

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

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

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

October 9, 2001

LCSA LETTER: 01-40

TO: ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR CONCEPT PAPER

*The Role of the Regional Administrator* concept paper has been finalized and is attached for your information. Regional Administrators serve as a key communication link between the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and local child support agencies (LCSAs). The concept paper is intended to provide a clear vision of the goals, responsibilities, communication processes, and organizational structure of this position as a part of a more accountable and uniform child support program in California. Regional Administrators help provide an effective mechanism for the resolution of critical issues and will support the continued improvement of California's child support program.

It is important to note that the Regional Administrator role continues to evolve. DCSS will issue an updated version of the concept paper, in consultation with LCSA Directors, as changes or additional requirements of the position develop so that stakeholders are informed about the expectations of the position.

I would like to acknowledge the thoughtful feedback from LCSA Directors, other interested stakeholders, and DCSS staff in the development of this concept paper. Your contributions have helped to make the concept paper a better and more comprehensive representation of the role of the Regional Administrator.

Sincerely,

CURTIS CHILD  
Director

Enclosure

DCSS-PR-2001-MIS-0008



DO YOUR PART TO HELP CALIFORNIA SAVE ENERGY  
For energy saving tips, visit the DCSS website at  
[www.childsup.cahwnet.gov](http://www.childsup.cahwnet.gov)

# California Department of Child Support Services



## The Role of the Regional Administrator

September 2001

Final Draft



DO YOUR PART TO HELP CALIFORNIA SAVE ENERGY  
For energy saving tips, visit the DCSS website at  
[www.childsup.cahwnet.gov](http://www.childsup.cahwnet.gov)

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

**THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR**

**SECTION ONE**

1. PURPOSE.....	1
2. BACKGROUND.....	1
3. GOALS.....	2
4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.....	3
5. MAP OF REGIONAL ASSIGNMENTS.....	4
6. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR RESPONSIBILITIES.....	5
7. WORKING WITH LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES.....	6
A. CHILD SUPPORT DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION.....	7
B. REGIONAL MEETINGS.....	7
8. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND EVALUATION EFFORTS.....	8
A. SITE VISIT ACTIVITIES.....	8
B. TRACKING AND MONITORING ACTIONS.....	9
C. QUALITY IMPROVEMENT EFFORTS.....	9
D. MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM.....	9
9. STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION.....	10

**SECTION TWO**

COMMUNICATION WITHIN DCSS.....	11
A. ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES DIVISION.....	11
B. CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES DIVISION.....	12
C. TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DIVISION.....	15
D. OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND PROGRAM DESIGN.....	15
E. OFFICE OF LEGAL SERVICES.....	15
F. COMMUNICATING POLICY DECISIONS.....	15

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PROVIDE COMMENTS TO: BILL OTTERBECK AT [BILL.OTTERBECK@DCSS.CA.GOV](mailto:BILL.OTTERBECK@DCSS.CA.GOV)

## **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this document is to present the role of the Regional Administrator in an improved, more accountable, responsive, and uniform California Child Support program. In addition to the Regional Administrator role defined by legislation, recommendations from the Department sponsored Policies, Procedures, and Practices (P3) project and the 1999 Bureau of State Audit Report *Child Support Enforcement Program: Without Stronger State Leadership, California's Child Support Program Will Continue to Struggle* (BSA Report 99103), were reviewed and Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) staff were consulted in the development of this paper. Local Child Support Agency (LCSA) input was also solicited.

## **2. Background**

California enacted legislation in 1999 to completely restructure the child support program at the State and local level. Legislative findings that led to reform of the child support program focused on the lack of State leadership, coordination and integration between the State and LCSAs, and uniform policies, forms, and procedures for LCSAs. The overwhelming thrust of the enacted legislation was the desire to build an effective child support enforcement program through strong State leadership and effective oversight and management of LCSAs.

The Director of DCSS has direct oversight and supervision of the Title IV-D operations of LCSAs, including prescribing the manner in which programs shall be operated. Regional Administrators will play a pivotal role by assisting in the direct oversight and monitoring of LCSA activities. Additionally, the Regional Administrators will provide insight to the Director on sensitive child support program issues, both locally and at the State level; enforce program policy with counties, notify counties of compliance issues and ensure that corrective measures are taken and monitored for success.

The role of the Regional Administrator is outlined in legislation at Family Code § 17314. The Regional Administrator oversees and provides guidance to counties to ensure compliance with all State and federal laws and regulations. The Regional Administrator serves as a key point of contact for senior county officials and provides assistance in the development and implementation of statewide uniform policies and procedures for LCSAs.

As a part of the DCSS management team, Regional Administrators are well situated to communicate and integrate the needs of the local agencies into DCSS' planning and decision-making process. The Regional Administrator positions are considered by the Departmental Executive staff to be integral to a well structured and effective communication process between the Department and LCSAs.

