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**Jazzin' It Up
for Children
and Families**

New Orleans

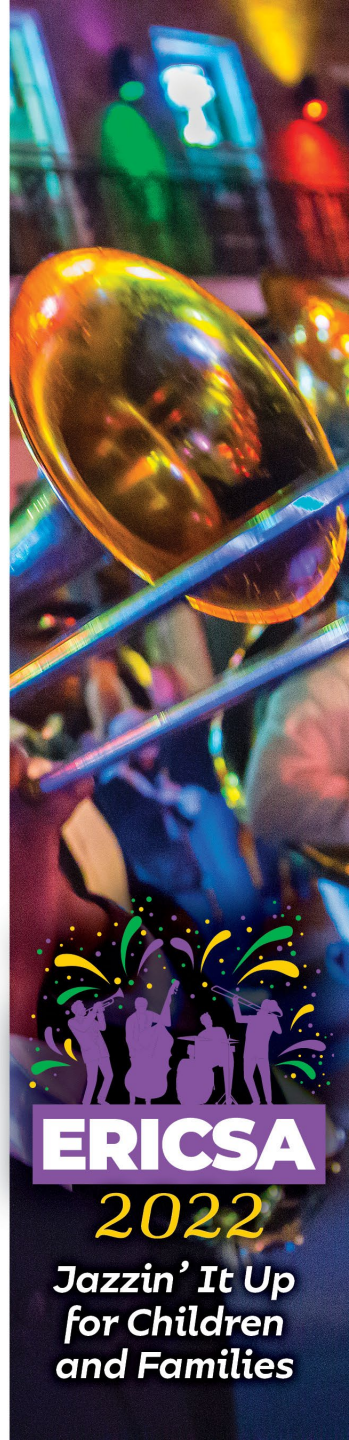
May 22 – 26, 2022

**59TH ANNUAL
TRAINING CONFERENCE
& EXPOSITION**

Partnerships for a Father Centered Child Support Program

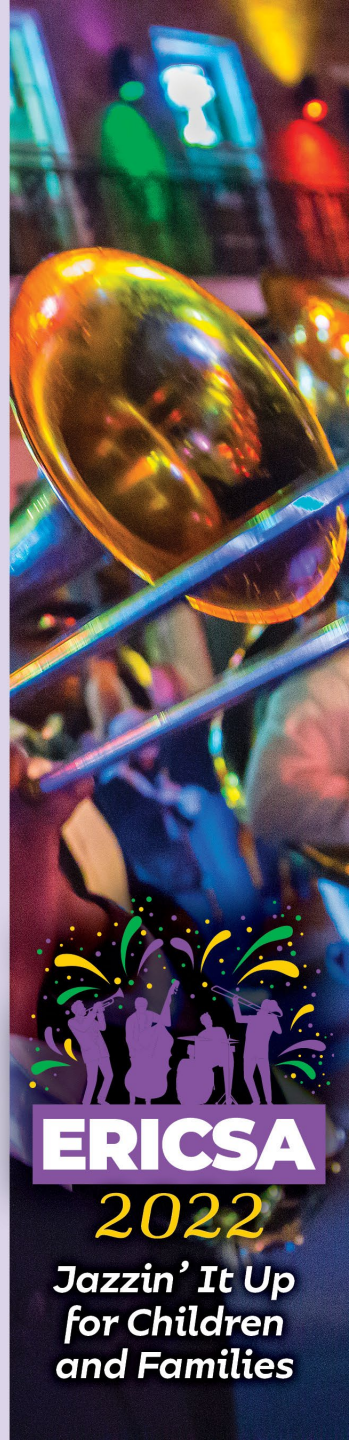
Shanika Sharee Alston, Assistant Ramsey County Attorney

Autumn Nelson, Assistant Ramsey County Attorney



Road Map for Presentation

- ROADS program
- Community Outreach team
- Other local resources



Ramsey County ROADS Program

R = Reliable

O = Opportunities

A = Advance

D = Dads

S = Support

Providing employment and training opportunities for fathers with child support orders.



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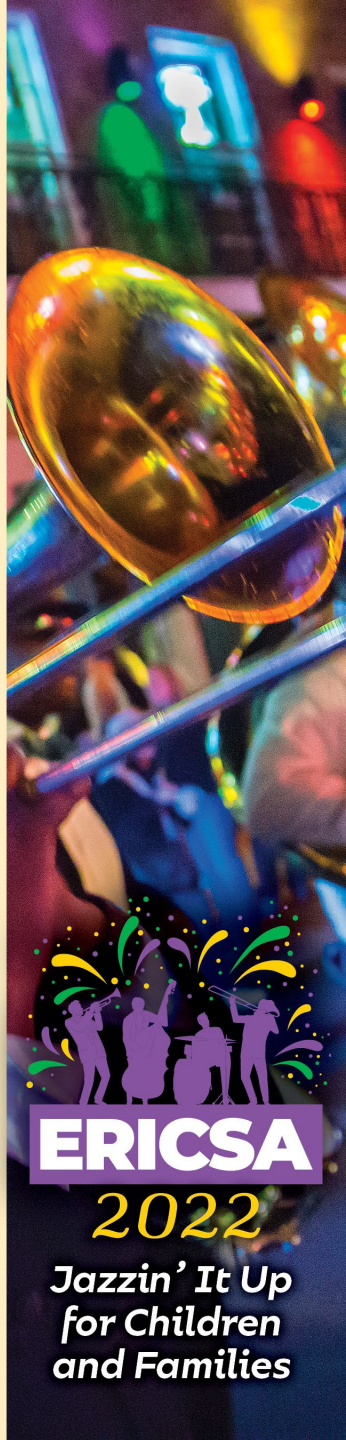
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What is the ROADS program?

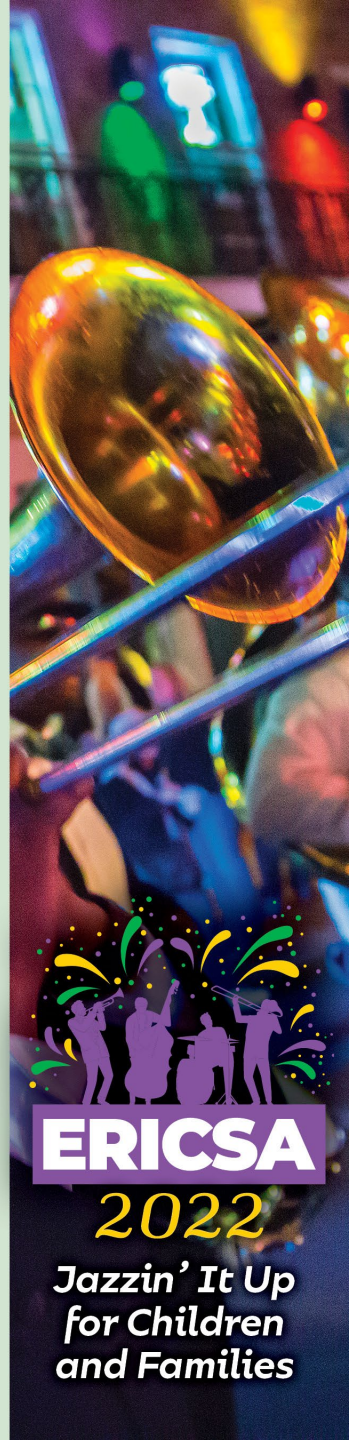
The ROADS program was launched in late 2018 and is a partnership between Ramsey County Child Support and Ramsey County Workforce Solutions.

Collaboration with Workforce Solution (WFS) to assist Ramsey County Child Support Obligor to achieve consistent, full-time employment. The goal of this project is to connect Obligor with Workforce Solutions to increase financial support to children and promote a positive relationship between Ramsey County Child Support and families.



