

Colorado Interstate Collaboration (CIC) Grant

Final Report

November 14, 2023

Jessica Pearson, Ph.D.
Rachel Wildfeuer, Ph.D.
Allie Lichota



Contents

Executive Summary.....	3
Background.....	4
Introduction.....	4
The Problem	4
Project Plan and Activities.....	6
Project Challenges	8
Project Evaluation	8
Summary of Key Findings	10
Initial Focus Groups.....	10
Baseline Survey.....	10
Midpoint Survey	11
Second Round of Focus Groups.....	11
Final Survey	12
Final Focus Groups	19
Interviews with Interstate Collaboration Experts	21
Lessons Learned	25
Next Steps.....	27
Appendix A	29
Arizona (AZ) At-A-Glance.....	29
Colorado (CO) At-A-Glance.....	32
Kansas (KS) At-A-Glance	34
Nebraska (NE) At-A-Glance	36
New Mexico (NM) At-A-Glance	39
Texas (TX) At-A-Glance	42
Utah (UT) At-A-Glance.....	45
Wyoming (WY) At-A-Glance	47
Appendix B	49
Appendix C.....	52
Appendix D	71
Appendix E.....	88

Executive Summary

The goal of the Colorado Interstate Collaboration (CIC) project was to improve performance for interstate child support cases by building relationships and understandings among Colorado county child support staff and their counterparts in seven border states (Arizona, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming) who handle interstate cases. Although the original project plan was to hold in-person summits, the summits were ultimately convened in a virtual manner in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, with two in-person summits held in June and July 2023, immediately prior to the project end on September 30, 2023. An evaluation of the CIC project conducted by the Center for Policy Research (CPR) assessed the reactions of CIC project participants to virtual and in-person summits using online surveys and focus groups at early, midpoint, and final stages of the project. In addition, CPR conducted interviews with experts in interstate case processing to explore next steps for the CIC project to provide advice for other states and regions interested in pursuing interstate collaboration initiatives. The following are key project takeaways:

- Grant plans can change totally because of external circumstances like the COVID-19 pandemic.
- While in-person meetings are optimal, virtual meetings are viewed as effective and valuable by participants, with most favoring a mix of virtual and in-person meeting opportunities.
- Collaboration initiatives should combine organic meeting elements like brief participant-led updates on new policies or practices with advance planning, coordination, and expert facilitation.
- Staffing shortages, the privatization of child support services, and high rates of staff turnover are barriers to engaging and retaining child support staff in interstate collaboration initiatives.
- The CIC project helped participants to better understand the unique processing and policy features of neighboring jurisdictions and made them feel more confident and supported. They also appreciated CIC project products that included an At-A-Glance document for each participating state and a Best Practices Summary, although both require routine updates and placement on the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) website to become more accessible to a larger number of workers in multiple states.
- CIC project participants would like the initiative to continue.

Colorado's Central Registry Director and manager of the CIC project retired at the end of the grant. CPR conducted Interviews with five interstate collaboration experts on methods of sustaining the CIC project.

- The engagement of federal regional representatives appears to be the best strategy for continuing the CIC project. State child support directors and Central Registry directors should explore the feasibility of incorporating the CIC project into other existing interstate collaboration initiatives that are led and/or supported by federal regional representatives. Thus, the CIC project might be folded into the existing intergovernmental collaboration for Regions 7 and 8, which currently encompass Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, with the potential of adding the states of New Mexico (Region 6), Texas (Region 6), and Arizona (Region 9).
- The leader of the next generation of the CIC project should incorporate key learnings from this grant. The core intervention format should be a quarterly virtual meeting that combines organic features with planned agendas, topics, materials, and activities that are skillfully facilitated.
- Virtual meetings should be augmented with face-to-face meetings, participation in annual state conferences in neighboring states, and engaging in national professional activities dealing with interstate child support.
- Tribal child support programs should be included in future interstate collaboration initiatives.

Background

Introduction

In 2019, the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS),¹ within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families, awarded Intergovernmental Case Processing Innovation demonstration grants to seven states and two tribal child support agencies. These grants provided funding to test innovations that would increase payments on intergovernmental cases and improve case processing procedures for parents.² The Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS), Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) received a grant to implement the Colorado Interstate Collaboration (CIC) project. The goal of the CIC project was to improve relationships among Colorado county child support staff and their counterparts in border states/jurisdictions who handle interstate cases to improve worker collaboration and responsiveness. In turn, this was expected to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service for interstate cases.³

To accomplish this, Colorado proposed to convene interstate child support staff from Colorado and from seven surrounding states with which Colorado shares a border and/or a high volume of child support cases (Arizona, Kansas, New Mexico, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming) to participate in five in-person summits. Although the original proposal called for live meetings, the summits were ultimately convened in a virtual manner in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was hoped that virtual formats would provide a productive forum in which interstate child support workers could become acquainted with one another, discuss differences and similarities in case processing in different state settings, build relationships, and resolve individual problem cases. In June and July 2023, just two months before the CIC project ended on September 30, 2023, Colorado was finally able to convene two in-person summits with states that participated in the CIC project. This afforded Colorado the opportunity to revisit its original goal of building relationships with neighboring interstate child support workers through face-to-face interaction.

An evaluation conducted by the Center for Policy Research (CPR) assessed the reactions of CIC project participants to virtual and in-person summits using online surveys and focus groups at early, midpoint and final stages of the project. In addition, CPR conducted interviews with experts in interstate case processing to explore next steps for the CIC and to generate advice for other states and regions interested in pursuing interstate collaboration initiatives.

The Problem

For its caseload size, Colorado has a high number of intergovernmental cases with approximately 28,000 family units who depend on case workers in Colorado and other jurisdictions to realize financial and medical support. This comprises 28% of the Colorado caseload, of which 10% are initiating cases, 9.9% are responding cases, and 8.2% are one-state cases. Colorado's collection rate (62.8%) for cases initiated in other states is comparable to overall state collection rates (64.7%), but collection rates for interstate cases initiated by Colorado have a much lower rate of collections (53.2%).⁴ Colorado depends on other states to enforce initiating intergovernmental

¹ In June 2023, the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) was renamed the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS).

² Office of Child Support Services. (2023). *Intergovernmental case processing innovation*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/grants/current-grants/intergovernmental-case-processing>.

³ Office of Child Support Services. (2023). *Intergovernmental case processing innovation project summaries*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/grant-funding/intergovernmental-case-processing-innovation-project-summaries>.

⁴ Colorado Department of Human Services. (2019). CIC project proposal submitted to OCSS.

cases on Colorado's behalf. Thus, if Colorado can assist other states in enforcing these cases, it can increase its collections percentages and improve the service it provides to families.

Although there are numerous new technological tools to improve interstate case processing (e.g., Interstate Case Reconciliation (ICR), the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA), Query Interstate Cases for Kids (QUICK), the Child Support Enforcement Network (CSENet) Electronic Document Exchange (EDE), and the communication Center on the OCSS Child Support Portal), the barriers to effective interstate case processing remain formidable.⁵ This includes:

- The inability to reach workers in other states,
- The lack of follow-up by other states after an Income Withholding Order has been issued,
- The failure of other states to take enforcement action when the noncustodial parent is not making full payments,
- The failure of some offices to assign interstate cases to someone until a specific task is required resulting in the lack of worker contact information,
- The lack of authority to redirect that the payment be sent to the Family Support Registry if the order requires that payments must be sent to the issuing state's State Disbursement Unit,
- The closure of cases for inability to serve the noncustodial parent at the verified address, rather than trying to locate the parent,
- The loss of documents required and recommended for interstate cases,
- The lack of knowledge about idiosyncratic requirements for certain documents by some courts and child support agencies,
- The inability to issue liens on inmate accounts,
- The inconsistency across states on enforcement remedies available in different states and the time frames associated with administrative versus court procedures,
- The differences in state practice regarding acceptance of direct Unemployment Compensation Benefits,
- Repeated requests from other states for additional documentation.

In addition to these barriers, interstate cases frequently involve unique scenarios that defy obvious solutions or courses of action. This includes:

- Neither party lives in Colorado,
- The custodial parent moves to another state and applies for services there without closing her case in Colorado,
- The other state does not pursue a proactive modification if the noncustodial parent is failing to meet the obligation that the other state is enforcing,
- The appropriate frequency of status reports should be requested on a non-paying case in another state.

Finally, workers are often confused about when and how often to use the multiple tools, the resources that are available to them for case management and the organizational structures, policies, and procedures in other states. This includes:

- Prioritizing the use of the multiple tools available for case management including their frequency of use to achieve an increase in support and arrears collection,
- The role and function of the Central Registry in various states,

⁵ Savoy, J., Sorenson, C., & Piper, C. (2014). *Intergovernmental summit: A report of the state and county meeting on process improvement of initiating and one-state Intergovernmental Services*. Colorado Division of Child Support Services.

- The nature and availability of in-person and web-based training on intergovernmental case processing,
- The organizational structures, policies, and procedures used in other states to handle intergovernmental cases.

Clear and timely communication and follow-up is frequently the only way to break down barriers in working on cases that involve other states. For this reason, Colorado chose to focus on interventions in its demonstration project that were designed to build relationships among workers who handle interstate cases in Colorado and the states with which it shares a geographical border.

Modelled after cross-border interstate projects conducted in Region 5, the CIC project aimed to replicate the effective engagement of workers in multiple midwestern states that have collaborated for many years on addressing roadblocks to interstate case processing.⁶ As noted in Wisconsin and Illinois Border Project:

There are many roadblocks involved when child support cases involve two or more states. Each state has different laws, procedures and requirements that sometimes are difficult for all to understand. If we understand how each state operates, child support caseworkers are better equipped to assist their participants more effectively and efficiently.⁷

Like child support workers in Region 5, the architects of the CIC project sought to answer basic questions about practices and policies in other states. As the Wisconsin and Illinois Border Project noted:

We need answers to all types of questions such as: “What is it the other state is asking of me? I don’t understand it.” “Why am I getting billing from two states?” “Who really is my child support worker?” “Who do I contact and what is their phone number?”⁸

The success of this midwestern interstate collaborative is legendary.

A determined group of Wisconsin and Illinois child support professionals came together for the purpose of improving interstate case work. Our goal was to help children and families. Many of the problems that seemed so insurmountable a few short years ago have been resolved with a continuation of improvements. Collaboration between bordering child support agencies can be accomplished and has been accomplished in Wisconsin and Illinois.⁹

Project Plan and Activities

The original CDHS project plan called for the creation of an advisory board to support the CIC project manager with project implementation. This included identifying problems in interstate case processing with border states, the topics to address in the CIC project summits, and the evaluation approach and tools to use to assess the intervention. Comprised of state and local child support personnel who are committed to interstate case policy and practice, the advisory board met quarterly to provide strategic direction to the project. They reviewed the director’s plans for virtual meetings, the evaluation instruments developed by CPR, the results of evaluation surveys and focus groups, and the project products that the evaluators developed.

The next step of the original project plan was to conduct at least five in-person, regional summits over a span of 24 months. Summits were planned to occur for workers in four corners of Colorado (Southeast, Northwest, Northeast, and Southwest) along with their counterparts in border/neighborhood states. A fifth summit was intended to engage workers in large urban jurisdictions in multiple states. The original evaluation plan called for

⁶ K. Mantilla, Indiana Prosecuting Attorney’s Association, email communication, September 2023.

⁷ Wisconsin/Illinois Child Support Border Project. (n.d.). *Home page*. <https://childsupportborderproject.com/index.htm>.

⁸ Wisconsin/Illinois Child Support Border Project. (n.d.). *Home page*. <https://childsupportborderproject.com/index.htm>.

⁹ Ibid.

the generation of extracts from the automated child support system and the analysis of samples of interstate cases held jointly by Colorado and border states at intervals timed to occur six months prior to and following the conduct of each summit.

These plans were upended by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing national shutdown. All in-person gatherings were suspended, in-person work activities in child support offices in Colorado and its border states were terminated, face-to-face meetings between clients and workers were abandoned, various enforcement remedies were dropped, and court hearings came to a standstill.

The CIC project was reconfigured. Instead of planning and conducting in-person meetings, CDHS invited staff from 29 Colorado counties and seven bordering states to attend virtual summits in 2020 and 2021. The neighboring states were Arizona, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming. The peer counties in Colorado where there are higher numbers of interstate relationships included Archuleta, Baca, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Denver, Dolores, El Paso, Garfield, Jackson, Jefferson, Kiowa, Kit Carson, La Plata, Las Animas, Larimer, Logan, Mesa, Moffat, Montezuma, Montrose, Phillips, Prowers, Rio Blanco, Routt, San Miguel, Sedgwick, Weld, and Yuma. There were five groups for the virtual summits: Northeast (Northeast Colorado, Northwest Kansas, Southwest Nebraska, and Southwest Wyoming), Northwest (Northwest Colorado, Southwest/South Central Wyoming, and Northeast Utah), Southeast (Southeast Colorado, Southwest Kansas, Northeast New Mexico, and Northwest Texas), Southwest (Southwest Colorado, Northeast Arizona, Southeast Utah, and Northwest New Mexico), and Metro (urban centers in each state).

The virtual summits were followed by quarterly virtual meetings in 2021 and 2022 of two larger groups, East and West, where states provided updates and discussed specific cases about which they had questions. The East group was comprised of Eastern Colorado counties, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. The West group was comprised of Western Colorado counties, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas.).

In a final third phase of the project, CDHS hosted two in-person summits for the East and West groups in June and July 2023. Although there was the option to attend virtually, most participants attended in person. The West Summit was held in Grand Junction, Colorado on June 13–14 and included employees from Archuleta, La Plata, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, Mesa, Montrose, and Weld counties; Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming state employees; and federal employees from OCSS. The East Summit took place in Burlington, Colorado on July 11–12 and included employees from Arapahoe, Jefferson, Lancaster (NE), Larimer, Pueblo, Sedgwick, Weld, and Yuma counties; Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, and Texas state employees and child support contractors; and federal employees from OCSS. Both summits followed the same agenda. Day one consisted of a “speed dating” session for caseworkers to get to know each other, a presentation from OCSS and subsequent discussion on the State Services Portal, and discussions on issues in establishment and enforcement. Day two included discussions on issues in modification, case closure, payment processing, and “other issues.”

The original evaluation plan which called for the generation and analysis of time frames and payment outcomes for samples of interstate cases shared by Colorado and its border states prior to and following the summits was dropped. Instead, the evaluation shifted to assessments of interstate workers in Colorado and border states who participated in the CIC project before and after their participation in the virtual and in-person summits using online surveys and focus groups.

The CIC project culminated in the preparation of products that were disseminated to workers in Colorado and neighboring states. This included At-A-Glance documents for each of the eight states that participated in the CIC project and a Best Practices Summary that provided both general and micro-level practice guidelines for workers who handle interstate. The CIC project manager distributed these materials to all CIC project participants with the hope that workers would use the documents to reduce barriers and increase collection on

their initiating interstate cases. See Appendix A for the eight At-A-Glance Documents and Appendix B for the Best Practices Summary.

At the conclusion of the CIC project, CPR conducted interviews with five national interstate child support experts about the features of successful interstate collaboration initiatives and the steps that Colorado and its border states might pursue to sustain the CIC project following the termination of the grant and the retirement of the CIC project manager.

Project Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic created a fundamental barrier to the goal of conducting in-person gatherings to build relationships and shared understanding and commitment to effective processing of interstate cases. When in-person gatherings were halted and public employees were banned from travel, it was necessary to conduct the summits through an online platform. Although individuals from different jurisdictions can be brought together virtually, it was expected that relationship and commitment building would be compromised.

Another challenge was maintaining a robust level of participation in the virtual summits by the identified jurisdictions that border Colorado. Buy-in and commitment from those jurisdictions were key to the project's success. The lack of a comprehensive roster of workers who handle interstate cases in each neighboring state made the process of explaining the CIC project and its expected benefits difficult. As result, CDHS was forced to rely on Central Registry directors in each state to recruit CIC project participants throughout their state. Central Registry directors were also the only vehicle for communicating information about project learnings, evaluation activities, and its products to line workers.

Participation by non-Colorado child support professionals in the CIC project was low with several states (e.g., Utah, Kansas, and Nebraska) routinely contributing only one or two participants. Staffing shortages were one reason for this problem. As a result of staff resignations during COVID-19, hiring freezes, high levels of staff turnover, and the influx of new employees, many local offices were unwilling to release staff to engage in interstate collaboration activities. For example, the Central Registry Director in Utah was the only person to participate in any aspect of the CIC project. As a further complication, Utah has a customer service unit that prevents callers, including other child support staff from other states, from reaching a case worker of record to obtain a substantive answer to a case issue. The outsourcing of child support case processing duties to private contractors in Kansas (Maximus and YoungWilliams) and parts of Nebraska (YoungWilliams) and Wyoming (YoungWilliams) presented challenges for the CIC project too. Private contractors face stiff performance requirements, experience high rates of staff turnover, and operate on slim financial margins. As a result, the only CIC project participation in Kansas and Nebraska came from state personnel.

Project Evaluation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting, dramatic changes in case processing and enforcement procedures for interstate child support cases that occurred, CDHS dropped its original plan to generate and examine administrative data on samples of interstate cases processed before and after the conduct of the CIC project. Simply put, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting shut down of in-person activities in child support agencies and courts resulted in too many changes in the use of enforcement remedies, time frames for response, court actions, and other critical features of interstate case processing to permit a valid pre- and post-project comparison of case treatment and outcomes for samples of interstate cases.

In its stead, CDHS adopted a purely descriptive evaluation approach for the CIC project. It consisted of its evaluator, CPR, conducting focus groups, surveys, and interviews with experts. These evaluation activities generated information that was used to inform the content of cross-border virtual summits, contribute to the

development of project documents to assist caseworkers in adopting effective practices, and provide recommendations for future interstate collaboration.

Initial Information gathering activities included focus groups with Colorado DCSS Central Registry staff and the grant advisory board to identify the processes used and challenges encountered with initiating and responding to intergovernmental cases. Other goals of the preliminary focus groups were to develop a survey that was administered to child support professionals in Colorado and border states to document baseline worker attitudes towards and experiences with handling interstate cases and to inform the content of summit sessions.

In July and August 2020, the initial baseline survey was administered to child support professionals in Colorado and border states that addressed processing issues and challenges in intergovernmental cases prior to the initiation of the virtual summits, and worker attitudes toward and experiences with handling interstate cases. After completing the survey, respondents had the option to provide their email address to be entered into a raffle for a gift card.

To gauge reactions to the virtual summits and their perceived impact on interstate case processing, evaluators drafted and circulated a midpoint survey to participants in October 2021. The survey also asked about the usefulness of the master contact sheet developed by the CIC project manager, and the draft Best Practices Summary developed by CPR. Finally, the survey was used to inform the next steps and the generation of project tools moving forward. After completing the survey, respondents had the option to provide their email address to be entered into a raffle for a gift card.

Eight focus groups, one for each state, were conducted in January and February 2022 after the conclusion of the virtual summits to gather state-specific data and guide the development of project tools. The focus groups covered communication tools, order establishment and registration, enforcement remedies, COVID-19-related remedy shut-offs and turn-ons, the use of contempt or show cause, interest charges on unpaid child support in interstate cases, other COVID-19-related practices, the use of the Intergovernmental Resource Guide (IRG) by workers, interest in changes in interstate case practices at the state and federal level, feedback for other participating states, and feedback on useful CIC project activities and products including a potential in-person summit. Participants received a gift card for their time.

Following the conduct of the in-person summits, a final survey was sent in September 2023 to all individuals in Colorado and border states targeted for the CIC project. This permitted an assessment of reactions to the in-person summits, recommendations for future activities to strengthen interstate case processing, and the utility of the products generated in the CIC project. After completing the survey, respondents had the option to provide their email address to be entered into a raffle for a gift card.

Respondents indicated on the final survey if they were interested in participating in a follow-up focus group. Two focus groups were held towards the end of the grant period to gather additional feedback on the CIC project, recommendations for ways to improve interstate case processing, and next steps for interstate collaboration. Participants received a gift card for their time.

Additionally, towards the end of the grant period, CPR conducted interviews with five interstate experts on approaches to sustaining the communications initiative between and among Colorado and its border states after the expiration of the CIC project. All interviewed personnel have had extensive involvement with state and regional interstate collaboration activities. While these respondents validated many of the challenges to conducting in-person meetings that Colorado experienced with the advent of COVID-19, they offered a variety of suggestions on effective virtual and hybrid formats. They also offered ideas on how Colorado might preserve the initiative and engage border states in continuing activities to boost relationship-building, communication,

and learning. Finally, they offer suggestions on how interstate collaboration initiatives can be generated and sustained in other parts of the country.

Summary of Key Findings

Initial Focus Groups

The initial focus groups provided insight into the process of working interstate cases in Colorado. Challenges were identified: the lack of communication and training in Colorado and other states; some states outsource all (e.g., Kansas) or some (Nebraska and Wyoming) interstate work and consequently have a significant turnover of workers; all state Central Registries operate differently and there is no readily available information on how different Central Registry offices operate; some states are reluctant to provide email addresses or direct phone numbers for caseworkers; it is particularly challenging to work with states that have a call center that impedes direct communication with a child support professional who is working a problematic case; Colorado requires some different things than other states and these requirements are driven by the courts, but other states provide pushback; CSENet, the electronic communication network across states, is not standardized or streamlined; and not all states are on, or active on, EDE. The main suggestions for strengthening interstate work centered around communication and having a direct line of communication with the worker in the other state (an email address and/or phone number).

Baseline Survey

The baseline survey was completed by 147 caseworkers in the eight states between July and August 2020 (65% of respondents were from Colorado). Since the link to the survey was forwarded to an unknown number of caseworkers by a variety of contacts, there is no way of determining the response rate.

Many of the caseworkers indicated that they would like more training on interstate cases. In Colorado, 40.5% of respondents reported receiving “too little” training on interstate cases; in the other states, it was 56.8%. Similarly, only 14% of the Colorado respondents and 26% of the other respondents felt that caseworkers in other states knew their state’s requirements. 75.3% of workers in Colorado and 70.6% of workers in the other states agreed that it is harder to work interstate than non-interstate cases.

Communication issues were identified as the biggest challenge for processing interstate cases, especially lacking the contact information for the caseworker handling the case in another state (identified by 68.8% of respondents in Colorado and 52.6% of respondents in the other states as a problem). Other common communication issues included states having CSENet limitations; states using canned, automated responses; states having high caseworker turnover; and states funneling cases through a call center.

In terms of documentation issues in interstate cases, the most common problem was pushback from other states about their state’s requirements (26.3% of respondents in Colorado and 40.0% of respondents in the other states identified this as a “major problem”). In Colorado, the most common process issue was getting cases that lack a recently verified address (36.2% of respondents identified this as a “major problem”). In the other states, the most common process issue was that process and requirements in other states are not clear (31.0% of respondents identified this as a “major problem”). With respect to case work problems, 50.7% of Colorado respondents identified having cases closed by another state without explanation as a “major problem” and 46.5% of respondents from the other states identified getting a canned, automated response from other state as a “major problem.” For interstate establishment, enforcement, and modification cases, the top problems cited by workers (in Colorado and the other states) for all three were not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state; needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center; and getting no response from another state.

For all states, the most frequently used tool to communicate with other states and exchange information was CSENet. The State Services Portal was also frequently used. 64.1% of workers in Colorado and 57.2% of workers in the other states said that they never or rarely contacted the Central Registry in their state for help with a case. All states in the CIC project agreed that Arizona and Texas were the lowest performing states in terms of overall interstate performance, Central Registry performance, interstate turnaround times, and the ability to reach caseworkers assigned to interstate cases.

See Appendix C for the September 1, 2020, report summarizing all findings from the baseline survey.

Midpoint Survey

The link to the midpoint survey was circulated to 120 virtual summit participants in October 2021. A total of 45 child support professionals responded to the survey, resulting in a response rate of 37.5%. Once again, most respondents (57.8%) were from Colorado, but all eight states were represented in the sample.

Feedback on the ongoing virtual summits was very positive, with 44.4% of respondents indicating that they provided an “excellent” and 37.8% of respondents indicating that they provided a “good” opportunity to meet counterparts in another state. The virtual summits also provided information that caseworkers didn’t know (37.8% rated them as “excellent” and 42.2% rated them as “good” in this respect) and answered some of their questions about interstate work (44.4% rated them as “excellent” and 32.2% rated them as “good” in this respect). Overall, respondents felt that the virtual summits had helped them to be more efficient in working interstate cases: 53.3% of respondents felt that participating in the virtual summits “definitely” supported having someone to work with in the other states, 57.8% felt that participating “definitely” resulted in them having a better idea of what states need, and 73.3% felt that participating “definitely” resulted in them having a better understanding of how states vary in interstate processing.

Of those who had seen and/or used the draft Best Practices Summary, most felt that it was either “very useful” (15.4%) or “somewhat useful” (46.2%). When asked about what additional information should be included in the Best Practices Summary, 50.0% of respondents selected enforcement thresholds for remedies. Of those who had seen and/or used the Master Contact Sheet circulated at the beginning of the project, most felt that it was either “very useful” (45.7%) or “somewhat useful” (20.0%) and 51.1% of respondents indicated that they would like a direct phone number for a worker or call center. Most respondents indicated that they use the IRG “1–2 times per week” (51.1%) or “everyday” (25.6%).

In terms of what they would like from the CIC project in the future, the most popular response was recommendations to OCSS on how to improve interstate case processing (62.2% of respondents were interested), followed by an IRG cheat sheet with key IRG item numbers to help direct you to state specific information (53.3% of respondents were interested). Regarding future meetings, 51.1% of respondents indicated that they would like a virtual meeting held every quarter rather than an in-person meeting (40.0%), a virtual meeting once per year (22.2%), a virtual meeting once every six months (26.7%), or a virtual meeting once per month (28.9%).

See Appendix D for the November 2021 report summarizing all findings from the midpoint survey.

Second Round of Focus Groups

In January and February 2022, CPR conducted eight virtual focus groups with child support professionals from each state. Most focus groups had about five to seven participants.

