

Department of Social and Health Services  
Community Services Division  
**Social Services Manual**

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### Summary

Updated Division of Child Support (DCS) Good Cause information for clarity. Renamed and dedicated the page to DCS Good Cause. Removed good cause references for other programs as this information is duplicative to other sections in the Social Services Manual, WorkFirst Handbook, and EA-Z Manual.

## Division of Child Support (DCS) Good Cause

**Created on:**

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[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?](#)

## Purpose:

This chapter provides the department's policy and procedures for determining if a custodial parent has "Good Cause" (GC) for non-cooperation with ~~department~~ TANF/SFA program requirements.

The Division of Child Support (DCS) helps families with a variety of services including the collection and disbursement of child support. Parent/caretakers receiving TANF/SFA for themselves and/or their child(ren) are required to cooperate with DCS to help establish paternity, set a child support order, and enforce child support.

"Child Support" includes health insurance coverage, medical expenses, birth costs, and child care or special child rearing expenses. Either or both parents are required to provide health insurance for the children, and both parents are required to contribute to uninsured medical expenses, regardless of whether the children received medical assistance.

The DCS~~This~~ cooperation requirement is waived if you determine that establishing and/or enforcing child support may result in serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker. This requirement may also be waived in instances of rape (including rape of a child), incest, or when an adoption discussion is taking place. See WAC 388-422-0020 and the EA-Z Manual - Child Support for more information.

## Clarifying Information

~~Good Cause (GC) means that an individual is relieved of certain program requirements when the individual is unable to participate for various reasons as outlined by each program. The individual must claim and the department must determine good cause.~~

~~Department programs that have requirements that can be waived as a result of an individual having good cause are:~~

- ~~• Division of Child Support (DCS)~~
- ~~• Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) cash~~
- ~~• Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Referral~~
- ~~• Pregnant Women Assistance (PWA)~~
- ~~• WorkFirst~~
- ~~• Basic Food Employment and Training (BFE&T)~~

## Worker Responsibilities

~~Equal Access: Ensure that the individual was screened for Equal Access and that the information is current. If the person's limitation or impairment prevents her/him from following through on all~~

program requirements, determine if she/he has Good Cause per WAC 388-472-0050. If she/he has Good Cause, the Department will not take adverse action.

## ~~Program Requirements~~

### ~~1. Division of Child Support (DCS) – Cooperation with Child Support Collection:~~

~~**TANF/SFA** – The Division of Child Support (DCS) helps families with a variety of services including the collection and disbursement of child support. Parent/caretakers receiving TANF/SFA for themselves and/or their child(ren) are required to cooperate with DCS to help establish paternity, set a child support order, and enforce child support. "Child Support" includes health insurance coverage, medical expenses, birth costs, and child care or special child rearing expenses. Either or both parents are required to provide health insurance for the children, and both parents are required to contribute to uninsured medical expenses, regardless of whether the children received medical assistance. This cooperation requirement is waived if you determine that establishing and/or enforcing child support may result in serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker. This requirement may also be waived in instances of rape (including rape of a child), incest, or when an adoption discussion is taking place. See WAC 388-422-0020 and the EA-Z Manual – Child Support for more information.~~

### ~~2. ABD Cash: To continue receiving ABD cash, the individual must:~~

- ~~○ Apply for and follow through with the SSI application process.~~
- ~~○ Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in WAC 388-449-0220.~~

### ~~3. HEN Referral: To continue receiving HEN Referral, the individual must:~~

- ~~○ Be incapacitated as defined in WAC 388-447-0001 through 388-447-0100.~~
- ~~○ Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in WAC 388-447-0120.~~

### ~~4. PWA: To continue receiving PWA cash, the individual must:~~

- ~~○ Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in WAC 388-449-0220.~~

### ~~5. WorkFirst: WorkFirst policy requires parents to participate up to 40 hours a week in approved activities unless the parent is determined to be exempt per WAC 388-310-0350, WAC 388-310-0300 and WAC 388-310-145 or have a valid Good Cause reason for not participating per WAC 388-310-1600. See: WorkFirst Handbook 1.2 – Required Participation.~~

~~6. **Basic Food Employment & Training (BFE&T):** Persons receiving Basic Food are required to register for work and must participate in BFE&T unless exempt per WAC 388-444-0015 and WAC 388-444-0020 or have a valid Good Cause reason for not participating per WAC 388-444-0050.~~

