



# COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD

Los Angeles County  
Board of Supervisors

Zev Yaroslavsky, Chair  
Gloria Molina  
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2008

## PUBLIC MEMBERS

### First District

Vacant  
Vacant

### Second District

Paula G. Leftwich  
John O. Murrell

### Third District

Lucy T. Eisenberg, Esq., Chair  
Honey Kessler Amado, Esq.

### Fourth District

Jean F. Cohen  
Vacant

### Fifth District

Reginald Brass  
Susan Speir, Vice Chair

## GOVERNMENT MEMBERS

### Chief Information Office

Richard Sanchez

### Department of Children and Family Services

Patricia S. Ploehn

### Department of Public Social Services

Philip Browning

### Child Support Services Department

Steven J. Golightly

### Los Angeles Superior Court

David Jetton

## EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

### California Department of Child Support Services

Mary Lawrence

### Franchise Tax Board

Debbie Strong

## CHILD SUPPORT ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES JULY 24, 2008

### Present

3<sup>rd</sup> District, Lucy T. Eisenberg, Esq., Chair

3<sup>rd</sup> District, Honey Kessler Amado

4<sup>th</sup> District, Jean Cohen

5<sup>th</sup> District, Susan Speir, Vice Chair

Gene A. Franklin, Sr., CIO

Dick SantaCruz, DCFS

Sylvia Valencia, DPSS

Steven J. Golightly, Director, CSSD

David Jetton, Superior Court

Mary Lawrence, DCSS

### Guests

Lisa Garrett, CSSD

Lori Cruz, CSSD

Gail Juiliano, CSSD

Jennifer Coultas, CSSD

### Staff

Lee Millen, Executive Office, BOS

Andrew Sevrin, Executive Office, BOS

### Absent

2<sup>nd</sup> District, Paula Leftwich

2<sup>nd</sup> District, John Murrell

5<sup>th</sup> District, Reginald Brass

Debbie Strong,

Franchise Tax Board

### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Eisenberg called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. in Room 372, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration.

### APPROVE MINUTES OF MAY 22, 2008

On motion of Vice Chair Speir, seconded by Member Amado and unanimously carried, the minutes of May 22, 2008, were approved with the following changes:

Jean Cohen was present; Page 3, "DCSS Report", 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, delete "...they had a revised release of COAP as of last week, and..."; 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph add, "This group is working on recommendations for improvements to COAP"; 3<sup>rd</sup> paragraph, edit to include: "The Program will continue in its current form until the State budget and the Trailer Bill are passed by the State Legislature, signed into law by the Governor and chaptered. The State budget and Trailer Bill will be retroactive to July 1, 2008."; and 5<sup>th</sup> paragraph, delete: "a policy", and add: "the COAP Policy."

**DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO INCLUDE: PERFORMANCE UPDATE; BUDGET UPDATE; DEPUTY DIRECTOR VACANCY; STATUS OF DISCUSSIONS WITH DCSS REGARDING IMPROVING INPUT OF EDD DATA; UPDATE ON LARGE URBAN JURISDICTION CONFERENCE; UPDATE ON CCSAS CONVERSION; PALMDALE ENFORCEMENT REORGANIZATION; BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE; AND STATUS OF ECSS IMPLEMENTATION**

Steven Golightly, Director, CSSD, reported the following:

- Budget Update - As recommended by the State Budget Committee, the State reverted back to the original amount of the disregard fee payable to welfare mothers from \$100 to \$50 to cut spending.
- Performance Update - Current support is the main issue and it has increased to 47.36% as of June, 2008; it was 45% for a long time. Collections have significantly increased from 2007. Last year there were a total of 471,000 cases, and this year there are currently 461,000 cases due to 10,000 case closures over the year. This translates to a 1.4% improvement rate, just short of the 2% improvement rate goal.
- Arrears collections increased by intercepting stimulus checks directed to NCPs. The department expects to receive total stimulus intercepts of \$9-11 million.
- EDD Data – Mary Ann Miller is pursuing the issue to the State level so CSSD can have better access to EDD data into their automated system. She's looking for batch dumps on individual searches for updated Wage Assignments rather than quarterly updates..
- Palmdale Enforcement Reorganization - a pilot program has been implemented in the Palmdale office involving three components: (1) early intervention on NCPs; (2) segmenting case loads into payment classes (i.e., always pays, sometimes pays, and never pays); and (3) a more proactive Case Management approach talking with and interacting with customers, rather than using the automated telephone call system. A report on the results will be provided in November.
- Business Plan Update - In the past, the Director has only invited Senior Managers for the Strategic Plan meeting, but has recently invited staff representation from every CSSD office. The results were very positive, as there was a lot of input from management and front line staff. The next meeting is scheduled for August 4, 2008. DCSS has asked for one overall business plan to simplify operations.
- Deputy Director Vacancy - Julie Paik was appointed Director of Child Support Services for Sonoma County. Recruitment to fill her vacancy closes on August 5, 2008.

