

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES FACT SHEET

Child Support Services:

The Child Support Services Division of the Tennessee Department of Human Services is responsible for locating non-custodial parents for the purposes of

- Establishing paternity
- Establishing child support orders
- Enforcing child support orders
- Securing and enforcing health insurance coverage
- Collecting and distributing child support payments

Our agency's goal is to ensure that all children have the financial support of both parents.

Child Support Enforcement:

Families who receive benefits through the State's Families First / Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program, as well as families who do not receive such benefits are eligible for child support services. The State charges a \$25 fee for helping families who have never received Families First/TANF benefits collect child support payments, but only after collecting at least \$500 in support for them in an annual period. There is no charge to families who are receiving, or who have ever received Families First/TANF benefits.

Families in which the custodial parent applies for Families First/TANF benefits or Medical Assistance Only, in most instances, are referred to the Child Support Office responsible for that county. Families who do not receive Families First/TANF benefits may apply directly to their local child support office.

In order to locate a non-custodial parent, the state child support agency automatically conducts a search of certain records, including:

- Drivers' license records
- Wage and unemployment records
- Vital records
- Criminal records
- Health records (TennCare)

On the federal level, the child support agency has access to the following records:

- The Federal Parent Locator Service, which includes information from the Internal Revenue Service and the Social Security Administration
- The National Directory of New Hire, which is a nationwide directory of all newly hired or rehired employees
- Federal Case Registry, which is a nationwide directory of child support orders.

If a child's parents were never married, or if paternity has never been legally established, must be established before a child support order and health insurance coverage can be established.

Some of the actions our agency can take to enforce child support orders are:

- Automatically withhold wages and other income
- Seize assets identified by the Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) program, or by other means
- Intercept federal tax refunds and deny passport applications using the IRS Treasury/Administrative Offset program
- Revoke driver's licenses, professional licenses, and various other licenses,
- Report a child support debt to the credit reporting agencies
- Place liens against real or personal property
- File a contempt petition with the court

If the non-custodial parent resides out-of-state, child support can be pursued across state lines under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA). Using standardized forms, one state can request another state for assistance with the activities necessary to establish, enforce, and collect child support.

Centralized Collections:

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), P.L. 104-193, required all states to establish and operate a centralized unit to collect and disburse any support collected for cases in which support is being enforced under the provisions of Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. These are referred to as IV-D child support cases.

Payments for other child support cases (non-IV-D cases) must also be collected and disbursed by the Centralized Collections Unit (CCU) if the initial support order was issued on or after January 1, 1994 and the payments are being made by income assignment. The Tennessee Department of Human Services implemented the CCU on October 1, 1999.

Where Should Payments Be Mailed?

Effective October 1, 1999, child support payments that meet the criteria described in the paragraph above should be sent to:

**Central Child Support Receipting Unit
P. O. Box 305200
Nashville, TN 37229**

Information Needed For Timely Processing Of Payments:

All payments made to the CCU by both non-custodial parents and employers MUST include the following information:

- Name of the non-custodial parent or employee
- Docket number
- Social Security number
- Child support case number *
(*The case number assigned by the Tennessee Child Support Enforcement System, or TCSES)
- Amount of the payment
- Name and address of the custodial parent

Along with their payments, non-custodial parents should return the payment coupons they received from the Department of Human Services (DHS), or include the appropriate identifying information on their checks or money orders.

Custodial parents should make sure the child support agency has their current address so that payments are mailed to the correct address. Custodial parents should call the Customer Call Center at the number below to report address changes.

Debit Card:

The Tennessee Electronic Access Card, which is a VISA debit card, can be issued to you to access your child support payments. This process will provide child support recipients a safe, convenient and secure way to receive their child support payments. http://state.tn.us/humanserv/cs/cs_elecdisb.html

Making Payments On-Line:

"You may use a valid credit card issued by any recognized financial institution in the USA to make your child support payments on the Internet. <https://tn.smartchildsupport.com/>

Payment Summary on the Internet:

Payment information shown reflects payments either collected or sent to the person or place entitled to receive the payment for a particular time period. The screen will show current month information. However, you have the choice to select payment information for the current month, the last six months, a date range, or payment history. <https://www.tennesseeanytime.org/tces/>

Customer Call Center:

For collections or payment information, or to update or change an address, parents should call the Child Support Customer Service Call Center. A special feature that is available after normal business hours is the automated voice response system. This works similar to those established for bankcard companies.

The Child Support Customer Call Center phone number is 1-800-838-6911 (toll free) or (615) 253-4394 (Nashville area).

Employers with questions about the new centralized process should also contact the Customer Service Call Center.