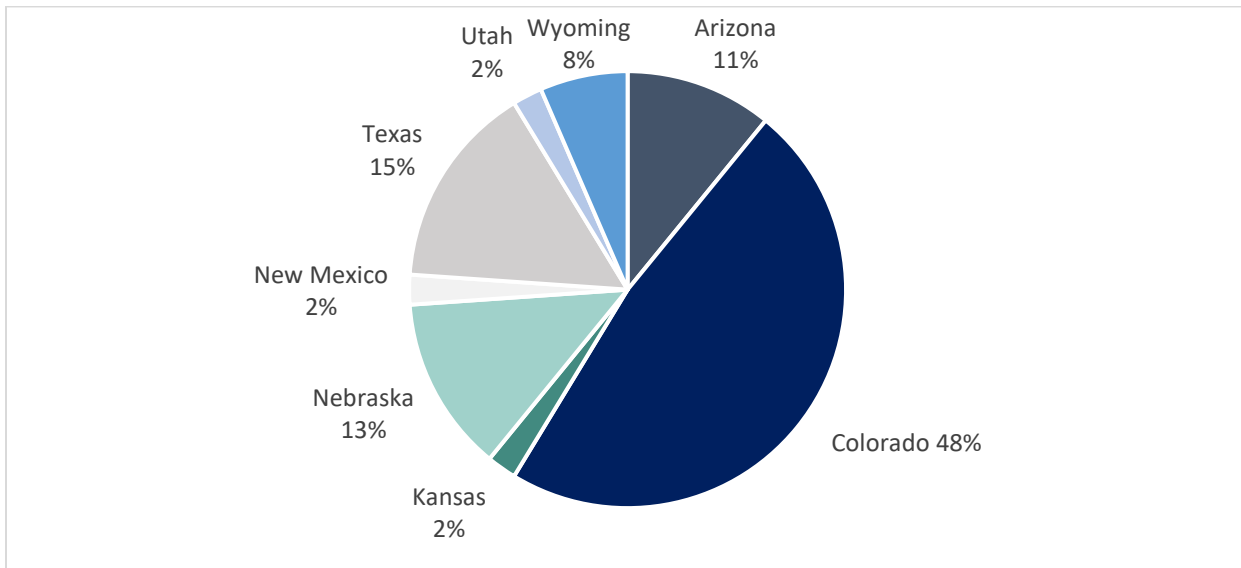
Drawing on the midpoint survey results, the focus groups, and follow-up with contacts in each state, CPR developed:

- An At-A-Glance document for each state with information on state-specific communication tools, enforcement remedies, and more as well as a “What’s Your Lingo?” section to clarify state-specific acronyms for their child support agency, Central Registry, state computer system, etc.
- An updated overall Best Practices Summary document including and IRG Quick Reference Guide
- A document with recommendations for OCSS action; see Appendix E for this document

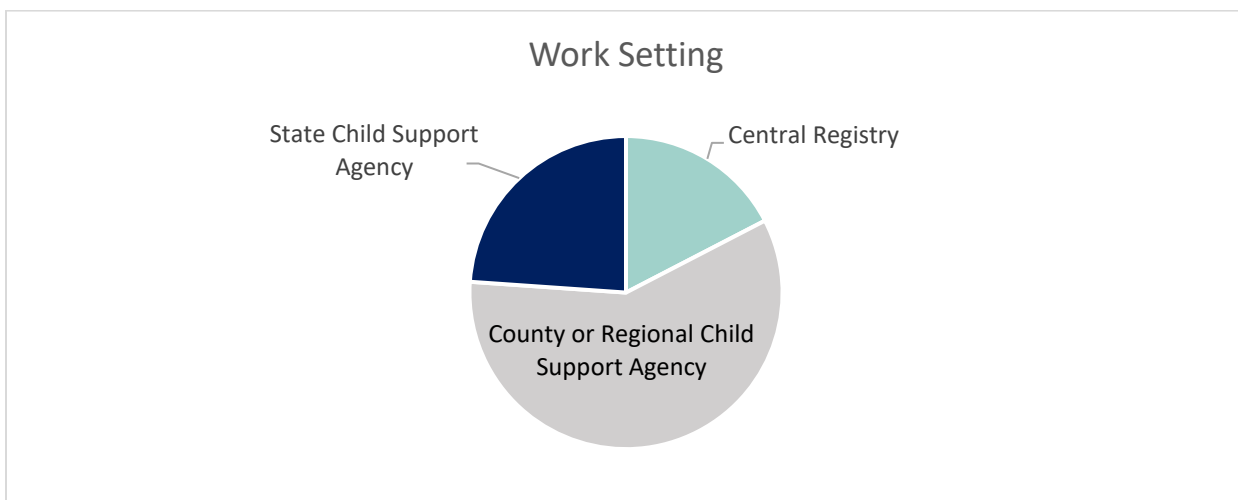
Final Survey

The link to the final survey was sent in September 2023 to the 107 individuals on the invitation list for the in-person summits. This list included the grant advisory board, caseworkers, Central Registry managers, and other child support staff across the eight states who were involved in the CIC project. The final survey was completed by 46 respondents, resulting in a response rate of 43.0%.

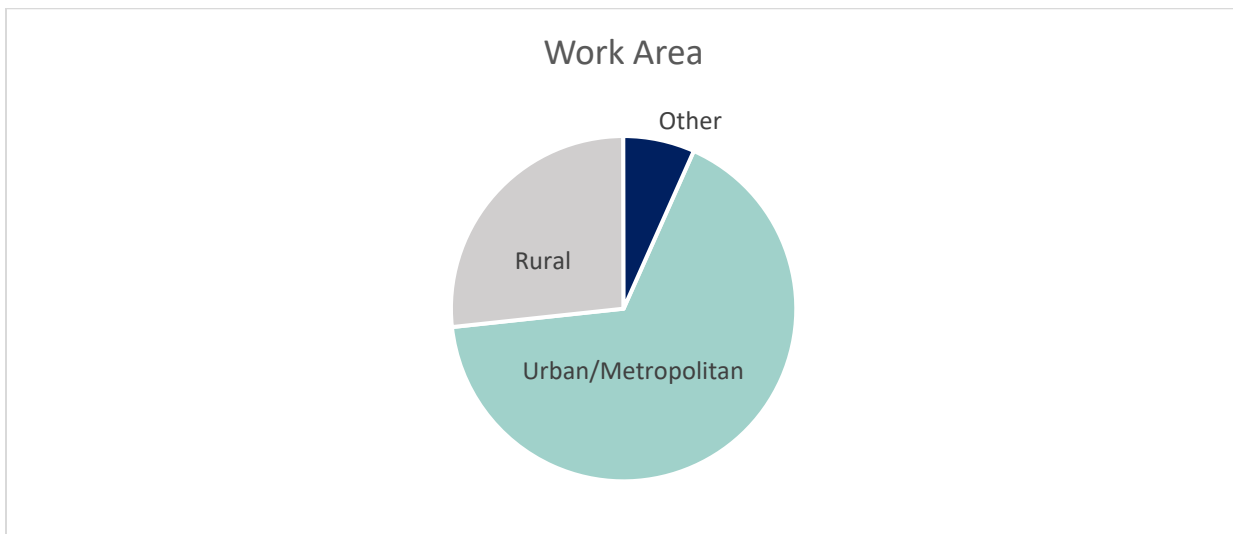
Around half (47.8%) of respondents were from Colorado, but every state in the project was represented.



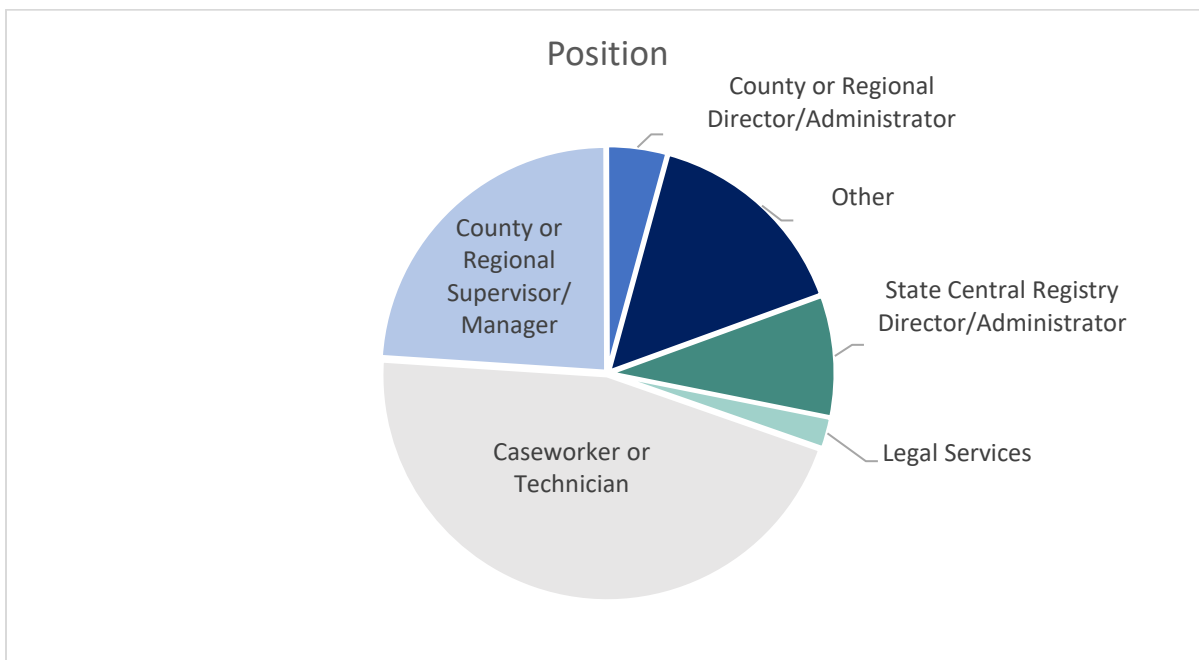
The majority (58.7%) of respondents indicated that they work in a county or regional child support agency.



Most respondents (66.7%) indicated that they work in an urban/metropolitan area. “Other” areas included teleworking and a mix of urban/rural.

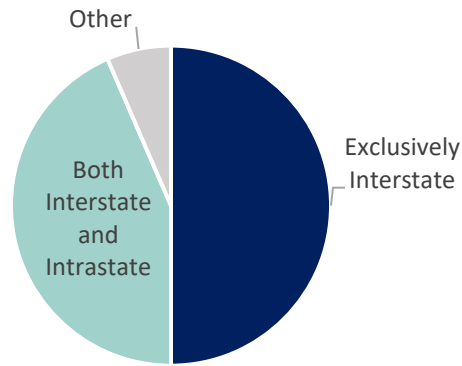


Almost half (45.7%) of respondents work as a caseworker or technician and almost a quarter (23.9%) as a county or regional supervisor/manager. “Other” positions included Financial Services Manager, IRG/Adoption Manager and Ombudsman, and Lead Child Support Technician.



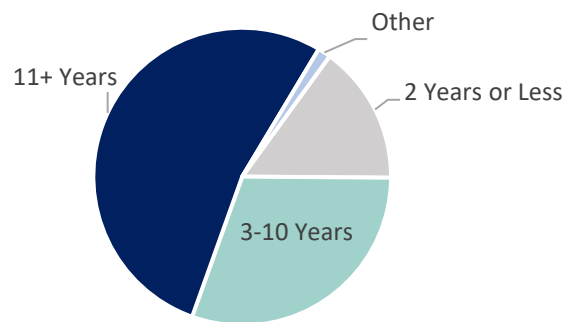
Half (50.0%) of respondents indicated that they work exclusively on interstate cases. “Other” types of cases included respondents who work on both enforcement and interstate cases.

Types of Cases Worked On

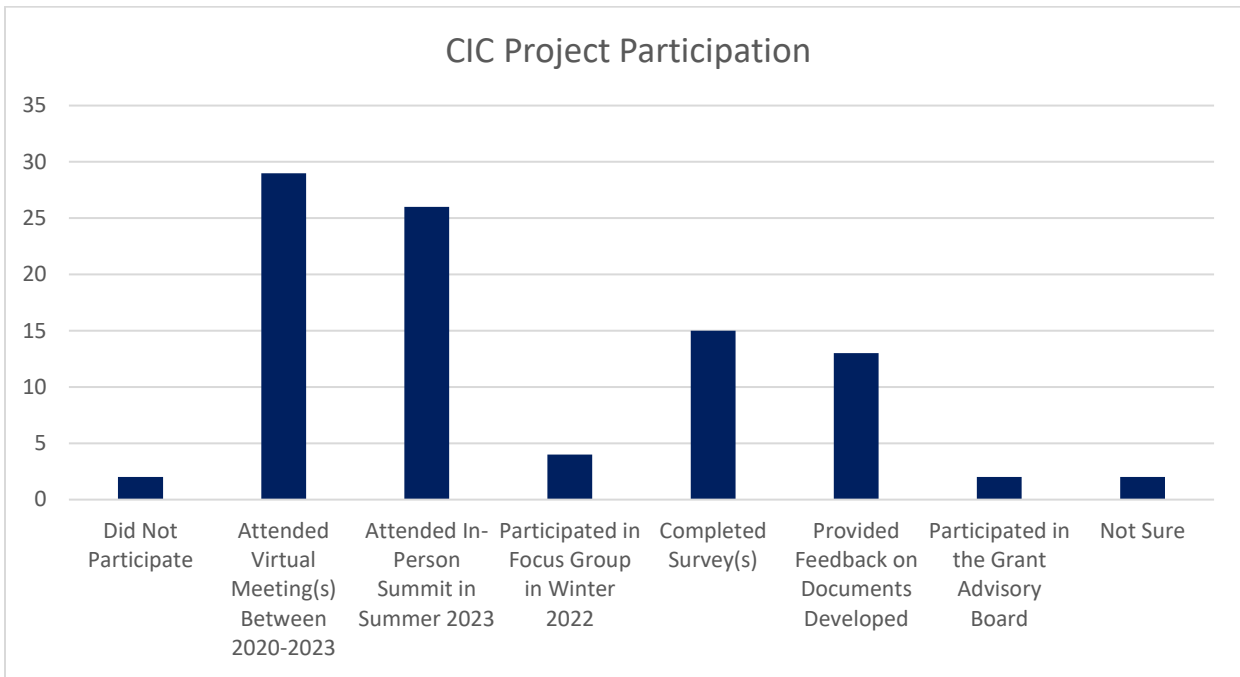


Almost half (45.7%) of respondents indicated that they have worked 11+ years in child support, although this number is higher since some of the “other” years in child support included 17, 30, and 31 years.

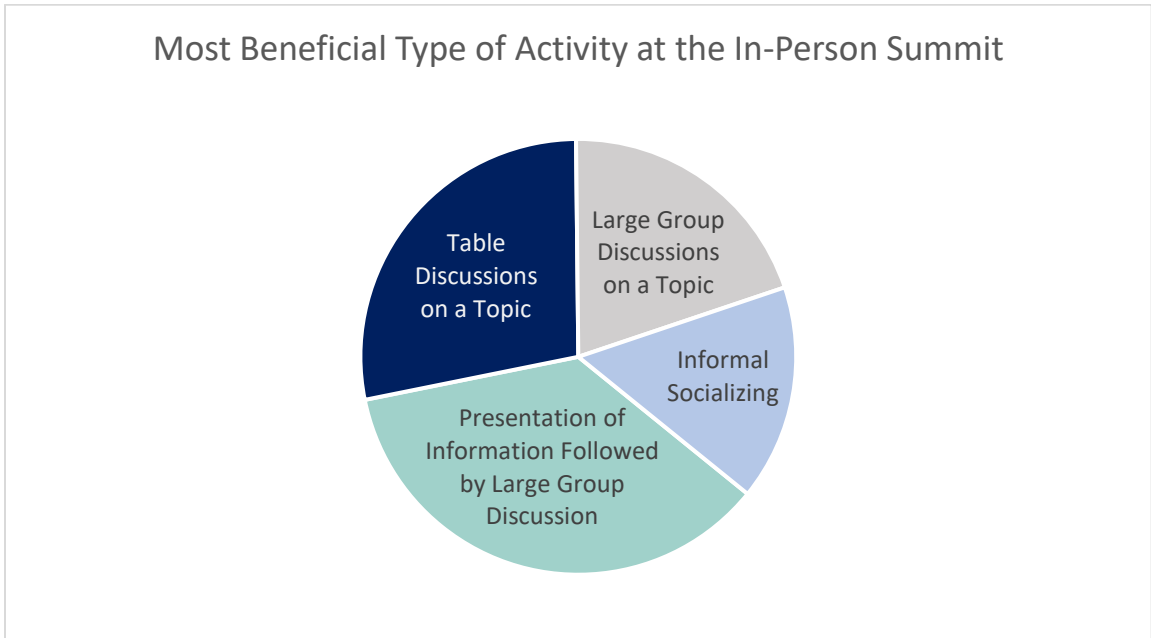
Years in Child Support



When asked about their participation in the CIC project, more than half of the respondents had attended virtual meetings between 2020-2023 (63.0%; $n = 29$) and had attended the in-person summit in Summer 2023 (56.5%; $n = 26$).

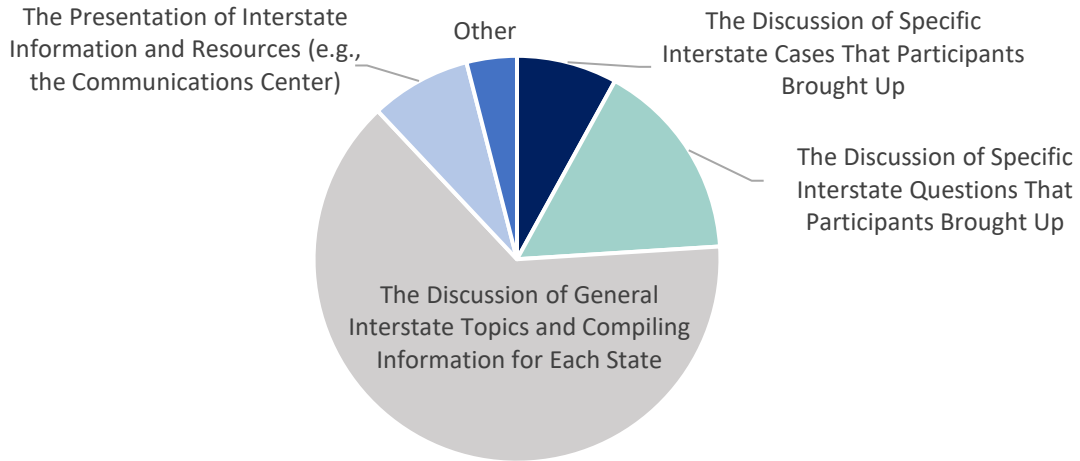


Of those respondents who attended the in-person summit, there was a mix of what type of activity they found the most beneficial: for 36.0%, the presentation of information followed by large group discussion was the most beneficial; for 28.0%, the table discussions on a topic was the most beneficial; for 20.0%, the large group discussions on a topic were the most beneficial; and for 16.0%, the informal socializing was most beneficial.



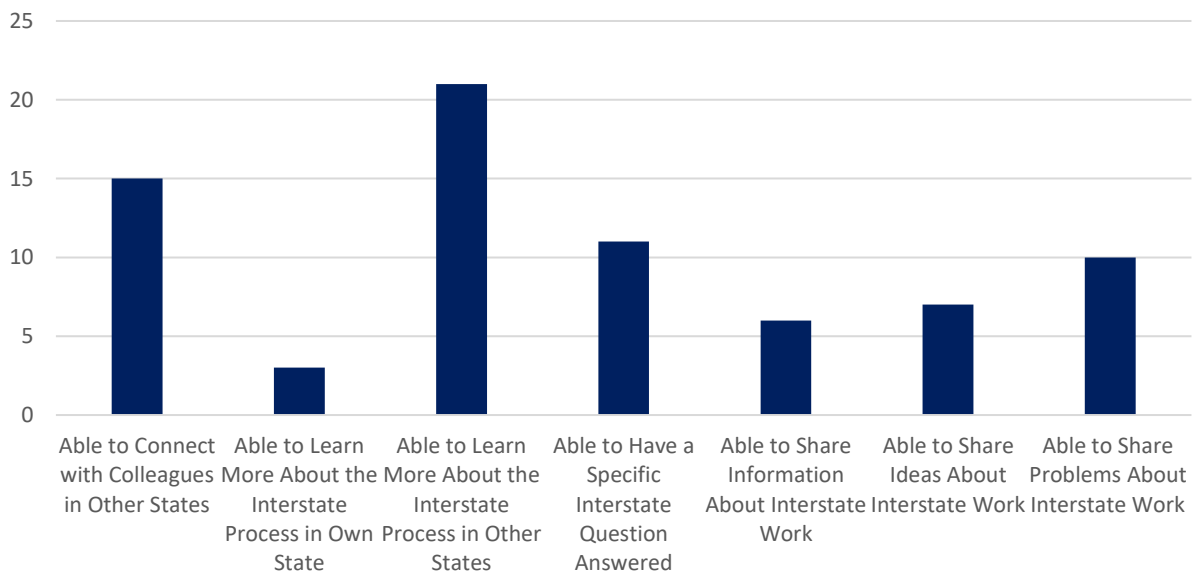
Of the respondents that attended the in-person summit, the majority (64.0%, $n = 16$) found the discussion of general interstate topics and compiling information for each state to be the most beneficial type of session.

Most Beneficial Type of Session at the In-Person Summit



Respondents who attended the in-person summit were asked what they gained from attending; 84.0% ($n = 21$) indicated that they were able to learn more about the interstate process in other states and 60.0% ($n = 15$) indicated that they were able to connect with colleagues in other states.

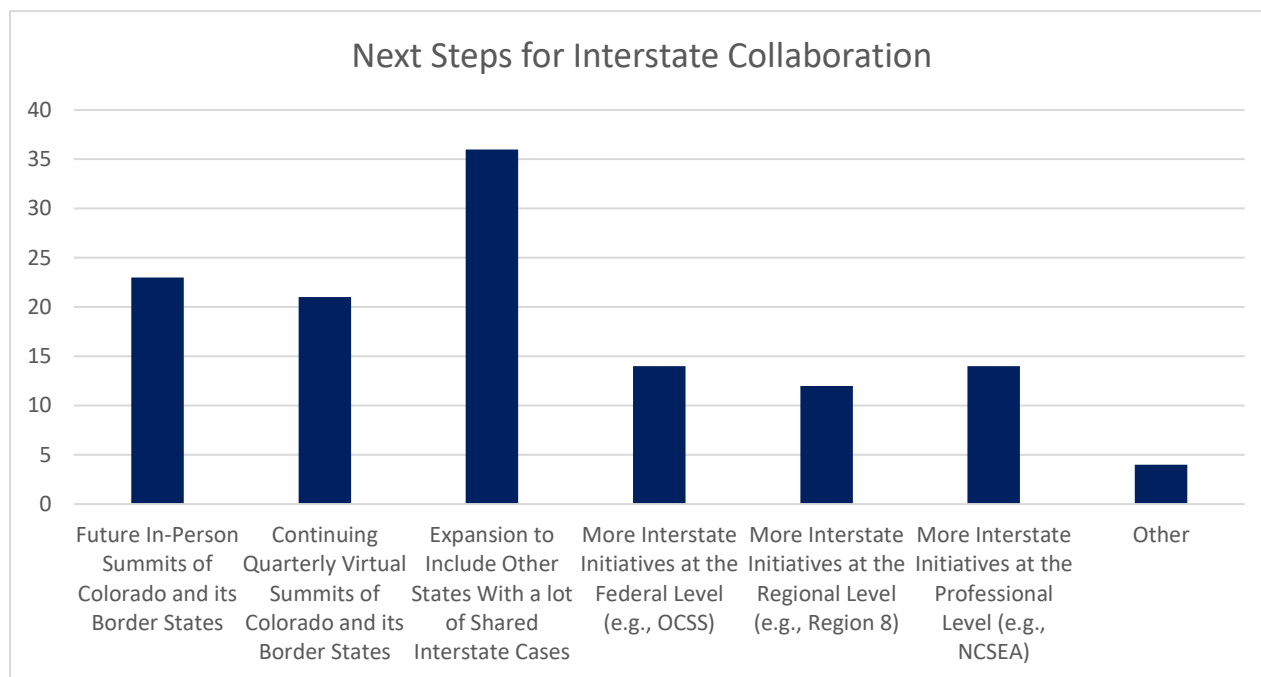
Gained from Attending the Summer 2023 In-Person Summit



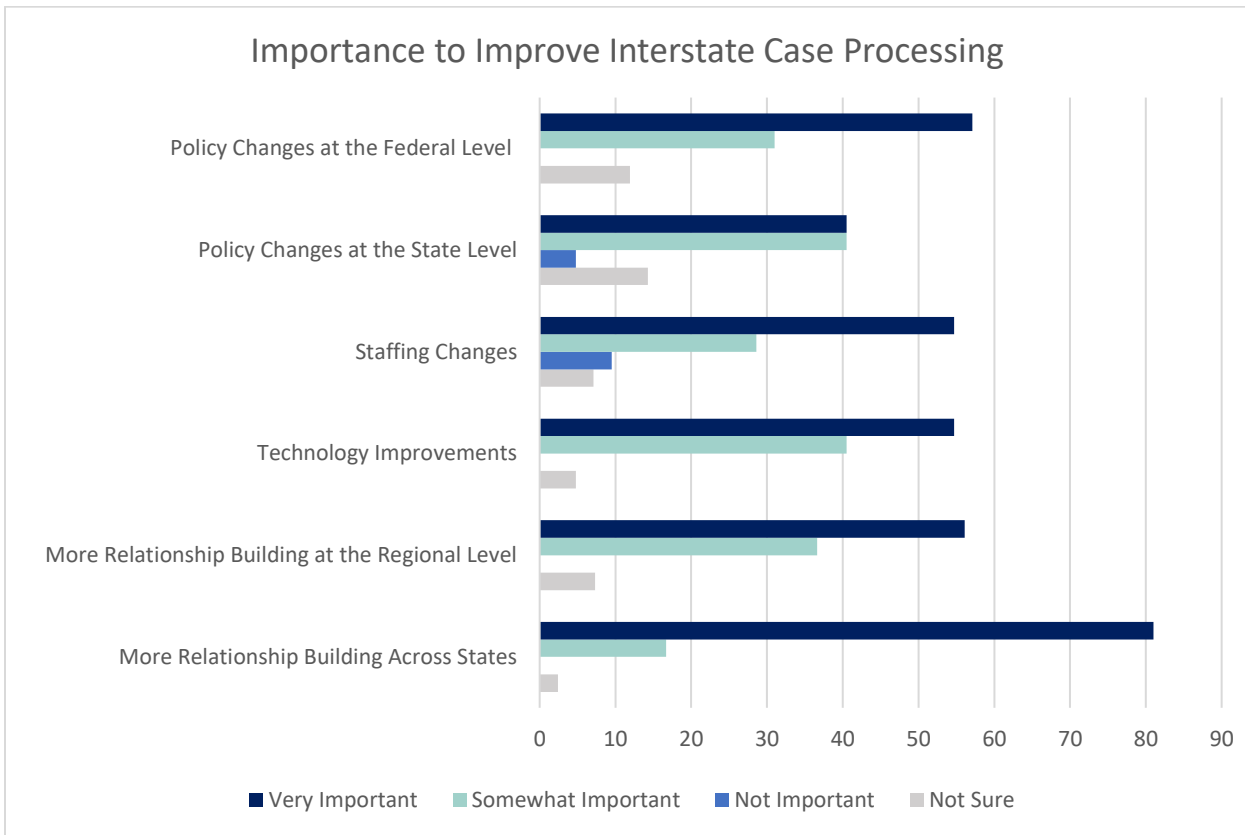
Open-ended feedback on the in-person summit was generally positive, with one respondent sharing, “I really enjoyed getting to meet everyone that I was able to and that there were multiple states that were in attendance,” and another that “it was a lot more educational than I thought it would be. Would go every year if I could.” A few respondents suggested that there be just one in-person summit, rather than separate East and West summits, and that the location of the in-person summit could be improved. As previously noted, the East

summit was held in Burlington, Colorado, a 2.5-hour drive from Denver International Airport, while the West summit was held in Grand Junction, Colorado, which has a small regional airport. Another respondent suggested that “it would be beneficial to have some classes or divide into groups to discuss certain topics . . . if it were sent up more like the annual child support conference that would be really neat.”

When asked about next steps that they’d like to see for interstate collaboration, 87.8% ($n = 36$) of respondents identified expansion to include other states with a lot of shared interstate cases, 56.1% ($n = 23$) of respondents identified future in-person summits of Colorado and its border states, and 51.2% ($n = 21$) identified continuing virtual summits of Colorado and its border states. “Other” next steps included virtual Case Specialist discussions and having topics and case scenarios established prior to meetings.