### **3. Goals**

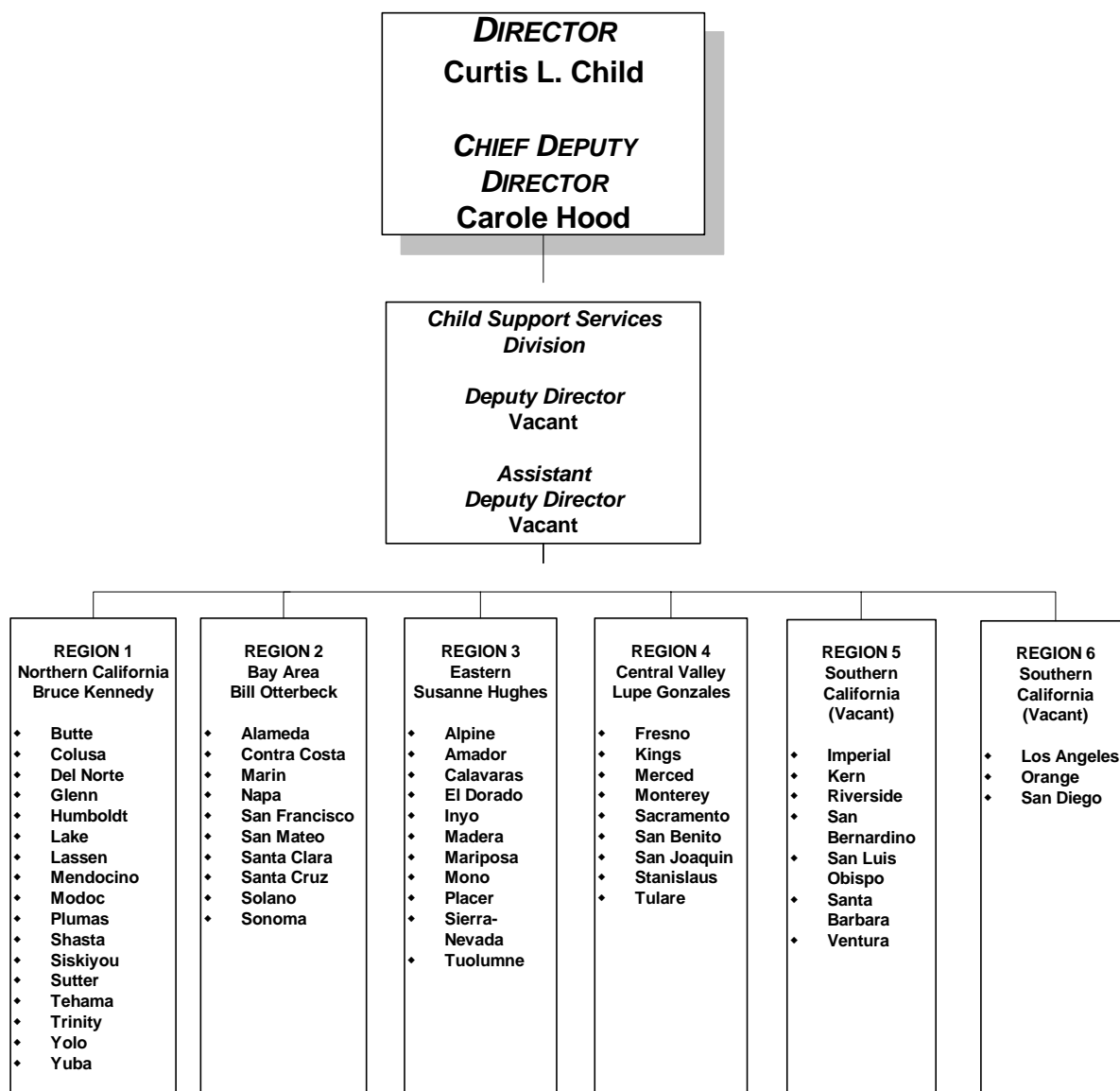
---

The goals of the Regional Administrators are to:

- ❖ Be a conduit for effective communication between the Department and LCSAs;
- ❖ Ensure that the California child support program is being administered locally in a uniform manner throughout the State by monitoring the implementation of regulations and other Departmental directives;
- ❖ Expedite issue resolution for local agencies;
- ❖ Strike a balance between the compliance and oversight functions of the position with the need to be a LCSA advocate and coordinator of technical assistance and resources for the counties;
- ❖ Have a visible presence in the LCSA through regular and comprehensive site visits and to be familiar with the operations, issues, and needs of the Regional Administrator's assigned counties;
- ❖ Provide and/or coordinate technical assistance resources for LCSAs;
- ❖ Actively participate in the identification and resolution of compliance issues related to State and federal law or regulation;
- ❖ Lead DCSS Multi-Disciplinary Teams (MDT) that support local quality assurance efforts in the LCSAs as a part of a statewide continuing improvement effort;
- ❖ Encourage collaboration and a sharing of best practices between LCSAs throughout the State; and,
- ❖ Ensure that individuals, agencies, and local, State, and Federal representatives that interface with, or are served by, the California child support program are appropriately informed about the program and are treated with dignity and respect.

