



Enforcing with Purpose: Developing a Tool to Help Guide Child Support Enforcement

By: Paul Gehm, FOCB Management Analyst

You are working your alerts like a dutiful IV-D worker when you suddenly stop and scroll back up. Something caught your attention: *the* case – the one that always gives you and your office headaches. The payer's time is up, again, and it is time to trigger another show cause hearing because the payments have not been made. Even show cause is hit or miss with this payer. Why does it work sometimes and other times not at all? When does enforcement work? Why does it work? What does it mean to be successful with enforcement? These and many other questions will be answered by the SCAO Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB) workgroup tasked with developing an enforcement manual.

SCAO is creating this manual in an effort to better equip judges, referees, and friend of the court (FOC) staff across the state to select and execute appropriate enforcement remedies. The manual will be structured in a format similar to the [Custody and Parenting Time Investigation Manual](#). It will discuss the statutory, regulatory, and case law requirements for each enforcement tool. The manual will provide practice tips, considerations, and guidelines for when and how to use discretionary enforcement tools based on case criteria and available office resources. When presenting discretionary tools, the manual will offer guidance regarding a tool's effectiveness, both perceived and real. A case law appendix will be included, organized according to the relevant enforcement tool. Bench cards, desk aids, flowcharts, checklists, practice tips, and other aids will be developed in conjunction with the manual.



A workgroup has been convened to gather the insight and input necessary to develop the manual. Members of the workgroup represent stakeholder groups from diverse Michigan geographic locations, socioeconomic demographics, and court or office management styles. The members are: judges, referees, FOC directors and staff, Office of Child Support staff, and family law attorneys.

[The Friend of the Court Association](#) (FOCA) recently held its summer conference, and many training sessions focused on enforcement. One of the sessions featured a panel of the FOCA members from the

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Enforcing with Purpose

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enforcement manual workgroup. They opened a discussion about the manual project and provided high-level insight into key issues that impact enforcement. The session allowed other FOCA members an opportunity to learn about this project and weigh in. The panelists led a great discussion and shared wisdom about not only current practices, but possibilities for improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and family-focused nature of enforcement remedies.

One key takeaway was a recognition that resources spent on the *front end* of a case (from thorough locate efforts at establishment through right-sizing support orders) can save the office and court more resources on the *back end* (when numerous FOC and court staff might dedicate hours to chasing and threatening a parent who has not been meeting his or her obligation). The panelists also acknowledged differing practices for certain methods of enforcement, such as license suspensions and civil contempt, and the many variables contributing to effectiveness. Overall, the discussion was a great jumpstart for the full workgroup's efforts.



After the workgroup meetings are complete, SCAO will pull all the information together into a draft to be shared with the workgroup and others for editing before publication. For more information or questions, please contact Paul Gehm, the workgroup leader, at GehmP@courts.mi.gov.

Collaboration within Michigan's Intergovernmental Community

By: Linda Bess, Calhoun County Friend of the Court



It has been my good fortune and privilege to have spent the majority of my 30+ year career at the Calhoun County Friend of the Court (FOC) working in the intergovernmental world (or interstate, as we used to call it, and "intergov," as it is now known in its short form).

As I recall, it was about 1997 when Michigan, along with the rest of the country, came face-to-face with major changes in the intergov law. RURESA (Revised Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act) had been replaced by UIFSA (Uniform Interstate Family Support Act) of 1996. This legislative change introduced new concepts, new regulations, and new ways of processing intergov cases; there was a lot to learn and many changes to be implemented.

Recognizing that we needed more than the training sessions provided by the state, Susan Fox of Macomb County FOC organized monthly meetings for intergov workers in the field to discuss the day-to-day issues we were facing. Dozens of workers from all over the state benefited each month from sharing our mutual frustrations, questions, and problem cases.

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THE PUNDIT

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Collaboration within Michigan's Intergov Community

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This monthly group quickly evolved into a cohesive grassroots organization bound together by our determination to help each other become proficient in this new intergov world. We frequently received valuable input and direction from the Interstate Case Reconciliation (ICR) team, the Office of Child Support (OCS) Policy team, and the State Court Administrative Office (SCAO). And yes, we even shared a few disagreements and arguments – there were some turbulent moments as we struggled through many challenges.



It soon became evident that our monthly meetings were not enough to keep up with the volume of questions and problem cases that existed all over the state. It was then that “LIST2” was created. LIST2 was a private e-mail chain that allowed members to ask questions and present problem cases to be dissected by other members without having to wait until the next monthly meeting. LIST2 was created by and for intergov workers with the intent to be “underground” and work through our issues without input from “the state.”

These were stressful times as we were also dealing with the implementation of our first state-wide computer system, MiCSES, which was forcing us to give up our

individual ways of doing things and to conform to imposed, standardized ways of processing cases. It is fair to say that there was a certain level of resistance.

There came a point in our journey when we realized that remaining a detached and closed group was not serving us well. We needed Lansing and Lansing needed us. This disconnect was holding us back.

Intergov case processing improved and advanced in Michigan when we worked together as partners. LIST2 emerged from the shadows and was opened to anyone in the state. Over time, we have developed solid working relationships with OCS and SCAO. Our group benefited greatly early on (and still today) from the contributions of Bill Bartels of SCAO, who shared his expertise with the more intricate legal aspects of UIFSA for anyone struggling with a problem case. He created a number of memoranda addressing challenging intergov issues.

Today, intergov workers enjoy a productive working relationship with multiple partners in Lansing: Liz Stomski of SCAO; Andrew Moore of OCS Policy; Paula Fulton from OCS Training; Jennifer Reed of ICR; and Brent Barton of MiCSES, to name a few. Workers from county FOC offices contribute by serving on workgroups, joint application design (JAD) groups, committees, and the intergov work improve team (WIT), providing valuable hands-on expertise from the field to shape process improvements, system updates, and policy developments. Luckily, Michigan has numerous educated, committed, engaged intergov experts from the far corner of the UP to the bottom of the mitten, and all the area in between.

