

# **Office of Child Support Enforcement**

## **OCSE Interstate Workgroup on Interagency Data Access**

**July 2003**

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# 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the efforts of the Interstate Workgroup on Interagency Data Access. Twenty-one members were chosen for their perspectives in Child Support Enforcement (CSE), specifically interstate case processing. Both state and Federal policy, program and systems leaders convened to improve the consistency and productivity of the data exchanged in interstate CSE cases. Individual members also represented large and small states, judicial versus administrative programs, and some states that had already built customer service websites. The workgroup members' efforts are intended to have immediate impact and also act as a platform for continuing improvements to the electronic exchange of interstate case information.

To help interstate caseworkers more readily access other states' data and, ultimately, to improve case management, customer service, and increase collections, the group addressed two areas of immediate need:

- A common understanding of the meanings of CSE terms, and
- Comprehensive and logically arranged case financial histories for exchange with other states.

Consistent definitions of data, in a readily understood format, with sufficient content, would expedite interstate communication, reduce the need for human intervention and improve the accuracy of case information.

This work augments existing interstate communication tools, such as the Child Support Enforcement Network (CSENet), the Federal Case Registry (FCR), and state websites and voice response systems, and does not intend to replace them.

The work also focuses on the interstate caseworkers' need to perform case management and customer service tasks. Additional improvements to providing interstate information for use in court and for distribution purposes were viewed as necessary, but were deferred to subsequent or parallel efforts.

To create consistent definitions, the group first determined the types of information and associated data elements interstate caseworkers typically need to do their jobs. They assessed the availability of this information in an electronic format. They then collectively agreed on the most appropriate wording to define those elements that were essential, but were missing from readily available sources. This will enable all states to map state-specific terminology to a documented set of commonly understood terms.

To assist states in the preparation or refinement of shared financial histories, the group evaluated currently available payment histories from numerous states, synthesized the positive attributes of these histories, and developed a list of preferred formatting standards. Two state participants then volunteered development teams to create visual representations of the "imagined" payment records, so that all states could see tangible ways financial information might be presented. States with existing customer service websites could then refine the presentation of that information. States without websites could save time and energy in requirements definition and system design by using the work products generated from this effort.

During the four months in which it met, the workgroup carefully considered the operational impact of its recommendations. Members polled frontline staff, supervisors, and neighboring states. But the workgroup also recognized the need to verify their recommendations with a broader audience of end users and all state CSE agencies.

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

The Interstate Workgroup on Interagency Data Access was established to assist interstate caseworkers in handling their cases more effectively by improving information sharing state to state. The workgroup was chartered to address interstate information needs – including financial, court order, and case information – and to recommend a standard financial record that can be used and consistently understood across state lines.

### **2.1 SCOPE**

The workgroup met four times on the following dates at the following locations:

- November 5-6, 2002 in Herndon, Virginia;
- January 8-9, 2003 in Reston, Virginia;
- February 5-6, 2003 in Phoenix, Arizona; and
- March 11-12, 2003 in Reston, Virginia.

### **2.2 PARTICIPANTS**

Key representatives from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE); state technical and program staff; and several OCSE partners were in attendance. State Information Technology Consortium (SITC) staff supported attendee travel and meeting accommodations, performed research and analysis work, and facilitated meeting discussions. The following individuals participated in the meetings. A roster is provided in Appendix A.

#### **2.2.1 STATE REPRESENTATIVES**

The following state participants were selected to provide representation from different facets of the CSE Program, including child support policy knowledge, technical expertise specific to statewide child support systems, and specific interstate experience. These participants represent large and small states, judicial vs. administrative process, and states that have already implemented customer service websites. Participants are listed in alphabetical order by state:

- Annmarie Mena, Arizona
- Craig Goellner, Colorado
- Mary Loven, Iowa
- Cheryl Traina, Massachusetts
- Phillip Herndon, New Mexico
- Barry Burger, North Carolina
- Mike Noreika, Pennsylvania
- Larry Davis, Texas

- Jeffrey Cohen, Vermont
- Connie White, Virginia
- Aaron Powell, Washington

### **2.2.2 OCSE AND PARTNER REPRESENTATIVES**

The following individuals participated in the meetings, by facilitating and supporting the workgroup, providing policy knowledge, and sharing experience about other interstate initiatives:

- Helen Smith, OCSE
- Robin Rushton, OCSE
- Eileen Brooks, OCSE
- Dianne Offett, OCSE
- Patricia Crawford, LMIT
- Kerry Newcombe, Northrup Grumman
- Christi Oakley, SITC
- Cynthia Olson, SITC
- Suzanne Poe, SITC
- Sheila Drake, SITC

### **2.3 PROCESS**

The workgroup was chartered to address providing needed information electronically to interstate caseworkers and recommending a standard financial record for use state to state. Key topics included:

- Interstate information needs – identifying the information that interstate caseworkers need to do their jobs more effectively, including who needs the information, what information is required, and when it is needed.
- Common definitions – defining terms so states can interpret information consistently and correctly.
- Presentation of the information and its accessibility.

At the conclusion of each meeting, a list of action items was created to document activities to accomplish between meetings. Summary minutes were produced and distributed to workgroup members following each meeting. A conference call was conducted in December 2002 to solicit feedback from workgroup members regarding input from their staff. This conference call confirmed that the workgroup was moving in the right direction.

### **3. DATA IDENTIFICATION AND DEFINITION**

The workgroup determined that identifying the types of data that interstate caseworkers need was crucial to achieving the goal of assisting interstate caseworkers in handling their cases and developing some commonality. Thus, a methodology was followed, assumptions were made, and techniques were used to derive, define and validate the required data elements.

#### **3.1 METHODOLOGY**

The process employed to construct the list of data elements began with a brainstorming session. A spreadsheet was used to assist the group both as a visual tool and as a documentation medium. For the identified information needs that were broad categories (such as payment information, contact information), the discussion drilled down to the specific related data elements.

The next step was to complete a gap analysis to distinguish data currently available in an electronic format from data not available electronically. This initial analysis showed that the largest gap in interstate case data is payment information. For those elements currently available electronically to caseworkers, the source of the data was identified. The group then evaluated the importance of data elements to interstate caseworkers and indicated the priority to provide (assessing each as high, medium, or low). This process was iterative in nature; and as such, some data elements were dropped and others were added. When the group was satisfied with this initial list, members were asked to validate the list with their staff.

