AUTOMATED SYSTEMS FOR

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT:

A GUIDE FOR ENHANCING CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION

Last Updated July 3, 2008

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

PREFACE

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) developed this *Guide for Enhancing Case Closure Automation* to support states in increasing the efficiency and accuracy of case closure in their Child Support Enforcement (CSE) systems.

The audience for this Guide includes state CSE policy, program operations, technical personnel and their contractors, and Federal OCSE technical assistance staff.

Comments were requested and received from states and were incorporated, wherever possible, in this Guide. ACF welcomes additional comments and suggestions from those using this Guide. Comments may be sent to:

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Modifications to This Document

- Modified title
- Added "Modifications to this Document"
- Revised Chapter 1, sections A and C
- Added CSENet-related case closure transaction information
- Updated Virginia case study
- Added Oregon case study
- Updated case closure reference list

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

This Introduction contains background information on collaborative Federal and state strategies for increasing the level of automation in state Child Support Enforcement (CSE) systems, with a focus on case closure automation. Section A describes Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) Level of Automation Technical Assistance. Section B summarizes important findings from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) Report on case closures using the Federal case closure criteria. Section C describes OCSE Technical Assistance specifically for case closure automation. Section D lists the benefits states are already realizing from automating case closure.

A. LEVEL OF AUTOMATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

The Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) provides national leadership and direction in planning, managing, and coordinating the nationwide administration and financing of a broad range of comprehensive and supportive programs for children and families, including Child Support Enforcement.

State and local agencies in large part carry out the Child Support Enforcement program. ACF retains the responsibility to monitor and evaluate programs to ensure that they are being operated as intended by law and regulation and that the expenditure of Federal funds is made in accordance with Federal regulation.

Level of Automation Technical Assistance is an OCSE initiative whose objective is to encourage and support states to enhance the functionality and efficiency of their CSE systems. It serves as a mechanism for OCSE to provide direction and share knowledge among states regarding technically-based strategies for addressing business challenges, tested automated solutions, and promising new technologies. Most importantly, technical assistance seeks to ensure that CSE systems effectively meet business user needs, as defined in the ACF publication *Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for States. Updated in IM 07-07 May 2007.*

Federal OCSE staff work in close collaboration with State CSE technical, policy, and program operations staff and together focus on improving system performance. Technical assistance subject areas are derived from OIG evaluations, CSE conferences, and State input. Regular Federal Financial Participation (FFP) at the 66 percent rate is available for enhancing the level of system automation.

OCSE will provide guidance documents such as this Guide for Enhancing Case Closure Automation to facilitate the technical assistance process. As part of its technical assistance development process, States and territories may request OCSE to conduct site visits to observe the State system and interview State personnel. OCSE and State personnel will

discuss and document their findings and recommendations for further State system automation. Additionally, State personnel will be encouraged to share documentation and lessons learned that OCSE can disseminate to other States.

In the future, OCSE may schedule collaborative sessions with State personnel and use this Guide to consolidate and document knowledge of their CSE system's current level of automation and to identify further opportunities for automation.

B. OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL (OIG) REPORT ON USE OF CASE CLOSURE CRITERIA

In 2002, the OIG assessed the use of the CSE case closure regulations [1] and estimated a national CSE case closure error rate of 32 percent (vs. the performance benchmark of a 10 percent error rate), due primarily to inadequate advance notification of intent to close a case. The OIG Report also found that six case closure reasons account for 95 percent of case closures and 96 percent of case closure errors.

The six high volume closure reasons[2] are:

Federal Closure Reason	Percent of Cases Using Reason* (N=495)
No enforceable order, and arrearage less than $500	26%
Unable to locate noncustodial parent or putative father	24%
Non-TANF client requests closure	18%
Non-TANF client uncooperative	12%
Lost contact with non-TANF client	8%
Unable to establish paternity	7%

* Percentages reflect weighted values

The OIG report states, "We encourage OCSE to work with states to undertake efforts to reduce the error rate." A companion report, "Barriers in Closing Child Support Enforcement Cases," September 2002, OEI 06-00-00471, identifies problems in case closure procedures and potential solutions. The report notes that automating state processes for identifying and closing cases is one of the major opportunities for improvement, with a particular focus on processes for advance notice of intent to close in the six most frequently used case closure reasons.

C. OCSE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ENHANCING CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION

[1] Refer to Appendix A, "Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations," February 2002, OEI 06-00-00470.

[2] "Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations," OEI 06-00-00470, p. 7.

The OCSE published revised Federal regulations 45 CFR 303.11 which define twelve case closure criteria in 1999. The revised regulations allow states to close cases that meet one or more of the twelve criteria. For nine of these twelve criteria, the regulations require that the recipient of services (typically a custodial parent or another state) receives advance notice of intent to close the case. The revised regulations make it easier for states to close more cases, and also to enhance recipient safeguards for notification prior to case closure.

Moreover, interstate communications have improved dramatically over the years and interstate case closure notifications may be conveniently exchanged between states via the OCSE network using Child Support Enforcement Network (CSENet) closure transactions. States may select one of the 17 MSC case closure transactions, which correlate to the CFR code, to convey to another state electronically that a case is closed, or provide a 60 day notice of the intent to close an interstate case when the criteria of 45 CFR 303.11(b)(12) is met.

In response to the OIG Report findings, OCSE is providing level of automation technical assistance for case closure. Federal OCSE staff will work in close collaboration with state CSE technical, policy, and program operations personnel. Together, they will focus on improving case closure automation, with a special emphasis on the six most frequent case closure reasons cited in the OIG Report as well as ensuring appropriate advance notification when required.

Observing caseworkers managing their caseloads has given the best guidance for automating responses. Actions that require little or no worker discretion are ideal for automated solutions. Even those situations in which caseworkers review specified case conditions before deciding upon a course of action can be partially automated through a careful course of selection criteria. Examples of case closure automation include:

- Queries of state caseload databases for cases meeting specific closure criteria
- Alerts to caseworkers when cases are eligible for closure
- Notice generation
- Tracking required timeframes
- Checking selection criteria, for example, noncustodial parent deceased; child reaches age 18 or age of emancipation; no current support order and arrearages less than $500
- Programming the local application with built in interstate case-closure triggers to send an electronic CSENet transaction automatically.

D. BENEFITS OF CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION

States employing case closure automation can realize significant benefits. Case closure automation can provide these direct benefits:

- Reduce case closure errors
- Ensure actions are taken in a timely manner and uniformly across cases
- Reduce or eliminate backlogs so states can concentrate on cases requiring worker determination
- Reduce data management demands by eliminating duplicate and outdated cases
- Reduce direct costs by sending an electronic CSENet transaction.

CHAPTER II: CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION TOOL KIT

State personnel can use this tool kit to help begin or further automate their case closure processes. Section A includes several analysis and design aids for clarifying case closure business and system requirements. Section B includes helpful information on case closure automation from various sources.

A. BUSINESS AND SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

This section helps states clarify case closure business and system requirements at the "front end" of the CSE system lifecycle, thereby resulting in potentially lower overall system costs for both system development and enhancements. It includes the following analysis and design aids:

A-1. 45 CFR 303.11 regulations
A-2. Requirements Matrix mapped to 45 CFR 303.11 and annotated for potential automation opportunities
A-3. Flowcharts showing one possible implementation of 45 CFR 303.11 requirements

A-1. REGULATIONS

The relevant regulations covering case closure, as cited in the certification requirements, are at 45 CFR 303.11 (see below). Additional information on these regulations can be found in:

- OCSE-AT-93-03 Clarification of Case Closure Criteria
- OCSE-AT-99-04 Case Closure Criteria Final Rule, 45 CFR Part 303
- OCSE-PIQ-00-02 Interstate Case Closure When Custodial Parent Location is Unknown
- OCSE-PIQ-03-09, Case Closure of Child-Only Medicaid Cases
- OCSE-PIQ-05-02, Case Initiation of Previously-Closed IV-D Cases

Refer to Appendix B, Case Closure Reference List, for links to these sources.

Title 45--Public Welfare
Chapter III--Office of Child Support Enforcement
Part 303--Standards for Program Operations

Sec. 303.11 Case Closure Criteria

(a) The IV-D agency shall establish a system for case closure.

(b) In order to be eligible for closure, the case must meet at least one of the following criteria:

(1) There is no longer a current support order and arrearages are under $500 or unenforceable under state law;

(2) The noncustodial parent or putative father is deceased and no further action, including a levy against the estate, can be taken;

(3) Paternity cannot be established because:

(i) The child is at least 18 years old and action to establish paternity is barred by a statute of limitations which meets the requirements of Sec. 302.70(a)(5) of this chapter;

(ii) A genetic test or a court or administrative process has excluded the putative father and no other putative father can be identified; or

(iii) In accordance with Sec. 303.5(b) of this part, the IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity in a case involving incest or forcible rape, or in any case where legal proceedings for adoption are pending;

(iv) The identity of the biological father is unknown and cannot be identified after diligent efforts, including at least one interview by the IV-D agency with the recipient of services;

(4) The noncustodial parent's location is unknown, and the state has made diligent efforts using multiple sources, in accordance with Sec. 303.3, all of which have been unsuccessful, to locate the noncustodial parent:

(i) Over a three-year period when there is sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort, or

(ii) Over a one-year period when there is not sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort;

(5) The noncustodial parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority because the parent has been institutionalized in a psychiatric facility, is incarcerated with no chance for parole, or has a medically verified total and permanent disability with no evidence of support potential.

The state must also determine that no income or assets are available to the noncustodial parent which could be levied or attached for support;

(6) The noncustodial parent is a citizen of, and lives in, a foreign country, does not work for the Federal government or a company with headquarters or offices

in the United States, and has no reachable domestic income or assets; and the state has been unable to establish reciprocity with the country;

(7) The IV-D agency has provided location-only services as requested under Sec. 302.35(c)(3) of this chapter;

(8) The non-IV-A recipient of services requests closure of a case and there is no assignment to the state of medical support under 42 CFR 433.146 or of arrearages which accrued under a support order;

(9) There has been a finding by the responsible state agency of good cause or other exceptions to cooperation with the IV-D agency and the state or local IV-A, IV-D, IV-E, Medicaid or food stamp agency has determined that support enforcement may not proceed without risk of harm to the child or caretaker relative;

(10) In a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), the IV-D agency is unable to contact the recipient of services within a 60 calendar day period despite an attempt of at least one letter sent by first class mail to the last known address;

(11) In a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), the IV-D agency documents the circumstances of the recipient of services' noncooperation and an action by the recipient of services is essential for the next step in providing IV-D services.

(12) The IV-D agency documents failure by the initiating state to take an action which is essential for the next step in providing services.

(c) In cases meeting the criteria in paragraphs (b) (1) through (6) and (10) through (12) of this section, the state must notify the recipient of services, or in an interstate case meeting the criteria for closure under (b)(12), the initiating state, in writing 60 calendar days prior to closure of the case of the state's intent to close the case. The case must be kept open if the recipient of services or the initiating state supplies information in response to the notice which could lead to the establishment of paternity or a support order or enforcement of an order, or, in the instance of paragraph (b)(10) of this section, if contact is reestablished with the recipient of services. If the case is closed, the former recipient of services may request at a later date that the case be reopened if there is a change in circumstances which could lead to the establishment of paternity or a support order or enforcement of an order by completing a new application for IV-D services and paying any applicable application fee.

(d) The IV-D agency must retain all records for cases closed pursuant to this section for a minimum of three years, in accordance with 45 CFR Part 74.

[54 FR 32311, Aug. 4, 1989, as amended at 56 FR 8004, Feb. 26, 1991; 64 FR 11817, 11818, Mar. 10, 1999]

A-2. REQUIREMENTS MATRIX

OCSE has developed a matrix incorporating the regulations in 45 CFR 303.11. The matrix breaks down the requirements for the Federal case closure criteria and shows all possible scenarios in which a case may be closed. Shaded cells marked with an * in the matrix indicate requirements that could be considered for automation.

States may have laws, regulations and business policies that further restrict case closure. The degree of automation achievable in these cases will need to be assessed on a state-by-state basis.

