

# Progress Report



Department  
of Child Support  
Services

Santa Clara  
County



2006

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## *Mission*

Our mission is to promote the well being of children and the self sufficiency of families by delivering effective child support services to help meet the financial and medical needs of children.

## *Vision*

Children can rely on their parents for the financial medical, and emotional support they need to be healthy and successful.



County of Santa Clara  
Department of Child Support Services

*Progress Report 2006*

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## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



Donald F Gage

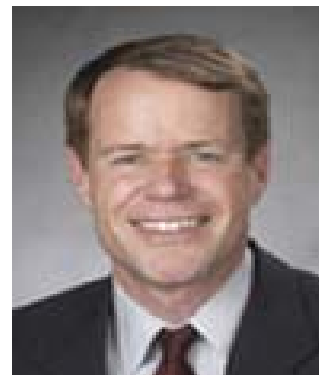


Blanca Alvarado

*The Board of Supervisors plays an important role in the success of Santa Clara County's child support program by overseeing the Department's activities and helping guide the organization.*



Pete Mc Hugh



Ken Yeager



Liz Kniss

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## *STATE DCSS Director's Message*

Children are our most valuable resource, and the child support program is an important part of California's effort to nurture and protect the future—our children. Working with our partners, the local child support agencies, we touch the lives of over 2 million children and their families every year.

Since the California Department of Child Support Services began operations in 2000, the child support program has evolved from a decentralized system administered by local district attorneys to a statewide program operated by 52 local child support agencies overseen by the state. These changes have strengthened and enhanced our ability to deliver uniform, high quality services to families across California.

Continuous improvement in program performance, implementation of federal automation requirements, and enhanced customer service are at the core of our operation.

Through our work to establish, collect and distribute child support, we provide an essential bridge to self-sufficiency and security for children and families.

**Greta Wallace**

*Director, California Department of Child Support Services*



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## *Director's Letter*

Dear Stakeholders,

The 2006 Progress Report for the Santa Clara County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) reflects performance for the federal fiscal year (FFY) ending September 30, 2006. In addition to reporting on federal performance measures, this Report also provides information on projects and activities the Department engaged in during the 2006 calendar year.

During the past year, the local Department focused primarily on federal performance measures related to Collections on Current Support and Collections on Arrears. A number of action plans were implemented to address performance improvement goals in these areas. These plans included the modification of order establishment practices, expedited modification of existing orders, and prompt closure of eligible cases. Performance improvements resulting from these activities should be realized during FFY 2007.

The past FFY has seen improvement in Federal Performance Measures, an increase in collections, and engagement in special projects/training benefiting customers, child support professionals, and our community. The Department realized improvement in the Paternity Establishment, Cases with a Support Order, and Cases with Arrearage Collection measures. Distributed support collections also increased over the prior year.

Special projects were widely varied and included the Mothers Day/Fathers Day License Program designed to increase collections, a Thank You card program recognizing compliant payers, a Backpack/School Supplies giveaway, and the hiring of approximately 30 emancipated foster youth in extra help positions.

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The Annual Child Support Training Conference was resurrected this year after a four year hiatus, providing an opportunity to connect with professionals from other Counties to exchange best practices and network.

At the State level, the focus of the Department of Child Support Services continued to be on the successful development and implementation of the California Child Support Automation System (CCSAS), now scheduled for pilot in May 2007. The historic failure to achieve timely implementation of a state-wide system has cost California taxpayers approximately \$1 billion in federal penalties but further penalties may be avoided if the delivered system is certified by the federal government. The local Department continues to support the automation effort with loaned staff. This provides the State with subject matter expertise but, in the short term, creates local challenges associated with costs to productivity and performance. These costs are outweighed by the long-term benefits of having a usable system and returning staff with broadened experience and understanding.

Provisions of the recently enacted federal Deficit Reduction Act present formidable challenges and potentially severe budget impacts in future years. The Department is working closely with the Child Support Directors Association, the State Department of Child Support Services, and the legislature to secure stable funding for the Child Support Program. The continued support of the Office of the County Executive and the Board of Supervisors is greatly appreciated as the Department endeavors to provide valuable services to the children and families of Santa Clara County.

