GIVING HOPE AND SUPPORT TO AMERICA'S CHILDREN

Handbook
on Child Support
Enforcement

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Office of Child Support Enforcement

The following will help you during your request for child support.

Use the pocket on this cover to insert important documents

- Full name of noncustodial parent (including other names or nicknames)
- Telephone number and complete address
- Social security number
- Date and place of birth
- Physical description
- Information about salary earnings or assets of the noncustodial parent, such as pay slips, bank statements, property, or Form 1099
- Divorce papers or separation agreement

***Additional information may be needed for each of the child support enforcement steps. Make sure to review the list in each section titled Gathering Information.

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The Child Support Enforcement Program

There is help in getting and enforcing child support...

This guide has information about the Child Support Enforcement (CSE) Program and services that are available to you.

The CSE Program is a government program to help make parents support their children when they do not live together. Federal, state, and local agencies work together to try to collect child support payments for you.

Commonly Used Child Support Enforcement Terms

Custodial
A parent, relative, or guardian who lives with the child or children.

Noncustodial
A parent who does not live with a child or children.

Paternity
Determining who is the natural father.

Caseworker
The person in the child support enforcement office who will help you with your case.

See page 18 for a listing of other child support enforcement words and what they mean.

Who Can Use The CSE Program

Any father or mother who is the custodial parent or other adult who has custody of a minor and needs help with:

- Locating where the noncustodial parent lives.
- Establishing who the natural father is and how to prove it.
- Establishing the child support order or how much child support payment will be received.
- Enforcing the order or making sure child support payments are made.

The CSE Program is also for:

- A father who needs help to establish paternity in order to have a legal relationship with a child.
- A noncustodial parent who wants to establish a child support order, or to pay child support through the CSE program.
- A custodial parent who wants to collect payments after the child is 18.

How Much Do CSE Services Cost

If you are now receiving financial assistance through the following programs, you qualify to receive free services from the CSE Program:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF),
- Medicaid,
- Federally-assisted Foster Care Program.

If you are not receiving financial assistance from any of these programs, you may have to pay a fee of no more than $25.00. Some states pay for part or all of the cost. Ask your caseworker or call your local child support office. See page 21 for a list of offices.

If you have the money, you may want to hire an attorney instead of using the services from the child support enforcement offices to collect child support payments.

How To Find The Noncustodial Parent

A noncustodial parent is a parent who does not live with a child. That person will usually be ordered to financially support the child.

To start the process for child support you must first find the noncustodial parent. Here is what you need:

Gathering Information

Remember, the more information you give, the easier it is to find someone.

- The Social Security number is the most important tool for finding a person.
- Address of current or recent employer (place of work).
- Names of relatives, employers, or friends who might know where the noncustodial parent lives.
- Birth certificates of the children.
- A copy of the child support order or any previous order.

For a list of additional important documents (papers) please see the back of the cover. On page 21 you will find a list of child support enforcement

Where To Go To Receive More CSE Information

Call the telephone number in your state, see page 21. In most states, the telephone call is free. If you do not find an office near you, check the county listings in your telephone book or write to the child support office in your state.

Once you have contacted the child support enforcement office near you, a person (caseworker) will be assigned to you.

If necessary, your caseworker will try to locate the parent through the Federal or State Parent Locator Service (FPLS or SPLS).

If the person lives in another state, through a new law called the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA), agencies in different states work together to enforce child support orders.

Making An Appointment With The Caseworker

offices. Call your state office to find the office that is closest to you, then call and make an appointment with a caseworker.

Contacting The Noncustodial Parent

Once the noncustodial parent is found (located), he or she will be notified by the child support enforcement office that you want child support. The caseworker will ask the noncustodial parent to come for an interview, or let this person know you plan to take legal action to get a child support order.

Important Things to Know

Visitation rights (the right to visit the child)

Emotional support is as important as financial support. That is why Congress provided funds for the states to develop programs to encourage noncustodial parents to visit their children. Ask your caseworker what programs are available.

