

Legal Resources

Northwest Justice Project Coordinated Legal Education, Advice & Referral (CLEAR) Project (low income only)

1-888-201-1014

www.nwjustice.org

Northwest Women's Law Center

Information & Referral Line

(206) 621-7691

www.nwwlc.org

Washington State Bar Association

To find legal referral services in your county call:

800-945-9722

www.wsba.org

Web sites

Contact the courts at

www.courts.wa.gov/

Division of Child Support

www.dshs.wa.gov/dcs/

Legal Clinics and Legal Information

wsba.org/atj/contact/legasst.htm

washingtonlawhelp.org

E-mail

Division of Child Support

DCS-CRU@dshs.wa.gov

E-mail

You can have someone (a relative, friend or legal representative) call DCS on your behalf. We can answer general questions for anyone, but we cannot discuss specific case details unless we have your written permission.

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

Washington State's Child Support Program



**Do I have
to pay child
support if I
am on public
assistance?**



Transforming lives

You owe child support even when you do not have money to pay.

Child support payments are due every month even if you are on public assistance known as Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), or General Assistance such as aged, blind, disabled (ABD), Pregnant Women's Assistance (PWA) and Housing and Emergent Needs (HENS).

If you are unable to pay your child support, you will have a debt waiting for you when you go to work or stop receiving assistance. This does not help you or your children.

What should I do?

Call the Division of Child Support (DCS) at 800-442-KIDS (5437) or one of our offices listed in the back of this brochure. Talk to your Support Enforcement Officer (SEO) about your debt and set up a payment plan.

Can DCS garnish my public assistance money?

No. DCS cannot take public assistance money.

Can DCS garnish my wages?

Yes. DCS can take up to 50% of your take-home-pay if you:

- earn wages or
- receive public assistance and earn wages.

Can DCS garnish my bank account money?

Yes. DCS can take money in bank and other accounts.

We have the bank send us the amount of money you owe or the amount of the child support payment. You can access other money left in your account the next day. If you have a joint account and you can show us the account contains your spouse's earnings, we will not take the money belonging to your spouse. DCS does not take money received from TANF or other cash grants.

DCS cannot garnish your wages if:

- your job is funded by TANF money or
- you enroll in job programs like Community Jobs or Job Corps.

What happens when I go back to work?

Call DCS and tell us about your new job. Federal and state laws require us to collect at least your current support payment plus something on the past due amount (also called an arrears debt). Whenever payments are not made and past due child support is owed, we can:

- withhold 50% of your wages
- suspend your driver's license, and
- take other actions (without telling you before we do it).

We may agree to accept less than current support for a specific period-of-time in order to avoid a suspension of your driver's license.



How can DCS help me?

A hearing or a conference board may lower the child support debt you owe to the state.

If you have a default administrative order, you may be allowed to ask for a late hearing.

If you have a court order or an administrative order, you can ask for a conference board.

If you were unable to pay the debt you owe to the state because of severe hardship, we will consider repayment options.

Can changing (modifying) my child support order help me?

Your child support payment should be set in your order to reflect your current ability to pay.

Modifying a child support order is the way the amount of the current child support payment is changed.

It does not change the amount of any past unpaid child support debts.

It does not happen automatically – you have to ask for it, and work with us to make it happen. We work with Administrative

Law Judges and Prosecuting Attorneys to modify orders. It can take many months to modify an order.

You can also modify your child support order in court by contacting an attorney or Family Law Court Facilitator.

Facilitators are located in county clerks offices. A facilitator provides forms and information, for a fee about the “pro se” process but cannot give you legal advice. Taking “pro se” court action means you do-it-yourself.

How does modification work?

No matter how long ago your situation changed, modifications are “prospective” only; this means we cannot change the amount for past payments, just future payments.