

CALIFORNIA

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

Family Code Section 4007.5:

An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process

**Submitted by the California Department of Child Support Services for
the fulfillment of the requirements of Family Code Section 4007.5(h)**

April 30, 2026

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 4

Background 5

 State Law 5

 Federal Law 7

Required Data Elements 8

 Data Considerations 9

 Number of Cases Administratively Adjusted 10

 Number of Cases Adjusted by Court 11

 Number of Cases Not Adjusted and No Action Taken 11

 Case Sample Review 12

Effectiveness and Ease of Process 17

 California Local Child Support Agencies: Survey Results 18

 Observations 23

 Person Ordered to Receive Support and Parent Ordered to Pay Support: Survey Results 26

 Observations 32

 Judicial Council of California: Survey Results 32

 Family Law Facilitators Survey 33

 Child Support Commissioners Survey 39

 San Diego LCSA Justice Involved Parents and Children 41

 Observations 42

Consensus of Responses Across All Surveys 44

Other California State Departments Work with Justice Involved Parents 44

Accurate and Timely Incarceration Records 47

Evaluation of the Intent of the Legislative Amendments 48

Conclusion 49

Appendix 50

 Case Sample Review Rates 50

 LCSA Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Open Questions 51

 Participant Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Questions 56

 JCC Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Questions 59

 Family Law Facilitator Survey 59

 Child Support Commissioner Survey 61

JIPC Survey Statements and Responses.....61
LCSA Caseworker- Survey Questions62

Executive Summary

Beginning in 2010, the Legislature enacted a series of statutory changes to Family Code (FC) § 4007.5 that provided relief to parent(s) ordered to pay support (PPS) who are incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized by suspending their obligation to pay current child support. This relief also applies to arrears that may have accrued during qualifying periods of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. These parents, referred to as justice involved individuals, include those currently or previously incarcerated in county jails, state prisons, or youth correctional facilities.

Chapter 565, Statutes of 2023 (Assembly Bill (AB) 1148), is the most recent amendment to FC § 4007.5 and was signed into law on October 8, 2023. AB 1148 states that effective January 1, 2024, all California child support obligations that accrued on or after September 27, 2022, will be suspended for a PPS who has been incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized for 90 consecutive days or more. The child support obligation will resume on the first day of the tenth month post release. This report is submitted in accordance with FC § 4007.5(h), which requires the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS), in consultation with the Judicial Council of California (JCC), to conduct an evaluation of the effectiveness of the administrative adjustment process and submit the results of the review to the Assembly Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee. This evaluation also includes a review of the ease of process to both the PPS and person ordered to receive support (PRS), analysis of the number of cases administratively adjusted, the number of cases adjusted in court, and the number of cases that have not been adjusted. Under FC § 4007.5, local child support agencies (LCSAs) are authorized, by operation of law, to suspend current child support obligations and to administratively adjust account balances for arrears accrued during a PPS's qualifying period of incarceration or institutionalization. LCSAs are required to provide notice to the PPS and PRS of the intent to administratively adjust accounts, and if either party objects, then the LCSA will file a motion for modification of the child support order with the court. The court will make the determination if the LCSA is able to proceed with the administrative adjustment of child support account balances including setting the current child support obligation to a zero-dollar order.

The data reviewed and analyzed in this report reflects the following legislative amendments to FC § 4007.5: AB 2325 (September 28, 2021, through September 26, 2022), AB 207 (September 27, 2022, through December 31, 2023), and AB 1148 (January 1, 2024, through July 21, 2025). Two important clarifications apply to the listed time periods. One is that for the period covered under AB 2325, the start date of September 28, 2021, was the last day of data that was reviewed in the previous legislative report titled "Family Code Section 4007.5: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process" (2021 Report), issued on

December 7, 2021.¹ The second important time period to note that is covered under AB 1148, July 21, 2025, marks the final date for data reviewed for this report.

Analysis of the data indicates a marked increase in the use of the administrative adjustment process from AB 2325 to AB 1148. This trend is further supported by a corresponding decline in the number of motions for modification filed with the courts. The 2021 Report found that LCSAs had primarily relied on judicial processes to review and adjust child support obligations, as existing regulations did not require a waiting period, only that the change in circumstance be expected to last at least 90 days.² The 2021 Report identified several contributing factors to this reliance on judicial processes, including the presence of sunset clauses and the limited operative periods of earlier statutory versions, which created confusion and inconsistency for both case participants and LCSA staff.³

AB 207 (2022) addressed these concerns by removing the sunset date and the disqualifying factors related to the PPS's criminal history. AB 207 also expands eligibility to include support obligations that accrued on or after September 27, 2022, regardless of when the child support order was established. Based on the data and survey responses collected for this report, the amendments introduced by AB 1148 appear to be functioning as intended. Specifically, AB 1148 implemented key recommendations from the 2021 Report, including the extension of the post-release relief period before support obligations resume, and the elimination of provisions excluding pre-enactment orders from eligibility.

Currently, DCSS does not recommend any further statutory changes. Instead, the department has identified internal areas for improvement. These include simplifying the language used in FC § 4007.5-related notices, enhancing communication with case participants, LCSAs, and correctional institutions, increasing automation of the administrative adjustment process within the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) system, and improving the integration of incarceration data into the CSE system.

Background

State Law

DCSS adopted California Code of Regulations (CCR), Title 22, Section 115530 in 2004, which addresses an automatic review of a case by an LCSA due to a change in circumstance. Pursuant to 22 CCR § 115530(a)(1), a change in

¹ Family Code Section 4007.5: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process (Dec. 2021)

² 22 CCR § 115510(e)(1)(A)

³ Family Code Section 4007.5: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process (Dec. 2021)

circumstance warranting automatic review for adjustment includes, but is not limited to, the PPS is incarcerated in a county jail, state or federal prison, or involuntarily institutionalized. When these conditions are met and the PPS lacks the ability to pay their child support obligation, the LCSA is required to seek a court order to adjust the obligation to zero-dollars.⁴ This regulation helps to prevent a PPS from accumulating child support debt that they are unable to pay while incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized. This regulation is still in effect today. FC § 4007.5 provides LCSAs with greater flexibility to assist incarcerated PPSs by allowing LCSAs to administratively adjust child support arrears that accumulated during a qualifying period of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. FC § 4007.5(b) does not preclude a PPS or LCSA from filing a motion for modification under section 3651 due to a change in circumstances. DCSS issued Child Support Services Informational (CSSI) Letter 24-02, which outlined the provisions of section 4007.5, including the past legislative statutory changes to the section.⁵

Beginning in 2010, the Legislature enacted a series of statutory changes to provide relief from current support obligations for a PPS who is incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized. The following is an overview of past legislative history and amendments to FC § 4007.5.

Chapter 495, Statutes of 2010 (Senate Bill (SB) 1355) added section 4007.5 to the FC effective July 1, 2011, with a sunset date of July 1, 2015. SB 1355 applied to child support orders enforced by DCSS that were issued or modified on or after July 1, 2011, and required the PPS to petition the court for the child support order to be suspended for any period exceeding 90 consecutive days in which the PPS was incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized. The provisions of SB 1355 did not apply if the PPS had the means to pay support and allowed the court to deny relief if the PPS was incarcerated for certain specified crimes. The provisions of SB 1355 did not provide relief by operation of law and are no longer in effect.

Chapter 629, Statutes of 2015 (AB 610) reinstated FC § 4007.5 effective October 8, 2015, with a sunset date of January 1, 2020. AB 610 broadened the statute's application to include any order issued or modified on or after its enactment, whether or not it was being enforced by DCSS. AB 610 specified that the suspension of a child support order occurs by operation of law for any period exceeding 90 consecutive days in which a PPS is incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized and authorized LCSAs to administratively adjust support rather than requiring judicial approval. AB 610 included similar exceptions where the PPS has the means to pay support as well as exceptions based on the nature of the

⁴ 22 CCR § 115530(a)(1)

⁵ Family Code Section 4007.5 – Incarcerated Parent Ordered to Pay Support, CSSI Letter 24-02 (February 9, 2024)

crime for which the PPS is incarcerated. AB 610 introduced a requirement for LCSAs to provide written notice to the PPS and the PRS prior to administratively adjusting support for relevant periods, and to file a motion if either person objected to adjustment. The provisions of AB 610 are no longer in effect as the statute sunset according to its initial terms.

Chapter 217, Statutes of 2020 (AB 2325) reestablished FC § 4007.5 effective January 1, 2021, with a sunset date of January 1, 2023. AB 2325 applied to every money judgment or child support order issued or modified after its enactment. Similar to the last iteration of this statute, suspension for qualifying periods of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization occurs by operation of law unless the PPS has the means to pay support or was incarcerated for specified crimes. AB 2325 clarified that the child support obligation shall resume on the first day of the first full month after the PPS's release in the amount previously ordered, and that the PPS may seek modification of the child support order based on a change of circumstances or any other appropriate reason. AB 2325 also contained requirements for LCSAs to provide written notice to the PPS and the PRS prior to administratively adjusting child support orders and required JCC and DCSS to draft a report to the Legislature evaluating the effectiveness of the administrative adjustment process. In accordance with the provisions of AB 2325, JCC and DCSS drafted a Report to the Legislature "Family Code Section 4007.5: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process" submitted on December 7, 2021, and recommended extending the reinstatement of child support obligations from the first day of the first full month to the first day of the third full month. The recommendation provided by JCC and DCSS was not incorporated within any legislative bill.

Chapter 573, Statutes of 2022 (AB 207) amended FC § 4007.5 effective September 27, 2022, to strike from statute the January 1, 2023, sunset date as well as the exceptions related to the type of crime committed by the PPS. AB 207 further clarified that a qualifying suspension period begins on the first day of the first full month of incarceration, which is consistent with prior DCSS interpretation. Lastly, AB 207 specifies that any period of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization after its effective date of September 27, 2022, is considered for potential relief, regardless of when the order was issued or last modified, a significant expansion in eligibility for relief.

Chapter 565, Statutes of 2023 (AB 1148) further amended FC § 4007.5 for a PPS who is released from incarceration or involuntary institutionalization on or after January 1, 2024, and extended the suspension period until the first day of the 10th month after release of the PPS. Further change authorized a PRS or the LCSA to seek a court order reinstating child support obligations at an amount to be determined by the court pursuant to the child support guidelines if the PPS obtains employment prior to the end of the statutory suspension period.

Federal Law

The Final Rule: Flexibility, Efficiency and Modernization in Child Support Enforcement Programs (FEM Final Rule) was issued in 2016 by the Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It aimed to enhance the child support program by empowering states to implement innovative approaches, leverage technology, and prioritize the well-being of families. To ensure compliance with the federal FEM Final Rule, the California Legislature enacted a series of statutory amendments beginning with AB 207. This amendment suspended child support obligations for all PPSs who are incarcerated or involuntarily institutionalized for more than 90 consecutive days, unless they have the means to pay. Additionally, Chapter 213, Statutes of 2023 (SB 343) introduced further changes to align with the FEM Final Rule. These changes require child support guidelines to be based on the PPS's ability to pay and account for the subsistence-level needs of low-income PPSs.

Required Data Elements

This report focuses specifically on data related to the following amendments to 4007.5: AB 2325 (September 28, 2021, through September 26, 2022), AB 207 (September 27, 2022, through December 31, 2023), and AB 1148 (January 1, 2024, through July 21, 2025). The start date of September 28, 2021, for AB 2325 data aligns with the end date of the previous 2021 Report, submitted on December 7, 2021.

Figure 1. Family Code § 4007.5 - Data Inclusive Dates

FC § 4007.5 Version	Data Inclusive Dates	
	Start Date	End Date
AB 2325	September 28, 2021	September 26, 2022
AB 207	September 27, 2022	December 31, 2023
AB 1148	January 1, 2024	July 21, 2025

Two ad hoc queries of CSE were constructed, one for data related to AB 2325 (Query 1) and one for data related to AB 207 and AB 1148 (Query 2) combined. These ad hoc queries were constructed using the following parameters:

Return child support cases from CSE with an open or closed case status that contain:

- Cases with child support orders filed between September 28, 2021, and September 26, 2022 (AB 2325);
- Cases with orders accruing on or after September 27, 2022 (AB 207 and AB 1148);
- Child support order monthly obligations from September 2021 through June 2025;

- Incarceration start date;
- Incarceration end date (if available);
- The presence of an incarceration adjustment selection (values include administrative, court, or no adjustment);
- A yes/no indicator to indicate the presence of a zero-dollar child support order (\$0) and the file date;
- A yes/no indicator to indicate the PPS was incarcerated during the requested time period;
- A yes/no indicator for all dependents on the child support case being over the age of 18.

The query parameters established the two distinct populations for analysis, Query 1 and Query 2. Query 1 returned 207,970 records and Query 2 returned 672,114 records. The query results initially included duplicate records, as a single PPS may have multiple incarceration or institutionalization records in the CSE system. Duplicate records were removed from the Query 1 for 103,410 unique records and from Query 2 for 671,155 unique records.

Once the two populations of cases to be studied and measured were identified, the number of each type of adjustment completed during each period was determined. These results are displayed in Figure 2 located on page 9. The adjustment options are “Administrative Adjustment,” “Court Adjustment,” or “No Adjustment.” The adjustment options are located and documented in the CSE System when the LCSA caseworker conducts a review of a case for FC § 4007.5 and depending on the outcome of the review, they choose one of the three adjustment options. The “No Action Taken” category in Figure 2 is not a selectable option in the CSE system; rather, it was derived from data filtering. The “No Action Taken” cases were identified in the population of cases as potentially qualifying for a FC § 4007.5 relief but have either not yet been reviewed by a caseworker or was reviewed and the outcome was not documented in the CSE system.

Figure 2. Family Code § 4007.5 Adjustments - Statewide

FC § 4007.5 Version	Administrative Adjustment	Court Adjustment	No Adjustment	No Action Taken
AB 2325	66	0	2	1,232
AB 207	895	1	306	2,135
AB 1148	1,844	1	74	18,223

Data Considerations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the large population size resulting from the data query for this report. For example, the current version of FC § 4007.5, as amended by AB 1148, applies to any child support obligation that accrues on or after September 27, 2022 (AB 207). In contrast, previous versions applied to child support orders and modifications filed after the statute's effective date. Because the current version of FC § 4007.5 applies to all child support obligations accruing on or after September 27, 2022, and due to limitations in the incarceration data within the CSE system, the number of cases identified through the query was substantial. As a result, all cases with orders accruing after this date were retrieved from the CSE system, even if the PPS did not have an incarceration record. This initial population was manually filtered to produce a more accurate dataset for analysis. This report examines cases with administrative adjustments, court adjustments, no adjustments, or no apparent action taken, in order to accurately assess the effectiveness of FC 4007.5 in its current form. Each of these adjustment types will be detailed independently throughout the report. Figure 2, on page 9, displays the number of cases with an administrative adjustment, a court adjustment, no adjustment, or no apparent action taken for each version of FC § 4007.5. As a reminder, the numbers for AB 2325 cover the time frame of September 28, 2021, through September 26, 2022, where the 2021 Report ended.

An additional consideration, when reviewing the data query, is that there are data points of an adjustment type selection (administrative, court, or no adjustment), the date that the adjustment was made, and the most recent incarceration dates for the PPS that are all pulled from the CSE system. Due to limitations with accurate and timely incarceration data received into the CSE system (primarily multiple, sometimes overlapping incarceration records due to the PPS moving facilities), when a caseworker reviews a case, an adjustment type completion date may be for a previous version of FC § 4007.5. For example, a caseworker may review a case during the AB 1148 period, but the adjustment made may actually pertain to a prior version of FC § 4007.5 by operation of law. This nuance is important, as it may slightly skew the adjustment totals shown in Figure 2 (page 9) for each statutory version.

Number of Cases Administratively Adjusted

A review of the data identified 1,844 administrative adjustments under AB 1148, 895 under AB 207, and 66 under AB 2325. Among cases adjusted under AB 1148, the average length of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization was 563 days. The duration of the incarceration ranged from 90 days to 23,082 days. These averages exclude 427 cases in which the PPS had no recorded incarceration end date. Open-ended incarceration records may indicate that the PPS is still incarcerated or that the record requires manual verification and updating by a

caseworker. For PPSs with administrative adjustments under AB 1148, monthly support obligations ranged from \$5 to \$2,777, with an average of \$431.

Under AB 207, 895 cases received administrative adjustments. The average incarceration or involuntary institutionalization period for these cases was 602 days. Incarceration durations ranged from 90 days to 24,124 days. As with AB 1148, these figures exclude 160 cases lacking an incarceration end date. Monthly child support obligations for this group ranged from \$5 to \$1,830, with an average obligation of \$393.

Under AB 2325, 66 cases received administrative adjustments. The average incarceration or involuntary institutionalization period was 871 days, with durations ranging from 145 to 12,692 days. These figures exclude 23 cases without a recorded incarceration end date. Monthly child support obligations ranged from \$8 to \$1,099, with an average of \$450.

