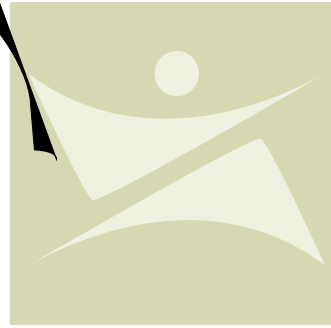


# A Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents



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# Preface

## **A Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents**

In 1994, Maine's Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery began a collaborative process with the Department of Human Services Training Institute to develop a competency model for child support enforcement agents. The competency model lays the foundation for a systematic program of professional development within the Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery (DSEER) which we term the "Competency Development Process" or CDP. The CDP establishes a partnership linking employee, supervisor and organization in a customized development plan that addresses emerging professional and organizational priorities.

This report on the competency model summarizes the work of developing the model and includes a description of the Department of Human Services Training Institute, its training model, the procedures for developing a competency model, and the Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents.

These materials are the result of a lengthy collaborative process among the public agency, the community and the state university system. Each of the partners in this process brings their own perspective and knowledge base as we pursue the common goal of improving the welfare of children in Maine. The competency model produced through this process is a living document, a work in progress which we continue to refine and adapt. In presenting this product to the field, our hope is that others throughout the country involved in similar work will benefit from our experience as they strive together to produce relevant materials for their own use.

Freda Bernotavicz  
Portland, Maine  
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# I. Overview

## A. Department of Human Services Training Institute (DHSTI)

Formally launched in 1992, DHSTI is a cooperative project between the Department of Human Services and the Muskie Institute of Public Affairs of the University of Southern Maine. The goal of the Institute is to enhance the professional development and organizational effectiveness of human services providers in order to improve the quality of services delivered to the people of Maine. While several states have implemented similar human services training programs in recent years, this Maine Institute has several unique features that influence its activities: collaboration, comprehensiveness, unifying themes, and a holistic approach to competencies.

### **Collaboration**

Agency personnel and Institute staff work as a team to design and deliver training consistent with agency priorities and reflective of the state of the art in adult learning. To ensure that training is incorporated as an essential element of the organization, all activities are designed and developed in a collaborative approach. The end-users of all training components provide information on their needs; the university provides technical assistance and guidance. With top-level administrative support and oversight, standing committees guide all activities related to developing and delivering training programs.

### **Comprehensiveness**

Training is viewed as an ongoing process of professional development that includes monitoring and reinforcing classroom learning and relating this to behavior on the job. Institute activities range from pre-service training, job shadowing, in-service workshops, and management training, to informal learning or participation in academic courses. The Institute also addresses issues of selection, retention, performance appraisal and organizational development.

### **Unifying Themes**

Six themes provide a unifying vision for the Institute, a way of communicating across institute activities, creating a sense of commonality through shared values and a sense of direction through articulating a set of principles to guide action. The themes are Self-responsibility, Striving for Excellence, Valuing Diverse Perspectives, Systems Thinking, Team Learning and Parallel Process (see Appendix A).

## Competency-Based

Training is based on a holistic view of the competencies needed for effective performance on the job. This holistic view includes both the specific job tasks, the individual performing the job and the organizational context.

**Tasks:** Jobs are more than a sum of the specific job tasks. Jobs are not static, but particularly in today's volatile work environment, made up of a variety of responsibilities which change in response to emerging needs of the organization. People do not perform tasks in a neat sequence, one at a time, but, in the real world of work, people juggle several tasks at once, shifting gears and setting priorities *in media res*. Thus, anticipating new priorities, collaborating with others and managing the workload are all essential job functions in addition to the specific tasks which form the core responsibilities. The mechanistic view of jobs, as a listing of job duties which can be defined in a job description, is being replaced by a more organic view of jobs as a fluid set of responsibilities.

Further, new organizational patterns are promoting the concept of inclusion and participation, recognizing that to be effective an organization needs input from all levels. As we move towards these new organizational structures, the concept of people performing specific tasks in isolation becomes less relevant. The concept of "contextual performance" recognizes that effective organizations need people who commit significant time and effort to extra-job activities such as volunteering on committees, mentoring new employees and supporting the organization's goals.

**Individual:** People at work are whole persons. We can think of individuals at work as being like icebergs. Above the surface, we can observe the knowledge, skills and abilities (often called the KSAs) needed to perform the job tasks, but below the surface are a number of personal characteristics (their attitudes, values, traits, motives) which influence how well they do their job as a whole. This entire range of KSAs and personal characteristics make up the competencies needed for effective performance.

Studies have shown that the competencies which distinguish outstanding performers, the "waterwalkers" or "stars" in a particular job or role, tend to be the underlying personal characteristics such as flexibility or results orientation rather than KSAs such as interviewing skills or the ability to operate a particular piece of equipment. Because the underlying personal characteristics are more difficult to change, it makes sense to screen and hire for individuals with the necessary underlying personal characteristics and train for the KSAs once people are on the job.

**Context:** Jobs are not performed in a vacuum but in specific organizational settings. The mission and goals of the organization, its customers or clients, policies, procedures, structure, culture and climate all impact on how the job is defined and therefore what constitutes effective job performance. Therefore, a holistic view of competencies also includes the contextual knowledge and skills needed to be effective in a specific organization.

Some of these contextual knowledge and skills are readily acquired in an orientation program. For example, the specific policies and procedures of the organization, the standard operating procedures (SOPs), the specific software program or information system, the organizational structure and reporting relationship are all appropriate content for on-the-job training. Other contextual skills are less easy to acquire on the job. For example, the organizational culture of an organization may require a degree of conformity and deference to authority which an otherwise qualified individual may not be able to demonstrate. In these instances, it is appropriate to identify the necessary contextual skills and to screen for them in the hiring process.

A systems view of job performance suggests a continual, dynamic interaction among these three major components: the **tasks** or job duties, the **individual** performing the job, and the organizational setting or **context**. A holistic view of competencies includes all three components. First, the KSAs which are needed to perform the tasks; second, the underlying personal characteristics that distinguish effective performers (the attitudes, values, traits and motives which drive people to action); and third, the context skills and knowledge needed in the specific organizational setting. Finally, linking all these skills (as a meta-competency), the Maine competency model emphasizes self-awareness and reflective practice as the basis for self-directed, ongoing learning to bridge the gap from the classroom to job performance in the real world of work.

## B. Components of a Holistic Competency Model

Developing a holistic competency model requires combining several different approaches to the analysis of job performance and to the collection of data.

**Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs):** The functional or task-related knowledge and skills are developed through task analysis using both on-site observation and expert opinion. Here the focus is on generating detailed listings of the job duties and then identifying what people need to know or to be able to do in order to perform these tasks. People familiar with the job (incumbents, supervisors or trainers), the so-called Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), are used to identifying this information.

