

**Georgia Department of Human Services**

# **Parental Accountability Court**

**Tangler Gray**

**Director, Division of Child Support Services**

**Ann Harris**

**Presiding Judge, Cobb PAC**

# PAC: Vision and Mission

## Vision



*Stronger Families – Stronger Georgia*

## Mission

The PAC assists in transitioning chronic non-payers of child support to financial self-sufficiency and parental responsibility by addressing the underlying issues that hinder their ability to support their children.



# What Is the PAC Program?

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- The Parental Accountability Court is a collaboration between Superior Court Judges and the Georgia Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services.
- The PAC program provides judges with an alternative to incarceration in civil contempt cases and encompasses vocational, educational and mentoring concepts.
- The program makes use of existing resources within the local community and reduces incarceration costs for those same communities.
- Judicial oversight encourages compliance with program requirements, resulting in long term fulfillment of child support obligations and financial self-sufficiency.



# PAC: Who Is Eligible

- Those with an open DCSS case
- Those who have a pending contempt, arrest order, or are in custody
- Those who are not considered violent offenders



*Stronger Families – Stronger Georgia*



# Services Offered to Participants



Substance abuse treatment referrals



Mental health services



Short-term training when available



Volunteer work opportunities



Literacy Training



Employment referral assistance



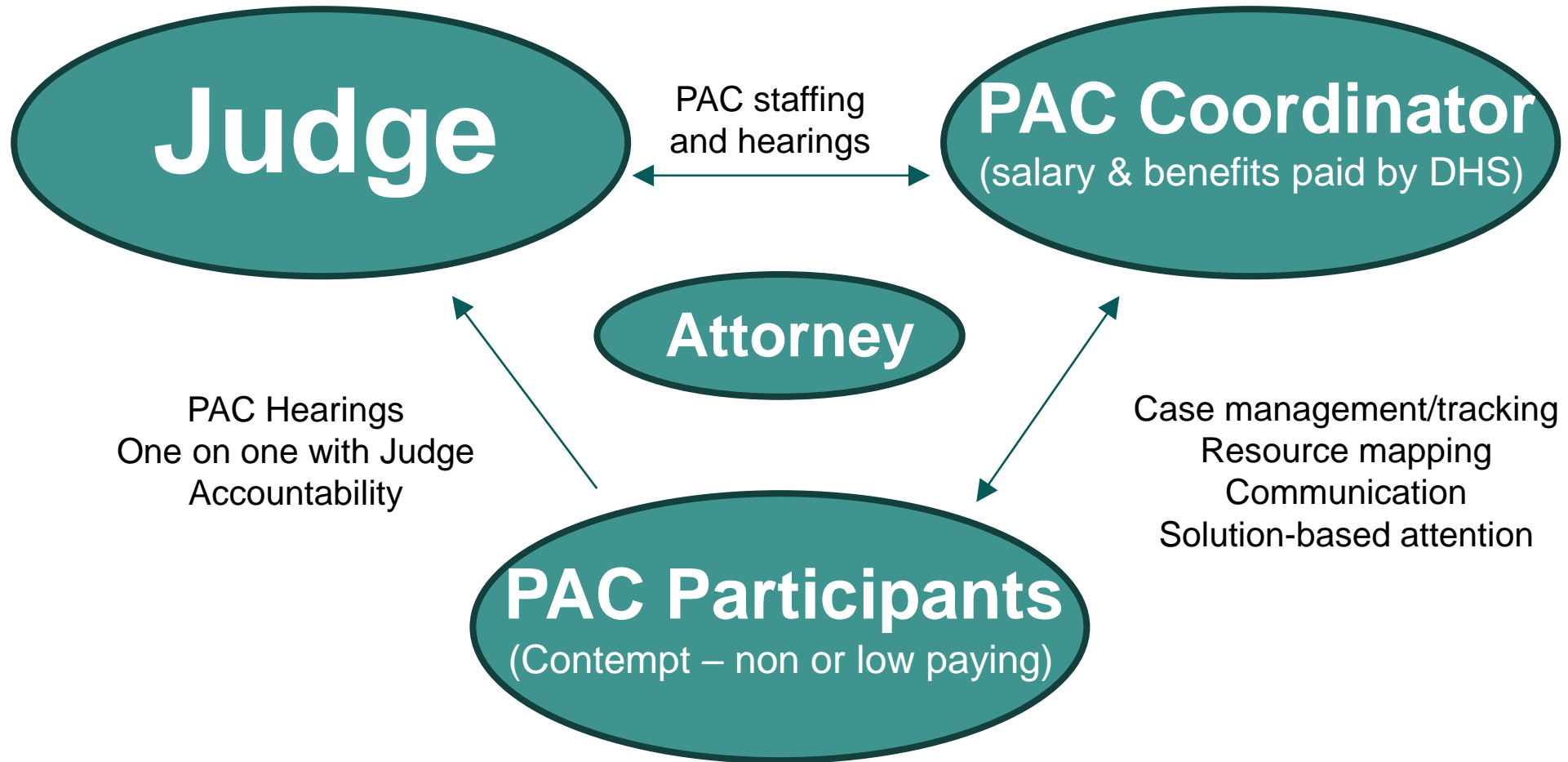
Access and Visitation referrals



Additional services specific to the local area



