

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

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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 20, 2004

LCSA LETTER: 04-15

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

**SUBJECT: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT-  
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT TOOLS**

The Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) program has proven to be a critical component of State and local efforts to improve child support program performance. During two years of implementation of QAPI, the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) and local child support agencies (LCSAs) have learned a great deal regarding the planning, implementation and evaluation of performance improvement activities.

Successful implementation of QAPI requires LCSAs to evaluate program performance and operations, identify areas in which improvement is needed, develop plans for actions to facilitate that improvement, implement those action plans, and evaluate the outcomes of the plans to determine the next steps. As they have gained experience with these activities, many LCSAs have expressed interest in capacity building in a number of areas to facilitate their ability to improve their programs' performance. Areas that have been frequently mentioned as being of interest to LCSAs include:

- Processes for conducting project planning
- Techniques for estimating project outcomes
- Ways to utilize program data to evaluate program effectiveness and identify areas in which improvement is needed
- Techniques for identifying issues with business processes which can impact performance
- Best practices which can be replicated in other LCSAs

In response to these issues, DCSS has developed a number of technical assistance tools which provide suggestions and guidance to LCSAs as they evaluate ways in which program operations and performance can be improved. These include the following:

- **PROJECT PLANNING** - a description of the process which DCSS recommends each LCSA utilize when planning any type of project, including QAPI performance improvement projects. This tool includes a discussion of the important steps and components that should be included in a project planning process, and includes a sample plan and accompanying Gantt Chart.
- **ESTIMATING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY OUTCOMES** – an electronic tool which allows LCSAs to estimate the outcomes of projects that are being considered for implementation. This tool will enable LCSAs, utilizing basic assumptions regarding project activities, to estimate the outcomes of projects, thereby facilitating the planning process for updates of QAPI plans and other performance improvement planning activities. Use of this tool will enable each LCSA to predict the extent to which implementation of a planned performance improvement project will enable the LCSA to achieve its performance targets.
- **DATA ANALYSIS FOR LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES** – suggestions and tips regarding ways in which LCSAs can use the Comparative Data for Managing Program Performance tables to analyze program performance and identify areas in which improvement is needed.
- **BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYSIS** – a document which describes the steps to take when conducting a business process analysis. As LCSAs work to identify areas in which targeted performance improvement efforts are needed, the ability to conduct effective analyses of business practices becomes more important.
- As problem areas in current business practices are identified (e.g., through data analysis), more LCSAs will become involved in business process analysis (BPA) activities. This is particularly important in the case of those LCSAs that have completed comprehensive QAPI case clean-up projects, and are now attempting to identify new performance improvement activities. The use of BPA processes can enable LCSAs to correct problems in current business processes and improve effectiveness and efficiency.
- **LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY BEST PRACTICES SURVEY** – DCSS recently completed a survey in which LCSAs were asked to provide information regarding best practices for overall program management activities. This report describes the results of that survey, and offers suggestions and tips for LCSAs to consider when identifying new business processes and program approaches.

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DCSS Quality Assurance Branch (QAB) staff will work with each LCSA to provide assistance with the use of these tools. It is our hope that these tools will assist LCSAs in their efforts to manage their programs and identify the most appropriate actions, when implemented will enable LCSAs to improve program performance, while ensuring program effectiveness and efficiency.

If you have any questions regarding the contents or use of these tools, please contact your Quality Assurance Branch Analyst.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sandra Poole".

SANDRA O. POOLE

Deputy Director

Child Support Services Division

## QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

### PROJECT PLANNING

Project Management is the process of planning, organizing, and managing tasks and resources to accomplish a defined objective within specific time frames. It includes several phases including planning, implementation, closure and outcome assessment. The success of a project depends on the effort, care, and skill applied in its planning, making project planning a crucial part of the overall project management process.

During project planning, the project planner determines: how the project will be done; who is responsible for implementation; time frames; and how available resources will be used. Without proper planning, a number of negative consequences may occur such as work being overlooked, unnecessary work being done, project benefits not reaching expectations, and unnecessary delays.

#### **PLANNING PROCESS**

To carry out the project planning process, a number of factors must be considered. Following is a brief overview of steps that must be taken to construct a project plan.

*Identify Project Goals and Objectives:* Project goals and objectives are statements that describe what the project will accomplish. Goals are high level statements that provide overall context for what the project is trying to achieve. Project goals should align to the local child support agency's overall business goals. Objectives are lower level statements that describe the specific, tangible products and deliverables that will be achieved as a result of the project's implementation.

Identification of project goals and objectives includes: naming the project; stating the project's overall purpose in one or two sentences; and stating the end results (i.e., what will be achieved at the completion of the project).

*Identify Project Deliverables:* A deliverable is the product which will be developed, or the activity which will be completed, in order to implement the project. As part of this process, the planner should distinguish between deliverables which are necessary to achieve the purpose of the project and those which are merely desirable.

*Establish the Project's Parameters:* Project parameters are the boundaries and limitations which establish the general framework of the project. Establishing parameters includes identifying the project time frame and the overall resources to be devoted to the project (e.g., funding, staffing, etc.).

*Establish Project Milestones:* Milestones are points in the project at which major work products are completed. Milestones indicate progress toward completion of the overall project, and may include completion or achievement of the project's interim targets. Milestones indicate significant progress points and assist in keeping the project on track. To set project milestones, the planner must identify all important points at which significant work products will be completed during the project.

*Identify Activities and Tasks:* Activities or tasks are the individual steps which will be implemented during the project. Activities must be clearly defined, and should be measurable to ensure that anyone can determine if a particular activity is in progress, or completed. To complete this step, the planner should develop a project schedule inserting activities between milestones, and assign responsibility for completion of all activities or tasks to managers or staff as appropriate. Regular updates of management and appropriate management oversight should be incorporated into the plan.

*Estimate time and costs:* In order to plan a project, an estimate of time and costs must be identified. Team members who are fully knowledgeable about the project, who know and understand the costs involved, and who will be involved in the implementation of the project should participate in this portion of the planning.

*Solicit Input:* A draft of the project plan should be distributed to all essential individuals who will be involved in the project's implementation for their review and analysis, as well as appropriate management staff. Carefully consider any input they provide regarding the plan.

## **TOOLS**

As mentioned above, there are many tools available for carrying out project planning. The most commonly used tool is the Gantt Chart.

Gantt Charts are useful tools for analyzing and planning more complex projects. They assist in planning tasks that need to be completed, provide a basis for scheduling when these tasks will be carried out, allow for planning the allocation of resources needed to complete the project, and help work out the *critical path*\* for a project when it must be completed by a particular date. When a project is under way, Gantt charts help monitor whether the project is on schedule.

\* The *critical path* is the sequence of activities that must be completed on schedule for the entire project to be completed on schedule. If an activity on the critical path is delayed by one day, the entire project will be delayed by one day (unless another activity on the critical path can be accelerated by one day).

## **PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROJECT**

### **(PROJECT PLAN SAMPLE)**

An example of a project planning process follows. The sample illustrates a planning process that an local child support agency (LCSA) might use to plan for a performance improvement project as part of the preparation of its Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) plan. LCSAs are encouraged to use the process shown in this example during their project planning phase for both QAPI planning purposes and any other instances in which project planning is required.

### **BLOCK CASE REVIEW**

An LCSA plans to implement a project to improve its performance in the Collections on Current Support and Cases with Payments on Arrears performance measures. In addition, the LCSA has identified that there may be issues with the quality of case data in its system. To address these issues, the LCSA has determined that a block review of all cases within its caseload is necessary.

The LCSA QAPI Coordinator has been given the assignment of planning the block review and taking the lead in the implementation of the review. Planning the review consists of meeting with LCSA management and staff as necessary, and developing a plan which identifies the following:

#### *PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES*

Title:       BLOCK CASE REVIEW

Goal: The following goals are established for the review: (1) improve performance in collections on current support and cases with arrears collections; (2) ensure overall program compliance and passage of the quarterly compliance reviews; (3) ensure case files are properly organized and include all appropriate documentation; and (4) ensure cases are as error-free as possible in preparation for the LCSA's upcoming conversion to a new automated system.

Objective: The objective is to complete a review of the total caseload within a six-month period, beginning January 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2005; take any appropriate enforcement or establishment action on cases that are reviewed; organize all case files; and correct any "correctible" errors found in the automated system during the process.

## *PROJECT DELIVERABLES*

To ensure the effective management of the project, the following products will be utilized:

- A list is to be produced, at the beginning of the project, showing all cases grouped by assigned case manager and case management unit. This will become a schedule and check list for case managers and supervisors to use to ensure that the review is completed within the six month time-frame. This list will be updated monthly as cases are reviewed.
- Other lists may be produced, showing categories of cases needing priority attention in the review, such as those with known assets or employment, but no collection. The review of these cases will be prioritized to ensure that necessary enforcement actions are taken on them first.
- A form will be provided, which case managers will use to record and report the completion of the review of each case and any necessary action taken.
- A report will be compiled and submitted to the QAPI Coordinator by each unit supervisor on the fifth of each month, summarizing the past month's accomplishments made toward completing the block review. The first report is to be submitted by February 5, 2005, and the last report July 5, 2005. As part of the reporting process, monthly updates will be provided to the LCSA managers, the executive management team, and the LCSA director.
- Monthly performance reports and quarterly compliance review reports will be analyzed to determine the impact of the project on performance and compliance.

