

WELCOME TO OUR  
**KQ Newsletter**  
*we're so glad you're here!*

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

What a fantastic comeback! I am filled with nothing but gratitude and appreciation for everyone involved in the Kansas Child Support Program. We had an amazing time catching up with old and new friends at the 2024 Annual KCSEA Conference. As Amy stated during conference, it was like a family reunion with so many of you and it was great meeting all the new faces.

I would like to thank every person who participated in this year's conference: Commissioner Gray as our Keynote Speaker, all our presenters/panelists who delivered very informative plenaries, the attendees, our sponsors, and the KCSEA Board of Directors. Special thanks to Ava Thompson for her amazing rendition of the national anthem, Topeka High Drumline for their awesome performance and Former IVD Director Jim Robertson for presenting this year's scholarship along with his wisdom on the importance of the annual conference.

Attendees will continue to have access to the KCSEA conference application through the summer. That means it's not too late to download a copy of the plenary presentations, pictures, etc. If you have not done so, please complete the conference survey.

Speaking of surveys, be on the lookout in the coming months for surveys coming directly to your inbox. We will be looking for your input and ideas for the 2025 Annual KCSEA Conference. We would like session ideas, topics to be covered, needed CLE's, personal and professional development, potential speakers and panelists, as well as thoughts for our networking event. We will also be asking for volunteers to assist on some of the conference planning committees and gather ideas for possible venues for the 2026 Annual Conference.

I would like to welcome Brian Windmeyer back to the KCSEA Board. He will serve a two-year term that will go through the 2026 Annual Conference. For those who are interested in being on the Board of Directors, there will be several open positions beginning June 2025. Be on the lookout for more information as time approaches the 2025 Annual Conference.

To learn more about KCSEA, become a member of KCSEA, pay your annual dues, become a sponsor of KCSEA, purchase your own KCSEA T-shirt, find additional information on the Jim Robertson Scholarship Fund, the 2025 KCSEA Educational Conference, and the KCSEA Board please visit [www.kcsea.org](http://www.kcsea.org). Sincerely,

Dustin R Whitaker  
KCSEA President



# JIM ROBERTSON SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Congratulations  
Kylie Dexter

Kylie is heading off to Arizona State University, Edson College of Nursing and Health Innovation in the fall. She is pursuing a career to be a Pediatric Registered Nurse.



## SILENT AUCTION

Thank  
you!



Thank you to all  
who participated  
in the silent  
auction,  
raffle, and 50/50  
drawing.  
We raised  
\$2,721.06 for the  
2025 scholarship  
fund.





# CONGRATULATIONS TO THE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS

The Customer Service Award  
goes to:  
**Kimberly Saunders**



The Excellence Award of  
Appreciation  
goes to:  
**Marcie Martinez**



Most Unique Collection Story  
Award goes to:  
**Stephanie Petrie & Robin Schultz**



The Largest Lump Sum Award goes  
to:  
**Emma Noone**  
(No Picture)

The Rookie of the Year Award  
goes to:  
**Brennan Riggs**



Guardian Angle Award goes to:  
**Gail Rice**  
(No Picture)

The Distinguished Service Award  
goes to:  
**Pam Underwood**



# KCSEA 2024 CONFERENCE RECAP

The 2024 KCSEA Annual Educational Conference was a resounding success, bringing together individuals from across the nation who are passionate about serving the families of Kansas through the child support program. We spent time with past and current Kansas Child Support program staff and leaders; State, federal, and Tribal partners; private vendors; co-workers and friends, old and new.

Held Thursday, June 13 and Friday, June 14 at the Ramada by Wyndham Topeka Downtown Hotel & Convention Center, this year's conference explored the entities involved in the Kansas child support program. Our "Back to the Future" theme seemed fitting for this first conference after a ten-year hiatus, taking a step back in time, bringing us to present day, and looking forward to what the program's future may hold.

A plenary style approach was adopted to help educate child support professionals about each piece of the child support puzzle in Kansas. The conference kicked off with the singing of the National Anthem by Ava Thompson, Ottawa High School 2024 graduate and an energizing performance by the Topeka High Drumline, directed by Sal Cruz. Board members provided valuable information during the opening ceremonies, leading up to the keynote address, delivered by OCSS Commissioner, Tangler Gray.

