

Department of Social and Health Services

Olympia, Washington

EAZ Manual

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Category	Child Support
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Summary

Updated the EAZ chapter Child Support with 25% non-cooperation reduction

Child Support

Revised ~~December 1, 2021~~ June 6, 2022

Purpose:

This chapter provides information and instructions on the assignment of support rights to the State. It includes the requirement to cooperate with the Division of Child Support (DCS) as a condition of eligibility for TANF and SFA.

[WAC 388-422-0005](#) What happens to my child and spousal support when I get public assistance?

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

WAC 388-422-0010 Do I have to cooperate with the division of child support (DCS)?

- [Clarifying Information](#)

WAC 388-422-0020 What if you are afraid that cooperating with the division of child support (DCS) may be dangerous for you or the child in your care?

- [Worker Responsibilities](#)

WAC 388-422-0030 What happens if my support is more than my TANF or SFA cash benefit?

- [Worker Responsibilities](#)

Clarifying Information - WAC 388-422-0005

Child Support Requirements

1. A parent/caregiver assigns all rights to support, including child support, child care, and spousal maintenance for each person applying for or getting TANF/SFA.
2. Effective February 1, 2021, TANF households are eligible to receive child support pass-through up to \$50 each month for households that include one child, and up to \$100 for households with two or more children. The amount of pass-through will not be more than what DCS collects during the month.
3. A parent/caregiver incurs a debt with DCS if they retain support payments, except for pass-through, received after the assignment to DCS.
4. DCS establishes and enforces child support and medical support on a case when a child receives TANF or SFA, unless the department grants good cause not to cooperate. A parent/caregiver whose child receives TANF or SFA doesn't have the option to request DCS taking only partial action on their case.

Note: In some cases child support arrears "past due support" is not assigned to the state and is forwarded to the custodial parent while on TANF. Budget child support arrears income received by the custodial parent as unearned income "DP".

Note: Effective February 1, 2021 Pass-through payments do not affect TANF/SFA grants. However, these payments must be budgeted for Basic Food. Workers must use SEMS for each active child support case to anticipate child support amounts. The SEMS Disbursement History (DH) screen shows the amount disbursed and passed through to the custodial parent/caregiver and the Case History (CH) screen shows how the payment is applied for current and arrears support. Using the CP valid value will budget this income correctly for Basic food and exempt it for TANF.

Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-422-0005](#)

How do I complete child support referrals?

1. Enter Non-Custodial parent (NCP) information for TANF and SFA applications in ACES on the Non-Custodial Parent Screen (NCP). The ACES Manual provides information about completing the NCP page and processing the case in ACES.
2. Collect and enter as much information as possible on the NCP page so the system can generate the Division of Child Support (DCS) referral (SEMS Quick Referral) for DCS to establish paternity or collect support.
3. In SEMS, choose the Quick Cash (QC) option from the drop down menu to check for child support income, send comments to DCS when screening parent/caregivers for child support income or payments.
4. Notify DCS if a parent/caregiver receives a support payment from any party other than DCS **after** assignment is complete.
5. Treat support payments received by the parent/caregiver **prior** to assignment as unearned income.

Note: See [Treatment of Income Chart](#) and [Child Support Matrix](#) for details on how to treat and code child support income.

Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-422-0010](#)

Cooperation

1. Explain to the parent/caregiver that they have assigned the support rights for each child applying for or getting TANF / SFA by signing the application, and unless a Social Service Specialist (SSS) determines that good cause for noncooperation exists, they must cooperate with DCS. DCS provides full support enforcement services which may include enforcement of the noncustodial parent's (NCP) obligation to provide health insurance and contribute his/her share of uninsured medical expenses for the child(ren). DCS also enforces existing orders for spousal maintenance owed to the parent/caregiver.
2. At the interview, have the parent or caregiver relative complete a [DSHS 18-334](#), *Your Options for Child Support Collection while receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)* on each Non-Custodial parent (NCP) of each child in the TANF/SFA assistance unit, indicating whether or not cooperating with DCS may be dangerous for the applicant or the child. During the interview, code each NCP page and document for each NCP whether the custodial parent (CP) or caregiver states that it is safe for DCS to collect or asks that we determine good cause for noncooperation.
 - a. For phone interviews, give the parent or caregiver the following options to access the DSHS 18-334:

