DCSS P3 PROGRAM
NON-JUDICIAL FORMS WORKGROUP
JULY 18, 2000 MEETING
MEETING SUMMARY

A. GENERAL

On July 18, 2000, the California Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) Policies, Procedures, and Practices (P3) Project, Non-Judicial Forms Workgroup, held its first official session in Sacramento. The following members attended:

- ☑ Bill Kirk, State Co-Leader (DCSS Data Manager)
- ☑ Pamela Crandall, County Analyst (FSO Supervisor---Sonoma)
- ☑ Rita Carroll, State Analyst (DCSS System Standards Analyst)
- ☑ Kristy Johnson, State Analyst (DCSS System Standards Analyst)
- ☑ Pat Ratty, Small County Rep (Paralegal---Placer)
- ☑ Ruth Franklin, Medium County Rep (FSO Supervisor---Santa Clara)
- ☑ Deborah Potter, Large County Rep (Analyst---Fresno)
- ☑ Robert McLeod, Advocate Rep (ACES---Legal Research)
- ☑ Jenny Skoble, Advocate Rep (Harriett Buhai Ctr---Staff Attorney)
- ☑ Ed Kent, FTB Rep (CCSAS Child Support Specialist)
- ☑ Lynn Johnson, FTB Rep (CCSAS Info Systems Analyst)
- ☐ Judi Bentzien, FTB Rep (CCSAS Child Support Specialist)
- ☐ Kathleen Cullen, Judical Council (County Clerk---Orange)

Attending *ex officio* were:

- ☑ Julie Hopkins, Facilitator (SRA International)
- ☐ Pat Pianko, Resource (OCSE Rep---Region 9)
- ☐ John Schambre, Resource (OCSE Rep---Region 9)
- ☐ Nancy Bienia, Resource (OCSE Rep---DC)

This meeting summary highlights points covered, material discussed, and decisions made, and follow-up tasks for forthcoming sessions. Comments and corrections should be addressed to Julie Hopkins at julie.hopkins@dss.ca.gov.

Julie Hopkins opened the meeting with a discussion of housekeeping items, including:

- Name tags and door codes
- Bathrooms
- Snacks and Sodas
- Phone messages – 916-263-4601
- Fax – 916-263-4745
- Lunch
- Scribe: Debbie Potter

- Action Items and Identification of System Requirements: Lynn Johnson
- Review of Minutes from all Workgroups to identify cross-over issues and/or systems requirements: Lynn Johnson

Julie then moved on to a discussion of the personal and/or professional agendas that each member brought to the group. The members candidly discussed their thoughts on this issue, and identified agendas as follows:

- Representation with experience on forms
- See where we're headed
- Represent families: rights, understanding
- History of process; caseworker interests; customers
- Standardization for ease of systems development; capture requirements
- County & caseworker representation & interests
- Make process work; ensure that needs of clients are represented (the children)
- FTB – coverage overview for FTB managers
- Forms standardization and simplicity
- Standardization and uniformity; procedures
- Coordination between county and state

B. REVIEW OF LAST MEETING'S MINUTES

The group briefly discussed the work they had done in San Francisco and the dynamics each member had observed. All agreed that the group was on the right track, and should proceed as planned in San Francisco. There was some discussion of the benefit of appointing another Co-Leader, as there was only one, Bill Kirk, a State representative. Patty volunteered to be Co-Leader. Debbi volunteered to be the Scribe and Lynn agreed to take Action Items and identify Systems Requirements.

C. TODAY'S TENTATIVE AGENDA

There was initially some confusion as to which issue the group would be covering. Our initial discussion centered on Issue One (scheduled for Sessions Two and Three) rather than Issue Two. The group reviewed both our long and short term goals:

> **Long Term: Provide all child support customers with timely and easy access to consistent, accurate and current information (forms).**
>
> **Short Term: Recommend a process and guidelines for the development of statewide standard client communication forms.**

The group then turned to the session agenda that Ed had prepared, based on our work in San Francisco:

Issue Two: Identify the general characteristics of an ideal client communication form.

Workplan: Develop a list of characteristics of an ideal form.
Develop a list of the legal requirements related to forms.

D. RESEARCH AND INFORMATION REPORT

Robert began this discussion with a review of forms requirements as set out in the ACES Guide to Implementation of the New California Department of Child Support Services. After some discussion of different types of forms and information they should contain (statement of ongoing collections; source of collections; TANF case statements, etc.), it was determined that this discussion should be tabled until the August 8th session, when the group plans to discuss categories and types of client communication forms.

Bill provided a review of SB 542, including a bullet list of customer-service related requirements.