The next step was to provide a “layman’s definition” for those elements not available electronically. Throughout this discussion, comments and needs/actions were identified and documented in the spreadsheet. As work on data progressed, group members recognized that they needed to focus on particular functions and decided to concentrate on those data elements specific to case management and customer service. They also decided that categorizing the information would assist the process. Data elements were categorized into Financial Information, Court Order Information and Case Information, as a way to organize the data elements and to assist, logically, with the development of their definitions.

The information contained in the spreadsheet was used to assist with researching various documents and websites to determine if complete and acceptable definitions could be found. The sources used for this task can be found in Appendix B.

The next step of the process was a consensus-building exercise. Each definition was presented as found in one or more of the sources. The group discussed the presented definition, and either revised the found definition, accepted the definition as stated, or created a new definition. As the definitions were finalized, they were documented in a glossary, which includes the definition, the source of the definition, any relevant notes and comments along with any assumptions that are specific to a particular data element. In addition, an “information needs status” matrix was used to keep track of and document how the definitions were developed, any newly identified needs, any deleted needs, and any other decisions relevant to the definitions. This matrix is provided in Appendix C. The glossary is provided in Appendix D.

To support the process described above, several demonstrations and reviews were conducted with the intention to educate the group, spark conversation, and provide impetus to the task of selecting the appropriate data elements, including:

- Colorado's Needs Assessment Report, which was completed for the state's e-commerce initiative, includes information on what interstate caseworkers need. The materials reviewed included customer and caseworker input taken from surveys and focus groups.
- Customer Service Web Functionality Matrix, which lists each state and the information that is available on its respective website.
- Washington's DebtCalc 2000 tool, which is a case-based tool with a web front-end, mainframe back-end and legacy server. This tool provides the client's debt and all payment information.
- Arrears Reconciliation Calculator Project, which offers states an easy-to-use tool to calculate the consolidated arrears balance from orders in different states.

### **3.2 DATA DEFINITIONS**

The purpose of this workgroup was to assist interstate caseworkers in handling their cases more effectively, by improving the accuracy and consistency of interstate data. One crucial aspect in achieving this purpose was to provide common definitions of the data elements. The group's primary effort was on defining those elements that were not already available electronically. This was accomplished following the methodology described above. For those elements already available electronically, their definitions were reviewed and modified, if required, to enhance understandability.

A parallel activity was to validate the requirement for each data element. Several techniques were used to assist with this validation.

For financial information, 22 state payment statements were gathered and analyzed, from both a content and readability perspective. Each workgroup member discussed likes and dislikes about the various payment statements.

In addition, a matrix was generated that listed the data elements for which definitions had been created or reviewed versus the states that had submitted a payment statement. A checkmark was made for each data element that was presented on a state's payment record. This matrix was used to determine if any data elements had been overlooked. The list generated by the workgroup was more comprehensive than any of the examined payment statements. This discussion and review led to the development of a list of general recommendations for overall financial record readability, which is described in Section 4. Another technique that was employed was the creation of two mock-ups of standard payment records. This, too, is further described in Section 4.

Those data elements categorized under "court information" were fairly straightforward and self-evident. For example, the "order identifier" and the designation for which party is ordered to provide medical support are not as open to interpretation as other terms.

For case information, the focus was on recent and pending administrative/court actions. Colorado's E-Commerce Application Design Document (specifically "designlet 24"), the 45 CFR and Section 466 of

the Social Security Act were used to compile an all-inclusive list of actions. This list is available as part of the task documentation.

## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DATA PRESENTATION

For clear interstate communication, the workgroup recognized that the format and presentation of a common set of data elements could be as critical as the content of that data. Consistent presentation of information (specifically financial) across states is key to improving interstate case processing. The group decided to capture a set of presentation standards, so that states could communicate more effectively. By moving beyond just a list of the data elements (and definitions for the data) to ways the information might be displayed, they attempted to put the data in context and confirm its utility.

### 4.1 METHODOLOGY

The group assembled current payment statements from as many states as possible, in order to understand how and what was being transmitted today. They submitted payment records from their own states and neighboring states for this analysis. In total, 22 payment statements were reviewed. Included were:

- Alabama
- Alaska
- Arizona
- Colorado
- Georgia
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Massachusetts
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nebraska
- New Mexico
- New York City
- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Dakota
- Texas
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington

The workgroup then reviewed these payment statements. Workgroup members and some members' field staff rated the ease of use and comprehensiveness of content, in order to arrive at a set of preferred presentation standards. Their purpose was to provide guidance and not fixed requirements for formatting financial information. They also recognized that their role was not to decide the best technologies to accomplish data transmission.

A matrix of those data elements appearing in the collected payment statements versus those deemed as essential by the group was also developed. Other than the "incoming payment amount" and its associated date (which all states provided), there was a wide variance in the data on each payment statement.

The workgroup further agreed that the term "payment statement" or "payment record" did not encompass all the data elements an interstate caseworker would need to effectively manage interstate cases and provide customer service. They, therefore, renamed the conceptual template that they hoped to provide to other states as "Financial Record".

## 4.2 STANDARDIZING SHARED FINANCIAL INFORMATION

After examining existing payment statements, the group's general consensus was that those payment statements that were concise and self-evident would be of most immediate use. State codes for case actions made some statements difficult to decipher. Data expressed in logical groupings was deemed as more readable. The workgroup listed the following general recommendations for overall financial record readability:

- Provide sufficient “white space” on the record
- Right justify dollar amounts
- Present information left to right; top to bottom
- Show “\$” signs to indicate an amount is money
- List case events in reverse chronology
- Use column titles
- Provide the ability to sort by column
- Avoid abbreviations
- For dates, use month, day, year (century) format
- “Box” information by year
- Show gridlines
- Use shading to distinguish entries
- Use 12 point type size or larger
- Avoid combining too much information into one view
- Allow the reader the ability to “do the math” (i.e., ensure numbers flow from visually logical equations)
- Organize by case level (static) information and then by transaction level (changing) information.
- Show logical groupings of data elements on the same screen
- Show page numbers (i.e., 1 of 10)
- Ensure ADA compliance
- Show the date a record was generated

The workgroup identified the following categories within which to logically group information:

- Disbursement (including date, amount, recipient)
- Incoming payment
- Outgoing payment
- Case (static) information, such as name of the noncustodial parent and case identification number
- Transaction information

- Summary information, all totals and balances by category; that is “payments”, “interest”, “arrearages”

### **4.3 RECORD MOCK-UPS**

Armed with the specifications for readability and for the logical grouping of data elements, outlined immediately above, two members of the workgroup volunteered to have their development teams, from Vermont and Washington State, create graphic representations of the presentation standards and concepts the workgroup had generated.

