mitigate child support system-related barriers to work and paying support.

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CSRA 20–22 Task 12 Report: Appendix A

Findings for Survey Items with Statistically Significant Differences by County Size

This appendix shows survey response distributions by county size, where significant differences by county size were identified.

Table A.1. Agency characteristics, by county size

	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Mean/ Percent	<i>n</i>	Mean/ Percent	<i>n</i>	Mean/ Percent	<i>n</i>	Mean/ Percent
Director characteristics								
Director has own caseload*	61	45.9%	23	60.9%	25	48.0%	13	15.4%
Director’s own caseload size* (of those with cases)	25	211.6	11	272.6	12	181.7	2	55.0
<i>(Range)</i>		<i>(3–500)</i>		<i>(15–500)</i>		<i>(3–430)</i>		<i>(10–100)</i>
How agency staff are organized*								
Specialize by function		30.0%		13.0%		15.4%		84.6%
Manage start-to-finish	61	70.0%	23	87.0%	25	84.6%	13	15.4%
Caseworker caseload sizes*								
Across all agencies*	59	727.9	22	373.4	25	611.4	12	1620.8
		<i>(85–6000)</i>		<i>(85–700)</i>		<i>(400–1000)</i>		<i>(750–6000)</i>
In agencies where staff specialize by function*	28	997.3	8	367.4	9	698.3	11	1700.0
<i>(Range)</i>		<i>(215–6000)</i>		<i>(215–700)</i>		<i>(470–1000)</i>		<i>(750–6000)</i>
Of those who manage cases start-to-finish*	31	484.7	14	376.8	16	562.5	1	750.0
<i>(Range)</i>		<i>(85–750)</i>		<i>(85–650)</i>		<i>(400–750)</i>		<i>(750–750)</i>

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10) and Kruskal Wallis test (p=0.10).

Table A.2 Director perspectives on the child support agency’s role, by county size

The child support agency should be expected to...	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Provide employment services directly to NCPs*	61	27.9%	24	13.0%	25	28.0%	12	53.8%
Refer NCPs to employment services	61	91.8%	24	91.3%	25	92.0%	12	92.3%
Refer NCPs to other supportive services (e.g., mental health, substance use, access and visitation, parenting services)	61	78.7%	24	73.9%	25	84.0%	12	76.9%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.3 Challenges collaborating with employment and other supportive service providers, by county size

Limits collaboration “a lot” or “a very great deal”	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Lack of buy-in from CSA staff*	57	12.3%	21	0.0%	23	17.4%	13	23.1%
Lack of interest in collaborating among potential partners, or lack of county administration support for collaboration	56	7.1%	20	5.0%	23	8.7%	13	7.7%
Lack of information about the providers available in the area	57	29.8%	21	33.3%	23	30.4%	13	23.1%
Insufficient time for getting to know providers in the area	57	47.4%	21	28.6%	23	60.9%	13	53.8%
Lack of financial resources, or restrictions on how agency can use financial resources*	57	45.6%	21	28.6%	23	56.5%	13	53.8%
Differences in agency’s priorities and the priorities of other providers	57	17.5%	21	9.5%	23	17.4%	13	30.8%
Challenges communicating with leadership or staff from other providers*	56	10.7%	21	9.5%	22	13.6%	13	7.7%
The physical distance between the agency and other providers*	56	19.6%	21	28.6%	22	18.2%	13	7.7%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.4 Communication practices with primary referral partner, by county size

Child support agency and primary referral partner engage in these communication practices:	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
	Regular meetings of <i>leadership</i> from both*	57	42.1%	21	9.5%	23	56.5%	13
Regular meetings of <i>frontline staff</i> from both*	56	37.5%	21	19.0%	22	40.9%	13	61.5%
Informal methods of communication, such as telephone calls and emails	57	91.2%	21	90.5%	23	87%	13	100%
Case planning or case staffing involving staff across both groups*	55	20.0%	19	0.0%	23	21.7%	13	46.2%
Informational sessions on services available through each group*	56	42.9%	20	35.0%	23	34.8%	13	69.2%
Other	31	22.6%	12	25.0%	12	25.0%	7	14.3%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.5. Caseworker likelihood of becoming aware of NCP job loss, by county size

Likelihood of caseworker becoming aware of NCP job loss*	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
	Not at all		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%	
A little		16.4%		34.8%		8.0%		0.0%
Somewhat	61	45.9%	23	43.5%	25	40.0%	13	61.5%
Very		32.8%		17.4%		48.0%		30.8%
Extremely		4.9%		4.4%		4.0%		7.7%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.6 Sharing and following up on information with primary referral partner, by county size

	Overall		Small		Medium		Large / Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Format of caseworker referrals to primary referral partner								
Online form or portal	55	50.9%	20	55.0%	23	47.8%	12	50.0%
Paper (e.g., mail or hardcopy form)	54	46.3%	19	47.4%	23	39.1%	12	58.3%
Email*	55	58.2%	21	47.6%	22	50.0%	12	91.7%
Telephone	55	49.1%	20	45.0%	23	43.5%	12	66.7%
In person, through an office visit or warm hand-off	55	36.4%	20	30.0%	23	30.4%	12	58.3%
Referral partner provides agency with updates on NCP participation and progress								
Yes	56	77%	21	71.4%	22	77.3%	13	84.6%
No/Not sure		23%		28.6%		22.7%		15.4%
Helpfulness of updates from primary referral partner for case planning (of those who receive them)*								
Not at all		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%		0.0%
A little bit		14.0%		0.0%		29.4%		9.1%
Somewhat	43	16.3%	15	33.3%	17	11.8%	11	0.0%
Very		37.2%		26.7%		35.3%		54.6%
Extremely		32.6%		40.0%		23.5%		36.4%
How often caseworkers follow up with the NCP after making a referral to primary referral partner*								
Never		3.6%		0.0%		0.0%		15.4%
Rarely		19.6%		14.3%		9.1%		46.2%
Sometimes	56	33.9%	21	38.1%	22	36.4%	13	23.1%
Most of the time		23.2%		23.8%		31.8%		7.7%
Always		19.6%		23.8%		22.7%		7.7%
How often caseworkers follow up with the primary referral partner after making a referral								
Never		5.5%		4.8%		9.5%		0.0%
Rarely		3.6%		9.5%		0.0%		0.0%
Sometimes	55	29.1%	21	14.3%	21	42.9%	13	30.8%
Most of the time		21.8%		28.6%		19.1%		15.4%
Always		40.0%		42.9%		28.6%		53.9%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$).