## 4. Organizational Structure

Six Regional Administrator positions have been established<sup>1</sup>. Their placement in the organization structure of the Department ensures they are an integral part of policy formulation and communication to the LCSAs. Regional Administrators have direct access to all areas of program management to obtain the latest information on critical program issues. Regional Administrators connect the reality and challenges of service delivery at the local level with policy making at DCSS.



<sup>1</sup> The recruitment is currently ongoing for the two Southern California Regional Administrator positions. In the interim the Southern California counties have been reassigned as follows:

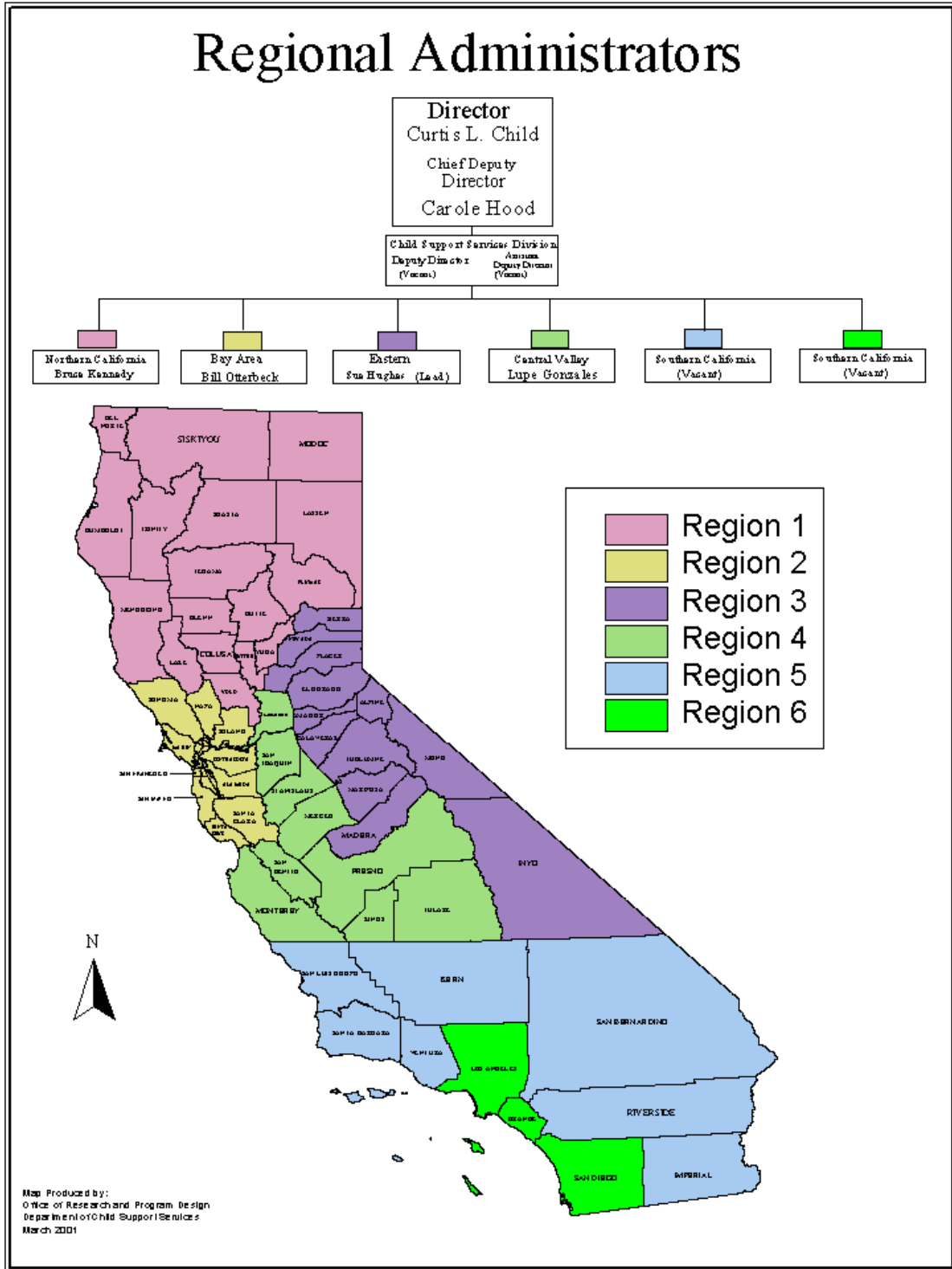
Bruce Kennedy: Imperial, Riverside and San Diego

Bill Otterbeck: Kern, San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara

Susanne Hughes: Los Angeles

Lupe Gonzales: Orange, San Bernardino and Ventura

5. The Regional Administrator Map



## **6. Regional Administrator Responsibilities**

The lack of coordination and integration between State and LCSAs has been identified as a major impediment to getting child support to children and families. In order to address this issue, the authors of the child support reform legislation defined a position that would bridge the gap between the Department and local agencies: Regional Administrators. While specific responsibilities are defined in statute, it is important to understand that the Department envisions a broader role for the Regional Administrator that balances oversight with local agency advocacy.