Commissioner Gray provided an engaging OCSS update. Attendees heard about the priority alignments of HHS, ACF, and OCSS; Commissioner Gray's three P's (People, Process, and Performance); the motivation behind the federal office's name change (OCSE to OCSS); federal child support policy accomplishments and continued areas of focus; lessons learned; ACF resources available to child support staff; and the vision of the federal office regarding the future of the child support program.

Melissa Johnson and Lynda Dillard, both with OCSS, educated attendees about the work done at the federal level during Plenary I: OCSS 101 and the Child Support Portal. We learned about the framework of OCSS, the work they do, the motivations behind their work, and how their work affects the Kansas program. Details about the Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) team, federal systems, support collection tools, and resources available to child support professionals were also provided.



Plenary II: Kansas Tribes and CSS included panelists Lori Myers, DCF, Kelly Hopkins, PBPB, and Stacy Caudle, Kickapoo, who shared information about tribal child support programs in Kansas. Attendees learned about the Kansas reservations and tribes, how the tribal child support programs are different than the IV-D program, and how we can work together to serve the tribal families of Kansas.

YoungWilliams hosted the Thursday evening Networking Reception, a terrific opportunity for attendees to network and connect with professionals from around the State and nation.

Friday morning kicked off with the conference's third plenary session, IV-D Program – Impacts with a Purpose, the future is what we make it. Speakers Raynora Charles, DCF, Rhonda Parsons, YoungWilliams, Lorenza Strother, Maximus, and Board member/moderators Terri Greer, DCF and Stacey Fitch, YoungWilliams brought information to attendees through their conversation about various aspects of the IV-D program in Kansas.

KPC staff Gina Hoffman and Pat O'Donnell embraced the Back to the Future theme, giving attendees a look into the KPC's past, present, and beyond. We enjoyed remembering how payment processing began, with many manual processes and reports and seeing how the landscape of payments has drastically changed over the past 24 years. Current payment options, annual payment volumes, accuracy rates, options and preferences for disbursements to payees and call center stats rounded out the presentation.

The last plenary session, an overview of how the non-IVD side of the child support program operates, included panelists from four of Kansas's judicial districts. Nicolette Bennett, 10th JD, Marc White, 3rd JD, Harold Schorn, 9th JD, and Carl Wheeler, 18th JD discussed which judicial districts have Court Trustees, how services in each judicial district in Kansas may vary, KPC's role in non-IVD cases, and differences between Court Trustees and DCF.



The KCSEA Board of Directors would like again to thank our 2024 conference sponsors, which include:

YoungWilliams, Platinum Level Sponsor, who sponsored the conference app and Networking Reception.  
Gold Level Sponsors - Veritas HHS and Maximus, who sponsored the Friday lunch.  
Silver Level Sponsors - U.S. Bank and SMI, who sponsored the Thursday afternoon and Friday morning breaks.  
And Auctor, our Bronze Level Sponsor, who sponsored the Excellence Awards and gifts for our conference speakers.

These sponsors made the KCSEA conference possible, and we are blessed to have their support.





# NCCSD 2024 CONFERENCE RECAP

I had the privilege to attend the National Council of Child Support Director's Conference in beautiful Lake George, Bolton Landing, New York this past May. The theme of the conference was Child Support Reaching Higher Peaks, which was very fitting given the importance of innovation and collaboration that enhance the child support program.

Sessions focused on exploring new methods and technologies to enhance services offered to families in our caseload, strategies for improving interactions with parents paying support and parents receiving support, as well as utilizing data to direct policies that will improve program outcomes.

There were several takeaways around innovation and technology but a key takeaway for me was collaboration. APHSA (American Public Human Services Association) hosted a session titled TANF and Child Support: Together We Can Move Mountains. The open dialogue between Rebekah Sides, Policy Associate with APHSA, Stephanie Boshart, Director of New York Employment & Advancement Services, Erin Oalican, Vermont Reach Up/TANF Director, alongside Michele Cristello, Massachusetts Child Support Director, focusing on whole family approaches to align economic supports.

To keep this open dialogue going between NCCSD, NCSEA, and APHSA, a Community of Practice was formed, over a year ago. The Community of Practice is a monthly convening of individuals throughout the United States in a variety of roles in child support and the TANF program to discuss current activity involving the respective programs such as benefit cliffs, access to supports, family first distribution, employment services for all parents, family councils, and language inclusivity.

