

# WORK4KIDS FAQs

## WHEN CAN OCS REFER AN NCP TO WORK4KIDS?

Office of Child Support staff (OCS) staff may refer a non-custodial parent (NCP) to Work4Kids (W4K) either at a court event or without any pending court action. If an NCP enters the W4K program without any court action (“referral”), the record of their W4K participation can still be used at later dates as evidence in an establishment (e.g., there’s a question regarding ability to work) or enforcement hearing.

### OCS RESPONSIBILITIES

Refer only NCPs to Work4Kids; custodial parents (CP) are not eligible due to the requirements attached to OCS’s federal funding. If an enforcement filing is required after a W4K referral, include the information about the referral and the NCP’s participation in the enforcement filing. For example, NCP was referred to Work4kids on 8/1/2020 and an intake appointment with EAP was scheduled for 8/3/2020. As of today, 12/1/2020, NCP missed his initial appointment and did not reschedule despite attempts from EAP to do so.

### EAP RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide services to NCPs and follow the W4K processes regardless of whether their participation is court-ordered or a referral.

## I THOUGHT A COURT ORDER WAS REQUIRED FOR W4K?

In the past OCS used W4K as an enforcement remedy. Now, in addition to using it as an enforcement remedy, OCS is utilizing the program as a proactive measure to help NCPs address their barriers to employment. Anytime an OCS employee determines that an NCP could benefit from the program, s/he will talk to him or her about it and make the referral if s/he is interested, even if the case isn’t ripe for enforcement.

### OCS RESPONSIBILITIES

Refer any NCP who could benefit from the program to Work4Kids regardless of whether they are behind on their support or not. That means OCS should refer NCPs in Establishment and Modification, not just Enforcement or Contempt.

### EAP RESPONSIBILITIES

Provide services to NCPs and follow the W4K process regardless of whether their participation is court-ordered or a referral.

## HOW DOES OCS SCHEDULE THE INITIAL EAP APPOINTMENT FOR NCP?

The preferred option is for OCS staff to use EAP’s [online appointment scheduler](#) at the time of referral. If there is not an appointment slot in the online scheduler that works for the NCP, the OCS staff should contact the EAP counselor by phone to schedule the EAP intake appointment. The objective at this stage is to provide NCPs with complete details about their upcoming EAP appointment as soon as they enter the Work4Kids program.

### OCS RESPONSIBILITIES

Go to EAP’s [online appointment scheduler](#) to make an appointment. If there is not a slot that works for the customer, reach out to the appropriate EAP counselor. Include NCP email address and phone number (if known) in scheduler submission.

### EAP RESPONSIBILITIES

Check and update the EAP appointment scheduler regularly to ensure that there are a variety of available time slots and that the slots listed continue to be times that work to avoid the complications that often arise when rescheduling.

## **WHAT'S THE NEXT STEP AFTER W4K HAS BEEN COURT ORDERED, OR THE NCP HAS AGREED TO PARTICIPATE VOLUNTARILY?**

Before creating a new record for the NCP in the W4K database, the OCS staff must check to see if there is an existing record. The W4K database should only have a single record for each NCP. This prevents the notes from being split across multiple NCP records in the database.

### **OCS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Use the search function to check the W4K database for an existing record. If none exists, create a new one. If one exists, update the information using the “Re-referrals & Changes” tab on the Management page.
- Reminder: An NCP with multiple OCS cases should only have one record in the W4K database.

### **EAP, HIREABILITY, AND VABIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Notify the HireAbility and OCS Work4Kids Coordinators if you find more than one record for an NCP in the W4K database or if you receive a new case notification for an NCP who you know has participated in Work4Kids previously.

## **WHAT IF EAP NOTICES THAT THE WORK4KIDS DATABASE DOES NOT HAVE RECORD OF A NEW REFERRAL?**

If an EAP counselor has contact with an NCP and finds that the NCP's case has not yet been created in the Work4kids database, they should contact their regional OCS point-of-contact. The regional OCS point-of-contact will not necessarily be the person who creates the database record, but they will be able to research OCS case records to determine which OCS staff member made the Work4Kids referral and should therefore create the database record.

### **OCS RESPONSIBILITIES**

- On the same day as the court order or of the referral, the person referring or present at the court event shall create a database record.
- If EAP reaches out to the OCS point-of-contact about a missing record, the OCS point-of-contact will nudge the OCS staff member who made the referral to create the Work4Kids database entry.

### **EAP REPOSIBILITIES**

If the EAP counselor is unable to find a record for the NCP they have had contact with, they will reach out to the OCS regional point-of-contact.