Leaving the country

Many states have agreements with foreign countries that recognize child support orders. For more information about how to get child support if a parent lives in another country talk to your caseworker.

How to Establish Paternity

It is important for each and every one of us to understand where we come from...

Establishing paternity is determining who is the natural father. Child support cannot be ordered without establishing paternity. It is important for children because they can obtain:

- A part of any Social Security retirement or disability benefits their father receives.
- Life insurance and inheritance their father might provide.
- Information about any health problems in their father's family.

Establishing paternity is important to women because this means it establishes who the father is, especially if she is not married to him. It is also important for fathers because they have the right to know and love their children and provide the necessary financial support.

When To Establish Paternity

The best time is right after the child's birth, but it can be established at any time until the child is 18.

The father can sign an affidavit or a consent order saying that he is the father. If he will not do so, they can arrange to have the man take a blood or saliva test to determine if he is the father. The mother and the child will have to be tested also. These tests are called "genetic tests."

Important Information

Following is a list of information and documents (papers) to help you establish paternity. The more information you give, the easier it is to find the noncustodial parent.

- Letters or notes that might help prove who is the father.
- Pictures of the father with the children or the family.
- Proof of any money that the father has given to you or the children.

- Birth certificate(s) signed by the father or some proof from the hospital that the father admitted paternity (he was the father).

- Any birthday cards or Mother's Day cards that the father might have given to you or your children.

For a list of additional important documents (papers) please see the back of the cover.

In some states the father pays for genetic testing and in others the mother pays if she is not receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Foster Care, or Medicaid. Ask your caseworker.

Important Things to Know

Living in another state

You can establish paternity even if the father does not live in your state. Ask your caseworker about the laws in your state.

Your caseworker can help file for a hearing to establish paternity if the father threatens to leave the state. If the father has been told of the hearing date according to state law but does not appear, paternity can be established by default. A default judgement means that the law decides who is the father.

Father does not work

It is important to establish paternity even if the father is not working. Collecting child support begins when the noncustodial parent starts working.

Your child's safety

If you are concerned about the safety of your child, talk to your caseworker about how you can show that there is good cause for not giving the father's name. For example, the father has been violent with you or your child.

How to Establish A Child Support Order

Financial support is important for your family's well being...

Benefits that may be included in the child support order:

- Amount of child support that must be paid.
- Medical insurance plan.
- Additional medical costs not covered by insurance.
- Provision for a child's support, insurance, or a provision in the will, in case the parent dies.
- Financial support for an extended period of time for children with disabilities.

Ask your caseworker for suggestions about your order.

Gathering Information

Following is a list of documents that will help you get a child support order.

- Information such as paychecks which show your own earnings (salary) and information about your assets (e.g., property, car).
- Records of any money the noncustodial parent has given to you or the children.

For a list of additional important documents (papers) please see the back of the cover.

Payment

Each state has guidelines for determining child support payments. Many state guidelines consider special needs, such as day care or special medical needs, and the amount of time a child spends with each parent.

Important Things to Know

Change In Income

Any parent can ask for a review of the child support order every three years, or if there is an increase or decrease of income, or change in a child's needs. For more information, ask your caseworker.

Two Families

Your support order may be affected in some states if the noncustodial parent has another family. When there are two orders for support and the noncustodial parent's income is not high enough to pay both, the state should have a formula for sharing the available money between both orders.

Military

If the noncustodial parent is in the military, your child should be included in their medical coverage. If the parent is in the military and has not provided medical coverage, you can call the following numbers for information:

(800) 334-4162 (California only)
(800) 527-5602 (Alaska and Hawaii only)
(800) 538-9552 (all other states including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands)

How to Enforce The Order

You are not alone in the fight for your family's well being...

When a parent is not helping to provide for his/her children, enforcement of the order becomes necessary. To enforce the child support order you will need proof of the order.

Collecting Child Support Payments

There are a number of ways to enforce child support orders.

