

Placer County
**Department of
Child Support Services**



June 2014

2014/2015 Annual Report

Accomplishments and challenges of the past year, and our vision for the future.

The Year in Review

- Placer County Messages
- Collaborations
- Collections & Distributions
- Performance Achievements

The Year Ahead

- Budgeting & Funding
- Doing More with Less
- The Role of the Attorney
- Pending Legislation



Committed to providing quality child support services

PLACER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MESSAGE



From District 1 Supervisor and Chairperson Jack Duran, on behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors

The Placer County Board of Supervisors strongly endorses Child Support Services for their ongoing efforts keeping the public engaged and informed about its programs, funding, priorities and results. I encourage you to review this 2014-15 annual report, because we want Placer County residents to know how their money is spent, what they receive in return and how to provide feedback. Child Support Services has a great story to tell. Last fiscal year, its efforts resulted in almost \$14 million being distributed to local families and paternity was resolved for 1,288 local children.

Director Troy Held and his staff are committed to finding new, better ways to serve the public. They worked with the Placer County Superior Court on a pioneering initiative that allows the department to monitor court proceedings and maintain communication with the courtroom team via videoconferencing. The project expedites the child support process dramatically – allowing court documents to be created quickly and families to receive child support payments sooner. The department also holds monthly outreach seminars, providing step-by-step guidance to residents on our available programs.

I urge you to take a few minutes to review this annual report to see how Child Support Services continues to successfully support local families.

PLACER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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Special Recognition: For his untiring efforts to edit content and provide outstanding support throughout the creation of this report, the department recognizes Child Support Supervisor, Doug Jastrow.



Director's Message



LET'S HELP OUR CHILDREN BE SUCCESSFUL!

Director Troy Held at the 2013 California Junior College Football Championship at Butte Community College. Butte College beat Fullerton Community College to become State Champions, and National Co-Champions. (Home of NFL Hall-of-Famer Larry Allen, NFL MVP and Super Bowl MVP Aaron Rodgers, and many more.)

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) became a stand-alone county agency in 2001. This year, the Department is merely thirteen-years-old. Since the Department's inception, there has always been a focus on varying areas of development. This has included: new program practices, new or modified policies and functionality, operational plans, staffing, strategic planning, and other items. During that time there has also been a focus on Program Performance and Customer Service. Unfortunately, though we continue to improve with our service to customers, we have yet to attain the levels that are satisfactory to us, or to you.

That is why the fiscal year 2014-2015 will be the Placer County DCSS *Year of the Customer*. "Customer" includes all participants of the child support program and process. Participants include both parents (in some circumstances, all parents); children; step-parents; adoptive parents; and grandparents. This also includes people who just might need a question answered.

Many times, the family law arena is a very stressful place to find oneself in, due to the emotional aspects of the process, and the intricacies involved in the law. Situations can include the lack of/or loss of money, the loss of time with one's children, uncertainty on employment opportunities, worry about how to put food on the table, pay your rent/mortgage, and other emotional challenges. Fear of the unknown, compounded by this instability; creates havoc on a person's emotions. Poor customer service only compounds the trauma.

From this year forward, the delivery of excellent customer service will be the primary goal of the Placer County DCSS. This will include refocusing all employees of the department, to concentrate not just on the delivery of the program, but how it is delivered. It is no longer enough to provide government services without recognizing and appreciating who the government is intended to serve. The department has built a staff of experts and is fortunate to have many skilled professionals to help achieve this goal. As the department hires new staff, one of the key components to their success is to possess excellent customer service skills. We will focus on the feelings of others, treating people with dignity and respect, and doing it in a compassionate way, with understanding and empathy. It is intended that this action will aid in the reduction of frustration and anxiety to those who are participating in the process, or at a minimum, not add to it. When this is all accomplished, other goals will come to fruition.

I am asking you for your assistance to help us reach this objective as well. You can help by sharing your experience, and continuing to hold us accountable to deliver on these assurances. This includes the completion of surveys that are in paper format, or in an electronic format on the Department's website. If you need one, please send us an email, or give us a call, and we will send one to you. I look forward to working with all of you to improve our customer service. Consider this, our pledge to do a better job for you.

Sincerely,

Troy Held, Esq.
Director



The Year in Review

PROGRAM SUCCESSES

The child support *Annual Report* reflects the accomplishments for the past year, and an accounting of the collections distributed to families. Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) was the *only* northern California County that met or exceeded the goal set for each of the five federal performance measures.

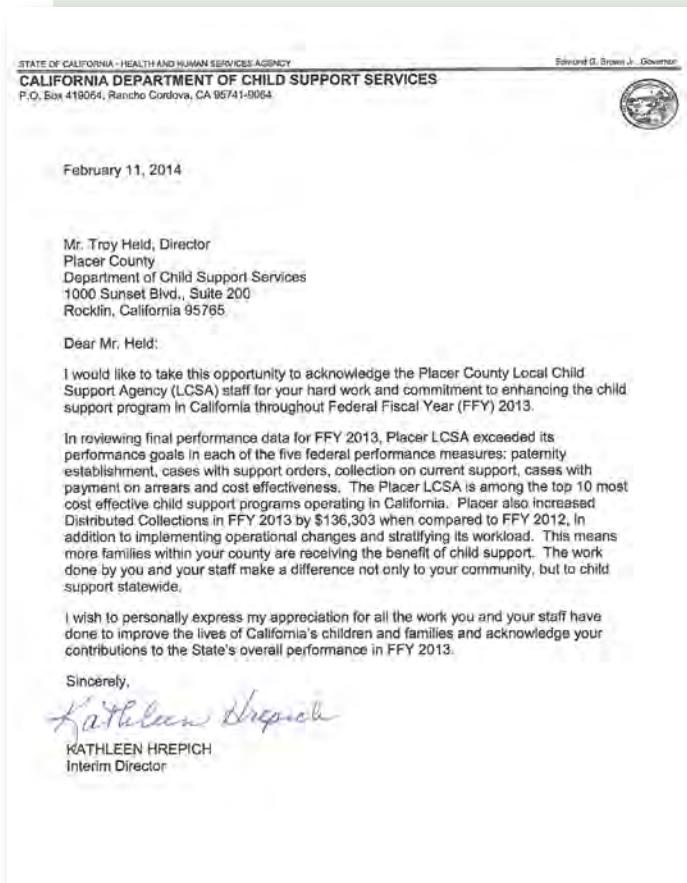
Collections distributed to families exceeded twenty-one-million dollars (\$21 million) of which nearly fourteen-million dollars (\$14 million) was distributed to families in Placer County. These achievements were realized without an increase in funding. (The department continues to experience static funding, and rising expenditures.)

