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CONTACT: Mike Boehmer, 946-2195

Hamilton County Child Support Amnesty Week: Big Success

- **218 participate in first-ever amnesty for Juvenile Court warrants**
- **More than \$34,000 collected/wage withholdings established**

Child Support Amnesty Week (Aug. 21-25) was a huge success. The first-time event attracted 218 participants, who paid more than \$34,000 and – most importantly – got reconnected to the system by establishing wage withholding or giving current contact information.

About 2,300 Hamilton County area parents with warrants for their arrest for non-payment of child support were eligible to get a chance to avoid jail. Nearly 10 percent turned themselves in at 800 Broadway St., downtown Cincinnati. They went in front of Juvenile Court magistrates, who heard their cases immediately.

Participants came from as far as Arizona. Although it was stressed in advance that amnesty pertained only to child support-related warrants issued by Juvenile Court, some with more serious offenses showed up and were arrested.

“Amnesty Week benefited both parents and children,” said Jeff Startzman, the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services assistant director in charge of Child Support. “It gave parents who had not made regular support payments a chance to get back on track. And it brought money to children as they started the school year.”

Startzman said cooperation among Juvenile Court, the Prosecutor’s Office, Sheriff’s Office and Child Support helped make the week a success.

Hamilton County held Amnesty Week as part of Child Support Awareness Month. In 2004, Hamilton County staged a successful Amnesty Day for those whose licenses had been suspended for non-payment. It resulted in \$25,000 in collections and 107 income withholdings established.

The Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services offers an array of social service programs, such as child support, child protection, adult protection, food stamps, Medicaid, cash assistance, welfare-to-work and subsidized child care. The agency’s Child Support division collected more than \$155 million in 2005. It handled an average of more than 90,000 cases. For more information, please visit www.hcjfs.org.

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