

BC Child Support Recalculation Service  
Evaluation of the Pilot Implementation Phase



May 2008

The Child Support Recalculation Service pilot project, including the preparation of the evaluation report, was carried out with financial assistance from the Department of Justice Canada.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION

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This document presents the findings of the pilot phase evaluation of the Child Support Recalculation Service (CSRS). The CSRS annually recalculates eligible child support orders and written agreements that have been filed in the Kelowna Provincial Court since June 2006. The overall objective of the CSRS is to promote the objectives of the federal and provincial Child Support Guidelines by ensuring that child support amounts are based on the updated (annual) incomes of parents.

The evaluation looked at the effectiveness of the CSRS during its pilot phase, identified implementation issues and challenges, assessed the range and type of services provided, client characteristics and key justice partner, client and staff satisfaction with the service. The evaluation used six methodologies including the collection of client and case tracking data and surveys with key justice partners and clients. Court records of registered CSRS cases were also reviewed.

### RESEARCH CHALLENGES

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The evaluation took place during the first year of the implementation of the CSRS. This affected the level of key justice partner experience with the service, the number of cases processed to the first recalculation date and the overall number of clients registered in the CSRS.

Some aspects of data design and data management and reporting were still being developed, tested or redesigned during the implementation period and this may have affected aspects of the data. The evaluation faced challenges related to the currency, completeness, interpretation or reliability of some of the data. As yet, the CSRS produces no pre-designated aggregated "canned reports" which could be used for evaluation purposes, case monitoring or case management purposes. In addition, much of the case tracking and outcomes data was compiled in extensive notes or narrative form. This made the extraction and aggregation of some of the data for the evaluation difficult and would likely have implications for case tracking and monitoring.

### CLIENT, CASE AND RECALCULATION DATA

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Selected data was collected on all cases processed by the CSRS by the date of November 6, 2007. At this time 222 cases had been processed by the CSRS. Of these, 47% were registered cases, 33% were exempted at Court and 20% were later exempted by the CSRS. Eighty-four percent of the exempted cases were exempted because of imputed income. Ninety-five percent of the cases were court orders; 5% were written agreements.

Within the 105 registered cases, 64% of the families had one child. A third of the payors had income levels below \$30,000. Thirty-six percent of the cases had assigned rights to BC Employment and Assistance and 32% were registered with FMEP.

CSRS program data flagged 10% of the cases as having safety concerns. Half of the safety data was extracted from CEIS records. This data was not completely congruent with safety issues reported by recipients participating in the Client Survey.

Over half of the registered cases had child support orders ranging from \$150.00 to \$499.00 per month. Fifteen percent of the cases had special expenses allocated.

Seventy-four percent of the orders from the registered cases focused only on child support and maintenance. Fifty-one percent of the cases had previous orders.

There were thirty-one cases that were eligible for recalculation in the time period covered by the evaluation. Of the cases that were eligible for recalculation, 87% underwent a recalculation process. In 63% of these cases income data was provided through an automatic 10% recalculation. In 93% of the cases where a recalculation process was completed the recalculation came into effect. In 76% of these cases an increase in child support amounts resulted.

In four cases CSRS clients applied to change their child support orders. At the time the data was reviewed one application to change the child support order had been approved; three were pending.

Almost all cases were processed within the one year time frame specified for the recalculation process. The available data indicated that in only one case was the recalculation completed more than two months after the expected deadline for reasons outside of the service.

CSRS tracking data indicated that telephone contact was made with 17% of the payors and in 42% of the cases a search for payor contact was undertaken. In over half the cases a search was undertaken by MELs, which had a success rate of over 80%.

## **FINDINGS FROM THE KEY PARTNER SURVEY**

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The CSRS evaluation included a survey of key justice partners, including representatives from FMEP, FMP, MELs, the Court Registry, the Judiciary, the Kelowna Family Justice Centre and the private bar. Twenty key justice partners were included in the survey. Sixty percent of the key justice respondents described themselves as having direct contact with clients receiving CSRS services. Key partners were not able to assess all aspects of the service because of its early phase of implementation.

Most key partners felt quite or well informed of central policies of the CSRS. Twenty to 30% of the key partners felt that they lacked knowledge in some areas, for example, related to the automatic 10% increase in the payor's income if no income information has been provided. Although respondent subgroups were small, respondents from the private bar seemed to have more knowledge gaps than others.

Over a third of the key partners felt that using exemption categories had limited the scope of the CSRS. The recommendation was that the categories needed to be reviewed and some eliminated, if feasible, to provide greater coverage by the service. CSRS staff noted that legislation limits the feasibility of amending most exemption categories.

Many key partners felt that they did not yet have enough direct experience with the CSRS to assess specific aspects of the CSRS. Those who did provide ratings gave high positive ratings to all aspects of the CSRS including the timeliness of the service response and the responsiveness of staff to client concerns.

Ninety-five percent of the cases registered in the CSRS are court orders rather than written agreements. Kelowna Family Justice Centre staff identified two barriers that they felt might affect the volume of written agreements. These were: payor resistance to becoming involved in the CSRS or unwillingness to opt-in and the high numbers of clients who are self employed. How self-employment affects the level of submission of written agreements in the courts was not explored with the respondents.

Key justice partners identified many benefits of the CSRS for recipients, payors and children. Key justice partners perceived the primary benefit of CSRS to recipients as the opportunity to participate in an out-of-court process that resulted in the appropriate and regular updating of child support. Not having to go to court was also a benefit identified for payors. For children the main benefits were the guarantee of regular, current and more accurate child support and the reduction of tensions in the family.

Other benefits of the CSRS identified by key justice partners included the efficiency and cost benefits resulting from the CSRS in keeping child support current and the time potentially saved in tracking payors with arrears (because child support may be kept more up-to-date).

Almost 80% of the key justice partners said that they felt it was likely that the CSRS would lead to a reduction in court time to address child support matters. Respondents also noted that the service could lead to the development of more (client) confidence in the family justice system in general.

The most frequent limitation of the CSRS, identified by a small number of the key justice partners, was a possible increase in tension between parents, because the CSRS could be experienced as punitive by payors. This concern appears not to be borne out by the results from the Client Survey which suggested that the CSRS is perceived by recipients as having a positive impact on safety.

FMEP and FMP respondents identified areas where the CSRS had increased the workload of staff. This was particularly noted by FMP, which has extensive documentation related to the CSRS to process. FMEP respondents said that their clients were sometimes confused about the mandate and that this required time to explain.

A higher use of the MELS or FMEP search mechanisms by the CSRS was also mentioned as having implications for these agencies, although this issue was not explored in detail in the evaluation.

A second issue for FMP related to the transferring of safety information to the CSRS. Although steps have been taken to ensure the exchange of safety information between FMP and the CSRS, an Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) has not been signed by the FMP that could help facilitate this exchange.

Fifty-five percent of key partners assessed the CSRS as being highly effective, with 45% assessing it as being only somewhat or not very effective. Service effectiveness was not seen as a service quality issue but as resulting primarily from the limited scope of the service because it operates at only one court in BC and the number of exemptions are seen to limit its scope.

Seventy percent of the key justice partners strongly recommended the expansion of the CSRS to other court sites. Key partners would also like to see the CSRS provide more detailed information about their mandate and policies to clients, the public and key partners, reduce the number of exemption categories (if feasible) to enable the CSRS to engage more clients, and reduce the paperwork required and generated by the program to make it more streamlined.

Key justice partners felt that the CSRS had been successful in meeting its objectives of providing an automatic out-of-court method for updating child support. Almost 70% said that it was unlikely that child support payments in Kelowna would have been kept up-to-date without the availability of the CSRS.

## **FINDINGS FROM THE CLIENT SURVEY**

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A telephone survey was conducted with clients registered with the CSRS who had a child support order dated between June and December 2006. Seventy-two clients (in 36 cases) were identified as potential participants for the Client Survey.

Client Survey completion rates were affected by the level of up-to-date accurate contact information for clients. Interviews were completed with forty clients, 55% of the client group. Eighty percent of the respondents participating in the Client Survey said that their incomes had undergone a recalculation.

Fifty-two percent of the clients said they originally found out about the CSRS through the CSRS registration package. Eighty-two percent recalled receiving this package.

Ninety-four percent of the clients felt that the registration package provided most or all of the information required to understand the overall purpose of the CSRS. About a quarter of the respondents described other information they would like to have about the CSRS, including how specific situations are handled by the service and/or further details about service effective dates

Most clients indicated a very high level of understanding of the basic mandate and requirements of CSRS. There were two areas where they expressed somewhat less understanding – the potential to vary orders in court if clients disagreed with the recalculated amounts and the automatic recalculation of 10% of the payor's income if annual income information was not submitted.

There was strong agreement by both payors and recipients that the principle of recalculating child support is fair, realistic and important. There was also general agreement among most clients that the 10% recalculated amount was fair although concerns were expressed by some recipients that the 10% might be too low if payors had earned more and didn't want to declare the income.

Most clients (75%) were also quite or very satisfied with the mandatory requirement to submit income information to the CSRS.

The applied benefits of the CSRS were assessed more cautiously by clients, but problems were generally related to issues around the degree to which child support had been paid (not a CSRS issue) rather than aspects of the service. Clients who had their incomes recalculated saw the CSRS as being more beneficial than those who had not. Twenty-five percent of the payors said the CSRS had been beneficial compared to 57% of the recipients.

Clients identified the greatest benefit of CSRS as helping them avoid court and reducing contact and conflict between the parents over child support issues. The main reasons why respondents said it was not beneficial were related to recipients not receiving child support or the new recalculated payments not being seen to be made. These concerns appear to centre around child support payment or arrears issues; subjects not within the mandate of the CSRS and not explored in the evaluation.

Clients said that registration in the CSRS had generally had positive impacts on the relationship between the parents. Twenty-five percent of the respondents said that registration in the CSRS had had a positive effect on their relationship, 60% said it had had no or a "neutral effect." Only 15% said it had had a negative effect.

Eleven of the twenty-eight recipients (39%) said that they had current or historical safety concerns related to the payor. Only two of these recipients were identified as having safety concerns in the CSRS database, suggesting that there are some limitations in the data that reports client safety concerns. Some of the data in CSRS on safety issues was also inconsistently entered, making the best source or most accurate data difficult to identify.

Of the eleven respondents who expressed safety concerns, 54% said that registration in the CSRS had had an impact on their sense of safety and, of these individuals, *all* reported that the program had *improved* their sense of safety by reducing conflict between the parents. These results underscore the value of CSRS to parents in terms of its impact of providing a "neutral" approach to child support issues.

Fifty-five percent of the respondents said that they were aware that they could call the CSRS directly if they had questions or concerns about the service, 54% of this group had made a direct telephone contact (30% of all clients).

Clients gave high positive ratings for the quality of the CSRS. Staff neutrality and fairness were given the highest ratings.

Clients were asked to suggest ways that the CSRS could be changed or improved to encourage more payors to submit their income information. Clients suggested that it might be helpful to raise the automatic recalculation to more than 10% or to recalculate more frequently, increase the penalties for payors who do not provide income information, and provide clearer instructions to payors about the submission of income information.

Recipients were asked whether it was likely they would have taken court action to keep child support up-to-date if the CSRS had not been implemented. Forty percent of the recipients said that without the CSRS it was likely they would have applied to court for a variation on their order. This finding suggests that for a significant number of clients involvement in the CSRS may have reduced the likelihood of their going to court for a variation of their order.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS REPORT

This report presents the findings of a pilot phase evaluation of the BC Child Support Recalculation Service (CSRS). The CSRS annually recalculates eligible child support orders and written agreements that are filed with the Kelowna Provincial (Family Court).

The CSRS began in June 2006 as a pilot project and is located within the Family Justice Services Division (FJSD) of the BC Ministry of Attorney General. The CSRS promotes the objectives of the federal and provincial Child Support Guidelines by ensuring that child support orders are based on the updated income of parents.

This report provides data on CSRS service levels, client characteristics and outcomes, client response to and satisfaction with the service and key partner assessment of the functioning and benefits of the CSRS. The data compiled in this report presents findings from the early implementation phase of the service.

Evaluation questions, measurement indicators and methodologies were first identified in the *CSRS Evaluation Framework* (Appendix A). The *CSRS Evaluation Framework* was developed in consultation with the Contract Authority and key justice partners.

Section 2.0 of this report provides a more detailed description of the CSRS. Section 3.0 describes the evaluation design and methodologies and Section 4.0 discusses the challenges encountered in completing the evaluation. Section 5.0 presents case and client data drawn from CSRS and court records. Section 6.0 presents the results of a telephone survey of Key Justice Partners. Section 7.0 provides the results of CSRS Client Survey and Section 8.0 summarizes the key findings and conclusions.

## 2.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE CHILD SUPPORT RECALCULATION SERVICE

Section 2.0 provides a brief history of the development the CSRS, and describes central policies and the mandate of the service. Information in this section was provided by the CSRS or was extracted from the *Child Support Recalculation Service, Policy and Procedures Manual* (Family Justice Services Division, Final Draft, April 1, 2007).

### 2.1 HISTORY OF THE CHILD SUPPORT RECALCULATION SERVICE

In 1997 amendments to the federal Divorce Act and the provincial Family Relations Act brought the Child Support Guidelines into force. The implementation of the guidelines introduced discussions about the possibility of automatically recalculating child support amounts at regular intervals using updated income information.

Section 25.1 of the Divorce Act provides for the setting up of provincial child support services to:

- Assist the Courts in determining child support amounts;
- Recalculate child support amounts at regular intervals based on updated income information, using the child support guidelines

Newfoundland/Labrador was the first jurisdiction in Canada to automatically recalculate child support (2002). This service requires judicial sign-off of the recalculated amount. Since 2005 Manitoba Justice has offered a child support recalculation service to parents who want their child support order recalculated based on updated information. A recalculation service also operates in PEI.

Specific reports related to the implementation of recalculation services in BC were published in BC in 2003 and 2004. In May 2004, a work plan to design and implement the CSRS was developed and work on legislative provisions for the CSRS began. Three year funding for the implementation of CSRS was approved by the federal Department of Justice in February 2005. In 2005 changes were made to the Family Relations Act (s.93.3) to provide authority for the CSRS.

From February to June 2006 the job description for the CSRS Recalculation Officer was developed and finalized, hiring took place and training and material development for the CSRS was finalized. Staffing for the CSRS in BC consists of one Recalculation Officer. The CSRS operates at Kelowna Court

The policies and procedures of the CSRS were developed through consultation with key partners including Court Services (headquarters and Kelowna Court registry staff), staff from the Maintenance Enforcement and Locate Services (MELS), Kelowna Family Justice Centre and the Family Maintenance Program (FMP) at the Ministry of Employment and Economic Assistance (MEIA). FMP has also been involved in providing input on the development of the safety concern protocol, communication forms and an information sharing agreement. The judiciary was involved in the development of the order checklist which is used by judges to record reasons why an order is ineligible for registration in the CSRS.

The regulation bringing s.93.3 into force was signed off by Cabinet to coincide with the start date of the Service – June 1, 2006. Both the Act and the regulations were further amended in June 2007 to incorporate deemed receipt provisions, and to require that judges state in the order which section of the

child support guidelines under which the order is made. (this helps in the determination of specific exemption categories).

