

FALL 2024

ERICSA Times

NEWS FROM ERICSA & THE CHILD SUPPORT COMMUNITY

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Grand Rapids Conference

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ERICSA's 2024 Annual Conference Wrap-Up

LORETTA EVERETT, ERICSA President



W

hat a great conference! Michigan did not disappoint. I would like to thank everyone from Michigan who assisted with the conference. They really provided the "Helping Hands" in our theme

Helping Hands – Bridging Bright Futures for

Families. I would also like to thank the sponsors and exhibitors. Without the local state staff and our sponsors and exhibitors, this conference would be impossible to pull together.

I hope everyone had the opportunity to make some new connections, have some laughs and learn some things along the way. I found several contacts from Oklahoma to ask about a case that I needed assistance with some questions (Shout out to my new Oklahoma friends: THANKS!). I've already been putting the other helpful things I've learned about interstate to use and utilizing the useful tools and resources.

I enjoyed the beautiful architecture and views of Grand Rapids and the Amway Grand Plaza. The President's Reception in the Imperial Ballroom was absolutely stunning. My room overlooking the river was gorgeous. I definitely got used to waking up and sipping some coffee while overlooking the river every day.

continues



ERICSA
EASTERN REGIONAL INTERSTATE
CHILD SUPPORT ASSOCIATION

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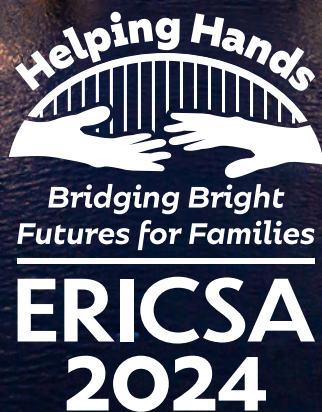
Speaking of views, I hope everyone had the opportunity to see the partial eclipse during the break.

ERICSA still has more information available to you. September 11, 2024, is our annual virtual Intergovernmental Training Event and don't forget to check out our website at ericsa.org for resources and news.

We look forward to seeing you all again in Norfolk, Virginia in 2025.

Helping Hands in Grand Rapids

LISA SKENANDORE, *ERICSA Immediate Past President*



ERICSA held our 61st annual conference in the beautiful city of Grand Rapids, Michigan this past April. We had a record-breaking attendance and a sold-out conference with the help of the great Michigan team!

I am very grateful for the board and the conference planning committee meeting, led by President-Elect Loretta Everett, for putting together such a great conference. The hard work and dedication of the entire planning team is to be commended as we could not do this without all their volunteer support. The Michigan team that volunteered and assisted were absolutely phenomenal.

It was a highlight for me personally to learn the history of President Gerald Ford Jr.'s integral role in IV-D regulations and that he called Grand Rapids home. Hopefully, many who attended ERICSA were also able to visit the Gerald R. Ford Museum or the house where he was raised. I was very thankful to Bob Williams for sharing the remarkable story of President Ford with all of us. If I piqued your interest, I highly encourage you to reach out to Bob to learn more.

Speaking of regulations, I was so proud of the ERICSA board for their support and comments on the following regulations: Elimination of the Tribal Match;

the Modifications to Performance Standards During National Disasters and Other Calamities; Parentage Establishment in the Child Support Services Program, and finally, submitted comments in response to the House Ways & Means Work & Welfare Oversight Joint Subcommittee Hearing on Tribal and Contractor Access to FTI and the Tax Offset Program. You can find all of these [here](#).

We also welcomed four new board members in Grand Rapids. We are very fortunate to have

Stacie Alexander, Irene Curran, Verna Donnelly, and Elizabeth West join us.

I have been very honored to lead this wonderful organization this past year. I am very thankful for the opportunity and look forward to continuing the great work we do here at ERICSA to support our families. In closing, I extend my heartfelt condolences and wish peace and comfort to the families and coworkers of Kesha Taylor-Jordan and ERICSA Past President Pam Sala.



