



Michele Ahern
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2022 NCSEA Board of Directors Election

Experience and Achievements: Over 25 years of public sector experience in programs and policies to reduce **child and family poverty**, including more than a decade in **child support** leadership roles spanning local and federal government.

- **Assistant Deputy Commissioner for Enforcement Operations, NYC Office of Child Support Services** which collects over \$770 million in child support payments annually (2013-Present)
 - Responsible for the appropriate application of administrative and judicial enforcement of child support orders; managing NYC's noncustodial parent employment programs which annually place over 1,000 participants in employment; and identifying new collection strategies.
 - Launch new initiatives to improve case outcomes, such as an early intervention program for parents with new orders; initiatives to reduce noncustodial parent child support debt and partnerships with workforce development to connect noncustodial parents with job training.
- **Chief Advisor to the Commissioner and additional leadership roles, NYC Human Resources Administration**, NYC's principal social services agency serving over 3 million people annually. Advised Commissioner on agency-wide policy and management issues. Led priority cross-agency initiatives. Developed and led employment programs for low-skilled workers. Directed citywide storm response efforts in aftermath of Hurricane Sandy. (2008-2013)
- **Senior Budget Analyst, White House Office of Management and Budget.** Budget, regulatory & policy oversight responsibility for the federal child support program, SNAP and other income support programs. Analyzed and recommended federal child support policy proposals. Three-month detail with DC Child Support. (1998 – 2008)
- **Policy Analyst, US Dept. of Health & Human Services.** Analyzed 1996 welfare reform legislation. (1995 – 1998)





- Board of Directors, 2019-Present
- Policy and Government Relations Committee, Member, 2019-Present
- Legislative Education Sub-Committee, Co-Chair 2019-2021, Member 2016-2021
- Upcoming 2022 Leadership Symposium, Workshop Presenter: *How to Build Child Support Units*
- 2019 Policy Forum, Workshop Moderator: *Helping Noncustodial Parents by Providing Structured Supports for Co-Parenting and Developing Programs that Incentivize Work*
- 2017 Leadership Symposium, Workshop Moderator: *Child Support Distribution-Is it Time to Eliminate Retained Collections?*
- 2016 Leadership Symposium, Workshop Moderator: *Reducing Child Support Debt Owed to the Custodial Parent*





How has your volunteer work with NCSEA prepared you for the commitment of Board service?

My volunteer work with NCSEA prepares me for my commitment to Board service in two ways.

- First, my volunteer experience deepens my appreciation for the invaluable role NCSEA plays in bringing child support professionals together from across the country. I gain so much from participating in committee discussions with other child support professionals, collaborating on papers, and preparing for conferences. These experiences expand my knowledge of the program and provide me with a diverse nationwide professional network which directly benefits the work I do for child support families in New York City. I am running once again for the NCSEA Board because I want to continue to help bring the same invaluable experience I have had to other child support professionals and programs across the country.
- Second, my experience gives me a full understanding of the extent to which volunteers are the lifeblood of NCSEA. Notwithstanding the stellar caliber of NCSEA's staff, the work of NCSEA is the result of the many hours of work of its committed volunteers. This is especially true of the Board of Directors on whom NCSEA depends for year-round leadership and active participation to make possible the substantial output of NCSEA's committees, online resources, communications, conferences and more. I recognize the essential importance of Board service to NCSEA and am prepared to continue to be a committed, active and engaged Board member for another term.





The child support community - and NCSEA as a body - is comprised of diverse individuals and entities, all dedicated to the child support mission, but with very diverse points of view, policies, and processes.

What do you see as the role of the Board in representing those diverse voices and perspectives in shaping the future of child support?

I see the Board as responsible for ensuring that the diverse voices of the child support community are represented in NCSEA and, thereby, in shaping the future of child support. Some of the many ways the Board can achieve this goal are by:

- Maximizing transparency of NCSEA's work to its membership including its committee, conference and event planning activities, as well as decisions of the NCSEA Board. To ensure all voices are represented, it needs to be easy for members to know about the work of NCSEA and how they can participate.





- Striving for broad participation in NCSEA events and use of NCSEA’s on-line resources by the wider child support community. We should continue to expand NCSEA’s virtual resources which grew throughout the pandemic to reach those who are unable to attend in-person events. At the same time, we need to continuously assess who is accessing NCSEA’s resources, and how better to increase participation by those who may be under-represented.
- Ensuring that voices are heard beyond the professionals who run the child support program. NCSEA communications and professional development opportunities should reflect the experiences and diverse perspectives of the families served by the program, as well as of program advocates and partners. Getting a 360-degree view is essential to our ability to improve the child support program so that we achieve better outcomes for families nationwide.
- Finally and critically, in order for the Board to ensure that diverse voices are involved in shaping the future of child support, the Board must not only prioritize efforts to maximize diversity among its own membership, it must continuously reassess the success of those efforts to ensure that results match our intent.