Number of Cases Adjusted by Court

Pursuant to FC § 4007.5(c)(1), LCSAs are required to provide both parties with a written notice of intent to administratively adjust child support accounts. Either party has 30 days to object to the proposed administrative adjustment. If an objection is received within 30 days, the LCSA must file a motion for modification with the court, which will then determine whether the adjustment may proceed. Across all versions of FC § 4007.5 reviewed by this report, the number of court-adjusted cases remain relatively low. As discussed in the Ease of Process section, LCSA staff report that parties rarely respond to administrative adjustment notices, which may explain the low number of court adjustments. Additionally, PRSs generally understand the rationale for administrative adjustments during the PPS's incarceration or involuntarily institutionalization, even if they disagree with the outcome. This understanding may further contribute to the limited number of court adjustments. Only one objection was raised by a PRS under both AB 1148 and AB 207, no objections were raised under AB 2325.

Number of Cases Not Adjusted and No Action Taken

As illustrated in Figure 2 (page 9), the categories labeled "No Action Taken" and "No Adjustment" represent cases for which no apparent action has been taken. The "No Adjustment" designation is a selectable option available to LCSA caseworkers within the CSE system when cases are reviewed for FC § 4007.5. These cases have undergone manual review by an LCSA case worker and, for various reasons outlined below, were determined not to require an adjustment. In contrast, the "No Action Taken" category is not a selectable option within the CSE system. Instead, this classification was derived through data filtering during the query process, which isolated a subset of cases that lacked any recorded action. Cases in this category may or may not have been reviewed by a caseworker. However, based on the available data, these cases appear to meet the criteria

for administrative adjustment under FC § 4007.5 but either are pending review or were reviewed without the outcome being properly recorded in the CSE system.

Case Sample Review

In order to study this population of cases, a randomized sample from the “No Adjustment” and “No Action Taken” categories were reviewed from each version of FC § 4007.5. The sample included 368 cases under AB 1148, 58 cases under AB 207, and 26 cases under AB 2325. The case reviews were conducted by DCSS staff with prior experience as caseworkers at LCSA. The reasons for review of these cases were to determine the following:

- The number of administrative or court adjustments that are not accounted for in the CSE system;
- The number of motions filed to modify the current child support obligation to a zero-dollar order, and whether the resulting court order was filed before or after the LCSA became aware of the PPS’s incarceration or involuntary institutionalization;
- The number of cases in which the administrative adjustment process has been initiated but not completed;
- The number of cases in which the PPS had an ability to pay the child support obligation while incarcerated or involuntary institutionalization.

Case reviewers were given preset outcomes to select including:

- Adjustment in process
- Administrative adjustment
- Cases not open during incarceration period (No action taken)
- Inaccurate incarceration record (Other outcomes)
- Incarceration period nonqualifying (Other outcomes)
- Incarceration unverified (No action taken)
- Ineligible for relief- Ability to pay
- Ineligible for relief- Crime exclusion
- Intergovernmental case (No action taken)
- Motion for modification (Zero order)
- Pending legal action (Other outcomes)

Administrative or court adjustments

When reviewing the random selection of 368 cases under AB 1148, there were 29 cases identified that had an administrative adjustment. There were no cases identified that had a court adjustment within this group of cases. This equates to roughly 7.8 percent of the 368 reviewed cases. There were also an additional 53

cases that were identified as “adjustment in process.” This means that the LCSA has initiated the administrative adjustment process, but the outcome has yet to be determined at the time of review. When reviewing the random selection of 58 cases under AB 207, there were four cases identified that had an administrative adjustment. These account for roughly 6.9 percent of the 58 cases reviewed. There were no court order adjustments and no adjustments in process that were identified. As for AB 2325, there were five administrative adjustments and two court order adjustments identified from the random selection of 26 cases. There were no adjustments in process, meaning that any adjustment that was initiated was finished to completion. The administrative adjustment and court adjustments identified equate for roughly 2.7 percent of the 26 cases reviewed. As a note, these additional findings for each version of FC § 4007.5 are not included in Figure 2 (page 9).

Motion for modification of order

The review of cases concluded that 32, or 8.7 percent of the reviewed cases for AB 1148 included a zero-dollar current child support obligation. Of those 32 cases, 22 of the cases already had a current zero-dollar child support obligation due to prior periods of incarceration or other qualifying circumstances. In five cases, the LCSAS filed a motion for modification resulting in a zero-dollar obligation based on a change in circumstance unrelated to incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. The remaining five cases involved motions filed specifically in response to the PPS’s incarceration or involuntary institutionalization.

Within the AB 207 sample of cases, nine cases, or 15.5 percent had a current child support obligation set at zero-dollars. In four of these cases, the zero-dollar obligation was already in place when the case was reopened by the LCSA following a period of non-enforcement. This status may have resulted from a prior qualifying period of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. In the remaining five cases, motions for modification were filed with the court, four in response to incarceration and one due to a separate change in circumstance.

Of the AB 2325 sample, eight cases, or 30.8 percent included a zero-dollar current child support obligation. Three of these obligations were attributed to prior qualifying periods of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. In five cases, the LCSAS filed motions for modification specifically in response to the PPS’s incarceration or involuntary institutionalization of the PPS.

Ineligible for relief

Several cases were identified in which the PPS was deemed ineligible for relief under FC § 4007.5. The primary reason for ineligibility was the PPS’s demonstrated ability to pay the child support obligation during the period of incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. Under AB 2325, statutory exclusions applied to the PPS convicted of certain offenses, including domestic violence against the PRS or the supported children, or a failure to pay the child support obligation, thereby

disqualifying them from relief. These crime-based exclusions were removed in subsequent amendments under AB 207 and AB 1148. Within the AB 1148 sample, 12 cases were identified in which the PPS had an ability to pay during incarceration or involuntary institutionalization and therefore ineligible for relief. These cases represent approximately 3.3 percent of the AB 1148 sample. Under AB 207, only one case involved a PPS with the ability to pay during the qualifying period, rendering the individual ineligible. In the AB 2325 sample, three cases were deemed ineligible: one due to the PPS's ability to pay, and two due to disqualifying domestic violence offenses against the PRS or the supported children.

No action taken

Within the AB 1148 sample, 108 cases, or 29.3 percent were identified as having no apparent action taken. Under AB 207, 19 of the 58 reviewed cases, or 32.8 percent, similarly showed no documented action. For AB 2325, 3 of the 26 cases reviewed, or 11.5 percent, were categorized as having no action taken. The absence of documented action may be attributed to several factors, including but not limited to:

- No location data available for the PPS and/or PRS;
- Unable to confirm incarceration with local or state facilities;
- Incarceration record remains unverified;
- Incarceration period was prior to the case being opened in the CSE system and prior to the establishment of a child support order;
- The child support orders were issued from an intergovernmental jurisdiction, and California does not have jurisdiction to administratively adjust accounts.

Other outcomes

A subset of cases under each version of FC § 4007.5 did not align with the previously defined outcome categories and were therefore classified as "Other Outcomes." Specifically, 134 cases under AB 1148, 25 cases under AB 207, and 5 cases under AB 2325 were categorized in this manner. These cases displayed a range of characteristics, including but not limited to:

- The incarceration period was nonqualifying;
- Pending legal action (i.e., amended summons and complaint, supplemental summons and complaint);
- Child support order included standard order attachment language. Meaning that the amount payable changes automatically when a specified event occurs, in this case the incarceration or involuntary institutionalization of a PPS.
- Case was in pending closure status (meaning the case was in the 60-day review period before the CSE system closes the case) and child support

accounts and charging instructions had been set for zero as the LCSA was no longer going to be enforcing the child support order and was setting up the case for closure;

- The incarceration record was not accurate at the time the queries were run. In other words, the queries indicated that the PPS was incarcerated for 90 consecutive days or more, as that is what was being reflected in the CSE system. However, the incarceration record was not updated to reflect the PPS’s release (prior to the 90-day threshold).

Figure 3. Assembly Bill 1148 Case Sample Review

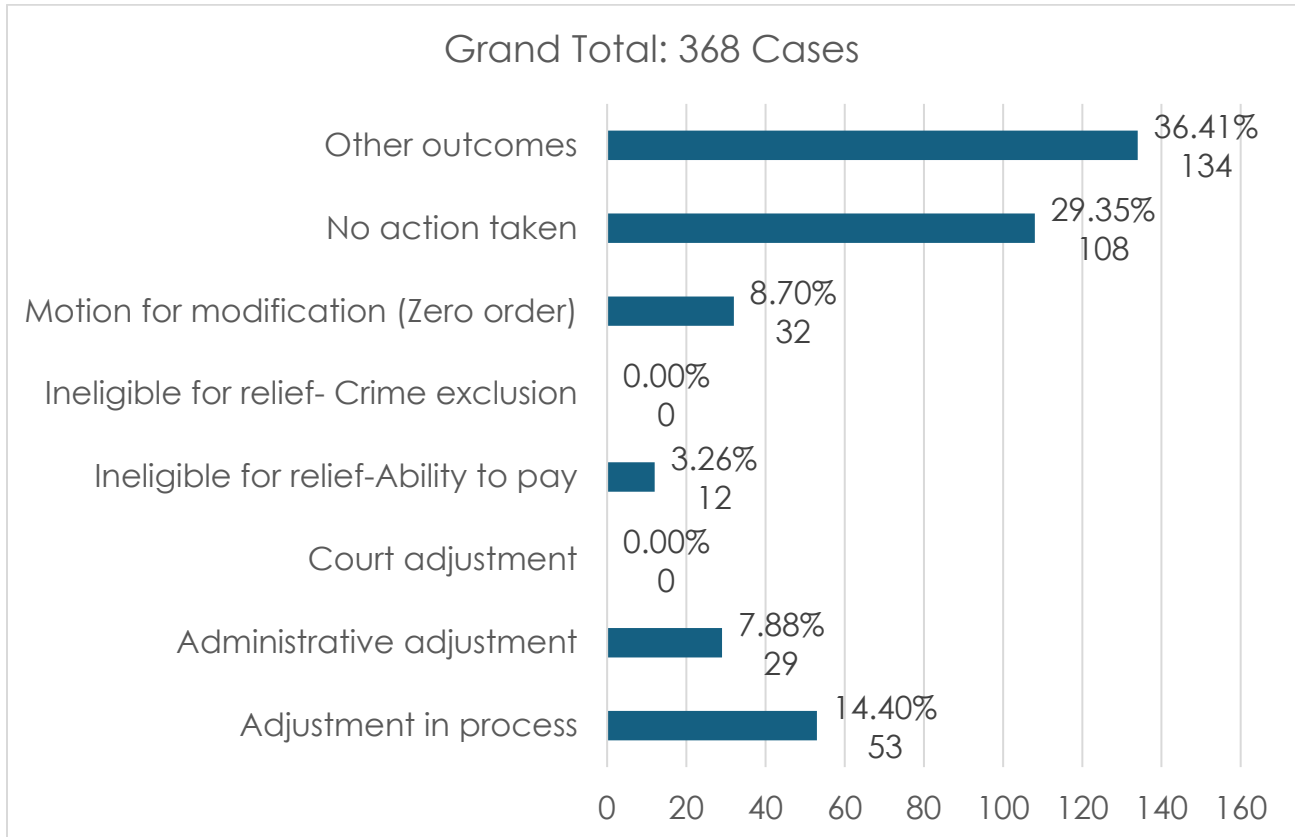


Figure 4. Assembly Bill 207 Case Sample Review

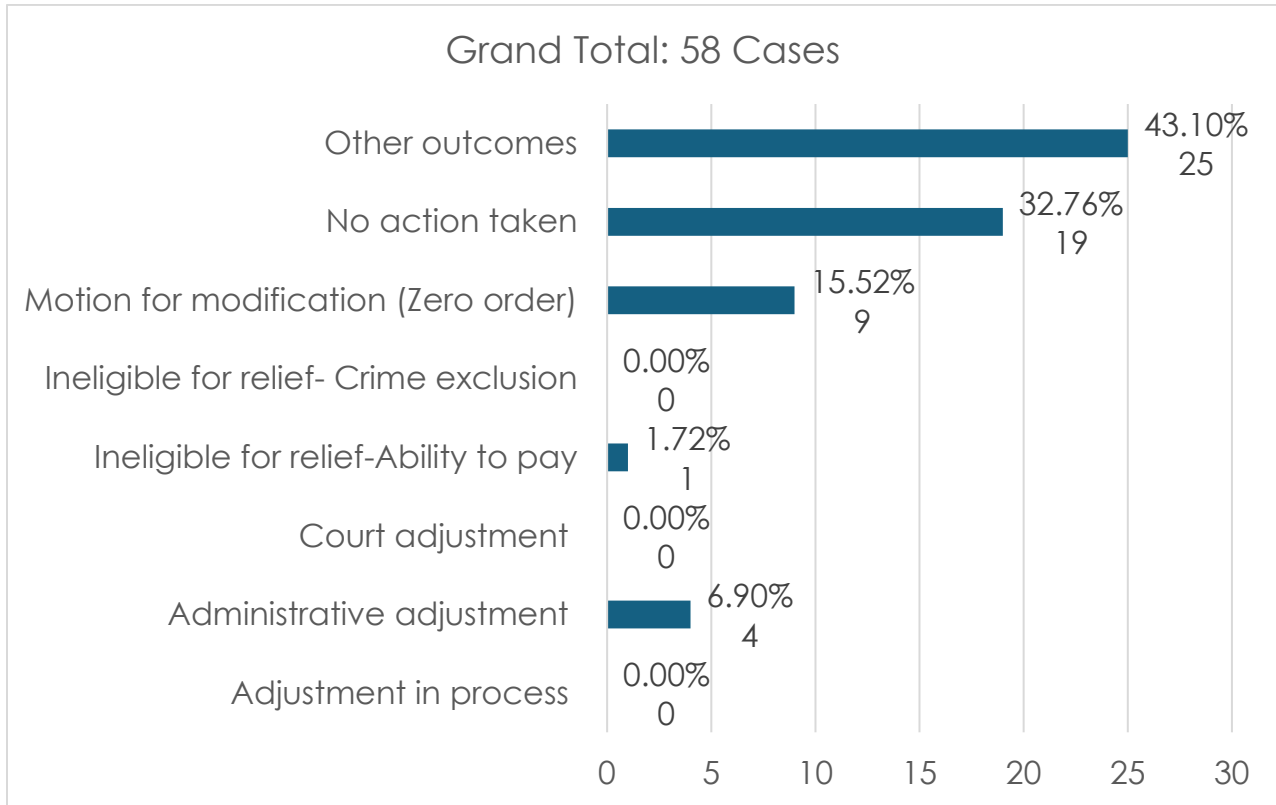
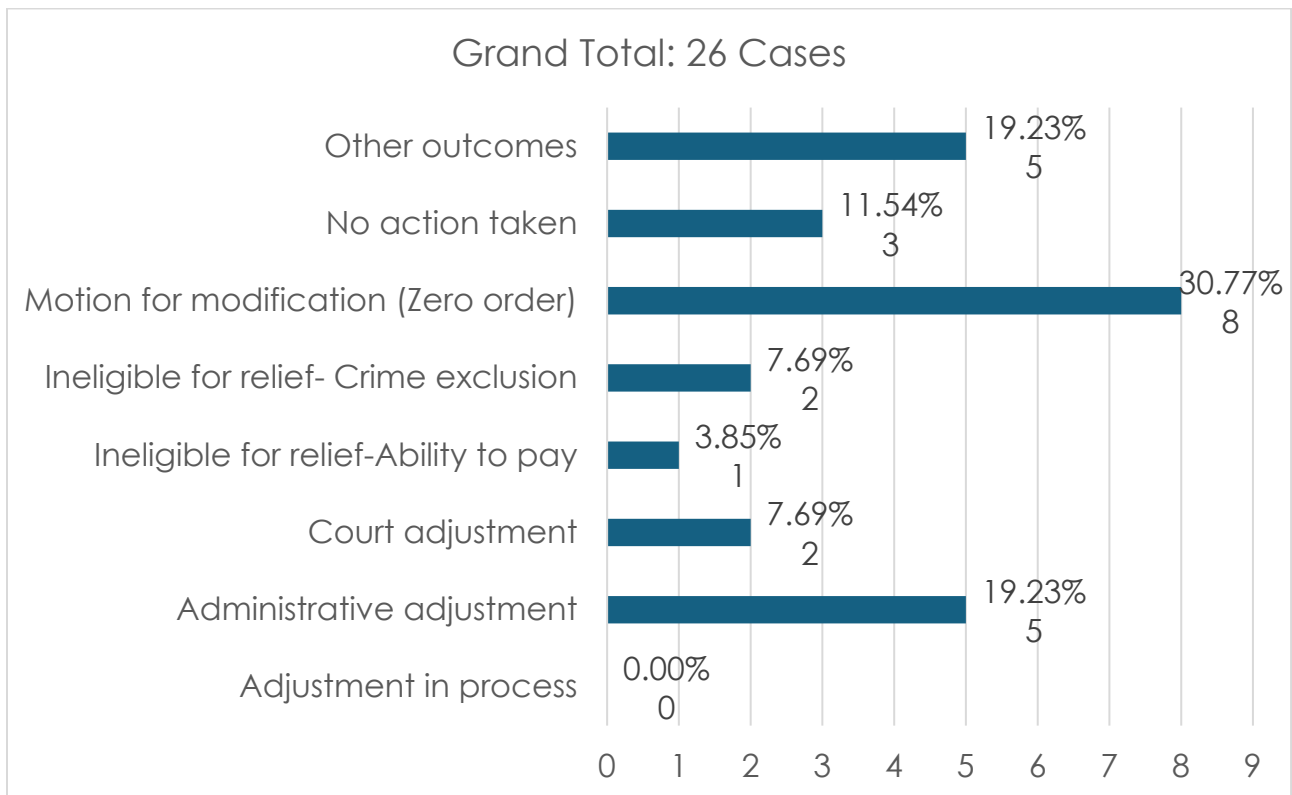


Figure 5. Assembly Bill 2325 Case Sample Review



In conclusion, across the three versions of FC § 4007.5 that have been reviewed, the use of modification motions for incarceration or involuntary institutionalizations has steadily decreased from AB 2325 to AB 1148. Conversely, there has been a notable increase in both administrative adjustments and adjustments in process, particularly between AB 207 and AB 1148. It is important to note that the case sample size for each version varied, reflecting the differing volumes of “no action taken” and “no adjustment” cases identified in each legislative period. Nonetheless, the findings suggest that LCSAs are increasingly relying on the administrative adjustment process rather than pursuing judicial modifications.

