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Child support amnesty offered

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The Chronicle-Telegram

People who have lost their driver's licenses for failing to pay child support have until the end of August to pay one month's child support and get their licenses back in an amnesty program.

The aim is to help people drive legally again, said Ann Eckstein, administrator of the Lorain County Child Support Enforcement Agency. It also brings in badly needed sup-

port for children, she said.

Letters have been sent to 5,558 people whose driver's licenses have been suspended, alerting them of the offer.

After paying the initial one month of support, the person seeking amnesty also must pay a \$25 reinstatement fee to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles at its facility in Parma or a \$35 reinstatement fee at one of the BMV offices in Lorain County, she said.

Those with questions may call

CSEA 7:45 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. Monday through Friday at (440) 284-4401.

The letters also alerted people about free legal advice that will be offered by the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cleveland 4 to 6 p.m. Aug. 28 at CSEA at 42485 North Ridge Road in Sheffield Township, according to Eckstein.

The legal aid staff will offer what is being described as "brief advice and referral" on child support cases only. People who want to talk to a legal aid

representative should call (888) 817-3777 to schedule an appointment, although some walk-ins may be allowed, Eckstein said.

For several years, amnesty has been offered at least one month a year by CSEA and the amount collected topped \$130,000 in August 2009 — the highest amount ever collected.

Eckstein said the improved economy means more people might be able to catch up a bit on support payments and begin driving legally again.

In Lorain County, more than 32,000 people pay child support, and the majority of the cases are paid on a regular basis through payroll deductions, according to Eckstein.

In addition to driver's licenses, she said any kind of professional license such as a barber's license also can be suspended, along with hunting and fishing licenses.

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