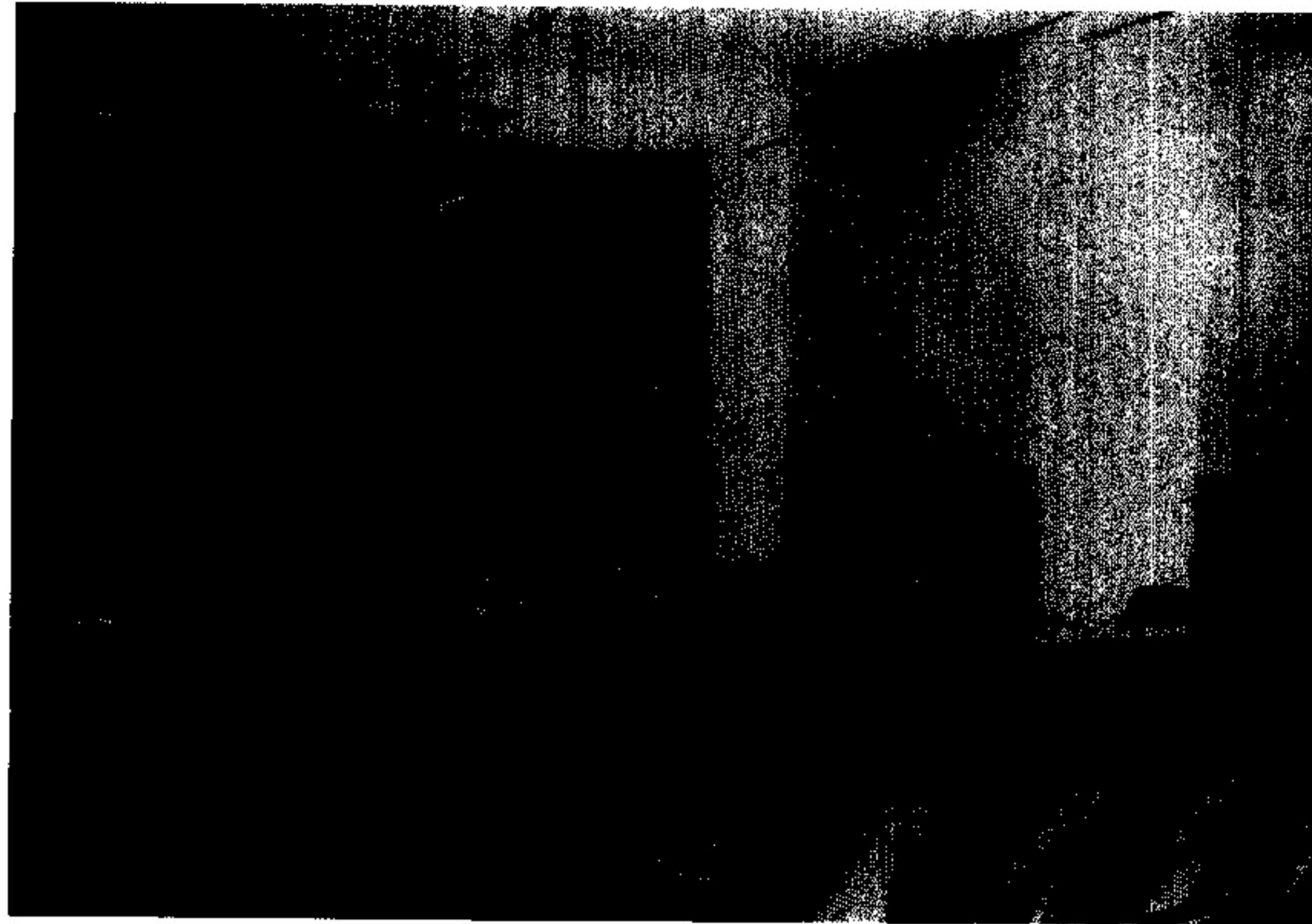


# **The 1058 WINDOW PROJECT**



*Efficiency in Service*

**A Child Support Delivery Project  
from:**

**The Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child  
Support Services,**

**The Nevada County Superior Court,**

**and**

**The California Department of Child Support  
Services**



*A Child Support Delivery Project from  
The Superior Court of Nevada County & The Sierra Nevada Regional Department  
of Child Support Services*