In both states, the development teams grappled with the same issue before proceeding: the need to somehow identify cases in other states through a query function. Both sets of developers needed to assume that this capability existed before proceeding with the visual mock-ups.

Washington State approached the task of developing a sample financial record with a “less is more” philosophy and presented a streamlined record, geared to address immediate customer service needs with readily available data. This effort sought to balance the number of data requirements suggested by the workgroup with the need to train workers to use extensive amounts of data.

Vermont’s record mock-up was designed with an eye to presenting all possible available information using multiple screens, while not overwhelming the caseworker with information s/he might not need to see. The user has the ability to see only summary information as well as detailed information if needed.

Neither of the sample mock-ups incorporated all of the data elements defined by the workgroup. As shared financial information is refined and automated to accommodate continuing improvements to interstate information access, the workgroup recognizes that the list of data elements should also be refined.

The attempt to make their recommendations tangible, by quickly sketching out ways the data elements might be presented, emphasized to the workgroup that the technologies to accomplish electronic efficiencies can readily accommodate their ideas for improvement. In the next section, under “Critical Success Factors”, the group’s thoughts on overcoming other potential barriers to institutionalizing their efforts are provided.

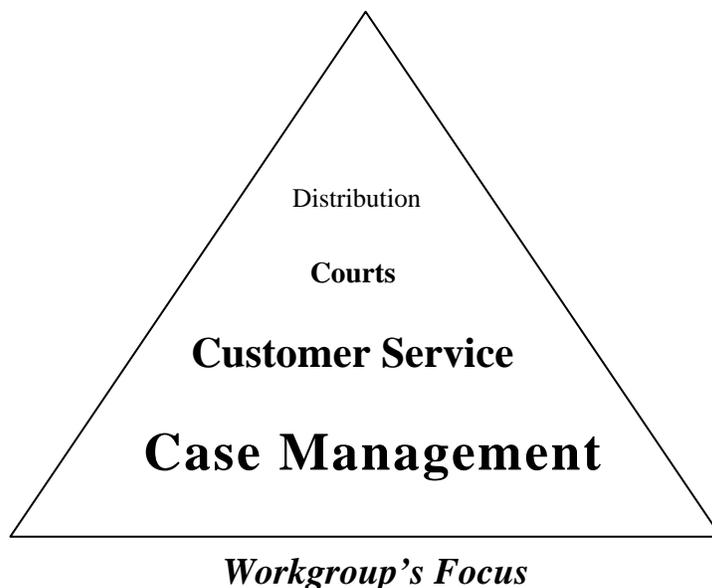
## 5. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS AND NEXT STEPS

During the course of its meetings, the workgroup captured general recommendations for improving interstate data access, as well as recommendations specific to formatting and working with common definitions for terms. The group also realized that certain general assumptions were necessary to remain productive and focused for the time allotted to this task.

To assist in furthering this effort, the workgroup also formulated a recommended set of next steps and actions critical to future success.

### 5.1 GENERAL ASSUMPTIONS

Initially, workgroup members looked at interstate data access from multiple perspectives, but then narrowed their focus to those areas they believed would have the most immediate impact: case management and customer service.



The workgroup felt that their efforts should be expanded to incorporate more court-related and distribution requirements over time. The group realized and assumed that this would be an on-going effort, subject to change, evolution, and modification; one that will likely lend itself to a staged solution.

While the workgroup recognized that additional work needs to be done to implement some of their recommendations, some of their work can be used immediately. Time and energy can immediately be saved by states developing websites, and states with websites that share CSE case information can consider modifications to reduce interstate miscommunication. States can also begin to “map” state-specific terms to commonly accepted definitions as soon as these are communicated and accepted.

Although they touched on exceptions, the group primarily focused on addressing the automation of 80% of potential CSE scenarios and not on those scenarios unique to less than 20% of CSE cases. Variations in state policies reduce the feasibility of addressing all possible scenarios.

Finally, from the outset, the workgroup intended to make full use of existing tools that support interstate efforts, like CSENet, FCR, websites, and automated voice response systems. This work augments those tools; it does not replace them. Also, the workgroup focused on data that already resides in state systems so states can avoid modifying their systems to capture new data elements.

## **5.2 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following summarizes the key recommendations of this workgroup:

- All states should translate obligation information to monthly data, as opposed to other state-specific reporting periods (weekly obligations should be translated to monthly amounts).
- In addition to individual financial transactions, a monthly summary view should be an option.
- Transmissions of interstate information should include an “as of” date and the name of the state providing the information in the transmission header.
- Identifying information, such as name, SSN, and date of birth, are required and should be included in the transmission header.
- The state should be mindful of the need for non-disclosure when a family violence indicator for the case is present. If relevant, a non-disclosure indicator should be included in the header of an interstate transmission.
- Whenever possible, define financial information needs in the form of an equation; going forward use a standard financial record “template” that expresses the requested financial data elements in the form of an equation. (Financial information needs to “add up” in a way that is understandable.)
- Keep “interest” and “arrearage” separate.
- If available electronically, provide all financial information on a case. However, at a minimum, interstate caseworkers need a year, by month, of payment history.
- State caseworkers should be aware of the fact that balances listed in transmissions may not include everything; for example, cost recovery and custodial parent fees.

During the course of the discussions, the capability to provide certified court/administrative documents electronically also surfaced as a worthwhile pursuit. The group envisioned this as a parallel activity, not directly related to any follow-on activities of this workgroup.

