

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES**

P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064



April 4, 2008

CERTIFICATION LETTER: 08-01

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

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
- Federal Certification

SUBJECT: PROCESS CHANGES REQUIRED FOR FEDERAL CERTIFICATION

This supersedes instructions outlined in Certification Letter 07-01.

The purpose of this letter is to direct all Local Child Support Agencies (LCSAs) to adopt or revise processes, as appropriate, to conform with mandates stemming from the ongoing Federal Certification Review. This letter addresses specific requirements as outlined in Federal Certification Finding 4.32.

Federal Certification Finding 4.32 states that no calculators other than the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) guideline calculator may be used to calculate child support obligation amounts in IV-D cases and that the CSE guideline calculator must be used in a manner consistent with federal regulations (as described in the following paragraph) by both county court and LCSA staff members.

All IV-D child support obligations established by judicial action must be maintained in the CSE system with linked CSE guideline calculations. All inputs used to calculate the final obligation amounts must be included in the CSE guideline calculations that are linked to the associated final court orders in CSE. Each guideline calculation linked to a support order in CSE must either (a) agree exactly with the final ordered amount, or (b) be identified in the system as a deviation.

To support this, a "Generation Reason" field has been added to indicate why the guideline calculation was run, if it was CSE generated or worker generated, the worker generating the guideline calculation (if applicable), and the date it was generated. This will address those instances where a guideline calculation is run based on information obtained outside of CSE.

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Additionally, in order to comply with Office of Child Support Enforcement requirements and close Finding 4.32 within the timeframes established for the overall certification effort, Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) has agreed to meet the following conditions regarding the implementation consistent with the limited exception granted by the federal government related to this finding:

1. By May 9, 2008, DCSS will have provided sufficient network access and software training to enable the use of the CSE Public Guideline Calculator at all county court locations where child support cases are heard.
2. By November 26, 2008, DCSS will have provided sufficient network access and software training to enable the use of the CSE Internal Guideline Calculator at all county court locations where child support cases are heard.

By meeting the two conditions referenced above, DCSS will support the ability of county child support commissioners and staff to adopt or revise their business practices to meet the federal certification requirements.

Attached is a description of Federal Certification Finding 4.32. The Required Process description section in the attachment has been coordinated with the Federal Certification Review Team, and must be adopted, effective immediately, by all LCSAs before the findings can be closed. The ultimate federal certification of California's Alternative System Configuration will not be possible until all findings have been formally closed by the federal Review Team.

Since the certification review is still in progress, we expect additional findings that will require LCSA process changes. Such findings will be addressed in future letters.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this matter, please contact Jarilyn Jones at (916) 464-4884 or Cindi Pocaroba at (916) 464-4887

Sincerely,

/os/

**BILL OTTERBECK**  
Deputy Director

Attachment

ATTACHMENT #1

**Federal Certification Finding 4.32: Courts are using commercial software to calculate obligations**

CSE has a guidelines calculator that meets certification requirements. However, some courts are persisting in utilizing commercial guideline calculation tools, which is in violation of the definition of a statewide CSE system. If the resulting guidelines calculation is different than that obtained using the CSE guidelines calculator, the certification team found that the deviation, amount and reason for the deviation may or may not be entered into the CSE guidelines calculator, depending on local business practices within the county.

**Required Process**

To be considered a statewide CSE system, the system must encompass all political subdivisions and organizations which provide child support enforcement related services. Therefore, the courts must use the CSE guidelines calculator contained in the CSE. The system must maintain case data on the application of the guidelines and deviations from the guidelines for the required four-year guideline review. This includes all guidelines calculations made prior to the court hearing as well as any re-runs of the guidelines calculations conducted during or after the court hearing.