

CONTRA COSTA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

I. DEPARTMENT MANDATE MISSION

A. MANDATE

Established by legislative authority, the Child Support Enforcement Program was authorized under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act to provide services assisting parents to meet their mutual obligation to support their children. Established in 1975, the program is a joint Federal, State and local partnership involving separate state systems, each with its own unique laws and procedures.

In California, child support reform legislation signed in 1999 by Governor Davis created the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) in 2000. The new department was directed to provide leadership and oversight to develop a statewide automation system, while ensuring uniformity of service for families throughout the State. This goal was accomplished in 2007 through the development of a new case management system, CCSAS, California Child Support Automation System. CCSAS was implemented in Contra Costa County in March 2008. Every county has a local child support agency providing child support services on behalf of the State of California. The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is the Contra Costa County agency responsible for providing child support services and enforcement.

No cost services to Contra Costa County residents with physical custody of a minor include:

- Establishing paternity
- Locating absent parents
- Establishing court orders for paternity, child and medical support
- Enforcing court orders for child, family and medical support
- Collecting and distributing support payments
- Maintaining accounts of payments paid and payments due
- Modifying court orders when appropriate

B. MISSION STATEMENT

The Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services promotes the well-being of children and the self-sufficiency of families by delivering effective child support services to help meet the financial, medical and emotional needs of children.

II. DEPARTMENT DATA

BUDGET: \$18,882,683

FTE: 152

OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORY	FILLED POSITIONS
Officials and Administrators	3
Professionals	19
Technicians	89
Administrative Support	41

ETHNICITY	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	PERCENT
WHITE	12	65	77	50.7%
BLACK	3	23	26	17.1%
HISPANIC	7	19	26	17.1%
ASIAN	4	7	11	7.2%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER	0	0	0	0%
FILIPINO	6	6	12	7.9%
AMERICAN INDIAN/ALASKAN NATIVE	0	0	0	0%
TOTAL	32	120	152	100.0%
	21.1%	78.9%	100.0%	

III. MAJOR PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

Contra Costa County's Department of Child Support Services is committed to delivering outstanding service using state of the art technology, modern communications methods, and streamlined business processes. Each functional area of the department is composed of several teams of child support professionals that interface to deliver seamless customer service.

The five department functional areas are responsible for a wide range of duties:

A. ADMINISTRATION/SUPPORT

Management
Business Administration
Systems Support

Administration is responsible for the overall management of the department. The Management team provides leadership and direction to ensure program compliance. Business administration is responsible for fiscal management, including budgets, purchasing, contracts administration and payroll, human resources, including recruitment, personnel and labor relations. Systems Support provides information technology (I.T.) support for a complex networking environment with more than 25 different software applications. Systems Support also provides I.T. leadership to streamline work and increase work efficiencies through the use of technology.

B. PRE-ORDER/PUBLIC SERVICE

Intake
Establishment
Drop-Ins
Family Law Facilitator

Intake is responsible for the initial processing of child support applications and service requests received from Employment and Human Services Department, including verifying the information that has been provided and conducting additional research to locate incomplete information. Establishment works to establish court orders, including locating income and asset information, calculating the amount of support to be collected and distributed and locating absent parents. Drops-Ins handles the in person contact with customers that visit our office. This unit handles requests for information, receives and processes child support payments, receives and tracks initial case referrals, collects, secures and confirms case information and provides direction to customers for the next appropriate action for their case. Working in conjunction with the Superior Court, the department has a Family Law Facilitator on site. The Family Law Facilitator provides customer assistance with legal forms and provides procedural information about the court process. The Family Law Facilitator can also assist customers with filing motions and provides referrals for legal services and educational workshops.

C. LEGAL SERVICES /ATTORNEYS

Legal Resolution
Legal Support
Legal Processing
Attorneys

The Legal Services division works to establish or modify court orders through the legal process. Legal support is responsible for coordinating genetic testing to establish paternity and processing and serving summons and complaints, including processing responses and maintaining the proofs of service. Legal processing is responsible for processing and serving court documents to our customers, filing summons and complaints documents with the Court System and providing legal clerical support in the court room. During the court preparation process, the Legal Resolution team works to establish court orders through the stipulation process, where the parties of the cases work to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement for support, thereby avoiding the time and process of a court appearance. Legal Resolution staff also attends court to work with customers and support the attorneys. Attorneys handle all court appearances, provide legal opinions and/or legal interpretations for staff and prepare court documents.