Effectiveness and Ease of Process

Pursuant to FC §4007.5(h), DCSS is required to evaluate the ease of process for both the PPS and PRS, and to report the findings to the Assembly Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee. To fulfill this mandate, DCSS developed and administered four distinct surveys targeting key stakeholder groups: LCSA caseworkers, JCC Family Law Facilitators (FLFs), JCC Child Support Commissioners, and child support case participants (PPS and PRS). The JCC provided consultation on the surveys for judicial stakeholders, while Truth and Justice in Child Support Coalition contributed to the development of the participant surveys. Each survey included a combination of five-point Likert scale items (ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree”), binary yes/no questions, and open-ended narrative prompts. Detailed results are presented in the following sections, with full survey questions and response rates included in the appendix.

All four surveys were disseminated via a platform called Ethelo. Ethelo is a collaborative decision-making platform licensed by DCSS through the Office of Impact. It offers structured voting, public commenting, and transparent dialogue, all within an intuitive, user-friendly interface. This platform enabled participants to engage asynchronously with background information and policy options, and to provide targeted feedback. For stakeholders with lower digital literacy, this approach was more accessible and easier to navigate than traditional government survey tools, encouraging broader participation.

DCSS selected Ethelo for this legislative survey because it facilitated broad, inclusive engagement from stakeholders across the state, including county agencies, judicial partners, and affected families. The platform allowed for confidential demographic data collection and real-time synthesis of responses, helping DCSS identify consensus, trends, and outliers quickly. This replaced the previous manual process of tallying and coding feedback matrices, reducing administrative burden and lowering the risk of overlooking critical feedback across diverse groups.

A point to note as the responses are analyzed in the next report sections is that Ethelo captures the respondents’ responses immediately as they answer each question and move through the survey. All questions required responses in order

for the respondent to continue through the survey, with the exception of one question in the FLFs survey which will be noted in that corresponding section. However, some respondents may not have completed the survey in its entirety, so their responses are captured for some questions and not all. This user drop off could be due to survey length, question complexity, or other unknown factors and as such leads to differing response totals for each question.

Surveys were anonymous except for the participant survey in which they were asked if DCSS could call them with additional questions. If they responded “yes,” then the respondents were to provide their name and contact information, which was optional and not required.

California Local Child Support Agencies: Survey Results

A total of 119 LCSA staff initiated the survey, with 107 completing it in full. The survey included 19 statements focused on the administrative adjustment process and was designed to capture the self-reported perspectives of LCSA staff regarding how PPS and PRS participants understand and navigate the process. Responses were visualized using a horizontal stacked bar chart with a neutral midpoint. Positive responses (“agree” and “strongly agree”) extended to the right of the midpoint, while negative responses (“disagree” and “strongly disagree”) extended to the left. As shown in Figure 6 (page 25), many responses clustered around the “neutral” and “agree” categories. Full survey questions and response rates are available in the appendix.

In addition to the survey, the Child Support Directors Association (CSDA), a nonprofit organization representing LCSA directors from all 58 California counties, provided supplemental feedback. CSDA emphasized the need for further evaluation of the 10-month post-release relief period using an evidence-based approach. Specifically, CSDA noted that delays in reinstating child support obligations may occur when PPSs obtain employment prior to the end of the relief period. These delays are often due to the time required to receive income documentation and allow for participant response. Additional delays may arise from the court calendaring process, as hearing dates can range from three to six months following the filing of a motion. During this period, enforcement suppressions must be placed on the case, preventing the collection of current support or arrears. CSDA expressed concern that such delays may hinder the timely delivery of support to children and recommended that LCSAs be granted the authority to administratively reinstate child support obligations and lift enforcement suppressions when a PPS secures employment prior to the end of the 10-month period.

Statements from the LCSA surveys that received the highest percentage of agreement excluding “neutral” responses include:

- The 30-day notice provided both participants with enough time to respond. (79.83% of respondents agree or strongly agree)

- The LCSA facilitates this process with very little action required by the case participant(s). (77.57% of respondents agree or strongly agree)
- The Notice of Account Reinstatement provided both participants with details about:
 - The effective date of reinstatement of the child support order
 - The amount of child support obligation to be reinstated
 - Information about who to contact for help with questions or concerns about their child support case. (70.09% of respondents agree or strongly agree)

The following statements received the highest percentage of disagreement, though still relatively low overall:

- The participants found this process to be manageable and/or efficient. (7.41% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
- It was relatively easy for participants who objected to the administrative adjustment of their accounts to attend the necessary court hearing. (4.63% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
- It was relatively easy for participants who objected to the administrative adjustment of their accounts to file their objection. (4.63% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)

In addition to the five-point Likert statements, the survey also included two narrative questions regarding why child support orders were modified in court rather than by administrative adjustment and any further comments on the ease of process for the PPS and the PRS. Direct quotes from the LCSA responses were included for the next two open questions.

Why were court order modifications pursued instead of an administrative adjustment?

LCSA staff were asked to respond to why modifications of child support orders were heard in court instead of utilizing the administrative adjustment process. This question was intended to help DCSS understand whether LCSAs are utilizing the administrative adjustment process and, if not, the reasons for pursuing court modifications instead. There was a total of 107 responses to this question from LCSA staff. Responses were nearly evenly split: 53 staff indicated they had sent cases to court for modification, while 54 indicated they had not.

There were a few themes that emerged from the responses of the fifty-three LCSA staff that had experience with child support obligations that went to court for modification. One of the themes that developed through responses was that the court modification was pursued due to an objection by the PRS.

- The PRS *“returned their objection letter disagreeing with the adjustment.”*
- One caseworker noted, *“the most common reasoning I have heard is that the PRS feels it is unfair for the PPS to get the benefit of not being required to support their child(ren) and that it is the PRS receiving consequences for the PPS's choices/actions.”*

Another theme that emerged was that the procedures of some LCSAs are to utilize both processes simultaneously.

- One caseworker noted, *“The case will start with an administrative adjustment and then depending on the length of time the PPS will be incarcerated, a motion to modify ongoing support to zero will be done. Once the PPS is released, a review will be conducted to potentially modify based on their current employment status.”*
- One of the reasons for doing the processes simultaneously is that it is *“unlikely PPS could still afford the reinstated order.”*
- There are often barriers that a PPS faces once released from incarceration and the *“PPS's release does not guarantee that they would find employment and receive the same pay that they did prior to incarceration.”*

Another reason for either doing the processes simultaneously or to file a motion for modification only is to remove the confusion behind all the different versions of FC § 4007.5. Some LCSAs are choosing to have the current child support orders and arrears addressed in court due to the complexity of cases spanning multiple versions of the statute. One caseworker noted that incarceration records are not always received, or records are inaccurate whether being received through the CSE interface or direct responses from the institution. In such cases, court determination may be simpler for both parties.

Some LCSA procedures are to utilize court order modifications only and not the administrative adjustment process.

- As one caseworker noted, this is due to the fact that the cases with an administrative adjustment *“automatically step back up to the amount that was ordered prior to the PPS being incarcerated. Often times, the circumstances are totally different, and the PPS is not able to earn the same amount of money right out of an incarceration situation.”*

Another case worker noted that once the PPS is released, they now have an incarceration record, and it is often harder for them to find a job. Some PPSs may also end up being homeless after a period of incarceration. LCSAs also pursue

court order modifications if the PPS is going to be incarcerated for a long period of time, making a zero-dollar child support order appropriate. In some instances, the PPS filed their own motion for child support modification with the courts prior to the LCSA being aware of the incarceration or involuntary institutionalization and prior to an administrative adjustment being processed by the LCSA. The last common theme to emerge from LCSA responses was that a modification of the child support order was filed with the court due to the PPS becoming employed prior to the ten-month relief period or assets or income for the PPS were found and the LCSA was made aware by the PRS.

Fifty-four LCSA staff out of the 107 responded that they have not filed child support order modifications in court. There were two common themes among these fifty-four responses. One of the common themes was that the LCSA procedure is to utilize the administrative adjustment process. The second common theme was that the parties did not file an objection to the administrative adjustment, so the LCSA was able to pursue that process. This is usually due to no response from the PPS or PRS.

Any additional thoughts to share on the ease of process for the PPS and PRS?

The LCSA staff were asked to share any additional thoughts on the ease of process for PRS and PPS and 106 LCSA staff responded. Of those, 44 respondents indicated they had no additional feedback to provide.

- Eight of the LCSA respondents agreed that the *“process is very straightforward and efficient”* and that the *“process is relatively easy for both PPS and PRS.”*
- One respondent even noted that the administrative adjustment process *“helps the PPS while incarcerated,”* and *“takes some stress off of them.”*
- Conversely, five respondents noted that *“the process is lengthy,”* and *“requires a lot of follow up and case monitoring.”*

One respondent said that if they can contact both parties to inform them of the suspension of child support obligations, then it should be able to occur that day to provide faster relief for the PPS. The LCSA went on to share that notices should still be sent out to both parties, but if both parties are contacted and agree to waive the 30-day response time, then relief can be afforded to the PPS in a timelier manner.

Several themes emerged from LCSA responses to the above question.

- One of the most frequent responses was that *“there typically is no involvement from the parties,”* and *“for the most part, when contact is attempted with either party, we typically do not get a response.”*

- Another common response was that if the LCSA did get a response from a participant, noting that *“often the PPS who is incarcerated files an objection due to misunderstanding the notice and what is actually happening with their child support billing. This causes unnecessary delays and court hearings.”*

One LCSA response even noted that it appears the PPSs are usually the participants who are more confused by the notices. A common recommendation to better assist participants in understanding the process, is to simplify the language on the notices and how incarceration affects child support obligations. One respondent had a direct recommendation on the Notice of Proposed Administrative Adjustment of Child Support Accounts Form.

- There is language on the form stating that the PRS may object to the administrative adjustment within 30 days of the notice *“and only if the person ordered to pay child support has the means to pay while incarcerated.”* The recommendation is to emphasize the quoted language as the LCSA respondent notes that this is often overlooked and *“it gives the impression that if they object then the admin adjustment will not happen.”*

Other important responses to note are responses by the PRS in that they liken the PPS to being *“rewarded”* by having their child support obligation suspended, especially when they are incarcerated due to domestic violence against the PRS.

- *“It is like the PRS is being victimized again.”*

One respondent noted that a PRS stated that the PPS should not qualify for the administrative adjustment process due to the type of crime that was committed but that the PRS still agreed to move forward with the process. One LCSA respondent noted that the ten-month relief period post incarceration seems arbitrary, and one noted that the ten-month relief period might be considered too long for the PRS to receive child support payments again.

- *“Most of the customers have no idea about this process until someone from an LCSA explains the process. At that point, the PRS' generally understand the 'why' because people generally can't work when they are incarcerated. However, they still do not like the fact that it's happening.”*

There were several responses that had to do with the confusion around FC § 4007.5 and included the following:

- *“As an attorney, there have been cases where the PPS has attempted to go back and get charges taken out because of prior periods of incarceration but none of them have ever been successful because they*

do not understand that the FC sunsetted and was reenacted several times and the time periods fall into time frames after the code had sunsetted. Those PPS were frustrated and confused by the process.”

- *“I think the participants, in general, understand what we are trying to do. I think there is confusion regarding the time periods and why some periods qualify, and others do not. Most PPS just assume if they are incarcerated their obligation will be adjusted to zero.”*
- *“Most of the time it is easy to determine if the participants qualify, however, I think that the process should be explained clearer on the operational procedures.”*
- *“I have found it is difficult to explain to PRS without compromising the confidentiality of the PPS concerning their incarceration. The process seems confusing to PRS when they receive correspondence in the mail, we need to have a better way of notifying PRS, perhaps a liaison to go out to the jail or a point of contact to relay and explain what is happening/explain the process to incarcerated parents.”*

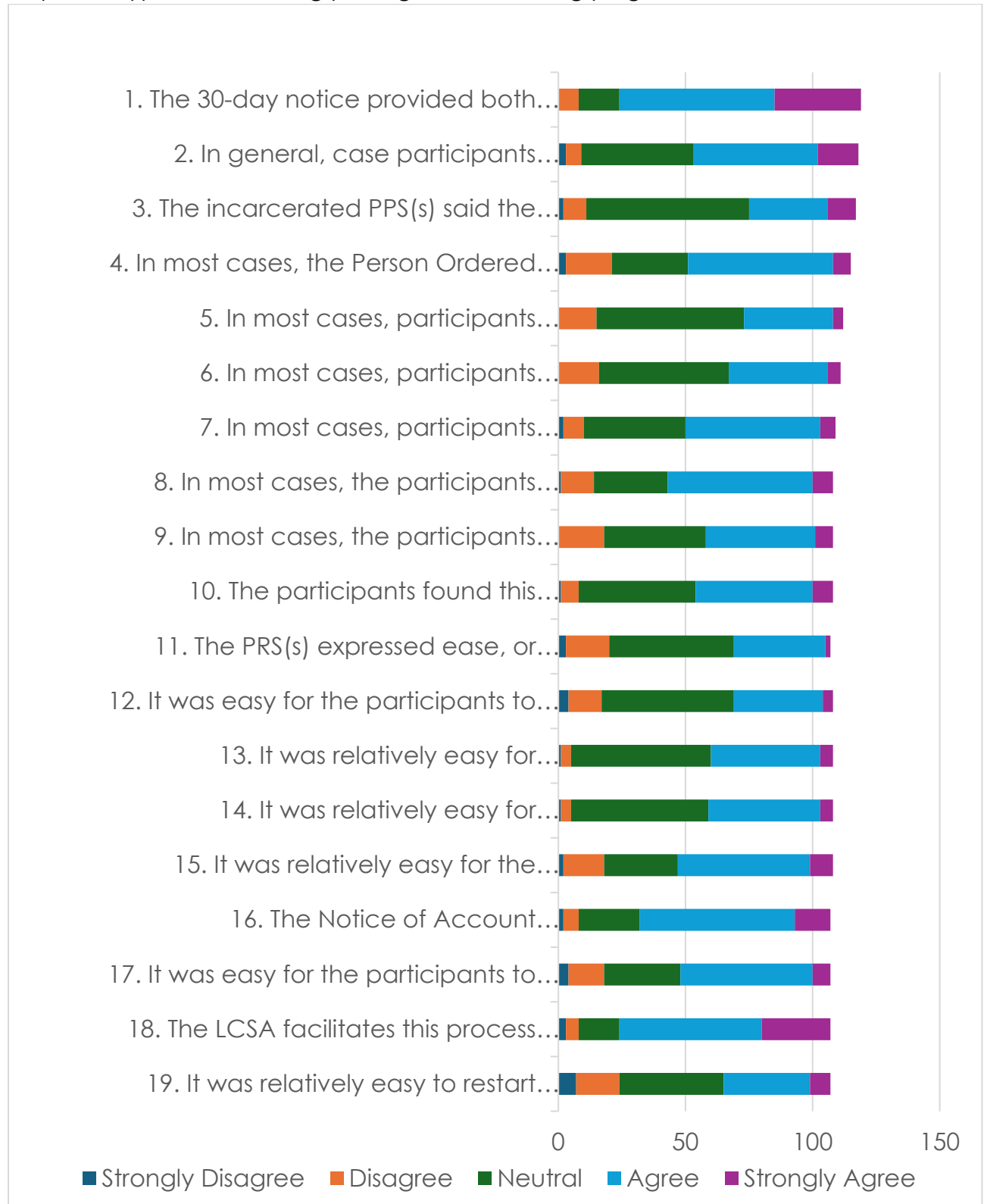
Observations

Overall, LCSAs generally observed that the process is relatively easy for participants to understand and participate in. However, some LCSAs noted that the administrative process is “convoluted” for staff and participants to understand. To improve communication, LCSAs recommended simplifying the language used in notices, as participants often found the current language confusing. Though LCSAs identified PRSs as the most dissatisfied with the process, this dissatisfaction was primarily due to the perception that the extended reinstatement period “rewards” the PPS. However, LCSA case workers also noted that in some instances, the PPS was not paying the child support obligation prior to incarceration and therefore this process could encourage compliance with the child support order post incarceration. Though LCSAs acknowledge some barriers exist, including transitional housing requirements that limit a recently released individual from working for a short period of time, overall, the 10-month reprieve was considered sufficient to allow for reintegration into society and reinstate child support obligations. However, in contrast to the general survey feedback, CSDA recommended a reevaluation of this 10-month relief period to validate that 10 months is an adequate relief time frame. Additionally, CSDA noted the challenges that come with the modification process when a PPS is discovered to have income before the end of the relief period. Filing a motion for modification in such cases can delay the reinstatement of support, preventing timely payments to the

supported child(ren). Also, due to the suppressions of child support enforcement actions on the case, this can complicate case management as well as adherence to compliance measures.