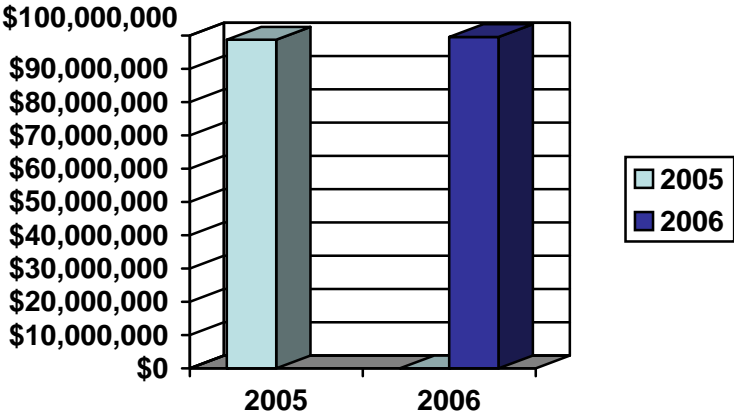
*Ralph Miller*  
*Director, Department of Child Support Services*

## *COMPARING 2006 WITH 2005*

	2006	2005
Caseload	62,047	63,366
Interviews	62,249	67,003
Summons & Complaints served	4,540	5,338
Enforcement		
Wage Assignments served	19,745	18,268
Liens filed	15,581	11,670
License Revocations	3,542	3,946
Modifications filed	1,233	1,055
Contempts filed	1,678	1,436
Court Orders Established	7,138	6,831
Paternity		
Paternity establishment	2,411	2,882
Paternity Opportunity Program (POP forms)	6,388	5,869

# COLLECTIONS

The Department of Child Support Services distributed collections totaling \$99,567,788 in Federal Fiscal year 2006. This represents an increase of 1% over the Fiscal year 2005 collections. This may appear seemingly unremarkable but consider that 75% of local child support agencies saw a reduction in 2006 collections compared to 2005.



## *SOURCE OF COLLECTIONS*

The Department of Child Support Services collected support from several sources during Federal Fiscal year 2006. Monies from employee wage assignments were the largest source of collections at 61%. All other sources generated the remaining 39%. FFY 2005 and FFY 2006 are compared below:

<u>Source</u>	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease%</u>
Wage Assignment	57%	61%	4%
Direct Payments	22%	20%	-2%
Unemployment/Disability	4%	3%	-1%
IRS/FTB Intercept	9%	9%	0%
Inter-State Collection	3%	3%	0%
FTB Collection Program	1%	1%	0%
Liens	4%	3%	-1%

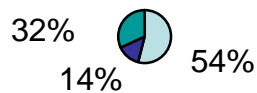


- Wage Assignments 61%
- Direct Payments from Obligor 20%
- Unemployment/Disability 3%
- IRS/FTB Intercept 9%
- Inter-State Collections 3%
- FTB Collection Program 1%
- Liens 3%

## *DISTRIBUTION OF COLLECTIONS*

Families receiving child support collected by DCSS are divided into three categories. Of the nearly \$100 million distributed, formerly aided families received 54%. Families never on aid collected 32% and 14% went to families currently on aid.

	<u>FFY 2005</u>	<u>FFY 2006</u>
Collections	\$98,749,318	\$99,567,788
Families Formerly on Aid	\$53,844,491	\$51,453,682
Families Never on Aid	\$31,458,741	\$34,426,114
Families on Aid	\$13,446,086	\$13,687,992



- Families Formerly on Aid  
 \$51,453,682
- Families on Aid  
 \$13,687,992
- Families Never on Aid  
 \$34,426,114

## MEASURING PERFORMANCE

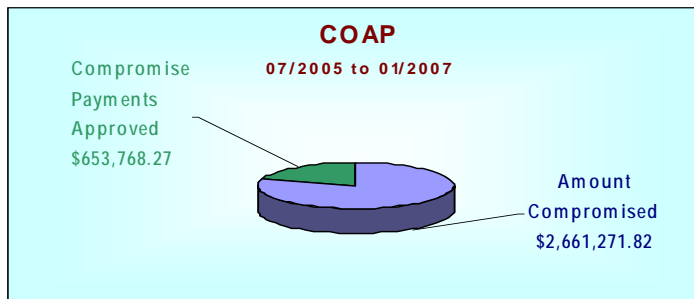
	<u>2005</u>	<u>2006</u>
Percent of cases with paternity established	91.6%	98.4%
Percent of cases with support orders	83.7%	84.4%
Percent of current support collected:	48.2%	47.6%
Percent of cases with arrears collection:	54.9%	56.6%
Cost effectiveness:	\$2.53	\$2.51