States can use the Requirements Matrix to aid in defining system requirements and preparing general system design documents. States can also make the Requirements Matrix available to focus groups to help set the context for gathering input about case closure.

Definitions Used in the Requirements Matrix

OIG% CASES CLOSED - Percent of cases closed using a particular Federal closure reason from OIG Report "Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations" OEI 06-00-00470

AUTO - State system should be able to process requirement automatically based on routinely gathered system data

CSENet - System must be able to generate a CSENet closure transaction to another state

INTERVIEW - Caseworker must conduct an in-person or telephone interview with principal

DOCUMENT - System must be able to generate a paper document for mailing or service with only minimal data entry and review by worker

IV-D AGENCY DECISION - Authorized IV-D employee must make a judgment or document an action

EXTERNAL CONTACT - IV-D agency must contact another organization with which it is not required to have an automated interface

UNKNOWN STATE LAW - State laws may vary – check state law to make a determination about automation

Requirements Matrix - Case Closure Scenarios

(Shaded cells marked with an * contain requirements that could be considered for automation)

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
1.	(b)(1)	26%	*There is no longer a current support order (includes temporary orders - AT-99-04) (AUTO)	*Arrearages are under $500 (AUTO)	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC02)	*If case is an initiating interstate case, send CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC02		
2.	(b)(1)		*There is no longer a current support order (includes temporary orders - AT-99-04) (AUTO)	*Arrearages are unenforceable under state law (UNKNOWN - STATE LAW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC02)			
3.	(b)(2)		*NCP is deceased (AUTO)	*No further action, including a levy against the estate, can be taken (EXTERNAL CONTACT, IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC03)			
4.	(b)(2)		*Putative father is deceased (AUTO)	*No further action, including a levy against the estate, can be taken (EXTERNAL CONTACT, IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC03)			

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
5.	(b)(3)(i)		*The child is at least 18 years old (AUTO)	*Action to establish paternity is barred by a statute of limitations which meets the requirements of Sec.302.70(a)(5) of this chapter (UNKNOWN - STATE LAW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4A)			
6.	(b)(3)(ii)		*A genetic test or a court or administrative process has excluded the putative father (AUTO)	*No other putative father can be identified (INTERVIEW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4B)			
7.	(b)(3)(ii)		*A court has excluded the putative father (AUTO)	*No other putative father can be identified (INTERVIEW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4B)			
8.	(b)(3)(ii)		*An administrative process has excluded the putative father (AUTO)	*No other putative father can be identified (INTERVIEW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4B)			
9.	(b)(3)(iii)		*Case involves forcible rape (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4C)			

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
10.	(b)(3)(iii)		*Case involves incest (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4C)			
11.	(b)(3)(iii)		*Legal proceedings for adoption are pending (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4C)			
12.	(b)(3)(iv)	7%	*The identity of the biological father is unknown (identity = name of the biological father - AT-99-04)* (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)	*The identity of the biological father cannot be identified after diligent efforts (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*Including at least one interview by the IV-D agency with the recipient of services (interview face-to-face (preferred) or by telephone - AT-99-04) (INTERVIEW)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC4D)		

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
13.	(b)(4)(i)	24%	*The noncustodial parent's location is unknown (NCP location means residence or employment address - AT-99-04) (AUTO)	*The state has made diligent efforts using multiple sources, in accordance with Sec. 303.3, all of which have been unsuccessful, to locate the noncustodial parent (DOCUMENT, EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*Over a three-year period (AUTO)	*There is sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort (Name, SSN, DOB is considered sufficient info - AT-98-04) (Name, DOB may be sufficient to find SSN - AT-99-04) (AUTO)	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC05)	
14.	(b)(4)(ii)		*The noncustodial parent's location is unknown (NCP location means residence or employment address AT-99-04) (AUTO)	*The state has made diligent efforts using multiple sources, in accordance with Sec. 303.3, all of which have been unsuccessful, to locate the noncustodial parent (DOCUMENT, EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*Over a one-year period (AUTO)	*There is not sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort (AUTO)	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC5B)	
15.	(b)(5)		*The noncustodial parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL*	*NCP has been institutionalized in a psychiatric facility (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*The state has determined that no income or assets are available to the NCP which could be levied or attached for*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC06)		

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
			CONTACT)		*support (EXTERNAL CONTACT, IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*			
16.	(b)(5)		*The noncustodial parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*NCP is incarcerated with no chance for parole (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*The state has determined that no income or assets are available to the NCP which could be levied or attached for support (EXTERNAL CONTACT, IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC06)		
17.	(b)(5)		*The noncustodial parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*NCP has a permanent disability with no evidence of support potential (INTERVIEW or EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*The state has determined that no income or assets are available to the NCP which could be levied or attached for support (EXTERNAL CONTACT, IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC06)		
18.	(b)(6)		*The NCP is a citizen of a foreign country (INTERVIEW OR EXTERNAL*	*NCP lives in a foreign country with which the state has been unable to establish*	*NCP does not work for the U.S. Federal government (INTERVIEW OR*	*NCP does not work for a company with headquarters or offices in the*	*NCP has no reachable domestic income or assets*; *(INTERVIEW OR*	*60-day notice required 303.11(c) (CSENet closure transaction MSC P

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
			CONTACT)	*reciprocity (INTERVIEW OR EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*United States (INTERVIEW OR EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	GSC07
19.	(b)(7)		*The IV-D agency has provided location-only services as requested under Sec. 302.35(c)(3) of this chapter (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*			(CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC08)		
20.	(b)(8)	18%	*The non-IV-A recipient of services requests closure of a case (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*There is no assignment to the state of medical support under 42 CFR 433.146 (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*There is no assignment to the state of arrearages which accrued under a support order (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	(CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC09)		
21.	(b)(9)		*There has been a finding by the responsible state agency of good cause (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*The state or local IV-A, IV-D, IV-E, Medicaid or food stamp agency has determined that support enforcement may not proceed without risk of harm to the child or caretaker relative (EXTERNAL CONTACT or IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*		(CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC10)		

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
22.	(b)(9)		*There has been a finding by the responsible state agency of other exceptions to cooperation with the IV-D agency (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*The state or local IV-A, IV-D, IV-E, Medicaid or food stamp agency has determined that support enforcement may not proceed without risk of harm to the child or caretaker relative (EXTERNAL CONTACT or IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*		(CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC10)		
23.	(b)(10)	8%	*In a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii) (EXTERNAL CONTACT or IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*The IV-D agency is unable to contact the recipient of services (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	*Despite an attempt of at least one letter sent by first class mail to the last known address (Includes 60-day notice) (DOCUMENT)*	*Within a 60 Calendar day period (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC11)		
24.	(b)(11)	12%	*In a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii) (EXTERNAL CONTACT or IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*The IV-D agency documents the circumstances of the recipient of services' noncooperation (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*An action by the recipient of services is essential for the next step in providing IV-D services. (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)*	*Within a 60 Calendar day period (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC12)		
25.	(b)(12)		*The IV-D agency documents failure by the initiating state to take an*	*60-day notice required to the initiating state 303.11(c)	*Upon case closure (CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC13)			

#	Reg 303.11	OIG % Cases Closed	Requirement 1	Requirement 2	Requirement 3	Requirement 4	Requirement 5	Requirement 6
			action that is essential for the next step in providing services. (Applies to all IV-D cases - AT-99-04) (IV-D AGENCY DECISION)	(CSENet intent to close transaction MSC P GSC14))				
26.	PIQ 00-02		*The initiating state requests closure. (EXTERNAL CONTACT)*	(CSENet closure transaction MSC P GSC11 or GSC14 and GSC13)				

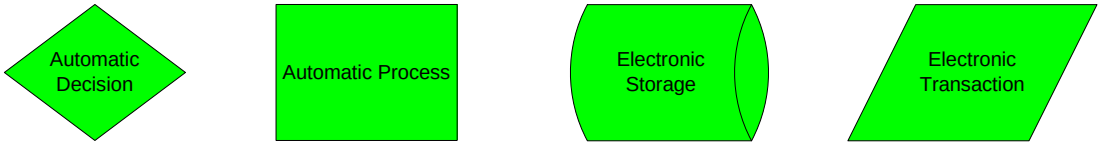
A-3. FLOWCHARTS

The following flowcharts show one possible logical implementation of the 45 CFR 303.11 case closure requirements. They are intended to show at a detailed level where there may be opportunities to develop or enhance existing case closure automation. However, they do not account for individual state laws, regulations or business practices and may not be appropriate for a particular state's data architecture.

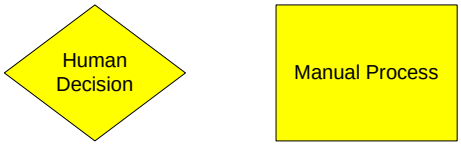
State CSE system technical personnel can use these flowcharts as a starting point during their system requirements analysis and design activities.

Flowchart Symbols

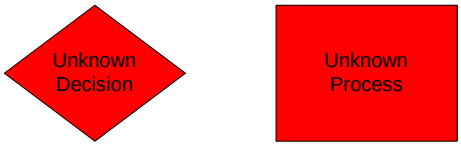
Green Symbols indicate an automated action

