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1 Introduction

In 2010, the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) introduced the Child Support Portal (CSP), initially called the State Services Portal, a secure Internet gateway that provides access to Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS) data and other services for state child support programs. It provides a way for states to access existing FPLS information and offers a quick and inexpensive way to take advantage of new applications.

The Communication Center application allows you to securely exchange communications and documents with states, employers, and OCSE. This guide contains navigation instructions for using the Communication Center.
1.1 How the Communication Center Assists with Case Management

Users may send communications to an employer, OCSE, or state based on the Communication Type selected or to a specific Portal user. All Portal users can send and receive communications.

1.2 General Tips for Using the Portal

Follow these general tips for using the Portal:

- Submit suggestions or ideas regarding the Portal using the Feedback link.
- View Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on each page for guidance on using applications.
- Use the Contact Us link found on each page or contact your State Technical Support Liaison for additional help.
- Hover over the symbol to see additional information about a field.
- Note that fields marked with a red asterisk (*) are required fields.

1.3 Using This Guide

You will find the following messages throughout this guide. The corresponding icons indicate whether the information is a note or warning.

**Notes**

Notes contain important information and additional hints to improve your results.

**Warnings**

You must carefully follow warnings to avoid undesirable results.
2 Navigating the Communication Center Application

- Select Communication Center from the Select Application drop-down list in the blue navigation bar at the top of the page
- Click the Communication Center link from the blue navigation bar at the top of the page
- Click the New or New Past Due links located under Communications on the right side of the page

![Image: Welcome to the Child Support Portal]

Figure 2-1: Welcome to the Child Support Portal
The Communication Center page (Figure 2-2) gives you access to initiate a new communication and to view received or initiated communications. The Received tab displays communications you received from another user. The Initiated tab displays communications you sent to another user.

![Figure 2-2: Communication Center – Received Communications](image-url)
2.1 Initiate New Communication

All Portal users can send a communication. Click New Communication to initiate a new communication with an employer, **OCSE, or state (Figure 2-3).

**State to OCSE/OCSE to State communication is reserved for the Senior Management team at the North Carolina Central Office.**
From the New Communication page (Figure 2-4), select **Employer** or **State** from the **Who do you want to communicate with?** drop down list.

**Figure 2-4: New Communication – Select Recipient**

If you select **Employer**, enter the employer’s Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) or name in the **Employer** field to search and select from a list of participating employers (Figure 2-5). Do not include a dash when entering the FEIN.

**Figure 2-5: New Communication – Employer**
If you select **State**, select one or more participating states from the **State** drop-down list (Figure 2-6).

![Figure 2-6: New Communication – State](image)
Select the **Communication Type** from the drop-down list (Figure 2-7) for the type of communication you are sending. The Communication Type directs the communication to designated recipients as determined by the receiving organization unless you choose to direct the communication to a specific recipient. **Communication Type** options vary depending on the **Who do you want to communicate with?** selection:

**Table 2-1: Communication Types**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Types</th>
<th>Employer</th>
<th>OCSE</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Case or Program Question</td>
<td>Income Withholding</td>
<td>Employer Services</td>
<td>Case Inquiry or Central Registry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lump Sum</td>
<td>Federal Offset</td>
<td>Federal Offset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medical Support Order</td>
<td>FPLS Support</td>
<td>General Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Hire and Multistate Reporting</td>
<td>Intergovernmental (IRG)</td>
<td>Passport Denial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment Inquiry</td>
<td>IRS Safeguards and Audit</td>
<td>Special Collections (MSFIDM and Insurance Match)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Verification of Employment</td>
<td>Locate Inquiry and Family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Violence Override</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Passport Denial</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regional Office</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Collections (MSFIDM and Insurance Match)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**State to OCSE/OCSE to State communication is reserved for the Senior Management team at the North Carolina Central Office.**
Figure 2-7: New Communication – State Communication Types
For State communications you may communicate with specific recipients in that state by selecting **Yes** for **Do you want to communicate with a specific recipient?**

![Figure 2-8: New Communication – Communicate with Specific Recipient]

Click **Add Recipient** to display the Select Recipient window. Enter recipient **First Name**, **Last Name**, or **Email Address** and click **Go**. From the results, click **Select** for the desired recipient. You may select up to five recipients. Click **Submit** to finalize your selection (Figure 2-9).

![Figure 2-9: New Communication – Select Recipient]
To copy a user from your state, click **Yes** for *Do you want to copy someone from your organization?* (Figure 2-10). Click **Add Recipient** to display the Select Recipient window to search and select the desired recipient.

