CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064

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
[X] Initiated by DCSS

November 24, 2003

LCSA LETTER: 03-22

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: NEW PROCEDURES FOR RESPONDING TO CORRESPONDENCE FROM NON-CUSTODIAL PARENTS AND CUSTODIAL PARTIES

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) has adopted new procedures for responding to correspondence from non-custodial parents and custodial parties.

Currently, all correspondence regarding a specific child support case or general child support questions are referred to the DCSS Public Inquiry Response Team (PIRT) for response. PIRT contacts the appropriate Ombudsperson Program for additional information and provides the customer with a written response to the inquiry based on information received from the Ombudsperson. In addition, PIRT provides information about the complaint resolution and State Hearing processes, if needed.

PIRT finds that in many cases the local child support agency (LCSA) has already responded to the customer's inquiry and PIRT simply forwards the LCSA response to the customer. As a result, DCSS has developed new procedures for responding to correspondence from non-custodial parents and custodial parties.

Effective December 1, 2003, PIRT will respond to customers' correspondence with a standard template letter directing them to the appropriate LCSA, as well as the DCSS website. This websites contains basic information about child support services in our child support handbook, answers to frequently asked questions, as well as information about how to file a complaint, the State Hearing process, links to family laws, child support services program regulations and policies, and other child support program links. The template letter will also refer the customer to the DCSS' toll-free number which provides child support information through recorded messages.

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If the correspondence is a formal request for complaint resolution, PIRT will fax the request to the Ombudsperson on the day of receipt and immediately mail the hardcopy. These new practices will increase the efficiency in responding to customers' inquiries by reducing the response time and redundancy in responding to customers, and directing customers to self-help services. Please contact Francine Woods, Branch Chief of the Customer and Community Services Branch at (916) 464-5377 if you have questions.

Sincerely,

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DONNA S. HERSHKOWITZ
Deputy Director
Child Support Services Division

cc: DCSS Regional Administrators
LCSA Outreach Coordinators
LCSA Ombudspersons