## *PROJECT PARAMETERS*

- The project will include a review of all cases in the caseload, regardless of whether a support order has been established.
- The project will begin on January 1 and be completed on June 30, 2005, plus time for necessary follow up and reporting.
- Based on the success of the project and available resources, future block reviews may be implemented.

## *PROJECT MILESTONES*

- It is anticipated that approximately one-sixth of the total cases will be reviewed each month, taking the normal attrition of cases in the caseload into consideration.
- An inventory will be taken at the end of the project period to ensure all cases have been reviewed and appropriate enforcement actions taken.
- A project wrap-up meeting will be held with the QAPI Coordinator briefing LCSA management staff on the final project results.

## *ACTIVITIES AND TASKS*

- A staff training session will be held in December 2004, during which the objectives of the project and procedures for the review of cases and implementation of follow-up actions will be discussed.
- At the beginning of each month of the project, unit supervisors will meet with their case managers to review accomplishments and provide updated lists.
- Case managers, in consultation with their supervisors and depending on their work schedules, will identify a time period each week, during which they will conduct the review of their cases.
- Case managers will review each case using the provided recording form and submit the completed forms to their supervisors on a weekly basis. Follow-up case action will be handled on a priority basis, and will be carried out as the individual cases are reviewed.
- Supervisors will batch the forms and deliver them to the QAPI Coordinator on a weekly basis.
- The QAPI Coordinator will compile project status information and submit this information to LCSA management staff for review and feedback on the 10th of each month.

## *PROJECT TIME AND COSTS*

- The case review process will be completed within the six month time-frame, and follow-up case enforcement action on individual cases will be initiated as the reviews of those cases are completed. It is likely that the

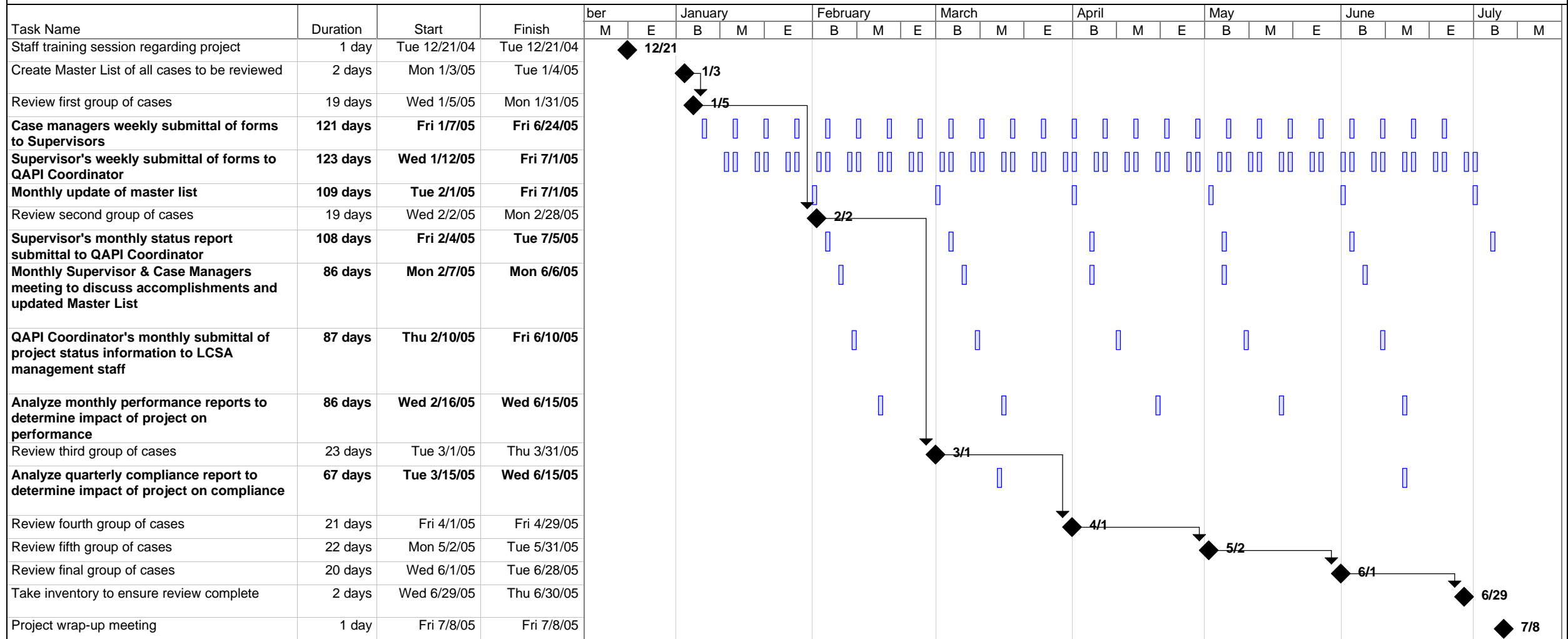


completion of enforcement actions will occur after the June 30, 2005 project end-date for a number of cases.

- No extra costs are associated with the review as staff will incorporate the review into their ongoing case management activities.

Upon completion of the project plan, the QAPI Coordinator will submit the plan for review by appropriate LCSA management and staff. Once the plan is approved, the Coordinator will be responsible for monitoring project implementation and reporting to LCSA management on its status and overall success.

BLOCK CASE REVIEW  
(PROJECT PLAN SAMPLE)



Project: Sample Gantt milestones Date: Wed 10/20/04	Task		Progress		Summary		External Tasks		Deadline	
	Split		Milestone		Project Summary		External Milestone			

# **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

## **ESTIMATING PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITY OUTCOMES**

### **Overview**

As part of ongoing efforts to improve program performance, local child support agencies (LCSAs) must plan for and implement performance improvement projects. During the planning phase of this process, LCSAs must determine which projects offer the greatest opportunity for performance improvement. To do so, an LCSA must be able to quantify the expected outcome of each project being considered. Doing so allows the LCSA to focus its resources on those projects that provide the greatest likelihood of success and represent the greatest return on the LCSA's investment of resources. Identifying expected project outcomes is a key component of each LCSA's Quality Assurance and Performance Analysis (QAPI) process, and provides a means of determining the most effective and efficient approach to achieving desired outcomes.

### **Estimating Project Outcomes**

To estimate project outcomes, LCSAs must have historical information or data available which can be used to make assumptions about the outcomes of future projects. For example, an LCSA that is considering the implementation of a case closure project could base an estimate of the outcome of that project on previous case closure projects. In this instance, if an LCSA closed ten percent of the cases reviewed during a previous case closure project, it may be reasonable to assume that implementation of a new case closure project could also yield a ten percent closure rate, provided that there are no new factors present which might impact the outcome of the new project. In this instance, it would be possible to estimate the number of cases that could be expected to be closed as a result of this project (i.e., ten percent of the cases to be reviewed). Furthermore, the LCSA could estimate the impact of the project to account receivables (i.e., the denominator portion of the current support equation) by considering the average amount of each order per case. This information would enable the LCSA to determine whether the case closure project being considered would be the most effective means of meeting its performance targets and whether the project represents the most efficient use of staff resources.

Because of the importance of having assumptions upon which outcome projections can be based, it is critical that LCSAs track the outcomes of performance improvement projects as they are implemented. Doing so will provide the basis for making assumptions when considering future projects. While the tracking of outcomes does entail the use of some staff time, the benefits derived from being able to evaluate the effectiveness of future projects (thereby allowing LCSAs to focus their resources only on

the most effective and efficient performance improvement activities), makes this process a key investment of staff time and resources for LCSAs.

### **Recommendations/Solutions**

The DCSS Quality Assurance Branch (QAB) and Data Performance and Analysis Branch (DPAB) have developed an Excel electronic spreadsheet (see attached) that will assist LCSAs in estimating outcomes for performance improvement projects. Excel is a common software program and is considered “user friendly,” enabling staff with varying levels of computer expertise to navigate the program with ease. LCSAs will input basic assumptions regarding projects that are being planned, and the Excel spreadsheet will calculate the expected outcome of each project.

In addition, the QAB has developed an Excel spreadsheet which can be used to track the outcomes of projects as they are being implemented. This spreadsheet can be used as a simple, efficient way to track case disposition as projects are implemented, with the spreadsheet calculating final outcomes. Utilization of this optional tool provides an opportunity for LCSAs to track outcomes without the need to invest significant amounts of staff resources in the tracking process.

LCSAs that are interested in using this spreadsheet should contact their Quality Assurance Branch Analyst.

## Introduction

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) has developed a series of Microsoft Excel calculation tools which will assist LCSAs in identifying specific benchmarks that must be achieved to facilitate performance improvement, as well as identify expected outcomes of projects being planned as a means of improving performance. These tools are designed to project the required change in the previous Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2004 data elements to meet the proposed Federal Performance Measure targets for FFY 2005.