MESSAGE FROM MICHIGAN

Bridging Bright Futures!

ERIN FRISCH

Title IV-D Director, Michigan Office of Child Support

As the host state for the ERICSA 61st Annual Training Conference and Exposition we are so glad you could join us! The conference theme of "Helping Hands – Bridging Bright Futures for Families" was

fitting with our conference location on the river in downtown Grand Rapids. The bridge metaphor also represents a lot of the work we are doing as child support professionals, including the work we do intergovernmentally. We are building strong systems to help families cross safely over turbulent times, to get to a more secure and calm future.

Attending the ERICSA conference is meant to be a transformative experience, or at least one that will open your eyes to new experiences and learning. We can say we shared a memorable experience with the near full solar eclipse we were able to collectively witness. It seemed fitting as child support programs are shifting and changing in ways that go beyond the everyday.

Some highlights for me included:

- A fascinating discussion on engaged fatherhood programming with Genesee County's Tony McDowell and Shon Hart from Involved Dad.
- The Intergovernmental Fair (IJ Fair) returned and provided an opportunity to connect and collaborate with others doing intergovernmental work in other states and tribes.

- A variety of sessions over the three days covered topics like: ethics, AI, enforcement, psychological safety, domestic violence, the sovereign citizens movement, and creating an equitable program.



My many thanks to the volunteers and speakers from Michigan whose efforts helped make the conference a great experience. We were pleased to serve in these roles and hope you felt our hospitality and welcome.

Thank you to all our sponsors and exhibitors. Without your support, we would not be able to offer this learning experience and welcome so many folks who may have never been to Michigan before. And of course, on behalf of the Michigan Office of Child Support, thank you ERICSA for choosing Grand Rapids as the location this year, and thanks to all the attendees for coming to see us in Michigan. I hope you all left Grand Rapids feeling invigorated and seeing your work with fresh eyes!

FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR

Reflections

RAYMOND CIVITELLA

Vice President of Conference Operations and Onsite Committee Chair

When I was named Vice President of Conference Operations and the Onsite Committee Chair for the 61st Annual ERICSA Training Conference in

Grand Rapids, I knew I was stepping into some large shoes and taking on a tremendous task. Fortunately for me and the organization, Sharon Pizzuti, the former VP and Chair left me a detailed outline to follow and was available to help me along every step of the way. In addition to Sharon's assistance, I relied heavily on the help of Melissa and her team at MgR & Associates. With their years of experience organizing events, they make the hard work look easy.

With as much as this committee is tasked to accomplish, it would have been impossible to succeed without the large group of volunteers that stepped in to help. Long before the beginning of the conference we had volunteers coordinating the major events such as the President's Reception, the Wednesday night banquet, and after party. On day one of the event, we had volunteers helping with registration and putting on the first timers' event. We organized the moderators' meetings and prepared all the packets and

forms needed for each session. Our committee researched and brought in the color guard and children's choir to entertain everyone during the opening ceremonies. Some of the group even helped me pack up our booth and put it in President Elect Loretta Everett's car.

I would like to say that everything went off without a hitch but that wouldn't be true. What I can say is that we all did the best we could, and hopefully none of our hiccups were noticeable.

As we prepare for the 2025 Event in Norfolk, I would once again like to thank everyone who helped make our conference in Grand Rapids such a success, and I can't wait to work with now President Everett, MgR and Associates, returning volunteers, and new volunteers.



CONFERENCE CHARITY

Kids' Food Basket

RIEDA ABRAMS-MILLER

Vice President of Exhibitors & Sponsors

y first year as VP of Exhibitors and Sponsors was a rousing success because of YOU!