The intergov caseload in Michigan is currently about six to seven percent of the total IV-D caseload. Relatively speaking, that's small, but it is also vital. The majority of counties have at least one worker dedicated to an intergov caseload. Many smaller counties cannot afford that luxury. Working an intergov caseload can be a lonely place when not connected to the larger community.

Our intergov workers group recognized (mostly through our own lonely experiences) that sometimes LIST2 and our meetings were not enough or were too high-level for those still struggling to learn the basics. To support those new to intergov, I led the way in forming a mentoring program. Now, experienced workers volunteer to be paired with a newcomer. The pair arranges their preferred method of communication according to their agreed-upon schedule. The newcomer can receive mentoring in a private and safe environment. This has proven to

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Collaboration within Michigan's Intergov Community

(cont'd from page 3)

bring new workers up to speed more quickly, allowing for a firm base on which to expand their knowledge. Michigan workers have mentored newcomers into becoming mentors themselves – a gift that keeps on giving.

Anyone interested in joining the mentoring program can contact Wendy Amell from the Livingston County FOC (WAmell@livgov.com). Wendy will connect newcomers with an experienced intergovernmental caseworker. Most of us find it beneficial to have someone we can talk to out loud about difficult cases.

We have become quite efficient in the art of partnering, tackling issues, and jumping hurdles by sharing knowledge and information. And this comes none too soon, as we are nudged into the modern era of internet and electronic transfer of information and data (Alerts, CSEnets, QUICK, and EDE – I will spare you the translation this time!).



We recently graduated from the LIST2 e-mail chain to a Google Group open to anyone interested in the intergovernmental work done in Michigan. It is administered by Liz Stomski of SCAO (StomskiE@courts.mi.gov) and Wendy Amell. To join this group, contact either administrator for an invitation to join.

We have found this group and the access to everyone's questions and answers to be a golden opportunity to continuously improve our work quality. Often many workers share the same question, and even sharing *misinformation* benefits our whole community because it opens a dialogue about the misunderstanding and identifying the correct information or process.

Those turbulent early years served a purpose as we learned the value of working together. The originally small grassroots group of local workers has grown to a recognizable strength and effectiveness, supported by our strong working relationship with Lansing. We transitioned through changes in laws and policies, new computer systems, and roller coaster rides through process changes and system upgrades. We have become good at what we do.

It is now time to put our strengths, partnerships, and commitments to the test. UIFSA 2008 was passed into law in Michigan in December 2016, which means more changes. Michigan did not adopt UIFSA 2001, where a majority of the changes in UIFSA 2008 occurred. There are some big differences between UIFSA 1996 and 2008 that will require the understanding of new concepts and language. Intergovernmental income withholding and payment processing look drastically different from how we currently know them in Michigan, especially with the addition of UIFSA 2008's section 319B.

Along with the major legislative changes, the federal forms have been overhauled and new ones added. These new forms will be added to our system in December. The challenges ahead will demand that we continue to work together for a smooth transition. Using the lessons of our past trials and tribulations will no doubt pave a path to success, and intergov cases will continue to be well-served by Michigan.

I was asked to explain why I choose to do what I do, and what interests me about my work. It is said often in our intergov world that you either love it or you hate it—and there is little space in between. I *love* intergov work, its challenges, and the dynamic quality of the work. More importantly, it is a pleasure and honor to work with people all over Michigan who share a passion for the work we do.

I am personally most proud of serving as a resource to other intergov community members in a few different ways. I have had the opportunity to work as a liaison of sorts between county field workers and Lansing state-level agencies by communicating the needs and desired changes from the field perspective through my WIT membership.

Furthermore, I have enjoyed teaching and encouraging others, watching the light bulbs go on when the dots finally connect. And of course, the mentoring program has been very rewarding – watching our community grow and get smarter and more engaged brings me joy. This community has blessed my career, and thus, my life. How fortunate are we who love what we do?

TECHNOLOGY TRENDS: A Special Focus on Graphic Design & Content Creation Tools



By: Michelle Le Feve, Courtland Consulting

[Editor's Note: This article is the second in a three-part series of articles that focus on the availability of technological resources to help courts collect information and perform efficiently. While certain products are highlighted, this is not an endorsement of one product over another.]

Through my work with Courtland Consulting, I share knowledge of new tools and technology trends with many courts, agencies, organizations, and businesses. These technological advances can help people do their jobs more efficiently and market programs and services more effectively. This Technology Trends article is the second in a series that I am writing to share how people and companies are taking advantage of new online tools to collaborate and work on projects, saving time and money.

The tools that I describe in this article are considered Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), which allows people to subscribe and use application software in the cloud. All of the examples in this article offer: a license-free or "freemium" version, free trial, and/or low-cost monthly fee.

Easily Turn Your Ideas into Stunning Graphics

With social media and internet usage increasing by leaps and bounds, we are all inundated with e-mails, Tweets, "likes," and texts, etc., which makes it more challenging for any particular company or agency to attract our attention. One important way to stand out from the noise is to **use graphic design for engaging visual content and imagery**. In fact, Facebook, which still reigns as the top social network with 1.94 billion monthly active users worldwide, reports that their posts with images receive 2.3 times more engagement than posts without images. Similarly, Twitter updates that include images generate 150% more retweets than plain-text updates. The reason that visual content has such an impact is because what we see has a profound effect on what we do, how we feel, and who we are. (Sources: Zephoria Digital Marketing, BuzzSumo, Buffer, and Thomson Reuters.) Maybe graphic design and marketing are foreign concepts to you, but you might find that one of your staff or coworkers is a design whiz when the right tools are available.

Whether you need social media covers, a printed poster, or presentation images, there are **online graphic design and content creation tools** that can help turn your ideas into striking designs without spending the time and money to hire an outside design or marketing agency. This can increase your reach and awareness with the audience you want to engage.