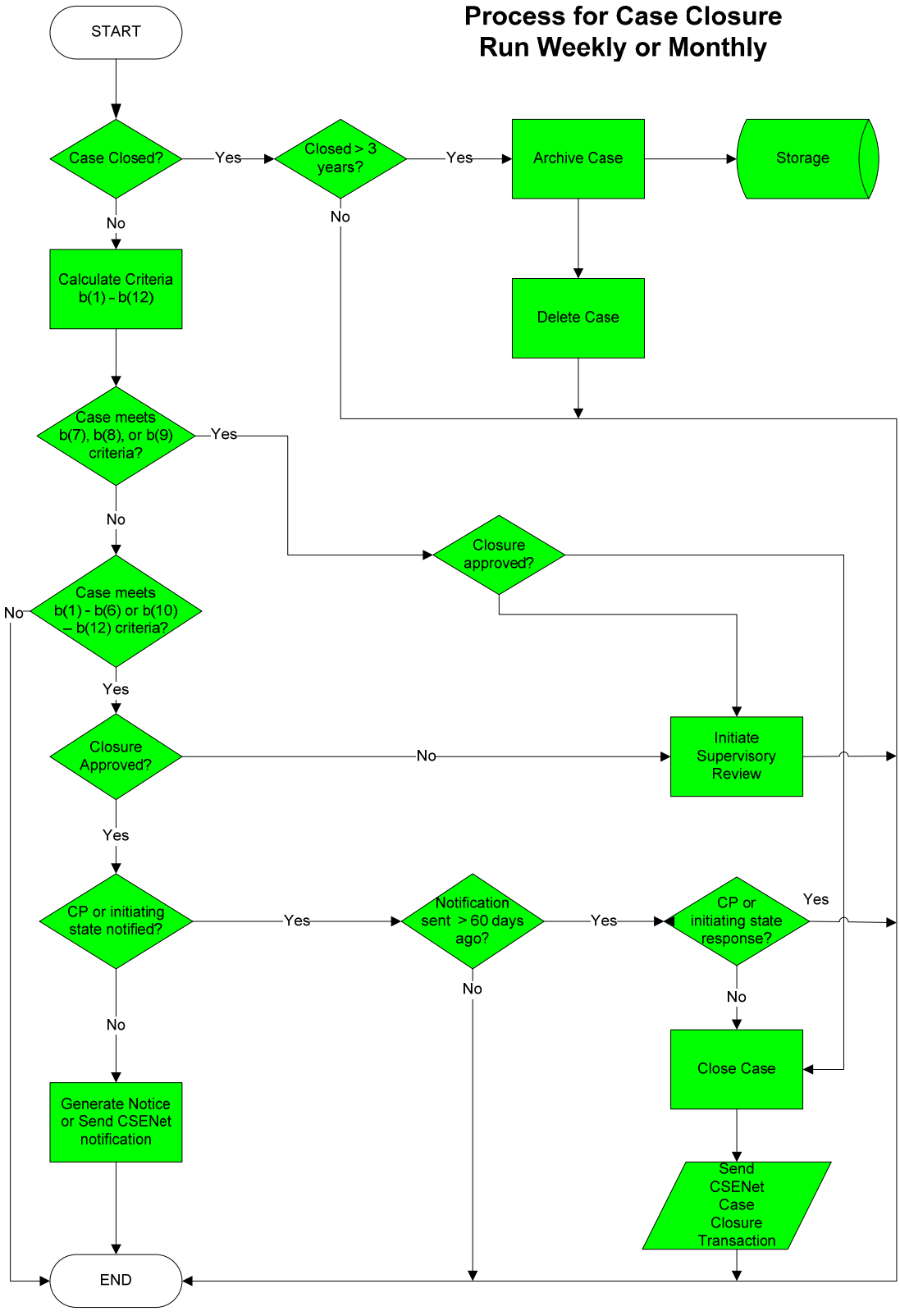


Yellow symbols indicate a human action is required

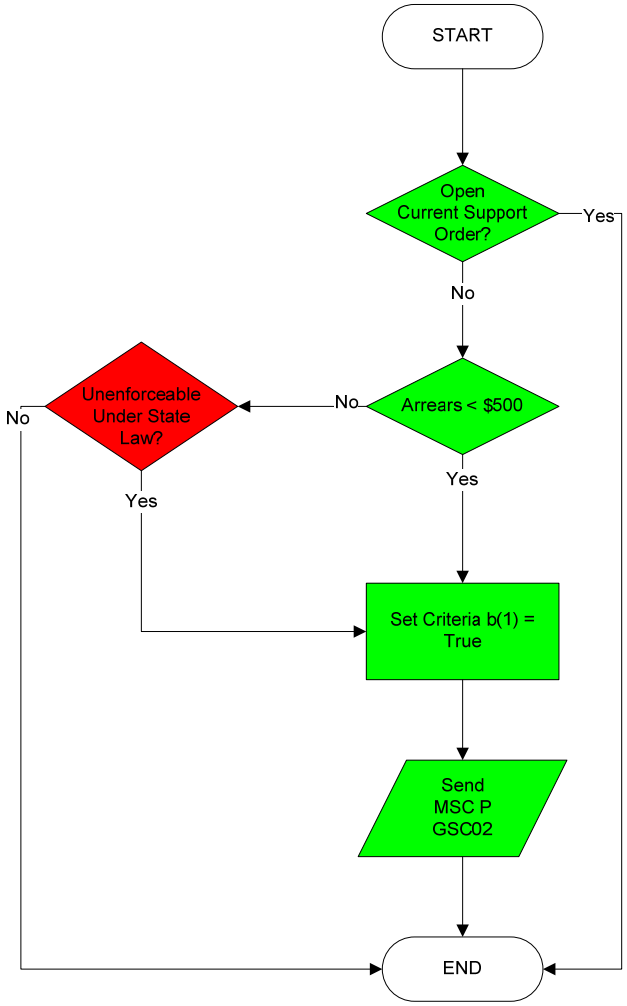


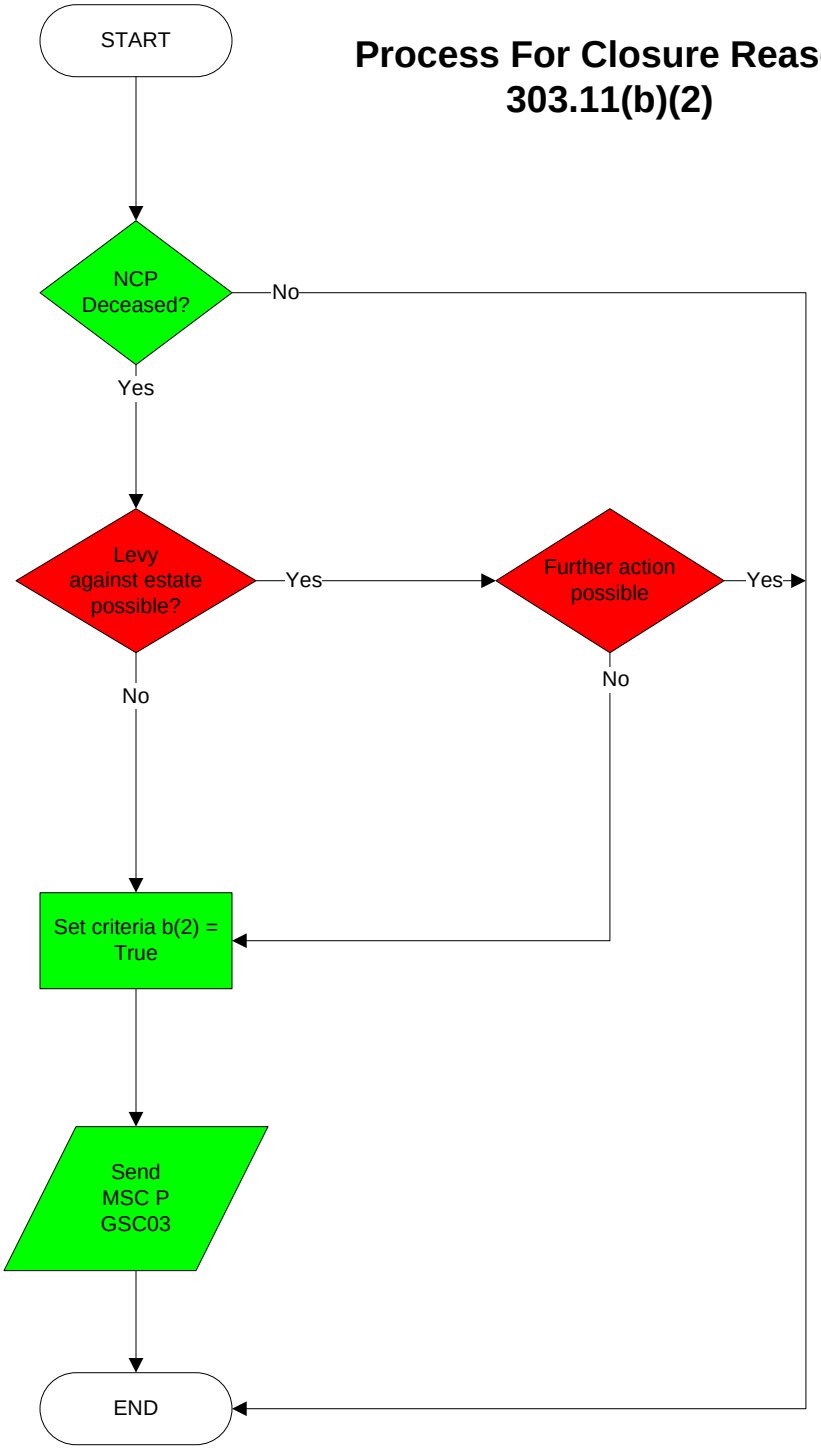
Red symbols indicate that the action is dependent on State law and may or may not be able to be automated

