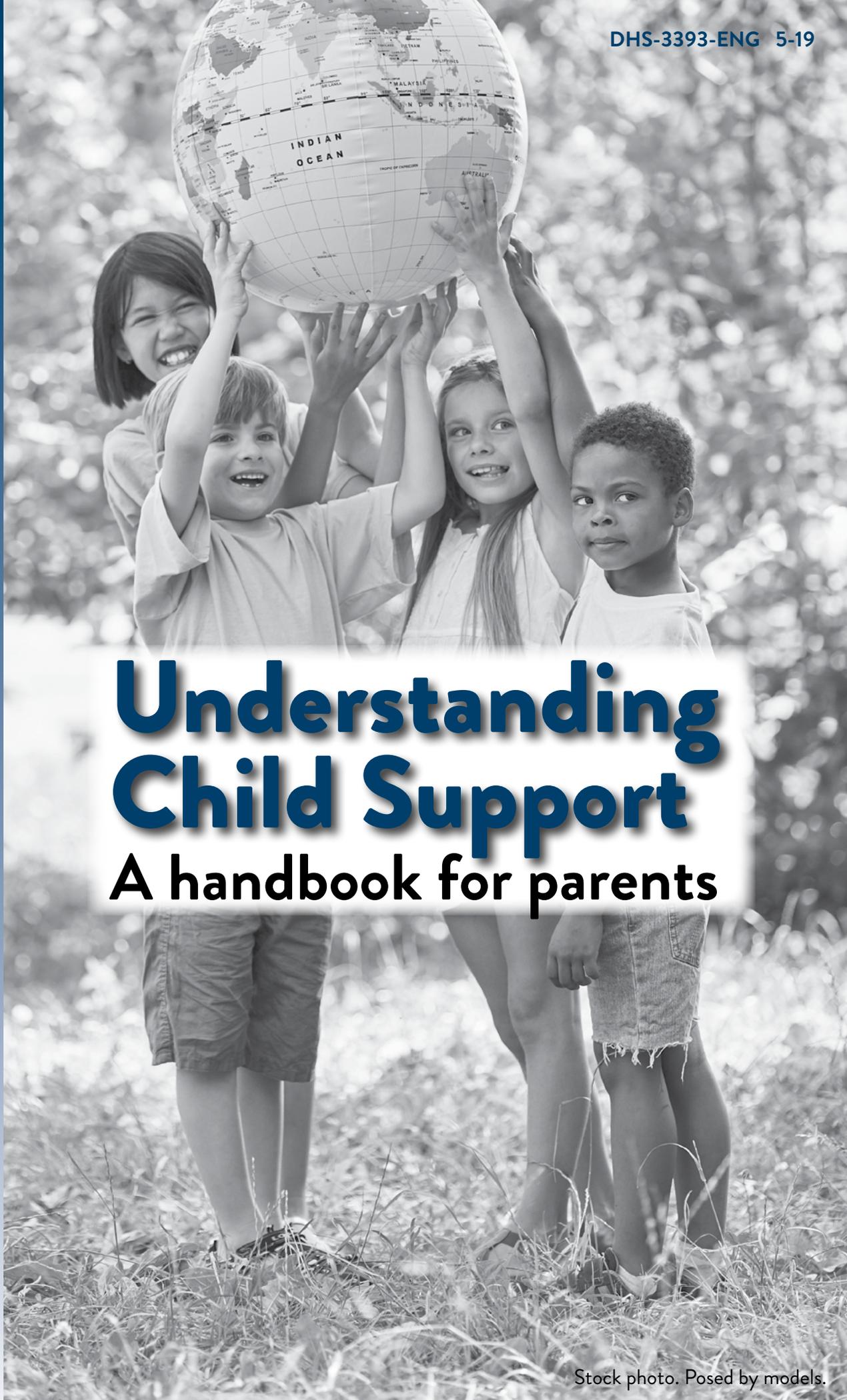




DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES



Understanding Child Support

A handbook for parents

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, ask your worker or call the number below for your language.

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알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 담당자에게 문의하시거나 1-844-217-3565으로 연락하십시오.

ໂປຣດຊາບ. ຖ້າທ່ານ ທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປເອກະສານນີ້ພຣີ, ຈົ່ງຖາມພະນັກງານກຳກັບການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອຂອງທ່ານ ຫຼື ໂທໂທ 1-888-487-8251.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, hojjettoota kee gaafadhu ykn afaan ati dubbattuuf bilbili 1-888-234-3798.

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Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda qoraalkan, hawlwadeenkaaga weydiiso ama wac lambarka 1-888-547-8829.

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Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi nhân viên xã hội của quý vị hoặc gọi số 1-888-554-8759.

