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Online Chat for Public to Learn More About Child Support

Cincinnati (June 15, 2009) An assistant director in charge of child support enforcement at the Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services will answer questions and listen to concerns and ideas during a live online chat Wednesday, June 17.

Jeffrey Startzman will chat live with the public from 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. He will answer general questions about Child Support.

The Department's Child Support Enforcement Agency handled more than 88,000 cases and collected more than \$154 million last year for families that might not otherwise have had the money 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.

"Child Support touches the lives of more than a quarter of all Hamilton County residents and I'm eager to hear what is on their minds, and what questions they have," he said. "I will caution everyone that Child Support cases are confidential by law, so I cannot discuss individual cases in a public forum, but I'll be happy to provide as much general information as possible and will gladly follow up any cases privately."

Child Support customers in search of information on their individual cases can participate in live, personal chats from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. weekdays by visiting the agency's Web site, www.hcjfs.org, and clicking on Child Support under the Services tab. Customers can also get personal information by submitting questions using the online form under Contact Us.

To participate in the June 17 public chat, the public can click on a link that will be posted on www.hcjfs.org prior to the 2 p.m. start. Also, an e-mail will be sent to subscribers to the [HCJFS Update](#) newsletter and to followers of the agency on Facebook and Twitter (hamiltoncojfs). To sign up for the newsletter, visit www.hcjfs.org.

The chat is another attempt by the Department of Job and Family Services, which handles child support collection, child welfare and public assistance programs, to be more accessible and open to its consumers and the public at large. It follows recent moves such as stationing employees in neighborhood non-profits for easier access to services and establishing a Speaker's Bureau to help educate the public on how the agency does business.

"We serve hundreds of thousands of people in this county each year and we're always trying creative ways to reach out to them," said Moira Weir, director of the department. "Our goal is to be accessible, responsive and accountable."

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.