



Alisha Griffin, Director  
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Child Support Services

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## Honorees of California's Child Support Performance Awards<sup>1</sup>

The California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) presented awards to the local child support agencies serving the counties that met or exceeded performance goals during the Federal Fiscal Year 2014.

### Director's Challenge Award Recipients

This award went to county child support agencies that attained an increase in the percentage of distributed collections by 5 percent or more over the previous year.

#### Lake County (Very Small: 2,845 cases)

The Lake County Department of Child Support Services had the third largest increase in the percentage of child support it collected and distributed on behalf of children and their families over the previous year. In FFY 2014, the child support agency increased distributed collections by 6.04 percent to \$4.7 million. That is an increase of \$268,412 over the previous year. By attaining an increase of 5 percent or more, this accomplishment earned Lake County a **Director's Challenge Award**.

#### Napa County (Small: 3,886 cases)

The Napa County Department of Child Support Services had the largest increase in the percentage of child support it collected and distributed on behalf of children and their families over the previous year. In FFY 2014, the child support agency increased distributed collections by 6.43 percent to \$10.4 million. That is an increase of \$630,041 over the previous year. By attaining an increase of 5 percent or more, this accomplishment earned Napa County a **Director's Challenge Award**.

#### Placer County (Medium: 8,853 cases)

The Placer County Department of Child Support Services had the second largest increase in the percentage of child support it collected and distributed on behalf of children and their families over the previous year. In FFY 2014, the child support agency increased distributed collections by 6.22 percent to \$22.3 million. That is an increase of \$1.3 million over the previous year. By attaining an increase of 5 percent or more, this accomplishment earned Placer County a **Director's Challenge Award**.

(more)

<sup>1</sup> Case numbers are the number of cases in the California Child Support Program on September 30, 2014, which is the last day of FFY 2014.



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## Innovation Award

This award was presented to the local child support agency, or group of agencies, that developed or implemented a practice with demonstrated measurable results that led to improved program performance or improved customer service.

### **Contra Costa County** (Large: 28,936 cases)

The Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services came up with an idea aimed at making it easier for cash-paying customers to pay their child support. A child support manager was on a shopping trip when she saw a coin collecting machine that could issue gift cards and collect charitable donations. She wondered whether child support could be collected in grocery stores, as well. When she shared her idea with her director the next day, the director remembered a news article about a program in another state that allowed customers to pay cash at convenient locations. From that one creative idea and that one article, the availability of child support payments through MoneyGram was born. The county approached the state and was selected to operate the state's pilot program on the service. During the pilot's first six weeks, 127 child support payments totaling \$38,228 were made in the county. The pilot program's success led the state to roll it out statewide as another one of the many convenient payment options available to child support customers. From the beginning of the statewide rollout on January 5 to March 19, MoneyGram received 2,317 child support payments in the amount of \$600,000. The state is now exploring additional money transfer services and other options to increase convenience to child support customers even more. For this, the Contra Costa Department of Child Support Services earned the state's **Innovation Award**.

### **San Diego County** (Very Large: 71,919 cases)

The San Diego County Department of Child Support Services developed the Legal Paperless System (LPS) to eliminate the need for paper litigation files used by child support attorneys in approximately 17,000 court hearings per year. The system was created to reduce the costs associated with generating paper files, while also increasing the efficiency of child support staff involved in the court hearing process. Since being introduced in January 2013, 97.9 percent of San Diego's child support case files have become paperless. As a result of the success in San Diego County, the state DCSS has made it possible for all local child support agencies in California to access and utilize the LPS. For this, the San Diego County DCSS earned the state's **Innovation Award**.

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## Honorable Mention for Innovation Award

### Butte, Colusa, Glenn and Plumas Counties

To use resources efficiently, Butte, Glenn, Colusa and Plumas counties are sharing an attorney to handle child support cases of all four counties. The concept came about in 2012 after the attorney of one county gave notice and the attorney of another county provided backup. It worked out so well, with the two counties sharing an attorney, that the child support directors of both counties decided to make sharing a permanent solution. They drew up a memorandum of understanding in 2013 so that the attorney in one county could provide legal services for both counties. When word got out about the success of this new concept, two neighboring counties joined in. Now, the smaller counties with a need for part-time attorney services are able to share in the resources of their larger neighbor. For their shared service agreement, the four local child support agencies earned an **Honorable Mention for Innovation in the California Child Support Program.**

### Lassen County

To help inmates at a local federal prison address their child support cases prior to release from incarceration, the Lassen County Department of Child Support Services initiated a partnership with the Herlong Federal Correction Institution. They invited the inmates to attend informational seminars and to obtain status updates on their cases in one-on-one meetings with a child support professional. In the meetings, county staff told the inmates whether their case was open or closed, how much they owed, whether they were eligible for a compromise of arrears and how to contact their case manager. Presenters emphasized that paying child support is a way for parents to show they care for their children. In all, 71 inmates with 96 child support cases in California participated in the program, in addition to more than 50 inmates from other states. As a result, cases were updated with the location of the noncustodial parent and the date of the parent's release. Since the first seminar in May 2013, 10 of the inmates with California cases were released, got jobs and began making regular payments. Four other inmates, who also became employed, began complying with their medical support orders. For this, Lassen County's child support agency earned an **Honorable Mention for Innovation in the California Child Support Program.**

### Shasta County

Normally, the amount of child support is decided in court by looking at each party's income and time spent with the child or children, among other factors. Parents don't have to go to court, however, if they can agree on an amount. This is called a stipulated agreement. To ensure parents know about this option when first entering the child support program, the Shasta County Department of Child Support Services established a Family Conference Team in 2012. When new cases came in, members of the team invited parents/guardians to participate in a case conference at the local child support office or by phone. By using problem solving techniques and negotiation skills early in the process, case workers were able to help the participants be heard, make informed decisions and reach voluntary agreements without going to court. As a result, the percent of new child support orders established by stipulations increased from 29 percent in October 2012 to 51 percent in September 2014. Further, the parents who engaged in the collaborative process received their first payment quicker. The average time to a first payment was reduced from 50 days to 27 days. Going to court and having a case heard by a judicial officer is still an option. For this, Shasta County's child support agency earned an **Honorable Mention for Innovation in the California Child Support Program.** ###