Major benefits to using online graphic design and content creation tools include:

- Easy to use with minimal learning curve;
- Designed to serve both beginners and pro-designers in creating simple and quick designs;
- Preset and customized design sizes and templates available (e.g., postcard mailer, flyer, Facebook banner, etc.);
- Images can be edited with filters and text captions.

I have chosen to highlight three of my favorite online graphic design and content creation tools, which are: **Canva**, **Pablo by Buffer**, and **Visme**. I have used these tools for a myriad of projects, ranging from presentations, reports, and e-mail marketing images to blog posts, social media, and various print designs.

(cont'd on page 6)



Canva is a graphic design and content creation tool that has over 10 million users. With Canva, you need to first create a free

account from their website at www.Canva.com. After your Canva login is generated, you can create a design by choosing the design size (such as a social media image, header templates, marketing ads, presentations, etc.) or choose from preset templates.

Canva has a drag-and-drop feature for uploading photos and images to your design and allows you to create

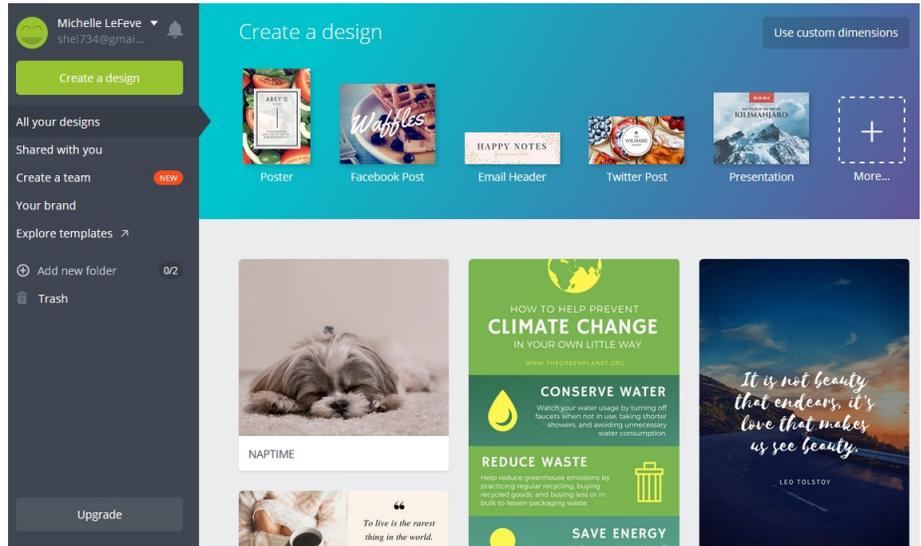


Figure 1 - Canva – Create a Design and Saved Designs in Account

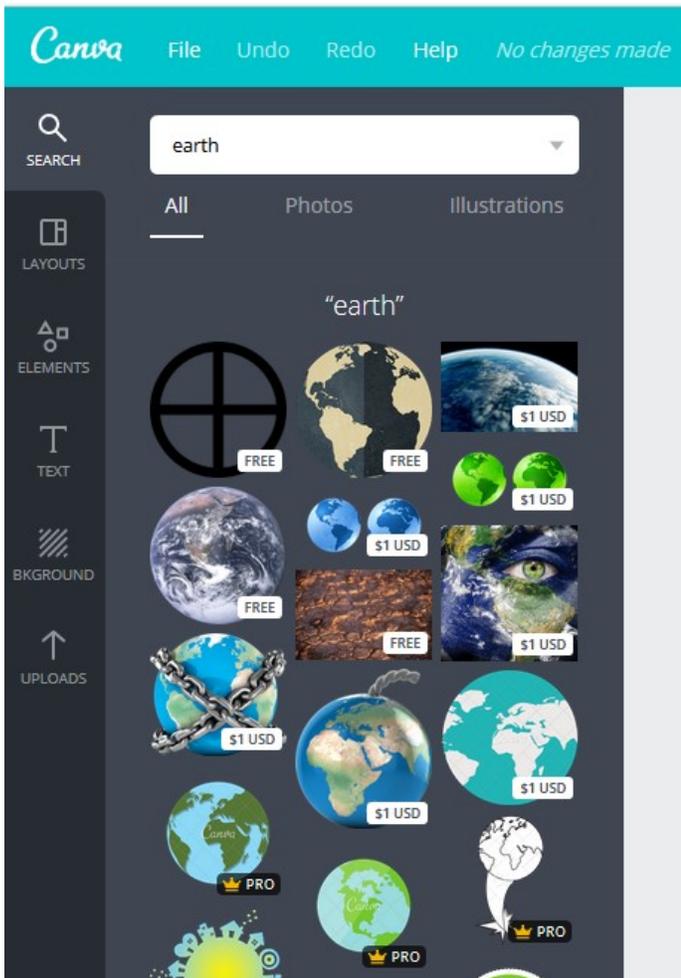


Figure 2 - Canva – Free and Paid Images Available

a design completely from scratch. When you save the Canva design, it is saved to your account profile, which you can later access from the web. This is extremely convenient when reusing graphic designs for other project purposes (refer to Figure 1).

You can utilize Canva’s library of free font styles, templates, and over 200,000 free photos and illustrations. Not all the available images are free, but those that require a purchase are clearly marked (see Figure 2). Canva also has an array of templates to choose from including reports, certificates, presentations, brochures, calendars, newsletters, and more.

For print materials, Canva has a preference for adding crop marks and bleeds to your design file if you need it, and you can export the final design artwork file to a high resolution PDF for printing or JPG and PNG image files for the web.

The paid version of Canva for Work offers several additional features compared to the “freemium” version, including more storage space for saving designs in your account; exclusive access to 300,000 free photos, illustrations, and templates (see images in Figure 2 designated “PRO”); set color palettes for your brand; and saving your templates.