BC is the first recalculation service in Canada to make recalculations of orders that are eligible, mandatory.

## 2.2 MANDATE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BC CHILD SUPPORT RECALCULATION SERVICE

The CSRS pilot project annually recalculates child support amounts based on the updated income information of parents. The broad mandate of the service is to promote,

*... the objectives of the Child Support Guidelines by ensuring that child support amounts are based on the updated income of parents.<sup>1</sup>*

The specific objectives of the CSRS are:

- 1) To provide a faster and cheaper process for parents to keep their child support order up-to-date in order to reflect changes in their annual incomes.
- 2) To reduce the number of child support orders that require the amount of child support to be changed by the court.
- 3) To establish a fair standard of support for children that ensures they continue to benefit from the financial means of both parents after separation.
- 4) To ensure that child support obligations are up-to-date and enforceable.

The responsibility for recalculating child support orders is governed by both federal and provincial legislation (Section 2.1). Child Support Recalculation staff also exercise their responsibilities according to the Violence Against Women in Relationships (VAWIR) policy.

## 2.3 ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CSRS

All child support court orders, written agreements with a recalculation clause or written agreements with addendums filed with the Kelowna Provincial Court since June 2006 are eligible for recalculation. Beginning on June 1, 2007 orders from the previous year began to be recalculated. Orders may be excluded from recalculation if they meet specific exemption criteria.

One of the fundamental principles of the CSRS is that the recalculation performed is administrative rather than judicial. In doing the recalculation the Recalculation Officer cannot exercise the discretion that a judge could in making a child support order. This is the reason underlying several of the exemption categories. These are ones in which the child support guidelines indicate that there is discretion in determining the child support amount. The exemption criteria are:

- Child has reached the age of majority;
- The payor's income is over \$150,000.00 and the table amount is not applied;
- The payor is standing in the place of the parent;
- The parents have shared custody;

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<sup>1</sup> BC Ministry of Attorney General, Family Justice Services Division, Child Support Recalculation Service: Policy and Procedure Manual, April, 2007.



- Undue hardship is determined;
- The payor's income is based on a pattern of income;
- The court has imputed the income of the payor;
- All or part of the parent's income used to determine support is from self employment or a partnership;

Cases will also be exempted if the order has been made under the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act and the parent is living outside of BC, because the jurisdiction of the BC Family Relations Act does not extend beyond BC. At present there is no interjurisdictional ability to enforce recalculated child support amounts (unlike enforcement of child support orders, which are subject to reciprocal enforcement agreements).

In the case of the imputed income exemption category, the judge has made a determination regarding the payor's income that is not based solely on the financial evidence that may have been present in court. For example, the judge may determine that the financial information provided is not an accurate representation of the payor's actual income, or, in the absence of any income information being presented, the judge may impute income based on other evidence presented by the parties. In both of these situations the judge has made an income determination based on information that would not be available, in updated form to the CSRS even if the payor were to supply his or her tax returns.

There is one circumstance in which income is imputed and the CSRS can still recalculate – that is where the spouse is exempt from paying income tax. Because the figure arrived at is strictly a matter of recalculation, it doesn't involve the exercise of discretion.

## 2.4 ACTIVITIES OF THE CSRS

Once a child support order or written agreement is registered with the CSRS for recalculation, the CSRS Recalculation Officer contacts the payor and recipient to confirm their registration in the service and advise them of the time frame and activities to meet the requirements of the recalculation.

Parents whose income information is needed for recalculation are requested to submit income information before the recalculation anniversary date. This is defined as one year after the date of the most recent child support order, written agreement or statement of (previous) recalculation.

Approximately ninety-six days prior to the anniversary date the CSRS sends the payor a *Notice of Income Information Request*. After the deemed receipt of the request, payors have 30 calendar days to gather their financial information and submit it to the CSRS. Parents registered in the CSRS can provide income information in one of two ways:

- By authorizing the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to release their annual tax information.
- By providing a complete income tax return and copy of the CRA Notice of Assessments/Re-Assessment from the most recent tax year.

If the payor does not provide up-to-date income information in the specified time period, the CSRS will automatically apply a 10% rate increase to the payor's income as specified in the current child support order or latest recalculation. Regulations to the Family Relations Act require the CSRS to apply the 10% rate increase.

Approximately forty-one days prior to the anniversary date (*Statement of Recalculation Notice of Issue Date*) the CSRS will mail the *Statement of Recalculation* to parents and file a copy with the court. Parents have 30 calendar days during which they can have the *Statement of Recalculation* suspended or dismissed by filing an application to court to vary their child support order. When a parent files an application to change an order, the recalculation process is suspended until the outcome of the recalculation is known. Possible outcomes are:

- The court makes a new child support order. The statement of recalculation does not come into effect. However, the new order will be recalculated in the following year.
- The court dismisses the application or the applicant withdraws the application (statement of recalculation stands and is effective for its original effective date).

### 3.0 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND DESIGN

#### 3.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The central questions addressed in the evaluation, the evaluation methodologies and sources of data were developed and are described in the *CSRS Evaluation Framework, Elements and Plan*. The evaluation framework and plan was developed in consultation with an Advisory Committee consisting of the Manager of the CSRS, the CSRS Project Manager, and several key justice partners. The plan was finalized in October, 2007 and is included in Appendix A.

The broad objectives of the evaluation were:

- To examine the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation of CSRS during its pilot phase in order to identify implementation phase issues, challenges and barriers to effective implementation.
- To assess the range and types of services provided to clients and the characteristics of clients enrolled in the service at a specific point in time.
- To examine the experience of clients with the CSRS and their assessment of the benefits and limitations of the service.
- To examine the level of key justice partner understanding of, and their experience and satisfaction with the service.
- To examine the outcomes of the CSRS in terms of client participation levels, level of recalculation, variations undertaken, and client and key justice partner satisfaction.

#### 3.2 EVALUATION TASKS

The evaluation involved the completion of the following tasks:

- 1) Review of documentation related to the CSRS.
- 2) Discussion and identification of the key evaluation questions.
- 3) Development of evaluation framework.
- 4) Review of all data sources and assessment of the scope, meaning, accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data from all sources (these included paper file documents, the file face sheet, the Access database tables, the Access notes section, the WA and the Court Orders spreadsheet and Time Frame spreadsheet which also included summary notes data on each case).
- 5) Discussion with CSRS staff about the meaning of the data.
- 6) Development of the data collection survey instruments (e.g. Key Partner and Client Survey questionnaires).
- 7) Development of an application to CEIS for access to court records.
- 8) Design of the Client Tracking Data Form.
- 9) Implementation of the Client Survey, client tracking data collection and Key Partner Survey.
- 10) Design of staff interview schedule.
- 11) Implementation of CSRS staff interviews
- 12) Collection of CEIS data and incorporation of CEIS data into the client tracking data.
- 13) Design of data entry and analysis systems (all databases).
- 14) Entry and aggregation of data.
- 15) Data analysis.
- 16) Development of draft and final reports.

### 3.3 METHODOLOGIES

Six methodologies were used in the CSRS pilot phase evaluation. These are described in Table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of CSRS Pilot Phase Evaluation Methodologies**

Methodology		Description
1	Program Policy and Document Review	<p>A review of CSRS policy, data collection and related documents was undertaken in the evaluation. Documents included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access database and spreadsheet formats and records</li> <li>▪ Client-related documents used by the CSRS (twenty-eight types of documents were reviewed)</li> <li>▪ Legislative documents related to recalculation</li> <li>▪ The CSRS Time Frame and case flow</li> <li>▪ The CSRS Policy and Procedures Manual</li> <li>▪ Jurisdictional studies (Family Justice Services Western Final Evaluation (Newfoundland and Labrador), the Support Variation and Recalculation Model Proposal (Saskatchewan) and the Evaluation of the CSRS Progress Report (Manitoba Justice))</li> </ul>
2	CSRS Client and Case Tracking Record	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A case and client tracking recording document was developed based on the data needs defined in the framework and taking into account the capacity of the CSRS data systems.</li> <li>▪ The tracking sheet compiled data on the characteristics of payors and recipients, the status of the order and related client and case characteristics.</li> <li>▪ Data was derived from the CSRS Access database – tables and Notes, the Written Agreements and Court Order Spreadsheet, and the Court Order Monthly Time Frame Spreadsheet (with case outcome and safety alert data). CEIS court record data was also reviewed and incorporated into the findings.</li> <li>▪ The clients identified in the November 6, 2007 list of Registered and Non-Registered Clients provided the baseline population for the client analysis.</li> </ul>
3	Client Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A Client Survey was conducted by telephone with both payors and recipients who had completed their first anniversary after the Child Support Order (CSO).</li> <li>▪ The survey included payors and recipients participating in the CSRS with CSO anniversary dates between June – December 2007.</li> <li>▪ Contact addresses and telephone numbers were provided by the CSRS.</li> <li>▪ The survey addressed client knowledge of the CSRS, identification of its benefits and limitations and level of satisfaction with the intent and quality of the service</li> </ul>
4	CEIS Case Data Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ An application was made to the Judicial Access Policy Working Committee to access court record information in relation to the registered and non-registered cases in the CSRS in order to identify the issues addressed in the current and past orders of clients.</li> <li>▪ Court record information was used to supplement the Client and Case Tracking Component of the evaluation and was collected for all clients entered on CSRS records in November, 2007.</li> </ul>
5	Key Justice Partner Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Interviews with key justice partners were conducted by telephone and explored service implementation effectiveness, perceived benefits and outcomes.</li> <li>▪ Key justice respondents included the Judiciary, Court Registry staff, Family Maintenance Workers, MELS, the private bar, Family Justice Services, and staff from the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program.</li> </ul>
6	Staff Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff interviews were conducted with staff currently involved with the CSRS, the Project Manager and the previous CSRS Project Manager.</li> </ul>

### **3.4 CLIENT CONSENT PROCESS**

A formal client consent process was developed in order to involve clients in the Client Survey component of the evaluation.

Letters explaining the research from both the Ministry of Attorney-General and the consultant were sent to potential respondents prior to attempting to contact them directly by telephone. The letters explained the purpose of the research, the types of issues being discussed and confidentiality provisions. A method for opting out of the evaluation was also provided. No potential respondents opted out of the study.

### **3.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data management and analysis systems were developed for the data collected through the Client and Key Partner surveys and the Case Tracking component(s). The data was entered and aggregated and is presented primarily as frequency counts or ratings. Some non-parametric tests (Fisher's Exact or Chi Square) were used to examine the statistical significance of the association between variables where applicable.

Verbatim data was analyzed by theme in a three-phase analysis.

The staff interview data was aggregated separately with qualitative answers being clustered by theme. This staff interview was not reported separately but is integrated into Section 8.0 (Key Findings and Conclusions).

## 4.0 RESEARCH CHALLENGES

Section 4.0 describes the central issues and challenges that arose in the evaluation.

### 4.1 LIMITED NUMBER OF CLIENTS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CLIENT SURVEY

The pilot phase of the Child Support Recalculation Service began in June 2006. The first set of Child Support Order (CSO) anniversary dates began one year later (from June 2007). Due to the timing of the evaluation, this limited a full assessment of clients' experience with the CSRS Survey to a six-month period (June – December, 2007). This limited the number of clients eligible to participate in the Client Survey. In addition, there was a significant number of clients for whom no correct current contact information was available. This also limited the number of potential clients available to participate in the survey.

### 4.2 IMPACT OF CLIENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE CSRS

CSRS is primarily an administrative program and most client contact is conducted by mail. Just over half the clients in the Client Survey had direct contact with the Recalculation Officer. Some clients had difficulty with recalling aspects of the CSRS. This may be due to a lack of direct contact with the CSRS.

### 4.3 RELIABILITY AND QUALITY OF CSRS DATA

The evaluation took place in the early implementation phase of the CSRS. Some aspects of data design and management were being developed, tested and redesigned during this period and this may have affected the data reliability and accessibility.

Aspects of the data system that presented challenges in the evaluation included having multiple sources for some of the data (Access tables, Access notes, WA and CSO spreadsheets, time frame spreadsheet and case notes, including safety alert data), making it difficult to identify the most accurate, current or best source of data. There was uneven data entry in some of the systems (for example, client safety issues were indicated in some data sources but not in others). There was a no availability of verified aggregate or canned reports and the data to extract tabular data from Access was limited. Most of the case tracking and outcome data was in narrative or note form making it difficult and time-consuming to locate the data and to interpret it in a consistent or comprehensive way.

A number of approaches were used in the evaluation to try to address these issues. A data tracking form was developed in the evaluation planning phase to try to define the best sources of the data and the placement and meaning of data were fields were discussed with the Recalculation Officer. Multiple data sources were cross-checked when inconsistencies were identified and where this was feasible and where time permitted. However, despite these approaches data reliability in some areas remained an issue.

### 4.4 LIMITED EXPERIENCE OF SOME KEY JUSTICE PARTNERS WITH THE CSRS

As noted above the CSRS is in an early phase of implementation. Some key justice partners said they lacked enough direct experience with the service to comment on all aspects of the service. Many also lacked contact with clients using the service.

Child Support Recalculation Service  
Pilot Phase Evaluation

**FINDINGS**

## 5.0 FINDINGS FROM THE CLIENT AND CASE TRACKING RECORD

### 5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE CLIENT AND CASE TRACKING RECORD

The Client and Case Tracking Record component of the CSRS evaluation involved the collection, aggregation and analysis of client and case data derived from CSRS records. The analysis included all records of registered, exempted and declined cases that were entered on program records on November 6, 2007.

The sources of data entered in the Client and Case Tracking Record were the WA and Orders spreadsheet, monthly time frame spreadsheet (with case notes), the Access database (tables and case notes), and CEIS court records. Because many of the Access tables lacked complete data, case notes (Access notes and time frame spreadsheet) were used as the source data on the status and outcomes of the case. Much of this data was in narrative or case note form.

The types of case and client data reviewed, entered and analyzed from these records and reported in this section include:

- Basic client characteristics including client income, number of children and child custody status;
- Reasons for client exemption from the service;
- Characteristics of present and past orders including date and number and types of issues addressed;
- Number of orders that include special expenses;
- Safety issues noted on the cases;
- Data related to timing of the submission of documents;
- The number of recalculations;
- Increases/decreases to order amounts as a result of recalculation;
- The number of applications made to vary existing orders.

Baseline data in this section is reported for all cases processed by the service. CSRS data is reported only for registered cases.

### 5.2 BASELINE DATA: ALL CASES PROCESSED BY THE CSRS

#### 5.2.1 Status of Case

Data was collected on 222 cases, representing 444 people on the CSRS database as of November 6, 2007. Of these, almost half were registered clients of the CSRS. Over a third of the cases on the database were exempted. In all, less than half the cases processed by CSRS became registered cases.



**Table 2: Status of Case**

Status of Case	Number and Percentage of Cases
Registered cases	105 (47%)
Exempted cases	73 (33%)
Declined by CSRS	44 (20%)
TOTAL	222 (100%)

### 5.2.2 Reasons for Exempted and Declined Cases

Table 3 results indicate that over 80% of the cases exempted by a judge were because the payor's income was imputed by a judge. To "impute income" means that the court may impute or calculate income to the payor where evidence of income is lacking or where income is determined to be higher than the amount the payor claims that he or she earns.