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For accessible formats of this information or assistance with additional equal access to human services, write to DHS.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-4400, or use your preferred relay service. ADA1 (2-18)

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This handbook gives general information about Minnesota’s child support program. Because parentage and child support are important issues, you may wish to contact an attorney. The Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Support Division and county child support agencies can help you if you apply for or are referred for child support services, but they cannot give you legal advice about your case.

Definitions

Arrears: The terms arrears, and arrearage, mean support obligation amounts that are overdue and unpaid.

Child: An individual under 18 years of age; an individual under 20 years who is still attending secondary school; or an individual who, by reason of physical or mental condition, is incapable of self-support.

Child support: Money parents pay for the care, support and education of their children. It may include a monthly court-ordered amount for basic support, child care support and medical support.

Contempt of court: Not doing what the court has ordered you to do.

Establishing parentage: The process to create a legal relationship between a child and the child's parent when no legal relationship previously existed. Actions to establish a legal relationship between a child and the child's father are informally referred to as paternity actions.

Federal Case Registry: This registry contains limited information about each child support case in the United States. It matches quarterly wage information and unemployment insurance records submitted by each state with the National Directory of New Hires.

Good cause: A county agency determination that a public assistance recipient does not have to cooperate with the child support agency because the recipient or child may be in danger of physical or emotional harm if efforts are made either to adjudicate parentage, or to establish or enforce support.

Joint child: The dependent child who is the child of both parents in the support proceeding. In cases where support is sought from only one parent of a child, a joint child is the child for whom support is sought.

National Directory of New Hires: The directory containing information employers are required by federal law to report about newly hired and rehired employees. The directory uses information from the Federal Case Registry to match social security numbers and report job information to the Minnesota child support agency.

Nonjoint child: The legal child of one, but not both, of the parents subject to the legal action being taken. Stepchildren are excluded from this definition.

Obligee: A person to whom payments for maintenance or support are owed.

Obligor: A person obligated to pay maintenance or support. For purposes of ordering medical support, a parent who has primary physical custody of a child may be an obligor.

Parenting time: The time a parent spends with a child regardless of the custodial designation regarding the child. Parenting time has also been referred to as visitation.

Public assistance: Benefits from a state or federal program. Public assistance programs include the Diversionary Work Program; the Minnesota Family Investment Program, which is Minnesota's Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program; Tribal Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; Child Care Assistance Program; Medical Assistance; and Title IV-E Foster Care services.



Stock photo. Posed by models.

Every child needs financial and emotional support. Every child has the right to this support from both parents. Devoted parents can be loving and supportive forces in a child's life. Even when parents do not live together, they need to work together to support their child.

Without the involvement of both parents, too many children do not get the chance they need and deserve to reach their full potential.

**You make a difference
in your children's lives.
Be there for them.**

Minnesota's child support program helps parents establish a financial partnership.

The Minnesota Department of Human Services, Child Support Division and county child support agencies work with both parents to establish and enforce support orders. Together, they help families become and remain self-sufficient through improved child support collections.

What is child support?

Child support is money parents pay to their child's other parent or caregiver to support their child. The court orders the support, which generally includes basic, medical and child care support.

The support may be part of an interim, temporary, permanent or modified court order in a:

- Divorce or legal separation
- Paternity action
- Order for protection
- Child custody action
- Separate child support action.

What child support services are available?

Full child support services

- Locating parents
- Establishing parentage
- Establishing court orders for basic, medical and child care support
- Reviewing and asking the court to modify basic, medical and child care support orders when appropriate
- Adjusting support orders based on the cost-of-living index

- Enforcing support orders
- Working with other states to establish and enforce support orders
- Processing payments received by the Child Support Payment Center for child support and spousal maintenance.

Full services are not available for the collection of spousal maintenance if the order does not include child support.

Income withholding-only services

- Services are limited to processing child support and spousal maintenance payments only. No other services are provided.
- The obligee, or obligee's representative, must serve the income withholding notice on the employer or payor of funds.
- Only service available for the collection of spousal maintenance when child support is not ordered.
- The obligor is charged a \$15 per month fee for this service.

Who can use these services?

Full child support services are available to:

- Parents of minor children if one parent does not live with the child
- Parents who pay court-ordered child support
- People who have court-ordered, physical custody of a minor child
- People who receive public assistance for a minor child who lives in their home.

What services are not provided?

Child support services do not include:

- Divorce assistance
- Parenting time or custody assistance
- Spousal maintenance order establishment or modification
- Collection of:
 - Bills not related to support
 - Property settlements
 - Attorney's fees, except in limited circumstances (Minn. Stat. § 518A.735)
 - Legal advice or counsel.

If you need any of these services, contact an attorney.

How can I apply for child support services?

You can apply for child support services through your county child support agency. Return a completed [application](#) to your county child support agency.

