

The Complaint Resolution Program

If you're not satisfied with the service you're receiving from your child support agency, you have the right to file a complaint through the Complaint Resolution Program. You must file your complaint within 90 days of the date you know about the subject of your complaint.

You may make a complaint by phone or in person, or get a "Request for Complaint Resolution" form from your child support agency or at www.childsupport.ca.gov. Submit the complaint form by mail or in person.

Someone other than your child support specialist will investigate and try to resolve your complaint. You are entitled to a response to every complaint in writing within 60 days.

The State Hearing Process

If you are not satisfied with the agency's response to your complaint, you have the right to have your complaint heard at a State Hearing.

The following can't be heard at a State Hearing:

- Court-ordered child support amounts
- Parental relationship/parentage
- Child custody or visitation
- Contempt proceedings
- Civil rights violations
- Discourteous treatment by a child support employee

To request a State Hearing you can do one of the following:

- Download the "Request for State Hearing" form at www.childsupport.ca.gov
- Contact the State Hearing Office: Call 866.289.4714, fax 916.464.5069, or email StateHearings@dcss.ca.gov
- Mail your request to:
California Child Support Services – Office of Legal Services State Hearings
P.O. Box 419087
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9087

California Child Support Services

www.childsupport.ca.gov

866.901.3212

TTY | 866.399.4096

Enroll Today!



Gavin Newsom
Governor
State of California

CHHS

Kim Johnson
Secretary

California Health & Human Services Agency

CALIFORNIA
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

Kristen Erickson-Donadee
Director
California Child Support Services

PUB 304

Managing Your Child Support Case

CALIFORNIA
CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES



www.childsupport.ca.gov

Enroll for child support

California Child Support Services assists in establishing and enforcing financial and medical support orders for children. Services are offered to any parent, guardian, or caretaker of minor children, with or without a prior court order. We help both parents navigate the child support and court processes.

If you already have a court order, enrolling for services helps with every part of the process, keeps records, and helps both parties stay on track. If you do not have a court order, the local child support agency can help locate the other parent, establish legal parentage if required, get a court order and see that it is enforced in every state and many foreign countries.

You can enroll in person at your local office, online at www.childsupport.ca.gov/enroll, or download and complete the enrollment packet and mail it in to the closest office.

To find an office closest to you, visit www.childsupport.ca.gov and search for “local office.”

How is child support enforced?

Most court-ordered child support payments are made through income withholding—when an employer deducts child support payments from an employee’s paycheck. For all payment options, visit www.childsupport.ca.gov.

If child support is not paid on time and in full, contact the agency handling your case immediately. Enforcement actions such as driver’s license suspension, professional and recreational license suspension, tax and real estate liens, and intercepts of other income are possible.

What can you expect once a case is opened?

Locating the other parent

Before a court order for child support can be made, information for both parents must be valid. There is no guarantee they will be found, but the more identifying information provided the easier it will be.

Summons and Complaint

A legal document is sent to the parent being asked to pay support with a requirement to respond within 30 days before a court order for child support is made. If you receive a Summons and Complaint, contact your local office right away – they can help ensure your situation is accurately presented to the court.

Establishing legal parentage

Any child support office can help you establish legal parentage without going to court if both parents sign a Voluntary Declaration of Parentage. We can help you arrange for free genetic testing if you are not certain the child is yours.

Get a child support order and enforce it

Your local office can help with the paperwork so that when the court sets the child support amount, it is fair to both of you. In many cases if both of you can agree on an amount, you can avoid court completely. The court will base the amount of child support ordered by reviewing the income and expenses of each parent and the amount of time each spends with the child, among other factors.

Closing a child support case

There are many reasons why a child support case can be closed. Typically, it’s when the youngest child reaches the age of 18, is no longer a full-time high school student, and no past-due balances are owed, but there are many other circumstances that can affect this. All records are maintained for at least four years and four months in accordance with federal law.

How to change your court order

If your financial, medical, or other situation has changed and you need a change in your child support order, contact the child support agency handling your case and complete a “Request for Review and Adjustment.” This can be done online through Customer Connect.

You may also go to court on your own (the Family Law Facilitator’s office at your local court may be able to assist you) or you may hire a private attorney to represent you.

Calculate Child Support

The California Child Support Guideline Calculator is based on the same legal guidelines used in court, and estimates the amount of support that may be ordered in your case. This calculator provides only an estimate and is not a guarantee of the amount of child support that will be ordered. Many factors may affect the amount of child support awarded.

The county child support commissioner or family law judge has the final say to determine the support order amount.

Ability to Pay

When a paying parent’s actual income is unknown, courts will look at the parent’s earning capacity -- the ability to earn income and opportunity to work -- to determine their ability to pay.

Courts may also consider circumstances and relevant background factors affecting the parent’s ability to earn, such as the parent’s education, skills, work experience, age, health, and the job market.