- If the parent has a regular job, money can be withheld from his paycheck (wage withholding) whether or not he works in the same state you live in.
- If wage withholding does not work, and the parent isn't paying, the CSE Program can take away the noncustodial parent's drivers, recreational, or occupational license.
- The CSE Program can take state and federal income tax refunds to repay past due support and can get liens on property and assets.

Important Things To Know

Jail

If the noncustodial parent is in jail it is possible that he will not be able to pay child support. But if he is working from the jail and is earning money you might be able to collect part of it. Once the noncustodial parent is released, he can start payments as soon as he starts working again.

Military

If the noncustodial parent is in the military, the parent still needs to comply with wage withholding orders. If there is a problem with the payments, ask your caseworker for help.

Living in another state

It is a federal crime if the noncustodial parent lives in another state and does not pay child support. If the parent owes more than $5,000 or has not paid for more than one year, ask your caseworker if the case can be forwarded to the U.S. Attorney's Office in your state.

Ask your caseworker for more information if:

- The noncustodial parent has his/her own business.
- The noncustodial parent's employer pays in cash.
- The noncustodial parent does not pay on time.
- The noncustodial parent tries to avoid paying by putting income or assets under a different name.
- Gifts in cash are given instead of payment.
- The noncustodial parent declares bankruptcy.

Important Words To Know

Administrative Procedures
Method by which an administrative agency (CSE office) establishes and enforces child support orders instead of through the courts or a judge.

Arrearage
Unpaid child support for past periods owed by a parent who is obligated to pay.

Assets
Personal possessions of value, such as property or a car, that can be turned into cash.

Complaint
Written document filed in court by which the claimant names the person, allegations, and what relief is being sought.

Consent Order
Written admission of paternity or responsibility for support.

Custody
Legal determination that establishes with whom the child shall live: the mother, father, or other adult.

Default Judgment
Decision made by the court when the defendant fails to appear.

Electronic Funds Transfer
Transfer of money from one bank account to another.

Establishing Paternity
Determination made that a certain individual is the father of a particular child.

Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS)
Service that helps the states locate the absent or noncustodial parent.

Federally-Assisted Foster Care Program
Program subsidized by the Federal Government under which a child is raised by someone other than the child's own parents.

Form 1099
Tax return form that shows the individual's income or payments received.

Garnishment
Legal process by which part of a person's wages and/or assets is withheld for payment of a debt.

Genetic Testing
Analysis of inherited factors, usually by blood test, that could help determine if a particular man is the child's father.

Good Cause
Written document or proof stating that identifying or locating the noncustodial parent could represent a risk for the mother or the child.

Immediate Wage Withholding
Automatic deductions from income that start as soon as the agreement for support is established.

Interstate Wage Withholding
Deductions for child support made when the noncustodial parent lives in another state.

Lien
Legal petition to prevent sale or transfer of property until a debt is paid.

Medicaid
Medical assistance for families who qualify.

Medical Support
Legal provision for payment of medical and dental expenses that can be calculated according to the medical coverage of the parent.

State Parent Locator Service (SPLS)
Service to locate the noncustodial parent using the social security number.

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
Limited financial assistance that replaces the AFDC program. The assistance to needy families is for a limited time only. This program also offers job preparation and support services to help families become self-sufficient.

Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) and Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement Support Act (URESA)
Laws under which the states may establish and enforce child support when the noncustodial parent and the child live in different states.

See *Mi Familia Nuestra Vida* (Spanish-language version) page 22 for a list of State Child Support Enforcement Offices.