There are a total of five tables shown below which are designed to assist LCSAs in planning activities which will facilitate the achievement of performance improvement targets in the Collections on Current Support and Arrears Collections federal performance measures. The tables are protected, allowing entries only in the “un-shaded” boxes. The “shaded” boxes contain a built-in formula, which will enable the necessary calculations to be performed. These tables are intended to be samples which demonstrate how LCSAs can utilize basic caseload information and project outcome assumptions to determine the extent to which QAPI projects being planned will enable the LCSAs to meet their performance targets. DCSS is also providing blank spreadsheets which the LCSAs should use to perform their individual calculations and projections.

**TABLE 1 – CURRENT SUPPORT PROJECTIONS**

	Current Support \$			
	Due	Paid	%	Target %
Current	\$66,165,439	\$33,342,635	50.4%	53.9%
Necessary	\$61,860,175	$\frac{O}{R}$ \$35,663,171		
Remainder	\$4,305,263	-\$2,320,537		

**Purpose:** This table calculates the amount of reduction in child support owed, or the amount of increase in child support collections which would be needed to meet the proposed 3 percent Current Support target.

- 1) Enter data from lines 24 and 25 of the latest CS 157 or CS 1257 report and the LCSA’s proposed target for the current FFY in the un-shaded columns.
- 2) The worksheet will automatically perform the calculations.
- 3) The shaded boxes under the heading “Due” represent the denominator in the Current Support collections performance measure equation and specify the amount by which the denominator must be reduced in order to reach the proposed target.
- 4) The shaded boxes under the heading “Paid” represent the numerator in the Current Support collections equation and specify the amount by which collections must be increased in order to reach the proposed target.

**Please note: LCSAs are encouraged to consider a combination of performance improvement projects or activities which, when combined as a total package of projects, both reduce the denominator in the formula or increases the numerator in order to meet their performance measure targets.**

**TABLE 2-CURRENT SUPPORT CASES CLOSED ESTIMATE**

Current Support Cases Closed Estimate		
Cases Owing Current Support	Average CS Owed/Case	Case Needing to be Closed
17,224	3,841	1,121

**Purpose:** For LCSAs planning a case closure project as a means of achieving their Current Support collections target, this table calculates the number of cases which must be closed in order to reach proposed Current Support target.

- 1) Enter data from line 44 of the latest CS 157 or CS1257 report in the un-shaded box.
- 2) The worksheet will automatically perform the calculations.
- 3) The shaded boxes indicate the amount of child support owed annually per case and the number of cases that need to be closed in order to meet the Current Support target (i.e., if the case closure project is the only activity the LCSA is considering to meet its Current Support target, 1,121 cases must be closed in order to reduce the amount of current support owed to the appropriate level).

**TABLE 3 –CASE CLOSURE PROJECTIONS**

Cases Closure Projection			
Cases to be Reviewed for Closure	Expected Closure Rate	Cases Expected to be Closed	Change in Support Due
3,000	10%	300	\$1,152,440

**Purpose:** An LCSA that is planning a case closure project as a means of achieving its Current Support target must be able to predict the likely outcomes of the project to determine whether it will enable the LCSA to meet its target. This table calculates the number of cases expected to be closed and the respective dollar amount in current support due in order to meet the proposed target.

- 1) Using historical data (assumptions from previous projects) and/or system generated reports enter the number of cases to be reviewed for closure in the first un-shaded box.
- 2) Based on previous experience with similar case closure projects and/or projections for the FFY, enter the expected closure rate in a percentage form (i.e. 10%) in the second un-shaded box.
- 3) The worksheet will automatically calculate the number of cases expected to be closed as well as the reduction in the amount of current support due after completion of the case closure project (based on the average amount of support due per case).

**TABLE 4 – ORDER MODIFICATIONS**

Order Modifications			
Cases with Orders Modified	Average \$ Per Case Modified	Change in Support Due (Monthly)	Change in Support Due (Annually)
300	\$150	\$45,000	\$540,000

**Purpose:** An LCSA that is planning an order modification project as part of its Current Support performance improvement strategy must be able to predict the likely change in the total amount of current support due as a result of the project. This will enable the LCSA to determine the extent to which the order modification project will help to achieve the Current Support target. This table calculates the expected monthly and annual change in current support due by modifying orders.

- 1) Using historical data (assumptions from previous projects) and/or system generated reports enter the number of orders expected to be modified in the first un-shaded box.
- 2) Based on previous experience with order modification projects, enter the average amount per order in the second un-shaded box.
- 3) The worksheet will automatically calculate the monthly and annual change in current support due after completion of the project.

**TABLE 5- CASES WITH ARREARS**

Cases with Arrears					
	Owing		Paying	%	Target %
Current	27,833		15,681	56.3%	59.3%
Necessary	26,444		16,505		
Remainder	1,389	O R	-824		

**Purpose:** LCSAs considering QAPI projects which will assist in meeting Arrears Collections targets must identify the increase in the number of paying arrears cases, or the decrease in the number of cases owing arrears which will be needed to meet the target. This table calculates the necessary increase in the number of cases paying on arrears, and the necessary decrease in the number of cases owing arrears to meet the proposed arrears target.

- 1) Enter data from lines 28 and 29 of the latest CS 157 or CS 1257 report and the proposed arrears target in the un-shaded boxes.
- 2) The worksheet will automatically perform the calculations.
- 3) The shaded boxes under the heading “Owing” represent the denominator in the equation or the number of arrears cases due that should be closed to meet the proposed arrears target.
- 4) The shaded boxes under the heading “Paying” represent the numerator in the arrears performance measure equation or the number of arrears cases for which collections are needed in order to meet the proposed arrears target.



## **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT**

### **DATA ANALYSIS FOR LOCAL CHILD SUPPORT AGENCIES**

Data analysis is a key component of each local child support agency's (LCSA's) effort to evaluate the effectiveness of its programs. The ability to identify program areas in which problems may exist is critical to an LCSA's ability to devise effective strategies for changes in business processes and policies in order to improve performance.

This guide offers tips to LCSAs in their efforts to use data to analyze their program activities and to strategize to improve their performance.

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) Data and Performance Analysis Branch (DPAB) collects and analyzes statistical data related to the federal performance measures and the OCSE 157. The DPAB collects data monthly through the CS1257 to monitor state and LCSA performance on the federal performance measures and factors related to performance. Results on selected areas are disseminated monthly and more in-depth information is published on a quarterly and annual basis. The reports are referred to as Comparative Data for Managing Program Performance. The data is posted on the County Secure website.

The Comparative Data for Managing Program Performance is organized into the following sections:

- Section 1 Performance Data for Local Child Support Agencies
- Section 2 Caseload
- Section 3 Support Orders
- Section 4 Collections
- Section 5 Undistributed Collections
- Section 6 Current Support
- Section 7 Arrears
- Section 8 Customer Service and Other Measures
- Section 9 Local Child Support Agencies – Administrative Services
- Section 10 Demographics (2000 Census data published with FFY 2000-2002 report)

Some sections are updated annually, while others are updated quarterly or monthly. The majority of the tables in Sections 1-4 and Section 6 are compiled monthly. A listing of all the tables and the frequency with which they are produced is attached. In addition, on an annual basis, tables comparing California's performance to other states are published for the first seven section topics listed above and are contained in Sections 11 through 18.

The tables are sorted by LCSA caseload size into the following size groupings:

- Very Large, currently defined as over 90,000 cases (6 LCSAs representing 57.3 percent of the caseload);
- Large, currently defined as between 25,000 – 89,999 (10 LCSAs representing 25.3 percent of the caseload);
- Medium, currently defined as between 10,000-24,999 cases (13 LCSAs representing 11.4 percent of the caseload);
- Small, currently defined as between 5,000-9,999 cases (11 LCSAs representing 4.3 percent of the caseload); and
- Very Small, currently defined as between 0-4,999 cases (12 LCSAs representing 1.8 percent of the caseload).

The purpose of grouping LCSAs by size is to facilitate comparisons between LCSAs of like size.

#### Comparison to LCSAs of Similar Size

The LCSA should compare its performance to statewide performance, and to LCSAs of like size for all tables in the Comparative Data Binder. If the LCSA identifies a specific performance measure or area in which performance improvement is desired, a focus on elements related to that performance measure or area should be initiated.

#### Analyzing Trends

An LCSA should compare performance over a period of time to identify trends. Sometimes, due to fluctuations in time periods, it may be necessary to compare similar time periods. For example, due to tax intercepts collections, third quarter collections may be higher than first quarter collections each year. To get an accurate assessment, it may be necessary to compare third quarter collections to the third quarter collections of a previous year.

#### Data Integrity

In addition to trends, comparing data over a period of time can also identify anomalies in reporting. Along with meeting performance goals, for purposes of incentives and avoiding penalties, data must meet a 95 percent standard of reliability. Case reviews for data reliability should also be conducted to determine the accuracy of the LCSA's performance data. If data is unreliable, any data analysis will be flawed.

## **Data Analysis Related to Federal Performance Measures**

The following sections contain specific suggestions for data analysis related to federal performance measures.

### 1. **Paternity Establishment Performance**

The “IV-D Paternity Establishment Percentage” (PEP) measures the total number of children in the IV-D caseload in the fiscal year (or, at the option of the State, as of the end of the fiscal year) who have been born out of wedlock and for whom paternity has been established compared to the total number of children in the IV-D caseload as of the end of the preceding fiscal year who were born out of wedlock, expressed as a percent; *or*

- 
- The “Statewide Paternity Establishment Percentage” measures the total number of children born out-of-wedlock for whom paternity was acknowledged or established in the fiscal year compared to the total number of children in the state born out-of-wedlock during the preceding fiscal year, expressed as a percent.