D. CLIENT SERVICES POST ORDER

Operational Teams

The Client Services Post Order division handles all actions on child support cases with established orders with the goal of collecting consistent support payments. Three Operational teams are collectively responsible for these duties. These duties include working with the parties of the case to ensure that payments are made in accordance with the court order, utilizing the case management tool to work cases to optimize current collections, collecting payments on arrears balances, reviewing and adjusting accounts and if appropriate facilitating stipulations. Enforcement also handles all interstate cases and closes cases when appropriate.

E. INTERNAL SUPPORT

Document Processing

Fiscal

Training and Special Projects

The Internal Support division is responsible for activities which support the other divisions. Document Processing is responsible for processing all incoming mail by scanning, indexing, and electronically routing it to the appropriate person or team to be worked. Fiscal is responsible for handling all of the child support accounts. These duties include activating new court orders and establishing the appropriate accounts, performing account adjustments and audits, and closing accounts when necessary. Fiscal also serves as a liaison with the State Disbursement Unit, processing payments at the local level, handling stop payments, researching and resolving funds held in suspense and resolving customer service concerns regarding payments. Training and Special Projects is responsible for providing training support for all staff members, including an intensive 9 week classroom training for all newly hired child support

specialists and the creation and delivery of new training programs as needed. This team is also responsible for making sure that staffs use the case management system correctly by working state created reports.

IV. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Caseload 29,049

Total Collections \$66,614,591

The Intake team opened 3,924 new cases and processed 14,889 automated service requests from the Employment and Human Services Department. 8,641 customers came into the department. 15.56% were Spanish speaking. The average wait time for a customer to be seen was 4 minutes. Lobby Central, an automated lobby management system, was implemented to speed service to the walk-in customers. In addition to serving those customers who came into our Department, our Public Service Drop-In staff successfully handled 2,718 inquiries that came in through the statewide customer connect self-service website. A full time Family Law Facilitator continues to be available in the lobby to assist child support customers with responding to or preparing court documents involving child and/or spousal support. The facilitator saw an average of 140 customers per month with an average wait time of 10 minutes. A digital billboard was installed in the lobby to provide customers with information while they wait.

The department led the way for California to accept child support cash payments using MoneyGram's 35,000 nationwide locations with a customer fee of \$1.99 per transaction. Contra Costa began the pilot in July. The state rolled out this service to the rest of the California counties at the beginning of 2015. The collections are rolling in, from the beginning of the pilot project through February 28, 2015 there had been a total of 1,560 payments for \$ 566,402.

The shared services agreement with Butte County Department of Child Support Services, to handle the incoming phone calls for Contra Costa, continued to be a successful customer service partnership. During this Federal Fiscal Year 74,260 calls were successfully handled with an average wait time of less than two minutes.

The Legal Services and attorneys appeared in court on 2,624 child support cases. The department's continued efforts to contact parties to discuss reaching an agreement, prior to going to court, resulted department-wide in 1,062 stipulated agreements. This is a 17% increase in the number of stipulations obtained in 2013.

A total of \$998,550 was collected in child support payments at the reception counter and drive-up window (\$856,279 in reception and \$142,271 at the drive-up window). These payments were in the form of cash, checks, and money orders. The fiscal team processes all the payments received in the office and has been very supportive of the MoneyGram project. Their team audits an average of 87 cases per month.

The Document Processing Team (DPT) processes (within 24 hours of receipt) an average of over 8,000 pieces of mail a month with two and a half staff. The DPT staff also updates the statewide case management system with accurate participant demographics.

The Department's Smith/Ostler program, which enables the enforcement of orders in cases where child and/or spousal support orders include a base support amount plus additional support from bonuses, commissions and income earned over a set amount, saw great success again this year with collections of \$1,457,027.

The department expanded the use of the Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDRO) to collect past due child support from obligor's pension and 401k plans. Collections of \$256,293 were obtained using this method.

The training team provided two nine-week training classes to seventeen new child support specialists, a three-week training was given to three new child support assistants, and numerous training classes to existing staff. Several speakers from other agencies were brought in to further educate the staff. Representatives from agencies such as Contra Costa Crisis Center and Vocational Services gave face-to-face presentations to further grow the relationships between our agencies.

