Iowa Child Support Services Customer Handbook

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Welcome from Iowa Child Support Services

Welcome to the Customer Handbook for Iowa Child Support Services (CSS). We hope this handbook provides answers to some of the questions you may have about working with our program. We are committed to providing quality customer service as you work with us going forward.

We are proud of the program Iowa has to offer and are here to help you. Please do not hesitate to ask any of our staff members for assistance. We also hope our additional resources will be helpful. Besides this handbook, we have a website dedicated to customer information and an automated phone system that are available 24/7 to meet your needs.

We are here to help!

Iowa Child Support Services

Section One – Overview

What does Child Support Services do?

We help families by establishing and enforcing child and medical support orders, and processing support payments.

We do this by:

- Locating parents and their employers or other income sources
- Establishing paternity
- Establishing support orders
- Suspending and reinstating support orders
- Modifying support orders
- Registering other states' orders for enforcement or modification in Iowa
- Sending and receiving referrals for services to and from other states
- Using collection methods including:
  - Income withholding
  - Offsets of federal and state tax refunds
  - Offsets of payments owed to federal and state vendors who do business with government agencies
  - Administrative levies of accounts at financial institutions
  - License sanctions
  - Reporting to credit agencies
  - Initiating contempt of court and garnishment actions
  - Placing liens against real estate
- Enforcing medical support orders
- Receiving and disbursing child and medical support payments
- Maintaining payment records
- Answering customers' questions and concerns

We also have projects and grants to increase and enhance the involvement of parents with their children and improve child support processes. Projects include an employment grant to help people ordered to pay support find work, facilitating access and visitation, and participating in other parental activities.

Who receives services?

We serve people who:

- Are receiving public assistance such as Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits, foster care services, and in some situations Medicaid benefits.
- Received public assistance in the past. Unless the person receiving support notifies us not to, we continue to collect support for the children when a family stops receiving public assistance.
- Apply for child support services. You may apply for our services online by going to the Apply for Child Support Services page.
- Live in other states but need services from us because the other parent lives or works here.

Who pays for the services?

The state of Iowa pays 34 percent, and the federal government pays 66 percent of most of the costs as long as we comply with federal regulations.

State law requires the person receiving support to pay a $35 annual fee if that person never received cash assistance for a child on the case under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act (such as FIP, TANF, or ADC benefits) in Iowa or another state. Each year the person receiving support is active on our services, we will collect the fee from the support payments, but only after we have sent at least $550 during the federal fiscal year which runs from October 1st – September 30th.

We also receive funds from the federal government based on how well our program does compared to all other states in establishing paternity, securing support orders, collecting support and being cost effective. These funds must be reinvested in the child support program.

Have there been changes in the caseload?

Changes in the caseload:

State Fiscal Year	Total Caseload[1]
2017	167,702
2018	164,947
2019	162,248
2020	157,678
2021	150,203
2022	144,737
2023	139,547
2024	136,174
2025	131,516
2026	126,806

Caseload composition has changed. Most of the changes are due to the implementation of welfare reforms and expansions in Medicaid eligibility levels.

Two main factors resulting in a change in the caseload include:

- A decrease in both non-public assistance applications and Medicaid referrals. As of August 1, 2010, an administrative rule change gave most parents who receive Medicaid benefits the choice of receiving services from Child Support Services. This change was made in response to families wanting only to get medical coverage for their children without receiving child support services.
- In recent years, divorce rates, birth rates and out-of-wedlock births have decreased. This change in demographic factors has an impact on the program.

State Fiscal Year	Public Assistance[1]	Non-public Assistance[1]	Foster Care, Medical, and Intergovernmental[1]
2016	15,165	76,232	77,460
2017	14,371	72,414	80,917
2018	12,993	68,962	82,992
2019	12,183	68,442	81,623
2020	11,734	67,073	78,871
2021	9,339	61,324	79,540
2022	7,750	57,154	79,833
2023	6,842	55,049	77,656
2024	6,233	60,115	69,826
2025	5,852	58,576	67,088
2026	4,979	55,868	65,959

[1] – All numbers are based on end of fiscal year case counts.

How much support is collected?