Imputed income may apply in cases where:

- The payor is intentionally unemployed or unemployed other than where this is required to meet the needs of the child.
- The payor has failed to provide complete income information.
- The payor unreasonably deducts expenses from his or her income.
- The payor's property is not reasonably utilized to generate income.

Imputed income was also the main reason why cases were exempted by the CSRS. Five percent of the cases were declined because the payor had income from self-employment.

**Table 3: Baseline Population: Reasons for Cases Being Exempted or Declined**

Reasons Cases were Exempted or Declined	Exempted Cases	Declined Cases	All Cases
Child is 19	2 (3%)	3 (7%)	5 (4%)
Payor income is over \$150,000.00	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)
Shared custody arrangement under Section 9	0 (0%)	2 (4%)	2 (2%)
Child support table amount is based on the payor's pattern of income	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)
All or part of the parent's income is from self-employment or partnership	3 (4%)	3 (7%)	6 (5%)
Payor's income is imputed	61 (84%)	14 (32%)	75 (64%)
Child Support Order was made under the Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act	6 (8%)	7 (16%)	13 (11%)
One parent resides outside of British Columbia	0 (0%)	7 (16%)	7 (6%)
Change in parental custody	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	3 (3%)
Order date prior to June 1, 2006	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	3 (3%)
Payor arrears only	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (1%)
TOTAL	73 (100%)	44 (100%)	117 (101%)

### 5.2.3 Type of Order

Most of the cases processed by CSRS up to November 6, 2007, were court orders rather than written agreements.

Table 4: Baseline Population: Type of Order

Type of Order	Registered Cases	Exempted Cases	Declined Cases	Total
Court Order	100 (95%)	73 (100%)	37 (84%)	210 (95%)
Written Agreement	5 (5%)	0 (0%)	7 (16%)	12 (5%)
TOTAL	105 (100%)	73 (100%)	44 (100%)	222 (100%)

### 5.2.4 Date of Court Order

The number of registered cases with orders or written agreements between June to December, 2006 (meaning an anniversary date between June and December 2007) was small. Table 5 indicates the dates of the courts orders and written agreements by month (at the time the data was reviewed).

Table 5: Baseline Population: Date of Court Order by Status of Case

Data of Court Order	Registered	Exempt	Declined	Total
Year 2006				
June	7 (7%)	1 (1%)	7 (16%)	15 (7%)
July	7 (7%)	9 (12%)	6 (14%)	22 (10%)
August	3 (3%)	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	6 (3%)
September	3 (3%)	3 (4%)	6 (14%)	12 (5%)
October	6 (6%)	0 (0%)	3 (7%)	9 (4%)
November	5 (5%)	3 (4%)	8 (18%)	16 (7%)
December	4 (4%)	5 (7%)	3 (7%)	12 (5%)
Year 2007				
January	7 (7%)	4 (5%)	2 (4%)	13 (6%)
February	9 (9%)	9 (12%)	0 (0%)	18 (8%)
March	13 (12%)	4 (5%)	1 (2%)	18 (8%)
April	7 (7%)	8 (11%)	1 (2%)	16 (7%)
May	7 (7%)	5 (7%)	1 (2%)	13 (6%)
June	9 (9%)	6 (8%)	1 (2%)	16 (7%)
July	8 (8%)	6 (8%)	0 (0%)	14 (6%)
August	2 (2%)	3 (4%)	0 (0%)	5 (2%)
September	7 (7%)	7 (10%)	1 (2%)	15 (7%)
October	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (0%)
Other (prior to June 2006)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	1 (0%)
TOTAL	105 (104%)	73 (98%)	44 (99%)	222 (98%)

### 5.3 CLIENT AND CASE CHARACTERISTICS: REGISTERED CLIENTS

This section provides data on the case and client characteristics of the 105 cases registered in the CSRS when data was drawn (November 6, 2007).

#### 5.3.1 Payor Income

A third of the payors in the registered cases had income levels below \$30,000.

Table 6: Payor Income: Registered Cases

Payor Income Categories	Registered
Under \$12,000	1 (1%)
\$12,000 to under \$20,000	16 (15%)
\$20,000 to under \$30,000	18 (17%)
\$30,000 to under \$40,000	30 (29%)
\$40,000 to under \$60,000	23 (22%)
\$60,000 to under \$80,000	5 (5%)
\$80,000 and over	3 (3%)
No data	9 (8%)
TOTAL	105 (100%)

#### 5.3.2 Client Enrollment in MEIA and FMEP

When BC Employment and Assistance clients are eligible for maintenance support they are required to assign their maintenance rights to government. BCEA Family Maintenance workers participate in the recalculation process by providing client information to the CSRS. They also assist clients in obtaining Child Support Orders.

There was a high percentage of BCEA clients on the CSRS caseload. Thirty-six percent (38/105) of the cases involved recipients who had assigned their recipient maintenance rights to BCEA.

Thirty-three percent (35/105) of the cases had FMEP case numbers signifying their registration with FMEP.

#### 5.3.3 Prevalence of Safety Issues

Data derived from CSRS program records indicated that 10% (11/105) of the registered cases had specific safety concerns flagged by CSRS. Most of the data on safety issues was derived from court reviewed data (CEIS) rather than information provided directly from parents.

**Table 7: Source of Safety Data for Registered Cases**

Source of Safety Concern Data	Number and Percentage of Cases
Returned CSRS Confirmation Letter	2 (18%)
Court record (CEIS) data	6 (54%)
MEIA data	1 (9%)
No information on data source	2 (18%)
TOTAL	11 (99%)

Program data identifying client safety issues is not congruent with safety concerns reported by clients in the Client Survey (see Section 7.9). Seven percent (7/105) of the registered cases had data indicating a previous restraining order. All of the cases with previous restraining orders had safety issues flagged by the CSRS.

**5.4 CHILD SUPPORT ORDER CHARACTERISTICS: REGISTERED CASES**

**5.4.1 Amount of Child Support**

Data on the amount of the child support order (by month) for registered cases is presented in Table 8. Over half of the registered cases had monthly child support amounts ranging from \$150.00 to \$499.00.

**Table 8: Amount of Child Support Order**

Amount of Child Support Order	Number and Percent of Cases
No amount specified	4 (4%)
Up to \$149.00	9 (9%)
\$150 - \$299	29 (28%)
\$300 - \$499	27 (26%)
\$500 - \$699	22 (21%)
\$700 - \$899	8 (8%)
\$900 - \$1,199	4 (4%)
\$1,200 - \$1,499	0 (0%)
\$1,500 and over	2 (2%)
TOTAL	105 (102%)

**5.4.2 Special Expenses Related to the Order**

Fifteen percent (16/105) of the orders of registered clients had special expenses attached to them. In 50% of these (8/16) the amount of the special expenses was a percentage and a specific dollar amount could not be determined.

Table 9: Amounts of Special Expenses

Level of Special Expenses	Number and Percentage
Percentage-based amount	8 (50%)
\$1 - \$99	2 (12%)
\$100 - \$199	1 (6%)
\$200 - \$399	1 (6%)
Over \$1,000	1 (6%)
No data	3 (19%)
TOTAL	16 (99%)

#### 5.4.3 Family Issues Addressed in Current Orders

Court record (CEIS) data was used to identify the types of family issues addressed on the child support orders. The court records provided a broad description of issues addressed in the orders but there was no method of verifying the accuracy or comprehensiveness of this data.

The issues addressed in the five written agreements is not described in CEIS, so the analysis involved only the one hundred registered cases with court orders. Results indicate that 74% (74/100) of the orders that were registered in CSRS involved child maintenance only.

Table 10: Issues Addressed in Current CSRS Orders

Issues Addressed	Number and Percentage of Cases
Child support/maintenance only	74 (74%)
Child support and access	8 (8%)
Child support, custody and access	2 (2%)
Child support, custody and guardianship	1 (1%)
Child support, custody, access and guardianship	11 (11%)
Other	2 (2%)
No data	2 (2%)
TOTAL	100 (100%)

## 5.5 HISTORY OF PREVIOUS ORDERS

### 5.5.1 Number of Issues addressed in Previous Orders

Fifty-one percent (51/100) of the registered cases with court orders had previous orders filed at the BC provincial Family Court. There was data on whether clients with written agreements had previous written agreements or orders.

More than 50% of the clients who had previous orders had more than one previous order (Table 11).

**Table 11: Number of Previous Orders of Clients**

Number of Previous Orders	Number and Percentage of Cases
One	24 (47%)
Two	13 (25%)
Three	5 (10%)
Four	3 (6%)
Five	3 (6%)
Six	1 (2%)
Seven	1 (2%)
Eight	1 (2%)
TOTAL	51 (100%)

### 5.5.2 Issues Addressed in Previous Orders

Table 12 describes the issues addressed in previous orders as gathered from court records.

**Table 12: Issues Addressed in Previous Orders of Registered Clients**

Issues Addressed	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Child support only	23 (45%)	9 (33%)	5 (36%)	5 (56%)	2 (33%)	1 (33%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Access only	7 (14%)	6 (22%)	3 (21%)	3 (33%)	2 (33%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)
Custody, access and guardianship	5 (10%)	2 (7%)	1 (7%)	1 (11%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Child support, custody, access and guardianship	5 (10%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Custody and access	2 (4%)	3 (11%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Child support and access	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Child support and guardianship	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Child support, custody and access	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Child support, access and guardianship	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Custody and guardianship	1 (2%)	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (100%)
Child support and custody	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Custody only	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (17%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Other	2 (4%)	2 (7%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51 (101%)</b>	<b>27 (98%)</b>	<b>14 (99%)</b>	<b>9 (100%)</b>	<b>6 (100%)</b>	<b>3 (100%)</b>	<b>2 (100%)</b>	<b>1 (100%)</b>

**5.6 RECALCULATION STATUS AND OUTCOMES OF CASES**

**5.6.1 Number of Cases Undergoing the CSRS Recalculation Process**

Thirty-one of the registered cases in the database tracked in the evaluation were eligible for recalculation with order dates between June and December 2007. Of these thirty-one cases, 87% (27/31) underwent a complete recalculation process.

In most of the cases that underwent a recalculation process, income changes resulted from the 10% automatic recalculation.

**Table 13: Source of Data for the Recalculation Process**

Source of Income Data	Number and Percentage of Cases
Payor submitted income information directly	1 (4%)
CRA information provided	9 (33%)
Amount determined through 10% automatic recalculation	17 (63%)
TOTAL	27 (100%)

**5.6.2 Outcomes of Recalculation**

Data indicated that among the 31 cases eligible for recalculation, 87% (27/31) underwent a recalculation process and 81% (25/31) had a recalculation come into effect (93% of the cases that had a recalculation process completed). The reasons for the recalculations not being performed or not taking effect in six cases are described in Table 14.

**Table 14: Reasons Why Cases Were Not Recalculated or Why Recalculation did Not Come into Effect**

Reason	Number and Percentage
Reasons why eligible cases were not recalculated	
Income not stated in the order	2 (33%)
Application to vary filed before Request for Income Information sent	1 (17%)
Application to vary filed before Statement of Recalculation sent	1 (17%)
Reason that recalculation amount has not come into effect	
Application to vary filed during Statement of Recalculation Notification period	1 (17%)
Application to vary filed before the Statement of Recalculation Came into Effect	1 (17%)
TOTAL	6 (101%)

**5.6.3 Income Changes Resulting from Recalculations**

Table 15 describes the income changes for twenty-five recalculated cases. In one case no income change was applied. In 76% of the cases the data indicated an increase in payments.



**Table 15: Amount of Income Change Resulting from Applied Recalculation**

Amount	Number of Cases with Increase	Number of Cases with Decrease	No Change
\$1.00 - \$24.00	2	2	0
\$25.00 - \$49.00	11	2	0
\$50.00 - \$99.00	4	1	0
\$100.00 - \$199.00	2	0	0
No change	0	0	1
TOTALS (25) (100%)	19 (76%)	5 (20%)	1(4%)

**5.7 APPLICATIONS TO VARY THE CHILD SUPPORT ORDER**

Applications to vary the child support order were made by 13% (4/31) of the registered clients. In three of the four cases the application to vary was made by the payor; in one case it was made by the recipient.

Table 16 identifies the time period when the applications to vary were made.

**Table 16: Time Period When Applications to Vary Made**

Period when Application to Vary the Order was Made	Number
In the period between the date of registration and the Request for Income Information	1
In the period from the date of the Request for Income Information to the Statement of Recalculation Notice Issue Date	1
During the Statement of Recalculation Notification Period	1
In the period after the deemed receipt and before the effective date	1
TOTAL REPORTING	4

At the time the data was analyzed three of the applications to vary were pending and in one case a new child support order had been made.

## 5.8 CSRS SERVICE DELIVERY DATA

### 5.8.1 Meeting of Task/Activity Guidelines

The CSRS is governed by specific activities and time frame requirements related to the dates of the client's court order, point of CSRS registration and the order anniversary date. Key activity dates of the CSRS include the following.

- 1) Approximately ninety-six days prior to the anniversary date the CSRS Recalculation Officer mails the Request for Income Information to parents.
- 2) Parents have 30 calendar days from the deemed receipt date to gather their financial information and submit it to the CSRS.
- 3) Approximately forty-one days prior to the anniversary date, the CSRS sends the Statement of Recalculation to the parents and files a copy with the court (Statement of Recalculation Issue Date).
- 4) Approximately thirty-one days prior to the anniversary date is deemed the first day of the notification period. Parents have 30 calendar days during which they can have the Statement of Recalculation suspended or dismissed by filing an application to court to change the order.
- 5) Statement of Recalculation Effective Date – calculated approximately one year after the order anniversary date. This is when the recalculated payment amount comes into effect.

Assessing the dates when the diverse activities of the program were completed was complex and information was available primarily in case note form which made it difficult to extract and analyze. The evaluation reviewed the completed date of the recalculation process against the expected data (one year anniversary). Results of this analysis concluded that the CSRS processed cases efficiently within expected time frames in all but one case (which was completed in two month after the anniversary date. Case notes indicated that this was because of delays in the court order documents being sent to the CSRS.

### 5.8.2 CSRS Contact with Payors and Search Activities

CSRS records indicate that direct telephone contact was made with 17% (18/105) of the registered payors while 71% (75/105) had no direct contact.

Payor location searches were undertaken in relation to 42% (44/105) of the registered cases. In most cases the payor search was undertaken by Maintenance Enforcement and Locate Services (MELS). The searches were successful in establishing the payor's location in 77% of the cases where a search was undertaken.

Table 17: Search Agencies and Results

Name of Search Agency	Number and Percentage of Cases	Cases where Search Successful
Search undertaken by MELS	23 (52%)	20 (87%)
Search undertaken by CSRS	19 (43%)	12 (63%)
Search undertaken by MEI	2 (4%)	2 (100%)
TOTAL	44 (99%)	34

## 6.0 FINDINGS FROM THE KEY JUSTICE PARTNER SURVEY

### 6.1 DESCRIPTION OF THIS METHODOLOGY

The CSRS evaluation included a survey of key justice partners. Key justice partners included respondents in the family justice system who have policy, service or administrative contact with the CSRS. The survey, which was conducted by telephone, explored key justice partner experience with and assessment of the CSRS during its pilot implementation phase. Key justice partners were asked to provide their views on:

- The effectiveness of the pilot phase implementation;
- Key partner knowledge of and involvement in the CSRS;
- Issues related to client response and uptake;
- The timeliness and efficiency of the service;
- Issues arising from exemption polices and categories;
- Perceived benefits of the service to recipients, payors, children, key justice partners and the family justice system;
- The relationship of key partners with the CSRS.