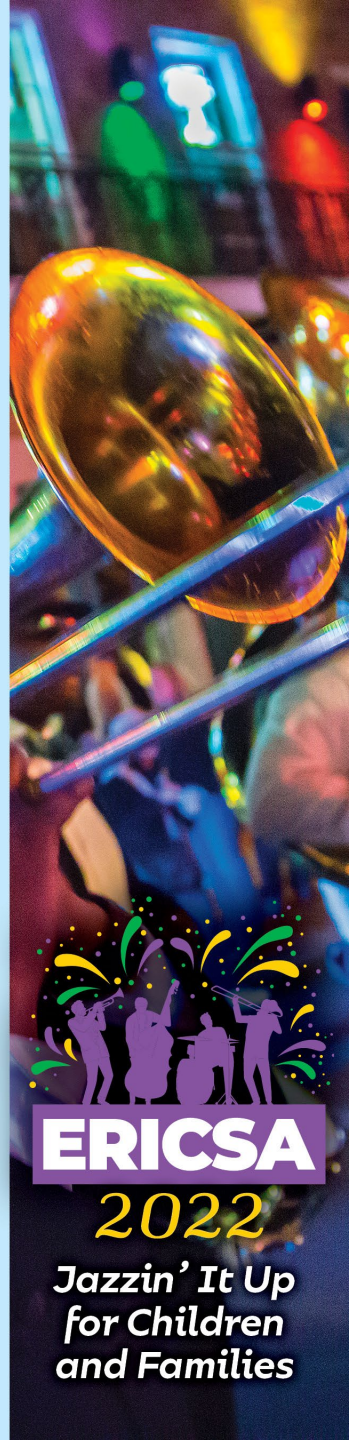
What is the ROADS program?

- ROADS recognizes that Fathers are vital in the life of their child.
- It is critical that fathers take an active role in their children's lives. Research shows that an involved father has an enormous impact on determining the success of a child.
- Children with an involved father: are more social, less likely to drop out of school, less fearful of new situations, more likely to have higher self-esteem.



Why did we choose to Partner with WorkForce Solutions?

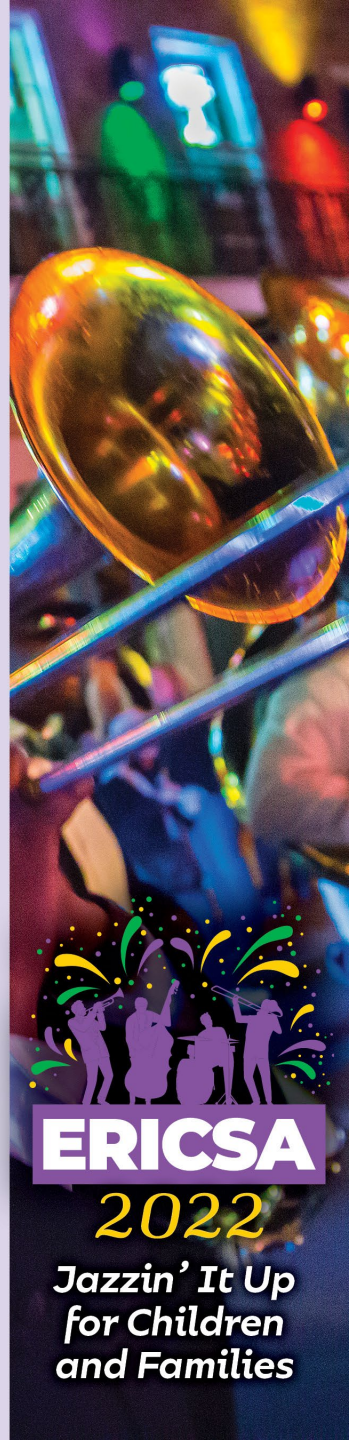
- Trend at national level to offer more services to parties to assist with employment.
- Other counties in MN have similar projects – Carver County, Dakota County, Hennepin County.
- Other states also have similar projects – Texas, Kansas, counties in California, South Carolina, Tennessee, Colorado, Wisconsin, Ohio, etc.



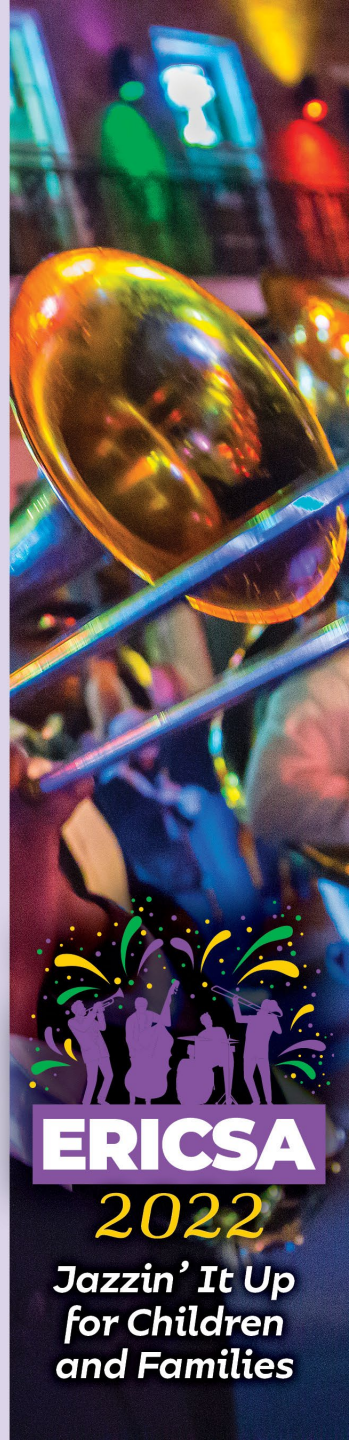
Why did we choose to Partner with WorkForce Solutions?

Benefits from the programs, including:

- Increased employment, payments and the consistency of payments.
- Increased trust between Obligors and the child support office.
- Increased awareness of Obligors' barriers to paying child support.
- Courts, child support office and Obligors saw successes, which reinforced the benefits.



ROADS video



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Ramsey County Workforce Solutions

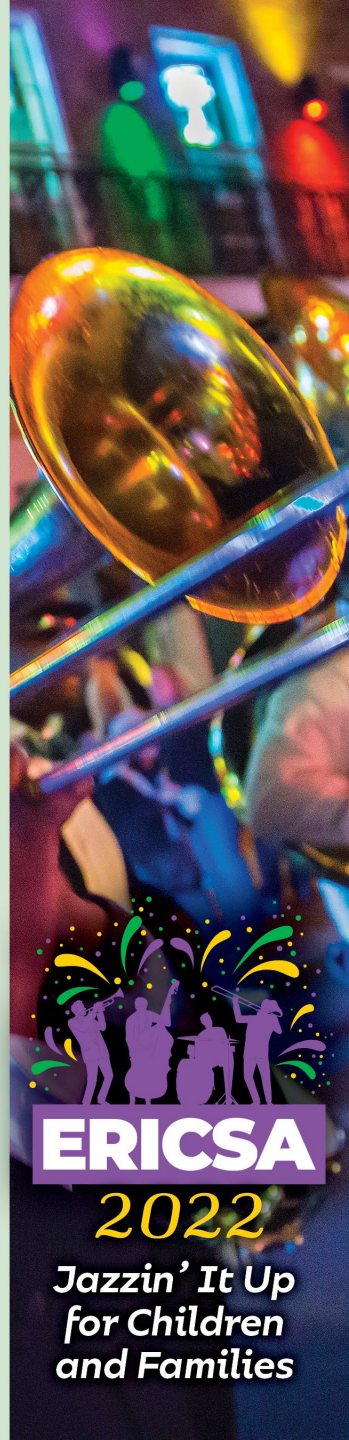
- Ramsey County agency that provides **employment and training services** to job seekers and businesses.
- Workforce offers career development and coaching. This may include educational services, basic job skills and/or occupational skills training, job search and job placement.
- Mission of Workforce Solutions is to **strengthen the economic success of the community** through effective workforce development.
- This aligns with Ramsey County Child's Support's mission in **helping families become economically self sufficient.**



Partnership With Workforce Solutions

Benefits:

- Able to connect resources for fathers through community agencies. This is something that ordinarily Ramsey County is not able to do based upon our role as the public agency.
- Fathers can meet with an employment counselor frequently based upon needs. This relationship allows for accountability and responsibility.
- Fathers can establish a “life” plan for the duration of participation in the program with clear and definable goals.
- Celebrate successes and milestones.



Program Eligibility

- Fathers with a child support case in Ramsey County.
- At least one of the father's children must receive MFIP public assistance in Ramsey County (tied to funding for the employment counselor).
- The father does not have to live in Ramsey County, but must be willing to meet with the counselor periodically in Ramsey County.
- Focus on African American, Native American and Hispanic fathers, but will consider any eligible father.