If you or your dependent minor child(ren) receive benefits from the Diversionary Work Program, Minnesota Family Investment Program, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Medical Assistance or Child Care Assistance Program, your financial worker will provide the child support agency information about you. The agency will open a case for you and will expect you to provide information and cooperate in establishing paternity, establishing an order for support and collecting support. If you receive only Medical Assistance, you may choose to have full child support services or only medical support services.

Are there any fees?

Federal Annual Fee – Each year, non-public assistance child support cases (cases where public assistance has never been provided) are charged a non-refundable \$35 fee after at least \$550 in support payments have been paid to the family. Federal annual fees are automatically deducted from support payments made to obligees, and are collected during each federal fiscal year, from October 1 to September 30.

Federal Tax Refund Offset Fee – An Internal Revenue Service (IRS) fee is deducted from the obligor's tax refund(s) collected for past due support before being disbursed as a support payment to the obligee. The obligor is credited with the full tax refund(s) amount collected. Therefore, the obligee pays this fee.

State Tax Refund Offset Fee – The Commissioner of Revenue charges a \$15.00 fee for each collection it makes through state tax intercept. The child support agency receives the collection minus the \$15.00 fee and credits the obligor for only the amount the Department receives. Therefore, the obligor pays this fee.

Cost Recovery Fee – Each year the child support agency charges a fee to applicants for child support services to help pay the costs of operating the child support program. The applicant is the person who completed the Application for Support and Collection Services (DHS 1958) or is the person referred to the child support program by one of the applicable public assistance programs. Currently the fee is up to 2% of the support collected by the child support agency from the obligor and is retained directly from the support. Child support applicants receiving

public assistance or child support applicants who have received public assistance in the last 24 months, will not be charged the fee. There is a cap on the fee which is adjusted annually.

Other States' Fees – If the child support agency refers my case to another state for enforcement, the other state may charge a fee for a particular service. The other state may collect its fees by retaining a part of the child support collection.

After I apply, what else must I do?

You must take an active role in your case. Cooperating with your child support agency makes establishing an order more efficient and makes collecting regular support payments more likely.

You must report changes that may affect your case. You must contact your county child support agency if:

- You or the other parent have new contact information
- You or the other parent have change in income
- You or the other parent have a change in your child's health care coverage
- Your child moves or graduates from high school
- Your child no longer receives child care
- You have new information that might help locate the other parent
- You apply for public assistance
- You are involved in other court actions regarding support payments or parenting time.

What if I receive public assistance?

- If you or your dependent minor children receive public assistance, the other parent may be ordered to pay child support. When the child support agency collects current basic support, they send the support to you. Two months later, the department may adjust your public assistance amount or grant. However, the first \$100 (for one child) or \$200 (for two or more children) of child support received each month will not reduce your public assistance.
- If you or your children receive Minnesota Family Investment Program benefits, you will receive any current basic support collected in the month that it is due. Support that is not paid during any month you receive cash assistance is owed to the state to reimburse MFIP benefits issued to you and your children.
- If you or your children receive Diversionary Work Program benefits, Medical Assistance or child care assistance, you will receive the current basic support collected in the month that it is due, but you will not receive the medical and child care support collected for that month.

- If you receive court-ordered child support directly from the other parent, you must report it to your county child support agency. Obligor should pay child support through the state and not directly to the other parent.
- If the child support agency has to establish paternity for your child or locate the other parent, you must cooperate by providing complete and correct information.
- If you do not cooperate with the child support agency, the department may reduce your public assistance benefits and end your coverage under Medical Assistance. If you have reason not to cooperate, you may claim good cause. If your good cause is granted, you do not have to cooperate with the child support agency because the county has determined you or your child may be physically or emotionally harmed if efforts are made to legally determine paternity, establish support or enforce support.
- If Medical Assistance is the only public assistance your child receives and you do not want full child support services, you may be eligible for medical-only services. With medical-only services, the county child support office will be involved with establishing and enforcing medical support. The child support agency will not establish or enforce basic or child care support. When your child no longer receives public health coverage, you may close your case or request full services. Contact your county child support office to request medical-only services.
- If the state makes a mistake and gives you more money than you should have received, the department may adjust your grant and may require you to repay all or a portion of the overpayment.

If I apply for child support services, do I have any rights?

Yes. You have the right to:

- Receive fair and nondiscriminatory treatment
- Be notified of all important actions concerning your case
- Participate in any court action involving your case
- Ask the child support agency to review and file a motion with the court to modify your support order if appropriate.

Is my child support information private?

Child support information is private data under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. The child support agency can give private or nonpublic data about individuals to:

- The person who is the subject of the data
- Others who the law says can see the data
- Others who the subject of the data states, in writing, can see the data
- Court and all other parties when filing legal documents; generally, court files are available to the public.