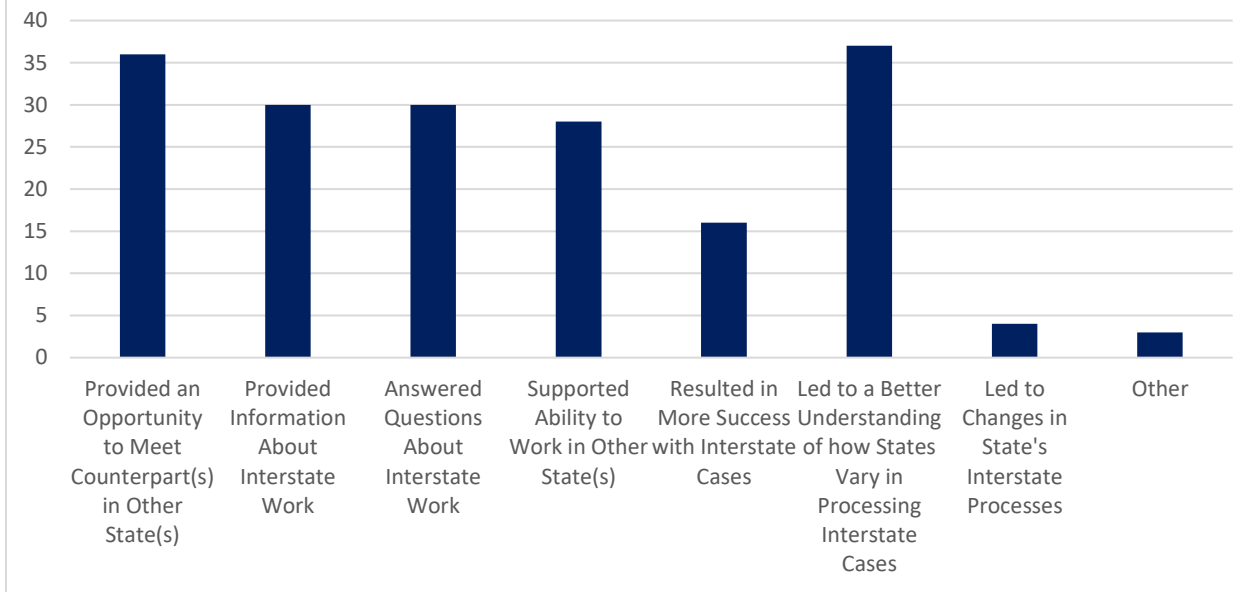
Respondents were most likely to identify more relationship building across states as very important to improve case processing and least likely to identify policy changes at the state level as very important.



Open-ended recommendations for improving interstate case processing focused on communication and training. One respondent suggested “an intergovernmental type certification process to ensure appropriate knowledge levels.” Another respondent noted that they “would appreciate a listserv or similar (vehicle) to ask questions/pose scenarios between meetings, (because) getting feedback from other agencies/states is super helpful.”

When asked about what the CIC project facilitated regarding interstate work, 92.5% ($n = 37$) felt that it led to better understanding of how states vary in processing interstate cases, 90.0% ($n = 36$) of respondents felt that it provided an opportunity to meet counterpart(s) in other state(s), 75.0% ($n = 30$) felt that it provided information about interstate work, 75.0% ($n = 30$) felt that it answered questions about interstate work, 70.0% ($n = 28$) felt that it supported their ability to work with other state(s), 40.0% ($n = 16$) felt that it resulted in more success with interstate cases, and 10.0% ($n = 4$) felt that it led to changes in state’s interstate process. “Other” outcomes mentioned by CIC project participants included the opportunity for feedback and gaining resources and that they have more patience with other interstate technicians now.

CIC Project Facilitated Regarding Interstate Work



Open-ended feedback on the CIC project was very positive. As one respondent noted, “[T]hese meetings have been helpful and of great benefit, they are constructive in understanding other state’s processes and experiences. Sharing this information connects us more to keep working together in moving our cases forward in less time to be able to help the families and especially the children.” People emphasized the benefit of having more information, improved communication, and increased understanding since “interstate is a beast . . . very busy work.”

Final Focus Groups

Towards the end of the grant period, CPR held two virtual focus groups with respondents who indicated on the final survey that they were interested in participating in a follow-up focus group. Fourteen child support professionals representing seven of the eight CIC project states participated in the focus groups. All focus group participants had engaged in the CIC project at various levels, but all were familiar with the project and nearly all had participated in both its virtual and in-person summits. The following themes emerged in the 90-minute focus group sessions.

Both virtual and in-person meetings are helpful. Face-to-face meetings are valued for “being able to put a face to a name” and enhancing relationships. Virtual meetings are helpful outlets to bring specific issues to the table and hear how workers in other states do business. Although most agreed that “nothing beats face-to-face,” participants found it valuable to discover that casework in another state is a “very different process.” They also acknowledge that Zoom meetings make it possible to connect with other workers because people can see one another. The chief value of seeing workers in other states is getting them to answer the phone and help. As one worker explained:

People dread interstate cases because they can’t get people to answer the phone. Once you get to see someone in another state, you can reach out and say, “Hey, can you look at something for me?”

There are barriers to engaging workers in virtual and in-person meetings. Respondents in most states blamed COVID-19 and its aftermath as challenges to engaging staff in the CIC project. For example, one Colorado county blamed the refusal of county commissioners to authorize virtual work during COVID-19 to a massive wave of

worker resignations from which it has never recovered. Others blamed budget cuts due to COVID-19 and its aftermath for staff reductions and hiring freezes. Participants agreed that the workforce had changed in fundamental ways that made it harder for agencies to retain employees. And two states pointed to recent changes in the vendors hired by their states to deliver child support services and the vendors' subsequent inability to fill vacant staff positions. As this worker put it, "Everyone is new and struggling with basics. They can't take on an initiative like interstate collaboration." Other challenges to CIC project recruitment and engagement were lack of support from the state child support director and the use of certain types of call centers.

Focus group participants favor the engagement of caseworkers and are skeptical about including higher-level personnel. Focus group participants see value in including ordinary caseworkers, or "boots on the ground." Nevertheless, while local workers are viewed as the parties best able to "fix" interstate problems, there is consensus that "brand new workers would be lost" in an initiative like the CIC project. Central Registry personnel are favored participants too. On the other hand, respondents fear that the participation of "higher-ups" would have a chilling effect on conversation and candor between and among staff in the trenches.

The importance of effective activities, approaches, and topics. Focus group participants cautioned against getting into highly specific discussions of individual problem cases. They also suggested the use of Zoom rooms to engage people in the discussion of topics that were of interest to only a subset of meeting attendees. Among the topics of key interest are updates on new processes and tools, complex case questions dealing with establishment and enforcement issues, interstate processes, and policies in surrounding states. One respondent who is familiar with other regional communication initiatives suggested that the coordinator send an agenda prior to each meeting so each state could decide the appropriate person to send. Very open-ended meetings were viewed as less successful than those with advance planning and agenda creation. It was generally agreed that the failure to include tribal child support programs was an omission and that future communication initiatives should be more inclusive.

The perceived impact of the CIC project. Participants credited the CIC project with helping them understand where neighboring "states were at." This included knowing the types of delays and reasons for delay that they might expect in other states, the impact of COVID-19 on agency capacity, staffing issues, remote work policies, system changes, the judicial versus administrative profile of the state, typical time frames for case processing, and court procedures. Knowing this type of information was credited with reducing worker anger about delays and making staff feel more confident in their interactions with other states and less intimidated. As one put it: "New workers don't want to ask a dumb question." And in the words of another worker:

It is a comfort to know more about other states. You have the fear of not knowing something, of saying the wrong things. It helps to know a little about their policies, procedures, and statutes before you reach out.

Another benefit of the CIC project is the validation it provides for interstate workers. Participants agreed that intergovernmental cases are not addressed by upper management within their states. The CIC project offers workers support from people who do similar work and understand their frustrations.

The key challenge to achieving more beneficial effects from an initiative like CIC project are use of call centers and voice response units (VRU) that shield workers from callers—including workers in other states. As a result, they rarely lead to more customized treatment or actual access to a worker. And because worker turnover at call centers is typically very high, reaching a human being doesn't translate into useful information.

Call center staff turnover is very high, so you usually have very new workers who don't know anything. Reaching them doesn't solve your problem. Essentially, you are constantly at ground zero.

Reactions to CIC project products. Focus group participants were aware of the At-A-Glance document for each participating state and the Best Practices Summary. They agreed that they were “nice resources” but noted that they will need to be updated. They also suggested that the documents be placed on the CDHS website and made a “living document.”

Reactions to participation by federal regional representatives. Kansas focus group personnel also participate in the Region 7 interstate initiative, which is led by a federal regional representative. Colorado and Wyoming personnel participate in the interstate collaboration groups for Region 8 and Region 9. Focus group respondents familiar with federal regional office involvement are supportive of the idea. They feel that it increases participation. Another respondent felt that it might “lend more weight to the discussion.” Some respondents were unsure of which region they were part of considering recent reorganizations. Others favored collaboration initiatives that involved states that shared a border because they were more “intimate” groupings. Still others felt that any time of grouping—border, regional, high case volume—would be beneficial.

Participation in national conferences that address interstate issues. Relatively few focus group participants attend national conferences that address interstate matters such as the Western Intergovernmental Child Support Engagement Council (WICSEC) or Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association (ERICSA) annual conferences. A few said that they were able to attend when it was offered in a virtual format, but since the cost of registering and traveling is typically borne by the county, few to none can attend, and those that do are from “upper management.”

Dissemination of CIC project learnings to other staff. Focus group participants agree that the CIC project representative in each state needs to be responsible for “flipping information out to other people in the state,” but that the distribution of meeting notes following each virtual and in-person session would have been helpful. One respondent felt that she was “using the CIC project to train herself so that she could train others [in her state].” Another CIC project participant described her dissemination process in the following way:

I took it back to the office and presented it. I talked to my boss first and then I would present it to the district managers. We have an annual conference so I could add a session on interstate collaboration to that too.

Continuation of the CIC project. Most focus group participants hope that Colorado will continue to organize a collaboration initiative for its border states and that the CIC project will remain operational. In the words of one participant, “It is a keeper.” Attendees assume that the staff member hired to replace the recently retired director of the Colorado Central Registry who convened the CIC project will assume similar duties in the future. Optimally, the future CIC project would have a chair and co-chair to divide the work. No other state offered to pick up the mantle. One participant suggested that Central Registry directors among the participating states jointly manage the initiative. Ideally, the CIC project would meet virtually on a bimonthly or quarterly basis and convene in-person annually.

[Interviews with Interstate Collaboration Experts](#)

The following themes emerged in interviews with five experts who have experience with interstate collaboration initiatives.

Interstate workers share a strong interest in expanding their contacts in other states. Regardless of state setting or region, child support workers who handle interstate cases are keenly interested in finding and

cultivating contacts in other states. They are also deeply interested in how cases are processed in other settings. As one expert put it, “[T]he tools are great, but you are always looking for a contact.” There are many logical and effective ways to group states for communication initiatives. They include states that share borders, states that share many cases, a state and the tribal child support programs within its boundaries, and states that comprise a single federal region. Among the challenges that interstate initiatives face is the privatization of child support services, which is associated with high worker turnover and limited caseworker involvement in meetings and other professional development activities. Another barrier is call centers, which make it difficult for workers to reach knowledgeable human beings in another state.

In-person meetings are optimal but virtual meetings are highly effective, too. In-person meetings are viewed as optimal ways to establish contacts in other states and build relationships. As one respondent put it, “Personal connection is key and real connections are in-person.” And in the words of another founder of interstate collaboration initiatives:

We have a simplistic model. If we put people at tables and force them to be together and learn together, they will be able to put a face to a name and help each other. They will understand one another and not be angry with each other.

Travel restrictions during COVID-19 upended these opportunities, and the expansion of the virtual world introduced new meeting formats. Experts now say that the most effective format is a combination of virtual and in-person meeting opportunities. The optimal initiative would consist of a quarterly virtual meeting of 90 minutes with a yearly in-person meeting of one to 1.5 days. Region 5 and Region 7 conduct three virtual and one face-to-face meeting per year. Virtual meetings garner good attendance, permit the communication of useful information, and enable child support staff to get to know their counterparts in other jurisdictions. They also make it possible for representatives of large, high-case-volume states to attend meetings as visitors. As one expert put it, “[T]he virtual world gives us the opportunity to bring individuals and groups together who wouldn’t otherwise connect.” One expert pegged the optimal size of a virtual meeting at 25–30 to allow for the creation of Zoom rooms for smaller-sized discussions. For time management purposes, each state should designate a single speaker to handle any state-specific update or presentation with others on the team chiming in with specific additional information.

Organic initiatives and convenings are vital. Several established interstate collaboration initiatives began and grew in an organic manner. As one regional convener put it, “We got data showing that performance on cases we shared was lower than performance on regular cases, so it was perceived as a need, and it grew organically.” Other states pair off with a single partner to do “nitty-gritty” case resolution. Still other states tie the strength of their interstate initiative to a regional culture that stresses multi-state collaboration. A respondent in Region 5 noted that states in that region began holding Large Urban Jurisdiction meetings in 2003 and that this experience had built a “foundation for exchange of best practices and meeting activity.” Once established, they are sustained by individuals who see value in them. Incorporating participants and content in an organic manner during meetings is also important. Respondents noted the value of attendees in every participating state providing a five-minute overview of new developments in interstate practice and policy at every quarterly and annual meeting. As one facilitator explained, “[E]very meeting starts with me doing rollcall and asking each jurisdiction to tell me something new.” These organic contributions are viewed as valuable ways to keep states informed about their neighbors and introduce colleagues across state lines. In the interests of time, experts urge participating states to designate a single speaker if multiple individuals attend the meeting with others chiming in only to provide missed material.

Preparation is necessary. Round-robin exchanges are necessary in interstate virtual meetings but are not sufficient, and an effective interstate collaboration initiative needs to be complemented with someone who convenes the meeting, plans the content of sessions, communicates with participants, and updates their contact information. Effective and durable communications initiatives also have convenors who provide skilled facilitation. They select interesting topics for meeting sessions, invite informative guests from other states and agencies, generate case and practice scenarios that spark discussion, and organize appropriate training activities.

Skillful coordination and facilitation are vital. The coordinator and facilitator of an interstate collaboration initiative plays a vital role in its success and sustenance. On a very practical level, this person needs to make sure that points of contact in the participating states are maintained. Staff change and communications with participants and their replacements must be updated on an ongoing basis. Another critical role that the facilitator plays is to schedule virtual meetings, develop an agenda, and remind attendees of its conduct. In virtual meetings, facilitators need strong online skills so that they can create breakout rooms, conduct mini-polls, engage participants in making virtual word clouds and sticky-notes, and pursue other techniques to enhance connectivity and engagement. Facilitators need to perform and/or delegate vital preparatory work to others prior to virtual meetings. This might include selecting a topical focus, engaging guest visitors from other states and tribes, arranging for mini-training sessions, creating case scenarios that will spark interest and discussion, and taking notes at the meeting and sending them to participants.

Treatment of problem cases. Child support workers struggle with problem cases, and one benefit of an interstate collaboration forum is to try to obtain a resolution. Nevertheless, experts caution against overwhelming partner states with questions about problem cases and/or using meetings to engage in lengthy case-specific discussions and explanations. To avoid getting “in the weeds,” on specific cases during the meeting, each participating state might be asked to identify 5–10 problematic cases and exchange them with the appropriate state representative for review and further follow-up action. If specific problem cases are used to generate meeting material, the issues they present should be elevated to a more general level that has broad policy and practice implications to make the discussion applicable to multiple states. As one respondent put it, “We elevate case situations to policy and procedures and solve the problems off-line.”

Other useful content for virtual and/or in-person meetings. Experts suggested that the facilitator of an interstate collaboration initiative use a variety of approaches to offer useful and varied content to attendees in virtual and in-person meetings. Since a few large states generate many interstate cases that affect every region, a representative of high-volume states like Florida, California, Texas, Illinois, and New York might be invited to participate virtually as a guest in an interstate meeting to provide information on how they operate, handle interstate cases, and respond to participant questions. In a similar manner, tribal child support programs that exist in border states in an interstate collaboration network might be invited to attend and discuss the process and challenges of handling interstate cases in tribal settings. Another effective facilitation strategy is to conduct scenario-based training and engage each state in describing how they would handle a case that involves a similar fact situation. Relevant topics include handling a change of child custody or payee, order modifications, income withholding procedures, and the use of certain enforcement tools. Finally, interstate experts might be engaged to conduct brief presentations or offer a short training session on a new electronic tool, or a complex procedure followed by a discussion. Resources for these activities include staff in the Division of Federal Systems at OCSS as well as state-level trainers. More extensive training sessions are reserved for longer, in-person meetings.

Documents and products. Interstate initiatives frequently generate products that help their state participants navigate the cases they share with other states. The most common document is a “Need to Know” handout that describes relevant interstate laws in border or regional states and clarifies what workers are allowed and not

allowed to do. Another common document is a Best Practices Summary. As previously noted, the CIC project produced variants of these types of documents: an At-a-Glance summary for each participating state and a Best Practices Summary.

The support of child support directors is critical. While child support directors are not the target audience for interstate collaboration initiatives, their support is vital. Ultimately, IV-D directors need to welcome state engagement in such initiatives, approve the participation of staff in communication initiatives, sanction their attendance at quarterly and/or annual meetings, potentially weigh in on who should represent the state and/or participate, and respond to requests for state changes that might be made by other participating states.

The targeted audience for interstate collaboration initiatives are “leaders at the state and county level.” Interviewed experts agree that the audience for interstate collaboration initiatives does not consist of child support directors or frontline case workers. Rather, states should seek to engage “leaders at the state and county level” who can recommend changes in policy and practice should they arise. Optimally, this would include state staff involved with interstate policy, Central Registry personnel, supervisors or experienced staff at the state and county level who might be opinion leaders in the child support community, and large city representatives who generate the biggest volume of interstate cases. In states that are highly judicial, a legal representative may be very important. Experts feel that child support directors have other forums in which to meet (e.g., the Child Support Directors Association and the National Child Support Engagement Association (NCSEA) Policy Forum) while frontline workers can go to state and national child support conferences where there are many opportunities for them to get basic interstate training.

Engaging federal regional officers can be beneficial but can also bring “federal expectations.” Federal regional representatives are actively engaged in several other interstate collaboration initiatives. This includes initiatives in Regions 1, 2/3, 5, 7/8, and 9/10. One advantage of participation by federal regional personnel is that they typically provide funding for in-person meetings. For example, in Region 2/3, the federal representative pays the transportation and hotel costs that participants incur when they attend an in-person meeting. In some regions, they also play a key role in preparing for quarterly convenings and facilitating them. For example, the Region 5 facilitator is a regional representative who regularly generates case scenarios for quarterly meetings that highlight relevant case practices and policies. Still another role that a federal regional coordinator can play is to make sure that interstate points of contact in each state are maintained and updated. Some experts say that federal involvement “helps” and that each of the regional representatives should host an interstate collaboration meeting. One interviewee suggested that it be made “a duty of the federal regional representative.” On the other hand, federal regional participation can lead to a “loss of control.” In the words of one expert, “[F]ederal funding makes it a federal show. If you put federal money behind these gatherings, you get federal expectations.” Maybe one expert put it best when he observed that “the benefits and costs of federal involvement depends on the federal representative.”

There are a variety of ways to promote cross-state engagement and relationship building. Rotating the location of an annual in-person meeting might deepen commitment to an interstate initiative, although Colorado is the obvious hub for the eight states targeted for the CIC project. Another team building and learning experience is for states to invite border states to send one or two representatives to their state conference, waive registration fees, and engage the visiting representatives on a panel or roundtable to discuss interstate practices. For example, Pennsylvania and New Jersey each involve three people from the opposite state to attend their state conference and register them without charging a fee. Finally, each state must come up with a way to disseminate learnings from the interstate collaboration initiative. The representative from the state might circulate notes from virtual and annual meetings to regional and local child support offices, organize a panel or roundtable on the interstate collaboration initiative at the child support community’s annual state

conference, or communicate meeting learnings to state trainers who work with interstate case workers. Finally, child support workers can participate in the professional associations that focus on interstate case processing. These are ERICSA, which sponsors an Intergovernmental Improvement Committee, and WICSEC, which sponsors an Intergovernmental Fair. NCSEA Connects, a bimonthly meeting of professionals who handle intergovernmental cases, is another vehicle for interstate collaboration. One challenge to the sustenance of interstate collaboration initiatives is the retirement of intergovernmental specialists. Viewed as “icons” in the field, many of the pioneers of case processing in this area are retiring and there is a perceived lack of replacements with similar zeal and passion.

Including tribes is challenging but important. There are 574 federally recognized tribes, of which 60 have a certified child support program. Nevertheless, interstate collaboration initiatives have typically failed to engage tribal child support programs, as was the case with the CIC project. One reason is that they lack some critical interstate tools, such as CSENet. This pattern, however, is beginning to change and Region 7 recently incorporated tribal child support programs in its interstate initiative, despite the challenges. Experts suggested that any future iteration of the CIC project include tribal cases and programs that operate within the border states that Colorado engages.

Lessons Learned

The CIC project provides several takeaways for Colorado and other states interested in improving collaboration between and among states that are proximate to one another and/or share interstate child support cases.

Grant plans can change totally because of external and environmental circumstances. Colorado’s proposal to OCSS aimed to improve cooperation and relationships between and among its seven border states by convening five collaborative, in-person meetings among Colorado and its seven neighboring states and testing the ability of such meetings to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service. Approximately six months after the award of the CIC grant on September 30, 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic began. In the wake of ensuing agency closures, travel restrictions, and suspensions of normal agency practice and procedures, Colorado’s grant plans were totally upended. Instead of conducting five in-person summits, project architects adopted a plan to conduct a series of quarterly virtual summits, with the hope of reverting to in-person meetings as soon as national health circumstances permitted. Instead of conducting a quantitative evaluation of pre- and post-project performance patterns extracted from samples of interstate cases drawn from the Colorado automated child support system, Colorado pivoted to conducting surveys and focus groups with workers who participated in virtual summits. When in-person summits were finally conducted during the last quarter of the project (June and July 2023), Colorado conducted a round of final surveys and focus groups with these participants, too. Finally, to explore the issue of sustainability and generate lessons for other jurisdictions that may be interested in interstate collaboration initiatives, CIC project evaluators conducted interviews with national interstate collaboration experts.

While in-person summits are optimal, virtual meetings are viewed as effective and valuable by participants and experts alike, with most favoring a mix of virtual and in-person meeting opportunities. While there is no perfect substitute for the connections made in face-to-face meetings, CIC project participants and experts alike give virtual interstate meetings very high marks with most favoring quarterly sessions. Virtual formats are cost-effective, garner good attendance, allow participants to connect a name with a face, help to reduce the isolation that some interstate workers feel, enable workers to learn about new policies and practices in neighboring states, facilitate the resolution of problem cases, afford exposure to national experts and new jurisdictions through guest invitations, and build case expertise and cross-state understandings through participation in scenario-based training activities.

Collaboration initiatives should combine organic meeting elements with advance planning, coordination, and expert facilitation. A key feature of every virtual and in-person communication initiative is brief, unscripted input by each participating state on new practices, policies, initiatives, and developments that might affect the pace, timing, and outcome of interstate case processing. Another spontaneous feature of interstate collaboration initiatives is the opportunity for workers to submit problem cases to the group and/or representative of another state for advice and potentially subsequent resolution. These organic elements, however, should not overshadow the importance of more structured meeting activities. This includes advance planning, agenda making, maintenance of participant contact information, preparation of meeting activities, the use of engagement techniques such as polling and break-out rooms, invitations to meeting guests and speakers, note-taking, the organization of brief training sessions, and the development and use of case scenarios that stimulate discussion and learning. Indeed, both CIC project participants and experts caution against allowing participants to engage in spontaneous, lengthy, case-specific discussions and explanations that are not generalizable to the full group. Rather, participants with specific case questions should submit them to the facilitator in advance to determine whether the item can be elevated to policy and procedure that would be of interest to multiple states and/or solved offline. Another way to avoid getting “in the weeds” on specific cases during the meeting is to allow participating states to submit an agreed-upon number of problem cases to one another for subsequent review and follow-up action.

There are barriers to engaging and retaining child support professionals in interstate collaboration initiatives. COVID-19-related resignations, staff reductions, and hiring freezes all have contributed to severe worker shortages in child support agencies. Workers and line staff are less expansive when they are overwhelmed and are less apt to participate in a communications initiative. Due to high levels of worker turnover and state use of private vendors to deliver child support services who struggle with worker retention, agencies have many new employees. This too presents a challenge for worker engagement in communication initiatives. New child support workers struggle with job basics and lack the background to participate effectively and benefit from communication initiatives. Still another challenge is the unwillingness of some child support directors and managers to adequately support the initiative and permit workers to engage. Several experts also note that the recent retirement of child support professionals who pioneered the interstate case processing field also presents challenges to the creation and sustenance of interstate collaboration initiatives at a national level.

The perceived benefits of interstate collaboration initiatives are wide ranging. The CIC project was credited with helping participants better understand neighboring jurisdictions, their unique processing and policy features, the types of delays and other case hiccups they might encounter, and the reasons for those circumstances. As a result, staff felt more informed and tolerant. Another benefit is increasing staff confidence. Workers are more apt to reach out to engage with their opposite state counterparts to try to resolve case problems if they feel knowledgeable and confident and less afraid of “asking dumb questions.” CIC project participants also appreciate products and documents that highlight key features of state process and policy and recommended practices. This includes the CIC project’s At-A-Glance document for each participating state and its Best Practices Summary, although both require routine update and placement on the CDHS website to become “living “that are accessible to a larger number of child support workers in each participating state.

Continuation of the CIC project and/or another interstate collaboration initiative will require staff commitment. Colorado’s Central Registry Director and manager of the CIC project retired at the end of the grant. As of this writing, no replacement has been hired and it is unclear whether sustenance of the CIC project will be part of the future duties of the new Central Registry Director. Although CIC project participants expressed support for its retention, no other state offered to pick up the mantle. As previously noted, staff support is critical to initiating, conducting, and sustaining an effective interstate collaboration initiative. Participants suggested

several ways forward ranging from joint management by Central Registry Directors for the eight participating states to management by federal regional representatives for DHHS.

Next Steps

Evaluators of the CIC project conducted interviews with five interstate collaboration experts on approaches to sustaining the communications initiative among Colorado and its border states and for other groups of states interested in promoting relationship building, communication, and learning in the interstate area.

Explore the feasibility of engaging federal regional representatives of DHHS in the continuation of the CIC project and its potential incorporation into other existing interstate collaboration initiatives. Child support directors and Central Registry directors in states that participated in the CIC project should explore the feasibility of engaging regional representatives of the DHHS in helping to sustain and potentially augment the CIC project. One purpose of federal regional representatives is to maintain close contact with state, local, and tribal partners and address the needs of communities and individuals served through DHHS programs and policies. Several existing, long-standing intergovernmental communications initiatives are led and/or supported by federal regional representatives. This includes initiatives that currently exist in Regions 2 and 3, 5, 7 and 8, and 9 and 10. The states that currently comprise the CIC project involve four different federal regions: Region 6 (New Mexico and Texas), Region 7 (Kansas and Nebraska), Region 8 (Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah), and Region 9 (Arizona). The next step for continuation of the CIC project would be to convene Central Registry Directors in the states that participated in the initiative, determine their interest in continuation, and engage the relevant federal regional directors in a conversation about the composition of an effective interstate initiative. One option might be to explore folding the CIC project into the existing intergovernmental collaboration for Regions 7 and 8, which would encompass the states of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, and Utah, with the potential of adding the states of New Mexico (Region 6), Texas (Region 6), and Arizona (Region 9). Federal regional representatives currently help to maintain and update points of contact for interstate meetings; plan and host virtual and in-person meetings; construct agendas; create instructive case scenarios; invite guests from other states, tribal child support programs, and regions; and otherwise support the collaboration and learnings objectives of the initiative. They may also be able to provide financial support to underwrite in-person meetings and or identify other relevant training, meeting, and learning opportunities at a national level. As previously noted, there is some concern that the involvement of federal regional representatives will lead to a “loss of control” and the introduction of “federal expectations.” Nevertheless, given the retirement of the architect of the CIC project and the absence of a replacement with the mandate and passion to sustain the CIC project, the engagement of federal regional representatives appears to be the best strategy for its survival.

