



Department of Justice  
Canada

Ministère de la Justice  
Canada

Canada

**RESEARCH REPORT**

**IMPACT OF ADDING REVENUE  
CANADA DATABASES UNDER  
FOAEA—PART 1 TRACING FOR  
LOCATING PERSONS**

**Final Report**

**2004-FCY-10E**



**Impact of Adding Revenue Canada Databases Under  
FOAEA—Part 1 Tracing For Locating Persons**

**Final Report**

**Prepared by:**  
Focus Consultants

**Presented to:**  
Family, Children and Youth Section  
Department of Justice Canada

*The views expressed in this report are those of the authors  
and do not necessarily represent the views of  
the Department of Justice Canada.*

*Aussi disponible en français*

*This report may be reproduced, in part or in whole, and by any means, without charge or further permission from the Department of Justice Canada, provided that due diligence is exercised in ensuring the accuracy of the materials reproduced; that the Department of Justice Canada is identified as the source department; and that the reproduction is not represented as an official version of the original report.*

© Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada,  
represented by the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, 2005

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	vii
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS DOCUMENT .....	1
2.0 FEDERAL TRACING: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND .....	3
2.1 General Legislative and Policy Background.....	3
2.2 Federal Enforcement Initiative .....	3
2.3 Tracing: Addition of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency Databases .....	4
2.4 Monitoring and Evaluation of Federal Enforcement Initiatives .....	4
2.5 Site Selection .....	4
3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE MAINTENANCE TRACING PROCESS .....	5
4.0 RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGIES AND LIMITATIONS .....	7
4.1 Overview of Components .....	7
4.2 Description of Component I.....	7
4.3 Description of Component II .....	8
4.4 Design Phase and Pilot Testing.....	9
4.5 Research Issues and Limitations.....	11
5.0 RECIPIENT AND PAYOR CHARACTERISTICS .....	17
5.1 Recipient Data.....	17
5.2 Payor Data.....	18
6.0 CASE CHARACTERISTICS.....	21
6.1 Enrollments and Multiple Files.....	21
6.2 Maintenance Orders .....	21
6.3 Total Arrears and Payments to Date .....	23
6.4 Type of Payments .....	26
7.0 TRACING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY .....	27
7.1 Trace History .....	27
7.2 Active Enforcement Actions.....	27

8.0	TRACE CHARACTERISTICS, RESULTS AND IMPACTS.....	29
8.1	Types of Trace Requests and Receipts .....	29
8.2	Time Durations Between Trace Intervals .....	30
8.3	Quality of Trace Data.....	31
9.0	TRACE COMPLETION DATA.....	37
9.1	Number of Completed Traces Based on FOAEA Results .....	37
9.2	Types of Verification Used for Trace .....	37
9.3	Payments Made as a Result of Successful Trace Completions.....	37
9.4	Reasons Why FOAEA Trace Data Did Not Result in the Successful Location of an Employer or Payor.....	38
9.5	Characteristics of Successful FOAEA Traces .....	39
10.0	PERCENTAGE OF FMEP REQUESTS SENT TO FOAEA FOR TRACE .....	41
11.0	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	43
12.0	RESPONSES TO STUDY FROM FLAS AND BC FAMILY JUSTICE PROGRAMS.....	47
12.1	Response to Study Recommendations from Family Law Assistance Section, Department of Justice Canada .....	47
12.2	Response from the Director of Family Justice Programs, Ministry of the Attorney General, British Columbia.....	48
	APPENDIX: TRACING PILOT DATA COLLECTION FORM.....	51

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Period of trace request from FAMS to the FOAEA .....	9
Table 2	Description of data elements.....	10
Table 3	Selected field definitions.....	12
Table 4	Age of recipients .....	17
Table 5	Number of children.....	18
Table 6	Age of payors.....	19
Table 7	Payor occupational category .....	19
Table 8	Most recent year case enrolled in FMEP .....	21
Table 9	Maintenance Order fate of issuance.....	22
Table 10	Term of Maintenance Order.....	22
Table 11	Maintenance Order court level.....	22
Table 12	Number of children attached to Maintenance Order.....	23
Table 13	Case group .....	23
Table 14	Amount of maintenance arrears owing.....	24
Table 15	Arrears payments made by payors.....	24
Table 16	Elapse time since last maintenance payment .....	25
Table 17	Assessment of frequency of payments.....	25
Table 18	Source of last maintenance payment.....	26
Table 19	Whether payments are voluntary or deducted .....	26

Table 20	Number of traces per case.....	27
Table 21	Number of active enforcement actions per case .....	28
Table 22	Types of active enforcement actions.....	28
Table 23	Search requests and receipts .....	29
Table 24	Time intervals between trace request processes .....	30
Table 25	Time durations of trace process to obtain FOAEA data in three distinct time periods.....	31
Table 26	Completeness and duplication of trace data.....	32
Table 27	Number of complete trace returns.....	33
Table 28	Dated address of most current FOAEA return.....	34
Table 29	Comparison of dates of residential addresses with dates of FMEP trace requests .....	34
Table 30	Comparison of employer active date with date of FMEP trace initiation.....	35
Table 31	Number of FOAEA trace results leading to location of payor or employer.....	37
Table 32	Source departments of completed traces.....	37
Table 33	Level of payments resulting from FOAEA traces .....	38
Table 34	General outcomes of trace .....	38
Table 35	Number of cases enrolled in FMEP requiring FOAEA traces.....	41

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1	Summary Flow Chart of B.C. Tracing Process.....	6
----------	---	---



## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The assistance of the following people during the completion of this project is gratefully appreciated.

- Jim Sturrock, Department of Justice Canada
- Louise Riley, Family Justice Programs Division, Ministry of Attorney-General (B.C.)
- Claire Michaux, Family Justice Programs Division, Ministry of Attorney-General (B.C.)
- Mike Redding, Family Justice Programs Division, Ministry of Attorney-General (B.C.)
- Brian Pollick, B.C. Family Maintenance Enforcement Program
- Stuart Minns, B.C. Family Maintenance Enforcement Program
- Kathy Bashi, B.C. Family Maintenance Enforcement Program
- Peggie-Ann Kirk, Focus Consultants
- Geoff Gosson, Focus Consultants



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document presents the results of the research implementation phase of a study intended to assess the impact and effectiveness of the addition of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA)<sup>1</sup> databases to federal information sources accessed for tracing payors owing maintenance arrears and in identifying and locating employers to whom attachments (garnishees) might be applied.

This report provides information on the history, objectives, parameters, methodologies and results of the research as well as case, payor and recipient data. It also includes a broad description of the provincial-federal tracing processes. The main study followed a Design and Pilot Phase that examined 20 files and case results to determine the requirements for a Client Data Collection Form and factors affecting the research.

Prior to 1997, only databases at Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)<sup>2</sup> were listed and being searched under the tracing component of the *Family Orders and Agreement Enforcement Assistance (FOAEA) Act* (Part 1). On March 6, 1996, the federal government, in a set of policy initiatives relating to child support, announced that it would enhance the capacity of the federal enforcement system by adding Canada Customs and Revenue Agency databases to the federal databases eligible for use in tracing payors owing maintenance arrears.

This project is one of a number of projects completed by the Research Unit of the Child Support Team at the Department of Justice Canada. These projects were part of the Department's mandate to report to Parliament on the implementation of the Federal Child Support Guidelines and enhancement of federal enforcement measures.

Four organizations or programs are involved in the maintenance tracing process in British Columbia. These are:

- The B.C. Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP);
- Family Search Program (FAMS—B.C. Family Justice Programs Division);
- The Family Orders and Agreement Enforcement Assistance Unit of the Department of Justice Canada (FOAEA); and
- Federal Data Source Departments: Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

---

<sup>1</sup> The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) has been renamed the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) since this report was written.

<sup>2</sup> Since this report was written, the former department of Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) was split into two separate departments: Social Development Canada (SDC) and Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC).

The purpose of this research was to track trace requests and outcomes through these organizations in order to assess the quality, timeliness, applicability and impact of the tracing data obtained from CCRA on the location of payors of maintenance orders and their employers.

Three hundred and fifteen cases were randomly selected and analyzed to determine case and recipient characteristics, arrears, payment and enforcement data. The quality, completeness, currency, timeliness and outcomes of both payor residential addresses and employer trace returns to these files were analyzed to determine trace outcomes and payment results. Other aspects of tracing, such as the duration of different parts of the tracing process, were also described and assessed. Payor, recipient and case information was provided to give a context to the findings and to provide some further understanding of the population requiring a federal trace.

A second component of this study assessed the proportional significance of the FOAEA trace function within the overall tracing process. This component was based on an analysis of the volumes of enrolment and trace request data from FMEP and FAMS.

Several limitations related to the accuracy and reliability of data affected this study. These were:

- The lack of data in some FMEP data fields required for this research. These limitations were related to enforcement, tracing, employer and payor address data (this data may not be compulsory or required for program operations);
- The difficulty in determining the exact definitions of data fields;
- The need to rely on the FMEP running record rather than specific data to verify trace outcomes and effectiveness. The running record is a narrative account of all actions carried out in relation to a case;
- The lack of clear information on trace outcomes or payments;
- The difficulty of assessing whether FOAEA data was reviewed or applied at FMEP;
- The lack of precise information on trace intervals and applications;
- The difficulty of determining the “life span” of trace data; and
- The difficulty of determining specific sources of payment.

Pilot phase results clearly indicated that employer data was requested more frequently than payor address data. Although request fields were modified in the FAMS system prior to the research implementation stage, making it difficult to identify the type of data requested, request patterns continued to suggest that employment data is still both the most requested and least likely to be sent by the FOAEA Unit. In no cases was “only” employer data sent when requested; it was always accompanied by payor data. In reality, any FAMS “request” designation is meaningless because the FOAEA Unit returns both payor location and employer data without any filtering based on the designated needs of FAMS.

The time durations of the tracing processes reviewed for this study were frequently extensive. Seventy-six percent of the cases took six months or more to go from the initial FMEP request to FOAEA received. The longest delays occurred during the FAMS search process (between FMEP request and Province Closed). Sixty-four percent of the cases took over four months in this stage. There were also significant delays in the period between Province Closed and application legal dates, especially between June and December 1998, when there were administrative problems relating to the processing of trace requests at both FAMS and the FOAEA Unit. Time durations decreased after these problems were resolved.

Data indicated that most payors were men working in semi-skilled or unskilled occupations. Most of these men were in the 36 to 45 age range. Forty-four percent of payors had been on GAIN (social assistance) in the past, three were on GAIN currently, and 53 percent had no previous records of being on GAIN.

The majority of recipients were also in the 36 to 45 age range and 50 percent had only one child. No family had more than four children. Twenty-two percent of the recipients were currently receiving GAIN, while 18 percent had received it in the past.

According to FMEP records, eight percent of the recipients had been enrolled in FMEP twice and 13 percent were involved in multiple files. Seventy-four percent of the maintenance orders were filed at the Family Court level, 25 percent were filed at the Supreme Court, and the origin of one percent was unknown.

Twenty-five percent of the files were categorized as REMO<sup>3</sup> (payor in) and four percent as REMO (payor out); 72 percent were “voluntary” files (both payor and recipient live in province). Alberta was the primary recorded jurisdiction for payors living out of province.

The average amount of arrears attached to each payor was \$16,741, although arrears ranged from \$0 (current data) to \$211,291. Twelve percent of the payors had made no payments and 58 percent had made payments of under \$5,000. The average amount paid was \$8,040.

Although 61 percent of payors had technically made payments at some time in the past six months, only six percent were making regular payments. In over 40 percent of the most recent payments, the source of payment was federal intercept funds, suggesting the use of standard deductions of federal payments (NOFIs). These were applied in the majority of cases owing maintenance arrears.

Each file had an average number of three FAMS and/or FOAEA traces; more than one third had undergone over four searches. Five percent of the cases had extensive (8 to 19) search histories.

