Building A Future For Families
Through Transforming Services

March 13th, 2019
Hilton Sacramento Arden West
Sacramento, California
About CSDA: The Child Support Directors Association (CSDA) was established in 2000 as a non-profit association to represent the local child support agencies of California’s 58 counties. CSDA’s mission is to educate, collaborate, and advocate in support of California’s families. As a coalition of experts, CSDA’s core purpose is to collaborate as a unified voice in an effort to transform the lives of children.

Capturing the Day...

To set the tone for the day, Phyllis Nance, President of the CSDA, quoted Margaret Mead by saying “never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed it is the only thing that ever has.” She appealed to the audience stating that today we would be engaged and provoked to “change and transform the world for California families.”

The ideas that came from this thoughtful and committed group of citizens that gathered at this year’s CSDA Policy Symposium discussions ranged from a radical helicopter ride into the future to strategies for promoting upward mobility for our families to economic forecasts to community engagement and finally to a carrot versus stick analogy for thinking about child support enforcement.

For highlights of this year’s Policy Symposium, check out the Top Takeaways at the end of this report.
Meet the Presenters...

Dr. Mary O’Hara-Devereaux, founder and president of Global Foresight, a “think tank” in San Francisco, is an internationally known futurist and author of several books. Ms. O’Hara Devereaux is a highly regarded strategic consultant and speaker specializing in providing long-term forecasts, strategy and innovation support to senior executives in the private and public sectors.

Dr. Heather Hahn is a Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute and national TANF expert with two decades of experience conducting nonpartisan research on the wide range of issues related to the well-being of children and families.

Amar Mann is the Supervisory Economist and Branch Chief and Senior Economist for the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, an agency that collects, processes, analyzes, and disseminates statistical data on conditions of the overall economy.

Sandra Hamameh is a Legislative Coordinator, Research & Policy Specialist for the California Workforce Development Board. She has more than 16 years of experience in vocational counseling, housing policy advocacy, labor representation and training and development.

Ashley L. Anglesey is the WIOA Research and Policy Analyst for California Workforce Development Board and has written an extensive policy brief regarding the partnership agreement with Child Support Services.

Senator Holly Mitchell, District 30, California is an advocate for children, leader in criminal and juvenile justice reform and defender of women’s rights, minorities, immigrants and the environment. Senator Mitchell has been recognized for her outstanding leadership by more than 100 community and business groups.

David Kilgore is the Director of the California Department of Child Support Services. Mr. Kilgore previously served as the Director of Riverside County DCSS and has served at the county level for 15 years holding several positions including chief deputy director and deputy director.
Meet the Moderator...

Sherri Heller “will allow us to think big and think differently...”
~Phyllis Nance, President, CSDA

Dr. Sherri Z. Heller, Retired - Director, Health and Human Services for the County of Sacramento, California

Dr. Sherri Z. Heller received her BA in Psychology from Franklin and Marshall College and her doctorate in Measurement and Program Evaluation from Harvard University Graduate School of Education. She has been a public official for over two decades at the county, state, and Federal level, where she has managed programs including mental health, drug and alcohol, child welfare, aging and adult protective services, nursing home, juvenile detention, public health, child care, child support, job training, and indigent healthcare programs. As Deputy Secretary for Income Maintenance, she managed the roll-out of welfare reform for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. As Commissioner of the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement, she led development of a national strategic plan and was recognized for leadership in IT advances. In the private sector, Dr. Heller consulted with state and city human services agencies nationwide on customer service and business process reengineering. Recently, she retired from the position of Director of Health and Human Services for the County of Sacramento, California, where she managed public health, indigent care, adult protective services, child protective services, in-home health services, WIC, and behavioral health services.
Mary O’Hara-Devereaux kicked off her inspiring vision into the future by explaining that California is ahead of the curve in planning for the future with the advances of Silicon Valley technology and some cities utilizing self-driving cars. She addressed the leaders of California Child Support urging them not to “benchmark yourself to the present, but benchmark yourself to the future.” Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux explained that we are in the “Age of Acceleration” where things are going faster and technological innovations are outpacing human adaptability. She added that as we move through “the Badlands” and into this new era it is particularly challenging for the social services sector to adapt. She explained that “institutions and leaders are mismatched to the issues and needs of the economy.” She says that if social institutions are going to survive they will need innovation and creativity.

Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux implored the leaders in the room by asking, “how relevant is your leadership to the future?” She described some institutions as spinning their wheels but never really getting anywhere.

Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux shifted into forecasting the economy by stating there are two scenarios: 1) recession by late 2019, early 2020 or 2) 1-3 years of secular stagnation starting by late 2019. She described secular stagnation as the transition to a digital economy where people become irrelevant. She explained this makes it even more important for leaders to be innovative and make changes to stay relevant.

Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux shared data on the future of our families pointing out that the traditional household is changing as family living arrangements are becoming more and more diverse. She explained that small communities are becoming more important for supporting families and individuals.

“The position we occupy is not as important as the direction we are moving in.” ~Leo Tolstoy
Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux explored the future of work stating that 2/3 of household incomes have stagnated in all advanced economies with an increase in digitally enabled independent workers. She showed us that income inequality continues to grow with the majority of wealth distributed to the top 5% and indicated that this trend will continue. She explained that earnings have fallen for workers with little education and that good jobs without a BA have declined from 60% to 45% since 1991. However, she stated, there is an increase in good jobs for Associate’s Degree holders. She shared that the “biggest Achilles heel for the future of the nation and for California is poor education.” It is predicted that there will be 55 million new jobs by 2022, 65% of which will require some college. She noted that “a degree is great…but knowledge and skills in science, technology, engineering and math [STEM], you’ve got to have those!” She added that statistics show that there is a deficit of 5 million jobs that need employable, educated people.

Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux asked the attendees to think of internet connectivity and artificial intelligence (AI) as “the future of work.” She stated that automation and AI will impact every job category by 2030. She implored the attendees to think about how do we as humans have a comparative advantage over artificial intelligence?

Ms. O’Hara-Devereaux closed by challenging the leaders in the room to not “let memory substitute for thinking” because “the future won’t resemble the past.”

Transforming Services Transforming Lives

Senior Fellow of the Urban Institute, Dr. Heather Hahn, began her presentation by discussing the idea of attaining the American Dream and sharing some statistics. She suggested that attainment of the American Dream largely depends on where geographically you grew up in the U.S. Currently, Dr. Hahn stated, that “nowhere in the U.S. can a full-time minimum wage worker afford a 2 bedroom apartment.” Dr. Hahn showed us that 90% of children born in 1940 earned more than their parents and only 50% of children born in 1980 earned more than their parents. Dr. Hahn explained that race, gender and immigration status continue to effect an earner’s ability to advance.

Dr. Hahn shared a study that was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and supported by the Urban Institute which sought to answer the question, “what would it take to dramatically increase mobility from poverty?” In this study researchers visited diverse communities across the country, immersing themselves into these communities.
As a result of the study, the researchers developed a conceptual model for mobility with three principles: power and autonomy, being valued in the community and economic success. Dr. Hahn explained that each of the categories can effect the other. In addition, the researchers came up with five strategies to help promote mobility from poverty: 1) Changing the narrative – the stories that we tell ourselves to make sense of the world 2) Creating access to good jobs 3) Ensuring zip code is not destiny 4) Providing support that empowers 5) Transforming data use.

Dr. Hahn shifted our attention to the important topic of dignity and respect. Dr. Hahn suggested that dignity is central to power and autonomy, feeling valued in the community, and economic success. She reminded us that seeking public services can be a demeaning experience. Dr. Hahn shared a study which found that how people are treated can significantly effect their responses. In addition, Dr. Hahn explained, that the physical environment of the social service office and interactions with staff can effect someone's human dignity.

Dr. Hahn posited that a less visible barrier to upward mobility from poverty is the toxic stress of living in poverty. She suggested that a person’s mind can be so dominated by survival that all they can do is focus on the day. She maintained that this survival mode in a child can change the way the brain develops.

Dr. Hahn stated that child support can create vicious cycles for fathers and alienate them from their children. She shared that research suggests that many fathers want to
be more than a paycheck to their children. Research has shown that when the government keeps the child support payment, fathers pay less. Alternatively, when the child receives the support payment fathers pay more because they see the direct connection to the child.

Dr. Hahn shared one example in which Colorado Child Support stopped recouping welfare money and began providing all child support payments to families. After 9 months of implementation Colorado’s collections increased by 29%, cases receiving payments increased by 17% and the average amount received by families was 26%. In addition to increasing child support payments, studies show that this method lowers child poverty, creates stronger family relationships and leads to more fathers establishing paternity.