#### *Comparative Data Tables to Review*

- 1.1 Statewide Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP)
- 1.1.1 IV-D Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP)
- 2.4 Cases Potentially Eligible for Closure
- 3.1.1 Paternities – Methods of Establishment
- 3.2 Statewide Comparison of Paternities Established Judicially

Table 1.1 contains information on the out-of-wedlock births in the county as compared to the state. The LCSA can calculate its percentage of out-of-wedlock births and compare it to its percentage of the caseload and to counties of like size.

If an LCSA has a low Statewide PEP, the LCSA should compare the number of POP declarations done (on Table 1.1) compared to LCSAs of like size and as a percentage of unwed births in the county. If the number is low, outreach to the local hospitals by POP coordinators should be considered.

If an LCSA has a low IV-D PEP, both the numerator and denominator of the formula should be examined. The numerator represents the children in the caseload who were born out of wedlock for whom paternity has been established. The first area to consider is the number of paternities established judicially compared to the number established in other counties of similar size. If the LCSA’s number is low, the LCSA should focus on establishing paternities that are at issue. The LCSA also may want to check its records. A number of those LCSAs that converted to SACSS or other consortia at one point have data problems on lines 5 and 6 of the CS 1257 which are being identified during the data reliability reviews. Often, paternities are not shown

as established as the date was not carried over during the conversion process. Outreach to hospitals may help to improve statewide PEP and can help IV-D PEP as well by reducing the number of paternities the IV-D agency must establish judicially. It is also helpful to check the denominator to ensure that children were correctly reported as born out of wedlock. Finally, an LCSA may want to determine whether any of those cases where paternity is at issue qualify for case closure.

## 2. Support Order Establishment Performance

This data element measures cases with support orders as compared with the total caseload. Support orders are broadly defined as all legally enforceable orders, including orders for medical support only, and zero support orders.

### *Comparative Data Tables to Review*

- 1.1.1 IV-D Paternity Establishment Percentage (PEP)
- 1.2 Cases with a Support Order Established
- 2.4 Cases Potentially Eligible for Closure
- 3.3 Locates by Successful Service of Summons and Complaint

If an LCSA has a low percent of cases with a child support order, it may be due to a low paternity establishment rate or a low rate of locates for summons and complaint. If neither of those factors seems to be a problem, the LCSA should examine those cases that do not have orders that would be potentially eligible for closure to reduce the denominator for the calculation of this performance measure.

## 3. Current Collections Performance

This performance standard measures the amount of current support collected as compared to the total amount of current support owed, expressed as a percentage.

### *Comparative Data Tables to Review*

- 1.3 Collections on Current Support
- 2.1 Local Agency Caseload by Type
- 2.4 Cases Potentially Eligible for Closure
- 3.6 Support Orders Set by Default
- 3.7 Support Orders Set Using Presumed Income
- 3.8 Support Orders Set by Default Using Presumed Income
- Sctn 4 Collections
- Sctn 6 Current Support
- 10.1 County Demographics (2000 Census data published with FFY 2000-2002 report)

In analyzing the factors that contribute to a low rate of collections of current support, one element to examine is the type of cases in the caseload as compared to other LCSAs. Correlations have been found to exist between a high percentage of current

assistance cases in the caseload with lower LCSA performance on this measure. Cases with orders set by default, especially using presumed income, have also been shown to correlate with low performance on this measure.

It is also informative to examine all the tables regarding collections. For example, collections by source may identify areas to focus on as a means of improving collections. A low referral rate on interstate collections will also impact performance. Section 6 (Current Support) provides useful information on both the numerator and denominator. If an LCSA wants to analyze how the denominator, current support due, is affecting performance, the tables in the section (except 6.3 and 6.4) provide comparative information, by caseload type, as a percentage of the state's current support due and the average amount due per case. If current support due for the LCSA is high in comparison to other LCSAs, it may point to problems in the way orders are being set and indicate a need to modify orders, as appropriate. An LCSA should also compare and analyze performance on the numerator, current support distributed, for which data is provided on Table 6.3. Table 6.4 provides data on the number of cases paying support which is also a factor to consider. County demographics related to income per capita in the county and more precisely, income of NCPs may also provide important information in identifying the cause of low performance. Finally, an LCSA may want to determine whether any cases in which collections are not being received qualify for case closure.

#### 4. Arrearage Collections Performance

This performance standard measures cases with child support arrearage collections as compared with cases owing arrearages.

##### *Comparative Data Tables to Review*

1.4	Cases with Arrears Collections
2.1	Local Agency Caseload by Type
2.4	Cases Potentially Eligible for Closure
2.7	Local Agency Cases Referred to FTB
2.9	Local Agency Cases Submitted for Intercept to IDB
3.6	Support Orders Set by Default
3.7	Support Orders Set Using Presumed Income
3.8	Support Orders Set by Default Using Presumed Income
Sctn 4	Collections
Sctn 7	Arrears
10.1	County Demographics (2000 Census data published with FFY 2000-2002 report)

In analyzing the factors that contribute to a low rate of cases with arrears collections, many factors that affect collections of current support also affect this measure. Again, one element to examine is the type of cases in the caseload as compared to other LCSAs. Correlations have been found to exist between a high percentage of current assistance cases in the caseload with lower performance on this measure.

Cases with orders set by default, especially using presumed income, have also been shown to correlate with low performance on this measure.

As noted above, it is also informative to examine all the tables regarding collections. As with the current support measure, collections by source may identify areas to focus on as a means of improving arrears collections. Franchise Tax Board referrals and collections and Cases Submitted for Intercept may pinpoint a problem in arrears cases being referred for collections.

Section 7 (Arrears) provides useful information on both the numerator and denominator. If an LCSA wants to analyze how the denominator, cases with arrears due, is affecting performance, the LCSA should consult Table 1.4. The tables in the Section 7 (except 7.3) provide comparative information on the amount of arrears due, by caseload type, and as a percentage of the state's arrears due. If the cases with arrears due or the amount due is high in comparison to other LCSAs, it may indicate a history of orders being set at amounts higher than other LCSAs. This has often been the case in LCSAs that set a high percentage of their orders by default using presumed income.

An LCSA should also compare and analyze performance on the numerator, cases paying arrears, which is Table 7.3. County demographics related to income per capita in the county and more precisely, income of NCPs may also provide important information in identifying the cause of low performance. Finally, an LCSA may want to determine whether any cases in which arrears collections are not being received qualify for case closure.

## Comparative Data for Managing Program Performance Data Collection Frequency

### 1. Performance Data for Local Child Support Agencies

Table

Frequency

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Comparison between Quarters	Table 01.1		Q	

Table

Frequency

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Summary of Federal Performance Measures	Table 1	M	Q	A
Federal Performance Measures Ranked and Averaged	Table 1a	M	Q	A
Statewide Paternity Establishment Percentage	Table 1.1	M	Q	A
IV-D Paternity Establishment Percentage	Table 1.1.1	M	Q	A
Cases with a Support Order Established	Table 1.2	M	Q	A
Collections on Current Support	Table 1.3	M	Q	A
Cases with Arrears Collections	Table 1.4	M	Q	A
Cost-Effectiveness	Table 1.5			A
Summary of State Performance Measures	Table 1.6		Q	A

### 2. Caseload

Table\*\*

Frequency

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Change in Statewide Caseload	Table 02.1		Q	A
Change in Statewide Caseload – Current Assistance	Table 02.1.1		Q	A
Change in Statewide Caseload – Former Assistance	Table 02.1.2		Q	A
Change in Statewide Caseload – Never Assistance	Table 02.1.3		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Caseload	Table 02.2		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Caseload – Current Assistance	Table 02.2.1		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Caseload – Former Assistance	Table 02.2.2		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Caseload – Never Assistance	Table 02.2.3		Q	A
Change in Statewide Interstate Caseload	Table 02.3			A
Change in Statewide Interstate Caseload - Cases Initiated in California	Table 02.3.1			A
Change in Interstate Statewide Caseload- Cases Received from other States	Table 02.3.2			A
Change in Local Agency Interstate Caseload	Table 02.4			A
Change in Local Agency Interstate Caseload-Cases Initiated in California	Table 02.4.1			A
Change in Local Agency Interstate Caseload-Cases Received from other States	Table 02.4.2			A
Change in Statewide Caseload Referred to Franchise Tax Board	Table 02.5			A

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Local Agency Caseload by Type	Table 2.1		Q	A
Local Agency Caseload Movement	Table 2.2	M	Q	A
Local Agency Caseload Movement– Current	Table 2.2.1	M	Q	A
Local Agency Caseload Movement– Former	Table 2.2.2	M	Q	A
Local Agency Caseload Movement- Never	Table 2.2.3	M	Q	A
Statewide Duplicate Cases - Intercounty	Table 2.3			A

