



Colusa, Sutter and Yolo Regional Child Support Agency Leadership Advisory Committee

To: RCSA Leadership Advisory Committee
From: Natalie Dillon, Regional Director
Subject: General Update (Agenda Item #5)
Date: December 5, 2024

There continues to be considerable change for the Child Support program broadly and for the Regional Child Support Agency (RCSA). This general update provides you with a high-level overview.

Staffing and Leadership Changes

Yolo County

Gerardo Pinedo, Yolo County CAO resigned in October 2024. The Yolo Board of Supervisors appointed Dirk Brazil as interim CAO. Dirk has a long history in Yolo County, and previously served as the Assistant CAO.

RCSA

In addition to regular turnover, it is important to note there will be change in two key positions. The first, one of our two Program Managers, currently filled by Tyria Valledor. Tyria is the manager over budget, HR, our analyst and staff development. Tyria has accepted a promotional opportunity and will be the Assistant Director of the Marin County Department of Child Support Services, commencing January 2025. Fortunately, Tyria gave us considerable notice, as to allow us to start the recruitment process early. We hope to have the position filled in early 2025.

We also received notice from one of our two Child Support Attorneys, Lizette Perez. As the Leadership Advisory Committee (LAC) is aware, the RCSA has been intentional about decreasing the number of attorneys employed within the agency. However, this vacancy will mean that we have one attorney for three courts, which is problematic. Again, we were fortunate to have notice to start the recruitment early. However, this is a very specialized position, which is taking longer to fill. We are actively working to fill it, and



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have reached out to Yuba County, who is willing to assist with our Sutter Calendar if needed during the interim.

California DCSS

David Kilgore was the CA DCSS Director for the last six years. He recently resigned from this position, accepting a job with CGI. Kristen Donadee, the Chief Deputy, was promoted to the position of Director. She has been very involved in the change and the strategic direction the program has embarked; we therefore do not anticipate significant change to the program or to the Regional Child Support Agency.

Conflict of Interest Code

During the May 26, 2021, Leadership Advisory Committee meeting I provided information on the RCSAs application for a conflict-of-interest code with the FPPC. This was a longer process than anticipated but is now finally near completion.

The Political Reform Act requires state and local government agencies to adopt a conflict-of-interest code. Each county in our jurisdiction has their own conflict of interest code. However, being regionalized, we were required to work with the FPPC – Fair Political Practices Commission, to develop our own conflict of interest code. We have designated six classifications that will be required to file their statements of economic interests with the Agency (Colusa Sutter Yolo Regional Child Support) annually via the Form 700. The six classifications are:

- Director of Child Support Services
- Assistant Director
- Program Manager
- Business Services Manager
- Business Services Supervisor
- Child Support Attorney V

Per FPPC regulation, we were required to incorporate a 45-day comment period. The 45-day period started Monday September 9, 2024, and ended October 23rd which did



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not result in any comment. The FPPC consultant then submitted the proposed code to their Assistant Chief Counsel for their review and approval. Approval is anticipated by the end of November.

The RCSA has written procedures and have designated a Business Services Supervisor to issue and retain completed statements of economic interest forms.

Website Domain Transition

In September, Yolo County transitioned their website from .org domain to .gov. Our website, colusasutteryolochildsupport.org is separate from the Yolo County website. As a result, we are now working on transitioning ours from .org to .gov as well. We recognize that other local agencies are going through similar transitions. We are working with Yolo County IT and Granicus to complete this and hope to finish the project once our Conflict-of-Interest Code is also in place.

Performance

This year we took a different approach to performance planning. Since regionalization, we have had performance goals communicated organization wide, but didn't have clearly defined staff level work expectations or supervisor level coaching and monitoring expectations. This year, we approached performance planning aligning all classifications work to our goals. Additionally given the myriad programmatic changes impacting collections and caseload, we wanted to also ensure attention to quality and timeliness. You will receive a more detailed presentation by Program Manager Daniel Padilla as to our performance plans for the current Federal Fiscal Year, in addition to performance outcomes for last year.