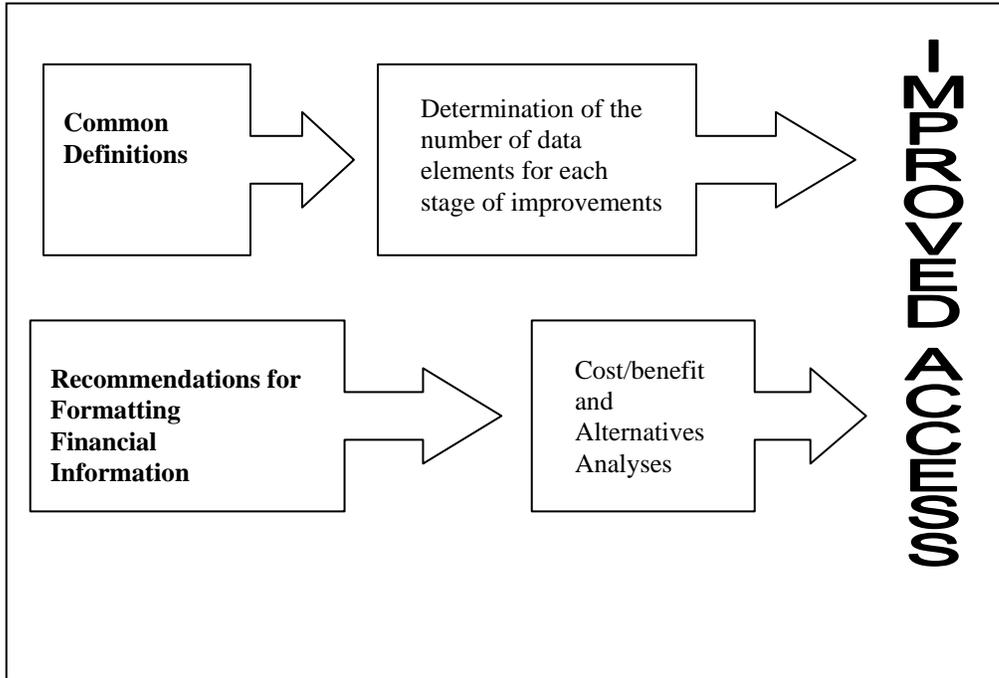
### 5.3 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

At a high level, the group recognized that OCSE should provide direction and leadership for interstate coordination, and that there should be a shared strategic vision and a coordinated communications effort for interstate issues and initiatives.

The workgroup also agreed on a set of “guiding principles” to inform future efforts. The following were listed:

- Build on existing information and tools, minimizing duplication of data and processes. Consider the impact on state systems and operations and assess the level of effort – Will the effort involve data mapping, new coding, and increased security? Is this worth the effort? Can the majority of states achieve this?
- Strive to present data as current as possible.
- Analyze and refine the immediacy of data needs.
- Consider ease of use and access for ultimate users.
- Consider system stability, reliability, and accessibility.
- Look at 24/7 availability and availability in all time zones.
- Help ensure the ease of implementation, including the potential of national models and templates for information sharing.
- Keep costs reasonable.
- Maintain data security. Provide the ability to control access.
- Help ensure ease of maintenance.
- Provide flexibility that allows incremental phasing, thereby adding more functions, adding new data elements, and increasing access to more stakeholder groups.
- Provide for a staggered implementation. Not all states will be ready at the same time.
- Consider alternative technologies and scalability. Strive for open systems.
- Consider training and support.
- Strive for a consistent look and feel across state lines.

The following graphic puts the work of this group in context with some recommended next steps. The actions in bold have been accomplished.



***Some Success Factors***

A more detailed discussion of the group’s recommended near term actions to achieve success follows.

**5.4 RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS**

The workgroup identified several action items and recommended next steps to advance the completed work toward implementation of a solution that will benefit states in performing interstate case management and providing customer service to interstate clients.

**5.4.1 ACTION ITEMS**

- Validate recommended data elements. Based on Federal feedback regarding certification guidelines for statewide child support systems and their required data elements, the workgroup will validate that the recommended information is currently captured by, or can be derived from, data already contained in state systems. The workgroup wants to avoid recommending new data elements and to minimize the impact on states.
- Analyze the immediacy of data needs. The workgroup will carefully consider the possibility of implementing a solution in phases, making the most critical data available first or serving the needs of one stakeholder group at a time.
- Request policy clarification from OCSE. The workgroup referred the policy issue of which state sends the withholding notice in a two-state process to OCSE.
- Solicit feedback from states. OCSE will disseminate the information contained in this report to solicit feedback from a broader state audience and validate the workgroup’s recommendations

and assumptions. In addition, to further ensure state acceptance, OCSE will sponsor opportunities for states to comment and offer input, such as conducting conference calls and spotlighting the group's work at conferences, such as IV-D Directors' meetings and possibly NCSEA, the National Judicial Symposium, WICSEC, ERICSA, and ACF State Systems Meetings. Comments received will be thoughtfully considered.

#### **5.4.2 NEXT STEPS**

During the next phase of this initiative, workgroup members would like to pursue the following:

- Collect, analyze, and incorporate, where applicable, information on data security and confidentiality and the ability to control access to information.
- Investigate possible statutory/regulatory issues (such as IRS) that could affect how the data is presented.
- Complete a feasibility study to evaluate different implementation approaches, following the guiding principles already identified for how to implement a solution. This feasibility study would include analysis of alternatives, risk, costs and benefits, and impact to states.
- Recommend a solution, create a prototype, and see it through the testing and pilot phases.

## 6. APPENDICES

### A. ROSTER

<p><b>ARIZONA</b>  <b>Ms. Annmarie Mena</b>  Policy &amp; Resources Administrator  Division of Child Support Enforcement  P.O. Box 40458  Site Code 776A  Phoenix, AZ 85067  Phone 602-274-7703  Fax 602-277-0517  Email <a href="mailto:annmarie.mena@de.state.az.us">annmarie.mena@de.state.az.us</a></p>	<p><b>NEW MEXICO</b>  <b>Mr. Phillip Herndon</b>  Deputy Bureau Chief  CSED/Information Systems Bureau  2009 S Pacheco St.  PO Box 25110  Santa Fe, NM 87505  Ph T, W, Th 505-827-6287  Ph M, F 505-841-4451  Fax 505-476-7191  Cell 505-412-0411  Email <a href="mailto:phillip.herndon@state.nm.us">phillip.herndon@state.nm.us</a></p>
<p><b>COLORADO</b>  <b>Mr. Craig Goellner</b>  CSE Systems Director  Division of Child Support Enforcement  303 E. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave.  Suite 200  Denver, CO 80203  Phone 720-947-5060  Fax – Unavailable  Email <a href="mailto:craig.goellner@state.co.us">craig.goellner@state.co.us</a></p>	<p><b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>  <b>Mr. Barry Burger</b>  Chief of Program Operations  Child Support Enforcement  P.O. Box 20800  Raleigh, NC 27619-0800  Phone 919-255-3807  Fax 919-212-3842  Email <a href="mailto:barry.burger@ncmail.net">barry.burger@ncmail.net</a></p>
<p><b>IOWA</b>  <b>Ms. Mary Loven</b>  Management Analyst  Bureau of Collections  400 S.W. 8<sup>th</sup>, Suite M  Des Moines, IA 50309  Phone 515-281-8377  Fax 515-281-8854  Email <a href="mailto:mloven@dhs.state.ia.us">mloven@dhs.state.ia.us</a></p>	<p><b>PENNSYLVANIA</b>  <b>Mr. Mike Noreika</b>  Interstate/CSENet Subsystem Lead  PACSES  30 North Third Street  Harrisburg, PA 17101  Phone 717-705-5158  Fax 717-772-1279  Email <a href="mailto:MikeNoreika@PACSES.com">MikeNoreika@PACSES.com</a></p>
<p><b>MASSACHUSETTS</b>  <b>Ms. Cheryl L. Traina</b>  Director of Customer Service  Child Support Enforcement Division  PO Box 7057  Chelsea, MA 02204  Phone 617-887-7611  Fax 617-887-7540  Email <a href="mailto:trainac@dor.state.ma.us">trainac@dor.state.ma.us</a></p>	<p><b>TEXAS</b>  <b>Mr. Larry Davis</b>  Senior Systems Analyst  5500 E. Oltorf  Austin, TX 78711  Phone 512-460-6826  Fax 512-460-6800  Email <a href="mailto:larry.davis@cs.oag.state.tx.us">larry.davis@cs.oag.state.tx.us</a></p>