Each file was undergoing an average of three active enforcement actions. Most of the active enforcement actions attached to the files were NOFIs (garnishees of automatic federal

---

<sup>3</sup> REMO – reciprocal enforcement of maintenance order. Refers to the legislation and process that allows jurisdictions to enforce orders that originate outside their jurisdiction. “Payor in” refers to cases where a jurisdiction is enforcing another jurisdiction’s order and “payor out” refers to cases sent to another jurisdiction for enforcement. This process has since been revised to standardize legislation and practice in all provinces and territories. The new process is called Interjurisdictional Support Orders (ISO).

payments). These were in place on 89 percent of the files. Credit Bureau actions were in place in 70 percent of cases and driver's license enforcement actions in 40 percent. However, active Notices of Attachment were only found on 14 percent of the files and federal license denials on 10 percent.

An analysis of the payor and employer trace returns concluded the following:

- While employer data is most required and requested, payor data is most likely to be returned;
- More payor data per case is returned than employer data. This is often because payor returns include more multiple addresses;
- CCRA sends more incomplete payor residential addresses than HRDC;
- The "quality" of employer returns (all sent by CCRA) is higher than comparable data sent by HRDC. There were no incomplete and only three duplicate addresses sent by CCRA. There was also a higher proportion of employer data than payor data that was "new" to FMEP and FAMS (i.e. not already in their databases);
- Despite being "new" to FAMS and the FOAEA Unit, the employer data provided by CCRA is older than the payor residential data. Sixty percent of the most current trace results were dated 1997 or earlier, compared with 30 percent of the most current payor addresses; and
- Considering the date of trace returns in relation to the time of the FMEP request, it is estimated that 56 percent of the payor residential addresses were "current" in comparison to 39 percent of the employer addresses.

An analysis of the outcomes of trace results shows that seven payors and nine employers were accurately traced using FOAEA data. Using the total number of files with trace returns as a baseline, this suggests a success rate of 2.3 percent for payor residential addresses and of 5 percent for employers. These percentages would be substantially higher if it were possible to accurately determine what type of trace was required.

All successful trace outcomes were ascertained by a review of the running record.

Ten of the sixteen successful traces resulted in payments to FMEP. Nine of the ten payments resulted from CCRA data.

Total payments obtained as a result of FOAEA traces were \$18,027; payments ranged from \$104 to \$6,934.

The study concluded that the addition of CCRA data has expanded tracing effectiveness and has increased the amount of payments for cases. Data indicates that CCRA data was responsible for 10 trace returns (62.5 percent of the total), and 94 percent of the payments (\$17,027.00).

One of the most significant findings of this study is that, despite the overall volume of data sent by the FOAEA Unit to FMEP, a large proportion is not requested, not required, incomplete, already available or outdated. Considering that the FOAEA data represents only a small

proportion of the data reviewed by FMEP, these characteristics have also led to FOAEA data being undervalued.

A restructuring of the FOAEA tracing system needs to be undertaken to ensure that FMEP receives the most minimal but highest quality data possible. A restructuring would include:

- A reduction in the overall volume of data generated by the FOAEA Unit and sent to FMEP;
- Filtering of trace data by request and currency of data (filtering could be done at the FOAEA Unit or FAMS);
- Elimination of all duplicate and incomplete data; and
- Upgrading of the FAMS and FMEP electronic systems to permit ongoing monitoring and assessment of tracing application data and outcomes.

It should be noted that the small number of FOAEA trace completions could be partially explained by the fact that the cases that are ultimately sent to the FOAEA Unit are those that have already undergone many search procedures over a length of time, all of which have been unsuccessful. Considering the problematic nature of these cases, it may be unrealistic to expect a high rate of completed traces resulting from FOAEA data.

## **Recommendations**

1. That search request criteria be more clearly defined by FAMS and that these criteria be used by the FOAEA Unit to select and designate trace returns.
2. That filters be applied at the FOAEA Unit and/or FAMS in order to:
  - Eliminate all incomplete and duplicate addresses sent by the FOAEA Unit; and
  - Ensure that only the most recently active address in each category be sent.
3. That FAMS/FMEP/FOAEA explore the possibility of FAMS automatically filtering FOAEA data in order to eliminate payor residential and employer addresses already searched. This process would minimize the volume of data returning to FMEP.
4. That a simple internal monitoring system, based on distinctive data fields, be incorporated within FAMS and FMEP to identify the data responsible for a valid and completed trace of a payor residential or employer address. For example, the data fields could be triggered by the issuance of a Notice of Attachment or a completed payment. This would permit continuous internal assessment of the effectiveness and utility of different information sources and tracing methods.
5. That small scale file reviews be carried out on an annual basis to monitor the duration of specific components of the tracing process. This would require the more accurate identification of some trace process dates (e.g. the dates for FMEP review of files and FOAEA transfer of data).
6. That the system of data transfer be restructured so that all FOAEA data is transferred electronically from FAMS to FMEP rather than by hard copy.





## **1.0 INTRODUCTION AND DESCRIPTION OF THIS DOCUMENT**

This report presents the results of the research implementation phase of a study assessing the impact and effectiveness of the addition of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) databases to federal information sources accessed for tracing payors owing maintenance arrears and in identifying and locating employers to whom attachments (garnishees) might be applied. This report was preceded by a preliminary report examining the Research Design and Pilot Phase results for the study.

This document provides information on the objectives and history of the research, a summary description of the pilot phase, a description and analysis of the final research results and recommendations for change related to the handling or transference of trace data. In addition, this report provides proportional data from the British Columbia Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEM), Family Search Program (FAMS) and the Family Orders and Agreement Enforcement Assistance Unit of the Department of Justice Canada (FOAEA), which indicate the overall frequency of FOAEA trace requests by FMEM and FAMS. To provide context and background for the reader, some basic information about the recipients, payors and cases reviewed is provided.

Specifically, this report includes the following:

- An overview of the history, purpose and objectives of the research;
- A description of the research design, process and methodologies;
- A description of research issues and limitations;
- Case characteristics (payor, recipient, file and case data);
- Information on the duration of and intervals between tracing processes;
- Arrears data and payment histories;
- Payor tracing and enforcement histories;
- Data on trace data quality, completeness and currency;
- Trace outcomes (payor residential and employer addresses);
- Number of cases traced directly through the FOAEA Unit, with the extent of payments made;
- Conclusions relating to tracing effectiveness and potential; and
- Recommendations for change.

This research was carried out in British Columbia and examines only one province's participation in the federal tracing process.



## 2.0 FEDERAL TRACING: HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

### 2.1 GENERAL LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY BACKGROUND

Under the Canadian legal system, the enforcement of family orders (custody, access rights and support) is a provincial responsibility. Until 1986, no federal provisions existed to help trace missing persons or those who had breached maintenance agreements. With the passage of *The Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance (FOAEA) Act* (January 1986), the federal government established the legislative framework for providing a tracing information service to assist in the enforcement of family orders, agreements and *Criminal Code* charges.

The primary objective of the FOAEA Act is to assist provinces in improving the rate of enforcement of maintenance orders and agreements in Canada.

Federal/provincial/territorial agreements are essential to the implementation of the Act. Memorandums of Understanding set the terms and conditions for release of data from federal information banks, designate retrieval sources and recipients, and delineate confidentiality provisions.

### 2.2 FEDERAL ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVE

The federal enforcement initiative is based primarily on two pieces of legislation:<sup>4</sup>

*A. Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act:*

**Part I:** provides for the release of information from designated federal information banks to help locate persons who have breached family maintenance orders or spousal agreements.

**Part II:** provides for the garnishment of specific federal monies in order to pay support orders and agreements in arrears.

**Part III:** provides provincial and territorial services with the option of denying or suspending specific federally-issued licenses, including aviation and marine licenses and passports.

*B. Garnishment Attachment and Pension Diversion Act*

**Part I:** involves the location and diversion of funds payable to the defaulter by the federal government (garnishment of salaries and diversion of benefits of federal public servants).

**Part II:** involves the diversion of pension benefits payable pursuant to the *Superannuation Acts* to satisfy financial support orders.

---

<sup>4</sup> The Queen's Regulations apply to the garnishee of funds of serving members of the Canadian Armed Forces.

## **2.3 TRACING: ADDITION OF CANADA CUSTOMS AND REVENUE AGENCY DATABASES**

Prior to 1997, only databases at Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) were listed and being searched under the tracing component of the FOAEA Act (Part 1). In 1994, it was learned that the databases at HRDC were using Revenue Canada<sup>5</sup> databases for updating. Further, an informal testing of responses from HRDC demonstrated that the Revenue Canada databases contained location information that was not in the HRDC databases and that the updating by HRDC from Revenue Canada databases was incomplete.

On March 6, 1996, the federal government, in a set of policy initiatives relating to child support, announced that it would enhance the capacity of the federal enforcement system by adding Revenue Canada databases to the federal databases eligible for tracing payors in arrears.

The Revenue Canada databases were added to the FOAEA Act (Part 1) and were included as part of the amendments contained in Bill C-41 that came into effect on May 1, 1997.

## **2.4 MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF FEDERAL ENFORCEMENT INITIATIVES**

This project is one of a number of projects completed by the Research Unit of the Child Support Team at the Department of Justice Canada. These projects were part of the Department's mandate to report to Parliament on the implementation of the Federal Child Support Guidelines and enhancement of federal enforcement measures.

## **2.5 SITE SELECTION**

British Columbia was chosen as the site for this study because the province has developed and implemented a comprehensive provincial tracing system using a range of public and non-public (provincial databases) information sources with a clearly defined role for the FOAEA search function.

In addition, British Columbia has developed sophisticated systems for the handling and recording of recipient, debtor, tracing process and outcome data, allowing for relatively efficient and comprehensive case analyses.

---

<sup>5</sup> At the time of writing, Revenue Canada had been renamed the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA). The agency is now known as the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA).

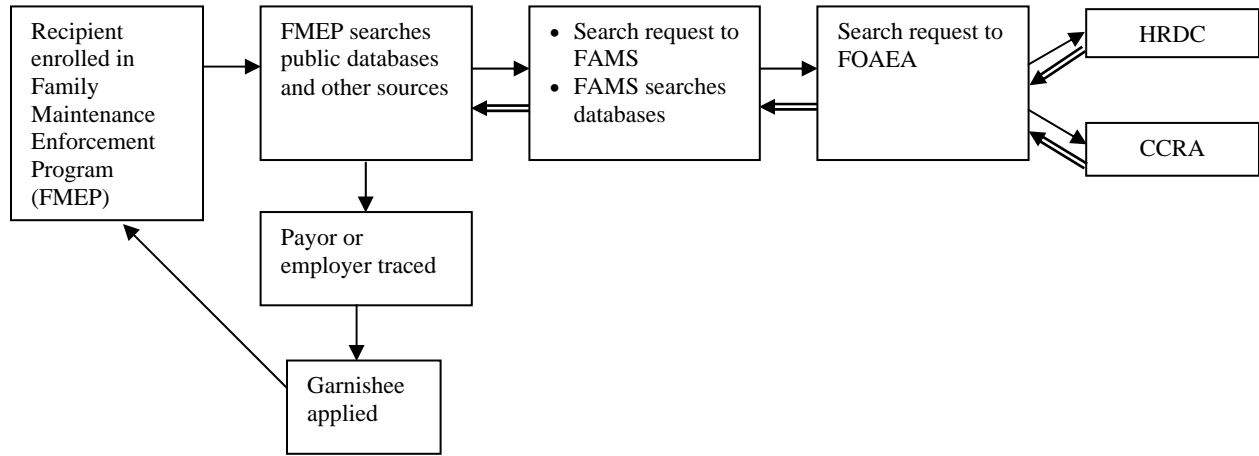
### 3.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE MAINTENANCE TRACING PROCESS

Four organizations are involved in the maintenance tracing process in British Columbia in situations where payors and/or employers of payors cannot be located. These are briefly described below:

- **The B.C. Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP)**—is responsible under the *Family Maintenance and Enforcement Act* for monitoring and enforcing all the maintenance and enforcement orders filed with the program. This may involve calculating, receiving, recording and forwarding payments to the person receiving maintenance (the recipient), or taking action, when necessary, to ensure that the person required to make payments (the payor) makes the required maintenance payments.
- **Family Search Program (FAMS)—B.C. Family Justice Programs Division**—conducts searches, where necessary, to find a payor, an employer location and payor sources of income in order to obtain, change or enforce custody, access, guardianship or maintenance orders or agreements. The Family Justice Division also manages the Reciprocals Program, which ensures the smooth flow of maintenance orders and information between the British Columbia Courts, FMEP and reciprocating jurisdictions in order to obtain, confirm or change maintenance orders or agreements.
- **Family Orders and Agreement Enforcement Assistance Unit of the Department of Justice Canada (FOAEA Unit)**—provides additional data to FMEP to assist in the location of payors and employers from the main source departments (below) in response to a trace request from FAMS.
- **Federal Data Source Departments:** Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) provide payor residential address and employer data to the FOAEA Unit from a range of databases.