~~See: EA-Z Manual – Basic Food Employment and Training – F. – Good Cause~~

## ~~Non-Cooperation with Division of Child Support~~ Clarifying Information

### DCS Good Cause Referrals

1. All requests for DCS Good Cause ~~for non-cooperation with DCS~~ due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker are referred by the PBS or WPS to the WorkFirst Social Service Specialist (SSS). The SSS can also see a list of cases pending good cause on the discrepancy reports in the Barcode Good Cause system. The SSS ~~will~~ reviews any documents associated with the referral including but not limited to:
  - a. The parent's/caretaker's- signed sworn statement on the DSHS 18-334(X), Your Options for Child Support Collection, for the parent's/caretaker's statement of claim outlining their fears and concerns; and
  - ~~a.b.~~ Additional documents, statements or other types of verification that has been gathered that support the parent's/caretaker's Good Cause request. Even without other documentation, you must accept a sworn statement in support of the good cause claim

~~NOTE:~~ Even without other documentation, the Department you must accept a written, signed, sworn statement (DSHS 18-334) in support of the good cause claim.

### Parent Interview

Whenever possible, interview the parent/caretaker on the same day you receive the Good Cause referral. If the interview is not done the same day the referral is received, schedule the interview as soon as possible allowing for adequate notice, but no longer than within 30 days.

During the interview, the WorkFirst Social Service Specialist ~~will~~:

1. Finds out why the parent/caretaker does not want to pursue Child Support.
  - a. Asks if there are current issues around Family Violence, rape, incest or pending adoption.
  - b. Reviews eJAS for possible Family Violence.

- a-c. If you feel that the parent, caretaker, or child(ren) is endangered, or at risk of serious harm, seek assistance from an on-site or community-based domestic violence advocate.
2. Talks with the parent/caretaker about what ~~she/het~~they views as the pros and cons of establishing paternity and/or collecting Child Support. If you feel the parent/caretaker is misinformed about a child's rights to resources, benefits, or entitlements, help the parent to seek advice from appropriate resources. Resources may include legal advocacy, DCS staff located in the CSOD, the local DCS office, a family violence advocate, etc.
  3. Informs the parent/caretaker:
    - a. About the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing Child Support.
    - b. About their choice between Good Cause Level A and Level B options and document their decision. (See Section 7 for more information about Level A and B)
    - c. If Good Cause is approved now, but later withdrawn, DCS will begin necessary actions to establish paternity and/or to establish and /enforce both past and current child support from the NCP. It is important that a victim of family violence understand this if there are any continuing safety risks at the time DCS action begins.  
—If cash assistance closes after Good Cause Level A approval, the Good Cause claim will not close. It will remain open through the next review period.
- b-d.
4. If there is more than one noncustodial parent (NCP) for the children in the assistance unit, the parent/caretaker must be given the option of claiming Good Cause for each NCP. Document the name of the NCP for which the parent/caretaker is claiming good cause.
  5. Once a support order ~~has been is~~ established, the NCP has an obligation to pay child support for the child. Granting either level of Good Cause does not cancel the support obligation or any existing child support order. However when Good Cause Level A is approved, DCS closes the case and does not take any action to establish paternity or to establish/ enforce a child support order against that NCP until the Good Cause claim is withdrawn or the parent/caretaker applies for non-assistance support enforcement services. This makes it important to obtain and maintain accurate information about the basis for the Good Cause exemption.
- ~~6-1. If Good Cause is approved now, but later withdrawn, DCS will begin necessary actions to establish paternity and/or to establish/enforce both past and current child support from the NCP. It is important that a victim of family violence understand this if there are any continuing safety risks at the time DCS action begins.~~
- ~~7-6. If Good Cause Level A is approved and has not been denied or withdrawn at the time the parent/caretakers cash assistance is terminated, DCS will not reopen the case at that time. DCS will reopen the case only if the parent/caretaker applies for TANF again without claiming Good Cause, or submits a non-assistance support enforcement application to DCS.~~
- ~~8-1. If cash assistance closes after Good Cause Level A approval, the Good Cause claim will not close. It will remain open through the next review period.~~

~~9.7.~~ If the NCP is in another state, DCS may need to ask the other state to help. DCS may be required to provide the parent/caretaker address to the other state and rely on that state to keep it confidential.