# PAC Implementation



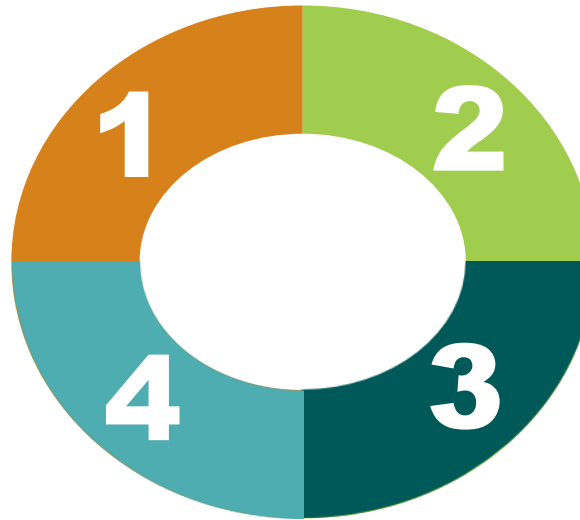
# PAC Program Phases

## Intake

- Complete forms, interviews and assessments
- Provide required documents
- Referrals to Service Providers
- Driver's License Reinstatement Review

## Phase I

- Meet with coordinator as specified
- Compliance with service providers
- Complete weekly verifiable job search/training, obtain employment
- Communicate/cooperate with DCSS



## Graduation

- Successful completion of program requirements
- Increased self sufficiency
- More informed on child support process
- Increased work ethic
- Increased child support payments for children
- 12 month follow up

## Phase II

- FT employment w/IWO & full payments (6 months)
- Compliance with Service Providers
- Review for Modification
- Referral for Access and Visitation if applicable
- Seek legitimation rights if applicable
- Request to negotiate payment on state arrears



# PAC Incentives

## Participant



- Alternative to incarceration
- Agency initiated reviews for modifications/ right size orders
- Negotiation of payments on state owed arrears
- Increased financial support for children
- New marketable skills
- Increased self sufficiency

## Judge



- Decreased re-offending
- Brief 2-3 minute face to face time with each participant
- A person who participants respect and seek approval from
- Seeks ways to get their attention and challenge participants
- Provides leadership

## Program



- Increased child support payments to families
- More frequent reviews
- Collaboration with Department of Community Supervision
- Collaboration with local Community Service Boards
- Incentives to pay off state debt and close case
- Increased compliance with court ordered support





