

Child Support Enforcement Services

What Is a Support Order?

A support order is a legal order. It spells out how much money the other parent owes, and how he or she must pay that money. A court hearing or an administrative proceeding can make a support order.

To get a support order, you must go to a child support enforcement office. They will give you a caseworker who will...

- Find the other parent who does not live with the child, called the noncustodial parent.
- Determine what your child needs, and how much the other parent should pay.

Will My Information Be Kept Private?

Yes. The child support enforcement office will protect your personal confidential information.

What Does It Cost?

If you get help from Medicaid, Foster Care, or cash assistance programs, these services will be free. Otherwise, they may cost you up to \$25. Some states charge extra. Ask your local office what they would charge.

Establishing Court Orders



Our children.
Our responsibility.

How Do I Get an Order?

First, you must contact your local child support enforcement office. You may bring a family member with you. The office will give you a caseworker who will tell you what you need to do next.

What Documents Should I Bring?

Your caseworker will help you—but you must do your part by bringing as much information as you can:

- Picture identification—Your driver's license, student I.D., matricula consular I.D., or other I.D.
- Social Security Number or Individual Tax Identification—Yours and the other parent's.
- Your child's birth certificate.
- The acknowledgement of paternity, if you have one.

Everything you know about where to find the other parent—date and place of birth, where he or she is living and working, phone number, names of relatives and friends, license plate, bank records, criminal history, etc.

How Do I Find an Office?

Every state has an office.

Visit <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/extinf.html>

To find a tribal office, visit <http://ocse.acf.hhs.gov/int/directories/index.cfm?fuseaction=main.tribalivd>

What Determines the Order Amount?

States must follow guidelines that determine how much a parent should pay. The guidelines consider the child's needs, other dependents, and the parents' ability to pay.

Can My Child Get Health Insurance?

All child support orders must include health care coverage. The noncustodial parent may have to...

- Cover the child under his or her employer's health insurance.
- Help pay for health insurance if the custodial parent carries it for the child.
- Pay a portion of uninsured medical costs.

How Do We Learn What the Other Parent Can Afford?

Your caseworker will look at the documents you bring. Then he or she will gather information on the other parent's income and assets from employers, banks, credit bureaus, insurance companies, courts, and other sources.

Is the Amount of Support Based on Both Parents' Incomes?

Some states consider both parents' incomes. Others consider only the noncustodial parent's income.

Can the Other Parent and I Agree On an Amount Ourselves?

If you and the other parent do not get public assistance, you may agree on an amount that is different from the state guidelines and present it in court.

How Can I Get a Fair Order?

Both parents will be notified of a support order hearing, and asked to bring certain documents. Both parents should go to the hearing and bring their documents. Then the judge can use information from both parents to decide.

If the Custodial Parent Gets Public Assistance, Do I Have to Repay It?

You would need to repay public assistance, such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families or state programs. The amount would be based on your ability to pay.

Can I Get Support If the Other Parent Is In Jail?

Yes, if the other parent has assets such as property or wages from a work release program.