**Personal Characteristics:** The characteristics of outstanding performers are generated through a different technique known as the Behavioral Event Interview. Using a structured approach, trained interviewers probe beneath the surface to articulate the underlying characteristics of individuals who have been identified as being outstanding at their particular job.

**Context Knowledge and Skills:** The identification of the context knowledge and skills requires yet another approach. Here the unit of analysis moves from the specific job tasks to the organizational setting. Some of this information is drawn from organizational data in

policy and procedures manuals. Surveys or focus groups provide more in-depth information on the organizational culture and climate.

This holistic approach to competency identification results in a competency model which has five categories:

- (1) **Work Management Skills:** Performing effectively in the work context.
- (2) **Conceptual Skills:** Using information effectively.
- (3) **Interpersonal Skills:** Relating to others effectively.
- (4) **Self Management Skills:** Effective use of self in the job.
- (5) **Technical Knowledge:** Information necessary to perform the job tasks.

Each category contains a list of competencies with specific indicators that demonstrate performance.

Data from each of the different approaches are combined and redundancies eliminated. The resulting model is then reviewed and validated by focus groups familiar with the job in question. Such reviews ensure that both concepts and language accurately reflect the experience of those most knowledgeable about effective performance. Furthermore, the reviews reflect the Institute's commitment to shared ownership.

In this holistic approach, effectiveness on the job is viewed as a process, a constant spiral of learning, growth and renewal which stems from the individual's inner core of competencies, her or his attitudes, values and motives. Because training can address this inner core only to a limited extent, the responsibility for the on-going process of effectiveness must rest with each individual.

A holistic approach also recognizes that effective functioning in the real world of work involves the capacity to learn from experience and to manage change. The truly competent professional is engaged in an ongoing process of self-assessment and reflective practice, competencies that are emphasized throughout the training offered by the Institute as well as modeled by the trainers. In this constant spiral of learning and growth, of reflecting upon and learning from experience, the individual is engaged in a continual process of becoming competent at being competent.

## II. Development of a Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents

### A. Approach

The approach described above was used to develop a competency model for the training of child support enforcement agents.

#### **Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities Needed to Perform the Job Tasks**

The training model focuses first on the specific tasks or duties that make up a job or role. In Maine, all job descriptions in the state system are written using a modified functional job analysis approach. Thus the basic task data were already available. This was used as the basis for generating a listing of the technical knowledge required to be a child support enforcement agent.

#### **Characteristics of Outstanding Performers**

This component of the training model attempts to get below the surface of observable behavior to identify the personal characteristics (e.g. values, motives, traits) that distinguish people who are outstanding in the particular role. Typically in Institute training programs, this component is developed by Delphi Consultants, private consultants who are trained and certified by McBer and Company of Boston in the Behavioral Event Interview. After interviewing outstanding performers, consultants analyze the data to identify an array of competencies that distinguish excellent performance.

To identify the interview sample for this training program, peers and supervisors were asked to nominate outstanding support enforcement agents. Nominations were based on three criteria: excellent skills as an enforcement agent, outstanding record in caseload management, and ability to obtain results in all areas of endeavor. A group of 17 interviewees were selected. They represented different regional areas in the state and different program areas, and included both men and women. Consultants conducted two-hour, tape-recorded interviews with individuals who described key events in their experience as support enforcement agents. Detailed analysis of the transcripts produced a listing of competencies or personal characteristics that distinguished effective agents. Interview data provided specific indicators for each competency and were grouped in the four categories of Work-Management Skills, Conceptual Skills, Interpersonal Skills, and Self-Management Skills.

## **Context Skills**

Context skills identify the competencies required to function effectively in a specific organizational setting. To complete the picture of the competencies needed for effective performance in the Maine Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery, information about the specific context knowledge needed was collected from the agency's Policy Manual and mission statement, as well as from federal and state statutes. In addition, a survey was mailed to 36 agents and supervisors, asking them to rate a listing of the organizational issues (mission, policy and procedures, professional standards, external environment, and culture/ climate) which impact on job performance in the agency. Analysis of their responses produced a list of context skills (e.g., enlisting participation of supervisors in especially difficult court appearances) that was incorporated into the competency model — primarily in the category of Work Management Skills.

## **Self Assessment and Reflective Practice**

The competency listing was reviewed to ensure adequate representation of self assessment and reflective practice skills, especially in the category of Self-Management Skills.

## **B. Review and Verification**

Once the competency model had been developed, members of a focus group from the Division of Support Enforcement and Recovery reviewed and revised the entire listing. These reviews resulted in changing the language to make it more reflective of the target audience, and in building familiarity and ownership of the competencies. The category of Technical Knowledge was refined considerably as a result of this process. The final listing of 28 competencies and behavioral indicators is included as Appendix B.

# III. Competencies in Context

## A. Approach

The Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents was presented to agents and managers throughout DSER at their annual training conference in July of 1994. In a group discussion, the model was acknowledged as having face validity, i.e., it reflected the competencies the group perceived as important to job effectiveness. The competencies in the area of Work Management, specifically Organizing Skills and Investigating Skills, were identified as most important to outstanding performance.

A number of agents felt it would be helpful to attach specific competencies to agents' major job roles. A work group composed of agents and facilitated by DHSTI staff defined five major job roles for agents: locating, paternity, case establishment, enforcement, and case maintenance. Reviewing the competency model, the work group designated competency indicators important for each job role. (See Appendix C.)

Working from this data, DHSTI staff derived information about various competencies and behavioral indicators which has implications for screening, training and professional development. For example, some job roles require a greater number of competencies than others: 13 competencies were identified for case establishment, 21 for enforcement. Some competencies are concentrated in a single job role, while others are widely used; for example, negotiating behaviors are needed only for enforcement, whereas analytic thinking is spread across four job roles. The data allowed staff to identify the top 16 weighted competencies which are required in three or more job roles:

### **Work Management**

Role Clarity  
Organizing Skills  
Investigating Skills

### **Interpersonal**

Interpersonal Sensitivity  
Communication Skills

### **Conceptual**

Analytic Thinking  
Creative Thinking

### **Technical**

Statutes/Regulations  
Court — Judicial  
Computer Proficiency  
Administrative Hearings  
Case Management

### **Self Management**

Job Commitment  
Self-Discipline  
Stress Management  
Self-Development

## B. Applications

Data derived from linking competencies to specific job functions can be used in a number of areas:

1. **Developing criteria for screening new hires:** designing job samples; interview questions; candidate rating sheets; assessing job applicants.
2. **Developing individual competency development plans:** specifying prior learning and experience; planning for pre- and in-service learning outcomes; designing ongoing professional development.
3. **Designing curriculum:** identifying specific competencies to be addressed in training interventions; obtaining competency-based individual/group profiles for training events; designing training activities to develop competencies.
4. **Evaluating performance:** linking performance appraisal and promotion with competency-based professional development plans; using competencies to identify and address performance problems.
5. **Developing competency profiles of the organization:** arraying data on competency-based learning outcomes and needs assessments in reports to supervisors, managers, policy makers, committees, trainers.