The CSRS Evaluation Advisory Committee identified twenty-five key partners as potential participants in the evaluation. Evaluation interviews were completed with 80% (20/25) of these respondents. Among those who were not interviewed:

- One was a Court Registry person in a new position who did not feel she could contribute to the study.
- Two were advice lawyers who had no time to participate.
- Two respondents said that they would fax completed questionnaires but did not submit the questionnaires despite being reminded.

The CSRS is a relatively new service with the first cases reaching their recalculation anniversary dates in June 2007. In some cases key justice partners felt that they could not comment on aspects of the program due to the relatively short duration of the implementation phase, their limited involvement with the service and their level of involvement with clients receiving services. In addition, the specialized role or mandate of some respondents limited the degree of contact with the CSRS or with clients of the service.

### 6.2 ROLE OF KEY JUSTICE PARTNERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE EVALUATION

The key justice partners who participated in the evaluation represented a wide range of roles and mandates within the family justice system. They included representatives from FMEP, FMP, the Court Registry, MELS, the Judiciary, the Kelowna Family Justice Centre and the private bar.

**Table 18: Role of Key Justice Partners who Participated in the Evaluation**

Organization	Number and Percentage
Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP)	4 (20%)
Family Maintenance Program (FMP)	3 (15%)
Maintenance, Enforcement and Locate Services (MELS)	1 (5%)
Judiciary	2 (10%)
Ministry of Attorney General	2 (10%)
Advice lawyer/Duty Counsel	2 (10%)
Family Justice Centre staff	3 (15%)
Court Registry/Court Services	3 (15%)
TOTAL	20 (100%)

Sixty percent (12/20) of the key justice respondents described themselves as having direct contact with clients receiving services from the CSRS. Thirty percent (6/20) said that they had a policy or administrative relationships with the service and two were members of the judiciary, who described themselves as having limited contact with clients and the service.

### 6.3 KEY JUSTICE PARTNER KNOWLEDGE OF THE CSRS

Key justice partners were asked whether they felt well informed about the CSRS prior to or at the beginning of the implementation of the pilot phase. This question used four descriptors of the CSRS (Table 19) to help assess respondent awareness.

Most key justice partners felt quite or very well informed about major aspects of the service. Twenty to thirty percent of the respondents identified gaps in their knowledge. Some respondents felt that they lacked sufficient knowledge of the CSRS in key policy areas such the automatic 10% recalculation to the payor's income if the payor does not submit current financial information. Only 53% of the respondents felt that they were well informed about this policy.

Table 19: Key Justice Partner Knowledge of the CSRS

Area of Knowledge	Had no information on this topic	Felt somewhat informed but lacked significant knowledge	Felt quite well informed but there were a few gaps in my knowledge	Felt very well informed in this area	Total Reporting
The overall purpose of the CSRS services	0 (0%)	4 (21%)	3 (16%)	12 (63%)	19 (100%)
The requirement for payors to submit financial information on an annual basis	2 (11%)	4 (21%)	1 (5%)	12 (63%)	19 (100%)
The categories of and reasons for exemptions from the CSRS	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	2 (11%)	11 (58%)	19 (100%)
An automatic 10% increase to be applied to the payor's income amount if the payor does not submit financial information to the CSRS	1 (5%)	5 (26%)	3 (16%)	10 (53%)	19 (100%)

Because of the small size of the subgroups, it was not possible to provide a definitive picture of the level of awareness of respondents according to their roles or mandate. In general, the private bar described more information gaps than respondents from other subgroups. FMEP staff appeared to lack complete information about the exemption categories and the judiciary described themselves as having limited information about the automatic 10% increase to the payor's income if income information was not submitted. The Family Maintenance Program respondents said that they also lacked complete information in this area. Some Court Registry staff said that they lacked information about CSRS requirements for the payor to submit income on an annual basis.

These results, while limited, suggest that some of the most important aspects of the CSRS are not completely understood by justice partners and that some "key messages" may need to be reinforced despite past communication strategies undertaken by CSRS.

Thirty-five percent (6/17) of the respondents who addressed this question also stated that they would like other information about the CSRS that is relevant to their work or mandate. Key issues identified by key justice partners included:

- The status of the CSRS at the present time, its plans for the future or for expansion.
- Information about what happens to recalculations when one party in the CSRS leaves the province.
- What all the specific exemption categories are.
- How to get specific information about the CSRS and who to contact to get this information.
- Once an order has been sent to the CSRS how to inform the court or CSRS about cases that should be exempted.
- How to facilitate a legal change of a recalculation for a client.

These concerns were noted by Court Registry staff, FMEP, the Child Support Officer at the Family Justice Centre and the FMP.

#### 6.4 ISSUES AND QUESTIONS RELATED TO EXEMPTION CATEGORIES

Most of the key justice partners said that they had a good understanding of the polices that exempted clients from being registered in the CSRS. A third of the key respondents expressed concerns that the exemption categories removed a significant number of clients from being registered in the CSRS. Concerns raised by key justice partners about the exemption categories included the following:<sup>2</sup>

- That imputed income or income from self employment be excluded from the list of exemptions.
- In terms of an additional issue related to exemption categories, some respondents suggested that interim orders not be processed by CSRS (since they may be more likely to lead to an exemption).
- That the exemptions falling under the Interjurisdictional Support Orders category not be excluded (respondents suggested that this can be confusing to clients).
- That another exemption category be added to cover cases where there is extreme violence. Current definitions were described by some respondents as not sufficiently covering this group.
- That exemption categories such as shared custody of parents and the age of the children be reviewed with the possibility of removing these from the exemption categories.

There was no overall consensus among the respondents on any of these concerns.

In most cases key justice partners who had direct contact with clients said that most of their clients appeared to understand the exemption categories. Of the fourteen respondents (including the judiciary) who had some contact with clients, 29% (4/14) said that their clients sometimes had questions about exemption categories, 43% (6/14) said these questions were rare, 21% (3/14) said questions about exemptions were never asked and one respondent had no comment.

When asked if they thought clients who were exempted from registration in the CSRS appeared to understand the reasons for their exemption, most respondents (8/14) were unable to comment. Four respondents said that they thought clients had a good understanding of the categories while only two said that clients appeared to lack understanding.

These results suggest that key justice partners, have limited information about whether the clients they are associated with have an understanding of the CSRS exemption criteria.

#### 6.5 KEY PARTNER ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE CSRS

Key justice partners were asked to assess the quality of the services provided by the CSRS using a 7-point rating scale (1 = poor quality of service, 7 = excellent quality of service). Service elements such as timeliness, staff knowledge, and efficiency were rated.

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<sup>2</sup> Exemption categories are determined by legislation and there may be limited capacity to change the categories.

Not all elements could be rated by key partners because of their limited contact with clients registered in the service.

Among the CSRS quality elements that were rated, all were rated highly. Assessment of the responsiveness of CSRS staff to client concerns was given a high positive rating of 6.3/7.0. No concerns related to the quality of services provided by the CSRS to clients were identified by key justice partners.

**Table 20: Key Justice Partner Ratings of the Quality of Service**

	Aspects of Service	Number who Rated	Low Rating	Moderate Rating	High Rating	Average Rating
1	Timeliness of CSRS staff in response to client concerns	3	0	1	2	6.3
2	Skills and expertise of CSRS staff	5	0	1	4	6.0
3	Efficiency of staff in meeting required time frame deadlines	6	0	2	4	6.0
4	Responsiveness of staff in addressing key partner concerns	11	0	3	8	6.3

**6.6 OTHER IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AFFECTING THE PILOT PHASE**

Key justice partners were asked to identify other aspects of the CSRS’s policies, structure or practices that they felt had affected the pilot implementation phase. Issues raised by respondents were broad and none related to concerns about the quality of the CSRS or the benefits of the service to clients.

Four respondents were concerned that current exemption policies were eliminating too many potential clients and limiting the scope of the service.

Two respondents noted a lack of involvement of the judiciary in the CSRS; they felt that the service was not always explained in detail to parents by the judiciary. Another issue that was noted was the need to clarify the differing roles of FMEP and CSRS and to support increased communication between the two agencies. A complete list of the issues identified by respondents is presented in Table 21. There was no overall consensus on these comments.

Table 21: Implementation Issues Identified by Key Partners

Issues Identified by Key Partners	Number of Respondents Reporting
Review, reduce or change the number and type of exemption categories	4
The need for increased communication, policy and information exchange between FMEP and CSRS	2
Provide further information to judges about the CSRS	2
Improve payor search method protocols between CSRS and FMEP (is a workload issue for FMEP)	2
Policy regarding clients who leave the province is unclear	1
Remove interim orders from the CSRS	1
Include orders from other jurisdictions	1
Ratify the Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between CSRS and FMP (the delay in ratification was seen to have negatively affected implementation)	1
Make CSRS involvement a requirement in written agreements	1
Clarify rules of CSRS within FMEP (should recalculations apply to payors with arrears?)	1
Provide further information to lawyers about the CSRS	1
Consider having parties complete a form clarifying they are in the CSRS at the point of registration	1
Improve access to better and more current tax information	1
Improve the process for deregistering orders	1

### 6.7 KEY PARTNER ASSESSMENT OF RECIPIENT AND PAYOR RESPONSE TO REGISTRATION IN THE CSRS

Key justice partners were asked to assess recipient and payor response to their automatic registration in the CSRS. The view of key justice partners was that most recipients were perceived as being generally positive about the service; compared to only 21% of the payors.

Table 22: Recipient and Payor Response to Automatic Registration in CSRS

CSRS Participant Type	Number of Key Justice Respondents Reporting	Generally Negative	Neutral	Somewhat or Very Positive
Recipients	13 (100%)	0 (0%)	4 (31%)	9 (69%)
Payors	14 (100%)	6 (43%)	5 (36%)	3 (21%)



## 6.8 ISSUES RELATED TO WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

Of the 105 cases registered in the CSRS that were reviewed in the evaluation, only a small number (5% or 5/105) involved written agreements. The evaluation explored some of the reasons for the low number of written agreements with Family Justice Counsellors.

All of the Kelowna Family Justice Centre staff participating in the evaluation said that they were quite or fully knowledgeable about the ways of involving clients with written agreements in the CSRS. When asked about the small number of written agreements being filed out the Kelowna Family Court the staff cited payor resistance to the CSRS and the unwillingness of payors to voluntarily "opt in" to the service. The high level of payors who are self employed and would therefore be exempt was another factor cited by the Family Justice Centre respondents. It was not clear how this issue would affect the submission of written agreements to the court.

When asked to estimate how many FJC clients voluntarily update their child support agreements to keep up-to-date with the payor's income none of the FJC respondents could be precise. Estimates ranged from 10% or 20% of their caseloads to "quite a few." This issue requires further exploration in order to accurately establish the degree to which this is undertaken voluntarily by clients.

## 6.9 BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CSRS AS PERCEIVED BY KEY JUSTICE PARTNERS

### 6.9.1 Benefits of the CSRS for Recipients, Payors and Children

Key justice partner respondents were asked to identify the benefits of the CSRS to payors, recipients, children, family justice agencies and for the family justice system in general. Not all respondents felt they were able to respond to this question because of the limited duration of the pilot implementation phase.

Key justice partners identified the major benefit of the CSRS to recipients as, 1) giving them the opportunity to participate in an out-of-court process, and 2) being able to be involved in a predictable and appropriate process that updates child support amounts.

*Child support will always be the amount (recipients are) entitled to . . . Recipients don't have to go to court to get adjustments. (The CSRS) Helps normalize the issue in the relationship – produces less tension regarding child support.*

*(The CSRS) results in realistic order amounts, less need to go to court, (it is) great for those not informed of the payor's income changes.*

Not having to return to court was also a major benefit identified by key justice partners accruing to payors.

One respondent noted that the 10% automatic recalculation may have a benefit for payors who have income increases larger than this amount.

For children the two most important benefits of CSRS were considered to be the guarantee of regular, updated and more accurate maintenance support for children and the reduction of conflict, tension and anxiety between the parents.

*(The CSRS) ensure(s) child support awards are updated regularly and that children get the deserved amount. Psychologically it reduces tension between parents, which is better for the child.*

The benefits of CSRS identified by key justice partners are presented in Table 23. Twenty respondents responded in each category

**Table 23: Benefits of the CSRS for Recipients, Payors and Children**

Perceived Benefits of CSRS	For Recipients	For Payors	For Children
The CSRS does not require a return to court	14 (70%)	11 (55%)	0 (0%)
The CSRS ensures that the child support amount is appropriate and accurate	7 (35%)	9 (45%)	18 (90%)
The CSRS removes the burden from the recipient and lessens the potential for conflict between parents	7 (35%)	4 (20%)	0 (0%)
Automatic process is more predictable	4 (20%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
Less potential for the payor to accumulate arrears	0 (0%)	3 (15%)	0 (0%)
10% automatic recalculation may benefit payors who have earned more	0 (0%)	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
Reduces conflict and anxiety in the parent's in relationship	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	9 (45%)
Special expenses can be considered	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
Needs of children given precedence	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (5%)

**6.9.2 Benefits Perceived for Family Justice Agencies and the Family Justice System**

Thirteen respondents identified benefits of the CSRS to agencies that address family justice issues. Four respondents (20% of the total) said that they could not yet identify benefits of the CSRS to their agencies because of the service had just recently been implemented.

*Hopefully we will see a reduction in adjustment claim(s), but have not seen yet.*

Current or potential benefits noted by at least three respondents included:

- The efficiency and cost benefits of the CSRS – the service is perceived by key justice partners as the most efficient way of keeping child support up-to-date with minimal cost.
- The benefit to FMEP in offering another option for addressing child support. Keeping child support amounts current may lead to less enforcement required for the tracking of arrears.
- Staff time saved – less time may be required to track payors down; less time may be required in court to handle applications to vary child support.
- Key partners suggested that the CSRS may create more satisfaction with different components of the justice system by the parties involved in a child support matter. This may lead to an increased level of confidence in the family justice system.

Eighteen key justice partners had comments on the benefits of the CSRS for the larger family justice and court system. Seventy-eight percent (14/18) said that the major benefit was a reduction in court time needed to address child support. A third of the respondents (6/18) said the CSRS could lead to perceptions that the court system is more fair and neutral. This may lead to a more favourable view of the family justice system in general.

*(The CSRS may lead to) greater efficiency, less use of expensive court time. Clients (may) view (the) system in a more favourable way because it is less confrontational and fairer.*

### **6.9.3 Concerns about the CSRS Related to Recipients, Payors and Children**

The most frequent concern described in relation to recipients was that the CSRS might increase tension between the parents or in the family or increase a sense of powerlessness on the part of the recipient.

*Because it is automatic and administrative, (it) could cause feelings of powerlessness to change, or create negative feelings and frustrations.*

This concern was not borne out by the results from the Client Survey. For example, clients who had safety concerns felt registration in CSRS had improved their sense of safety.