Table A.7 Factors limiting case manager referrals to employment services, by county size

Limits referrals “a lot” or “a very great deal”	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Lack of employment services in the area*	60	20.0%	23	34.8%	24	16.7%	13	0.0%
Concerns about NCPs’ abilities to access the employment services available in the area*	60	18.3%	23	26.1%	24	16.7%	13	7.7%
Concerns about the quality or effectiveness of employment services in the area*	59	22.0%	22	31.8%	24	16.7%	13	15.4%
Lack of a clear or consistent point-of-contact within employment programs	60	18.3%	23	26.1%	24	20.8%	13	0.0%
Lack of clarity about employment programs’ service offerings and eligibility rules*	60	18.3%	23	26.1%	24	20.8%	13	0.0%
Complex methods for making referrals to employment services*	60	15.0%	23	21.7%	24	8.3%	13	15.4%
Little need for employment services among NCPs	60	5.0%	23	4.3%	24	8.3%	13	0.0%
Lack of willingness among NCPs to participate in employment services*	60	71.7%	23	87.0%	24	66.7%	13	53.8%
Staff difficulty convincing NCPs to engage in employment services	60	63.3%	23	69.6%	24	54.2%	13	69.2%
Insufficient case manager time for making referrals to employment services	60	20.0%	23	8.7%	24	29.2%	13	23.1%
Hesitation or reluctance among CSA staff to make referrals to employment services	60	10.0%	23	0.0%	24	16.7%	13	15.4%

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.8 Director reports of primary referral partner’s eligibility criteria, by county size

	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Primary referral partner has eligibility criteria (vs. serving any NCP)	57	50.9%	21	52.4%	23	39.1%	13	69.2%
Primary referral partners require NCP to:								
Be eligible for or receive certain public benefits*	28	53.6%	10	53.6%	9	90.0%	9	55.6%
Have a child with a CP who is eligible for or receives certain public benefits*	28	21.4%	10	21.4%	9	50.0%	9	0.0%
Be under contempt or have a pending contempt action	28	7.1%	10	7.1%	9	0.0%	9	22.2%
Have a child living at home	28	7.1%	10	7.1%	9	0.0%	9	22.2%
Be co-enrolled in another program	28	3.6%	10	3.6%	9	10.0%	9	0.0%
Pass a drug screening	27	11.1%	9	11.1%	9	22.2%	9	11.1%

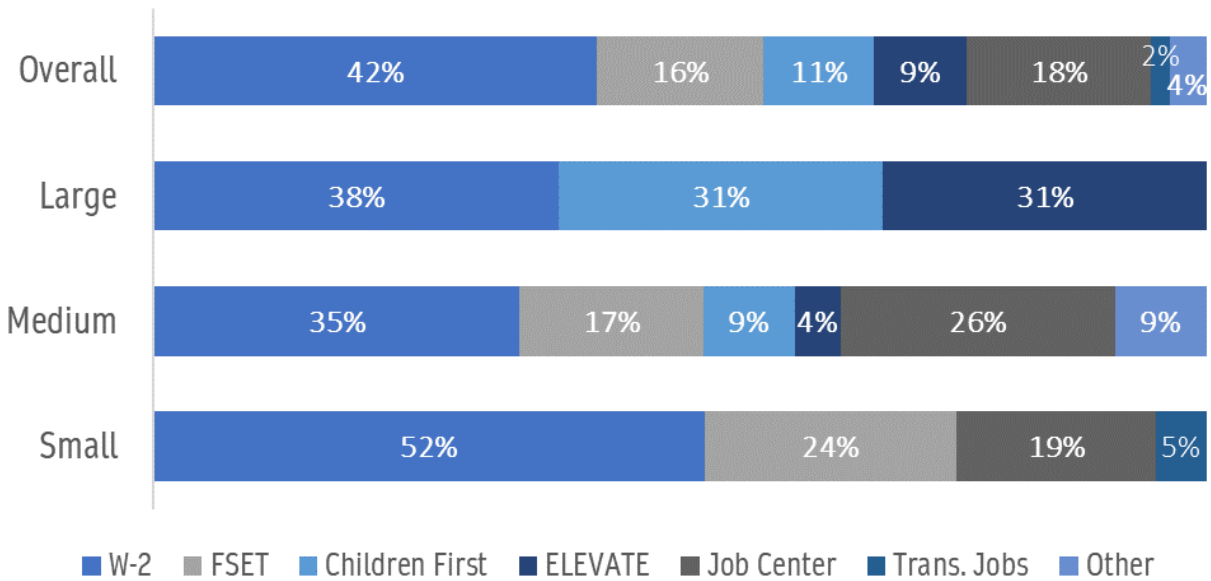
* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Table A.9 Location and accessibility of primary referral partner, by county size

	Overall		Small		Medium		Large/Extra Large	
	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent	<i>n</i>	Percent
Primary referral partner is located on public transit*	57	31.6%	21	4.8%	23	21.7%	13	92.3%
In relation to CSA, primary referral partner is:*								
In the same building or space as agency		19.3%		9.5%		13.0%		46.2%
Within a few blocks of the agency		7.0%		9.5%		4.4%		7.7%
Within a mile of the agency		8.8%		19.1%		4.4%		0.0%
More than a mile, but within the same city	57	21.1%	21	0.0%	23	26.1%	13	46.2%
Outside of the city, but within the same county		12.3%		19.1%		13.0%		0.0%
Outside of the agency’s county		31.6%		42.9%		39.1%		0.0%

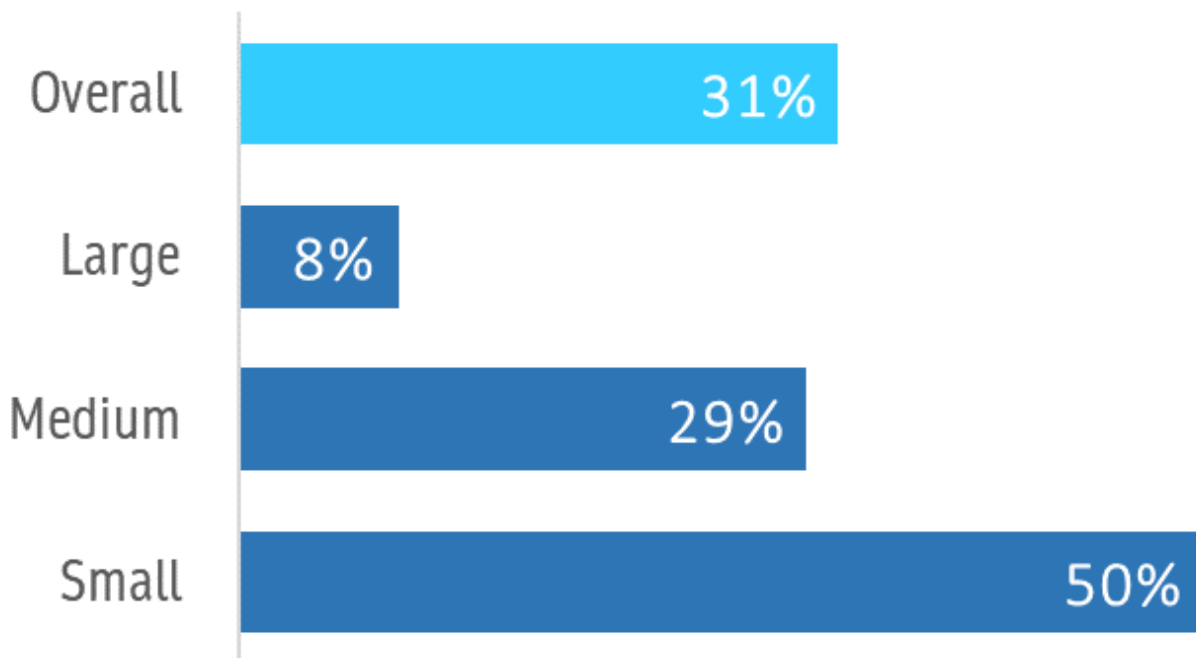
* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).