Competencies have also been used to develop training interventions for agents. In the spring of 1995, a work group comprising agents and DHSTI staff developed an interview skills training which included a competency-based self-rating checklist (see Appendix D) to be used by participants at the outset of training; this checklist highlighted the competencies addressed by the training and allowed participants to develop individual learning goals based on their self-ratings. It provided the basis for post-training evaluation of competency-based learning outcomes, and will be used in a three-month follow-up to assess transfer of learning by training participants.

The Department of Human Services Training Institute has begun work with DSER and other state agencies to develop specific applications in some of these areas. For example, materials were recently developed for screening child welfare caseworker applicants; these include a competency-based interview and a job sample providing data on competencies which have been identified by the Bureau of Child and Family Services' staff as important in staff selection. DHSTI plans to work with DSER on similar materials for screening potential agents.

As mentioned in the preface to this report, the competency model is a work in progress. It is designed to help support enforcement agents think about what it takes to do the work with which they are engaged day-to-day. As the model is reexamined, rearranged, and applied in new and different ways, it becomes increasingly meaningful and useful to support enforcement professionals.



# Appendix A

## Unifying Themes of the Institute

### Unifying Themes

#### 1) **Self-Responsibility**

**Slogans:** *“Take ownership,” “Be proactive.”*

Being responsible for self means being knowledgeable enough about ourselves, our perspectives, our behaviors, and our values that we can discern our effect on others. It also means owning our actions and words. Self-responsibility is a quest for continual learning achieved through an on-going process of reflection—discovering the gap between what we say and what we do. Self-responsibility means taking a proactive stance within the organization, figuring out what needs to be done, helping to create and shape the work environment.

#### 2) **Striving for Excellence**

**Slogans:** *“Provide quality,” “Can do!”*

We have a responsibility to identify and build on our own strengths as well as those of our colleagues. Although we work in a world where the demands made on us are often unrealistic, we must resist the temptation to use organizational realities as an excuse for failing to provide quality services. We must approach challenges creatively, identifying and removing barriers to quality services, rather than accepting problems and frustration as the norm. With clients as well as with colleagues, it is essential to have the expectation that, through collaborative efforts, situations can be managed and problems can be solved.

#### 3) **Valuing Diverse Perspectives**

**Slogan:** *“Recognize mental models — your own and others’.”*

We all carry around internal pictures of how the world works; these mental models influence what we do because they influence what we see. Recognizing the characteristics of different personal styles and different learning styles helps us to see more sharply the strengths and limits of our own mental models. When we affirm the reality of multiple mental models we open the way to draw on the resources of this variety — to engage in productive advocacy and inquiry.

#### 4) **Systems Thinking**

**Slogans:** *“Look at the big picture,” “Tension is natural.”*

We work in a world of tension, in which we are constantly faced by multiple demands from different interest groups both within our organization and within the larger community. Dealing with these multiple demands calls for systems thinking: looking at the “big picture” rather than at separate events or individuals, and taking a long view which includes the future as well as the immediate present. This focus on interactions and on dynamics creates a climate for action that emphasizes causes rather than symptoms. When we take a systems view and when we recognize that tension is a catalyst for positive change, we can lay the groundwork for high quality problem solving.

#### 5 **Team Learning**

**Slogans:** *“Communicate,” “No blaming!”*

Teamwork means aligning ourselves with others who have different responsibilities and, perhaps, different priorities. Dialogue and discussion are tools to help us value these differences; effective teamwork is based on open, clear communication. When we collaborate we consolidate the energies of individuals who, in diverse ways, share and work towards the same goals. In working together, we need to extend compassion to ourselves, colleagues, supervisors and administrators as well as to clients. We need to work to solve problems without placing blame on people. It is essential to assume that we all are working toward the same goals; we all want good things for people.

#### 6) **Parallel Process**

**Slogans:** *“Model positive behavior,” “Stop the negative process.”*

Both positive and negative attitudes, values, ways of interacting with and treating one another at one organizational level tend to be repeated at other levels. Organizational culture, climate and structure have a powerful effect on our behavior. In addition, much of what we learn comes through the modeling of behaviors, although frequently this takes place at an unconscious level. Wherever we are in the organization, we should take responsibility to model positive behaviors and stop negative parallel processes. Continued efforts to practice the unifying themes will promote more conscious and more positive modeling of behavior.

# Appendix B

## Competency Model for Child Support Enforcement Agents

### Outline

#### **I. WORK MANAGEMENT**

1. Role Clarity
2. Organizing Skills
3. Investigating Skills
4. Strategic Influence
5. Negotiating Skills

#### **II. INTERPERSONAL**

6. Interpersonal Sensitivity
7. Communication Skills
8. Building Rapport
9. Teamwork
10. Cultural Sensitivity

#### **III. COGNITIVE**

11. Analytical Thinking
12. Creative Thinking

#### **IV. SELF-MANAGEMENT**

13. Job Commitment
14. Achievement Motivation
15. Self-Confidence
16. Self-Discipline
17. Stress Management
18. Self-Development

#### **V. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE**

19. Statutory & Regulatory Bases
20. Caseload Management
21. Automated Enforcement
22. Administrative Enforcement
23. Court/Judicial System
24. Administrative Hearings
25. Occupational Information
26. Financial Information
27. Mathematical/Accounting Proficiency
28. Computer Proficiency



# Child Support Enforcement Agent Competency Model

## I. WORK MANAGEMENT

### 01.00 Role Clarity

- 01.01 Maintains a focus on the establishment of child support obligation and the collection of past due child support to advance the financial welfare of children, families and taxpayers.
- 01.02 Clarifies agency roles and responsibilities (to clients and absent parents, court personnel, hearing officers, etc.).
- 01.03 Sets clear expectations and boundaries with others about what an agent and the system can or cannot do.
- 01.04 Informs people of their legal responsibilities, rights and obligations, and agency processes and procedures.
- 01.05 Sets clear parameters for own role and responsibilities in handling the workload.