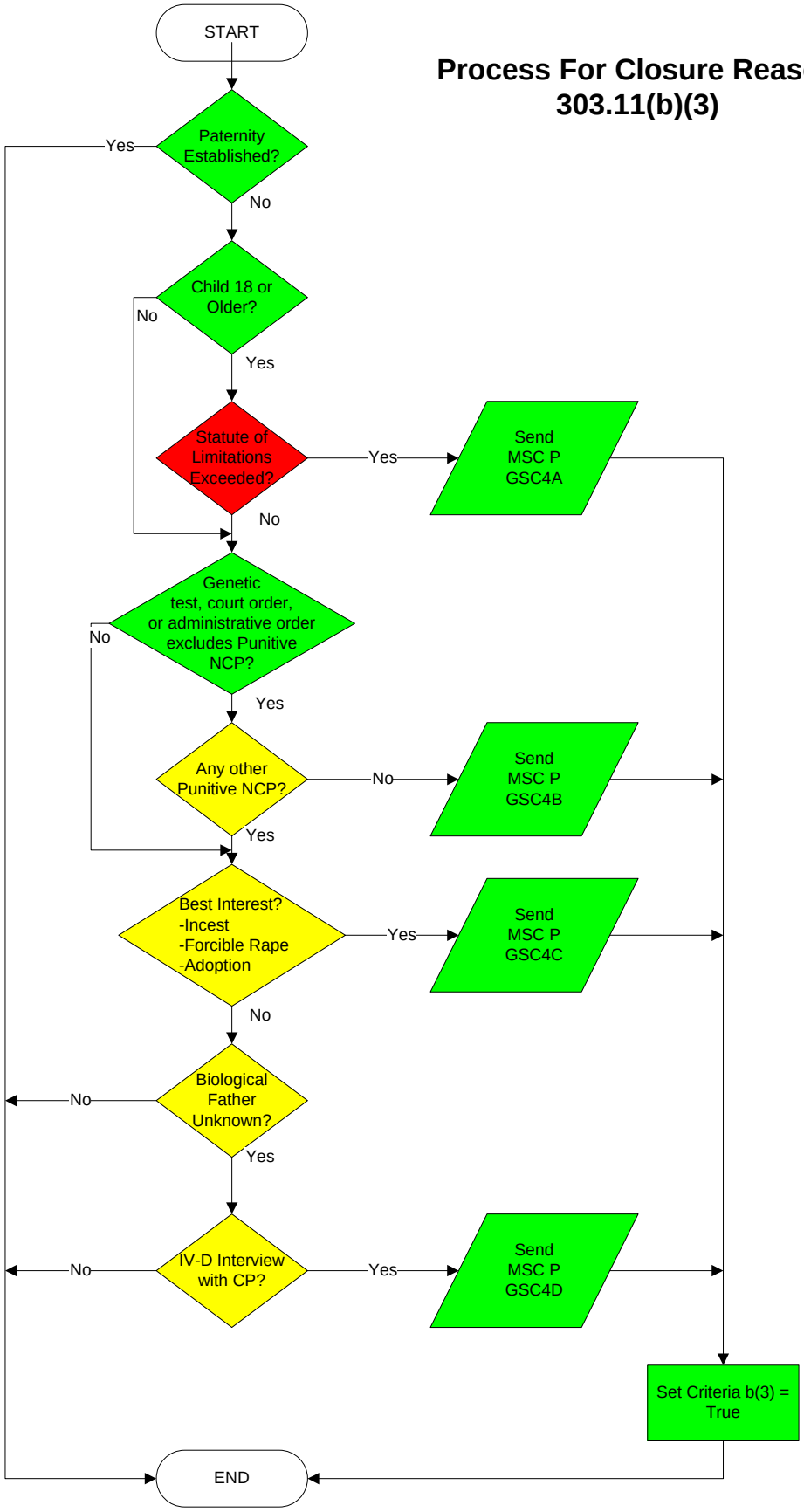


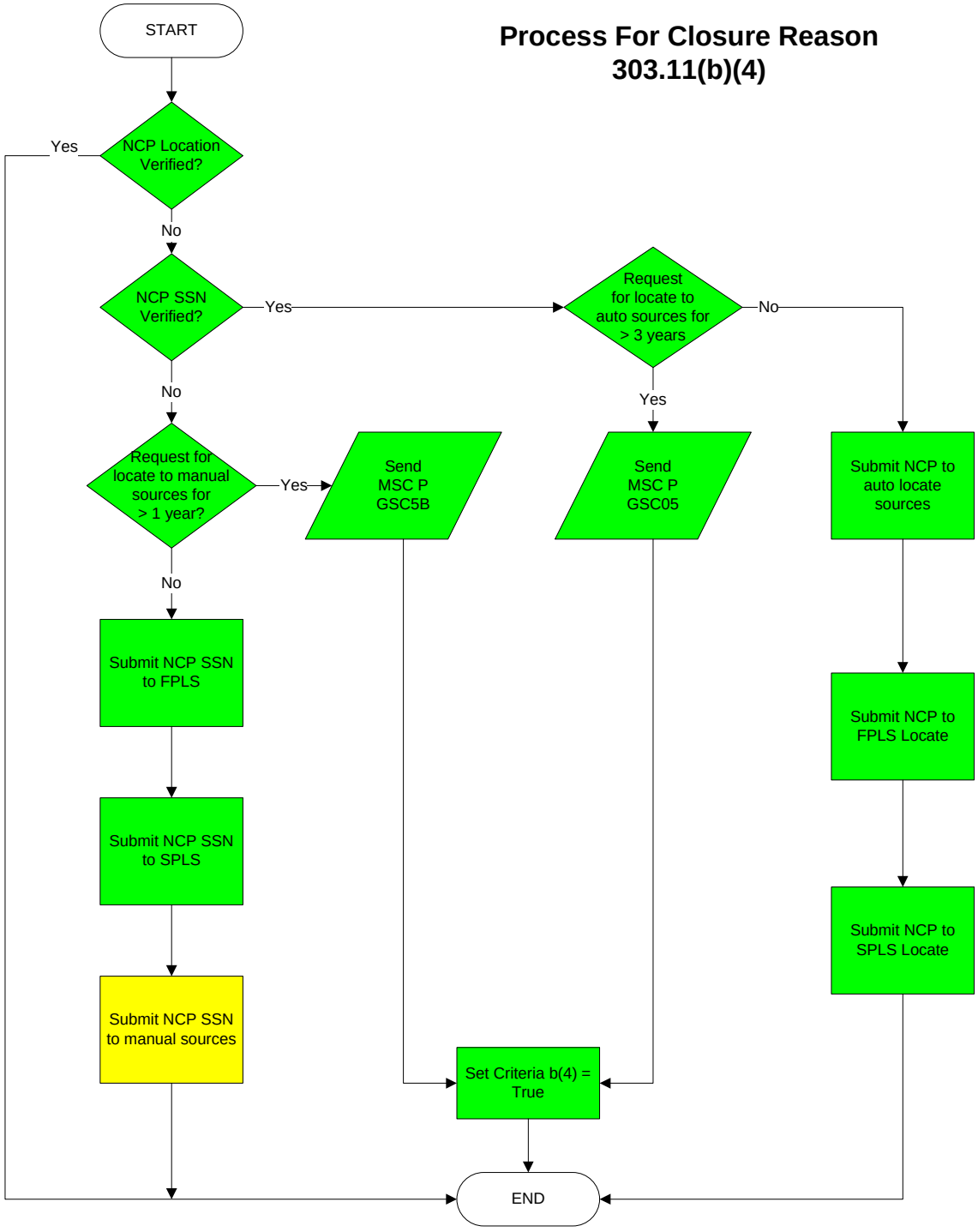

Process for Case Closure
Run Weekly or Monthly
START
Case Closed?
Yes
Closed > 3 years?
Yes
Archive Case
Storage
No
No
Calculate Criteria b(1) - b(12)
Delete Case
Case meets b(7), b(8), or b(9) criteria?
Yes
No
Closure approved?
Case meets b(1) - b(6) or b(10) – b(12) criteria?
No
Yes
Closure Approved?
No
Initiate Supervisory Review
Yes
CP or initiating state notified?
Yes
Notification sent > 60 days ago?
Yes
CP or initiating state response?
Yes
No
No
No
Close Case
Generate Notice or Send CSENet notification
Send CSENet Case Closure Transaction
END

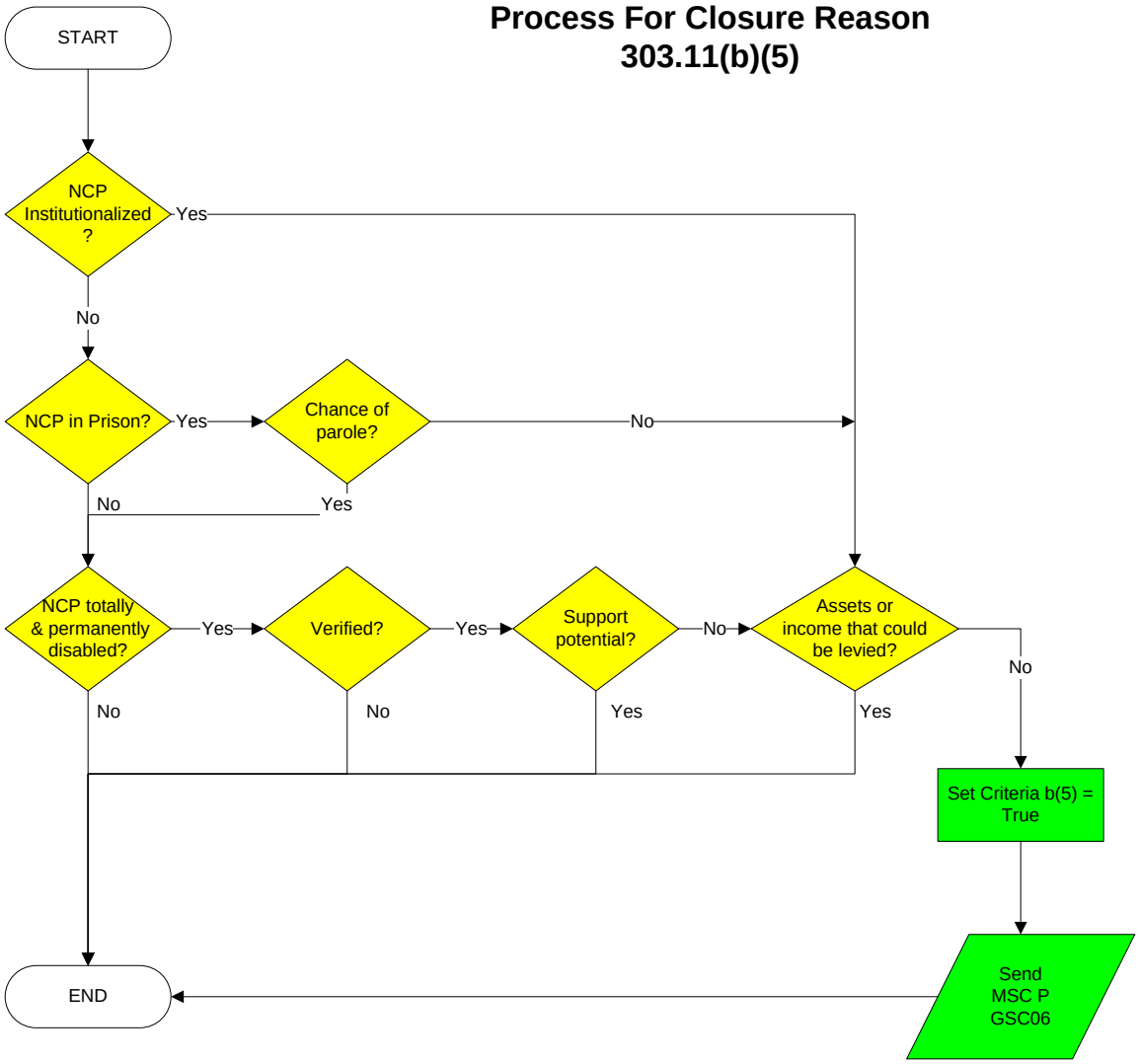
Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(1)

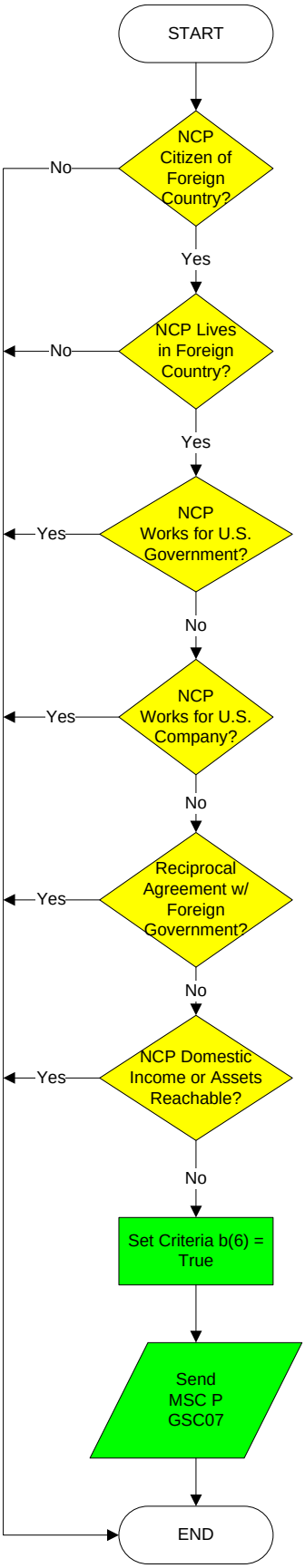



Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(2)
START
NCP Deceased?
No
Yes
Levy against estate possible?
Yes
Further action possible
Yes
No
No
Set criteria b(2) = True
Send MSC P GSC03
END

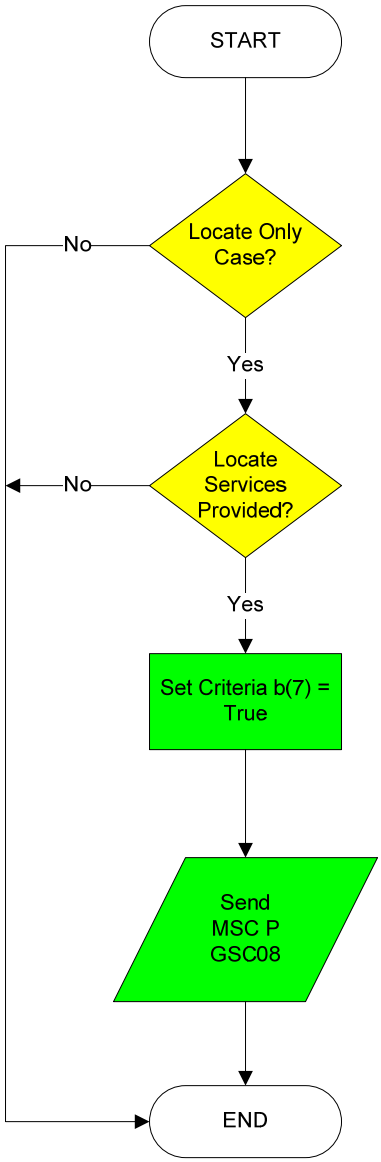

Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(3)
START
Paternity Established?
Yes
No
Child 18 or Older?
No
Yes
Statute of Limitations Exceeded?
Yes
Send MSC P GSC4A
No
Genetic test, court order, or administrative order excludes Punitive NCP?
No
Yes
Any other Punitive NCP?
No
Send MSC P GSC4B
Yes
Best Interest?
-Incest
-Forcible Rape
-Adoption
Yes
Send MSC P GSC4C
No
Biological Father Unknown?
No
Yes
IV-D Interview with CP?
No
Yes
Send MSC P GSC4D
Set Criteria b(3) = True
END


Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(4)
START
NCP Location Verified?
Yes
No
NCP SSN Verified?
Yes
No
Request for locate to auto sources for > 3 years
No
Yes
Request for locate to manual sources for > 1 year?
Yes
No
Send MSC P GSC5B
Send MSC P GSC05
Submit NCP to auto locate sources
Submit NCP SSN to FPLS
Submit NCP SSN to SPLS
Submit NCP SSN to manual sources
Submit NCP to FPLS Locate
Submit NCP to SPLS Locate
Set Criteria b(4) = True
END