Conduct quarterly virtual meetings that combine organic features with planned agendas, topics, materials, and activities that are skillfully facilitated. The leader of the next generation of the CIC project should incorporate key learnings from this grant. The core intervention format should be a quarterly virtual meeting that incorporates both organic and planned components. Each meeting should begin with a representative of each state providing a five-minute overview of new developments in policy and practice. Round-robin exchanges should be combined with carefully planned agendas that include interesting topics, informative guests from other states and tribal programs, case scenarios that spark discussion, and appropriate training activities. Skilled facilitation is another core feature of effective communication initiatives. This includes maintaining points of contact within each state, scheduling meetings, preparing agendas, managing meeting time, and using techniques to enhance connectivity and engagement including breakout rooms, mini-polls, and the use of virtual word clouds and sticky-notes.

Augment quarterly virtual meetings with face-to-face meetings, participation in annual state conferences in neighboring states, and engaging in national professional activities dealing with interstate child support. In-person meetings are optimal ways to establish contacts in other states and build relationships. Communications initiatives should aim to conduct in-person meetings on an annual basis in a location that is relatively central to the group of participating states and offers easy travel access. Another team building and learning experience is for states to invite border states to send one or two representatives to their state conferences, waive registration fees, and engage them in a panel or roundtable to discuss interstate practices. States can broaden their interstate expertise and exposure to caseworkers in other states by participating in professional associations and conferences that focus on interstate case processing. Finally, the CIC project coordinator must generate notes from each virtual and in-person meeting that are shared with a point person in each participating state who is committed to disseminating learnings, announcements, and opportunities to regional and local child support offices and/or state trainers who work with interstate case workers.

Include tribal child support programs in interstate collaboration initiatives. There are 574 federally recognized tribes, of which 60 have a certified tribal child support program. The CIC project did not engage tribal child support programs. Working with tribal child support programs is challenging; many lack critical interstate tools. Nevertheless, some regional communication initiatives (e.g., Region 7) have begun to include tribes despite the challenges. A future iteration of the CIC project should include tribal cases and child support programs that operate within the border states that participate.

Appendix A

Arizona (AZ) At-A-Glance

- State run program.
- 95% of work is done remotely.
- Caseload 1,000-2,000 per caseworker.
- They are about 15 months into a system replacement (anticipated rollout is 2023 with enhancement and updates continuing through 2024).

Communications					
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments		
Email	Preferred	Yes			
Phone	Used if not getting response	Yes	Will send multiple forms of communication only if unsuccessful with first attempt.		
QUICK	All workers have access		Cannot use the Texas or Colorado portal, must use Quick.		
EDE	Yes		Preferred method for receiving incoming Transmittals. Would like states that have EDE to use it and not also use US mail.		
Portal Communication Center	Available but new and not used much yet		Anticipate that use will increase once they have their new system.		
CSENet	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?	Comments
	None	Initiating Cases: Status request quarterly if no payments Responding Cases: 'No information available' response to status request even though caseworker review might provide information		AZ can still receive CSENet transactions on closed cases.	Workers receive a "reconciliation report" if a CSENet does not go through to another state

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial	Registered by Central Registry when case received	

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/ Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Judicial	No		Seen as barrier to employment so not done often.
Occupational License	Judicial	No		
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes	\$500 Arrears	
FIDM	Administrative unless admin review requested	Yes, and Manual		
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		
Passport				
Lottery & Sports Betting Intercept	Administrative	Yes		
Liens	Administrative	Yes, and Manual		
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	90 consecutive days of nonpayment, NCP must have ability to pay and be willfully avoiding payment; proof that other bills are being paid, i.e. mortgage, credit card, etc.	Results in a bench warrant if they do not appear.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
10%	Yes	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- 5% of staff are remote on any given day.
- Increased use of EDE and email; Increase in telephone/video hearings.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
DCSS – Division of Child Support Services	DES – Dept. of Economic Security	CR -- AZ Central Registry	SDU	ATLAS	UIB
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP (transitioning to using Support Recipient)	NCP (transitioning to using Support Payor)	AF – Alleged father, NCP	HPP – Hospital Paternity Program	Current support or accrual	IV-A, Cash, or TANF

Colorado (CO) At-A-Glance

- State supervised, county operated program.
- Arrears-only cases accepted only if case has been continuously open since before the last child emancipated.
- CO is heavily automated but making changes for more worker activity in enforcement.

Communications					
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments		
Email	Preferred	Yes			
Phone	Preferred	Yes			
QUICK	Frequently used				
EDE	Yes				
Portal Communication Center	Yes		Available as of October 2022		
	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?	Comments
CSENet	4 lines, 80 characters	Not all states can receive 4 lines. Sometimes misinterpreted, e.g., message sent when hearing scheduled interpreted as hearing held.	CO includes worker emails to facilitate responses via email.		CO doesn't get an error report for transactions that don't go through.

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Both	County option, varies. Routine but not required to enforce. Not required to serve NCP first.	CO routinely asks other states to register.

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Administrative	Yes	Selected when balance greater than \$500 and 60 days or more past due; caseworker notified to review and move forward or suppress the action	
Occupational License	Administrative	Yes		
Recreational License	Administrative	Yes		

Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes	\$500 Arrears	
FIDM	Administrative	Partially	Balance greater than \$1,000 across all orders and no payment in 3 months	Not currently processing, waiting for system enhancement to require caseworker approval to move forward.
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		
Passport	Administrative	Yes	Balance at least \$2,500	Zero balance required to release passport hold.
Lottery & Sports Betting Intercept	Administrative	Yes		
Liens	Administrative	No		
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	Determined by county	

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
Different by year (See IRG)	County option; no counties currently enforcing interest	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- Increased use of email due to working remotely.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
CSS – Division of Child Support Services	Office of Economic Security	CCR -- CO Central Registry	FSR – Family Support Registry	ACES	UCB
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP or Obligee	NCP or Obligor	AF – Alleged father, NCP	AOP – Acknowledgment of Paternity	MSO – monthly support obligation	Colorado Works— TANF, SNAP (food benefits), CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program)

Kansas (KS) At-A-Glance

- Privatized since 2013; all cases contracted out to Maximus (4 urban counties) or YoungWilliams (101 rural counties).
- Both vendors have their own call centers; workers try to handle questions on-the-spot before forwarding to a specialist.
- Central Office Administration staff handle limited services and is in contact with other states.
- Transitioning to new IV-D director.
- Orders automatically reduce when a child emancipates.

Communications				
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred	Yes	Might use more than one type of communication if not getting response.	
Phone	Preferred	Yes		
QUICK	Used daily		Find other state contact information often out-of-date or call center info only.	
EDE	Yes			
Portal Communication Center	Just implemented in 2022		Not in general use yet.	
CSENet	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
	Limited. Sometimes send Transmittal forms due to this	Outdated system results in very short messages or use of multiple CSENet		

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial	All orders registered	Faster in urban areas.

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Administrative	No	\$2500; \$500 per order to lift suspension	Worker driven; can get restricted license (can drive to and from work).
Recreational License	Administrative	Yes	\$500 per order to lift suspension	These are fishing and hunting licenses.
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes		
FIDM	Judicial			Not being pursued due to COVID.
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		

Passport	Administrative	Yes		
Other	Workers Comp and insurance claims attachment; everything is heavily worker driven since they are judicial.			
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	Determined by county	Try to use other tools before contempt (community outreach, referral to training, parenting classes and resources; trying to determine NCP's ability to pay before contempt). Not very effective tool.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
No statutory interest	IVD program does not enforce	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- Increased use of QUICK and EDE due to working remotely.
- Maximus workers are remote but offices open and staffed.
- Most YoungWilliams workers are in office but some remote teams.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
CSS --Child Support Services	DCF – Dept. for Children and Families	Central Registry	Kansas Payment Center	KAESCES	Unemployment compensation
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP – payee	NCP – payor	Alleged	Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity (VAP)	Child support obligation	TANF

Nebraska (NE) At-A-Glance

- 5 service areas; one has a contract with YoungWilliams.
- The interstate office recently moved to Lincoln and is now housed with Central Registry and the Operations team; the long-term goal is that all interstate casework would be worked in that office with interstate workers.
- Staff shortages but no hiring freeze.

Communications				
Method	Available/ Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred	Yes	DHHS.CSECentralRegistry@nebraska.gov is shared email for Central Registry. Enter NE case number and the state's case number in subject line.	
Phone	Yes		Call center has prompt for interstate cases that routes directly to the Central Registry office; they try to respond the same day.	
FAX	Yes		402-742-2369 is shared fax for Central Registry. Include NE case number and the other state's case number on cover sheet.	
QUICK	Yes		All workers encouraged to use QUICK daily.	
EDE	No		Hope to implement by end of 2022.	
Portal Communication Center	No		Not yet implemented.	
	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
CSENet	400 characters on outgoing messages; no limit on incoming messages	NE uses CSENet as documentation; if NE emails or calls another state, they will update the case in CSENet and will send a CSENet follow-up.	Yes; daily tickler with communication from states.	CSENet history kept on system through case closure.

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial	County option, varies. Can be done administratively or judicially at worker's discretion.	

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/ Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Administrative	Partially	3 months or more past due	System sends warning letters and notice of intent, suspension done by worker. When NCP no longer qualifies for DLS, system complies it without worker intervention. License suspension prior to contempt; some states require that the license be available before they file a contempt.
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes	\$500 Arrears	
FIDM	Administrative	No	Case-by-case basis and must go through administrator	
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		
Passport	Administrative		\$2,500	Needs to be paid in full to get passport back.
Other	Unclaimed property; Liens on bonds on criminal cases -- in big counties, workers check jail records daily to flag NCPs for bonds; Inmate accounts;--most inmates can hold some form of employment			
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	Determined by county; 4 months in arrears due to license suspension required before contempt	Incarceration is typically based on failure to appear for bench warrants. Can be suspended by purge order usually \$50-\$100 over the monthly obligation.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
Rate varies and depends on "market factors"	Yes	Calculations must be received from initiating state. Have some issues with initiating state calculating interest on NE order at their own state's rate.

- Increased use of email due to working remotely.

What's Your Lingo?

Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
Nebraska Child Support	Dept. of Health and Human Services				
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF

New Mexico (NM) At-A-Glance

- NM implemented modernization of its child support program in 2019 (based on the 2016 federal rule). It involves more outreach to the NCP to make sure orders are appropriate and a collaborative effort with the Department of Workforce Solutions to conduct the Step-Up. Program which helps unemployed & nonpaying NCPs seek employment and avoid immediate legal action or punitive enforcement. Step-Up is currently being expanded from operating 4 regions to statewide.
- Caseworkers are called child support legal assistants.
- Due to a hiring freeze during the pandemic, there are a lot of staff shortages and a lot of new staff.

Communications				
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred	Yes	Frustrated when other states do not provide direct contact information.	
Phone	Yes	Yes		
QUICK	Frequently used	Yes	Could use more training for new staff.	
EDE	Used a lot by Central Registry and more and more by the field offices	Yes	Working with OCSE on training for staff.	
Portal Communication Center	All workers have access but just beginning to use as of February 2022	Yes	Working with OCSE on training for staff.	
CSENet	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
	3 lines, 240 characters (80 characters per line); messages often cut off when received	When another state or CSED updates a PYCR (tax intercept) or extending the PP1 (graduation date), the computer automatically sends a CSENet to the other state that the order was modified, which it was not. Other states often ask for a copy of the modified order; this is usually the CSENet response to their request: "Hello. Please be advised there is no modified order. Our office entered the tax Intercept which sent a CSENet that there was a modification but there was not."	Incoming CSENet messages go directly to the caseworker's morning mail.	Incoming CSENet messages on closed cases go directly to the caseworker's morning mail.

Order Establishment and Registration

Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial	Registered when received	

Enforcement Remedies

Remedy	Judicial/ Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Administrative	Automated	Delinquent 30 days or more	All remedies available under state and federal law may be used to collect judgement/additional arrearage even though a respondent may be paying as ordered.
Occupational License	Administrative	Automated	Delinquent 30 days or more	
Recreational License	Administrative	Automated	Delinquent 30 days or more	
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Automated	Delinquent 30 days	
FIDM	Administrative	Automated	Delinquency of at least three full months of support obligation (PP1/PP2 combined)	
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Automated	TANF cases owing at least \$150 in past-due support, multiple cases may be combined to reach the \$150 minimum; non-TANF or Medicaid-only cases owing at least \$500 in past-due support owed to, or on behalf of, a qualified child, multiple cases may be combined to reach the \$500 minimum	
Passport	Administrative	Automated	Support arrears in excess of \$2,500	
Lottery & Sports Betting Intercept	Administrative	Not Automated	Lottery – delinquent obligors claiming prizes of more than \$600 Gaming – delinquent obligors winning \$1,200 or more per payout	
Liens	Administrative	Not Automated	Delinquent 30 days or more	All remedies available under state and

				federal law may be used to collect judgement/additional arrearage even though a respondent may be paying as ordered.
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No		Rarely used.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
4%	Interest enforced only if JCP is more than 30 days delinquent.	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- A lot of staff still working remotely; required to be in the office 2 days per week.
- Courts all shut down face-to-face and some have started to reopen (although have started with private family court cases).
- Virtual courts are both telephonic and via Zoom.
- Increased use of email.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
CSED – New Mexico Child Support Enforcement Division	Dept. of Human Services (HSD)	NM CR or Central Registry	SDU	CSES	UIB
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP	NCP	AF	AOP	Ongoing	TANF

Texas (TX) At-A-Glance

- All initiating cases worked by field offices; all responding cases worked by the Central Registry unless a judicial action is needed; case is then assigned to a field office. Central registry has 56,000 responding cases and 14-17 employees.
- TX has approximately 54,000 initiating cases.
- TX has a statewide NCP employment program (NCP Choices) to which nonpaying NCPs are referred with attendance mandated and monitored by the court,
- Requests for post office address verifications are hard to provide since they are handled through a vendor and do not come to the Central Registry. The information is updated in their system by the vendor and no hard copy is scanned.

Communications				
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred	Direct contact is available, but preferred method is email to TXCENREG@OAG.TEXAS.GOV	All emails go through Central Registry to distribute and monitor for response.	
Phone	Yes	Direct contact is available, but preferred method is their centralized ICR call center (512-406-2300)		
QUICK	Implemented Jan 2021; all staff have access			
EDE	Yes		Their one complaint is when states are using all available methods to send communication instead of just one for the same case.	
Portal Communication Center	Yes		Will be used more when more states have access.	
	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
CSENet	4 lines, 160 characters	Not all states receive all types of CSENet messages. When states send batch status update requests, can create a very large number.	Yes	No auto response for CSENet received on closed cases' no way to locate those incoming CSENet.

Order Establishment and Registration

Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial and quasi-administrative that involve agency-based negotiations with non-minor parties with no family violence who both appear & can reach an agreed order or modification. These are now being done through Zoom for the most part.	Only if needed for court action	In El Paso, both parties must be served to set a court hearing date. The field office files the motion, but the actual court date is not set until both parties are served; most counties are now using this process with Zoom hearings as they have better success rate in parties attending.

Enforcement Remedies

Remedy	Judicial/ Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Either	No	Three times the current obligation	Must obtain an order with a judgement (can be obtained administratively or judicially) and put the NCP on a payment plan (administratively or judicially). If the payment plan is not honored, the DLS is processed administratively by regional attorneys or judicially by the filed office; more commonly done through the administrative courts.
Occupational License	Both			Can deny renewal. Case is flagged for denial if the NCP fails to remit qualifying payments within the last 185 days. NCP must negotiate with field office to have denial withdrawn. Judicial to action required to suspend.
Recreational License	Either	No		Processed administratively by regional attorneys or judicially by the field office; more commonly done through the administrative courts.
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes		
FIDM	Administrative			Over \$5k in funds must be available in the account. Paying cases looked at on a case-by-case basis but rarely referred unless very large amount of funds available.
Federal Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		No state income tax in TX.
Passport	Administrative		\$2,500	Zero balance required to release passport hold.
Lottery & Sports Betting Intercept	Administrative (Lottery)		\$100 (Lottery)	

Liens	Administrative			
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No		Both parties sent Ability to Pay Questionnaire before proceeding. NCP referred to jobs program, NCP Choices. The NCP Choices Program is a partnership between the OAG, the TX Workforce Commission (TWC), and IV-D courts. This program helps unemployed and underemployed NCPs find work and financially support their children. Eligible parents are enrolled in the program as a condition of their enforcement or establishment child support order. Participation must be court-ordered.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
6%	Yes	Calculations must be received from initiating state and reconciled occasionally, as TX does not automatically add the interest each month.

- Judicial enforcement suspended for a time; now on a case-by-case basis and is back-logged.
- There is a hold on incarceration for civil nonpayment.
- Zoom meetings make establishment faster as people are participating and cooperating more.
- CSRPs (Child Support Review Process) are in-office meetings between parents and a child support office to negotiate an agreed-upon order or modification. CSRPs are now virtual
- Hybrid staffing plan at child support with line staff in office 2 days per week and managers 3 days. Court hearings by Zoom with some using in-person formats.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
Child Support Division (CSD)	Office of the Attorney General (OAG)	ICR- TX Interstate Central Registry	SDU- State Disbursement Unit	TXCSES – TX Child Support Enforcement System	UIB
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP or Obligee	NCP or Obligor	AF- Alleged Father, NCP	AOP- Acknowledgment of Paternity	CSPP1 – Child Support Payment Plan 1	TANF

Utah (UT) At-A-Glance

- State operated program; 4 offices.
- In addition to administration and associate regional directors, there are teams (Central Registry team, pre-order teams, post-order teams, and one modification team). Within the post-order teams, there are two outgoing interstate teams that each have about nine workers; the other post-order teams handle UT cases as well as incoming interstate cases. There is also a criminal non-support team.
- State-operated customer service unit handles all phone calls and try to resolve issue. If they cannot, caller referred to a team. If team unable to take the call on the spot, message left. Except for some managers and administrators, workers have no direct phone number, so all follow-up calls go to customer service unit again.
- Other states that cannot get a response on an open interstate case are welcome to connect with Central Registry at ors-cru@utah.gov or contact the Central Registry Manager, Chris Deary @ 801-741-7544.
- Required to have birth records showing paternity for every child in system.

Communications				
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred	No	Emails to Ors-cru@utah.gov go directly to Central Registry and are routed to workers as needed.	
Phone	Use a lot	No	All workers on central phone system. Prompts route call to caseworker or customer service.	
QUICK	All employees should have access			
EDE	No		They are working on getting access target date of July 1, 2022.	
Portal Communication Center	No		Want to learn about it.	
CSENet	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
	4 lines, 270 characters			

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Both	Only registered when needed	Stipulation can be done in CS office and default order can be done administratively.

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/ Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension				Have the ability but rarely done.
Occupational License	Administrative			Not actually done.
Recreational License	Administrative			
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative			
FIDM	Administrative			
Federal & State Income Tax Intercept	Administrative			
Passport	Administrative		Balance at least \$2,500	
Liens	Administrative		If \$1,000 in checking account	Used a lot.
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	Must have a valid residential address and at least 6 months without a payment	

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
No	Not applicable	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- Very short-staffed and having difficulty hiring.
- Many workers continuing to work remotely.
- Court back to in person hearings but cases backlogged.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
ORS – Office of Recovery Services	Dept. of Health & Human Services	Central Registry Unit-CRU	SDU	ORSIS	UC
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP or obligee	NCP or Obligor	Alleged Dad, NCP, presumed	Voluntary Declaration of Paternity (VDP)	CRS -- Current support, ongoing or ongoing support	TANF

Wyoming (WY) At-A-Glance

- 9 judicial districts: 5 are operated by YoungWilliams (a private corporation), 3 are run by joint powers boards (between counties, people from each county make up the board), and 1 is county-operated. This may cause some differences in policies and procedures.
- They are short-staffed and have a statewide freeze due to budget cuts and COVID.

Communications				
Method	Available/Preferred	Direct Contact Available?	Comments	
Email	Preferred			
Phone	Preferred			
QUICK	All have access but not used by all staff		Some confusion due to limited financial data in quick and different acronyms used.	
EDE	Preferred		Frustrating, EDE is optional, and states don't use/respond.	
Portal Communication Center	In process of setting up			
CSENet	Message Length Restrictions	Automated Message Issues	Direct to Caseworker?	Incoming Messages on Closed Cases?
	5 lines, 400 characters (80 characters per line)		Yes, try to respond within 10 days.	Unable to use on closed cases.

Order Establishment and Registration		
Establishment Administrative or Judicial?	Register All Orders When Received or Only If Needed?	Comments
Judicial	County option, varies	

Enforcement Remedies				
Remedy	Judicial/Administrative?	Automated?	Threshold	Comments
Driver's License Suspension	Once the NCP is served with the intent to proceed, administrative	Yes, after NCP is served	\$2,500 arrears and no payment that meets current support in a least 90 days	
Recreational License	Judicial order required		NCP must be served prior to judicial order	
Credit Bureau Reporting	Administrative	Yes	\$1,000 Arrears	
FIDM	Administrative	Partially	Criteria are office dependent	Caseworker receives alert and assesses case.
Federal Income Tax Intercept	Administrative	Yes		

State Income Tax Intercept	None			No state income tax.
Passport	Administrative			Zero balance required to release passport hold.
Hunting & Fishing	Judicial			Requires a judge's order; NCP must be served.
Liens	Administrative			
Contempt/ Show Cause	Judicial	No	Determined by county	Laramie County, cannot take any contempt action against an arrears-only case.

Interest		
Statutory Interest Rate	Collected on In-State Orders?	Comments on Other States' Order if Interest Requested
10%	CSE offices do not; private attorneys or parties may	Calculations must be received from initiating state.

- Increased use of email due to working remotely.
- No remedies suspended.
- Increased use of virtual or telephonic hearings.

What's Your Lingo?					
Child Support Agency	State Agency Where CS Housed	Central Registry	State Disbursement Unit	State Computer System	Unemployment Compensation
WY Child Support Program	Dept. of Family Services	Central Registry	SDU	POSSE	ESC – Employment Security Commission
Custodial Party	Noncustodial Parent	Potential Father	Voluntary Paternity	Current Support Obligation	IV-A Cash/TANF
CP or obligee	NCP or obligor	NCP	Paternity Affidavit	CS -- Current support	POWER

Appendix B

Colorado Interstate Communication (CIC) Grant Best Practices Summary

These findings were compiled based on virtual summits and focus groups with state staff and interstate child support workers in eight border states – Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

1. General Practice Guidelines	
Do This	Not This
Provide resources and information promptly when requested by a worker in another state or county, even if you are unsure of the reason for the request.	Do not make assumptions about other people's processes - states have different requirements, standards, and procedures.
Use EDE whenever possible. Remember that not all states have access to EDE so be sure to determine if that form of communication is an option.	Do not send paper documents through the mail if the other state can receive them via EDE.
Use email to communicate whenever possible – this is more accessible for those working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Not all states can easily communicate via email, given encryption and privacy regulations. A phone call may be a useful alternative.	Do not communicate only via Transmittal #2 sent through the mail.
When leaving a voicemail message or sending an email, provide as much information as possible: your name, the case number for both your state and the corresponding state (if you have that information), the full spelling of the client's name, the reason for your call and/or the question that you have, and return contact information such as your phone number or email. Remember that all workers are busy and crunched on time – the more information you can give on the case, the better for time management.	Do not leave a voicemail or email message containing minimal information about why you are contacting the worker in the other state – more information allows them to generate an answer to the question before calling you back.
Provide a complete reply to questions received or a timeframe by which the reply will be received.	Do not send a reply that indicates a request is being reviewed without following up.
Utilize the IRG if you are not sure what another state might or might not do.	Do not call just to confirm information that you see on the IRG.
Utilize QUICK to find information on interstate cases.	Do not call just to confirm information that you see on QUICK.
Consider time zones and work schedules when returning calls	Do not expect that other workers have the same work schedule you do.

2. Micro-Level Practice Guidelines	
Do This	Not This
Be detail-oriented with paperwork - ensure that all paperwork is appropriately signed and that the numbers match.	Do not staple packets – the worker in the other state may need to unstaple the paperwork to process it.
When leaving a voicemail with your contact information and question, speak slowly and audibly. Leave your contact number twice to ensure the receiving worker can understand it.	Do not leave a message without including your direct contact number or email.
Respond to inquiry within 2 business days.	Do not wait a long time to respond to inquiries.
Use CSENet but be aware of limitations and complications in individual states, provide email or phone number for information to be sent to.	Do not assume that CSENet messages reliably go through to the intended recipient. When using CSENet, provide an alternative mode of communication, such as your email address or direct phone number. There are system glitches in California and Texas.
Update SSP/IRG with reachable contact information.	Do not leave outdated information on the SSP/IRG.

IRG Quick Reference Guide

Note: The last date the information was updated can be found at the top of each state's Profile page.

Age of majority (emancipation)	2: 1-7
Automated Administrative Enforcement in Interstate Cases (AEI)	9: 1-2
Certified orders (how to obtain)	16: 1
Certified payment records (how to obtain)	16: 2
Change of custody between parents	6: 7
Change of payee	4: 6-7
Costs/Fees	12: 1-3
Credit bureau reporting	9: 3-6
CSENet transactions	15: 1-6
Direct income withholding of unemployment insurance	7: 6-6.1
Direct income withholding of workers' compensation (WC) benefits	13: 4
Enforcement remedies	9: 1-42
Father's name on birth certificate – proof of paternity?	5: 5
Guideline method	6: 2
Insurance match	13: 4-6
Interest	4: 2-4
Legal custody requirements for caretaker	4: 7
Liens, real property	9: 38
Liens. financial	7: 9 9: 14-26
Modification/Review & Adjustment	10: 1-6
Order establishment (administrative or judicial)	1: 3 6: 1.1-1.2
Paternity/Parentage	5: 1-12

Retroactive support	6: .4.1-4.3
Statute of limitations	3: 1-3
Support for prior periods establishment	1.4
Unemployment Insurance and how to attach it	7.8 – 7.8.1

Baseline Survey

Summary of Findings

Executive Summary

The Colorado Intergovernmental Collaboration (CIC) demonstration project aims to improve cooperation and relationships between Colorado and its bordering states in order to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service for interstate cases. By engaging Colorado interstate workers with their counterparts in border states in a series of four online meetings, herein termed “Virtual Summits,” Colorado hopes to create cross-border relationships, share case processing practices, and increase cross-state communication.

This report presents the results of a baseline survey completed by 147 caseworkers in eight states—Colorado and seven border states—prior to the conduct of the Virtual Summits, or at the conclusion of the first Virtual Summit.

A link to the survey was sent to managers of child support offices in Colorado counties that work with border states with instructions for them to forward it to workers in their offices who handle interstate cases. In seven border states, the survey was sent to the director of the Central Registry with instructions to forward it to interstate workers that handle cases jointly held with Colorado.

Since the link was forwarded to an unknown number of workers by a variety of contacts, rather than to an established list of interstate child support caseworkers, we have no way of calculating a response rate.

The following presents the results of the baseline survey based on the responses of 147 respondents.

Survey responses were heavily skewed to Colorado with 65 percent of respondents coming from that state. Due to the small number of respondents in the seven border states, all responses from other states are combined and patterns are compared for Colorado versus Other States. The following are some highlights of baseline survey results for Colorado respondents and those in Other States:

Experience, Training and Knowledge of State Specific Requirements

- Most respondents in Colorado and Other States had considerable experience working interstate but about a third had worked in the area for two years or less.
- Many workers in Colorado (40%) and Other States (56.8%) would like more interstate training. More than half in Colorado (58.2%) and less than half in Other States (43.2%) feel that the training received was sufficient.
- Half of Colorado workers feel their knowledge base is thin about state specific requirements in border states. This was the case for 40% of respondents in Other States.
- Only 14% of Colorado respondents and 26% of Other State respondents felt that workers in other states know their state’s requirements.