Performance is measured by five criteria:

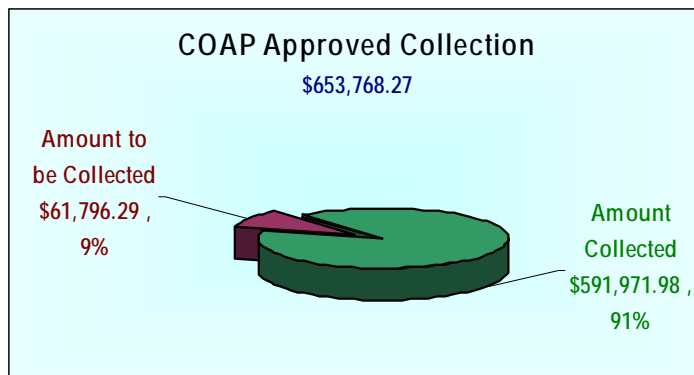
- Percent of cases with paternity established or acknowledged compared to the number of children in the caseload born out of wedlock the preceding federal fiscal year;
- Percent of cases in the total caseload with a child support order;
- Percent of current support collected as compared to current support owed;
- Percent of cases with arrearage collections as compared with the number of cases with arrears owed; and
- Cost effectiveness—the total amount of distributed collections as compared to the total amount of expenditures for the fiscal year.

## COMPROMISE OF ARREARS (COAP)

From July 2005 to January 2007, the Compromise of Arrears Program (COAP) has compromised more than 2 million dollars in past due child support owed to the government. As a condition of the elimination of all or a portion of “past due” debt, Obligor’s are paying their current monthly child support on time. The first chart below shows the total amount compromised to date. The second chart shows the actual amounts collected of the approved payment total.



COAP allows for the approved payment to be paid in monthly installments from two to thirty-six months. The chart below reflects this by breaking down the amount actually collected and the amount to be collected.



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## CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH



*"This is a way for us to demonstrate that the Child Support Services staff care deeply about the children we serve".*

