

# Child Support Report

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OFFICE OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

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## Region II Rolls Out Vision of National Hispanic Workgroup

By Jens Feck  
OCSE Region II

In recent years, OCSE established the National Hispanic Workgroup to promote greater access so all Hispanic children and families can receive child support services regardless of language and culture.

On Nov. 14, OCSE's New York Regional Office moved this vision forward when it sponsored and cohosted a conference, "Child Support: Forging Partnerships with the Hispanic Community," with the New York State Division of Child Support Enforcement and New York City's Human Resources Administration and Office of Child Support Enforcement.

The event in New York City drew more than 100 service providers who maintain daily contact with Hispanic custodial and noncustodial parents and their children. Welcoming all were OCSE Commissioner Margot Bean, Regional Administrator Joyce A. Thomas, Commissioner of the State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance David A. Hansell, and Commissioner of the New York City Human Resources Administration Robert Doar.

Presenters included Monique Rabideau, Bureau Chief for Outreach of the State Division of Child Support Enforcement; the Hon. Thomas Quiñones, New York State Magistrate; Estela Rivera, Executive Director of Borough Office Operations of the City Office of Child Support Enforcement; Frank Villalobos, Director of Papas de Bushwick; Julio Diaz, Program Director of Loaisaida Inc.



From left: Kathy Beckman, meeting facilitator; Iran Rodriguez, OCSE Region II; Frances Pardus-Abbadessa, Deputy Commissioner, New York City Office of Child Support Enforcement; Keshia Rodriguez and Judi Albury, OCSE Region II; Commissioner Margot Bean; and Scott Cade, New York State Director, Division Child Support Enforcement

(Teen Dads); Robert Carmona, President of Strive New York International; and Udai Tambar, Assistant Deputy Commissioner of the Division of Parent and Community Engagement of the City Office of Child Support Enforcement.

Attendees represented more than 35 agencies and community organizations, including Archdiocese of New York Head Start, Arbor Employment and Training, Superior Court of New Jersey, County of Los Angeles

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Office of Child Support Enforcement

CSSD, Seedco, Montefiore Medical Center, Hostos Community College, NYC Housing Authority, NYS Children & Families, NYC Department of Education, Coalition for Hispanic Family Services, Office of the Bronx Borough President, Puerto Rican Family Institute, East New York Family Child Care, Princeton University, The Doe Fund, Lutheran Family Health Center, The Fortune Society, and Fordham University.

All had the opportunity to learn about the child support enforcement process and actively participated in sessions around the theme of “Where are we now? Where should we go? How can we collaborate to get there?” In addition, they got a glimpse of OCSE’s draft Web-based “Hispanic Resource/Toolkit” that will offer State child support agencies adaptable material for their efforts to reach out to Hispanic communities.

The Region planned the event with several objectives in mind: 1) provide clear and relevant information about child support services and dispel misconceptions about the process; 2) identify successful outreach practices and activities in the metro area from a holistic perspective; 3) identify remaining barriers to full access impacting the Hispanic community; and 4) propose establishment of a formal collaborative structure to address the needs of the Hispanic community on an ongoing basis.

Attendees’ evaluations confirmed that the Region met

its objectives and that the conference provided a unique learning and networking opportunity. Fourteen attendees ensured that this conference would not end with the last session when they volunteered to collaborate with the State, City, and Federal child support agencies toward establishing a permanent New York State workgroup to address the action items identified at the meeting, as well as other issues of interest to the Hispanic community.

Scott Cade, Director of New York State’s Division of Child Support Enforcement, concluded the conference by recognizing the sometimes complex, often evolving, yet demonstrably successful State child support program:

“We all share the goal of improving services to our clients, and we must continue to work together going forward to inform the broader Hispanic community of available child support services and to encourage ongoing engagement of individuals and families already involved in the program.”

More than 100 new friends want to help Director Cade reach that goal—and OCSE looks forward to new collaborations from this conference on behalf of Hispanic children and families.