Other characteristics of forms were discussed, including:

- Forms should be informative, complete
- Listing of location attempts: Status report – (monthly as in the Barnes notice)
- Continuing balance of the account
- Source of the payment – is money coming in? Where is it going?
- Pertinent Information in understandable format

E. CHARACTERISTICS OF AN IDEAL FORM

The group spent time brainstorming to determine what items would be included in an ideal form, as follows:

- Contact name, return address, phone numbers
- "Forms Unit" recommendation?
- Font size (if more than 12 pt, look at cost-extra paper/ink)
- Spacing
- Content
- Letter format
- Terminology: limit use of acronyms, legal terminology, county specific terms
- FTB actions should meet DCSS standards: There should be notice to counties of action taken so that when a client/customer calls for information, the case worker can relay the correct information
- Language simplicity
- No information overload
- Focus on the goal of the form
- Term use requirements
- "Multi-tasking": caseworker generation of form generates notice to client or other interested parties (SYSTEM - Discussion item for September 5, 2000)

- Automated quarterly locate letter (SYSTEM - Discussion item for September 5, 2000)
- Scannable/Digitizeable (SYSTEM - Discussion item for September 5, 2000)
- Use of electronic signature? (SYSTEM - Discussion item for September 5, 2000)
- Incorporate Turner requirements
- Include code section cites

NON-JUDICIAL FORMS RECOMMENDATIONS

FORMAT	CONTENT	OTHER
Font size (14 pt)	Language should be at 6th grade level	Business letters &/or check boxes
Font type	Multi-lingual	Include code cites
Spacing	Simplicity-concise and to the point-no information overload	
US Postal standards for mailing	Non-threatening	
	Specific contact information e.g. FTB/counties	
	Terminology: terms defined when above 6th grade level; limit use of acronyms; legal terminology; county-specific terms	
	TURNER requirements (?)	

F. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

The group moved on to identify legal requirements related to forms.

- Notice requirements (i.e. NCP cited has the right to have an attorney present)
- No attorney/client relationship
- 14 pt type – Important notices
- Other than Important Notices, there is no proscribed format
- Barnes requirements (case law)
- 17404-17406 California Family Code – Jenny will review and report back any requirements at the next session
- 5234 B – Jenny will review and report back any requirements at the next session.

This listing may be clarified/revised after Jenny's review of the California Family Code.

G. CUSTOMERS: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL

During our meeting, various internal and external customers were identified. We anticipate that this list will grow substantially as our work evolves. Patty also provided a preliminary customer listing; the entire group will review, revise and add to the listing, in preparation for Session Two.

- Employers
- Post office
- Hospitals (POP)

H. ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- Lead time on approval/implementation of forms
- Costs of multi-page forms
- Need/requirement for outreach (FC 17400 (e))
- Cost of generating and mailing forms
- Need to identify available county resources
  - How staff may/will process new forms
  - Change management procedures associated w/new forms
  - System changes; impact of new forms on system, ensuring all links between form and case history, case management, ticklers, etc. are maintained

I. DRAFT RECOMMENDATION FOR ISSUE TWO

SB542 requires that the Director of DCSS develop uniform forms. To meet this requirement, it is the recommendation of this workgroup that:

1. There be a DCSS Forms Unit that is responsible for developing, distributing, updating and revising forms to meet the following ideal characteristics:

FORMAT	CONTENT	OTHER
Font size (14 pt)	Language should be at 6th grade level	Business letters &/or check boxes
Font type	Multi-lingual	Include code cites
Spacing	Simplicity-concise and to the point-no information overload	
US Postal standards for mailing	Non-threatening	
	Specific contact information e.g. FTB/counties	
	Terminology: terms defined when above 6th grade level;	

	limit use of acronyms; legal terminology; county-specific terms	
	TURNER requirements (?)	

We recommend an Advisory Review Board to provide consultation and input to the DCSS Forms Unit. Board includes users, customers and interested stakeholders.

2. Including, but not limited to legal requirements
    - Barnes
    - CA Family Code (Jenny)
    - Notice regulations
    - Important notice regs.

J. HANDOUTS

- Customer Service Related Bullets from the Law
- Agendas and Workplans developed at Kickoff Conference
- Workgroup Phone List
- Virginia Non-Judicial Forms Information
- Barnes Decision
- DHS Memo (May 18, 2000): Elimination of Face-to-Face Interview at Application
- Excerpt from ACES Guide: "Failure of the Agency to Report Consistent and Correct Account Information to the Family"
- Sample "Monthly Statement of Collections and Distributions", County of Los Angeles
- Turner Requirements
- KIDZ Forms Listing
- Customer Listing

K. ACTION ITEMS/HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEXT SESSION

- See attached listing.

L. ANCILLARY (PARKING LOT) ISSUES

M. ATTACHMENTS

- Action Item List (incorporates Kickoff Conference Meetings and Session One).
- Agenda for Session Two: August 8, 2000
- Workplan for Session Two