- 28 Exhibitors

- 17 Sponsors

- 31 Donors of Raffle/Auction Items

- 600+ Generous Hearts

This year, we chose Kids' Food Basket (KFB) as our charity and held a raffle and silent auction. Kids' Food Basket exists to increase access to healthy food for children and their families. KFB began with a phone call of concern for students from a local school principal. Many students regularly visited the cafeteria after school in search of food to take home. What started with feeding 125 students at three schools in Kent County has grown in 20+ years to serve thousands of children and families in four counties throughout West Michigan every day.

Through the generosity of those who donated and the enormous hearts of our ERICSA Conference attendees, we raised \$10,005 for this wonderful organization. Thank you to all who contributed with their donations, ticket purchases, auction bids, and time. I was humbled, and also delighted, to present such a generous check to Kids' Food Basket.

ERICSA is a successful professional association because, in large part, of our sponsors and exhibitors. We are grateful for their ongoing support and willingness to share their knowledge and skills with us. As ERICSA has grown and adjusted to reach more of our members, it is their support and involvement that makes it possible. We recognize and thank you all for your commitment to ERICSA and the child support program.



Thank you to our Sponsors!

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Thank you to our Exhibitors!



THE FELIX INFAUSTO AWARD*Michael P. McGuire II Presented with the Highest ERICSA Honor*

LISA SKENANDORE
ERICSA Immediate Past President

I am incredibly honored to have bestowed the Felix Infausto Award to Michael P. McGuire II. They say this is the pinnacle of the presidential duties for ERICSA, and I can attest that it requires considerable time and thought to recognize someone for this award. It's no small task, as Felix was instrumental and highly regarded within our organization and the child support community.

I was fortunate to begin my journey with ERICSA alongside Mike. We joined the board together and progressed to the executive level together. When Mike was President-Elect, preparing for his presidential year and the related conference, the pandemic hit. We had to cancel the annual in-person event and transition to a virtual format. Mike handled this transition with grace and fortitude, knowing how much our membership values the annual training. He never once complained; instead, he always asked what he could do to help. This attitude continues to this day. Whether we need his legal expertise for the charity raffle or simply a sounding board for leadership decisions, he is always present. Mike is always thoughtful and kind, consistently checking in to ensure everyone is doing well. He truly epitomizes the spirit of collaboration and working together for a positive good.



Michael P. McGuire II and Lisa Skenandore



2024 RECOGNITION AWARDS

ERICSA Awards of Professional Excellence

JOHN HURST

*Recognitions Committee & Patrick W. Quinn
Intergovernmental Scholarship Award Chair*

One of the many highlights of the 2024 ERICSA Annual Conference was the presentation of the ERICSA Awards of Professional Excellence and the Patrick W. Quinn Intergovernmental Award. These awards allow child support professionals to recognize the outstanding work performed by their co-workers, manager or supervisor, or a colleague from another jurisdiction. The call for nominations was sent on January 17th. The Recognitions Committee then had the challenging task of selecting the award recipients from the thirty-six nominations received.

The award recipients recognized at the 2024 ERICSA Conference in Grand Rapids were:

- Award of Professional Excellence – Frontline Child Support Professional: **Janet Jones** (Agent 3, Georgia Division of Child Support Services)
- Award of Professional Excellence – Manager/Supervisor: **Kate Weaver** (Referee Supervisor, Oakland County Friend of the Court, Michigan)
- Award of Professional Excellence – Intergovernmental Cooperation: **Haywood Saunders** (Intergovernmental Specialist Senior, Virginia Division of Child Support Enforcement)
- Patrick W. Quinn Intergovernmental Award: **Rob Velcoff** (Consultant, Intergovernmental Support Services)

Congratulations to each of the award recipients! The work each of you do matters and is important. Thank you to the members of the 2024 Recognitions Committee for your great work in serving on the committee!