~~10.8.~~ Asks the parent/caretaker for verification. Discuss with the parent/caretaker the types of verification that can be used to substantiate the Good Cause claim. Document which type of documentation was used to make the determination. The parent/caretaker has 20 days to provide verification of good cause, however they can request more time and help getting proof. Verification may include one the following:

- a. A signed, sworn statement which includes the ~~C~~ completed 18-334(X) or other signed statement from the survivor herself or himself, outlining his/her fears and concerns;
- b. Civil or criminal court orders (domestic violence protection orders, restraining orders, no-contact orders);
- c. Medical, police, or court reports; or
- d. Written ~~A~~ statement from clergy, friends, relatives, neighbors or co-workers.

**NOTE:** DSHS cannot require a parent to provide documents such as court orders or police records in order to support a claim of Good Cause. There are many reasons why a victim of family violence would not be in possession of these, ~~f.~~ For example, if ~~s/he~~ the client has fled and left these papers behind, or if seeking copies of these documents would alert a perpetrator to the client's ~~her/his~~ whereabouts. In addition, many victims, for a variety of good reasons, have never sought help from systems like the police, courts or medical facilities.

~~11.9.~~ Offers a referral to the on-site or community based domestic violence advocate, if available. For households where the custodial parent/caretaker is not on WorkFirst, provide the National Domestic Violence Hotline number (1-800-799- SAFE or 1-800-799-7133).

~~12.10.~~ Withdraws the request if the parent/caretaker does not want to proceed with the Good Cause claim, ~~they can withdraw their request at anytime.~~

- a. Remind the parent that ~~she/het~~ they may request Good Cause at anytime if ~~her/his~~ their circumstances change. Document the parent's request to withdraw the claim.
- b. Send a DSHS 18-444 (X), Good Cause Decision, to the parent/caretaker ~~and,~~ DCS, ~~and FSS~~ PBS marked withdrawn. If you choose central print, a copy will automatically be sent to the parent/caretaker and DCS. An alert will auto generate for financial staff to update 3G.
- c. If the parent/caretaker has questions or fears about issues related to custody, visitation or paternity, refer the parent/caretaker to the legal services CLEAR line (1-888-201-1014).

~~13.11.~~ ~~If it is necessary for you to conduct a review of the parent/caretaker's statement or other verification provided, consult with the on-site or community based family violence advocate to ensure the parent's/caretaker's safety as needed. Only make~~ Makes third party contacts

with the knowledge and consent of the parent/caretaker. Inform the parent/caretaker of each specific contact.

- a. When the decision is based upon phone verification, document the date, phone number, and the person you talked with, along with the information you received.
  - ~~b.~~ If the parent/caretaker needs help getting verification and consents to your helping them, have the parent/caretaker complete and sign the [DSHS 14-012 - Authorization to Release Information](#).
  - ~~b.~~
  - c. If the parent/caretaker does not consent to department assistance, talk with the parent/caretaker in order to identify other ways to get the verification.
  - d. Offer the parent/caretaker the opportunity to obtain the information on their own.
- 14.12. Explains to the parent/caretaker that the parent/caretaker has the opportunity to decide what level of Good Cause protection is necessary [and document their decision](#). There are two levels:

- o **Level A:** DCS **will not** pursue the establishment of paternity, establishment of a support order, or enforcement/collection of child support or from the NCP because any contact with the NCP poses a risk of serious harm to the child or parent/caretaker. DCS closes the child support case, takes no actions on the child support case and the parent/caretaker will not receive child support. Even though DCS closes the child support case, any child support owed under an existing child support order continues to accumulate each month that it is not paid. In the future, if the good cause claim is withdrawn or if the parent/caretaker files an application for DCS non-assistance services, DCS will reopen the case and collect both current and past due child support.
- o **Level B:** DCS **will** pursue the establishment of a support order and collect child support **without** the parent/caretakers cooperation. DCS keeps the parent/caretaker advised of case actions, but the parent/caretaker is not required to cooperate with DCS; she/he may elect to cooperate or not. Generally, paternity establishment is not pursued in Level B cases because these proceedings require the cooperation and involvement of the child and custodial parent.)

Note: If either Level A or Level B good cause is granted after a case has been filed in court by the prosecutor's office, the prosecutor must request the permission of the court to withdraw from or dismiss the action.

See [Appendix II](#) for information about DCS that provides additional information to the parent about DCS functions and the DCS Handbook for Child Support policies.