The Department's plan for the Regional Administrator is to provide support for and a process to encourage continual improvement in the local child support program. By their very nature, certain program oversight activities are reactive, e.g. program review audits. What is envisioned for Regional Administrators is to assist in and work collaboratively with local agencies in developing a proactive performance measurement, evaluation, and program improvement process.

### **Regional Administrators will:**

- Conduct regular and comprehensive site visits to the LCSAs assigned to their region and prepare quarterly reports to be submitted to the Department for the purpose of encouraging uniform implementation of policies and procedures.
- Notify a LCSA of any potential or actual noncompliance with any State or federal law or regulation by the agency and work with the LCSA to develop an immediate plan to ensure compliance.
- Participate in meetings with other Regional Administrators and the Director on at least a monthly basis to ensure statewide uniformity in the program operations of the LCSAs. The Regional Administrators may recommend proposals for approval and adoption by the Director to achieve this goal.
- Serve as the Director's representative at meetings with local officials; mediate impending non-compliance issues with counties; and attend hearings, conferences, or other gatherings at which formal DCSS representation must be present.
- Respond to LCSA requests for management or technical assistance by LCSAs concerning program operations issues to ensure uniform and effective results oriented processes in compliance with State and federal law, and policy.
- Coordinate with program monitoring teams as set forth in statute and provide guidelines and procedures to LCSA to ensure compliance with applicable child support laws and regulations.
- Participate in and evaluate quality assurance programs at the local level.



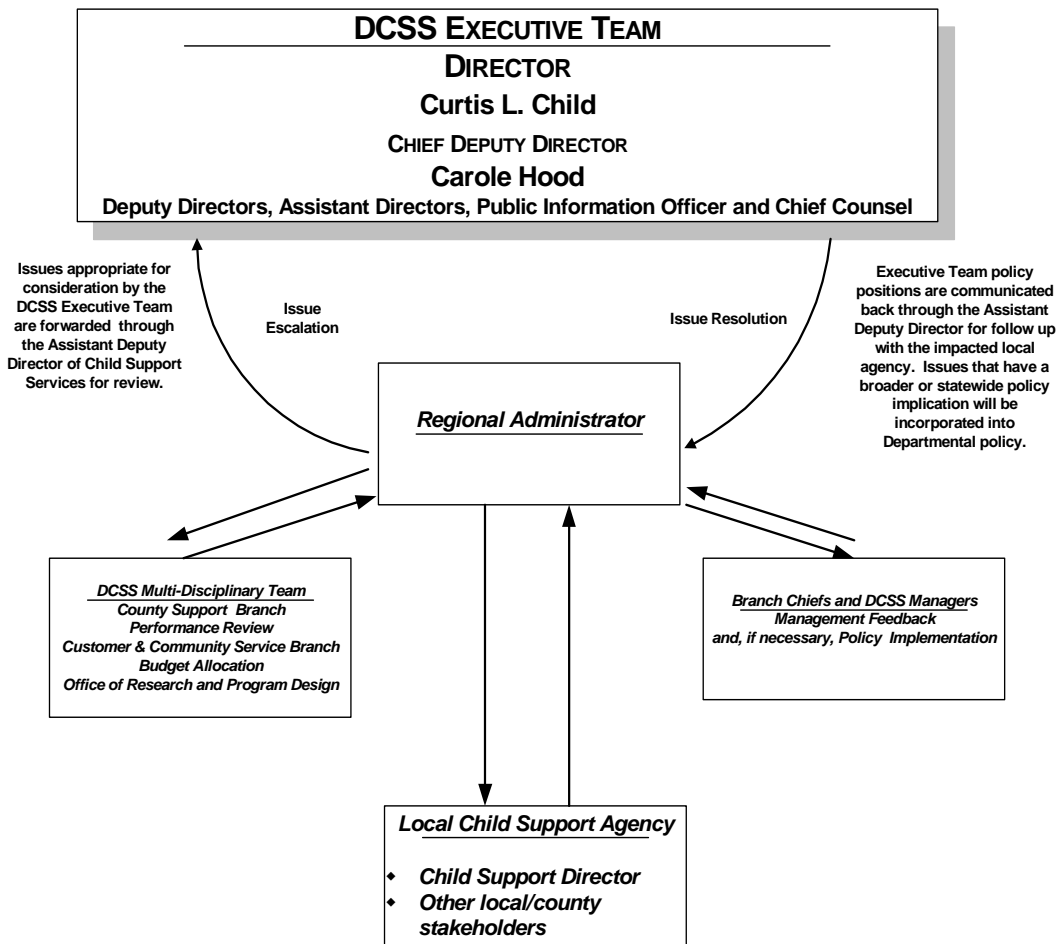
## THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

- Participate in the annual process to develop the LCSA allocation, and any amendments to the LCSA allocation.