Kate Weaver, Manager/Supervisor
Award Winner



Haywood Saunders, Intergovernmental
Cooperation Award Winner



Lisa Skenandore and Rob Velcoff,
Patrick W. Quinn Intergovernmental
Award Winner

SCHOLARSHIPS

The Gordon Moseley Rising Star Scholarships

TIM CAWOSKI
Scholarship Chair



Amanda Knights, Tim Cawoski, Danielle Rice

Each year, one scholarship is awarded to a child support professional who has never attended an in-person ERICSA conference. One from the conference host state and another is awarded to a professional from outside of the host state. The award covers the registration fee, hotel room, transportation costs to and from the conference, and a daily stipend for the days of attendance.

HOST STATE WINNER

Danielle Rice, Interstate Caseworker
13th Circuit Court, Friend of the Court

"My time spent at the 61st Annual ERICSA Training Conference was nothing short of amazing! I met so many individuals from all over the country. I have worked in child support for nearly six years in a small office. Having the opportunity to network with workers from other jurisdictions provided me with a very eye-opening view of the differences between my office and theirs that I had no idea even existed.

While every session I attended provided much-needed insight and information, the two sessions that I attended that helped me the most were the State Roundtable: Large Mid-North States and the 'Why Do Other States Do That!?' session. Most of the cases on my caseload involve working with the states in the Great Lakes Region. Learning about the other states' processes was really helpful and gave me some fantastic tips to take back to my office. Being relatively new to the interstate world, I had no idea that child support cases were handled so differently throughout the country!

I am sincerely grateful to the scholarship committee for choosing me for one of the awards and allowing me to attend this year's conference. It was a very memorable experience!"

OTHER STATE WINNER

Amanda Knights, Child Support Specialist
Carroll County DSS Child Support Administration, Westminster, MD

"This year, the organization celebrated sixty years of successfully providing an opportunity for learning, growth, and networking. In addition, this year was my first time attending an ERICSA conference as the 'Gordon Moseley Rising Star Scholarship' winner. As described by my co-workers who have previously attended, ERICSA is a week of attending workshops and meeting out-of-state child support workers. It was now my time to experience this event and develop an opinion of my own. Most importantly, it was my time to maximize the resources available that would essentially elevate the type of professional I aim to be. Overall, my experience exceeded my expectations. I applied for this year's scholarship with the intention of increasing my knowledge and relaying new information to my child support unit. Today, I am glad to report that each workshop effectively delivered information relevant to the current nature of child support."

Membership Committee Updates

LAURA BERNACKI STONE

Honorary Board Member and Past President



One of the best parts of being the immediate past president is that I have the pleasure of facilitating the nominations committee. This committee reviews applicants and

proposes board members for vote by the general membership at the annual conference.

I am proud of my time and experiences on the board, and as I move to the honorary board, I wish you all the best and hope that you enjoy your time. All of the ERICSA community welcomes you.

This year, I have the pleasure of announcing the following Executive Board members:

Loretta Everett, President

Nick Palos, President-Elect

Ray Civitella, VP of Conference Operations

Diane Potts, VP of Policy and Legislation

Rieda Abrams-Miller, VP of Exhibitors and Sponsors

Tammy Pearson, Secretary

Patterson Poulson, Treasurer

Lisa Skenandore, Immediate Past President

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

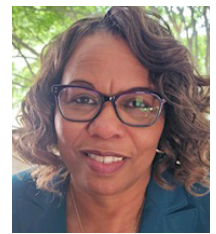
In addition, we added a few new Board members. Please help me welcome **Stacie Alexander, Irene Curran, Verna Donnelly, Jennifer McFaggan, and Elizabeth West.**



Stacie Alexander



Irene Curran



Verna Donnelly



Jennifer McFaggan



Elizabeth West

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Comprehensive lists of board members can be found here:

- **Executive**
- **Directors**
- **Honorary**
- **Life Members**

AWARD AND RECOGNITION

Congratulations to Sharon Pizzuti ERICSA Board of Director

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haron Pizzuti received the NCSEA Private Sector Individual Award at the 2024 NCSEA Leadership Symposium!

We are very proud of Sharon and everything she does for the child

support community and ERICSA.

Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition. We wish you even more success in the future.