Likes and Dislikes About Working Interstate Cases

- While most Colorado and Other State respondents report liking to work such cases (71.9% vs. 70.6%), nearly identical proportions say it is frustrating to work interstate cases (72.2% vs. 70.6%). They tend to view interstate work as harder than working non-interstate cases (75.3% vs. 70.6%).
- Nevertheless, at least 70% of both groups of respondents say they are able to close cases for the right reason (74% vs. 80%).

The Most Common Problems when Processing Interstate Cases

- Lack of contact information for the worker handling a case in another state is the top problem for workers in Colorado (68.8%) and Other States (52.6%).
- Other top problems cited by Colorado respondents are CSENet limitations in some states (43.8%), states using automated responses (41.7%), and states with high caseworker turnover (41.7%).

- In Other States, respondents cited the following top problems: states funneling cases through a call center (45.6%), states using automated responses (43.9%), and caseworkers who are generalists and not specialized in interstate (31.6%).

Communication Issues

- Colorado respondents are more dissatisfied with communication issues in interstate cases than their counterparts in Other States.
- They are significantly less likely to feel they can brainstorm with workers in another state about case issues (46.7% vs. 37.3%)
- They are significantly more likely to feel that other states change the caseworker on an interstate case without notification (64.4% vs. 45.1%)
- They are significantly less likely to know a person in a border state they can reach out to for help (20% vs. 43.1%)
- They are statistically more likely to say that not having a name, phone number for the worker in the other state is a major problem (74% vs. 51%).
- They are more likely to say that conveying questions or messages through a call center is a major problem (84% vs. 69%).
- They are more likely to say cases have no assigned worker (30% vs. 12%).

Documentation Issues

- Colorado respondents and respondents in Other States agree on the major problems with documentation in interstate cases.
- Both groups rate pushback from other states about my state’s requirements as a major problem (26.3% vs. 40%).
- Both groups say getting cases that lack their state’s documentation requirements is a major problem (21.9% vs. 35.9%).

While Other States say that getting forms that do not match the requested action is a “minor problem,” (71%), Colorado workers are more likely to say this is “not a problem” (29% vs. 8%). Other State respondents rate not being able to get/send documents electronically as a major problem, while fewer Colorado respondents characterize it as a major problem (20.3%). Other States are also more likely to characterize the failure of workers to prove paternity acknowledgement as a major problem (36.1%) as compared with Colorado respondents (17.6%).

Process and Case Work Issues

- The chief process issue cited as a major problem in Colorado is “getting cases that lack a recently verified address” (36.2%).
- In Other States, the top “major problem” was “process and requirements in other states are not clear” (31%).
- The major work problems that Colorado reported was having cases closed by another state without an explanation (50.7%) and getting canned, automated responses from another state (43.6%).
- The major work problems cited by respondents in Other States were getting canned, automated responses from other states (46%).

Top Problems in Establishment, Enforcement, and Modification Cases

- Regardless of case type, Colorado respondents cited the following as top problems:
- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker
- Getting no response from another state

Other State respondents said the top problems for establishment, enforcement and modification cases were:

- Getting no response from another state
- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker

Tools and the Central Registry

- CSENet is the most commonly tool that workers use to communicate with other states and to exchange information. The State Services Portal is also commonly used.
- Colorado respondents are less apt than workers in Other States to contact Central Registry personnel in their own state and in border states for help with a case and rate the help they receive from other states less favorably with 44% saying it was “somewhat” helpful and 12% saying it was “very helpful.”
- Other State respondents are more apt to report contacting the Central Registry in their own state and in border states for help and to characterize it as “somewhat” (46%) or “very helpful” (32%).

Ratings of States on Performance

- Colorado gave highest ratings to Colorado, followed by Wyoming, Nebraska, and Utah for both overall performance and Central Registry performance.
- Other States gave highest ratings for overall performance and Central Registry performance to Wyoming, followed by Colorado, Nebraska, and Utah.
- Colorado ranked Texas the lowest for overall and Central Registry performance.
- Other States ranked Arizona on the bottom for both overall and Central Registry performance.
- These state ratings were the same for turnaround time and ability to reach a caseworker.

Conclusions

- Many respondents in Colorado and Other States would welcome more training on interstate case processing. Half of Colorado respondents and 40 percent of Other State respondents say that they are uncertain about state-specific requirements in border states.
- All respondents rate communication issues as the biggest challenges in processing interstate cases with the single biggest issue being the lack of contact information for workers handling the case in another state.
- Colorado workers are less apt than their counterparts in Other States to use the Central Registry in other states for case help and are less satisfied with the help that it provides.
- Colorado workers rate Colorado as the top performer followed by Wyoming, while Other State respondents rate Wyoming as the top performer followed by Colorado. All agree that Texas and Arizona are the lowest performing states.

Introduction

The Colorado Intergovernmental Collaboration (CIC) demonstration project aims to improve cooperation and relationships between Colorado and its bordering states in order to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service for interstate cases. By engaging Colorado interstate workers with their counterparts in border states in a series of four online meetings, herein termed “Virtual Summits,” Colorado hopes to create cross-border relationships, share case processing practices, and increase cross-state communication. As a result, Colorado expects to increase collection on interstate cases initiated by Colorado, speed up the process of establishing orders in interstate cases and reduce the number of case closures due to lack of cooperation from initiating states.

Some of the outcomes posited for the CIC project will be assessed via a comparison of pre and post project information on child support collections and case processing timeframes drawn from extracts of the Automated Child Support Enforcement System (ACSES). Other outcomes, however, will be gauged by a comparison of survey responses provided by workers prior to and following their participation in the Virtual Summits.

This report presents the results of a baseline survey completed by 147 caseworkers in eight states—Colorado and seven border states—prior to the conduct of the Virtual Summits, or at the conclusion of the first Virtual Summit. Center for Policy Research (CPR) developed the survey after it had conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with Colorado child support workers who have extensive experience processing interstate cases. They included the director and staff of the Colorado Central Registry, members of the CIC Advisory Board, and members of the CIC Planning Committee. In addition to providing initial information on the experience of

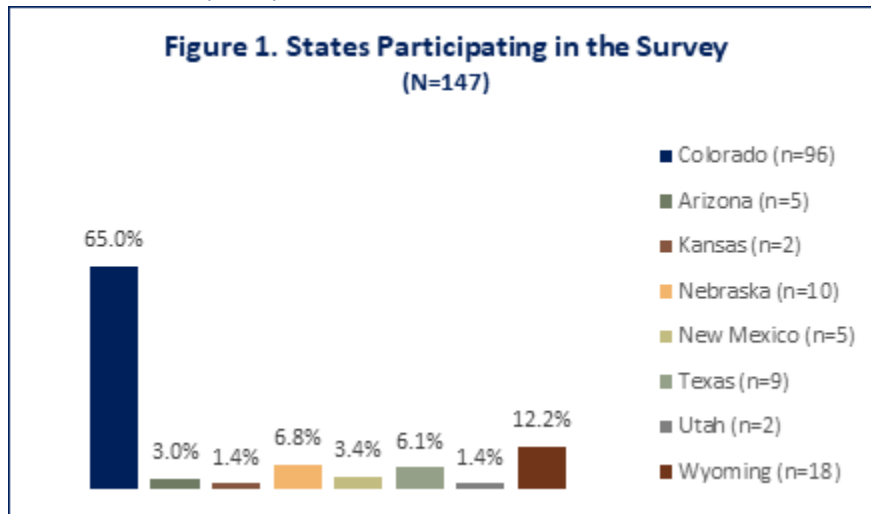
processing interstate cases and various case processing challenges, these audiences reviewed drafts of CPR’s baseline survey, which was revised pursuant to their input. The survey was placed on Qualtrics, an online survey platform.

A link to the survey was sent to managers of child support offices in Colorado counties that work with border states with instructions for them to forward it to workers in their offices who handle interstate cases. In seven border states, the survey was sent to the director of the Central Registry with instructions to forward it to interstate workers that handle cases jointly held with Colorado. All respondents were offered the opportunity to be entered into a drawing to receive a \$100 gift Amazon gift certificate. The survey was circulated in July 2020 and responses were accepted through August 26, upon the conclusion of Virtual Summit #1.

Since the link was forwarded to an unknown number of workers by a variety of contacts, rather than to an established list of interstate child support caseworkers, we have no way of calculating a response rate.

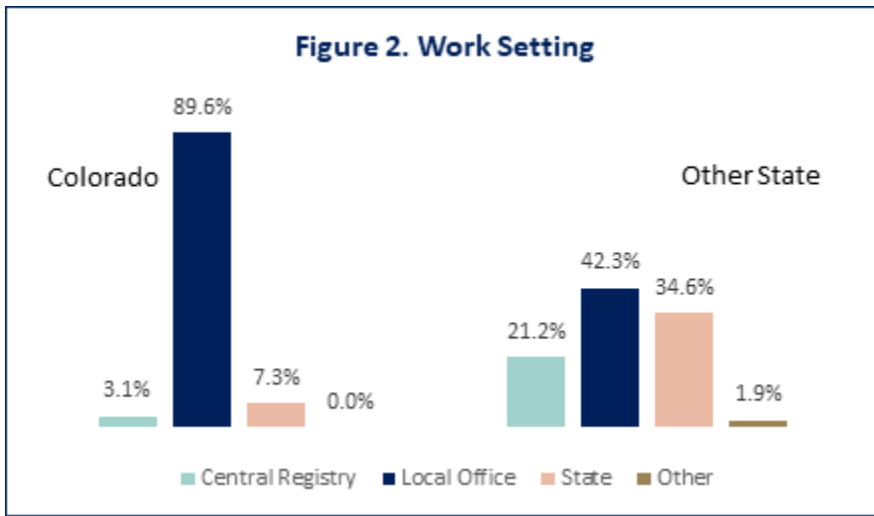
The following presents the results of the baseline survey based on the responses of 147 respondents.

Profile of Survey Respondents



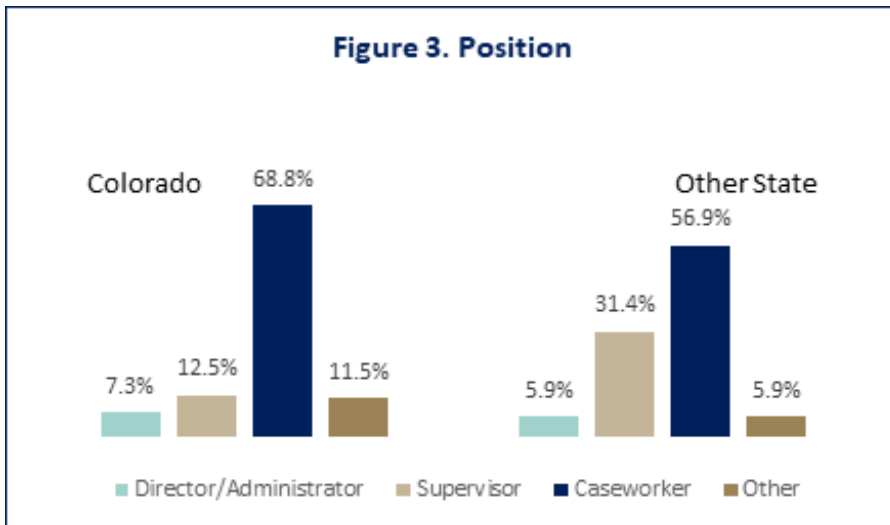
Two-thirds (65%) of the survey respondents are from Colorado (See Figure 1). Wyoming has the next greatest number with 12%.

Geographic Area	Percentage
Northeast	10.8%
Northwest	15.1%
Southeast	14.0%
Southwest	26.9%
Metro	33.3%

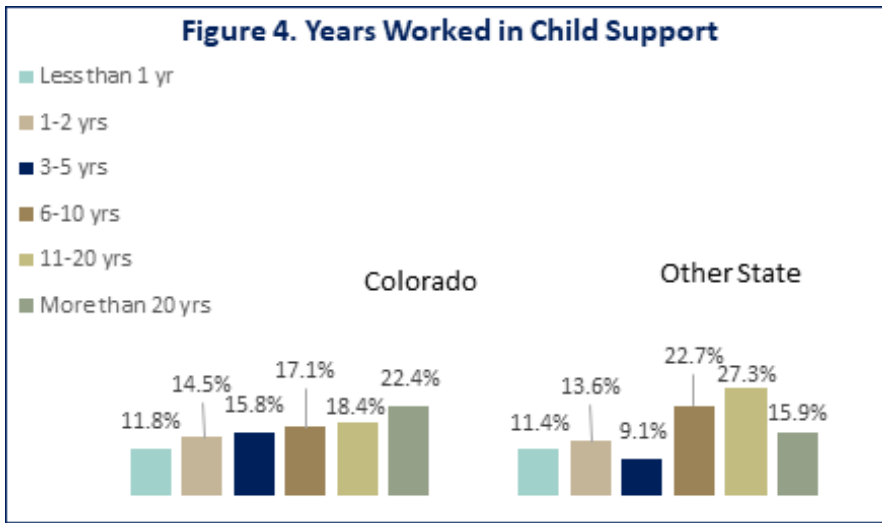


Broken down by geographic area, a third of the respondents report working in urban centers (Metro). Just over a quarter are in the Southwest (southwest Colorado, northeast Arizona, southeast Utah, or northwest New Mexico). Approximately equal percentages are located in the Northwest (Northwest Colorado, Southwest/south central Wyoming and Northeast Utah) and in the Southeast (southeast Colorado, southwest Kansas, northeast New Mexico, northwest Texas). The remaining respondents are in the Northeast (northeast Colorado, northwest Kansas, southwest Nebraska, southwest Wyoming).

Nearly 90% of the survey respondents in Colorado work in a local child support office. Only 3% work in the Central Registry and 7% work at the state. In the other states there was greater diversity. Approximately 40% are from local offices, but 35% are at the state office and 21% are at the Central Registry (See Figure 2).

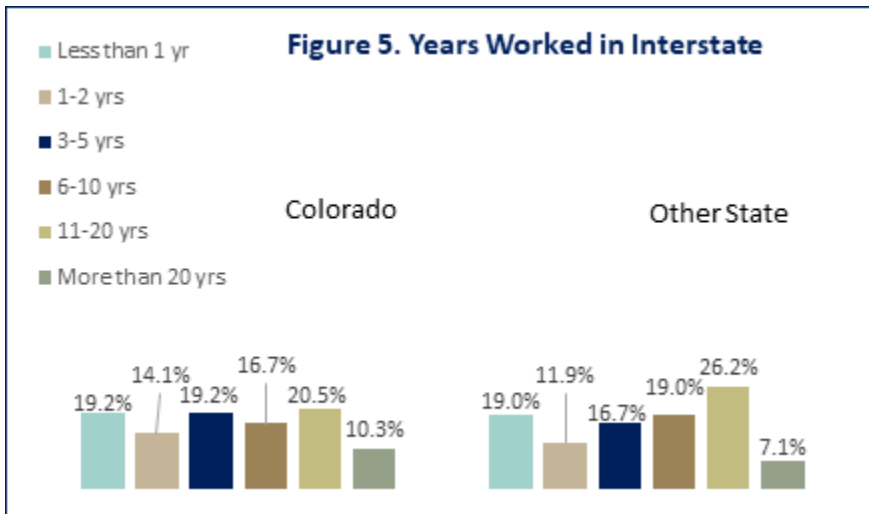


As expected, given the large percentage of Colorado survey respondents who work in local offices, most individuals in Colorado describe themselves as caseworkers or technicians. In the other states, caseworkers also make up the majority of respondents, however, approximately a third describe themselves as supervisors.



In Colorado, just over 40% of those surveyed say they have worked in child support for more than 10 years. Approximately a quarter report working in the field for two years or less. In other states, the pattern was similar. About 40% said they had worked in child support for more than 10 years and a quarter had worked in the field two years or less.

Survey Respondents Experience with Interstate Cases



Although Colorado workers are relatively experienced with the child support system in general, over a third have worked interstate cases for two years or less (compared to a quarter who have worked in the child support system in general for this amount of time). The same is true in other states.

Survey respondents were asked to estimate what percentage of time they typically spend on initiating interstate cases, responding interstate cases, non-interstate cases or some other type of case.

Table 2. Percentage of Time Spent on Various Types of Cases

		Colorado	Other States
Initiating Cases	Average	31.5	25.7
	Median	15.0	15.0
		(78)	(43)
Responding Cases	Average	19.7	33.9
	Median	10.0	20.0
		(78)	(43)
Non-Interstate Cases	Average	32.9	34.4
	Median	20.0	27.5
		(78)	(44)
Other	Average	5.5	6.1
	Median	0.0	0.0
		(77)	(44)

In Colorado, for initiating interstate cases:

- On average the amount of time is 31.5%
- Half of those responding say they spend 15% of their time or less on initiating cases.

For responding interstate cases:

- On average the time spent is estimated at 19.7%
- Half say they spend 10% of their time or less.

For non-interstate cases, the average is 32.9% of their time and half report spending 20% of their time or less.

In other states, for initiating interstate cases:

- On average the amount of time is 25.7%
- Half of those responding say they spend 15% of their time or less on initiating cases.

For responding interstate cases:

- On average the time spent is estimated at 33.9%
- Half say they spend 20% of their time or less.

For non-interstate cases, the average is 34.4% of their time and half report spending 27.5% of their time or less.

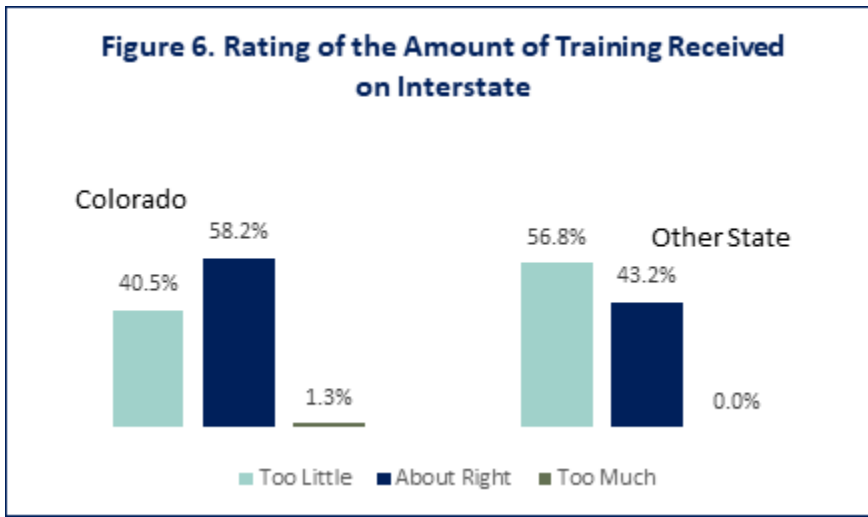
Interstate Training and Knowledge

**Table 3. Training on Interstate Cases in the Past 3 Years
(Check all that apply)**

	Colorado	Other States
None	2.1%	7.0%
1-3 hours	13.5%	15.8%
4-8 hours	15.6%	10.5%
1-2 days	31.3%	21.1%
Occasional webinars*	57.3%	24.6%
Sessions at state or national conferences	31.3%	29.8%
Other	8.3%	3.5%

*Chi square significant at .05

When asked about the extent of training they have received on interstate cases, approximately 16% of the Colorado workers, and 23% of the workers from other states say they received 3 hours or less. However, many of these workers may have participated in webinars and sessions at state or national conferences. About 30% in Colorado and 20% in other states report receiving 1 to 2 days of interstate training.



When asked to assess whether the amount of interstate training they received was sufficient, nearly 60% in Colorado said it was about the right amount. However, 40% would have liked more training. In the other surveyed states, an even greater percentage — 57% — reported receiving too little training.

Survey respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements about their level of knowledge of interstate cases. In Colorado about half of those responding to the survey disagreed (strongly or somewhat) to statements about understanding:

- State-specific establishment requirements in border states
- State-specific modification requirements in border states
- State-specific paternity requirements in border states
- What large urban jurisdictions require in establishment cases in border states
- What large urban jurisdictions require in modification cases in border states
- What large urban jurisdictions require in paternity cases in border states

In other states approximately 40% disagreed with each of these statements.

When asked to agree or disagree with the statement “Workers in other states know my state’s requirements,” only 14% of Colorado respondents and 26% of respondents in other states agreed (either strongly or somewhat.) See Table 4.

	Colorado			Other States		
	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA
I know about state-specific establishment requirements in border states	35.2%	48.9%	15.9%	49.0%	35.3%	15.7%
I know about state-specific modification requirements in border states	30.3%	58.4%	11.2%	42.9%	42.9%	14.3%
I know about state-specific paternity requirements in border states	30.7%	51.1%	18.2%	45.1%	39.2%	15.7%
I know what large urban jurisdictions require in establishment cases in border states	22.5%	57.3%	20.2%	41.2%	41.2%	17.6%

I know what large urban jurisdictions require in modification cases in border states	25.0%	60.2%	14.8%	43.1%	41.2%	15.7%
I know what large urban jurisdictions require in paternity cases in border states	23.6%	56.2%	20.2%	43.1%	39.2%	17.6%
Workers in other states know my state's requirements	14.4%	61.1%	24.4%	25.5%	45.1%	29.4%

General Assessment of Working Interstate Cases

Table 5 shows responses to a series of statements about the individual's experiences working interstate cases. At least 70% of the Colorado respondents agreed (strongly or somewhat) with the following statements:

- It is harder to work interstate than non-interstate cases (75%)
- I am able to close cases for the right reason (74%)
- I feel frustrated working interstate cases (72%)
- I like working interstate cases (72%)

Among non-Colorado respondents 70% or more agreed (strongly or somewhat) with the following statements:

- I am able to close cases for the right reason (80%)
- CPs get frustrated or angry - because I can't get answers from other states about their cases (76%)
- It is harder to work interstate than non-interstate cases (71%)
- I like working interstate cases (71%)
- I feel frustrated working interstate cases (71%)

Table 5. General Assessment of Working Interstate Cases by State

	Colorado			Other States		
	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA
I like working interstate cases	71.9%	23.6%	4.5%	70.6%	25.5%	3.9%
I feel frustrated working interstate cases	72.2%	24.4%	3.3%	70.6%	27.5%	2.0%
CPs get frustrated or angry because I can't get answers from other states about their cases	67.8%	20.0%	12.2%	76.5%	13.7%	9.8%
It's harder than working non-interstate cases	75.3%	13.5%	11.2%	70.6%	21.6%	7.8%
I am able to close cases for the right reason	74.2%	18.0%	7.9%	80.4%	13.7%	5.9%
I find myself waiting for courts in other states to make needed changes to child support orders	67.4%	20.2%	12.4%	66.7%	13.7%	19.6%
Other states close cases I don't think meet federal closure criteria	68.2%	15.9%	15.9%	64.7%	11.8%	23.5%

Most Common Interstate Issues Pre-COVID-19

Table 6 shows the issues that survey respondents viewed as the most common problems prior to COVID-19. At the top of the list for Colorado and other states is a lack of contact information for the worker handling a case. Other key problems in Colorado include CSENet limitations of some states, states using automated responses and high caseworker turn over. In other states, key problems included states funneling cases through a call center, states using automated responses and caseworkers who are generalists and not specialized in interstate.

Table 6. Before COVID-19, Which of the Following were Common Problems?

	Colorado	Other States
States not providing contact information for the worker handling a case*	68.8%	52.6%
States that have CSENet limitations	43.8%	29.8%
States using canned, automated responses	41.7%	43.9%
States with high caseworker turnover	32.3%	29.8%
States funneling cases through a call center*	31.3%	45.6%
States not using Electronic Document Exchange	21.9%	22.8%
States using private contractor to run their child support programs*	19.8%	3.5%
Caseworkers who are generalists and not specialized in interstate	19.8%	31.6%
Cases with multiple alleged fathers	18.8%	10.5%
States conveying documents solely through US mail*	12.5%	24.6%
States with idiosyncratic requirements	11.5%	14.0%
States with limited Central Registry staffing	10.4%	14.0%
States lacking a statewide scan system*	4.2%	15.8%
*Chi square significant at .05		

Table 7 shows respondent assessments of how COVID-19 has affected interstate work. Significant numbers of workers in Colorado and other states report that reaching a caseworker has become “a lot worse.” In other states over 40% of the respondents also report timeliness has become more of a problem.

Table 7. How COVID-19 Has Affected Interstate Work

	Colorado			Other States		
	No Change	Somewhat Worse	A Lot Worse	No Change	Somewhat Worse	A Lot Worse
Timeliness	23.0%	51.4%	25.7%	16.7%	42.9%	40.5%
Ability to Reach a Caseworker	18.9%	43.2%	37.8%	14.3%	40.5%	45.2%

Communication Issues in Interstate Cases

Tables 8 and 9 show responses to a series of item related to communication between the initiating and responding state. In Table 8 survey respondents were asked to agree (strongly or somewhat) or disagree (strongly or somewhat) to a series of statements. There were three items that showed statistically significant differences between responses from Colorado and responses from other states. Specifically:

- On the item “I am able to brainstorm with workers in another state about case issues,” Colorado workers were more likely than workers in other states to say they disagreed.
- On the item “Other states change the caseworker on interstate cases without letting me know,” Colorado workers were more likely than workers in other states to say they agreed.
- On the item “I know a person in border states I can reach out to for help,” Colorado workers were significantly less likely to agree compared to workers in other states.

While the differences with other states are not statistically significant, Colorado workers are more likely to agree with the statements “I can’t get my questions about a case answered” (67% vs 49%) and “I sometimes give up on cases due to lack of response from another state” (26% vs 20%).

Table 8. Reactions to Communication Issues in Interstate Cases by State

	Colorado			Other States		
	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA
I can't get my questions about a case answered	66.7%	30.0%	3.3%	49.0%	49.0%	2.0%
I know who to call to get my questions answered	54.4%	41.1%	4.4%	64.7%	35.3%	0.0%
I sometimes give up on cases due to lack of response from another state	25.8%	69.7%	4.5%	19.6%	76.5%	3.9%
I am able to brainstorm with workers in another state about case issues*	51.1%	46.7%	2.2%	51.0%	37.3%	11.8%
I often close cases due to lack of response from another state	25.6%	61.1%	13.3%	39.2%	47.1%	13.7%
I don't close cases that should be closed because I can't reach workers in another state	40.0%	45.6%	14.4%	45.1%	41.2%	13.7%
Other states change the caseworker on interstate cases without letting me know*	64.4%	24.4%	11.1%	45.1%	29.4%	25.5%
I know a person in border states I can reach out to for help*	20.0%	71.1%	8.9%	43.1%	52.9%	3.9%

*Chi square significant at .05

When presented with issues that may arise in interstate cases, Colorado survey respondents were more likely than workers in other states to classify a number of these as “major problems” rather than “minor problems.” For example, Colorado was statistically more likely to say that not having a name, phone number or email for the worker in the other state is a major problem (74% vs 51%). While not statistically significant, Colorado workers were also more likely to say that needing to convey questions or messages through a call center was a major problem (84% vs 69%) as was cases having no assigned worker (30% vs 12%).