Figure 6. LCSA Survey Results- Ease of Process

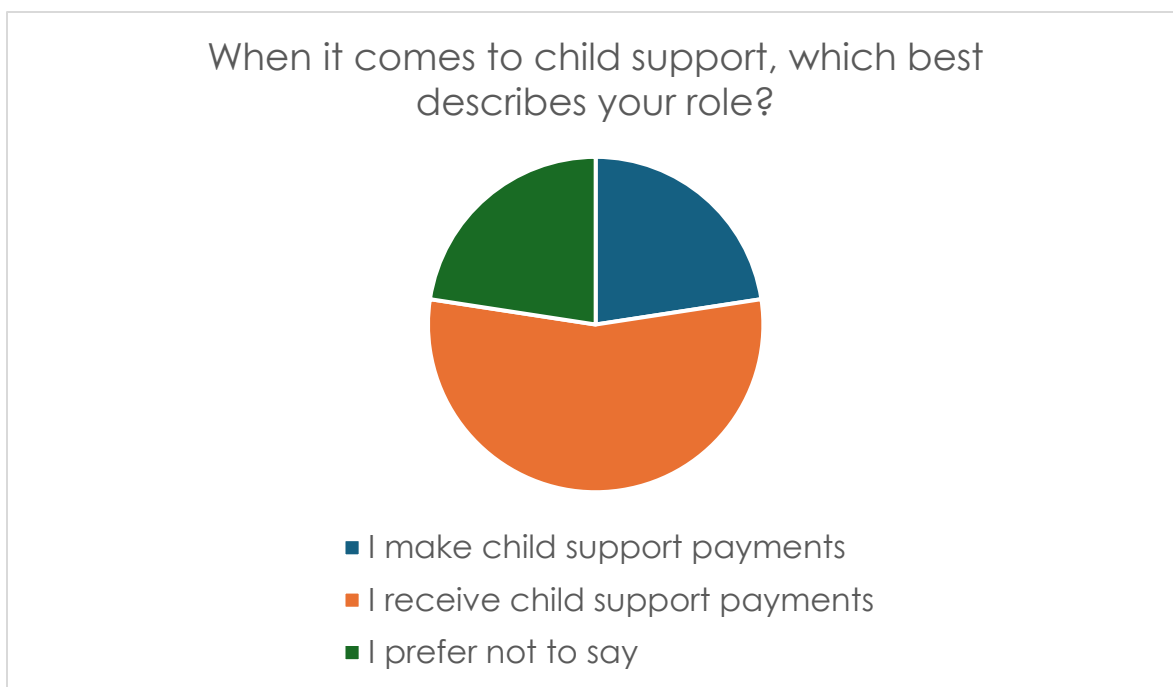
Refer to the appendix for full survey questions and response percentage rates. This horizontal stacked bar chart illustrates the distribution of responses according to response type from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”



Person Ordered to Receive Support and Parent Ordered to Pay Support: Survey Results

The surveys for child support case participants were disseminated by email and text message. A total of 2,918 emails and 614 text messages were sent. Of those, a total of 42 case participants began the survey. As with other surveys, user drop-off was observed. The survey included a question asking about the case participant's role when it comes to child support. 17 case participants responded that they received child support payments, seven responded that they make child support payments, and seven responded that they would prefer not to say their role in child support.

Figure 7. Demographic Question



The child support case participant survey contained six statements regarding the administrative adjustment process. As with the LCSA survey, results are presented in a horizontal stacked bar chart with a neutral midpoint. The bar chart shows a wide range of responses that fall within the full range of responses from “strongly disagreed” to “strongly agreed.” Figure 8 (page 27) shows these results from the five-point Likert statements. Refer to the appendix for the response rates. Statements that received the highest percentage of agreement (excluding “neutral” responses) include:

- I could easily understand all the letters I received from the child support agency about the administrative adjustment process. (43.59% of respondents agree or strongly agree)
- What I was supposed to do throughout the process was always clear to me. (43.24% of respondents agree or strongly agree)

- I understood what was happening and why because of the child support agency's communication throughout the process. (41.67% of respondents agree or strongly agree)

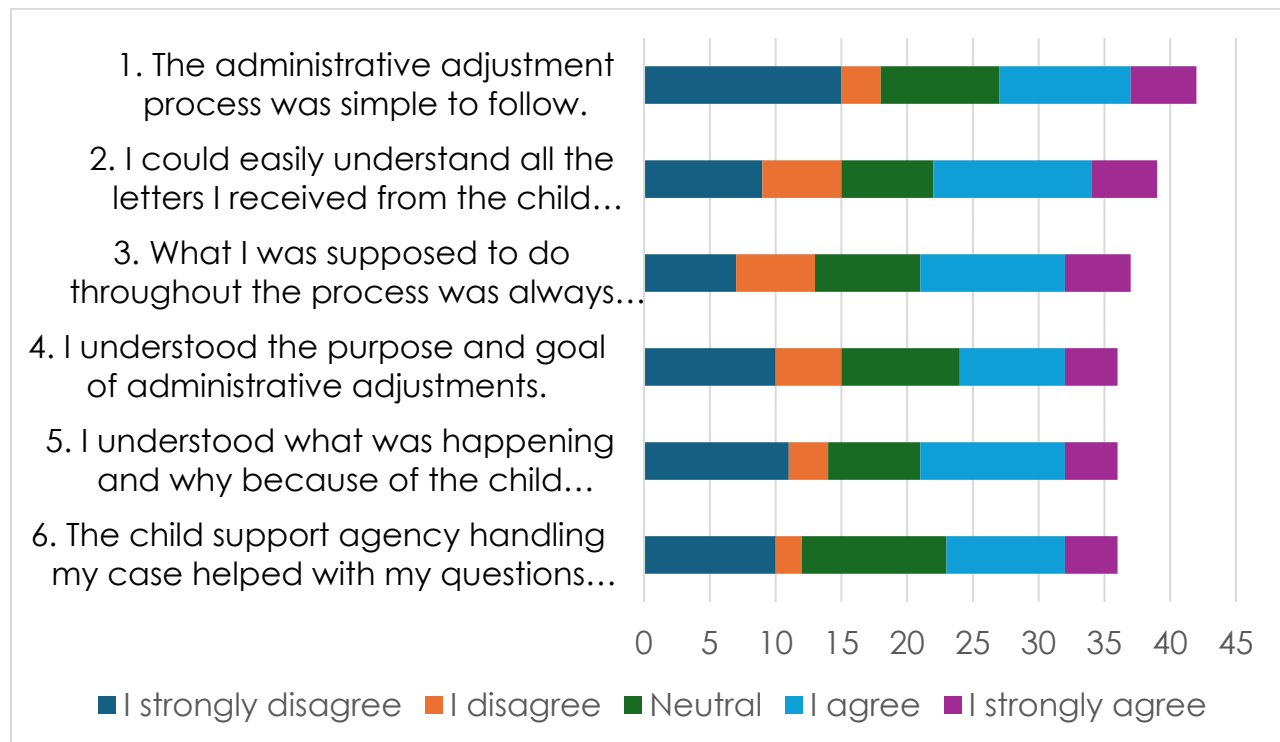
Some of the statements that received the highest percentage of disagreement include:

- The administrative adjustment process was simple to follow. (42.85% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
- I understood the purpose and goal of administrative adjustments. (41.67% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
- I understood what was happening and why because of the child support agency's communication throughout the process. (38.89% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree)

Notably, the final statement listed above received both one of the highest levels of agreement and disagreement, indicating a wide divergence in participant experience.

Figure 8. Child Support Case Participant Survey Results- Ease of Process

See the appendix for full survey questions and response percentage rates. This horizontal stacked bar chart illustrates the distribution of responses according to response type from “strongly disagreed” to “strongly agreed.”



The case participants were also asked three open questions. The responses to these questions are broken down by their role in their child support case. The PPS

responses are analyzed independently while the PRS and those who preferred not to distinguish their role are analyzed together as their responses were similar. Similar to the LCSA survey results, direct quotes from the case participants are included for each question.

What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the most helpful?

For case participants who receive child support payments or prefer not to say their role, 35 case participants in total, one of the most common responses to this question identified the LCSA providing clear explanations and answering questions as the most helpful part of the process. One response notes that the LCSA provided answers to all their questions, even though they do not agree with FC § 4007.5. Eight of the 35 respondents identified this as the most helpful part of the process.

Twelve of the 35 respondents stated “*nothing*” was helpful. One case participant noted they called into the LCSA three times and were given a different description of what was occurring each time. This inconsistency may reflect confusion caused by the multiple versions of FC § 4007.5. Some respondents said this process did not help make the parent pay the child support obligation and stated “*the system allows those with a criminal past to get away with it. He was released and had the 10-month waiting period in that time he never looked for work, now he wants the child support back terminated and reduced.*”

For case participants who make child support payments, seven PPSs responded to this question. Two PPSs said there was nothing helpful about the process. The remaining five found everything about the process very easy and helpful. Specifically, one PPS noted the pause on the child support obligation allowed them to reenter society and another noted the most helpful part of the process was the fact that their driver’s license was released.

What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the hardest or least helpful?

The most common response from the PRSs and those that preferred not to say their role indicated understanding FC § 4007.5 was the hardest part of the process. Even if they did understand the process, they “strongly disagreed” with it and felt overall frustration by it. A few also responded there was poor communication by the LCSAs and the process itself was not communicated clearly.

The PPS responses were similar in that the process was the hardest part to understand, and it was difficult finding a job after the relief period ended. One PPS said the process was not explained to them and wondered why they did not have an arrears balance on their child support case.

Is there anything else that we should know?

Twenty of the 35 PRSs and those who preferred not to say their role did not have any additional information to provide. The other respondents were frustrated by FC § 4007.5, feeling it *“only benefits the non-law-abiding parent,”* and does not benefit the children. Eight other respondents also indicated the PPSs are still not paying their child support obligation.

Four of the seven PPSs who responded to the survey did not have any additional comments; however, one did say *“thank you”* to the legislature for FC § 4007.5 and that help is needed at times. One respondent said they still have not found employment and two respondents thought better communication and better outreach to child support case participants would be helpful.

May we call you if we have additional questions?

Twenty respondents said “yes” to an additional call from DCSS and seventeen of those provided contact information. Providing contact information was not required and the nine who said “no” to an additional call from DCSS did not get asked to provide contact information. Thirteen respondents did not respond to this question, which was likely due to the user drop off.

Of the seventeen participants who provided contact information and stated that they were willing to speak with our office further, DCSS was able to reach six individuals and have conversations with them; four PRSs and two PPSs. All PRSs confirmed they received the notice of the intent to administratively adjust child support accounts by letter from DCSS. Three of the PRSs agreed they understood the intent of FC § 4007.5, and when their child support obligations would be suspended and reinstated. None of the PRSs agreed with the suspension of the child support payments and most shared that it was not fair and hurt the family. One PRS stated that she found the entire process confusing.

PRSs were asked about how the suspension of the child support obligation affected them and their children. The PRSs DCSS spoke with made the following statements:

- *“Well, for starters and the most obvious, is that we are not receiving any money. Think of all the ways that hurts a family.”*
- *“It did not have any impact on us at all because he never pays and I do not anticipate him paying anytime soon.”*
- *“Not much actually because he was not paying me before he was locked up. He wasn’t paying before and is not paying now. He is in the process of getting a job.”*
- *“This law is unfair, and these criminals are benefiting for 10 months, and I have had to work and care for my child alone. My child goes without and is not growing properly because I cannot afford food. He is an expert criminal*

and will take full advantage of this new law and has. This law needs to be reversed."

PRs were asked if there was anything further that they would like to discuss with DCSS as it pertains to FC § 4007.5, PRs made the following statements:

- *"Stop giving criminals breaks. No one gave me a break while he was in jail. He broke the law and is basically getting rewarded by not having to pay child support. It does not make any sense."*
- *"I don't really have a problem with this law because it doesn't impact my family since he never pays. However, if he were a paying parent and I had to go without after actually getting payments, I would be very upset and have difficulty paying for all of the expenses alone."*
- *"This bill is awful. I am in school, and I work. I have no grace given to me, ever. I must raise my children. He does not pay and is rewarded for being in jail and fathering 2 more kids that he doesn't pay for. This bill needs to be cancelled because it only helps the criminals. Whoever wrote this was not thinking about hungry children or mothers who are already struggling, they only think of the fairness to criminals who already don't pay their support. It makes no sense to me."*
- *"Children are suffering from this policy. I also would be willing to testify regarding this bill and how harmful it is to children. I feel that mothers with incarcerated fathers should be eligible for aid no matter what they make. Fathers should be on the hook to pay once they are released, not 10 months later. The fathers should be responsible for repaying the aid of mothers once they are released."*

Though the PRs understood the intent of FC § 4007.5, none felt it was helpful to them or their children and most shared that it created an additional financial burden to care for their children. Even with those that shared the PPS never financially supported their child(ren), they felt the law was not fair and that something should be done to help the PRS while the PPS is receiving the relief from paying child support. DCSS spoke with two PPSs regarding the effect that FC § 4007.5 had on them post release from incarceration. Both PPSs stated that they understood why their child support obligation was suspended and the process was easy to understand. One PPS said that he was notified of the suspension by letter, while the other PPS did not receive notification, but found out about the suspension when he reviewed his child support balance.

PPSs were asked if they were prepared to begin paying their child support obligation once it was reinstated and if there was anything that helped them feel prepared to start paying. The PPSs stated the following:

- *"For the most part, yes. The pause in payments helped me to not get too far behind and also allowed me to get back into society."*
- *"No, I have not yet found a job."*

The PPSs were asked if they felt the 10-month relief period was sufficient time for them to begin paying their child support obligation again. PPSs both stated that they believed it was sufficient time, but one did state he still has not found a job. When the PPSs were asked if they felt the administrative adjustment of their child support obligation was helpful, they responded with the following:

- *“Yes, because it allowed me time to get back into society.”*
- *“I guess. It is giving me extra time to find work and begin paying.”*

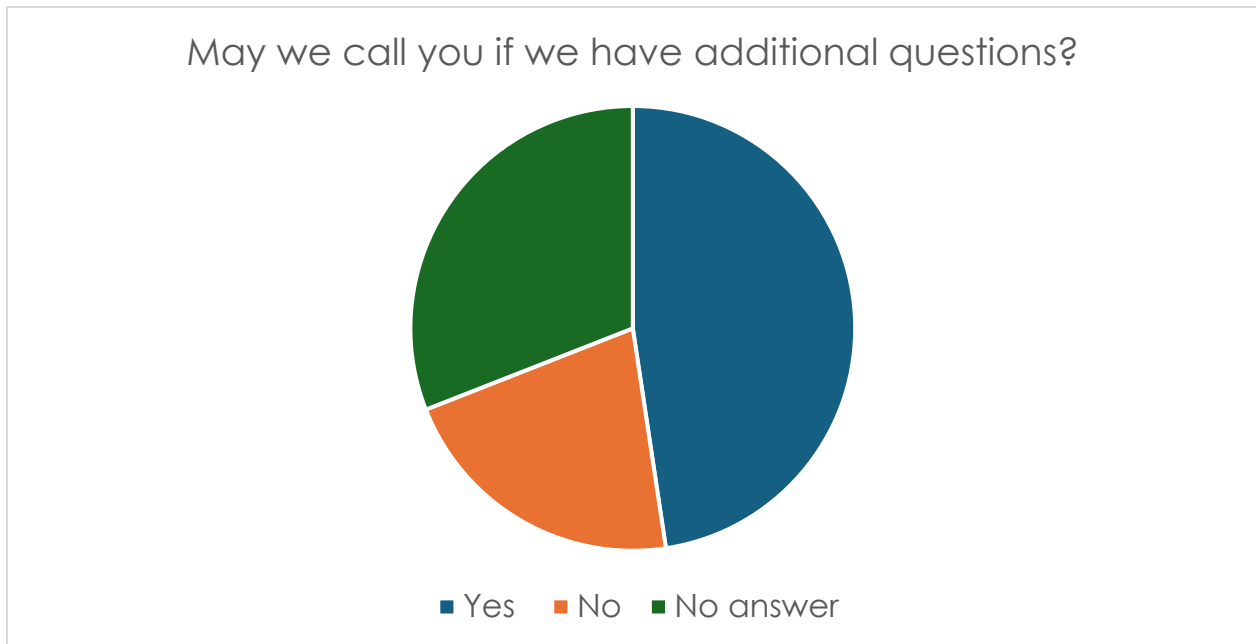
Both PPSs confirmed that they did not have any re-entry requirements that would make it harder for them to begin repaying their child support obligation. However, the PPSs stated the following regarding re-entry requirements and barriers to regaining employment:

- *“No requirements really but it is difficult to get hired after being locked up.”*
- *“It is not easy after incarceration overall. I guess that was my biggest barrier.”*

Lastly, both PPSs were asked if there was anything further they would like DCSS to know regarding their experience with FC § 4007.5. The PPSs stated the following:

- *“I think that the communication was lacking. I was not informed that this was happening, even though it made things easier for me, communication could have been better.”*
- *“No, I do appreciate the program but wish it was easier to find work.”*

Overall, the PPSs agree that the 10-month relief period was a sufficient amount of time for them to reintegrate into society and to find employment. However, even though they both did not have re-entry requirements, they both agreed that the fact that they have a history of incarceration has made it difficult to find employment. They also agreed that the administrative adjustment of their child support obligations was helpful but wished there had been more communication about the process and that it was easier to find employment.