*Ralph Miller,  
Director of the Department of Child Support Services*

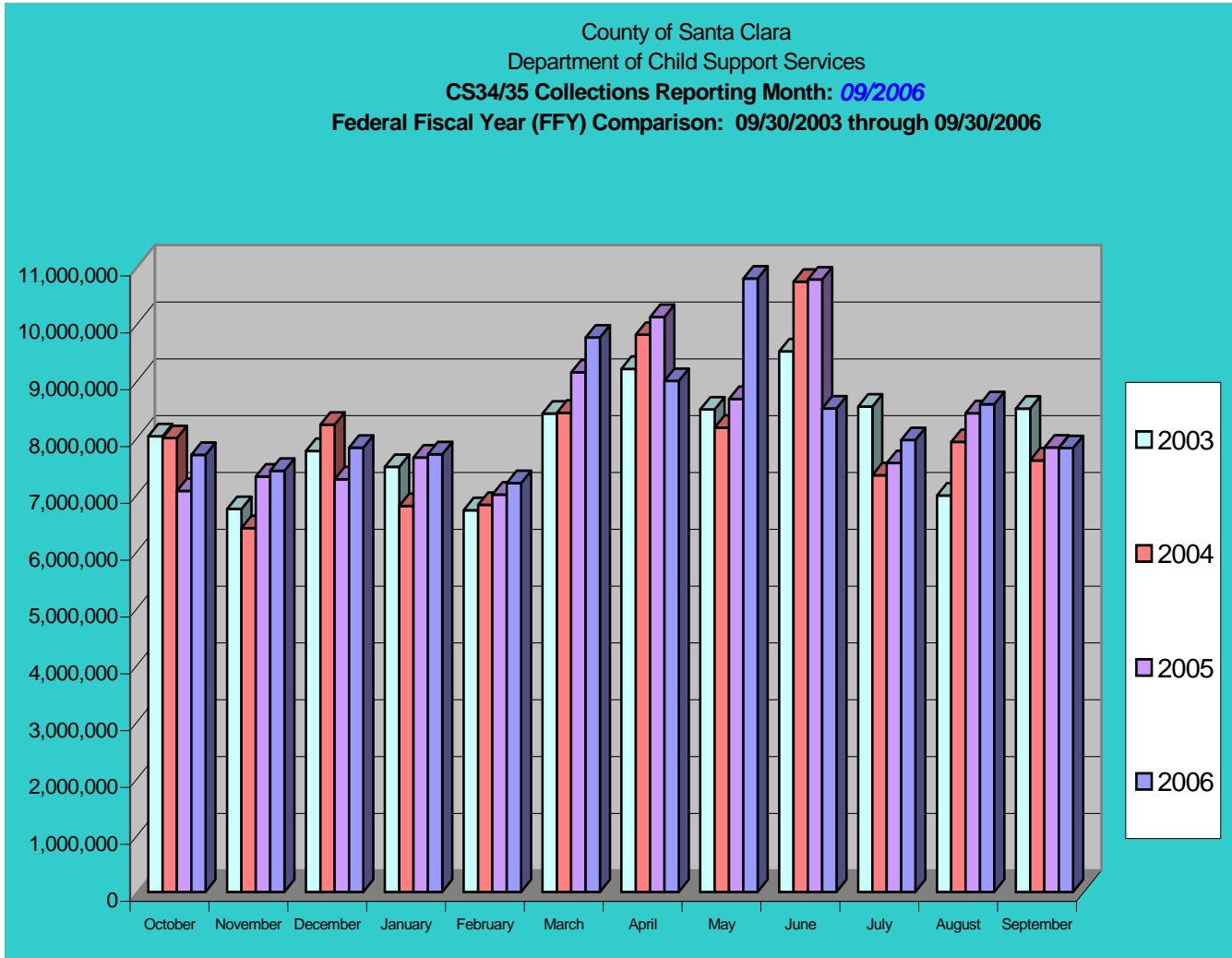
On August 24, 2006, the Pride Team, Ombudspersons and Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) staff hosted its first resource fair and second backpack give away event.

Parents with open cases at DCSS had the opportunity to receive information from representatives of several agencies and community based organizations. Agencies participating were Child Health: Disability Prevention, Nutrition and Wellness/WIC, Healthnet of California, Tobacco Prevention, Breathe California, First Five, Vital Records, Legal Advocates for Children and Youth (LACY), and Social Services Agency. Community Prosecutors administered Inkless Child ID and DNA kits.

Employees of DCSS donated backpacks and school supplies for nearly 200 children. Staff manned tables piled high with books as children lined up to make their choice to take home. 20 prizes ranging from Starbucks gift baskets to Target gift cards were awarded to parents as they enjoyed popcorn, cookies and beverages.

DCSS staff was pleased to give some assistance to families as children went back to school.

# RECORD COLLECTIONS 2006



Current FFY Collections compared to Prior FFY Collections  
for the Same Period

Gross  
Collections

Distributed  
Collections

1.5% Increase

.8% Increase

Gross collections for the federal fiscal year were over \$100 million. This is the third year in a row the Department of Child Support Services' collections exceeded \$100 million.

## EMANCIPATED FOSTER YOUTH PROGRAM



Department of Child Support Services program managers worked closely with employment counselors at Social Services Agency to select 30 young people to temporarily fill entry level positions in the department. All are emancipating or have emancipated out of Santa Clara County's foster care program.

Foster youth earned valuable experience in a variety of job duties, ranging from simple account reconciliations, to answering communication center calls and greeting customers in the reception area. Others were given the tasks of data input, organizing files, and copying and collating material for the training unit.

Ranging in age from 18 to 25, the young people began their internship in February 2006 and many continued through June 2006 with 83% successfully completing the program. In keeping with the tradition of rewarding employees who excel in their positions, DCSS extended internships for eleven young people.