Buffer is a leading social media management tool with over 3 million registered users and allows you to schedule, publish, and analyze all of your social media posts in one place. You can update multiple social media profiles simultaneously with Buffer, and it allows you to schedule posts in advance. As an important extension of Buffer, **Pablo** was developed as a *free* graphic design tool to allow fast and easy image creation with the perfect size and format for Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest. This takes the guesswork out of image sizing for each different social network and you can choose from a set of typography and formatting options. I have also used Pablo for creating quick images for presentations.

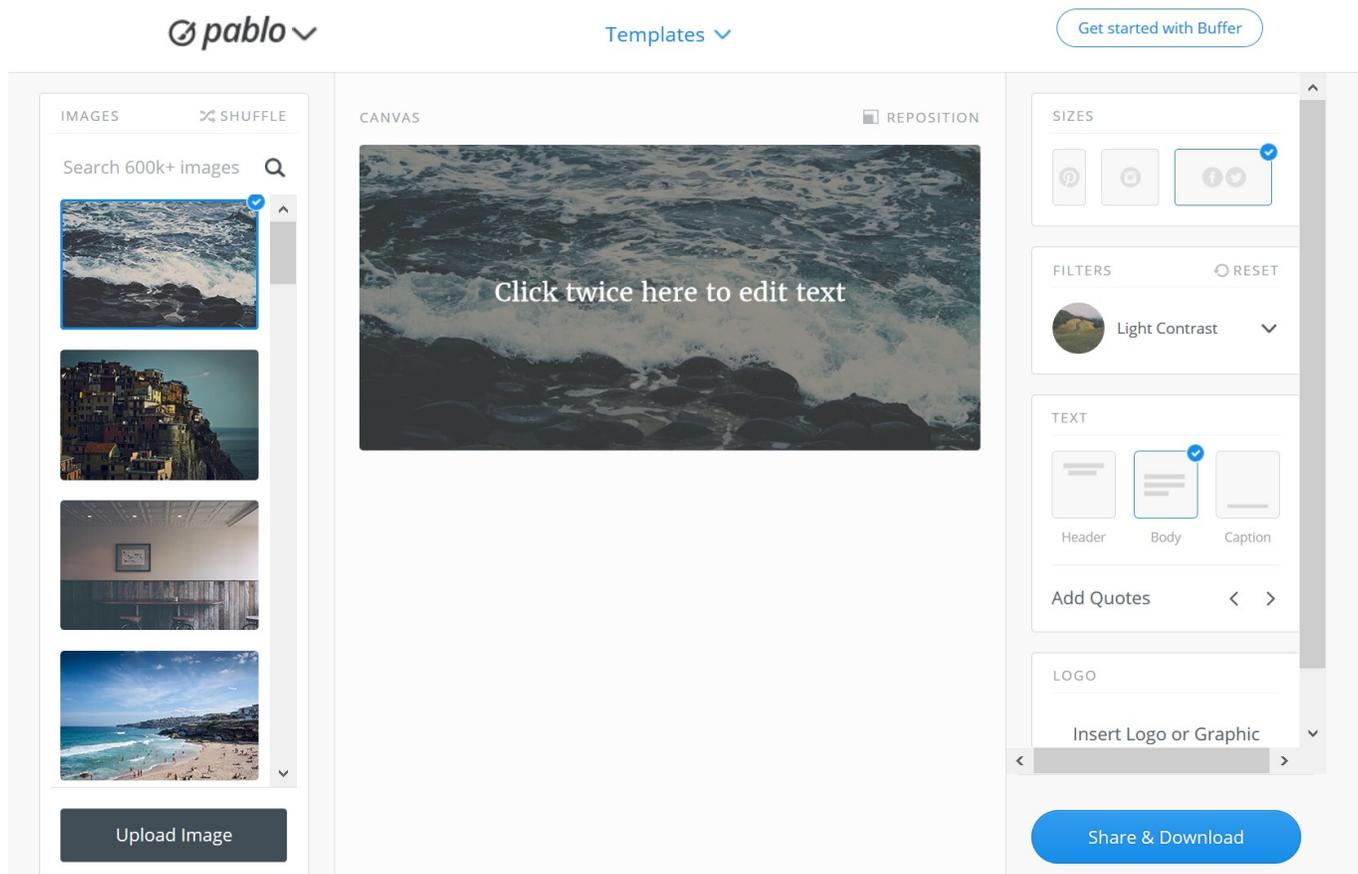


Figure 3 - Pablo – Intuitive Interface

With over 600,000 images available to use for free, Pablo has a lot of features for an online photo editing tool and it does not require a login to use the tool. Go to <https://pablo.buffer.com> and check out the following features for Pablo and refer to Figure 3:

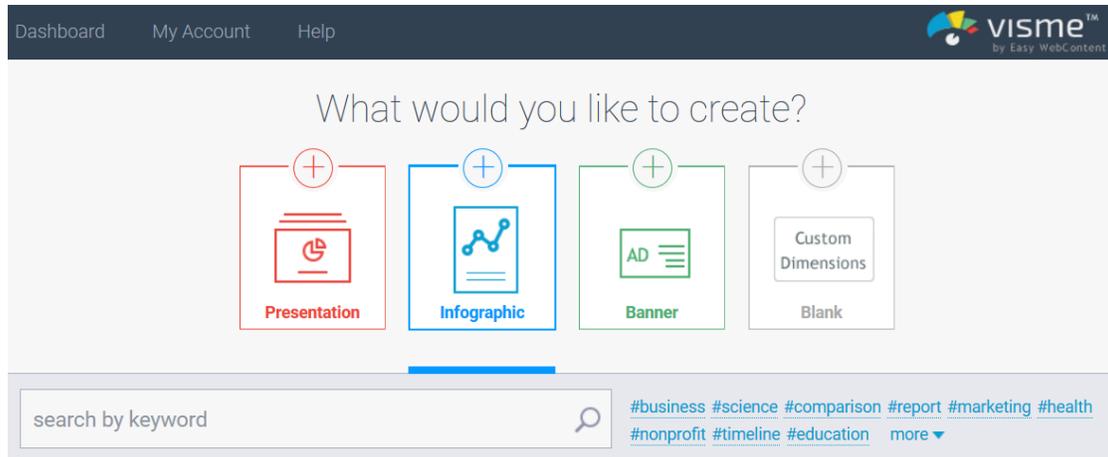
- Intuitive and easy-to-use interface;
- Standard social media graphic size options available;
- Drag-and-drop feature for adding images;
- Upload images or graphics;
- Filter photos with a contrast, blur, or tint;
- Share your graphic design on social media; schedule using Buffer or download the final design artwork file as a PNG file.