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Recruitment Activities

- Distributed flyers to the Self Help Center, at Court, libraries, local agencies and community partners.
- Posters in our child support lobby and public assistance building.
- Social media posts.
- Information posted on our website.
- Postcards mailed to selected clients every other month.
- Informational meetings held with other county agencies.
- Meetings with community partners.



Recruitment Activities

Most referrals come from “cold calls” based on running a report of possible cases from our child support program (PRISM).

Referrals can also be made by any child support worker by sending a name, case number and valid phone number to a ROADS program child support worker.



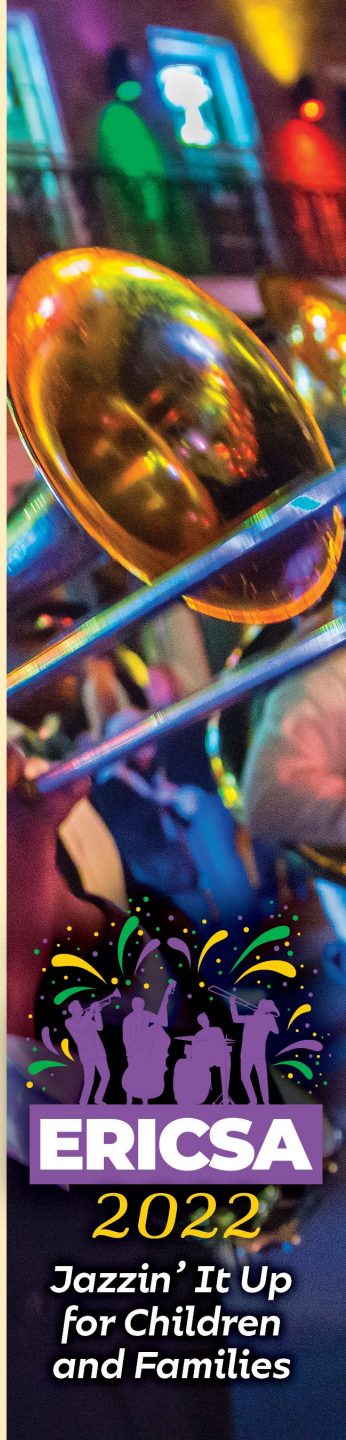
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ROADS website

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/assistance-support/employment>



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ROADS flyer

ROADS

ROADS recognizes that fathers play a vital role in the life of their child and it is critical that fathers take an active role.

Research shows that an involved father has an enormous impact on determining the success of a child.

Children with an involved father are:

- more social.
- less likely to drop out of school.
- less fearful of new situations.
- more likely to have higher self-esteem.



What is ROADS?

ROADS (Reliable Opportunities Advance Dad's Support) is a partnership between you, Workforce Solutions and Child Support Services to develop a plan on your career goals, employment and your child support case.

You can also gain additional parenting and life skills so that you can be more supportive in the life of your children.



RAMSEY COUNTY
Workforce Solutions

For more information, call
651-266-3108

A partnership between Ramsey County
Child Support Services and Workforce Solutions

ROADS

Employment and training opportunities for fathers with child support orders.

RAMSEY COUNTY
Workforce Solutions



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ROADS flyer



What does ROADS offer you?

- Education and employment opportunities that can help launch your career path.
- Joint request to temporarily reduce or suspend child support.
- Release hold on driver's license.
- Release hold on school loan eligibility.
- Forgiveness of public assistance arrears.
- Avoid further enforcement actions, such as civil contempt.
- Designated child support worker and employment counselor to assist you.
- Incentives for completing your personalized goals and reaching milestones in the program.

Education and employment opportunities

Career Coaching

Work one-on-one with a career coach to map out a personalized plan for your education and career path.

Education and Training

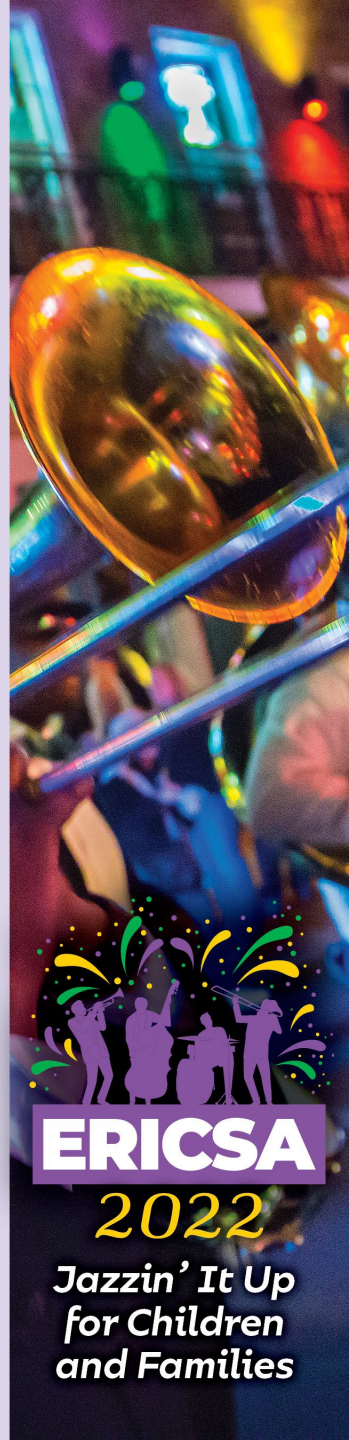
Complete your adult diploma or GED. Enroll in college. Earn industry certificates and credentials.

Work Experience

Earn income working at local businesses while you gain valuable skills to help launch your career.

Community Resources

Get connected to other community resources including parenting programs, food, legal assistance and shelter.



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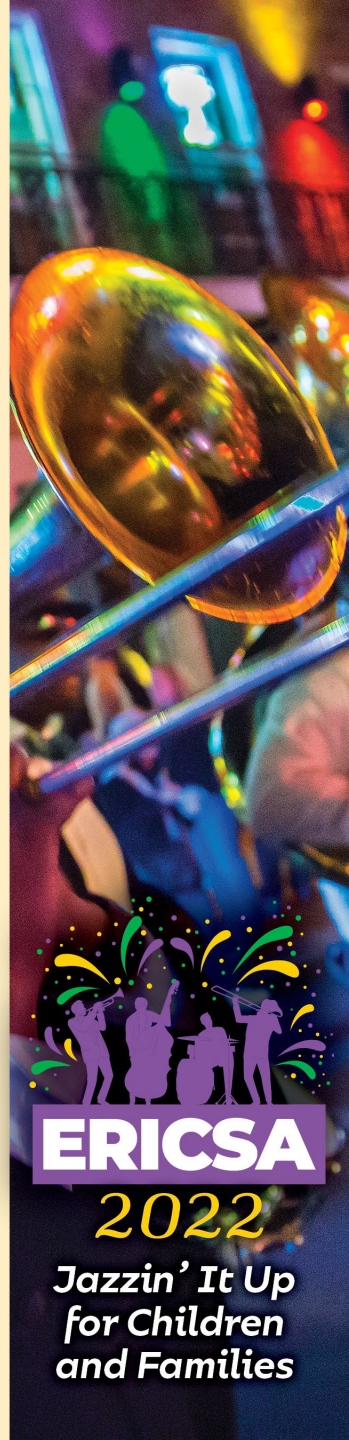
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How does it work?

Once a participant is identified and agrees to join the program a Referral Form is sent to the employment counselors at WFS (Workforce Solutions).

The Referral form transmits participant and case information as well as notifies the employment counselor what child support case incentives can be offered for participation in the program.

Participant is assigned a designated employment counselor and child support worker.

