

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

August 23, 2002

LCSA LETTER: 02-28

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: POLICY INTERPRETATIONS

REFERENCE: LCSA LETTER NO. 01-22

In July 2001, the Policy Branch of the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) implemented a process for local child support agencies (LCSAs) to transmit policy questions to the Policy Branch via email from designated LCSA Policy and Fiscal Coordinators. The instructions for this process are outlined in LCSA Letter No. 01-22 and require each LCSA to utilize the designated Policy or Fiscal Coordinator to transmit policy questions to the Policy Branch.

This policy is not being followed in all LCSAs and, as a result, we are experiencing numerous problems in the processing of policy questions. We are receiving many policy interpretation emails from county staff other than the designated LCSA's Policy or Fiscal Coordinator. This has created a very heavy workload for the Branch and has resulted in delayed response times of up to eight weeks in providing a response. Some of the email requests received contain hypothetical situations or do not contain enough information or clarification to provide a response. In addition, some county staff are inappropriately utilizing the policy interpretation process to provide comments to regulations packages.

In an effort to ensure the effectiveness of the policy request process, the Policy Branch has developed some additional guidelines for the transmission of policy questions to the Policy Branch. The following provisions will take effect immediately for policy interpretation requests:

1. All policy interpretations **MUST** be transmitted via the LCSA's designated Policy or Fiscal Coordinator. Any request received from someone other than the designated Policy or Fiscal Coordinator will be returned, unanswered, to the



Policy or Fiscal Coordinator for that county. If the LCSA Policy or Fiscal Coordinator cannot respond to the question, it should then be returned to the Policy Branch. This ensures that only those questions that cannot be answered by the LCSA are directed to DCSS and allows the LCSA to be fully aware of the staff's questions.

2. Policy requests for hypothetical situations will be returned, unanswered, to the Policy or Fiscal Coordinator for that county. Due to staffing levels, the Branch is unable to respond to these types of requests. Policy requests must contain actual case circumstances or a request to interpret a specific policy or statute.
3. Policy requests must be clear and contain a specific question. Many of the requests received contain unclear information and hypothetical situations and do not actually state what the specific question is. Please be very clear in presenting the question.
4. Regulation comments received through the Policy Branch email address will be included in the comments for the regulation package, but a response will not be sent back to the sender.

Attached is LCSA Letter No. 01-22 and a copy of the current Policy and Fiscal Coordinators list. Please send any updates to policy.branch@dcss.ca.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation in this effort. We are committed to ensuring the most effective process of communicating policy information and to providing timely responses to your questions. If you have questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Michele Carotti at (916) 464-5099.

Sincerely,

PATRIC B. ASHBY
Deputy Director
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Attachments

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