# PAC Results: Evidence-Based Research

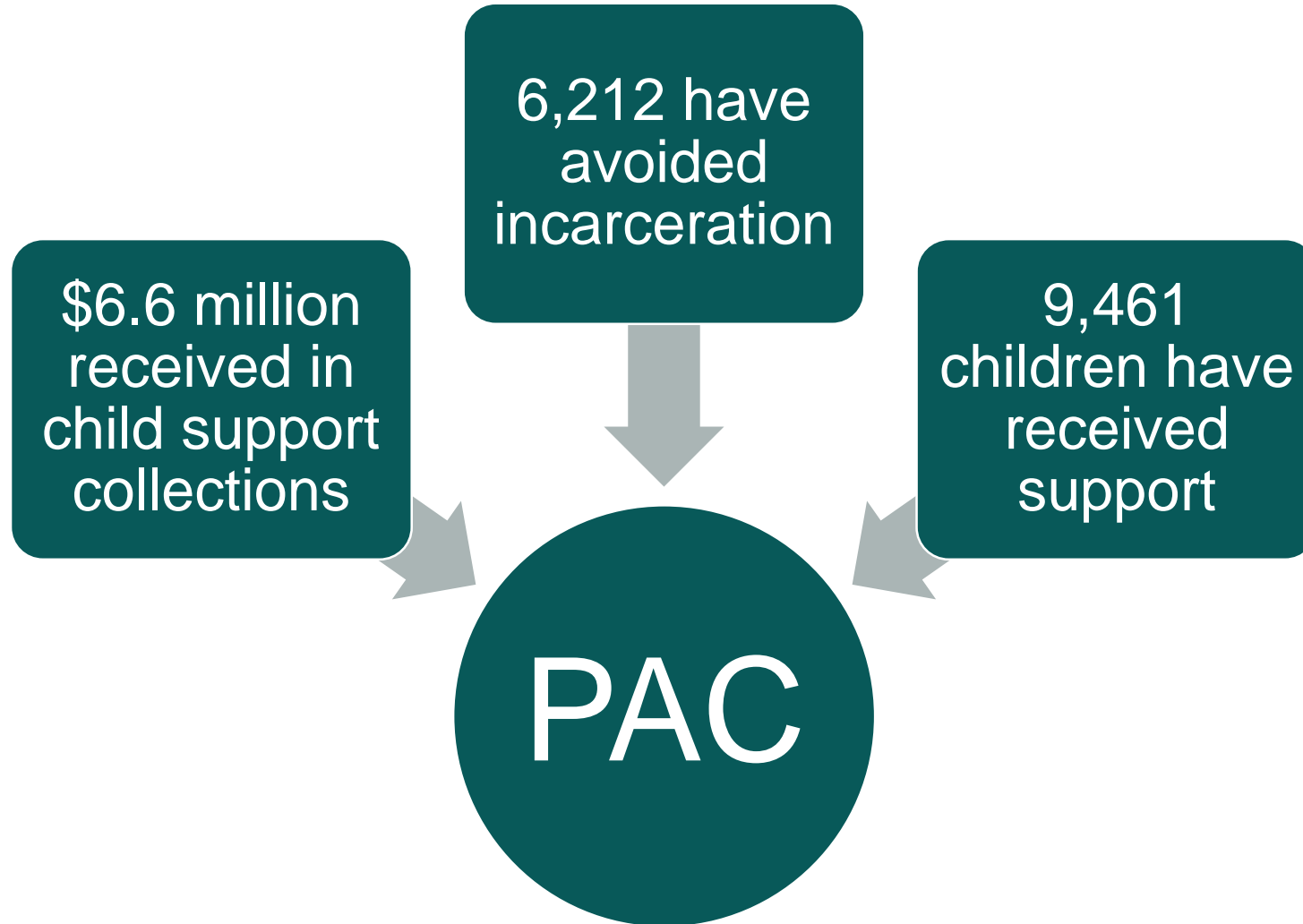
## Judicial Council of Georgia: Administrative Office of the Courts (2018)

- Reduced incarceration time
- Monthly child support payments increased 79% for PAC participants
- Participants who received referral-services increased payments by 84%
- Participants with felony record more than doubled their monthly payments
- PAC graduates maintained average monthly payments
- Monthly payments for ultimately unsuccessful participants increased 29%

Source: Judicial Council of Georgia, Administrative Office of the Courts. (2018). *PAC Court Evaluation*.



# PAC's Since 2012



# National Award Recognition

Georgia's Department of Human Services, Division of Child Support Services PAC program was awarded NCSEA's Innovative Partnership/Collaboration Award on August 14, 2018 at the NCSEA Leadership Symposium in Pittsburg, PA.

- Recognizes innovative partnerships
- Collaborations between child support agency and courts or other organizations or programs serving families



# Questions?

## **Judge Ann B. Harris**

Superior Court Judge  
Cobb Judicial Circuit