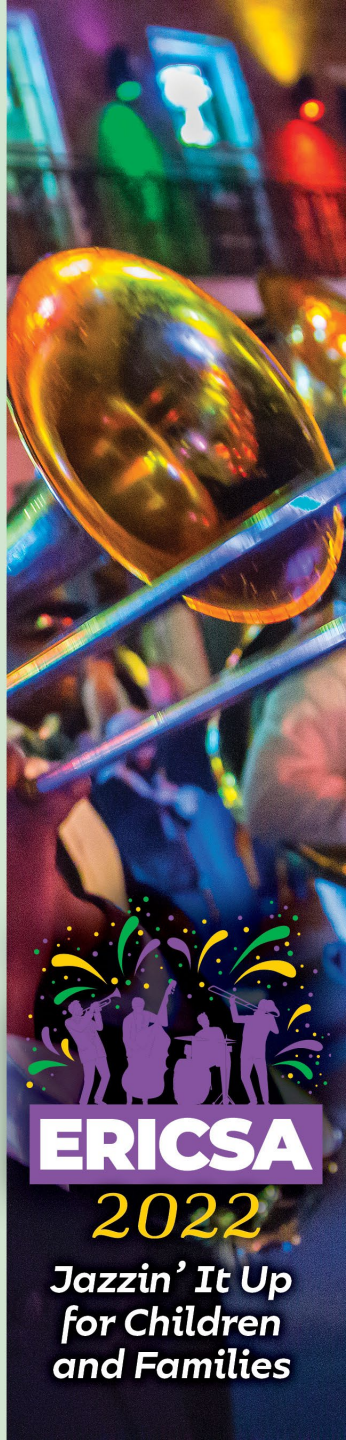


How does it work?

The participant attends a 1:1 meeting with their Workforce Services employment counselor.

Services that can be provided to the participant include:

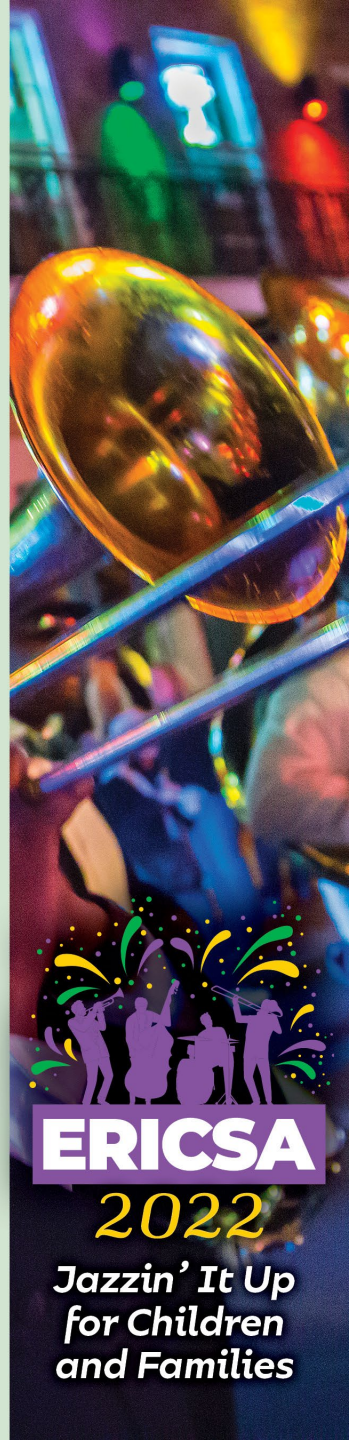
- Creating Goals/Employment Plan
- Education – GED, post secondary
- Assist with “essential skills”, helping to manage a crisis
- Job/career search & job training programs



How does it work?

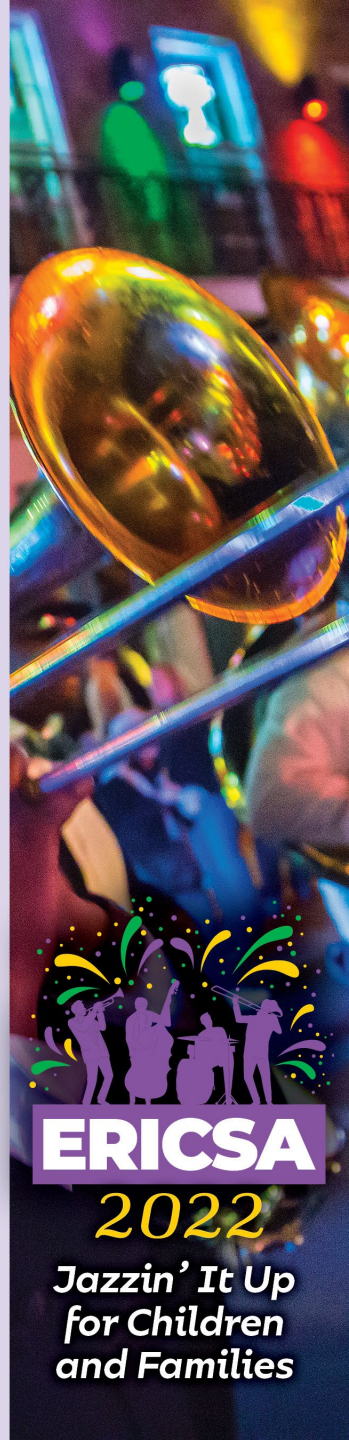
Cont'd - services that can be provided to the participant include:

- Assist with housing and/or health concerns
- Assist with literacy skills including helping ESL participants.
- Assist with Social Security application or work rehab when appropriate
- Targeted group sessions – Parent Power, Sankofa Reading Program, weekly networking events
- Provide Resources



Role of the counselor(s) at Workforce Solutions

- Biweekly or monthly meeting – based on Father's goals
- Developing employment plan
- Resource referrals and connections
- Documenting milestones and tracking progress
- Celebrating milestones and successes
- Keeping others informed (attorney for court, CS worker for timelines to remove arrears etc.,)
- Facilitating orientations w/ Father and CS worker



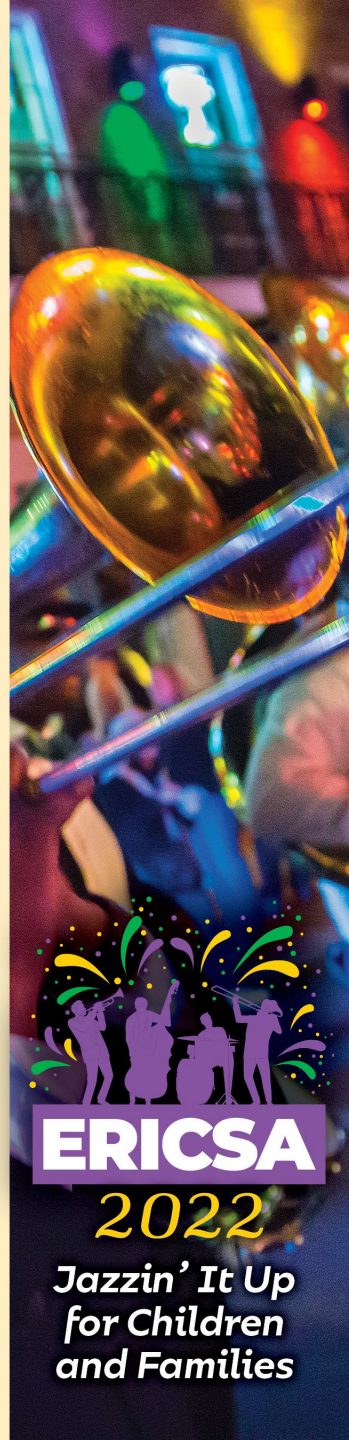
Role of Child Support Program & County Attorney

- Release of Information signed by case participants/fathers.
- Case consult with WFS Counselor(s) on Father's employment plans/career goals.
- Verify program eligibility, public assistance status, and engagement with custodial parent.
- Draft pleadings and/or motions and set matters on for hearing.
- County Attorney and CSO will appear at prehearing conferences to determine if there are any agreements.



Role of Child Support Program & County Attorney Continued...

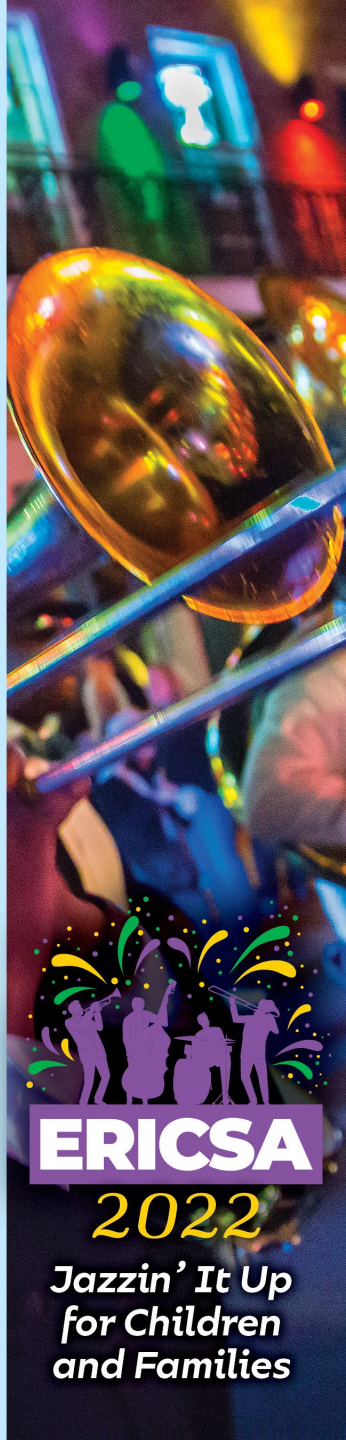
- County Attorney and CSO will appear at hearings and make arguments to the court as why father's participation in program is in best interests of child(ren).
- Continuous party engagement related to child support case and hearing preparation
- Public Assistance Arrears management.
- Enter into an agreement to forgive public assistance arrears.
- Stay of enforcement remedies.
- Coordinate with other counties if and when possible.