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*Superior Court of Nevada County*



*Sierra Nevada Regional DCSS*

## **Do you want to:**

- **Provide excellent customer service?**
- **Get your Orders After Hearing signed by the Court Commissioner at court?**
- **Serve customers with the order at the end of the hearing?**
- **Eliminate service costs on court orders?**
- **Get your new or modified orders on your automated systems for collection within 24 hours?**
- **Reduce Arrears?**
- **Improve Performance?**

How do you do this? Utilize videoconferencing technology in partnership with the Courts and you can achieve all of these goals!

The Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child Support Services (SNRDCSS) has piloted the *1058 Window* Project for the past 5 years to achieve these goals by providing efficiency in service.

The Nevada County child support court calendar averages forty-four (44) cases per court date. The Commissioner signs approximately 98% of the orders-after-hearing, which are created that day. The majority of customers present in court are served with that order and 97% of the new or modified orders are entered in to the accounting system within one day.

The SNRDCSS held the following Federal Performance numbers in 2002 when this pilot began as a solution for creating efficiencies:

Collections on Current Support:	44.2%
Collections on Arrears	53.3%
Cases with Support Orders:	80.9%

The SNRDCSS held the following Federal Performance numbers in 2006:

Collections on Current Support:	58.5%
Collections on Arrears:	61.6%
Cases with Support Orders:	88.3%

### *History*

The Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child Support Services (SNRDCSS) examined new methods of operation to enhance the service to our customers, improve performance and better use of the staffs time in relation to the court process.

Attorney staff from the Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child Support Services regularly attends court calendars in the Nevada County Superior Court in Nevada City and Truckee and the Sierra County Superior Court in Downieville. The largest percentage of cases is heard in the Nevada City venue, and therefore two attorneys have been assigned to this caseload. The current process has the attorney staff attending court at this site approximately six miles from our main office. The assigned child support attorneys attend court and upon their return to the office, they must update the CASES system (child support computer system). They must also deliver the files to the legal unit for the production of the orders after hearing. This process has our staff working retroactively, which produces a lengthy break in time before the parents are served with the orders. It is our desire to streamline this process by use of existing technology.

Two possible solutions were initially identified to achieve this goal.

- Option 1: Send the court team to the courthouse and set up equipment at that site. (This would involve an increased staff commute to the courthouse, further impact to courthouse parking, delivery and removal of equipment for each calendar.) The orders would be produced at that location and submitted. The narrative entries into CASES would be developed during the court calendar. CASES access from this site would require a remote CASES access point and security assurances.
- Option 2: Utilize the existing video conferencing equipment housed in the Department 5 Child Support Courtroom and DCSS. The video conferencing unit in the court would connect with the unit located in the DCSS law library at the commencement of court at the direction of the Commissioner. The Court Team (two legal secretaries and a regional attorney) would report to the Child Support Services law library within the main office (Videoconferencing site). These staff members would access our database systems from within our office and be prepared to handle the functions described above. The video conferencing unit in the DCSS law library would display the video and audio from Department 5 in real time. This process would not be disruptive to the Court as outgoing audio could be muted. As the orders are produced, they would be electronically sent to the printer in Department 5 for review and signature. CASES narratives would be made as the events happen. If the calendar is started late or a recess occurs, the court team in the office law library can complete their immediate tasks and move on to other work assignments at their desks until the court process commences once again. Once the narratives are entered, the Child Support Officers could review data immediately and initiate work on the tasks produced from the court session.

Option 2 was selected upon mutual agreement by the Nevada County Superior Courts, the California Department of Child Support Services and the Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child Support Services. The system was set up as envisioned. The DCSS utilized the existing

video conferencing equipment located in the department's law library. The initial setup consisted of one Tandberg video conferencing camera and two monitors.



In 2007 SNRDCSS changed the video equipment to a Tandberg Edge 95mxc, 2 Sharp Aquost 52" LCD's and a table that accommodates video conferencing.