State Child Support Enforcement Offices

ALABAMA

Department of Human Resources
Division of Child Support
50 Ripley Street
Montgomery, AL 36130-1801
(334) 242-9300
FAX: (334) 242-0606
1-800-284-4347[1]

ALASKA

Child Support Enforcement Division
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 310
Anchorage, AK 99501-6699
(907) 269-6900
FAX: (907) 269-6813
1-800-478-3300[1]

ARIZONA

Division of Child Support Enforcement
P. O. Box 40458
Phoenix, AZ 85067
(602) 252-4045
(no toll-free number)

ARKANSAS

Office of Child Support Enforcement
P.O. Box 8133
Little Rock, AR 72203
Street Address: 712 West Third
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-8398
FAX: (501) 682-6002
1-800-264-2445[2] (Payments)
1-800-247-4549[2] (Program)

CALIFORNIA

Office of Child Support
Department of Social Services
P. O. Box 944245
Sacramento, CA 95244-2450
(916) 654-1532
FAX: (916) 657-3791
1-800-952-5253[1]

COLORADO

Division of Child Support Enforcement
1575 Sherman Street, 2nd Floor
Denver, CO 80203-1714
(303) 866-5994
FAX: (303) 866-3574
(no toll-free number)

CONNECTICUT

Department of Social Services
Bureau of Child Support Enforcement
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06105-5033
(860) 424-5251
FAX: (860) 951-2996
1-800-228-5437[2] (problems)
1-800-647-8872[2] (information)
1-800-698-0572[2] (payments)

DELAWARE

Division of Child Support Enforcement
Delaware Health and Social Services
1901 North Dupont Hwy
P.O. Box 904
New Castle, DE 19720
(302) 577-4863, 577-4800
FAX: (302) 577-4873
(no toll-free number)

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Child Support Enforcement
Department of Human Services
441 4th Street, NW, 2nd Floor
Washington, DC 20001
(202) 724-1444
FAX: (202) 724-3710
(no toll-free number)

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide

FLORIDA

Child Support Enforcement Program
Department of Revenue
P.O. Box 8030
Tallahassee, FL 32314-8030
(850) 922-9590 FAX: (850) 488-4401
(no toll-free number)

GEORGIA

Child Support Administration
P.O. Box 38450
Atlanta, GA 30334-0450
(404) 657-3851 FAX: (404) 657-3326
1-800-227-7993[1] (706 & 912 area codes)
657-2780 (for 404 & 770 area codes)

GUAM

Department of Law
Child Support Enforcement Office
238 Archbishop F.C. Flores, 7th Floor
Agana, GU 96910
(671) 475-3360
(no toll-free number)

HAWAII

Child Support Enforcement Agency
Department of Attorney General
5251 Kamokilo Blvd., Suite 601
Honolulu, HI 96817
(808) 692-7000
(no toll-free number)

IDAHO

Bureau of Child Support Services
Department of Health and Welfare
450 West State Street, 5th Floor
Boise, ID 83720 - 5005
(208) 334-5710 FAX: (208) 334-0666
1-800-356-9868[2]

ILLINOIS

Child Support Enforcement Division
Illinois Department of Public Aid
509 South Sixth
Marriott Building
P. O. Box 19405
Springfield, IL 62701-1825
(217) 524-4602 FAX: (217) 524-4608
1-800-447-4278[1]

INDIANA

Child Support Office
402 West Washington Street, Rm W360
Indianapolis, IN 46204
(317) 233-5437
FAX: (317) 233-4925
1-800-622-4932[2]

IOWA

Bureau of Collections
Department of Human Services
Hoover Building - 5th Floor
Des Moines, IA 50319
(515) 281-5580
FAX: (515) 281-8854
(no toll-free number)

KANSAS

Child Support Enforcement Program
Department of Social &
Rehabilitation Services
P.O. Box 497
Street Address: 300 S.W. Oakley St.,
Biddle Building Topeka, KS 66606
(913) 296-3237
FAX: (913) 296-5206
1-800-432-0152 (Withholding)
1-800-570-6743 (Collections)
1-800-432-3913 (Fraud Hotline)

KENTUCKY

Division of Child Support Enforcement
Cabinet for Families and Children
P. O. Box 2150
Frankfort, KY 40602-2150
(502) 564-2285
FAX: (502) 564-5988

LOUISIANA

Support Enforcement Services
Office of Family Support
P.O. Box 94065
Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4065
(504) 342-4780
FAX: (504) 342-7397
1-800-256-4650[1] (Payments)

