

**NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services**  
**600 East Boulevard Avenue, Bismarck ND 58505**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
September 15, 2006

Contacts: Mike Schwindt, Child Support Enforcement Division Director, 701-328-3582; Paul Ronningen, Children and Family Services Division Director, 701-328-1725; or Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933

**North Dakota Receives Federal Grant to Coordinate Child Welfare and Child Support Services**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The federal Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Child Support Enforcement has awarded the North Dakota Department of Human Services a Section 1115 Program Development grant. The grant, when matched with other federal funds, will allow the department to develop a multi-year \$670,000 project strengthening the coordination between child support and child welfare services.

“The department strives to improve the lives of children,” said department Executive Director Carol K. Olson. “This project will help improve the alignment of child support and child welfare services so that we can serve vulnerable children and families more effectively.”

The grant will be used to refine business processes and implement additional automation to support four key objectives including: the expanded use of parent locate tools to promote placements with noncustodial parents and other relatives instead of foster care; a more unified approach to strengthening the role of fathers including referrals to fatherhood programs and other support services; faster referrals of child welfare cases to the child support; and better management of custodial parents’ past-due child support obligations when children are reunited with them after a foster care placement.

“This effort puts North Dakota on the cutting edge to improve services when a family is in crisis,” said Mike Schwindt, director of the department’s Child Support Enforcement Division.

The project will run from October 2006 through September 2009.

###