Figure A.1*: Primary referral partner for NCPs in need of employment services, by county size



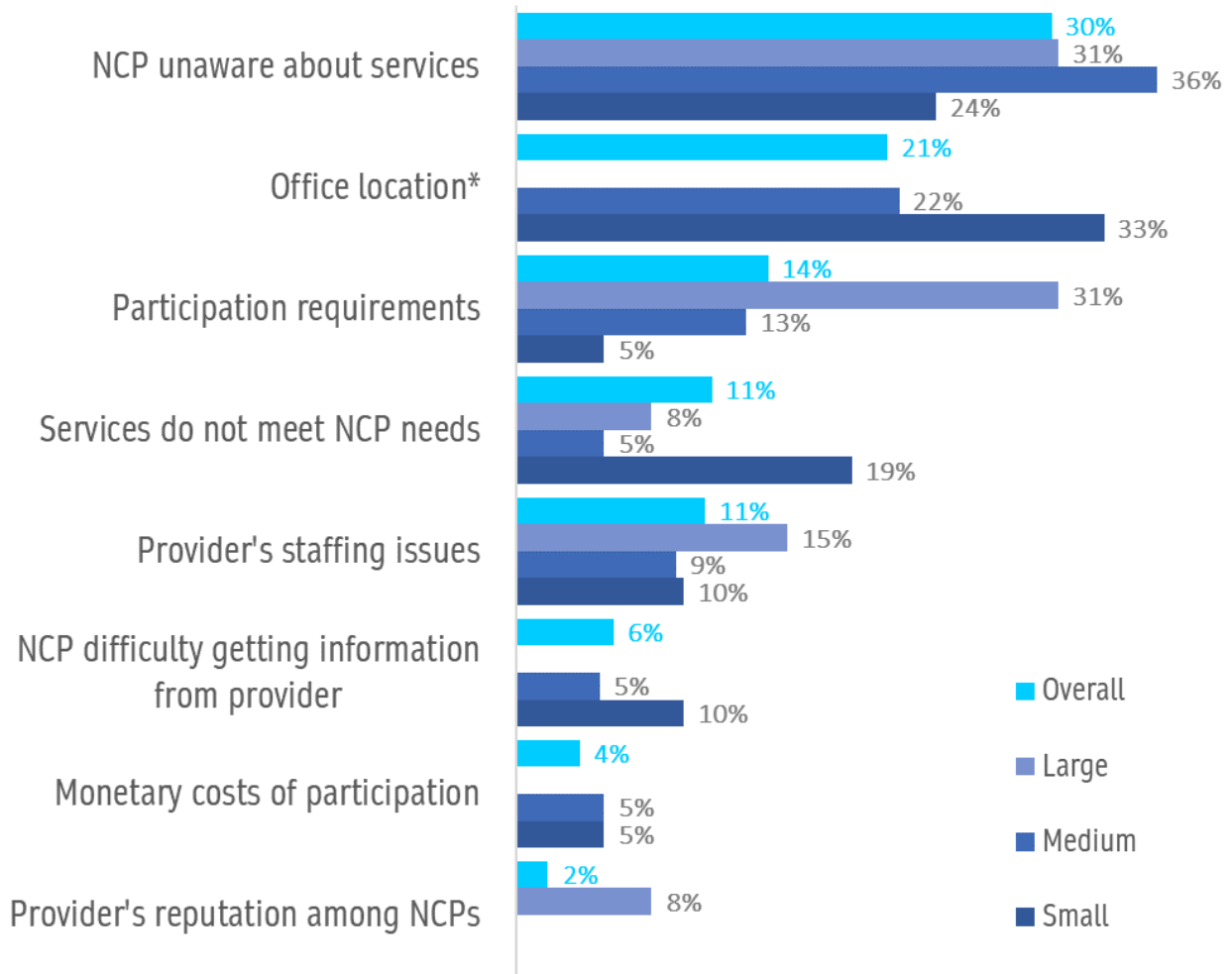
Note: These percentages indicate the provider to which the director selected as the place where their caseworkers refer NCPs in need of employment services *most often*. The sample sizes for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 21, 23, 13 and 57, respectively. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$).

Figure A.2*: Perceived helpfulness of having CSL for connecting NCPs to employment services



Note: Percentages include directors who indicated that working with the CSL is *Very* or *Extremely* helpful. The sample sizes for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 16, 17, 12 and 45, respectively.

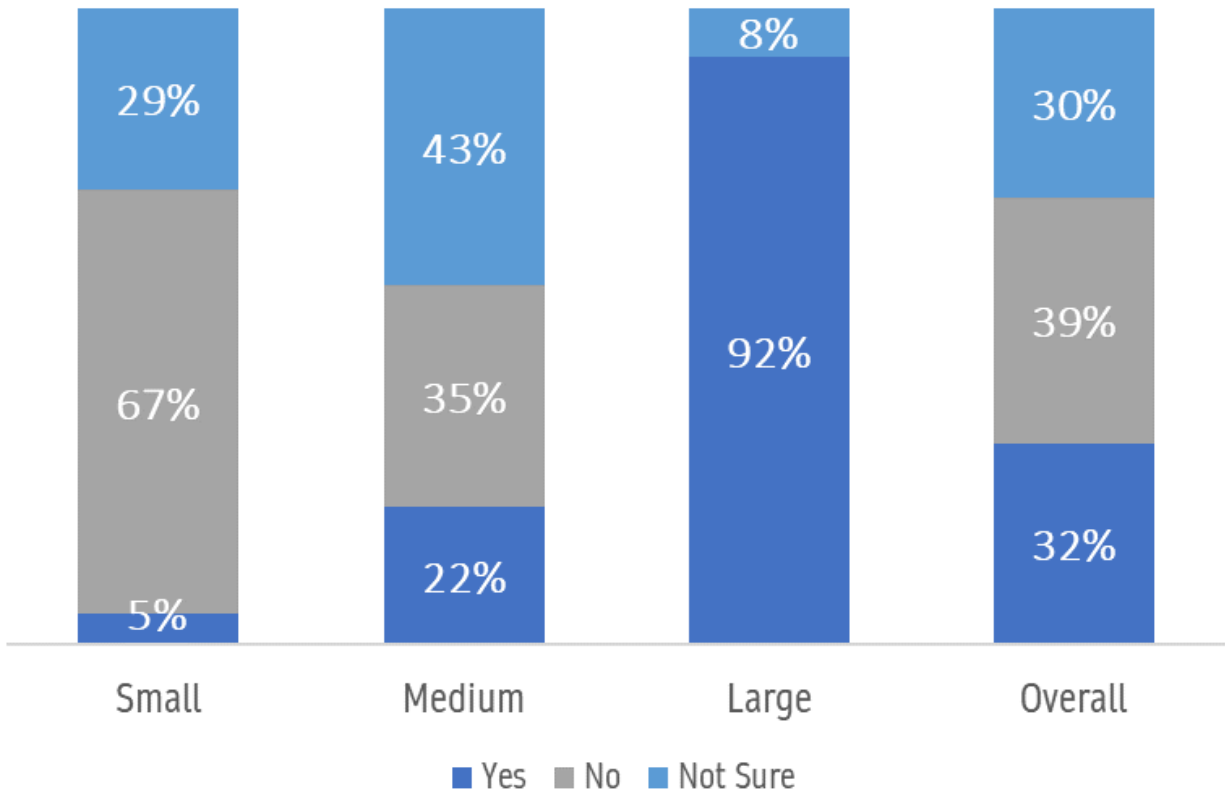
Figure A.3*: Factors limiting NCP engagement in primary referral partner’s services, by county size



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated the factor limits NCP engagement by *A lot* or *A very great deal*. The sample sizes for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 20–21, 20–23, 12–13 and 54–57, respectively.