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide

MAINE

Division of Support Enforcement
and Recovery
Bureau of Family Independence
Department of Human Services
State House Station 11 Whitten Road
Augusta, ME 04333
(207) 287-2886
FAX: (207) 287-5096
1-800-371-3101[1]

MARYLAND

Child Support Enforcement Administration
Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21201
(410) 767-7619
FAX: (410) 333-8992
1-800-332-6347[1]

MASSACHUSETTS

Child Support Enforcement Division
Department of Revenue
141 Portland Street
Cambridge, MA 02139-1937
FAX: (617) 621-4991
1-800-332-2733[2]

MICHIGAN

Office of Child Support
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 30478
Street Address: 7109 W. Saginaw Hwy
Lansing, MI 48909-7978
(517) 373-7570
FAX: (517) 373-4980
(no toll-free number)

MINNESOTA

Office of Child Support Enforcement
Department of Human Services
444 Lafayette Road, 4th floor
St. Paul, MN 55155-3846
(651) 215-1714
FAX: (651) 297-4450
(no toll-free number)

MISSISSIPPI

Division of Child Support Enforcement
Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 352
Jackson, MS 39205
(601) 359-4861
FAX: (601) 359-4415
1-800-434-5437[2](Jackson)
1-800-354-6039 (Hines, Rankin and
Madison Counties)

MISSOURI

Department of Social Services
Division of Child Support Enforcement
P.O. Box 2320
Jefferson City, MO 65102-2320
(573) 751-4301
FAX: (573) 751-8450
1-800-859-7999[2]

MONTANA

Child Support Enforcement Division
Department of Public Health and
Human Services
P.O. Box 202943
Helena, MT 59620
(406) 442-7278
1-800-346-5437[1]

NEBRASKA

Child Support Enforcement Office
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 95044
Lincoln, NE 68509
(402) 471-9160
FAX: (402) 471-9455
1-800-831-4573[1]

NEVADA

Child Support Enforcement Program
Nevada State Welfare Division
2527 North Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89706-0113
(702) 687-4744
FAX: (702) 684-8026
1-800-992-0900[1]

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Office of Child Support
Division of Human Services
Health and Human Services Building
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH 03301-3857
(603) 271-4427
FAX: (603) 271-4787
1-800-852-3345[1] ext. 4427

NEW JERSEY

Division of Family Development
Department of Human Services
Bureau of Child Support and
Paternity Programs
P.O. Box 716
Trenton, NJ 08625-0716
(609) 588-2915
FAX: (609) 588-3369
1-800-621-5437[2]

NEW MEXICO

Child Support Enforcement Bureau
Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 25109
Santa Fe, NM 87504
Street Address: 2025 S. Pacheco
Santa Fe, NM 87504
(505) 827-7200
FAX: (505) 827-7285
1-800-432-6217[1]

NEW YORK

Office of Child Support Enforcement
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 14
Street Address: One Commerce Plaza
Albany, NY 12260-0014
(518) 474-9081
FAX: (518) 486-3127
1-800-342-8859[1]

NORTH CAROLINA

Child Support Enforcement Office
Division of Social Services
Department of Human Resources
100 East Six Forks Road
Raleigh, NC 27609-7750
(919) 571-4114
FAX: (919) 881-2280
1-800-992-9457[1]

NORTH DAKOTA

Department of Human Services
Child Support Enforcement Agency
P.O. Box 7190
Bismarck, ND 58507-7190
(701) 328-3582
FAX: (701) 328-5497
1-800-755-8530[1]

OHIO

Office of Family Assistance and Child
Support Enforcement
Department of Human Services
30 East Broad Street - 31st Floor
Columbus, OH 43266-0423
(614) 752-6561
FAX: (614) 752-9760
1-800-686-1556

OKLAHOMA

Child Support Enforcement Division
Department of Human Services
P.O. Box 53552
Oklahoma City, OK 73152
Street Address: 2409 N. Kelley Avenue
Annex Building
Oklahoma City, OK 73111
(405) 522-5871
FAX: (405) 522-2753
1-800-522-2922[2]