Among payors, there were concerns that the initiative could be seen as punitive, unfair or confusing and that it might override private arrangements made between the parents. However, only 15% of the clients said that the CSRS had a negative effect on the relationship between the parents in terms of discussions about child support issues (most said it had a positive or neutral impact).

The fact that the CSRS uses income from the last tax return for the first recalculation and is therefore often outdated was also noted.

*(Payors) may have to pay higher even when income drops because the CSRS is based on (income information from) a previous year.*

Over half of the respondents identified no concerns related to children. However, several noted that the program might increase tension in the family or that the amount of child support could fluctuate or decrease more dramatically. Again this concern does not seem to be borne out by results from the Client Survey which indicates that recipients with safety concerns feel safer as a result of registration in CSRS. In addition 85% of the clients said that registration in the CSRS had had no impact or a positive impact on parental discussions about child support issues.

Time delays in doing the recalculations were also mentioned as possibly affecting children.

Table 24 describes the concerns as expressed by the key justice partners

**Table 24: Concerns Raised About the CSRS in Relation to Recipients, Payors and Children**

Perceived Limitations of the CSRS	For Recipients (N=13)	For Payors (N=10)	For Children (N=7)
May increase tension between parents	5 (31%)	0 (0%)	4 (29%)
May be unfair and punitive to payors	0 (0%)	5 (36%)	0 (0%)
Automatic nature of CSRS may increase the powerlessness of recipients	3 (19%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)
Could override private arrangements between payors and recipients	2 (12%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)
Service may be confusing and difficult to understand	0 (0%)	2 (14%)	0 (0%)
Only 10% when payor's income could be higher	2 (12%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)
Child support can decrease or fluctuate	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	2 (14%)
Too many exemptions – not enough coverage by CSRS	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Payor's hidden income may not be taken into account	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Income information may be out of date	1 (6%)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)
No concerns identified	3 (19%)	4 (29%)	7 (50%)

**6.9.4 Limitations of the CSRS in Relation to Family Justice Agencies and the Court System**

Three limitations of the service related to key partner agencies and the family justice system were identified by respondents, primarily from the perspective of the FMEP and FMP. Only 45% (9/20) of the key justice partners identified any limitations of the CSRS in relation to this area:

In relation to FMEP an increased workload related to the interpretation of cases and administrative costs was noted. For example, some respondents noted that some FMEP clients may have problems differentiating between CSRS and FMEP.

*It is hard for clients to separate who is FMEP and CSRS. (There is a ) problem keeping in touch with them – orders are not marked as registered in CSRS.*

*If payor is earning less now, FMEP not sure how to advise payor – wait for recalculation or go to court now.*

Another issue was the issue of applicability, which is somewhat narrow because CSRS is seen to apply to cases at only one court, to Provincial court cases and to new orders. A higher use of the search process (MELS) by CSRS was described by some respondents as having workload implications although this was not explored in detail.

The BC Family Maintenance Program within the Ministry of Employment and Income Assistance is involved in the case files of recipients who are receiving income assistance while enrolled in CSRS. When clients are receiving assistance they are required to assign their maintenance rights to the government. Family

Maintenance Program workers assist income assistance recipients to obtain court orders, communicate safety issues and may assist with location searches. Acting on behalf of MEIA clients, Family Maintenance Workers participate in the recalculation process by providing necessary client information to the CSRS. When child support is calculated, FMP workers are responsible for reviewing the recalculated amount. If they disagree with the recalculated amount they may file an application to change the CSO during the 30-day notification period. Over a third (37% or 82/222) of CSRS recipients who were tracked in the CSRS database were receiving benefits at the time of the evaluation.

Data from the case tracking component of the evaluation indicated that only one case had safety information identified through MEIA data. An Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between CSRS and MEIA could help facilitate the transfer of client safety information between MEIA and CSRS. The ISA has been developed but is waiting final approval from MEIA.

FMP staff participating in the key justice partner survey were divided on whether the protocols for sharing information on client safety issues were being effectively followed. Of the three respondents who addressed this question, two respondents felt that the protocols had been effective and non-problematic. One respondent said that FMP had not received information from CSRS on cases involving violence.

All of the FMP respondents participating in the survey stated that client involvement in the CSRS had increased their workload. The following issues were cited as requiring significant time on the part of FMP staff:

- The amount of paperwork involved to address cases registered in CSRS. FMP described eight types of documentation the CSRS had generated for staff to review, process or send to other parties.
- Staff time required to explain the CSRS to clients.
- Obtaining and reading copies of all correspondence.
- Tracking exemptions and exclusions.
- Processing court documents.

The workload pressures were exacerbated by internal conditions at the Family Maintenance Program at the time. There was a decrease in FMP staff that took place during the CSRS Pilot Implementation Phase.

Nine respondents described potential family justice system limitations of the CSRS that might arise in relation to the family justice system. Three of these respondents noted that the impact of CSRS on the court could *increase* court time if recalculation amounts are challenged in the future. This was not seen as a current issue but one that could possibly arise and that should be tracked in the future.

Two respondents who felt that the CSRS should be expanded said that the service was at present not equitable as it is only available at the Kelowna Court. Two other respondents said that the mandatory (not voluntary) approach could be experienced as disempowering and that this factor might make clients more unresponsive or expressed no concerns about the mandatory nature of the service.

**6.9.5 Key Justice Partners assessment of the Effectiveness and Impact of the CSRS**

A majority of the key justice partners assessed the CSRS as being quite or highly effective. There was a higher rate of positive assessment among respondents who had direct contact with clients although these differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 25: Key Partner Assessment of the Effectiveness of the CSRS**

N=19

Assessment	Type of Respondent		Total
	Has Direct Contact with Clients	No Direct Contact with Clients	
CSRS is very or quite effective	8 (57%)	3 (50%)	11 (55%)
CSRS is somewhat or not very effective	6 (43%)	3 (50%)	9 (45%)
TOTAL	14 (100%)	6 (100%)	20 (100%)

Nine respondents had suggestions on how to improve the CSRS to make it more effective. The suggestions fell into four categories:

- To expand the CSRS to more court locations in BC. In a supplementary question 70% of the respondents (14/20) strongly recommended that the CSRS be expanded to include other court sites in BC.
- To expand awareness about the specific aspects of the CSRS to clients and key partners.
- To reduce the number of exemption categories to make the CSRS broader in scope. One respondent also recommended a voluntary opt-in choice for parents.
- To reduce the paperwork required by, and generated by, the program to make it more streamlined.

A primary goal of the CSRS is to provide an out-of-court method for keeping child support payments up-to-date. Almost 70% of the key justice partners believe that the CSRS is playing a significant role in keeping child support payments up-to-date. Most said that it was “unlikely” that child support would be kept up-to-date without the CSRS. Only 10% said that the CSRS is likely having no impact on this issue.

**Table 26: Likelihood that CSOs would be Kept Up-To-Date without the CSRS**

Likelihood that CSO Amounts Would be Kept Up-to-Date Without the CSRS	Number and Percentage
Likely or very likely	2 (10%)
Uncertain	4 (21%)
Not Likely	13 (68%)
TOTAL	19 (99%)

### 6.9.6 Key Partner Recommendations about Service Expansion

A majority of key justice partners (70% or 14/20) strongly recommended that the CSRS be expanded to other court sites throughout the province.

Table 27: Key Partner Recommendations to Expand the CSRS

Type of Recommendation	Number and Percentage
Strongly recommend	14 (70%)
Recommend to some degree	1 (5%)
Uncertain	5 (20%)

Three of the five respondents who were uncertain about the expansion expressed the view that it was too soon in the implementation phase to consider expansion.

## 7.0 FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF CSRS REGISTERED CLIENTS

### 7.1 GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE SURVEY

A telephone survey was conducted with clients registered with the CSRS who had a child support order that was dated between June and December 2006. Seventy-two clients were identified as potential participants for this component of the evaluation. This group represented thirty-six cases with both recipients and payors included. Interviews were successfully completed with 56% (40/72) of the eligible group.

The telephone survey addressed questions related to client knowledge of the CSRS, perceived benefits of the service and an assessment of service quality. Potential respondents were initially contacted about the evaluation through letters sent by the Ministry of Attorney General and the Director of the evaluation. These letters described the purpose and general contents of the survey and provided a mechanism to opt out of the evaluation. None of the potential research participants who were sent letters used this opt-out provision.

The Client Survey was based on the experiences and opinions of clients, some of whom had limited experience or did not have direct personal contact with the service. Data derived from the Client Survey was not cross-checked with service tracking data.

### 7.2 CLIENT SURVEY PARTICIPATION RATES

#### 7.2.1 Reasons for Non-Contact

Client Survey completion rates were significantly affected by the lack of accurate and current contact information for payors and recipients available through the CSRS. Interviews were successfully completed with 56% (40/72) of the eligible group of clients. Most of the non-contacts were due to a lack of phone numbers, incorrect or not in service (NIS) numbers. In four cases clients had moved without leaving forwarding contact information.

**Table 28: Client Survey Participation Rates**

Interview Status	Number and Percentage
Completed	40 (56%)
Not completed	32 (44%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ No phone number, NIS, wrong #</li> <li>▪ Moved – no forwarding information</li> <li>▪ No response to contact/messages</li> <li>▪ Declined interview</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: right;">19 (26%)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4 (6%)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">4 (6%)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">5 (7%)</p>
TOTAL	72 (100%)

Five percent of the clients declined to participate in the telephone survey. The reasons provided by clients for declining to be involved in the evaluation interview were:



- The Child Support Order of the payor had been rescinded;
- The payor did not want to participate as child support was being handled by a lawyer;
- No reason provided;
- Too busy;
- The custody arrangement with the other parent had changed.

**7.2.2 Participant Role and CSO Anniversary Date**

More recipients (70% or 28/40) than payors (30% or 12/40) participated in the Client Survey. All were registered in the CSRS at the time the sample was selected from the registered cases (October 2006) with child support order anniversary dates between June and December 2007. Theoretically this time frame meant that all had reached their CSRS first anniversary date at the time the interviews were conducted (interviews were conducted between December 2007 and January 2008). Eighty percent of these respondents said that their child support had been recalculated.

**7.3 CLIENT INTRODUCTION TO THE CSRS AND RESPONSE TO REGISTRATION PACKAGE**

Clients found out that they were registered in the CSRS in a variety of ways. Just over half said that they initially found out that they were registered through receiving a letter in the mail from the CSRS (the CSRS registration and welcome package).

There were no significant differences between the payors and the recipients in how they learned about the CSRS.

**Table 29: Client’s Source of Initial Information about Registration in the CSRS**

Source of Initial Information about the CSRS	Number and Percentage		
	Recipient	Payor	Total
Judge	4 (14%)	1 (8%)	5 (13%)
Court Registry – Kelowna Court	1 (4%)	1 (8%)	2 (5%)
Family Maintenance Program	2 (7%)	1 (8%)	3 (8%)
CSRS Letter (welcome letter and information)	14 (50%)	7 (58%)	21 (53%)
Family Justice Counsellor	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (3%)
Child Support Officer	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (3%)
Client’s Lawyer	4 (14%)	1 (8%)	5 (13%)
Other	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	2 (5%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>28 (100%)</b>	<b>12 (98%)</b>	<b>40 (103%)</b>

Despite having different sources of initial information about the CSRS, 85% (34/40) of the clients recalled receiving the CSRS registration package in the mail.

Most of the clients (71% or 24/34) said that the level of information that they received in the registration package was sufficient in helping them understand the overall purpose of the CSRS; 29% (10/34) identified some or significant gaps in the information provided (6 respondents did not respond to this question).

There was no consensus on the areas where clients would have liked more detailed information, however, the following areas were identified by more than two respondents.

- Some clients wanted more specific information about the purpose of the CSRS information and registration package. Some respondents expressed confusion about what the initial information package was for or why they had received it.
- One respondent didn't really understand the importance of submitting income information. Several other payors also said this was a problem in response to another question.
- Several clients wanted more detail about specific service expectations and timelines, for example, when the recalculated amount would come into effect.
- Clients wanted more specific information about how income and payments are recalculated.

These results suggest that some clients may have problems understanding the basic objectives and requirements of the CSRS or what specific documents mean. It is our understanding that highlighting some elements of the initial letter to clients (as is being done currently) has been successful in obtaining a better client response rate. Enclosing a more detailed FAQ about specific aspects of the CSRS in the registration package may also be helpful.

#### 7.4 LEVEL OF CLIENT UNDERSTANDING OF SPECIFIC COMPONENTS OF THE CSRS

Clients were asked to assess the degree to which they felt they understood five key aspects of the CSRS, including the fact that a recalculation is automatic if the payor does not submit income information.

In some areas (e.g. CSRS registration leads to child support payments being adjusted annually) there was a high level of understanding by a majority of the clients surveyed. There was less understanding in one area: that a 10% increase is added to the payor's income if income information is not submitted.

**Table 30: Client Understanding of Key Elements of the CSRS**

CSRS Element	Number of Responses	Poor or no understanding	Some degree of understanding	High degree of understanding
Registration in the CSRS leads to child support payments being adjusted annually	35 (100%)	3 (9%)	4 (11%)	28 (80%)
Changes to child support are based on the payor's updated income information	35 (101%)	2 (6%)	3 (9%)	30 (86%)
Recalculations can mean an increase or decrease in monthly child support payments	35 (100%)	1 (3%)	4 (11%)	30 (86%)
If payors or recipients disagree with the new child support amounts they can go to court to vary their orders	35 (100%)	5 (14%)	6 (17%)	24 (69%)
If the payor does not provide income information when requested, the CSRS will recalculate child support based on a 10% increase in the payor's income	34 (101%)	5 (15%)	7 (21%)	22 (65%)

Payors were asked whether the requirements for providing financial information stipulated by CSRS were clear and easy to follow. Seven payors responded to this question. Most respondents (4/7) said that the requirements were very clear and easy to follow, one respondent gave this a moderate rating and two respondents gave this a low rating.

Suggestions were made about improving the transmission of information to payors about the financial requirements of CSRS. There was no overall consensus on these issues.

- Some payors felt that there was a lack of clarity on what financial information is required – it would be better to ask specifically for T4s or the tax return.
- There was some confusion about which financial year information is involved (current or past).
- Some payors wanted to know how to contact the CSRS directly to get assistance.
- Several payors said that reminder notices or telephone calls prior to the deadline to submit income information would be helpful.
- Several respondents said that marking specific requests for information as urgent would help emphasize the importance of submitting information to the CSRS.

#### 7.5 CLIENT RESPONSE TO THE MANDATORY REGISTRATION OF ELIGIBLE CLIENTS

One of the important aspects of the CSRS is that it involves the mandatory registration of eligible clients. Clients were asked to comment on their response to the mandatory registration requirement of the CSRS. Most clients were either strongly or quite satisfied with the mandatory registration requirement. Only one respondent had a strongly negative response. Although recipients expressed a higher level of satisfaction to the concept of mandatory registration than payors, these differences were not statistically significant. These findings suggest that the mandatory aspect of CSRS is not perceived as an issue for most clients.

