



Colusa, Sutter and Yolo Regional Child Support Agency Leadership Advisory Committee

To: RCSA Leadership Advisory Committee

From: Daniel Padilla, Regional Program Manager

Subject: 2023-2024 Performance Update (Agenda Item #7)

Date: December 5, 2024

Child support has proven to be a valuable source of income for families and importantly reduces child poverty. The federal Office of Child Support Services reported via an [infographic](#) that in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2023 the child support program collected \$29.6 billion and served more than 12.7 million children; 97% of child support collected went to families. Child Support serves more children than all other programs except Medicaid and SNAP.

California's poverty rate soared in 2023 to 18.9% meaning about 7.3 million state residents lacked the resources to meet basic needs last year. Furthermore, the rate of poverty for children in California is higher than the national average. Unfortunately, California serves fewer children as a percent to total, than nationally (approximately 1 in 9 children in CA compared to 1 in 5 children nationally) – demonstrating the need to expand access to services.

Child support services promotes the well-being of children by establishing parentage and through the establishment and collection of child support for children living in a co-parenting situation. We strive to improve our services to families and continue to be creative in areas we aim to enhance. In addition to alleviating child poverty, expanding access to child support and importantly parental involvement of both parents has other benefits for children including:

- Reduced instances of child abuse and neglect,
- Improved educational outcomes, and
- Improved cognitive, language and social development.



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The Colusa Sutter Yolo Regional Child Support Agency (RCSA) strongly believes in educating our community and connecting customers with services for the purpose improving child outcomes, reducing child poverty, and increasing parental involvement. For many customers, the value of child support services isn't immediate, and only through lived experiences does this become apparent.

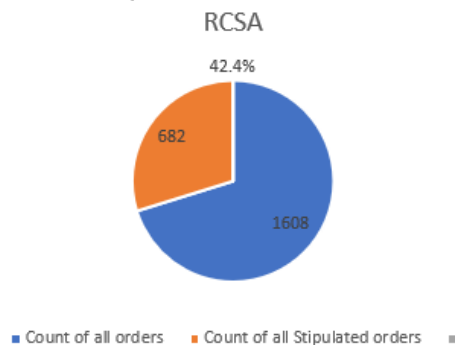
Customer Engagement

Stipulations

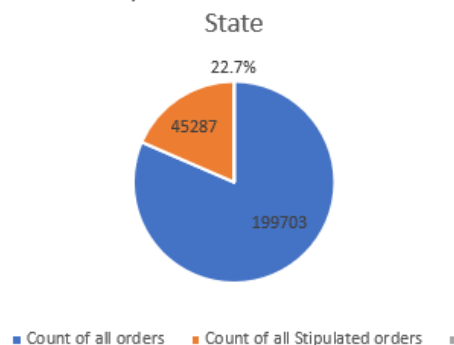
The RCSA continued efforts to increase stipulations for FFY 2024 as a strategy to increase customer engagement and performance. The agreements between the parents can streamline a potentially taxing legal process, allowing them to focus on their critical responsibility of co-parenting. With this objective in mind, the establishment team reaches out to all newly opened cases with the goal of educating and engaging both parents.

Although the percent of stipulated orders for the FFY 2024 is lower than the year prior, we ended with 38.9%. The aggregate total for FFY 2022/2023 and FFY 2023/2024 reached 42.4%, as compared to 22.7% statewide stipulations for the same period.

Percent of Stipulated Orders FFY 23 & FFY 24



Percent of Stipulated Orders FFY 23 & FFY 24



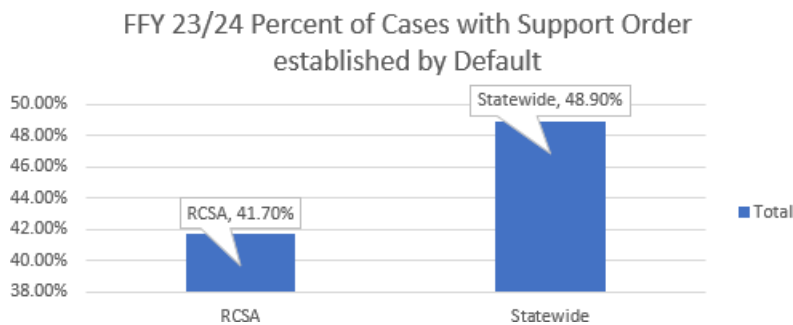
Default Judgment

To further this point, one of the core duties for the establishment team is to file orders



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and for many of our customers it is their first child support order (judgment) filed. Although contact with customers does not guarantee a stipulation, it can reduce default judgements. Default judgements are filed when the Parent Paying Support (PPS) chooses to not act on the summons and complaint they were served within the 30 days legally allowed by either stipulating or filing an Answer to the complaint. Historically, default orders do not perform as well as stipulated orders. The RCSA's default percentage of all support orders established was slightly better than compared statewide. The default percentage for RCSA in the 2023/2024 FFY was 41.7% as compared to the 48.9% statewide.