OREGON

Recovery Services Section
Adult and Family Services Division
Department of Human Resources
260 Liberty Street N.E.
Salem, OR 97310
(503) 378-5567
FAX: (503) 391-5526
1-800-850-0228[1]
1-800-850-0294[1](Rotary)

PENNSYLVANIA

Bureau of Child Support Enforcement
Department of Public Welfare
P.O. Box 8018
Harrisburg, PA 17105
(717) 787-3672
FAX: (717) 787-9706
1-800-932-0211[2]

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide

PUERTO RICO

Child Support Enforcement
Department of Social Services
P.O. Box 9023349
San Juan, PR 00902-3349
Street Address: Majagua Street,
Bldg.2 Wing 4, 2nd Floor
Rio Piedras, PR 00902-9938
787) 767-1500
FAX: (787) 282-7411
(no toll-free number)

RHODE ISLAND

Child Support Services
Division of Administration and Taxation
77 Dorrance Street
Providence, RI 02903
(401) 222-2847
FAX: (401) 277-6674
1-800-638-5437[1]

SOUTH CAROLINA

Department of Social Services
Child Support Enforcement Division
P.O. Box 1469
Columbia, SC 29202-1469
(803) 737-5875
FAX: (803) 737-6032
1-800-768-5858[2]
1-800-768-6779[1] (Payments)

SOUTH DAKOTA

Office of Child Support Enforcement
Department of Social Services
700 Governor's Drive
Pierre, SD 57501-2291
(605) 773-3641
FAX: (605) 773-5246
(no toll-free number)

TENNESSEE

Child Support Services
Department of Human Services
Citizens Plaza Building - 12th Floor
400 Deadrick Street
Nashville, TN 37248-7400
(615) 313-4880
FAX: (615) 532-2791
1-800-838-6911[1] (Payments)

TEXAS

Office of the Attorney General
State Office
Child Support Division
P.O. Box 12017
Austin, TX 78711-2017
(512) 460-6000
FAX: (512) 479-6478
1-800-252-8014[2]

UTAH

Office of Recovery Services
P.O. Box 45011
Salt Lake City, UT 84145-0011
(801) 536-8500
FAX: (801) 436-8509
1-800-257-9156[2]

VERMONT

Office of Child Support
103 South Main Street
Waterbury, VT 05671-1901
FAX: (802) 244-1483
1-800-786-3214[2]

VIRGIN ISLANDS

Paternity and Child Support Division
Department of Justice
GERS Building, 2nd Floor
48B-50C Krondprans Gade
St. Thomas, VI 00802
(340) 775-3070
FAX: (340) 775-3808
(no toll-free number)

VIRGINIA

Division of Support Enforcement
Department of Social Services
730 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219
(804) 692-1428
FAX: (804) 692-1405
1-800-468-8894[1]

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide

WASHINGTON

Division of Child Support
Department of Social Health Services
P.O. Box 9162
Street Address: 712 Pear St., S.E
Olympia, WA 98504
(360) 664-5000
FAX: (206) 586-3274
1-800-457-6202[2]

WEST VIRGINIA

Child Support Enforcement Division
Department of Health & Human Resources
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East
Capitol Complex, Bldg. 6, Rm. 817
Charleston, WV 25305
(304) 558-3780
1-800-249-3778[2]

WISCONSIN

Bureau of Child Support
Division of Economic Support
P.O. Box 7935
Street Address: 201 E. Washington Ave., Rm 271
Madison, WI 53707
(608) 266-9909
FAX: (608) 267-2824
(no toll-free number)

WYOMING

Child Support Enforcement
Department of Family Services
2300 Capitol Avenue, 3rd Floor
Cheyenne, WY 82002-0490
(307) 777-6948
FAX: (307) 777-3693
1-800-457-3659[2]

[1] In-State Only
[2] Nationwide