What if I have safety concerns?

The child support agency shares your address and other identifying information with other state and federal agencies and the courts as allowed by state and federal law. The information you provide may become available to the other parent. Contact your local child support agency to discuss available options if you have concerns that seeking to establish, modify or enforce an order of support will create a risk of harm to yourself or your child.

The child support agency is required to protect information concerning your whereabouts from the other party if:

- You provide evidence that there is a protective or restraining order in effect against the other party
- The child support office determines, based on information provided by you, that release of such information may result in physical or emotional harm to you or your child.

Most public assistance programs will refer your case to the child support program as a requirement for receipt of public assistance. If you fear that you or your child will be at risk of domestic violence if paternity or an order of support is established or enforced, you may claim good cause from cooperating with the child support program. You may claim good cause if:

- Cooperation is expected to result in physical or emotional harm of a serious nature to the child for whom support is sought;
- Cooperation is expected to result in physical or emotional harm of a serious nature to you, sufficient to impair the caretaker's ability to care for the child adequately;
- The child was conceived as a result of incest or rape; or
- Adoption of the child is pending before a court, or you are working with an agency that is helping you decide if you should place the child for adoption and the work has gone on for three months or fewer.

What must be done before I can get a child support order?

Before a child support agency can get an order from the court, it must notify the people involved that it is trying to establish an order. The child support agency cannot take action in some cases if it cannot locate both parents.

If a child support agency does not know where a parent lives or works, it gathers information from many places including:

- Unemployment records
- Credit-reporting agency records
- Financial records
- Public assistance and food support records
- Social services records
- Motor vehicle registration and driver's license records
- Minnesota Department of Natural Resources records
- United States Postal Service
- Current and previous employers
- Current and previous utility companies
- Law enforcement agencies, parole and probation offices
- State licensing boards
- Military records
- The Federal Case Registry
- National Directory of New Hire Reporting.

How do parents establish parentage?

If a mother is unmarried when her child is born, the child does not have a legal father. Unmarried parents can establish a legal father for their child by going through a legal action in court or by signing the Minnesota Voluntary Recognition of Parentage form ([DHS-3159](#)) and filing it with the Minnesota Department of Health, Office of Vital Records.

Why is establishing a legal father important?

Parentage must be established before the court can order a father to pay child support or before the court can order custody and parenting time. A child must have a legal father before a father's name can be placed on the child's birth record. Children with legal fathers are entitled to benefits, including Social Security benefits, veteran's benefits and inheritance rights through their fathers. Children may also benefit by knowing their families' biological, cultural and medical histories.

What is the difference between a legal father and a biological father?

Every child has a biological father. The biological father is the man with whom a child's mother became pregnant. The legal father may not necessarily be the biological father. The legal father is the man the law recognizes as the father of the child. Sometimes parents want proof that the man is the biological father of the child before he is named the legal father. Parents can request genetic testing. This testing can exclude a man who is not the biological father of the child or it can show a greater than 99 percent probability that the man is the biological father. The child support agency can help you with genetic testing.

Who establishes support orders?

The court establishes child support orders. The child support agency or parent may ask the court to issue a support order. The support order may be part of a temporary, permanent or modified court order in: divorce, paternity, child custody or a separate child support action; a legal separation; or an order for protection. The court generally orders the parent not living with the child to pay support for the child to the other parent. The court may order past support and set the ongoing amount of basic medical and child care support.

What does a child support order include?

Orders for child support generally include three types of support. In some cases, the court may also order past support.

Basic support

Basic support is for expenses relating to the child's care, housing, food, clothing and transportation. The amount is determined by applying the parent's combined Parental Income for Determining Child Support and the number of joint children to the basic support guidelines table. The basic support obligation does not include payment toward arrears.

Medical support

Medical support is for expenses related to health care coverage, which may include medical, dental and/or vision insurance.

- Medical support may also include the court ordering parents to contribute a monthly dollar amount towards the cost of health care coverage and/or Medical Assistance.
- The court may also order parents to pay a portion of the uninsured and/or unreimbursed medical expenses, which may include dental or vision costs.

Child care support

Child care support is for child care expenses that occur when the parent the child lives with works or goes to school. After reviewing income information from both parents and the amount of child care expense, the court decides each parent's financial responsibility for child care support.

Past support

In some cases, the court may order a child support obligation for a period of time prior to the date the order is signed (these are called retroactive orders). Minnesota law only allows for retroactive child support to go back two years prior to the service of a legal action to establish child support, or the date of the child's birth, whichever is more recent.

Retroactive support or past support is not considered arrears unless the court order does not set forth repayment terms and/or the obligor does not comply with the court-ordered repayment terms. Any failure of the obligor to comply repayment terms for past support will turn the entire amount into arrears.