PROGRAM MODIFICATION

The newly minted stratification business model assigns cases based on how the cases are performing, which results in an increase in productivity. Newly hired child support specialists become effective early on in their employment, resulting in a greater impact on performance due to this new caseload stratification model. (*See the Caseload Stratification Business Model on page 14 for more information.*)

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Increased collections by three-and-six-tenths percent (3.6%)
- Established five-hundred-seventy-two (572) orders for support
- Resolved paternity for one-thousand-two-hundred-eighty-eight children (1,288) during the federal fiscal year 2013
- Assisted and shared technology with counties converting to the stratification model
- Child Support website transformed to ensure media-readiness and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) compliance standards
- Continued the Immersion Program to train twenty-one (21) State employees about the child support program, at the local level
- Hosted monthly “Open House” seminars
- Hosted Child Support Northern Region Directors Meeting
- Over one-hundred (100) employees attended Placer County job trainings events
- Attorney staff attended the Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) Attorney College
- Six (6) employees attended the CSDA Annual Child Support Training Conference
- Received special recognition from the State for performance measure achievements (*see left*)



Collaborations and Outreach

PLACER COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES

A MESSAGE FROM JONN MELROSE

The Placer County Department of Veteran Services has the opportunity to touch every department within the county on a continuous basis. Some departments have more frequent contact with Veteran Services, such as Health and Human Services, Child Support Services, and the Sheriff’s Department. By far, the most contact with other Departments is with social service programs. Due to the close collaboration developed within these county departments, we are able to ensure those men and women who served in the military are aware of their benefits. These benefits range from tuition assistance, to hospital care, service connected compensation, and non-service connected pension assistance.

Within social services, we do our best to get those who served in the military off of programs such as general aid programs, and on to veteran specific programs. This allows human services the opportunity to serve more people who may not have the extra safety net of those who qualify and served in the military.

Specific services that we provide are ensuring those who have served in the military understand and complete complex application processes for compensation, pension, and Veterans Administration (VA) health care. In addition, we continually educate other program managers, and front line workers, to direct those who have served, to our office for further assistance.

Specifically, the Placer County Veteran Services Office, in conjunction with the Department of Child Support Services, helps to ensure children of those who served in the military are afforded their care. If the military veteran is in receipt of VA benefits that pay a stipend for children, that stipend may be collected to help satisfy any court ordered child support. By federal law, VA disability payments cannot be garnished, however, the VA allows for apportionments

to be made if the veteran has children less than eighteen-years-old (or twenty-four-years-old and attending school). Although apportionments occur in special circumstances, they allow the Department of Child Support Services to collect monies meant for the children of a veteran.



Jonn Melrose, Placer County Veteran Service Officer



CHILD SUPPORT OUTREACH

Marsha White, Child Support Specialist

The important role that the Department of Child Support Services plays in the community is often misunderstood. False assumptions can originate from a lack of information. To change these assumptions, the department makes concerted efforts throughout the year to reach those within the community who could benefit from a greater understanding of the child support program, and its services. Child support professionals have worked regularly in conjunction with several local government agencies, and non-profit organizations to get the word out.

For example; the department outreach team has worked with the Latino Leadership Council and Kids First. In so doing, the department reached out to the Hispanic community by providing an education forum for those who were unaware of the department's services.

The department also participated in the Veteran Stand Down; provided in-house seminars at rehabilitation centers throughout the county; and is a proud member of the Placer County Probation Department's Community Resource Team.

The department believes that the more the community knows about their services, the more the department can benefit the lives of those they serve.



Veteran Stand Down committed volunteers, Child Support Specialists Marsha White (left) and Janine Vienna (right), who care deeply about people.

OPEN HOUSE SEMINARS

Kristen Mindus, Child Support Supervisor

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services offers free monthly information seminars open to the public to further bolster its daily dedication to customers, and the delivery of information to the public. The department opens up its office for anyone interested in learning more about the child support program, and the services offered by the department. Typically, the seminar is facilitated by one (1) supervisor and one (1) attorney. The seminar is an avenue to share information and answer questions about child support, in addition to dispelling commonly held myths and misinformation about child support.

The informational seminars are held at the Department of Child Support Services located at 1000 Sunset Boulevard in Rocklin, every third (3rd) Tuesday of each month from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. Everyone

is welcome to attend, whether you have questions to ask, or if you are simply interested in learning more about the child support program.



Each seminar is different. The overview may be very broad or very specific depending on those in attendance. Many people have expressed their appreciation to the department for holding these seminars, as the whole process becomes clear to them after attending a session. The department believes that these monthly informational seminars have been a huge success, and benefit to our customers in demonstrating an openness, and willingness to educate those interested in learning more. The department looks forward to educating, and assisting more customers in the future with these seminars.

Family Success Stories

MEDIATING FOR POSITIVE OUTCOMES

Verna Wiseman, Child Support Specialist

The parents of two (2) boys under the age of four (4) found themselves in a dire financial hardship. One parent tried moving out of state while the other relied on the kindness and, at times, couches of friends in order to feed and clothe the children.

Both parents realized this arrangement wasn't working. So, with the assistance of a child support specialist, the parents reached an agreement that was both affordable and significant enough to get the kids off the couch and into a real bed of their own. They've since reported that the consistency of a wage garnishment provides them both with the peace of mind to focus on raising their children in separate households, as best they can.



INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Mandy Rudd, Child Support Specialist

A couple and their child resided in England and moved to Placer County, California. The mother and child went back to England for a "visit", but did not return. The mother filed for a divorce in England, and obtained an order for custody and support without the father being present to represent himself, obtain representation, or provide his information. The English order provided for support amounts based on incorrect income information of the father, which resulted in a large arrears (past due) balance, and an order that he could not afford.

After the father was unable to seek any redress in the Courts in England due to poor service, and the inability to afford a trip to England, he contacted the Placer County Department of Child Support Services. The department was able to establish a relationship with a child support enforcement agency in England, and influence them to modify the existing order of support from nine-hundred dollars (\$900.00) per month, to four-hundred-seventy-five dollars (\$475.00) per month based on actual income, instead of the estimated amount provided by the mother in the English Court.



LOCATING PARENTS

Katherine Owens, Child Support Specialist

Many times, child support specialists are presented with the challenge of locating and attempting to serve a parent who is avoiding contact with the department. Being personally served with court papers is required before a child support order can be established. On one particular case, the process server was having little success in personally serving one of the parents responsible for paying child support. After several attempts to contact the parent at their residence, it was determined that the next avenue would be to serve the parent at their place of employment. The case was then referred to the department's investigator. Over the span of several weeks, the investigator made numerous attempts to serve the parent, and often waited near the parent's parked vehicle for the chance to move the process forward toward establishing support for a newborn child. Eventually, the investigator made contact with the parent and served the legal papers. As a result, the department was able to establish a court order that meets the needs of the child; and the parent ordered to pay support has taken responsibility by making timely payments.