Behind The Scenes

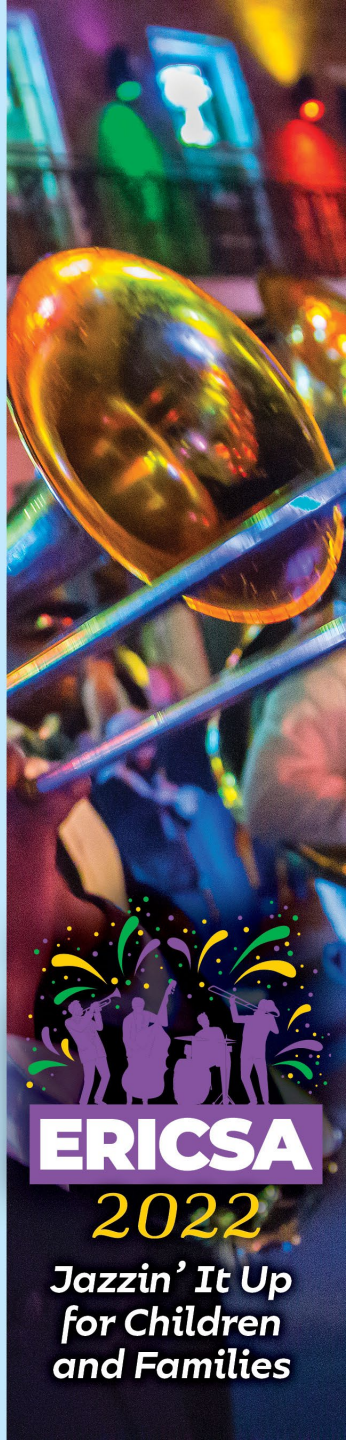
How Child Support & Workforce Solutions Work Together:

- MOU
- Forms & Handbook
- WFS One Program
- Access To CS Case Mgmt system
- Monthly Meetings
- Case Tracking
- Annual Retreat
- Employment Counselor(s) Appearance at Hearings



ROADS forms

- ROADS referral form (between our agencies)
- Participant Consent form – join the program and that agencies can share data
- Public Assistance Forgiveness form
- Motion to Suspend or Modify Child Support



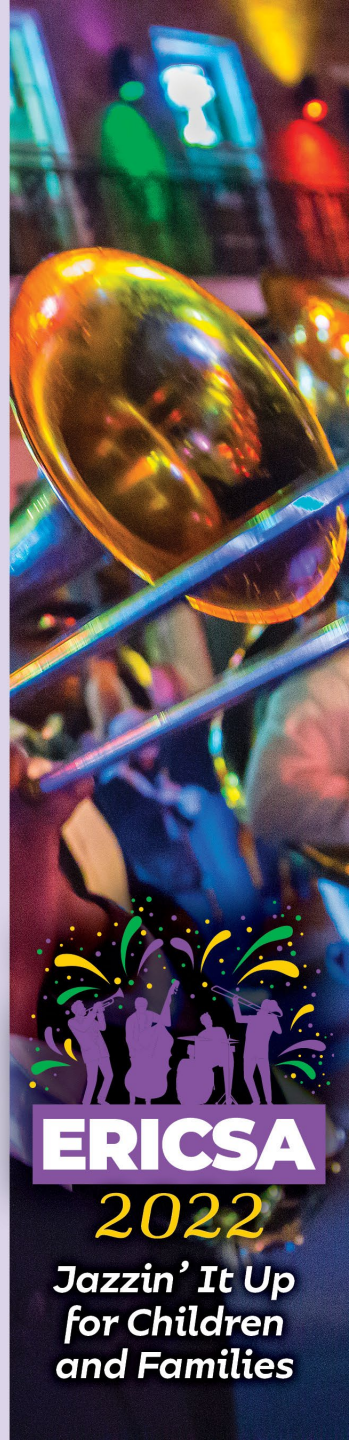
How does it work?

Once Child Support Services is notified that the participant has attended the 1:1 meeting with the employment counselor the case will be reviewed for child support related benefits.

New child support case (no existing child support order)

Month 1:

- Begin process of reserving (not setting a dollar amount) for the child support order, with review hearings, to assess progress in ROADS program.
- If existing child support order in another county, coordinate with the other county to release any holds on driver's license.



How does it work?

Month 2+:

- Provide updates to Court at review hearings on participant's progress in ROADS program.
- Upon employment, Child Support Office will recommend a delayed effective date (2-3 months after starting employment) to start child support, to allow time for starting a new job, etc.



How does it work?

Current child support case (charging order in place)

Month 1:

- Begin process of modifying the child support order, with review hearings, to assess progress in ROADS program.
- After the Participant's 1:1 meeting with WFS employment counselor, release any hold we have on the participant's driver's license.
- If existing child support order in another county, coordinate with the other county to release any holds on driver's license.
- Enter into agreement to forgive public assistance arrears.



How does it work?

Months 2-3:

- Discontinue use of the following enforcement remedies:
delay/stop civil contempt action, release hold on student loan requests, release hold on federal and state tax intercepts (if no NPA arrears on any of the active cases)
- Stop interest on public assistance arrears.



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How does it work?

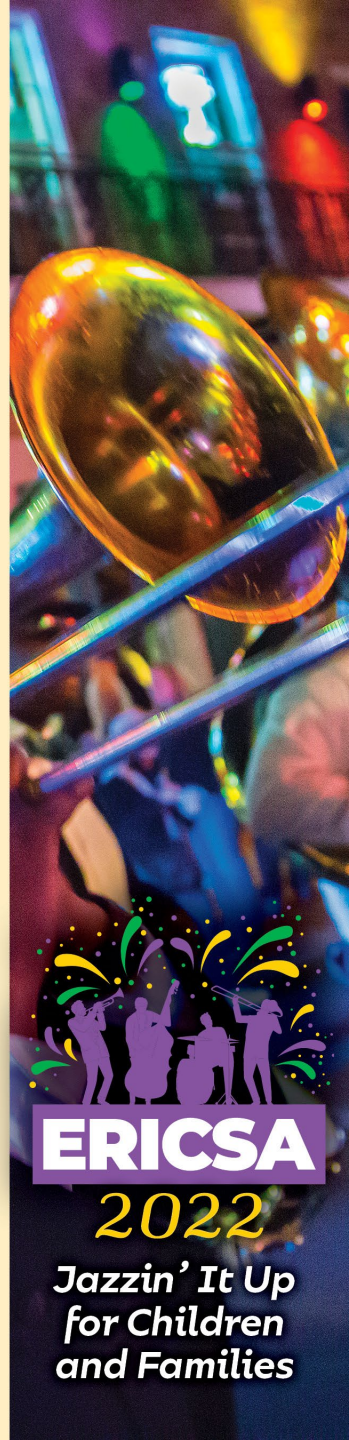
Month 4+:

- Provide updates to Court at review hearings on participant's progress in ROADS program.
- Upon employment, Child Support Office will recommend a delayed effective date (2-3 months after starting employment) to start child support, to allow time for starting a new job, etc.



