

Case Study:

The Monterey County Department of Child Support Services Improves Services to Families with Accurint® for Government



“This is a smart tool. In this economy, this tool saves money. Accurint helps our department be more efficient. After all, it is our tax dollars too.”

– Cassondra Simon
Lead Child Support
Officer
Monterey County
Dept. of Child Support
Services

Overview

The Monterey County Department of Child Support Services in California is responsible for providing service to over 425,000 citizens for a wide range of custodial and financial issues relating to children and families, including establishing, modifying and enforcing court orders to pay child support; collection and distribution of child and spousal support payments; locating absent parents; establishing paternity; and establishing and enforcing medical support and family support orders. The agency also examines accounts and generates reports when it finds money that needs to be disbursed, often resulting in payments to people whose cases have long since been closed. The Monterey Co. Dept. of Child Support Services serves a middle class to upper middle class demographic as well as a large migrant population.

The Challenge

Each individual case is unique; there are many levels and layers and myriad possibilities in an investigation. Many times, multiple individuals must be tracked using only one Social Security number. Individuals at times do not want to be found, and investigations where an individual owes money are even more challenging. Sometimes, delinquent individuals are not even aware of the fact that they owe money. In other instances, the agency is holding money in escrow and the person or family to whom it is owed—the custodial mother in most cases—has moved and needs to be located. In other cases, a welfare differential needs to be reconciled with another state where laws may have changed and money is owed to a family. Verification does not end with address data; when large sums of money are involved, investigators need to speak with an individual in order to prevent fraud. This entails finding valid phone numbers or physical visits. Also, improper verifications can result in misidentifications of innocent people, and can have serious ramifications for the Department as well as the subjects, who may have papers served on them or may be arrested. No matter what the activity, the focus is on what is in the best interest of the children the Department serves.

The Solution

The Child Support Services Department has been receiving less funding, but is still required to operate an efficient and effective organization and follow complex federal and state regulations that impact the infrastructure of the organization. With such complex needs, LexisNexis® Accurint® for Government is involved in all investigations. "It's the core. It is home base," according to Cassandra Simon, lead child support officer with Monterey County. Accurint offers "different modules and layers, and is usable on a lot of levels." She continues, "The bottom line is about the kids, and locating parents and their information is critical to getting money to these kids—that's why I appreciate this product: it helps me do my job better."

The Results

Accurint for Government enables the Child Support Services Department to quickly and efficiently resolve many of its cases, getting money and assistance to those who need it. Simon has been on the job for 15 years and is a self-described veteran. She says that manpower resources are conserved by using Accurint, and that the return on investment is "a thousand times what we spend on it." In one case, Simon used Accurint to trace a cell phone when the subject had no fixed address. She had almost \$13,000 in an escrow account that belonged to a family, and they were overjoyed when she located them at a Residence Inn. Accurint has also been helpful in assisting other agencies with solving their cases where they overlapped with Child Services cases, including criminal cases that were not able to be solved with other investigative resources.

For more information:

Call 888.579.7638 or visit
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