



## MTS History

**2000:** Interim final rule for tribal child support programs published

**2002-2005:** Tribal Systems Workgroup studied feasibility of automating tribal child support programs, developed essential system requirements, and created the general system design

**2004:** Final rule for tribal child support programs published (45 CFR Part 309)

**2006:** Feasibility study, market study and cost-benefit analysis completed

**2007:** Concurrence of ACF Assistant Secretary to build MTS; software development begins

**2009:** Forest County Potawatomi Community selected to pilot test the MTS

**2010:** Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma joins pilot testing; tribal system regulations published (45 CFR Part 310)

**2012:** MTS Pilot ended

**2013:** MTS Launch planning begins

## Inside this Issue

Welcome from the Roundtable	1
Additional MTS Functionality is Coming	1
MTS Configuration Options	1
Tribal Advance Planning Documents (APDs): Questions and Answers	3
MTS Definitions	4
Letter to Tribal Leaders	4



## Welcome from the Roundtable



The Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE), Division of State and Tribal Systems (DSTS) conducted a presentation on the Model Tribal System (MTS) this month at the third annual Region VI Tribal Child Support Director's Roundtable, co-hosted by the Cherokee Nation, Osage Nation, and Region VI OCSE. The event was held March 4-5 in Catoosa, Oklahoma. More than 55 attendees, including representatives from 12 of the region's 14 tribal child support programs convened to exchange ideas, best practices, and strategies to improve delivery of child support services. DSTS was asked to provide a presentation on configuration options for MTS, the APD (Advance Planning Document) process, and a general MTS overview.

For those of you who were unable to attend, we would like to bring you some highlights from that presentation for this month's MTS FLASH. The original presentation can be found at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/resource/mts-presentation-region-vi-tribal-roundtable>.

## Additional MTS Functionality is Coming



Even as we focus on the national rollout of the MTS, we are still improving the system to meet your needs. DSTS is working with the Modoc Tribe of Oklahoma on a new Automated Clearing House (ACH for direct deposit/debit cards) enhancement to process payment transactions on the system.

The ACH enhancement will allow a tribe to disburse payments to a client's bank account via electronic direct deposit. It will also allow a tribe to disburse payments to a client via direct deposit through a state disbursement unit (SDU).

## MTS Configuration Options



The MTS has a configuration module that allows the tribe to select a wide-range of options in how the system will perform and operate. Examples of configurable items include how the MTS will handle different types of data (automatically update or require the user to confirm they want the data updated), how it will print documents (locally or centrally), what interest rate it will charge on arrears debts, what logos and other graphics are displayed on documents, and other items needed to ensure the system works for each tribe according to their specific policies. The main configuration areas and the options are displayed in the table on page 2.



## MTS Configuration Options

Configuration Items	Options
Tickler Configuration: MTS has 80 different ticklers (alerts) to keep workers informed of case progress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use of all ticklers</li><li>• Timing of all ticklers</li><li>• Create customized ticklers</li></ul>
Document Configuration: MTS has 126 documents that can be generated from pre-defined templates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Document appearance and content</li><li>• Create unlimited additional templates</li></ul>
Office and Worker Configuration: MTS can be configured to support multiple offices, and supervisors have many options for their case workers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assignment of cases to a worker within an office</li><li>• Movement of cases between offices</li><li>• Assignment of caseworkers to roles</li><li>• Assignment of caseworkers to a letter range for automatic assignment of cases to caseworker</li></ul>
Financial Configuration: MTS can be configured to align with your tribe's specific financial processes and policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Late fees</li><li>• Pass-through of current support</li><li>• Pass-through of arrears</li><li>• Bank account for checks and deposits</li><li>• Interest on Child Support Arrears and TANF Arrears</li><li>• Automatic distribution to arrears balances</li><li>• Automatic distribution to fees</li><li>• Check printing</li></ul>
Check Configuration: Checks generated by the MTS have 22 configurable parameters to meet your tribe's needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Signatures (number and placement)</li><li>• Logo</li><li>• MICR encoding</li><li>• Watermarks</li><li>• Payment stub</li><li>• Check content (e.g. case information, address, etc.)</li></ul>



## Tribal Advance Planning Documents (APDs): Questions and Answers



An APD is a document submitted by a tribe seeking funding to install the MTS, a state system, another tribal system, or to make improvements to their installed

copy of the MTS, state or tribal system, as allowed by regulations at 45 CFR Part 310. Here's a collection of questions and answers regarding the APD process.