With appreciation to the Placer County District Attorney's Office in providing Investigator services to assist in the enforcement of child support orders.



SUCCESS ACROSS THE STATES

Ron Joslin, Child Support Specialist

UIFSA is the Uniform Intergovernmental Family Support Act, which assists in establishing court orders for paternity, child support, and medical support, and enforcing those orders while working with other states or countries.

UIFSA cases develop when the department does not have jurisdiction to enforce child support due to parents' living outside the jurisdiction of Placer County. One example is when the owing parent lives in Placer County, and the parent requesting child support lives in another state. Another would be the parent ordered to pay support may be living in another country or state, and does not cooperate with the department in making payments to the requesting parent, living in Placer County.

There are two types of cases for UIFSA: *Initiating* and *Responding*.

Initiating cases are where the person who is owed child support resides in the state of California, and the department seeks assistance from another state or country for establishment or enforcement of a court order. The department relinquishes enforcement actions to the other state or country.

In responding cases, the parent responsible for paying child support resides in Placer County, and the department receives a request to establish or enforce a child support order by the other jurisdiction.

One particular case had been referred to the UIFSA Team because the parent responsible for paying child support was not making regular payments. The department could not get in contact with that person, despite numerous attempts by phone, email, and postal mail. This particular case was open for several years; as the person ordered to pay support moved from state to state. The department eventually discovered their location and the child support specialist handling this UIFSA case, prepared the necessary documentation to send to the other state (Idaho, in this case), in order for that state to assist the department with enforcement of the court order. Within a month, Idaho was able to utilize their locate sources, and they issued a wage assignment to a new employer. They also found a new

address and phone number for this person. The Placer County Department of Child Support Services was then able to assist the parent ordered to pay child support to get back on track with consistent payments (which can help prevent enforcement actions).

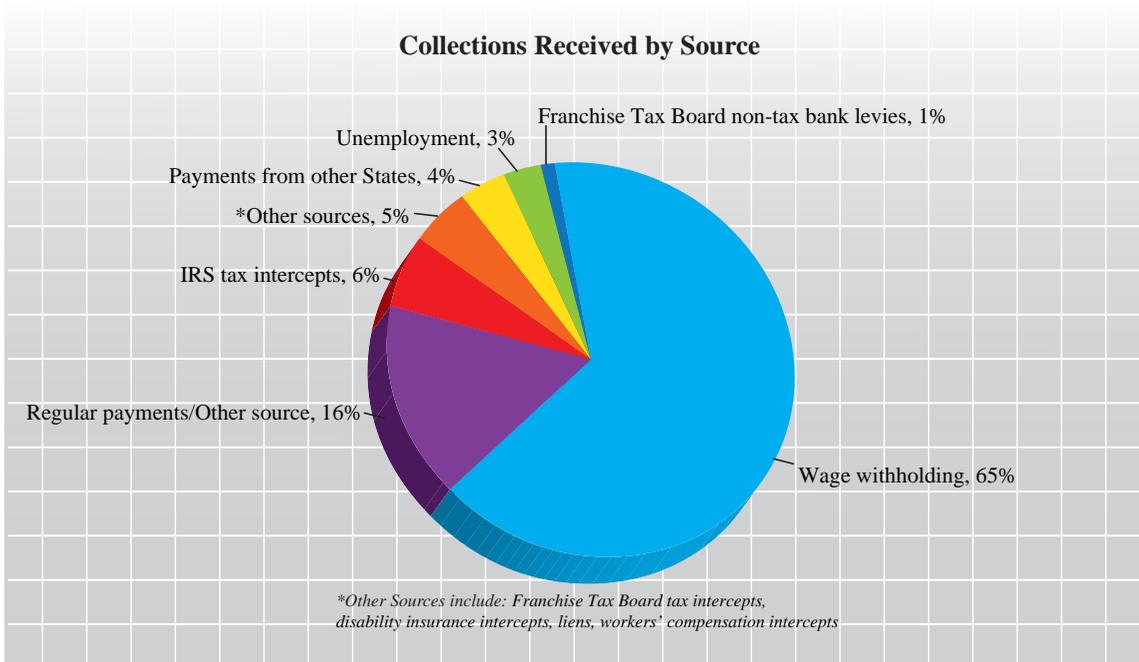
IMPROVING INTERSTATE RELATIONSHIPS

Sarah Sanders, Child Support Specialist

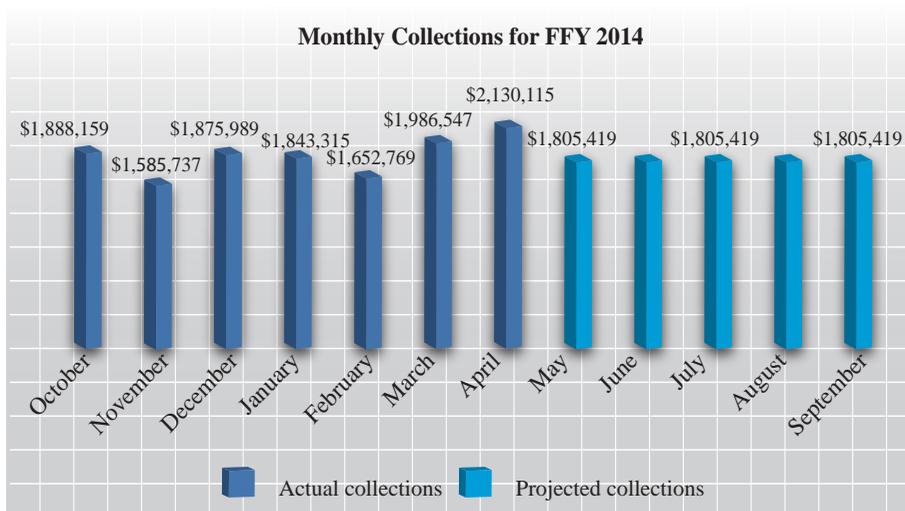
Interstate cases can be confusing and frustrating. And they're almost always complicated, which makes it that much more rewarding when the department can help its customers through a challenging process. When two separate jurisdictions are handling a case, many customers feel lost. Sometimes, when one state is asked to enforce on another's behalf, there is even confusion about where to send payments. It is the department's mission to help both parties navigate through the child support system in a way that they can understand, while assuring them that someone is always here to assist them.

On this particular case, the department made a hard-fought difference. The parent who was owed child support had been contacting several offices regularly for years, frustrated that no payments were coming, and wondering how to pursue further action. This case was shared with Louisiana. The child support specialist newly assigned to the case found a string of past correspondence with the other state that was confusing and ambiguous even to a trained eye. The parent owed child support felt that justice was not being served. The department's first step was to contact that parent immediately, and explain the present situation as well as potential outcomes. The child support specialist was able to explain the processes in a way that the parent said, "finally made sense." With much persistence, the specialist then was able to establish new contacts in Louisiana, open up a dialogue about how to proceed, and eventually payments commenced. The parent felt empowered with the knowledge of the process. The child support specialist was able to establish a productive interstate relationship that should help for many cases to come, and the family received the support they needed.

