Goal

• Better understand the people whose lives you touch

3 Questions

• What should you keep doing?
• What can you change?
• What do you want to learn?
Child Support, Poverty, & Public Assistance

- Child support is vital tool
- Public assistance requires cooperation with child support
- Payments to State, not family
- Paying parents live in poverty

Place matters
Hard work isn’t enough
Children don’t do better
Strategies

- Change the narrative
- Create access to good jobs
- Ensure zip code is not destiny
- Provide support that empowers
- Transform data use
The Problem

- False assumptions of fathers as antagonists
- System creates a vicious cycle
- Recoupment diverts family resources

The Solution

- Empower parents
- Reasonable standards
- End welfare recoupment
San Francisco Debt Relief Pilot

- Public/private partnership
- Built on COAP
- 100% debt relief
- Independent evaluation

How Did Debt Accrue?

- “Once that interest kicks in, there’s no turning back.” - Joe
- “I have to choose between paying child support and supporting my child.” - $krilla
- “It’s just like a snowball.” - Jeff
How Did Debt Accrue?

- Orders unaffordable
- High interest rate
- Lost licenses and assets
- Provide direct support

Debt Relief Results

- More consistent payment
- Reduced stress
- Improved credit scores & housing
- Reduced employment barriers

Debt Relief Results

- Increased financial control
- Better relationship with child
- Better coparent relationship
- Improved relationship with child support system
Before Debt Relief

• “They just look at you as a paycheck, or bad guy, or monster…” - Shawn
• “California is a mom’s state” - Artie

Before Debt Relief

• “They think you just have excuses. They don’t understand hardship.” - Jeff
• “I felt like I was an inmate…I had no power.” - Jeff

After the Debt Relief

• “It just felt like a blessing, like winning the lotto.” - $krilla
• “It feels like someone’s on your side finally.” - Shawn
Policy Options

• 100 percent payment to family
• Forgive government-owed debt
• No interest on govt.-owed debt

Practice Changes

• Ensure parents feel heard & respected in court
• Recognize parents’ desire to support children

Discussion

• What are you already doing to understand parents?
• How do you already show respect for parents’ dignity?
3 Questions

• What should you keep doing?
• What can you change?
• What do you want to learn?

You will make a difference in someone’s life.
Make it a positive difference!