

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

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



June 1, 2001

LCSA LETTER NO. 01-12

TO: ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

Reason for this Transmittal

- State Law or Regulation Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order or Settlement Change
- Clarification requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by DCSS

SUBJECT: CHILD SUPPORT COLLABORATION WITH STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

This letter provides counties with information for expanding community collaboration and customer service efforts for non-custodial parents (NCPs) to help them better support their children, financially and emotionally. This letter requires that each local child support agency (LCSA) designate a liaison to coordinate collaborative efforts, to develop written agreements with Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grant operating entities and Local Workforce Investment Boards (Local Boards/WIBs), as appropriate, and to implement a referral process for child support customers who may benefit from employment programs, community services and other resources.

Recent research and evaluation in the child support field demonstrates value in providing services to NCPs and families in promoting parental responsibility and child well being. Best practices outlined by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement in Information Memorandum OCSE IM-00-13, "Best Practices and Good Ideas," (Dec. 18, 2000) strongly support the implementation of fatherhood programs and NCP employment and training programs as successful strategies for improving state child support programs and for improving familial relationships.

In keeping with California's commitment to provide excellent customer service, this letter provides counties with a guide for expanding services for low-income NCPs by proactively working with local service providers, including the WtW community; Local Boards/WIBs; county welfare departments (CWDs); jobs skills and employment service providers; education and vocational training programs; counseling and mentoring programs; County Health Departments; local mental health and substance abuse



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programs, and other service agencies; and community- and faith-based organizations (CBO/FBOs) to help parents better support their children.

Possible Funding Sources

It is intended that LCSAs use customer service funds to expand their outreach efforts by collaborating and referring NCPs to programs that provide interventions aimed at helping child support customers meet the financial, physical and emotional needs of their families and children. There is no additional funding available to LCSAs for these activities. Funding for the support services themselves may be available through the local providers or county agencies (e.g., federal and state funding available through the WtW Grant operating entities, CWDs, Local Boards/WIBs and local foundations).

Collaboration Liaison

In order to expand outreach and collaboration efforts, LCSAs must designate a liaison (Attachment 1) to be the collaboration contact and coordinate implementation of the following activities:

- Liaisons will coordinate collaborative efforts between child support and local WtW Grant operating entities, CWDs for the CalWORKs program (CalWORKs is the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids program, the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program), Local Boards/WIBs that oversee implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), other agencies, including the Department of Corrections, local mental health and substance abuse programs and CBO/FBOs.
- Liaisons can develop, implement and monitor a referral process to identify, refer and follow-up with child support customers who may benefit from CalWORKs employment activities, WtW Grant employment services, WIA services and other program services designed to address barriers for the hardest-to-employ population, and who may benefit from other resources provided through CBO/FBOs, private businesses and nonprofit foundations.

Liaisons can work with CWDs, WtW Grant operating entities, Local Boards/WIBs and other entities to develop an agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), outlining the responsibilities of each party with regard to referral and information-sharing processes. The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) can assist LCSAs in drafting these agreements.

DCSS will share the list of LCSA Collaboration Liaisons with the WtW Grant operating entities, Local Boards/WIBs, CWDs and other organizations listed in this letter so that they will know who in the LCSA to call for more information about collaboration. In addition, DCSS will share this list with all the LCSA liaisons. DCSS also plans to bring the collaboration liaisons together periodically for workshops to facilitate sharing of best practices.

Each LCSA must forward the liaison information (Attachment 1) by June 15, 2001 to the following address:

Leora Gershenzon, Assistant Director
Office of Research and Program Design
California Department of Child Support Services
P.O. Box 419064, MS-50
Rancho Cordova, California 95741-9064
Fax: (916) 464-5065

Copies of signed Agreements/MOUs, if applicable, should be mailed to the same address within 30 days of execution.

Possible Collaboration Partners

The following list of agencies and organizations provides a starting point for LCSAs to expand collaboration and referral activities. Your county's organizations and names for specific departments may differ from those given below. Attachments with local county contacts are provided where available. If an organization has a website, it is included on Attachment 2.

Access and Visitation Programs – These programs, overseen by the Judicial Council, encourage visitation agreements or parenting time, and many include a component that supports men in their role as fathers, through paternity establishment, parental education and programs linking fathers and children. Attachment 3 gives local contacts in the counties.

