



**TO:** NCCSD

**FROM:** Joint NCCSD/NCSEA/OCSE Public Relations Committee

**DATE:** July 14, 2021

**RE:** Joint Public Relations Committee Annual Report

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The National Council of Child Support Directors (NCCSD), National Child Support Enforcement Association (NCSEA), and the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) proposed a child support public relations initiative nationwide to promote a more positive, holistic image of the IV-D Program and improved understanding of its services. The Public Relations Committee is comprised of representatives from NCCSD, NCSEA, and OCSE. The Committee is responsible for creating, developing, and implementing an initiative to improve the perception and awareness of the program.

### **Initiatives completed in 2018**

The Committee conducted two surveys of state child support agencies to learn more about their current outreach and public relations tools, services, and messaging. This initiative provided a snapshot of the state of child support public relations today and offered an opportunity to learn about innovative and successful approaches used in states. To learn more about current public relations and outreach efforts across the country, the Committee sought to create a baseline of current outreach efforts. The results were remarkably similar in that they showed a lack of coordinated efforts nationwide to conduct outreach.

### **Initiatives completed in 2019 and 2020**

The Committee identified several objectives, including the development of strategies to educate legislatures, court systems, employers, and other stakeholders about the child support program and the importance of their role in helping families and facilitating payment of support. It also sought to develop strategies to change the perception of the program by the general public, as well as the child support community itself, so that the program is viewed as a service agency whose goal is ensuring children have the emotional and financial support they need. To assist child support programs across the

country, the Committee developed several talking points to use for different purposes and for different audiences. The Child Support Program Talking Points publication is a result of the joint efforts of the Committee to help meet those objectives and was distributed out to all directors through the NCCSD List Serve.

### **Initiatives in progress for 2021**

The Committee is proposing the develop a national application, or enrollment form. This is believed to be the single fastest action we can take to address the declining caseload, and it will create simplicity and consistency for our customers around the nation. Following up the dramatic findings in the OCSE Digital Media Marketing Grant, in which Virginia saw a 22% increase in case openings in a month after launching a new online application and Minnesota gained 1,000 new cases during their testing of a similar approach, it's clear that we all would gain immediate benefits from a short, simple, mobile responsive application. NCSSD believes they can host the website that would manage such a national effort and route the completed applications to the appropriate states for processing, and we in California have sent out the prototype from our own application project for other states to review.

Another finding from the Digital Media Marketing grantees is that our messaging is hit and miss when it comes to correctly identifying benefits of our program that will resonate with our target audience. The Committee will be addressing the need for more market research which can be designed to elicit the reasons why parents don't come to us and identify options or services we could offer that would address their needs, resonate with them, and stimulate case openings.