**Table 31: Client Response to the Mandatory Registration Requirement**

Level of Client Satisfaction with Mandatory Registration	Recipient	Payor	Total
Very satisfied	21 (75%)	4 (33%)	25 (63%)
Quite satisfied	2 (7%)	3 (25%)	5 (13%)
No strong opinion one way or the other	5 (18%)	4 (33%)	9 (23%)
Quite dissatisfied	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Very dissatisfied	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (2%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (99%)	40 (101%)

**7.6 LEVEL OF SUBMISSION OF INCOME DATA**

Of the twelve payors who were interviewed in the client survey, 67% (8/12) said that they had submitted income information to the CSRS or had authorized CRA to do so; 33% (4/12) said that they had not.

In two of the four cases where payors said that they did not submit income information, they acknowledged that they didn't pay close attention to the request to submit from the CSRS.

*(I) just didn't pay close attention to the request to submit. Had no problem doing so, but just didn't realize it was so important. I do know this now.*

*It was laziness and procrastination. I was moving at the time I got the letter and didn't pay attention to it.*

Another payor said that he did not remember ever having received a request for income information from CSRS. Another payor said that the current agreement made with the other parent had been working and that he had no incentive to change it.

**7.7 CLIENT ASSESSMENT OF THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE CSRS**

**7.7.1 Assessment of the Objective of the CSRS**

There was overwhelming agreement on the part of both recipients and payors that the principle of recalculating child support annually to better reflect changes to the payor's income is important. Ninety-five percent of the respondents expressed agreement with the intent of the CSRS. There was little difference between payors and recipients on this issue.

**Table 32: Client View of the Importance of the Intent of the CSRS**

<b>Client Response to the Intent of the CSRS</b>	<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Payor</b>	<b>All Clients</b>
CSRS intent is important	27 (96%)	11 (92%)	38 (95%)
CSRS intent is not important	1 (4%)	1 (8%)	2 (5%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (100%)	40 (100%)

Most clients said that annual adjustments to reflect the actual income of payors was fair since income changes were predictable. For most clients this benefit outweighed other benefits such as the possibility of avoiding court to change an order.

*Many changes in income can happen over the year and it is important to keep track of this so the payor is paying an appropriate amount, whether higher or lower than previously.*

*It is important for both sides. Avoids much nastiness. (There) can be many changes in income and people may not be aware that they are entitled to a different amount.*

**Table 33: Reasons Why Respondents Agree with the Intent of the CSRS**  
N-37

Reasons	Number Reporting*
The CSRS is fair to all parties because it reflects the payor's current income	30 (81%)
Recalculation benefits children because it is up-to-date	10 (27%)
Recalculation is automatic and takes the weight off parents to arrange this	3 (8%)
Avoids court and lawyer costs	2 (5%)
CSRS empowers recipients	1 (3%)

\*Thirty-seven clients responded to this question. Several respondents provided more than one answer.

**7.7.2 Assessment of the Applied Benefits of the CSRS**

In terms of its applied benefits to clients, the CSRS was assessed more cautiously and there were fundamental differences in opinion between payors and recipients. About half of the clients said that the registration in the CSRS had been very or quite beneficial to them personally. Although payors were less positive these differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 34: Client Assessment of the Perceived Benefits of the CSRS**

Client Assessment	Recipient	Payor	Total
CSRS has been very beneficial	12 (43%)	2 (17%)	14 (35%)
CSRS has been quite beneficial	4 (14%)	1 (8%)	5 (13%)
CSRS has been somewhat beneficial	3 (11%)	2 (17%)	5 (13%)
CSRS has not been very beneficial	4 (14%)	1 (8%)	5 (13%)
CSRS has not been beneficial at all	5 (18%)	6 (50%)	11 (28%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (100%)	40 (102%)

Twenty-three clients described specific benefits that they felt had resulted from their registration in the CSRS. The most commonly perceived applied benefit noted by almost 50% of the respondents of the CSRS was that the service helps parents avoid going to court to have adjustments made in their child support.

Thirty-nine percent (9/23) of the clients noted that enrollment in the CSRS helped reduce contact and conflict between parents.

*(The CSRS) is awesome in that I don't have to deal with (my) ex(partner) or return to court. It makes the payor take it more seriously when the service informs him of the new amounts. It has been a tremendous relief to have this service.*

**Table 35: Benefits of the CSRS Perceived by Clients**  
N=23

Perceived Benefits	Number of Respondents Reporting
CSRS helps clients avoid returning to court	11 (48%)
The CSRS reduces conflict between the parents	9 (39%)
The CSRS is seen as a more neutral and fairer process for both parties	5 (22%)

Sixteen respondents identified ways that they felt that the CSRS was not seen as being beneficial. In most cases, the lack of a perceived benefit was related to a lack of receipt of child support which was most likely an arrears or enforcement issue. The main reasons (cited by three or more respondents) were that:

- The recipient was not receiving any child support payments anyway so the CSRS had had no impact;
- The recalculation or adjustment had not yet taken place;
- The 10% recalculation increase was perceived as unfair (too high) by the payor.

The degree to which recipients were receiving child support was not explored in the evaluation.

**7.7.3 Assessment of the Benefits of the CSRS to Children**

Although recipients were more positive about the impact of the CSRS on their children's well-being than payors, about half of the clients did not see significant benefits arising from CSRS for their children. This was in spite of many respondents feeling that the *intent* of CSRS was positive for children.

Table 36: Benefit of CSRS to Children

Benefit of CSRS to Children	Recipient	Payor	Total
Very beneficial	10 (36%)	3 (25%)	13 (33%)
Quite beneficial	2 (7%)	1 (8%)	3 (8%)
Somewhat beneficial	3 (11%)	1 (8%)	4 (10%)
Not very beneficial	3 (10%)	1 (8%)	4 (10%)
Not beneficial at all	10 (36%)	5 (42%)	15 (38%)
Unable to comment	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	1 (3%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (99%)	40 (102%)

The two most significant benefits for children described by respondents were that automatic increases can provide more money to meet the needs of children (11/18 identified this) and that registration in the CSRS reduced conflict between the parents which was better for children (6/18 respondents).

*It is no longer a personal issue between me and my ex. So the kids are not in the middle of our bickering. Having a third party handling child support variations makes it so much easier for them.*

Nineteen respondents identified areas where the CSRS had a limited impact on children. The primary issues noted were those mentioned above –for these clients CSRS may not have led to any changes in payment amounts or payment results may not have been made. Again this likely to be an arrears or enforcement issue that is not connected to the mandate of the CSRS. The link between the CSRS and the payment of child support may not be clear to all parents.

One respondent said that the child support guideline rates were too low, minimizing the benefits of CSRS. Another, who was returning to court to challenge the recalculation said that this procedure could result in being an extra burden for children.

#### **7.7.4 Client Response to the Automatic Recalculation Provision**

Payor incomes are automatically recalculated if the payor does not provide income information. A majority of respondents felt that the automatic 10% recalculation of the payor's income was an effective way of encouraging payors to provide their income information to CSRS. There was a higher percentage of payors who agreed with this although the difference between payors and recipients was not statistically significant.

Table 37: Effectiveness of Automatic Recalculation

Effectiveness of Automatic Recalculation	Recipient	Payor	Total
Effective	19 (68%)	9 (75%)	28 (70%)
Not effective	9 (32%)	3 (25%)	12 (30%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (100%)	40 (100%)

Clients who felt the 10% recalculation was not effective identified three issues that they felt limited the effectiveness of this policy. Two respondents expressed concern that the 10% was too low an amount to result in compliance. A related concern was that if increases in the payor's income were higher, payors might not submit income information in order to receive a (more favourable) 10% recalculation. This was a concern expressed by almost half (5/12) of the respondents who addressed this question.

*If the payor's income goes up more than 10% then it is to their advantage not to submit information.*

Respondents who had this concern were not asked to consider the impact on the payor of accumulated over a longer period of time.

## 7.8 IMPACT OF CSRS REGISTRATION ON THE PARENT'S RELATIONSHIP

One of the questions addressed in the evaluation was whether registration in the CSRS had had any impact on the relationship between the parents in terms of issues or discussions related to child support. A quarter of the respondents said that registration in the CSRS had had a positive effect in terms of issues related to child support, while most said that registration had neither a positive or negative impact. Only 15% noted a negative impact, suggesting that for most clients mandatory registration in the CSRS had a positive or neutral impact. There were no statistically significant differences between payors and recipients on this opinion.



**Table 38: Impact of Registration in CSRS on the Relationship between Parents (Related to Issues of Child Support)**

Impact	Recipient	Payor	Total
Positive Impact	8 (29%)	2 (17%)	10 (25%)
No impact (neutral)	18 (64%)	6 (50%)	24 (60%)
Negative impact	2 (7%)	4 (33%)	6 (15%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (100%)	40 (100%)

Because the recalculation is made automatically, it is perceived as being more neutral and fairer by parents. This has the potential of reducing arguments, blame and conflict between the two parties. There was consensus on this positive impact from all of the respondents who reported positive impacts.

*(The CSRS) has taken the matter out of my direct hands. It is not me but the judge who is initiating it. It seems fairer this way, and the father is less likely to complain about it being my fault.*

*No one has to threaten each other to get the issues resolved. It has eased tensions about child support.*

*(It is) not so personal anymore. It is no more, "she's coming after me for money."*

Six clients identified negative impacts of being registered on their relationship. In two cases this was because payors had a negative response to child support payment increases in general, in one case the recipient reacted negatively to the decrease in child support, in two cases stress between the parents had risen (no specific reason was cited). In one case the recipient felt that the payor had not reported all his income to CSRS.

## 7.9 SAFETY CONCERNS OF PARENTS

Almost 40% of the recipients (11/28) said that they had concerns about their own personal safety in relation to the actions or behaviours of the other parent historically or currently; 61% (17/28) reported no safety concerns. Detailed information on the type of concern was not collected. Of the eleven recipients who described safety concerns, half (55% or 6/11) said that their safety concerns were current. None of these recipients said that they had notified CSRS of these current safety concerns although there is a process in place to do so.

Of the eleven recipients who identified safety concerns in the Client Survey, two had been flagged as having safety concerns on the CSRS database; nine others had not. These results suggest that CSRS case data may not contain comprehensive data on all of the safety issues that apply to clients. There was uneven entry of safety data on CSRS records. For example, safety data identified in the case notes

component of Access was not consistently recorded on Access tables or in the safety alert sections. The system of asking clients in a letter to identify personal safety concerns does not appear to be an effective method to elicit safety information because clients have the option of not responding to the letter.

Of the eleven recipients who had expressed current or past safety concerns 55% (6/11) said that being registered in CSRS affected the level of concern they had about their safety. In *all* of these cases the impact of being registered in the CSRS was positive and made recipients feel that they had increased their level of safety.

The CSRS was described as having contributed to the sense of safety felt by recipients primarily by reducing contact between the parents and through having a neutral party establish the updated child support amounts.

*(I) feel a lot more safe because of this service, as it reduces contact with ex, and (it) seems easier because the judge is calling the shots.*

This finding suggests that involvement in the CSRS has an adjunctive benefit for recipients in that it creates distance from the (frequently) contentious issue of child support and provides a neutral framework for recalculating child support.

#### **7.10 LEVEL OF DIRECT CLIENT CONTACT WITH THE CSRS**

Just over half (55% or 22/40) of the respondents said that they were aware that they could call the CSRS directly if they had any questions or concerns about the CSRS; 45% (18/40) said that they were not aware of this option. There was no substantial difference between payors and recipients on this question.

Among those who were aware they could contact the CSRS directly, 55% (12/22) had made direct contact with the service. This group represented 30% of all the clients included in the Client Survey.

#### **7.11 CLIENT ASSESSMENT OF THE QUALITY OF THE CSRS**

##### **7.11.1 Assessment of the Quality of the CSRS**

Clients who had direct contact with the CSRS were asked to assess the quality of service in relation to elements such as the timeliness, responsiveness and neutrality of the service. Service elements were given primarily high positive ratings (6 or 7 out of a 7-point rating scale). Highest ratings were given for staff politeness, and the level of neutrality and fairness is shown.

**Table 39: Client Assessment of CSRS Service Quality**

Aspect of Service	Number Reporting	Low Rating (1-3)	Moderate Rating (4-5)	High Rating (6-7)	Average Rating
Timeliness of response by CSRS staff	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	3 (25%)	9 (75%)	6.4
Ability of the CSRS to answer client questions and concerns	12 (99%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	10 (83%)	6.0
Level of politeness of CSRS staff	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	6.6
Level of neutrality and fairness of the CSRS	12 (100%)	0 (0%)	2 (17%)	10 (83%)	6.7

**7.11.2 Client Satisfaction with the Results of the Recalculation (Clients who were Recalculated)**

Eighty percent of the respondents (32/40) said that their income levels had been recalculated by the CSRS.

Among the group of respondents where incomes had been recalculated; just over half were satisfied with specific results of the recalculation and 16% were very dissatisfied. Recipients were more satisfied with the results of recalculation than payors, however, these differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 40: Client Assessment with the Results of the Recalculation**

Client Satisfaction With the Results of the Recalculation	Recipient	Payor	Total
Very satisfied	10 (45%)	2 (20%)	12 (37%)
Quite satisfied	4 (18%)	1 (10%)	5 (16%)
Neutral	3 (14%)	3 (30%)	6 (19%)
Not very satisfied	3 (14%)	1 (10%)	4 (12%)
Very dissatisfied	2 (9%)	3 (30%)	5 (16%)
TOTAL	22 (100%)	10 (100%)	32 (100%)

Respondents who had had their recalculations completed saw the CSRS as being much more beneficial than those who had not. Fifty percent of those who had not had their child support recalculated said the CSRS had not benefited them at all.

**Table 41: Assessment of the Benefit of CSRS Based on Recalculation Status of Respondents**

Assessment of Benefit of the CSRS	Has CSRS Been Recalculated?	
	No	Yes
Very beneficial	2 (25%)	12 (38%)
Quite beneficial	0 (0%)	5 (16%)
Somewhat beneficial	1 (13%)	4 (13%)
Not very beneficial	1 (13%)	4 (13%)
Not beneficial at all	4 (50%)	7 (22%)
TOTAL	8 (101%)	32 (102%)

Client satisfaction with the outcomes of the recalculation was linked with whether or not clients considered the amount of the recalculation to accurately represent the payor’s income. Seventy-eight percent of those who felt the recalculated income level was not accurate were dissatisfied with the calculation.

Both recipients and payors expressed concerns about the accuracy of the recalculation. Recipients felt that all the payors sources of income were not always taken into account. Some of the payors who had their incomes automatically recalculated felt that the recalculated amount was too high.

**Table 42: Client Satisfaction and Assessment of the Accuracy of the Recalculation**

Satisfaction with Outcomes	Amount Generally Accurate	No Opinion	Amount Not Accurate	Total
Satisfied	10 (59%)	2 (12%)	5 (29%)	17 (100%)
Neutral	3 (50%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)	6 (100%)
Not satisfied	1 (11%)	1 (11%)	7 (78%)	9 (100%)

**7.11.3 Ways of Increasing Payor Submission of Income Information**

Respondents were asked to suggest ways the CSRS could be changed or improved to encourage more payors to submit their income information. Twenty-three respondents made suggestions. The three most frequently made suggestions (made by five or more clients) were:

- To raise the automatic recalculation to more than 10% or to recalculate more frequently. Ten percent was seen as too small a penalty to result in compliance with the CSRS income requirements.
- To add additional penalties if payors did not provide income information after a period of time (licence withdrawal was mentioned as a possible response).
- To provide clearer instructions to the payor about the submission of income information including a reminder letter or telephone call.