### 7. Working with Local Child Support Agencies

It is recognized that LCSAs have contacts within DCSS on a broad range of issues and that inquiries to DCSS come from a variety of designated contacts in LCSAs. Supervising attorneys, administrative officers, program analysts, and information technology analysts/managers represent some of the diverse range of LCSA staff who make contact with the Department. In order to clarify the appropriate contacts, a DCSS contact list will be made available to LCSA Directors, and updated regularly.

The Regional Administrator positions are designed to compliment established LCSA contacts with DCSS, not replace those contacts. The communication structure will allow LCSAs, through their Directors, to escalate significant issues in a more expedited manner through their Regional Administrator. The Regional Administrator will coordinate with DCSS Leadership Team as appropriate to work through these issues. This approach will improve the communication process for counties by providing a conduit for focused, timely, clear, and consistent guidance from DCSS. A process map of the communication and issue resolution process follows:



## ***THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR***

---

Regional Administrators will work closely with LCSA Directors to resolve issues of local concern. It is also expected that LCSA Directors will coordinate issues arising out of their own agencies. Directors should utilize their Regional Administrator as their first point of contact for significant local issues being raised to the Department. Some examples of issue areas that are appropriate for Regional Administrator contact are:

- New and emerging operational issues;
- Issues arising from actual or potential non-compliance with State and/or federal regulation or statute;
- Substantial performance issues or other critical issues as defined by LCSAs or the Department;
- Politically sensitive concerns of the LCSA; and
- Requests by the LCSA to meet with and/or inform the County Administrator and/or Board of Supervisors of policies, regulations, or issues related to the California Child Support Program.

### **a. Child Support Directors Association (CSDA)**

Regional Administrators regularly attend the CSDA monthly meetings. To the extent that Regional Administrators are working on special projects, e.g. Medical Support or Hispanic Outreach, they will update the LCSA Directors on the status of these projects. Every effort will be made to provide consistent communication between Regional Administrators and Directors of LCSAs outside of the CSDA monthly meetings.

### **b. Regional Meetings**

Regional meetings facilitated by the Regional Administrators will be one way of fostering a closer relationship between the counties. Best practices, implementation of program directives, and sharing of program improvement strategies all can be facilitated through regional meetings. These meetings will be scheduled with sufficient regularity to meet the needs of local agencies for new and updated information. The meeting location will be made as centrally located and accessible as possible to the region. The meetings are intended to compliment CSDA meetings and other avenues for communication. The meetings will also present an opportunity to provide training tailored to the unique needs of the region, program requirements, or other areas as identified by the Department or LCSAs. Agendas for regional meetings facilitated by Regional Administrators will be available to CSDA.

The meeting agenda will be developed in conjunction with input from the counties. Meetings will be facilitated by Regional Administrators. This will allow for key issues from the Department's perspective to be shared as well as issues that reflect local needs, problem areas, and program interests. Where appropriate, relevant or timely regional meetings will involve DCSS staff presentations as well as other governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations. By sharing information, ideas and strategies through regional meetings, programs will have a greater likelihood of successfully coordinating change in a more cohesive and uniform way.

## **8. Quality Improvement and Evaluation Efforts**

DCSS is committed to the continuous improvement of LCSAs. Site visits are considered a part of the a larger quality improvement effort initiated by the Department. The quality improvement effort will be designed in collaboration with LCSA and other stakeholders and implemented in every child support agency. The development of a quality improvement strategy will be centered on the concept of local agency internal reviews to ensure a uniform and comprehensive, results-based assessment of county child support performance. The internal reviews will be conducted by LCSA staff and monitored by the Department under the direction of the Regional Administrators. The primary focus will be county performance in meeting federal and state performance standards. The LCSA reviews will include, but not be limited to, information and data analysis; human resources; leadership systems; customer focus; process management; and business results. Specific action plans will be developed from review findings and closely monitored for effectiveness. The site visit approach is the first stage of the quality improvement strategy for LCSAs.