*Please contact Jens Feck at [jens.feck@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:jens.feck@acf.hhs.gov) for further information. Region II can provide background information and documentation to anyone interested in planning a similar event.*



At left are meeting presenters, from left, Frank Villalobos, Julio Diaz, and Robert Carmona. Below, from left, are OTDA Commissioner David A. Hansell, Kesha Rodriguez, Judi Albury, Iran Rodriguez, OCSE Commissioner Margot Bean, and HRA Commissioner Robert Doar.





# Minnesota 'Streams' Military Training to Counties

By Deborah Kreger

Minnesota Department of Human Services

The Minnesota Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED) hosted the OCSE training "Working with the Military on Child Support Matters," using live video-streaming technology, this August in St. Paul. Presenters were Judge Larry R. Holtz, Judicial/Court Liaison, OCSE; Rodney Winn, Deputy General Counsel at DFAS (Defense Finance and Accounting Service) Cleveland, who handles all military child support garnishment actions; and Lt. Col. Thomas Williams, USAF, of the Office of Personnel Readiness, the Pentagon.

Through video streaming, CSED was able to reach a large off-site audience across the State, while saving money for its county partners by avoiding travel expenses. The streaming allowed staffs who live up to 400 miles from St. Paul to attend the training in real time at their desktop computers via a secure site. They were able to provide feedback and ask questions throughout the training event via e-mail and a dedicated telephone number.

To prepare for this training, staff at CSED conducted a number of test runs. The first two were relatively simple: live video streaming of a clock ticking and music playing. County staff was asked to log in to the secure site and access a dedicated link; they reported how well the tests worked and any hurdles they encountered. State and county staff worked together to overcome a variety of hurdles, such as access to media player software, bandwidth speed, and access to audio speakers. The third test showcased CSED staff in a talk show format that allowed county staff to provide feedback on voice and picture quality.

Before the training event, State staff posted the training handouts and materials on the secure site. This gave county staffs the chance to



Minnesota's military video training team, from left: Dick Anderson, Trygve Larsen, Donna Wilson, Deborah Kreger, and Julie Swinland (seated).

print materials before the training event. Throughout the event, new materials were added to the site as well as links to Web sites used in the training.

The key challenge of this training was to ensure that the in-house audience used the microphones when they asked questions and provided feedback. It was necessary to use a dual microphone system—one for the video feed and one that tied into the room's public address/auditory assist system for one in-house participant. With practice, the speakers and in-house participants adapted to microphone use.

"It is amazing how technology can bring us together. Being in a very northern county of Minnesota, being able to participate in this manner was by far the most cost-effective for us," said one participant. Another said, "I found the presenters to be very knowledgeable and felt the training very beneficial. I learned much more than I anticipated and was glad I attended."

Next up for Minnesota CSED is to video stream standard training modules.

For more information, contact Deborah Kreger at [deborah.kreger@state.mn.us](mailto:deborah.kreger@state.mn.us) or 651-431-4531, or Julie Swinland at [julie.swinland@state.mn.us](mailto:julie.swinland@state.mn.us) or 651-431-4602.

**The military pay calendar for 2009 is now available online:**

<http://www.dfas.mil/militarypay/militarypaytables/fy2009militarypaydays.html>



# Region X Hosts Third Annual Tribal/State Conference

By Janis Jensen  
*OCSE Region X*

As the number of comprehensive Tribal child support programs has steadily increased, so has the need to train child support staffs in State and local agencies about the distinctive Tribes and Tribal programs. To meet this training challenge, Region X joined the Quinalt Nation Child Support Program and Director John Baller in cohosting a conference this September in Ocean Shores, WA.

More than 135 participants represented 28 Tribes from Regions X, IX, VIII, VI, and V; State and local staffs from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho; and OCSE staff from Regions IX and X and Central Office.

Keynote speakers were Commissioner Margot Bean and Tulalip Tribe Judge Theresa Pouley. Commissioner Bean

congratulated Tribal program attendees for their positive results in providing services to families. She provided an update on the Tribal Model System and emphasized her commitment to finishing the system. Judge Pouley provided a message of “Tribal Child Support as an Act of Sovereignty.”