Collection Performance



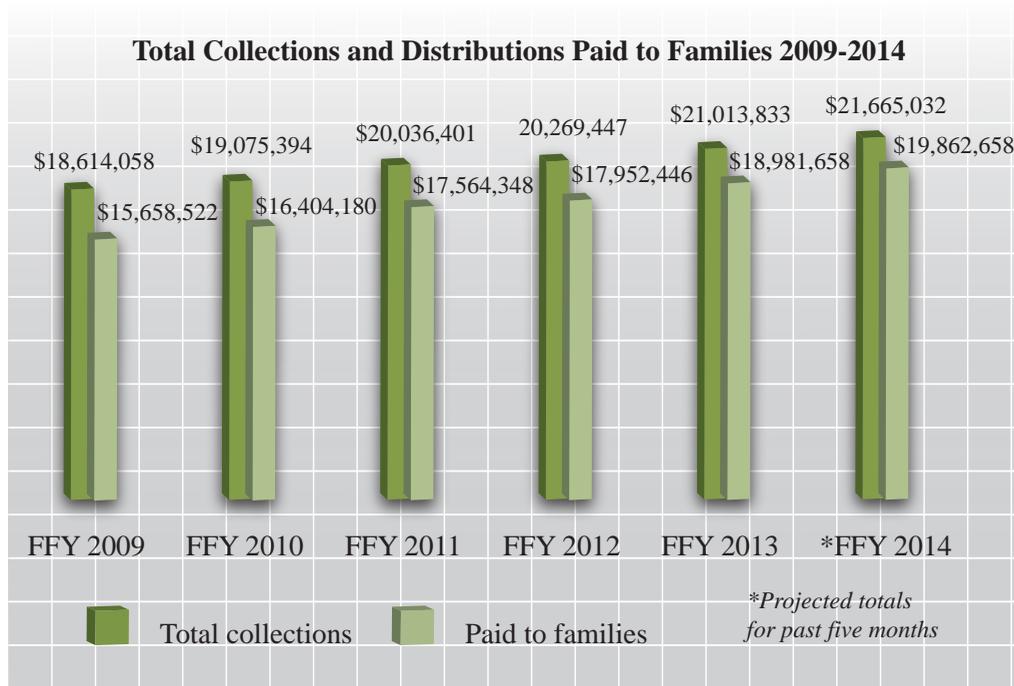
The Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) relies on the great work and efforts of employers to help make child support a sustainable income for families. Employers collect over sixty-five percent (65%) of the department’s total collections. This makes them an extremely valuable resource. The department’s second largest source of collections comes from direct payments by customers. The department collected fifteen-and-eight-tenths percent (15.8%) from customers in federal fiscal year 2013. Above is a chart depicting collections from the largest sources.



The chart above illustrates monthly collections, and future collection projections. The Placer County DCSS is projecting collections to exceed twenty-one-million dollars (\$21 million) for the second year in a row.



Distributions to Families



The department helps families by collecting and distributing child support.

In FFY 2013, the department paid to families ninety-and-three-tenths percent (90.3%) of the total collected. The remaining percentage of collections is directed back to the State, and counties for payments made to families receiving assistance who also had court ordered child support.

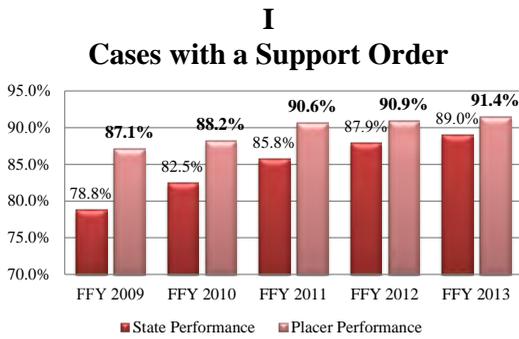
Child support is recognized as an economic stabilizer for many families. The department strives to collect all child support due for families.

Above is a chart showing the total collections, and what was distributed to families over the past five-years, and the projected totals for FFY 2014.



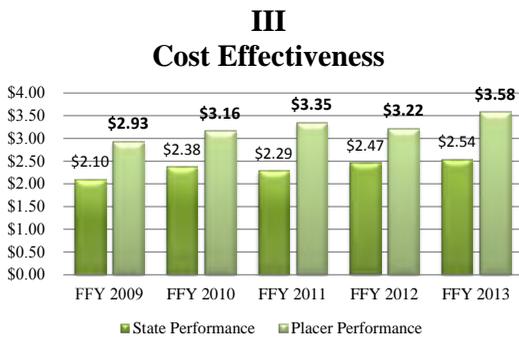
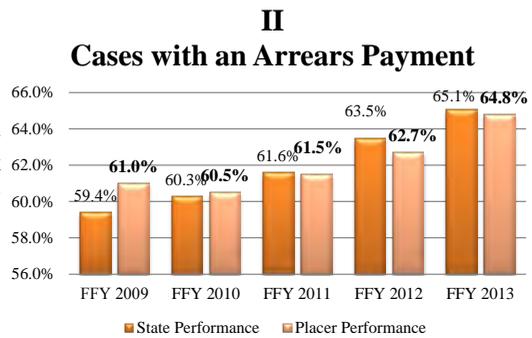
Performance Achievements

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services is evaluated monthly on five federal performance measures by the State of California DCSS. This data provides a basis for assessment to confirm that the department is meeting the goals on a continual basis, and supports the department's efforts to perform at an optimal level. The five performance measures include the following areas of focus:



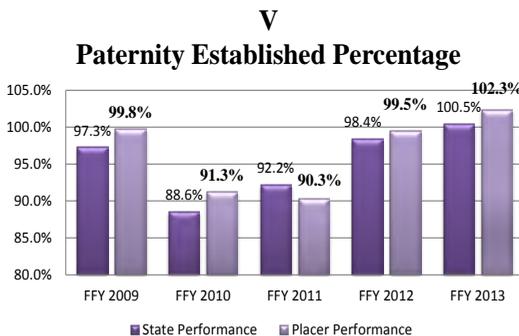
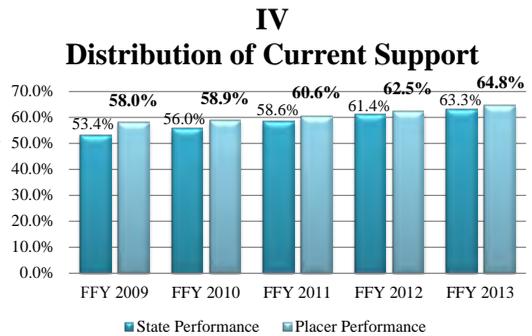
This performance standard measures: cases with support orders as compared to the total caseload. Support orders are broadly defined as legally enforceable orders, including orders for financial and medical support, and zero support orders.

