

# Washington State's Child Support Program



## Child Support Conference Boards



Washington State  
Department of Social  
& Health Services

---

*Transforming lives*

---

DSHS 22-386 (X) (Rev. 2/20)

## What is a Conference Board?

A Conference Board is a way to resolve disputes about how the Division of Child Support (DCS) works your case. A Conference Board Chair is the DCS attorney who makes the decisions.

What kinds of relief does the Conference Board have authority to grant?

Conference Boards may:

- Release liens filed by DCS.
- Release money DCS gets from IRS tax refunds, bank accounts, or other sources.
- Change the withholding from your pay.
- Decide whether DCS will report a child support debt to a credit bureau.
- Decide how DCS will enforce an order or collect a debt.
- Reduce back support owed to the State of Washington.
- Review and adjust other actions taken by DCS.

Conference Boards can ONLY forgive debts owed to Washington State, based on:

- Hardship to the paying parent or that parent's household.
- Settlement by partial payment.
- Future cost of collections.
- An error or legal issue that reduces the possibility of collection.

## Are there problems the Conference Board cannot resolve?

Yes. A Conference Board cannot:

- Change the amount of child support ordered in an administrative or court order.
- Reduce debts owed to an individual, another state, or another agency.
- Decide visitation or custody issues.
- Decide issues of paternity or parentage.

***You must try to settle your case with the field office first.***

## Can I settle my case without a Conference Board?

Yes, DCS field office staff may make some of the same decisions Conference Boards make. Contact the Support Enforcement Officer (SEO) assigned to your case to try to reach an agreement before the Conference Board. You may also talk to a lead worker or supervisor. If you cannot reach an agreement, you can still have a Conference Board.

## How do I ask for a Conference Board?

- Contact the DCS field office by phone, mail or in person. The field office will refer your case to the Conference Board Unit or the appropriate person.
- Explain what you disagree with and why.
- Provide information to back up your claim.

## How will the decision be made?

Chairs base their decisions on:

- DCS records, rules and laws, and
- Information you or the other party provide.

## Is there a meeting?

Usually the Conference Board Chair makes the decision without meeting with you. They may ask for more information by letter, email or phone. You will get a written decision.

## What happens at a Conference Board meeting?

The Chair and one or more DCS staff take part in an informal meeting, usually by telephone.

The Board members listen and ask questions while you tell your view of the dispute. Other parties also share their views, in some cases.

Meetings usually last less than an hour. Meetings are not recorded and recording is not allowed.

## How do I participate in the Conference Board meeting?

You, the Chair, DCS staff and other people involved in the meeting take part by phone.

In order to take part by phone, you must:

- Call DCS at the number printed in the notice a week before the meeting to ensure DCS has your correct phone number, and
- Be at that phone number on the date and time of the meeting.

If there is no phone you can use, contact us as soon as possible and make other arrangements.

### **How can I ask for a different date or time for my Conference Board?**

If you cannot make it to your scheduled meeting, call and ask for rescheduling. Call DCS at least one week before the meeting day. The Conference Board Notice gives you the phone number to call.

### **Do I need to send anything to the Conference Board?**

If you have papers you want the Chair to review, send them to DCS before your meeting, if possible. All other parties may see your proof, so you may want to delete personal information. The Chair will have all papers you give to DCS.

### **How can I prepare for the Conference Board?**

- Make notes to organize what you want to say.
- Provide any papers that help the Chair understand and resolve the dispute.

### **During a Conference Board meeting, you may:**

- Be represented by anyone, such as an attorney, friend or relative. However, you do not have a right to free legal help from DCS.
- Tell your view of the case.
- Present proof; such as cancelled checks, school records, witness statements or other papers.
- Ask to send in more proof after the meeting.
- Have the Chair telephone your witnesses.

Board members may question you and your witnesses.

Please show respect for the others on the phone.

### **What happens if I am not available for the meeting?**

If the Chair cannot reach you by phone for the meeting, the Chair may:

- Dismiss your request.
- Go ahead with the meeting without you.

### **How will I find out when my meeting is set?**

DCS mails you a Notice with the date and time of the meeting. Make sure DCS knows your current mailing address and phone number.

### **What if I don't like the Conference Board decision?**

Ask for an informal review or reconsideration by calling the Conference Board Chair or by writing to the Conference Board Manager at:

PO Box 9162, Olympia, WA 98507

### **What if I do not speak English well or have special needs?**

Call 360-664-5326 or 800-457-6202 or email [dcsconfboardteam@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:dcsconfboardteam@dshs.wa.gov) if you or a witness need:

- A language translator or interpreter. A friend or relative may not be your interpreter unless approved in advance.
- Other special assistance such as a sign language interpreter or alternate format materials because of a disability.

Call 360-664-5011 if you need DCS Deaf and Hard of Hearing (TDD) help.

Ask for these free services at least a week before a meeting.

All DCS offices are wheelchair accessible.

### **If you have other questions about Conference Boards, you may:**

- Call the DCS Field office or the Conference Board Unit at the numbers in the back of this brochure.
- Contact an attorney.

## Request for Conference Board

To request a Conference Board, complete this form and return it to the Division of Child Support (DCS). Except for your signature, print or type all responses. Attach additional pages if needed.

I tried to resolve my dispute with DCS staff. I request a Conference Board because:

---



---



---



---

I understand that:

1. A Conference Board tries to resolve complaints informally. A Board cannot modify a court order. A court does not review a Board's rulings.
2. This is not a request for an adjudicative proceeding (hearing). A Conference Board does not take the place of any other right I have to a hearing. This request will not stop DCS from taking collection actions.
3. I may represent myself or have someone else represent me. DCS will not pay my costs.
4. DCS may send a copy of this request to the other party to my child support case. DCS will remove my address from the copy sent to the other party.

No person, because of race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, age, or disability, shall be discriminated against in employment, services, or any aspect of the program's activities. This form is available in alternative formats upon request.

Print Name			
PO Box or Street Address			
City	State	Zip	
Date	Home Phone	Work Phone	
Signature			
Case No. (if known):			

**Call the DCS office nearest you or call 800-442-KIDS (5437) to find the office handling your case.**

### DCS Offices:

Everett	800-729-7580 425-438-4800
Kennewick	800-345-9981 509-374-2000
Olympia	800-345-9964 360-664-6900
Seattle	800-526-8658 206-341-7000
Spokane	800-345-9982 509-363-5000
Tacoma	800-345-9976 253-597-3700
Vancouver	800-345-9984 360-696-6100
Wenatchee	800-535-1113 509-886-6800
Yakima	800-441-0859 509-249-6000
Headquarters	800-457-6202 360-664-5000
Conference Board Unit	800-457-6202 360-664-5326 Fax 360-664-5340

Email: [dcskonfboardteam@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:dcskonfboardteam@dshs.wa.gov)

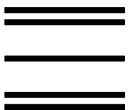
Rules governing Conference Boards are in the Washington Administrative Code: WAC 388-14A-6400 through 6415



NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_



PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & HEALTH SVCS  
DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT  
PO BOX 11520  
TACOMA WA 98411-5520