Statewide & Local Agency Cases Potentially Eligible for Closure	Table 2.4		Q	A
Interstate Cases Initiated in California	Table 2.5		Q	A
Interstate Cases Initiated in California – Current Assistance	Table 2.5.1			A
Interstate Cases Initiated in California – Former Assistance	Table 2.5.2			A
Interstate Cases Initiated in California – Never Assistance	Table 2.5.3			A
Interstate Cases Received	Table 2.6			A
Interstate Cases Received – Current Assistance	Table 2.6.1			A
Interstate Cases Received – Former Assistance	Table 2.6.2			A
Interstate Cases Received – Never Assistance	Table 2.6.3			A
Local Agency Cases Referred to Franchise Tax Board	Table 2.7			A
Franchise Tax Board - Cases Referred and Withdrawn	Table 2.8			A
Local Agency Cases Submitted for Intercept to Intercept Database	Table 2.9			A

3. Support Orders  
Frequency

Table

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Local Agency Paternities – Methods of Establishment	Table 3.1			A
Statewide Paternities – Methods of Establishment	Table 3.1.1			A
Statewide Comparison of Paternities Established Judicially	Table 3.2		Q	A
Locates by Successful Service of Summons and Complaint	Table 3.3			A
Statewide Comparison of Support Orders Established	Table 3.4		Q	A
Support Orders Established During the Period	Table 3.5		Q	A
Support Orders Set by Default	Table 3.6	M	Q	A
Support Orders Set Using Presumed Income	Table 3.7	M	Q	A
Support Orders Set by Default Using Presumed Income	Table 3.8	M	Q	A
Cases with Medical Support Ordered	Table 3.9		Q	A
Statewide Comparison of Health Insurance Provided as Ordered	Table 3.10		Q	A
Health Insurance Provided as Ordered	Table 3.11		Q	A

4. Collections  
Frequency

Table\*\*

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Change in Statewide Distributed Collections	Table 04.1		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Distributed Collections	Table 04.2	M**	Q	A
Change in Local Agency Cases with Collections	Table 04.3		Q	A

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Statewide Distributed Collections by Case Type	Table 4.1	M	Q	A
Local Agency Distributed Collections by Case Type	Table 4.1.1	M	Q	A
Local Agency Distributed Collections per Case	Table 4.2	M	Q	A
Local Agency Distributed Collections per Case by Case Type	Table 4.2.1	M	Q	A
Distributed Collections per Case with Collection	Table 4.3	M	Q	A
Distributed Collections per Case with Collection by Case Type	Table 4.3.1	M	Q	A
Statewide Distributed Collections Received by Source	Table 4.4			A
Local Agency Distributed Collections Received by Source	Table 4.4.1			A
Local Agency Collections Received from Franchise Tax Board	Table 4.5			A
Local Agency Interstate Collections – Received from Other States	Table 4.6			A
Local Agency Interstate Collections – Collected for Other States	Table 4.7			A
Distributed Collections per Case with a Support Order	Table 4.8	M	Q	A



Distributed Collections per Case with a Support Order by Case Type	Table 4.8.1	M	Q	A
Local Agency Cases with Support Orders with Collections	Table 4.9	M	Q	A
Local Agency Cases with Support Orders with Collections – Current Assistance	Table 4.9.1	M	Q	A
Local Agency Cases with Support Orders with Collections – Former Assistance	Table 4.9.2	M	Q	A
Local Agency Cases with Support Orders with Collections – Never Assistance	Table 4.9.3	M	Q	A
Percent of Caseload with Collections	Table 4.10	M	Q	A
Percent of Caseload Collections – Current Assistance	Table 4.10.1	M	Q	A
Percent of Caseload Collections – Former Assistance	Table 4.10.2	M	Q	A
Percent of Caseload Collections – Never Assistance	Table 4.10.3	M	Q	A

5. Undistributed Collections  
Frequency

Table

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Comparison of Undistributed Collections (UDC) to Caseload	Table 5.1		Q	A
Statewide Undistributed Collections Summary	Table 5.2		Q	A
Statewide Undistributed Collections Percentages	Table 5.3		Q	A
Undistributed Collections Aging	Table 5.4			A
Percent of Statewide Undistributed Collections	Table 5.5			A

6. Current Support  
Frequency

Table\*\*

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Change in Statewide Current Support Due	Table 06.1		Q	A
Change in Local Agency Current Support Due	Table 06.1.1		Q	A
Change in Average Current Support Due per Case Owing Current Support	Table 06.2		Q	A

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Comparison of Current Support Due to Total Caseload	Table 6.1	M	Q	A
Comparison of Current Support Due – Current Assistance	Table 6.1.1	M	Q	A
Comparison of Current Support Due – Former Assistance	Table 6.1.2	M	Q	A
Comparison of Current Support Due – Never Assistance	Table 6.1.3	M	Q	A
Local Agency Current Support Due by Case Type	Table 6.2	M	Q	A
Local Agency Current Support Due vs. Current Support Distributed	Table 6.3	M	Q	A
Local Agency Cases Paying Towards Current Support	Table 6.4	M	Q	A
Average Current Support Due per Case Owing Current Support	Table 6.5		Q	A

7. Arrears  
Frequency

Table\*\*

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Change in Statewide Arrears Due	Table 07.1		Q	A

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Comparison of Arrears Due to Total Caseload	Table 7.1		Q	A
Comparison of Arrears Due – Current Assistance	Table 7.1.1		Q	A
Comparison of Arrears Due – Former Assistance	Table 7.1.2		Q	A

Comparison of Arrears Due – Never Assistance	Table 7.1.3		Q	A
Local Agency Arrears Due by Caseload Type	Table 7.2			A
Local Agency Arrears Due vs. Arrears Distributed	Table 7.3			A

8. Customer Service and Other Measures  
Frequency

Table

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Open Complaints	Table 8.1		Q	A
Resolved Complaints by Complaint Type	Table 8.2		Q	A
State Hearings Granted	Table 8.3		Q	A

9. Local Child Support Agencies – Administrative Services  
Frequency

Table

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
Compliance Status	Table 9.1			A
Cases per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Table 9.2			A
Distributed Collections per Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)	Table 9.3			A

10. Demographics  
Frequency

Table

Frequency		M*	Q*	A*
County Demographics	Table 10.1			A

# QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

## BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYSIS

### Overview

Establishing effective and efficient business practices is essential for providing quality child support services, meeting federal and State compliance requirements, and ensuring the highest levels of program performance. Inefficient or inappropriate business practices may lead to duplication of efforts, lost time, and/or inappropriate use of resources, and often results in low productivity, poor performance and customer dissatisfaction.

This document serves as a guide for local child support agencies (LCSAs) to use when evaluating their current business practices. Conducting a business process analysis (BPA) can assist an LCSA in determining if a change is needed in business processes in order to improve program performance or operations. As such, BPA is an important tool in each LCSA's implementation of the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) program. Examples of needed changes that can be identified as a result of a BPA are eliminating duplication, streamlining daily operations, or maximizing the use of limited resources to improve efficiency and overall performance.

Effective business processes improve the quality of an LCSA's program work and may reduce the time needed to complete program activities, and facilitate an improved relationship with program customers, including custodial parents (CPs), non custodial parents (NCPs), employers and IV-A agencies. In addition, sound business practices are a key part of an LCSA's efforts to deal with reduced staff or the loss of staff. Identifying duplication of efforts or overlap of duties can reduce a staff's workload by allowing them to work smarter, not harder.

Each LCSA should carefully consider the use of a BPA process as a means for identifying opportunities for performance improvement. Doing so will facilitate program improvements and enable the LCSA to utilize its resources in the most efficient and effective manner possible. This tool provides guidance regarding the uses of, and process for, carrying out a BPA. Each LCSA has the option of customizing its BPA based on its own needs and circumstances; however, LCSAs are encouraged to consider the recommendations included in this tool.

### When to Conduct a Business Process Analysis

As indicated above, BPA represents opportunities to improve program performance, eliminate duplication and improve customer service. As part of their implementation of QAPI, the majority of LCSAs have planned and carried out various case clean-up projects in which the focus is on taking enforcement actions (e.g., review and modification, case closure, etc.) on specific lists or categories of cases in order to ensure proper management of those cases. Many LCSAs are finding that, as they complete these case-specific clean-up projects, it is becoming necessary to identify new and creative ways to continue to meet their performance improvement goals.

BPA offers an excellent opportunity to address targeted areas within a program in which process changes can help improve performance. As a means of identifying program areas which are hindering performance, LCSAs should analyze the Comparative Data for Managing Program Performance tables. These tables provide valuable information regarding each LCSA's performance in a number of specific program areas, and offer the opportunity to

compare the LCSA's performance with statewide performance and that of other LCSAs with similar characteristics. This analysis process will frequently identify program areas in which an LCSA's performance does not meet expectations, statewide performance, or the performance level of other comparable LCSAs. Where this is the case, the LCSA must take steps to identify the reason for the lowered performance and the changes that can be made to address the problem area. For instance, the monthly comparative data tables include a table which shows the percent of support orders that are set by default. An LCSA with an above-average percent of default orders and a low percent of collections should review and analyze its establishment function (also intake and locate) and consider its current processes to correct the problem.