The collection on arrears (past due child support) performance standard: measures the number of cases with child support arrearage collections, compared with the number of cases owing arrearages during the fiscal year.



The cost effectiveness performance measure: compares the total amount of distributed collections to the total amount of expenditures for the fiscal year, (expressed as distributed collections per dollars of expenditure).

The current support distributed performance standard measures: the amount of monthly support distributed, compared to the total amount of monthly support owed.



Statewide paternity establishment measures: the total number of children born out-of-wedlock for whom paternity was acknowledged or established in the fiscal year, compared to the number of children born out-of-wedlock during the preceding fiscal year, expressed as a percentage.



Department of
Child Support Services

The Year Ahead

PRIORITY BASED BUDGETING AND STATIC FUNDING

Jeff Thompson, Senior Administrative Services Officer, joined the department in June 2013 with over thirteen (13) years experience as an Administrative Services Officer in Sacramento County. His background in budgeting, the understanding of county, state, and federal policies, and in strong leadership skills have established Jeff as a valuable new member of the department's management team.



Placer County is implementing priority based budgeting county-wide which encompasses a systematic review of existing programs, why the programs exist, what value they offer, how they benefit customers, their cost with the goal to spend within the financial means, and ensuring transparency to the public. This review of programs is vital to meeting the needs of customers and federal performance measures.

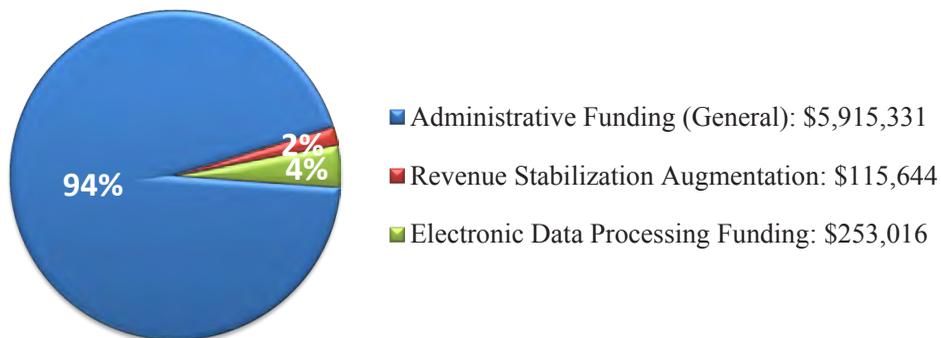
Child Support Services funding is paid by the federal government at a rate of sixty-six percent (66%), and the State provides thirty-four percent (34%) of the funding allocation. Child Support does not receive any monies from the county general fund.

The Year in Review on page five (5) shows that while static funding has been a challenge, Child Support Services is able to be innovative and continue to meet the needs of customers, while exceeding federal performance measures and adhering to county, state, and federal fiscal requirements. The level of Child Support funding has remained static for several years, and is anticipated to remain as such for the foreseeable future. One of the challenges of static funding is the increasing costs of doing business, with staffing costs accounting for over seventy-six percent (76%) of the total department budget, and increasing each year.

As a proactive step, the department is developing a staffing plan that will plot the course for the next five (5) years taking into consideration the needs of customers, ongoing training for new and existing staff, retirements, state performance measures, and service delivery models, to be an efficient and effective local child support agency.

Below is the breakdown of funding for the department for Fiscal Year 2014/2015.

**Placer County Department of Child Support Services
FY 2014/2015 Budget Allocation
Total: \$6,283,991**



Caseload Management

CASELOAD STRATIFICATION BUSINESS MODEL

Susan Dunlap, Program Manager has worked for the Placer County Department of Child Support Services for more than twenty (20) years. She is highly regarded for her depth of knowledge in child support law, program management, and her dedication to leadership.



The department recently introduced a stratification method to child support case development and maintenance. Cases were divided into groupings where the cases shared a common performance characteristic. The stratification was implemented in February 2013 and, to date, has shown a striking increase in performance.

During this current Federal Fiscal Year (FFY), the department forecasts an increase in performance in the following areas:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <i>Cases with a Support Order:</i> | From 91.4 to 93 percent.
This number reflects a 1.6 percent increase. |
| <i>Current Support Collected:</i> | From 64.8 to 67 percent.
Attaining this goal would show a 2.2 percent increase. |
| <i>Collection on Arrears:</i> | From 64.8 to 67 percent.
Attaining this goal would show a 2.2 percent increase. |

The department is forecasting a six percent (6%) overall increase in performance during this FFY, more than in any previous year.

The department continues to show an increase in total distributed collections, despite the downturn in the economy, and staffing shortages. The department collected \$21,013,922 of child support during FFY2012/13, its highest amount ever.

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services was the only Northern California County to meet, and exceed all of the performance goals for FFY 2013.

During the current FFY, the department program staff are focusing on meeting and exceeding the performance goals from the state and federal child support offices. Some of the performance campaigns that the department staff are actively working on, are:

- A *Contact and Pay Letter* designed to be used for cases in which the parent ordered to pay has stopped paying, and needs to get back on track in meeting their court ordered child support.
- A monthly child support seminar designed to educate the public (customers and non-customers) on the available services the department offers. These seminars have been attended by parents ordered to pay, those raising children, family members of those ordered to pay, and various community members. The customer and community responses have been positive.



Court Videoconferencing

THE 1058 WINDOW PROJECT

Named after *Assembly Bill 1058*, which gave priority to child support cases, and provided for the special child support courtroom, the “1058 Window Project” allows for video-conferenced court proceedings between the Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) and the Placer County Superior Court.

The project increases efficiency as child support orders are produced, signed, and served at the time the proceedings take place. Prior to videoconferencing, final orders took over six (6) weeks to produce and serve. Providing customers with their orders at the time of the hearing increases early collections, and distributions to families.

Multiple steps such as attorney review, write up of the order, forwarding the order to the court for the Commissioner’s review and signature, filing, and return to the Placer County DCSS for mailing to the parties, is either compressed or eliminated with this highly efficient, and award-winning model. This also enables parties to immediately interact with representatives from the Placer County DCSS who are in the courtroom to answer questions and serve the public. The “1058 Window Project” was initiated and implemented by Troy Held, Director in collaboration with the Placer Superior Court. A Clean Air Grant from the Placer County Air Pollution Control District made this project possible.