If a maintenance recipient enrolls in FMEP and the payor or employer cannot be located, an initial search is made by FMEP staff using public or other data sources. If the search results are negative, a trace request is made to FAMS, which applies additional trace resources and techniques. If no accurate trace data is found, FAMS sends a trace request to the FOAEA Unit at the Department of Justice Canada, which in turn accesses available data from both HRDC and CCRA. This data is sent back to FMEP via FAMS for review and application. Figure 1 describes the federal/provincial tracing process.

**Figure 1 Summary flow chart of B.C. tracing process**



## **4.0 RESEARCH DESIGN, METHODOLOGIES AND LIMITATIONS**

### **4.1 OVERVIEW OF COMPONENTS**

The overall objective of this research is to assess the impact and effectiveness of the addition of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) databases to processes used in tracking payors owing maintenance arrears and in identifying and locating the employers of payors against whom wage attachments (garnishees) might be applied.

The research design is comprised of two components:

- **Component I**—determines the approximate percentage of cases over a period of time that require FOAEA trace searches within the federal-provincial tracing process. This provides a view of the proportional “significance” of the federal trace information.
- **Component II**—assesses the quality, currency, impact and effectiveness of the CCRA data on the tracing of payors and the location of employers to whom attachments (garnishees) might apply.

### **4.2 DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENT I**

Component I was designed to generate the following specific data:

- The percentage of new and continuing cases enrolled in FMEP that are sent to FAMS for search during a specified period (in this case, January to June 1999);
- The percentage of new and continuing cases sent from FAMS to the FOAEA Unit for federal tracing during this time period; and
- The approximate overall percentage of cases arising in FMEP that require a federal search.

To arrive at the percentages identified above the following data was selected, aggregated, reviewed and compared:

- The number and percentages of new and continuing cases enrolled at FMEP between January and June 1999. Because all FMEP cases may potentially require a trace, both new and continuing enrolments within FMEP were included in the baseline population;
- The number and percentage of the cases (out of total FMEP enrolment numbers) that were sent from FMEP to FAMS for a FAMS search during this time. These do not include cases sent to FAMS for regular, automatic searches; and
- The number and percentage of FAMS cases (originating at FMEP) sent to the FOAEA Unit for further trace data between January and June 1999.

## 4.3 DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENT II

### 4.3.1 Objectives

Component II is the primary component of this research. The main activity of this component was to identify and track a random sample of FMEP cases that have received FOAEA trace results in order to describe:

- Recipient, client and case characteristics;
- The type, completeness, timeliness, quality and source of HRDC and CCRA data returned by the FOAEA Unit;
- Whether the data was utilized and/or resulted in the successful location of payors or employers;
- Whether any type of payments were made as a result of FOAEA results; and
- Whether the addition of CCRA data led to a higher number of completed traces or increased payments.

### 4.3.2 Sample Size and Selection

Three hundred and fifteen cases were randomly selected from a population of cases sent for trace by FAMS with data returns from the FOAEA Unit in the period between June and December 1999. These cases were sent by FAMS to the FOAEA Unit between June 1998 and December 1999 (see Table 1).

A lengthy time period between trace request and trace return was required in order to ensure that all tracing processes would be completed at the time of data analysis. It was estimated that the period between trace request and receipt would average between five and seven months. A generous time period **after** the receipt of trace results was also required in order to allow enough time for the review of trace results, the application of enforcement actions (e.g. issuance of a Notice of Attachment) and the possible receipt of payments.

The original sample size was estimated at 250 cases to be taken from a population base of 1,585 cases. However, because of the manner in which the population was drawn, the base for the study was larger than first anticipated (3,870). In addition, when the files were reviewed it was found that almost one quarter of the FMEP files were sent to FAMS in mid to late 1998, a period when there were some technical slow downs in the data transfer between FAMS and the FOAEA Unit. As a result, a further 65 cases were randomly sampled in order to increase the proportion of 1999 cases in the study and to increase the validity of the results.

Given a total population size of 3,870, a confidence level of 95 percent and a hypothesized level of FOAEA trace results of 30 percent, a minimum sample size of **298** was required for the study.

Seventy-eight percent of cases forwarded to the FOAEA Unit for tracing were sent in 1999, with the largest proportion (44 percent) transmitted in the last six months of that year.



**Table 1      Period of trace request from FAMS to the FOAEA**

<b>Period when trace request made by FAMS to the FOAEA</b>	<b>Total</b>
June 1998—December 31, 1998	67 (21%)
January 1, 1999—June 30, 1999	108 (34%)
July 1, 1999—December 31, 1999	140 (44%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>315</b>

### **4.3.3 Methodology**

A case analysis and trace tracking process was developed to collect recipient, payor and case characteristics and to assess trace history, duration, results, application and effectiveness.

A comprehensive *Case Data Collection Form* was developed on which to enter results from FMEP, FAMS and the FOAEA Unit prior to their being entered onto an electronic data management system (The Survey System) for aggregation and analysis.

FMEP, FAMS and FOAEA electronic data management systems were reviewed in order to identify the data elements required for the study. The location of the data elements, their descriptors and access points were defined during the Evaluation Design Phase of this project (see Table 2).

Data from each electronic system (FMEP, FAMS and FOAEA) was entered on the Case Data Collection form (see Appendix), and was cross-checked and verified. Trace quality, timeliness and applicability were determined by cross-referencing and analyzing the results.

## **4.4 DESIGN PHASE AND PILOT TESTING**

### **4.4.1 Purpose of Design and Pilot Phase**

Because of the number of data sources and complexity of the data collection process, a Pilot Phase was implemented in order to develop, clarify or refine:

- The most efficient methods of determining and drawing the research sample;
- The source, scope, yield and relevance of data elements;
- Data field definitions;
- Alternative and “best” sources of data;
- Optimal pathways to data access (in FAMS, FMEP); and
- Cross-validation mechanisms for data currency dates.

**Table 2 Description of data elements**

Data category	Description of data		Data sources
Case ID numbers file linkages	Code numbers identifying cases in FMEP, FAMS and FOAEA systems		. FAMS general case screen
Search data: requests and receipts	Search request for: Assets . Employment . Location		. FAMS action history
Case flow and interval data	. Date FMEP enrollment . Date search request to FAMS . FAMS case closed . Date legal application	. Date affidavit . Date Federal Closed . Date FMEP search results received	. FMEP case screen . FMEP enquiry screen . FAMS general case screen . FOAEA data . FAMS external search
Trace characteristics . History . Case group	. Previous FAMS and federal trace requests (dates, type of search, current status) . Does not include automatic trace requests from FMEP-FAMS . Case group / jurisdiction		. FMEP case screen . FMEP tracing screen
Financial data . Payment requirements and status	. Periodic payment times and amounts . Amount arrears (date) . Amount paid (date) . Date last payment . Date first payment	. Source last payment . Regularity of payment – previous 12 months . FOAEA (generated payments) date and amount of last payment	. FMEP payment status . FMEP schedule summary
Payor data	. Birth date . GAIN status . Most recent GAIN duration . SIN No.	. Gender . Probable location . Probable employer . Occupation . Most recent address	. FMEP screen . FMEP address log . FAMS employer screen
Maintenance Order	. Type of order (child/spouse) . Court level . When issued active	. Expiry date . Number of children on order	. FMEP Order Schedule
Recipient and child data	. Birth date . Date GAIN assignment . Gender . Probable location	. Other file history . Number of children . Gender of children . Birth dates	. FMEP recipient screen . FMEP assignment screen . FAMS children
Trace results . Location . Employer	. Source department . Date info sent . Date address active . Level of completeness of trace result	. Relation to existing data (date received and active) . Whether data applied . Verification means . Whether used for payment	. FMEP running record . FOAEA records . FAMS external search
Past enforcement actions	. Type of enforcement (NOA, NOFI, NOFG) . Federal license denials . SC committal hearings	. Credit Bureau . Driver's license . Reg – Land . 26.1	. FMEP Notice of Attachment . FMEP Enforcement Activity Summary
Employer data (historical)	. Name of business . Most recent addresses . Date last known	. Date entered . Date employed	. FMEP employer history . FAMS employer

During the pilot phase, 20 cases that required and received FOAEA trace data were selected from FAMS records and tracked through the FMEP, FAMS and FOAEA systems.

Six drafts of the Client Data Collection Form were developed, “pre-tested” and revised during the pilot phase, taking into account case characteristics, data entry requirements, data limitations and program staff feedback. (See Appendix: *Case Data Collection Form.*)

## **4.5 RESEARCH ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS**

Several issues related to data definition completeness, accessibility, reliability and comparability affected this research. These are summarized below in relation to their impacts on the data collection and analysis process.

### **4.5.1 Difficulty in Determining Definitions of Data Fields**

The lack of comprehensive data dictionaries (FMEP, FAMS and FOAEA) made the interpretation of some fields difficult. A selection of fields which required definition or clarification is presented in Table 3.

### **4.5.2 Limitations of Data Fields**

Some FMEP data fields and screens within FMEP were not well maintained with the most current enforcement status data, trace history or address related information. This was particularly true in the following four areas:

- **Enforcement data and enforcement screen**—history of enforcement actions taken (e.g. Notices of Attachment) and active dates;
- **Tracing history data and screen**—a history of traces requested and results received with active and termination dates;
- **Employer address logs**—history of previous employer searches, including most active date believed to be correct at the time of entry and the date entered on the system; and
- **Payor address logs**—history of payor address searches, including the most active date believed to be correct at the time of entry and the date entered on the system.

Enforcement data was sometimes missing and the status of enforcement actions unclear. This caused problems particularly if it was necessary to establish the status or currency of a Notice of Attachment (NOA) to determine whether an accurate employer contact had been made.

Trace history data was also frequently incomplete and/or missing. There were many instances where the specific FOAEA trace being addressed by this research was not included in the trace history record.

Although enforcement and tracing data are reported in this document, complete accuracy cannot be ensured.