(cont'd on page 8)



Visme has over 750,000 users and is a content creation tool that also does graphic design. Visme offers templates for infographics, presentations, social media cover images, and custom dimensions for designs. Similar to Canva, you need to first create a free Visme account from their website at www.Visme.com.

Then you choose what type of design content you would like to create using Visme's user-friendly interface (refer to Figure 4).



Featured



Figure 4 - Visme – User-Friendly Interface

Visme offers privacy control over content to be public, private, or password-protected. In addition, Visme has over 100 fonts, millions of free images, and over 6,000 image icons. The presentation templates include different slide layouts for you to choose from and an easy-to-use Presentation builder.

With the paid version of Visme, you can also use the Graph Maker feature to help turn data into beautiful visuals using over 20 chart types and hundreds of templates. The charts can be populated with static or dynamic data by uploading an Excel or CSV file. Visme is simple and straightforward for the novice, and powerful and flexible for professionals and organizations of all sizes.

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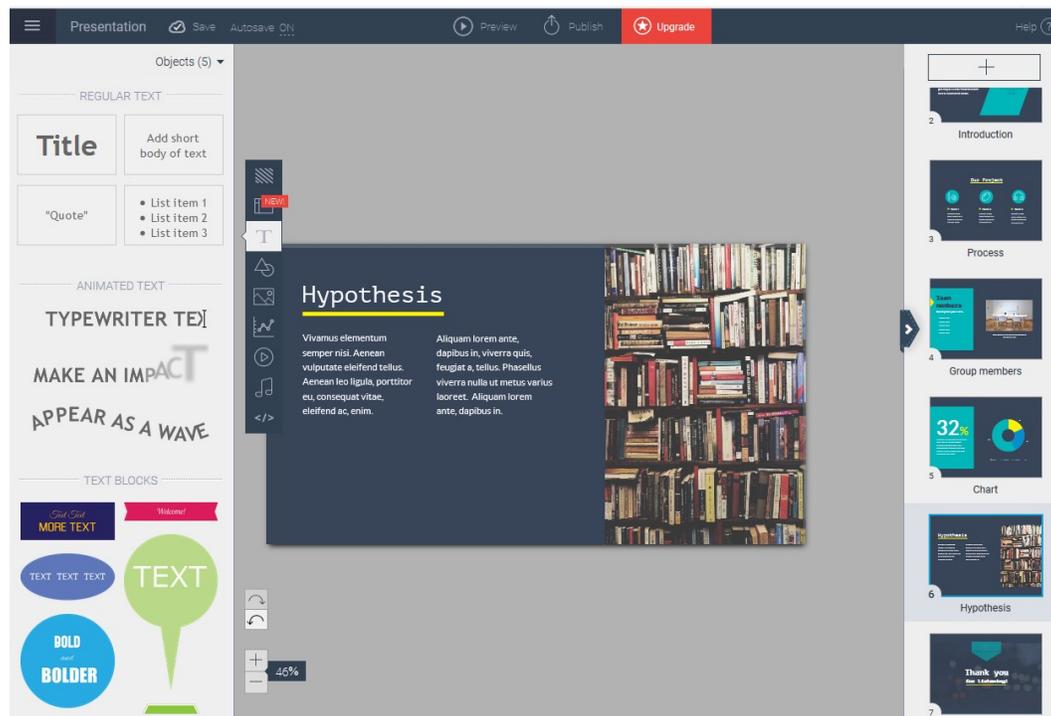


Figure 5 - Visme – Presentation Template Example

Taking Advantage of the Opportunity

Tools such as Canva, Pablo by Buffer, and Visme open the creative process to anyone – even those without graphic design training. With a variety of templates and different types of content and images, these tools can help you increase awareness and attract attention to have your key messages stand out. Companies who develop these new SaaS tools are fiercely competitive with each other and they are designing these easy-to-use products that are affordable and include the features we need. With a little time investment on your part, you can learn on your own.

I hope you find this article beneficial with learning and exploring new avenues to help support and manage the important work you do for your court, counties, and communities. Feel free to send me your thoughts or how you have used any of these tools. Look for the last Technology Trends article in the winter issue of *The Pundit*.

Meet the Author: Michelle Le Feve is a creative type who works as a project manager, communication specialist, writer, speaker and trainer. She is passionate about helping people learn new skills using technology to improve efficiency in the workplace. She loves being a mom, good conversation, and a strong cup a coffee. Connect with her by email at lefevem@courtladconsulting.com or Twitter @MichelleLeFeve.

Website links for tools and resources mentioned in this article: www.Canva.com, <https://Pablo.Buffer.com>, <https://Buffer.com>, <https://blog.Bufferapp.com>, www.Visme.co, <https://smallbiztrends.com>, www.buzzsumo.com, <https://zephoria.com>, <https://tax.thomsonreuters.com>, www.expandedramblings.com.

