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Economic Stimulus Checks Subject to Interception for Child Support Payments

Cincinnati (April 30, 2008) Hamilton County residents itching to get their hands on tax rebates may be very disappointed if they owe delinquent child support.

Economic Stimulus rebates, which begin mailing next week, will be intercepted to help needy children if they are destined to a parent who has not met their child support obligation.

“It is a shame it has to be done this way, but if you aren’t meeting your obligation to your children, we’ll work with the IRS to make sure they at least get something to take care of their basic needs,” said Moira Weir, director of the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services, which includes a Child Support Division charged with enforcing child support orders. “Otherwise, it falls to the taxpayer to support your child.”

In most cases, the tax rebates will total between \$300 and \$600 for individuals and \$600 to \$1,200 for taxpayers who file a joint return. The rebates are subject to offset for child support arrears just as with income tax refunds, Weir said. In each of the past two years, approximately 6,800 Hamilton County residents have their tax refunds confiscated to pay child support, totaling about \$13 million in collections (about \$6.5 million a year).

The Department’s Child Support Enforcement Agency handles about 92,000 cases a year. Last year, it collected \$142 million for families that might not otherwise have had the financial support necessary to pay for such items as food, medical care, child care, school clothes and school supplies. Many of the children who do not receive child support turn to public assistance, with taxpayers providing financial support.

In addition to intercepting tax returns, Hamilton County Child Support uses a variety of tools to collect child support, including issuing Most Wanted posters, denying passports, freezing and seizing funds from bank accounts, intercepting tax refunds and suspending licenses.

About Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services

The Department of Job and Family Services administers federal, state and local programs for those in need. The Department helps with local child protection, adult protection, child care, child support enforcement, workforce development, cash assistance, food stamp disbursement and Medicaid disbursement. Servicing Hamilton County since 1947, the Department helps hundreds of thousands of residents each year. The Department of Job and Family Services is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.