



How to Resolve Problems with Your Child Support Case



Department of
Child Support Services

How should I prepare for a state hearing?

The Ombudsperson can help you request a state hearing and prepare the documents you'll need. The following information will help you present your case:

1. Write a statement of the facts of your case.
2. Bring copies of any information, such as statements and notices, that support your case.
3. Prepare a list of witnesses and people who might be willing to speak on your behalf at the hearing.

The hearing will be held within 45 days after the State Hearing Office receives your request. You will be notified of the date, time and place of the hearing. If you are unable to attend, ask for a new hearing date or for the hearing to be held by telephone.

Translation services and reasonable disability assistance are available free of charge if needed.



Complaint Resolution & State Hearing Timelines

You must file your complaint with the local child support agency within **90 days** of the date you knew, or should have known, about the subject of your complaint.

You must request a state hearing within **90 days** after the date you receive the LCSA's written response to your complaint.

If the LCSA does not respond to your complaint in writing, you must request a state hearing within **90 days** from the date you filed your complaint with the LCSA.

The state hearing will be held within **45 days** after the State Hearing Office receives your request.



*Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor
State of California*

*Kimberly Belshé, Secretary
California Health and Human Services Agency*

*Greta Wallace, Director
Department of Child Support Services*

1-866-249-0773 (toll-free)
TTY 1-866-223-9529 (toll-free)
www.childsup.ca.gov

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The Complaint Resolution Program

If you're not satisfied with the assistance you're receiving from the local child support agency (LCSA) you have the right to file a complaint through the Complaint Resolution Program.

The party who has/had custody or the parent who does not have custody may file a complaint if there is a case open with the Department of Child Support Services.

Complaint issues that **can** be resolved through the Complaint Resolution Program include:

- Decision to open or close a case
- Failure to establish a court order for child support
- Collection and distribution of payments
- Calculation of past-due payments
- Efforts to modify the child support amount
- Timeliness of service
- Enforcement efforts

Complaints that **cannot** be resolved through the program include:

- Court-ordered amount of child support or past-due payments; custody, visitation, or spousal support; or determination of parental relationship
- Complaints about court services—contact the Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse, an advocate, or a lawyer for help
- Civil rights violations
- Services, if the complainant does not have a child support case open

How do I file a complaint?

State your complaint by phone or in person, or get a "Request for Complaint Resolution" form from your LCSA or the California Department of Child Support Services website, www.childsup.ca.gov. Submit the complaint form to the LCSA by mail or in person.

You must file your complaint with the LCSA within 90 days of the date you knew—or should have known—about the subject of your complaint.

Talk to the Ombudsperson!

If you need help with a problem, ask to speak with the LCSA's Ombudsperson—it is his or her job to:

- Help you get child support services
- Explain your rights and responsibilities
- Help you resolve problems with your case
- Explain the complaint process before, during, and after a complaint is filed
- Help you request and prepare for a state hearing if you are not satisfied with the results of the complaint resolution process

What will be done about my complaint?

Someone other than the caseworker involved with your complaint will investigate and try to resolve your complaint, and will tell the LCSA what must be done to remedy the problem. The complaint investigator will contact you soon after he or she receives your complaint.

The LCSA is required to provide a resolution in writing to every complaint within 30 days. If necessary, the LCSA can extend the complaint resolution period a maximum of 30 additional days. If the complaint resolution period is extended, the LCSA is required to mail you a notice stating the reason.

The LCSA will send you a written Notice of Complaint Resolution which will include information about your right to a state hearing in case you are not satisfied with the response to your complaint.



The State Hearing Program

If you are not satisfied with the LCSA's response to your complaint, you have the right to have your complaint issues heard at a state hearing.

The following disputes **cannot** be heard at a state hearing:

- Issues that must be addressed in court
- Court-ordered child support amounts
- Parental relationship/paternity
- Child custody or visitation
- Contempt proceedings
- Civil rights violations
- Discourteous treatment by LCSA employee

How do I request a state hearing?

Talk to the Ombudsperson, or request a form from:

- Your local child support agency;
- The California Department of Child Support Services website, www.childsup.ca.gov;
- The State Hearing Office—call toll-free (866) 289-4714; or
- Write to the California Department of Social Services, State Hearing Office, 744 P Street MS 19-98, Sacramento, CA 95814.