Ohio Sunset Review Committee
Agency Questionnaire

Agency Name Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council

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Agency's primary purpose and its various goals and objectives

Federal regulations require each state to establish a single set of child support guidelines to be used by courts and child support enforcement agencies statewide. Every four years the state must review its child support guidelines to determine whether child support orders issued in accordance with the guidelines - and using the corresponding child support worksheets - adequately provide for the needs of children. In Ohio, the Department of Job and Family Services is responsible for conducting this review.

The Child Support Guidelines Advisory Council was established by the legislature through Ohio Revised Code §3119.023 to assist the department with its review of the guidelines. The statute requires the council to include child support obligees and obligors, child support program professionals, judges and attorneys practicing in the domestic relations area, members of the House and Senate, as well as other interested advocates. Each representative brings his or her own perspective to the council and ensures that the department does not review the guidelines through any single lens but from a broad view of the experience and expectations of these stakeholders.

The Ohio statute, following federal requirements in 45 CFR 302.56, establishes specific factors the council is required to consider related to economic data, labor market data, the impact of guideline policy on low income families, and employment data. The council is also required to analyze deviations from the presumptively correct guideline calculations. The council is also charged with providing a meaningful opportunity for public input.

Agency’s past and anticipated workload, number of staff required to complete workload, and total number of staff

Beginning with the recruitment of members for the council and ending with the issuance of the department's report to the General Assembly, the guidelines review lasts 12 to 24 months. During most of that time, the council meets virtually and/or in person in Columbus on a periodic (usually monthly) basis. In addition to the periodic meetings, council members may be asked to attend at a forum that allows members of the public to address the council on matters of concern to them.

The council has no full-time staff. Members are not compensated for their time but are reimbursed for travel expenses. The department provides logistical support for the duration of the council and assumes all costs associated with guidelines review, including the reimbursement of travel expenses.

Agency's past and anticipated budgets and its sources of funding

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The source of funding for reimbursement and other logistical support is general revenue funding matched at a 66% rate through federal financial participation under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

Number of members of its governing board or other governing entity and their compensation, if any

Members are not compensated beyond expenses, usually associated with travel. The Department of Job and Family Services establishes the Council and manages the guidelines review. The Ohio Revised Code (3119.023(C)) establishes the membership as follows:

(1) Obligors;

(2) Obligees;

(3) Judges of courts of common pleas who have jurisdiction over domestic relations and juvenile court cases that involve the determination of child support;

(4) Attorneys whose practice includes a significant number of domestic relations or juvenile court cases that involve the determination of child support;

(5) Representatives of child support enforcement agencies;

(6) Other persons interested in the welfare of children;

(7) Three members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate, not more than two of whom are members of the same political party; and

(8) Three members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house, not more than two of whom are members of the same political party.

Additional notes

The positive role the council plays in the review of the Ohio child support guidelines is evidenced by the passage of revised child support guidelines in Chapter 3119 of the Ohio Revised Code in 2018. The Council played an important role in reviewing the economic basis for a revised basic schedule, incorporating stakeholder views and considerations, and establishing support for revision of the guidelines for the first time in 23 years. The new guidelines became effective in March 2019.

The department supports continuing the legislative mandate for establishing the council as part of the guidelines review as it ensures stakeholder involvement in the review and representation of their various viewpoints.