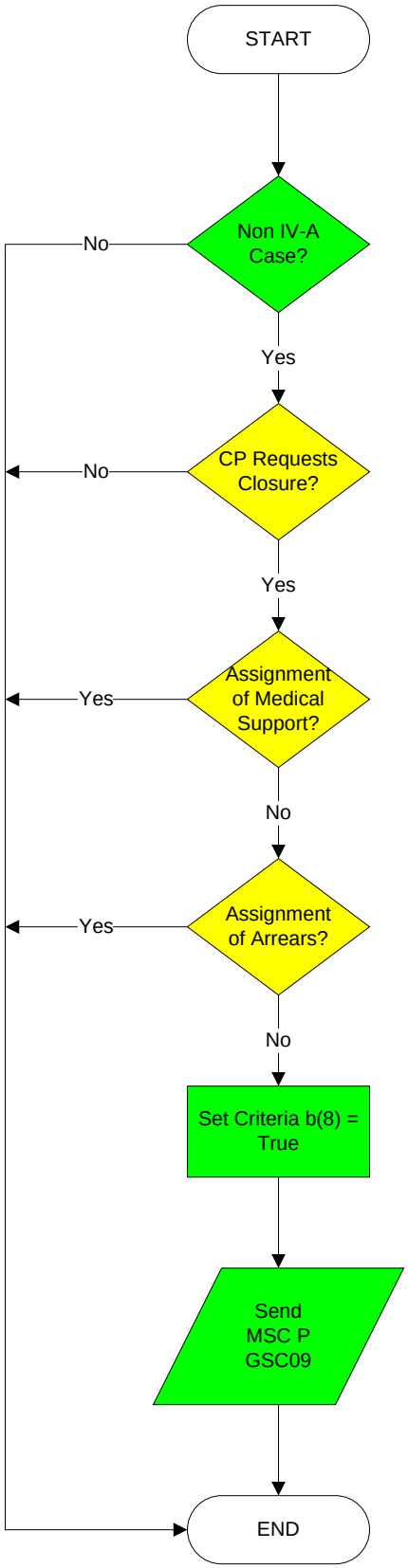

Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(5)
START
NCP Institutionalized ?
Yes
No
NCP in Prison?
Yes
Chance of parole?
No
No
Yes
NCP totally & permanently disabled?
Yes
Verified?
Yes
Support potential?
No
Assets or income that could be levied?
No
No
No
Yes
Yes
Set Criteria b(5) = True
Send MSC P GSC06
END



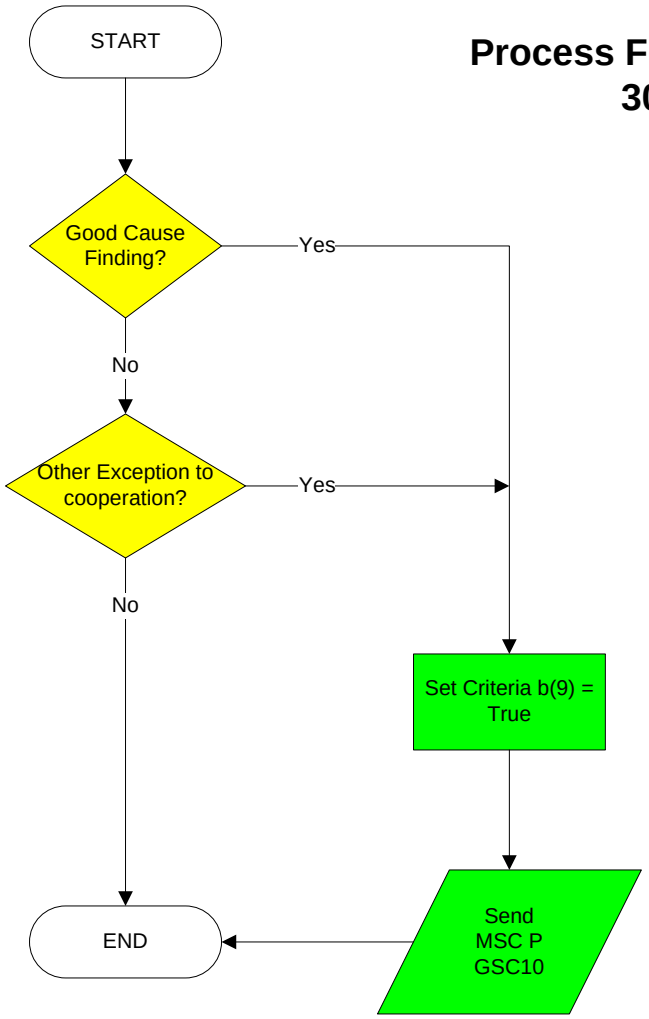
Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(6)



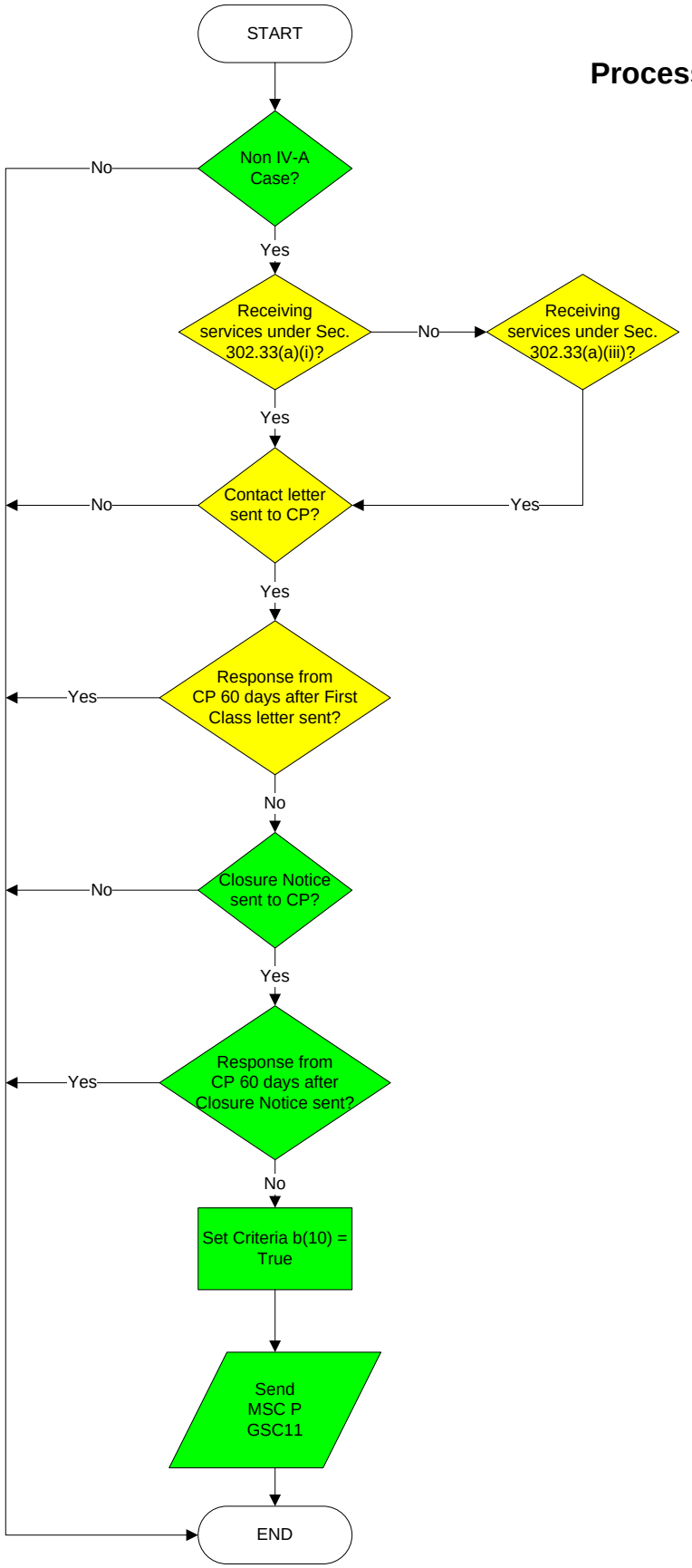
Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(7)



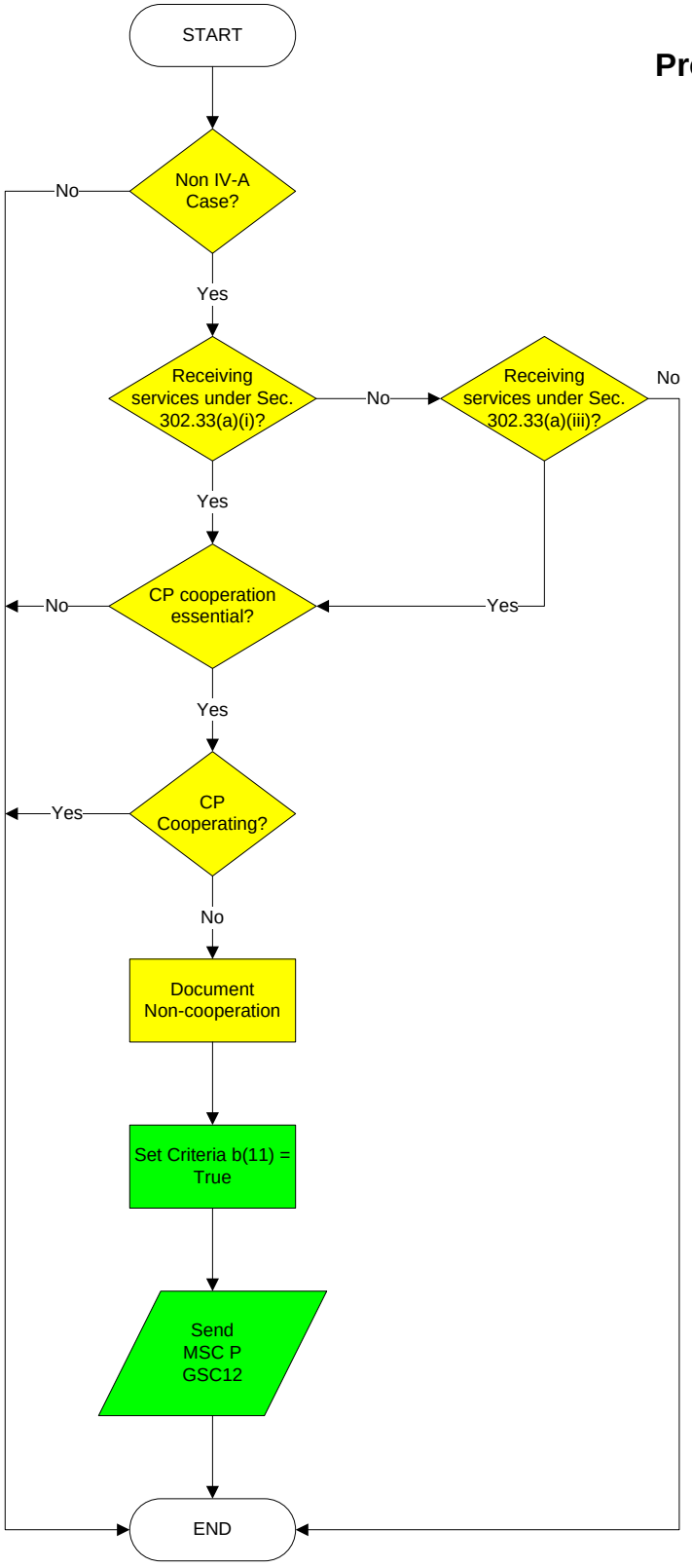
Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(8)