#NCSEA2024 #LeadershipSymposium
#Congratulations



Congratulations NCSEA Celebrating 50 Years - Shaping the Future of Child Support

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his year's theme, "Leading with Heart and Soul". Congratulations NCSEA for your dedication, passion, and core values on providing service to our communities for 50 years.

May you continue to succeed, grow, and reach the highest peaks!



Child Support Awareness Month

TAMMY PEARSON
ERICSA Secretary



Child Support Awareness Month calls attention to the achievements of the child support program and its employees and acknowledges the hardworking

parents who spend time with their children and who make regular child support payments to safeguard their children's future.

We are grateful that we still celebrate Child Support Awareness Month, and we understand it is still an occasion to honor our staff and the families we serve. There are many ways you can observe this month and do your part in ensuring each child has the necessary resources available to move ahead and live a comfortable life. If you take a small step today, you will be paving the way for a bright future for generations to come.

“Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future.”

—John F. Kennedy

Check out the messages from some of our ERICSA members!

STACIE ALEXANDER

The child support program is so much more now than monetary collections. Making the public aware and changing the perception of the program is key to reaching more families with potential need.

SHARON PIZZUTI

ERICSA is dedicated to raising awareness of the child support program because knowledge empowers us to equitably serve and uplift vulnerable populations. Happy Child Support Awareness Month to the thousands of noble child support professionals worldwide from all of us at ERICSA!

ANN MARIE OLDANI AND MARGOT BEAN

As we raise awareness during Child Support Awareness Month this August about the critical services the child support program provides to families, I would like to say "Thank you" to all the child support professionals who work every day to make this the great program that it is. The work you do matters, and it makes a difference!"

SUSAN SMITH

The Indiana Child Support Bureau is excited to celebrate Child Support Awareness Month! Our program collected \$676,651,699 and provided services to 350,967 households (serving 297,000 children) in 2023. Our Kidsline Customer Service Representatives handled 136,556 calls and improved call times by 38 seconds with a 96% answer rate. Our program also opened 16,731 new IV-D cases (FY2023)!

NOELITA L. LUGO

As families begin or prepare for the beginning of the school year, I'm reminded of the millions of children (1 out of 4) who are impacted by the child support program. Child Support Awareness Month is aptly timed with this annual ritual of getting ready for school. Day in and out, child support professionals tirelessly work to ensure that parents provide the emotional and financial support their children need. I'm proud to be part of this community and know the positive impact child support services can have on family outcomes.

DANA GRIMM

Being involved in Child Support brings great pride to my professional career and fulfills my personal commitment to better the lives of children. I celebrate Child Support Awareness Month, which recognizes the dedicated efforts of agencies and individuals committed to strengthening family units and prioritizing children's needs for stable financial, emotional, and medical support. Child support extends beyond financial assistance; it is pivotal in fostering strong and thriving families. It is a vital program in addressing child poverty. When child support payments are reliable, they help children grow up in a stable environment by covering their basic needs, education, and healthcare.

Tribute to Pam Sala

There are no truer words spoken about Pam Sala's strength and dedication to her profession of working with children. Pam exemplified her commitment and perseverance toward making a better life for children. She has always stood strong and was willing to go the extra mile. She was a past ERICSA president, and her leadership was undeniable. She worked tirelessly for the well-being of children. Pam was also a mentor for new board members in the ERICSA organization. Her expertise was always welcomed, as she never turned down a challenge to make new board members better people and workers in the child support world. When you speak of Pam, you have to smile. She was gracious and kind, and she always seemed to have that beautiful smile when she was around her ERICSA family. The ERICSA family lost a true warrior when Pam passed away. But her memories will live on because of who she was. I was so pleased to have met Pam and honored to have her as a friend. Pam was a dear friend to all and a mentor to many.