In state fiscal year 2026, CSS collected:

- $8.5 million in current and past due support on Iowa public assistance cases.
- $308.2 million in current and past due support on all other types of cases.
- $316.7 million in total current and past due support.

Collections (in millions):

State Fiscal Year	Public Assistance[2]	All Other2[2]	Total[2]
2017	17.0	305.3	322.3
2018	15.8	305.0	320.8
2019	14.6	305.3	319.9
2020[3]	27.7	320.3	348.0
2021	18.4	302.9	321.4
2022	14.9	301.5	316.4
2023	11.0	296.5	307.5
2024	9.6	298.2	307.8
2025	9.4	306.0	315.3
2026	8.5	308.2	316.7

Note: This chart includes current and past due support collected on in-state cases and on cases where Iowa and another state are working together.

How is support paid out?

Support may be sent to:

- **The Family** – We send support directly to families who do not receive Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits or have a child in foster care.
- **The Family Investment Program (FIP)** – Families that receive FIP benefits assign their rights to support in exchange for public assistance benefits. We deposit the support collected into the Family Investment Program account.
- **The Medicaid Program** – The court may order a parent to provide health care coverage for the children or to pay a certain amount each month for a child's medical expenses or insurance coverage. When the child is receiving Medicaid, we send cash medical support we collect to Medicaid as repayment for bills paid by Medicaid. If the person ordered to pay support provides health care coverage, the health insurance plan is billed for medical expenses paid by Medicaid.

[2] – All numbers are based on end of fiscal year case counts.
[3] – SFY20 collections were impacted by COVID-19, including the offset of stimulus payments and pandemic unemployment benefits. Impacts may be seen throughout the document in the number of actions/collections received.

- **The Foster Care Program** – When children are in foster care, we collect support payments from the parents and deposit them into the Foster Care Program account.
- **Another State, Tribe, or Country** – If a family receives child support services from another state, tribe, or country and the person ordered to pay support lives or works in Iowa, the other child support agency may ask for our help in collecting support. When this happens, we collect the support and send it to the other child support agency providing services to the child(ren)'s family. The other child support agency sends the money to the family or retains it if the family is receiving public assistance.

How many payments are processed?

In state fiscal year 2026, the Collection Services Center (CSC) processed 2,093,953 support payments.

How well is Child Support Services doing its work?

Three critical measures of our performance are establishment of paternity, establishment of child support orders, and collection of support. Paternity and child support orders are needed before child support can be collected. Support collections help families with children be self-sufficient.

Fiscal Year	Percent of Cases with Court Orders (by state fiscal year)	Percent of Current Support Paid in Month Due (by state fiscal year)	Percent of Children Born Out of Wedlock with Paternity Established (by federal fiscal year)
2017	92.3	73.3	94.2
2018	93.0	72.9	95.3
2019	92.8	72.6	96.5
2020	93.4	73.5	94.9
2021	94.1	72.1	93.2
2022	94.6	70.9	90.3
2023	94.4	71.9	94.9
2024	93.9	71.5	90.2
2025	94.6	71.8	96.9
2026	95.1	71.4	Available in November

How can customers contact Child Support Services?

Customers are encouraged to contact their case manager to schedule a virtual or in-person appointment. Contact information may be found on the Customer Website, childsupport.ia.gov.

Child Support Automated Phone System

Our automated phone system receives more than 1,600 calls each month. Customers can get information about their last payment, guidelines, phone numbers for field offices, and information on specific topics. Customers can get this information by calling the automated phone system anytime at 1-888-229-9223.

Iowa Child Support Customer Website

The Iowa Child Support Customer Website receives over 1.1M total hits each month. Over 108,600 customers are registered to use the website. The customer website expands upon the automated telephone services by providing greater access to personal records, and the ability to print information and forms. Using secure technology, customers can view payment records, make payments electronically using a checking/savings account or a debit/credit card, sign up to receive payment alerts by email, view case information including worker information, obligation information, and the case balance. Customers may report employment information, update personal information, receive information about child support guidelines, access general information, and find contact information. The website also provides links to other websites on the Related Sites tab. A chatbot feature is available to assist customers with obtaining general information about child support services. Videos on child support topics are also available.

How can employers contact Child Support Services?