<p><b>VERMONT</b>  <b>Mr. Jeffrey Cohen</b>  IV-D Director, Office of Child Support  103 South Main Street  Waterbury, VT 05671-1901  Phone 802-241-2319  Fax 802-244-1483  Email <a href="mailto:jeffc@ocs.state.vt.us">jeffc@ocs.state.vt.us</a></p>	<p><b>Ms. Robin Rushton</b>  Director, Div. of State &amp; Tribal Systems  Phone 202-690-1244  Fax 202-401-4582  Email <a href="mailto:rrushton@acf.hhs.gov">rrushton@acf.hhs.gov</a></p>
<p><b>VIRGINIA</b>  <b>Ms. Connie White</b>  Program / Systems Dev. Manager  Division of Child Support Enforcement  730 E. Broad Street  Richmond, VA 23219  Phone 804-692-1513  Fax 804-786-0546  Email <a href="mailto:cjw900@dcse.dss.state.va.us">cjw900@dcse.dss.state.va.us</a></p>	<p><b>Ms. Helen Smith</b>  Assistant Associate Commissioner  Phone 202-690-6639.  Fax 202-401-5558  Email <a href="mailto:hsmith@acf.hhs.gov">hsmith@acf.hhs.gov</a></p>
<p><b>WASHINGTON</b>  <b>Mr. Aaron Powell</b>  Information Systems Manager  Division of Child Support  P.O. Box 9162  MS 45860  Olympia, Washington 98507-9162  Phone 360-664-5402  Fax 360-664-0729  Email <a href="mailto:apowell@dshs.wa.gov">apowell@dshs.wa.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Ms. Patricia Crawford</b>  Manager Oper. &amp; Tech. Support, LMIT  9500 Godwin Drive  Bldg. 120/023, Box 136  Manassas, VA 20110-4157  Phone 703-367-3949  Fax 703-367-3143  Email <a href="mailto:Patricia.Crawford@lmco.com">Patricia.Crawford@lmco.com</a></p>
<p><b><u>Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE)</u></b>  Address for following participants:  Office of Child Support Enforcement  370 L'Enfant Promenade SW  Washington, DC 20447</p>	<p><b>Ms. Kerry Newcombe</b>  Technical Support Liaison  Northrop Grumman  Reston, VA  Phone 703-345-8094  Fax 703-345-8146  Email <a href="mailto:kerry.newcombe@trw.com">kerry.newcombe@trw.com</a></p>
<p><b>Ms. Eileen Brooks</b>  Deputy Director, Policy Division  Phone 202-401-5369  Fax 202-401-4054  Email <a href="mailto:ebrooks@acf.hhs.gov">ebrooks@acf.hhs.gov</a></p>	<p><b><u>State Information Technology Consortium (SITC)</u></b>  c/o Software Productivity Consortium  2214 Rock Hill Road  Herndon, VA 20170-4227</p>
<p><b>Ms. Dianne Offett</b>  Interstate Liaison Officer  Phone 202-401-5425  Fax 202-205-4315  Email <a href="mailto:doffett@acf.hhs.gov">doffett@acf.hhs.gov</a></p>	<p><b>Ms. Sheila R. Drake</b>  Event Planner  Phone 703-742-7127  Fax 703-742-7350  Email <a href="mailto:drake@software.org">drake@software.org</a></p>

**Ms. Christi Oakley**

Project Manager

Phone 703-742-7297

Fax 703-742-7350

Email [oakley@software.org](mailto:oakley@software.org)**Ms. Cynthia Olson**

Consultant

Phone 703-938-2194

Fax 703-938-0467

Email [cynpib@aol.com](mailto:cynpib@aol.com)**Ms. Suzanne Poe**

Consultant

Phone 540-843-0788

Fax 540-843-0887

Email [Suzanne@shentel.net](mailto:Suzanne@shentel.net)

## B. SOURCES

The workgroup used the following sources:

- ACF/OCSE Website
  - Glossary of Child Support Terms, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/im-00-08.htm>
  - Calculating Payments from document "Essentials for Attorneys in Child Support Enforcement", <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/2002/reports/essentials/c10.html>
  - "Instructions for the distribution of child support under section 457 of the Social Security Act (the Act)", <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/at-9717.htm>
  - Income Withholding Order/Notice, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/newhire/employer/income/income.htm>
  - OCSE-IM-97-05, Subject: Summaries from the "One-State" Interstate Retreat Held April 14-16, 1997 in Providence, RI, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/im-9705.htm>
  - Child Support Report, January 2000, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/new/csr0001.htm>
  - Document "One-State & Limited-Services Interstate Case Processing" Glossary of Terms, <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/pol/im-01-08a.htm#N10361>
  - Related Program Statutes and Regulations
- 45 CFR
- Colorado E-Commerce Business Area Analysis Needs Assessment Report
- Colorado E-Commerce Application Design Document
- CSENet 2000 Interface Guidance Document
  - Data Dictionary
  - Glossary of Terms
- Massachusetts Department of Revenue CSE Vocabulary for parents, [www.cse.state.ma.us/CSEVocabulary.htm](http://www.cse.state.ma.us/CSEVocabulary.htm)
- National Center for State Courts Website, <http://www.ncsconline.org/wc/publications>
  - English Legal Glossary
- National Medical Support Notice
- OCSE-34A Child Support Enforcement Quarterly Report of Collections
- OCSE-157 Child Support Enforcement Annual Data Report
- OCSE-396A Child Support Enforcement Program Financial Report
- Social Security Act, Section 466
- UIFSA Act
- UIFSA Forms
  - General Testimony
  - Glossary
  - Locate Data Sheet
- Notice of Determination of Controlling Order
- Transmittal #1 Initial Request: Period of Computation

