

# Addendum No. 1

## Child Support Funding Equity

### LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

**Board Strategic Priority: *Ensure Fiscal Responsibility, Promote Good Governance and Increase Organizational Capabilities, and Improve Public Safety and Enhance the Overall Criminal Justice System***

**Issue:** The State Child Support Services Department's (CSSD) current funding allocation methodology for local child support agencies results in inequitable funding to the County, and negatively impacts families and children in San Joaquin County.

**Legislative Platform:**

1. **Advocate and support legislative, administrative, and/or budgetary efforts to revise the CSSD funding allocation methodology to adequately address issues identified by San Joaquin County.**
2. **Build a coalition of County child support directors that support a revision of CSSD's funding allocation methodology.**

**Background:** The current model for allocating funds between counties was developed in the 1990s when the child support program was managed by the county district attorneys. It considered a number of factors, including county collections and compliance with case processing requirements. In 2000 the program was removed from local district attorney offices and management was transferred to a new and independent State child support department. The new department inherited and continues to use the same allocation methodology despite annual increases in operating costs.

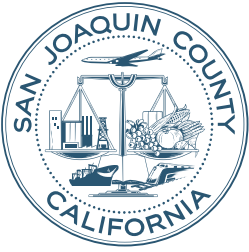
Recognizing the negative impact of flat funding on local child support agencies, the State provided a Revenue Stabilization funding augmentation in 2009/10. The State indicated the purpose of the fund was to maintain revenue generating caseworker staffing levels in order to stabilize child support collections. San Joaquin County's share continues to be \$409,049 annually.

However, after two decades of no funding increases and rising annual County costs, the methodology is no longer sufficient to adequately fund the child support program in San Joaquin County and is responsible for creating a significant inequity and negative outcomes for the children and families of San Joaquin County.

The State's base funding for the San Joaquin County Department of Child Support Services has not increased since fiscal year (FY) 2002/03. As a result, the department has not received an increase in

Department of Child Support Services

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### LEGISLATIVE ISSUES (*CONTINUED*)

basic administrative funding for the past 14 years, despite the fact that its operating costs have continued to rise. No increase is proposed for FY 2017/18.

The impacts of this dated methodology scheme are significant and devastating. In San Joaquin County:

- Caseworker levels have dropped from 182 (2009) to 127 (2016) in order to absorb increasing operating costs;
- Child support is a safety net for lower income families. A decreased ability to collect support for lower income families results in a higher incidence of child poverty in the County;
- Fewer caseworkers requires more reliance on automated enforcement measures and diminishes customer service;
- Fewer caseworkers results in a time lag for customer requests like support order modifications;
- Decreased collections results in less family self-sufficiency;
- Decreased collections results in less recoupment to the County;
- The quality of customer service may result in fewer caseworkers which may result in additional constituent complaints; and
- Fewer caseworkers may contribute to low employee morale.

Adopted on: September 12, 2017