

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

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September 20, 2007

LCSA LETTER: 07-22

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: CCSAS TECH POLICY LETTER

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

The purpose of this letter is to remind the Local Child Support Agencies (LCSAs) of the change in approach and technical policy that accompanies the deployment of the new CCSAS desktop, laptop, printer and network infrastructure hardware. These changes impact all LCSAs, regardless of their county option model.

With the deployment of CCSAS, the State is implementing consistent, uniform, and statewide desktop management processes – many of which differ from the current LCSA practices. In the past, an LCSA hardware item, such as a desktop computer or a laptop, has been procured by LCSAs and considered a county asset, even though Federal and State funds were used to purchase the hardware. Under CCSAS, the State has amended this policy whereby a hardware item supplied by the CCSAS Project is to be considered and treated as a State asset.

This has several effects on Option 2 and 3 LCSAs standards and conventions, and potentially their associated County Information Technology departments. The primary areas affected include (1) computer naming description and (2) inclusion of asset tracking software, and (3) laptop hard drive encryption. The CCSAS Project expects these conventions remain unaltered after installation at the LCSA sites.

CCSAS Computer Naming Standards

Under CCSAS, the State is establishing standards for both the use of the computer description field and the computer name field. The State has worked closely with the Child Support Director's Association Infrastructure Subcommittee to develop these standards. Since no common Statewide naming standard was used throughout the LCSAs and counties, the workgroup agreed that the appropriate path forward was to implement conventions that did not conflict with those already in use by the individual LCSAs and/or counties.

- The Statewide CCSAS naming standard for the computer name field will be “CSE-Serial Number”, for example CSE-ABCD12”.
- The CCSAS standard for the computer description field will be CSExxyyz####, where:
 - xx = County number
 - yy = LCSA site number
 - z = Asset type
 - #### = sequential number

For example, the computer description field for a Yuba workstation would be CSE5801W001

CCSAS Asset Tracking

The establishment and use of this Statewide naming standard complies with DCSS’ approach to asset management for CCSAS devices. This naming convention permits the State to track and better meet Federal inventory and reporting requirements through the use of an asset tracking tool which comes standard on each workstation and laptop system. The selected asset management software product pushes an encrypted message on a uniform basis statewide through the Internet to a central server, notifying the central server the computer is active on the LCSA’s network. In the event a computer/laptop does not initiate a “heartbeat” to the central server, the CCSAS Project will be alerted that a computer is not active. The LCSA will be contacted to confirm the hardware device is still in the LCSA’s possession. The CCSAS Project will be developing a companion process for an LCSA to notify CCSAS when a workstation/laptop will be inactive for an extended period of time so CCSAS does not query the LCSA on the status of the inactive machine.

Laptop Hard Drive Encryption

The recently released Child Support Services (CSS) Letter 07-01, DCSS Information Security Manual, documented security standards, including security requirements for Mobile Computing Devices (MCDs). A critical requirement, supported with the deployment of CCSAS laptops, is the use of “an encryption algorithm that meets or exceeds industry recommended encryption standards”. All MCD devices supplied by CCSAS will be pre-installed with the hard drive encryption product. Depending on an LCSA’s county option, in the event a CCSAS laptop requires re-imaging due to a hardware or software problem, CCSAS may either provide the software to re-install the encryption software or have the laptop returned to the CCSAS Project Office.

The CCSAS Project would like to draw to your attention to a few other reminders and helpful hints, based on lessons learned and deployment experiences. First, LCSAs should ensure any installed hardware, whether a CCSAS supplied device or a legacy hardware device, should be plugged into a surge protector to shield the device from unexpected surges in power. If these spikes in power are significant, or occur often enough, an unprotected hardware device's components will eventually be damaged. The warranty offered on our CCSAS devices exclude free part replacement and support resulting from a power surge, or a loss in power as an LCSA recently experienced. Two additional notes about surge protectors: (1) they will not protect against power failures or lightning strikes, and (2) after repeated surges, the surge protectors must be checked and replaced periodically to ensure continued operations.

Second, with the deployment of the CCSAS desktops and laptops, the CCSAS Project is installing the warning banner to safeguard federal tax information (FTI) as described in CSS Letter 05-24. This letter communicates the federal compliance requirement regarding access to FTI data – the lack of conformity to this requirement would result in an IRS Safeguard audit exception which could lead to the LCSA and/or State losing access to the FTI data until remediated. The CCSAS Project has made a conscious decision to present the warning banner upon desktop boot-up. This ensures that regardless of whether the desktop is attached to a network, the FTI warning banner must be acknowledged by the staff person.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding any of these matters, please contact Ira Androphy at (916) 464-5360 or via e-mail at Ira.Androphy@dcss.ca.gov .

Sincerely,

/OS/ by Joan Obert

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cc: LCSA Coordinators