## C. INFORMATION NEEDS MATRIX

### Financial Information

Status	Need	Electronically Avail.
2	Incoming Payment Amount	NO
2	Incoming Payment Date	NO
2	Incoming Payment Source	NO
2	Current Support Due	NO
2	Date Associated with Current Support Due	NO
2	Arrears Balance Owed	NO
2	Date Associated with Arrears Balance Owed	NO
2	Interest Balance	NO
2	Date Associated with Interest Balance	NO
2	Fees	NO
2	Total Amount Owed	NO
2	Date Associated with Total Amount Owed	NO
2	Judgment Amount	NO
2	Adjustments	NO
2	Cash Medical Support	NO
2	Assigned Arrears Balance	NO
2	Date of Disbursement	NO
4	Amount Disbursed	NO
4	Payment Recipient	NO
4	Instrument Identifier	NO
2	Last Payment Amount	CSENet
2	Last Payment Date	CSENet
11	Current Support (Note: this is "Current Support Due")	CSENet
5	1 yr history or longer	NO
11	Arrears owed to CP	NO
11	Amount Kept by State	NO

### Court Order Information

Status	Need	Electronically Avail.
2	Order Identifier	NO
4a	Tribunal Identifier	CSENet
2	Which Party is Ordered to Provide Medical Support	NO
2	COS (Controlling Order State)	NO
10	Electronic Version of Certified Copy of Orders	NO
11	Multiple Jurisdictions	FCR
4a	State(s) with an Interest in a Case	FCR, research further
11	Court/Admin Order Document Identifier (Note: same as Order Identifier)	CSENet
2	Request Copy of Court Order / Documents	CSENet, (MA website-request only)
11	Existing IWO: One State	NO
11	Existing IWO: Two State	CSENet

### Case Information

Status	Need	Electronically Avail.
2	Arrears Only Case Indicator	NO
2	Case Closure Reason	NO
2	Pending and Recent Court Administrative Actions	NO
2	Status/Reason	NO
2	Worker to Worker Contact Capability/Information	NO
2	Caretaker Indicator	NO
4	Date IWN Sent	NO
4	Employer Receiving Income Withholding Notice	NO
2	Case Status	CSENet, FCR
4a	Case Category	CSENet
4a	Case Function	NO
4a	Case Event/Action	NO
11	Case Status: Lien Filed Indicator	CSENet
11	Case Status: TANF vs. Non-TANF	CSENet
11	Case Status: Court Hearings	CSENet
11	Case Status: Tax Offset	CSENet (collections)
11	Case Status: Outstanding Warrant	CSENet
11	Case Status: Genetic Testing	CSENet
11	Case Status: Paternity Establishment	CSENet
11	Case Status: Open or Closed	CSENet, FCR
2	Children's Names, SSN and DOB	CSENet, FCR
2	IV-D Case # for Initiating State	CSENet, FCR
11	Asset/ Income Info	CSENet, NDNH, MSFIDM, 1099
2	Multiple Cases Alert	FCR
11	Case Lookup Capability w/Verification	CSENet (CSI), FCR
11	Case Specific Contact Information	CSENet
11	Employer	NDNH, CSENet (out of date)
6	Timeframes	NO
7	IRG Contact Information	NO
7	State Law/ Environment	NO
7	FIPS Codes	NO
8	Family Violence Indicator	NO
9	Interstate Notice Matrix	Various
11	Case and/or Participant: Obligation Info by Child	NO

#### Status Codes:

- 1= Data already available; definition to be clarified by group
- 2= Definition complete
- 3= Definition needs to be addressed/completed
- 4= New information need identified and definition completed during February meeting
- 4a= New information need identified and definition completed during March meeting
- 5= Not information need; presentation of information
- 6= Not information need; how information is used
- 7= Not information need; hot link capability
- 8= Not information need; consider how information is transmitted where family violence is involved/an issue
- 9= Not information need; needed as a resource
- 10= Not information need; capability that workgroup would like to have
- 11= Information need deleted by workgroup

Information Needs removed during January meeting:

- Case Notes: Overall Summary
- Case Notes: Event History

Information Needs removed during February meeting:

- Current Support – Deleted because it is the same as Current Support Due
- Arrears Owed CP – Deleted because for a customer service view it could be misleading to parents, an extra step needs to be taken to make this determination (i.e., check other states with an interest in this case), and multiple states could be tracking the same information.
- Amount Kept by State – Deleted because the definition of assigned arrears was changed to reflect the amount owed to the state providing the information
- Existing IWO: One State – Created an element under Case Information: Date IWN Sent, which will indicate if a state already has income withholding in place
- Existing IWO: Two State – Taken care of in one-state
- Periods of Assignment of Arrears (Public Assistance) – Considered and then deleted because the definition of assigned arrears was changed to reflect the amount owed to the state providing the information
- Case and/or Participant: Obligation Info by Child – Deemed unnecessary with financial history information provided

Information Needs removed during March meeting:

- Multiple Jurisdictions – Replaced with “State(s) with an Interest in a Case”
- Case Status was clarified to mean “indication of whether case is open or closed”
- Individual Case Status Events/Actions – Replaced with Case Event/Action
- Asset/Income Information – Not required after further consideration
- Case Lookup Capability w/Verification – Not a data element
- Case Specific Contact Information – Covered by Worker to Worker Contact Capability/Information
- Employer – Information required contained in Employer Receiving Income Withholding Notice

## D. GLOSSARY OF DATA ELEMENTS

### Financial Information

**Incoming Payment Amount**<sup>1</sup> - Indicates the total payment received for a case.

*Note: Added phrase "for a case" to CSENet definition.*

**Incoming Payment Date**<sup>2</sup> - A child support payment is considered to be received on the date it arrives at the SDU.