The conference included a variety of 25 child support-related workshops and a special track for attorneys with presenters from Tribes and State child support programs who work in Tribal courts.

Highlights included a spirited “Jeopardy” game, hosted by Ted Thornton (Washington), with three teams of State, Tribal, and Federal contestants, and judging by Brady Rossnagle (Washington) and Calvin Hill (Klamath).

Another highlight was Joe Bodmer’s (OCSE) two workshops about the Model Tribal System, as well as the capability for participants to try out completed modules with the assistance of contractors who helped develop the system. The hands-on experience offered Tribal staff a look at the options that will be available to them in the future.





## Deborah Yates

For Deborah Yates, 2008 has been filled with “honor.” In June, she was elected President of the National Tribal Child Support Association. In October, the Comanche Nation Child Support Program, for which Yates has served as Director since April 2007, transitioned from a start-up program to a comprehensive Tribal IV-D child support program.

Then, says Yates, “I was honored to be invited to Washington, DC,” in October, to join other Federal, State, Tribal, and local child support program leaders, to start the wheel turning for the National Child Support Enforcement Strategic Plan for 2010 through 2014.

An honorable year at the least, Yates also takes pride in helping to turn the wheel for America’s Indian youth for many years before.

After growing up in the heart of the Osage Nation Tribe in Oklahoma, Yates moved to New Mexico, where she raised five children and planned post-secondary education science and engineering initiatives for 18 years. When she returned to the Osage community in 2003, Yates began working with its Foster Care program, where, she says, “I realized these were very fragile families; \$50 a month would have made a tremendous impact on their economic status. Also, the children knew their [noncustodial] parent wasn’t contributing, that their dad didn’t care, and that intrigued me.”

Having gained knowledge about the Administration for Children and Families’ budget and administration processes, through Foster Care and previous Head Start program experience, Yates moved on, in 2005, to help Osage Nation apply for a Tribal IV-D start-up child support program grant. This was a “new and challenging opportunity,” she explained, adding, “I saw it as a way to strengthen



Tribal sovereignty and a new beginning for myself.” Within 2 years, the neighboring Comanche Tribe asked her to lead its child support program.

Overall, Yates sees the process of inclusion for Tribal communities as

positive. In the past year, the number of comprehensive Tribal child support programs has grown from 12 to 30, and 12 Tribes now operate start-up programs.

Referring to the final rule published in March 2004 that announced direct Federal funding for Tribes applying to operate a child support program, Yates says, “I’m impressed with the regulation as being able to accommodate the unique elements in Tribes.” She cites

differences in population and economic factors, and knowing that a Tribal Plan will meet the needs of each Tribe, as does each individual State Plan.

She’s especially impressed with the varying levels among the Tribal child support directors—some are attorneys, one is in her mid 20s—“yet all of us are able to respond to the regulations and the way they are written.”

Clarity, in fact, ranks high on Yates’s list of priorities. “I believe child support programs should treat both parents with respect, but I also want services to be accessible and understandable for everyone. And these services include child support forms and letters that many customers have trouble understanding.”

Yates says she is always hopeful that the

Tribal perspective of treating people holistically will be viewed as valuable, and perhaps lead the way, as child support professionals everywhere design forms and other material for the nation’s diverse communities.

Looking back over the past few years,



**November is National American Indian Heritage Month**

Yates is pleased that “Commissioner Bean philosophically understands the need to be mindful of Tribal interests.” And she appreciates the Commissioner’s praise of the importance of partnership between State and Tribal programs.

Yates also remembers: “When Greg Kidder [Osage Nation Child Support Director] and I started the child

support office, we only had a cell phone and a computer, so we could get on the Internet to do searches. That’s where we found the National Child Support Enforcement Strategic Plan for 2005 through 2009. And that’s what I looked at to give me a broad understanding of the program. Now, it’s ironic that I’m here to help plan the next one.”

—Elaine Blackman, OCSE

To submit an idea or article for this In Focus column, please send an e-mail to [elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:elaine.blackman@acf.hhs.gov).

