



Guide to Getting Child Support

Do you Need Help Getting Child Support?

The Wisconsin Child Support Program can:

- Contact the paying parent's employer and set up income withholding.
- Collect child support from a parent living in another state.
- Provide help for reviewing or changing a support order for a possible increase or decrease.
- Provide payment and collection information on your child support case.
- Provide interpreters and translations of child support information at no cost.
- Provide privacy protection if the release of your address, telephone number, or other location information would put you and your child(ren) at risk.

Applying for Child Support Services:

All families may apply for child support (case management) services at their local child support agency without paying an application fee. Parents and guardians can download an application form online at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/apply>. Return the completed application to the child support agency.

If you are in aid/benefit program, you automatically receive child support services. Aid/benefit programs include the W-2, SSI Caretaker Supplement, Kinship Care, WI Shares (child care), and federally funded foster care programs. If the BadgerCare Plus program refers you to child support, you will automatically receive services.

Getting help from the aid/benefit program depends on your cooperation with the child support program. Child support services will continue when the benefits end.

Important to Know:

- Having a court order for support does not mean you are receiving case management services from your county or tribal child support agency. You will need to apply for services if you are not in an aid/benefit program listed above.
- If you are now receiving cash benefits from the W-2 or SSI Caretaker Supplement programs, you will only receive a portion of the paid child support.

How Can you Help?

- When you apply for child support services, provide copies of any divorce decrees and court orders you have for support or paternity.
- Give any information you have about the other parent, including full name, place of birth, current address, employment, other income information and Social Security or Tax Identification Number.
- Always cooperate with your child support worker, complete forms immediately, and keep appointments.
- Please be patient. The courts deal with many cases, and child support agencies have large caseloads. Stay in touch with your child support agency and report any new information about the other parent that might help with your case.

How is Child Support Collected?

Approximately 75% of child support is collected through income withholding. Child support agencies automatically send withholding notices to the paying parent's employers. Child support may also be withheld from unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, most pension payments, and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. The Consumer Credit Protection Act limits the withheld amount for current and past-due support to 50%-65% of a payer's disposable income (gross income minus taxes).

Past-due support may also be collected from a paying parent's tax refunds. Wisconsin lottery winnings of \$1,000 or more, and some saving and checking accounts. If you are owed past-due support, your case may be enforced for up to 20 years after your youngest child's 18th birthday.

Support Payments:

Child Support is sent to parents in one of two ways: direct deposit or the Wisconsin Support Collections Debit Card.

If you sign up for one method, you may switch to the other at a later date. For direct deposit, download the application form at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/cp/pay/dd> or call the Wisconsin Support Trust Fund.

Wisconsin Support Trust Fund
(800) 991-5530 toll free
(877) 209-5209 toll free TTY
Monday – Friday
8:00 am – 5:00 pm

Payment Information:

- **Child Support Online Services (CSOS):** provides detailed payment and balance information and printable account histories. Visit <https://csos.wisconsin.gov/login> (registration required). Information is updated every night except Sunday.
- **Wisconsin Support Trust Fund:** provides information about your last two payments. Information is updated every night except Sunday.
- **Child Support Notice of Collection:** the month after a payment is received families who get cash benefits will receive this notice. The notice will tell the family how much child support was paid, how much was sent to them, and how much was used to pay for their benefits.
- **Debit Card Accounts:** parents may call the phone number on the back of their card. For more options, refer to the information that came with the card or visit <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/cp/pay/debit-card>.

Working with the Local Child Support Agency:

By law, a new address, job, or change in income must be reported to the local child support agency. An address can be updated by contacting a caseworker, calling the Wisconsin Support Trust Fund, or online <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/parent-rights/updates>.

Can my child support agency help if the other parent moves to another state or country?

Yes. Information about working with other states and countries to receive child support can be found at <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/cs/intergov>.

My caseworker never calls me. How do I get someone to work on my child support case?

Due to large caseloads, child support workers might not be able to contact individuals regarding case information or updates. If the worker does not call, it does not mean the caseworker is not working on an individual's case.

Weeks ago my caseworker said that the agency would take my case to court because the other parent is not paying. Why have they not gone to court yet?

It takes time to set a court date. The court may be unable to schedule your case immediately.

When can enforcement be requested, and how do I ask for enforcement?

If the other parent does not make a payment for more than one month, call the child support agency and ask for enforcement of the support order.

Can child support agencies arrest the other parent?

No. Child support agencies cannot arrest anyone. Only the court can authorize an arrest warrant. The warrant gives law enforcement agencies the authority to arrest a person.

I do not agree with what the court decided. What can I do?

When a court rules on a case, the child support agency cannot change the ruling. Decisions of a court commissioner can be reviewed by a judge if a request is filed. A judge's decision may be appealed to a higher court. You may hire an attorney for these actions or ask a coworker if there are other options.

Why does the agency keep sending letters? I Want the other parent in jail.

Child support agencies have many tools to help enforce child support orders. Some tools, such as charging interest on past-due support, are done automatically. For the most efficient use of staff time, child support agencies use their experience to choose what tools to use and when. For example, a caseworker may write a warning letter before taking a more drastic action. Some enforcement actions require due process or a court action. Jail is not always the best way to get money for a child.

I am not getting my child support. Why?

Your case may be very difficult; although the Wisconsin Child Support Program is a national leader in support collections, not all families receive support in any given month. The most common difficulty is that the paying parent's address and/or employer are unknown. You may learn information about the other parent's address and job changes before the child support agency and should inform your caseworker about these changes.

Important Reminders

- You are required by law, to report changes to the local child support agency: address, income, health insurance or employment.
- If you have a Child Support Debit Card, call the number on the back of the card to report an address change. The post office cannot forward replacement/new cards.

For More Information Contact:

The Department of Children and Families is an equal opportunity and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please contact (608) 266-3400 or the Wisconsin Relay Service (WRS) – 711. For civil rights questions, call (608) 422-6889.