How is the amount of child support determined?

Child support is determined using the guidelines established through Minnesota law and considers the incomes of both parents, the number of children and the actual cost of raising a child at various income levels. The court may deviate from guidelines to encourage prompt and regular payment of child support and to prevent either parent or the joint children from living in poverty.

Gross income

The guidelines use the gross income of both parents in determining the basic support amount. Gross income includes any form of monthly income received, but does **not** include:

- Compensation for employment in excess of 40 hours per week, with some exceptions
- A child support payment received by a party
- The income of the obligor's spouse or the obligee's spouse
- Public assistance benefits.

The guidelines require the addition of potential income and the child's social security or veteran benefits coming from a parent's eligibility.

The guidelines require the subtraction of child support and/or spousal maintenance payments ordered by the court for a nonjoint child or former spouse.

Parental Income for Determining Child Support

Parties who have nonjoint children living within their home receive a deduction from their gross income. The maximum number of deductions allowed for nonjoint children is two. The resulting amount is the Parental Income for Determining Child Support.

Basic support amount

The basic support amount is determined by using the combined Parental Income for Determining Child Support of both parents and finding the corresponding income bracket in the basic support guideline table. The basic support guideline table is found in Minnesota Statutes 518A.35.

Percentage contribution

Determine the percentage contribution of each parent by dividing the combined Parental Income for Determining Child Support into each parent's Parental Income for Determining Child Support. The obligor's basic support obligation is determined by multiplying the basic support amount by the percentage contribution.

Parenting expense adjustment

The obligor is entitled to a parenting expense adjustment for costs incurred while exercising parenting time, such as food, transportation, recreation and household expenses. The parenting expense adjustment is based on the number of overnights granted in a court order.

Self-support adjustment

A child support order should not exceed the amount an obligor is able to pay. The court calculates the obligor's income available for support by subtracting a self-support reserve equal to 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for one person from the obligor's gross income.

If the obligor's income available for support is less than the basic support amount, then the support is reduced until the support order is equal to the obligor's income available for support.

Minimum basic support amount

If the obligor's gross income is less than 120 percent of the federal poverty guidelines for one person, the court must order the following amounts as the minimum basic support obligation.

- \$50 per month for one or two children.
- \$75 per month for three or four children.
- \$100 per month for five or more children.

If the court finds the obligor receives no income and completely lacks the ability to earn income, the minimum basic support amount does not apply.

How to estimate your child support obligation using the guidelines calculator

The Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Support Division maintains a web-based calculator on its public website. To access the calculator, visit childsupportcalculator.dhs.state.mn.us/.

This will bring you to the worksheet, worksheet instructions and calculator.

Important disclaimer

The child support guidelines worksheet, instructions and calculator are for informational and educational use only, and are not a guarantee of the amount of child support the court will order. The results obtained are only as accurate as the information provided. Other factors may affect the actual child support order. The court has the final authority to determine the amount of the child support order.

What happens when a parent does not pay child support?

When your child's other parent does not pay the child support obligation and you have an open case, the child support agency takes action to enforce the support order. Interest may be added to past-due child support. Past-due child support remains due until paid.

Cases must meet certain criteria before the child support agency can take action. Generally, child support policy allows enough time for the child support agency to give an obligor proper notice and an opportunity to pay the past-due amounts or to establish a payment agreement. Some enforcement actions take time and some actions may not be appropriate for a case. The child support agency and the county attorney may decide to take some actions based on the circumstances of the case and the likelihood of success.

What enforcement tools are used to collect child support?

Contempt of court

The child support agency may ask the court to find an obligor in contempt of court for not making

support payments after the agency has reviewed the circumstances of the case and the likelihood of success. The parent must be:

- At least three months behind in support payments
- Failing to follow a payment agreement
- Failing to respond to other enforcement tools.

The court may find parents in contempt if they have the ability to pay but are intentionally not paying their child support obligation. If the court finds the obligor in contempt, the court may order the obligor to serve a jail sentence unless the obligor begins to meet certain conditions, such as making regular support payments.

Credit bureau reporting

The child support agency may report obligations that are past due to credit bureaus if a parent is at least three months behind in paying support.

Criminal nonsupport

Obligors who do not pay support and who have previously had a nonsupport contempt action initiated against them may be charged with criminal nonsupport. Obligors may be charged with a misdemeanor, gross misdemeanor or a felony depending on the number of months behind and the past-due amount. If convicted, the court may order obligors to pay fines and serve prison time.

Financial institution data match

The child support agency matches information about parents who owe past-due child support with data from financial institutions to find assets. The child support agency may levy and take an obligor's assets if the agency has already certified the arrears to take tax refunds and the parent is:

- At least five months behind in paying a child support obligation
- Not following a payment plan.