- i. Receive a copy of the 18-334 by mail. If the applicant picks this option, mail a General Correspondence Letter (0050-01) with the 18-334(s) and request the parent/caregiver complete, sign and return the 18-334(s), or
 - ii. Availability to access the 18-334 form online. If the applicant picks this option, explain how to access the 18-334 and options for returning it. See the CSD Procedure Handbook for additional information.
- b. Don't pend the TANF application for the 18-334(s).
3. Both parents in a two-parent household must help DCS establish paternity for each child in the assistance unit.
4. For unmarried, two-parent TANF applicants where the father isn't named on the child's birth certificate, give the mother and alleged father the pamphlet titled, "Establishing Parentage for Your Child's Sake... What Every Parent Should Know", DSHS 22-586(X). Encourage them to sign a notarized Acknowledgement of Parentage DOH 422-159 in the CSO. If the parents choose not to sign the Paternity Acknowledgement, explain to them that the father will be referred to DCS for paternity establishment and both are required to cooperate with DCS unless good cause exists.
5. There is no requirement for the parent/caregiver to cooperate with DCS when they claimed good cause verbally or in writing and the department's decision is pending. For more information on how to process a case when a custodial parent requests good cause after a ~~noncompliant non-cooperation~~ sanction has been entered, see worker responsibilities 9.
6. Whenever possible, the SSS interviews the parent/caregiver on the same day the Good Cause claim is received.
7. If a parent/caretaker claims good cause at a phone interview, immediately refer the good cause claim to the SSS without waiting for the returned 18-334(s). The SSS schedules an interview as soon as possible, but no later than 20 days from the good cause claim. For more information, see the good cause section below and the Social Services Manual - [Good Cause](#).
8. DCS determines when a parent/caregiver isn't cooperating with DCS as required and notifies the CSO what the parent/caregiver must do to be considered "cooperating with DCS". When DCS sends a notice letting us know the parent/caregiver is in non-cooperation, and no good cause is claimed, place the family in 25% non-cooperation sanction. See the ACES User manual - Division of Child Support (DCS) Sanction.
9. DCS also determines when a parent/care giver resumes cooperation and notifies the CSO. Lift imposed 25% non-cooperation sanctions effective the date that DCS declares is the date the parent/caregiver began cooperating.

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Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-422-0020](#)

Good Cause

See instructions for explaining assignment of child support rights and completing the 18-334(s) in the Clarifying Information, Cooperation section above.

1. When the CP applying for or receiving TANF/SFA states it isn't safe for DCS to provide full collection services (which may include collection of medical support), this is a request for a good cause determination.
2. Send a General Correspondence letter with instructions to complete and return the [DSHS 18-334](#). Also let the parent or caregiver know they can access the DSHS 18-334 online. If a parent/caregiver already receiving TANF/SFA requests good cause over the telephone or in writing, do a referral to the SSS for the good cause determination while you wait for receipt of the form.
3. When a parent/caregiver requests good cause, enter an "N" in the IV-D cooperation field, a "Y" in the good cause indicator field, the appropriate code in the reason field, and a "CP" (claim pending) in the status field on the NCP page of the NCP that the CP (custodial parent) states may cause harm.
4. After entering the NCP page information, refer the parent/caregiver to the SSS who makes the good cause determination. Refer the good cause claim to the SSS immediately following the phone interview if the parent/caregiver claims good cause without waiting for the returned 18-334(s).
5. The SSS must complete the good cause determination even if the parent/caregiver terminates TANF/SFA during the good cause determination process.
6. The supervisor approves the DSHS 18-444(X) - Good Cause Decision by checking the 'reviewed by Supervisor' box in the Barcode Good Cause system. This is a requirement before generating the decision letter.
7. Replace the "CP" (claim pending) coding with the appropriate code when the SSS approves or denies good cause.
8. Begin the good cause process as detailed above if a parent/caregiver begins to cooperate with DCS and then requests good cause. Change the reason and status fields to the appropriate code when the determination is pending and again after approval or denial.
9. When a custodial parent requests good cause after a 25% DCS non-cooperation sanction has been entered, begin the good cause process as detailed above. Instead of coding "CP" (claim pending) enter a "NS" (Pending Non-Cooperation) in the status field. DCS is notified that the client has claimed good cause and they put a hold on the collection process for 30 days. DCS sends a Cooperation Notice, and staff must follow the lifting DCS non-cooperation sanction process.
10. The system notifies DCS in the overnight batch process (e-Referral) when the NCP page changes.

For more information see the [Social Services Manual - Good Cause](#)

Note: Don't require the parent/caregiver to cooperate with DCS when they claim good cause and the department's decision is pending.

Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-422-0030](#)

A TANF grant will automatically close after the second consecutive month that child support collections exceed the grant payment amount unless there are optional members in a Consolidated Assistance Unit. For instruction about how to close these cases, go to ACES Procedures. See link below.