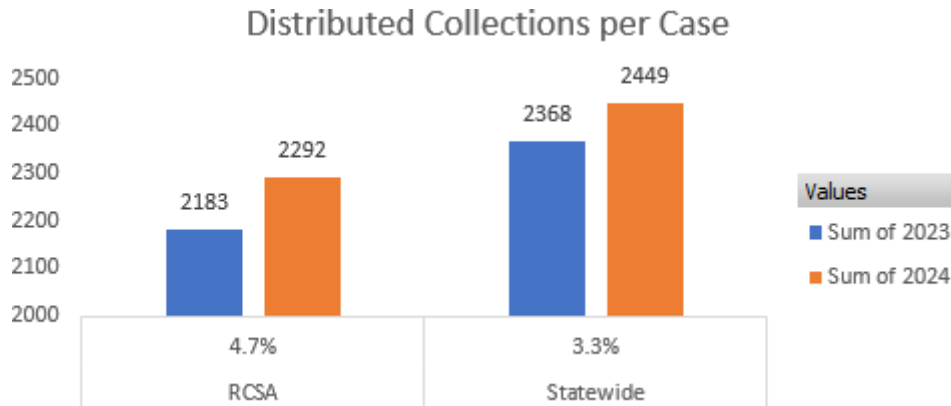


Distributed Collections

The impacts of customer engagement extend beyond the stipulation and default percentage and spills into other areas of the child support program including collections. By making a diligent effort to reach out to our customers we have distributed \$2,292 on average per case with a collection for the FFY 2024. This is a 4.7% increase from the FFY 2023 (\$2,183). Despite collecting more per case, it should be noted that the RCSA did experience a 4.3% or \$980,285 decline in total collections for the FFY 2024 (\$21,419,612) as compared to FFY 2023 (\$22,399,897). The primary factor contributing to this decline is the reducing caseloads. The RCSA had a total of 10,319 cases in September of 2023 but only reported 9,375 cases in September of 2024: a reduction of 944 cases in a 12-month period.



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Average Number of Days from Case Opening to Order

Customer engagement can also speed up the process to establish an order even if it's through a hearing. The RCSA averaged 106 days from case opening to order (PI-22) filed during the 2023/2024 FFY as compared to 137 days statewide. The RCSA also averaged 43 days from monetary order to first payment as compared to 57 days statewide. This means the RCSA is obtaining orders and getting money to families quicker than the average statewide. In addition to assisting the person receiving support, this efficient work also helps the parent ordered to pay by avoiding or reducing arrears they could potentially owe.

FFY2024/2025

New State Approach

State DCSS introduced a new performance planning approach for FFY2024/2025. In previous years the state required all local child support agency's (LCSA) to create a Performance Management Plan or PMP. Every year we set our goals, tracked our outcomes, and reported back to the state. This year the state came out with the Annual Performance Strategies or APS for FFY 2025 which replaced the PMP. The APS aligns with the DCSS' Strategic Plan which focuses on improving service delivery, outcomes for children and families and streamlines internal process. The APS includes three key initiatives:



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1. Uncollectible Debt: Phase 1 – Sole source of income and foster care.
2. Final Rule: Flexibility, Efficiency, and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs (FEM) guideline changes. All LCSAs are to develop a plan to implement the requirements of the changes to the guideline calculator.
3. Transition to IV-D PEP – LCSAs are to clean up IV-D paternity data by July 2025.

The RCSA responded to the state's directive and organized plans to work these. As a result, the RCSA has closed 651 foster care cases for the Uncollectible Debt Phase 1 initiative. As of November 2024, the RCSA has 28 cases remaining on the list to review. Regarding the sole source of income portion of the Uncollectible Debt Phase 1 initiative the RCSA has been able to analyze and process 180 cases since November 2023. The RCSA currently has 45 cases remaining to be reviewed. The Final Rule- FEM guideline changes have been implemented as of August 2024 prior to the new guideline calculator's state implementation deadline of September 2024. Finally, the IV-D paternity data clean-up is up to date, but we will continue to review every quarter until July 2025 to ensure clean data.