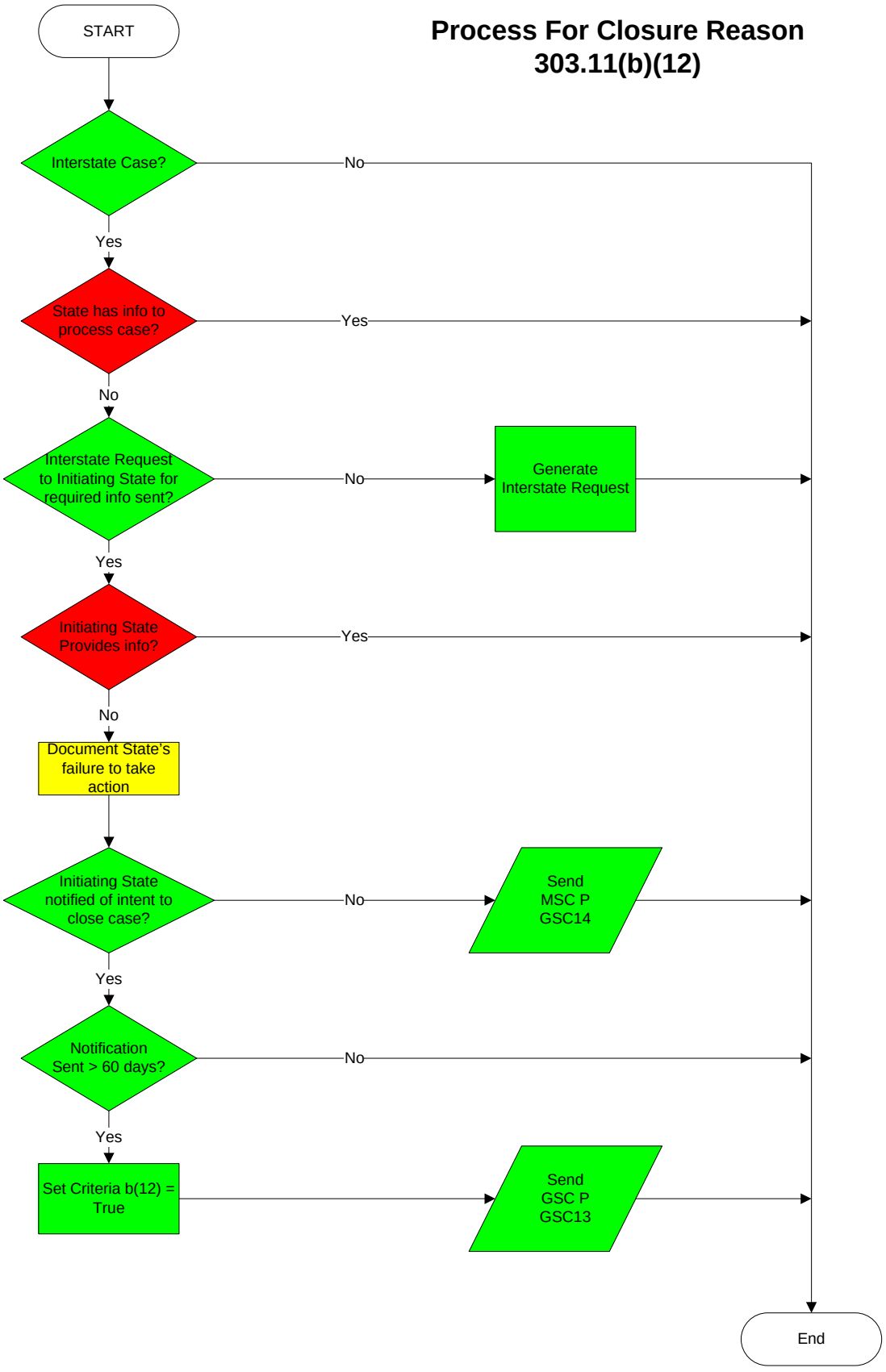

Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(9)
START
Good Cause Finding?
Yes
No
Other Exception to cooperation?
Yes
No
Set Criteria b(9) = True
Send MSC P GSC10
END

Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(10)



Process For Closure Reason 303.11(b)(11)




Process For Closure Reason
303.11(b)(12)
START
Interstate Case?
No
Yes
State has info to process case?
Yes
No
Interstate Request to Initiating State for required info sent?
No
Generate Interstate Request
Yes
Initiating State Provides info?
Yes
No
Document State's failure to take action
Initiating State notified of intent to close case?
No
Send MSC P GSC14
Yes
Notification Sent > 60 days?
No
Yes
Set Criteria b(12) = True
Send GSC P GSC13
End

B. HELPFUL INFORMATION

This section contains practical suggestions from various sources. It includes:

B-1. Tips from OIG reports on case closure
B-2. Sample Case Closure Intent Notices
B-3. Excerpts from the Federal Case Registry Technical Assistance Guide, Release 3.0, "How the FCR Can Help with Case Closure" and "How SSA Date of Death Matches Can Help with Case Processing"
B-4. Perform Routine Monitor/Supervisory Review
Appendix A. State case studies in case closure automation

B-1. TIPS FROM OIG REPORTS

1. Automate as much as possible of the case closure process for the six case closure reasons that account for 95 percent of case closures and 96 percent of case closure errors.[3]

Federal Closure Reason	Percent of Cases Using Reason* (N=495)
No enforceable order, and arrearage less than $500	26%
Unable to locate noncustodial parent or putative father	24%
Non-TANF client requests closure	18%
Non-TANF client uncooperative	12%
Lost contact with non-TANF client	8%
Unable to establish paternity	7%

* Percentages reflect weighted values

2. Train caseworkers about case closure regulations and procedures. Provide guides and manuals that instruct workers on how to perform each function of closure.
3. Reduce the number of closure codes to simplify processing. Codes should be traceable back to a Federal requirement.
4. Be aware that the Section 303.11 (b) (10) regulation requires <u>two</u> sixty-day waiting periods to close a case in which contact has been lost with a non-TANF client. The OIG Report indicates that not waiting 60 days is a major problem in this category.[4] The closure notice must be sent at least 60 days after the contact letter is sent. There is also a 60-day wait after the notice is sent. So, for this closure criterion, two letters must be

[3] "Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations," OEI 06-00-00470, p. 7.

[4] *Ibid*., p. 8.

sent, even if the post office returned the first one as address unknown. The entire process takes at least 120 days.

5. Be sure that case closure intent notices contain the minimum necessary information to be effective. The six pieces of information needed in advance notices are:
   - Statement that the agency intends to close the case
   - Specific closure reason
   - Date of intended closure
   - Procedures for requesting a case not be closed
   - Contact name
   - Contact telephone number

   See Section B-2 for a generic template for case closure intent notices.
6. Continue to allow for manual review of cases when needed.
7. Perform routine monitoring of case closure activities in order to uncover problems and continually improve strategies.

B-2. GENERIC TEMPLATES FOR CASE CLOSURE INTENT NOTICE AND CSENet CASE CLOSURE NOTIFICATION

Two generic templates are presented below. The first, Notice of Intent to Close Case template, shows the minimum necessary information needed for the Custodial Parent (CP) to respond appropriately. States can customize this generic template for their own use. The second, CSENet Case Closure Notification template, provides information regarding CSENet's support of electronic notices and the data blocks and fields recommended for inclusion within a closure transaction.

GENERIC TEMPLATES
NOTICE OF INTENT TO CLOSE CASE

(MAILING DATE):
(CSE MAILING ADDRESS):
(CSE CASE NUMBER)

(CP NAME)
(CP ADDRESS)

Dear (CP NAME)

The purpose of this notice is to inform you that your child support enforcement case with (NCP NAME) will be closed effective (CLOSURE DATE) for the following reason(s):

(CLOSURE REASON #)
(CLOSURE REASON #)
(CLOSURE REASON #)

If you want your case to remain open and active, you must notify your local CSE office contact shown below WITHIN 60 DAYS from the mailing date listed above.

If you agree that your case should be closed, you do not need to respond to this notice. Your case will automatically be closed 60 days from the date of this notice.

Once your case is closed, you may later request that your case be reopened if there is a change in circumstances which could lead to the establishment of paternity, or the establishment or enforcement of a child support order. Unless you are receiving public assistance, you will be required to pay an application fee and sign a contract for services at that time.

Thank you for your cooperation,

(CASEWORKER NAME)

Child Support Enforcement Office
(CASEWORKER CONTACT INFORMATION:
PHONE NUMBER, EMAIL)

CSENet CASE CLOSURE NOTIFICATION

CSENet supports electronic exchange of interstate case closure notifications between States as required by 45 CFR 303.7(c)10 and the notice of intent to close an interstate case to the initiating State as required by 45 CFR 303.11(c). A unique transaction conveys the closing criteria pursuant to 45 CFR 303.11(b). When programming for the case closure process, states would benefit from automating the generation of transactions whenever closure notification to another state is required. States may realize the following benefits:

- direct cost savings due to the elimination of printing and mailing notices.
- meets Federal requirements for notification,
- expedites processing,
- provides management immediate process control,
- reduces the need for manual intervention by workers,
- reduces risk for errors

The following list outlines the data blocks and fields recommended for inclusion within closure transactions. Complete information on transaction usage and

requirements may be found within the *CSENet 2000 Interface Guidance Document;* Appendices D; *Transaction Functional Matrix* (TFM) MSC and Appendix C; *Data Block Record Layout.*

HEADER

LOCAL-FIPS-STATE/COUNTY
OTHER-FIPS-STATE/COUNTY
CSENet 2000 VERSION NUMBER
TRANSACTION SERIAL NUMBER
ACTION CODE
FUNCTIONAL TYPE CODE
TRANSACTOIN DATE
CASE ID
OTHER-CASE-ID
ACTION REASON
ATTACHMENTS IND
CASE-DATA-IND
NCP-IDENTIFICATION-IND
NCP-LOCATE-IND
PARTICIPANT-DATA-IND
ORDER-DATA-IND
COLLECTION-DATA-IND
INFORMATION-IND
OVERDUE-IND

CASE DATA BLOCK

CASE-TYPE
CASE-STATUS
CONTACT-NAME-LAST
CONTACT-NAME-FIRST
CONTACT-ADDRESS-LINE-1
CONTACT-CITY
CONTACT-STATE
CONTACT-ZIP-1

NCP IDENTIFICATION DATA BLOCK

NAME-LAST
NAME-FIRST
SSN-1/SSN-2/SSN-3

PARTICIPANT DATA BLOCK

NAME-LAST
NAME-FIRST
RELATIONSHIP
PARTICIPANT-STATUS

B-3. EXCERPTS FROM THE FEDERAL CASE REGISTRY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE, RELEASE 3.0

7.3.4 How the FCR Can Help with Case Closure

In November 2001 as part of FCR Release 01-01, the FCR-to-FCR proactive match process was enhanced to provide information to states when a case is closed or a person record is deleted. Prior to this enhancement, proactive FCR-to-FCR matches were sent only when case and participant records were added or changed.

This enhancement affords states the opportunity to identify cases and participants that have been closed or deleted on the FCR by another state. The delete information enables states to better manage their interstate caseloads and keep interstate cases and participants synchronized with other states. States should notify their caseworkers of the receipt of closed case/deleted participant matches for interstate responding or initiating cases so that appropriate follow-up action is taken (e.g., case closure). Appropriate case closure assists states with performance measurement and caseload allocation.

The delete information states receive is person-based. The proactive match indicates whether the person is being deleted on an individual basis or because the entire case was closed. Matches are sent for both IV-D and non IV-D person deletes, but only to states that have IV-D cases. Proactive matches are not sent when a person on the FCR has an FVI. Proactive matches also are not sent to a state that previously deleted the person record.

The changes to the FCR Query/Proactive Match Response Record ('FT') include a new field, Person Delete Indicator, which was added in position 800 in an area previously defined as filler. The valid values are 'C' to indicate that the entire case was closed and 'P' to indicate that the individual person was deleted from a case still open. A change also was made to the Case Change Type field (position 867) to allow a new value of '4' for case is closed or person is deleted.

States should focus on cases in other states with which they share common persons since those cases have the greatest impact on case processing. Prior to deleting a person record or closing a case based on a proactive match, a state should verify the information. States could consider generating a CSENet transaction or performing a worker review.

7.3.5 How SSA Date of Death Matches Can Help with Case Processing

At the request of states, the FCR began matching in November 2001 against date of death information provided by SSA. This enhancement was implemented under FCR Release 01-01.

States wanted this match as it provides valuable death information that could change the case function or disposition. Depending upon the case, death information might lead to a lien being placed upon the estate of the deceased, or the CP may be advised to apply to SSA for survivor's benefits. In some instances, the case may meet case closure conditions. Because the implications as to next case step may be complicated, states should use discretion in closing cases, or deleting persons, based on the receipt of SSA date of death information. States should verify the information independently. SSA may have to correct or delete dates of death erroneously reported. Because the incidence of error in what is reported to SSA is significant, states should exercise caution in using the death information.

The SSA Death Master File provides the SSN, name, date of death, zip code of last residence, and zip code of where any lump sum payment was sent for persons reported as deceased. SSA obtains this information from several sources, including reports from funeral homes and hospitals, as well as phone calls from relatives. Only information for verified SSNs is added to the SSA Death Master File.