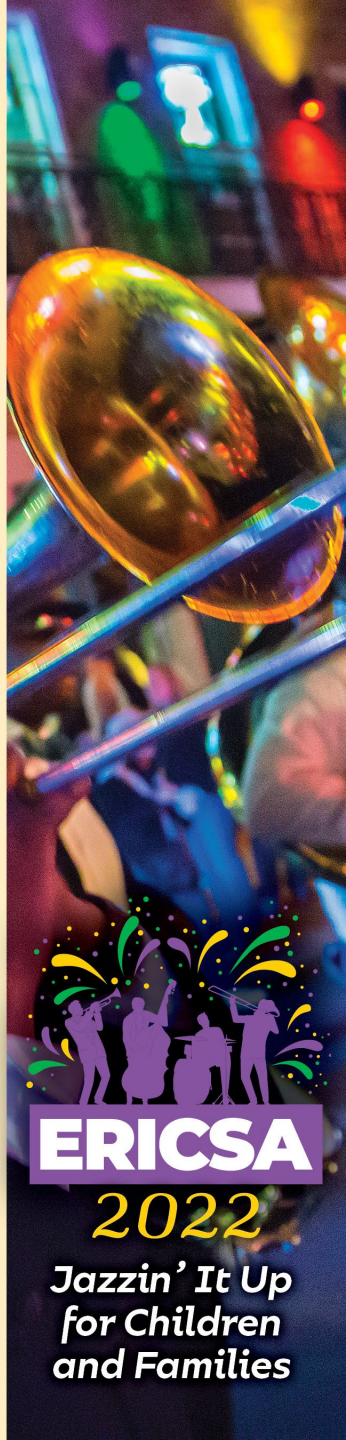
Factors that may affect the outcomes:

- The Court has ultimate authority on how much child support is ordered. Only the Court can grant or deny a motion to modify child support.
- If the participant has multiple cases in different counties – we will request that the other county work with the participant (e.g. releasing hold on driver's license, review case for modification, release student loan hold, etc.) but we cannot guarantee that the other county will agree, since this is a county program – not a state program.



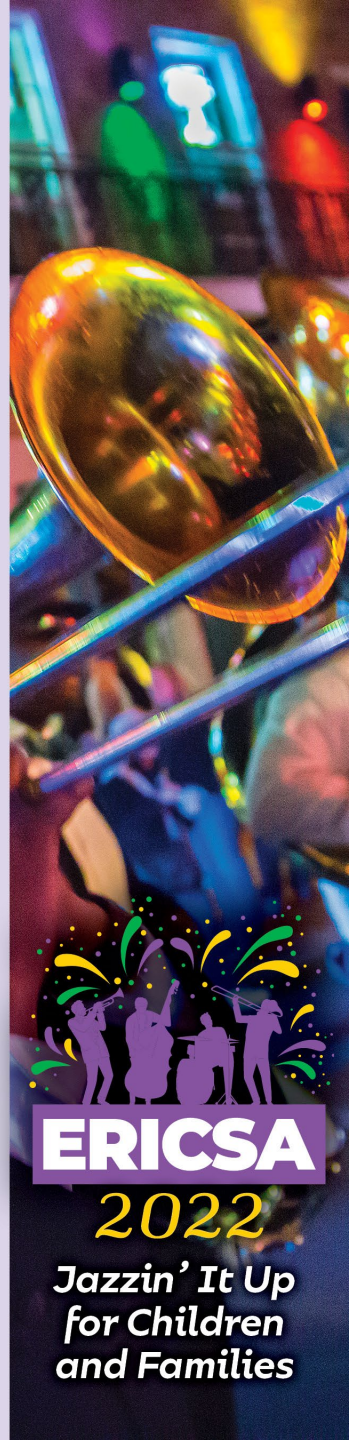
Case Example #1:

- Case Scenario 1: Paternity Action where Father was an active participant in ROADS program.
- County asked for a deviation from guidelines child support to set his support at \$0 based upon his enrollment in the program.
- Court agreed that it was in the child's best interests and granted the request for a downward deviation \$0 and a review hearing was set to measure progress in the program.
- Review hearing held 3 months later; Father did not appear at the hearing, but WFS counselor confirmed his continued participation in the program. Father had just completed TABE test which is a test needed to obtain GED. Kept prior order in place.
- Next Review Hearing held 2-3 months later, no show at the hearing. Lack of contact with WFS counselor, so court set support (dollar amount).



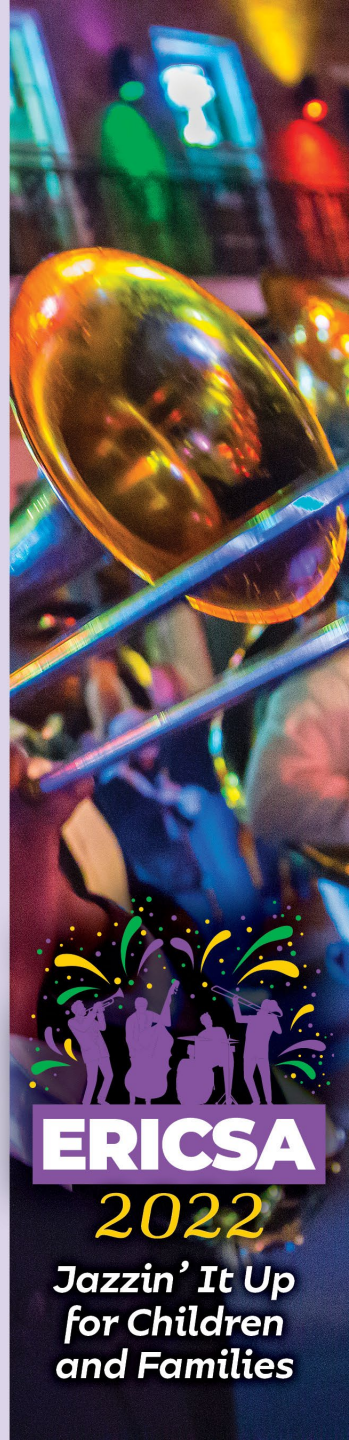
Case Example #2

- Case Scenario 2: Paternity Action where Father enrolled into the ROADS program after we commenced court action.
- Father was newly employed earning \$14 per hour full time at a call center but he did not pass one of the required training tests and was terminated.
- Father's employment history was sporadic. Long periods of time where he was unemployed. No secondary education.
- History of unstable housing/homelessness.
- Father wanted to become a commercial driver & obtain his CDL.
- Custodial mother was supportive of Father's goals. She agreed to the downward deviation of \$0 and to come back for review hearings to monitor Father's progress in ROADS program.
- Several review hearings held in this case where Father was consistently making progress in ROADS.



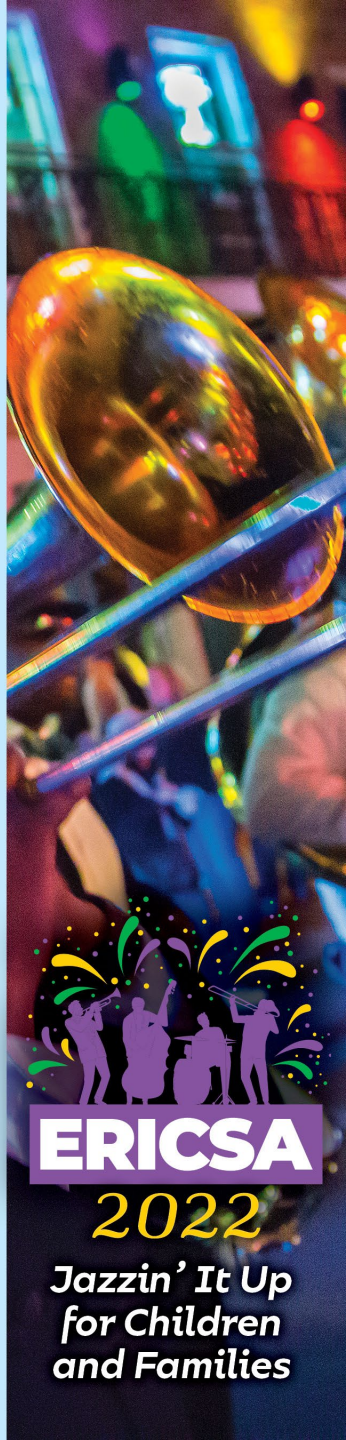
Case Scenario #2 Continued

- At about the 9-month mark, custodial mother became frustrated with lack of dollar amount.
- Parties agreed to a minimum basic support order of \$50 per month as Father continued to move through the program.
- Unfortunately, the pandemic impacted the momentum of Father's progress, and he began to miss appointments with WFS counselor.
- Parties eventually agreed to keep the \$50 per month order without Father fully completing the program.