Figure 9. Child Support Case Participant Survey - Question 1

Observations

Although more than 3,000 surveys were distributed to individuals whose cases were adjusted under FC § 4007.5, only a small number of participants responded to DCSS's request for feedback. Most of the responses came from individuals who receive child support. Both PPS and PRS respondents reported difficulty understanding the process and indicated that the information provided was unclear. PRSs expressed that the relief period was unhelpful, noting that in many cases, the PPS was not paying support before incarceration and still had not resumed payments after the relief period. Among the seven PPS respondents, those who understood the administrative process generally found it helpful. However, several PPSs stated that finding employment remained difficult, making it challenging to meet their support obligations once reinstated. Others felt the process supported their reintegration into society. Overall, while the 10-month reprieve was viewed as a reasonable timeframe for reintegration, both PPS and PRS participants indicated that the process was not easy to understand. Notably, participants did not offer specific suggestions for improving the process.

Judicial Council of California: Survey Results

The Child Support Commissioner and Family Law Facilitator Program was established under Chapter 957, Statutes of 1996 (AB 1058). This legislation added Family Code sections 4250–4253 and 10000–10015, creating what is now known as the AB 1058 Child Support Program. The program was designed to simplify and streamline the resolution of issues related to parentage, child support, and health insurance, while reducing conflict. It also created an expedited court process for

establishing and enforcing child support orders. Under AB 1058, each superior court must appoint a Child Support Commissioner to hear child support cases that are enforced by the LCSA, establish uniform and simplified procedures for establishing and modifying child support orders, and create the Office of the Family Law Facilitator in each superior court who are to provide parents with free education, assistance, and information on child support matters. The program is funded through a cooperative agreement between DCSS and JCC.

DCSS in consultation with JCC, is required to report to the Assembly Judiciary Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee on various aspects of the administrative adjustment process. To support this report, DCSS and JCC collaborated to develop survey questions for both the Child Support Commissioners and the FLFs. The surveys aimed to gather feedback on the effectiveness and ease of the administrative adjustment process, for both PPS and PRS, as well as general feedback on FC § 4007.5. Separate surveys were administered to Child Support Commissioners and FLFs. JCC distributed the surveys using the Ethelo platform.

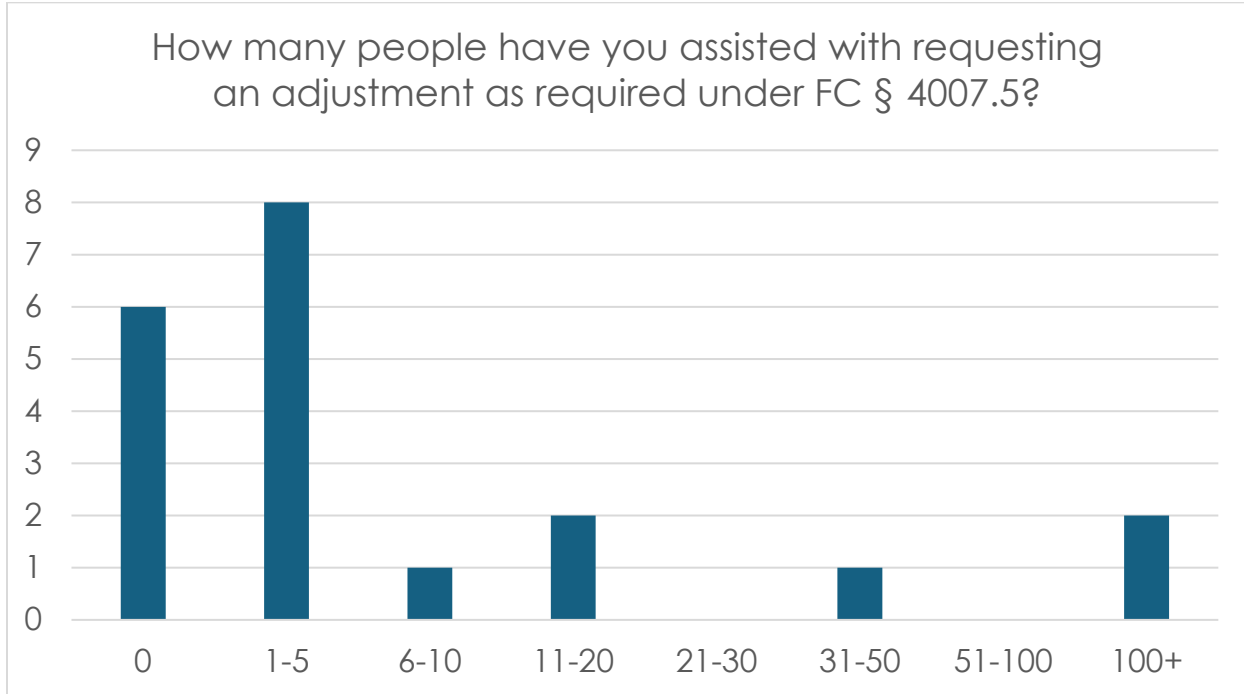
Family Law Facilitators Survey

Under FC § 10002, each superior court must maintain an FLF office that is staffed by attorneys licensed in California and with experience in family law mediation and/or litigation. According to FC § 10004, the FLF offices are responsible for providing educational materials to parents on the court process of establishing parentage and establishing, modifying, and enforcing child support and spousal support orders, distribute court forms and voluntary declarations of parentage, provide assistance completing forms, prepare visitation schedules based on statutory guidelines, and provide referrals and resources to the LCSA, family court services, and other community agencies that assist parents and children. Either parent may utilize the services of the FLF as the FLF does not represent either party. Twenty FLFs began the survey and due to user drop off, 13 facilitators completed the survey in its entirety.

How many people have you assisted with requesting an adjustment as required under FC § 4007.5?

FLFs were asked how many people they assisted with requesting an administrative adjustment under FC § 4007.5. Six FLFs had not assisted any case participants with requesting an administrative adjustment. Eight FLFs had assisted one to five case participants, one had assisted six to 10 case participants, two had assisted 11 to 20 case participants, one had assisted 31 to 50 case participants, and two FLFs had assisted over 100 case participants. This question was generalized to encompass all versions of FC § 4007.5.

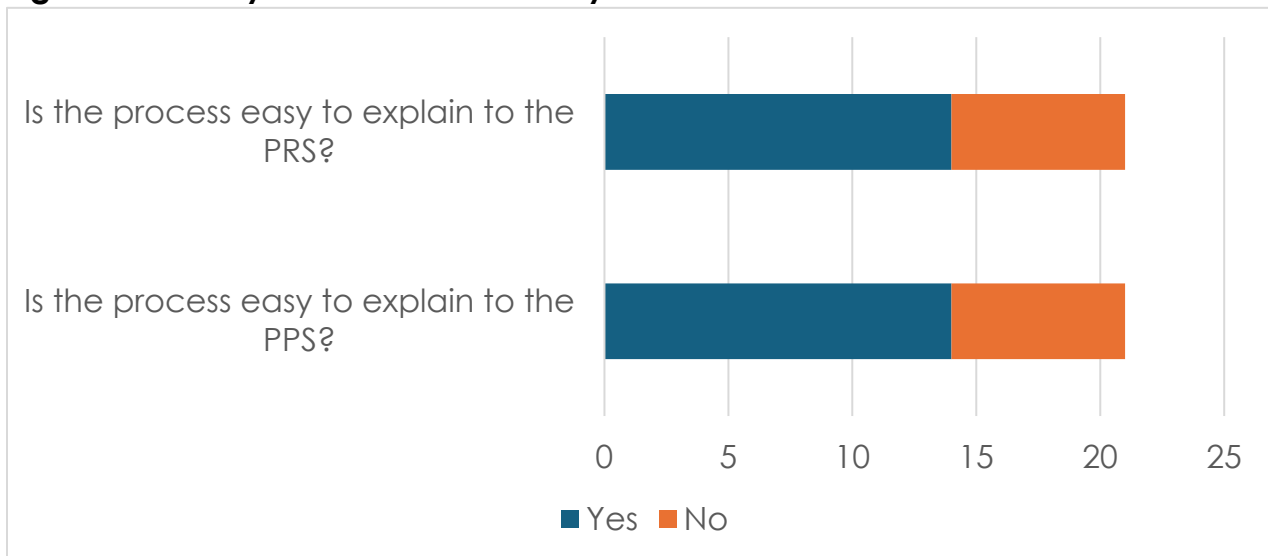
Figure 10. Family Law Facilitator Survey - Question 1



Is the process easy to explain to the PPS? To the PRS?

There were 14 FLFs who responded “yes” it was easy to explain the administrative adjustment process to the PRS and the PPS, and there were seven FLFs who said that “no” it was not easy to explain the process to the PRS and PPS.

Figure 11. Family Law Facilitator Survey - Question 2 and Question 3



If not, what part of the process do you find more challenging to explain to the PPS or PRS?

There were six responses to this question. Three of the responses did not have an opinion on the question. One FLF said that the most challenging part to explain to the PPS and PRS are “*all the exceptions to the rule.*” FC § 4007.5 has been amended several times, with each version including different provisions, like crime exclusions. One FLF noted that the overly complicated legal language is challenging to explain to the PPS and PRS.

What is your process when you learn that a party is eligible for administrative relief under FC § 4007.5?

Most FLFs reported that upon identifying a party eligible for relief under FC § 4007.5, they inform the individual of their eligibility and refer them to the appropriate LCSA for assistance with the administrative adjustment process. FLFs also responded that they assist the parties with completing and filing legal forms and documents like a Request for Order to determine adjustments of child support for incarcerated periods.

What is your process when you learn that a party has been denied administrative relief that appears to be available to them?

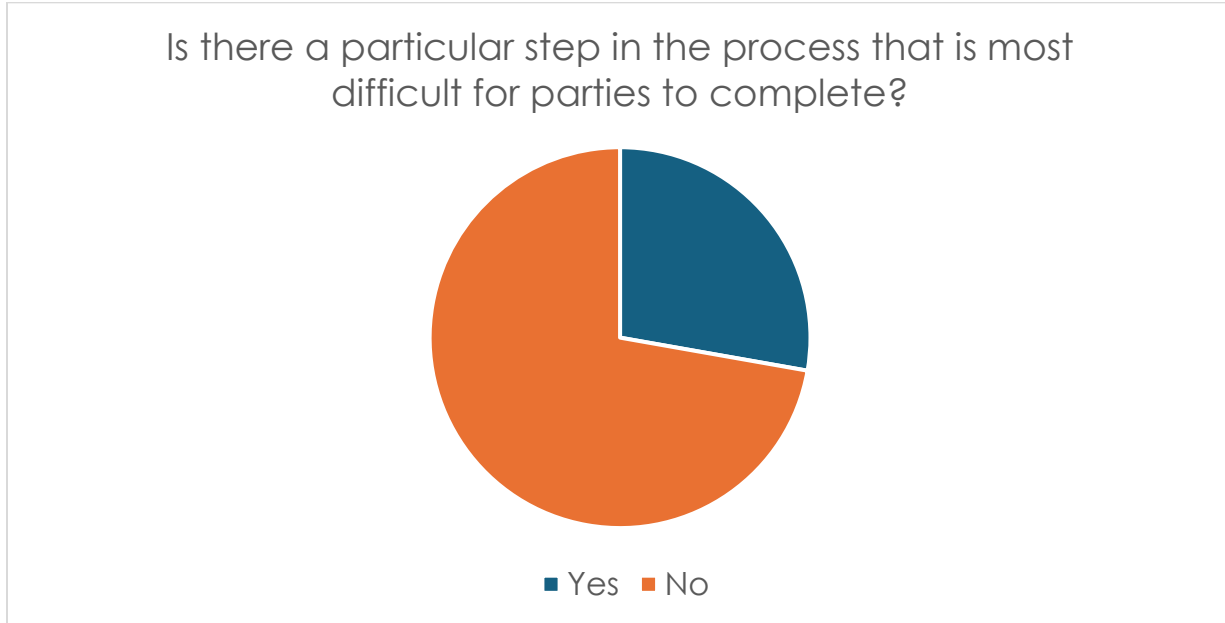
FLFs generally indicated that if a party is denied administrative relief but appears eligible, they assist the individual in filing a Request for Order to seek judicial review. Eight respondents stated they had not encountered this situation and therefore did not provide a specific opinion.

How do the parties react when they learn about the relief options?

Most FLFs reported that PPSs generally expressed relief and viewed the available relief options as fair. In contrast, PRSs often perceived the process as unfair and expressed frustration over the lack of support during the PPS's incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. Eight FLFs noted that while PPSs were appreciative of the relief, some were frustrated that their support orders were not automatically modified to zero-dollars. Additional concerns raised by PPSs included the volume of paperwork and the necessity of court involvement. One FLF observed that many PPSs were unaware of the availability of this relief until it was explained to them, while the PRS were frustrated by the lack of child support being received.

Is there a particular step in the process that is most difficult for parties to complete?

When asked whether any step in the process posed particularly difficult for parties, thirteen FLFs responded “no,” while five indicated “yes.”

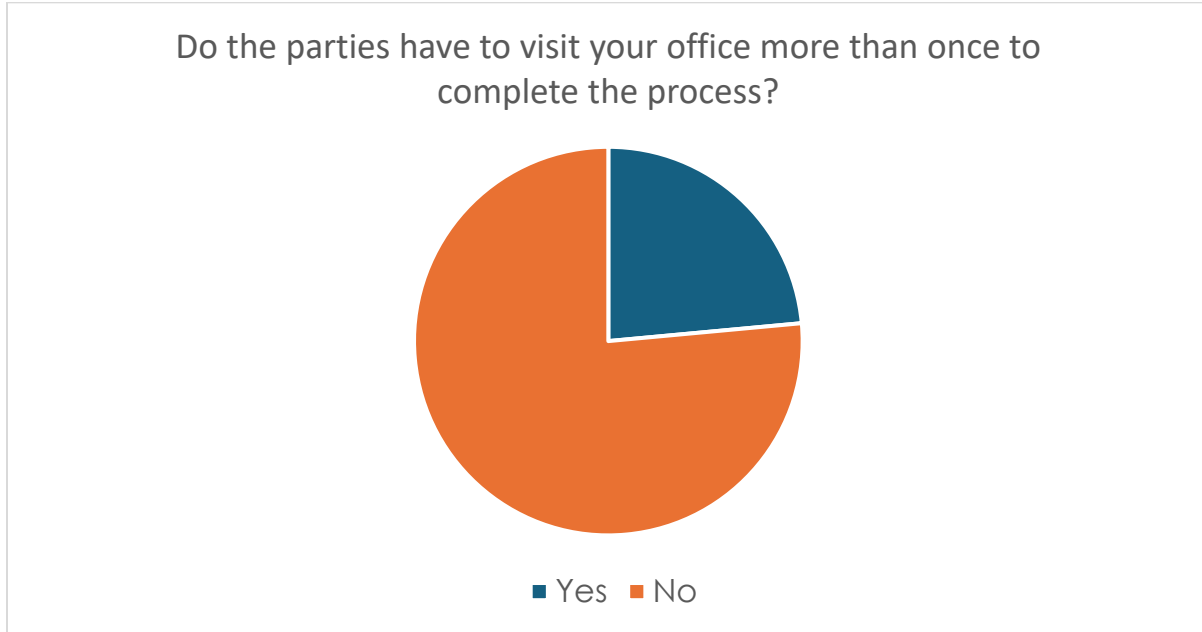
Figure 12. Family Law Facilitator Survey - Question 4**If yes, which step in the process is more difficult for parties to complete and why?**

One FLF identified the drafting of declarations as the most challenging step, noting that parties often struggle to articulate legal arguments or present facts clearly. Another FLF echoed this sentiment, citing general difficulty with completing required forms. A third FLF noted that parties with mental health conditions may have difficulty recalling or verifying the dates of their involuntary institutionalization.