This was a conference I will not soon forget. It highlighted the value of collaboration, among not just states but programs as well, to share best practices and tackle common challenges.

Written by: Terri Greer

# ERICSA 2024 CONFERENCE RECAP

ERICSA 2024 in Grand Rapids, Michigan was a phenomenal experience. Downtown was filled with history, unique shops and many different food choices so there was something for everyone! The ERICSA Conference was fun and very educational for all who attended.

The OCSS presentation focused on shifting the emphasis of child support as an enforcement/collection program to a family-focused approach. Overall, the goal is to see people - their traumas, current situations, successes, failures, efforts, etc. rather than just data, and to support the whole family, including fathers, and all types of family structures.

Sessions such as Behavioral Economics, Domestic Violence, and the Overcoming Racial Bias discussed how to achieve the overall all goal and gain respect, understanding, communication, and good relations between the public and the state and tribal child support programs.

Attendees also learned about many topics from a top-level point of view including the OCSS Portal 2.0. Phase 1 of the portal was released on 3/18/24 and in Phase 2 the homepage will change to create a more uniformed look. Also, various contractors spoke about integrating AI into the child support workflow discussing generative AI, benefits of AI, and federal and state policies regarding AI. There were several sessions that provided legislative updates, case law as it relates UIFSA and FFCCSOA, discussion over jurisdictional issues and much more.

The Interjurisdictional (IJ) Fair was the perfect way to wrap up the conference by meeting new people, networking, and getting contact information from other states to bring back to our offices and improve working relationships throughout the country.

Written by: Ali Robertson

# TRIBAL 2024 CONFERENCE RECAP

The National Tribal Child Support Associate (NTCSA) held their annual conference June 16th-20th, in the beautiful Great Smokey Mountains of Cherokee, North Carolina. The NTCSA is a non-profit organization that partners with tribal, state, and federal professionals to improve the quality of life for Native children through communication, training, and public awareness. This year, Marcie Martinez, Terri Greer, Kaye Long and Lori Myers from DCF Central Admin attended as well as Brandi Ridgeway, from YoungWilliams. The conference consisted of several plenary sessions and more than 35 different breakout sessions. The welcome ceremony included a presentation of dozens of Tribal flags, native language prayers, native music and some very young children entertaining us with various dances honoring animals.

While there are over 570 federally recognized Tribes, just over 60 of them have IV-D child support agencies, two of which are in Kansas. Most of these agencies have small caseloads, few staff and one office. It was very interesting to learn how these individual IV-D agencies are much more a part of their community and culture than any state agency ever could be. Tribal agencies partner with volunteers and elders in their community to help educate teenagers on the benefits of avoiding early parenthood and the importance of each child having two involved parents. The agencies also work with non-custodial parents to provide more NCP related services and to allow NCPs to make in-kind payments rather than cash support. NCPs can receive credit for providing childcare services, firewood or even hunted game for the children. CPs report the received service, and the NCPs are given an adjustment to the monthly support or support arrears. This helps promote co-parenting and keeps NCPs more involved in the children's lives and most importantly, helps provide for the needs of the children. While many of these agencies are very small in size, they are very dedicated to their jobs and helping meet the needs of their Tribal families and communities.

If you have a chance to visit Cherokee, NC, I highly recommend it, but I offer a few words of advice:

1. Uber will take you from the airport to Cherokee, but there is no Uber from Cherokee to the airport.
2. If you ask nicely, Bobby from the hotel valet staff, will take you to Dollar General when he's done with his shift, and he will even wait for you to do your shopping so he can take you back to the hotel. He's going to retire in 5 years, so you have time to plan a trip.
3. Bring your walking shoes and hiking boots. We didn't get much time to enjoy the outdoors, but what we did get to see was stunning.

Written by: Brandi Ridgeway

# SAVE THE DATE

The 2025 KCSEA Annual Educational Conference is tentatively scheduled for June 12 & 13, 2025. Stay tuned for further details.

## JOIN OUR TEAM & MORE!

Currently Accepting  
Award Nominations



**CLICK HERE**



Self-nominate  
yourself for a  
Board Member Position



Please Take the  
2024 Conference  
Survey

