

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064



May 7, 2001

LCSA LETTER: 01-08

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: IRS INTERCEPT PROBLEMS

This letter is to report on the status of the analysis the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) is conducting regarding the Integrated Database (IDB) Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Intercept problems reported at the April 4, 2001 Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) meeting. Problems were reporting concerned IRS tax intercepts occurring for Non-Custodial Parents (NCP) for whom counties had submitted delete transactions to the IDB. The assumption was that if the delete transaction had "worked," it would have prevented the intercept. The failure to delete records from the tax intercept process causes severe customer service problems locally each year during tax refund time.

DCSS analysis of specific examples of the IRS intercept "problem" indicate a number of difficulties, including the age of the legacy IDB computer system, complex processing rules, county input transaction errors, county conversions, and user education and training. Unfortunately, the problems identified are not unique to the IRS Intercept issue but are symptomatic of similar problems in all intercept processes.

Some of the issues which require immediate attention include the need to ensure that the IDB is synchronized with the county child support databases. This will require a "full file/field synchronization" and data cleanup process. Counties must have easier access to multi-county intercept cases being processed at the State level. This information is currently available via microfiche which is cumbersome and time-consuming to use. DCSS is developing an application to make multi-county intercept information available via CD-ROM. Appropriate county staff must receive training on the many intricacies and complex processing rules (e.g., Assistance/Non-Assistance, NCP match criteria, processing cycles, etc.) used by all the State's child support intercept processes.

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DCSS is developing an action plan for how these issues, and others, can be addressed and remedied in the most efficient and effective manner. The PRISM Advisory Group discussed the State's planned approach at its May 1, 2001 meeting and a draft workplan is targeted for presentation at the June CSDA meeting. Once adopted, the workplan, along with instructions to counties, will be distributed via an official CSS letter.

During the next few months I request your patience and understanding that the problems to be solved are many and will require time and effort on all our parts. If you have an immediate problem that requires resolution you can contact either Vic Johnson at (916) 464-5357 or Bill Brown at (916) 464-5322.

However, please keep in mind that each county request for historical information for a specific transaction requires 3 – 4 hours of research at a minimum. This is due in large part to the old computer technology the IDB uses and that each reported problem must be researched independently. If counties can minimize their research requests, and ensure that problems reported are not a result of the county processing environment or activities, programming staff will have more time to spend on process improvements.

In addition to the above efforts, please be assured that DCSS will also be assessing the cost benefit of enhancing IDB services to better support program needs until the statewide system is implemented.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at (916) 464-5333 or Vic Johnson at (916) 464-5357.

Sincerely,

JOAN OBERT  
Assistant Deputy Director  
Technology Services Division