In closing, I would be remiss not to include Pam's last day with ERICSA. Pam's dear friend Sharon Pizzuti brought Pam to the most recent ERICSA Conference in Michigan this past April. This was the first time many of us had seen her in a couple of years, as Pam had been battling pancreatic



cancer. She was greeted with open arms by her ERICSA friends. You could see the sheer joy and happiness among all who welcomed her. Pam was truly the major attraction. She looked amazing that night. Saying good-bye is always tough, especially for anyone diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. But

Pam had the time of her life with everyone. When the night came to an end, Sharon drove Pam home, and Pam's parting words to Sharon were, "I felt like a queen tonight." Pam passed away early the next morning. The ERICSA family was truly blessed by Pam, our queen, that night. Rest in peace forever, Pam. Your friends and family are at ERICSA.



Pam enjoying past ERICSA Conferences with fellow board members.

2024 VIRTUAL EVENTS



INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRAINING EVENT

Wednesday, September 11, 2024
10:00 am – 4:30 pm ET

The Eastern Regional Interstate Child Support Association is hosting our fourth virtual Intergovernmental Training Event. Attendance at this event is exclusive for members of ERICSA.

This training event is a continuation of the excellent intergovernmental training sessions ERICSA is committed to provide to its members during the annual conferences. It will take place on Wednesday, September 11, 2024, from 10:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. ET with an opening plenary and eight presentations during four time slots.

Please note: If you registered for the 61st Annual ERICSA Conference April 7 – 11 in Grand Rapids, you are already registered for this event. You do not need to register or pay an additional fee because you are already a member of ERICSA.

DETAILED AGENDA

REGISTER NOW



JOINT VIRTUAL MINI IJ FAIR

Wednesday, October 30th
2:00 p.m – 3:15 pm ET

ERICSA, WICSEC and NTCSA are pleased to present the next Virtual IJ Fair where child support professionals have joined together to bring you this Creating Connections and Expanding our possibilities IJ Fair event to network, exchange contact information, and learn about the IV-D programs of other jurisdictions.

Registration is FREE and will open in September!

The last IJ Fair was held in May and the recording can be found [here](#).



INTERGOVERNMENTAL WEBINAR

Wednesday, November 13th
2:00 pm – 3:15 pm EST

ERICSA will host its second Intergovernmental Webinar of the year.

Registration is FREE and will open in October!

The last intergovernmental webinar *Intergovernmental Communication Tools: Effectively Managing the Flow of Information* was held in February and the recording can be found [here](#).

Policy and Planning also had a webinar in June and the recording can be found [here](#).

COMING SOON: THE ERICSA BULLETIN BOARD

We are excited to announce the upcoming launch of the ERICSA Bulletin Board, your soon-to-be source for the latest news, updates, and essential information in the child support community. This platform is specifically designed for child support professionals, offering a dynamic space to stay informed and connected with the ever-changing landscape of child support enforcement and policies.

We will have information about:

- What's Happening Across States, Regions, and Tribal Communities
- New Laws and Policies Affecting Child Support
- Upcoming Events

The ERICSA Bulletin Board is on the way—your future go-to resource for staying informed, engaged, and prepared in the child support field. Get ready to explore, connect, and enhance your professional journey as we work together to support families and children across the region. Stay tuned for more updates and prepare to make the most of this exciting new platform!

2025 ERICSA CONFERENCE WORKSHOP TOPIC SUGGESTIONS

The 2025 ERICSA Planning Committee is looking for possible topics for our 62nd Annual ERICSA Conference in Norfolk, Virginia **Sunday May 18 – Thursday, May 22, 2025.**

ERICSA is asking our members and partners to **submit any session topics and descriptions.** We are looking for new topics and ensuring we have topics that address our members concerns and needs.

All Possible Topics and Descriptions must be submitted by close of business Friday, September 27, 2024.

**SUBMIT
WORKSHOP TOPIC**

2025 CONFERENCE

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 18–22, 2025

NORFOLK
VIRGINIA

ERICSA'S 2025 ANNUAL
TRAINING CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