**Table 3 Selected field definitions**

Field	Data description / clarification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Case data requested and received (FAMS)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prior to the research implementation phase, FAMS identified the specific data needed from the FOAEA Unit in its trace request. However, some of these categories were aggregated by the time of the research implementation phase, making analysis difficult. In any case, the FOAEA Unit does not apply trace request parameters but carries out employer and payor address searches in all cases. A limited analysis was carried out where requests for data could be identified.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date of FMEP request</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date FMEP sent trace search request to FAMS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prov. closed / fed. initiated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date FAMS search closed/ date FAMS notified FMEP federal search will be undertaken.</li> <li>• Does not signify exact date search request sent to the FOAEA Unit.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• App. legal date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date on initial FAMS application for trace results to the FOAEA Unit.</li> <li>• Province has 30 days to “activate” the application with an affidavit.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receive aff. date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certifies affidavit online authorizing FOAEA search request.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal Closed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date at which FAMS “picks up” first trace results from the FOAEA Unit. This is not necessarily the precise date when results are sent or when they arrive.</li> <li>• Represents date of only first trace results. Other addresses related to the same trace request may be sent after the Federal Closed date.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payor occupation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General type of occupation only—specific occupation may not be available.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payor address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be “last known” if payor in process of being traced.</li> <li>• May not be available on FMEP records.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employer name and address</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be “last known” if in process of being traced.</li> <li>• May not be available on FMEP records.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• REMO Data</li> </ul>	<p>Defined by case group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RDI—REMO, payor lives in B.C.</li> <li>• RDO—REMO, payor lives outside of B.C.</li> <li>• Vol—both payor and recipient live in B.C.</li> <li>• DEEM court sent file to FMEP for enrollment (term no longer in use).</li> </ul>

**Table 3 Selected field definitions (cont'd)**

Field	Data description / clarification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enforcement actions (the following actions will be recorded)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NOFI—garnishee of federal funds.</li> <li>NOFG—garnishee of federal salaries.</li> <li>NOA—Notice of Attachment to local companies.</li> <li>DL—Driver’s License.</li> <li>License denial—federal license denial (marine, passport, aviation).</li> <li>SC—committal hearing.</li> <li>Reg. Land—lien against land and house.</li> <li>Credit Bureau.</li> <li>26.1—action against personal property.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arrears payments made</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both date sensitive. Arrears are current on the date the case was reviewed.</li> <li>Arrears include all federal fees owed.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance Order payment requirements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maintenance Order can consist of lump sums, process fees and periodic, regular payments.</li> <li>Only basic periodic payment requirements and outstanding balance were tracked and calculated.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payment source</li> </ul>	<p>Source of payments does not specifically identify whether payment is voluntary or required. Payment sources include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheque.</li> <li>Money order.</li> <li>Post-dated cheque.</li> <li>TFC—transfer funds on behalf of recipient.</li> <li>Dir—direct payment.</li> <li>Fed. Payment—unclear as to source.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regularity of payments</li> </ul>	<p>Derived categories indicate regularity of payments over past 12 months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No payments.</li> <li>Very occasional (several times over a period of years).</li> <li>Occasional (2 to 5 times over a 12-month period).</li> <li>Somewhat regular (6 times over a 12-month period).</li> <li>Regular (payments match or are close to requirements).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous trace history</li> </ul>	<p>Includes all previous trace requests <b>excluding</b> withdrawn and automatic searches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cpte—completed.</li> <li>WD—withdrawn.</li> </ul> <p>Data on all traces requested by FMEP is not entered automatically and does not appear to include all trace requests.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FOAEA date sent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not clarified. May be date when HRDC and CCRA send trace results to Department of Justice (FOAEA Unit) for transmission to FAMS.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source dept.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).</li> <li>Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).</li> </ul>

**Table 3 Selected field definitions (cont'd)**

<b>Field</b>	<b>Data description / clarification</b>
• Coding of address elements	
- Complete	• All address elements included with or without postal code.
- Incomplete	• Some address elements, but insufficient for a trace (e.g. postal code).
- Entered dates	• Date when address entered on FAMS or FMEP system by staff.
- Date active	• Last known date when debtor/employer at this address (according to records, search or other information).

Of more consequence to this study was the lack of consistent, complete and up-to-date data in the FMEP employer and payor address logs (both fields and screens). These fields were expected to include a list of recent trace results (employer addresses or payor residential addresses), dates that these addresses were last considered to be active, and dates when the search results were entered into the FMEP system.

Accuracy of these fields was critical to this research because the data should have enabled the researchers to compare and assess the quality, currency and value of FOAEA results with that of existing data on the FMEP database (derived from FAMS and FMEP searches). However, data was frequently missing from these fields. The researchers found many instances where FOAEA trace results had been received, but were not entered, and other situations where fields were empty. They also found instances where an active date was entered, but not linked with any data.

In all these cases, it was necessary to “reconstruct” parts of the employer and payor address logs through a review of the FMEP running record. This enabled the researchers to assess the currency of FOAEA trace results.

#### **4.5.3 Reliance on the Running Record**

Because of the lack of information on trace results and trace histories in some key fields, it was necessary to reconstruct or confirm data in the running record. The running record is a narrative of case related actions and results completed by family maintenance staff in an abbreviated form. It contains the most complete picture of each case and tracing efforts, but it is subjective, not organized by category or key word, can be very lengthy, and is difficult for someone not involved in the case to interpret.

In order to assess and validate trace results, the running record was reviewed in each case. This contributed to the length of the review research process and difficulties in accurately determining outcomes.

#### **4.5.4 Lack of Clear Information on Trace Outcome or Payments**

There was no specific data field within the FMEP database to validate the source of the trace information or whether trace information had been received, reviewed or applied. It was also

difficult to ascertain whether a specific trace had been successful, or whether the trace had resulted in payor or employer contact or payment. This information had to be inferred from other data and the data analyzed to establish cause and effect. For example, it was sometimes difficult to assess whether a Notice of Attachment (NOA) was issued as a result of a federal trace or from some other information. Similarly, it was not easy to determine whether payments made were the result of a NOA or another action.

The study attempted to determine the source of any maintenance payments made and whether these were voluntary or compulsory. Again, this was difficult to distinguish. Type of payment (e.g. cheque) was broadly defined and could include a variety of sources, including direct payment from a payor or from a company garnishee (Table 18).

#### **4.5.5 Difficulty in Assessing FMEP Review and Application of Data**

In most cases, there was a minimum period of five to seven months between the FMEP search and request and the receipt of FOAEA data by FAMS. However, it was sometimes difficult to establish if and when FMEP staff had reviewed trace results after they had been sent by FOAEA via FAMS. In most cases, this was ascertained through a review of the running record. However, in some cases it appeared that there were lengthy delays before the FOAEA data was assessed and/or applied. In a small number of cases involving employer searches, data from the FOAEA Unit appeared to be correct and would likely have resulted in a NOA if the trace information had been reviewed immediately by FMEP.

#### **4.5.6 Duplication of Data**

Some of the data sent by the FOAEA Unit was incomplete and duplicative. This had implications for the overall quality of and response to the data. Inconsistencies were also found in the data sent and data entered into the FAMS system. This applied in relation to “postal code only data.” In some cases, the FOAEA Unit sent several postal codes to FAMS, but with a range of active dates. However, the FAMS electronic system retained only the first postal code received even if subsequent data was more currently dated. Because postal code data is likely to be of limited value it is doubtful whether this filtering had negative impacts. Even so, all trace partners should clarify any automatic filtering. If filtering is applied, it should eliminate all but the most recently active information, even if the information is incomplete.

#### **4.5.7 Lack of Precise Information on Trace Process Intervals and Applications**

The trace request and return process, review and application of trace results and the triggering of enforcement processes are carried out in a series of stages. One of the objectives of this research was to ascertain time intervals between tracing stages. This was made difficult for the following reasons:

- No clear FOAEA “send” date could be identified;

- The “Federal Closed” date is identified in the FAMS system as the time when the FOAEA trace results are received. However, this date often reflects the point at which FAMS search officers retrieve data from the FOAEA system, not specifically the time when the data is actually sent or arrives. Sometimes there may be a lag between when the FOAEA Unit sends the trace results and their retrieval (recorded) by FAMS; and
- FMEP does not note the date when FOAEA data is received, or more importantly, when its staff review the trace results. Because FOAEA data is sent to FMEP automatically by FAMS, the “Federal Closed” date was estimated as being approximately the same date as FMEP receipt.

#### **4.5.8 The Difficulty of Determining the “Life Span” of Trace Data**

The maintenance tracing process is complex and lengthy and operates in a dynamic and changing environment. FOAEA trace results comprise only a small part of the total amount of payor residential and employer address information that is available. They also can be affected by other data such as new information from the recipient or FAMS at any time. Even in cases where FOAEA data has been successful in determining the location of an employer or payor, it is impossible to say how long this data will remain accurate or current.



## 5.0 RECIPIENT AND PAYOR CHARACTERISTICS

The following section provides descriptive detail on the 315 cases randomly selected for this study. These cases were sent by FAMS to the FOAEA Unit between June 1998 and December 1999. This section includes demographic data on the recipient and payor, and on case characteristics including payor trace and enforcement histories. These data were collected from the electronic and hardcopy files of the cases during the study and represent the latest available information recorded at the time.

### 5.1 RECIPIENT DATA

#### 5.1.1 Gender and Age

Almost all (99.7% or 314/315) of the recipients in the selected sample were women. Of these, the largest number was between the ages of 36 and 45 (see Table 4).

**Table 4**      **Age of recipients**

<b>Age category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 25	9	3%
26-35	100	32%
36-45	131	42%
46-55	29	9%
56-65	4	1%
66+	1	0%
Unknown	41	13%
Total	315	100%

#### 5.1.2 Number of Children

Most recipients had only one child; no recipient had more than four children. The average age of children in the recipient's family was 13.

**Table 5          Number of children**

<b>Number of children</b>	<b>Number of recipients</b>	<b>%</b>
No children	10	3%
1 child	157	50%
2 children	113	36%
3 children	29	9%
4 children	5	2%
No data	1	0%
Total	315	100 %

### **5.1.3 Recipient Jurisdiction**

In almost 24 percent (76/315) of cases, the recipient’s address was recorded on FMEP as “unknown.” It is FMEP’s practice to record the recipient’s address as unknown if it is an RDI file where the recipient lives out of the province. This is because FMEP communicates directly with the recipient’s jurisdiction, rather than the recipient. In 71 percent (225/315) of cases, the address was registered as British Columbia; in four percent of cases (14/315) it was recorded as being outside of the province. Eleven out of the fourteen recipients were recorded as living in Canada (primarily Alberta and Ontario) and one in the United States.

### **5.1.4 Recipient GAIN Status**

Twenty-two percent of the recipients (70/315) in this group were currently receiving GAIN (income assistance), while 18 percent (57/315) had received it in the past. For 60 percent of the recipients, no GAIN history was recorded.

## **5.2 PAYOR DATA**

### **5.2.1 Gender and Age**

With the exception of one person, all payors were male. Most payors were in the 36 to 45 age range.

**Table 6**      **Age of payors**

<b>Age category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 25	7	2%
26-35	76	24%
36-45	163	52%
46-55	57	18%
56-65	12	4%
66+	0	0%
Unknown	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 5.2.2 Payor Presumed Jurisdiction

In 76 percent (240/315) of the cases, the payor’s jurisdiction was presumed or known to be in British Columbia; in eight percent (24/315) it was outside of the province. In 10 percent of cases, the jurisdiction was registered as “unknown.” Of the 24 payors living outside of British Columbia, 54 percent (13/24) were living in Alberta, 25 percent (6/24) were living in Ontario and the rest were located in other provinces.

### 5.2.3 Payor Occupation

Occupation or occupational category was listed as “unknown” for 40 percent (127/315) of the payors. For those with known occupations, 56 percent fell within the categories of semi-skilled or unskilled workers.

**Table 7**      **Payor occupational category**

<b>Occupational category</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Professional	4	2%
Managerial	8	4%
Sales	18	10%
Clerical	1	0%
Skilled worker	42	22%
Semi-skilled worker	70	37%
Service worker	9	5%
Unskilled labourer	36	19%
<b>Total</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>99%*</b>

\* Due to rounding, percentages in tables may not indicate 100% in all cases.

#### **5.2.4 Payor GAIN Status**

While only three percent (10/315) of the payors were on GAIN currently, 44 percent (139/315) had been on GAIN in the past. Fifty-three percent (166/315) showed no record of having received GAIN. Of those 139 payors who had been on GAIN previously, 17 percent (24/139) had been on GAIN in the past year.