Dr. Hahn brought us back to the earlier model and the three principles for changing the child support system to improve mobility. She suggested that greater economic success increases compliance as well as improved social emotional and cognitive outcomes for children. Power and autonomy improves with lower arrearages, fewer fathers facing sanctions for failure to pay and improved mental health for parents and children. Lastly, when non-custodial parents are able to support their children they will feel more valued in their community and feel more important in their children’s lives.

Dr. Hahn closes by asking the attendees 3 questions to take back to their agencies: 1) What can you do differently next week? 2) What first step can you take now to move toward a longer-term change? 3) What do you want to learn today to help you refine and act on those plans?
Mr. Mann explained that higher education is linked to lower unemployment rates and higher wages. He also showed that higher education across all races shows unemployment rates drop below three percent for all groups. The data also shows that single women with young children have the highest unemployment rate.

Mr. Mann shared the counties with the highest and lowest pay in California with the average being $27.50. He explained that there are 15.5 million Americans who are independent contractors, temp workers, on-call workers, workers provided by contract firms or “gig workers” and 1.6 million Americans being paid through apps.

Mr. Mann stated that healthcare is the fastest growing industry in the U.S. and some occupations are shrinking due to automation. He explained that jobs which require a higher education have higher projected job growth however, most current jobs require a high school diploma or less. He pointed out that there are many well-paid jobs that do not require a college degree such as plumbers, electrical power line installers and flight attendants.

For more information about jobs and employment data, Amar directed the attendees to the BLS website.

Sandra Hamameh, Legislative Coordinator, Research and Policy Specialist for the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB), provided an overview of the Board and shared some of their programs and initiatives. She explained that the Board is responsible for development, oversight, improvement of the workforce investment system and alignment of education and workforce investment systems.

Ms. Hamameh explained that the Board has over 21 strategic partners, 14 regional planning units and 45 local boards within those 14 regions. The 45 local boards oversee approximately 200 job centers. The board is also administering 12 federal and state initiatives. She added that the Board provides policy guidance, grant administration and workforce system alignment for the 14 regional planning units.

Ms. Hamameh provided an overview of several of CWDB’s programs including CAALskills, a fully developed data integration system which allows for longitudinal analysis.

Another program that Ms. Hamameh shared was the Equity, Climate and Jobs program which emphasizes sustainability, job quality and equity.
Ms. Anglesey explained that the local workforce boards are required to partner with representatives of local child support agencies (LCSAs) and submit a partnership plan. The plan details how the stakeholders will serve their local non-custodial parent population.

Ms. Anglesey provided a qualitative analysis brief on the research which she conducted to provide to the local and regional workforce boards and partners with best practices. The brief examined current policy and programs in California and nationwide specifically focusing on barriers impacting employment for non-custodial parents and strategies for successful implementation.

The brief contained three case studies from Solano, San Joaquin and Los Angeles Counties who were already practicing the partnerships locally. The studies highlighted strengths, challenges and success stories for future implementation in other counties.

The biggest challenges for counties, Ms. Anglesey shared, were limited access to community based organizations (especially small and rural counties), transportation, connecting with formerly incarcerated or justice involved parties, access to child care for custodial parents which allows them to seek or maintain employment and lastly non-custodial parents working “under the table.”

All of these challenges, Ms. Anglesey explains, can be alleviated by maintaining partnerships between LCSAs and community based organizations (CBOs). She included inspiring success stories that can be achieved by operationalizing partnerships.
Call to Action

We had the pleasure of having Senator Holly Mitchell speak with us and share her journey into the political arena as well as her inspiration and vision for California families.

Senator Mitchell explained that early on she knew the power of political decisions and felt that politics should provide equity for all to have the resources to survive and thrive. She explained that this is part of the reason she decided to run for political office. The final push for Senator Mitchell was in 2008 when the legislature cut a billion dollars out of subsidized child care and she had an opportunity to run for chair of the budget sub-committee. As an advocate for families in California and with her experience running Crystal Stairs, the largest child development agency in the country, she felt a responsibility to take on this challenge. Eventually Senator Mitchell decided to run for State Assembly in 2010.

Ms. Angleseym pointed out that successful partnerships between LCSAs and CBOs require commitment, communication, education and information sharing agreements.
importance of education and partnerships in addition to time, exposure to concepts, culture shifts and persistence to ensure that the public is well informed on what is happening in California.