Article Disclaimer: With some of these tools, the freemium version only offers limited features vs. the paid version with more bells and whistles. You can review the package differences on each product's website. Product packages and pricing are subject to change based on its provider. If you have issues connecting to these tools from your court, county, or state office network, then you will need to work with your IT Department for approval/access. As an alternative, these tools have free mobile apps that you can install or use via a web browser on your tablet or smartphone. Do not ever publish confidential information when using any free software tools.

Fall Conference at Boyne Highlands: Register Now!



Did you know that this is the 35th year of the fall [Michigan Family Support Council](#) (MFSC) conference? Two of its key organizers, Sheila Waldrop and Pam Sala, provided some insight into why the conference is held each year, the history of the conference, what to expect at this year's conference, and why they are personally dedicated to making the conference happen.



Sheila Waldrop is the Deputy Director of Berrien County's Friend of the Court office, where she has worked for the past 21 years in various positions. Waldrop is the current President of MFSC and describes the fall conference as "a great program and a great opportunity to keep people informed about processes and procedures."

Pam Sala is currently the Chief Assistant Friend of the Court for Administrative Operations with Oakland County's Friend of the Court office. She has also worked for Wayne County's Friend of the Court and as a trainer for state-wide implementation of the MiCSES system. These experiences bring her a total of 27 years with the Michigan child support program. Sala is currently serving as the MFSC Program Chair, and she sees the fall conference as important because "it fills a void that the state can't fill elsewhere because of funding constraints."



Conference Agenda. This year's conference will feature about 40 different workshops on topics ranging from the child support calculator, intergovernmental casework, leadership, and custody and parenting time. The conference opens on Wednesday, October 4th, with keynote speaker [Linda Larsen](#). Also speaking at the conference are Erin Frisch, Director of the Office of Child Support, and Steve Capps, Director of the Friend of the Court Bureau.

You can look forward to having some fun between workshop sessions, including dancing, a photo booth, a coloring contest, euchre, and a silent auction with proceeds benefitting [Ele's Place](#) – a healing center for grieving children and teens.

Scholarships & Volunteering. If you have never been to the conference, we hope you will consider attending this year! If the conference cost is an issue, there are [scholarships available](#) to cover the cost of conference registration and lodgings. Note that all scholarship recipients are obligated to volunteer at the conference. For those of you who have an urge to contribute or give back, MFSC is always looking for more [conference volunteers](#) to help manage the registration process, silent auction, and other tasks.

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The Pundit provides information on current issues to Michigan child support staff. The Pundit is not intended to provide legal advice and does not represent the opinions of the Michigan Supreme Court or the State Court Administrative Office.

Fall Conference at Boyne Highlands

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Awards Nominations. Did you know that MFSC gives out awards for outstanding child support professionals at the fall conference? Nominations are open until September 2, 2017, for a management and staff position from each agency: Friend of the Court, Prosecuting Attorney, and Office of Child Support. Many people are not aware that you can also nominate someone outside of your own agency. Sometimes we might feel that we are working thankless jobs – here's a chance to give recognition to those who go above and beyond!

Why should you be excited about attending the conference? As child support professionals all across the state and working for different agencies, we often find ourselves unaware of how our work on a given case impacts a later action by a different agency, or why a case came to us in a certain condition. We also may not be aware of different methods used in other counties to accomplish the same task. And how often do most of us have the opportunity to mingle with program leadership? The fall conference provides a setting to meet your counterparts in other offices, learn about and discuss current challenges, and have some fun with your new acquaintances! When asked why she dedicates so much time and energy to MFSC as a volunteer, Pam Sala replied without hesitation, "The people." Sheila Waldrop immediately echoed the sentiment, "I have to agree." Waldrop added that the conference is "an opportunity to network outside of your 9 to 5."

The deadline to [register](#) at the discounted rate is September 23, 2017 – don't miss it!

Meet the Friend of the Court Bureau's New Analyst

Amy Lindholm is the newest management analyst at the State Court Administrative Office's Friend of the Court Bureau (FOCB). Amy earned her undergraduate degree at Kalamazoo College and her master's degree from Grand Valley State University. Her master's degree is in public administration with a focus in policy and planning.

Immediately before joining FOCB, Amy worked as the administrative director at a Michigan-based nonprofit organization, SowHope. The organization works with local people from developing countries to improve the overall health of families and communities in their countries by implementing projects designed to empower very poor women. Amy hopes to apply knowledge of systems change related to poverty, family structure, and cross-sector collaboration to the child support program.



Before completing her master's degree, Amy worked at the Kent County Friend of the Court (FOC) from 2010 to 2015 with a focus on support review and modification. While at the Kent FOC, Amy served on the joint application design group tasked with creating the web-based Michigan child support formula calculator that is currently in use.

Amy also worked on projects related to process improvement, customer service improvement, community outreach, and holistic case management. Through these experiences with the Kent FOC, she developed a passion for effective customer service and accurate child support calculations and orders, as well as individualized case management techniques. Amy is excited to bring this local office experience to the FOCB team, as well as her public administration perspective.

Outside of work, Amy volunteers with local nonprofit organizations based in the Grand Rapids community doing things like tutoring children and working to improve residents' access to opportunities and resources. You might hear her using buzzwords like "social justice" and "health equity." She also enjoys and supports the local arts community through attending and organizing events. Amy's favorite pastime is traveling, whether camping in Michigan, exploring cities in other states, or learning about different cultures and languages abroad.

You can contact Amy at LindholmA@courts.mi.gov. She looks forward to hearing from you!

Introducing a new column: BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Whatever position we hold in the IV-D world, it can sometimes feel that we are all chasing dollars in some way or another. A child's livelihood, a parent's ability to care for a child, and even our offices' ability to provide services can all be measured in cash. But **beyond the numbers**, every case is a story of a real family's unique challenges, struggles, and sometimes because of our help...successes. These stories play out across Michigan, and child support professionals see them every day where they work and where they live.

What stories motivate you? Submit your **Beyond the Numbers** article for the chance to share it with your colleagues across the state in the next Pundit edition.