### 02.00 Organizing Skills

- 02.01 Structures work to maximize quantity without sacrificing quality; thinks through agendas, procedures, etc. in order to make the most efficient use of time (e.g., organizing documentation, computer records, and paperwork; sequencing tasks).
- 02.02 Sorts and assigns an order and level of effort for attending to cases and tasks; sets priorities for efficiently managing individual caseload and associated responsibilities of the job.
- 02.03 Uses a personal time management system to pace work and develop a case management style for juggling multiple tasks and handling interruptions and distractions (e.g., dedicates blocks of time for specific activities).
- 02.04 Systematizes routine transactions to improve efficiency and free up time for high-pay-off activities; manages client/absent parent interaction through telephone scheduling.
- 02.05 Identifies process problems and inefficiencies and takes steps to cope with them.
- 02.06 Anticipates problems and takes pre-emptive action to prevent their occurrence.
- 02.07 Engages in detailed planning and preparation for effective court appearances, meetings, mediations, hearings (e.g., reviews case history, anticipates questions, reviews the law, assembles back-up documentation, rehearses court appearances, etc.).

02.08 Periodically reviews workload and adjusts priorities in accordance with most recent developments and information.

### **03.00 Investigating Skills**

- 03.01 Makes optimal use of computer resources to obtain information and to identify problems.
- 03.02 Is rigorous and thorough in uncovering leads and checking out clues for locating people and their financial assets (e.g., Motor Vehicles accident reports; Worker's Compensation).
- 03.03 Taps multiple and non-traditional information sources; uses creativity to push beyond obvious sources of information; knows when all resources are exhausted.
- 03.04 Enlists clients in the investigation; uses the information they provide as a primary resource.
- 03.05 Stays alert for tips from various resources such as employers and clients; notes specifics and follows up on the information obtained.
- 03.06 Uses effective questioning strategies to maximize the amount of useful information gathered (e.g., diffuses anxiety and opens up dialogue, questions with follow-up probes).
- 03.07 Develops a sophisticated awareness of the games people play to escape their child support obligations and of agent strategies for thwarting them.

### **04.00 Strategic Influence**

- 04.01 Approaches situations with a clear mental image or scenario that includes the environment or setting, characteristics of the people involved, one's own role and image, and the purpose of the encounter.
- 04.02 Selects and times influence strategies based on insights into how people will react (e.g., stops pressing for closure temporarily until an irate or emotionally unstable person regains composure).
- 04.03 Uses well reasoned, factual statements to gain support, (e.g., presenting data, explaining the likely consequences of actions and decisions or emphasizing legal obligations).
- 04.04 Engages people's sense of responsibility in gaining cooperation (e.g., helps absent parents see situations from a realistic perspective in terms of the children's welfare).
- 04.05 Enlists management and third parties to strengthen own position or to gain compliance (e.g., enlists the participation of supervisors in especially difficult court appearances).

### **05.00 Negotiating Skills**

- 05.01 Makes sound judgments about what is a good offer or solution for each party to a negotiation.
- 05.02 Works for mutually beneficial (“win-win”) decisions and agreements.
- 05.03 Is flexible in making payment arrangements with absent parents; attempts to accommodate the needs of the parent without compromising the needs of the client or department.
- 05.04 Knows when to push people, when to back off and when to stand firm.

## **II. INTERPERSONAL**

### **06.00 Interpersonal Sensitivity**

- 06.01 Shows respect for others as people; understands the impact of department actions on people’s lives and livelihoods.
- 06.02 Avoids stereotyping people or pre-judging situations; seeks to understand others.
- 06.03 Anticipates how individuals or groups will respond (e.g., how receptive a person will be to a suggestion).
- 06.04 Empathizes with the feelings and perspective of others; can view situations from another’s point of view.
- 06.05 Exercises utmost caution to protect clients in keeping sources of information confidential.
- 06.06 Refers clients in need to support resources that can assist them.
- 06.07 Shows consideration for others when requesting information or advice, recognizing their job responsibilities and time constraints, and expressing appreciation for their help.

### **07.00 Communication Skills**

- 07.01 Assures that people get the information they need to be effective (e.g., clients, attorneys, absent parents, colleagues).
- 07.02 Assures that communications are timely (e.g., alerts people promptly to important upcoming events).
- 07.03 Tailors communications style to people’s backgrounds, taking individual differences into account (e.g., with clients, avoids agency acronyms, uses familiar analogies and frames of reference, etc.).

- 07.04 Listens to or reads attentively all messages (oral, written, or electronic) to ensure a full grasp of the meaning.
- 07.05 Accurately interprets non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, aspects of personal appearance, etc.).
- 07.06 Uses telephone communications effectively as an extension of face-to-face communications (e.g., to solicit full information; to build rapport).

### **08.00 Building Rapport**

- 08.01 Takes time to get to know people, to encourage cooperation.
- 08.02 Recognizes importance of building good working relationships with clients; views clients as useful resources.
- 08.03 Follows through on commitments to others as a means of building trust and credibility.
- 08.04 Involves clients and absent parents in negotiations in order to build rapport and commitment.

### **09.00 Teamwork**

- 09.01 Creates links among people to facilitate direct dialogue and first-hand information sharing.
- 09.02 Treats fellow workers as teammates; works to enhance cooperation and good will across the agency; builds positive working relationships with others based on mutual trust and respect.
- 09.03 Lends support to others when they need it; volunteers to help out in crises; volunteers one's expertise in coaching and advising colleagues.
- 09.04 Seeks the input and advice of knowledgeable people to help clarify issues or solve problems (e.g., bounces ideas off supervisors when in doubt or dead-ended; confers with other agencies).
- 09.05 Puts agency problems and issues on the table and encourages working collaboratively to resolve them.
- 09.06 Respects the roles and responsibilities of others (e.g., is careful not to usurp the roles nor undermine the credibility of others; keeps supervisors informed of sensitive issues).
- 09.07 Shares accolades and recognition with people who contributed to successes; thanks people for their support.

### **10.00 Cultural Sensitivity**

- 10.01 Cross-Cultural Diversity — Understands and is able to identify differences in cultural, ethnic, and religious values, perceptions, customs and behaviors.
- 10.02 Cross-Cultural Interactions — Understands and is able to identify ways of communicating and establishing relationships with clients from cultural backgrounds different from one's own.

## **III. COGNITIVE**

### **11.00 Analytical Thinking**

- 11.01 Recognizes patterns or trends; makes accurate conclusions based on observations over time.
- 11.02 Recognizes and responds to deviations from normal trends and patterns.
- 11.03 Accurately identifies the key variables that define a problem or predict an outcome.
- 11.04 Analyzes complex problems by separating out different components and identifying the most productive step-by-step approach for addressing them.

### **12.00 Creative Thinking**

- 12.01 Thinks through the implications of situations and events, and weighs the pros and cons of options.
- 12.02 Thinks divergently and imaginatively about options and possibilities before arriving at answers or solutions.
- 12.03 Thinks through options and possible scenarios to determine “best approaches.”
- 12.04 Connects seemingly unrelated information from diverse sources into a coherent whole. (“Solves the jigsaw puzzle.”)