Of the current payors on GAIN, seven out of ten (70%) had been on GAIN for one year or less.

#### **5.2.5 Employer Presumed Jurisdiction**

In 74 percent of cases (232/315), the jurisdiction of the employer was recorded in FMEP records as “unknown;” in 23 percent (73/315) the employer was presumed to be in British Columbia; and, in three percent (10/315) the employer was outside of the province (five in Alberta, four in other provinces and one in the United States).

## 6.0 CASE CHARACTERISTICS

### 6.1 ENROLLMENTS AND MULTIPLE FILES

Eight percent (25/315) of the sample had been enrolled in FMEP twice, while one recipient had been enrolled three or more times. The dates of the most recent enrolments for the sample are described in Table 8.

**Table 8 Most recent year case enrolled in FMEP**

<b>Year of most recent enrollment</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
2000	21	7%
1999	26	8%
1998	64	20%
1997	40	13%
1996	43	14%
1995	26	8%
1994	22	7%
1993	20	6%
1992 or previously	52	17%
No information	1	0%
Total	315	100%

Thirteen percent (41/315) of the payors were involved in multiple files; that is, they were involved in payments to other recipients. However, an analysis of these other files was not undertaken.

### 6.2 MAINTENANCE ORDERS

#### 6.2.1 Date of Issuance and Term

Thirty-one percent (98/315) of the maintenance orders were issued in 1991 or previously (see Table 9).

**Table 9 Maintenance Order fate of issuance**

<b>Date of order</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
1999	6	2%
1998	22	7%
1997	38	12%
1996	38	12%
1995	35	11%
1994	22	7%
1993	27	9%
1992	28	9%
1991 or previously	98	31%
No data	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

The term of the maintenance order was documented on only 120 cases (Table 10). In half of the cases, the term ranged from 16 to 20 years. The average term was 14 years.

**Table 10 Term of Maintenance Order**

<b>Term of Maintenance Order</b>	<b>Number N=120</b>	<b>%</b>
1-5 years	5	4%
6-10 years	9	7%
11-15 years	44	37%
16-20 years	60	50%
21-25 years	1	1%
26+ years	1	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>100%</b>

Almost three quarters of the Maintenance Orders were issued at the Family Court level and in 83 percent of the cases it was a British Columbia order.

**Table 11 Maintenance Order court level**

<b>Court level</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Family Court	234	74%
Supreme Court	79	25%
Unknown	2	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

In 95 percent (300/315) of cases, the type of order was for the child only, while in four percent (12/315) it was for the spouse. In two cases (less than 1 percent) it was for both child and spouse; in the other case, the type of order was not recorded.

Table 12 describes the number of children attached to the Maintenance Orders.

**Table 12 Number of children attached to Maintenance Order**

<b>Number of children on Maintenance Order</b>	<b>Totals N=303</b>	<b>%</b>
1 child on order	152	50%
2 children on order	118	39%
3 children on order	28	9%
4 children on order	5	2%

The data recorded on the FMEP database indicated that in 68 percent of the cases, both the payor and recipient were living in the province. Twenty-five percent of cases were described as RDI (REMO: payor living in).

**Table 13 Case group**

<b>Case group designation</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>	<b>%</b>
RDI (REMO: payor living in B.C.)	78	25%
RDO (REMO: payor living out of province)	13	4%
VOL (Both recipient and payor living in province)	215	68%
DEEM (older court designation: payor and recipient live in province)	8	3%
No data recorded	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

The most frequently recorded jurisdiction for these 13 RDO (REMO: payor out) cases was Alberta (eight), followed by Ontario (four) and one unknown.

The type of payment required under the Maintenance Order was not always recorded on FMEP records, particularly if the payor owed only arrears. Data indicated that 83 percent (262/315) of the payors were required to make periodic maintenance payments. The majority (89 percent or 232/260) of these payments were stipulated as monthly payments.

### **6.3 TOTAL ARREARS AND PAYMENTS TO DATE**

The amount of arrears owed by payors ranged from zero to \$211,291 (see Table 14). The average amount owing was \$16,741.

**Table 14 Amount of maintenance arrears owing**

<b>Amount owing</b>	<b>Number of payors</b>	<b>%</b>
\$0	20	6%
\$1-499	21	7%
\$500-1,999	24	8%
\$2,000-4,999	34	11%
\$5,000-9,999	53	17%
\$10,000-19,999	81	26%
\$20,000-39,999	53	17%
\$40,000-59,999	15	5%
\$60,000-89,999	7	2%
\$90,000-124,999	5	2%
\$125,000-159,999	1	0%
\$160,000 or more	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>101%</b>

Eighty-eight percent (277/315) of payors had made some level of maintenance payments, while 12 percent (38/315) had not. The average amount paid by payors was \$8,040; the highest amount was \$112,835.

**Table 15 Arrears payments made by payors**

<b>Amounts</b>	<b>Number of payors</b>	<b>%</b>
No payments	38	12%
\$1-499	21	7%
\$500-1,999	53	17%
\$2,000-4,999	71	22%
\$5,000-9,999	58	18%
\$10,000-19,999	49	16%
\$20,000-39,999	20	6%
\$40,000-59,999	4	1%
\$60,000-89,999	-	-
\$90,000-124,999	1	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>99%</b>

Of the 277 payors who had made maintenance payments at least once in the past, the majority (61 percent or 168/277) had made relatively recent payments. However, 14 percent had made no payments for two or more years.



**Table 16 Elapse time since last maintenance payment**

<b>Elapse time since last maintenance payment</b>	<b>Number N=277</b>	<b>%</b>
Under 6 months	168	61%
From 6 months to under 1 year	35	13%
From 1 year to under 2 years	35	13%
From 2 years to under 3 years	14	5%
From 3 years to under 4 years	8	3%
From 4 years to under 5 years	8	3%
From 5 years to under 6 years	3	1%
6 years or over	6	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>101%</b>

Because length of time since last payment is not necessarily an indication of the regularity of maintenance payments, an attempt was made to assess the overall regularity of payments in the past.

On the basis of this assessment, only six percent of those who had made payments had made regular payments, or payments that closely matched maintenance order requirements. Over 70 percent had made occasional, very occasional or no payments.

**Table 17 Assessment of frequency of payments**

<b>Frequency of payments</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
No payments	38	12%
Very occasional (several times over a period of years)	101	32%
Occasional (2 to 5 times over a 12-month period)	95	30%
Somewhat regular (6 times over a 12-month period)	63	20%
Regular (match or close to requirements)	18	6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

## 6.4 TYPE OF PAYMENTS

Data was collected on the type of last payment in order to determine whether payments were voluntary or derived from deductions. Data fields represented broad categories, however, and only the “federal payments” category clearly indicated source (involuntary federal payment deductions).

**Table 18 Source of last maintenance payment**

Type of payment	Number	%
Cheque	65	23%
Money order (payor/attachees money orders, bank drafts, bank orders, certified cheques made payable to the recipient)	24	9%
Post-dated cheque (any payment with a date in future)	5	2%
Transfer funds on behalf of recipient (received from large companies or reciprocating jurisdictions, made payable to the program and deposited into trust accounts)	19	7%
Federal payments (Federal Intercept Funds)	115	41%
Direct payment (payment made directly to recipient through regional office or reciprocating jurisdiction)	25	9%
Other	24	9%
Total	277	100%

Table 18 indicates that 41 percent of the last payments made by payors were from a federal source.

An attempt was also made to assess the entire history of payments in terms of whether payments were primarily voluntary or deducted. Table 19 provides an approximate description of payors’ payment histories. In most cases, payments were a combination of voluntary and deducted payments

**Table 19 Whether payments are voluntary or deducted**

Type of payment	Number	%
Payments <b>primarily</b> voluntary	42	15%
Payments <b>primarily</b> deducted	70	25%
Combination voluntary and deducted	154	56%
No data	11	4%
Total	277	100%

## 7.0 TRACING AND ENFORCEMENT HISTORY

### 7.1 TRACE HISTORY

Data was collected on the previous trace histories of the 315 clients for whom a federal trace search was made. An attempt was made to identify the number of previous FAMS traces (excluding automatic searches) and federal FOAEA traces. However, trace history data were often incomplete or inaccurate. For example, sometimes no trace history was recorded, despite there being a FOAEA trace underway. Five percent of the cases were registered as never having had a FAMS or FOAEA trace. Despite these data limitations, trace history results are presented in Table 20.

**Table 20** Number of traces per case

Number of searches recorded	Number of files: FAMS searches	Number of files: FOAEA searches	Total files searched
No searches/no data	86 (27%)	61 (19%)	16 (5%)
1-3 searches	174 (55%)	247 (78%)	193 (61%)
4-7 searches	52 (16%)	7 (2%)	90 (29%)
8-9 searches	3 (1%)	0	12 (4%)
10-19 searches	0	0	4 (1%)
Average no. of traces per case	2	1	3
Total	315 (99%)	315 (99%)	315 (100%)

According to this data, over one third of the cases had been searched by FAMS or FOAEA a minimum of four different times; the average number of searches per case file was three. Five percent of the files had lengthy (eight or more) trace histories.

### 7.2 ACTIVE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Over 35 types of enforcement actions can be applied by FMEP in response to maintenance arrears. This study tracked 10 of the most significant enforcement actions **actively** underway for each case **at the time** the file was reviewed. In most cases, other enforcement actions had been applied but had expired or were withdrawn.

An explanation of the enforcement actions reviewed is provided in Table 22.

Each file had an average number of three enforcement actions currently underway.

**Table 21** Number of active enforcement actions per case

<b>Number of active enforcement actions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
None recorded	21	7%
1 action	54	17%
2 actions	80	25%
3 actions	89	28%
4 actions	52	17%
5 actions	16	5%
6 actions	3	3%
Total	315	100%

Garnishees of federal payments (NOFIs) were the most basic form of enforcement used because they can be attached to a wide range of federal payments. Federal license denial, one of the most serious enforcement actions, was applied in only 10 percent of cases. All federal enforcement measures go beyond provincial/territorial boundaries and are not geographically restricted.

**Table 22** Types of active enforcement actions

<b>Type of enforcement action</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Notice of Attachment	Garnishee—usually of company wages	44	14%
NOFI	Garnishee of federal payment	280	89%
NOFG	Garnishee of federal salary	0	0
CPA	Compulsory Payment Allotment (military personnel)	0	0
Reg-Land	Lien against land or house	11	3%
Active committal hearing	Hearing prerequisite to imprisonment	0	0
Driver's License enforcement action	Enforcement related to Driver's License	125	40%
License denial	Federal license denial (marine, passport, aviation licenses)	31	10%
Credit Bureau enforcement action	Loan denial assessment (if payor applies for loan)	219	70%
26.1	Seizure of personal property (e.g. boat, car)	65	2%

## 8.0 TRACE CHARACTERISTICS, RESULTS AND IMPACTS

### 8.1 TYPES OF TRACE REQUESTS AND RECEIPTS

Pilot Phase results clearly indicated that employer results and locations were of the most interest to FMEP and FAMS. Search requests were designated “employer only” in the majority of cases. However, since the FOAEA Unit sends back location and employer information no matter what is requested or required, initial search specifications have lost their importance and accuracy. In addition, changes to the search request fields have reduced the number of requests designated as “employer only” and added broader categories (driver’s license) that do not indicate trace data preference. However, a broad interpretation of these data suggests that employer data is still considered a priority over payor residential address data.

**Table 23 Search requests and receipts**

<b>Search request designation</b>	<b>Number of requests</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Number received</b>	<b>%</b>
Employment data only	56	18%	0	0
Payor location data only	13	4%	144	46%
Employment and location	242	77%	168	53%
No data / other	4	1%	3	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data describing trace returns indicates that payor residential address data dominates returns. In no cases was “employer only” data returned; it was always sent in combination with payor residential address data. This is despite the fact the employer data is more clearly identified as being required by FMEP.

