



California Health & Human Services Agency

## **PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **STATE'S CHILD SUPPORT COMPUTER SYSTEM READY FOR FEDERAL APPROVAL**

***California May End Federal Automation Penalties Until Fully Certified. This Expands The Ability to Better Serve Children and Families***

SACRAMENTO – Today, California requested federal certification for the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS), signaling the state's compliance with federal automation and centralized payment processing requirements for child support payments and putting federal automation penalties on hold during the certification process. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement will make a determination about California's compliance within the next twelve to fourteen months.

"The child support automation system will allow us to better serve children and families and will alleviate California of more than \$200 million in annual federal penalties," stated Secretary Kim Belshé.

"The single statewide system—CCSAS—gives the state and county child support agencies the necessary tools to manage and track child support cases statewide—increasing the program's capacity to deliver uniform, high-quality services to families and manage program performance," said Greta Wallace, Director for the Department of Child Support Services.

Overseen by the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and managed by Franchise Tax Board, the CCSAS project has drawn on technical expertise from the state and private sectors as well as from county child support professionals to develop and design a system that meets federal requirements and encompasses the complexity of California's child support program.

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In November 2005, county child support agencies began transitioning to a centralized statewide system which is responsible for collecting and disbursing all child support payments previously processed by the state's 52 local child support agencies. CCSAS works to ensure greater financial self-sufficiency for California families, in its first eleven months of operation, more than \$1 billion in child support payments to families was issued through the new system.

The federal certification review process is expected to begin in January 2007 and continue through 2008.

## **BACKGROUND**

Federal law requires states to:

- Implement a single statewide automated child support system, including a single location for processing child support collections and payments for cases handled by local child support agencies and all child support wage withholding payments through employers – including private child support wage withholding payments.
- Provide statewide case management capabilities.
- Streamline the receipt and disbursement of child support collections and reduce the costs associated with it.

California's delay in meeting these requirements has resulted in significant federal penalties, which will end during the federal certification process. When the system is certified, California will receive 90% of the 2006 penalty payment back from the federal government. This administration, working with IBM and Bank of America, has applied innovative technologies to build the largest child support automated system in the nation. This process has encompassed folding 58 separate county system into one unified whole – meeting federal requirements while providing new levels of service for California's families.

DCSS has sought the active participation of local child support agencies. This ongoing partnership is a critical component in the state's development of a system that will better serve California families and increase the state's ability to put child support dollars into the hands of children and families.

DCSS is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of all functions necessary to establish, collect and distribute child support for the child support program. In 2005 the state program collected \$2.3 billion and served more than two million children.

Child support program services are delivered through 52 local child support agencies. The following services are available at no cost to the public: locating a parent; establishing paternity; establishing, modifying and enforcing a court order for child support; and establishing, modifying and enforcing an order for health insurance coverage.

For more information, log on to <http://www.childsup.ca.gov/>.



California  
Department of  
Child Support  
Services

*Supporting  
California's  
Children*

## California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS)

### Fact Sheet

In 1988, the Family Support Act amended the Social Security Act to require all states to establish a single statewide automated child support system. In 1996, additional federal legislation, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), increased federal automation requirements by requiring all states to establish a single location for processing all child support collections and disbursements by October 1, 1998. The law intended to:

- Improve the accuracy of child support records;
- Speed payment processing; and
- Streamline wage assignment processing for employers.

To meet federal requirements, in 1999, state legislation required the Franchise Tax Board (FTB) to procure a performance-based contract for a single statewide automated system, the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS). Overseen by the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and managed by FTB, CCSAS provides statewide case management capability to local child support offices, increasing the program's ability to track and enforce financial and medical support on a statewide basis.

CCSAS project development and design was a collaborative effort that included DCSS, FTB, local child support agencies, and various stakeholders from the public and private sectors. IBM is the primary contractor for the statewide automated system; responsibilities include project management, application development and testing, data center services, hardware (computers, printers, scanners), and system architecture.

### Implementation

County transitions to the new system began in November 2005 with the implementation of the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). The SDU is responsible for collection and disbursement of all child support payments previously processed by the state's 52 local child support agencies, plus all wage assignment payments for private child support orders not previously processed by local child support agencies.

In its first eleven months of operation, the SDU has processed over \$1 billion for families. SDU payment collection and processing services are provided through a service agreement with Bank of America.

### Enhanced Services

More service options are available to families receiving support, parents making support payments, and to employers:

- Web and toll-free call center access to information
- Direct deposit services for families receiving support payments
- Instant access to support dollars through electronic payment cards, similar to ATM or debit cards, which can be used at ATM machines as well as retail outlets
- Schedule payments via electronic transfer from a checking or savings account— or make payments using credit cards over a secure internet connection
- Employers now send child support wage withholding payments to only one location— the SDU— and can submit payments electronically.

For more information, log on to [www.childsup.ca.gov](http://www.childsup.ca.gov).