## **IV. SELF-MANAGEMENT**

### **13.00 Job Commitment**

- 13.01 Has strong commitment to the job and conviction about its important contribution to society.

- 13.02 Takes responsibility for projecting and maintaining a professional image for the department and the role of enforcement agent; recognizes political implications and need for diplomacy.
- 13.03 Understands and acts within the full scope and boundaries of authority granted to enforcement agents.
- 13.04 Assures that work adheres to legal standards and guidelines.
- 13.05 Takes responsibility for solving problems or seeing things through to completion.

#### **14.00 Achievement Motivation**

- 14.01 Sets high standards for own performance; goes above and beyond what is expected; aims to “work the job rather than let the job work you.”
- 14.02 Enjoys the “puzzles and mysteries” of the job; is energized by the challenge of constructing “winning” strategies.
- 14.03 Sets up a variety of indicators to gauge success; enjoys the feedback of success in collections.
- 14.04 Stays focused on larger goals and what must be done daily to achieve them.
- 14.05 Sets goals and priorities for managing cases, and continually strives to reduce the size of own caseload over time.

#### **15.00 Self-Confidence**

- 15.01 Takes pride in own expertise, and believes in own ability to handle situations and make sound decisions.
- 15.02 Accepts criticism without loss of self-esteem and without responding defensively.
- 15.03 Takes a strong stand on issues important to the job.
- 15.04 Stands firm in the face of intimidation; holds own ground.
- 15.05 Is assertive in locating and securing the resources needed to get things done.

#### **16.00 Self-Discipline**

- 16.01 Stays calm and consistent when confronted, under attack, or in high-stress situations (e.g., views angry tirades against the agency and oneself as part of the Enforcement Agent’s job; does not interpret this anger as a personal attack).
- 16.02 Inhibits impulses to do or say inappropriate things, and substitutes more appropriate behavior.

- 16.03 Monitors own personal values and biases so that they do not undermine objectivity and professionalism.
- 16.04 Shows patience and perseverance in working for desired results.

### **17.00 Stress Management**

- 17.01 Shows resilience by accepting change or disruption as a natural part of life; bouncing back from disappointments; using strong sense of purpose to avoid dwelling on negative situations or events.
- 17.02 Finds ways to stay centered and positive; effectively copes with the stress caused by interruptions, competing demands upon one's time and case overload; leaves stress of the job at the workplace.
- 17.03 Shows flexibility and ingenuity in face of obstacles.
- 17.04 Finds ways to relieve the inevitable tensions of the job and to maintain equilibrium (e.g., cultivates a sense of humor; acknowledges achievements).
- 17.05 Contributes to making the work environment a positive place.
- 17.06 Keeps own achievement drive within reasonable bounds; recognizes that results can only be achieved over time and with patience.
- 17.07 Seeks support in times of trouble to stay effective in the job.

### **18.00 Self-Development**

- 18.01 Understands own strengths, limitations, values, and biases.
- 18.02 Enhances his/her professional expertise and skills.
- 18.03 Reflects on and learns from previous successes and failures.
- 18.04 Maintains an open mind toward change.
- 18.05 Seeks out and learns from expertise of colleagues.

## **V. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE**

### **19.00 Statutory and Regulatory Bases**

- 19.01 **Statutory and Regulatory Base** — Understands the basis in federal and state law, regulations and rules for the operation of the support enforcement program.
- 19.02 **Knowledge of Relevant Statutes** — Knows the statutes related to the support enforcement program, how to reference them, and their relationship to other laws.

- 19.03 **Definitions and Concepts** — Understands legal definitions and concepts and is able to apply them to support enforcement and judicial process.
- 19.04 **Ethical Issues** — Understands the policy requirements of ethical practice and ramifications to staff and clients when this does not occur.

## **20.00 Caseload Management**

- 20.01 **Caseload Management Principles** — Knows the rationale and requirements for the sequence of prescribed procedures.
- 20.02 **Caseload Management Procedures** — Knows and is able to apply procedures for: case initiation, location of absent parent; establishment of paternity; identification of assets; establishment of support; enforcement and monitoring compliance; probation revocation or termination; and case termination.
- 20.03 **Definitions and Concepts** — Understands procedural definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to caseload management.
- 20.04 **Central Office** — Knows central office administrative roles and responsibilities: Case Review, DOL, State Tax, Automated Actions, Certificates of Liens and UCC.
- 20.05 **Documentation** — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.

## **21.00 Automated Enforcement**

- 21.01 **Policy Base** — Understands the basis in policy for automated enforcement actions.
- 21.02 **Automated Actions** — Knows and is able to apply specific procedures for: federal tax offset, state tax offset, credit bureau reporting, unemployment compensation offset, and lottery offsets.
- 21.03 **Definitions and Concepts** — Understands policy definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to automated enforcement actions.
- 21.04 **Documentation** — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.

## **22.00 Administrative Enforcement**

- 22.01 **Policy Base** — Understands the basis in policy for administrative enforcement actions.
- 22.02 **Administrative Actions** — Knows and is able to apply policies and procedures for: certificates of lien, order to withhold and deliver, wage assignment, license revocation/payment agreement, and IRS certification.

- 22.03 **Definitions and Concepts** — Understands policy definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to administrative enforcement actions.
- 22.04 **Documentation** — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.
- 23.00 **Court/Judicial System**
- 23.01 **Legal System** — Knows jurisdictions of various courts that deal with support enforcement.
- 23.02 **Procedures and Process** — Knows and is able to apply legal procedures including basic rules of evidence, how to testify, court etiquette, standards of proof and preparation for court.
- 23.03 **Legal Terminology** — Knows and can utilize basic legal terminology.
- 23.04 **Court-Ordered Actions** — Knows and is able to apply specific procedures for: criminal non-support, contempt of court (civil), immediate income withholding order, seizure of assets, judgment on arrears, writ of execution, probationary proceedings, and federal prosecution.
- 23.05 **Legal Records** — Knows and is able to access legal records: Registry of Deeds, Probate Court and pending court cases.
- 23.06 **Documentation** — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.

#### **24.00 Administrative Hearings**

- 24.01 **Administrative Hearings System** — Knows administrative hearings system that deals with support enforcement and process for initial and review hearings.
- 24.02 **Procedures and Process** — Knows and is able to apply administrative hearings process and procedures including preparation for hearing, rules of evidence, cross examination, standards of proof, hearing etiquette, presentation and implementation of findings.
- 23.03 **Definitions and Concepts** — Understands legal definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to administrative actions.
- 23.04 **Documentation** — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.