## Oklahoma ‘Leading the Way’

By Carl Rich  
*OCSE Region VI*

The Oklahoma Child Support Association held its annual Fall Training Conference, Sept. 30 through Oct. 3, with this year’s theme, “Leading the Way,” in recognition of Oklahoma child support professionals’ continued dedication to children. The conference was sponsored by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services, Oklahoma Child Support Division (OKCSED), the Oklahoma Attorneys Council, and OCSE.

More than 400 attendees were welcomed by Gary Dart, Oklahoma Child Support Director, and Senator Howard Hendrick, Director, Oklahoma Department of Human

Services. Both recognized the accomplishments of the program and urged staff to keep families as their priority, not only looking at numbers. Individual and group awards were presented for outstanding work at the annual awards luncheon. Workshop tracks included Supervisory, Child Support Specialist, and Continuing Legal Education.

OCSE’s Linda Keely (Washington, DC) and Carl Rich (Dallas) participated in a plenary workshop titled “Have You Been PAID Yet?” with OKCSED members Dawn Zellner, Carol Lively, and Ron Smith. The workshop highlighted key areas of the national PAID (Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies) initiative and Federal resources. Oklahoma panelists discussed the OKCSED PAID team and projects, and best practices from other States.

For more information, contact [linda.keely@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:linda.keely@acf.hhs.gov) or [carl.rich@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:carl.rich@acf.hhs.gov).



On the panel are, from left, Carl Rich, Region VI State and Tribal Specialist; Ron Smith, Program Manager, OKCSED Special Collections Office; Carol Lively, OKCSED Office Manager; Dawn Zellner, Managing Attorney, OKCSED Special Collections; and Linda Keely, OCSE Senior Advisor.

Oklahoma conference attendees

# Californians Usher in 'A New Era'

By David Oppenheim

California Child Support Directors Association

Connie Brunn, President of the Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) of California and Director of the San Bernardino County Department of Child Support Services, welcomed conference goers to California's third annual Child Support Training Conference and Expo, held this October in Orange County's Garden Grove. With California's new child support system recently approved, Brunn proclaimed that it is a new era for the State's child support program and a major turning point when all counties begin to operate on a single statewide system this year.

The new California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS) was built through a partnership between the State Department of Child Support Services, the Franchise Tax Board and California's county-based local child support agencies. State DCSS Director David Maxwell-Jolly told attendees how very proud he was of each State and local child support professional for their efforts on behalf CCSAS, and that he was excited about how the new system will positively benefit California's children and families.

Conference keynote speaker Commissioner Margot Bean echoed the sentiment with congratulations to all for the newly implemented statewide system, which she said will benefit not only California, but also the rest of the nation. The Commissioner further congratulated the California Child Support Enforcement System Team for being chosen to receive the Organizational Team Achievement Award, presented by the Acting Assistant Secretary for the Administration of Children and Families, USDHHS, for its efforts in the successful certification of the State's system.

California's child support conference featured more than 70 topical workshops divided into six unique training tracks. The tracks included Performance Improvement, Legal, Program Operations, Customer Service, Automation, and Fiscal and Administration.

After attending California's child support conference, I think it is fair to say that the State's child support program has truly entered a new and prosperous era.



OCSE Commissioner Margot Bean is flanked by David Oppenheim, Executive Director of the California Child Support Directors' Association, left, and David Maxwell-Jolly, California IV-D Child Support Director.

Photo courtesy of Al Reyes, Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department

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# PAID Game Debuts at California Conference



By Elise Wing  
OCSE Region IX

A new version of the TV game show “Family Feud” debuted at the California Child Support Directors Association Annual Training Conference last month. Many of the rules remain the same, however, the new rendition revolves around the national child support program’s Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies, or PAID initiative.

The lively California show was hosted by OCSE’s Linda Keely (Washington, DC), with assistance from Elise Wing and John Kersey (Region IX). The competing teams were The Brady Bunch (Orange County child support staff) and The Beverly Hillbillies (child support staff from Los Angeles, San Mateo, and Tuolumne Counties).