Monthly, the FCR matches against an SSA Date of Death Update File, which includes new dates of death, changes to previously reported dates, and deletions of erroneously reported dates of death. The monthly updates are relayed to states, as was the initial match, through the FCR Query/Proactive Match Response Record ('FT').

To process date of death matches on the 'FT' record, states must accept:

- Code 'D' for SSA Date of Death File Update in position 5, Action Type Code;
- Dates in positions 184-191, Matched Person Date of Death, including '99999999', which indicates SSA is removing an erroneous date of death previously reported;
- Values in position 755, SSA Date of Death Indicator, of 'A' for a new date of death, 'C' for a correction to a previously reported date of death, and 'D' for the deletion of an erroneous date of death previously reported; and
- Address data in positions 756 through 792 that reflects the city, state and zip code of the address where the deceased last resided and where any lump sum payment was sent.

States should be aware of the following important points:

- The 'FT' records that contain date of death information are generated specifically from the match with SSA Death Files; these are records independent of proactive matches that share information among states. Information as to associated case participants is not contained on the 'FT' records generated from date of death matches since these matches are person-specific.
- Date of death matches are made regardless of the presence of an FVI.
- Date of death matches are made for persons in both IV-D and non IV-D cases.
- Only the FCR Primary SSN is used for the match; date of death matches are not made against multiple valid SSNs on the person record.
- Address information on the returned 'FT' record is keyed off the receipt of a valid zip code from SSA. SSA only provides the zip code for the address where the

deceased last resided or where a lump sum payment was sent. The FCR uses SSA's zip code to locate the associated city and state. If SSA has an invalid zip code in its Death Files, the address fields on the 'FT' are blank.

In addition to the monthly updates the FCR sends states, the FCR returns any date of death information stored on the FCR whenever a person record is added or changed successfully on the FCR, or when a locate request is received. The date of death information is returned on the FCR Person/Locate Request Acknowledgement/Error Record ('FS').

An 'FS' record is returned for each 'FT' person add, change, or locate request accepted by the FCR. Only the FCR Primary SSN is used for the return of date of death information on the 'FS' record. The following is provided as an easy reference to where date of death information appears on the 'FS' record since the relevant data fields do not always follow each other sequentially. This occurred since 'placeholders' were reserved for fields known to be available from SSA in the original 'FS' record specifications. Fields previously defined as filler were used for FCR-determined city and state based on an SSA-provided zip code.

- SSA-recorded date of death in positions 685-692;
- SSA-provided zip code for the deceased's last known residence in positions 693-697;
- SSA-provided zip code for the address to which any lump sum payment was sent in positions 698-702;
- City of the deceased's last residence in positions 804-818 as determined by the FCR based on SSA-provided zip code;
- State of the deceased's last residence in positions 819-820 as determined by the FCR based on SSA-provided zip code;
- City where any lump sum payment was sent in positions 821-835 as determined -by the FCR based on SSA-provided zip code; and
- State where any lump sum payment was sent in positions 836-837 as determined by the FCR based on SSA-provided zip code.

Date of death information also is provided to states with the FCR Person Reconciliation File. Use of the Reconciliation File is described in detail in the next subsection of this guide.

States need to coordinate date of death information received from the SSA Death Files with other date of death information received from external locate sources on the FCR Locate Response Record ('FF'). The date of death information may not be consistent among the various sources:

- FBI external locate response record returns date of death information for employees killed in the line of duty.
- SSA SVES response records provide date of death information for SSA and SSI benefit recipients.

- VA external locate response record returns date of death information that is reported to the VA by family members, or information that is known to the VA through hospital records.

With the exception of certain SVES Title XVI date of death information, none of the death information is verified. States should contact the state vital statistics agency to verify date of death information.

B-4. PERFORM ROUTINE MONITOR/SUPERVISORY REVIEW

The CSE system needs to create and routinely generate reports of case closure for use by supervisory personnel doing case review. Such reports should be provided, sorted by such criteria as chronology, caseworker, or date range, to local supervisors at least monthly. The state should also implement procedures requiring supervisors to review a defined percentage of cases on such reports to ensure that proper procedures for case closure are being followed.

CHAPTER III: CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

A. INTRODUCTION

Case Closure Automation Technical Assistance was prompted by recommendations by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Inspector General (OIG), to automate processes for identifying and closing child support cases to reduce case closure error rates. Refer to Chapter I of this Guide for additional information about the OIG Report findings.

OCSE, CSENet and state personnel may schedule collaborative technical assistance sessions via phone conferences or face-to-face meetings. As a starting point, the team will use tools found in this Guide for Enhancing Case Closure Automation as a starting point. The purpose of these sessions is to:

- Identify and document the state CSE system's current level of automation
- Discover opportunities for enhanced automation
- Locate shared resources such as system documentation and work products (for example, Closure Intent Notice) to be shared with other states
- Develop Case Studies to include in the Guide For Automating Case Closure
- Determine to what extent CSENet closure transactions have been automated

As part of the joint technical assistance activity, OCSE staff may conduct site visits to observe the state system and interview state personnel. OCSE and state personnel will record their findings and recommendations for further state system automation. As a result of these technical assistance sessions, state personnel may also develop a case closure automation plan for incorporation into their system enhancement plan.

B. CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

State child support enforcement (CSE) stakeholders, state policy, program operations, technical personnel and their contractors, and Federal OCSE and CSENet technical assistance staff can benefit from using this Discussion Guide during their joint Technical Assistance sessions. They can use the Discussion Guide to consolidate and document their knowledge of their CSE system's current level of automation and to identify further opportunities for automation.

The Discussion Guide is based on Federal case closure criteria from Title 45 CFR Section 303.11. In the Guide, the following key terms are used:

- Fully Automated
- Partially Automated
- Not Automated

CSE System Case Closure Automation Discussion Guide Based on 45 CFR 303.11, Case Closure Criteria

Name	State
Organization	
Phone	Email
Date	CSE System Name

DIRECTIONS

1. For each Sec. 303.11 criterion, double-click on the appropriate check box.
2. In the Check Box Form Field Options, change Default value to Checked to indicate fully automated, partially automated, or not automated.

   Fully automated means the CSE system automatically searches for cases that meet Federal case closure criteria and closes eligible cases without caseworker intervention. For example, for closure criterion 303.11 (b) (1), the CSE system can run a monthly batch search for cases with no current support order and arrearages under $500 or unenforceable by state law. For cases meeting this 303.11 (b) (1) criterion, the CSE system can generate and mail a Notice of Intent to Close Case, track the required 60 day (or longer) timeframe, recheck cases for meeting the criterion, and then close the case and generate CSENet transactions on interstate cases.

   Partially automated means caseworker determination with automated assistance. The caseworker determines readiness for case closure through case review, interviews, and other manual procedures. The caseworker then provides input to the CSE system (for example, enters a case closure reason code or updates case information). This input triggers automated assistance such as: automated notice generation and mailing, automated time tracking of required timeframes, automated case closure, and where appropriate, the automated generation of CSENet transactions.

   Not automated means the caseworker performs all case closure actions manually (case review, interviews, notice generation and mailing, case closure).

3. If fully automated, or partially automated, briefly describe how by placing your cursor in the textbox and entering text.

EXAMPLE – Completed Discussion Guide
Sec. 303.11 (b) (1) only

Sec. 303.11 (b) (1)

There is no longer a current support order (includes temporary orders per AT-99-04) and arrearages are under $500 or unenforceable under state law.

- ☐ Fully automated
- ☐ Partially automated
- ☐ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

1. Automated search for cases with no current support order and arrearages under $500
2. Automated search for additional criteria ($0 balance, all children over 18 or emancipated)

If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.

- ☐ Fully automated
- ☐ Partially automated
- ☐ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

1. Automated search for valid custodial parent mailing address
2. Automated verification that no other Notice of Intent to Close has been sent
3. Automated tracking of required 60 days (or longer) timeframe
4. Automated notice generation to custodial parent's current mailing address

For initiating interstate cases the MSC P GSC02 CSENet closure transaction is sent to notify the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC02 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sec. 303.11 (b) (1)

1. There is no longer a current support order (includes temporary orders per AT-99-04) and arrearages are under $500 or unenforceable under state law.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases the MSC P GSC02 CSENet closure transaction is sent to notify the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC02 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (2)

1. The noncustodial parent or putative father is deceased and no further action, including a levy against the estate, can be taken.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC03 CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC03 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (3) (i)

Paternity cannot be established because:

1. The child is at least 18 years old and action to establish paternity is barred by a statute of limitations which meets the requirements of Sec. 302.70(a)(5) of this chapter.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC4A CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC4A CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (3) (ii)

Paternity cannot be established because:

1. A genetic test or a court or administrative process has excluded the putative father and no other putative father can be identified.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC4B CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC4B CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (3) (iii)

Paternity cannot be established because:

1. In accordance with Sec. 303.5(b) of this part, the IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity in a case involving incest or forcible rape.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC4C CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC4C CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

2. Or, in accordance with Sec. 303.5(b) of this part, the IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity in any case where legal proceedings for adoption are pending.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC4C CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC4C CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (3) (iii) - continued

3. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (3) (iv)

Paternity cannot be established because:

1. The identity of the biological father is unknown and cannot be identified after diligent efforts, including at least one interview by the IV-D agency with the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC4D CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC4D CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (4)

1. The noncustodial parent's location is unknown, and the state has made diligent efforts using multiple sources, in accordance with Sec. 303.3, all of which have been unsuccessful, to locate the noncustodial parent, over a three-year period when there is sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC05 CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC05 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

3. Or, the noncustodial parent's location is unknown, and the state has made diligent efforts using multiple sources, in accordance with Sec. 303.3, all of

which have been unsuccessful, to locate the noncustodial parent, over a one-year period when there is not sufficient information to initiate an automated locate effort.

- □ Fully automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC5B CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC5B CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

3. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.

- ☐ Fully automated
- ☐ Partially automated
- ☐ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (5)

The noncustodial parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority because:

1. The parent has been institutionalized in a psychiatric facility, or the parent is incarcerated with no chance for parole, or the parent has a medically verified total and permanent disability with no evidence of support potential.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC06 CSENet closure transaction is sent to the other state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC06 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

2. The state must also determine that no income or assets are available to the noncustodial parent which could be levied or attached for support.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC06 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC06 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (5) - continued

3. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (6)

1. The noncustodial parent is a citizen of, and lives in, a foreign country, and the noncustodial parent does not work for the Federal government or for a company with headquarters or offices in the United States, and the noncustodial parent has no reachable domestic income or assets.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC07 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC07 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (6) – continued

2. And the state has been unable to establish reciprocity with the country.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC07 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC07 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

3. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (7)

1. The IV-D agency has provided location-only services as requested under Sec. 302.35(c)(3) of this chapter.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC08 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC08 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (8)

1. The non-IV-A recipient of services requests closure of a case and there is no assignment to the state of medical support under 42 CFR 433.146.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC09 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC09 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

2. Or, the non-IV-A recipient of services requests closure of a case and there is no assignment to the state of arrearages which accrued under a support order.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC09 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC09 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (9)

1. There has been a finding by the responsible state agency of good cause or other exceptions to cooperation with the IV-D agency and the state or local IV-A, IV-D, IV-E, Medicaid or food stamp agency has determined that support enforcement may not proceed without risk of harm to the child or caretaker relative.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC10 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC10 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (10)

1. This is a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), and the IV-D agency is unable to contact the recipient of services within a 60 calendar day period despite an attempt of at least one letter sent by first class mail to the last known address.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC11 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC11 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

303.11 (b) (11)

1. This is a non-IV-A case receiving services under Sec. 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), and the IV-D agency documents the circumstances of the recipient of services' noncooperation and an action by the recipient of services is essential for the next step in providing IV-D services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If applicable, a 60-day notice of intent to close is sent to the recipient of services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For initiating interstate cases, the MSC P GSC12 CSENet closure transaction is sent to another state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC12 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

Sec. 303.11 (b) (12)

1. The IV-D agency documents failure by the initiating state to take an action which is essential for the next step in providing services.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

2. If the MSC P GSC14 60-day notice of intent to close transaction is sent to the initiating state.
   - □ Fully automated
   - □ Partially automated
   - □ Not automated

If fully or partially automated, briefly describe how.