In addition, LCSAs that undertake a business redesign will be better equipped in preparing for the implementation of the California Child Support Automated System (CCSAS), which will require all counties to evaluate and redesign its business practices. Transition to CCSAS will significantly impact child support services and LCSAs in many ways, including daily business processes. Previous experience with transitioning LCSAs from one automated child support system to another has proven that there are significant personnel and resource impacts that occur as a result of a system transition. The transition to CCSAS will significantly alter LCSA business processes, and will require reengineering of business processes, retraining of LCSA staff and establishment of new procedures to ensure the system is used efficiently and effectively.

## **Participation Levels**

In order to ensure a successful redesign of business processes all staff must actively support and participate in the evaluation and redesign process. Emphasis is placed on the importance of involvement and participation of all staff that participate at any level in the business process being analyzed (clerical staff, case workers, supervisors and managers). Front line staff that performs daily activities will provide valuable insight on current processes and may have good ideas for improvement (BPA teams in medium and large LCSAs may need to interview staff and bring their input to the team, while smaller LCSAs may be able to have all relevant staff participate on the team). The participation of managers and supervisors is necessary for making key decisions and implementing a plan to redesign the business processes being analyzed.

Although a BPA and redesign requires the input and support of all involved staff, a team or committee should be formed. The team will be responsible for the analysis and redesign of business processes from start to finish, as well as continuous follow-up monitoring to determine the extent to which the BPA has led to achieving the desired process improvement. The team should include all staff that participate in the business process which is being discussed as well as relevant managers and supervisors. It is important to identify roles within the team (e.g., team leader, facilitator, note-taker, timekeeper, etc.). The team should first meet and discuss the area(s) that need improvement and brainstorm ideas for a business redesign. Once the problem has been identified, the process of flowcharting current business practices and interviewing appropriate staff will begin. During these discussions, the team will document any discussions and/or meetings that are held.

## **Evaluating/Analyzing Business Processes**

A thorough analysis should be done of each function and each step within the current business process to determine whether duplication of efforts or communication gaps exists, or if there is overlap of duties. This will require the LCSA to gather pertinent data regarding the existing business process being analyzed. As part of this process, the team will determine what information is needed in order to accurately reflect the current business process, as well as which staff are most appropriate for providing that information. In some cases (e.g., in smaller LCSAs), team members may be able to describe the business process, while in larger LCSAs, team members may need to interview other staff to gather the necessary information (for example, a BPA team may include caseworkers, but team members may still need to interview other caseworkers to ensure that their understanding of the process is consistent with other staffs' understanding of the process).

Once the information-gathering phase is complete, the BPA team will prepare a flowchart which represents the business process being analyzed. The flowchart will include the steps necessary to carry out that specific function or task. All tasks should be identified and documented, including best practices and problem areas (e.g., duplication of efforts or process gaps). This will create a visual of the overall process and frequently identify duplications or problem areas. The flowchart will also facilitate the identification of solutions to the problems by enabling team members to visualize the current process and, in many cases, easily determine where a process change is needed. This will also be useful for developing the final flowchart, which will represent the newly redesigned business process.

It is important to note that LCSAs should not only be looking for inefficiencies but also to best practices that promote high performance. LCSAs will be aware of business practices that have been successful in their program and should document these as best practices. LCSAs may also wish to adopt a best practice of another LCSA and/or share their best practice with other LCSAs. It is strongly recommended that during the BPA process, LCSAs communicate and network with other LCSAs of similar size and demographics, as well as those that operate within the same consortia system to assist with the identification of potential process improvements.

## **Identifying and Implementing Necessary Business Process Redesigns**

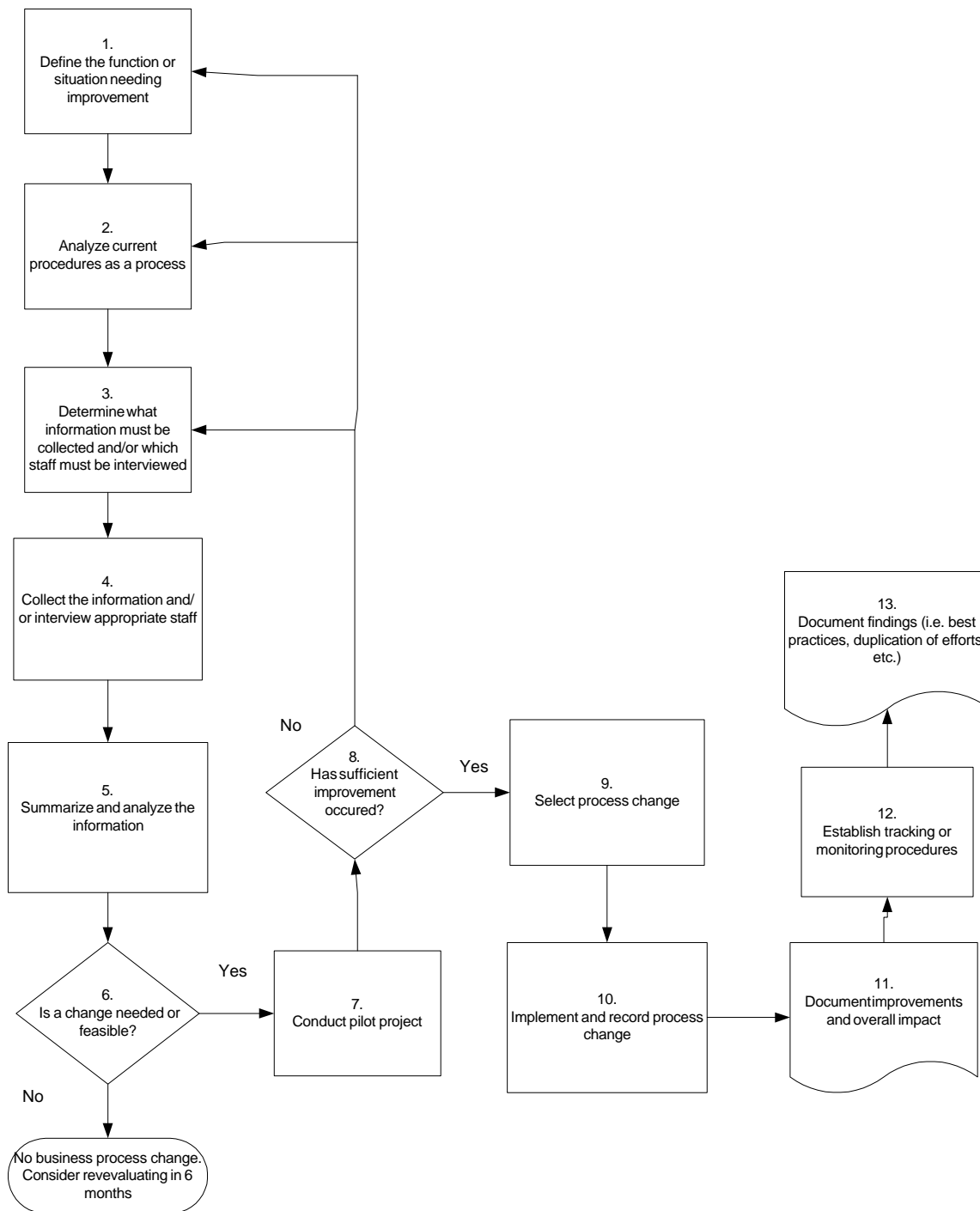
Once the flowchart is complete, the team will determine whether a business process change is appropriate. Where it is determined that a change is appropriate, the team should identify the change(s) which will be made to the process, and document the new business process in written format (e.g., a written procedure which describes the new process in detail). The team should then develop a plan to pilot the new procedure. Doing so will allow the LCSA to test the new procedure to determine the extent to which it successfully improves the business process and facilitates improved performance and/or efficiencies. In cases where the piloted procedure does not achieve the desired result, the BPA team should reevaluate its newly proposed process and consider other options for change. Where the piloted procedure proves to be successful, and it is determined that the LCSA should adopt the new procedure, information regarding the new procedure must be provided to all appropriate LCSA staff (e.g., through an e-mail or memorandum). This information should include a description of the issue or problem being addressed and documentation of the new business process. Expectations regarding staff's role in implementing the new process should be described clearly. In addition, the implementation plan should include a process for monitoring and documenting the extent to which the new process is achieving its desired results and successfully improving the LCSA's

performance. This will include both internal tracking processes which the LCSA implements (which include opportunities for staff to provide feedback regarding the new process), as well as improvements which are reflected in the comparative data tables.

As a final step, the BPA team should prepare a report documenting the results of the analysis and process redesign effort. This report should clearly describe the extent to which the redesigned process has led to improved performance or greater efficiencies, and indicate whether further analysis of the process for additional improvements is warranted.

The diagram below illustrates the steps required in analyzing business processes.

## Steps to Analyzing Business Processes



As part of the ongoing effort to improve program performance, LCSAs should evaluate the critical functions of child support program operations periodically. Following is a list of program areas recommended for review:

Intake  
Locate  
Establishment (paternity and child support orders)  
Enforcement  
Review and Adjustment  
Interstate  
Case Closure  
Customer Service  
Collections and Distribution

In addition to the evaluation of data, there are other factors that would lead an LCSA to determine that a business process analysis would be appropriate. Each LCSA should periodically evaluate its overall performance in each of these areas to determine whether changes are needed. As part of this analysis, certain questions should be asked regarding each function. These include:

- Are there written procedures in place or is training available for new and existing employees?
- What are the actual timeframes for conducting the tasks under each function (i.e., the timeframes within which the LCSA completes those tasks)?
- Are the actual timeframes in compliance with federal and state regulations and/or the LCSA's internal office procedures?
- Is there clear communication between each unit or sub-unit within the LCSA as cases move between units during the implementation process?
- When information is received from any source (e.g., CP, IV-A agency), is it properly documented and/or is the system updated?
- What tasks or processes are automated, and which tasks or processes require manual intervention?