The court possesses a PolyCom camera and one large screen flat screen monitor on a swing arm which is located at the front of the courtroom. The child support/family law calendar in Nevada County (Department 5) primarily occurs every Thursday in Department 5 at 9:00 a.m. The DCSS Court Team handles the “*1058 Window Project*”. This team consists of the following positions:

- Two Legal Secretaries: They produce the Orders after Hearing during the court calendar and have them ready for attorney review and court signature. The orders are reproduced and served in court or sent out for service immediately after court concludes.
- A Regional Attorney: They enter the CASES narratives as the information develops during the court process. An attorney has been selected in order to insure that the legal process is described with appropriate particularity.

At approximately 8:30 a.m., two child support attorneys take the physical files to Department 5 and meet and confer with attorneys and customers. These two attorneys represent the DCSS in court. At approximately 8:40 a.m. two legal secretaries and one attorney (Court Team) initiate the laptop PCs in the law library and access our database systems. Once that is completed, they make the video conferencing connection with Department 5. The court clerk in Department 5 receives the call. Once the call is connected, the Court Team and the Court Clerk speak to each other to assure that the audio connection is functioning. The Court Team then places their outgoing audio on mute. Once court commences the Court Team Attorney enters the legal events as they happen in the computer system narrative. The two legal secretaries (who prepared the files for court) monitor to assure that the information they need on the legal tracking is communicated. If there were a lapse in the communication, one of those persons would alert the Court Team Attorney who would then take the system off of mute and contact the DCSS Attorneys or Court directly over the system. Once the narrative is completed, the legal secretary assigned to that case opens the system and enters the data to produce the Order after Hearing. Once this is completed, it is printed through the counties connectivity to the Clerk’s Office in Department 5. A legal office assistant from DCSS displays the document for approval by the attorney staff and the court. Copies are made (along with current Dissomaster documents) and delivered to the Court Attendant/Bailiff for service on the named parties present. This process continues throughout the day until the morning and afternoon calendars are complete.

If the court calendar is started late or a recess occurs, the court team in the office law library can complete their immediate tasks and move on to other work assignments at their desks until the court process commences once again. Once the narratives are entered, the Child Support Officers can review data immediately and initiate work on the tasks produced from the court session.

This process can be simulated throughout the Nation in the Local Child Support Agencies (LCSAs) to help achieve faster order production and court case completion. It would make better use of staff time, eliminate the necessity for travel by LCSA court staff and eliminate parking congestion at courthouses. It also provides LCSA court supervisors the ability to be present at the LCSA for administrative work while supervising court attorney staff and case results from the courtroom.

Some success stories from this pilot project include:

- Obligor appear in court and discuss topics/issues with the court and are instructed to come to DCSS to resolve the issue(s). When the person arrives, a Child Support Specialist speaks with them about the issue(s) with a clear understanding (and with preparation) of the events in court and specific issues. The matter has a better chance for immediate resolution without the person having to come back to the office. This eliminates the scenario where the person leaves court, comes to the office and says, “I was just in court and the judge told me....” The Child Support Specialist is unable to ascertain what is accurate and factual causing them to ask the person to come back to the LCSA after the Court Minutes and notes are completed. With the 1058 Window Project, this does not happen.
  
- An obligor was in court. She complained of being in a car accident and was willing to complete a waiver for medical records. One was not available. The Court asked our office via the videoconferencing to fax one to them. It was done immediately, and within minutes the obligor had completed the form.

- An obligor phoned in for his appearance. He claimed to have faxed his job contacts form to our office. The legal secretary in the receiving site had just checked our fax and all inboxes and informed the court team attorney that the form was not at DCSS. The DCSS attorney was asked by the attorney at the LCSA to request that the obligor re-fax the documents. The DCSS attorney then asked the obligor for the fax number he used. The obligor had the wrong number and the correct number was given to him. The document was then faxed to DCSS. Without this process a lengthy delay would have occurred.
- All narratives are entered on the CASES system during the court process and, therefore, do not need to be entered after court by the attorney staff assigned to those cases.
- For casework processes, automation narrative entries allow for almost immediate review of the court case by the assigned Child Support Specialist. The entries are especially helpful when the obligor comes to the LCSA after court.
- Orders after Hearing are completed at the time of the court hearing and served.
- Attorneys can, and have, appeared virtually. An assigned attorney left court after completion of his cases. Later, an obligor showed up in court. The attorney was able to handle the matter from DCSS without delay.
- All DCSS staff are able to see the court process (big picture and final result) without travel or excessive leave from their duties.
- Receiver site attendees can take breaks during court recesses and complete or handle other work from their workstations.
- Court attorneys can interactively receive instant case data while in court with DCSS staff.
- DCSS Court Team staff can speak to the DCSS court attorney or Court Commissioner to receive further information or clarify legal issues.