These photos illustrate the “1058 Window Project” in process from both sides. The top left photo is David Rutz, Child Support Attorney at the Superior Court, Santucci Justice Center in Roseville. The monitor in the courtroom shows the Placer County DCSS staff at the Rocklin office taking notes and producing court orders for each hearing.



The lower photo is the Placer County DCSS Courtroom, where Glen Harnish, Senior Attorney (left) and Ron Joslin, Child Support Specialist (right) are observing live court proceedings. They are able to speak to the Commissioner during the process if needed, and the completed orders are relayed to a printer in the courtroom for delivery to all parties before they leave the courtroom.

STATE IMMERSION PROGRAM

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) continued the Immersion Program by training six (6) California State Department of Child Support Services employees alongside newly hired Placer County DCSS employees. Through the Immersion Program the department has provided twenty-one (21) state employees valuable insight into the child support program from the perspective of the local child support agency. State employees were trained in the classroom for several weeks, and then were given the opportunity to job shadow with department subject-matter-experts. The job shadowing helped to develop new relationships and build a rapport between state and department employees. The program is successful, and trainings will continue.



Doing More with Less

INCREASING EFFICIENCIES AND IMPROVING PERFORMANCE

From 2001 to 2004, the department employed approximately eighty-five (85) full-time employees. Although funding decreases have occurred, the department has progressed through the years, and efficiencies have been developed in all major facets allowing for better service delivery. Some areas where efficiencies were identified and put into practice include computer systems, automated processing, efficient manual processing, and the streamlining of duties and services.

Today, the department not only sustains performance measures, but has improved performance with far fewer staff (currently forty-two (42) full-time employees) through new methods and procedures in law practice and case management that allow the department to achieve, and surpass goals set by the state and federal government.

STAFFING GOALS

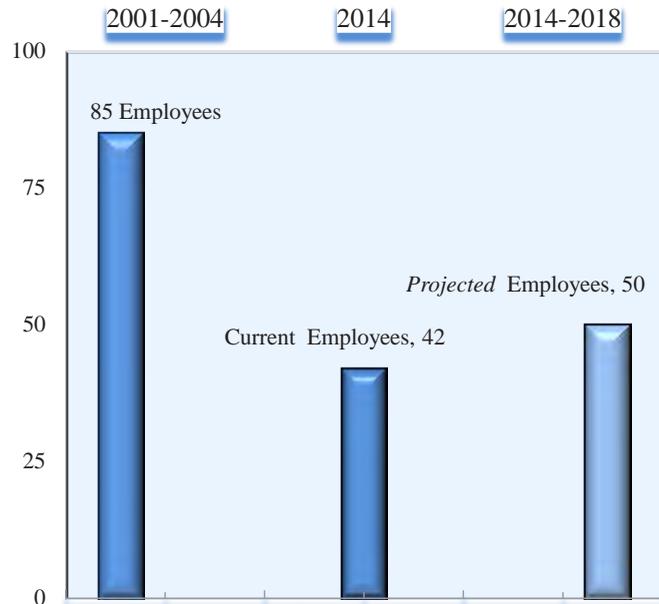
The goal of the department is to increase staffing levels to eventually employ approximately fifty (50) full-time employees to create an optimal ratio of child support specialists to caseload size. With this increase in employees, the department anticipates an increase in overall performance rankings, and collections.

PERFORMANCE PROJECTIONS

Currently the department is improving in the performance ranking as measured against the fifty-one (51) county and regional offices. The department anticipates an overall performance increase to become one of the top twenty (20) performing counties statewide over the next five (5) federal fiscal years (FFY).

Additionally, the department is forecasting a two-million dollar (\$2 million) increase in collections in FFY 2015, and within the next five (5) years, an over four-million dollar (\$4 million) increase in collections.

DEPARTMENT STAFFING TRENDS



Pictured at left: Katherine Owens, Child Support Specialist setting the example of extraordinary customer service while working as part of the Customer Service Unit, which provides support for all incoming telephone calls.



Performance Management Plan

PROGRAM INITIATIVES FFY 2014/15

Susan Dunlap, Program Manager

The department implements a Performance Management Plan each year. This plan (internally called Operational Initiatives, initially developed with the assistance of Tom Christofk of the Air Pollution Control District) is designed to keep staff focused on the goals and activities of the current Federal Fiscal Year (FFY). All initiatives are identified, analyzed, and monitored for success. Some of the most recent successful campaigns are described below.

- **Focus on Family Centered Services and Collaboration** where parents are contacted and encouraged to work together for the betterment of their children. This effort is targeted at focusing on the specific issue at hand and overcoming emotional responses and actions from what can be a very emotional process.
- The **Late Payment Reminder Letter** campaign which was designed to reach out to persons ordered to pay court ordered child support, and have not done so for an extended period of time, and get them back on track with making payments to support their children. This campaign has been successful by seeing an increase in collections on these cases in which several years have passed and no payments were made.
- **Dialing for Dollars** campaign. This campaign was designed to reach out to all customers who owe child support and have not made a payment during the federal fiscal year. This campaign is successful in assisting the department with meeting and exceeding their goals, and in getting payments sent into households who had not received a payment in quite some time.
- Using **actual income** to set current child support orders rather than using an ability to pay when information is available. This effort is successful by setting orders that are attainable, and are most likely to receive cooperation by those ordered to pay child support.

The Performance Management Plan for FFY2014 includes goals to reach one-hundred percent (100%) parentage establishment; increasing the percentage of cases with a court order for support; cases paying the ongoing child support amount; and number of cases paying toward child support arrearages. Additionally, the department is expected to improve, or maintain cost effectiveness; meet compliance time-frames; and maintain data reliability standards.



Interesting Fact:

In 2011, the average annual payment to poor families totaled four-thousand-five-hundred-three dollars (\$4,503) in child support, which represented fifty-two percent (52%) of the average poor families' income.

Meet the Legal Team

DIRECTOR OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

TROY HELD, ATTORNEY AT LAW

Mr. Held has guided the department through several years of static funding and staff reductions, while still focusing on program performance improvement, department and staff development, customer service, and priority-based budgeting. This focus has helped the department to achieve improvement in program methods, resulting in improved performance, increased collections, and increased distributions to families.

He also coordinated and implemented a large-scale move of the main child support office to Rocklin from the original location in Auburn in 2009, and maintained an office in Carnelian Bay.

Mr. Held is currently a member of the Coordinating Council for the Placer County Priority Based Budget Concept, and a member of the Child Support Directors Association Finance Committee.