At a minimum, the following issues should be considered when evaluating each program function (note these are not all inclusive)<sup>1</sup>:

#### **Intake**

- What is the current intake process?
- Does the process for gathering intake information provide complete and thorough information?
- Is there efficient interaction between the LCSA and Social Services (Welfare) for public assistance cases?
- Is the interview process conducive to establishing a good working relationship between the person interviewed and the LCSA?
- Who, where, and/or how is the information received from the applicant and/or the IV-A agency and how or when is it entered into the system?

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<sup>1</sup> PSI Management Assessment Protocol For County IV-D Programs. September 2002. Part IV-3 through IV-7



## **Locate**

- What is the current locate process?
- Are caseworkers familiar with all sources of locate information available to them?
- Are there standards for verifying locate information?
- Are there sufficient procedures for following up on initial locate leads?
- Are automated locate sources fully utilized?

## **Paternity and Support Order Establishment**

- What are the current processes for establishing paternity and support obligations through the judicial process?
- Does the overall process produce fair, appropriate and timely child support orders and/or paternity establishment?
- Is the process of service, the summons and complaint package, and the initial interaction between the NCP and the child support agency conducive to obtaining stipulations?
- Are default judgments over-utilized?
- What special efforts are made to work with people with language barriers?

## **Enforcement**

- What are the current enforcement processes?
- Is wage withholding automated and fully utilized?
- Is the value of new hire information maximized by obtaining and using the information as quickly as possible?
- Can the interaction between the Franchise Tax Board and the LCSA be improved?
- Are enforcement tools such as State License Match System (SLMS), liens, and intercepts used as effectively as possible?
- Are cases monitored from the time the order is entered into enforcement and a payment is missed (early intervention)?

## **Review and Adjustment**

- What is the current review and adjustment process?
- Are cases routinely reviewed to determine if an adjustment is appropriate and/or necessary?
- Does the automated system prompt timely review?
- Are orders that are based upon presumed income subsequently reviewed once reliable income information is obtained?

## **Interstate**

- What are the procedures for handling interstate cases?
- If there is a separate interstate division or staffing assignment, when is a case referred to the division or staff?

## **Case Closure**

- What are the current procedures for closing cases?
- How are cases that are eligible for closure identified?
- Who in the LCSA is responsible for closing cases?
- Is staff aware of case closure criteria and procedures?

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT LCSA BEST PRACTICES SURVEY RESULTS**

As part of the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement (QAPI) Program, identification of best practices provides an invaluable assistance tool for those seeking information on how to improve performance in a given program area. The QAPI program is founded on the belief that state and local agencies share a mutual responsibility to improve program performance statewide. A key component of the QAPI program is the focus on identifying and sharing information about what works. Best practices capture the experience of practitioners that are getting good results and facilitate efforts to enhance program performance and customer service and satisfaction. Best practices will provide the structure, approach and tools necessary to focus efforts statewide on performance improvements. Best practices will provide information to those that need it, through easy-to-use tools, methods and resources.

In order to gather and disseminate information on best practices, the Quality Assurance Branch conducted a survey to identify those organizational techniques, operational practices, and special projects that both enhance program performance in local child support agencies (LCSAs), and are suitable for replication in other LCSAs throughout California. Program areas of interest include LCSA practices pertaining to: leadership and organizational techniques; case management practices (particularly as they pertain to improving performance in the federal performance measures), approaches to customer service, fiscal and administrative practices, and implementing the QAPI program. Information obtained through this survey is documented below and is being provided to all LCSAs for their review and use.

LCSAs are encouraged to consider replication of any best practices that offer the opportunity for improving performance in their programs, including those referenced in the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement's (OCSE) "Compendium of Best Practices/Good Ideas in Child Support Enforcement - 2003, 8th Edition," recently distributed to the LCSAs by electronic mail and available on the OCSE website at "[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/IM/2004/im004-03.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/IM/2004/im004-03.htm)."

## 1. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL TECHNIQUES:

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
Question of the Day Exercise	Tuolumne	Twice weekly a question is developed by a compliance analyst and e-mailed to all staff. Questions cover federal performance measures, policy letters, customer service issues, compliant resolution and compliance issues. The answers are given with references (regulation, statute, policy letter, etc.).	Provides ongoing training & program improvement. All staff participate in a fun learning exercise. The staff person who answers the question first is given a crown. All other winners are given a star for their paper crown & are entered in the staff recognition drawing.	<b>Adele Hendrickson</b> (209) 533-6460 ahendrickson@co.tuolumne.ca.us
Co-Stars	Sacramento	CASES Imaging System.	Allows any CASES LCSA access to all imaged material; orders, liens, paternity questionnaires & other pertinent information.	<b>Sharon Blackwell</b> (916) 875-7244 blackwells@saccounty.net
Internal Teleconferencing	Ventura	Conduct meetings between two locations (field offices) within their local network, using web cams.	Eliminates travel.	<b>Raji Bishnoi</b> (805) 654-3481 raji.bishnoi@mail.com

## 2. CASE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

### a. Administrative Practices Related to Case Management

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
Electronic Locate File System (ELFS)	San Diego	Electronically track active and closed files through a wireless email system.	Saves staff time by accelerating the file retrieval/delivery and location process. Improves customer service.	<b>Connie Gach</b> (619) 578-6338 Cgachx@sddcss.org
Use of Intranet Links	Humboldt Ventura	Available to all staff. Very useful tool. Constantly updated.	Humboldt: Provides easy links to information regarding: registered fishing vessels, zip codes, minimum wage levels, online prison information, local drug rehabilitation centers, welfare department workers and other county phone numbers. Ventura: Policies and Procedures manual, KIDZ Notes, DCSS Roster and other informational material.	<b>Carol Guy</b> (707) 441-3234 Carol.guy@co.humboldt.ca.us <b>Raji Bishnoi</b> (805) 654-3481 raji.bishnoi@mail.co.ventura.ca.us
Medical Desk	Solano	Two office assistants handle all medical tasks, each assigned an alpha split.	Staff become experts in dealing with employers, unions, trust funds, etc. Decrease in errors, timeframes are met.	<b>Pamela Sillanpaa</b> (707) 432-3606 pksillanpaa@solanocounty.com
Bench Warrant Recall Program	Santa Clara	Notices sent to NCPs for which bench warrants have been issued.	500 letters sent, \$80,000 collected.	<b>Angie Fenton</b> (408) 503-5460 afenton@dcss.co.santa-clara.ca.us
Service of process in the LCSA office	Santa Clara	Improve service of Summons & Complaints.	Improve success rate for service of process and increase stipulations.	<b>Angie Fenton</b> (408) 503-5460 afenton@dcss.co.santa-clara.ca.us
Video Conference	Kern	Used for co-locate interviews.	Eliminates need to send staff to district offices or force clients to travel to LCSA office.	<b>Terrie Porter</b> (661) 868-8563 tporter@co.kern.ca.us

<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>LCSA</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
Title Company and Lien Specialist	Alameda Ventura	Streamlined process for dealing with title companies on liens. Flow chart available.	One contact person, improved working relations with title companies.	<b>Sharon Patterson</b> (510) 567-6009 slm@co.alameda.ca.us <b>Raji Bishnoi</b> (805) 654-3481 raji.bishnoi@mail.co.ventura.ca.us
Specialized Investigative Aides	Central Sierra Kern	Central Sierra utilizes two investigators. Kern utilizes disabled law enforcement officers.	Increased ability to track/ locate NCPs.	<b>Marlene Brawner</b> (209) 754-6782 brawnermarlene@hotmail.com <b>Terrie Porter</b> (661) 868-8563 tporter@co.kern.ca.us
List of Carnival Workers	Del Norte	Contacted County Fair Board and obtained list of registered carnival workers to match to NCP lists and network with other counties.	Success in locating NCPs and assets.	<b>Nola Penna</b> (707) 464-7232x270 npenna@co.del-norte.ca.us
Learning Resource Center (LRC)	Orange	Online tool consolidates business practice with other related resources- job aids, Synergy workbooks, case management system guidebooks and tool books.	Staff access appropriate modules & learn how to process cases effectively and efficiently. Centralized location of resources reduces training time and improves casework consistency.	<b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8250 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com