*Note: Modified OCSE 34A definition.*

**Incoming Payment Source**<sup>2</sup> –

2a. From the Offset of Federal Tax Refunds. Amounts received as a result of the IRS offset of Federal income tax refunds. The full amount of the collection is reported, prior to the reduction for the FMS service fee.

2b. From the Offset of State Tax Refunds. Amounts received as a result of the offset of State income tax refunds.

2c. From the Offset of Unemployment Compensation Payments. Amounts received as a result of the offset of unemployment compensation insurance payments.

2d. Through Procedures for the High Volume, Automated Administrative Enforcement in Interstate Cases (AEI). Amounts received as the "assisting state" for AEI request in accordance with Section 466(a)(14) of the Social Security Act. (Amount reported will be forwarded to another State during the current quarter or in a subsequent quarter.)

2e. From Income Withholding. Amounts received as a result of either voluntary or involuntary income withholding from Title IV-D cases, including withholding actions initiated prior to the effective date of Section 466(a)(1) of the Social Security Act. Also includes amounts received from non IV-D child support cases for processing through SDU.

2f. From Other Sources. Amounts received from another state, including any amounts received as the initiating state, either in Interstate or AEI cases.

2g. From Other Sources. All other amounts received through the State's own collections procedures, including: payments received directly from non-custodial parents; collections received through the IRS' full collection process; collections received as a result of the administrative offset process (prior to reduction for FMS service fee); collections received through the Financial Institution Data Match; and collections made as a result of the passport denial process.

*Note: Clarification for 2f – add state identifier. Requires an additional data element.*

**Current Support Due**<sup>3</sup> - The amount of monthly current support payments (spousal, child, cash medical) owed under the order less any payments received (does not include amounts on arrears).

*Note: Distinguish from obligation.*

*Note: It is strongly recommended that financial information be presented as a monthly amount when transmitting financial records.*

**Date Associated with Current Support Due**<sup>3</sup> - As-of date

**Arrears Balance Owed**<sup>4</sup> - The total unpaid support obligation for past periods owed by a parent who is obligated to pay (includes judgments).

*Note: Added phrase "includes judgments" to MA Dept. of Revenue CSE Vocabulary for Parents definition.*

**Date Associated with Arrears Balance Owed**<sup>3</sup> - As-of date

**Interest Balance**<sup>3</sup> - Total amount of unpaid interest.

*Assumption: Amount reflected on the system of the state providing the information.*

**Date Associated with Interest Balance**<sup>3</sup> - As-of date

**Fees**<sup>3</sup> - Fees charged to the NCP (e.g. legal, blood testing, filing).

*Assumption: How much NCP owes; what goes into the arrears balance.*

*Assumption: Not trying to address every fee (e.g. cost recovery fees, CP fees, Federal Offset).*

**Total Amount Owed**<sup>3</sup> - Current support due + arrears balance owed + interest balance + fees.

*Assumption: This is a derived number - the sum of different elements.*

*Assumption: This amount does not explain all discrepancies but is the basis for questions such as CP fees and cost recovery.*

**Date Associated with Total Amount Owed**<sup>3</sup> - As-of Date.

**Judgment Amount**<sup>3</sup> - Amount of arrears reduced to a recorded judgment.

*Note: For case management purposes; part of order information.*

**Adjustments**<sup>3</sup> - Entries to payment history that change the balance; examples are bounced checks, monies misdirected, injured spouse returns.

**Cash Medical Support**<sup>5</sup> - Cash payments for health insurance and/or medical bills.

*Note: A portion of the OCSE-157 definition was used.*

**Assigned Arrears Balance**<sup>3</sup> - Total amount of unpaid arrears assigned for the period of time the custodial person (CP/obligee) received public assistance in the state providing the information.

*Assumption: Assume capability exists to check all state systems for other state(s) that may have an interest in the case.*

*Assumption: For determining assigned arrears in other states, it may be necessary to check other sources such as FCR, other state systems, case file, etc.*

**Date of Disbursement**<sup>3</sup> - Date money is sent to each recipient for a case.

**Amount Disbursed**<sup>3</sup> - Amount of money sent to each recipient for a case.

**Payment Recipient**<sup>3</sup> - Entity who received the money (such as CP, state, other jurisdictions, Foster Care, etc.).

**Instrument Identifier**<sup>3</sup> - Check or trace number of the outbound disbursement.

*Note: The workgroup was not clear on how big an issue this is; needs more investigation.*

**Last Payment Amount**<sup>3</sup> - Amount of the last payment received for a case.

**Last Payment Date**<sup>3</sup> - Date the last payment was received in this case.

*Note: Required because it could be a long time since a payment was received. Still want to know the date and amount of the last payment received.*

## Court Order Information

**Order Identifier**<sup>3,6</sup> - Number/characters that uniquely identify the order; may be the tribunal number, docket number, cause number or any other appropriate reference information. Depending on state policy this identifier may remain constant or may change when the support order is modified.

*Note: Used part of UIFSA General Testimony definition.*

**Tribunal Identifier**<sup>3</sup> – FIPS code of the tribunal that is associated with the order identifier.

**Which Party is Ordered to Provide Medical Support**<sup>3</sup> - The parent obligated to provide medical support, either cash or health insurance, for a case.

**COS (Controlling Order State)**<sup>3</sup> - State abbreviation of controlling order state, if a determination has been made.

*Assumption: If State code is present for the COS, then the Order Identifier identifies the controlling order. If the order identifier is present, but the state code for COS is blank, don't assume this order is the controlling order.*

*Note: This links the order identifier with the controlling order state.*

**Electronic Version of Certified Copy of Orders**<sup>3</sup> -

*Note: Not defining anything new; instead, documenting that the workgroup would like to be able to send copies electronically.*

*Note: Look at existing request definitions in CSENet and state websites like MA.*

**State(s) with an Interest in a Case**<sup>3</sup> – State abbreviations of those states that have indicated to the FCR that they have an interest in the case.

**Request Copy of Court Order/Documents**<sup>1</sup> – Indicator that provides the capability to request a copy of court order/documents.

