Legal Help

Northwest Justice Project's Coordinated Legal Education, Advice & Referral (CLEAR) Project

888-201-1014
www.nwjustice.org

Employment Security Department

800-318-6022
www.esd.wa.gov

Washingon State Bar Association

To find legal referral services in your county call:

800-945-9722
www.wsba.org

Web sites

Access Washington: State Government Information and Services

www.access.wa.gov

Court forms, courthouse facilitator programs, court locations and other useful information

www.courts.wa.gov/

Division of Child Support:

www.childsupportonline.wa.gov

E-mail

DCS-CRU@dshs.wa.gov

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

DSHS 22-991 (Rev. 3/17)

Washington State's
Child Support Program

I do not have a job, what happens to my child support?

Washington State
Department of Social & Health Services
Transforming lives

What happens to my child support now that I do not have a job?

You owe child support even when you do not have a job. Your child support order sets the payment amount the Division of Child Support (DCS) must collect. DCS does not stop taking collection actions when you are not earning wages.

Will DCS take my unemployment benefits?

Yes, DCS takes payments from unemployment benefits.

If you pay child support to the Washington State Support Registry (WSSR), DCS can withhold up to 50 percent (half) of your benefits. If half of your benefit is not enough to pay current support, you can pay the difference directly to WSSR. DCS adds any unpaid current support to the past due amount you owe.

I owe a lot of back support, and I need my payment amount lowered.

You can talk with your Support Enforcement Officer (SEO) about lowering the past due support payment. The SEO cannot change the amount of current support in your order.

You can ask for a Conference Board. A Conference Board is an informal review of your case and situation by a Conference Board Chair (DCS attorney). The Conference Board Chair decides if a phone or in office meeting will be held and if additional DCS staff will be at the meeting to help decide what action DCS will take in response to your request. The Conference Board Chair issues a written decision about the relief that you requested.

A Conference Board can give you relief from a collection action, or from a high support debt owed to the state. For more information about Conference Boards, contact your SEO and ask for our brochure titled, “Child Support Conference Boards?” (DSHS 22-386).

What do I do if my unemployment benefits change or I return to work?

Call your SEO as soon as you know your income is changing. If you do not contact your SEO, DCS may send a payroll deduction to your new employer for up to 50 percent of your take home pay.

My income is lower on the new job. How do I get my child support order changed?

Ask for DCS brochure 22-652, “Changing a Child Support Order-Review and Modification.”

When a court order sets child support

If your order is at least one year old you can ask the court to change (modify) the amount of your order if your life has changed in a serious and unexpected way or if the order causes you severe economic hardship.

If your order is at least two years old you can ask the court to change (modify) the amount of your order because your income has changed.

If you have had a significant change of circumstances, ask your SEO for a modification review. You and the other parent may be asked to complete review forms and confirm your incomes.

If your case appears to meet the requirements for modification, DCS refers your case to a prosecuting attorney. The prosecuting attorney chooses whether or not to file the case in court.

If your case does not meet the requirements for the DCS modification process you can:

- hire an attorney, or
- go to court on your own (pro se) with help from a family law court facilitator. Ask for DCS brochure “How to Obtain or Modify a Child Support Order on Your Own”. (DSHS 22-021)

Court facilitator’s help parents understand the way the court works and provide the forms needed to change the amount of a court order. Court facilitators charge a fee and do not give legal advice or provide legal representation. Forms are available at www.courts.wa.gov/forms/

The good things about modifying your court order on your own or by using an attorney are:

- It can be faster.
- A Superior Court Judge can hear your case even if it doesn’t qualify for the DCS process.

When a Washington State Administrative Order sets child support

Either parent can ask DCS to modify the support order without asking for a review. If your income changed since DCS entered the administrative order, you can ask for an administrative hearing.

I do not have a case with DCS, what can I do?

If you are a paying parent or a receiving parent of child support and you want DCS to review your order, you can apply for full enforcement services and ask for a review for modification.