### **a. Site Visit Activities**

Regional Administrators are responsible for monitoring and providing oversight for all components of the local child support program. The Regional Administrator will advise local agency management on all aspects of the program based on established DCSS policy. To be positioned to perform this requirement, comprehensive site visits will be conducted. Some of the anticipated site visit activities are:

- Functional or process review of the LCSA;
- Review of Customer Service Initiative projects including call center operations where appropriate;
- Review of the implementation of LCSA Ombudsperson program;
- Meeting with One Stop partners, Fatherhood project coordinators, advocates and community based organizations to better understand the local community perspective of local and state child support program efforts;
- Review of co-locate approach and site to evaluate the operational relationship and outreach efforts between local IV-A agencies and LCSAs ;
- Evaluation of courts, including family law facilitator and commissioner to better understand the impact of the local judicial process on child support operations;
- Review of the Outreach program and associated materials;
- Review of quality improvement activities;
- Status of Corrective Action Plan implementation efforts;
- Review of the County's process for implementing new policy and procedures;
- Location and accessibility of the LCSA office(s);
- Attendance at management team meetings; and
- Attendance at LCSA "All Staff" meetings.

**b. Tracking and Monitoring Actions**

In order to promote LCSA compliance with DCSS initiatives and other program directives, Regional Administrators will regularly monitor the LCSA activities in a number of areas. These activities include:

- Monitoring individual LCSA performance in the Federal Performance Measures;
- Review of Customer Service Program quarterly reports, including county initiated reporting from Complaint Resolution Tracking System;
- Review of LCSA Plan of Cooperation requirements;
- Evaluation of the progress made toward Corrective Action Plan and Program Improvement Plan deliverables; and
- Specific DCSS' directed actions or initiatives requiring timely and uniform LCSA response. Examples of such efforts would include undistributed collections and case closure initiatives.

**c. Quality Improvement Efforts**

Regional Administrators will be involved in the development and implementation of quality assurance improvement efforts of LCSAs.

- The performance of LCSAs in the Federal measures is a primary focus of program evaluation efforts. This would include initiation of quality improvement action plans to deal with deficiencies or low performance.
- Regional Administrators will be involved in the specific tracking of customer service program deliverables for timely delivery, impact on service, and integration into overall case processing. Customer service regulations require the creation of a County Customer Service Advisory Board/Committee. Regional Administrators will be included as adjunct committee members for these committees. This will provide the Regional Administrators with an understanding of the community perception of the customer service program in the LCSAs. It will also introduce Regional Administrators to best practices and innovative approaches to customer service.
- Once a Quality Assurance team program is developed the Regional Administrators would meet with this team as part of their county visits.

**d. Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach**

The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) approach is intended to provide a coordinated evaluation and response by the Department to LCSA performance, compliance, management issues, resource needs, or deficiencies. Key DCSS staff will participate in the MDTs. To best utilize Department resources in the Branches, certain members have been designated as Core Team members while others are auxiliary members. Core Team membership includes representatives from the County Support Branch, Community and Customer Services Branch, Financial Services Branch and the Office of Research and Program Design. Resources in support of the MDT will include: Policy Branch, Legal, Information Technology, Public Information Officer, and Administrative Services' Audit Unit staff. The role of the Regional Administrators will be to ensure that the unique needs of the LCSAs will be fully understood by the Department and by the MDT members. This compliment of resources will allow Regional Administrators to

provide a focused response to any issue that requires a specific resource mix tailored to the issue and the needs of the LCSA and will maximize the effectiveness of the results.

## **9. Stakeholder Collaboration**

---

Regional Administrators are uniquely positioned to facilitate collaborative efforts between and among LCSAs and other program stakeholders. Regional Administrators will develop relationships with other stakeholders at the State and local level. For example, contacts have been made with Regional Advisers in the California Department of Social Services - CalWORKs program to explore shared issues and programmatic concerns. In addition, consistent communication with advocates will be pursued at both the State and local level. Regional Administrators participate in monthly meetings with advocates at the Department. These meetings will provide Regional Administrators with an informed understanding of the issues of relevance to the advocates and their constituents. The meetings will also provide a broader perspective for Regional Administrators when communicating with LCSAs.

## **Section Two: Communication within DCSS**

The Regional Administrators are a part of the DCSS Leadership Team, which is comprised of Director, Chief Deputy Director, Deputy Directors and the Branch Chiefs. The Leadership Team meets on a weekly basis to consistently share information. These meetings are intended to promote well-informed and uniform decision making and consistent issue resolution by allowing key managers to receive and discuss information at one place and at one time. This weekly meeting also provides the opportunity to bring important local issues to the attention of the Department policy makers.

To promote effective internal and external communication in DCSS a well structured information exchange process needs to exist between the Regional Administrators and the managers and analysts in each of the Branches. Regional Administrators work with DCSS Branches in all program areas with increasing frequency. This interaction means that requests made by Regional Administrators will have an increasingly substantial impact on the workload of the Branches. In order to coordinate the interaction between the Branches and Regional Administrators and, as a general principle, Regional Administrators will direct inquiries through the Branch Chief or Section Managers. This communication process will allow senior managers to be “in the loop” on issues, to make appropriate assignments to staff, and to follow up to ensure that assignments and issues are prioritized and are being resolved in the necessary time frames.