(To submit, visit <http://michildsupportpundit.blogspot.com/> and scroll to the bottom.)

Beyond the Numbers: Patience Pays Off

Submitted by Juan Rosario.

Juan is a case manager at Kent County Friend of the Court. Juan is thankful for his diverse life experiences from growing up in the Dominican Republic, New York City, and later Grand Rapids.



One dad whose story sticks with me is Deante.* When he first came in for an appointment to tell me about why he hadn't been paying his support, he was really irritated with the friend of the court, and he didn't trust me to help him.

He was well-spoken and told me about his dream job and the training he had done to get that job. But he had a felony on his record now, didn't have housing, and didn't get along with the mom on his case. His case had been charging almost \$700 per month, and he had only made a couple small payments. He said he had given up: "All I wanted to do, I gave it up." His support order was based on his pre-felony earnings, so I started a support review to right-size support.

Something struck me about how Deante talked about his old dream job. I referred him to a transitional work program available through Goodwill. He was able to get full-time hours and more, but at minimum wage. It wasn't a smooth transition. He struggled at first with attendance because he did not have reliable transportation. My contact at the Goodwill program asked if I thought they should keep Deante on. I asked them to give him another chance. Deante started showing leadership qualities in his work. When there was an opening for a lead position, Deante interviewed for it. He did great and he got the job. I talked to him after that, and he was proud of his accomplishments as a lead worker. He told me that he hadn't realized how negative he had been before. I could tell that now he had confidence in himself; he finally had something of his own that he accomplished. Now he's working on getting his own housing, too.

I like to go the extra step and help people out, but it is not always easy. Trying to make employment work with Deante almost drained me. He was so negative in the beginning that I remember telling him before his first interview with the Goodwill program, "Man, you don't have to do this if you don't want to." Now for the first time in his case, Deante is earning enough to pay his full monthly obligation.

*Name changed to protect confidentiality.



MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS DECISIONS

PUBLISHED AND UNPUBLISHED SEE: <http://courts.mi.gov/courts/coa/opinions/pages/zipfiles.aspx>

Geering v King, for publication opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 13, 2017. (Docket No. 335794). Inconsistency in co-parenting, discipline, communication, and the failure to foster the relationship with the other parent did not render the parents unfit within the definition the statute provides. If two fit parents oppose an order for grandparenting time, the court must dismiss the grandparenting time request.

Jones v Jones, for publication opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 22, 2017. (Docket No. 334937). The plaintiff, presumed father, could revoke his paternity under the Revocation of Paternity Act (RPA) because he specifically revoked his consent to defendant's assisted reproductive technology procedures and did not contribute to her *in vitro* fertilization. The court distinguished the situation in which a presumed father might have participated in *in vitro* fertilization but later revoked his consent for assisted reproductive technology by opining the best interest factors could still be used if appropriate to deny revocation.

Matthew v Trudell, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 5, 2017. (Docket No. 334911). When the moving party introduced evidence that a change in domicile could produce more income and access to extended family, but failed to produce evidence of how such a change would improve the child's life and further how the proposed change in parenting time would preserve and foster the parental relationship between the child and each parent, the court correctly denied the motion to change domicile.

McCoy v Main, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 11, 2017. (Docket No. 334659). The trial court is free to adopt the custody investigator's recommendation provided that the court indicates on the record that it makes an independent determination that the findings in the investigator's report were correct and proper.

Walker v Walker, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 13, 2017. (Docket No. 334752). A material change of circumstances significant enough to warrant a change in custody and/or parenting time must be greater than normal parenting struggles with children's hygiene and homework.

Daly v Ward, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 18, 2017. (Docket No. 333425). It was irrelevant whether the trial court's temporary order changing custody was proper; once a new established custodial environment exists—regardless of how it came to exist—it cannot be changed absent clear and convincing evidence that a change is in the child's best interests.

Landry-Chan v Chan, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 20, 2017. (Docket No. 331977). The trial court could properly limit evidence related to the best interest factors to events *after* the last custody order had entered because the court had already considered the best interest factors for entry of that order.

Anglin v Anglin, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 25, 2017. (Docket No. 331313). The failure of a party to appeal from an original judgment of divorce operates as a stipulation to the provisions in that judgment, and a party cannot later collaterally attack the validity of that judgment through a motion to modify child support.

Shimel v McKinley, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released April 27, 2017. (Docket No. 334571). The trial court need not consider all factors under MCL 722.27a(7) in determining whether to modify parenting time; only those factors that are relevant.

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MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS DECISIONS *(cont'd from page 13)*

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Emmons v Vancourt, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released May 4, 2017. (Docket No. 335703).

When a change in parenting time would bring plaintiff's annual overnights from 265 down to 182.5, the change would necessarily impact the child's established custodial environment. As such, the trial court should have required defendant to show proper cause or a change of circumstances to change custody and then show by clear and convincing evidence that the parenting time modification is in the best interest of the child.

Department of Health and Human Services v Birmingham, unpublished opinion of the Court of the Appeals, released May 30, 2017. (Docket No. 336553).

Although the Child Custody Act allows certain designated third-parties to initiate an action for custody of a child and allows the trial court to award custody to other third-parties when the court is already engaged in a custody determination, a Family Support Action designating a great-uncle of the child as the child's *custodian* was for purposes of determining that he had the right to seek support and did not create a custody dispute sufficient to give the trial court authority to entertain a motion to grant custody to him.

Moffett v Jemmott, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 8, 2017. (Docket No. 330900).

By signing an order for genetic testing in a paternity action without objecting to any terms of the order, a defendant concedes a court's personal jurisdiction over him.

Lessard v Londo, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 13, 2017. (Docket No. 336156).

The trial court did not err by gradually increasing parenting time from a limited, supervised schedule and not allowing a more liberal parenting time schedule as suggested by articles plaintiff introduced because it was required to determine a parenting time schedule based on the facts of the case and not on a hypothetical child.

