

Appendix G

Thinking of Consolidating Collections Programs? What to Consider.

CONSOLIDATED COLLECTIONS ISSUES – WHAT TO CONSIDER

General:

- Number of individuals and/or cases with outstanding balances in each court.
- Number of individuals with outstanding balances in more than one court.
- Willingness of judges to arrange dockets so that collections staff can be available on site for sentencings, dispositional hearings, and show cause hearings.
- Willingness to be consistent among the courts (judges, referees, magistrates, administrators, collections staff, etc.).
- Convene group of stakeholders to identify roles and responsibilities (DOC, court probation staff, law enforcement, local bar, prosecutor, etc.).

Goals:

- Determine how collections will be consolidated (by court type, individual, county, etc.).
- Collections plan to be developed and documented from beginning to end, including roles and responsibilities of all involved, delinquency timelines, and actions to be taken for noncompliance. Consideration should be given to (not an all-inclusive list):
 - When and how individuals are notified of expectation of payment and estimated amounts due.
 - Payment plans.
 - Who establishes and when.
 - Requirements to establish (proof that payment plan needed, minimum amount, case type, etc.).
 - Documentation provided to individual that details payment plan.
 - Maintaining individual balances and payment information (spreadsheet, data base, manual).
 - Distribution of payments among cases.
 - Location(s) and process for receiving, receipting, and distributing payments.
 - Stopping enforcement actions on specific cases if payments being made according to payment plan but not being applied to specific cases.
 - Wage assignments (voluntary, required, issue only if default on payment plan).
 - Reviewing all dockets to determine if delinquent individual will be in any of the courts for any reason.
 - Obtaining jail release dates and making payment arrangements prior to release.
 - Payment alternatives such as community service.
 - Who authorizes and when.
 - Requirements to establish need.
 - Documentation required as proof of completion of payment alternative.
 - Distribution of “credit” from payment alternative among cases.
 - Location(s) and process for receiving proof and making necessary adjustments to the balance(s) in the case management system(s) and/or payment plan.
 - Delinquency notices.
 - Orders to remit prisoner funds.
 - Show cause docket (informing judges of all outstanding obligations so judges can address at hearing).

- Income tax garnishments/intercepts.
- Use of locator service(s).
- Collections staff.
 - Number needed.
 - Title and job description/responsibilities.
 - Employee(s) of court or contractor(s).
 - Pay and benefits.
 - Supervision responsibilities over collections staff/who collections staff report to.
 - Location of home office and equipment and supplies needed.
 - Training required (courts, duties, case management system[s], collections software, JDW, etc.) and who will provide training and at what cost.
 - Delegation of collections duties (by court type, alphabet, etc.).
- Implementation timeline, including hiring and training of collections staff.
- Plan for sustaining program after grant complete.

Evaluation of results:

- Identify what tools will be used to measure results (reports that can be generated, manually tracked information, measure results of each tool implemented to determine effectiveness of tool, etc.).
- Determine how results will be evaluated (in total, by court type, by individual collections staff, etc.).
- Determine how often results will be evaluated and by who.