## **WHO SHOULD ENTER NOTES IN THE ACTIVITY LOG (NEW COURT REPORT)?**

This is a record of an NCP's engagement that is populated by designated EAP, HireAbility, and VABIR W4K staff. These records are tied to a program performance metric, so OCS should not enter notes here. OCS staff can add case information as needed to the “Court Date Comments” field, which is found on the “Referral” (new) and “Re-referral & Changes” pages of the Work4Kids database. Anyone entering notes in the Activity Log should understand and expect that those notes will be submitted as evidence to the court.

### **OCS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Don't enter notes in the Activity Log New / Court Report! If you have questions about case notes, please contact the assigned EAP, HireAbility, and VABIR staff via email or phone.

## EAP, HIREABILITY, AND VABIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Record the NCP’s program activity according to [Case Note Guidance](#). If needed, OCS can elicit testimony from the NCP to flesh out details about topics mentioned in the Activity Log.
- Document all case activity within two business days of when it occurs. For example, if an EAP counselor meets with an NCP on Thursday, they have until the end of the day on Monday to enter notes.
- Reminder: If it’s a new W4K participant, the clock for the two business days deadline does not begin until the case record has been created in the database by OCS.

## HOW SHOULD THE “NON-COMPLIANT” CHECKBOX BE USED AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

This field is changed by EAP or HireAbility staff to notify OCS that an NCP has failed to engage or follow through in the program sufficiently. A non-compliance indicator does not guarantee any court action but is intended to flag the case for review by OCS, and potentially for review at the regional team meeting. This field may be reversed at any time if an NCP resumes compliance with Work4Kids.

## OCS RESPONSIBILITIES

Do not update this field. Instead, monitor NCP compliance status at regular intervals between court events.

## EAP AND HIREABILITY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Update this field to accurately reflect what the NCP’s program compliance is currently.
- Be sure to complete the “Date non-compliance determined” field; and
- Either enter a case note with the reason(s) for non-compliance or enter this information in the “Cooperation Description” box. If there is already narrative in the “Cooperation Description” box, DO NOT delete it. Add the new non-compliance information w/ a date or enter this information as a case note.

## HOW SHOULD THE “ACTIVE/INACTIVE” FIELDS BE USED AND WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

This field is changed by OCS staff to notify EAP, HireAbility, and VABIR staff that a case is or isn’t being monitored by OCS for Work4Kids compliance. If an NCP gains employment and is making consistent support payments, OCS staff will stop monitoring the NCP’s compliance with Work4Kids. The NCP may still have an order from the court to participate in Work4Kids, but the Work4Kids order is considered secondary to their payment of support. OCS staff should update this field to “Inactive” as soon as OCS is no longer monitoring for Work4Kids compliance.

## OCS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Update this field to “inactive” when OCS is no longer monitoring for Work4Kids compliance.
- Regional points of contact will periodically review and clean up W4K participant lists at regional team meetings to ensure this field is accurate.

## EAP, HIREABILITY, AND VABIR RESPONSIBILITIES

- If case is in “Active” status, add notes as activity occurs.
- If case is in “Inactive” status:
  - HireAbility and VABIR may continue working with the individual as a HireAbility participant but should no longer update the W4K database.
  - EAP counselors should work to transition participants to other programs and services that are situated to meet their needs, including alternate sources of counseling.
- If neither status is checked, add notes as activity occurs and contact the OCS regional point-of-contact to confirm Active/Inactive status.

## **HOW IS THE “NEXT SCHEDULED COURT DATE FIELD USED AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?”**

This field lost its significance during the pandemic when court events ceased altogether and continues to be largely insignificant post-pandemic due to hearings being held remotely and less often. next by the court. This may be more or fewer than 60 days after the previous court date. When review hearings were the norm, this field was changed by OCS staff to notify EAP, HireAbility, and VABIR when an NCP’s progress would be reviewed by the court. OCS staff should update this field if the court sets a W4K review hearing.

### **OCS RESPONSIBILITIES**

Revise this field to a future date when a case has been scheduled for review.

### **EAP, HIREABILITY, AND VABIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Notes should be entered within 2 business days of the contact or action. Double check the Activity Log one week prior to the “Next Scheduled Court Date” to make sure notes are current. It is critical that OCS have the most up to date information going into a hearing.

## **WHAT IF THE ACTIVITY LOG APPEARS INCOMPLETE?**

If OCS staff are reviewing a case or prepping for a court event and find that the Activity Log appears to have incomplete information, they should contact the EAP, HireAbility, and/or VABIR staff who have worked with the NCP recently. For example, the last case note references a meeting but notes about that meeting have not been entered yet.

### **OCS RESPONSIBILITIES**

If the Activity Log appears incomplete, contact EAP, HireAbility, and/or VABIR staff working with the NCP

### **EAP, HIREABILITY, AND VABIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

- Promptly respond to inquiries from OCS staff about whether the Activity Log is up to date. If it is not, add missing notes to the Activity Log to make it current.
- Reminder: All case activity should be documented in the database within two business days of the contact or action.