Do the parties have to visit your office more than once to complete the process?

When asked whether parties needed to visit the FLF office more than once to complete the process, thirteen FLFs responded “no,” while four indicated that multiple visits were required.

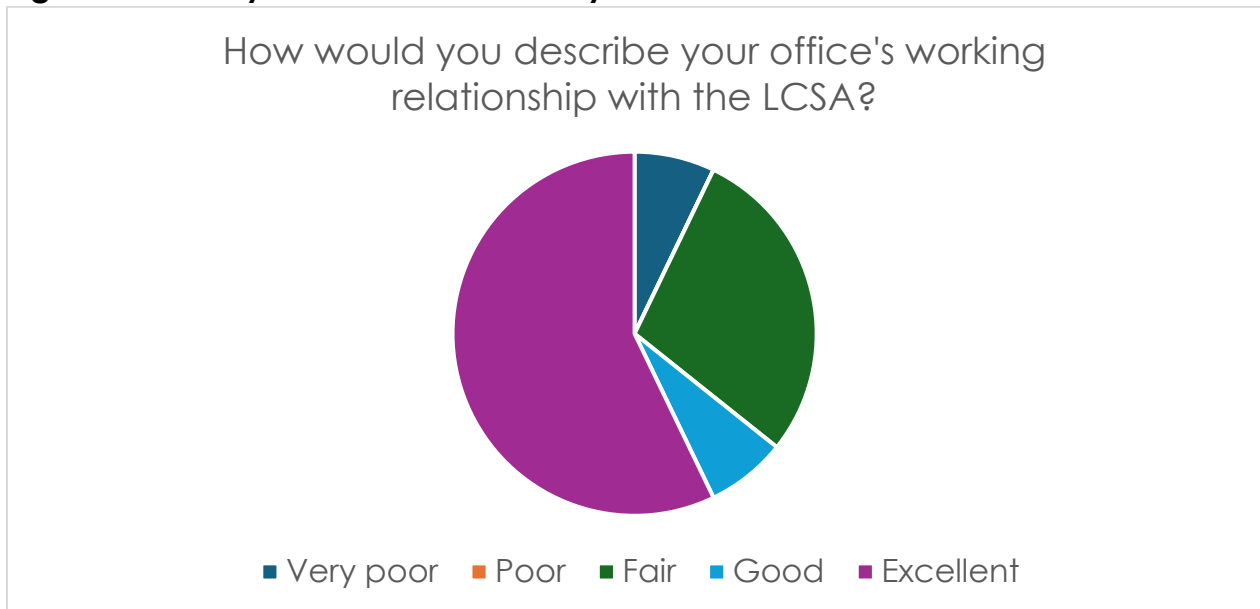
Figure 13. Family Law Facilitator Survey - Question 5



How would you describe your office’s working relationship with the LCSAs?

A response to this question was optional. Of the respondents, one described the relationship as “very poor,” four as “fair,” one as “good,” and eight, representing the majority, as “excellent.”

Figure 14. Family Law Facilitator Survey - Question 6

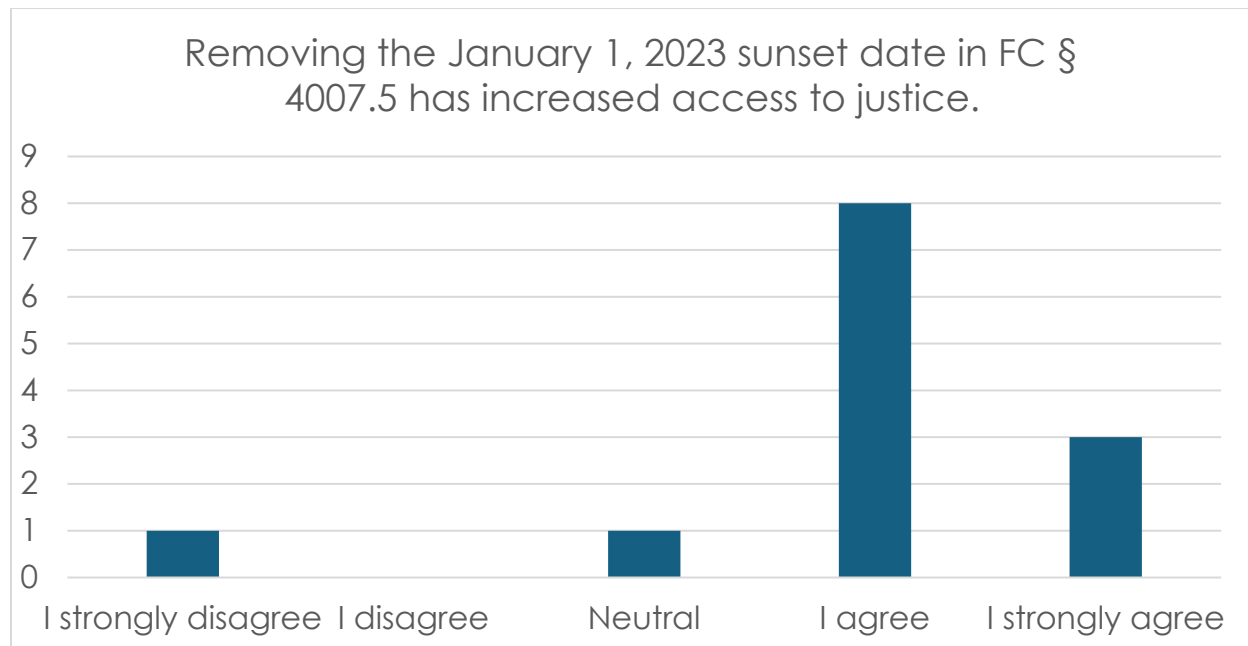


Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Removing the January 1, 2023, sunset date in FC § 4007.5 has increased access to justice.

Most FLFs agreed removing the January 1, 2023, sunset date in FC § 4007.5 increased access to justice. Specifically, eight facilitators “agreed” and three “strongly agreed.” One facilitator did not have an opinion on the statement choosing the “neutral” option and one facilitator “strongly disagreed” that removing the January 1, 2023, sunset date in FC § 4007.5 increased access to justice.

Figure 15. Family Law Facilitator Survey – Statement 1



Do you have any comments or recommendations to improve this law?

One facilitator noted the simpler the statute the better. One stated they agree with FC § 4007.5 and it should stay in place. They did not have any recommendations for improvement but did state a general recommendation that 10% interest on arrears is high. One facilitator noted caseworkers at the LCSA could improve their communication with parties to more effectively explain the options of the PPS and PRS. Twelve FLFs did not have any additional comments or recommendations for improving FC § 4007.5 at this time.

Observations

The FLFs are actively assisting eligible child support case participants with administrative adjustments under FC § 4007.5. However, they are divided on their assessment of how difficult the process is to explain to both PRS and PPS.

FLFs noted that the multiple amendments to FC § 4007.5 resulted in inconsistent application, with varying criteria for relief depending on the date of incarceration (e.g. 1-month vs 10-months relief). Most FLFs reported that from the PPS

perspective, the law is beneficial; however, many PPSs were unaware of the relief available to them until engaged with a FLF. Conversely, PRSs often viewed the law as unfair and were frustrated over the suspension of support during the PPS’s incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. Most FLFs reported having a positive working relationship with their LCSA and agreed that removing the sunset date in FC § 4007.5 improved access to justice.

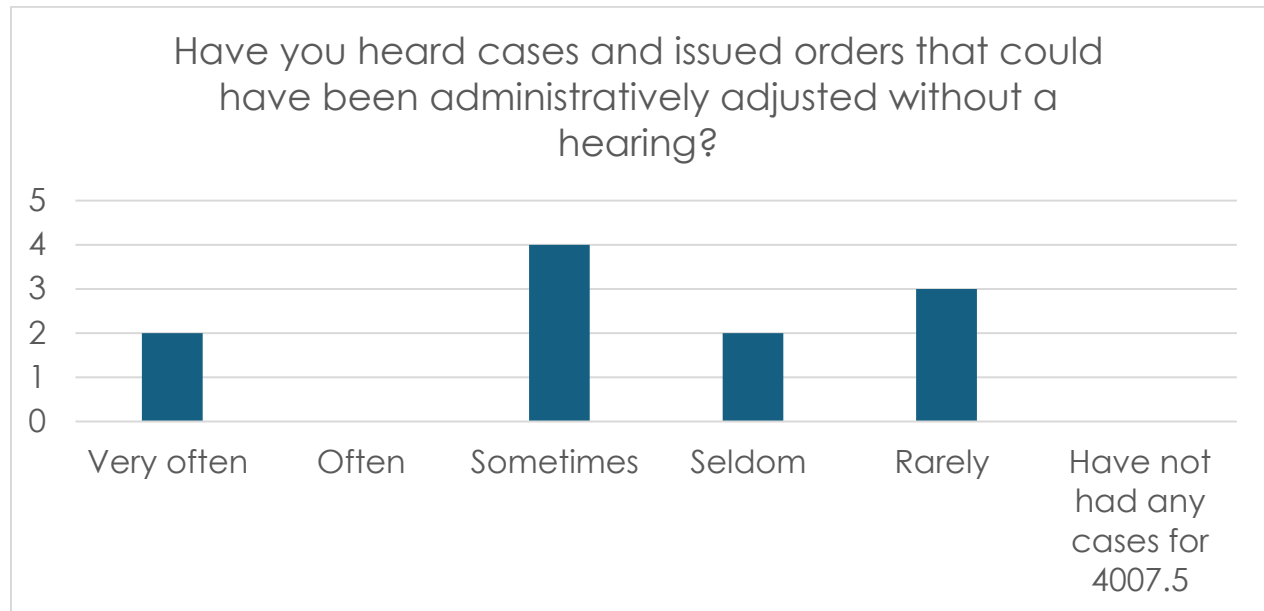
Child Support Commissioners Survey

Under FC § 4251, each California superior court must provide an adequate number of Child Support Commissioners to adjudicate child support cases in which the LCSA is providing services. As with the FLF survey, JCC distributed surveys to the Child Support Commissioners via the Ethelo platform to collect feedback on FC § 4007.5. A total of 11 Child Support Commissioners responded to the survey.

Have you heard cases and issued orders that could have been administratively adjusted without a hearing?

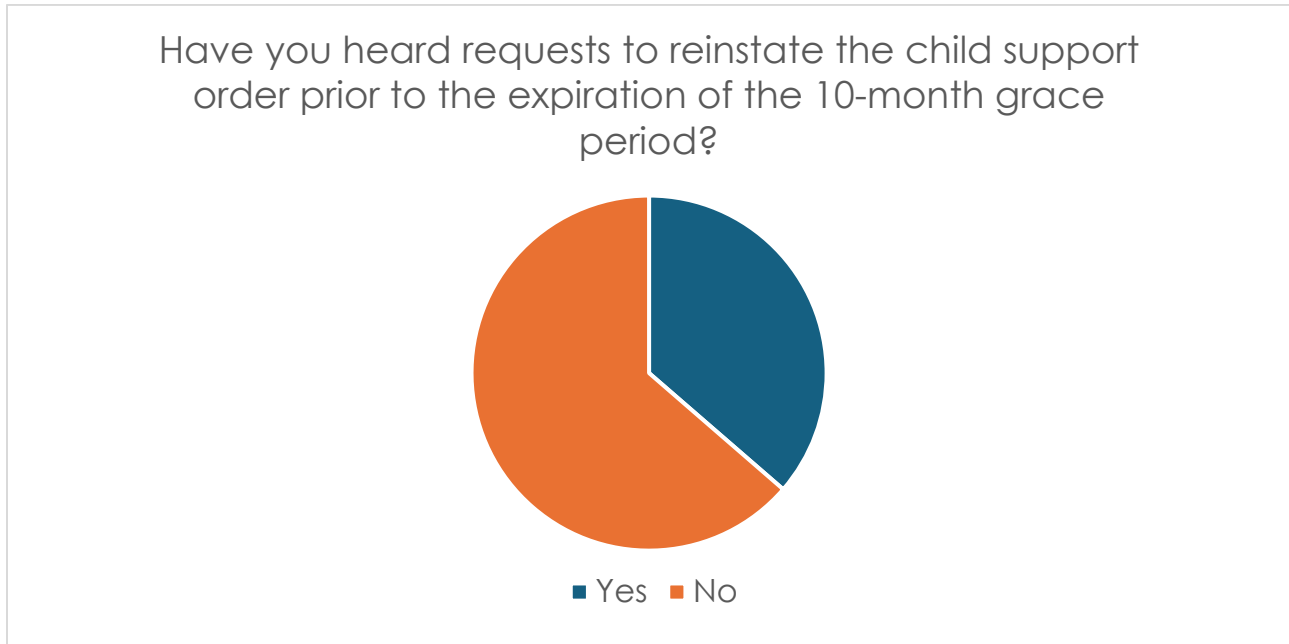
Two Child Support Commissioners reported encountering such cases “very often,” four “sometimes,” two “seldom,” and three “rarely.” All respondents indicated they had presided over cases that could have been resolved through an administrative adjustment.

Figure 16. Child Support Commissioner Survey - Question 1



Have you heard requests to reinstate the child support order prior to the expiration of the 10 month-grace period?

Child Support Commissioners were asked a binary question on whether they have heard any requests to reinstate child support orders prior to the expiration of the 10-month relief period. Four said “yes,” and seven said “no.”

Figure 17. Child Support Commissioner Survey - Question 2**How could the process be improved to avoid the need to go to court?**

Child Support Commissioners generally agreed that the administrative adjustment process is being handled efficiently and effectively by LCSAs. One Child Support Commissioner noted they had not encountered any cases involving FC § 4007.5, while another described their experience as limited. Another Child Support Commissioner observed that, when such cases do reach court, the hearings are typically brief and proceed efficiently. Three Child Support Commissioners expressed support for judicial modifications, emphasizing the importance of tailoring support orders to the PPS's current financial circumstances.

Another recommendation for improving the administrative adjustment process was providing clearer guidance for the LCSA staff handling cases. FC § 4007.5 has gone through many iterations, which is often confusing for LCSA caseworkers and child support case participants to know which periods of incarceration qualify for which version of the statute. This confusion often leads to additional modifications being filed with the courts. Another recommendation of note is the PPS's incarceration status and records should be verified as early as possible in order to ensure they are getting the relief they qualify for.

Are there any other recommendations or feedback you have regarding CA Family Code section 4007.5 in general?

A reoccurring theme in responses was the need for improved communication and coordination among LCSAs, probation and parole officers, and case participants. A Child Support Commissioner noted it could be beneficial for there to be collaboration between the probation and parole officers and the LCSAs in order to ensure the PPS receives information and resources to address their child

support obligations. Another Child Support Commissioner recommended that clearer guidance and statutory clarification could reduce the number of cases requiring judicial intervention. One respondent proposed enacting a final, consolidated version of FC § 4007.5 with unlimited retroactivity, allowing adjustments for qualifying periods of incarceration regardless of when the obligation accrued.

Two Child Support Commissioners were divided on the appropriateness of the 10-month post-release relief period. One Child Support Commissioner supported the 10-month relief period, citing its value in supporting reintegration. Another opposed the duration, arguing it was excessive. They noted that the PRS often expresses frustration over the suspension of support during the PPS's incarceration, with an additional 10-month delay before payments resume.

Five of the 11 Child Support Commissioners did not have any recommendations for improvement of FC § 4007.5 at this time.

Observations

Most Child Support Commissioners indicated they did not frequently receive requests to reinstate child support obligations before the conclusion of the 10-month suspension period. There was general agreement among Child Support Commissioners that LCSAs are managing administrative adjustments effectively. Several Child Support Commissioners recommended enhancing communication and coordination among LCSAs, probation, and parole to ensure that case participants are informed of the relief provided under FC § 4007.5. Child Support Commissioners also observed that multiple amendments of FC § 4007.5 have led to confusion among case participants regarding their eligibility for relief.