This data suggests that there is not a clear “fit” between trace requests and returns. A large proportion of the data returned to FMEP is not required, and because of this, is likely to be of little value. When this is added to time pressures faced by FMEP staff, and the volume of data that is available to be reviewed (from FAMS and other sources), it is likely to lead to the overall “devaluing” of FOAEA data.

## 8.2 TIME DURATIONS BETWEEN TRACE INTERVALS

Data was collected on the intervals between different stages of the trace request process. Specific time markers were not available for all intervals (see Section 4.5.7). In these cases, the closest approximate time definitions were used.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 24 Time intervals between trace request processes (all cases)**

<b>Time intervals</b>	<b>Amount of time between FMEP request and Province Closed</b>	<b>Amount of time between Province Closed and application legal date (for FOAEA)</b>	<b>Number of weeks between legal application and Federal Closed</b>
Less than 2 weeks	2 (1%)	132 (42%)	15 (5%)
From 2 weeks to under 4 weeks	27 (9%)	45 (14%)	68 (22%)
From 4 weeks to under 8 weeks	27 (9%)	44 (14%)	48 (15%)
From 8 weeks to under 12 weeks	25 (8%)	12 (4%)	153 (49%)
From 12 weeks to under 16 weeks	32 (10%)	8 (3%)	18 (6%)
Over 16 weeks	201 (64%)	74 (23%)	13 (4%)
No data	1 (0%)		
<b>Totals</b>	<b>315 (101%)</b>	<b>315 (100%)</b>	<b>315 (101%)</b>

Table 24 indicates that the longest time delays were in the period between FMEP request and Province Closed. This is during the period when FAMS searches provincial databases for payor residential and employer address data. Sixty-four percent of the cases took over four months for FAMS to review its search data and identify the need for a federal trace. There were also significant delays in the period between legal application date and the Federal Closed date. Almost 60 percent of the files took over eight weeks to complete this task.

Altogether the total tracing time from FMEP request to Federal Closed was lengthy; in 76 percent (241/315) of cases it took six or more months for all stages of the process to be completed and data to be returned (Table 25).

It is recognized that time delays are affected by other administrative issues such as the affidavit submission process. This affected trace requests to the end of 1998. A review of total trace duration times (FMEP request to Federal Closed) during three separate time periods (June to December 1998, January to June 1999 and July to December 1999) showed changes in the total

<sup>6</sup> **Date FMEP Request** – date FMEP sends trace search results to FAMS. **Province Closed** – when FAMS closes its own search and notifies FMEP a FOAEA search will be undertaken. Does not indicate when actual trace request to FOAEA made. **Application Legal Date** – date of initial FAMS application for trace results to the FOAEA Unit. (Province still has to activate the application with a signed affidavit which may take up to 30 days.) **Federal Closed** – date when FAMS “picks up” first trace results sent by the FOAEA Unit. Does not signify actual dates sent by the FOAEA Unit or date received by FMEP.

time it took to complete a trace. For example, the number of cases taking six months or more dropped from 77 percent to 59 percent. These differences clearly show the impact of administrative issues on the duration required to complete a trace.

**Table 25 Time durations of trace process to obtain FOAEA data in three distinct time periods**

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Jun 1998 – Dec 31, 1998</b>	<b>Jan 1, 1999 – Jun 30, 1999</b>	<b>Jul 1, 1999 – Dec 31, 1999</b>	<b>Total time period</b>
Less than 2 months	2 (3%)	5 (5%)	8 (6%)	15 (5%)
2 months to under 4	0 (0%)	4 (4%)	21 (15%)	25 (8%)
4 months to under 6	1 (1%)	4 (4%)	29 (21%)	34 (11%)
6 months or more	64 (96%)	95 (88%)	82 (59%)	241 (76%)
Total	67	108	140	315

A closer look at time specific intervals related to these time periods reveals the following:

- The fastest search period was from July to December 1999 when 21 percent of the files went through the entire search process in under four months. Search timeliness had steadily improved since June to December 1998 when administrative problems delayed the search process.
- The fastest period of transference between FMEP Request and Province Closed was from June to December 1998. The slowest period was from January to June 1999 when 89 percent of the files took over four months to be searched. In the period July to December 1999, 64 percent of the files took four months or more.
- Lengthy delays in 1998 were mostly accounted for by delays between Province Closed and the Application Legal Date. Ninety percent of the cases sent in this time period took over four months to process, in contrast to three percent in the July to December 1999 time period.
- There were time delays between the Application Legal Date and Federal Closed in the January 1999 to June 30, 1999 time period; 90 percent of the cases were received in a little over two months. Time intervals shortened during the July to December 1999 time period, with only 33 percent of the cases requiring over two months to process.

### **8.3 QUALITY OF TRACE DATA**

The overall quality of trace data sent by the FOAEA Unit is an important issue to assess both in terms of the utility of the data and the value that is attached to it. It was recognized that a high proportion of incomplete or outdated addresses returned by FOAEA would not inspire confidence in the overall value of the trace results.

Four aspects of data quality were considered:

- Whether the data was incomplete or complete;

- Whether the data was unique or duplicative;
- The overall number of trace returns provided by the FOAEA Unit; and
- The currency of the data (both in terms of “active” date and date in relation to original FMEP request).

### 8.3.1 Completeness and Duplication of Trace Data

Files were assessed in terms of completeness of the address data provided by the FOAEA Unit. An address was considered to be complete if it included enough information to be traceable (postal code not required). It was considered incomplete if some information was provided (e.g. postal code) but the information was not sufficient to result in a completed trace.

Many trace requests received duplicate addresses and there was a high proportion of incomplete data that was duplicative.

Table 26 indicates that payor residential address data was most likely to be returned (96 percent). However, the quality of the data tended to be higher in the employer address category. Fewer employer traces were incomplete or duplicate.

While the higher proportion of payor residential address data returned may appear to have been positive, there was less demand for this data. Of greater concern was the large number of files (47 percent) that returned no employment data.

**Table 26 Completeness and duplication of trace data**

Trace data description	Payor address data	Employer name and location
	N=315	
No. of files where (at least 2) complete addresses returned	304 (96%)	168 (53%)
No. of files where no addresses returned	11 (3%)	147 (47%)
No. of files where incomplete address returned	117 (38%)	0 (0%)
No. of files where duplicate addresses returned	101 (32%)	3 (1%)

Most cases received more than one complete trace return, particularly those with payor residential addresses. Seventy percent of the cases had two or more complete addresses. In the case of employer data, 41 percent of the cases had two or more complete trace returns. Ninety-seven percent of the incomplete payor residential addresses came from CCRA. In most cases, these consisted of postal codes only. **All** employer data was obtained via CCRA and all were complete.



**Table 27      Number of complete trace returns**

<b>Number of complete addresses per case</b>	<b>Payor address data N=304</b>	<b>Employer name and location N=168</b>
1 complete trace returned	90 (30%)	95 (56%)
2 complete	179 (59%)	49 (29%)
3 complete	31 (10%)	14 (8%)
4 complete	4 (1%)	6 (4%)
5 or more complete	-	4 (2%)

### **8.3.2    Proportion of FOAEA Data that is “New” to FAMS and FMEP**

Prior to the request for FOAEA data, FMEP and FAMS had already conducted extensive searches for the payor residential and employer address. Both recorded, to varying degrees, the addresses searched and discarded as invalid or outdated.

Existing FMEP and FAMS payor residential and employer addresses were compared with FOAEA results to determine whether FOAEA trace results were supplying new information to FAMS and FMEP. Most of the information sent by FOAEA was **not** new. Many addresses had already been reviewed and found to be inaccurate by FAMS and FMEP staff. There was a higher proportion of “new” information (43 percent or 135/315) on employer files than on payor files (25 percent or 79/315).

### **8.3.3    Currency of FOAEA Trace Results Dates**

The dates of the most recent active date of FOAEA results for payor residential addresses ranged from 1992 to 1999 or earlier. Although data provided by HRDC extended further back in time, a higher proportion of CCRA data was outdated. Over 60 percent of the employer addresses provided (all by CCRA) were dated 1997 or earlier. This compared with 30 percent of the data for payor residential addresses.

Some research, conducted by FAMS after this study was completed, has suggested that the dates attached to FOAEA residential address and employer trace results sent to FMEP via FAMS may not be correct in all cases. It was, however, beyond the scope of this study to determine the validity of dates attached by CCRA, HRDC or by the FOAEA Unit prior to the sending of trace information to FAMS.

**Table 28 Dated address of most current FOAEA return**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Most current residential trace</b>	<b>Most current employer trace</b>
1999	129 (41%)	65 (39%)
1998	80 (25%)	2 (1%)
1997	40 (13%)	100 (60%)
1996	23 (7%)	1 (1%)
1995	7 (2%)	-
1994	10 (3%)	-
1993	6 (2%)	-
1992 or earlier	9 (3%)	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>168</b>

The currency of FOAEA data is also related to the time when a trace request was made. The study examined the date of the most current trace return in relation to the date the trace was requested by FMEP.

The results indicated that just over half of the most active payor residential addresses (56 percent or 171/304) were “current” (e.g. in the same year) in relation to the date of the initiation of the search request by FMEP.

**Table 29 Comparison of dates of residential addresses with dates of FMEP trace requests**

<b>Payor residential addresses date of trace return compared to FMEP request date</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Most active trace return is in same year or is more recent than FMEP request date	171	56%
Most active trace return is 1 year out of date	55	18%
Most active trace return is 2 years out of date	38	12%
Most active trace return is 3 or more years out of date	40	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>99%</b>

Using this framework for analysis, employer addresses were less current than the payor residential addresses provided by the FOAEA Unit. Only 39 percent of the most active traces were current in terms of the year of the FMEP request.

**Table 30 Comparison of employer active date with date of FMEP trace initiation**

<b>Employer addresses dates of traces returned compared to FMEP request date</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>%</b>
Most active trace return is in same year or is more recent than FMEP request date	65	39%
Most active trace return is 1 year out of date	61	36%
Most active trace return is 2 years out of date	42	25%
Most active trace return is 3 years or more out of date	-	-
Total	168	100%



## 9.0 TRACE COMPLETION DATA

### 9.1 NUMBER OF COMPLETED TRACES BASED ON FOAEA RESULTS

An analysis of the outcome of trace results sent by the FOAEA Unit concluded that seven payors and nine employers were accurately traced using FOAEA data. Using the total number of files that included payor residential addresses and employer trace results as a baseline, this suggested a completion rate for payors of 2.3 percent (7/304) and for employers of five percent (9/168). However, it is possible that the success rate would have been higher, if it had been possible to accurately estimate whether trace requests were **specifically** designated for employers or payors.

**Table 31** Number of FOAEA trace results leading to location of payor or employer

Number of successful residential addresses	Percentage of files with payor returns
7	2% (7/304)
Number of successful employer addresses	Percentage of files with employer returns
9	5% (9/168)

CCRA supplied most of the successful data and all of the employer data.

**Table 32** Source departments of completed traces

Type of trace	Source department		Total
	HRDC	CCRA	
Payor	6	1	7
Employer	0	9	9
Total	6	10	16

### 9.2 TYPES OF VERIFICATION USED FOR TRACE

All the successful trace completions were ascertained by a review of the running record; in five out of nine employer traces, a clearly specified Notice of Attachment (NOA) had been issued.

### 9.3 PAYMENTS MADE AS A RESULT OF SUCCESSFUL TRACE COMPLETIONS

Ten of the sixteen successful traces resulted in payments to the FOAEA Unit. There was a higher rate of payments from the files that were traced through CCRA; in nine out of ten cases, payment came from files provided with successful data from CCRA.

The total number of payments up to the point of data analysis (in the period between November 1999 and January 2000) was \$18,027. Payment results showed a range of payments from \$104 to \$6,984, with an average payment per case of \$1,803. CCRA accounted for \$17,027.00 or 94 percent of these payments.