Urgency and/or sensitivity may dictate exceptions to this policy. In these situations, it will be the responsibility of the Regional Administrators to communicate the contact made and the issue discussed to the appropriate manager. Additionally, at regular senior management meetings the status of unresolved issues will be discussed to ensure effective communication and issue tracking.

### **a. Administrative Services Division**

Within the Administrative Services Division there are four primary areas where Regional Administrators are likely to be involved in resolving issues:

- Financial Services Branch, County Allocations
- Financial Services Branch, Accounting Services Section, Claims Unit
- Administrative Resources Branch
- Financial Integrity and Audit Coordination

Consistent with the general principle of Regional Administrators working through Branch or Section managers, contacts will be made to Staff Services Managers of the relevant sections.

### **1. Financial Services Branch**

The Financial Services Branch, County Allocations analyst contacts were established in the Child Support Services (CSS) letter 01-02. Inquires related to allocations and to allocation appeals will be properly routed to those analysts with a copy to their manager. If the issue is related to a more urgent budgetary matter, contact will be routed through the County Allocations Unit Manager.



Regional Administrators will participate in the annual process to develop the LCSA allocation, and any amendments to the LCSA allocation.

On occasion claiming issues and data problems arise from the CS 800 and 820 reports that staff and managers in the Accounting Services Section, Claims Unit are not able to resolve. Regional Administrators will assist in the resolution of these issues at the request of the Branch Chief.

## **2. Administrative Resources Branch**

In the Administrative Resources Branch there will be issues arising from the counties with the human resources and labor relations implications. CSS letter 01-04 specifically addresses the role of Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) with regard to LCSA personnel systems. This letter also clarifies that LCSAs shall perform functions exclusively through the use of civil service employees of the public agency. The role of CPS particularly as counties move through Administrative transition, has raised a number of personnel issues. In order to coordinate these issues, the Branch Chief of Administrative Resources has been designated by the Department as the contact on issues related to CPS or the civil service provisions of the child support reform legislation. The Branch Chief will work closely with CPS and with the Regional Administrator to address and resolve LCSA issues.

The Administrative Services Division will be developing an audit capability within the Department. The role of the Regional Administrators with respect to the audit function will be defined as a part of the design process for this function.

### **b. Child Support Services Division**

The Child Support Services Division has adopted a meeting schedule to support effective communication within the Division. The goal of these meetings is to consistently share information so that there are a number of forums for information exchange that ensure effective communication in the Division:

- Weekly meetings among Regional Administrators
- Weekly meetings with the Assistant Deputy Director, Branch Chiefs, and Regional Administrators.

## **1. County Support Branch**

The Regional Administrators will work directly with Staff Services Managers in the County Support Branch. The managers will be responsible for assigning work to the appropriate analyst. The managers will also monitor the progress of the analyst's work on a given issue until the issue is resolved, redirected for further analysis or escalated. Units in the County Support Branch that the Regional Administrators will work with are Program Review Section, and Technical Assistance Section and the Statewide Initiatives Section.

It is important to recognize that the Department is considering alternative program performance evaluation models. As the Department moves forward with a focus on

results based–quality assurance processes and review, the role of the Regional Administrators will continued to be refined.

### **Program Review and Technical Assistance Section**

Pursuant to Family Code §17314, Regional Administrators are responsible to work on issues related to potential or actual non-compliance with state of federal law or regulations. The Regional Administrators will have a role in the following program review components:

- Annual Review Guide and county sample list: Regional Administrators will review the Review Guide prior to release.
- Regional Training on Review Guide: Regional Administrators will be notified of the training schedule, training locations and counties attending the training.
- Findings Letter: Regional Administrators will sign off on the findings letter during the release process and be involved as is appropriate based on the criticality of the issues raised.
- Notification of Program Improvement Report (PIR): Regional Administrators will be involved with the evaluation of PIR report directives. Regional Administrators will be kept informed of the progress and completion of major tasks through the County Support Branch managers.
- Certification and Verification of Compliance: This information will be shared with the Regional Administrators through the County Support Branch managers.
- Technical Assistance: Significant issues arising from contacts with the counties or any regional trainings will be communicated to the Regional Administrators by the Technical Assistance Section.
- Transition Plans: Regional Administrators will be involved in the review and approval process for administrative transition plans.

### **Statewide Initiatives Section**

- To the extent that Regional Administrators are requested to assist in the resolution of issues, they will support the County Support Branch, Transition Team, and the DCSS Directorate.
- Where counties have informed the Regional Administrators of emerging or critical issues, the Regional Administrators will communicate these issues to the Statewide Initiatives Section and department executive management.

## **2. Customer and Community Service Branch**

The Regional Administrators will work closely with the Branch Chief in the review, validation, and evaluation of the Ombudsperson program and the Local Customer Service Plan. The Branch Chief will compile the information from the program quarterly reports and compare them to the annual plans. The Branch Chief will meet with Regional Administrators to discuss trends, best practices, areas of concern, and whether the plans meet the intended objectives of the Customer Service Initiative. Where a LCSA is not completing its self assigned tasks, the Regional Administrators will have the primary responsibility of contacting local agency directors to ascertain why the county is not meeting the objectives laid out in its customer service plan.