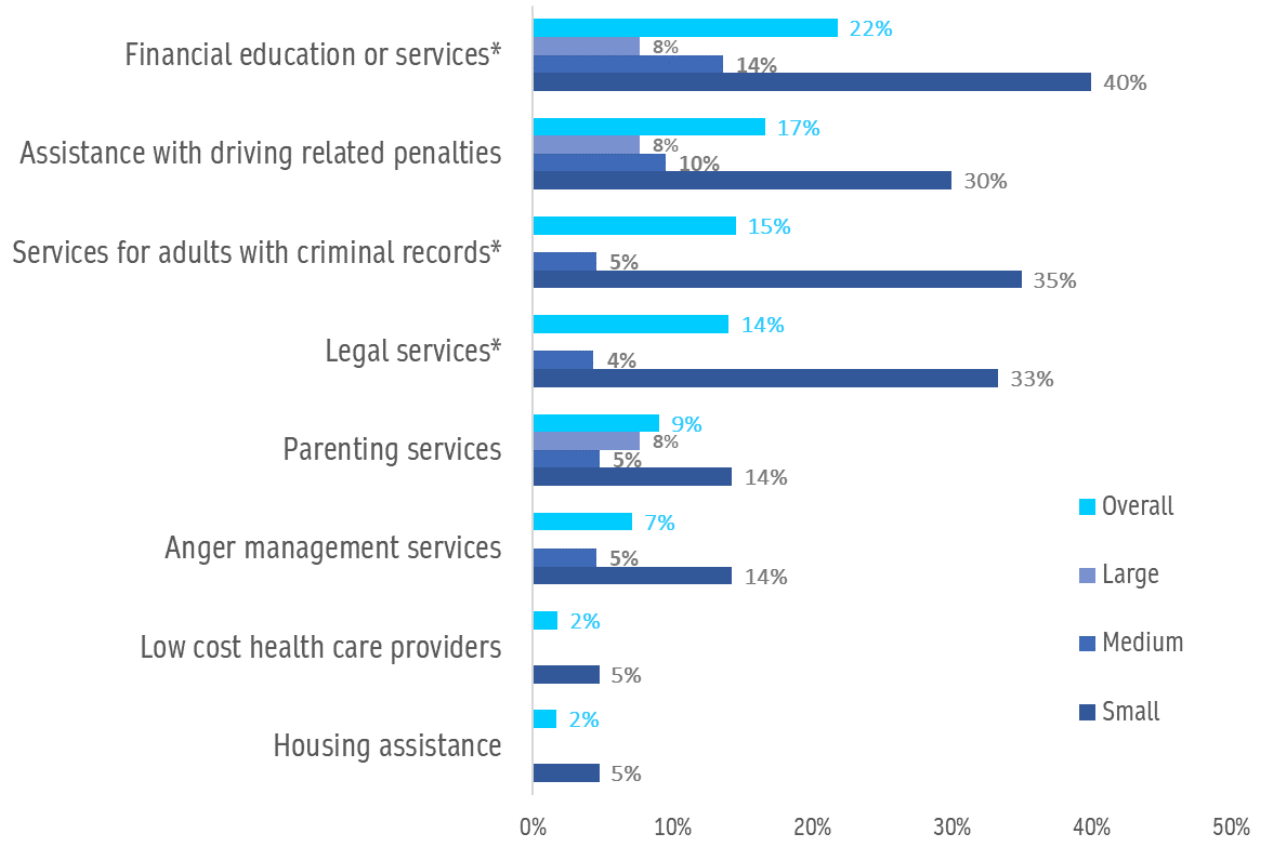
* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$).

Figure A.4*: Accessibility of primary referral partner via public transit, by county size



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated the primary referral partner is located along a public transit route. The sample sizes for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 21, 23, 13 and 57 respectively. Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$).

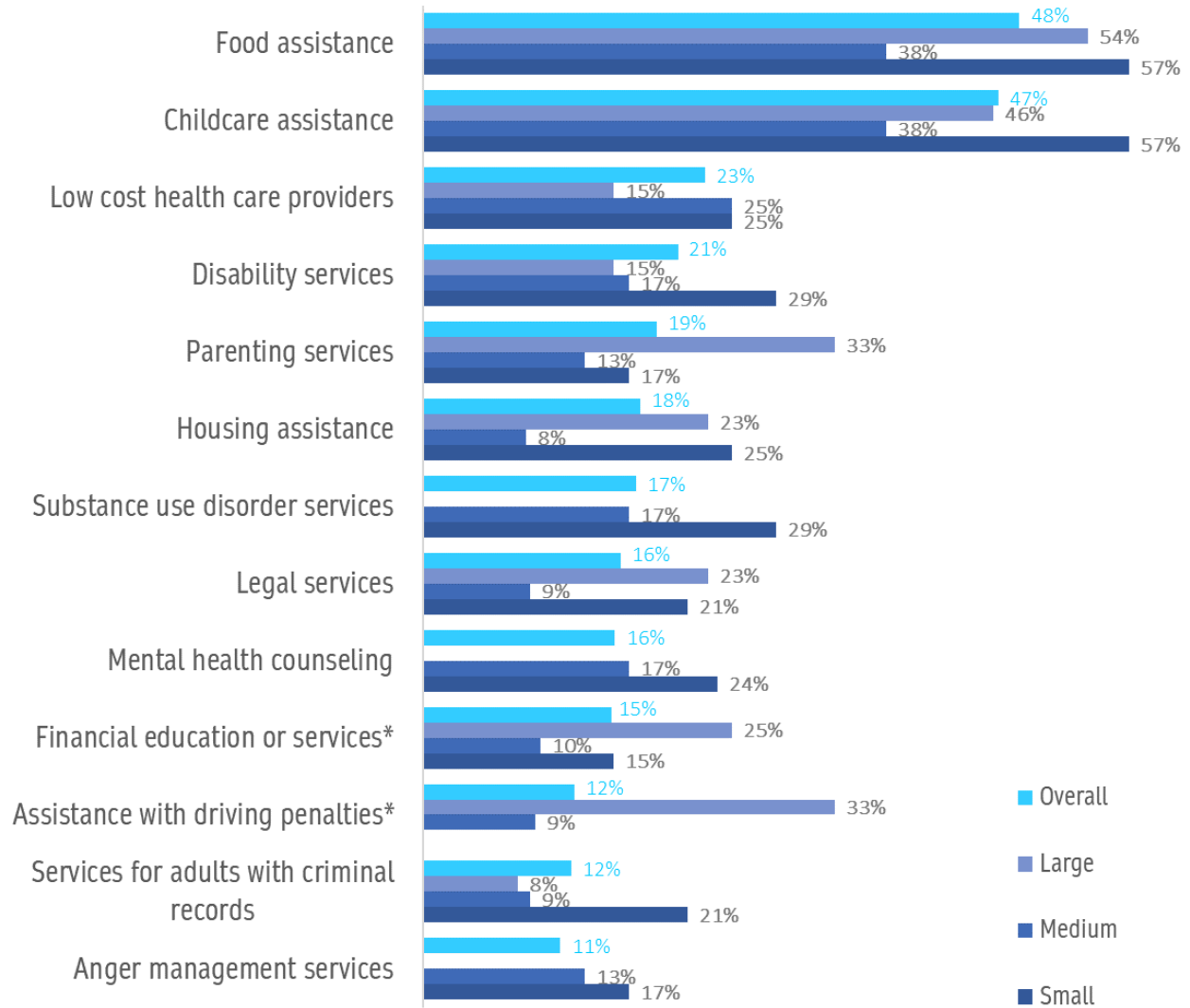
Figure A.5*: Directors' reports of related services that are unavailable, by county size



Note: The sample size ranges for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 13–21, 21–24, 12–13 and 46–58, respectively.

* Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test ($p=0.10$).

Figure A.6* Director perceptions of strength of relationships with other supportive service providers, by county size



Note: These percentages include directors who indicated a *Very* or *Extremely* strong relationship. The sample size ranges for Small, Medium, Large and Overall are 13–21, 21–24, 12–13 and 46–58, respectively.