**DCSS REPORT TO INCLUDE; BUDGET STATUS; STATUS OF LEGISLATION TO EXTEND COAP; PERCENTAGE OF PAYMENTS NOT SENT TO SDU; STATUS OF FEDERAL CERTIFICATION AND PENALTIES; AND STATUS OF STATE CALL CENTER**

Laura Choate, DCSS, reported that the legislation to repeal the COAP sunset clause is tied to the state budget process, and once the Budget and Trailer Bills are passed the Sunset clause will be repealed effective July 1, 2008.

DCSS is currently working on implementation of immediate COAP improvements scheduled for release by the end of September 2008. Program improvements include:

1. Eligibility expansion for NCPs with multiple cases in multiple counties;
2. Adjusting the minimum government debt eligibility requirements from \$5,000 down to \$501;
3. Eligibility expansion for the manual process to include NCPs with current child support;
4. Translation of all COAP forms into threshold languages to assist with communication to non-English speaking NCPs;
5. Shifting the DCSS role in COAP to a compliance review and quality assurance role similar to the department's role in other child support activities.

It is of note that some of these improvements are tied to authority integrated in the Trailer Bill language and therefore dependent upon completion of the State budget process. The COAP Advisory workgroup is providing expert assistance as DCSS completes implementation of the immediate program improvements. The workgroup will reconvene this fall to begin consideration of additional improvements that can be implemented by September 2009.

Since January, 2008, DCSS has established a Ghost Box, a central P.O. box created specifically by the State Disbursement Unit (SDU) to which payment mailings are directed from the old mailing address. Since then, they have seen a decline in the amount of mail sent to the box. In January, Los Angeles County accounted for 16% going to the box. DCSS provided CSSD with some lists, and they initiated their own Outreach Campaign. Six months later the numbers have declined to 11%, but DCSS expects a larger impact in August and September from their mass mailing.

The DCSS Integrated Voice Response System (IVR) takes calls for child support inquiries at its Sacramento call center. They take a high volume of calls because it's the number printed on notices sent to NCPs. It is a toll-free statewide phone number, and has been in effect since May, 2007. The average response time on calls is 2-3 minutes. When the caller is asked on the voice-activated system what County they're calling from their call is routed to the Los Angeles County Call Center for assistance.

**REVIEW AND APPROVE SEMI-ANNUAL REPORT**

The Semi-Annual Report was distributed for review. Chair Eisenberg asked for recommendations or revisions. Jean Cohen suggested the 10% interest charge for retroactive arrears should be included.

Chair Eisenberg noted that on Page 8, footnote #9 will include: "Legislative action to lower the interest rate." Also, the Chair inquired if more information on the Criminal Prosecution process would be of interest, in which case Wayne Doss will be asked to speak at the next meeting.

Following further discussion, on motion of Member Kessler Amado, seconded by Vice Chair Speir and unanimously carried, the Semi-Annual Report was approved.

### **REVIEW AND DISCUSS PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

Chair Eisenberg noted that in the complaint resolution process, when an inquiry is received the Department has 30 days to respond before it becomes a complaint. If the complaint is not resolved within 90 days, it reaches a State hearing level.

Gail Juiliano advised that a Past Due case is when the case is unresolved; at least 10% of all unresolved cases are from the Torrance office.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Juiliano noted that per the Order Calculation Method, there was extraordinary volatility on Zero Orders from NCPs that are incarcerated, receiving SSI benefits, on General Relief, or living in the home.

Sylvia Valencia reported that the Department of Social Services is forwarding CSSD information on NCP GR cases that are receiving those benefits.