Table 9. Worker Contact Issues in Working Interstate Cases by State

	Colorado			Other States		
	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem
Not having name, phone, or email info for worker in the other state*	1.2%	24.7%	74.1%	4.4%	44.4%	51.1%
Need to convey questions, messages, requests through call center	1.2%	14.8%	84.0%	6.7%	24.4%	68.9%
Case has no assigned worker	21.7%	47.8%	30.4%	27.5%	60.0%	12.5%
No response from other state	2.5%	32.9%	64.6%	4.4%	28.9%	66.7%
No point person in other state to reach out to for help	9.2%	32.9%	57.9%	18.2%	40.9%	40.9%

*Chi square significant at .05

Documentation Issues in Interstate Cases

The survey asked respondents whether a variety of issues related to documentation were “not a problem,” a “minor problem,” or a “major problem.” The results are shown in Table 8. Only one item showed statistically

significant differences between Colorado workers and other states. Other states were more likely to say that forms not matching the requested action was a “minor problem” (71%), while Colorado workers were more likely to say this was “not a problem” (29% vs. 8%).

In Colorado, the items most likely to be rated as a “major problem” were:

- Pushback from other states about my state’s requirements (26%)
- Getting cases that lack my state’s documentation requirements (22%)
- Forms do not match the requested action (21%)
- Getting documents that are incomplete, lack signature or are unusable (21%)

In other states, the items most likely to be rated as a “major problem” were:

- Pushback from other states about my state’s requirements (40%)
- Failure of worker to prove paternity acknowledgement (36%)
- Getting cases that lack my state’s documentation requirements (36%)
- Not able to get/send documents electronically (30%)

Table 10. Issues Related to Documentation in Working Interstate Cases by State						
	Colorado			Other States		
	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem
Getting cases that lack required federal interstate documents that were updated in 2018	38.3%	43.3%	18.3%	26.3%	57.9%	15.8%
Getting cases that lack my state’s documentation requirements	21.9%	56.3%	21.9%	15.4%	48.7%	35.9%
Pushback from other states about my state’s requirements	15.8%	57.9%	26.3%	15.0%	45.0%	40.0%
Getting documents that are incomplete, lack signature or are unusable	27.8%	51.4%	20.8%	11.9%	66.7%	21.4%
Forms do not match the requested action*	28.6%	50.0%	21.4%	7.9%	71.1%	21.1%
Not able to get/send documents electronically	28.4%	51.4%	20.3%	23.3%	46.5%	30.2%
Failure of worker to prove paternity acknowledgement	27.5%	54.9%	17.6%	25.0%	38.9%	36.1%
Failure to provide birth certificates	28.6%	51.8%	19.6%	22.2%	50.0%	27.8%
Failure to provide payment record	31.0%	53.5%	15.5%	17.1%	53.7%	29.3%
Failure to provide affidavits of direct payments	30.4%	50.7%	18.8%	15.4%	59.0%	25.6%
Failure to provide copies of orders	25.3%	54.77%	20.0%	19.0%	52.4%	28.6%

*Chi square significant at .05

Process and Case Work Issues in Interstate Cases

Tables 11 and 12 show ratings of case processing and case work issues that may pose problems in interstate cases. In Colorado, the process issue that is mostly likely to be rated as a major problem is “getting cases that lack a recently verified address.” About a third of Colorado respondents rated this as a major problem. Among other states, the item cited by about a third as a major problem was “process and requirements in other states are not clear.”

Table 11. Process Issues That Pose Problems in Working Interstate Cases by State						
	Colorado			Other States		
	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem
Getting cases that lack a recently verified address	14.5%	49.3%	36.2%	10.0%	70.0%	20.0%
Confusion due to use of multiple temporary/permanent numbers	44.0%	38.7%	17.3%	22.7%	54.5%	22.7%

Process and requirements in other states are not clear	11.5%	62.8%	25.6%	16.7%	52.4%	31.0%
--	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	-------

With respect to case work problems, Colorado reports that “Having cases closed by another state without explanation” is often a major problem (51%) followed by “Getting canned, automated response from other state” (44%). Among other states the only item with approximately half of the respondents citing it as a major problem is “Getting canned, automated response from other state” (46%).

Table 12. Case Work Problems Encountered in Interstate Cases by State

	Colorado			Other States		
	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem	Not a Problem	Minor Problem	Major Problem
Having cases closed by another state without explanation	8.0%	41.3%	50.7%	5.0%	57.5%	37.5%
Having to close case because I lack needed information	18.6%	51.4%	30.0%	15.0%	50.0%	35.0%
Getting canned, automated response from other state	10.3%	46.2%	43.6%	11.6%	41.9%	46.5%

Top Problems in Interstate Establishment, Enforcement and Modification Cases

Table 13 shows the top three problems mentioned by Colorado workers and workers in other states in handling interstate establishment cases, interstate enforcement cases, and interstate modification cases. For all three types of cases, the top problems cited by Colorado workers are:

- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker
- Getting no response from another state

In other states, common answers for all three types of cases include:

- Getting no response from another state
- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker

Table 13. Top Problems In Interstate Cases

Top 3 Problems in Establishment Cases			
	Colorado Percent of Total Responses		Other States Percent of Total Responses
Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state	19%	Failure of worker to provide paternity acknowledgement	13%
Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker	14%	Getting documents that are incomplete	11%
Getting no response from another state	9%	Getting no response from another state	10%
Top 3 Problems in Enforcement Cases			
	Colorado Percent of Total Responses		Other States Percent of Total Responses
Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state	21%	Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state	12%
Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker	17%	Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker	12%

Getting no response from another state	12%	Getting no response from another state	11%
Top 3 Problems in Modification Cases			
	Colorado Percent of Total Responses		Other States Percent of Total Responses
Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state	21%	Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state	12%
Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker	17%	Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker	12%
Getting no response from another state	12%	Getting no response from another state	11%

Tools and Central Registry

Table 14 shows the tools that workers report using in interstate cases. The most commonly used tool is CSENet to communicate with other states and to exchange information. The State Services Portal is also frequently used.

Table 14. Tools Employed in Working Interstate Cases by State

	Colorado			Other States		
	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure /NA	Agree (strongly or somewhat)	Disagree (strongly or somewhat)	Not sure/ NA
I use the State Services Portal (*QUICK, FCR Query, etc.) for case information*	91.0%	6.7%	2.2%	84.3%	3.9%	11.8%
Workers in other states seem to use the State Services Portal for case information	40.9%	29.5%	29.5%	45.1%	21.6%	33.3%
I use CSENet to communicate with other states	94.4%	2.2%	3.3%	98.0%	0.0%	2.0%
I find CSENet messages/information from other states helpful	83.3%	13.3%	3.3%	84.3%	13.7%	2.0%

*Chi square significant at .05

Figure 7. How Often Do You Contact Personnel at the Central Registry in Your State for Help with a Case?
Chi Square Significant at .03

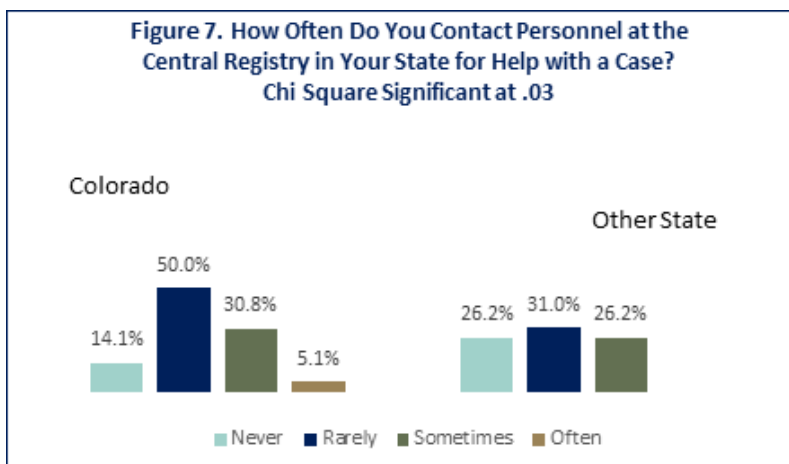
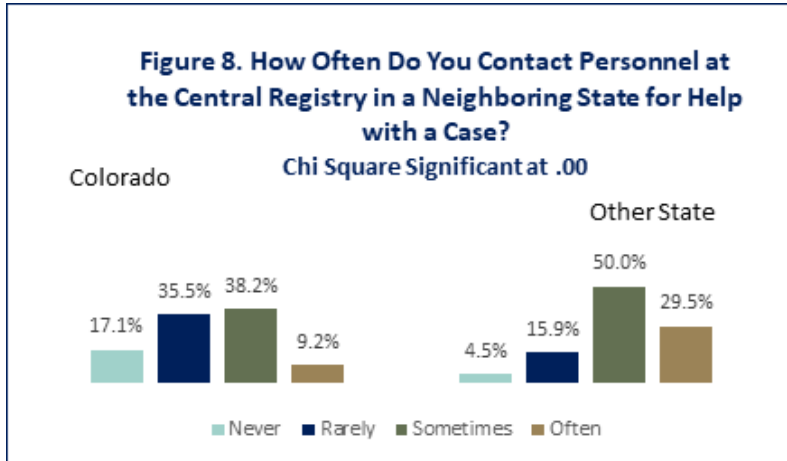
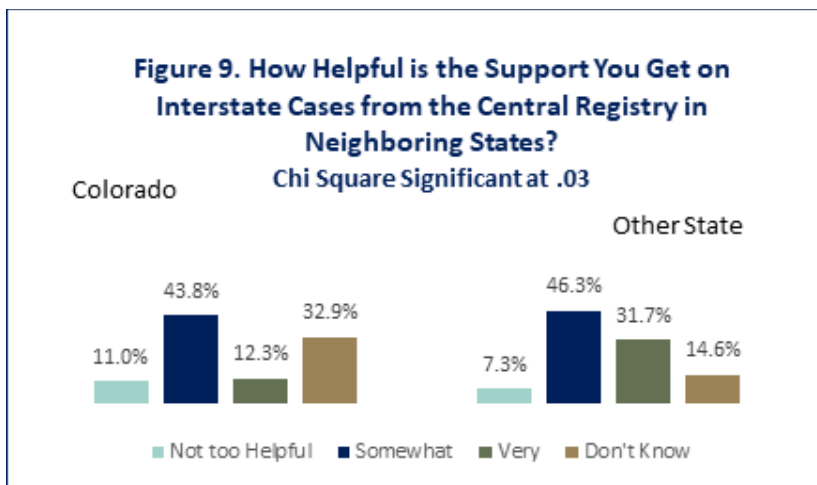


Figure 7 shows responses to the question “How often do you contact personnel at the Central Registry in your state for help with a case?” Two-thirds of Colorado workers said they never or rarely contacted the Central Registry. In other states the comparable figure is 57%.

When asked how often they contact personnel at the Central Registry in a neighboring state for help, just over 50% of Colorado workers said rarely or never. However, only 20% of workers in other states selected rarely or never.



Most of the Colorado respondents who used a Central Registry in a neighboring state said the result was either some-what (44%) or very helpful (12%). Other states were more positive with 46% selecting “somewhat” and 32% selecting “very” helpful.



Ratings of States on Performance

The final set of questions asked respondents to rate each state on overall interstate performance, Central Registry performance, interstate turnaround times, and ability to reach caseworkers assigned to interstate cases.

Table 15 shows overall interstate ratings for each state. The scale ran from 1 (worst) to 10 (best). Colorado gave highest ratings to Colorado, followed by Wyoming, Nebraska, and Utah. Other states gave highest ratings to Wyoming, followed by Colorado, Nebraska, and Utah.

**Table 15. Average Ratings of States on Interstate Performance
(1 = worst, 10=best)**

Average Overall Rating			
State Being Rated:	Ratings Given by Colorado	State Being Rated:	Ratings Given by Other States
Colorado	8.9*•	Wyoming	7.5
Wyoming	7.4	Colorado	6.7
Nebraska	6.4	Nebraska	6.4
Utah	6.1	Utah	6.0
Kansas	5.6	New Mexico	5.5
New Mexico	4.4◀↓	Kansas	5.3
Arizona	3.7	Texas	4.7
Texas	3.1■•	Arizona	4.2

* Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .03
 ◀ Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .05
 ■ Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .01

**Table 16. Average Ratings of States on Central Registry Performance
(1 = worst, 10=best)**

Average Overall Rating			
State Being Rated:	Ratings Given by Colorado	State Being Rated:	Ratings Given by Other States
Colorado	8.2*•	Wyoming	8.1
Wyoming	7.3	Colorado	7.0
Nebraska	6.4	Nebraska	7.0
Utah	5.9	Utah	6.5
Kansas	5.4	Kansas	6.3
New Mexico	4.7◀↓	New Mexico	6.2
Arizona	3.8	Texas	5.5
Texas	3.6■•	Arizona	4.2

* Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .03
 ◀ Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .05
 ■ Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .01

Table 16 shows ratings given to Central Registries. The ratings provided by Colorado again gave highest ratings to Colorado, followed by Wyoming, Nebraska, and Utah.

Other states again gave highest ratings to Wyoming, followed by Colorado, Nebraska, and Utah.

Tables 17 and 18 show the ratings given to states on turnaround time in interstate cases and ability of workers to reach the caseworker assigned to the interstate case.

Colorado gave highest turnaround time ratings to Colorado, followed by Wyoming. Other states also gave Colorado and Wyoming the top two ratings.

With respect to being able to contact the interstate caseworker, Colorado gave highest ratings to Colorado and Wyoming, while other states gave top ratings to Wyoming and Nebraska.

Table 17. Ratings of States on Turnaround Time

Table 17. Ratings of States on Turnaround Time			
	Turnaround Time		
	Colorado	Other States	
	Percent Responding "Good"	Percent Responding "Good"	
Colorado*	85.2%	Colorado	48.8%
Wyoming	64.8%	Wyoming	47.1%
Utah	46.3%	Nebraska	35.3%
Nebraska	39.7%	Utah	23.7%
Kansas	25.0%	Texas	20.5%
New Mexico	17.6%	New Mexico	19.4%
Texas	11.3%	Kansas	18.2%
Arizona	8.7%	Arizona	10.5%

* Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .00

Table 18. Ratings of States on Ability to Reach a Caseworker

Table 18. Ratings of States on Ability to Reach a Caseworker			
	Colorado	Other States	
	Percent Responding "Good"	Percent Responding "Good"	
Colorado*	82.4%	Wyoming	44.4%
Wyoming←↓	68.2%	Nebraska	41.7%
Utah←↓	46.7%	Colorado	39.5%
Nebraska	35.6%	Utah	20.5%
New Mexico	24.6%	Kansas	19.4%
Kansas	21.3%	New Mexico	15.4%
Texas	12.3%	Arizona	13.2%
Arizona	9.5%	Texas	12.2%

* Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .00
 ← Difference between Colorado and Other States is significant at .05

Summary

Survey responses were heavily skewed to Colorado with 65 percent of respondents coming from that state. Due to the small number of respondents in the seven border states, all responses from other states are combined and patterns are compared for Colorado versus Other States. The following are some highlights of baseline survey results for Colorado respondents and those in Other States:

Experience, Training and Knowledge of State Specific Requirements

- Respondents in both categories had similar levels of experience with interstate cases with most being experienced but about a third working in the area for two years or less.
- While interstate training patterns are fairly comparable for respondents in both groups, Colorado workers are significantly more apt to report attending occasional webinars in addition to training sessions.
- Many workers in Colorado (40%) and Other States (56.8%) would like more training. More than half in Colorado (58.2%) and less than half in Other States (43.2%) feel that the training they received was sufficient.
- Half of Colorado workers feel that their knowledge base is thin about state specific requirements in border states. This was the case for 40 percent of respondents in Other States.

- Only 14% of Colorado respondents and 26% of Other State respondents feel that workers in other states know their state’s requirements.

Likes and Dislikes About Working Interstate Cases

- Most respondents in Colorado and Other States hold both positive and negative views about working interstate cases.
- While most Colorado and Other State respondents report liking to work such cases (71.9% vs. 70.6%), nearly identical proportions say it is frustrating to work interstate cases (72.2% vs. 70.6%). They tend to view interstate work as harder than working non-interstate cases (75.3% vs. 70.6%).
- Nevertheless, at least 70% of both groups of respondents say they are able to close cases for the right reason (74% vs. 80%).

The Most Common Problems when Processing Interstate Cases

- Lack of contact information for the worker handling a case in another state is the top problem for workers in Colorado (68.8%) and Other States (52.6%). Other top problems cited by Colorado respondents are CSENet limitations in some states (43.8%), states using automated responses (41.7%), and states with high caseworker turnover (41.7%).
- In Other States, respondents cited the following top problems: states funneling cases through a call center (45.6%), states using automated responses (43.9%), and caseworkers who are generalists and not specialized in interstate (31.6%).

Communication Issues

Colorado respondents are more dissatisfied with communication issues in interstate cases than their counterparts in Other States.

- They are significantly less likely to feel they can brainstorm with workers in another state about case issues (46.7% vs. 37.3%)
- They are significantly more likely to feel that other states change the caseworker on an interstate case without notification (64.4% vs. 45.1%)
- They are significantly less likely to know a person in a border state they can reach out to for help (20% vs. 43.1%)
- They are statistically more likely to say that not having a name, phone number for the worker in the other state is a major problem (74% vs. 51%).
- They are more likely to say that conveying questions or messages through a call center is a major problem (84% vs. 69%).
- They are more likely to say cases have no assigned worker (30% vs. 12%).

Documentation Issues

Colorado respondents and respondents in Other States agree on the major problems with documentation in interstate cases.

- Both groups rate pushback from other states about my state’s requirements as a major problem (26.3% vs. 40%).
- Both groups say getting cases that lack my state’s documentation requirements is a major problem (21.9% vs. 35.9%).

While Other States say that getting forms that do not match the requested action is a “minor problem,” (71%), Colorado workers are more likely to say this is “not a problem” (29% vs. 8%). Other State respondents rate not being able to get/send documents electronically as a major problem, while fewer Colorado respondents characterize it as a major problem (20.3%). Other States are also more likely to characterize the failure of workers to prove paternity acknowledgement as a major problem (36.1%) as compared with Colorado respondents (17.6%).

Process and Case Work Issues

- The chief process issue cited as a major problem in Colorado is “getting cases that lack a recently verified address” (36.2%).

- In Other States, the top “major problem” was “process and requirements in other states are not clear” (31%).
- The major work problems that Colorado reported was having cases closed by another state without an explanation (50.7%) and getting canned, automated responses from another state (43.6%).
- The major work problems cited by respondents in Other States were getting canned, automated responses from other states (46%).

Top Problems in Establishment, Enforcement, and Modification Cases

Regardless of case type, Colorado respondents cited the following as top problems:

- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker
- Getting no response from another state

Other State respondents said the top problems for establishment, enforcement and modification cases were:

- Getting no response from another state
- Not having name, direct phone, and/or email for caseworker in another state
- Needing to convey all questions, messages, and requests through a call center worker

Tools and the Central Registry

- CSENet is the most commonly tool that workers use to communicate with other states and to exchange information. The State Services Portal is also commonly used.
- Colorado respondents are less apt than workers in Other States to contact Central Registry personnel in their own state and in border states for help with a case and rate the help they receive from other states less favorably with 44% saying it was “somewhat” helpful and 12% saying it was “very helpful.”
- Other State respondents are more apt to report contacting the Central Registry in their own state and in border states for help and to characterize it as “somewhat” (46%) or “very helpful” (32%).

Ratings of States on Performance

- Colorado gave highest ratings to Colorado, followed by Wyoming, Nebraska, and Utah for both overall performance and Central Registry performance.
- Other States gave highest ratings for overall performance and Central Registry performance to Wyoming, followed by Colorado, Nebraska, and Utah.
- Colorado ranked Texas the lowest for overall and Central Registry performance.
- Other States ranked Arizona on the bottom for both overall and Central Registry performance.
- These state ratings were the same for turnaround time and ability to reach a caseworker.

Conclusions

- Many respondents in Colorado and Other States would welcome more training on interstate case processing. Half of Colorado respondents and 40 percent of Other State respondents say that they are uncertain about state-specific requirements in border states.
- All respondents rate communication issues as the biggest challenges in processing interstate cases with the single biggest issue being the lack of contact information for workers handling the case in another state.
- Colorado workers are less apt than their counterparts in Other States to use the Central Registry in other states for case help and are less satisfied with the help that it provides.
- Colorado workers rate Colorado as the top performer followed by Wyoming, while Other State respondents rate Wyoming as the top performer followed by Colorado. All agree that Texas and Arizona are the lowest performing states.

Midpoint Survey

Summary of Findings

Executive Summary

The Colorado Intergovernmental Collaboration (CIC) demonstration project being conducted by the Colorado Division of Child Support Services (CSS) aims to improve cooperation and relationships between Colorado and its bordering states to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service for interstate cases. By engaging Colorado interstate workers with their counterparts in border states, Colorado hopes to create cross-border relationships, share case processing practices, and increase cross-state communication.

To date, Colorado CSS has facilitated two rounds of virtual cross-border summits involving a total of 30 calls. During these sessions, participants have provided information regarding their terminology, laws, practices, and policies, collaborated on solving difficult cases they have in common, and have obtained points of contact in other jurisdictions. Based on the summits, CSS and its technical assistance and evaluation contractor, the Center for Policy Research (CPR), prepared two tools designed to enhance interstate case processing: a master contact sheet and an Interstate Best Practices Guide that summarized key learnings from the virtual summits.

The following report summarizes results from a survey that CSS circulated to virtual summit participants in October 2021, approximately halfway through the CIC project (and 15 months following the administration of a baseline survey to potential virtual summit participants). Respondents were asked about their impressions of the interstate virtual summits so far and how the summits have affected interstate case processing. They were asked about the usefulness of the master contact sheet and the Best Practices Guide. Additionally, to inform next steps and the generation of tools moving forward, respondents were asked about their use of the Intergovernmental Reference Guide (IRG) and the desired content, format, and frequency of future CIC summits, products, and other activities.

Key findings from the midpoint survey include:

- A total of 45 child support professionals responded to the survey. This comprised 37.5 percent of the 120 individuals targeted for input.
- Most respondents (57.8%) were from Colorado, but all eight participating states were represented in the respondent sample. Almost half of the respondents work in urban/metro areas.
- Most respondents were long-serving child support professionals who were very engaged in the virtual summits and attended consistently.
- Respondents rated the meetings very highly and appreciated the opportunity to connect with interstate professionals in other settings. They also credited the virtual summits with improving their practice and interstate case processing performance.
- Respondents from states other than Colorado and respondents who work exclusively in interstate case processing seemed to find particular value in the meetings and rated them most favorably.
- Of those who had seen both the Best Practice Guide generated following the first round of CIC virtual meetings and the contact sheet, most reported that the tools were at least somewhat helpful.

- Most respondents use the IRG at least 1-2 times per week and 40% felt that a simple guide to frequently used IRG items (an IRG cheat sheet) would be a useful tool to generate.
- Most respondents (62.2%) were interested in making recommendations to OCSE on improving interstate case processing.
- There was strong interest in continued cross-border meetings with 51% favoring a quarterly virtual interstate meeting and 40% endorsing an in-person meeting and a better best practice document, respectively.

While the ongoing participation and benefits reported by the core group of regular summit meeting attendees are quite encouraging, they do not speak to the value of the virtual summits for child support professionals with less frequent attendance patterns. Nor do we know whether and how the potential benefits derived for regular attendees have translated into changes in interstate case processing in Colorado and border states as a whole. Additional information is needed to answer these questions and to examine the impact of the summit meetings and CIC products on improving interstate case processing. Hopefully, the upcoming focus groups with state representatives will provide helpful insight, as will a widely distributed post-survey at project completion.

Introduction

The Colorado Intergovernmental Collaboration (CIC) demonstration project aims to improve cooperation and relationships between Colorado and its bordering states in order to increase child support collections, improve case processing procedures, and enhance customer service for interstate cases. By engaging Colorado interstate workers with their counterparts in border states, Colorado hopes to create cross-border relationships, share case processing practices, and increase cross-state communication.

Two rounds of virtual Cross-Border Summits have been facilitated under the Colorado Interstate Collaborative Demonstration (CIC) project. Participants have provided information regarding their terminology, laws, practices, and policies, collaborated on problem-solving difficult cases they have in common, and obtained contact points in other jurisdictions. The summits' rationale and evidence are heavily rooted in behavioral economics and research about team-building strategies. This evidence shows that workers often experience cognitive overload when faced with cross-state requirements in addition to their regular case processing work. By creating easy-to-use resources that provide best practice guidance, workers will quickly understand potential differences and apply practices efficiently.

The following report summarizes results from a survey provided to virtual summit participants approximately halfway through the Colorado Intergovernmental Collaboration. Two tools have been created as a product of the summits thus far, an interstate Best Practices Guide and a master contact sheet. Feedback on the usefulness of these tools, as well as possible improvements, was solicited in the survey. Additionally, respondents were asked about their impressions of the interstate virtual summits so far and how the summits have potentially impacted interstate case processing. In order to inform the next steps and the generation of tools moving forward, respondents were asked about their use of the Intergovernmental Reference Guide (IRG) and what they would like to come out of the project overall.

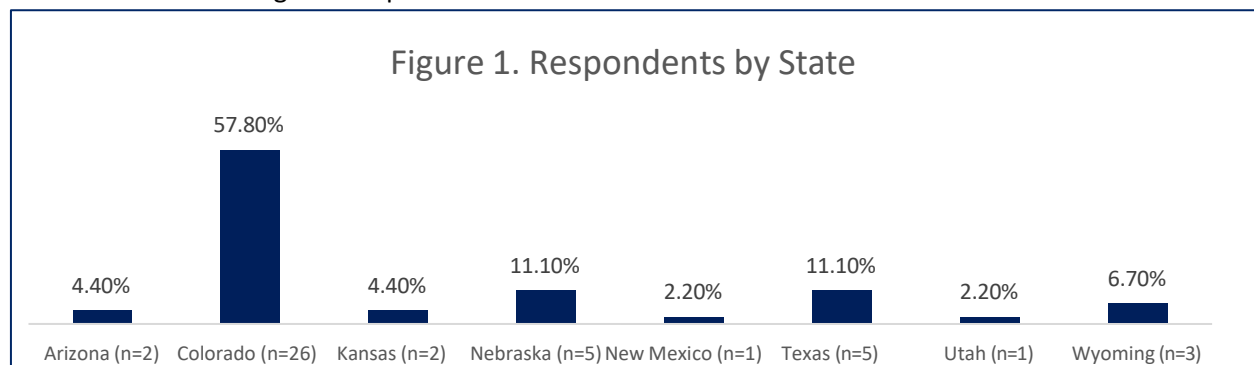
The results of this survey will guide the future structure of the interstate meetings. The next step in the development of valuable tools and resources will be to convene state-specific focus groups. The purpose of the focus groups is to generate meaningful and detailed information about the needs and preferences of each participating state regarding the CIC, as well as to identify specific interstate policies and

practices that they would like neighboring states to know. These focus groups are scheduled to begin early in 2022. It is clear that respondents of this midpoint survey have found the meetings valuable in bolstering their interstate practices overall and are interested in future products that will make their daily practice more fluid. Respondents who work exclusively with interstate cases are particularly enthused about both the meetings themselves and their significant impact on interstate child support case processing. Suggestions for how to leverage the project to its fullest potential impact will be considered.

Profile of Survey Respondents

- The 45 survey respondents came from all eight states and CIC regions, with the majority (57.8%) coming from Colorado.
- Respondents worked in diverse settings, with the most common being county or regional agencies.
- Many respondents are caseworkers and work on both intrastate and interstate cases.
- The respondents reported lengthy service in child support, with almost half reporting eleven years or more.