*Correlation with county size is statistically significant based on a chi-square test (p=0.10).1

CSRA 20-22 Task 12 Report: Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Getting to Know the Respondent and the Agency

1. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: To get started, I am hoping you can tell me a bit about yourself and the work you do at [FILL AGENCY NAME].
 - a. What is your job title?
 - b. How long have you worked at [FILL AGENCY NAME]? In this role specifically? In child support?
 - c. In your role, do you provide services directly to noncustodial parents?
 - d. How many child support cases are on [an average caseworker's/your] caseload?
 - e. Do [staff/you] specialize in a function or manage child support cases from start-to-finish?

Barriers to Employment Among NCPs

Next, I have some questions about the employment situations of NCPs [your agency/you] work with.

1. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Of the NCPs [your agency/you] work with, about what proportion would you estimate have difficulty finding and keeping work?
2. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: From your perspective, what sorts of issues can get in the way of NCPs finding and keeping work?
3. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: In your opinion, what role should the child support agency play in helping NCPs address employment-related barriers to paying child support?

Identifying and Connecting NCPs with Employment Difficulties

4. [FRONTLINE STAFF]: How does it come to your attention if an NCP on your caseload is having difficulty finding or keeping work? [PROBE: *From the CP or NCP; via reports; during casework; other?*]
 - a. If an NCP is experiencing difficulty with finding or keeping work, how likely are you to find out?
5. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: If it comes to [your staff's/your] attention that an NCP is having difficulty finding work or keeping a job:
 - a. [DIRECTORS]: What are staff expected to do? [PROBE: *Make referrals or other actions? Always or under some circumstances?*]
 - b. [FRONTLINE STAFF]: What sorts of steps do you typically take? [PROBE: *Make referrals or other actions? Always or under some circumstances? How do you decide?*]

Employment and Other Resources in Your County

The next questions ask about the types of agencies or programs available in your county to help NCPs who are having trouble finding or keeping work. First, I'd like to talk about agencies or programs that provide employment services specifically.

- These might be agencies or programs that provide services especially for NCPs, or to NCPs in addition to other groups.
- Please include agencies or programs that provide employment services an NCP might choose to participate in voluntarily, as well mandatory or court-ordered services.

[IF NEEDED: I'll ask about services other than employment programs that can help overcome barriers to work, such as substance use or legal issues, later on].

6. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: First, can you please walk me through each of the different programs or agencies that provide employment services available in your community? Let's make a list together first, and then I'll ask you a few follow up questions about each one. [PROBE: *Any others?*]
 - a. [Do staff at your agency/Do you] ever refer NCPs [served by your agency/on your caseload] to [FILL] for employment-related help?
 - b. What kinds of employment-related services does [FILL] offer?
 - c. Under what circumstances would [staff/you] refer NCPs to [FILL]?
 - d. Would any NCP having employment difficulties served by your agency be eligible for referral to [FILL], or only NCPs meeting certain criteria? [PROBE: *Which NCPs are eligible?*]
 - e. How often do you think [your staff/you] refer NCPs to [FILL]? [ALLOW ANY RESPONSE FORMAT]
 - f. Do NCPs experience any barriers to accessing services through [FILL]? PROBES: *Location/public transit? Co-located with CSA or other service providers? Waitlist?*
 - g. How do you perceive the quality of the services provided by [FILL]?
 - h. How successful do you think [FILL] is in helping NCPs find and keep work? In helping them find jobs that allow them to meet their child support obligations as well as their own basic needs?

Referral Practices and Information-Sharing

Next, I'd like to learn more about how [your staff/you] connect NCPs to programs when they need help with employment issues. As we discuss these practices, please think about referrals [your agency/you] make to the programs or agencies we just talked about, including: [INTERVIEWER: READ LIST ALOUD].

7. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF, FOR EACH EMPLOYMENT OR OTHER PROGRAM/AGENCY]: [First let's talk about [FILL AGENCY/PROGRAM NAME/Next let's talk about [FILL AGENCY/PROGRAM NAME]. Can you walk me through the process of connecting NCPs to [FILL]?
 - a. In what format do [staff/you] make referrals? [PROBE: *Written, verbal, electronic, other?*]
 - b. What information do [staff/you] share about [FILL] with the NCP when you make the referral?
 - c. What information, if any, do [staff/you] share with [FILL] about the NCP? [PROBE: *Need explicit permission from the NCP to share? What format? How often obtain it? What can you share with it, and what can you share without it?*]
 - d. Is an NCP's participation in this program voluntary or court-ordered?
 - e. How often do you think NCPs [your agency/you] refers end up participating [FILL]'s services?
 - f. [Do staff/do you] follow up on referrals after [they/you] make them to [FILL]?
 - i. IF YES: What sorts of follow up efforts do [staff/you] engage in? How, with whom, and what information are [staff/you] looking for?
 - g. If an NCP [your staff/you] refer to [FILL] enrolls in services, does [FILL] provide updates to the agency on the NCP's participation and progress?
 - i. IF YES: What information comes back to the agency? How is it used? How helpful is it?
8. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Thinking of all the referrals [your staff/you] make to programs that help with employment barriers, how often do you think NCPs follow through on referrals?
 - a. Are they more likely to follow through on referrals to some programs? [PROBE: *Which? Why?*]
 - b. What factors get in the way of more frequent uptake? What encourages participation?

Other Services to Support NCP Employment

9. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Some NCPs have barriers to work that aren't directly related to employment, but still make it hard to find or keep a job. Examples might include substance use or mental health issues, legal problems, lack of housing or transportation, or other challenges. Do [your staff/you] ever refer NCPs to programs or agencies that help with these issues?
 - a. IF YES: Can you walk me through a list of each? [PROBE: *Any others?*] FOR EACH:
 - i. What kinds of services does [FILL] offer?
 - ii. Under what circumstances would [staff/you] refer NCPs to [FILL]?
 - b. Would any NCP having employment difficulties served by your agency be eligible for referral to [FILL], or only NCPs meeting certain criteria? [PROBE: *Which NCPs are eligible?*]
 - c. How often do you think [your staff/you] refer NCPs to [FILL]? [ALLOW ANY RESPONSE FORMAT]
 - d. Do NCPs experience any barriers to accessing services through [FILL]? PROBES: *Location/public transit? Co-located with CSA or other service providers? Waitlist?*
 - e. How do you perceive the quality of the services provided by [FILL]?
10. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Other than the programs and agencies you just told me about, does your child support agency directly provide other kinds of resources or assistance intended to help NCPs overcome barriers to work? [PROBE: *What kinds? How got involved in providing?*]
11. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Are there services that you wish were available in your community to help NCPs address employment barriers, but aren't offered?? [PROBE: *What kind? For what needs?*]

Strength of Partnerships

12. [DIRECTORS]: How has your agency approached identifying programs/agencies in your community that can help NCPs with employment barriers, and building relationships with these programs and agencies?
13. [DIRECTORS]: Are there steps your agency takes, or practices your agency engages in, to help facilitate a productive working relationship with these types of programs?
 - a. IF NEEDED: Do any of the leadership or staff from your organizations meet with each other? [PROBE: *How often? Who meets? What topics?*]
 - b. IF NEEDED: Do your agencies exchange information in other ways?
 - i. IF YES: Can you tell me more about that? What information and how? How often and on what topics?
14. [DIRECTORS]: What challenges has your agency faced in building such relationships? [PROBE: *Strategies*]
15. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: How often are [you and your staff/you] in communication with staff or leadership from these programs and agencies? [PROBE: *Frequency, format, topics*]
16. [DIRECTORS]: Thinking of all the agencies and programs your child support agency collaborates with to help NCPs with employment barriers, do you see your agency's relationship with any partners as especially strong? [PROBE: *Which partners? In what ways are they strong?*]
17. [DIRECTORS]: Do you see your agency's relationship with any of these programs or agencies as especially challenging? [PROBE: *Which partners? In what ways are they strong?*]

Reflections

To wrap up, I would like to hear your perspective on challenges with, and promising strategies for, collaborating with programs and agencies that aim to help NCPs with barriers to employment.

18. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: From your perspective, what have been the most challenging aspects of trying to connect NCPs to services to help address employment barriers? [PROBE: *Strategies*]
19. [DIRECTORS]: Looking to the years ahead, are there ways in which you think your agency will expand efforts to connect NCPs to services to help address employment barriers? [PROBE: *What ways?*]
20. [DIRECTORS]: In your opinion, what could the state do to help support county efforts to connect NCPs to these types of services? [PROBE FOR: *Guidance, information, resources*]
21. [DIRECTORS AND FRONTLINE STAFF]: Is there anything we haven't covered today that you would like to share about connecting NCPs to services that can help address employment barriers?

[FRONTLINE STAFF]: Thank you so much for taking the time to share your experiences and input!

[DIRECTORS]: Thank you so much for taking the time to share these valuable experiences and perspectives. I am hoping to also invite staff members at your agency who provide services directly to noncustodial parents to take part an interview. Would you be willing to share with me the names and emails of frontline staff members who you think might be helpful to us?

- NOTE: The specific number we ask for will depend on the agency's configuration (i.e., how large the agency is, and whether staff specialize by function).

CSRA 20-22 Task 12 Report: Appendix C Qualtrics Survey

Start of Block: Introduction

Child Support Agencies as Connectors

A research team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Institute for Research on Poverty (IRP) is conducting research about how child support agencies partner with employment programs and other local service providers to help noncustodial parents who have difficulty finding and keeping employment and meeting their child support obligations. This study is being conducted on behalf of the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. As part of this study, we are hoping to hear from every county child support agency director in Wisconsin about their agency's experiences.

The goal of this study is to better understand what employment programs and other supportive services are locally available to Wisconsin's child support agencies, how agencies connect parents to these resources, and county perspectives on benefits and challenges related to these collaborative efforts.

You are being asked to complete this survey because you are the director of a Wisconsin child support agency. Your participation in this survey is very important, and will help to ensure that our findings are representative of all Wisconsin counties. The length of this survey is different for different people but is estimated to take about 30 minutes. Your participation is voluntary and you may skip any questions you don't want to answer. Whether or not you take part is up to you and will have no effect on your employment with the county.

Your responses will be kept confidential and your identifying information will not be shared with anyone outside of the research team. Our report and any other subsequent publications will not identify specific individuals, agencies or counties. The information collected from the surveys may be used in future research studies related to this project.

There is minimal risk related to taking part in this study. In the unlikely event of a data breach, your participation could become known. We take every precaution to protect your identifying information.

While there are no direct benefits to you, your participation will help the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families learn more about how child support agencies can help noncustodial parents overcome barriers to employment and meet their child support obligations.

If you have any questions about the survey or research, please do not hesitate to contact co-investigator Lisa Klein Vogel, UW IRP. You can reach Lisa at lmklein@wisc.edu or by calling 608-265-9377. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant or have

complaints about the research study or study team, call the confidential research compliance line at 1-833-652-2506. Staff will work with you to address concerns about research participation and assist in resolving problems.

Thank you for participating in this survey. **By completing the survey and submitting your responses, you are confirming that you understand the information you provide will be kept confidential, used only for research and evaluation purposes, and that your answers will be combined with the responses of other staff so that no individuals are identified.**

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: 1. About You and Your Agency

First, we have a few questions about you.



For how many years have you been in the role of the Child Support Agency [\\${e://Field/Title}](#) of [\\${e://Field/County}](#) County?

Do you have your own caseload of child support cases for which you provide child support services directly, in addition to your role as [\\${e://Field/Title}](#)?

Yes, the number of cases on my caseload is:

No

Next, we have some questions about your child support agency (CSA).

In your CSA, do most caseworkers specialize by function (i.e. establishment, enforcement or modification), or do they manage all aspects of a child support case from start to finish?

- Most specialize by function
- Most manage all aspects of a case start-to-finish
- Other (please describe): _____

Display This Question:

If management = Most manage all aspects of a case start-to-finish



What is the approximate average caseload size per caseworker in your CSA?

Display This Question:

If management != Most manage all aspects of a case start-to-finish



What is the approximate average caseload size per caseworker *who specializes in enforcement* in your CSA?

End of Block: 1. About You and Your Agency

Start of Block: 2. Barriers to Employment Among NCPs

The next questions ask about your CSA's experiences serving noncustodial parents (NCPs) who have difficulty finding and keeping work.

Among the NCPs served by your CSA, how much of a problem are each of the following in finding or keeping a job?

How much of a problem is...

	Not a problem at all	A small problem	Somewhat of a problem	A very large problem	An extremely large problem
...not having job skills that are in demand?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...not having an adequate employment history?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having trouble getting along with others or controlling their anger?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having a criminal record?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having problems with drugs or alcohol?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having physical health issues?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having mental health issues?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having transportation issues, such as not having a car, a license, or access to public transit?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...having care-taking responsibilities, such as for children or	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

other family members?					
...not having a steady place to live?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...lacking the desire to work?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...a reluctance or hesitation to ask for help?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In your opinion, should child support agencies be expected to:

	Yes	No
... provide employment services directly to NCPs who are not working?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... refer NCPs who are not working to local employment programs or agencies?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... refer NCPs to services other than employment programs to help address barriers to work and payment (e.g., services for mental health, substance use, access and visitation, or parenting supports)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: 2. Barriers to Employment Among NCPs

Start of Block: 3. Identifying and Connecting NCPs with Employment Difficulties

The next questions ask about what happens if an NCP served by your agency is having difficulty finding or keeping work.

If an NCP served by your CSA loses their job, how likely is their caseworker to become aware that this has happened?

- Not at all likely
- A little bit likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

From which of the following sources do your CSA's caseworkers become aware that an NCP has lost their job?

Could they learn about it from...

	Yes	No
...worklists or reports that track employment or child support payments?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...another CSA staff member, including call center staff?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...an employer?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...the NCP themselves?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...the custodial parent?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...staff who work for agencies or programs other than child support?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there other sources from which caseworkers in your CSA could learn that an NCP has lost their job?

If a caseworker learns that an NCP on their caseload has lost their job, are there **specific steps** that the CSA expects all caseworkers to take, or is it up to the caseworker to decide what steps are appropriate?

- The CSA expects all caseworkers to take specific steps
- It is up to caseworkers to decide what steps are appropriate
- It depends (please describe):

Page Break

Display This Question:

If expect or not = The CSA expects all caseworkers to take specific steps

Which of the following steps are caseworkers in your CSA expected to take after learning that an NCP on their caseload has lost their job?

Are they expected to...

	Yes	No
...reach out directly to the NCP for more information about their employment circumstances?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...share information with the NCP about employment programs or agencies available locally so the NCP can follow up if interested?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...share information with an employment program or agency about the NCP, so that the program or agency can follow up with the NCP?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...if appropriate for that NCP, work with legal partners to include a requirement that the NCP participate in services through an employment program or agency in a court order?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If expect or not = The CSA expects all caseworkers to take specific steps

Are there other steps caseworkers in your CSA are expected to take in this situation?