Community- and Faith-Based Organizations – These include community outreach centers; local family preservation programs; social service organizations and family services programs for crisis intervention; parenting, teen parent and fatherhood programs; peer support groups; family reunification services; out-of-home protective placement for endangered children; adolescent outreach to prevent teen pregnancy, reduce violence, substance abuse and school failure; programs for job readiness training and job placement; culturally and linguistically responsive services; and projects fostering relationships between incarcerated parents and their children and families. Some of these organizations employ Certified Application Assistants who can help families apply for Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, Food Stamps and emergency services.

Community Colleges – Local community colleges offer classes that prepare individuals for careers, provide basic skills and education, teach English, and work with local employers as a workplace learning resource center.

County Alcohol and Drug Services – Includes treatment programs for alcohol and other drug abuse problems. Includes prevention programs targeting youth.

County Departments of Mental Health Services – Provides counseling and therapy interventions for family members. Includes local organizations such as a city or county alliance for the mentally ill, and mental health treatment centers that provide health care services for mentally ill children and adults.

County Health Departments – Provides access to health, education and child development services, such as:

Medi-Cal

Medi-Cal is a state and federally funded health coverage program providing low-cost and no-cost medical, dental, vision care and family planning services.

Healthy Families

Healthy Families provides insurance for children with family incomes above the level eligible for no-cost Medi-Cal and below 250 percent of the federal income guidelines (\$35,376 for a family of three).

Access for Infants and Mothers (AIM)

Provides low-cost health insurance for low-income pregnant women and their infants.

Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

WIC is a nutrition program that helps pregnant women, new mothers and young children eat well and stay healthy through special vouchers to buy healthy foods. WIC provides supplemental nutrition and health information, support for breastfeeding, and help in finding health care and community services. Some local WIC programs may offer services to the entire family, including fathers. WIC services are provided through local county and private non-profit agencies funded through the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (Attachment 4).

Male Involvement Program (MIP)

Engages teen and young adult males in adolescent pregnancy prevention and early unintended fatherhood programs (Attachment 5).

Family Resource Centers (FRC)

These community-based, family-focused agencies serve families with children from birth to three years old who are at risk for disabilities or have developmental delays. FRCs are part of the Early Start Program which provides families access to information, resources and support to help parents of children with special needs.

Child Protective Services Program – The Child Protective Services Program is a social services program offering child protective emergency placement, child abuse prevention, in-home emergency family counseling, substance abuse counseling and mental health services, parenting classes and other service programs.

County Welfare Departments – Provides assistance to low-income people with life necessities such as food and health care needs; homeless programs; community services; employment services and financial or medical assistance. The CalWORKS program provides cash assistance to families and assistance with child care, transportation and job training and placement. CWDs also administer refugee,

adoptions, Foster Care and adult programs. See Attachment 6 for the County Welfare Director listing for local social services agencies.

Domestic Violence Programs – Domestic violence programs foster the development of healthy communities, healthy families and healthy and responsible youth. These programs embrace violence-free values in the family and community, focusing on prevention at all levels. CBO/FBOs or local sheriff's offices may provide services or access to shelters for victims, a link to counseling, self-defense classes or a crisis hotline for victims or abusers.

Family Law Facilitators – Provides legal services for information and assistance with child support, child custody and visitation, domestic violence and conflict mediation. Attachment 7 is a list of local contacts.

Head Start and Early Head Start Grantees – Head Start is a federally funded program that provides child development and social services programs to children three to five years old and their families. Early Head Start expands the benefits of early childhood development to low-income families of pregnant women and/or families with children age birth to three. LCSAs were previously instructed to designate a liaison and develop Memorandums of Understanding in DCSS' All-County FSDIN Letter No. I-14-00 (Apr. 5, 2000). LCSAs can expand the existing liaison position to include collaboration as outlined in this letter or add an additional position(s) for community collaboration. Attachment 8 lists California Head Start and Early Head Start grantees.

Local Workforce Investment Boards – Workforce Investment Boards (Local Boards/WIBs) set policy for the workforce investment system in local workforce investment areas and over see the One-Stop Centers. Attachment 9 provides information on WIA and Local Boards/WIBs.

One-Stop Centers – One-Stop Centers offer job, education and training services and benefits, including access to service directories, job availability information, labor market data, assessments for programs for which applicants may qualify and referral to needed support services, often co-located at the One-Stop Centers. One-Stop Centers build partnerships between employers and job seekers and tailor training and employment programs that prepare individuals for current and future jobs. One-Stop Centers help students, college graduates, down-sized professionals, career changers, people moving from WtW, veterans, and workers with disabilities. Anyone can apply for unemployment benefits, register for the State job service, obtain free job search assistance, find out about job training programs, learn about special programs for veterans and others, and more. Anyone in need of training or employment is welcome. Attachment 10 lists One-Stop Centers, satellite offices and kiosks.

