



Changing Your Child Support Amount

Points to Remember

- Parents or caregivers can request a modification (change).
- To request a modification through the local child support agency, you must have an open case.
- A case can be opened anytime.
- Your child support order can go up or down based on information gathered. The order may not be what you expected.
- There is no charge for requesting a modification through the local child support agency.
- Even if your request is denied, you can still go to court to have a judge decide your order. The Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse can help you do this.



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The California Department of Child Support Services does not provide legal services to parents or guardians.



Department of
Child Support Services

How can I change my child support amount?

You can ask for a modification to increase or decrease your court-ordered child support amount.

Who can ask for a modification?

- Noncustodial parents.
- Custodial parties (parents, caregivers, etc.)
- Local child support agencies.
- Child support agencies from other states.

How do I ask for a modification?

- Contact your local child support agency.
- Go to court on your own. The Family Law Facilitator at the courthouse (not part of the local child support agency) provides free legal assistance and can help you with the process.
- Hire a private attorney to go to court with you.

When can I ask for a modification?

You can ask for a modification if your circumstances change, such as:

- You are laid off or fired from your job.
- You get a new or additional job.
- Your income or the other parent's income increases or decreases.
- Custody or visitation changes.
- Family size changes.
- You become disabled.
- You go to jail or prison.
- You are deployed to active military service.



What do I need to provide?

In order for the local child support agency to review your case for modification, you will need to provide information, such as:

- Income and expenses.
- Child care expenses.
- Medical insurance.
- Disability (SSI, SDI, SSA, etc.)
- Jail or prison status.
- Unemployment benefits.
- Retirement income.
- Custody and visitation arrangements.

What should I expect?

After reviewing the information (above) you and the other parent provide, the local child support agency will determine whether a modification is needed, and if so, the appropriate amount of support. A modification may be justified if the support order would change by 20 percent or \$50, whichever is less.

If you and the other party can agree to the support amount ahead of time, you can sign a stipulation (agreement) that must be filed with the court.

If there is no agreement, you will receive a notice to appear in court for a hearing where a judge or commissioner will decide the amount.

If the other party lives in another state, the local child support agency may have to request that the other state conduct a review and request a modification.