For responding interstate cases, the MSC P GSC13 CSENet closure transaction is sent to the initiating state.

- □ Automated
- □ Partially automated
- □ Manually

If using a fully or partially automated MSC P GSC13 CSENet closure transaction, briefly describe how.

APPENDIX A: CASE STUDIES IN CASE CLOSURE AUTOMATION

CASE STUDY – STATE OF VIRGINIA

Case Closure Automation

Summary. In 1999, a study commissioned by the State of Virginia's General Assembly showed a high number of inactive child support cases. In response, the Division of Child Support Enforcement, Division of Information Systems, undertook a special project to identify cases that could be closed based on the twelve Federal case closure criteria. This two-year manual effort reduced the state's caseload from 420,000 to 359,000. However, this manual case closure effort was too time-consuming for caseworkers to sustain along with their other responsibilities. In 2001 the Division embarked on a collaborative effort with its stakeholders to automate case closure procedures where desirable and feasible. The automation was deployed in three phases, with pilots in District offices preceding statewide implementation. In implementing phases 1 and 2, the Division closed 28,000 cases using new automated case closure processing for three of the twelve Federal case closure criteria. Results indicated a significant increase in the number of cases closed in compliance with Federal criteria; decreases in worker caseloads resulting in improved morale and ability to focus on getting support to children. Using a combination of manual and automated case closure, the Division has closed 472,000 cases from December 1999 through September 2006.

Background. In 1999, the State of Virginia's General Assembly commissioned a study of staffing needs as they related to caseloads in the Department of Social Services, Division of Child Support Enforcement. A major finding of this study was the high number of inactive cases among the Division's 420,000 cases.

In response to the study, the Department's Division of Information Systems undertook a special project in 1999-2000 to identify cases that met the Federal case closure criteria. The project consisted of:

A. A manual case-by-case review using Virginia's Automated Program to Enforce Child Support (APECS)
B. Analysis of Caseload Enforcement Aging Reports for each status: Locate, Paternity, Establishment, and Enforcement

This special project reduced the state's caseload from 420,000 to 359,000. The Division's team realized, however, that the manual review was too time-consuming for caseworkers to sustain along with their other responsibilities. Instead, they decided to develop an automated case closure process to supplement the manual process. Using a combination of manual and automated case closure, the Division has closed 472,000 cases from December 1999 through September 2006.

Automation Process. The Division of Information Systems team used a collaborative process to determine their requirements. First, they convened Focus Groups of approximately 10 members, with stakeholders from Division of Child Support Enforcement's policy, information systems, training, self-assessment team, and field staff, including program specialists, auditors, and supervisors. These Focus Groups pooled their caseload and business practice knowledge and experience to identify the most desirable and feasible case closure criteria for automation. The four criteria they identified were:

- There is no longer a current support order and arrearages are under $500 or unenforceable under state law - Section 303.11, (b) (1)
- The noncustodial parent or putative father is deceased – Section 303.11 (b) (2)
- The noncustodial parent's location is unknown – Section 303.11 (b) (4)
- Paternity cannot be established – Section 303.11 (b) (3)

Next, the Division of Information Systems team developed detailed specifications from these requirements and began implementing case closure automation in phases.

Phase 1. Automated Section 303.11, (b) (1), No Longer a Current Support Order (CNOA)

Based on Focus Group input, the team developed an automated process with even stricter closure criteria than the Federal regulation. The stiffer criteria include $0 arrearage, no support payments within the last thirty days, and all children either over age 18 or who have reached emancipation. The team piloted the automated process in two District offices in July 2000. The pilot included a manual review of all cases the system identified for closure. Statewide implementation for Section 303.11 (b) (1) began in January 2001 and resulted in the automated closing of 15,000 cases.

Phase 2. Using a similar rollout, automation for two more criteria -- noncustodial parent or putative father is deceased, and noncustodial parent's location is unknown -- was piloted and implemented statewide.

Phase 3. Implementation of the Automated Assists.

Once a caseworker enters the appropriate case closure code, the system generates the Closure Intent Notice daily in batch and the letter is mailed from the Home Office. The case is automatically closed 65 days after the Notice is sent. The automated assist is also available for all of the case closure reasons requiring the 60-day Closure Intent Notice. When a worker prints the letter, the system sets the case for closure and automatically closes the case 65 days after the Notice is printed.

1. Paternity cannot be established – Section 303.11 (b) (3). Parts of this criterion will be automated. They are:
    a. Child is at least 18 years old and action to establish paternity is barred by a statute of limitations –Section 303.11 (b) (3) (i)
    b. A genetic test or a court or administrative process has excluded the putative father and no other putative father can be identified – Section 303.11 (b) (3) (ii). A Notice of Intent to Close is sent to the custodial parent.

The Division team estimates that resources for its case closure automation effort took a little over two years at a cost of approximately $250,000. The automated closure process alone closed approximately 28,000 cases in the initial two-year period after it started in 2001.

Challenges and Solutions. The Division team encountered several challenges and devised these solutions:

Challenge 1. Multiple case closure codes had previously been used; in some cases, no one knew what they represented anymore.

Solutions:

- Standardize on twelve codes that match the Federal case closure criteria.
- Train staff on using new codes.

Challenge 2. Caseworkers are reluctant to give up control to the automated system.

Solutions:

- Give caseworkers a "veto." Provide a Case Do Not Close (CDNC) code that overrides automated closure procedures for one year. After one year, the system again makes the case available for automated closure.
- After a case is set to close and the notice has gone out, a worker can also prevent the case from being closed automatically before the closure takes place.

Benefits. The Division team reports these benefits from its case closure automation efforts:

1. The number of cases closed in compliance with Federal criteria has increased. There are fewer case closure errors compared to manual processing.
2. Case closures are more timely.
3. Worker caseloads have decreased significantly, from 1,400 to 1,000 per caseworker. As a result, caseworkers report that they feel less overwhelmed and have more time to focus on collections.
4. The State CSE system has passed its data reliability audit, in part from the case closure initiative. As a result, the State has qualified for more Federal performance incentives.

Lessons Learned. The Division team documented these Lessons Learned:

1. Use a structured process that involves key stakeholders to identify needs and to establish priorities based on stakeholder experience with state caseloads.
2. Determine feasibility of automating case closure criteria. Do not assume that all criteria can or should be automated.
3. Pilot new automated procedures before statewide implementation.
4. Look for opportunities to use data already being collected from other sources, for example, death information from SSA via FCR. This death information is helpful to the states; however, independent verification is required through a carefully worded Closure Intent Notice sent to the custodial parent.
5. Give caseworkers an override capability for automated case closure.

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CASE STUDY – STATE OF OREGON

Case Closure Automation

Summary: With the finalization of the Federal case closure rule, the State of Oregon Child Support Program chose to automate a selected group of the case closure rules. Subsequently, in 2002 the State made the decision to further automate case closure processes. At that time, the entire case closure program was rewritten to correct inconsistencies in the program as well as add new automated case closure processes.

With the new program, all cases meeting case closure criteria close automatically. An immediate impact of these changes was felt. From May 2002 to October 2002, the updated program closed 16,284 cases. In five months, the new programming closed more than five times what was closed in the previous year. The automated case closure program closed 52,642 cases in 2004, 58,321 in 2005 and 50,841 in 2006. This has been a substantial time saver for staff.

Background: Existing case closure programs were not closing all eligible cases automatically and when faced with time-consuming manual processes, case managers were not closing cases. To rectify the automation issues related to case closure, a workgroup was formed to identify errors and to automate case closure processes as fully as possible.

Today, the system automatically searches for cases that meet Federal case closure criteria and closes cases without caseworker intervention. Closure notices are processed from a central location. This relieves workers from tedious manual processing. Workers can focus their efforts on establishing, modifying and enforcing child support obligations.

In addition, the Child Support Program chose to provide the ability for case managers to manually initiate case closure. Whether closure is initiated manually or by the system, the system will: 1) Automatically narrate when the user selects the appropriate closure box and provides additional narration for closure reasons in the narrative text of the program; 2) Proceed with automatic closure when specified narrative codes are used; 3) Automatically set an alert to satisfy any money owed to the state and/or file or credit any obligee arrears.

Using the automated closure process whenever possible, the Child Support Enforcement Automated System (CSEAS) generates an automatic 60 day alert and if there is no objection to case closure, the system removes any existing manual receipts coding from the case. If an objection to case closure is received and an objection code is entered on the case, the system will stop all automatic case closure actions.

The case closure process will stop any and all actions to establish and enforce support, including billing and accrual if there is a support order, but will not terminate the support order or release the judgment lien unless those actions are requested.

With these changes, case managers can capture and record the reasons for case closure on the Child Support Enforcement Automated System, generate case closure notices through the CSEAS system, track the timeframes for case closure issuance, monitor case closure actions and generate reports.

Challenges and Solutions:

The greatest challenge that Oregon faced was identifying the many programs that were affected by case closure. Once those were identified, there were no significant issues to deal with.

Benefits:

The benefits gained from automating case closure processes:

1. The number of cases closed in compliance with Federal criteria has increased.
2. Closure of cases is timelier.
3. The caseload has been reduced.
4. Case managers have more time to work their caseloads.
5. Data reliability audit passed.

The review and rewrite of the case closure process resulted in an additional benefit. The automated processing was simplified to enhance maintainability. The simple design allows for easier system changes in the event the case closure criteria changes.

Lessons Learned:

1. Automate as much as possible.
2. Use of key stakeholders to identify needs and processes.
3. Do not assume all criteria can or should be automated.
4. Override capability for automation of case closure.

APPENDIX B: CASE CLOSURE REFERENCE LIST

Reference	Description	Location
45 CFR 303.11 Case Closure Criteria	Title 45, Public Welfare, Chapter III, Office of Child Support Enforcement, Part 303, Standards for Program Operations, Sec. 303.11, Case closure criteria	http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/2003/cfr/compilation_federa
Automated Systems for Child Support Enforcement: A Guide for States	OCSE developed this Guide to assist the States and Territories as they consider optional enhancements and modifications to their statewide CSE systems.	http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/stsys/dsts_cert_guide.html
Barriers in Closing Child Support Enforcement Cases	Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General Report, September 2002, OEI-06-00-00471	http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-00-00471.pdf
OCSE-AT-93-03	Action Transmittal, Clarification	http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/AT/at-9303.htm

Reference	Description	Location
	of Case Closure Criteria	
OCSE-AT-99-04	Action Transmittal, Case Closure Criteria Final Rule, 45 CFR Part 303	**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/AT/at-9904.htm**
OCSE-PIQ-00-02	Policy Interpretation Question, Interstate Case Closure When Custodial Parent Location is Unknown	**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/PIQ/piq-00-02.htm**
OCSE-PIQ-03-09	Policy Interpretation Question, Case Closure of Child-Only Medicaid Cases	**http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/PIQ/piq-03-09.htm**
OCSE-PIQ-05-02	Policy Interpretation Question, Case Initiation of Previously-Closed IV-D Cases	**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/PIQ/2005/piq-05-02.htm**
FPLS Technical Assistance Guide	Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) Technical Assistance Guide (TAG), Release 3.0, Chapter 7.3.4, How the FCR	**http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/library/fcr/fcr.htm**

Reference	Description	Location
	Can Help with Case Closure	
Use of Federal Child Support Case Closure Regulations	Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General Report, February 2002, OEI-06-00-00470	**http://oig.hhs.gov/oei/reports/oei-06-00-00470.pdf**
CSENet Case Closure Specifications Document	Federal Parent Locator Guide Child Support Enforcement Network Release 03-01 – Minor: August 22, 2003	**http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/csenet/library/csenet20**
CSENet Interface Guidance Document	CSENet Interface Guidance Document (IGD), Version 6.0, Appendices D; Transaction Functional Matrix (TFM) MSC and Appendix C; Data Block Record Layout.	**http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/csenet/library/csenet20**