**Table 33 Level of payments resulting from FOAEA traces (with source departments)**

<b>Level of payments</b>	<b>HRDC</b>	<b>CCRA</b>
\$0-499		3
\$500-999		3
\$1,000-1,499	1	
\$1,500-4,999		2
\$5,000+		1

**9.4 REASONS WHY FOAEA TRACE DATA DID NOT RESULT IN THE SUCCESSFUL LOCATION OF AN EMPLOYER OR PAYOR**

It should be noted that the small number of FOAEA trace completions can be partially explained by the fact that the cases ultimately sent to the FOAEA Unit are those which had already been subjected to many search procedures over a length of time, and all of which had been unsuccessful. Because the most difficult cases are sent to the FOAEA Unit, it may not be realistic to expect a high rate of success from the federal search results.

In most cases, it was difficult to determine the specific reason why FOAEA data was not successful in concluding a trace. Whether and how FOAEA data was assessed at FMEP was not always evident, and in most cases, could only be ascertained by a review of the running record and by an overall assessment of the file and data at the time of the trace return.

Table 34 summarizes the reasons why trace results were not successful. This data was drawn from an **overall** assessment of **all** the trace data sent for each case and therefore does not necessarily correlate exactly with some of the data presented elsewhere in this report.

**Table 34 General outcomes of trace**

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Residential data</b>	<b>Employer data</b>
Trace results successful	7 (2%)	9 (3%)
No trace sent	11 (3%)	147 (47%)
Trace results appear not to be required at time of trace return	160 (51%)	3 (1%)
All trace results clearly outdated	110 (35%)	84 (27%)
Trace results not valid	-	2 (1%)
Trace results not clearly entered in FMEP fields	16 (5%)	53 (17%)
Cannot verify trace outcome	-	3 (19%)
Trace or file withdrawn	4 (1%)	7 (2%)
Other	7 (2%)	7 (2%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>315 (99%)</b>	<b>315 (101%)</b>

This data also indicates the number of files where trace conclusions could not clearly be drawn in relation to specific FMEP records (although data was reviewed in the running record).

An overall assessment of case files identified three main factors involved in the lack of trace data success. These were:

- In the case of employer data there were a large number (47 percent of files) where there was simply no data returned by the FOAEA Unit in response to a request. Employer data is the most required data and was not adequately provided.
- In 27 to 35 percent of the files, results were clearly outdated in comparison to data already generated and recorded on case files, either in FAMS or FMEP.
- In the case of payor residential data, over half of the data received was not required or requested. This data could not be used, primarily because it was already on file. Not only was this data relatively useless, it contributed to data overload in the tracing systems.

Timeliness of data returns is obviously a factor in the degree to which trace results are outdated. Overall case data is continually changing, being revised or updated. The life of any one address may be only weeks or months. Even if an address is correct at one time, its life span may be extremely limited.

## **9.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL FOAEA TRACES**

No generalizations can be made from the small number of cases that resulted in a successful FOAEA trace. However, these cases were analyzed for any obvious payor, recipient, case or trace history characteristics.

All of these cases took six or more months to trace (from FMEP request to Federal Closed or FOAEA return). Most of the successful cases (8/16) were initiated by FMEP between January and June 1999; 6 out of 16 cases were initiated between January and June 1998; and 2 out of 16 were launched between July and December 1999.

These cases exhibited characteristics that reflected the longer-term nature of cases or past difficulties in tracing. Half (8/16) had been enrolled in FMEP since 1996, and of these, one third (5/16) had been enrolled since 1992. Most of the files (13/16) had undergone at least one to three previous FOAEA searches and one had been the subject of four to seven searches. Ten out of 16 files had three or more active enforcements attached to the case, although only one license denial was recorded.

In terms of case group, 11 out of 16 cases were those where both payor and recipient lived in British Columbia; 4 out of 16 were RDI cases (the payor lives inside the province); and, 1 out of 16 were RDO (the payor lives outside the province). The proportion of RDI cases appears to have been slightly higher than the overall sample population.

At the same time, payors in this group had all made some form of payment to FMEP in the past. In 12 out of 16 cases, their “last payment”<sup>7</sup> had been made in the previous six months prior to the review of the file. In 5 out of 16 cases, past payments were described as being somewhat regular, however in 11 out of 16 cases payments had been very occasional or occasional only. All of the payors traced through FOAEA data had made at least some payment on their case.

---

<sup>7</sup> As noted in Section 6.4 it was difficult to determine the source of all payments.



## 10.0 PERCENTAGE OF FMEP REQUESTS SENT TO FOAEA FOR TRACE

The objective of Component I of this study was to determine the approximate percentage of FMEP cases that require a FOAEA search. This calculation provides a perspective on the proportional significance of the federal trace function.

This proportional significance calculation is based on the following data:

- The number of cases enrolled at FMEP between January and June 1999 and the percentage sent to FAMS for a trace; and
- The number and percentage of cases concluded at FAMS and sent to the FOAEA Unit for a federal trace.

**Table 35** Number of cases enrolled in FMEP requiring FOAEA traces

Month 1999	Total number of cases enrolled at FMEP*	Number of FMEP cases sent to FAMS for trace**	Number of cases concluded by FAMS	Number of cases sent to FOAEA for trace***	Percentage of FAMS cases sent to FOAEA	Percentage of FMEP cases sent to FOAEA
Jan	39,235	929 (2.4%)	592 (1.5%)	337	36% (337/929)	0.86%
Feb	38,560	879 (2.3%)	591 (1.5%)	288	32% (288/879)	0.75%
Mar	39,906	939 (2.3%)	588 (1.5%)	351	37% (331/939)	0.88%
Apr	40,330	872 (2.2%)	550 (1.4%)	322	37% (322/872)	0.80%
May	40,569	905 (2.2%)	565 (1.4%)	340	38% (340/905)	0.84%
Jun	40,832	1,271 (3.1%)	906 (2.2%)	365	29% (365/1,271)	0.90%

\* Includes both active and newly enrolled cases.

\*\* FMEP and FAMS numbers were somewhat different for this category. FAMS numbers were used to complete this table.

\*\*\* A small number of FOAEA trace requests (one to four each month) were still pending.

The data indicated that the proportion of all enrolled FMEP cases requiring a federal search was less than one percent each month. However, this percentage was calculated from FMEP data that included all **enrolled** cases, whether or not they currently required a trace.

In the case of FAMS, the percentage of FMEP cases requiring a FOAEA trace was much higher, ranging from 29 to 38 percent per month, with an average of 35 percent. These statistics suggest that the FOAEA Unit has an important role to play in terms of providing information on a significant number (1/3) of cases that cannot be resolved by FAMS searches. Both the small number of cases sent originally by FMEP to the FOAEA Unit and the low total of successful traces is a reflection of the fact that these cases are the most problematic to trace. These cases cannot be traced successfully using the standard methods employed by the provincial components of the tracing process.



## 11.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This document presents the results of the research implementation phase of a study that assesses the impact and effectiveness of the addition of Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) databases to processes used in tracing payors owing maintenance arrears and in identifying and locating employers to whom Notices of Attachment (garnishees) might be applied.

Three hundred and fifteen cases were randomly selected and analyzed to determine case and recipient characteristics, arrears, payment and enforcement data. The quality, completeness, currency, timeliness and outcomes of both payor residential and employer trace returns for these files were analyzed to determine trace outcomes and payment results. Other aspects of tracing, such as the duration of different components of the tracing process, were also described and assessed.

A second component of this study assessed the proportional significance of the FOAEA trace function within the overall tracing process. This component was based on an analysis of enrolment and trace request data from FMEP and FAMS.

An analysis of the payor residential and employer trace returns concluded the following:

- Employer data is the most required and requested, however payor residential data is more likely to be returned;
- More payor residential data is returned than employer data—that is, payor address returns include more multiple addresses;
- CCRA sends more incomplete payor residential address returns than Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC);
- The “quality” of employer returns (all sent by CCRA) is higher than for payor residential address data. There were no incomplete and only three duplicate employer traces sent by CCRA. There was also a higher proportion of employer data than payor residential address data that was “new” to the FMEP and FAMS data systems;
- Despite being “new” to the system, the employer data provided by CCRA is older than the payor residential address data. Sixty percent of the most current employer results were dated 1997 or earlier, compared with 30 percent of the data related to payor addresses; and
- Based on an examination of the date of trace returns in relation to the time of the FMEP request, an estimated 56 percent of payor addresses were “current,” compared to 39 percent of employer addresses.

An analysis of the outcomes of trace results showed that seven payors and nine employers were accurately traced using FOAEA data. Using the total number of files with returns as a baseline, this suggests a completion rate of 2.3 percent for payor addresses and five percent for employer addresses. These numbers would be substantially higher if it were possible to accurately ascertain specific tracing needs.

There is, at present, no clear way of determining the specific trace needs of FAMS. This is due in part to the fact that FAMS does not clearly designate its trace needs on its requests and to the reality that the FOAEA Unit always sends back both payor residential and employer addresses.

Ten of the sixteen successful traces resulted in payments to the FOAEA Unit totalling \$18,027. Overall, the CCRA data yielded a much higher rate of payments (9/10) than the HRDC data. This is logical because the location of employers is more likely to result in a payment. The range of payments resulting from traces was \$104 to \$6,934, with an average payment per case of \$1,803.

The primary objective of this study was to determine whether the addition of CCRA databases has increased the number of completed traces of payors and employers, and, as a consequence, raised the amount of maintenance arrears collected. The study concluded that the addition of CCRA data appears to have increased tracing effectiveness and the amount of payments from the FOAEA Unit. Data indicates that CCRA data was responsible for 10 trace returns; accounting for 62.5 percent of the total returns and 94 percent of the payments received (\$17,027). However, overall, the impact of FOAEA trace data, from either source department, is limited and payment recovery is minimal.

The study also attempted to determine the approximate proportional “value” of FOAEA traces to both FMEP and FAMS. The data revealed that FOAEA traces are requested for approximately one third (35 percent) of cases sent to FAMS for search by FMEP. Less than one percent of cases originally enrolled in FMEP terminate in a FOAEA search. However, it should be noted that FOAEA traces are normally only requested in cases where other search methods have been unsuccessful.

One of the most significant findings of this study related to the overall volume of data sent by the FOAEA Unit to FMEP via FAMS. A large proportion of this data was not requested, not required, incomplete, already searched by FMEP or FAMS, or substantially outdated.

Considering that the FOAEA data represents only a small proportion of the data requested by FMEP, these characteristics have led to the FOAEA data being undervalued. A restructuring of the FOAEA tracing system needs to be undertaken to ensure that FMEP receives the most minimal but highest quality data possible. A restructuring would include:

- A reduction in the overall volume of data generated by the FOAEA Unit and sent to FMEP;
- Filtering of trace data by request and currency of data (filtering could be done at the FOAEA Unit or by FAMS);
- Elimination of all duplicate and incomplete data sent by the FOAEA Unit; and
- The upgrading of the FAMS and FMEP electronic systems to permit ongoing monitoring and assessment of trace application data and outcomes.

The intent of this restructuring would be to:

- Streamline the amount of data to reduce the volume and workload for FMEP staff;

- Enhance the relevance and “appearance of quality” of FOAEA data so that this data would be reviewed more rapidly by FMEP staff;
- Increase the likelihood of more successful trace completions; and
- Support improvements to the data transfer system that would increase the timeliness, efficiency and effectiveness of the trace process.