## Claim Determination and Processing

1. ~~If possible,~~ [The department is required to](#) make a determination within 30 days. [WorkFirst](#) Social Service Specialists (SSS) are required to use the Barcode Good Cause program for claim

determination and processing. Good Cause is found if the parent or caretaker's written statement outlining their fears and concerns, or other verification, indicates that the likelihood of harm to the parent/~~caregiver~~-caretaker or child(ren) is too great to safely seek collection of child support. When verification has been received and/or the review of the verification is completed, you are ready to make a decision. [Document the verification that was used to make the decision.](#)

2. If you approve Good Cause, set the review date for twelve months or shorter if circumstances warrant.
3. If TANF/SFA benefits are provided to the parent who requested Good Cause due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker but [TANF](#) assistance is **terminated** while the claim is still pending, the SSS must complete the Good Cause determination. DCS must be informed to know if further action concerning the child support case is necessary.
  - a. If a determination cannot be made, because of loss of contact or some other reason, the default decision is approval of the good cause claim.
  - b. If the parent reapplies for cash assistance after a default approval decision, Good Cause must be re-determined according to the standard process.
  - c. If the parents/caretakers cash is terminated before the Good Cause decision is made, a determination must be completed.
4. Supervisory approval is required on all Good Cause claims before the decision letter can be generated. The supervisor approves the DSHS 18-444(X) - Good Cause Decision by checking the 'reviewed by Supervisor' box in the Barcode Good Cause system.
5. Notify the parent/caretaker of the final decision on the DSHS 18-444(X) - Good Cause Decision. [Copies of the decision must also be provided to the PBS-FSS and Once the letter is saved, a copy will be mailed from central print to the parent/caregiver and DCS. A Barcode tickle will automatically generate to alert eligibility staff for an entry in 3G.](#)
6. If Good Cause is denied, advise the parent/caretaker that:
  - a. ~~She/he~~**They have has** a right to an Administrative Hearing. See- [\(EA-Z Manual - Administrative Hearings\)](#).
  - b. If circumstances change, the parent/caretaker may, at any time, request another good cause determination due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker by completing and signing another Your Options for Child Support Collection ([DSHS 18-334\(X\)](#)).
  - c. On-site or community based domestic violence advocates are available [for support](#).
7. Document essential case information in the appropriate confidential notes section (Barcode Good Cause Program and eJAS [if the parent/caretaker is on TANF](#)). [The notes should include for which noncustodial parent the parent/caretaker is requesting good cause, if good cause was granted, what we used to verify good cause, what level of good cause was chosen and when the next review will need to be completed.](#) The notes may be needed in the future to:
  - a. Support the decision;
  - b. Aid at review; and



- c. Inform the Administrative Hearing process.

## Reviewing Good Cause Determinations

Review Good Cause determinations at intervals consistent with the family circumstances. [WorkFirst Social Service Specialists](#) are required to use the Barcode Good Cause program for reviewing good cause determinations.

1. If Good Cause is approved because the child was conceived as a result of rape or incest, it is not necessary to review the Good Cause decision. The review date can be set for the child's eighteenth birthday. However, advise the parent/caretaker that they can withdraw their claim of Good Cause at any time if she/he wishes to do so.
2. If Good Cause is approved based on any other circumstance (e.g.- physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker or adoption discussions or proceedings), Good Cause will be reviewed periodically, usually every twelve months.
3. At the time of review:
  - a. Review the ~~documents~~ ~~facts~~ in the case record. Determine if contact with the parent/caretaker is necessary to make the determination to continue Good Cause.
  - b. If there is sufficient verification in the record to continue the Good Cause determination without contacting the parent/~~caregiver~~~~caretaker~~, authorize continued Good Cause and establish a new review date at an appropriate time in the future.
  - c. If contact is necessary:
    - i. Interview the parent/caretaker to determine if the circumstances have changed since the last Good Cause determination. If additional verification is available and necessary to make a re-determination, inform the parent about what ~~she/he~~~~they~~ will be expected to provide. Ask the parent/caretaker if ~~she/he~~~~they~~ expect ~~s~~ to have any problems in providing the information and offer to assist the parent/~~caregiver~~~~caretaker~~ if ~~she/he~~~~they~~ need ~~s~~ special accommodations or ~~are~~~~is~~ unable to obtain the verification.
    - ii. Evaluate the new verification and circumstances against the previous Good Cause determination.
  - d. Complete a DSHS 18-444(X), Good Cause Decision:
    - i. Mark the box to indicate it is a re-determination; and
    - ii. [Once the letter is saved, a copy will be mailed from central print to the parent/caregiver and DCS. A Barcode tickle will automatically generate to](#)

alert eligibility staff for and entry in 3G. Send copies to the parent, DCS, and to eligibility staff for entry into ACESFSS.