**7.12 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CSRS IN KEEPING CHILD SUPPORT UP-TO-DATE**

Three quarters of the respondents said that the CSRS was an effective way of keeping child support payments up-to-date. Recipients assessed the CSRS as being more effective than payors, although these differences were not statistically significant.

**Table 43: Effectiveness of the CSRS in Keeping Child Support Payments Up-to-Date**

Level of Effectiveness	Recipient	Payor	Total
Very effective	14 (50%)	2 (17%)	16 (40%)
Quite effective	8 (29%)	6 (50%)	14 (35%)
Somewhat effective	2 (7%)	1 (8%)	3 (8%)
Not very effective	2 (7%)	1 (8%)	3 (8%)
Not at all effective	2 (7%)	2 (17%)	4 (10%)
TOTAL	28 (100%)	12 (100%)	40 (101%)

Those who had not had their child support recalculated considered the service to be less effective. Eighty-one percent (26/32) of those who had had a recalculation completed considered the service to be quite or very effective compared to 50% (4/8) of those who had not been recalculated.

### **7.13 IMPACT OF CSRS ON COURT RELATED ACTIONS**

Respondents were asked whether they would likely have taken action to keep their child support order up-to-date if the CSRS did not exist. Forty-three percent (12/28), of the recipients said that it was unlikely that they would have taken any action; 7% (2/28) said that they were uncertain and 50% (14/28) said that it was likely that they would have taken some action related to their order if the CSRS did not exist. Of those who said that they would have taken some action, 79% (11/14) said that they would have applied to court for a variation of the order.

These results indicate that 39% of the recipients would likely have returned to court to apply to vary their orders if CSRS did not exist.

### **7.14 CLIENT SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CSRS**

Clients were asked if they had any suggestions on how to improve the effectiveness of the CSRS. Sixteen clients made specific suggestions but there was no strong consensus on any issue. A quarter of the respondents said that more direct contact between the CSRS and registered clients, could help in the submission of income information from the payor or might help troubleshoot problematic cases. A second suggestion was to increase the penalty for not reporting income or to increase enforcement if income information was not submitted by the payor on a consistent basis.

## 8.0 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Section 8.0 summarizes the key findings and conclusions of the CSRS Pilot Phase Evaluation and brings together key results from the individual components of the evaluation. Issues identified during the interviews with the three CSRS staff are also integrated into this section. Comments are not reported by individual staff in order to protect participant confidentiality. The content in this section is presented by theme.

### 8.1 RECALCULATION STATUS OF CLIENTS

Eighty-seven percent of the CSRS cases eligible for recalculation and falling within the time frame of the evaluation had undergone a recalculation process. In 63% of the cases the recalculated amount was determined through an automatic 10% increase. In 93% of the cases where a recalculation process was completed the recalculation came into effect. In 76% of these cases the recalculation resulted in an increase in payments, most frequently in the range of an additional \$25.00 - \$49.00 per month.

Thirteen percent of the cases eligible for recalculation involved an application to vary the court order. At the time of the evaluation, one application had resulted in a new court order, the other three applications were pending.

### 8.2 BENEFITS AND VALUE OF THE CSRS

Key justice partners identified the main benefit of the CSRS as the implementation of out-of-court changes to child support orders that assist children by providing them with support that meets the current income status of payors. There was strong consensus on the value of this objective among key justice partners. FMEP also valued the CSRS as providing another method of keeping child support current and possibility reducing the build-up arrears among payors. Key justice partners also felt that the CSRS has the potential for creating more confidence in the family justice system.

About 80% of the key justice partners said that the CSRS would likely result in reductions in court time required to deal with child support issues. Seventy percent said that it was unlikely that child support payments in the Kelowna court with registered clients would have been kept up to date *without* the CSRS.

Ninety-five percent of the clients interviewed in the Client Survey agreed that the basic intent of CSRS was positive – saying that the CSRS was based on a fair, realistic and valuable principle. Both recipients and payors equally shared this opinion. Seventy-five percent of the clients also said that they were strongly or quite satisfied with the mandatory registration aspect of the CSRS.

Applied benefits experienced by recipients and payors were assessed more cautiously. Only 48% of the clients rated the CSRS as being somewhat or quite beneficial; recipients were more positive than payors about the benefits.

The most commonly identified applied benefit was that the service helped parents settle their issues without going to court. The main reason why CSRS was not seen as beneficial was because the recipient had received no child support (at all) or had not received the new child support amount. In most cases concerns were related to payment or enforcement, rather than service issues. Child support payment or

arrears payment issues are not part of the mandate of the CSRS and so were not explored in the evaluation

A quarter of the clients said that registration in the CSRS had had positive impacts on their relationship with the other parent when issues regarding child support were discussed (60% said that registration had no impact). Recipients who felt that the CSRS had had a positive impact in terms of child support issues said that removing child support issues to a neutral body, outside of the relationship, had decreased tension between the parents.

Clients stated that involvement in the CSRS led to improvements in their sense of safety. Of the eleven recipients who identified safety concerns in the Client Survey 54%, said that registration in CSRS had affected the level of concern that they had about their safety. In *all* of these cases registration in CSRS had contributed to the recipient's sense of safety by reducing contact and conflict between the parents on child support issues. This finding suggests that registration in CSRS may have an important adjunctive impact for a significant number of recipients by creating distance between parents on the frequently contentious issue of child support.

Among those clients who had recalculated orders, there was a higher level of satisfaction with the service. Satisfaction was clearly linked with whether clients considered the amount of the recalculation to accurately represent the payor's income.

The CSRS also appears to have had an impact on the number of recipients who return to court to address their child support issues. Almost forty percent of the recipients said that it was likely that they would have returned to court to address the amount of child support if they had *not* been registered in the CSRS.

### 8.3 SCOPE AND REACH OF THE CSRS

One third of the cases processed by the CSRS were exempted at court and a further 20% were exempted by the CSRS. Imputed income was the most common reason for the exemption of cases, accounting for 84% of the exemptions. The high numbers of clients exempted and/or declined affected the scope, "reach" and potential impact of the CSRS. One third of the key justice partners identified this as a concern.

In general, key justice respondents felt that the exemption categories should be systematically reviewed with the objective of streamlining or possibly eliminating some in order to expand service coverage. The categories that key justice partners felt should be reviewed included those related to imputed income, self-employment, inter-jurisdictional orders, age of majority of children, and shared custody arrangements.

CSRS staff, however, noted that many of the current exemption categories are governed by specific legislation which limits the ability to make changes. The rationale for exemption categories may not be completely understood by all key justice partners.

There was general agreement by a majority of key justice partners that the CSRS should be expanded to other courts in BC – 70% supported this direction.

Only 5% of the orders registered by the CSRS were a result of written agreements. Family Justice Centre staff identified two factors that they felt might be affecting the low level of written agreements at the



Kelowna Court. These were: Payor resistance to the CSRS and the unwillingness of payors to opt in to the service; and the high number of self-employed payors (who might later be exempted). There was no further information provided on how this exemption category applied to written agreements.

#### **8.4 KEY JUSTICE PARTNER AND CLIENT AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE CSRS**

Most key justice partners felt quite or well informed about the mandate and central policies of the CSRS but 20-30% felt that they would like additional knowledge in specific areas. Although information on sub-groups of key respondents was limited due to the size of these groups, members of the private bar who participated in the evaluation appeared to have information gaps.

Fifty percent of the clients said that they first found out about the CSRS through the welcome/introductory package sent out by the service. Over 70% of the clients felt that the information they received in this package was sufficient in helping them understand the overall purpose of the CSRS. About 30% of the respondents identified areas where they would like more information. Clients said that they would like more information on the purpose of the information package, the importance of submitting income information and answers to specific questions such as how income changes are calculated. A development of a simply worded FAQ for clients that would address these questions could be helpful. The FAQ could also be a useful resource for FMEP and MEIA clients, as well as for some key justice partners.

#### **8.5 CLIENT ENGAGEMENT IN THE CSRS**

The CSRS is essentially an administrative program with most activities conducted by mail. Fifty-five percent of the clients were aware they could contact the CSRS directly and, of these, 54% contacted the service.

Several payors said that they would have submitted income information if they had been reminded or had fully understood its importance. Some staff also believe that direct contact with clients who have complex situations could increase compliance with the service.

Another issue that might be addressed through direct client engagement is resolving the confusion that appears to exist in the minds of some clients about the differences between FMEP and the CSRS. Although the level of this confusion could not be estimated, it was noted as an issue by some FMEP staff and by several clients.

#### **8.6 ACCESS TO PAYOR INCOME INFORMATION**

Of the cases that were registered and underwent a recalculation process, data indicated that only one payor submitted income information. In 63% of the cases the recalculation amount was determined through the automatic 10% increase provision.

Because contacting payors, tracking results, follow-up and recalculation of new payment amounts are complex and time consuming tasks, several key respondents and some recipients suggested that it would be beneficial to develop a system whereby payor income information can be transferred directly without the payor's consent. A similar system exists in Australia.

This was stated as a concern and suggestion, respondents who recommended this approach did not address ways to address this issue, considering the privacy consent and legislative issues involved. Changes in this policy would require approval from the provincial and federal governments.

## **8.7 REPORTING OF CLIENT SAFETY ISSUES**

The evaluation reviewed five types of records to determine client safety characteristics: interviews with the clients (Client Survey) and data from two Access Tables, the Access Notes Section, and the Time Frame Spreadsheet Safety Alert data. Additional data was also noted through court records entered in the Access Notes. Program data was not always consistently entered in these sources and there was no way of determining the best or most recent source of data.

Thirty-nine percent (11/28) of the clients who were interviewed in the Client Survey said that they had current or historic safety concerns – 54% (6/11) said that these concerns were current. Of these eleven recipients, only two were identified in the CSRS records as having safety concerns. Looking at this issue from the other perspective, of the eleven cases flagged in the CSRS database, two had safety concerns (and were mentioned in both types of records), seven who had recorded safety concerns were not interviewed and two who were flagged on the CSRS database as having safety concerns did not discuss them in the Client Survey.

The data suggests that the CSRS may not be picking up all client safety concerns by the use of current methods and that the system of asking clients to identify safety concerns in a voluntary written form has not yielded information in most cases.

Respondents noted that only one communication about client safety concerns (from MEIA to CSRS) has taken place. Currently there is no Information Sharing Agreement (ISA) between the two Ministries which might help facilitate the transfer of safety information. The ISA has not yet been ratified.

## **8.8 PROGRAM QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY**

Key justice partners gave the CSRS a high rating for service delivery, although some felt they did not have enough experience to assess specific aspects of the service. High ratings were given for staff responsiveness, timeliness, and expertise. Clients who had contacted the staff rated the quality of the CSRS and the service they received very positively. The aspects of staff that were evaluated most positively were their level of neutrality and fairness and the politeness of staff when dealing with clients.

One broad time frame criterion was measured in the evaluation. This indicated that the CSRS met the time frame guidelines for the service in all cases but one (where the issue was outside of the service's control).

## **8.9 DATA MANAGEMENT**

Data management has been the most significant issue for the CSRS during the pilot implementation phase. The CSRS involves many data management tasks including the tracking and updating of case records for case management and administrative purposes, for the management of information flow from other data sources (e.g. the courts and CEIS), for on-going service quality tracking and assessment and for the purpose of evaluation, research and reporting.

Processes to test, redesign and improve the system for data management have continued throughout the pilot implementation phase and these changes may have affected aspects of the data, data management or reliability of some of the data relied on for the evaluation.

Data management is particularly important if the CSRS is expanded to other court sites when data demands will become more significant. Some of the central issues that emerged in the evaluation are described below.

- Currently there are multiple and duplicative data collection systems in place. For example, client safety issues are noted in the Access tables, the Access Case Notes Section and as a safety alert in an Excel database. Court data (e.g. on restraining orders) is also reported in case notes. We found instances where some types of data was not consistently entered in these data systems. It was also difficult to identify the best and most recent or updated source of data. Having multiple sources of data to enter may be time-consuming and confusing for staff to handle (there is only one Recalculation Officer). At the time of the evaluation, staff had also developed and were using a face sheet data for data management purposes in order to manage data more effectively. Multiple sources of data also increase the risk of incorrect data entry and make it difficult for staff to update data.
- A large proportion of the data on the management or status of cases is in narrative or case note form. This makes it difficult to review, aggregate or access for case management, service quality or evaluation purposes. Cases are also often complete requiring clear indicators of case status and outcomes.
- During the evaluation there was no method for accessing reliable and verifiable reports generated from the data. The query function in Access is limited due to the lack of key identifiers in all tables (the reasons for this were not explored with technical staff). In addition, despite the CSRS being in existence for over a year, there is no capacity to produce aggregated "canned" reports on specific client or case outcomes. Our understanding is that a process to produce these reports is nearing completion.
- The Access system is operating at a very slow speed at the office of the Recalculation Officer due to a technical problem that has not yet been resolved. A number of attempts have been made to address this issue.
- A consistent case number reference is not entered on most but not on all service data documents (e.g. letters sent to payors and recipients). This issue was raised in the evaluation but needs to be explored in more detail with staff who are directly handling documents to determine its applicability and importance.

Because the CSRS is primarily an administrative service, case management is a major function and a large proportion of time spent on data management is appropriate. However, a review of the data sources and discussions with respondents suggests that the data management system could be streamlined to become more efficient, more consistent and accurate. A lack of training and experience in data management on the part of staff may have contributed to some of these issues. A lack of staff training in some areas of data management was identified by staff.

### **8.10 DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**

The CSRS is primarily an administrative program and utilizes about thirty significant documents, many of which (in various forms) must be sent to clients or other key partners. Some key justice partners, especially FMP, identified document management in relation to the CSRS as a major challenge.

Attempts should be made to streamline the number of documents required, if feasible, through larger policy changes (e.g. through encrypted electronic data transfer) or through simple methods such as the development of a data management system that can automatically bring forward and generate documents at pre-specified dates.

### **8.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE CSRS**

Some key justice partners were concerned that the CSRS could increase tension between parents, however, findings from the Client Survey indicate that CSRS is seen by clients as increasing the sense of safety of recipients.

Some key justice partners also were concerned that some of the recalculations may not be timely because they are based on the previous year's tax returns. Others raised concerns that there may be court challenges to recalculated amounts in the future which may end up using more court time. This issue has not yet arisen but could be explored in the future.

Some recipients were concerned that the 10% recalculation was too low, making the automatic recalculation a better alternative for payors if their incomes are higher. Some recipients felt that a payor's refusal to submit income information on a regular basis (in subsequent years) should be subject to further penalties.

### **8.12 Expansion of the CSRS**

There was a consensus among key justice partners that the CSRS should expand its scope and outreach to involve more clients in the service. Seventy percent of the key justice partners recommended the expansion of the CSRS to other court locations in BC. Reviewing some of the exemption categories to expand the scope, where feasible, was also recommended. Staff also noted that the CSRS could be expanded to include Supreme Court Orders. Recommendations for expansion were based on the perceived benefits of the CSRS to recipients, payors, children, family justice agencies and to the family justice system in general.