State Department of Corrections and Local Probation and Parole Agencies – LCSAs can explore working with incarcerated or paroled NCPs or those on probation in order to assure that child support orders are realistically set during periods of incarceration, that NCPs who are soon to be released from prison receive services to

enhance their ability to adequately parent their children and become gainfully employed, and that services are available for NCPs to enhance their chances for personal and economic success and compliance with their child support orders.

State Department of Rehabilitation, Local Field Offices – Provides assistance to people with disabilities in obtaining and retaining employment. Attachment 11 is a list of the local field offices throughout California.

State Employment Development Department – The Employment Development Department (EDD) offers a variety of employment and training services, including CalJOBS, an Internet system for linking employer job listings with job seeker resumes. EDD administers the federal WtW Grant program, which is designed to compliment the CalWORKs program by assisting the hard-to-employ populations to obtain jobs and reach self-sufficiency, and Workforce Investment Act funds that support the Local Boards/WIBs and a number of employment and training programs as well as the One-Stop Centers in California.

Welfare-to-Work Grant Operating Entities – Any organization operating a program funded with federal WtW Grant Funds or State WtW Grant match dollars is a WtW Grant operating entity. This includes the EDD 15 percent and 85 percent formula WtW Grant projects, as well as the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) 25 percent Competitive WtW Grants and CWDs using the State WtW Grant match to provide direct WtW Grant services.

The WtW Grant program is designed to provide job readiness, vocational educational or job training, employment activities, post-employment, and job retention and supportive services. It also provides outreach, recruitment, intake, assessment, eligibility determination, development of individual plans, and case management. Services may also include housing, clothing, childcare and transportation. These services are designed to address the personal barriers to employment for the hardest-to-employ eligible populations.

NCPs should be referred to the WtW program where their eligibility and needs for the programs and services will be assessed. Attachment 12 lists WtW Grant Program contacts and grantees grouped by county.

Additional Information

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement has provided direction for states and LCSAs to build a strong collaboration in order to maximize services and resources available to low-income NCPs, in addition to custodial parents. Activities conducted are subject to existing requirements of the child support program as outlined in the enclosed Information Memorandum OCSE No. IM-00-05, dated May 8, 2000 (Attachment 13). IM-00-05 provides guidance to states in developing strategies to enhance recruitment, referral, eligibility determination and service provision policies when working with these programs. IM-00-05 identifies collaborative issues and

strategies, outlines operational activities, gives policy guidance and lists internet resource sites for WtW Grant operating entities, the CalWORKs programs, and the LCSAs.

Additionally, enclosed as Attachment 14, is the California Department of Social Services' All-County Information Notice No. I-56-00, dated June 2, 2000, which includes expansion to the eligibility criteria of the WtW Grant program and information for IV-D agencies regarding NCP participation in the WtW Grant program.

Strategies for Serving NCPs

Information on recommended strategies for serving NCPs is also enclosed (Attachment 15). These strategies provide direction to LCSAs on developing and strengthening a multi-agency, community- and faith-based collaborative approach to expanding outreach efforts and services to the family, by helping NCPs accept the responsibility to support their children both financially and emotionally.

If you have any questions or need assistance with collaborative projects, please contact Ann Fowler at Ann.Fowler@dcss.ca.gov or at (916) 464-5032 or by fax at (916) 464-5065.

Sincerely,

CURTIS L. CHILD
Director

c: California Employment Development Department
California Department of Social Services
OCSE, Region IX
Judicial Council

Attachments

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

- 1) Form: Local Child Support Agency Liaison for Welfare-to-Work
- 2) List: Web Sites of Agencies and Organizations working with NCPs
- 3) List: Access and Visitation service providers
- 4) List: Women, Infants and Children service providers
- 5) List: Male Involvement Program
- 6) List: County Welfare Directors
- 7) List: Family Law Facilitators
- 8) List: Head Start Grantees
- 9) Fact Sheet: California Workforce Association
List: Workforce Investment Boards
- 10) List: One-Stop Centers
- 11) List: Rehabilitation -- local field offices
- 12) List: Welfare-to-Work Grant Program Contacts and WtW Funds Subgrantees
- 13) Letter: OCSE, Information Memorandum, IM-00-05, "Joint Guidance on Strategies..." (May 8, 2000)
- 14) Letter: DSS, All County Information Notice No. I-56-00, "Changes to the U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL) Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grant Program" (June 2, 2000)
- 15) List: Recommended Strategies