Judgment and interest

Child support arrears automatically become judgments by operation of law. Child support arrears can also be entered and docketed as judgments with the court. Entering and docketing a judgment creates a lien on real property owned by an obligor in the county in which the judgment is docketed. Child support judgments (both types) may be reported to the credit bureaus and accrue interest. The interest rate on child support judgments is calculated pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, section 549.09, and is the same as the interest on all other civil judgments.

License suspension

The child support agency may suspend the driver's license, recreational license (hunting or fishing) or occupational license of a parent who is in a job that requires a license from a state, county or municipal board, or from an agency (e.g.: realtors, barbers, lawyers) if the parent is:

- At least three months behind in paying a child support obligation
- Not following a payment plan.

The child support agency may suspend a recreational license for a parent who is:

- At least six months behind in paying a child support obligation
- Not following a payment plan
- Not responding to other enforcement actions.

New hire reporting

The child support agency uses data from employers to locate parents. Employers report basic information about newly hired employees to the state's new hire reporting center. In Minnesota, employers must provide information within 20 days of the day the employee starts work. Employers also report when employees no longer work for them. Every state sends information and receives data from new hire reporting.

Other income

If a parent owes past-due child support, the child support agency may take employment bonuses and periodic or lump sum payments the parent receives from state or local agencies, including unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and lottery winnings. The child support agency may also take assets held in financial institutions or in retirement accounts.

Passport denial

A parent's application for a passport may be denied if the parent is:

- At least \$2,500 behind in paying a child support obligation
- Eligible for federal tax refund intercept.

Student grant denial

A parent's application for a student grant may be denied if the parent is:

- At least one month behind in paying a child support obligation
- Not following a payment agreement.

State tax refund intercept

The child support agency may collect past-due child support from a parent's state income tax refund or property tax refund if the parent:

- Is at least one month behind in paying a child support obligation or the past-due support has been entered into public record as a judgment
- Owes at least \$25 in past-due support
- Has a payment agreement in which state tax interception is not prohibited.

Federal tax refund intercept

The child support agency may collect past-due child support from a parent's federal income tax refund if the parent owes at least \$500 in nonpublic assistance arrears or at least \$150 in public assistance arrears.

Many children in Minnesota's child support system receive child support payments regularly. However, even though we continue to strengthen child support laws and increase penalties for parents who refuse to pay, some parents have circumstances that prevent them from paying their child support and some do not accept their responsibility. If an obligor works for cash, hides assets in other names, is self-employed or actively evades the child support agency, usual enforcement actions may be difficult, if not impossible, to implement.

What happens when one parent does not live in Minnesota?

Some of the most difficult cases to enforce are those in which the parents live in different states. All states must provide child support services, and with the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, interstate enforcement of child support obligations is improving. The act includes laws requiring states to work together to establish and enforce child support orders. State child support agencies must cooperate and help each other in handling requests for assistance.

Can a support order be changed?

Child support orders can be changed by court orders and by cost-of-living adjustments. Either parent may request that the child support agency review their support order.

The county child support agency will determine whether the existing order meets review requirements. If it does, the agency will complete the review and file a motion asking the court to modify the order. If the case does not meet the requirements, the county child support agency will notify the parent who requested the review. If a parent still wants the order changed, they can file a motion asking the court to modify the order.

The court may change a child support order if:

- There is a substantial increase or decrease in either parent's gross income
- There is a substantial increase or decrease in the needs of a party or the child
- One of the parties or the child begins receiving public assistance
- There is a change in the cost of living for either parent
- There are extraordinary medical expenses for the child
- There is a change in the availability of health care coverage, or a substantial increase or decrease in health care coverage costs
- There is a substantial increase or decrease in existing work-related or education-related child care expenses
- The child is emancipated.

The court will consider a substantial change of circumstances and presume any of the above circumstances makes the terms of the existing order unreasonable and unfair if:

- Application of the guidelines would change the current order by at least 20 percent and at least \$75 higher or lower than the current order; if the current support order is less than \$75, it results in a calculated court order that is at least 20 percent per month higher or lower
- The medical support provisions of the order are not enforceable
- The health coverage ordered is not available to the child for whom the order is established.
- The current order is for a percentage of income, not a fixed dollar amount
- The gross income of a party has decreased by at least 20 percent through no fault or choice of the party
- A deviation was granted because the child lived in a foreign country and the child no longer resides in the foreign country.

The court may also change a support order if custody has changed.

Cost-of-living adjustments

Most Minnesota basic support orders require a cost-of-living adjustment every two years. The child support agency takes steps necessary to get the adjustment for these orders. Unless the obligor contests the adjustment in court, the child support agency will adjust the basic support obligation every other year on May 1.