In addition to his dedication to the child support program, Mr. Held has also served numerous local community organizations over the years, including as a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) Vice-President and an elected Governing Board Member for the Colfax Elementary School District. Mr. Held has received the following recognition since his appointment as Director in 2007: *Successful Statewide Implementation of the California Child Support Automation System*, 2008; *Outstanding Leadership Award*, Placer County, 2009; *Successful Implementation of the Enterprise Customer Service Solution Interactive Voice Response and Call Routing System*, 2009; Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition from Tom McClintock for *Outstanding Service to the Community*, 2009; *Placer County Cost Savings Task Force, Outstanding Performance and Lasting Contributions*, 2010; California Department of Child Support Services, *Most Improved in Distributed Collections FFY 2011*; Recognition for having met or exceeded all program performance goals for 2013; Recognition for collaboration with the California Department of Child Support Services in hosting the Child Support Immersion Program, 2014, and Recognition by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement for a *National Best Practice* and numerous other awards and recognitions for the “1058 Window Project”.



Troy Held, Director



Child Support office located at 1000 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 200 in Rocklin



Tami Uhler is the Assistant Director of the Placer County Department of Child Support Services and was admitted to the California State Bar in 1994. She has been a resident of Placer County for 39 years. A product of local schools (Franklin Elementary and Del Oro High School), she is a graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in Political Science, and a minor in Psychology. She earned her Juris Doctorate degree from University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law. She is a former Placer County Deputy District Attorney, where she spent six years handling cases from misdemeanors to felonies, and "Three Strikes", cases involving crimes from theft, violence, DUI, and drugs, to murder. She joined the Department of Child Support Services in 2009, and currently oversees the legal unit. Tami is a member of the Placer County Bar Association, and a former member of its Board of Directors. She previously served on the California State

Directors Association Policy and Regulation Committee, whose mission is to provide a forum for a dialogue between the state and local child support agencies on policy issues. She served from 2008 to 2014 on the Board of Directors of KidsFirst, a local not-for-profit with public/private funding, which is dedicated to protecting and advocating for children. She currently serves on the County Executive Officer's Employee Engagement Committee. In 2010, she completed courses for the Child Support Leadership Institute through the University of California. Tami is currently working toward a certificate from the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) Institute for Excellence in County Government, as she also maintains her mandatory legal education for her law degree. In her spare time, Tami spends time promoting self-confidence and public speaking skills of young women through involvement in pageantry, and traveling to and from competitive soccer, softball, and lacrosse matches with her children. Tami enjoys multiple creative activities, reading, and attending rock concerts.

Glen Harnish, Senior Attorney. Admitted to California State Bar in 1996

Education: Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Babson College Business School, Wellesley, MA; Suffolk Law School, Boston, MA

Experience: Opened a general law practice in Massachusetts; after moving to California he joined the firm of Anderson, Goff and Wilson.

Accomplishments: Sacramento Regional Flex-Com committee; Child Support Directors Association Judicial Forms Committee; Child Support Tribal Liaison; Civil Rights Officer; Worker's Compensation Coordinator; UIFSA cases expert.



Christine Delgado, Child Support Attorney. Admitted to California State Bar in 1987

Education: University of Hong Kong

Experience: Practiced as a Solicitor in Hong Kong. Worked for an international law firm in San Francisco practicing corporate, real estate, and immigration law.

Accomplishments: Serves as the department Appellate Coordinator; served as contributing Editor for the "*Cases of Interest to Child Support Attorneys*", an annual publication that serves as a legal resource for child support attorneys statewide.



David Rutz, Child Support Attorney. Admitted to California State Bar in 1991

Education: California State University, Sacramento, CA; University of the Pacific's McGeorge School of Law, Sacramento, CA

Experience: Worked for 12 years in the insurance field; experience representing personal injury cases; has lived abroad in Japan, and in several states in the U.S.

Accomplishments: In addition to the commitment to his work, David enjoys cycling, and has bicycled throughout California, as well as the San Juan Islands, and across the state of Iowa along with 11,000 other cyclists.



Child Support Legislation

AB 1653 (GARCIA)

This bill establishes state standards for notice requirements, and would amend current law to provide that a month in which an individual has been granted an exemption from welfare-to-work requirements due to domestic violence shall not be counted as one of the twenty-four (24) months of participation in welfare-to-work activities. The bill would change the proof requirements for alleging domestic abuse.

AB 1654 (BONILLA)

When a custodial parent receiving child support is also on aid, the child support money paid by an obligor is “recouped” by Local Child Support Agencies and redirected to the state, with the exception of the first fifty dollars (\$50.00), called a “disregard”, which goes to the custodial parent. This bill amends the law to raise the amount of the disregard to one-hundred dollars (\$100.00).

AB 2291/SB 1366 (JONES SAWYER/CORREA)

These bills would establish a framework in the *Business and Professions Code* to authorize intrastate Internet poker, as specified. Players would have to assent to providing information that would be collected by public agencies, including the State Department of Child Support Services. Creates a framework by which arrears owed could be recovered by local child support agencies.

AB 2256 (GARCIA)

This bill would amend *Government Code* §6103.2 to allow a sheriff’s department to bill local child support agencies for service of process of child support legal documents.

AB 2344 (AMMIANO)

This bill would establish statutory forms for assisted reproduction to provide clarity regarding a person’s intent to be a legal parent if he or she is using assisted reproduction at the time of conception. The bill would state that these forms may suffice to satisfy the written requirement declaring this intent.

SB 899 (MITCHELL)

This bill would increase eligibility for aid under the CalWORKS program if a child, on whose behalf aid or an increase in aid is being requested, was born into an applicant’s or recipient’s family while the applicant’s or recipient’s family was receiving aid under the CalWORKs program.

SB 1306 (LENO)

This bill would repeal the statutory provision declaring that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid. This bill would not affect a current provision of the California Constitution declaring the same, which has been held unenforceable.

FEDERAL SB 1870 (SEN. BAUCUS)

Amends 42 USC 651 *et seq.* (*Child Support and Establishment of Paternity*) of title IV of the Social Security Act (SSA). Some sections relative to child support include amendments that:

- Direct the use of federal and state enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with United States treaty obligations under any multilateral child support convention in the event that a state plan does not comply with those obligations.
- Authorize a central authority for child support enforcement in a foreign reciprocating or treaty country to obtain information from the United States for the purpose of establishing parentage or child support obligations, and enforcing them.
- Authorize a state to require residents of a foreign reciprocating or treaty country who apply for specified child support services to make application through the foreign country’s central authority for child support enforcement.



- Allow a state to accept or reject the application of any individual residing in a foreign country which is not a reciprocating or treaty country.
- Allows collection of past-due support from federal tax refunds in response to a request from a reciprocating country or a foreign treaty country.
- Amends the federal judicial code with respect to full faith and credit for child support orders when parties reside in different states.
- Allows issuance of passports to certain individuals with annual incomes of under \$100,000 who owe arrearages of child support, but have been making such payments over a period of time.
- Authorizes child support enforcement programs operated by Indian Tribes to conduct an experimental pilot, or demonstration project to assist in promoting the *SSA title IV part D* objectives.
- Authorizes establishment of voluntary parenting time arrangements under state part D plans.
- Increases the length of time that information entered into the data base maintained by the *National Directory of New Hires* shall remain, before being deleted.
- Establishes in the executive branch a child support enforcement task force to report to Congress findings and recommendations for improvements in child support enforcement.

