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Hamilton County Liens Yield \$1 million in Child Support Payments

Cincinnati (Dec. 15, 2008) Hamilton County recently passed the \$1 million mark in child support payments through its innovative lien program that targets the property of delinquent parents.

The program, which has been recognized by the Ohio Child Support Enforcement Agency Director's Association for its innovation, has resulted in 16,793 liens since its 2006 inception. Those liens have led to collections of \$1,054,455 for Hamilton County's children, said Moira Weir, director of Hamilton County's Job and Family Services, which is responsible for collecting child support.

"This is a tremendous tool for getting delinquent parents to honor their obligation to feed, clothe and house their children," she said. "Children shouldn't have to go to bed hungry or worry about whether they can buy the supplies they need for school. Every child deserves the basics needed to live a happy, healthy life."

Once a parent is legally determined to be in default on child support payments, the agency works with the Hamilton County Recorder's Office to have the lien filed against any real estate or other personal property the parent may own now or in the future, such as cars, bank accounts, inheritances. After the agency then places a lien on that property, the parent must pay off the arrearage and make arrangements to continue to pay the child support to have the lien removed.

"We're determined that the taxpayers should not have to foot the bill for delinquent parents and this is an innovative program that helps us hold them accountable," Weir said. "You'd be surprised how fast people pay up when you place a lien on their property. Cases that linger for years are paid in full within days. People who plead they don't have the money to support their children somehow come up with it right away."

Hamilton County's Child Support Enforcement Agency handles about 92,000 cases right now. 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 liens, the agency uses a variety of tools to help collect child support, including Most Wanted Posters, suspending driver's licenses, suspending professional licenses, garnishing wages, freezing and seizing funds from bank accounts, restricting passports and intercepting tax refunds.

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, elderly 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 each year and is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, an international, independent, not-for-profit child and family service accrediting organization.