4. If the cash assistance is closed, deny Good Cause to close out the good cause claim. -DCS **will not** pursue the establishment of a support order unless the parent/caretaker files an application for non-assistance child support services through DCS.

a. In the Barcode Good Cause program, take the following steps:

- i. Check "Review Claim"
- ii. "Good Cause Established?" - check "No"
- iii. "Reason for Good Cause Decision" - Select "No Proof of Good Cause"
- iv. Enter Close Date - End date of current review
- v. "Reason" - Select "Financial Assistance Closed"

**NOTE:** If the cash assistance is closed, the 18-444 will automatically be suppressed and not sent to the custodial parent/caretaker

## Referrals and Resources

1. ~~If the parent is a WorkFirst participant, offer the parent/~~needy caretaker a referral to the on-site or community-based domestic violence advocates who may be able to help them address the circumstances creating the need for the Good Cause claim. Create and document the referral in eJAS to the local contracted domestic violence advocate, if available in the local office. Document the note in eJAS under note type, Family Violence Special Records. Document the family violence related referrals in the Barcode Good Cause program.
- 1.2. ~~For TANF parents/caretakers, not participating in WorkFirst, also document the referral provide resources to the parent/~~needy caretaker in eJAS in the Family Violence Special Records note type to a community-based domestic violence agency for support.
- 2.3. Explain the use of ~~the~~ Washington Apple Health to obtain health care coverage for the family. Ask the parent/caretaker if ~~she/het~~they needs any special accommodations to seek or access health care coverage services. Tell the parent/caretaker that receiving Medicaid or other state-funded health care coverage will not automatically result in a DCS case, but that they can apply for DCS services if they wish to do so.
- 3.4. Give the parent/caretaker available informational brochures related to DCS or Good Cause due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker and discuss any other pertinent issues related to the parents/caretakers situation.
- 4.5. Encourage the parent/caretaker at risk of family violence to determine if enrolling in a community support group, counseling activities or contacting legal services (CLEAR 1-888-201-1014) is in their best interest.

5-6. If the parent would like more information about DCS support enforcement services, have the client call 1-800-442-KIDS.

7. Some parents may be participating in the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) through the Office of the Secretary of State. The ACP protects the address of persons attempting to escape from family violence or sexual assault situations. Participants use a substitute address in place of their actual physical or mailing address. See the EA-Z Manual if the parent is participating in, or you would like more information about the [Address Confidentiality Program](#).

## Forms

| Form Number                    | Title   | Use  | Distribution  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| DSHS 14-012(X)                 | Authorization to Release Information  | To obtain evidence when the parent/caretaker is unable to provide it directly                    | Original to verification source, copy to parent/caretaker and case record       |
| <a href="#">DSHS 18-334(X)</a> | Your Options for Child Support Collection                                       | Parent/Caretaker's statement outlining their fears and concerns why a Good Cause claim is needed | Social Services receives a copy with the referral to determine Good Cause       |
| DSHS 18-444(X)                 | DCS Good Cause Decision   | Notify parent/caretaker, DCS and financial services of Good Cause determination                  | Original to parent/caretaker, copies to case record, financial services and DCS |
| DSHS 22-583(X)                 | Facts about the DCS Child Support Enforcement Program                           | Give to parent/taker   | To parent/caretaker   |
| DSHS 22-688(X)                 | Support their future  | Give to parent/caretaker with Toll-free DCS number   | To parent/caretaker   |
| DSHS 14-475                    | Appointment Letter for Division of Child Support (DCS) Good Cause Determination | Send to the parent/caretaker for a Good Cause appointment.                                       | To parent/caretaker   |

| <b>Form Number</b> | <b>Title</b>            | <b>Use</b>   | <b>Distribution</b>        |
|--------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| DSHS 18-011        | DCS Information Request | DCS sends to CSD requesting good cause information within 30 days.   | CSD staff send back to DCS |
| DSHS 18-011(A)     | DCS Information Update  | DCS sends to CSD to begin the good cause process when a parent/caretaker has informed DCS about family violence in the home. | Copy to case record        |