### **Recommendations**

1. That search request criteria be more clearly defined by FAMS and that these criteria be used by the FOAEA Unit to select and designate trace returns.
2. That filters be applied at the FOAEA Unit and/or FAMS in order to:
  - Eliminate all incomplete and duplicate addresses sent by FOAEA; and
  - Ensure that only the most recently active address in each category is sent.
3. That FAMS/FMEP/FOAEA explore the possibility of FAMS automatically filtering FOAEA data in order to eliminate payor residential and employer addresses already searched. This process would minimize the volume of data returning to FMEP.
4. That a simple internal monitoring system, based on distinctive data fields, is incorporated within FAMS and FMEP to identify the data responsible for a valid and completed trace of a payor residential or employer address. For example, the data fields could be triggered by the issuance of a Notice of Attachment or a completed payment. This would permit continuous internal assessment of the effectiveness and utility of different information sources and tracing methods.
5. That small scale file reviews be carried out on an annual basis to monitor the duration of specific components of the tracing process. This would require the more accurate identification of some trace process dates (e.g. the dates for FMEP review of files and FOAEA transfer of data).
6. That the system of data transfer be restructured so that all FOAEA data is transferred electronically from FAMS to FMEP, rather than by hard copy.



## **12.0 RESPONSES TO STUDY FROM FLAS AND BC FAMILY JUSTICE PROGRAMS**

### **12.1 RESPONSE TO STUDY RECOMMENDATIONS (P. 41) FROM FAMILY LAW ASSISTANCE SECTION, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE CANADA.**

1. We don't agree that search requests criteria be established and used. The FOAEA tracing service is a fishing expedition and it should remain so. There is no reason why the Maintenance Enforcement Programs (MEPs) could not decide what information is useful for them and disregard the remainder. It should also be mentioned that it would involve major system changes to establish tracing criteria both for FOAEA and CCRA-HRDC.
2. We agree that all duplicate information should be eliminated before it is sent to MEPs. With respect to incomplete information, a decision will need to be made as to exactly what incomplete means. A postal code alone could be considered as an address. We do not agree that only the most current address information should be included. It is not FOAEA that should be making these decisions. We do agree that where possible we should be including the date on which the data bank was updated and let the MEPs decide if they wish to ignore everything before, remembering that we will not provide duplicate information.
3. We agree that FOAEA should be filtering duplicate information. It should be noted that this is only if it is a true duplication. As an example, if one address is P.O. Box 35 and the other is Postal Box 35, we cannot determine if this is a duplicate. It would require major system changes to be able to detect these types of duplications.
4. No comment on this recommendation.
5. FOAEA agrees that subject to the availability of resources, it will review its tracing process in light of the recommendations of this report and determine how it can be made more useful to MEPs. It should also be noted that the current FOAEA tracing service has its limitations due to the nature of the data banks that are searched. For this reason we must be cautious in determining the level of resources we use to improve a process that has inherent limitations. Resources may be applied more beneficially for other tracing initiatives such as New Employee tracing.
6. No comment on this recommendation.

**12.2 RESPONSE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF FAMILY JUSTICE PROGRAMS,  
MINISTRY OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, BRITISH COLUMBIA**



December 10, 2001

ARCS #410-20 RCI-2

Jim Sturrock  
Senior Research Officer  
Child Support Team  
Department of Justice  
284 Wellington Street  
Ottawa ON K1A 0H8

Dear Jim Sturrock:

Re: Response to research on the Impact of Adding Revenue Canada Databases  
Under FOAEA – Part 1 Tracing for Locating Persons

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in the Federal project to evaluate the impact of the Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency database on tracing for maintenance enforcement purposes.

The recommendations arising from the report, as well as comments from the Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP) staff, have led Family Search, Family Justice Programs Division (FJPD) and the FMEP to review British Columbia's processes for acting upon Federal search results. We are currently exploring a shift in the analysis of Federal information from FMEP to Family Search.

As the Family Search database is designed to receive and store address and employment information electronically, it lends itself to a comparison of Federal search results with previous search results. Further, the Family Search authority to demand information complements the task of following up and confirming search results received from the Family Orders and Agreement Enforcement Assistance Unit (FOAEA). Once information is confirmed, the best information can be sent to FMEP electronically, greatly reducing the workload for FMEP staff. Although the follow up to confirm employment can be time consuming for Family Search staff, it appears that approximately 15% of the Federal search results are useful, when acted upon promptly. This is significant, considering that the Federal searches are being conducted on cases where extensive provincial searching has been unsuccessful.

---

**Ministry of  
Attorney General**

**Justice Services Branch**  
Family Justice Programs Division

210 – 815 Hornby Street  
Vancouver BC V6Z 2E6

Phone: 604 660-2528  
Facsimile: 604 660-3728

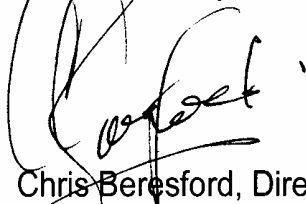


The proposed filtering of dates by FOAEA is not supported at this time. We have learned that the dates provided by FOAEA with employment results do not always match the date when the employee actually worked for the employer. It would be valuable for FOAEA to research the dates that are being retrieved from its sources.

As suggested by Focus Consultants, the implementation of a monitoring system to identify the data sources responsible for the successful location of address and employer information would be useful from both a research and a program management perspective. However, this suggestion needs to be considered in the context of its impact on FMEP operations.

Finally, to update you on the current turnaround time in British Columbia, provincial searches are taking an average of 17.2 days.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Beresford", written over a large, faint circular stamp or watermark.

Chris Beresford, Director  
of Maintenance Enforcement

CB/jp



# APPENDIX: TRACING PILOT DATA COLLECTION FORM

## I. FILE AND CASE DATA

CASE FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

### Source

1. FILE LINKAGES (FAMS SEARCH)

1. RESEARCH CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_
2. FMEP FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_
3. FAMS FILE NO. \_\_\_\_\_
4. REFERENCE CONTROL NO. \_\_\_\_\_

FAMS Case Screen

2. RECIPIENT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle

3. CASE REQUESTS AND RECEIVED (✓ or x)

Data Item	Request	Recv'd
Location		
Employment		
Assets		
SIN		
Other		

FAMS: Fed Trace Results

4. CASE FLOW DATA

Activity	No data	Day	Month	Year
4.1 DATE ENROLLED FMEP				
4.2 DATE FMEP REQUEST				
4.3 PROV. CLOSED/ FED INITIATED				
4.4 APPL. LEGAL DATE				
4.5 RECEIVE AFF. DATE				
4.6 FED CLOSED (FAMS)				

FMEP Case

FAMS: Case Screen

FAMS: Case Screen

FOAEA

FOAEA

FAMS: Case Screen

5. INTERVALS

- 5.1 Request to FAMS™ FAMS closed \_\_\_\_\_ mos.
- 5.2 Legal Application™ Fed. Closed \_\_\_\_\_ mos.
- Total \_\_\_\_\_ mos.

### Summary comments

---



---



---



---



---

## II. FILE AND CASE DATA

### PAYOR

6. GENDER M F
7. BIRTH DATE \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
d m y
8. SIN \_\_\_\_\_
9. GAIN STATUS
- 1. no record
  - 2. current
  - 3. past
  - 4. applied/ineligible
10. Most recent GAIN \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
d m y d m y
11. OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_

### Source

FAMS: Case Screen

FAMS: Employer

FMEP: Payor

### RECIPIENT

12. NAME \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
Last First Middle
13. GENDER M F
14. Birth Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_  
d m y
15. JURISDICTION
- 1. inside B.C.
  - 2. outside B.C. Province \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. unknown
16. Recipient GAIN status Active Non-Active

FAMS: Recipient

FAMS: Recipient

FMEP Recipient

FMEP Assignment Screen

### CHILDREN

17. GENDER, NUMBER AND BIRTH DATES

	Gender	Birth Dates		
		d	m	y
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

FAMS: Related Data: Children

18. TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN ON ORDER \_\_\_\_\_





## VI. PREVIOUS TRACING HISTORY (excludes automatic searches)

30.

	Date Issued			Type of Request					Trace Source			Cple	WD	d	m	y
	d	m	y	Auto	SIN	LOC	Emp	Assets	FAMS	Fed	Other					
1.																
2.																
3.																
4.																
5.																
6.																
7.																
8.																
9.																
10.																

31. TOTAL NUMBER TRACES:

1. FAMS \_\_\_\_\_

2. Federal \_\_\_\_\_

3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. Total \_\_\_\_\_

FMEP Tracing

## VII. ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

32. SUMMARY OF ACTIVE ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

Code only the following: NOFI, NOA, NOFG, CPA, Reg-Land, Committal Hearing, DL, License Denial

	Type	Date Issued			End Date		
		d	m	y	d	m	y
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							

Enforcement  
Action  
Summary

### VIII. FOAEA RESULTS: PAYOR LOCATION

33.	FOAEA Data Sent			Recv'd FAMS			Box	Suite or Apt.	St.	City	Prov.	Country	P.C.	Federal Date Active			Source Dept. (HRDC)	In System FAMS Y/N	Date Entered			Date Current			In System FMEP Y/N	Date Entered			Date Current			Results FOAEA Data														
	d	m	y	d	m	y								d	m	y			d	m	y	d	m	y		d	m	y	d	m	y		d	m	y	d	m	y								
1.																																														
2.																																														
3.																																														
4.																																														
5.																																														
Totals																																														

**Results Code:**

- I** Incomplete
  - C** Complete
  - V** Unknown
1. Last entered, latest active
  2. Latest active, not most recent entered
  3. Older active, newest entered
  4. Old active, outdated
  5. No record of entry



## IX. FOAEA RESULTS EMPLOYERS

34.	Name of Bus.	FOAEA Data Sent			Recv'd FAMS			Box	Suite or Apt.	St.	City	Prov.	Country	P.C.	Federal Date Active			Source Dept. (HRDC)	In System FAMS Y/N	Date Entered			Date Current			In System FMEP Y/N	Date Entered			Date Current			Results FOAEA Data					
		d	m	y	d	m	y								d	m	y			d	m	y	d	m	y		d	m	y	d	m	y		d	m	y		
1																																						
2																																						
3																																						
4																																						
5																																						
Totals																																						

Results Code:

**I** Incomplete  
**C** Complete  
**V** Unknown

1. Last entered, latest active
2. Latest active, not most recent entered
3. Older active, newest entered
4. Old active, outdated
5. No record of entry

35. SUMMARY: TRACE RETURNS

Payor		
Dept.	Complete	Incomplete
RC		
HRDC		
Totals		

Employer		
Dept.	Complete	Incomplete
RC		
HRDC		
Totals		

**TRACING RESULTS**

**PAYOR**

36. DID FOAEA TRACE DATA RESULT IN SUCCESSFUL LOCATION OF PAYOR?

1. **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ → Verified Address

Type verification	P.O.
Letter	Suite
Phone Call	Street
Other _____	City
Date verification ____ / ____ / ____	Province
d      m      y	Country
	P.C.

2. **NO**

Trace cancelled .....	Reason
Trace not required by Province .....	
No results sent .....	
Incomplete Results .....	
Trace results entered, not applied .....	
Trace results entered, not applicable .	
Other .....	_____
Other .....	_____

3. **UNKOWN**

Trace results not entered FMEP .....	
Entered but not verified.....	
Other .....	_____

4. **OTHER**

FOAEA helped confirm existing data...	
Other .....	_____

Summary Comments

---



---

**EMPLOYER**

37. DID FOAEA TRACE DATA RESULT IN SUCCESSFUL LOCATION OF EMPLOYER?

1. **YES** \_\_\_\_\_ → Verified

Name
P.O.
Suite
Street
City
Province
Country
P.C.

Type verification \_\_\_\_\_

- Letter
- Phone Call
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Date verification \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

d            m            y

2. **NO**

Trace cancelled ..... Reason \_\_\_\_\_

Trace not required by Province .....

No results sent .....

Incomplete results .....

Trace results entered, not applied .....

Trace results entered, not applicable .

Other ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Other ..... \_\_\_\_\_

3. **UNKOWN**

Trace results not entered FMEP .....

Entered but not verified.....

Other ..... \_\_\_\_\_

4. **OTHER**

Helped confirm existing data .....

Other ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Summary Comments

---



---