Display This Question:

If if expect = ...reach out directly to the NCP for more information about their employment circumstances? [Yes]

If a caseworker in your CSA finds out that an NCP has lost their job from a source *other than the NCP*, how likely is the caseworker to reach out *directly* to the NCP for more information about their employment circumstances?

- Not at all likely
- A little bit likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely
- Not sure

Display This Question:

If expect or not != The CSA expects all caseworkers to take specific steps

How likely is a caseworker to take the **following steps** after learning that an NCP on their caseload has lost their job?

How likely would a caseworker be to...

	Not at all likely	A little bit likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely	Extremely likely
...reach out directly to the NCP for more information about their employment circumstances?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...share information with the NCP about employment program or agencies available locally so the NCP can follow up if interested?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...share information with an employment program or agency about the NCP, so that the program or agency can follow up with the NCP?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...take steps to have the NCP court ordered to participate in an employment program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...take other steps? Please tell us:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The next questions are about your CSA's use of **employment service programs**.

Employment service programs provide help such as resume assistance, job search, work experience, job readiness training, vocational training, job placement, or other services specifically aimed at helping NCPs find and keep jobs.

Sometimes child support agencies refer NCPs who are unemployed or underemployed to local employment service programs, but for various reasons this option is not always used.

How much do each of the following factors **limit** the number of referrals that your CSA case managers make to employment service programs?

How much is the number of referrals your CSA case managers make *limited* by...

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	A lot	A very great deal
...a lack of employment services in your area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...concerns about the ability of NCPs to access the employment services available in your area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...concerns about the quality or effectiveness of employment services in your area?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...the lack of a clear or consistent point-of-contact within the employment services programs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

...a lack of clarity about the employment programs' service offerings and eligibility rules?

...complex or burdensome methods of making referrals to the employment services programs?

How much do each of the following *additional* factors **limit** the number of referrals that your CSA case managers make to employment service programs?

How much is the number of referrals additionally *limited* by...

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	A lot	A very great deal
...little need for employment services among NCPs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...a lack of willingness among NCPs to participate in employment services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...staff difficulty in convincing NCPs to engage in employment services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...insufficient case manager time for making referrals to employment services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...hesitation or reluctance among CSA staff to make referrals to employment services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: 3. Identifying and Connecting NCPs with Employment Difficulties

Start of Block: 4. Employment Resources in Your Area

The next questions ask about specific agencies and programs that provide employment services in your area. These include agencies or programs that provide services especially for NCPs, or to NCPs *in addition to* other groups.

Employment services provide help such as resume assistance, job search, work experience, job readiness training, vocational training, job placement, or other services specifically aimed at helping NCPs find and keep jobs.

To the best of your knowledge, **do your CSA caseworkers refer NCPs having employment**

difficulties for employment services to any of the following? Please check all that apply.
You may hover your cursor over each option for more detail.

- the local W-2 agency
- FSET
- Children First
- ELEVATE
- the Wisconsin Job Center
- DVR
- the Transitional Jobs program
- the Veteran's employment program
- WIOA workforce services
- the Transform Milwaukee Jobs program
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here): _____
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here): _____
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here): _____

Carry Forward Selected Choices - Entered Text from "Employment services provide help such as resume assistance, job search, work experience, job readiness training, vocational training, job placement, or other services specifically aimed at helping NCPs find and keep jobs. To the best of your knowledge,

do your CSA caseworkers refer NCPs having employment difficulties for employment services to any of the following? Please check all that apply. You may hover your cursor over each option for more detail. "



Which one of these employment service agencies or programs do you think caseworkers in your CSA make referrals to **most often**? If you see just one option, please select that one.

- the local W-2 agency
- FSET
- Children First
- ELEVATE
- the Wisconsin Job Center
- DVR
- the Transitional Jobs program
- the Veteran's employment program
- WIOA workforce services
- the Transform Milwaukee Jobs program
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here):
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here):
- Any other program or agency, provided by the government, a nonprofit or private agency, or any other place that provides employment services (enter only ONE program or agency name here):

End of Block: 4. Employment Resources in Your Area

Start of Block: 5. Referrals

The next questions ask for a bit more information about **#{Im://Field/1}**.

Does **#{Im://Field/1}** offer any of the following employment-related services to its customers? If a service of **#{Im://Field/1}** is not listed, please specify this other service below.

Does **#{Im://Field/1}** offer...

	Yes	No	Not Sure
... help with finding a job or applying for a job (e.g., resume assistance, job search assistance)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... training in basic job skills (e.g., job readiness)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... training in skills for a specific job (e.g., short-term or vocational jobs)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... covering all or some of the cost of getting to work or participating in work (e.g., gas cards, bus passes, work clothing or uniforms, tools or equipment)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... help in keeping a job once employment is obtained (e.g., job retention services)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... education-related services (e.g., GED, HSED, or literacy education)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... other services? Please tell us:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there any criteria that an NCP must meet to be served by $\{\text{Im://Field/1}\}$, or can any NCP receive their services?

- The NCP must meet some criteria (for example, the NCP is eligible for or receives certain public benefits)
- Any NCP can receive their services

Display This Question:

If Loop all: criteria or not = The NCP must meet some criteria (for example, the NCP is eligible for or receives certain public benefits)

Which of the following criteria must an NCP meet to be served by $\{\text{Im://Field/1}\}$?

Does the NCP have to...

	Yes	No
...be eligible for or receive certain public benefits?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have a child with a CP who is eligible for or receiving certain public benefits?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...be under contempt or have a pending contempt action?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...have a child living at home?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...be co-enrolled in another program?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...pass a drug screening?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Loop all: criteria or not = The NCP must meet some criteria (for example, the NCP is eligible for or receives certain public benefits)

Are there other criteria that an NCP must meet to be served by [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

Page Break

The next questions are about how staff in your CSA make referrals to [\\${Im://Field/1}](#).

In your area, which of the following ways do your CSA staff refer NCPs to [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

	Yes	No
Do your case managers recommend \${Im://Field/1} directly to the NCP?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your case managers request staff at \${Im://Field/1} to reach out directly to the NCP?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do your case managers connect the NCP to \${Im://Field/1} with the help of an intermediary, such as a W-2 child support liaison?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are NCPs mandated to participate in services through \${Im://Field/1} by court order?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is there some other way CSA staff refer NCP's to \${Im://Field/1} ? Please tell us:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

In which of the following formats do your CSA staff make referrals to [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

Do they make referrals...

	Yes	No
...through an online form or portal?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...on paper, such as by mailed letters, or hardcopy forms?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...through email to one or more people?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...by phone?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...in person, such as through an office visit, or a warm handoff?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question:

If Loop all: connect = Do your case managers recommend $\${m://Field/1}$ directly to the NCP? [Yes]

And Loop all: connect = Do your case managers request staff at $\${m://Field/1}$ to reach out directly to the NCP? [Yes]

You mentioned that your case managers make referrals by reaching out to **both** the NCP and to $\${m://Field/1}$. Is this communication usually done separately or together?

- Separately; we usually reach out to each of them on separate calls, emails or meetings.
 - Together; we usually introduce them to one another in the same call, same email or same meeting.
 - We make referrals separately and together.
-

Are caseworkers in your CSA required to obtain explicit permission from the NCP before they are able to share information with $\{\text{Im}://\text{Field}/1\}$?

- Yes
- No
- It depends (please specify): _____
- Not sure

When a caseworker in your CSA refers an NCP to $\{\text{Im}://\text{Field}/1\}$, how often do they follow up with $\{\text{Im}://\text{Field}/1\}$ or with the NCP to find out if the NCP participated in their services?