![Figure 2-10: New Communication – Copy Someone From Your Organization](image)

**Figure 2-10: New Communication – Copy Someone From Your Organization**
Enter a **Subject** (Figure 2-11), **SSN** and **Case ID** (when appropriate), and **Message** in the designated fields.

![Figure 2-11: New Communication](image)

**Figure 2-11: New Communication**
If you need to send an accompanying document, click **Add Document** (Figure 2-12). DOC, DOCX, PDF, XLS, XLSX, JPEG, JPG, TXT, and PNG files up to 400mb each are allowed. You may add up to five documents.

![Figure 2-12: New Communication – Add Document](image)

Select **Yes** for **Is a response needed?** (Figure 2-13) to notify the recipient if you require a response.

![Figure 2-13: New Communication – Response Needed](image)
Select **Yes** for *Is there a due date?* (Figure 2-14) if you require a response by a specific date. Click **Submit** to send the communication.

**Figure 2-14: New Communication – Due Date Selection**
If the communication was successfully submitted, a confirmation message will display (Figure 2-15).

Figure 2-15: New Communication Sent
The Communication Center Initiated tab displays the new communication and the Last Action shows as New/Sent (Figure 2-16).

![Figure 2-16: Communication Center – New Communication Sent](image)

Communications are stored for 60 days from the date they were initiated. After 60 days, communications and their attachments are purged and are no longer available.
2.2 Receive New Communication

It is important to monitor the Communication Center for incoming communications to make sure you respond to them timely. Additionally, email alerts are sent to alert you to access the Communication Center when a communication is received. Access your communications by clicking the **New** or **New Past Due** buttons located under Communications on the right side of the Welcome to Child Support Portal page. From the Communication Center page, click the **Received** tab. Communications display in the Communications table (Figure 2-17).

![Communication Center – Received Communications](image)

**Figure 2-17: Communication Center – Received Communications**
Click **New/Sent** in the Last Action column to view the communication (Figure 2-18). The View Communication page will display.

**Figure 2-18: Communication Center – Received Communications**
The View Communication page (Figure 2-19) displays the communication heading, the original communication, subsequent responses, and attachments. The communication heading includes the following details:

- Date Initiated
- Due Date
- From (Organization)
- Sender
- Communication Type
- Subject
- SSN
- Case ID
- Last Action
- Last Action Date

The next section of the View Communication page includes the original communication details and any responses, if available. The details include:

- To
- From (Organization)
- Date
- Message
- Attachments
- Response is required
- Due Date
Once the intended recipient views a communication, the Last Action will display as Read. The Last Action is not updated to Read if someone who is copied on the communication views it.
2.2.1 Respond to Communication

The View Communication page displays the following available actions:

- Print PDF
- Undo Last Action – return to the Communication Center without updating the Last Action status
- Respond
- Forward – send the communication to someone in your state, another state, OCSE, or an employer
- Return – return to the Communication Center (Last Action status will be updated)

Click **Respond** to reply to the communication. On the Respond to Communication page, type your response in the **Message** field (Figure 2-20) and indicate if the communication requires a response or a due date. Attach any documents, if needed, and click **Submit**.

![Figure 2-20: Respond to Communication](image)
If the communication was successfully submitted, a confirmation message will display (Figure 2-21).

**Figure 2-21: Response Sent**
The Communication Center page now shows the Last Action for the communication as Responded in the Communications table (Figure 2-22).

![Communication Center - Last Action Updated to Responded](image)

**Figure 2-22: Communication Center – Last Action Updated to Responded**
2.2.2 Forward Communication

The Communication Center allows users to forward communications to someone in your state, an employer, OCSE, or another state. Anyone who has received a communication may forward the communication, including those who were copied. Click the Last Action in the Communications table to view the communication for forwarding (Figure 2-23).

![Communication Center](image)

**Figure 2-23: Communication Center**

*Communications may be forwarded to up to five recipients at a time.*
Click **Forward** (Figure 2-24) to access the Select Recipient window.