Success Stories!

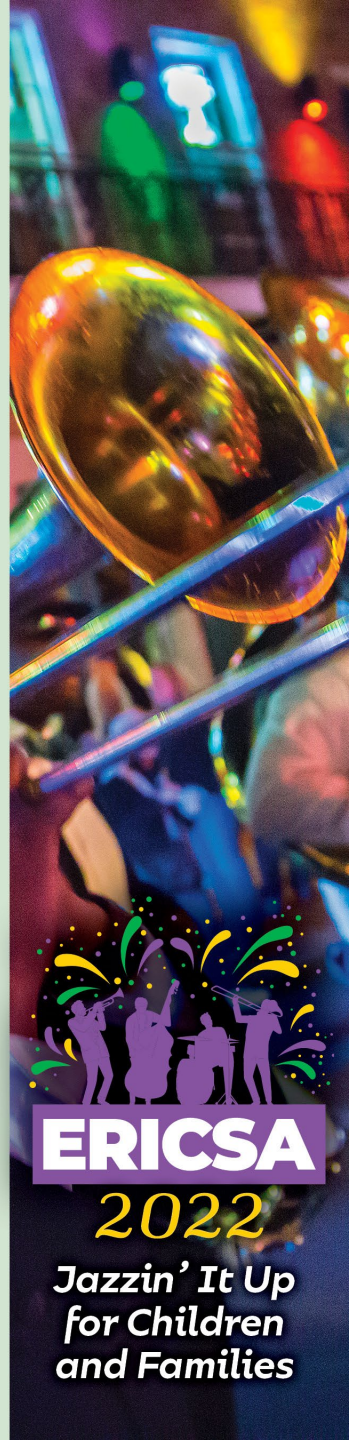
- Case Example 1
 - Father not only was able to get his DL back but obtained his CDL.
 - Father was able to pay down a significant portion of his arrears.
- Case Example 2
 - After successful completion of the program, father obtained employment with waste management.



Biggest challenges: Recruitment

Recruitment – building relationships is key and this takes time. It doesn't happen overnight, and it's difficult to contact some fathers that may be eligible.

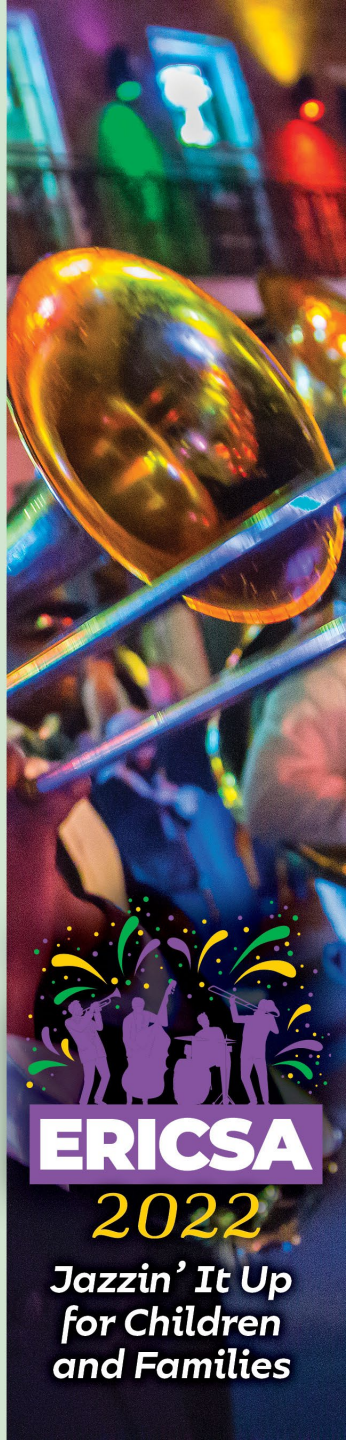
- Our recruitment subcommittee meets monthly to discuss new ideas and existing activities.
- **Engagement** is key when approaching fathers and other community resources.
- Connecting with internal and external partnerships.
- Connect with community outreach contact person.



Biggest challenges: Recruitment

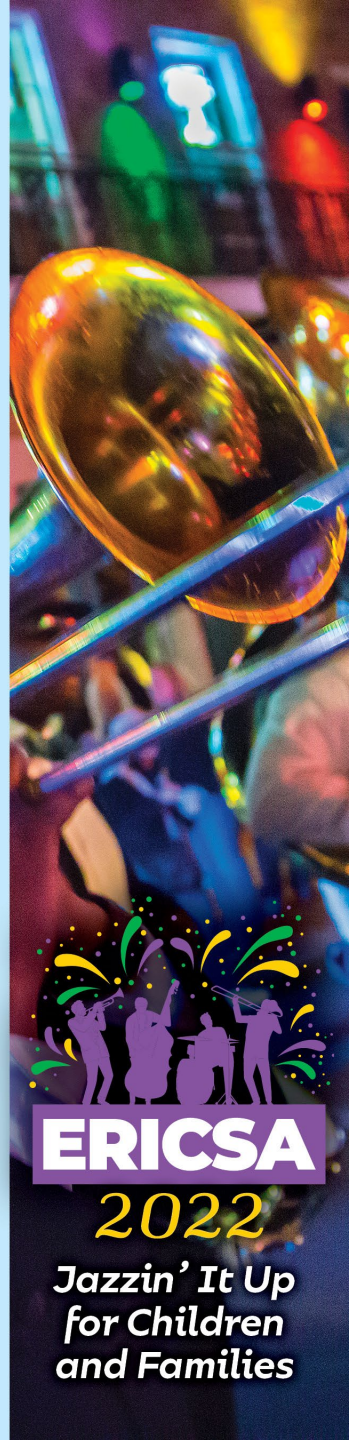
Methods we have tried:

- Attending family support groups and other organization(s) meetings to share program.
- Flyers (libraries, employment services agencies, temp agencies).
- Mailing flyers and letters to community agencies – contact person at each organization.
- Cold calls from case report
- Posters in lobbies, postcard mailing
- Connecting with organizations that work with or serve fathers.



Biggest Challenges:

- Child on MFIP requirement – this limits the pool of possible fathers and flips off/on/off.
- Court/judicial officers do not fully appreciate the barriers that fathers face when looking for and maintaining employment, and have unattainable expectations.
- Establishing the communication and processes between two different county agencies, located in different county departments.
- Increased engagement with custodial parent(s).



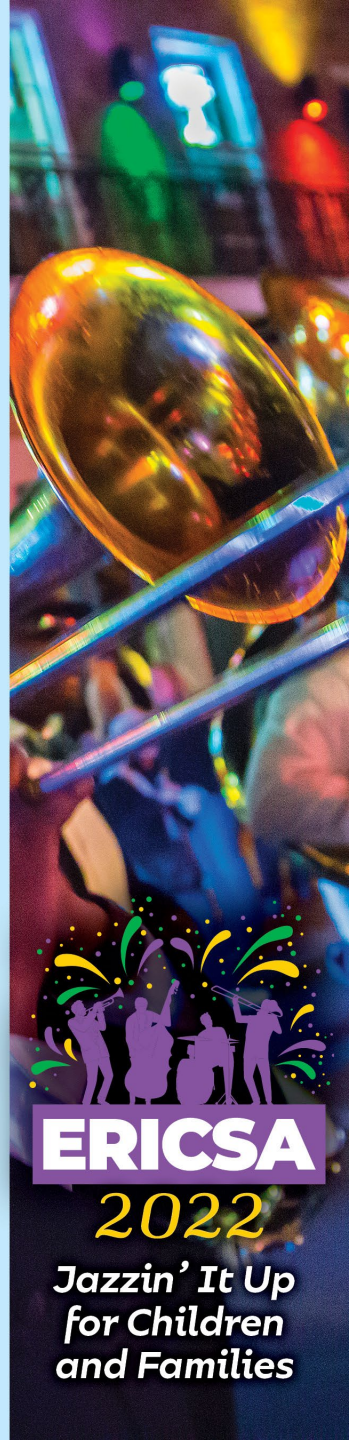
“TRAILS”

- Another option if not eligible for ROADS
- Same partnership between Workforce and Child Support, but less monetary incentives
- Direct connection to counselor is reduced, but still have access to Workforce services