Program Changes

Flexibility Efficiency and Modernization (FEM) Final Rule is a federal rule originating from the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) that was put into effect December 20, 2016. California is implementing in phases over the next few years. SB 343 was chaptered in



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September 2023, which made changes to the child support guideline, effective September 2024. The new law adjusts the multipliers in the guideline calculations for minimum wage and lower earners with the goal of “right sizing” orders – in other words making child support orders more payable for low-income payors. The new law also expanded credits for low income earlier in the form of a Low-Income Adjustment (LIA).

Phase 2 of FEM will be implemented in 2026 which requires that local child support agencies (LCSA) consider the following 14 factors as it pertains to earning capacity when establishing a child support order: assets, residence, employment/earnings history, job skills, educational attainment, literacy, age, health, criminal record and employment barriers, record of seeking work, local job market, availability of employers, prevailing earning levels and other factors as determined. Again, the goal of FEM is to improve child support by setting accurate obligations, increase on-time payments to families, improve collection rates, and reduce arrearages. Although we have historically considered income as part of establishing child support factors, most of these other factors will significantly change how we engage with customers, interview, fact gather as well as alter the amount of information presented to the court. These changes will require system changes, training for staff, and to some degree – a customer service philosophy change. We have started some of the training and changes to how we conduct case interviews and document information. This will be ongoing and significant change to the program.

SB 1055 – California Drivers License Suspension as an enforcement tool.

As mandated by federal regulation, states use driver and professional license suspension as a tool to gain compliance with the child support obligation. In California, implementation of this policy impacted a large number of payors. For those debtors who are delinquent and have disregarded other attempts by the agency to solicit payment, the department provides advance notice to the parent that their license is subject to suspension. Typically, that letter gets the attention of the obligor who will contact the office and set up a payment plan.

However, SB 1055 was signed by the Governor and is effective January 1, 2025, which prohibits California Child Support from suspending California driver licenses for any



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child support obligor whose annual household income is at or below 70% of median income for the county in which they reside. Based on information in CSE (the California child support system) approximately 90% of California child support obligors make less than 70% of median income. It should be understood that an unknown subset of these obligors is working under the table, is self-employed, or is otherwise hiding income/assets from the program. Because we don't have income information for these parents, they too will no longer be subject to license suspension.

It is estimated that there are approximately 200,000 California child support obligors with their license suspended due to child support delinquency. DCSS is working with DMV to release all of those suspensions and potentially waive the \$15 fee. LCSAs will then be required to review their entire caseload to identify those obligors who may be eligible given the new income threshold. Additionally, there may be cleanup work required in CSE, to ensure the information in the Child Support System matches what is in the DMV system.

This change in law and policy will require substantially more work on a case-by-case basis to determine eligibility for this enforcement tool. Although many parents paying support may be relieved, parties receiving support will likely be frustrated as this has been a valuable tool to gain payment compliance. This change in law does not affect our use of professional license suspension. It is anticipated that implementation of this law may negatively impact child support collections.

The Work Number (TWN)

California has had a contract with Equifax for access to The Work Number (TWN), a tool that verifies the latest employment and income. TWN includes details such as employer name, address, FEIN as well as employee information such as name, address and phone plus employment status, hire date, duration with the employer, departure date, and job title. Access to TWN is essential and has provided the child support program with critical information about payors income and employment status. However, due to contract and cost issues California will be ending their contract with Equifax in the next few months. This will have significant impacts to our ability to set accurate orders, effectuate income withholding orders and ensure health insurance for children. Employers are legally



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required to provide information to Child Support; though many regularly refer us to the TWN – which has worked up until now. The Child Support Program can hold employers in contempt for failure to provide information; however, attorney and legal resources are limited. As of yet, there has not been a comparable tool identified. The loss of this contract will create more manual work for staff and will likely result in reduced performance on order attainment and a decrease in child support collections.

Former Assistance Pass Through Update

During previous LAC meetings, the RCSA provided an update on Formerly Assisted Pass Through, in other words passing through to families, collections on child support debt that was created because of non-payment of child support while the custodial parent was receiving CalWORKs. This has been a great policy change and in our three counties alone has resulted in the additional distribution of \$659,420 (from May 1 through November 7, 2024) to families instead of being recouped to government coffers. (Colusa - \$41,149; Sutter - \$219,540; Yolo - \$423,049) This is meaningful money for predominantly low-income parents.