Our employer customer service center, Employers Partnering in Child Support (EPICS), connects the employer community to CSS. EPICS serves as a single point of contact for employers to get answers to questions about their responsibilities in withholding child support and medical support payments from income, enforcing health care coverage orders, and reporting new hires, rehires and terminations.

Employers can contact EPICS at 877-274-2580 weekdays from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. or by email at csrue@hhs.iowa.gov.

Employers can also electronically report employee information, receive income withholding forms and make payments on our secure employer website, www.iowachildsupport.gov.

EFT/ACH Credit Contact

Support payments can also be made via EFT/ACH Credit. For additional information, employers may email the EFT Coordinator at EPICSEFT@hhs.iowa.gov.

How is Child Support Services structured?

CSS Central Office provides program direction, policy and procedural development, computer system development and maintenance, and customer service.

The Central Registry receives and distributes support referrals from other states, tribes or countries.

CSC receives and pays out support payments.

CSS field offices are organized into four regions. Office locations can be found on the Offices page of the CSS Customer website.

How are Parents Located?

Why does Child Support Services need to locate parents?

We use a variety of state and federal sources to locate parents and to find information about their income and assets. We use this information to establish, modify, and enforce support obligations for children. Sometimes we also have to locate the person receiving support in order to distribute payments.

How are parents located?

We use the following to find information:

- *Federal Parent Locator Service (FPLS)* – We send information to FPLS to search federal sources to locate parents. These federal sources include such agencies as the Social Security Administration, Veterans Administration, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service and National Directory of New Hires.
- *State Parent Locator Service (SPLS)* – If we have information that a parent lives in another state, we direct location searches to that state. Other states also direct searches to us. States use sources of information and records available in the state such as their workforce development and corrections agencies to locate parents.
- *Iowa Department of Workforce Development* – We match our files with the employer wage file to get employment and wage information, and match with the unemployment benefit file to find out if parents have applied for unemployment benefits.
- *Iowa Centralized Employee Registry (ICER)* - Employers are required to report newly hired or rehired employees to this registry within 15 days of hire or rehire. We maintain this database, allowing quick access to employment information.
- *Financial Institution Data Match* – We conduct automated computer matches with in-state and multi-state financial institutions to locate assets of people ordered to pay support whose obligations are delinquent.
- Other Sources – We use prison information, public utilities, vehicle registration, driver's license, professional and recreational license information, and state revenue information to locate parents.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.2 and 303.3
- Iowa Code Chapters 252B, 252G, 252I

How is Paternity Established?

Paternity can be established:

- Administratively
- By Affidavit of Paternity
- Through a (Judicial) Court Process
- By Marriage

Administrative Paternity Establishment

What is Administrative Paternity Establishment?

In administratively establishing the legal paternity of a child born out of wedlock, we take all steps required by law and present the order to a judge for approval. A court hearing is not held unless a parent asks for one. We use the administrative process to establish paternity when a child has not yet reached age 19 and Iowa has jurisdiction over the alleged father.

How is paternity established administratively?

- First, the mother of the child born out of wedlock must sign a written statement naming a man as the father of her child and give us information to support her statement.
- Next, we serve notice on the alleged father and the mother, or the alleged father or the mother may waive service. We also send a request for financial information and an explanation of how child support amounts are figured to the alleged father and the person that will receive support.

To challenge this action:

- Both parents have 10 days from being served with notice to request a conference with us to discuss the action; 20 days from service to deny paternity; and a minimum of 20 days from service to ask for a court hearing.
- This may be extended by having a conference, having genetic tests, or both.

After service, any of the following may happen:

- Both parents may waive the time allowed for requesting a conference or hearing or for denying paternity. We prepare an administrative order (consent order) establishing paternity and support and present the order to the court for approval.
- The parents may not respond. We prepare an administrative order establishing paternity and support (default order) and present the order to the court for approval.