For more detail visit: <http://legiscan.com/US/text/SB1870/2013>

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD SUPPORT ATTORNEY *Christine Delgado, Attorney*

Attorneys are an integral part of the child support process. ***In fact, the process is a legal process operated by legal professionals such as Attorneys, Court Commissioners, and Judges.*** California provides that in all actions involving paternity or support, the local child support agency represents the public interest in establishing, modifying, and enforcing support obligations. The attorney does not represent either parent or the child; therefore no attorney-client relationship is created between the local child support agency and any person by virtue of the action of the local child support agency in carrying out these statutory duties. The Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) attorney represents the local child support agency for the County of Placer in all court filings and appearances. The attorney's goal is to further the federal government's interest in supporting children and providing for families and to facilitate the establishment or adjustment of a child support order in accordance with State guidelines.

Each Placer County DCSS attorney manages a caseload from inception of the case to the end, and is responsible for the legal accuracy and sufficiency

of every legal document produced. In a typical day, an attorney will review and sign legal documents, make decisions on appropriate establishment and enforcement actions, assist and train staff, prepare for court, perform legal research and interact with customers, outside attorneys, and other public agencies. The attorney supervises and often participates in the negotiation and settlement of cases. The attorney attends court hearings in the Placer County Superior Court at least two (2) days of every week. In calendar year 2013, the Placer County DCSS attorneys handled approximately eighteen-hundred fifty-seven (1,857) hearings set in the Superior Court in over nine-thousand (9,000) cases with a minimum number of participants over twenty-seven-thousand (27,000) people.

The Placer County DCSS Director is the Chief Attorney, and carries the responsibility for all action, and inaction taken where the County of Placer has jurisdiction in child support matters.



Educating and Assisting Customers

CHILD SUPPORT TRIBAL LIAISON

Glen Harnish, Senior Attorney

The Placer Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) recognizes and respects the unique relationship between the Placer County DCSS and federally recognized Indian Tribes, such as the United Auburn Indian Community (UAIC). Federally-recognized tribes are sovereign governments. The Placer County DCSS has established a framework for working effectively with the UAIC. Cooperation, communication, and coordination are critical. The Placer County DCSS, through Tribal Liaison (and Senior Attorney) Glen Harnish, maintains open communication with both the personnel and legal departments of the UAIC. If issues arise on child support issues, such as by employees of the tribe, members of the tribe, or those with gambling wins, those issues are quickly resolved.

SEEK WORK ORDERS

An enforcement tool available to the Placer Department of Child Support (Placer County DCSS) is the seek work order, arising from *Family Code Section 4505*. The Placer County DCSS may seek an order that a person who is underpaying their child support, and who claims to be unemployed or underemployed seek work and report periodically on their efforts to gain employment. In 2012 the Placer County DCSS brought eighty-eight (88) persons to court to request that the Commissioner issue seek work orders. Once ordered, approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of cases receive child support payments. The Placer County DCSS is dedicated to firmly, fairly and even-handedly collecting the child support ordered by the court, and uses various enforcement tools depending on the law, facts, and history of each case.



AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

Doug Jastrow, Supervisor

While the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010 (also known as the ACA, or ObamaCare) experiences several significant implementation hurdles during its initial implementation in 2014, the Placer County Department of Child Support Services continues to stand ready to meet the needs of its customers.



During its first open-enrollment period, many Californians have already signed up for health insurance plans or in Medi-Cal through the state's marketplace exchange known as "Covered California." This increase in services and benefits has an inevitable impact on how child support is established and enforced. With parents now having expanded options in how they can provide medical coverage to themselves, and their children, the department is working with its customers to educate and assist in achieving positive results during this time of change.

EDUCATIONAL VIDEO SERIES

To further its efforts in engaging our customers and the community as a whole, Child Support Services has resumed filming and producing educational videos this year drawing upon real-life situations such as: when to request the department's services, and how to modify a court order. These videos are designed to demystify routine procedures that can still prove daunting to those unfamiliar with the child support program. The department partnered with the Placer County Department of Administrative Services Media Services Division to film on location at their offices at 1000 Sunset Boulevard in Rocklin and the Santucci Justice Center in Roseville.

Customer Service

OMBUDSPERSON

Every customer of the Placer County Department of Child Support Services has rights and responsibilities regarding the services they receive. The department's Ombudsman is available to help explain those rights. The Ombudsman works as an advocate for customers to ensure fair and equitable treatment throughout the child support process. By helping resolve customers' child support issues at the earliest stage possible, the Ombudsman is an invaluable tool for customers to utilize whenever they feel their issue or concern with the department needs independent review. The Ombudsman can be reached directly at 916-435-5757; by mail or in person at 1000 Sunset Boulevard, Suite 200 in Rocklin.

CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK

Upon entering the offices of Child Support Services, every customer is greeted by a child support professional ready to provide them with immediate assistance. The Customer Service Desk is specifically designed to help customers as soon and as effectively as possible, by staffing it at all times with a dedicated child support specialist.

Whether dropping off a document or coming in for an extended meeting with a child support specialist, customers begin their interaction with the department by speaking directly with a trained staff member ready to help them. This unique take on the reception experience ensures the proper handling of sensitive child support issues from beginning to end, and every step along the way.

In this picture of the Customer Service Desk, two State Immersion Program trainees observe Sarah Sanders, skilled Child Support Specialist.



BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The Enterprise Customer Service Solution (ECSS) is the statewide telephone system for all child support agencies in California. The system is a part of the Customer Connect services. It provides customers with different ways to connect to information. Customers can use the self-help feature to obtain case related information, or they can choose to be transferred to the county of their choice for live assistance.

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services (Placer County DCSS) receives an average of one-hundred twenty (120) calls per day. The department's call center provides full service to its customers by staffing the center with child support specialists. The child support specialists are able to assist customers and have the authority to take action on a case when necessary. The specialists answer over ninety-five percent (95%) of incoming calls with an average customer wait-time of *less than one minute*.

If a county is not able to receive calls, the State invokes the program's business continuity plan, and routes their calls to other counties. In the plan, the Placer County DCSS is designated to provide assistance to nine (9) other counties when needed. The department provides the same level of service to other county customers as it would its own. The business continuity plan keeps customers connected to professionals who can assist with their immediate child support needs.



"When children are involved and financial help is needed, we are here." Troy Held, Director



**Department of
Child Support Services**

Troy Held, Director

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Visit our website: www.placer.ca.gov/childsupport