In parting, Senator Mitchell urged the attendees to think about one thing they could do big or small to make a difference in the lives of children. Senator Mitchell suggests meeting with local assembly members or their staff because you never know when your issue can be useful in educating members of the legislature.

“Make the decision to play hardball to advocate for children and families!”

Transforming Services for Families

Our final presenter was David Kilgore, Director of the California Department of Child Support Services who began with the analogy of the carrot versus the stick. Mr. Kilgore pointed out that historically child support has been known to use more sticks than carrots. He stated that the child support program has grown and evolved over the past 30 years.

Mr. Kilgore explained that 70% of the work that caseworkers do is related to enforcement. Further, he pointed out that the Child Support Enforcement System (CSE) is applying the same enforcement on all of it’s 1.2 million cases. He proposed that the impact of these enforcement actions are typically only effective on the population of cases that are able to pay but unwilling to comply.

Mr. Kilgore asked the attendees if they could think about when these enforcement tools should be applied especially if we want to start using a more incentive based approach to child support as opposed to punitive. He suggested that the resources we are using for our punitive enforcement methods could be used for different types of supportive services and perhaps more “engagement focused.” He wondered how impactful our case workers are with families and if are they just putting out fires that the automated enforcement system has created.

Mr. Kilgore suggested that in order to remove barriers for our families perhaps we can make our forms less bureaucratic or at least beef up our providers who are assisting families with completing forms.

Mr. Kilgore expressed that child support can do much to improve services so we are more balanced and equitable to both the custodial and non-custodial parents.

Lastly, Mr. Kilgore explained that the state is moving in the direction of having more data driven information so that we can analyze and improve our services. As a result the state is committing additional resources for research and data development to guide and improve programs.
The 2019 CSDA Policy Symposium highlighted many contributions, not only those being made by the presenters, but by other stakeholders across the country. Here are some of the programs & organizations highlighted at the Symposium - so attendees and beyond can connect:

Global Foresight LLC
Mobility Partnership
Urban Institute
$2.00 A Day by Kathryn Edin and Luke Shaefer
Colorado Child Support Pass-Through SB 15-012
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
California Workforce Development Board
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Senator Holly Mitchell
Crystal Stairs
California Department of Child Support Services
California Department of Social Services
1) Innovation and Creativity is Crucial
Mary O’Hara-Devereaux reminded us that in the Age of Acceleration technology is outpacing human adaptability. But as humans we have a competitive advantage due to our ability to empathize. She described innovation as creating relevance to the future. Ms. O’Hara Devereaux challenged leaders to be strategic in planning for the future of their organizations and emphasized that “failure of imagination is our biggest risk!”

2) Child Support Engagement
David Kilgore presented a shift in the way we think about child support enforcement. He suggested a more incentive based, engagement style model rather than the more punitive, automated way of enforcing child support orders. Making forms more user friendly and less bureaucratic as well as using more neutral terminology such as “parent paying support” instead of non-custodial parent. Mr. Kilgore explained that the national trend of shrinking caseloads should allow us to utilize resources more effectively to serve our families.

3) Empowering Families
Dr. Heather Hahn spoke of dignity, respect and empathy as being central to power and autonomy, economic success and having value in the community. She reminded us that our agencies have the capacity to promote human dignity by how we treat our customers and the physical environment that we create in our offices. Dr. Hahn pointed out that promoting father involvement is an essential part of the empowering process.

4) Partnerships Are Key
Sandra Hamameh and Ashley Anglesey brought to our attention the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships with community based organizations to bolster services to our families. Ms. Anglesey pointed out that local child support agencies have limited resources and partnering with community based organizations can fill in the gaps. These partnerships can be successful with a high level of engagement, commitment, shared vision and trust building.

5) The Future of Work
Amar Mann shared extensive data on the current state of the workforce in the U.S. and specifically California along with some predictions for the future of the workforce. Mr. Mann presented that currently there are more jobs in the U.S. than people looking for work. He showed us that the highest paying jobs are those with a B.A. degree or higher, however, he stated that many vocational and technical jobs without a four year degree offer competitive salaries. Mr. Mann shared that the fastest growing industry is in the healthcare field. Lastly, while the unemployment rate is low at 3.8% there are still high unemployment rates for young people, African American and Latinos as well as single women with young children.