- Either parent may deny paternity. If this happens, we enter an administrative order requiring all parties to submit to genetic tests. One rescheduled test is allowed.
- Test results are provided to all parties. If the probability of paternity is over 95 percent, paternity is presumed. Either parent can challenge the results by requesting a court hearing or by asking to have another genetic test performed. If the request for hearing or additional genetic testing is not received on time, we prepare an administrative order for the court's approval establishing paternity and support. If the test results exclude the alleged father, the action is dismissed.
- Either parent may request a conference to discuss the action. Following the conference, we issue a second notice taking into account any new information provided. Either parent can still deny paternity or request a court hearing. If a denial or request for hearing is not received on time, we prepare an administrative order and present it to the court for approval.
- Either parent may request a court hearing. If this happens, a court hearing is held, and we present evidence, including any genetic test results and information about the financial circumstances of both parents. The court determines whether paternity and support are established.
- Usually, paternity and support, including medical support, are established at the same time. Either parent may be ordered to provide medical support. After service and before entering an administrative order through default or consent, we prepare and send a worksheet to both parents showing how the amount of support was determined using the Iowa mandatory child support guidelines.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Iowa Code Chapter 252F
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-100.3 through 100.13

How many paternities are established administratively?

1,097 paternities were established in state fiscal year 2026 using the administrative paternity order process.

Paternity by Affidavit

What is Paternity by Affidavit?

Parents can legally establish the paternity of a child born out of wedlock by signing a paternity affidavit and filing it with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health Statistics (BHS).

Parents can get a paternity affidavit from the hospital or birthing center at the time of the child's birth. Parents can also ask us for this form, get it from BHS, county recorder/county registrar, or the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services.

How is paternity established by affidavit?

- Birthing facilities provide the parents with information describing the process, benefits and responsibilities resulting from paternity establishment. Birthing facilities also provide a paternity affidavit form and the opportunity to talk to staff about the information provided.
- Although not required to do so, birthing facilities may help parents complete the paternity affidavit. Birthing facilities may have a contract with us for providing this service or provide this service at no cost. Birthing facilities under contract to perform this service are paid $20.00 per affidavit.
- All completed paternity affidavits must be filed with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Health Statistics.
- Establishing paternity through a signed affidavit creates a legal obligation to support the child. If the parents separate, the affidavit can be used as a basis for establishing a support order.

How is paternity rescinded?

To challenge this action:

- After filing a paternity affidavit with the BHS, either parent has the right to rescind (deny) paternity. To do this, one of the parents must file a completed and notarized Rescission of Paternity Affidavit with the BHS within the earlier of:
  - 60 days after the date of the latest signature on the paternity affidavit; or
  - Entry of a court order regarding the child.
- When a completed and notarized rescission form is filed with the BHS within the required time frame, it voids the original paternity affidavit. The man named on the paternity affidavit is no longer the legal father and his name is removed from the birth certificate.
- The BHS charges a fee for rescinding paternity. Rescission forms are available from the BHS, all county recorder/county registrars' offices, the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and all CSS offices.

What is the legal basis for this service?

Iowa Code, sections 144.40, 144.13 and 252A.3A

How many paternities are established by affidavit?

9,896 paternities were established during state fiscal year 2026 using this process.

Judicial Paternity Establishment

What is Judicial Paternity Establishment?

Judicial paternity establishment is a court process to legally establish the father of a child born out of wedlock. We use this court process if paternity cannot be established administratively.

How is paternity established judicially?

A petition is served on the alleged father and the mother, or the alleged father or the mother may waive service. The alleged father and the mother have 20 days to file an answer.

Along with the petition we send documents explaining the parent's rights, the timeframes for filing an answer to the petition, and the consequences of failing to respond. We also send a request for financial information and an explanation of how support amounts are figured using the Iowa mandatory child support guidelines.

After service, one of three things may happen:

- The alleged father may consent or voluntarily acknowledge paternity. If so, we prepare and present a consent order to the court for approval.
- The parents may fail to file an answer. If this happens, we ask the court to enter a default order establishing the alleged father as the child's legal father.
- Either parent may file an answer contesting paternity. If this happens, we ask the court to schedule a hearing. We may request genetic tests or take other legal actions to obtain evidence needed to establish or disprove paternity.

Usually paternity and support, including medical support, are established at the same time. Either parent may be ordered to provide medical support. Before entering either a consent or default order, we prepare and send a worksheet to both parents showing how the support amount was determined under the guidelines.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(5)
- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 302.31, 302.70, 303.4 and 303.5
- Iowa Code Chapters 252A, 252F and 600B
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-95.2(3)

How many paternities are established judicially?