Questions featured activities that can occur at State or local child support agencies to improve collections in the five categories central to PAID: setting appropriate orders, employing early intervention, reviewing and modifying orders, improving locate and enforcement, and managing existing arrears. In addition, various audience members shared how their jurisdictions had implemented an activity or process in the “survey” to help them deliver effective child support services.

It was a close game, but in the end, The Brady Bunch won. All who attended left with a new idea or practice that they could implement in their local office to improve their collections or customer service.

Stay tuned for “PAID Family Feud” coming to a training session near you. OCSE will soon be posting the PowerPoint presentation of the game to the PAID Workplace and members will be able to edit the surveys to reflect State or local practices and initiatives.

*PAID Family Feud is a production of the OCSE Gameshow Workgroup: John Clark, Keira Dembowski, Wendy Gray, Linda Keely, Nancy Mathieson, and Elise Wing.*



**PAID PUNDITS**—What better way for California conference attendees to reinforce the mission of the national Project to Avoid Increasing Delinquencies than to compete in a “Family Feud”-style game.



Photos courtesy of Rick Apostol, Los Angeles County Child Support Services Department



# Increases in Child Support Collections Exceed National Rate of Inflation

By John Clark  
OCSE Region III

In the past 10 years, State child support programs have shown remarkable success in developing new methods to collect financial support for children. To validate this success, we need only compare national child support collections for 1997 to 2007, while considering the rate of inflation.

## Setting the Scene

To illustrate how State child support collections have substantially exceeded the rate of inflation, we can create an imaginary scenario.

Suppose in 1997, a local office collected about \$100,000. Also, assume the rate of inflation totaled 50 percent for the 10-year period from 1997 to 2007. If a child support office collected \$150,000 in 2007, local office collection performance would be the same rate for both periods because the collection increase would equal the inflation rate. If the local office collected \$175,000, it would be collecting \$25,000 more than the inflation rate.

This inflation rate should be considered in assessing an office's performance because, over a period of time, new and existing orders will reflect the rate of inflation

through guideline revisions (e.g., based on the increased cost of raising a child), modifications, etc.



## Charting the Course

Using the inflation rate of 29.3 percent (Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index), from Oct. 1, 1997, to Sept. 30, 2007, the United States should have increased collections from about \$13.4 billion in 1997 to \$17.3 billion in 2007. Actually, the country collected over \$24.85 billion in 2007. This means that if we assume that collections only keep pace with inflation, then the collection increase for the 10-year period reached \$7.5 billion more than would be expected.

The chart below illustrates the steady increase in the average collection per case for every year from 1997 through 2007.

Factors contributing to this success include:

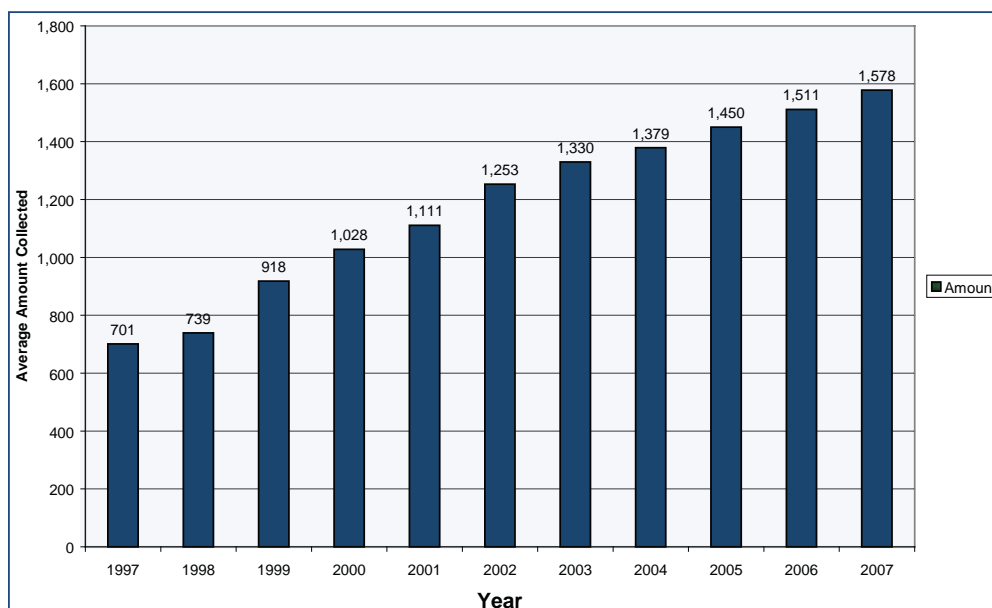
- enhanced federal automated resources available through the Federal Parent Locator Service;
- enhanced automation capabilities in States;
- improvements in the child support process as a result of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, as well as the passport denial threshold decrease included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005; and
- dedication and expertise of the local, State, and Federal child support professionals.