#### **25.00 Occupational Information**

- 25.01 **Standard Occupations** — Knows structure and financing of a variety of occupations including licensing requirements, wage and salary structures, places of work, how to access listings of employers and corporations.

- 25.02 **Non-standard Occupations** — Knows structure and financing of a variety of non-standard occupations indigenous to Maine (e.g. lumber, fishing), including licensing requirements, wage and compensation structures, places of work.
- 25.03 **Self Employment** — Knows structure and financing of self-employment, including tax issues and reporting requirements.

## **26.00 Financial Information**

- 26.01 **Income Taxes** — Knows and can interpret state and federal income tax information including reporting requirements, forms, exemptions.
- 26.02 **Bankruptcy** — Knows bankruptcy chapters and the implications for support enforcement.
- 26.03 **Real Estate and Excise Taxes** — Knows process and requirements for assessing and paying real estate and excise taxes and is able to access information on property values and additions.
- 26.04 **Financial Resources** — Knows and is able to access and interpret sources of information on financial resources: profit and loss statements, mortgages, loan and bank applications, credit card applications, credit bureau reports.

## **27.00 Mathematical/Accounting Proficiency**

- 27.01 **Calculations** — Understands procedures and is able to make arithmetic calculations involving decimals and percentages.
- 27.02 **Accounting** — Understands and is able to read and interpret financial records (including income tax returns, business profit and lost statements).
- 27.03 **Support Computation** — Understands and is able to apply procedures to compute obligations, payments, and debt.
- 27.04 **Advanced Financials** — Understands and is able to interpret computerized financial records, how cashiers account for financial obligations.

## **28.00 Computer Proficiency**

- 28.01 **Computer Concepts, Terminology and Uses** — Understands and is able to apply basic Honeywell and NECSES terminology and describe uses.
- 28.02 **Keyboarding** — Understands and is able to apply keyboarding ability to access and process information.
- 28.03 **Case Management Applications** — Understands and is able to utilize NECSES as a tool for case management (e.g., ticklers, notepads, form letters).

# Appendix C

## Competencies by Job Function for Child Support Enforcement Agents

LOC=Location      PAT=Paternity      EST=Establishment & Review  
 ENF=Enforcement      C.MGT=Caseload Management

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>I. WORK MANAGEMENT</b>						
<b>01.00 Role Clarity</b>						
01.01	Maintains a focus on the establishment of child support obligation and the collection of past due child support to advance the financial welfare of children, families and taxpayers.			•	•	
01.02	Clarifies agency roles and responsibilities (to clients and absent parents, court personnel, hearing officers, etc.).		•			
01.03	Sets clear expectations and boundaries with others about what an agent and the system can or cannot do.					•
01.04	Informs people of their legal responsibilities, rights and obligations, and agency processes and procedures.	•	•	•	•	
01.05	Sets clear parameters for own role and responsibilities in handling the workload.	•				•
<b>02.00 Organizing Skills</b>						
02.01	Structures work to maximize quantity without sacrificing quality; thinks through agendas, procedures, etc. in order to make the most efficient use of time (e.g., organizing documentation, computer records, and paperwork; sequencing tasks).			•		•
02.02	Sorts and assigns an order and level of effort for attending to cases and tasks; sets priorities for efficiently managing his/her caseload and associated responsibilities of the job.				•	•
02.03	Uses a personal time management system to pace work and develop a case management style for juggling multiple tasks and handling interruptions and distractions (e.g., dedicates blocks of time for specific activities).					•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
02.04	Systematizes routine transactions to improve efficiency and free up time for high-pay-off activities; manages client/absent parent interaction through telephone scheduling.	•	•			•
02.05	Identifies process problems and inefficiencies and takes steps to cope with them.					•
02.06	Anticipates problems and takes pre-emptive action to prevent their occurrence.					•
02.07	Engages in detailed planning and preparation for effective court appearances, meetings, mediations, hearings (e.g., reviews case history, anticipates questions, reviews the law, assembles back-up documentation, rehearses court appearances, etc.).		•	•		
02.08	Periodically reviews workload and adjusts priorities in accordance with most recent developments and information.					•
<b>03.00 Investigating Skills</b>						
03.01	Makes optimal use of computer resources to obtain information and to identify problems.	•		•		•
03.02	Is rigorous and thorough in uncovering leads and checking out clues for locating people and their financial assets (e.g., Motor Vehicle accident reports; Worker's Compensation).	•			•	
03.03	Taps multiple and non-traditional information sources; uses creativity to push beyond obvious sources of information; knows when all resources are exhausted.	•				
03.04	Enlists clients in the investigation; uses the information they provide as a primary resource.	•	•			
03.05	Stays alert for tips from various resources such as employers and clients; notes specifics and follows up on the information obtained.	•				
03.06	Uses effective questioning strategies to maximize the amount of useful information gathered (e.g., diffuses anxiety and opens up dialogue, questions with follow-up probes).	•	•	•		
03.07	Develops a sophisticated awareness of the games people play to escape their child support obligations and of agent strategies for thwarting them.	•				

	LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>04.00 Strategic Influence</b>					
04.01 Approaches situations with a clear mental image or scenario that includes the environment or setting, characteristics of the people involved, one's own role and image, and the purpose of the encounter.			•		
04.02 Selects and times influence strategies based on insights into how people will react (e.g. stops pressing for closure temporarily until an irate or emotionally unstable person regains composure).			•		
04.03 Uses well-reasoned, factual statements to gain support, (e.g., presenting data, explaining the likely consequences of actions and decisions or emphasizing legal obligations).		•	•		
04.04 Engages people's sense of responsibility in gaining cooperation (e.g., helps absent parents see situations from a realistic perspective in terms of the children's welfare).	•	•		•	
04.05 Enlists management and third parties to strengthen own position or to gain compliance (e.g., enlists the participation of supervisors in especially difficult court appearances).					
<b>05.00 Negotiating Skills</b>					
05.01 Makes sound judgments about what is a good offer or solution for each party to a negotiation.				•	
05.02 Works for mutually beneficial ("win-win") decisions and agreements.				•	
05.03 Is flexible in making payment arrangements with absent parents; attempts to accommodate the needs of the parent without compromising the needs of the client or department.				•	
05.04 Knows when to push people, when to back off and when to stand firm.				•	
<b>II. INTERPERSONAL</b>					
<b>06.00 Interpersonal Sensitivity</b>					
06.01 Shows respect for others as people; understands the impact of department actions on people's lives and livelihoods.		•			
06.02 Avoids stereotyping people or pre-judging situations; seeks to understand others.		•			
06.03 Anticipates how individuals or groups will respond (e.g., how receptive a person will be to a suggestion).	•	•			

