

# CHILD SUPPORT INFORMATION FOR THE DEAF AND HARD-OF-HEARING

## THE CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION

*of the Office of the Attorney General provides the full range of child support services to deaf and hard-of-hearing parents.*

When a parent does not live with his or her children, that parent should pay child support to the person living with the children: the biological parent, grandparents, other family members or foster parents. These individuals may be entitled to receive child support payments if they are paying the costs of raising the child.

## WHO CAN APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT?

Noncustodial and custodial parents or another person with custody of a child can apply for child support services. The Office of the Attorney General can help establish paternity, obtain a child support order and enforce an order requiring the payment of child support. Also, the Office of the Attorney General may help change a child support order if the amount to be paid is too high or too low.

## HOW AND WHERE CAN I APPLY FOR CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES OR GET MORE INFORMATION?

Contact any field office of the Child Support Division of the Office of the Attorney General or visit the Attorney General's Website at [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov). For the office nearest you, call Relay Texas toll free 7-1-1 or 1-800-RELAY-TX or (800) 735-2989.

## HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

There is no charge to apply for child support services provided by the Office of the Attorney General.

## WILL AN INTERPRETER BE PROVIDED FOR ME AT THE CHILD SUPPORT OFFICE?

Yes. The Child Support Division of the Attorney General's office is responsible for securing and paying for interpreters used in our child support offices. If you need to cancel an appointment, please let us know 48 hours in advance.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING TO THE CHILD SUPPORT OFFICE?

Please bring:

- Names, addresses and Social Security numbers of both parents
- Children's birth certificates
- Your divorce decree, if you have one
- The noncustodial parent's work address
- A copy of the court registry payment history
- A list of any payments made directly to you

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET CHILD SUPPORT?

Because establishing or enforcing a child support order is a legal process in which lawyers and the court are involved, the process can be slow. Some things can make the process take longer, such as:

- If you don't know where the other parent lives
- If the other parent does not live in Texas



- If you do not know important information about the other parent, such as Social Security number, date of birth, place of employment, etc.

## WHAT SERVICES DOES THE CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION PROVIDE?

If you are married or in a common law marriage, the Child Support Division can help get a child support order, but cannot help with the divorce. If you were never married, the Child Support Division can help establish paternity (legal fatherhood) and get a child support order. If you already have a child support order, the Child Support Division can help to enforce it.

## IS IT IMPORTANT TO ESTABLISH PATERNITY?

Yes. It provides many benefits for children, including:

**Money** - Children who are supported by only one parent often do not have enough money for their needs.

**Benefits** - Children have the right to other benefits (Social Security, insurance, and veterans' benefits).

**Inheritance** - Children may have the right to money or possessions passed on after a parent dies.

**Identity** - Children deserve to know who their parents are.

**Medical** - A child needs to know if he or she has inherited any special health problems. Doctors can better treat your child if they know the full family medical history.

## HOW CAN YOU PROVE WHO THE FATHER IS?

The court can order a paternity test to prove who the father is. This test requires a sample of body tissue from the father, mother and child. The test will show whether the man is the biological (birth) father. If a parent opens a child support case with the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), and the OAG determines that a paternity test is necessary, generally one will be provided at no cost.

## HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET PATERNITY TEST RESULTS?

Test results take about ten days.

## WHO PAYS FOR THE PATERNITY TESTS?

Generally, there is no charge for paternity testing.

## IS THIS THE ONLY WAY TO ESTABLISH PATERNITY?

No. Both parents can voluntarily sign an Acknowledgment of Paternity (AOP) form, which becomes a legal finding when filed with vital statistics unit (VSU).

## WHAT IF THE OTHER PARENT IS STILL IN SCHOOL OR DOESN'T HAVE ANY MONEY? DOES THE OTHER PARENT HAVE TO PAY CHILD SUPPORT?

The other parent can still be ordered to pay child support. The judge may let the other parent wait until he or she has finished school and found a job. But the other parent cannot count on the judge to decide that. Remember, both parents are responsible for supporting the child, even if the parents are still teenagers.

## WHAT IF THE OTHER PARENT DOES NOT PAY?

If the other parent does not pay child support, that parent is subject to enforcement measures to collect regular and past-due payments. The Child Support Division uses many techniques to enforce child support orders, including:

- requiring employers to deduct court-ordered child support from the parent's paycheck through wage withholding
- intercepting federal income tax refund checks, lottery winnings or other money that may be due from state or federal sources
- filing liens against his or her property or other assets
- seeking to have driver's, professional, and hunting and fishing licenses suspended
- filing a lawsuit against the parent asking the court to enforce its order

A judge may sentence a nonpaying parent to jail and enter a judgment for past-due child support.

## **IF I NEED TO GO TO COURT, WILL AN INTERPRETER FOR THE DEAF OR HARD OF-HEARING BE IN THE COURT ROOM?**

Yes. The court will provide an interpreter, who will be paid for by the county.

## **WHAT IF THE OTHER PARENT DOES NOT SHOW UP FOR COURT?**

If the court has some evidence to establish or enforce a child support order, the court will do so even if the other parent does not come to court.

## **CAN THE CHILD SUPPORT DIVISION HELP FIND THE ABSENT PARENT IN ANOTHER STATE?**

Yes. The Child Support Division can help find the other parent in any state and some other countries.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

### **BY US MAIL**

Office of the Attorney General  
Child Support Division  
P.O. Box 12017-MC051  
Austin, TX 78711-2017

### **ON THE INTERNET**

**Website:** [www.texasattorneygeneral.gov](http://www.texasattorneygeneral.gov)

**Email:** [child.support@texasattorneygeneral.gov](mailto:child.support@texasattorneygeneral.gov)

### **BY TELEPHONE**

**24-Hour Voice Information Response system**

(800) 252-8014

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Relay Texas toll free 7-1-1 or

1-800-RELAY-TX

(800) 735-2989