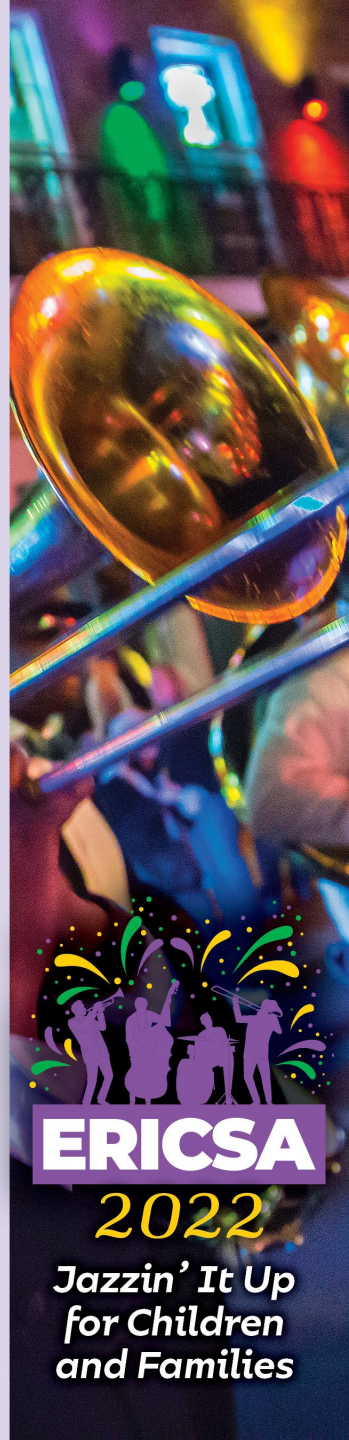
Navigating through the Pandemic:

- Orientations via ZOOM
- Forms via email – keeping them secure
- Contact with CS worker and employment counselor
- Court hearings via ZOOM, and less prehearing time
- Job market changing – livable wages



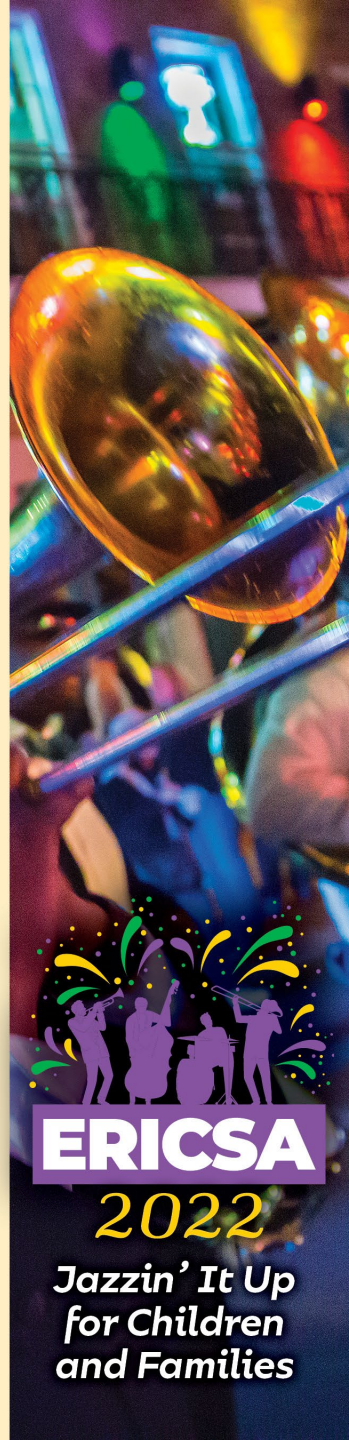
Ramsey County Community Outreach Team

- Connect with local community organizations and non-profits, to better provide services to the whole family
- Engaging with community leaders
- Build trust with the whole community and parents on our cases
- Rebranding from “collections agency” to providing help and resources
- Facebook Live
- Cross-train our county partners



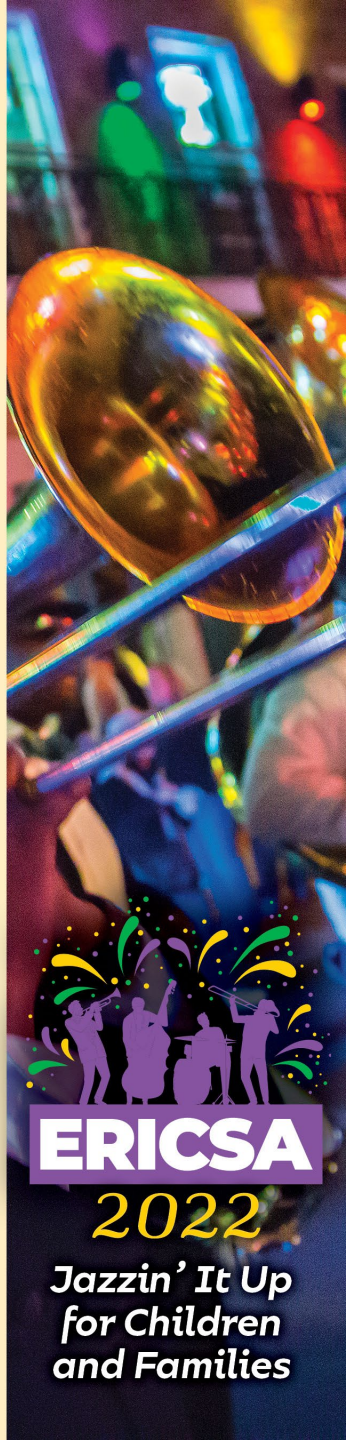
Minnesota FATHER Project

- Founded in 1999 by the City of Minneapolis, the FATHER (Fostering Actions To Help Earnings and Responsibility) Project became a program of Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota in 2004.
- Since then, the FATHER Project has served thousands of fathers through an extensive network of community partners.



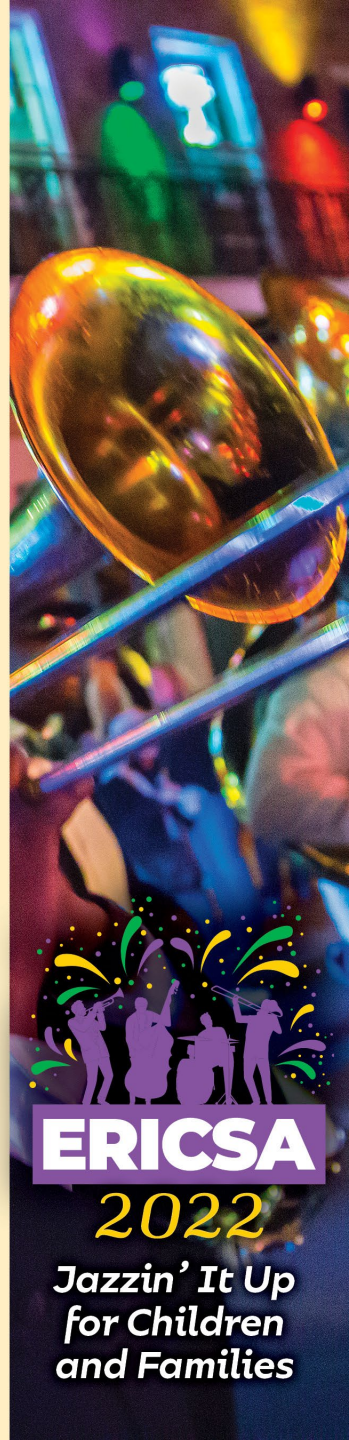
Minnesota FATHER Project

- The FATHER Project's mission is to assist fathers in overcoming the barriers that prevent them from supporting their children economically and emotionally.
- Services offered include:
 - **Case management:** a professional father advocate provides expert consultation on issues facing fathers and support for effective parenting.



Minnesota FATHER Project

- Services offered include:
 - **Parenting support:** parenting classes help fathers learn practical skills and receive support from other fathers in similar circumstances.
 - **Child support services:** Child support staff works with FATHER Project; from paternity to payment issues, we help fathers understand and improve their situation.
 - **Father and family activities:** fun and educational activities provide fathers, children and family members with important opportunities to strengthen relationships.



Question for you:
What services do you
have available to families,
or specifically to fathers?



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Questions?

Thank you!

Shanika & Autumn

Special thank you to Tarita Tyson, Supervisor
on ROADS program!



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