## Case Information

**Arrears Only Case Indicator**<sup>3</sup> - Current support obligation has ended, but arrears are still outstanding. Value of Indicator: Y, N

### **Case Closure Reason**<sup>7</sup> –

303.11 Case closure criteria.

The IV-D agency shall establish a system for case closure. In order to be eligible for closure, the case must meet at least one of the following criteria:

(1) In the case of a child who has reached the age of majority, there is no longer a current support order and arrearages are under \$500 or unenforceable under State law;

(2) In the case of a child who has not reached the age of majority, there is no longer a current support order and arrearages are under \$500 or unenforceable under State law;

(3) The absent parent or putative father is deceased and no further action, including a levy against the estate, can be taken;

(4) Paternity cannot be established because:

(i) The child is at least 18 years old and action to establish paternity is barred by a statute of limitations which meets the requirements of 302.70(a)(5) of this chapter;

(ii) A genetic test or a court or administrative process has excluded the putative father and no other putative father can be identified; or

(iii) In accordance with 303.5(b) of this part, the IV-D agency has determined that it would not be in the best interests of the child to establish paternity in a case involving incest or forcible rape, or in any case where legal proceedings for adoption are pending;

(5) The absent parent's location is unknown, and the State has made regular attempts using multiple sources to locate the absent parent over a three-year period, all of which have been unsuccessful;

(6) The absent parent cannot pay support for the duration of the child's minority because the parent has been institutionalized in a psychiatric facility, is incarcerated with no chance for parole, or has a medically-verified total and permanent disability with no evidence of support potential. The State must also determine that no income or assets are available to the absent parent which could be levied or attached for support;

(7) The absent parent is a citizen of, and lives in, a foreign country, does not work for the Federal government or a company with headquarters or offices in the United States, and has no reachable domestic income or assets; and the State has been unable to establish reciprocity with the country;

(8) The IV-D agency has provided location-only services as requested under 302.35(c)(3) of this chapter;

(9) The non-AFDC custodial parent requests closure of a case and there is no assignment to the State of medical support under 42 CFR 433.146 or of arrearages which accrued under a support order;

(10) There has been a finding of good cause as set forth at 302.31(c) and either 232.40 through 232.49 of this chapter or 42 CFR 433.147 and the State or local IV-A, IV-E, or Medicaid agency has determined that support enforcement may not proceed without risk of harm to the child or caretaker relative;

(11) In a non-AFDC case receiving services under 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), the IV-D agency is unable to contact the custodial parent within a 30 calendar day period despite attempts by both phone and at least one certified letter; or

(12) In a non-AFDC case receiving services under 302.33(a)(1) (i) or (iii), the IV-D agency documents the circumstances of the custodial parent's non-cooperation and an action by the custodial parent is essential for the next step in providing IV-D services.

(c) In cases meeting the criteria in paragraphs (b) (1) through (7) and (11) and (12) of this section, the State must notify the custodial parent in writing 60 calendar days prior to closure of the case of the State's intent to close the case. The case must be kept open if the custodial parent supplies information in response to the notice which could lead to the establishment of paternity or a support order or enforcement of an order or, in the instance of paragraph (b)(11) of this section, if contact is reestablished with the custodial parent. If the case is closed, the custodial parent may request at a later date that the case be reopened if there is a change in circumstances which could lead to the establishment of paternity or a support order or enforcement of an order.

(d) The IV-D agency must retain all records for cases closed pursuant to this section for a minimum of three years, in accordance with 45 CFR Part 74, Subpart D.

[54 FR 32311, Aug. 4, 1989, as amended at 56 FR 8004, Feb. 26,1991]

*Note: Use only reasons contained in regulations*

**Pending & Recent Court/Administrative Actions**<sup>3</sup> - List of actions of interest to another state. List of actions (pending and recent) taken; (e.g., court date scheduled, actions taken, appeal hearing scheduled); both time period and number of actions.

*Note: Recent events for case; action code with reason codes.*

**Status/Reason**<sup>3</sup> - To indicate or explain why there is no activity on the case. Examples include: address unknown, bankruptcy, incarcerated, SSI, disability, employer unconfirmed (special circumstances).

*Note: To be used only when no recent activity is recorded in the "Pending & Recent Court/Administrative Actions" field.*

**Worker to Worker Contact Capability/Information**<sup>3</sup> - Other method of direct worker-to-worker contact; for example email address (not available to the public).

*Note: This should be part of the CSENet transaction. Should be at state discretion. Confidentiality and access control issues need to be resolved here.*

**Caretaker Indicator**<sup>3</sup> - Caretaker who is custodian of the child(ren), but who is not the mother or father of the child(ren). Value of indicator: Y, N

**Date IWN Sent**<sup>3</sup> - Date the providing state last sent a withholding notice.

*Note: Applies to both one-state and two-state.*

*Issue: Timing of update; potential candidate for batch transmission in addition to real-time.*

*Issue: How do we prevent states from stepping on each others' toes?*

*Referred policy issue of which state sends the withholding notice in a two-state process to OCSE.*

**Employer Receiving Income Withholding Notice**<sup>3</sup> - FEIN (if available) and name of employer to whom the last withholding notice was sent.

*Note: Question of whether to include address; depends on implementation.*

**Case Status**<sup>3</sup> – Indication of whether the case is open or closed.

**Case Category**<sup>3</sup> – Indication of whether the case is TANF, Non-TANF, Foster Care, Non IV-D, or Medicaid Only.

**Case Function**<sup>3</sup> – Indication of the phase in the workflow of a case (intake, locate, paternity establishment, support order establishment, enforcement).

**Case Event/Action**<sup>3</sup> – Recent actions concluded with associated dates; recent actions pending with associated dates; at a minimum include the last action taken and its associated date.

Examples of actions concluded:

Paternity established, genetic testing completed, service of process achieved, lien filed, withholding order sent, reported to credit bureau, driver's license suspended, bank account frozen

Examples of actions pursued: Same, but framed in another tense

**Children's Names, SSN, and DOB** – Self-explanatory.

**IV-D Case Number for Initiating State** – Self-explanatory.

**Multiple Cases Alert**<sup>3</sup> – Indicates that the obligor has more than one case recorded on the state system.

*Note: This may be a derived element.*

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<sup>1</sup> Definition Source: CSENet Data Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> Definition Source: OCSE-34A

<sup>3</sup> Definition Source: OCSE Interstate Workgroup on Interagency Data Access

<sup>4</sup> Definition Source: MA Department of Revenue CSE Vocabulary for Parents

<sup>5</sup> Definition Source: OCSE-157

<sup>6</sup> Definition Source: UIFSA General Testimony

<sup>7</sup> Definition Source: OCSE Website: (Related Program Statutes and Regulations are the preamble to the final rule on case closure (64 FR 11810, 11812 (March 10, 1999); OCSE-AT-99-04 and 45 CFR 303.11.