How often do they...

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time	Always
...follow-up with the NCP?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...follow-up with $\{\text{Im}://\text{Field}/1\}$?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Does $\{\text{Im}://\text{Field}/1\}$ provide updates to your CSA on the NCP's participation and progress?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Display This Question:
If Loop all: update = Yes

How helpful is the information provided by $\{\text{Im://Field/1}\}$ to your caseworkers for their case planning?

- Not at all helpful
 - A little bit helpful
 - Somewhat helpful
 - Very helpful
 - Extremely helpful
-

Approximately how many NCPs do you think staff in your CSA refer to $\{\text{Im://Field/1}\}$ per month OR per year?

Your best guess is fine.

- Per month _____
- Per year _____

End of Block: 5. Referrals

Start of Block: 6. Access

The next questions ask for a bit more information about $\{\text{Im://Field/1}\}$ itself.

Where is the office of [\\${Im://Field/1}](#) physically located, in relation to your CSA?

- In the same physical building or space
 - Within a few blocks of the CSA
 - Within a mile of the CSA
 - More than a mile away, but within the same city as the CSA
 - Outside of the city, but within the same county as the CSA
 - Outside of the county
-

Is [\\${Im://Field/1}](#) located along a public transit route?

Public transit here refers to a system of transportation that is available for public use on a regular schedule.

- Yes
 - No
 - Not sure
-

Is there typically a waitlist for NCPs to access services from [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

- Yes, the waitlist is approximately [enter number] months long

 - No
 - Not sure
-

In your opinion, how much do each of the following factors limit NCP engagement in the services available through [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

Is NCP participation in services available through [\\${Im://Field/1}](#) limited by...

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	A lot	A very great deal
... where \${Im://Field/1} 's office is located?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... \${Im://Field/1} 's participation requirements?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... \${Im://Field/1} 's reputation among NCPs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... NCPs' little awareness of \${Im://Field/1} 's services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... any monetary costs associated with participating in \${Im://Field/1} 's services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... NCPs' difficulty reaching or getting information from \${Im://Field/1} ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... the services available through \${Im://Field/1} not matching NCP needs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... staff turnover or other staffing issues at \${Im://Field/1} ?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are there other factors that limit NCP engagement in the services available through [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

Overall, how would you rate the quality of services provided by [\\${Im://Field/1}](#) to NCPs?

- Poor
- Fair
- Good
- Very good
- Excellent

End of Block: 6. Access

Start of Block: 7. Strength of Partnerships

The next questions ask about your CSA's relationship with [\\${Im://Field/1}](#).

Does your CSA engage in any of the following practices with [\\${Im://Field/1}](#)?

	Yes	No
Regular meetings of <i>leadership</i> from both groups. Please tell us how many times a year:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Regular meetings of <i>front-line staff</i> from both groups. Please tell us how many times a year:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informal methods of communication, such as telephone calls and emails.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Case planning or case staffing involving staff across both groups.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informational sessions on services available through each group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, how strong do you feel your CSA's relationship with [\\${Im://Field/1}](#) is?

- Not at all strong
- A little bit strong
- Somewhat strong
- Very strong
- Extremely strong

End of Block: 7. Strength of Partnerships

Start of Block: 8. Additional Services

Does your CSA work with the W-2 child support liaison (CSL) in your region?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Skip To: 8.4 If CSL != Yes

In which of the following ways does your agency work with the W-2 child support liaison, or CSL?

	Yes	No
Does your agency have caseworkers refer NCPs to the W-2 CSL for services or information?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
While working with NCPs being served by your CSA, does the W-2 CSL share updates about those NCPs with your CSA?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your CSA work with the W-2 CSL in other ways? Please tell us:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall, how helpful is the W-2 CSL for connecting NCPs having employment issues to employment services?

- Not at all
 - A little
 - Somewhat
 - Very
 - Extremely
-

Other than the employment services that you already told us about, does your CSA directly provide any of the following to help NCPs address barriers to work?

Does your CSA directly provide...

	Yes	No
... job fairs?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... job boards, or a list of job openings?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... computers or workspace onsite at the CSA for job search?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... other information or resources? Please tell us:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: 8. Additional Services

Start of Block: 9. Related Services

The next questions ask about your agency's relationship with programs that provide services to help address problems that aren't directly related to work, but can make it more difficult for NCPs to find or keep a job.

To the best of your knowledge, how easy is it for NCPs served by your CSA to access the following services in your area?

How **easy** is it for them to access...

	This service is not available in my area	Not easy at all	A little bit easy	Somewhat easy	Very easy	Extremely easy
...mental health counseling?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...substance use disorder services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...anger management services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...disability services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...community health centers, public health clinics, or other low-cost health care providers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...housing assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...food assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...childcare assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...legal services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

...re-entry services, or services aimed at adults with criminal records?

...driver's license reinstatement assistance or assistance with DMV fines and fees?

...financial education, banking or credit repair services?

...parenting services?

If a caseworker learns that an NCP on their caseload has a need related to these types of services, are they **expected** to make a referral to a provider of those services in your area?

- Yes
- No
- It depends on the circumstances (please describe):

If a caseworker learns that an NCP on their caseload has a need related to these services, how **likely** are they to make a referral to such a service provider in your area?

- Not at all likely
- A little bit likely
- Somewhat likely
- Very likely
- Extremely likely

Carry Forward Unselected Choices from "To the best of your knowledge, how easy is it for NCPs served by your CSA to access the following services in your area?How easy is it for them to access..."



Overall, how **strong** do you feel your CSA's relationship is with each of the following types of service providers in your area?

	Not at all strong	A little bit strong	Somewhat strong	Very strong	Extremely strong
...mental health counseling?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...substance use disorder services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...anger management services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...disability services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...community health centers, public health clinics, or other low-cost health care providers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

...housing assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...food assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...childcare assistance?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...legal services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...re-entry services, or services aimed at adults with criminal records?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...driver's license reinstatement assistance or assistance with DMV fines and fees?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...financial education, banking or credit repair services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
...parenting services?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: 9. Related Services

Start of Block: 10. Reflections

These last few questions ask for your perspective on your CSA's efforts to connect NCPs to services intended to help address barriers to employment.



When you think about all of your CSA's priorities for the year ahead, **how important** do you believe it will be for your CSA...

to build or strengthen connections with programs and agencies that provide employment services?

- Not at all important
 - A little bit important
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
-

When you think about all of your CSA's priorities for the year ahead, **how important** do you believe it will be for your CSA...

to build or strengthen connections with programs and agencies that provide other types of supportive services (such as mental health or legal services) that NCPs might need to help overcome employment barriers?

- Not at all important
 - A little bit important
 - Somewhat important
 - Very important
 - Extremely important
-

Thinking of your CSA's experiences in the past one year, when you had wanted to collaborate with providers that offer employment services or other supportive services in your area, how much have the following factors made those collaborative efforts a **challenge**?

	Not at all	A little bit	Somewhat	A lot	A very great deal
Lack of buy-in from CSA staff	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of interest in collaborating among potential partners, or lack of support for collaboration from county administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of information about the providers available in my area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insufficient time for getting to know other providers in my area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of financial resources, or restrictions on how my CSA can use financial resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Differences in my CSA's priorities and the priorities of other providers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Challenges communicating with leadership or staff from other providers

The physical distance between my CSA and other providers

Have any other factors made collaborative efforts a challenge?

Page Break

Is there anything that the Wisconsin state government could do to help facilitate your CSA's efforts to connect NCPs with services intended to help address employment issues?

Is there anything else you'd like to share on this topic?

End of Block: 10. Reflections