San Diego LCSA Justice Involved Parents and Children

In January of 2022, San Diego LCSA established the Justice Involved Parents and Children (JIPC) team to support parents with a history of incarceration with their reintegration back into society post incarceration. DCSS collaborated with San Diego LCSA's JIPC team for this report, however other LCSAs throughout California have similar teams with the focus of reviewing cases for FC § 4007.5. To qualify for the JIPC caseload, a PPS must be currently incarcerated or recently released within the last two years. The JIPC team file summons and complaints, establish appropriate child support orders, and enforce those orders. If a PPS is incarcerated and no child support order exists, JIPC establishes a zero-dollar child support order. If a PPS is incarcerated and there is current charging on a child support order, JIPC will review to administratively adjust the child support account arrears balances and suspend current child support obligations to zero-dollars per month. Once the PPS has been released and the first day of the tenth month post release has commenced, the JIPC team reviews the case to either modify the current zero-dollar order to a monetary amount or reinstate the prior support obligation. If sufficient income is identified before the end of the post incarceration relief period, the JIPC team files a motion with the court to modify

the current child support order based on the current reported income. Prior to the enactment of the new provisions of FC § 4007.5, LCSAs more frequently filed motions with the court to modify the existing orders for incarcerated PPSs, particularly when the orders were high or lacked standard attachment language for administrative adjustments. Between January of 2022 and December of 2023, the JIPC team filed 398 motions to modify child support orders to a zero-dollar due to PPS incarceration. As of January of 2024, the team ceased filing such motions, instead relying exclusively on the administrative adjustment process.

San Diego LCSA collaborates with their local jails and meets with incarcerated individuals biweekly to offer child support services to these parents. The services provided include serving summons and complaints, facilitating stipulations (which are agreements between the PPS and PRS or with the PPS and LCSA if it is a case in which public assistance is being paid) on child support orders and genetic testing, assisting in completing an answer to the summons and compliant, and providing current case status on existing child support cases. San Diego LCSA also collaborates with outreach partners including Center for Employment Opportunities, DocuReady Fairs, San Diego Probation Department, Lighthouse Recovery, Homeless Court, and GEO Re-entry Services that provide services on a monthly or biweekly bases to incarcerated individuals.

San Diego LCSA partnered with DCSS to gather lived experiences from the PPS and PRS participating in the JIPC program as well as feedback from the LCSA caseworkers on the ease of the administrative adjustment process. DCSS and JIPC collaborated to create a list of open questions to assist the case workers in their conversations with the participants (See the appendix for a full list of these questions). JIPC caseworkers conducted a phone survey to both PPS and PRS with child support obligations that were administratively adjusted due to the PPS incarceration, or the child support obligation is being suspended for the nine-month relief period. At the time JIPC conducted the phone surveys, a total of 232 cases were identified. Of those, 125 cases had PPS who were incarcerated, and 107 had been released from incarceration. For the 107 PPS that were released from incarceration, 8 of those had their child support obligation reinstated and 99 of those were still in the nine-month suspension period. JIPC caseworkers contacted 19 PPSs and 97 PRSs to obtain real life experiences directly from the participants and developed an analysis of the responses that are detailed in the next section.

Observations

Of the 232 PPSs in the JIPC caseload, 19 participated in phone interviews to assess the effectiveness of FC § 4007.5 (See the appendix for a full list of questions). Of those interviewed, 95% understood the rationale for the suspension of child support orders and found the information accessible. When asked how the PPS was notified of the suspension of child support orders, 53% were notified by phone call from the LCSA caseworker and 47% were notified through a notification letter, jail visit, or in office visit. However, 68% of PPSs reported they were not, or did not

expect to be ready, to resume payments after the 10-month relief period, and 53% felt the suspension period was insufficient to prepare for reinstatement while 63% believed that nothing helped them feel prepared for the reinstatement of their child support obligation.

Justice involved individuals often face barriers to employment after release from incarceration. These barriers may include criminal records, driving under the influence charges, probation conditions, lack of transportation, and for those in residential treatment programs, restrictions imposed by program rules and requirements. Of the 19 PPSs interviewed, 79% said that these barriers made it difficult to find employment, while 47% had re-entry requirements that also made it harder for them to begin paying child support again. Even with these barriers to overcome, 79% of the PPSs believed that the administrative adjustment process was helpful and had a positive impact on them even if they did not feel that they would be prepared to begin paying their child support obligation again.

JIPC case workers also spoke with PRSs. Ninety-seven PRSs agreed to discuss with the caseworkers, the ease of the administrative process and the impacts the process has had on their lives. Of the PRSs contacted, 98% said the process was easy to understand and more specifically, they felt it was easy to understand why the child support obligation would be adjusted and when it would be reinstated. Regarding how the PRS was notified of the administrative adjustment, 69% were notified by a phone calls with their LCSA caseworker, 20% were notified by letter, and 11% were notified by email or Customer Connect. Customer Connect is the DCSS secure self-service website that allows the participant 24-7 access to their case information. Each PRS was asked about the impact that the suspension of child support payments had on their financial circumstances, and 63% said the suspension had little to no financial impact due to the PPS not meeting their obligation to pay the child support before their incarceration.

The JIPC caseworkers were also surveyed on their experience with the process. Caseworkers understood that the purpose of the administrative adjustment process was to pause the child support obligation, assisting the PPS to become self-sufficient, gain employment, and support successful re-entry before reinstatement of the child support order. Further, caseworkers understood the PPS may not have the ability to pay child support while incarcerated or immediately after release. Some PPSs may enter rehabilitation or halfway houses as part of completing their sentences. Continuing the suspension of the child support orders for 10 months after release gives the PPS time to complete required programs and secure employment. Caseworkers who were interviewed believed the PPS and PRS understood the reason for the suspension in child support payments. The case workers felt the most helpful part of the administrative adjustment process was the notification letter explaining the process, along with a follow-up phone call for further clarification. From the caseworker's perspective, the PPSs who were a part of the process felt like the 10-month suspension period after the release from incarceration was beneficial, although the PPS felt it was not enough time to gain

employment due to barriers noted earlier. Alternatively, the PRS shared with caseworkers the amount of time it takes the caseworker to locate PPS' income and employment after release can take an extended amount of time. The caseworkers shared the PRS believed the PPS would not voluntarily provide their income if the PPS becomes employed before the reinstatement period as they do not trust the PPS to freely pay their child support obligation. The caseworkers heard from PRSs they believed the PPS would instead work for cash or under the table in order to avoid reinstatement of their child support obligation. Overall, caseworkers shared both the PPS and PRS understood the purpose and goal of the administrative process, but to make the process more accessible, San Diego LCSA suggests the information and resources be disseminated to PPS and PRS through various communication methods including justice involved agencies, jails, prisons, rehabilitation facilities, and sober living facilities consistently throughout the state.

Consensus of Responses Across All Surveys

The consensus amongst respondents to the surveys is that the provisions provided under FC § 4007.5 appear to provide temporary relief for individuals to reintegrate back into society post incarceration or involuntary institutionalization. Though the PRS seem to be the most frustrated with the process as it applies to the relief period, overall, they understand the intent behind it. The expectation for relief from FC § 4007.5 is to provide incentive to the PPS to find gainful employment and begin or continue financial support to their child(ren).

There was feedback within all the surveyed groups that the numerous amendments to FC § 4007.5 resulted in confusion and uncertainty with the process. Caseworkers find it difficult to explain the process to case participants when multiple versions of qualifying periods and participants find the process confusing overall. The lack of clarity made it challenging for LCSAs to apply the statute uniformly and accurately. As one Child Support Commissioner noted, with more clarity and understanding of the process, there could be less need for FC § 4007.5 cases to be heard in court for determination.

Other California State Departments Work with Justice Involved Parents

Currently, many California state departments are implementing or working to implement programs to assist justice involved individuals. These state departments include California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), California Department of Rehabilitation (DOR), California Correctional Training and Rehabilitation Authority (CALCTRA), California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), and California Department of Social Services (CDSS).

On January 26, 2023, California was the first state in the United States approved to offer a set of Medi-Cal services to justice involved youth and eligible adults up to

90 days prior to release. This is part of the California Advancing and Innovating Medi-Cal (CalAIM) Initiatives. DHCS's Justice Involved Reentry Initiative aims to ensure these individuals have access to continued health coverage once they are released, known as pre-release services, and have access to key services that will allow them to successfully return to their communities. A federal Medicaid 1115 demonstration waiver was approved by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services allowing DHCS to partner with state agencies, counties, and community-based organizations to establish a community reentry process. This reentry process will assist individuals leaving incarceration to connect to physical and mental health services that they may need prior to release to help ensure that individuals have a continuation of health care coverage after incarceration. This Medicaid 1115 was approved as of December 29, 2021, was effective through December 31, 2026. DHCS is in the process of renewing this project and is currently waiting on approval.

Chapter 465, Statutes of 2024 (SB 1254), also known as the FRESH Act, Food for Re-entry and Ensuring Stable Homes, was passed and chaptered into law on September 22, 2024. SB 1254 extends pre-release support to CalFresh. SB 1254 aims to reduce food insecurity among individuals who are re-entering society after incarceration by facilitating their enrollment in CalFresh before their release. SB 1254 requires CDSS to partner with CDCR and county jails to allow incarcerated individuals to pre-apply for CalFresh benefits up to 90 days prior to their release.

The Division of Rehabilitative Programs (DRP) is a branch of CDCR that has many programs and services to assist incarcerated individuals who are serving their time on good behavior including education, job training, and anger management counseling. According to DRP, "Its top priority is to provide rehabilitative programming and skills to incarcerated people and parolees to reduce their likelihood of re-offending by the time they return to their homes and communities." The DRP programs are focused into three groups, in-prison programs, pre-release community programs, and post-release programs. The in-prison programs provide comprehensive educational programs, psychosocial education programs, and pre-release rehabilitative programs for incarcerated individuals. The focus of these programs includes but is not limited to: Cognitive Behavior Interventions, pre-release education, planning, skills, and acquiring a California identification card. The pre-release community programs allow eligible individuals who are incarcerated in state prison to serve the end of their sentences in communities located throughout California. The Male Community Reentry Program, Female Community Reentry Program, Alternative Custody Program, and Community Participant Mother Program are all pre-release community programs that provide a wide range of rehabilitative services to aid in the transition and reintegration into the community. The post-release programs focus on providing transitional and supportive services to parolees. These programs and services are located throughout California and delivered through residential, outpatient, and drop-in centers.

CALCTRA was established in 1982 and is a state-operated agency that functions as a semiautonomous entity within CDCR. They are a self-supporting and customer focused business with the goal of reducing recidivism among justice involved individuals, while increasing prison safety and enhancing public safety by providing real work and training opportunities to said individuals. CALCTRA's Transition to Employment Program assists incarcerated individuals who participated in CALCTRA programs during incarceration with acquiring sustainable employment upon release. They assist these individuals in obtaining copies of certificates earned, CALCTRA Work History Reports, or information regarding employment and re-entry services within a specific county.

The CWDB was established in 1998 under the federal Workforce Investment Act and is California's primary body responsible for overseeing and continuously improving California's workforce development system. The CWDB now operates under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and they assist the Governor in setting workforce development policy, developing innovative initiatives, and guiding the state's workforce system. One of CWDB's workforce initiatives is Prison to Employment, which operates under the framework of the Corrections Workforce Partnership Agreement (CWPA). The CWPA was established in 2018 and is a collaborative effort between CWDB, CDCR, CALCTRA, and California Workforce Association. It was designed to strengthen the connection between California's workforce and corrections system.

The California DOR provides services that results in employment, independent living, and equality for individuals with disabilities by working with consumers and other stakeholders. DOR also works with justice involved individuals with disabilities and have begun working with County Probation and Parole Departments, the Office of Community and Youth Restoration, state hospitals, CDCR, community-based organizations, including Prison to Employment Program, Project Rebound, Career Expansions and Amity Foundation. They have extended their work with these individuals by expanding eligibility to individuals who may still be in custody, but who are nearing re-entry and who could benefit from vocational rehabilitation planning and employment-preparation services. DOR has a long list of re-entry support and vocational services available to consumers, including justice involved individuals with disabilities. These services include individualized career counseling, guidance, and planning; resource information and referral; job search and placement assistance including resume development and interviewing skills training; vocational, job, and career training, including post-secondary (college and university) education; assistive technology services and devices; orientation and mobility services for individuals who are blind or low vision; paid and unpaid work experience; apprenticeship opportunities; educational supports, including tutoring; training and placement tools and supplies; on-the-job training and job support; other employment and training support; work-incentive advisement on disability benefits; independent living services; and support for employers on hiring and employing individuals with disabilities. California state departments working together and with external

partners to expand programs and services to assist justice involved individuals benefits not only the justice involved individuals but also their children and families.

Accurate and Timely Incarceration Records

Since the last report in 2021, DCSS has continued to work to ensure the receipt of accurate and timely incarceration records. Though DCSS's agreement with CDCR Strategic Offender Management System allows for some incarceration data to be shared with DCSS, the information is not always as complete as needed for our purposes. LCSAs have relied on other tools to search for incarceration status including VINE (Appriss, Inc.) and communicating directly with local jails. However, this is not a perfect system and varies on the resources each LCSA chooses to use to obtain this information. CSDA noted much of the incarceration release data that is shared by various interfaces can be largely inaccurate. These inaccuracies and the necessity for LCSA case workers to access various sources cause time-consuming and complex monitoring of cases. While working to secure a better system of obtaining more complete and accurate information, DCSS has been in talks with the Department of Justice (DOJ) over the past year and are currently finalizing a data sharing agreement (DSA) that will allow DCSS to obtain more accurate and timely incarceration records. DOJ has access to multiple data sources to obtain incarceration records which will alleviate the need for DCSS to search multiple sources to obtain incarceration information to help their customers.

As noted, there continue to be some challenges over the ability to quickly ascertain whether a PPS is incarcerated in a county jail. In the 2021 Report to the Legislature, it was noted the verification process varies by county but often requires confirmation by use of booking websites or by direct contact at the county jail itself.⁶

The Office of Child Support Services acknowledgement of this challenge in the Final Rule states:

“It is a system certification requirement to have automated interfaces with State sources, when appropriate, feasible, and cost effective, to obtain locate information, and this includes the Department of Corrections. We also encourage States to develop electronic interfaces with child support data being shared with Federal, State, Tribal, and local corrections institutions to maximize identification of incarcerated parents and program efficiency, and to establish practices for

⁶ Family Code Section 4007.5: An Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Administrative Adjustment Process (Dec. 2021)

servicing parents in correctional facilities. Identifying the fact of incarceration is important to set and keep support orders consistent with the parent's current ability to pay, avoid the accumulation of arrears, and increase the likelihood that support will be consistently paid after release."⁷

Evaluation of the Intent of the Legislative Amendments

Considering the data and the survey responses, the intent of the amendments to FC § 4007.5 made by AB 1148 appears to be effective. DCSS has no recommended changes to the statute and any improvements identified would be internal within DCSS.

Improvement 1. Simplify the language on the FC § 4007.5 notices.

Due to the responses from the surveys, there is an overarching theme that the current FC § 4007.5 form notices can be confusing for participants. These forms include the Notice of Proposed Administrative Adjustment of Child Support Account, Notice of Account Adjustment, Notice of Account Reinstatement, and Objection to Administrative Adjustment of Child Support Account. DCSS will review these forms for any potential improvements to the form language.

Improvement 2. Increase communication with participants, LCSAs, and incarceration institutions.

Many state departments currently work with justice involved individuals and are making strides to improve processes and programs for this population. Increased communication between all parties is beneficial and ensures that justice involved individuals are receiving the relief they qualify for under FC § 4007.5. As part of DCSS' 2025 Strategic Plan⁸, DCSS committed to the establishment of an Incarceration Oversight Board. The Incarceration Oversight Board will create an executive steering committee to support DCSS in tracking all efforts impacting those who are currently or formerly incarcerated, or who have other justice involvement, to inform future proposals for new efforts related to this population. Anticipated outcomes include:

- Various efforts impacting incarcerated or justice involved populations are informed and aligned with each other

⁷ 81 Fed.Reg. 93531 (Dec. 20, 2016).

⁸ Department of Child Support Services Strategic Plan, 2025. <https://dcss.ca.gov/individualized-services/>. Recognize and Provide Individualized Services to Customers, Establish an Incarceration Oversight Board.

- DCSS is able to effectively research impacts and targets for desirable outcomes in the population of individuals within the DCSS caseload who are documented as having justice involvement.⁹

Improvement 3. Increase automation of the administrative adjustment review process in the CSE system.

DCSS is currently in the process of improving the automation of the administrative adjustment review process. One issue is LCSA caseworkers are processing a heavy manual workload when it comes to reviewing cases for administrative adjustments. Currently, there is a lack of automated notification by the CSE system when the PPS approaches the first day of the 10-month post release while also inundating case workers with multiple, and sometimes duplicative, incarceration related tasks. DCSS has consulted with LCSAs on this issue and how best to make automation improvements. These efforts are currently in process for implementation into the CSE system. Improved automation will ensure PPS are receiving the relief they potentially qualify for and will assist LCSA caseworkers monitor and update cases accordingly.

Improvement 4. Improve transfer of incarceration data into the CSE system.

There is a continued effort by DCSS to improve the receipt of accurate and timely incarceration data. As previously noted, DOJ and DCSS are in the process of finalizing the DSA that will establish the content, use, and protection of requested incarceration data to be implemented in the CSE system. It has been noted by CSDA that incarceration release data can often be inaccurate and PPSs rarely self-report incarceration dates. Reviewing and validating incarceration data from various sources can be time consuming and complex, leading to potentially negative impacts to the ease of process, such as delays and confusion throughout the process for both the participants and LCSA case workers. Improved receipt of incarceration data will assist LCSAs in working cases where PPSs are incarcerated and will ensure that PPSs are receiving the relief they are entitled to under FC § 4007.5.