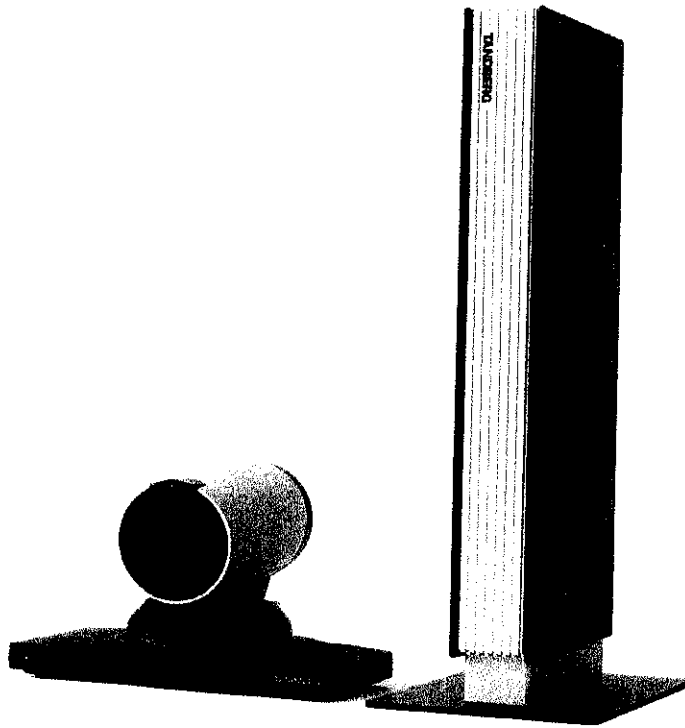


- Orders after Hearing on all cases are signed during court or at its conclusion on calendars that are presided over by a Judge Pro Tem, without delay.

For Further information on the project or how to implement in you child support agency, please contact either:

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## Video Communications Help Sierra Nevada DCSS Provide Faster and Better Service to Customers



### *Challenge - Streamlining processes in a complex system*

The well being of millions of children across the nation depends on delivering child-support collection-and-enforcement services effectively. It is a highly complex undertaking and faces several unique challenges:

- As states struggle with limited resources, caseworkers and administrators must deal with many policies, time-consuming processes, and outside parties including the courts, attorneys and associates in other jurisdictions
- Uniform training on child support establishment, enforcement and accounting is State-mandated and a well-planned and executed training program contributes to the success of a child-support collection-and-enforcement program. But providing such training to remote counties can be expensive and time-consuming

California's six-region Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), committed to extensive training, has been selected by federal officials to pilot a national modeling program for child-support staff, including the possible establishment of a certification program for professionals. For remote counties in the Sierra Nevada region, the DCSS needed to locate an easier and more affordable access to training but, at the same time, it wouldn't sacrifice the effective learning that face-to-face communications delivers.

The DCSS, which continually examines new methods to enhance service, improve efficiencies and better use staff time, decided to adopt videoconferencing at its Sierra Nevada regional office. Located in a remote area of northern California, the office represents two counties and operates as the Regional Training Center for California's Eastern DCSS Region, which embraces 12 counties. The regional office conducted a thorough review of video products, seeking a system that delivers excellent picture quality at manageable bandwidth and also is user-friendly, easy to manage centrally, interoperable and expandable. "It was also critical that the system translate seamlessly between Internet Protocol and ISDN networks - and be competitively priced," says Ken Osborn, Regional Training Coordinator.