**Figure 2-24: View Communication – Forward**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date Initiated: 06/10/2021 2:00PM</th>
<th>From: South Carolina</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date: 06/10/2021 2:00PM</td>
<td>To: South Carolina / Chris Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From: South Carolina</td>
<td>Message: We have sent a UPSA parcel with all the detailed documentation for NOP James Smith SSN: 000-00-6988. Let us know if you need additional information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication Type: Passport Denial</td>
<td>Attachments: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject: SSN: 000-00-6988 Regarding Passport Denial</td>
<td>Response is not required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSN: 000-00-6988</td>
<td>Due Date: N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case ID: 1234564321</td>
<td>From: Maryland / Sid Priestwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Action: Responded</td>
<td>Date: 06/06/2021 1:30PM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Action Date: 06/06/2021</td>
<td>Message: Can you send the requested details of SSN: 000-00-6988 to Chris. Thank you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments: N/A</td>
<td>Response is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: N/A</td>
<td>From: Maryland / Mary Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message: Can you send us the pending child support amends details of NOP James Smith SSN: 000-00-6988.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachments: N/A</td>
<td>Response is required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date: N/A</td>
<td>From: South Carolina / Chris Johnson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Message:</td>
<td>Date: 06/06/2021 2:00PM</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[![Image of the Child Support Portal interface showing View Communication with an email from South Carolina to Maryland, discussing a passport denial and requesting additional information.](image-url)]
Select **Yes** to forward the communication to someone in your state (Figure 2-25). Enter the recipient’s **First Name**, **Last Name**, or **Email Address** and click **Go** to search for results.

*Figure 2-25: Select Recipient – Someone in Your State*
Click **Select** beside the appropriate recipient (Figure 2-26). You may select up to five recipients. When you have finished selecting your recipient(s), click **Submit** to finalize your selection(s) and return to the communication.

**Figure 2-26: Select Recipient – Multiple Recipients Selected**
If you want to forward the communication to an employer select **No** (Figure 2-27). Select **Employer** from the **Who do you want to forward it to?** drop-down list. Enter the employer’s FEIN or name in the **Employer** field and select from the responses. Do not include a dash when entering the FEIN.

![Select Recipient](image)

**Figure 2-27: Select Recipient – Employer**
If you want to forward the communication to another state, select **State** from the **Who do you want to forward it to?** drop-down list. Select the state from the drop-down list (Figure 2-28).

If you want to forward the communication to a specific person in the other state, select **Yes** to access the Select Recipient window. Enter the **First Name**, **Last Name**, or **Email Address** and click **Go** to search for the recipient. In the results table, click **Select** next to the appropriate recipient. Once you have selected the recipient, click **Submit**.

![Figure 2-28: Select Recipient – State](image-url)
Next, select the appropriate **Communication Type** from the drop-down list (Figure 2-29) and click **Submit**.

![Select Recipient - Communication Type](image.png)

**Figure 2-29: Select Recipient – Communication Type**
Back on the Forward Communication page (Figure 2-30), you may select Add Recipient to include another recipient. To remove a recipient, click the X next to the recipient’s name. Next, enter the Message text, attach documents, and indicate if a response or a due date is required. Click Submit to forward the communication.

Figure 2-30: Forward Communication
A confirmation message will display to indicate the communication was successfully sent (Figure 2-31).

Figure 2-31: Communication Sent
The Communications table now displays multiple figures in the Users column for the communication and Forwarded in the Last Action column (Figure 2-32).

Figure 2-32: Communication Center – Forwarded Communication
2.3 Close Communication

Only the user who initiated the communication may close the communication. Click the Last Action for the communication from the Initiated tab (Figure 2-33) to view and close the communication. Closed communications no longer appear in the Communications table for any user once they have been closed.

Figure 2-33: Communication Center – Initiated Communications
Click **Mark as Closed** to close the communication (Figure 2-34). Alternately, you can respond to the communication and close it at the same time by clicking **Respond & Close**.

Figure 2-34: View Communication – Mark as Closed
Click **Yes** in the Close Communication window to confirm that you want to close the communication (Figure 2-35).

![Figure 2-35: Close Communication](image)

The closed communication no longer appears in the Communications table (Figure 2-36). Although they do not appear in the Communications table, they are available to view 60 days from the initiated date. To view a previously closed communication, use the advanced filtering options on the Communication Center page.

![Figure 2-36: Communication Center – Initiated Communications](image)
2.4 Search for Communication

The search options on the Communication Center page allow users to search for specific communications and to view previously closed communications. Communications are retained for sixty days in the Communication Center before they are purged. To search for received communications, click the Received tab. To search for initiated communications, click the Initiated tab. Enter key words in the search bar and select **Subject**, **From** (Received only), **To** (Initiated only), **Sender** (Received only), or **Message** to search for a specific communication. Click the search icon to view results. The results display in the Communications table (Figure 2-37).

![Communication Center](image)

**Figure 2-37: Communication Center – Search for Communications**
Click **Show More Options** (Figure 2-38) to expand the search filters. The additional options include:

- Last Action
- From Due Date
- To Due Date
- SSN
- Case ID

Click the arrows located at the top of each column to sort the communication results within the table. To clear the filtered results, click **Reset**.

![Communication Center – Show More Options](image-url)