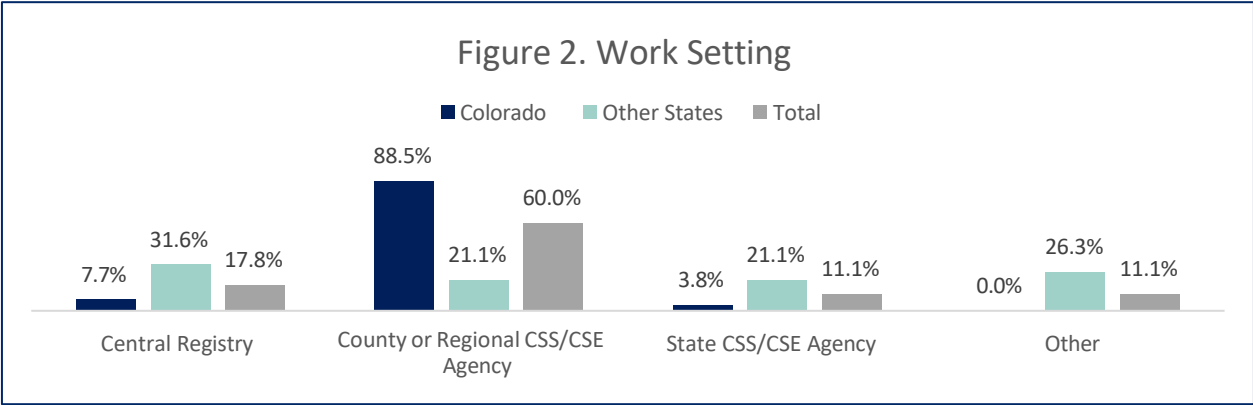
The midpoint survey was sent to 120 potential respondents who had participated in at least one virtual summit meeting between August 2020 and October 2021. We received 45 completed surveys from the 120 targeted individuals which translates into a response rate of 37.5 percent. Although most respondents came from Colorado (n=26), at least one person in each of the eight participating states responded to the survey. Nebraska and Texas generated the second greatest number of surveys with each state contributing five respondents.



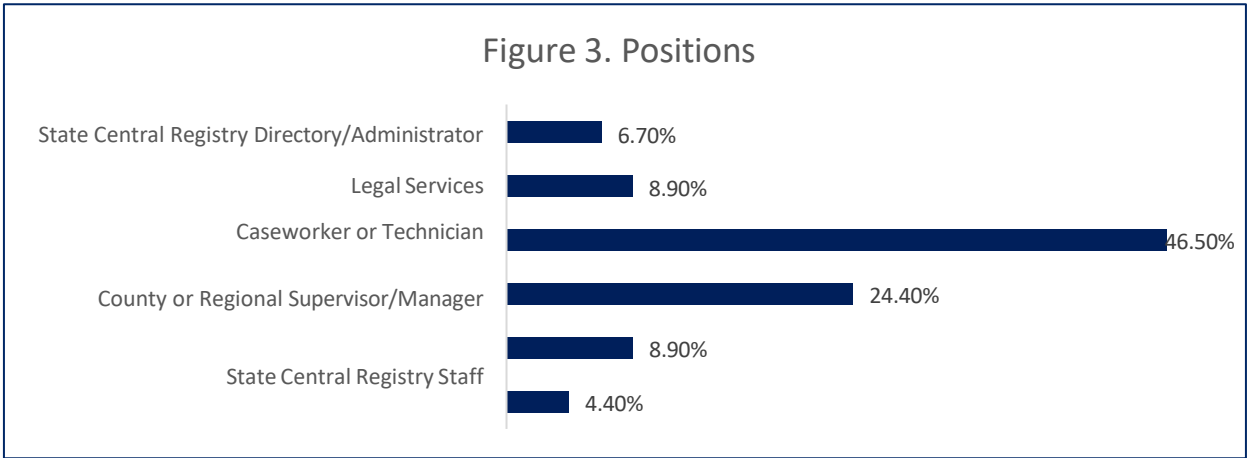
Respondents from the Metro-Urban centers in each participating state comprised 40% of those who took the survey, with nearly equal participation from the remaining three categories.

Table 1. Geographic Area	
Northeast – Northeast Colorado, Northwest Kansas, Southwest Nebraska, Southwest WY	15.6%
Northwest – Northwest Colorado, Southwest/South Central Wyoming, Northeast Utah	11.1%
Southeast – Southeast Colorado, Southwest Kansas, Northeast New Mexico, Northwest Texas	15.6%
Southwest – Southwest Colorado, Northeast Arizona, Southeast Utah, Northwest NM	17.8%
Metro – Urban centers in each state	40.0%

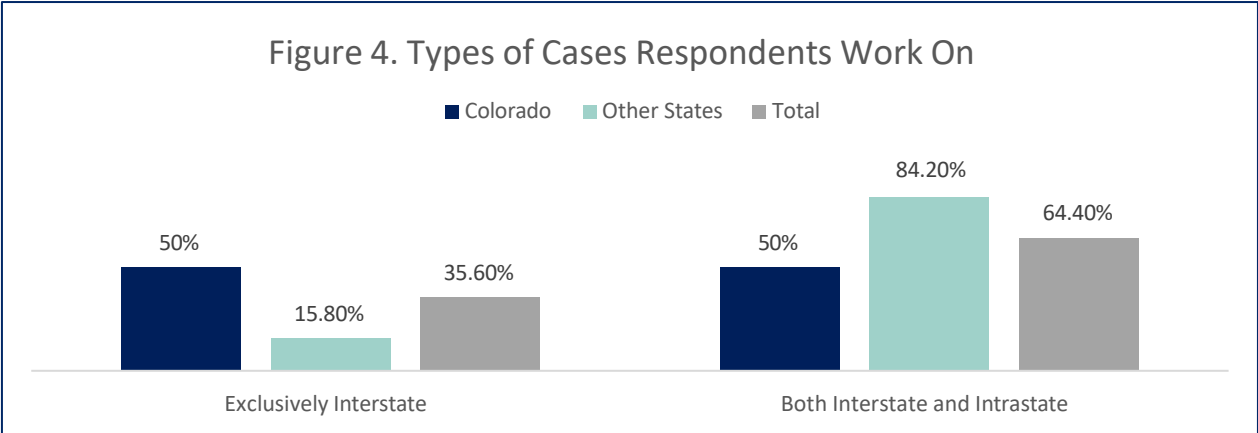
The most common work setting for survey participants was a County or Regional CSS/CSE Agency, with 88.5% of Colorado respondents choosing this option. Respondents from other states were almost equally divided amongst different categories.



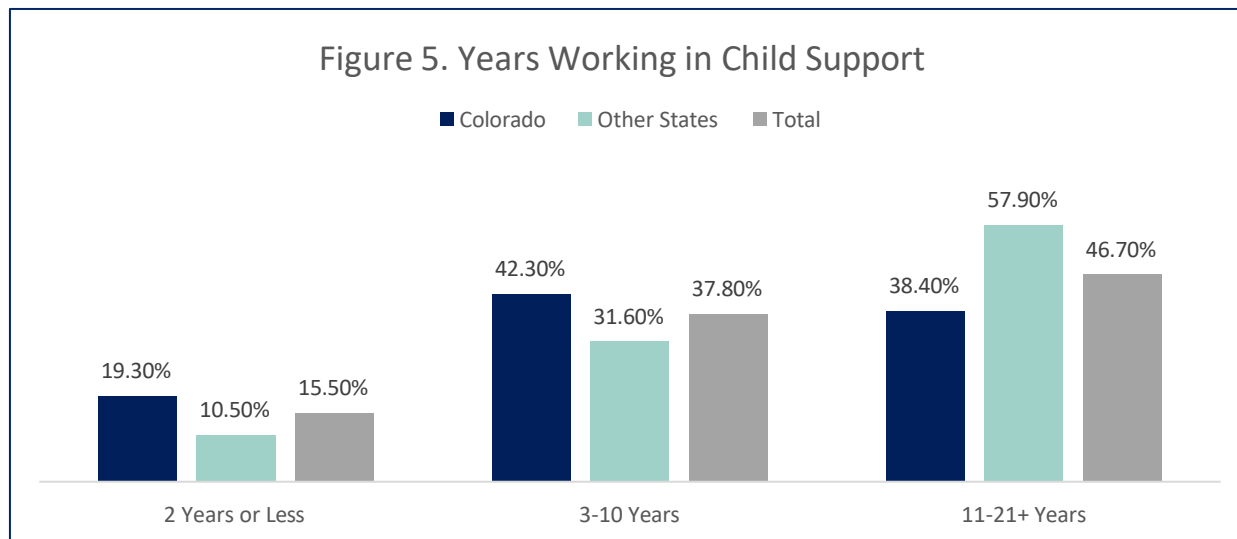
The role of caseworker or technician was most common among survey respondents at 46.5%. The second most common role was a county or regional supervisor/manager.



Overall, most survey respondents worked on interstate and intrastate cases, but Colorado participants were more apt to handle interstate cases exclusively. In Colorado, half of all respondents are interstate specialists, while this is the case for only 15.8% of respondents in other states.



Nearly 30% of survey respondents have worked in child support for over 21 years; fewer than 5 percent are new employees with less than a year of experience. A comparison of child support tenure patterns among Colorado and other state respondents finds that slightly more respondents from other states have worked in child support for 11+ years. However, a majority of all respondents had worked in child support for at least three years.



Participation in Virtual Summit Calls

- Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents attended almost all of the virtual summit calls.

Attendance patterns did not vary by the first (August 2020-December 2020) and second (August-October 2021) round of calls. Nor did they differ for Colorado respondents and respondents from other states.

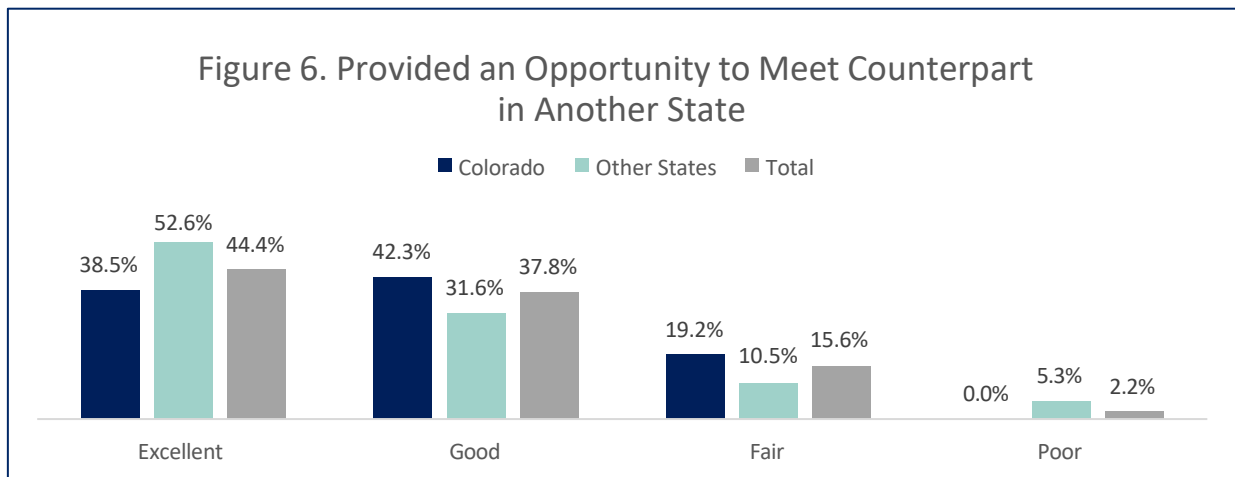
Table 2. Round 1 Meeting Participation (August – December 2020)			
	Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
I did not attend any sessions	7.7%	5.3%	6.7%
I attended less than half of the sessions	11.5%	10.5%	11.1%
I attended about half of the sessions	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I attended more than half of the sessions	11.5%	5.3%	8.9%
I attended almost all of the sessions	69.2%	78.9%	73.3%

Table 3. Round 2 Meeting Participation (August – December 2021)			
	Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
I did not attend any sessions	3.8%	5.3%	4.4%
I attended less than half of the sessions	7.7%	5.3%	6.7%
I attended about half of the sessions	7.7%	10.5%	8.9%
I attended more than half of the sessions	11.5%	10.5%	11.1%
I attended almost all of the sessions	69.2%	68.4%	68.9%

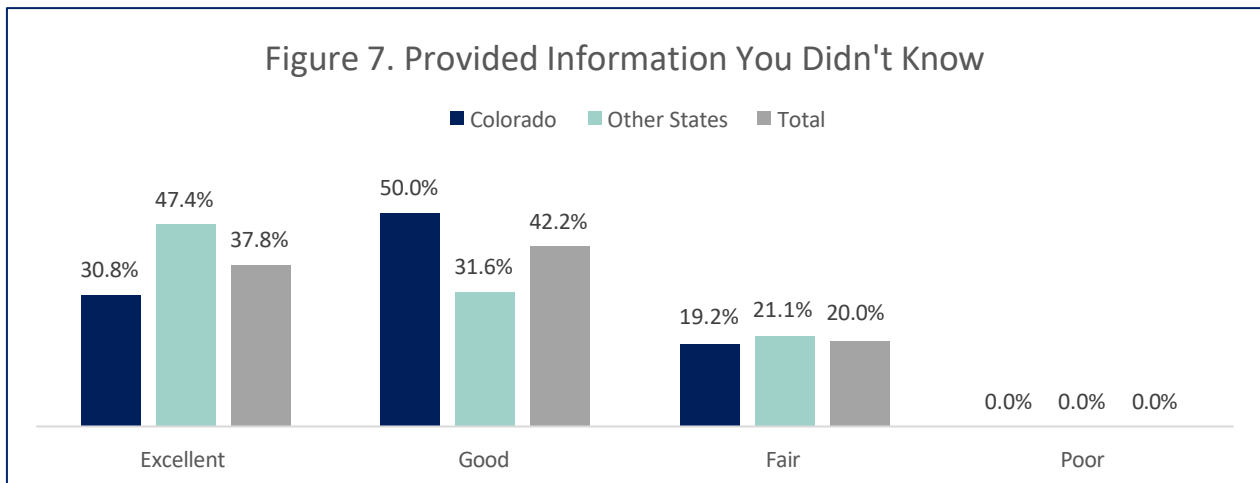
General Feedback on Virtual Summits

- Feedback on the virtual summits was very positive overall.
- Respondents from states other than Colorado consistently reported the summits to be “excellent” at providing opportunities to connect with others and improve interstate case processing.
- Respondents from Colorado most often found the summits to be “good” at providing opportunities to connect with others and improve interstate case processing.
- Feedback was similar and positive for both interstate generalists and specialists.

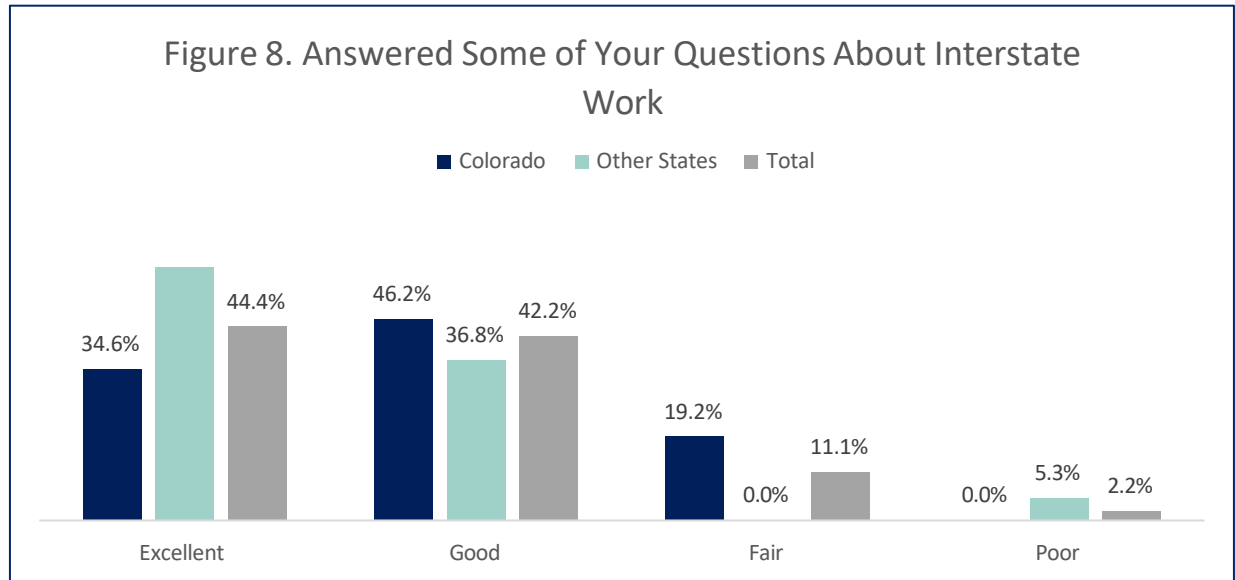
In general, survey respondents found the calls to be “excellent” or “good” at providing them a chance to meet their counterparts in other states. Slightly more respondents from states outside of Colorado perceived the calls to be “excellent” at providing this opportunity.



Survey respondents were most apt to rate the summits as “good” at providing information that they didn’t already know, with the majority finding them to either be “good” or “excellent.” No respondents reported that the meetings were poor at providing previously unknown information. Other state respondents were more apt to rate the meetings as “excellent” in this respect as compared with Colorado respondents.



Most respondents from states outside of Colorado found the meetings to be “excellent” for answering some of their questions about interstate work. Less than half of the respondents from Colorado reported that the meetings were “excellent” at answering questions about interstate work. The majority of respondents overall found the meetings to be “good” or “excellent” at answering questions about interstate work.



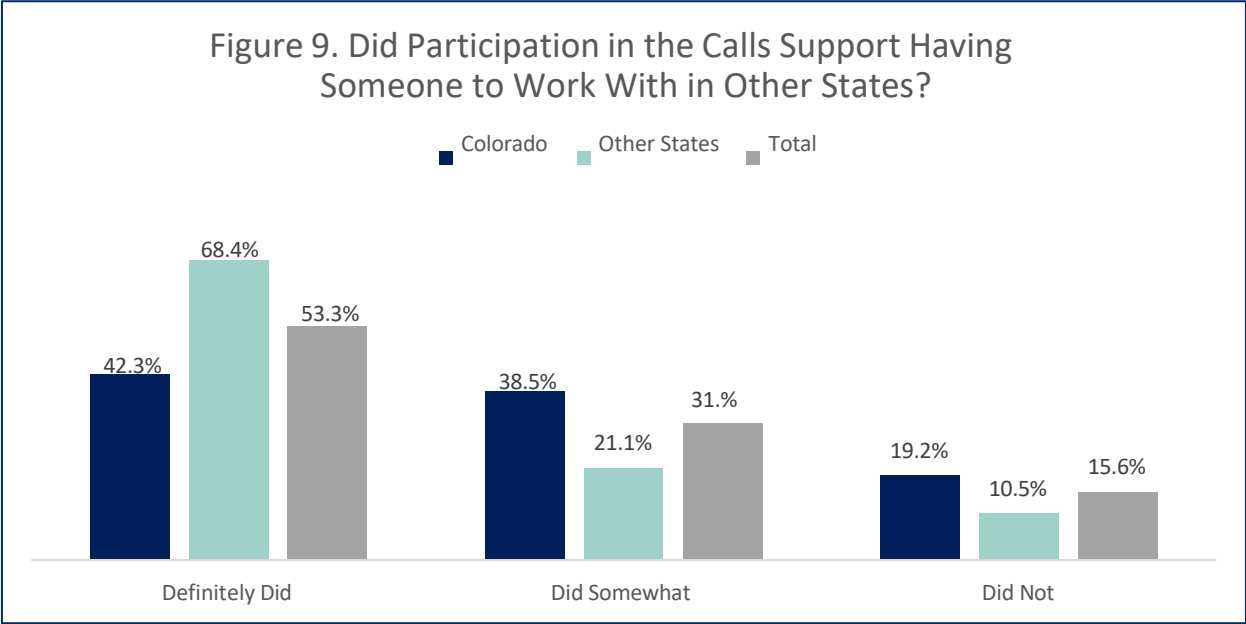
Call feedback was similar for interstate specialists and generalists. In both instances, the majority rated the meetings as either “excellent” or “good” in each of the above categories: meeting counterparts in another state, providing new information, and answering some questions about interstate work.

Perceived Effects of the Calls on Interstate Case Performance

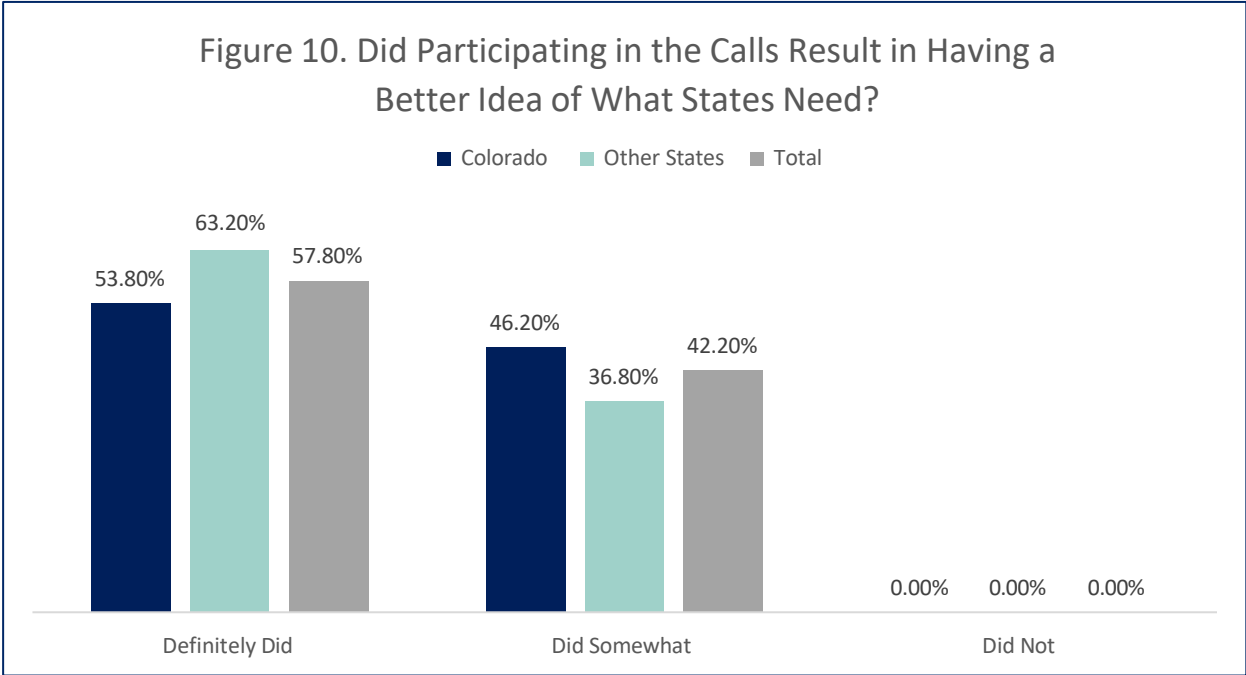
- Respondents felt that the virtual summits helped improve interstate case processing overall.
- Respondents from states other than Colorado were more apt to report substantial benefits than respondents from Colorado.
- Very few respondents felt that interstate processing had not improved as a result of the summits, with interstate specialists perceiving the greatest benefits.

Overall, respondents felt that the calls had helped them to be more efficient in working interstate cases. The following examines the specific perceived benefits of the calls for Colorado respondents versus those in other states.

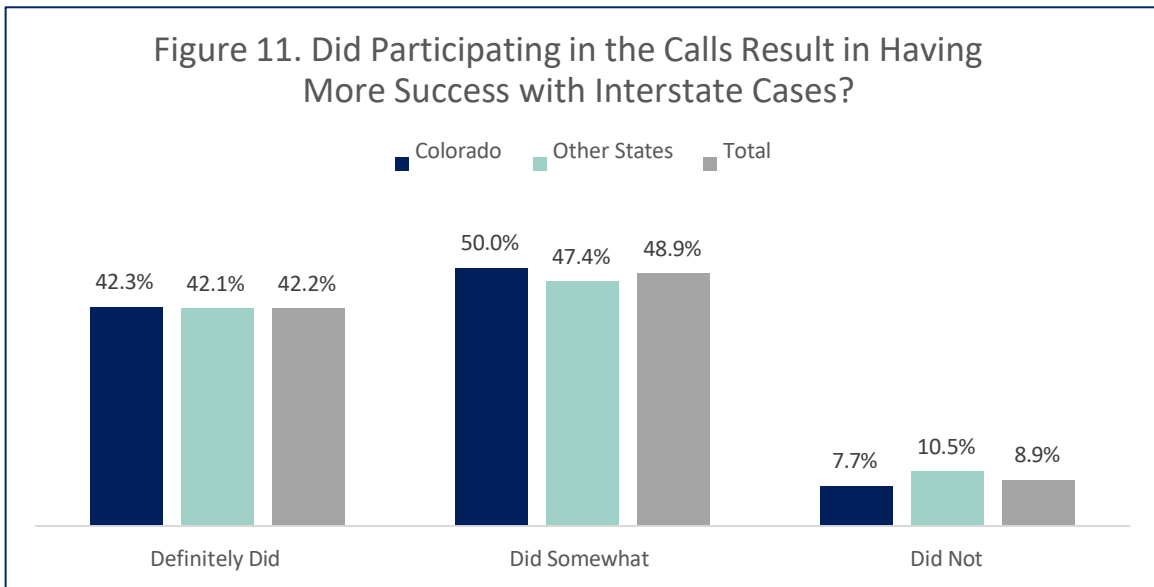
Contacts in the Other States: While most respondents found that the calls had expanded their network of interstate contacts in other states, this benefit was more apt to be reported by respondents from states outside of Colorado. Thus, nearly 70 percent of non-Colorado respondents felt that the calls had “definitely” supported their ability to work with workers in other states compared with 42 percent of Colorado respondents.



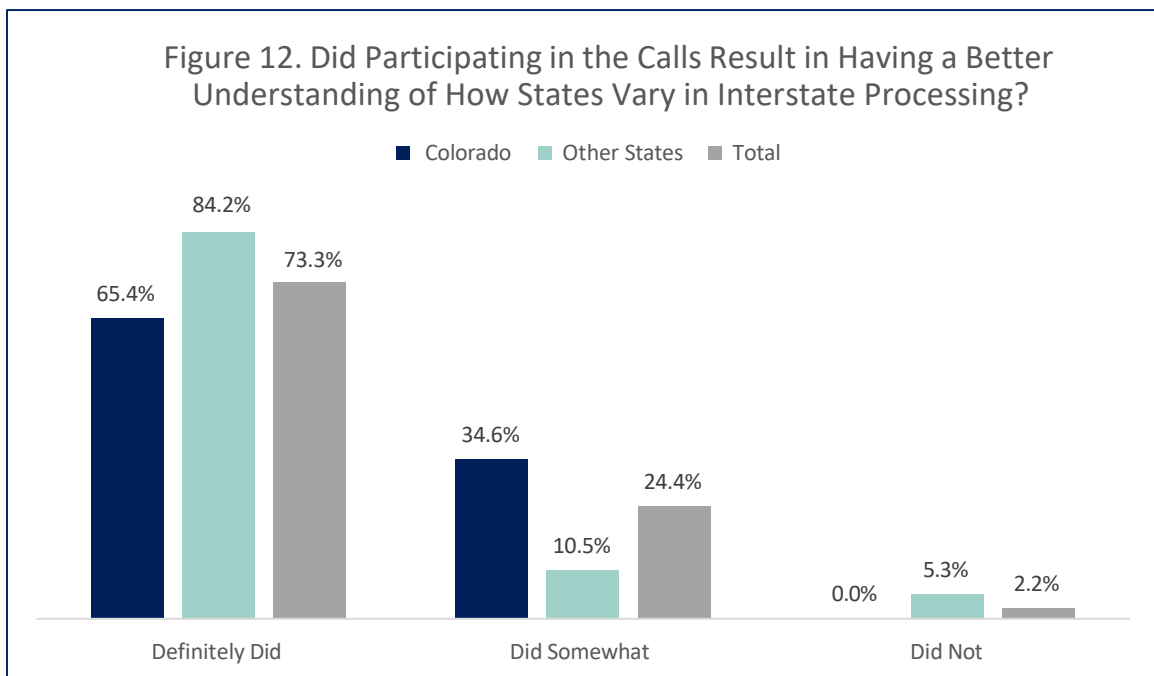
Knowing What the Other States Need: Most respondents reported that the calls “definitely” helped them have a better idea of what other states need, and zero respondents said that they “did not” help with knowing what other states need. There were only minimal differences between respondents in and outside of Colorado.