### **REVIEW PROGRESS TOWARDS DEPARTMENT GOALS FOR 2007/2008, INCLUDING: (a) REPORT (AND STATISTICS) ON STRATEGY TO REDUCE DEFAULT JUDGMENTS – LORI CRUZ; (b) REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN ON ARREARS – GAIL JULIANO; (c) REPORT ON PILOT PROJECT IN DIVISION 4 TO REDUCE RETROACTIVE ARREARS – LORI CRUZ; AND (d) REPORT ON JUNE 19<sup>TH</sup> OUTREACH CAMPAIGN – LORI CRUZ**

Lori Cruz, Deputy Director, reported that the Department's goal is to achieve a 50% collection rate with potentially highly productive months left in the year. The District Attorney's investigators have helped in Bench Warrant arrests. The Default Reduction Project is a three-phase notification process requesting NCPs to appear in person. The phases are: a postcard reminder; a courtesy letter; and if there is no response after the first two notices, a warning letter about disregarding a summons complaint. This project resulted in a 10-12% success rate and focuses on pre-judgment cases. The policy is not intended as a punitive experience, but rather an educational experience for NCPs. In response to Chair Eisenberg, Director Golightly reported that both goals have not proven successful as yet.

Gail Juiliano reported that two Divisions have been most successful in having NCPs appear, with significant results:

- Division 4 (South Los Angeles) has called NCPs to appear prior to the issuance of the Summons and Complaint cases, resulting in a 30-40% response rate.
- Division 1 (Encino) has had a 50% appearance rate.

Lori Cruz advised that the West Covina office has used the three step correspondence system and the percentage of respondents has been low. Also, collection of arrears has been up 1.5% because of several projects, including COAP, the Federal Lien project, and the Outreach Project.

In response to Chair Eisenberg, Ms. Juliano advised that it takes 2,450 cases in collections for the percentage to move up one point. The percentage has increased because of stimulus checks, first time payments in collections, closing arrears cases with less than \$500 owing and review of a work list on NCPs 62 years and older who receive Social Security benefits.

Director Golightly added that not enough staff is available to work on arrears and COAP applications. This is a challenge in that COAP application processing is a Department priority.

Vice Chair Speir commented that in her experience the parent often has trouble completing the arrears forms without assistance because they are difficult for them to understand. The parent should be assisted in completing the COAP application by an attorney or someone with legal experience.

Lori Cruz advised that regarding the Pilot Project in Division 4, a total of 903 cases were reviewed for dismissal of the summons and complaint. Staff found a more recent address for 279 of the cases and 435 cases were out of service of the S&C. Due to the fact that more updated information was found and that a large majority of cases were out for service, only 135 cases were dismissed. Vice Chair Speir requested a report showing dollar amounts rather than case numbers. Ms. Cruz noted that Division 4 is imaging all their cases and will need a few months to report back on their totals.

**REPORT ON OBTAINING CORRECT DATA REGARDING INCARCERATION AND RELEASE DATES TO ENSURE CORRECT SUPPORT ORDERS FOR INCARCERATED NCPS – GAIL JULIANO**

Ms. Juliano reported that the Offender Based Information System (OBIS) obtains information on incarcerated NCPs. OBIS identified 13,000 inmates in Los Angeles County; 2,000 cases will be processed with modifications, and 800 cases are to be modified in September. OBIS is restricted to state prison populations in that County jails release inmates very quickly and data case retrieval on them is outdated.

**UPDATE ON CSTATS REPORTING PROJECT AND DISCUSSION ON DISPARITIES IN DIVISIONAL PERFORMANCE – LORI CRUZ**

Discussed earlier in the 2007/2008 Department Goal report.

**REPORT ON CONFERENCE CALL WITH CSSD, DPSS STAFF AND COUNTY COUNSEL REGARDING ALLOWING NCPS TO OBTAIN A UAP AUDIT – SUE SPEIR/HONEY KESSLER AMADO**

Honey Kessler Amado reported that the Unreimbursed Assistance Pool (UAP) audit is a monthly DPSS report of CPs on welfare, their total benefits, and total child support payments

received. The NCP is made aware of his required child support payments, and the UAP keeps a running total of how much arrears is owed to the CP.

Vice Chair Speir advised that some of the reports have been incorrect, and as such the information hasn't always been reliable. For example, a UAP audit shows all children the mother has, even if some children are not from the same NCP.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICE COMMITTEE REPORT – SUE SPEIR**

Chair Eisenberg noted that NCP collections are very difficult to obtain in that statistics show that 33% have no income and 37% have an income of less than \$10,000 a year.

Vice Chair Speir reported that there are cases where some NCPs are on Social Security Disability benefits and have had their arrear payments garnished without receiving credit for it; consequently, they end up paying double the collections owed to the CP.

### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was none.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Eisenberg declared the meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.