*"We are facing a crisis and it concerns the foster youth of our community. We must empower these young adults as they transition out of the foster care system".*

*Jim Beal,  
State Assembly Member*

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## PRIDE TEAM

DCSS Pride Team was created two years ago to promote improvement of the DCSS program with the participation of staff and management. The group's motto is "Striving for Excellence Through Collaboration".

The Pride Team facilitated several special projects during 2006 that included a Mother's Day and Father's Day Program. Non custodial parents were given the opportunity to either make payments or enter into a payment arrangement allowing their driver's or business licenses to be released.

362 calls were received from parents inquiring about the program, 318 cases received payments, including one payment of \$13,000. A total of 89 licenses were released.

In June 2006 an estimated 14,000 thank you cards were mailed by the team and DCSS staff to non custodial parents that consistently made their child support payments January through March 2006. The Pride team wanted to recognize parents efforts.

In conjunction with DCSS staff and management, the Pride Team was instrumental in creating a "Kid's Corner" in the DCSS lobby. Games, books, furniture, toys and DVDs were donated by staff.

Looking towards the future, the team hopes to gather enough books and toys for children not just to entertain themselves in the lobby but to allow the children to take items home if they wish.

*" Our goal is to promote the betterment of staff, nurturing of mutual respect and the free exchange of ideas to strength the lives of the families in the community we serve".*

*The Pride Team*



## CHILD SUPPORT DIRECTOR'S ASSOCIATION TRAINING CONFERENCE



The 2006 Annual Child Support Training Conference was held October 3-5 in Garden Grove, California.

The conference's fifty workshops not only afforded support professionals the opportunity to hone their skills, but to network and reconnect with other support staff representing counties throughout the State.

Several Santa Clara County Department of Child Support Services staff were commissioned to plan and conduct training sessions on various topics.

A highlight for Santa Clara County was the CCSAS Excellence Award presented to DCSS Senior Accountant Mary Clesi. Ms. Clesi was recognized for her significant statewide contribution to the development and implementation of the California Child Support Automation System.

Motivated and energized DCSS staff returned from the training conference empowered with a renewed dedication to the community they serve.

*"The incredible array of workshops and plenary sessions is a tribute to the hard work and dedication of the thousands of child support professionals in California. I know that they will benefit from the expertise that has been assembled".*

*Jan Sturla*

*Director, Orange County Department of Child Support Services and  
President, Child Support Directors Association of California*

## GOALS FOR 2007

The local and State Departments of Child Support Services continue to focus on improving performance in federal measures related to collections on current support obligations and collections on past due support (arrears). Goals in each of these areas are established by the State and do not necessarily represent reasonable targets for the local Department. Nevertheless, the local Department of Child Support Services is focused on achieving significant improvement in these measures and is engaged in significant organizational and process changes designed to produce measurable improvement.

The following table captures last year's Federal Fiscal Year performance on the two measures cited above along with targets for FFY 2007.

<b>Federal Performance Measure</b>	<b>FFY 2006</b>		<b>FFY 2007 Goals</b>
	<b>Goals</b>	<b>/ Results</b>	
<i>Current Support Collected</i>	50.3%	/ 47.6%	51.7%
<i>Cases with Arrears Collected</i>	55.6%	/ 56.6%	57.2%