Case Success: Most respondents said that participating in the calls either “definitely” or “somewhat” resulted in more success with interstate cases. Responses from Colorado and other state respondents were very similar.



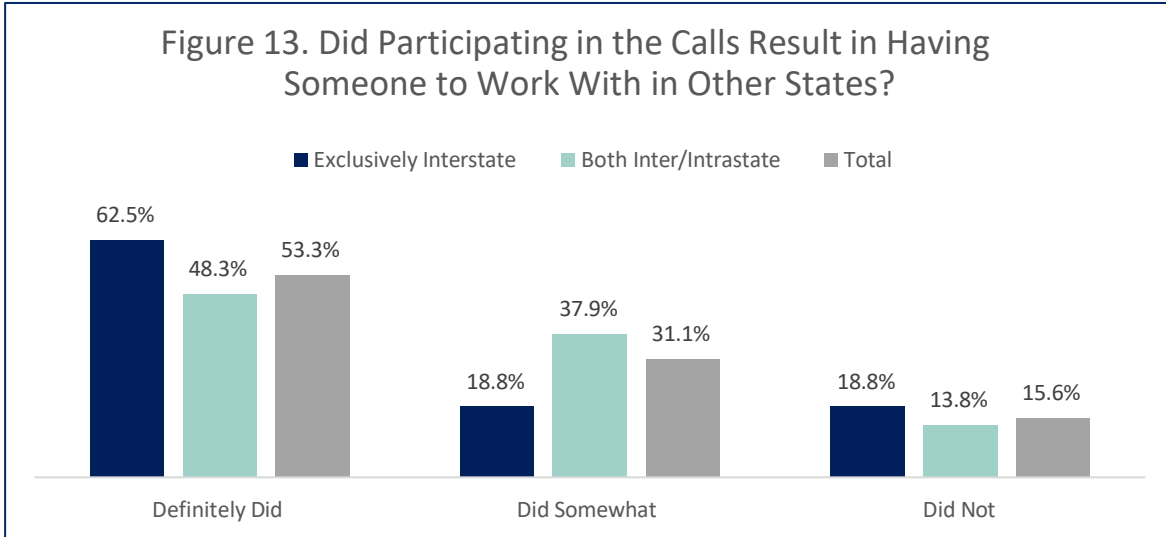
Knowledge of State Differences in Interstate Case Processing: Finally, most respondents from both Colorado and other states reported that the calls had “definitely” led to a better understanding of how states vary in processing interstate cases. Once again, respondents in other states were somewhat more apt than Colorado respondents to note definite benefits from the calls.



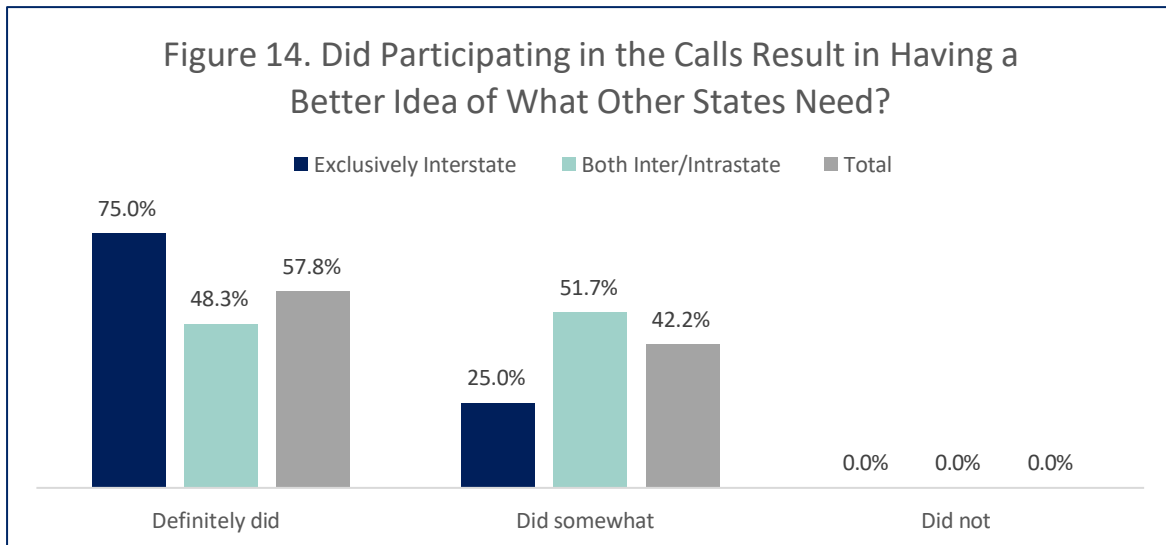
Responses of Interstate Specialists versus Generalists

To gauge whether the calls had had a differential effect on interstate specialists versus generalists, we compared responses for these two categories of workers. However, because of the small number of respondents, we were unable to simultaneously look at survey responses for worker types and geographical setting.

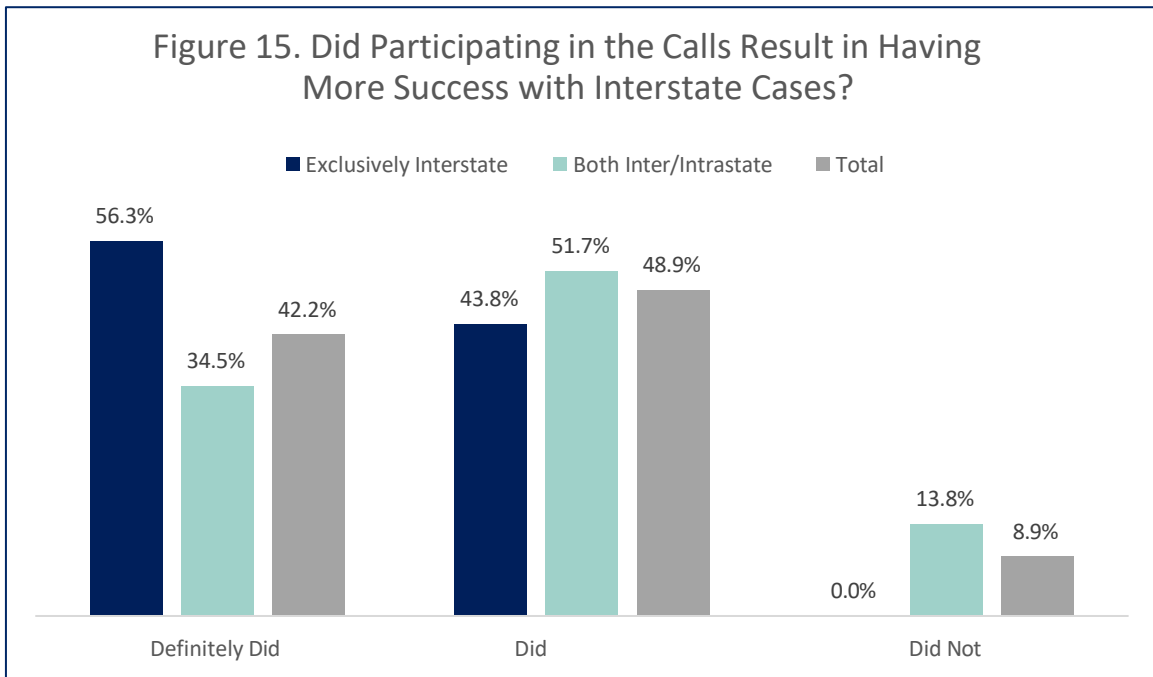
- Overall, respondents who exclusively work in interstate processing found the meetings to have a greater positive impact on their work than respondents who handle both interstate and intrastate cases.
- Very few respondents from either category felt that the summits did not improve interstate case processing.



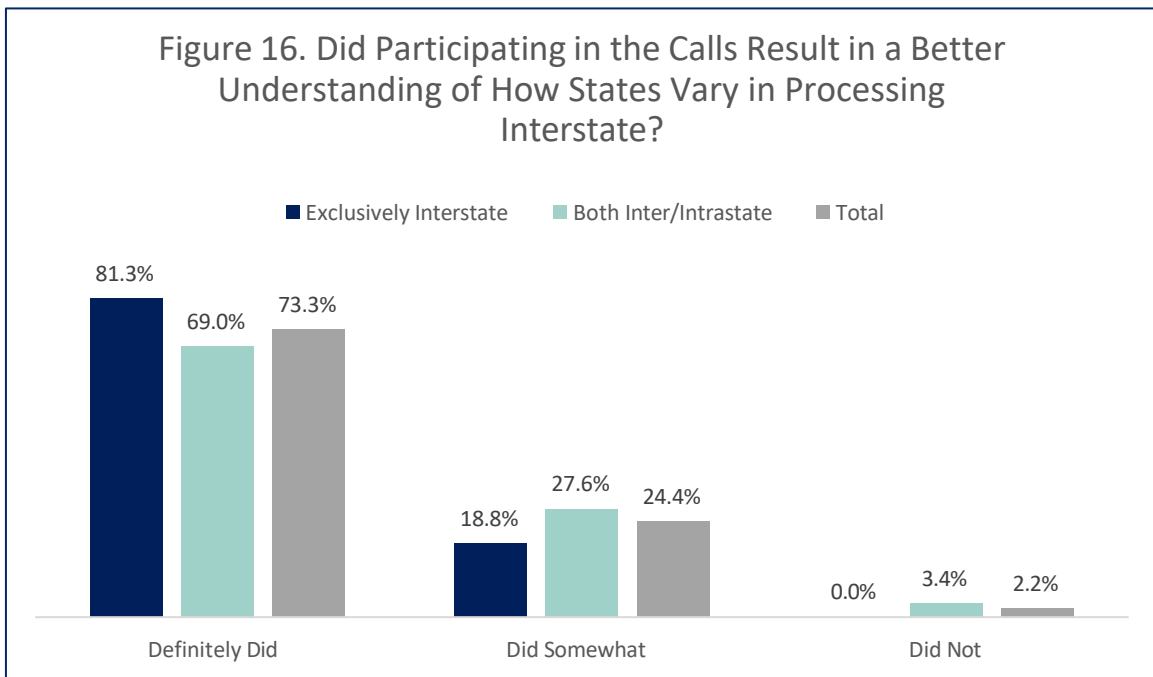
The majority of respondents who work exclusively interstate felt that the calls “definitely” gave them a better idea of what other states need. To compare, less than half of respondents who work in all types of cases said that they “definitely did.” No respondent said that they “did not” increase their idea of what other states need.



Similarly, workers who handle interstate cases exclusively felt that participating in the calls “definitely” created more success in interstate cases, and no interstate specialist said that they “did not” help.



Nearly all respondents from both groups felt that participating in the calls increased their understanding of how states vary in processing interstate cases.



Comparisons Between the Baseline and Midpoint Surveys

- Respondents were more likely to know someone in a border state now as compared to the baseline survey administered prior to the start of the virtual summits.
- Respondents still feel that not having appropriate contact information is an issue, as they did

when the baseline survey was administered.

- Respondents report that the timeliness of interstate processing has either improved marginally or has not changed since the baseline survey.

Although direct comparisons between results for the baseline and midpoint surveys cannot be made given differences in wording in the two instruments and differences in the number of survey respondents (e.g., 147 versus 45), some qualitative patterns are noted below.

Knowing Someone in the Other States: In the baseline survey, 57.9% of Colorado respondents and 40.9% of respondents from other states reported that not having a point person in another state to reach out to for help was a “major problem.” Also, in the baseline survey, only 20% of Colorado respondents and 43.1% of respondents from other states agreed to the statement of “I know a person in border states I can reach out to for help.” However, in the midpoint survey, most respondents from both Colorado and other states agreed strongly or somewhat to this statement, at a rate of 78.9% for other states and 73.1% in Colorado. Thus, at least for the portion of participants who responded to the survey, not knowing someone in another state was less of a problem at the midpoint survey.

I know a person in border states I can reach out to for help.				
		Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
	Strongly Agree	30.8%	52.6%	40.0%
	Somewhat agree	42.3%	26.3%	35.6%
	Neither agree nor disagree	19.2%	10.5%	15.6%
	Somewhat disagree	3.8%	0.0%	2.2%
	Strongly disagree	3.8%	10.5%	6.7%

Contact Information for Interstate Workers in Other States: In the baseline survey, 74.1% of Colorado respondents and 51.1% of respondents from other states reported that not having a name, phone number, or email address for workers in other states was a “major problem.” Unfortunately, the lack of contact information for workers in other states appears to be a persistent problem, especially for Colorado workers. Thus, at the midpoint survey, 69.2 percent of Colorado respondents agreed strongly or somewhat with the statement, “Often, I don’t have a name, phone or email info for a worker in the other state.” In contrast, this was the case for only 36.9% of respondents from other states.

Often, I don't have a name, phone or email info for a worker in the other state.				
		Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
	Strongly Agree	19.2%	15.8%	17.8%
	Somewhat Agree	50.0%	21.1%	37.8%
	Neither agree nor disagree	15.4%	21.1%	17.8%
	Somewhat Disagree	11.5%	36.8%	22.2%
	Strongly Disagree	3.8%	5.3%	4.4%

Changes in Timeliness of Interstate Work: In the baseline survey, 77.1% of respondents from Colorado and 83.4% of respondents from other states reported that case processing timeliness had become either “somewhat worse” or “a lot worse” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, in the midpoint survey, most respondents reported that the timeliness of interstate work has improved in the past year, or

there had been no change. This suggests that the disruptions due to COVID-19 had not worsened in 2021 and may have improved.

In the past year, have you noticed changes in the timeliness of interstate work?				
		Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
A lot better		0.0%	21.1%	8.9%
Somewhat better		46.2%	42.1%	44.4%
No Change		38.5%	15.8%	28.9%
Somewhat worse		11.5%	15.8%	13.3%
A lot worse		3.8%	5.3%	4.4%

Feedback on Various Interstate Case Processing Tools

The survey elicited feedback on several tools that can be used in the course of handling interstate cases. They include longstanding tools like the Interstate Resource Guide (IRG) and new ones developed through the Colorado Interstate Communication (CIC) grant.

Best Practice Guide Feedback

- All respondents from states outside of Colorado and most respondents from Colorado had heard about or seen the Best Practice Guide, and one third had used it.
- The majority of respondents felt the guide was at least somewhat helpful.
- Many respondents feel that “enforcement thresholds for remedies” would be a helpful addition to the guide.

The Best Practice Guide summarizes key points discussed during the first round of virtual interstate meetings. It includes a guide to terminology used in the eight states participating in CIC and preferred methods of communication. Additionally, it contains a list of common mistakes and alternative practices recommended. A higher proportion of respondents from neighboring states (42.1%) compared to Colorado respondents (26.9%) had used the Best Practices Document when they completed the midpoint survey. Overall, 24.4% of respondents had seen but not used the document.

Have you seen and/or used the Best Practice Guide?				
		Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
I have not heard about it		11.5%	0.0%	6.7%
I have heard about it but not seen or used it		34.6%	36.8%	35.6%
I have used it		26.9%	42.1%	33.3%
I have seen but not used it		26.9%	21.1%	24.4%

Of those who had seen and/or used the Best Practice Guide, most felt that it was either “very useful” or “somewhat useful.”

If you have seen or used the Best Practice Guide, how useful is it?	Colorado (n=14)	Other States (n=12)	Total (n=26)
Very useful	7.1%	25.0%	15.4%
Somewhat useful	50.0%	41.7%	46.2%
Neutral	21.4%	25.0%	23.1%
Not useful	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
I don't know/NA	21.4%	8.3%	15.4%

Survey respondents were asked what type of information should be included in the Best Practice Guide that had not yet been added. The most popular response from both Colorado and other states respondents was “enforcement thresholds for remedies.” Respondents were also interested in “what happens to a CSNET if a case has been closed.”

What type of information, if any, should be included in the Best Practice Guide that was not?	Colorado (n=14)	Other States (n=12)	Total (n= 26)
Where I can find key information in the IRG/the IRG item number	7.1%	0.0%	3.8%
Age of emancipation	0.0%	8.3%	3.8%
Interest charges/fees	7.1%	16.7%	11.5%
What happens to a CSNET if a case has been closed	28.6%	16.7%	23.1%
Enforcement thresholds for remedies	57.1%	41.7%	50.0%

Contact Sheet Feedback

- Most respondents had seen or used the contact sheet.
- Respondents from states outside of Colorado found the contact sheet to be particularly useful.
- The majority of respondents would like a direct phone number to be included.

At the beginning of the interstate project, a master contact sheet was created and distributed to participants. Generally, 82.2% of survey respondents had either seen or used the contact sheet, with more respondents from other states using it (52.6%) compared with Colorado respondents (38.5%).

Have you seen and/or used the worker contact sheet?	Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)
I have not heard about it	7.7%	0.0%	4.4%
I have heard about it but not seen or used it	11.5%	15.8%	13.3%
I have seen but not used it	42.3%	31.6%	37.8%
I have used it	38.5%	52.6%	44.4%

Of those who had seen and/or used the contact sheet, most of the respondents from both Colorado and other states reported that the document was either “very useful” or “somewhat useful.”

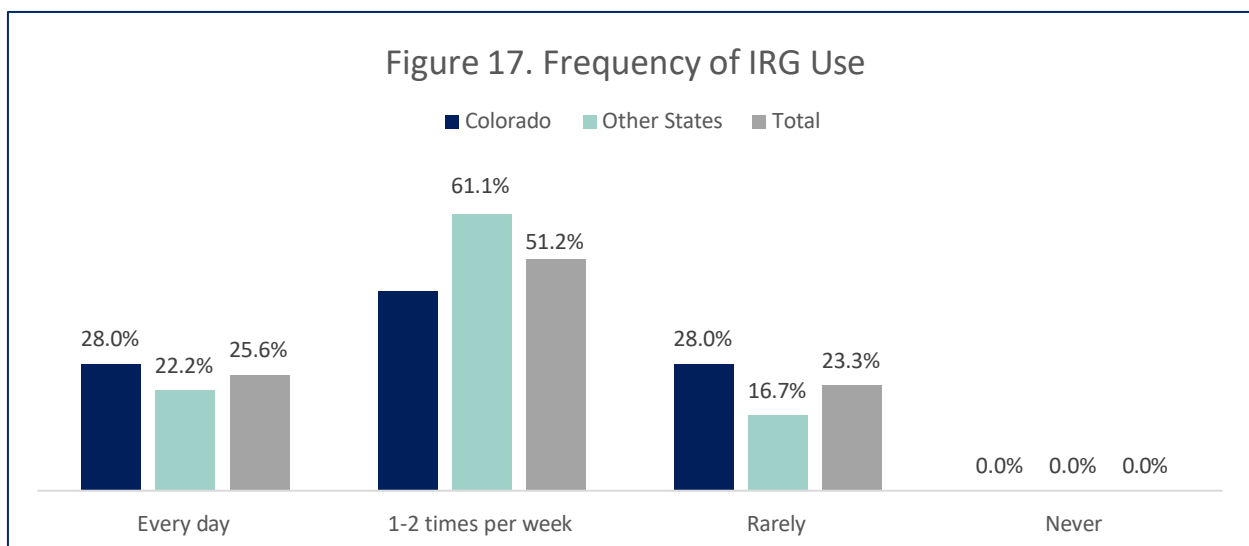
		Colorado (n=20)	Other States (n=15)	Total (n=35)
If you have seen or used the worker contact sheet, how useful is it?	Very useful	30.0%	66.7%	45.7%
	Somewhat useful	30.0%	6.7%	20.0%
	Neutral	20.0%	13.3%	17.1%
	Not useful	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
	I don't know/NA	20.0%	13.3%	17.1%

Survey respondents were asked what should be included in future versions of the contact sheet that was not yet included. Over half (51.1%) of respondents indicated that they would like a direct phone number for a worker or call center. Other suggestions for information to add about each contact on the list include: the type of case handled, ability to receive electronic documents, their in-office versus remote work status, and their geographical scope of service.

Use of the IRG

- Most respondents use the IRG at least 1-2 times per week.
- Age of emancipation and contact information for someone in another state were the two most common reasons for using the IRG.

Survey respondents were asked about their use of the Intergovernmental Resource Guide (IRG) to inform future CIC activities and guide the development of tools moving forward. Most survey respondents use the IRG 1-2 times per week or every day. However, Colorado respondents are somewhat less apt to report highly frequent use than respondents in other states.



Respondents were asked why they do not use the IRG if they do not. About a fifth to a quarter of respondents said they have other sources of information.

If you do not use the IRG, what is the reason?				
	Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)	
I can't find the information I need in the IRG	7.7%	5.3%	6.7%	
The information I need is not included in the IRG	3.8%	0.0%	2.2%	
I have other sources of information	23.1%	15.8%	20.0%	

Respondents were asked what they most commonly look up in the IRG. The majority of respondents reported using the IRG to look up contact information for a worker in another state (60%) and the age of emancipation (64.4%). Respondents from Colorado were more likely to use the IRG to look up the age of emancipation (73.1%) than respondents from other states (52.6%).

What are the most common items you look for on the IRG?				
	Colorado (n=26)	Other States (n=19)	Total (n=45)	
Age of emancipation	73.1%	52.6%	64.4%	
Fees	19.2%	5.3%	13.3%	
Contact information for worker in another state	65.4%	52.6%	60.0%	
Change of payee/custody	34.6%	10.5%	24.4%	

Input on Future Interstate Meetings

- Survey respondents were asked what level, meeting activity, and products that they would like from the CIC in the future.
- The most popular response overall was making “recommendations to OCSE on how to improve interstate case processing”.

The most popular responses regarding meeting format and frequency were a “virtual meeting every quarter” (51.1%) and “an in-person meeting” (40%). There is no meaningful difference in preferences reported by interstate specialists and generalists and only minor differences in responses for Colorado respondents versus those in other states. Overall, the most popular response was “recommendations to OCSE on improving interstate case processing,” with 62.2% of respondents indicating that they were interested in this activity. The second most popular selection was “an IRG cheat sheet with key IRG item numbers to help direct you to state-specific information.” About half (53.3%) of respondents indicated that they were interested in that product. Most (52.6%) respondents from other states were interested in attending an in-person meeting, while only 30.8% of respondents from Colorado said they were interested in an in-person meeting. The most popular virtual meeting schedule was a meeting held every quarter. This was endorsed by 53.8% of Colorado and 47.4% of other state respondents.

	% Interested from Colorado (n=26)	% Interested from Other States (n=19)	% Total Interested (n=45)
An in-person meeting	30.8%	52.6%	40.0%
A virtual meeting once per year	23.1%	21.1%	22.2%
A virtual meeting every 6 months	26.9%	26.3%	26.7%

Table 14. What Would You Like Moving Forward?			
	% Interested from Colorado (n=26)	% Interested from Other States (n=19)	% Total Interested (n=45)
A virtual meeting every quarter	53.8%	47.4%	51.1%
A virtual meeting once per month	30.8%	26.3%	28.9%
Recommendations to OCSE on how to improve interstate case processing	53.8%	73.7%	62.2%
A better best practice document	38.5%	42.1%	40.0%
An IRG cheat sheet with key IRG item numbers to help direct you to state specific information	53.8%	52.6%	53.3%

Conclusions

The information provided by the midpoint survey documents the impact of the CIC on interstate processing for participating states, and will guide the future development of tools and the structure of the interstate summit meetings. Key findings include:

- Most of the 45 who responded to the survey are from Colorado, but all eight participating states were represented in the respondent sample. Almost half of the respondents work in urban/metro areas.
- Most respondents were long-serving child support professionals who were very engaged in the virtual summits and attended consistently.
- Respondents rated the meetings very highly and appreciated the opportunity to connect with interstate professionals in other settings. They also credited the virtual summits with improving their practice and interstate case processing performance.
- Respondents from states other than Colorado and respondents who work exclusively in interstate case processing seemed to find particular value in the meetings and rated it most favorably.
- Of those who had seen both the Best Practice Guide generated following the first round of CIC virtual meetings and the contact sheet, most reported that the tools were at least somewhat helpful.
- Most respondents used the IRG at least 1-2 times per week and reported that an IRG cheat sheet would be a valuable tool to generate. Respondents were also interested in making recommendations to OCSE on how to improve interstate case processing, and having a virtual interstate meeting once per quarter. There was some interest in an in-person meeting and a better best practice document.

While the ongoing participation and benefits reported by the core group of regular summit meeting attendees are quite encouraging, they do not speak to the value of the virtual summits for child support professionals with less frequent attendance patterns. Nor do we know whether and how the potential benefits derived for regular attendees have translated into changes in interstate case processing in Colorado and border states as a whole. Additional information is needed to answer these questions and to examine the impact of the summit meetings and CIC products on improving interstate case processing. Hopefully, the upcoming focus groups with state representatives will provide helpful insight, as will a widely distributed post-survey at project completion.

Appendix E

Colorado Interstate Communication (CIC) Grant SUGGESTIONS FOR OCSE

These suggestions were compiled based on virtual summits and focus groups with state staff and interstate child support workers in eight border states – Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming

Limited Services Requests

- Create a way to track these that would be recognized by all states and the federal office. This is difficult, as an IV-D case is not opened when providing limited services, even though some of these requests do involve some limited enforcement. The states' efforts to assist other states with these requests should be credited and acknowledged as activity.

International Payment Processing

- Provide a way for all states to send payments electronically to other countries and receive payments from them. Many countries no longer accept checks and there are often high fees for processing them if they are accepted. This leads to cases that are being enforced, both in the U.S. and other countries on which payments cannot reach the custodial party.

Postmaster Verification Letter

- Provide guidance on verifying the NCP's address, specifically on the Postmaster Verification Letter. Some states require a copy of the letter to move forward with a case and this can sometimes be provided but not always. For example, in Texas, a vendor provides this service and verifies the address but does not provide the document to the Texas CSE agency.

IRG Recommendations

- Add information on whether states will accept arrears-only cases for enforcement, and/or whether they will file contempt on arrears only cases (e.g., Texas will not).
- Add information on establishing and enforcing orders when NCPs are incarcerated.
- Add information on reviews and modifications when someone is in the military.

Federal Forms

- It should be easier to identify which state is initiating and which is responding across forms, as the time spent figuring this out adds up.*
- It would be helpful to have transmittal forms that are 'federally translated' in Spanish and other languages.
- On the bottom of the transmittal forms (where contact information is provided), add a question about preferred mode of communication (email, phone, etc.).
- When the order does not have the interest rate for the other state on the initial transmittal form, there should be a section providing it. (Workers sometimes have to check the IRG, and it may not be a simple answer. They then have to reach out to the other state, which creates a hold on the order.)*
- On transmittal forms, it would be helpful if a state could indicate if they are an electronic document management (EDM) state and if they need paper packets or if electronic packets via EDE are sufficient.*
- Have uniform electronic signatures that would be recognized by all states and their courts.

EDE

- OCSE should broadcast when a state joins EDE.

Birth Certificates/Acknowledgments of Paternity

- Need a standard way to obtain these without having to get originals through various agencies.

Note: suggestions marked with an asterisk (*) may need to be discussed for clarification.