FFY24/25 Performance Strategy

As the RCSA enters the FFY 2025 the agency stays committed to look for areas of internal improvement. The fact the RCSA's APS implementation is in good status gave the agency an opportunity to work on goal setting internally.

The FFY 2025 Performance Strategy was created with the vision to produce more clarity across the organization. This document aligns with the state DCSS' Strategic Plan and will align all internal performance conversations and all performance related work across teams so we can better understand how our everyday duties impact others in the organization and ultimately impact our goals. The Performance Strategy calls out eight goals the RCSA labeled as Big Picture Goals and provides the measurements for those goals.



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Agency Wide Big Picture Goals & Measurements

<i>Goals</i>	<i>Measurements</i>
Time to Order	93 days or fewer by end of FFY
Parentage	3% by end of FFY
New Case Processing	2 business days and zero cases at more than 20 days
Timely R&A's	Zero R&A's past 180 days
Collection on Current	70% or higher on current
Collection on Arrears	61.5% or higher on cases with arrears owed by FFY and 39% on monthly DECK stat
Uncollectable Debt – Sole Source	No cases on Tableau list over 60 days by FFY
Outreach/New Nevers	10% increase over 23/24

The advantage of having goals closely related to staff’s work is the quick understanding of their impacts to those Big Picture goals, and a better understanding of the smaller outcomes not always visible in the Big Picture goals. This allows for smaller tactical strategies at the worker level. The FFY 2025 Performance Strategy outlines core areas of review for each of the goals designed to improve workflow between teams and solidifying expectations for all employees. These reviews will at minimum take place between staff and their supervisor at their monthly one-one-one meetings and again with the supervisor and their manager as the goals impact multiple teams across the organization. By having these core areas outlined ensures consistent conversations are being had across the organization. The performance strategy does not include all aspects of workers duties, but we believe this will focus our energy and will direct our efforts in the same path forward which will positively impact our customers.

Vacancy impacts

As teams and staff work under the 2025 Performance Strategy and build a better understanding of workflow and duty impacts it becomes evident how impactful vacancies are. Unfortunately, vacancies are now a regular hurdle for government agencies and that fact is also true for the RCSA.

FFY 2024 saw a decrease of attorneys for the agency, part of which was intentional due to budget. The RCSA went from three full time attorneys to two full time. Due to a resignation in October, the RCSA currently only has one attorney but is actively recruiting to fill the second vacant position.



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This decrease in attorneys increases internal workload on our one attorney who is required to attend all hearing appearances for each of the three courts. This workload may slow the legal process which can have negative performance outcomes, specifically in our time to order and our timely review and adjustment stats. The organization has made strategic decisions regarding duties of the legal team Child Support Specialists (CSS) to mitigate any potential delays. The CSS will review work that does not require attorney review to prevent backlogs and streamline processes.

The RCSA has also had CSS and Child Support Assistant (CSA) vacancies which we have regularly worked to fill and onboard. The CSS vacancy means shifts in caseloads, or temporary coverage provided by Senior CSS's. Caseload size varies, but currently our caseloads range from 430 to 500 cases per CSS. Vacancies at the CSS level require immediate planning to ensure coverage of the caseload. CSAs are responsible for legal document processing, coordination of service of process, locate and limited case management. Vacancies can affect the efficiency of the overall operation.

Conclusion

The RCSA continues to be strategic in its approach to case management and performance. Case opening, parentage and the child support establishment remains the responsibility of our establishment team. The agency is working to stem the tide in case closure by outreach, advertising and educating the community on the breadth of services we provide. Our enforcement teams focus on the collection, distribution of child support and the modification of child support orders when needed. Although we collected less money in total, the average amount collected per case with a distributed collection increased. Furthermore, the timeliness of order establishment and the distribution of the first payment is faster than the state average.

The RCSA has also invested a great deal of time and energy into improving its internal processes by creating the FFY 2025 Performance Strategy. While the investment the RCSA is dedicating to our internal processes may not be visible to our external customers, the effects of the resulting efficiencies will be felt by all. The performance strategy aims to align our work through the core reviews we identified to reach the Big Picture Goals. This will have all staff rowing in the same direction which is intended to improve our quality of work and service to customers.



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The RCSA is committed to providing quality service. We recognize the value of our program, the positive impacts to the many families who depend on our service, and to our communities.