## The Bottom Line

That increases in child support collections substantially exceed the rate of inflation shows the national child support community is making progress toward goal #4 of the National CSE Strategic Plan—“All Children in IV-D cases receive financial support from parents as ordered.”

*Child support data in this article was compiled from the “22nd Annual Report to Congress” and the “FY 2007 Preliminary Data Report” issued by OCSE. Data for the chart was compiled from the Annual Reports to Congress and the Preliminary Data Reports. See reports at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/index.html#annual>. For more information, contact [john.clark@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:john.clark@acf.hhs.gov).*

Amount Collected Per Case – National Average



# Washington State Shares Opportunities, Challenges with Canadian Partners

By Rhonda Thomas  
*Washington Division of Child Support*

Last month, a team of international child support professionals from Canada's British Columbia Ministry of the Attorney General spent a day with Washington State's Division of Child Support in Olympia.

The visit began with an overview of Washington's program and how the Division of Child Support connects to our community partners in the legal system as well as the public assistance system. From there, the team of seven split out into separate sessions, meeting with Division staff on a variety of topics. The British Columbia group sought information and learned details of ongoing child support research initiatives and performance projects, efforts with employer outreach, administrative versus court-based services and programs, Web-site access, conference board process, and case management initiatives.

In addition to receiving an abundance of information on the ins and outs of Washington's program, the visitors spent time discussing a proposed "Gateway" project, an innovative way to electronically transfer funds between Washington State and British Columbia.

Currently all States send child support distributions to Canadian provinces in paper form, which is an expensive process. It is much more efficient to send funds electronically; however, there are many barriers, not the least of which is that there are relatively few payments that cross the border from each jurisdiction. The cost to find a vendor who will process just a few international payments is prohibitive.

The Gateway project attempts to solve the volume issue by routing all payments from the United States to Canada electronically to Washington. These would disburse to British Columbia which would in turn distribute them to any province. Payments from Canada to the United States would follow a reverse path.

Although this visit was set up for our Canadian partners to learn more about the Washington child support program, it also provided a great learning opportunity for Washington's child support staff. During the visit, the British Columbia staff shared unique qualities and challenges of their program. They also requested feedback on their Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Web site (<http://www.fmep.ag.gov.bc.ca/>) in an effort to make the site more user friendly for Washington residents who have a child support enforcement case in the Canadian province.

Washington's Division of Child Support is thankful for the opportunity such as this to share with and learn from partnering programs. These types of experiences support and strengthen our commitment to growing stronger child support programs.



From left: Trish Riswold, Regional Manager, Family Maintenance Enforcement Program (FMEP); Hanna Roots, Managing Director, FMEP; Ringo Dosanjh, Deputy Director, Maintenance Enforcement and Locate Services; Louise Riley, Program Analyst, Maintenance Enforcement and Locate Services; Chris Beresford, Director of Maintenance Enforcement; Troy Hutson, Washington Assistant Secretary for Economic Services; David Stillman, Director, Washington Division of Child Support; Michelle Frazer, Project Director, Information Systems, FMEP; Nancy Hall, Business Analyst, FMEP.