How are support payments made?

In Minnesota, more than 70 percent of all support payments paid on cases are made through income withholding.

If the child support agency is enforcing your order, child support must be paid to the state, not directly to the other parent. If you receive a payment directly or make a payment directly to the other parent, report it to your child support agency.

Income withholding

The court may determine that child support payments are subject to income withholding. If the child support agency is enforcing the order, they will identify and notify the obligor's employer or payor of funds to withhold the child support from the obligor's income. After notification, the employer or payor of funds must withhold child support from the obligor's paycheck. The employer can mail a check to the state payment center or electronically transfer the funds to the state.

Employers and other payors of funds may withhold income from one or more checks per month as long as they withhold the entire amount due every month. Based on the number of times per month the employer withholds money, the other parent may get weekly, biweekly or monthly child support payments from the state.

If a parent owes both current support and arrears, the support amount collected through income withholding can be increased by 20 percent per month to cover the arrears, unless the court has ordered a specific payback amount for arrears.

Other payment options

If income withholding is not available, payments may be made through the following options:

Pay online

- Make secure, free online payments from your checking or savings account by visiting Minnesota Child Support Online at www.childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us.

Pay with cash

- Using PayNearMe at participating locations nationwide, including Casey's General Store, CVS Pharmacy, Family Dollar Store and 7-Eleven.
- Get a PayNearMe barcode using your name and 10-digit participant number (also called MCI number) at <http://www.PayNearMe.com/Minnesota> or by contacting your county child support office.

- Using MoneyGram
 - Find a participating location at <http://www.moneygram.com/billpaylocations>; nationwide locations include Walmart, CVS Pharmacy and Cub Foods.

Pay by mail

- Mail a check, cashier's check or money order to:
 - Minnesota Child Support Payment Center
P.O. Box 64326
St. Paul, MN 55164-0326
 - Include your name on the payment and at least one identifying number, such as: participant number (also called MCI number) or Social Security number.

Pay through automatic recurring withdrawal

- Complete the Automatic Recurring Withdrawal Authorization Form (PDF) at <https://edocs.dhs.state.mn.us/lfserver/Public/DHS-4117-ENG>
- Mail the completed form to the Minnesota Child Support Payment Center
P.O. Box 64329
St. Paul MN 55164-0329
- Or, fax the completed form to 651-431-7469.

How quickly does the state process support payments?

Child Support Payment Center staff receipt payments Monday through Friday. Within 24 hours of the time they receipt the payment, they record the payment on the child support computer system.

What happens to the child support that is collected?

Federal and state regulations govern how payments are applied. The child support office generally applies payments as follows.

- If a parent owes support to more than one family, the state sends a portion of each payment it receives to each family.
- For each case, most payments collected during a month pay current support first. Current support is support that is received by the child support agency in the month it is due. After current support is paid, other payments received that month go towards past due support called arrears.
- If a family has been on public assistance, the parent who receives support may or may not receive arrears payments made by the other parent.

How do I receive the support collected?

The child support agency collects the support from the obligor. In most cases, the child support agency sends the support collected and owed to the obligee within two days. Funds collected through certain tax intercepts may be held for up to six months to make sure the refund was properly intercepted. Once you apply for services, all support payments must come through the state. If you receive a support payment directly from the obligor, you must tell your child support worker. You may be asked to send the payment to the Child Support Payment Center so that it can be disbursed according to federal guidelines.

For up-to-the-minute case and payment information:

- Visit www.childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us/
- Call the Child Support Payment Line
 - 800-657-3512 outside the Twin Cities metro area
 - 651-431-4340 in the Twin Cities metro area.

To get information, you must know your personal identification number (PIN) that the child support agency assigns to you.

What are my direct deposit choices?

To increase the efficiency, convenience, speed and safety of payments to you, the state sends support by direct deposit. Through direct deposit, you may choose to have your support payments electronically deposited into a checking account, savings account or stored value card account. After your support case is open, the child support agency will send you more information on how to set up direct deposit.

When does a case close?

A child support case does not automatically close when a child turns 18 or emancipates. Your court order will tell you when your obligation ends. If you have child support arrears, your case may stay open until the arrears are paid in full.

If you are a child support obligee who does not receive public assistance and you applied for child support services, you may choose to close your child support case. However, any portion of your case that is for collecting public assistance obligations cannot be closed. If you are a child support obligor who applied for child support services, you may also be able to close your nonpublic assistance child support case. In either case, if you close your child support case, you will be responsible for maintaining payment records and the obligor will be responsible for payments due the obligee.