Local Customer Service Plan components that the CCSB Branch and the Regional Administrators will review and evaluate are:

- Public Outreach
- Access to the Child Support Program
- Services to Encourage Program Participation
- Working with the Courts
- Training

As a part of the site visits, Regional Administrators will validate the customer service plan objectives implemented at the local level. LCSA progress reports will be reviewed for the status of plan deliverables and, in conjunction with site visits, the deliverables will be reviewed and verified. Updates on the status of plan deliverables will be included in Regional Administrator reports to the Department.

Ombudsperson program tracking will be coordinated by the Customer and Community Service Branch through the LCSA complaint resolution and state hearing issue tracking as well as by tracking issues directly reported to the CCSB. Trends in specified areas, e.g., number of complaints, number of referrals, and type of complaint, will be evaluated by CCSB to identify customer service trends and elevated to the Regional Administrator when there is clear indication a systemic problem may exist. Regional Administrators will work closely with CCSB and the Policy Branch to identify training, compliance, and process issues impacting the quality of customer service and the effectiveness of the Ombudsperson program.

### **3. Policy Branch**

LCSA letter 01-06 established a LCSA Policy Coordinator structure for the counties. The local policy coordinators have been established for the purpose of policy issue resolution. When circumstances require that a policy decision cannot be worked through the normal process, LCSA Directors should contact their Regional Administrator. Regional Administrators will then work directly with the Branch Manager or Section Managers in the Policy Branch .

To promote consistent policy communications, the Regional Administrators will share policy clarifications from the Policy Branch with all Regional Administrators. When warranted, issues raised through this process, which are determined by the Policy Branch Chief to be of broad program impact, will be communicated to LCSAs through policy letters.

Throughout the regulations roll out process, it will be important for the Policy Branch and the Regional Administrators to be in close communication as to how counties interpret and implement regulations. Uniformity is the watchword and close attention will be paid to the proceduralizing of regulations and the staff training delivery within the LCSAs.

**c. Technology Services Division**

Regional Administrators will operate in a supporting role with regard to automation issues. The PRISM (Pre-Statewide Interim Systems) Advisory Group coordinates major policy, funding, and program change issues that relate to automation with the consortia leads for the county interim systems. Individual county issues related to the maintenance and operations, development and funding of local interim systems will be directed through the appropriate Technology Services Division sections: Automation Approvals, Locate/Intercept Section, PRISM Branch, and Systems Support Branch. The Regional Administrator will assist DCSS staff and branch managers as necessary and where issues remain problematic or unresolved. Inquires directed to Regional Administrators by LCSA Directors will be communicated through Technology Services managers for appropriate resolution. The Information Technology Division will keep Regional Administrators informed of significant automation activities occurring in the Regional Administrator's region.

**d. Office of Research and Program Design**

Regional Administrators will schedule regular meetings with the Assistant Director and appropriate managers and staff to discuss the status and issues coming out of demonstration projects.

Regional Administrators will also participate in the discussion of information compiled from the CS 157 reports on a quarterly basis in order to evaluate the statewide performance trends in all of the federal and state performance measures with the Office of Research. Regional Administrators will work with the Assistant Director to identify high performing and low performing counties. As a part of this process, baseline program trends will be developed to assist Regional Administrators in their evaluation of LCSA performance.

Regional Administrators will also work with the Office of Research and LCSAs on demonstration projects. This will provide an opportunity to evaluate demonstration projects including those that are designed to better serve low income fathers who are struggling to meet their child support obligations.

**e. Office of Legal Services**

Formal requests for legal opinions of the Office of Legal Services will be sent through the Assistant Deputy Director of Child Support Services Division. It is important to distinguish these requests from requests asking for a clarification of statute or legislative intent. For tracking purposes, requests for interpretation or clarification of statute will be directed through the secretary for the Office of Legal Services.

**f. Communicating Policy Decisions**

Critical policy issues will move through the Assistant Deputy Director for Executive team review and decision making. Executive Team policy positions will be communicated back to the Regional Administrator for follow up and resolution with the impacted local agency(ies). Issues that appear to have statewide policy implications beyond the directly impacted county will be evaluated for incorporation into DCSS policy. These

## ***THE ROLE OF THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR***

---

issues will be discussed with the appropriate DCSS Branch Chief, the Policy Branch Chief, and the Assistant Deputy Director of Child Support Services at the weekly Child Support Services Division meeting. Issues meriting a formal policy statement in the form of a CSS, CSS-IN, or a Local Child Support Agency letter will be assigned to the appropriate branch for research and development of the policy letter. The policy letter will be routed through the formal DCSS review and approval process.