### **b. Review and Adjustment**

Use of Telephone	Lassen Tulare	Case worker has initial contact with NCP and for possible modifications. Effective tool for locate and case work.	Provides contact, easy access. Educates NCP with the child support process, encourages communications, and obtains actual income information for more accurate orders.	<b>Kelly Stout</b> (530) 257-2701 kstout@co.lassen.ca.us <b>Denise Cardoza</b> (559) 713-5787 dcardoza@co.tulare.ca.us
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<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>LCSA</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
Special team review of MBSAC and presumed income orders for modification	Colusa Orange Riverside	Cases reviewed and worked by specialized staff in enforcement teams. (Colusa reviews any orders over \$300.)	Colusa: Increased collections and case closures. Orange - \$2.2 million difference between MBSAC balance & new modification balance.	<b>Mary Anderson</b> (530) 458-0560 Mkacolusa_99@yahoo.com <b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8224 lomeli@css.ocgov.com <b>Janice Peebles</b> (909) 955-4110 jpeebles@co.riverside.ca.us
Self-Adjustment Clause in child support orders	San Louis Obispo	Provision added to all judgments, temporarily adjusting order to zero under certain circumstances.	Saves time in modifying an order.	<b>Genny Gator</b> (805) 781-5736 ggator@co.slo.ca.us

### c. Improving Collections

Parent Involvement Effectiveness Project (PIEP)	Sonoma	NCP is brought to court for contempt instead of being incarcerated for non-payment. The LCSA contracts with California Parenting Institute. One condition is to attend parenting classes.	Unemployed NCPs are connected to employment prospects through JobLinks. Increase collections (64 % of PIEP NCPs make regular payments). Bonds between NCP & children are strengthened. Parents learn how to deal with anger, visitation issues, etc.	<b>Laura Larrow</b> (707) 565-4147 llarrow@Sonoma-county.org
Two-week Amnesty Program	Santa Clara	(Based on the Virginia program) An Appearance Demand Notice is mailed to the most egregious NCPs that owe arrears and have not made a payment in a designated month. The notice will offer a limited one-time 30-day period to make a good faith payment and appear in the LCSA office to make payment arrangements.	15,500 letters were mailed. 1,721 NCPs appeared to discuss their case. 703 made payments and/or payment arrangements. The LCSA collected \$274,000.	<b>Angie Fenton</b> (408) 503-5460 afenton@dcss.co.santa-clara.ca.us

<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>LCSA</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
Driver's License Buy-Back Program SLMS	Orange Placer Santa Clara Solano	Advertised on the news and in the newspaper. Placer mailed SLMS information to NCPs in their monthly statements.	Santa Clara: Released 300 licenses, collected \$264,000.	<b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8224 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com <b>Kathy Shealy</b> (530) 889-5776 kshealy@placer.ca.gov <b>Angie Fenton</b> (408) 503-5460 afenton@dcss.co.santa-clara.ca.us <b>Pamela Sillanpaa</b> (707) 432-3606 pksillanpaa@solanocounty.com
Just Ask Just Ask for Five Pick Up The Phone Keep The Change	Butte Madera Marin Napa Orange Riverside San Diego Santa Barbara Santa Cruz/ San Benito	When in contact with the obligor for any reason, ask him/her to make minimal payment towards arrears.	Increase in cases with arrears collections.	<b>Paula Kartch</b> (530) 538-6357 pkartch@buttecounty.net <b>Norma Landers</b> (559) 675-7915 n.landern@csa20ca.org <b>Kathy Sokolik</b> (415) 499-6436 ksokolik@co.marin.ca.us <b>Karina Castaneda</b> (707) 259-8289 kcastaneda@co.napa.ca.us <b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-824 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com <b>Janice Peebles</b> (909) 955-4110 jpeebles@co.riverside.ca.us <b>Connie Gatch</b> (619) 578-6728 cgachx@sddcss.org <b>Sandra Simons</b> (805) 568-2326 ssimons@co.santa-barbara.ca.us <b>Debbie Ogawa</b> (831) 454-3701 debbie.ogawa@co.santa-cruz.ca.us
SNOOP (Saturday Open House Program)	Butte	Invite NCPs who have not paid support in a year to a Saturday Open House to discuss possible modifications and payment plans.	Increased collections and/or reasonable modifications.	<b>Paula Karch</b> (530) 538-6357 pkarch@buttecounty.net

## d. Working with the Courts

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
Evening Court	Eastern Sierra Marin	Eastern Sierra holds night court once a month on Tuesdays, 5:00-9:00 pm. Marin does the same every Tuesday.	Provides flexibility in scheduling hearings, reduces no-shows and continuances. Obtain orders earlier.	<b>Linda Anisman</b> (760) 873-3659 inyolxa@QNET.com <b>Kathy Sokolik</b> (415) 507-4067 ksokolik@co.marin.ca.us
LCSA files its own court documents	Marin	Clerical staff go to court with staff attorneys. Family Law Facilitator also attends court and can work with unrepresented parties after the hearing.	Documents are prepared in court; signatures are obtained at that time; and the order is filed immediately.	<b>Kathy Sokolik</b> (415) 507-4067 ksokolik@co.marin.ca.us
Administrative Judicial Review Process	Lake	LCSA staff prepare, serve and file notice of motion earlier in review and adjustment process, as soon as eligibility is determined during screening. This expedites the placement on the court calendar.	Ability to process review and adjustment cases within required time frames.	<b>Cindy VanLanen</b> (707) 262-4309 cvanlanen@co.lake.ca.us



### 3. CUSTOMER SERVICE

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
Expanded Customer Service Hours	Solano	Hours expanded from 7:15 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. M-F, including lunch hour and walk-ins.	Offers flexibility to customers to drop in or schedule appointment before or after work. Improved service increases NCP cooperation, thereby increasing collections.	<b>Pamela Sillanpaa</b> (707) 432-3606 pksillanpaa@solanocounty.com
Employer Workshop and New Case Orientation	San Diego	Provide separate presentations for employers and CPs. Question and Answer session included.	Reach employers and custodial parents by taking sessions to the community.	<b>Connie Gach</b> (619) 578-6338 cgach@sddcss.org
Coordinate with State Prisons	Lassen	Give presentations to all out-processing inmates. LCSA is setting up presentations to all incoming inmates as well.	Educates the inmate population on child support rights and responsibilities.	<b>Diana Midkiff</b> (530) 251-2630 dmidkiff@co.lassen.ca.us

#### 4. FISCAL & ADMINISTATIVE PRACTICES

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
E-Pay	Orange Shasta Solano Tehama	Provides a more convenient method for payment. On-line credit card payments. Shasta also has staff designated to process payments for obligors without access to the Internet.	Increase in collections. Provides another method for payment.	<b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8224 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com <b>Emma Post</b> (530) 229-8897 epost@co.shasta.ca.us <b>Pamela Sillanpaa</b> (707) 432-3606 pksillanpaa@solanocounty.com <b>Dennis Reasoner</b> (530) 527-3110 dreasoner@tehamaccs.org
Accrual Credits Project	Orange	Cases reviewed for credit adjustments to correct errors in amount of receivables.	Removed over \$1 million from the total debt owed for child support.	<b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8224 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com

## 5. QAPI IMPLEMENTATION

BEST PRACTICE	LCSA	DESCRIPTION	RESULTS	CONTACT
Solicitation of general staff input in developing overall plan and action plan items	Monterey S. Luis Obispo Del Norte Humboldt Eastern Sierra Kern Kings Ventura	Accomplished through various means, such as staff meetings, brainstorming sessions, written input, discussion with supervisors, workgroups, committees, etc.	Greater staff investment in and commitment to resulting action plans and projects, as well as to agreed upon goals and objectives	QAPI staff for named LCSAs, as well as DCSS Quality Assurance Branch staff
"SPACE" Campaign	Sonoma	Stands for "Support orders, Paternity, Arrears, Current, Effectiveness" and is used to make staff aware of the federal performance measures. It includes such things as skits, posters and discussion at all staff meetings.	Staff become more aware of how their jobs contribute to the LCSA's performance.	<b>Pamela Crandall</b> (707) 565-4157 pcrandall@sonoma-county.org
Campaign Mapping	Sonoma	A consultant-developed process to identify and solve problems, using cross-functional team analysis, streamlining (business process flow changes) and strategic planning.	Used to develop more effective QAPI action plans	<b>Pamela Crandall</b> (707) 565-4157 pcrandall@sonoma-county.org

<b>BEST PRACTICE</b>	<b>LCSA</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>RESULTS</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>
Steering Committee	Yuba	A committee, separate from the LCSA's QAPI team, is made up of a cross-section of department managers, trainers, and program area experts. The committee reviews and selects target areas to be included in the QAPI plan, oversees ongoing progress, and recommends changes in the plan and/or business processes, if needed.	More effective overall process	<b>Frances Locke</b> (530) 749-6058 flocke@co.yuba.ca.us
Intra-departmental Competition	Tulare	As part of efforts to carry out action plans and meet performance targets, the LCSA incorporates "friendly competition" between various departmental units and recognizes accomplishments.	Greater staff commitment and involvement, morale booster	<b>Denise Cardoza</b> (559) 713-5787 dcardoza@co.tulare.ca.us
Sampling of Casework	Kings Napa Orange San Joaquin Tuolumne	Supervisors/QAPI staff perform monitoring and quality control.	Targets errors, training issues, systemic and/or data entry problems.	<b>Linda Warford</b> (559) 558-3221x2520 lwarford@co.kings.ca.us <b>Karina Castaneda</b> (707) 259-8289 kcastaneda@co.napa.ca.us <b>Dolly Lomeli</b> (714) 347-8224 dlomeli@css.ocgov.com <b>Ramona Sajor</b> (209) 468-2624 rsajor@sjgov.org