Federal law allows the child support agency to close a child support case. If your children currently receive public assistance from the Diversionary Work Program, Minnesota Family Investment Program, Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, Minnesota health care programs, Child Care Assistance Program or Title IV-E Foster Care, your case cannot be closed except in limited circumstances. If your children received public assistance in the past, the public assistance portion of your case may not be closed. In general, child support agencies close cases when an obligation ends and all support is paid, or the person who asked for child support services requests that the case be closed and the case qualifies.

How can I make a difference?

We recognize that fathers and mothers are important in the lives of their children, and we encourage parents to be involved with their children's lives whether they live with them or not. Staying involved is important even though it may not always be easy.

The more you know about Minnesota's child support program, the better you will be able to exercise your rights and responsibilities under the law, and the more successful you will be in providing support to your children.

Tribal Child Support Services

Minnesota's tribal and county child support programs work together to assist families, promote healthy family relationships and provide financial support for children. Tribal members may be able to receive services from a tribal program. For more information, contact a county child support agency or one of the following Tribal IV-D Child Support Programs:

Leech Lake Child Support Program

218-339-8600

<http://www.llojibwe.org>

Mille Lacs Band Child Support Program

320-532-7755

<http://www.millelacsband.com>

Red Lake Nation Child Support Program

218-679-3350

<http://www.rlnn.org>

White Earth Nation Child Support Program

218-983-4641

<http://whiteearth.com>



Resources

Child support information telephone lines and websites provide easy access to child support and payment information 24 hours a day.

Payment and case information

- Minnesota Child Support Online at www.childsupport.dhs.state.mn.us provides up-to-the-minute case and payment information on a secure website.
- The Payment Information Line at 651-431-4340 or 800-657-3512 provides up-to-the-minute payment information.

Minnesota Child Support Offices

A list of Minnesota child support offices, including contact information, can be found at <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/child-support/contact-us/county-offices.jsp>.

Minnesota Child Support Help Desk

The Minnesota Child Support Help Desk is available weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. by calling 651-431-4400. The Help Desk can assist with accessing Minnesota Child Support Online, obtaining child support officer contact information, and providing general information on Minnesota's child support program.

General information

- Minnesota Department of Human Services at mn.gov/dhs/ provides more information about child support services, online forms, brochures and other programs.

Child Care Assistance Programs help families provide safe, nurturing and affordable care for their children. Contact your county human services office.

Child Care Resource and Referral can assist you in selecting a child care provider. Contact your county human services office.

211 Minnesota Information and Referral is a United Way-sponsored resource that provides information and referral to community services. Call 800-543-7709 to reach their 24-hour answer line or go online at www.211unitedway.org.

MinnesotaHelp.info™ is an online directory of services designed to help people identify resources such as human services, information and referral, financial assistance, and other forms of aid and assistance within Minnesota. It is especially rich in resource information for seniors and their caregivers; people with disabilities and their caregivers; parents and families; and Minnesotans with low incomes. Visit MinnesotaHelp.info™ online at www.minnesotahelp.info.

The Diversionary Work Program, Minnesota Family Investment Program and Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families are public assistance programs designed to help families reach self-sufficiency. Contact your county human services office.

For more information about these and other programs, visit the Minnesota Department of Human Services' website at mn.gov/dhs/.

CareerForce provides services that help people find jobs. To find an office in your area, call 651-259-7501. Information is also available at <https://www.careerforcemn.com/>.

National Domestic Violence Hotline at 800-799-7233 (SAFE) is a 24-hour confidential service for survivors, victims and those affected by domestic violence, intimate partner violence and relationship abuse.

Safe at Home is designed to help survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or others who fear for their safety to maintain a confidential address.

Telephone hours: 8 a.m.-4 p.m.
Metro area: 651-201-1399
Greater Minnesota: 866-723-3035
Minnesota Relay Service: 711 or 800-627-3529

Minnesota Child Support forms and information

These child support forms are available at <https://mn.gov/dhs/people-we-serve/children-and-families/services/child-support/resources/>.

- Full Child Support (IV-D) Services Application and Information on Child Support Services
- Income Withholding-Only (Non-IV-D) Services Application
- Minnesota Voluntary Recognition of Parentage (ROP) form
- Being a Legal Father: Parentage information for mothers and fathers
- Minnesota Voluntary Recognition of Parentage Revocation Form
- Minnesota Voluntary Recognition of Parentage Husband's Non-paternity Statement
- Minnesota Husband's Non-paternity Statement Revocation Form
- Child Support Payment Options
- Changing Your Minnesota Child Support Order
- Explanation of Child Support (IV-D) and Income Withholding-only (Non-IV-D) Services in Minnesota



**DEPARTMENT OF
HUMAN SERVICES**

Child Support Division
P.O. Box 64946
St. Paul, MN 55164-0946
<https://mn.gov/dhs/>