

**National Council of Child Support Directors (NCCSD) Position Paper
Maintenance of Technical Assistance Funding Levels
Approved by Executive Committee March 17, 2005**

Issue:

Pending legislation would maintain funding for technical assistance to child support programs at least at FY 2002 levels. The Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would be authorized to use the greater of 1% of the federal share of child support collected on behalf of families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) during the preceding year, or the amount appropriated for FY 2002.

NCCSD Statement of Support:

NCCSD supports this proposal to maintain funding for technical assistance for state child support programs at least at FY 2002 levels. Technical assistance to state programs is essential to maintain and improve quality of services. Adequate funding should be maintained, even if the federal share of collections decreases.

States rely on OCSE to provide technical and training assistance. OCSE is in a unique position to assess and address the needs of state IV-D agencies, and should be funded to continue in this role.

Background:

Current federal law (42 U.S.C. § 652(j)) authorizes the Secretary of HHS to use 1% of the federal share of child support collected on behalf of TANF families during the preceding year to provide states with technical assistance, including information dissemination and technical assistance, training of state and federal staff, staffing studies, and related activities needed to improve state child support programs (including technical assistance concerning state automated systems). Until expended, the Secretary may also use these funds for research, demonstration and special projects of regional or national significance relating to the operation of state child support programs.

OCSE develops and delivers technical and training assistance that state IV-D agencies need in order to operate effective child support programs. For example, OCSE has used these funds to identify and promote best practices that states have in turn used to improve specific program operations. OCSE has also used these funds to develop and deliver training on various issues, such as customer service training and how to process interstate cases. Regional and national meetings are held to discuss common issues, such as processing interstate cases, and share possible solutions that benefit all states and the children they serve.

This proposal is necessary, because of the possible impact of other pending legislation that would change the child support distribution rules to allow TANF and

former TANF families to keep more of the child support collected on their behalf. Because funding for technical assistance is directly tied to a percentage of retained collections and retained collections will decrease, this change will ensure continued and adequate funding for technical assistance.

In order to maintain funding at least at FY 2002 levels, allowing the Secretary of HHS to use the greater of 1% of the federal share of child support collected on behalf of TANF families during the preceding year, or the amount appropriated for FY 2002 would accomplish this goal.