

## Nomination for NASCIO Award

Title of Nomination            Child Support Portal - Data Transfer System

System Project Manager:    John Baird

Job Title:                      Portal Manager

Agency:                      Office of the Attorney General (OAG)

Department:                 Child Support Division (CSD)

Address:                      Post Office Box 12017 - MC033-1  
Austin, Texas 78711

Phone:                        (512) 460-6897

Fax:                            (512) 460-6434

Email:                         [john.baird@cs.oag.state.tx.us](mailto:john.baird@cs.oag.state.tx.us)

Category:                     Government to Government (G to G)

---

### Executive Summary

In the performance of our responsibilities to obtain financial support for children, the Child Support Division (CSD) works routinely with county employees. To provide a proactive mechanism for the exchange of information, the CSD built the Child Support Portal. The Data Transfer System is a browser-based utility written in JAVA that is part of the Child Support Portal. The Data Transfer System (DTS) functionality has been available since February 6, 2003. The DTS is designed to replace several manual and highly cumbersome processes that were being handled by County Registries. Its benefits to both the CSD and counties include consistent look and feel, increased data integrity, faster turnaround times, and improved security. The cost to the CSD for both the Child Support Portal Infrastructure and the DTS is \$956,740. The anticipated cost avoidance to the counties is expected to exceed \$4 million in FY 04.

### Description of the Project

The Attorney General's Child Support Division (CSD) has a responsibility to assist parents in obtaining financial support for children. The CSD establishes paternity of children, establishes court orders for financial and medical support, and vigorously

enforces child support orders. The CSD regularly works with County staff on a variety of day-to-day processes that include scheduling court activities and exchanging legal documents.

The Child Support Portal provides a mechanism for the proactive exchange of information between the CSD and County Registries. Prior to implementation of the portal, multiple data sharing methods using a myriad of manual or technical alternatives were in place. The intent of the portal is to offer a simple single point of access to our business partners.

The Data Transfer System (DTS) is designed to run within the Child Support Portal. The DTS allows both County and OAG users to upload and download files using the world wide web as a transport mechanism. It is a versatile utility for receiving, managing, and distributing data files with our business partners. DTS offers both functional and row-level security features. Some types of files transfers include:

1. Case data collected by the county
2. Federally-required State Case Registry data
3. Electronic Automated Income Withholding forms

The DTS is a browser-based utility written in JAVA that can receive a file from the web and automatically send it to a mainframe database as a staging area for processing by the TXCSES application. Conversely, the TXCSES application can send data files directly to the DTS where the file can be downloaded by portal users. The Data Transfer System functionality has been available since February 6, 2003.

#### Significance to Government Operations

The ultimate benefit of the Child Support Portal is customer service to our business partners. It is a mechanism by which the CSD can provide information and answer questions. The CSD currently has several applications that can be assessed now or in the near future via the portal. These include:

1. Combined Pay Record – this application takes data from a number of sources related to Child Support payments and combines the information into one place.
2. Paternity Vendors may access the portal to print confirmation notices eliminating the need for faxing and to schedule paternity tests.
3. CSD staff may search data from Texas Department of Criminal Justice for information about incarcerated persons.

The Data Transfer System is designed to replace a largely manual and cumbersome process of exchanging information via disk or email. Prior to the availability of the DTS, information related to Automated Income Withholding was transferred by the CSD in a file that was printed and data entered at the county. The resulting legal documents were mailed via the United States Postal Service. Processing often took a couple weeks

to complete. All of this processing can now be handled relatively immediately and on a daily basis.

By design, the DTS has features that will enable the OAG to communicate with all of its' partners including employers, third party payees, and other agencies. As the use of XML becomes more widespread, we hope to use the DTS as a steppingstone into the area of Web Services.

### Benefits

Benefits of the portal for both the CSD and our county users include:

1. Single access point for counties
2. Consistent look and feel
3. Promotes uniform processes across the CSD and counties
4. Reduces workload
5. Increased data integrity
6. Faster turnaround time for data transfer
7. Promotes common standards, i.e. standard navigation
8. Increases and simplifies security

### Return on Investment

In FY 02, the CSD built the infrastructure for the Child Support Portal at an approximate cost of \$536,454.

In FY 03, the CSD enhanced the Child Support Portal for the DTS at an approximate cost of \$421,286.

Total Cost to the CSD is \$956,740.

The primary benefits of this system to the CSD are those items listed above. The financial return on investment includes:

1. The initial load of case data from large counties was already an automated process and did not result in noteworthy cost savings.
2. Currently, the CSD contracts with the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) who data enters State Case Registry data and provides it to the CSD. BVS processes approximately 58,000 transactions a year at a cost per transaction of \$2.03. The majority of this data will be provided to the CSD by the counties via the portal starting in September, 2003. This CSD avoids approximately \$117,740 in costs in FY 04.
3. Automated Income Withholding will be available in 34 Texas counties starting in September, 2003. Counties have estimated that an additional four full-time

equivalent employees handled this process. Assuming the \$15 per hour rate, this process will avoid \$3,916,800 in costs in FY 04.