### **Solution**

The DCSS tapped TANDBERG's video-communications technology, and now the region develops, tests and perfects video applications that eventually could be rolled out across the state. Video systems were installed in the regional office, Regional Training Center and the 12 field offices. The state DCSS office joined by installing the same systems in the state training room and, from there, video-based training sessions began.

"We've been delighted with the results - the picture quality and the effectiveness of the communications," says Osborn. "It's critical that our training programs maintain the collaborative, personal, and high-retention aspects of visual communications. That knowledge is just too important to our success."

Within a few short months of employing the video systems, the Sierra Nevada counties participated in the DCSS's first statewide training initiative, which included 600 participants from 23 counties at 22 video sites. Videotapes of those sessions were distributed to an additional 400 people to view. "The cost for that training initiative was about \$4,000, compared to the \$12,000 to \$15,000 we would have spent delivering that same content via in-person classrooms," says Kathleen Hrepich, director of the Sierra Nevada Regional DCSS.

## The Future

The adoption of videoconferencing continues. The Sierra Nevada County Regional Office, in a pilot project with three of the state's superior courts, conducts family court hearings via video communications. Now in a matter of minutes, instead of two months, a family court session and the resulting court order are completed. "Our staff saves very valuable time and families get the resolutions they need quickly and without the stress of long waits," says Ms. Hrepich. "We believe video communications eventually will be as prevalent as the phone and e-mail."



*California's Department of Child Support Program - Nevada County pilot program makes use of video communications in the courts*

# PowerPoint Pilot Training a Success

By Jamie Beam, Staff Development Specialist, Statewide Training Resource Unit, San Diego DCSS

Shasta County Department of Child Support Services hosted a pilot training on Microsoft PowerPoint 2000 (Level 1) for Region 1 trainers Nov. 13. The pilot PowerPoint training was developed as a result of a request received at the Child Support Program Orientation (CSPO) Training for Trainers event in June 2003. Since PowerPoint presentations are a component of the DCSS CSPO training product, it is necessary for trainers to be familiar with the program software to ensure consistency in the delivery of CSPO to new child support professionals statewide.

The purpose of the beginning level PowerPoint course is to provide an introduction to the software and provide trainers with more tools they can use to increase the effectiveness of future trainings and presentations. Level 1 topics include: exploring the PowerPoint window, beginning a presentation, working with drawing tools, word art and clip art, templates and the slide master and presentation options. The PowerPoint Level 1 pilot included a participant guide and hands-on training addressing each of the Level 1 topics. Participants were also provided lab time to apply newly acquired skills and create their own PowerPoint presentations. According to participant feedback, trainees particularly enjoyed the lab time. One participant commented, "I actually created a PowerPoint presentation. [!] can't wait to start using it."

The Statewide Training Resource Unit developed the participant materials for the pilot training. Jamie Beam from the Statewide Training Resource Unit and DCSS Training Administrator Chris Ching delivered the training to the following 14 Region 1 participants: Connie Alberico, Kathy Anderson, Jennie Arechar, Jeannine Friemark, Shelia Grimsley, Kim Maxwell, Charlene McConnell, Donna Peckham, Kiffin Reading, Gina Redinbaugh, Linda Robertson, Irma Santana, Lois Stevenson and Kerry Williams.

Overall the pilot program proved successful. Feedback and comments from participants were forwarded to DCSS for consideration in future PowerPoint courses. One participant wrote, "I had always wanted to incorporate PowerPoint into my curriculum; unfortunately, I had not had the opportunity to learn this effective tool. Since attending... I have incorporated PowerPoint into two of my presentations."

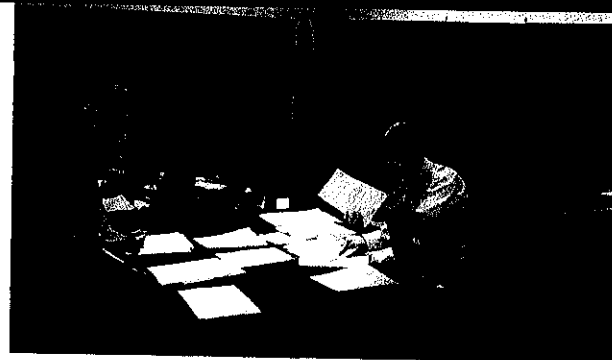
# Virtual Reality in Nevada County

By Cat Karnezis, Customer Service Manager, Sierra Nevada Regional DCSS

In recent months, Nevada County Superior Court Department 5 has grown – virtually encompassing the Sierra Nevada Regional Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) office (six miles and one town away) in Grass Valley.