The Electronic Paternity Opportunity Program (e-POP) proof-of-concept project was completed. In partnership with the Contra Costa Regional Medical Center, the mobile system was used for 90 days to obtain 71 paternity declarations that were all signed electronically.

The System Support Team (SST) expanded the development and use of macros to automate high volume repetitive case processing tasks. The use of macros has improved efficiency and saves worker time. They also moved the department's email from Lotus Notes to Microsoft Office 365. Smaller footprint all-in-one PCs were installed at child support staff workstations in the Superior Court courtroom. Giving the staff more room to work. SST implemented Lobby Central and digital signage systems for use in reception and the lobby. They also implemented a new badge system for the department that is used for employee badges and customer identification cards.

Contra Costa continues to be seen as a leader in the child support business. The management staff spoke at numerous conference sessions and wrote four articles for professional publications throughout the year.

The department launched a multi-media campaign to advertise the new MoneyGram cash payment option using: email, outbound dialing, mailers, posters, website & Facebook, digital billboard on I-680, press release and event. The outreach campaigns were so successful that Contra Costa's materials were shared with all California child support offices in the state.

The department ran a three month summer BART and movie theater advertising campaigns in numerous Contra Costa locations to educate the general public about Child Support services.

The department has continued to partner with Rubicon, a community based organization, whose mission is to work with low-income individuals to help them overcome barriers to financial independence. Monthly presentations are given at two county locations to the Rubicon participants to educate them about the department's services. The department has a new partnership with the Office of Education to give bi-monthly presentations to inmates at the West Contra Costa Detention Facility.

Department staff participated in a number of outreach events such as Homeless Court, Homeless Connect, Bay Area Stand Down, and Convoy of Hope East Bay.

V. CHALLENGES

A. INTERNAL TO DEPARTMENT

The California Department of Child Support Services has shifted focus from evaluating statewide and local performance improvement efforts exclusively by the five federal performance measures to a more customer-oriented, family-centered approach. This approach will measure program effectiveness through key Practice Improvement Indicators of program operations and improvements consistent with the FFY 2015-2019 Strategic Plan.

The department will be focusing efforts to achieve locally established goals under these state strategic plan goals:

- Increase support for California's children
- Deliver excellent and consistent customer services statewide
- Enhance program performance and sustainability
- Develop and strengthen collaborative partnerships
- Be innovative in meeting the needs of families

A continued focus on increasing the number of in-house stipulated agreements.

Stratify the enforcement case load to segment the cases for a more focused effort to collections.

Take a more proactive and firmer approach with delinquent parents by setting review appointments.

Expand the use of Qualified Domestic Relations Orders (QDRO) to collect past due child support from obligor's pension and 401k plans.

Improve communication with customers by implementing the ability to communicate via text messaging, live chat, and through a mobile application.

B. INTERNAL TO THE COUNTY

The salary increases for staff are a welcome tool in retaining existing staff, but presents challenges to the department as funding from the state remains flat. The department may not be able to backfill vacant positions in the coming year.

Further develop the partnership with America's Job Center of California so more child support parents use the Center's training and employment resources.

Work with Superior Court to increase court time to five days a week.

C. EXTERNAL TO COUNTY OPERATIONS

Advocate at the state level for increased department funding to cover increased costs of doing business.

Improve contact with Contra Costa employers by providing a direct phone line and getting them enrolled in the federal portal.

Increase child support services to families by promoting services through partnerships, outreach, marketing, and social media. Explore new methods of advertising such as buses to make the public aware of child support services.

VI. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The federal department of child support has established performance measures for each state in the country. Each state then establishes goals for each individual county. Below is a side by side comparison of Contra Costa Department of Child Support Services’ performance with that of the State of California. Contra Costa County DCSS has consistently outperformed the State of California average.

Contra Costa County	FFY 2010	FFY 2011	FFY 2012	FFY 2013	FFY 2014
Cases with Support Orders Established	88.5%	89.90%	90.3%	90.5%	93.7%
Collections of Current Support Due	58.1%	59.80%	63.0%	65.8%	66.9%
Collections on Cases with Arrears	64.0%	65.30%	66.6%	67.6%	68.5%
Cost Effectiveness	\$3.19	\$3.25	\$3.33	\$3.41	\$3.56
Declared Paternity	114.5%	115.5%	111.0%	104.7%	102.7%