### Q1: Do I need an APD?

**A1:** You need to submit an APD if you need Federal Financial Participation (FFP) to support your IT needs, unless you are: 1. Using office automation (submit requests through your Annual Budget); 2. building your own system (these costs are not eligible for federal funding); or 3. seeking funding as part of a consortium through the consortium lead.

### Q2: What costs are allowable under an APD?

**A2:** New equipment and software; system installation (MTS, state, or another tribal IV-D system); system enhancement (MTS, state, or another tribal IV-D system); tribal IT and program salaries including staff time to clean-up case data, enter case data, work on design changes, test the system, attend user training, and conduct training; and operating costs and other costs charged by a state or another tribal IV-D program for use of their system.

### Q3: How much money can I apply for?

**A3:** The total APD project amount cannot exceed your program's grant award for the federal fiscal year in which the request is made.

### Q4: What goes into an APD?

**A4:** An APD contains the following items:

- 1) A Sole System Statement. This statement declares that the MTS installation (or state/tribal IV-D system) project is the sole system effort being undertaken by the tribal IV-D program.
- 2) A Length of Time Statement. This statement declares that you agree to use the system for a minimum period of time.
- 3) Projected Resource Requirements. These requirements must include the estimated tribal IT staff, program staff, contractors, computer hardware, software, networking, wiring, training, supplies, service contracts, etc.
- 4) A Proposed Schedule. The schedule must contain sufficient detail to show all of the project's activities and milestones. For each project activity, include a narrative description with start and end times of each task in that activity.
- 5) A Proposed Budget. The budget should list all line items (for example, staff, hardware, software, supplies, travel) and include each contract separately, shown by fiscal quarter and summed to the fiscal year.
- 6) Procurements and Contracts. The APD should include a schedule of proposed procurements. As solicitations and contracts are developed, submit to OCSE for approval before execution.

### Q5: Can I get help with my APD prior to submission?

**A5:** Absolutely! DSTS is here to help you. When you are ready to begin drafting your APD, please contact us to arrange a technical assistance conference call so we can assist you prior to your first draft. We also encourage you to share a draft of your APD before formally submitting the final version. We are here to help you throughout this process.



## MTS Definitions



**Code:** The technical underlying structure for the MTS that drives all functionality.

**Disbursement:** The amount of child support sent to the payee. Disbursement is distinct from “distribution” in that disbursements are the amounts that are actually remitted to the payee, where “distribution” describes how a payment is allocated to obligations and debts owed by the paying parent.

**Distribution:** How a child support payment is divided between current support, arrears, and different debts owed to the family and/or to a tribe or other jurisdiction.

**End User:** A tribal IV-D program caseworker, supervisor, or financial specialist trained to use some or all of the MTS to perform their assigned functions.

**Tribal Organization/Consortium Lead:** A tribe approved by OCSE to serve as the leader for a group of member tribes. The Tribal Organization or Consortium Lead will provide services to its members that may include: completion of APDs, training, system customization, case conversion and data entry, and other services.

**System Update:** Replacing the software of an existing installation with a new version. This may include running database scripts and deploying new code. The database scripts and new code for the MTS will be obtained from OCSE.

## Letter to Tribal Leaders



At the beginning of November, we sent a letter to tribal leaders to hear about your tribe’s plans for the Model Tribal System.

We received a total of 14 letters from tribes: 5 tribes are seeking the OCSE-Supported path, 4 tribes are seeking a Tribal Organization Supported path, and 4 tribes indicated that they were not interested in pursuing the MTS at this time. We received a letter from one of the pilot tribes noting their continued use of the MTS.

Based on this feedback, we are in the process of evaluating the response letters and conducting follow-up information requests from tribes as needed. This process will help us determine the order of MTS installation support for tribes, given our limited resources. Our goal is to begin the first installation in early summer.

For more information or to offer article ideas

Joseph Bodmer, MTS Project Director  
[Joseph.Bodmer@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Joseph.Bodmer@acf.hhs.gov)

Paige Hausburg, Tribal Coordinator  
[Paige.Hausburg@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:Paige.Hausburg@acf.hhs.gov)

[www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/tribal-systems](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/css/tribal-systems)