White v Garber, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 15, 2017. (Docket No. 336251).

After applying the relevant factors under the Uniform Child Custody Jurisdiction and Enforcement Act and determining it does not have jurisdiction, the trial court has no reason nor obligation to contact the other state to confer.

Duncan v Booth, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 15, 2017. (Docket No. 336364).

The trial court could properly find that the lack of time defendant spent with his other daughter and particularly his failure to exercise summer parenting time with her was a factor in determining plaintiff had the better capacity and disposition of the parties involved to give the child love, affection, and guidance and to continue the education and raising of the child in his or her religion.

Magryta v Magryta, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 20, 2017. (Docket No. 336433).

The Court of Appeals directed the trial court to find the mother in contempt and impose such sanctions as will make her comply with the court's order because when a party continuously violates the court's orders without consequence, the other party's rights under a court order are rendered meaningless.

Marchese v Marchese, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 22, 2017. (Docket No. 330925; 331560).

Evidence of a parent intentionally withholding the other parent's court-ordered parenting time until some other condition is met (in this case, sale of the parties' cottage to the custodial parent's mother) is a clear violation of that parenting time order and grounds for a contempt ruling against the violator.

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MICHIGAN COURT OF APPEALS DECISIONS (cont'd from page 14)

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Fante v Nova, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released June 29, 2017. (Docket No. 334735; 336085). The trial court improperly “placed” the children with their father under what the trial court called a temporary order pending the conclusion of a child protective services investigation of mother. Because the order amounted to a change in custody, the court should have first determined whether an established custodial environment existed and whether an analysis of the best interest factors supported a change.

Hund v Hund, unpublished opinion of the Court of Appeals, released July 6, 2017. (Docket No. 334313). In considering a request to change a child’s domicile, the court is not limited to evidence of how the change would improve the child’s life from the current situation but may consider a former better situation made worse by voluntary changes such as, in this case, the mother’s voluntary temporary move to her parent’s house to be nearer to her desired location.

Michigan IV-D Memorandums (Office of Child Support)

2017-018 (July 17, 2017) Implementation of the Case Closure Improvement Plan (CCIP)

This IV-D Memorandum announces the implementation of the Case Closure Improvement Plan (CCIP). By implementing the CCIP, Michigan’s IV-D program will continue its corrective actions to improve case closure after failing the federal benchmark for Case Closure in the FY 2015 SASS audit and following a corrective action plan (CAP) for Case Closure during FY 2016.

2017-017 (July 6, 2017) Paternity Establishment Improvement

This IV-D Memorandum explains the Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP)-Up Initiative to improve paternity establishment data in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES). It also provides: a description of the PEP-Up Report; recommended actions for FOC, PA, and OCS support specialist (SS) staff; instructions for accessing the 2017 PEP-Up report; and information for monitoring progress on the PEP-Up Initiative.

2017-016 (July 13, 2017) Updates to Michigan’s Federal Reporting Process, the Child Support Enforcement Annual Data Report OCSE-157 (FR-157), and Other Related Business Objects Reports

The introduction of the automated Medicaid negative offset process within the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) has created the need for changes to Michigan’s federal reporting process. This has resulted in changes to several Business Objects reports that will be effective with the Data Warehouse 2.29.2 Release on July 21, 2017. The changes to Michigan’s federal reporting process have also resulted in an update to Exhibit 1.30E1, Performance Factor Indicators. This exhibit is published with this memorandum. This memorandum also announces the Data Warehouse’s resumption of federal reporting batches.

2017-015 (July 6, 2017) Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Self-Assessment (SASS) Audit Results

This IV-D Memorandum provides information related to the FY 2016 SASS audit and findings. This includes: a brief overview of the SASS audit process and an explanation of the SASS audit findings. This IV-D Memorandum replaces and obsoletes IV-D Memorandum 2016-024.

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Michigan IV-D Memorandums (Office of Child Support) (cont'd from page 15)

2017-014 (June 8, 2017) Revisions to the Birth Expenses Request and Updates to Section 4.25, "Birth Expenses," of the Michigan IV-D Child Support Manual

This IV-D Memorandum announces revisions to the Birth Expenses Request (OCS0076 and 6070). The revised OCS0076 and 6070 will be implemented in the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) on June 14, 2017. These forms are the MiCSES-generated versions of the Birth Expenses Request (DCH-0491). This memorandum also announces revisions to Section 4.25 to clarify the PA staff process for sending the Birth Expenses Request and provide information about the new automated Medicaid negative offset process that will be implemented with the MiCSES 9.5 Release on June 15, 2017.

2017-013 (June 5, 2017) Automated Medicaid Negative Offset Process for the Recoupment of Incorrect Medical Support Paid to the State

This IV-D Memorandum introduces the automated Medicaid negative offset process for the recoupment of incorrect medical support payments made to the state. These support payments are made to the state to cover Medicaid and state-paid birth expenses. This process will be introduced with the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System (MiCSES) 9.5 Release on June 15, 2017.

2017-012 (June 6, 2017) IV-D Services for Same-Sex Couples

On June 26, 2015, the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) in *Obergefell v. Hodges* legalized same-sex marriage. Although the Supreme Court's decision permits same-sex marriage in all states, the types of services that IV-D staff can provide to same-sex spouses and couples when they request IV-D services are not addressed in the decision. This IV-D Memorandum provides direction to IV-D staff regarding the level of IV-D services afforded to same-sex spouses and couples and their children.

2017-011 (July 28, 2017) OCS Implementation of the Independent Security Audit Requirement Contained in Section 4.33(b) of the Current (Fiscal Year [FY] 2017) Cooperative Reimbursement Program (CRP) Agreement

This IV-D Memorandum also provides guidance related to the items that must be reviewed in an Independent Security Audit and supporting documentation for the security standards.



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