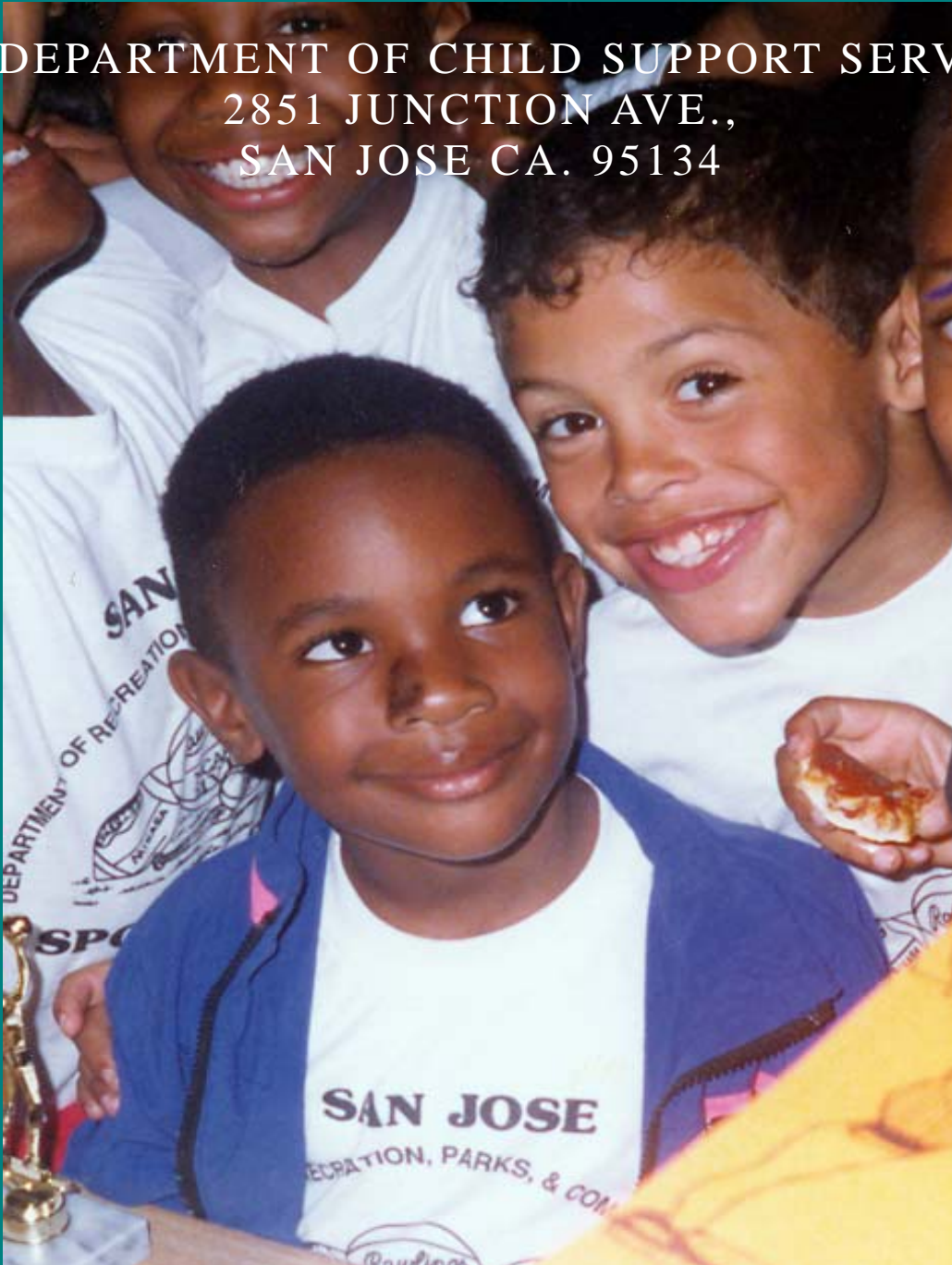
Targets are aggressively established by the State but the Department plans to narrow the gap between unmet stretch goals (Current Support Collected) and achievements through organizational and process improvements. The Department should achieve the goal established for Cases with Arrears Collected in FFY 2007 and realize significant improvement in current support collected.

The remaining federal performance measures are in the categories of Paternity Establishment, Cases with Orders Established and Cost Effectiveness. California as a whole and this County are performing above the federal thresholds in these categories and, although the Department will seek continued improvement in these areas, they are not the primary focus for 2007. While measurements for Cost Effectiveness are not updated as frequently as other measures, the Department was most recently measured at \$2.51 collected for each \$1 spent on the Program (federal threshold is \$2). Paternity Establishment improved from 91.6% (FFY 2005) to 98.4% (FFY 2006). Percentage of cases with Orders Established was up almost 1%, ending the FFY at 84.4%. Performance in the areas noted above provides a solid foundation for focused improvement in collections as establishment of paternity and appropriate support orders is a necessary first step in the collections process.

The Department is committed to providing needed services to our customers and will continue to explore innovative paths to Program improvement.

The overarching focus of the State Department of Child Support Services continues to be on completion of the California Child Support Automation System and relief from penalties.

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