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
06.04	Empathizes with the feelings and perspective of others; can view situations from another's point of view.		•			
06.05	Exercises utmost caution to protect clients in keeping sources of information confidential.	•	•			
06.06	Refers clients in need to support resources that can assist them.					•
06.07	Shows consideration for others when requesting information or advice, recognizing their job responsibilities and time constraints, and expressing appreciation for their help.	•				
<b>07.00 Communication Skills</b>						
07.01	Assures that people get the information they need to be effective (e.g., clients, attorneys, absent parents, colleagues).		•	•		
07.02	Assures that communications are timely (e.g., alerts people promptly to important upcoming events).		•	•	•	
07.03	Tailors communications style to people's backgrounds, taking individual differences into account (e.g., with clients, avoids agency acronyms, uses familiar analogies and frames of reference, etc.).	•	•	•		
07.04	Listens to or reads attentively all messages (oral, written, or electronic) to ensure a full grasp of the meaning.	•		•		
07.05	Accurately interprets non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, aspects of personal appearance, etc.).	•	•			
07.06	Uses telephone communications effectively as an extension of face-to-face communications (e.g., to solicit full information, to build rapport).	•	•		•	
<b>08.00 Building Rapport</b>						
08.01	Takes time to get to know people, to encourage cooperation.		•			
08.02	Recognizes importance of building good working relationships with clients; views clients as useful resources.	•	•			
08.03	Follows through on commitments to others as a means of building trust and credibility.	•	•			
08.04	Involves clients and absent parents in negotiations in order to build rapport and commitment.					

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>09.00 Teamwork</b>						
09.01	Creates links among people to facilitate direct dialogue and first-hand information sharing.	•				•
09.02	Treats fellow workers as teammates; works to enhance cooperation and good will across the agency; builds positive working relationships with others based on mutual trust and respect.					
09.03	Lends support to others when they need it; volunteers to help out in crises; volunteers own expertise in coaching and advising colleagues.					
09.04	Seeks the input and advice of knowledgeable people to help clarify issues or solve problems (e.g. bounces ideas off supervisors when in doubt or dead-ended; confers with other agencies).					•
09.05	Puts agency problems and issues on the table and encourages working collaboratively to resolve them.					
09.06	Respects the roles and responsibilities of others (e.g., is careful not to usurp the roles nor undermine the credibility of others; keeps supervisors informed of sensitive issues).					•
09.07	Shares accolades and recognition with people who contributed to successes; thanks people for their support.					
<b>10.00 Cultural Sensitivity</b>						
10.01	Cross-cultural Diversity: Understands and is able to identify differences in cultural, ethnic, and religious values, perceptions, customs and behaviors.		•			
10.02	Cross-cultural Interactions: Understands and is able to identify ways of communicating and establishing relationships with clients from cultural backgrounds different from one's own.		•			
<b>III. COGNITIVE</b>						
<b>11.00 Analytical Thinking</b>						
11.01	Recognizes patterns or trends; makes accurate conclusions based on observations over time.	•				•
11.02	Recognizes and responds to deviations from normal trends and patterns.			•		
11.03	Accurately identifies the key variables that define a problem or predict an outcome.			•	•	•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
11.04	Analyzes complex problems by separating out different components and identifying the most productive step-by-step approach for addressing them.	•				
<b>12.00 Creative Thinking</b>						
12.01	Thinks through the implications of situations and events, and weighs the pros and cons of options.				•	•
12.02	Thinks divergently and imaginatively about options and possibilities before arriving at answers or solutions.	•			•	•
12.03	Thinks through options and possible scenarios to determine “best approaches.”	•			•	•
12.04	Connects seemingly unrelated information from diverse sources into a coherent whole. (“Solves the jigsaw puzzle.”)	•				•
<b>IV. SELF-MANAGEMENT</b>						
<b>13.00 Job Commitment</b>						
13.01	Has strong commitment to the job and conviction about its important contribution to society.					•
13.02	Takes responsibility for projecting and maintaining a professional image for the department and the role of enforcement agent; recognizes political implications and need for diplomacy.	•				
13.03	Understands and acts within the full scope and boundaries of authority granted to Enforcement Agents.	•		•	•	
13.04	Assures that work adheres to legal standards and guidelines.	•	•	•	•	•
13.05	Takes responsibility for solving problems or seeing things through to completion.				•	•
<b>14.00 Achievement Motivation</b>						
14.01	Sets high standards for own performance; goes above and beyond what is expected; aims to “work the job rather than let the job work you.”					•
14.02	Enjoys the “puzzles and mysteries” of the job; is energized by the challenge of constructing “winning” strategies.				•	
14.03	Sets up a variety of indicators to gauge success; enjoys the feedback of success in collections.				•	•
14.04	Stays focused on larger goals and what must be done daily to achieve them.					•

	LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
14.05					•
<b>15.00 Self-Confidence</b>					
15.01					
15.02					
15.03					
15.04	•			•	
15.05	•			•	
<b>16.00 Self-Discipline</b>					
16.01			•	•	
16.02			•		
16.03			•		
16.04		•		•	•
<b>17.00 Stress Management</b>					
17.01				•	•
17.02					•
17.03				•	•
17.04					•
17.05					•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
17.06	Keeps own achievement drive within reasonable bounds; recognizes that results can only be achieved over time and with patience.					•
17.07	Seeks support in times of trouble to stay effective in the job.					•
<b>18.00 Self-development</b>						
18.01	Understands own strengths, limitations, values, and biases.					
18.02	Enhances his/her professional expertise and skills.				•	•
18.03	Reflects on and learns from previous successes and failures.				•	•
18.04	Maintains an open mind toward change.					•
18.05	Seeks out and learns from expertise of colleagues.				•	•
<b>V. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE</b>						
<b>19.00 Statutory and Regulatory Bases</b>						
19.01	Statutory and Regulatory Base — Understands the basis in federal and state law, regulations and rules for the operation of the support enforcement program.	•	•	•	•	
19.02	Knowledge of Relevant Statutes — Knows the statutes related to the support enforcement program, how to reference them, and their relationship to other laws.	•	•	•	•	
19.03	Definitions and Concepts — Understands legal definitions and concepts and is able to apply them to the support enforcement and judicial process.	•	•	•	•	
19.04	Ethical Issues — Understands the policy requirements of ethical practice and ramifications to staff and clients when this does not occur.	•	•		•	
<b>20.00 Caseload Management</b>						
20.01	Caseload Management Principles — Knows the rationale and requirements for the sequence of prescribed procedures.					•
20.02	Caseload Management Procedures — Knows and is able to apply procedures for: Case Initiation, Location of Absent Parent, Establishment of Paternity, Identification of Assets, Establishment of Support, Enforcement and Monitoring Compliance, Probation Revocation or Termination, and Case Termination.					•
20.03	Definitions and Concepts — Understands procedural definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to caseload management.			•		•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
20.04	Central Office — Knows central office administrative roles and responsibilities: Case Review, DOL, State Tax, Automated Actions, Certificates of Liens and UCC.					•
20.05	Documentation — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.			•		•
<b>21.00 Automated Enforcement</b>						
21.01	Policy Base — Understands the basis in policy for automated enforcement actions.					
21.02	Automated Actions — Knows and is able to apply specific procedures for: Federal Tax Offset, State Tax Offset, Credit Bureau Reporting, Unemployment Compensation Offset, and Lottery Offsets.					•
21.03	Definitions and Concepts — Understands policy definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to automated enforcement actions.					
21.04	Documentation — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.					
<b>22.00 Administrative Enforcement</b>						
22.01	Policy Base — Understands the basis in policy for administrative enforcement actions.					•
22.02	Administrative Actions — Knows and is able to apply policies and procedures for: Certificates of Lien, Order to Withhold and Deliver, Wage Assignment, License Revocation/Payment/Agreement, and IRS Certification.					•
22.03	Definitions and Concepts — Understands policy definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to administrative enforcement actions.					•
22.04	Documentation — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.					•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>23.00 Court Judicial System</b>						
23.01	Legal System — Knows jurisdictions of various courts that deal with support enforcement.		•	•	•	
23.02	Procedures and Process — Knows and is able to apply legal procedures including basic rules of evidence, how to testify, court etiquette, standards of proof and preparation for court.		•	•		
23.03	Legal Terminology — Knows and can utilize basic legal terminology.		•	•		
23.04	Court-ordered Actions — Knows and is able to apply specific procedures for: Criminal Non-support, Contempt of Court (civil), Immediate Income Withholding Order, Seizure of Assets, Judgment on Arrears, Writ of Execution, Probationary Proceedings, and Federal Prosecution.			•	•	
23.05	Legal Records — Knows and is able to access legal records: Registry of Deeds, Probate Court and pending court cases.		•	•	•	
23.06	Documentation — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.			•		
<b>24.00 Administrative Hearings</b>						
24.01	Administrative Hearings System — Knows administrative hearings system that deals with support enforcement and process for initial and review hearings.		•	•		
24.02	Procedures and process — Knows and is able to apply administrative hearings process and procedures including preparation for hearing, rules of evidence, cross examination, standards of proof, hearing etiquette, presentation and implementation of findings.		•	•		
24.03	Definitions and Concepts — Understands legal definitions and concepts and is able to apply them appropriately to administrative actions.		•	•		
24.04	Documentation — Knows information to be accumulated, analyzed, and recorded; appropriate forms; relationship between documentation and accountability.		•	•		

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>25.00 Occupational Information</b>						
25.01	Standard Occupations — Knows structure and financing of a variety of occupations including licensing requirements, wage and salary structures, places of work, how to access listings of employers and corporations.	•				•
25.02	Non-standard Occupations — Knows structure and financing of a variety of non-standard occupations indigenous to Maine (e.g., lumber, fishing), including licensing requirements, wage and compensation structures, places of work.	•				•
25.03	Self Employment — Knows structure and financing of self employment, including tax issues and reporting requirements.	•				•
<b>26.00 Financial Information</b>						
26.01	Income Taxes — Knows and can interpret state and federal income tax information, including reporting requirements, forms, exemptions.	•				•
26.02	Bankruptcy — Knows bankruptcy chapters and the implications for support enforcement.					•
26.03	Real Estate and Excise Taxes — Knows process and requirements for assessing and paying real estate and excise taxes and is able to access information on property values and additions.					•
26.04	Financial Resources — Knows and is able to access and interpret sources of information on financial resources: profit and loss statements, mortgages, loan and bank applications, credit card applications, credit bureau reports.					•
<b>27.00 Mathematical/Accounting Proficiency</b>						
27.01	Calculations — Understands procedures and is able to make arithmetic calculations involving decimals and percentages.			•		•
27.02	Accounting — Understands and is able to read and interpret financial records (including income tax returns, business profit and loss statements).			•		•
27.03	Support Computation — Understands and is able to apply procedures to compute obligations, payments and debt.			•		•
27.04	Advanced Financials — Understands and is able to interpret computerized financial records, how cashiers account for financial obligations.			•		•

		LOC	PAT	EST	ENF	C.MGT
<b>28.00 Computer Proficiency</b>						
28.01	Computer Concepts, Terminology and Uses — Understands and is able to apply basic Honeywell and NECSES terminology and describe uses.	•	•			
28.02	Keyboarding — Understands and is able to apply keyboarding ability to access and process information.	•	•		•	
28.03	Case Management Applications — Understands and is able to utilize NECSES as a tool for case management (e.g., ticklers, notepads, form letters).	•	•		•	•

# Appendix D

## Competency-based Interviewing Skills Checklist

### Support Enforcement Agent Interviewing Competencies

Please make an “X” on the scale to indicate how often you use the following behaviors in interviewing custodial and non-custodial parents. On the scale, 1=never, 3=sometimes, 5=always.

- |   |   |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I clarify roles and responsibilities (to clients and absent parents; court personnel; hearings officers, etc.)   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I inform people of their legal responsibilities, rights and obligations, and agency processes and procedures.  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I use effective questioning strategies to maximize the amount of useful information I gather (e.g., diffusing anxiety and opening up dialogue, questioning with follow-up probes).                         |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I use well-reasoned, factual statements to gain support, (e.g., presenting data, explaining the likely consequences of actions and decisions or emphasizing legal options).                                |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I make sound judgments about what is a good offer or solution for each party to a negotiation.   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I know when to push people, when to back off and when to stand firm.   |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I show respect for others as people; I understand the impact of department actions on people’s lives and livelihoods.  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I avoid stereotyping people or pre-judging situations; I seek to understand others.  |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | I tailor my communication style to people’s backgrounds, taking individual differences into account (e.g., with clients, I avoid agency acronyms, I use familiar analogies and frames of reference, etc.). |

- 1 2 3 4 5 I accurately interpret non-verbal cues (body language, facial expressions, tone of voice, aspects of personal appearance, etc.).
- 1 2 3 4 5 I think divergently and imaginatively about options and possibilities before arriving at answers or solutions.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I take responsibility for projecting and maintaining a professional image for the department and the role of enforcement agent; I recognize political implications and the need for diplomacy.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I stand firm in the face of intimidation; I hold my ground.
- 1 2 3 4 5 I inhibit impulses to do or say inappropriate things, and substitute more appropriate behavior.

# Appendix E

## Background Readings

### Background Readings

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