Over two years ago the California State DCSS, along with local child support agencies (LCSAs), ventured into the world of video conferencing technology to better communicate with each other and to improve service to customers and stakeholders. The long-distance virtual communication includes a geographical expanse of one-on-one meetings, multi-participant conferences, educational workshops offered to all LCSAs and, in Nevada County, virtual court attendance from the child support services office. Virtual court attendance is made possible through the "1058 Window Project," a window to the courts designed specifically and exclusively for child support services.

The Nevada County Child Support Calendar is heard on Thursdays in Superior Court Department 5. Child support



attorneys appear at the courthouse in Nevada City while the court team (legal secretaries and a regional attorney) records the court events in the Child Support Services Law Library in Grass Valley.

From the law library, the court team accesses the child support database via laptop. A video-conferencing connection is made with Department 5 and the court clerk receives the call and confirms the audio connection is functioning with the court team. The court team places their outgoing audio on mute and the legal secretaries and regional attorney monitor the proceedings. If

*Continued next page, see VIRTUAL*

Photographs: Cat Karnezis



*Opposite page, bottom: Child support services law library in Grass Valley. Above: The Nevada County Superior Court, Dept.*

additional information is required in court or at the LCSA, the regional attorney takes the system off of mute and contacts the DCSS attorneys or court directly over the system.

When the court is called to order, its reach virtually encompasses all the resources of the child support services agency. From the courtroom, attorneys obtain up-to-date information that may not be contained in their physical files. Attorney Richard Campbell sees this ability to contact DCSS staff immediately to access necessary information as a real advantage. Recent payments (including payments received on the court date) can be verified and other pertinent documentation is provided in short order upon request of the attorney or commissioner.

"DCSS is able to participate in the proceedings more fully and seamlessly, without any disruption to the Court," said Commissioner Sean Dowling.

"Having DCSS live by video helps us all understand the court's rulings," observed Court Clerk Barbara Cravalho. Enhanced communication between DCSS and the court staff is "the best effect" of video conferencing, she noted.

Legal Secretary Vicky Wilbourn and Supervisor Becky Swabeck agreed court video conferencing enables them to process work more quickly and efficiently. Secretaries and attorneys enter events into the child support computer system (CASES) in real time. Their entries expedite the production of orders, and, because the court processes are recorded in real time, the information is immediately accessible to all child support services employees. Child support specialists and the

department's public service unit can respond to customer inquiries appropriately with access to the most current case information.

Ultimately, the court video conferencing project will yield court orders produced, reviewed, approved and signed by the commissioner on the day they are decreed. Service will be possible for all case participants present in court. Attorney Susan O'Connor considers the real time orders a must: "They can be put on the system more quickly, enforcement becomes more immediate, and support will reach the children with less delay."

Commissioner Dowling agrees with O'Connor's assessment and adds, "[W]hile we are still in the start-up phase of producing immediate orders after hearing, I look forward to seeing the same scale of improvement to that process which we have experienced to date in our window project."

Sierra Nevada Regional DCSS Assistant Director Troy Held, in setting up the "1058 Window Project" said establishing a partnership with the courts was the first step. Assistance from information specialists on the county technical team was necessary to ensure the existence of intercounty technology and bandwidth sufficient to support and sustain the connectivity between child support services and the court.

*For more information about the "1058 Window Project," contact Troy Held at [troy.held@co.nevada.ca.us](mailto:troy.held@co.nevada.ca.us).*

**Child Support  
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**Child Support Directors Association**

The Child Support Directors Association of California (CSDA) was established in 2001 as a non-profit association to represent the local child support directors of California's 58 counties. The association strives to be of service to local child support agencies (LCSA) in their effort to provide children and families with the financial, medical, and emotional support required to be productive and health citizens in our society.

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