



**NEWS RELEASE – August 3, 2005**

**CONTACT:** Laurie Petrie, HCJFS Communications, 946-2188 or [petril@jfs.hamilton-co.org](mailto:petril@jfs.hamilton-co.org)

## **Child Support’s “Most Wanted” to be displayed on new poster**

*Poster is one of several activities for Child Support Awareness Month*

The faces of some of Hamilton County’s most elusive child support scofflaws will soon appear on “Most Wanted” posters.

The county’s Child Support Services division plans to launch the poster in September. Planning for the poster is among the local activities for national Child Support Awareness Month, which is observed in August. Child Support Services is a division of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (HCJFS).

The poster will show photos of 10-12 Hamilton County residents who are wanted by the Sheriff’s Office for failure to pay their court-ordered child support. The poster also will have the person’s name, age, last-known address and occupation, number of children, and amount owed – typically in the tens of thousands of dollars.

To appear on the poster, the person must have a warrant for failure to appear in court.

Posters will be placed in county buildings, such as the courts, community centers, and a variety of other locations. Anyone who knows the whereabouts of a person pictured can call the Sheriff’s Office at 946-5350. Tipsters can remain anonymous.

“We want to use every tool we can to collect child support,” said HCJFS director Rick Roberts. “The “Most Wanted” poster helps to create a culture in which it is socially unacceptable to avoid taking responsibility for your children.”

HCJFS was inspired by the success of Butler County, which distributes its own poster twice a year and typically rounds up everyone whose photo appears. The state of Ohio has a “Most Wanted” poster, but any county can submit photos, so the local impact is diluted. Statewide, more than half of those who appeared on the state’s posters have been located since the project began in 1992, and hundreds of thousands of dollars collected.

The “Most Wanted” poster is among the ideas generated for Child Support Awareness Month, a national observance held each August. Other HCJFS activities include:

- A workshop on Aug. 10 for community organizations, lawyers and others who work with child support clients
- Flyers about child support inserted into water bills
- Cinema advertisements at Showcase Cinemas in Springdale and Cincinnati

See next page for more information about Child Support in Hamilton County

## **About Child Support in Hamilton County**

**The purpose of the child support program** is to provide children with an opportunity for a better life. By working with both parents to establish and enforce child support orders, Child Support Services helps children receive financial and medical support that has been ordered for them.

**Ohio's child support program touches the lives** of more children than any other public program except education.

**Child support is required by law.** Formed in 1988, the child support program is a federal, state and local partnership. It is empowered by the Social Security Act to locate parents, determine paternity, establish support obligations and collect child support.

**In Hamilton County,** Child Support Services is a division of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (HCJFS).

**The local child support system** includes HCJFS, juvenile and domestic relations courts, the county prosecutor's office and the county sheriff.

**It is difficult to collect child support.** In Federal Fiscal Year 2004, Hamilton County collected about 64 percent of the child support that was owed by parents with current orders. That means more than 35 percent of the money currently owed to children went unpaid. More than 90 percent of child support cases have late or missing payments at some time during the year. That means cases accumulate arrearages, or overdue support. Some parents make payments on the arrearages; many do not. The website of the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office includes a list of more than 3,000 so-called "deadbeats," – persons wanted for failure to pay child support. In addition, many cases do not even have court orders because the father has not been legally identified.

### **In 2004, Hamilton County Child Support Services...**

**Collected \$154.9 million**

**Handled a monthly average of 94,671 cases**

**Collected \$1.4 million through drivers' license suspensions (121% increase over 2003)**

## Services, eligibility and applications

### Eligibility:

Open to all Hamilton County residents

Child support orders usually issued with a divorce

If you had a child out-of-wedlock, call the child support agency to: 1) establish paternity;  
2) help you get an order for support

### Applying:

In person at: HCJFS, 222 E. Central Parkway, first floor

Walk-ins are seen Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

You must show a picture ID or birth certificate

### Services:

- Establishment of paternity
- Location of absent parents
- Establishment of child support orders
- Modification of child support orders
- Enforcement of existing orders
- Collection and disbursement of payments (state)
- Education, outreach and referrals to other services

## Methods of collecting child support

Administrative and law enforcement tools include:

- Wage withholding
- Interception of tax refunds
- Seizure of bank accounts
- License suspensions
- Credit Bureau reporting
- Interception of financial awards (e.g. bonuses)
- Contempt of court
- Criminal non-support

## Trends and Highlights

**Child Support is big:** About one in three Hamilton County residents is involved in a child support case.

**Enforcement tools with teeth:** Non-traditional enforcement tools such as driver's license suspension and bank account seizures are effective. In 2004, HCJFS ordered the suspension of 8,355 driver's licenses, a 62% increase over 2003. Nearly 3,000 licenses were reinstated and \$1.4 million collected, a 121% increase. In 2004, HCJFS seized \$780,588 from 656 bank accounts, a 107% increase over 2003.

**Child Support Planning Committee:** This group brings together representatives from various organizations who are involved in the county child support system, including HCJFS, Juvenile Court, the Prosecutor's Office, Court of Domestic Relations, private

agencies and advocacy groups. Committee members share information and work on projects to improve collections and customer service.

**Customer Service improves:** Our new call center handles 20,000 calls a month at 946-7387. Callers hear a helpful voice at the other end of the line, not an answering machine. The percentage of callers who hang up before getting help has dropped from 27 % to less than five %- on par with the highest industry standards.

## **Help and contact information**

### **Mailing address**

HCJFS  
Child Support Services  
222 E. Central Parkway  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

### **Telephone, fax and e-mail**

946-SETS (7387)  
Fax: (513) 946-1430  
www.hcjfs.org (click on Child Support Help)  
Customer complaints: 946-2300

### **Payments**

Ohio Child Support Payment Central  
PO Box 182372  
Columbus, OH 43218-2372

### **Cash and credit card payments**

800 Broadway - first floor  
Cincinnati, OH

### **24-hour automated information**

1-800-860-2555  
<http://jfs.ohio.gov/ocs>

*Fact sheets about child support: [www.hcjfs.org](http://www.hcjfs.org). Click on Clients, then Child Support*