# APPENDIX

## CSRS Evaluation Framework Elements and Plan FINAL

CSRS Evaluation Framework Elements and Plan  
FINAL



Date of Draft: October 23, 2007

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document includes the main elements of an evaluation framework and plan to evaluate the Child Support Recalculation Service. This document includes:

- 1) The broad evaluation areas and questions to be addressed;
- 2) Data sources;
- 3) Methodologies;
- 4) Considerations related to the collection or analysis of data;
- 5) Information on the time frame for the application of methods.

Table 1 includes a description of the central evaluation questions related to implementation, outputs (services and activities) and outcomes. Client and key partner satisfaction are treated as separate components of the framework. Outcomes and results are oriented around client outcomes, key partner or client satisfaction.

One of the main tasks involved in the development of the framework has been to identify the most accurate and up to date sources of data. There are six data collection systems or methods used by the CSRS. These include a number of Excel records, an Access database, and information and documents (including a face sheet) compiled in the paper file. All of these data sources were reviewed and compared and the best and most current sources of data were identified.

In addition to the framework elements (Table 1), this document includes a more detailed description of the methodologies and the time frame for their application.



## 2.0 EVALUATION PLAN, METHODS AND DATA SOURCES

Table 1: CSRS Evaluation Plan, Methods and Data Sources

Broad Evaluation Areas	Specific Evaluation Questions to be Addressed	Specific Elements or Sources of Data	Methodologies	Issues Pertaining to Data Extraction or Use
<b>IMPLEMENTATION: Effectiveness and Efficiency of CSRS Implementation, including Policies and Procedures</b>	1) To what degree is the CSRS able to meet proscribed timelines for registered cases. The timelines to be assessed are: 1) Notice of Income Information Request date, 2) Statement of Recalculation Notice date, and 3) completion of all activities before the one year anniversary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CSRS: Monthly Time Frame Spreadsheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	The degree to which clients have met specific timelines will depend on the dates of their csos and their placement on the schedule of activities
	2) What are the reasons for any delays in registration or after registration (in terms of service activities), among registered cases from the perspective of the CSRS staff?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> </ul>	
	3) What issues can staff identify that may have affected the effective implementation of CSRS?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> </ul>	
	4) How could implementation of the CSRS be improved?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> <li>▪ Key Partner Survey</li> </ul>	
	5) What are the factors that have contributed to the limited number of written agreements being submitted at the Kelowna Court		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> <li>▪ Key Partner Interviews</li> </ul>	
	6) What are some of the factors that staff and key partners identify as contributing to the limited number of written agreements being submitted at the Kelowna court?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Partner Interviews</li> </ul>	Questions could be directed to FJCs, the CSO, the Kelowna Local Manager and Advice Counsel working at the Kelowna Family Justice Centre
	7) Are key partners aware of, and do they understand, the CSRS? What are their knowledge gaps?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Partner Interviews</li> </ul>	
	8) How do key partners assess the implementation (including timelines and efficiency) of the CSRS?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Partner Interviews</li> </ul>	
	9) To what degree do clients understand the objectives, written materials, timelines, policies, procedures and implementation process of the CSRS? Is client response to the CSRS related to problems of understanding or a basic disagreement with the objectives of the service?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Face Sheet: CSRS Paper File</li> </ul>	
	10) Are stipulated policies, protocols and steps followed when addressing cases with safety concerns? e.g. 1) safety notice letter sent out, 2) referral to FJC for safety planning, 3) referrals to FMW if this is a MEIA case.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CSRS Paper file</li> <li>▪ Staff interviews</li> </ul>	The research will review whether MEIA client safety data is incorporated in CSRS safety alert data

Broad Evaluation Areas	Specific Evaluation Questions to be Addressed	Specific Elements or Sources of Data	Methodologies	Issues Pertaining to Data Extraction or Use
<b>IMPLEMENTATION: Effectiveness and Efficiency of CSRS Implementation, including Policies and Procedures (Cont'd)</b>	11) Is communication on client safety issues transmitted by MEIA incorporated into CSRS safety alert data?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CSRS Payor File</li> </ul>	The research will review whether MEIA client safety data is incorporated in CSRS safety alert data
	12) Do CSRS staff and MEIA follow protocols for sharing information on safety issues?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Partner Interviews</li> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> </ul>	
	13) How effective, time efficient and current are data collection and data management systems? Do current data collection systems lend themselves well to program evaluation, assessment and service improvement? What changes could be made to improve these developing data collection or management system, if required?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> </ul>	
	14) To what degree does the level of case exemptions affect the coverage of the CSRS? Are there issues related to the 1) interpretation, 2) understanding, 3) application or 4) policies related to specific exemption categories that need to be addressed? What are these issues and how could they be addressed by service policy or practice, if required?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> <li>▪ Key Partner Survey</li> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	Client data suggests that the level of exemptions related to imputed income is significant and affects the overall scope and impact of the CSRS
	15) Do exempted clients appear to fully understand the CSRS exemption criteria and the how this relates to involvement in the CSRS?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> <li>▪ Key Partner Survey</li> </ul>	Although exempted clients will not be interviewed key partners and staff may have some feedback on this question
	16) Is the judiciary fully conversant with CSRS policy related to exemptions and eligibility for recalculation? Do they have concerns or comments about exemption policies and practices?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key Partner Survey (Judiciary interviews)</li> <li>▪ Staff Interviews</li> </ul>	
<b>PROGRAM OUTPUTS: Range and Type of Services and Activities Provided Including Description of Clients</b>	1) What is the number of parents associated with registered and non-registered orders?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of Court Orders and WA (CSRS Data)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	2) How many of the non-registered cases are exempted at court or not registered by the CSRS? How many registered cases are declined for recalculation by CSRS for the current year?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of Court Orders and WA (CSRS Data)</li> <li>▪ Excel Spreadsheet: Monthly Reports: Notes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	3) What are the reasons non-registered cases are exempted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access Database: (Order): Records for not registering orders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	4) What are the demographic characteristics of cases registered and non-registered in the CSRS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Income level of payor</li> <li>▪ Number of children</li> <li>▪ Community of payor/recipient</li> <li>▪ Child custody status (Joint/Sole)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Access Database: (Order)</li> <li>▪ List of Court Orders and WA (CSRS)</li> <li>▪ Access Database: (Participant)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	Case and demographic data available in the CSRS database will be compared on registered and non-registered cases.

Broad Evaluation Areas	Specific Evaluation Questions to be Addressed	Specific Elements or Sources of Data	Methodologies	Issues Pertaining to Data Extraction or Use
<b>PROGRAM OUTPUTS: Range and Type of Services and Activities Provided Including Description of Clients (Cont'd)</b>	5) What are the case characteristics of registered clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the case a MEIA case at the time of data entry? At the time of recalculation?</li> <li>▪ Is the case enrolled in FMEP at registration?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ List of Court Orders and WA (CSRS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	6) Safety Concerns Related CSRS Client Records. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent do clients indicate serious safety concerns through the return of the confirmation letter or in the Client Survey.</li> <li>▪ Does client survey data on safety concerns indicate gaps or limitations in existing CSRS data collection methods?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CSRS Confirmation Notice</li> <li>▪ CSRS Face Sheet (alerts related to safety concerns are determined from a range of data sources including MEIA and CEIS)</li> <li>▪ CSRS paper file</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Confirmation notice data is not submitted by clients in all cases and is unlikely to be a comprehensive source of data.</li> <li>▪</li> </ul>
	7) What are the characteristics of the CSOs for registered cases? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Is the CSRS CSO an original order or a variation?</li> <li>▪ Dates of original orders or variations.</li> <li>▪ What was the amount of the CSO prior to recalculation?</li> <li>▪ What other issues (e.g. custody and access) are included in the order?</li> <li>▪ What is the type of order? Court ordered/interim, Section 10, WA with clause or addendum.</li> <li>▪ If Court ordered what was the type of order?</li> <li>▪ Were special expenses included in relation to the CSO? If yes, what was the amount, payment pattern and purpose of the special expenses?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CEIS or paper file (order)</li> <li>▪ List of Court Orders and WA</li> <li>▪ Access Database: Table Order</li> <li>▪ Access Database: Order (Special Expenses)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	8) Characteristics of Recalculated (Registered) Cases <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was the recalculated amount automatic (10%) or determined by financial information provided by the CRA or payor?</li> <li>▪ How much was the recalculated amount?</li> <li>▪ Did the amount of the recalculation result in an increase or decrease of the CSO?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excel Spreadsheet: Monthly Reports: Notes</li> <li>▪ Access database (comments section)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
	9) Contact with Payor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Was payor contact made?</li> <li>▪ If payor contact was not made, why not?</li> <li>▪ Was a location search undertaken?</li> <li>▪ At what level does available CSRS data indicate that search was undertaken? (CSRS, MELS or MEIA)?</li> <li>▪ What was the result of the search attempt?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excel Spreadsheet (Notes)</li> <li>▪ MELS Search Request Form (CSRS paper file)</li> <li>▪ Access database</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	Access data on these records may be incomplete

Broad Evaluation Areas	Specific Evaluation Questions to be Addressed	Specific Elements or Sources of Data	Methodologies	Issues Pertaining to Data Extraction or Use
<b>OUTPUTS: Range and Type of Services and Activities Provided Including Description of Clients Service (Cont'd)</b>	10) Was an attempt to vary the CSO made after the case was registered in the CSRS? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ At what time period did the application to vary fall:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) from the date of Registration to the date of Request for Income Information?</li> <li>b) from the date of Request for Income Information to the date of Statement of Recalculation notice issue date?</li> <li>c) during the Statement of Recalculation Notification period?</li> <li>d) from the end of the Statement of Recalculation Notification Period to the next request for information period?</li> </ol> </li> <li>▪ What other justice issues (e.g. custody, access, guardianship) were addressed in any post-registration application to vary?</li> <li>▪ Who applied for the variation?</li> <li>▪ How long did it take for the application to vary to be processed?</li> <li>▪ Did the application to vary delay the recalculation process?</li> <li>▪ If there was more than one application to vary, how many applications were involved?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CEIS</li> <li>▪ CSRS Monthly Time Frame Spreadsheet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> </ul>	
<b>Questions/Issues Related to Client Satisfaction</b>	1) To what extent are clients satisfied with the automatic nature of registration? 2) Are payors and recipients satisfied with the service response and quality of service they receive? 3) Are payors and recipients satisfied with the methods used for, and outcomes of, recalculation? Do satisfaction levels differ between those with different recalculation outcomes? 4) How do clients respond to requirement for the disclosure of income information? 5) Do satisfaction levels differ between payors and recipients? 6) What do clients perceive the strengths and limitations of the CSRS to be? 7) Do clients feel that the information used for the recalculation and the process for recalculation are fair and accurate?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> <li>▪ Client Survey</li> </ul>	Most of the clients in the survey will have received a recalculation notice

Questions/Issues Related to Key Partner Satisfaction	1) What benefits or limitations arising from the service are perceived by key partners for the court system, specific agencies/programs and clients? What kind of input has the CSRS had on the Kelowna Court?		▪ Key Partner Survey	
	2) What is the assessment by key partners of client response to the CSRS?		▪ Key Partner Survey	
	3) To what degree is the CSRS seen as an effective or ineffective method for addressing out of date child support orders for those who are MEIA clients?		▪ Key Partner Survey	
	4) What is the view of FMEP on the impact of the CSRS on child maintenance enforcement?		▪ Key Partner Survey	
	5) What impact has the CSRS had on MEIA (FMP) client services, workload and costs? Has the workload in any of these areas increased or decreased? Describe the types of impacts.		▪ Key Partner Survey	
	6) What are the benefits to MEIA clients and to FMP staff of involvement in the CSRS?		▪ Key Partner Survey	
Outcomes/Results (may duplicate questions in section above)	1) How many registered payors have met the income information submission deadline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excel Spreadsheet Monthly Reports (notes)</li> <li>▪ Access Data</li> </ul>	▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet	More detail on the comprehensiveness of the Access data is required
	2) How many registered CSRS clients have had their child support orders recalculated?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Excel Spreadsheet Monthly Reports (notes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> <li>▪ Access Database</li> </ul>	More detail on the comprehensiveness of the Access data is required
	3) How many payors and recipients make applications to vary their child support orders after receiving a notice that they are registered in the CSRS?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CEIS or Excel Spreadsheet Monthly Reports (notes)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Case and Client Tracking Sheet</li> <li>▪ Access Database</li> </ul>	More detail on the comprehensiveness of the Access data is required
	4) What are the perceived benefits of the CSRS for key partners, their agencies, the court system and for clients?		▪ Key Partner Survey	

### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF METHODOLOGIES

Table 2 provides further detail on the methodologies identified in Table 1. Four methodologies are recommended:

**Table 2: Recommended Methodologies**

Methodology	Description	Estimated Time Frame														
Development of Case and Client Tracking Sheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A tracking sheet will be developed for each case/client to be used for aggregating and updating data from CSRS spreadsheets and the paper file, the Access database and CEIS. This client/case data will then be entered onto a data management system, aggregated, analyzed and compared.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of Tracking Sheet – August</li> <li>Data Entry – October</li> </ul>														
Client Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A survey of registered clients will be carried out by telephone.</li> <li>Respondents will be those for whom the deadline for payors to submit financial information has passed and a statement of recalculation has deemed to be received. Proposed cases will include active cases with CSO anniversary dates from June – December, 2007. These estimates suggest that there are 32 cases with a potential number of 80 respondents. We estimate a maximum contact level of 70% (58 respondents). Some December cases may not have reached recalculation effective dates. A stipend of \$25.00 will be paid to each respondent who completes an interview.</li> </ul> <table border="1" style="margin-left: auto; margin-right: auto;"> <tr> <td>June</td> <td>7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>July</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>August</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>September</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>November</td> <td>8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>40 cases = 80 potential respondents</td> </tr> </table>	June	7	July	5	August	3	September	3	October	6	November	8	Total	40 cases = 80 potential respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Letter sent – October</li> <li>Interviews – November to January</li> </ul>
June	7															
July	5															
August	3															
September	3															
October	6															
November	8															
Total	40 cases = 80 potential respondents															
Staff Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff Interviews will be conducted by telephone or in person and will focus primarily on implementation issues and questions identified in the framework. Approximately 6 – 8 interviews are projected. Staff interviews will include:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laurel Holonko – CSRS</li> <li>Jo-Ann Harris – CSRS</li> <li>Cathy Tait – Project Manager</li> <li>Kathryn Platt – Previous Manager</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaire Development – October</li> <li>Interviews – October/November</li> </ul>														
Key Partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Key Partner Interviews will be conducted by telephone and will explore implementation effectiveness, efficiency, client response, client uptake and service outcomes. Approximately 25-30 interviews are projected. A final list of respondents is under development but will include representatives from:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FMP (HQ &amp; Kelowna Staff)</li> <li>FMEP</li> <li>MELS</li> <li>The Judiciary (Kelowna Court)</li> <li>The Kelowna Family Justice Centre (FJCs, Local Manager, and Child Support Officer)</li> <li>The Kelowna Court Registry</li> <li>The Private Bar</li> <li>Legal Services (Advice Counsel)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Questionnaire Development – September/October</li> <li>Interviews – October/November</li> </ul>														