Conclusion

Through DCSS's efforts to obtain information on how the ease of process is working for FC § 4007.5 it can be surmised that once parties are aware of the administrative adjustment process, it is useful and functions as intended. There continue to be challenges with the efficiency of obtaining accurate and timely

⁹ California Department of Child Support Services. Recognize and Provide Individualized Services to Customers. [Recognize and Provide Individualized Services to Customers - DCSS](#) (accessed September 16, 2025).

incarceration records, working to improve communication with participants to fully explain the process and relief available both verbally and in writing, as well as articulating clearly who qualifies for this relief. Though not all parties, specifically PRSs, appreciate the relief provided to the justice involved individuals, it is possible that the extended relief period will assist PPSs in gaining employment and preparing for the reinstatement of their child support payments.

Relief being afforded by FC § 4007.5 can be seen through the increase of administrative adjustments being completed by LCSAs from AB 2325 to AB 1148. As DCSS strives to improve services to individuals participating in the child support program we have identified areas for improvement in this program. Those areas include increasing communication with participants, securing accurate and easily attainable incarceration records to identify those who may qualify for relief, and exploring ways LCSAs can communicate with other providers such as probation and parole to ensure accurate information about this process is shared with justice involved individuals.

Appendix

Case Sample Review Rates

Assembly Bill 1148 Case Sample Review

- Grand Total: 368 Cases
- Case Outcomes:
 - Other Outcomes (134 cases) – 36.41%
 - No action taken (108 cases) – 29.35%
 - Motion for modification (Zero order) (32 cases) – 8.70%
 - Ineligible for relief-Crime exclusion (0 cases) – 0.00%
 - Ineligible for relief-Ability to pay (12 cases) – 3.26%
 - Court adjustment (0 cases) – 0.00%
 - Administrative adjustment (29 cases) – 7.88%
 - Adjustment in process (53 cases) – 14.40%

Assembly Bill 207 Case Sample Review

- Grand Total: 58 Cases
- Case Outcomes:
 - Other Outcomes (25 cases) – 43.10%
 - No action taken (19 cases) – 32.76%
 - Motion for modification (Zero order) (9 cases) – 15.52%

- Ineligible for relief-Crime exclusion (0 cases) – 0.00%
- Ineligible for relief-Ability to pay (1 case) – 1.72%
- Court adjustment (0 cases) – 0.00%
- Administrative adjustment (4 cases) – 6.90%
- Adjustment in process (0 cases) – 0.00%

Assembly Bill 2325 Case Sample Review

- Grand Total: 26 Cases
- Case Outcomes:
 - Other Outcomes (5 cases) – 19.23%
 - No action taken (3 cases) – 11.54%
 - Motion for modification (Zero order) (8 cases) – 30.77%
 - Ineligible for relief-Crime exclusion (2 cases) – 7.69%
 - Ineligible for relief-Ability to pay (1 case) – 3.85%
 - Court adjustment (2 cases) – 7.69%
 - Administrative adjustment (5 cases) – 19.23%
 - Adjustment in process (0 cases) – 0.00%

LCSA Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Open Questions

119 LCSAs Responding

Statement 1: The 30-day notice provided both participants with enough time to respond.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0%
- b. Disagree – 6.72%
- c. Neutral – 13.45%
- d. Agree – 51.26%
- e. Strongly Agree – 28.57%

Statement 2: In general, case participants understood when the suspension of payments would take effect and when it would be reinstated.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 2.54%
- b. Disagree – 5.08%
- c. Neutral – 37.29%
- d. Agree – 41.53%

- e. Strongly Agree – 13.56%

Statement 3: The incarcerated PPS(s) said the process was easy, or they were happy with the steps required.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 1.71%
- b. Disagree – 7.69%
- c. Neutral – 54.7%
- d. Agree – 26.5%
- e. Strongly Agree – 9.4%

Statement 4: In most cases, the Person Ordered to Receive Support (PRS) understood the intent of FC § 4007.5.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 2.61%
- b. Disagree – 15.65%
- c. Neutral – 26.09%
- d. Agree – 49.57%
- e. Strongly Agree – 6.09%

Statement 5: In most cases, participants expressed ease, or satisfaction, with providing a response to the LCSA's notice of intent to suspend payment and/or administratively adjust accounts.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0%
- b. Disagree – 13.39%
- c. Neutral – 51.79%
- d. Agree – 31.25%
- e. Strongly Agree – 3.57%

Statement 6: In most cases, participants expressed ease, or satisfaction, with the effort and time needed to suspend payments and/or administratively adjust their accounts.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0%
- b. Disagree – 14.41%
- c. Neutral – 45.95%
- d. Agree – 35.14%
- e. Strongly Agree – 4.5%

Statement 7: In most cases, participants understood the reason for going to court, such as when one of the parties objected to the administrative adjustment.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 1.83%
- b. Disagree – 7.34%
- c. Neutral – 36.7%
- d. Agree – 48.62%
- e. Strongly Agree – 5.5%

Statement 8: In most cases, the participants understood what factors qualify a case for relief.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0.93%
- b. Disagree – 12.04%
- c. Neutral – 26.85%
- d. Agree – 52.78%
- e. Strongly Agree – 7.41%

Statement 9: In most cases, the participants understood what factors disqualify a case for relief.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0%
- b. Disagree – 16.67%
- c. Neutral – 37.04%
- d. Agree – 39.81%
- e. Strongly Agree – 6.48%

Statement 10: The participants found this process to be manageable and/or efficient.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0.93%
- b. Disagree – 6.48%
- c. Neutral – 42.59%
- d. Agree – 42.59%
- e. Strongly Agree – 7.41%

Statement 11: The PRS(s) expressed ease, or satisfaction, understanding the process.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 2.8%
- b. Disagree – 15.89%
- c. Neutral – 45.79%
- d. Agree – 33.64%
- e. Strongly Agree – 1.87%

Statement 12: It was easy for the participants to understand the different notices about this process.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 3.7%
- b. Disagree – 12.04%
- c. Neutral – 48.15%
- d. Agree – 32.41%
- e. Strongly Agree – 3.7%

Statement 13: It was relatively easy for participants who objected to the administrative adjustment of their accounts to attend the necessary court hearing.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0.93%
- b. Disagree – 3.7%
- c. Neutral – 50.93%
- d. Agree – 39.81%
- e. Strongly Agree – 4.63%

Statement 14: It was relatively easy for participants who objected to the administrative adjustment of their accounts to file their objection.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 0.93%
- b. Disagree – 3.7%
- c. Neutral – 50%
- d. Agree – 40.74%
- e. Strongly Agree – 4.63%

Statement 15: It was relatively easy for the incarcerated PPS to receive and respond to notices about this process.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 1.85%
- b. Disagree – 14.81%
- c. Neutral – 26.85%
- d. Agree – 48.15%
- e. Strongly Agree – 8.33%

Statement 16: The Notice of Account Reinstatement provided both participants with details about:

- The effective date of reinstatement of the child support order
- The amount of the child support obligation to be reinstated

- Information about who to contact for help with questions or concerns about their child support case.
 - a. Strongly Disagree – 1.87%
 - b. Disagree – 5.61%
 - c. Neutral – 22.43%
 - d. Agree – 57.01%
 - e. Strongly Agree – 13.08%

Statement 17: It was easy for the participants to understand that the child support obligation resumes on the first day of the 10th month after the PPS is released.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 3.74%
- b. Disagree – 13.08%
- c. Neutral – 28.04%
- d. Agree – 48.6%
- e. Strongly Agree – 6.54%

Statement 18: The LCSEA facilitates this process with very little action required by the case participant(s).

- a. Strongly Disagree – 2.8%
- b. Disagree – 4.67%
- c. Neutral – 14.95%
- d. Agree – 52.34%
- e. Strongly Agree – 25.23%

Statement 19: It was relatively easy to restart payments early when the PPS found employment before the first day of the 10th month after release.

- a. Strongly Disagree – 6.54%
- b. Disagree – 15.89%
- c. Neutral – 38.32%
- d. Agree – 31.78%
- e. Strongly Agree – 7.48%

Open Question 1: Any additional thoughts to share on the ease of process for the PPS and PRS?

Open Question 2: Why were court order modifications pursued instead of an administrative adjustment?

Participant Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Questions

42 Participants Responding

Statement 1: The administrative adjustment process was simple to follow.

- a. I strongly disagree – 35.71%
- b. I disagree – 7.14%
- c. Neutral – 21.43%
- d. I agree – 23.81%
- e. I strongly agree – 11.9%

Statement 2: I could easily understand all the letters I received from the child support agency about the administrative adjustment process.

- a. I strongly disagree – 23.08%
- b. I disagree – 15.38%
- c. Neutral – 17.95%
- d. I agree – 30.77%
- e. I strongly agree – 12.82%

Statement 3: What I was supposed to do throughout the process was always clear to me.

- a. I strongly disagree – 18.92%
- b. I disagree – 16.22%
- c. Neutral – 21.62%
- d. I agree – 29.73%
- e. I strongly agree – 13.51%

Statement 4: I understood the purpose and goal of administrative adjustments.

- a. I strongly disagree – 27.78%
- b. I disagree – 13.89%
- c. Neutral – 25%
- d. I agree – 22.22%
- e. I strongly agree – 11.11%

Statement 5: I understood what was happening and why because of the child support agency's communication throughout the process.

- a. I strongly disagree – 30.56%
- b. I disagree – 8.33%
- c. Neutral – 19.44%
- d. I agree – 30.56%
- e. I strongly agree – 11.11%

Statement 6: The child support agency handling my case helped with my questions and concerns about the administrative adjustment process.

- a. I strongly disagree – 27.78%
- b. I disagree – 5.56%
- c. Neutral – 30.56%
- d. I agree – 25%
- e. I strongly agree – 11.11%

Open Question 1: What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the most helpful?

Open Question 2: What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the hardest or least helpful?

Open Question 3: Is there anything else that we should know?

Question: May we call you if we have additional questions?

- a. Yes – 66.67%
- b. No – 33.33%

Demographic Question 1: When it comes to child support, which best describes your role?

- a. I make child support payments – 22.58%
- b. I receive child support payments – 54.84%
- c. Prefer not to say – 22.58%

Demographic Question 2: Age

- a. Under 18 – 0%
- b. 18-24 – 3.13%
- c. 25-34 – 43.75%
- d. 35-44 – 40.63%
- e. 45-54 – 9.38%
- f. 55-64 – 0%
- g. 65 and over – 0%
- h. Prefer not to say – 3.13%

Demographic Question 3: Race (check all that apply)

- a. Hispanic – 50%

- b. White – 53.33%
- c. Black – 3.33%
- d. Native American – 3.33%
- e. Middle Eastern/Northern African – 3.33%
- f. Cambodian – 3.33%
- g. Prefer not to say – 6.67%

*Note: Percentages exceed 100% as participants were able to select more than one option. Additionally, Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Vietnamese, other Asian group, Hawaiian, Guamanian, Samoan, and other Pacific Islander group were options, but were not selected by any participants.

Demographic Question 4: Primary language

- a. English – 80.65%
- b. Spanish – 12.9%
- c. Prefer not to say – 6.45%

*Note: Chinese, Tagalog, Korean, and Vietnamese were options, but were not selected by any participants.

Demographic Question 5: What is your highest level of education?

- a. Some high school – 9.52%
- b. High school Diploma or Equivalent – 28.57%
- c. Some college – 33.33%
- d. Vocational degree – 9.52%
- e. Associate degree – 4.76%
- f. Bachelor's degree or higher – 4.76%
- g. Prefer not to say – 9.52%

Demographic Question 6: What is your yearly income range?

- a. \$0.00 to \$30,000 – 53.33%
- b. \$31,000 to \$60,000 – 16.67%
- c. \$61,000 to \$94,000 – 6.67%
- d. \$95,000 to \$150,000 – 0%
- e. More than \$150,000 – 6.67%
- f. Prefer not to say – 16.67%

Demographic Question 7: Do you identify as neurodivergent (e.g., autistic, ADHD, dyslexic)?

- a. Yes – 14.29%
- b. No – 64.29%
- c. Prefer not to say – 21.43%

Demographic Question 8: Which region of California do you live in?

- a. Northern region- Glenn County – 12.5%
- b. Northern region- Placer County – 12.5%
- c. Northern region- Sacramento County – 37.5%
- d. Northern region- Solano County – 37.5%
- e. Central Region- Fresno County – 25%
- f. Central Region- Kern County – 41.67%
- g. Central Region- Kings County – 8.33%
- h. Central Region- Stanislaus County – 25%
- i. Bay Area Region- San Francisco County – 100%
- j. Central Coast Region- San Luis Obispo County – 100%
- k. Southern Region- Los Angeles County – 50%
- l. Southern Region- Orange County – 33.33%
- m. Southern Region- San Bernardino County – 16.67%
- n. I do not live in California – 52.63%
- o. Prefer not to say – 47.37%

*Note: Percentages exceed 100% due to how the questions were framed in the survey. Additionally, all 58 counties were options, but were not selected by participants.

JCC Survey Statements, Response Rates, and Questions

Family Law Facilitator Survey

Question 1: How many people have you assisted with requesting an adjustment as required under FC § 4007.5?

- a. 0 – 30%
- b. 1-5 – 40%
- c. 6-10 – 5%
- d. 11-20 – 10%
- e. 21-30 – 0%
- f. 31-50 – 5%

- g. 51-100 – 0%
- h. 100+ - 10%

Question 2: Is the process easy to explain to the PPS?

- a. Yes – 61.11%
- b. No – 38.89%

Question 3: Is the process easy to explain to the PRS?

- a. Yes – 66.67%
- b. No – 33.33%

Question 4: Is there a particular step in the process that is most difficult for parties to complete?

- a. Yes – 33.33%
- b. No – 66.67%

Question 5: Do the parties have to visit your office more than once to complete the process?

- a. Yes – 21.43%
- b. No – 78.57%

Question 6: How would you describe your office's working relationship with the LCSA? (Optional)

- a. Very poor – 7.14%
- b. Poor – 0%
- c. Fair – 28.57%
- d. Good – 7.14%
- e. Excellent – 57.14%

Statement: Do you agree or disagree with the following statement?

Removing the January 1, 2023 sunset date in FC § 4007.5 has increased access to justice.

- a. I strongly disagree – 7.69%
- b. I disagree – 0%
- c. I do not agree or disagree – 7.69%
- d. I agree – 61.54%
- e. I strongly agree – 23.08%

Open Question 1: If the process is difficult to explain to the PPS or PRS, what part of the process do you find more challenging to explain to the PPS or PRS?

Open Question 2: What is your process when you learn that a party is eligible for administrative relief under FC § 4007.5?

Open Question 3: What is your process when you learn that a party has been denied administrative relief that appears to be available to them?

Open Question 4: How do the parties react when they learn about the relief options?

Open Question 5: If there is a step in the process that is difficult for parties to complete, which step is it and why?

Open Question 6: Do you have any comments or recommendations to improve this law?

Child Support Commissioner Survey

Question 1: Have you heard cases and issued orders that could have been administratively adjusted without a hearing?

- a. Very often – 18.18%
- b. Often – 0%
- c. Sometimes – 36.36%
- d. Seldom – 18.18%
- e. Rarely – 27.27%
- f. I have not had any cases come before me requesting adjustment under FC 4007.5. – 0%

Question 2: Have you heard requests to reinstate the child support order prior to the expiration of the 10 months grace period?

- a. Yes – 36.36%
- b. No – 63.64%

Open Question 1: How could the process be improved to avoid the need to go to court?

Open Question 2: Are there any other recommendations or feedback you have regarding section 4007.5 in general?

JIPC Survey Statements and Responses

PPS- Survey Questions

1. Do you understand the reason your child support payments have stopped?
2. How did you find out your payments were going to stop?

3. Is the information you were given or found hard to understand?
4. When payment started again, were you ready to begin paying?
5. Was there anything that helped you feel prepared for the reinstatement of child support obligations?
6. Do you feel like it was enough time to get ready to start paying again?
7. Was it hard to find employment or income? What difficulties or barriers have you faced?
8. Did you have any re-entry requirements that made it harder to begin paying for support?
9. Was the process helpful to you?
10. What impact has suspension of support had on your situation?

PRS-Survey Questions

1. How did you find out your child support order would stop?
2. How easy was it to understand why your child support order would stop and when they would begin again?
3. What impact has suspension of support had on your situation?

LCSA Caseworker- Survey Questions

1. What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the most helpful for the PPS/PRS?
2. What parts of the administrative adjustment process were the hardest or least helpful for the PPS/PRS?
3. How would you explain the purpose and the goal of this process to the PPS/PRS?
4. Do the PRS/PPS understand the purpose and goal of the administrative process?
5. How can we improve this process to make it more accessible?
6. For child support orders that were modified in court, why was this process - chosen instead of an administrative adjustment?