Innovation and Technology

Spanish Customer Connect

In October, California implemented Spanish Customer Connect. Customer Connect is a tool that has been available in English only, that serves as a customer portal to communicate with and access limited case specific data. Feedback from staff and customers has been positive.

eR&A

The modification, or review and adjustment process of a child support order can be a lengthy and complicated process. One form in particular, the Income and Expense Form, is often difficult for customers to complete fully and accurately and is essential to the process. We are excited that this form has now been incorporated in an online format to streamline the process for customers. We anticipate by the end of the calendar year, the



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RCSA will also have a link added to the Customer Connect portal for easy access for parents. This larger process is referred to as eR&A, or Electronic Review and Adjustment.

Mobile Device Management

Yolo County continues to contemplate implementing a Mobile Device Management (MDM) Policy which will ultimately be for consideration by the Board of Supervisors. The goal of the draft plan created by Yolo County Innovation & Technology Services Department, is the creation of county-wide standards defining the use of mobile devices which includes both Agency Owned Mobile Devices (AOMDs) and Personally Owned Mobile Devices (BYOD). Deployment of appropriate protection schemas within and residing on all mobile devices and its communications and connectivity to County assets to ensure that data and information remain protected and that the use of such mobile devices ensure compliance with Federal, State, and local legal and regulatory requirements. Oversight of the allocation and administration of mobile devices at the Department Head level.

The RCSA provided android cell phones (AOMDs) to each member of the leadership team and our process servers who function in the field. All other staff members do not need a cell phone for any regular aspect of their work. To comply with the new anticipated requirements, the RCSA replaced the Leadership Teams existing cell phones with Apple iPhones which CA DCSS now manages (DCSS does not manage Android devices), in compliance with the anticipated new Yolo County standards. The process server's usage of the phone is limited to phone and text and does not have access to the state or county network. As a result, the process servers retained their Android devices. Agency staff are on the State O365 tenant making local Yolo County ITS management of the phones impossible.

CA DCSS Staff at Local Offices

As noted in the May 2024 General Update, the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) was looking for local offices that state employees could work from given the Governor's return to the office (part time) edict. The RCSA entered into an MOU with DCSS to house three state employees at the Colusa office, each one day a week. The



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three employees, which work in their technology division, will not engage with customers. This non-financial arrangement started in mid-October and is working well. We commenced the arrangement with a pizza lunch so staff could get to know one another.

Training

Staff of the RCSA have had myriad opportunities to train and be trained.

I was honored to be part of an esteemed group who facilitated a discussion at the Western Intergovernmental Child Support Engagement Council (WICSEC) a session on Women in Leadership. We were also fortunate to be able to send our Intergovernmental specialist, Michelle Garcia, to WICSEC this year.

Earlier this year, Assistant Director Amanda Battles trained a group of California Child Support leaders at a program called Elevate on Story Telling with Data. I was also privileged to speak and train the same cohort on Building Political Acumen.

WICSEC held a Micro Learning that highlighted the RCSAs efforts to Inform Spanish Speaking Participants on the Benefits of Child Support.

I also had the recent honor to be asked by the Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) to speak at the California Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) in a session regarding the changes in child support.

We feel very fortunate to have both Program Managers, Daniel Padilla and Tyria Valledor participate in the most recent cohort of the Elevate Leadership Development Program, graduating in October.

Sandra Padilla, a Child Support Supervisor, is currently participating in and enjoying the Sacramento Valley Leadership Development Program.

Staff development will remain a focus for the department in 2025. In addition to our regular new hire induction training and program related trainings, we are committed to continuing our monthly Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training, and plan to institute a formal mentoring program. This initiative aims to foster professional growth, enhance skills development, and assist with succession planning. By nurturing talent from within,



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we hope to prepare future leaders who are well versed in the department's goals and values.

Another impactful training coming midyear is Crucial Conversations. Crucial Conversations training is designed to provide staff members with the tools needed in order to navigate and manage difficult conversations effectively.

Several of our staff have been asked to speak at the 2025 CSDA Annual Child Support Training Conference and Expo – which is generating some excitement.