355 paternities were established during state fiscal year 2026 through the judicial order process.

Paternity Established by Marriage

How is paternity established by operation of law?

Paternity is established automatically (by operation of law) when the mother is married at the time of conception, birth, or anytime in between conception and birth.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Iowa Code Chapter 252A
- Iowa Code Section 598.21E

How is Support Established?

Support can be established through:

- An administrative process
- A court (judicial) process

Administrative Establishment of Support

What is Administrative Establishment of Support?

In establishing support administratively, we take all steps required by Iowa law and present a support order to a judge for approval. A court hearing is not held unless a parent requests one.

We establish orders administratively when:

- Paternity has already been established for the child.
- The person who will be ordered to pay support lives in Iowa or can be personally served under the jurisdiction of the Iowa courts.

How is administrative support established?

Notice is served on both parents, or both parents may waive service.

To challenge this action:

- Both parents have 10 days to contact us to request a conference to discuss the action and 30 days to ask that the court hear the matter.
- With the notice, we include a request for financial information and an explanation of how support amounts are figured using the Iowa mandatory child support guidelines.

After a parent is served, one of four things may happen:

- Either parent may waive the time to request a conference or court hearing. If so, we prepare an administrative order and present the order to the court for approval.
- The parents may not respond. If this happens, we prepare an administrative order (default) and present the order to the court for approval.
- Either parent may ask for a conference. If so, we issue a second notice if there is a change as a result of the conference. We issue a conference report if there are no changes. The parents have an additional 30 days after we issue the second notice or 10 days after we issue the conference report to ask for a court hearing. If a hearing is not requested, we prepare an administrative order and present it to the court for approval.
- Either parent may ask for a court hearing. If so, a court hearing is held, and we present evidence about the financial circumstances of both parents and the amount support should be under the guidelines. The court decides if support is ordered and the amount.

Before entering an administrative order through default or consent, we prepare and send a worksheet to both parents showing how the support amount was figured under the guidelines. Either parent may be ordered to provide medical support.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 302.31, 302.70, 303.4 and 303.101
- Iowa Code Chapter 252C
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-100.17

How many administrative orders for support are entered?

2,400 administrative orders for support were entered in state fiscal year 2026.

How Do We Work with Other States, Tribes, or Countries?

What is the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA)?

The Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) defines how states must work with other states, tribes, or countries to establish, modify and/or enforce child support. It also requires states to determine a controlling order if there are orders for support from more than one jurisdiction for the same person ordered to pay support and child. The controlling order then becomes the only order for current support for that person ordered to pay support and child. UIFSA also allows an income withholding notice to be sent directly to the employer when the person ordered to pay support is employed in another state.

How does UIFSA apply to state actions?

- When one state wants another state to help establish paternity or child support, or modify or enforce a support order, that state (the initiating state) sends the other state (the responding state) a federal Interstate Transmittal form. The initiating state notes on the form which action(s) it wants the responding state to take.
- The responding state honors the request using all tools available to that state, then tells the initiating state when the requested action has been completed.
- All parties to the action are informed of the proceedings as they occur.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Uniform Interstate Family Support Act, Iowa Code Chapter 252K
- 28 United States Code section 1738B, Full Faith and Credit for Child Support Orders Act

How many Intergovernmental cases have been referred or received?

As of July 1, 2026, Iowa had:

- 11,924 intergovernmental (includes 125 Tribal and 27 International) cases which Iowa referred to other states, tribes or countries and
- 6,806 active intergovernmental (includes 15 Tribal and 20 International) cases that Iowa received from other states, tribes or countries

How is Support Modified?

Support can be modified through:

- Review and Adjustment

- Administrative Modification
- Cost-of-Living Alteration
- Suspension and Reinstatement of Support

Review and Adjustment, Administrative Modification and Cost-Of-Living Alteration

What are the ways support can be modified?

Support can be modified administratively through review and adjustment, administrative modification, or a cost-of-living alteration.

In review and adjustment and administrative modification, we use the guidelines set by the Iowa Supreme Court to modify the support amount. These guidelines are reviewed every four years and help provide for consistent support awards so that persons in like circumstances are required to provide similar amounts of support.

A cost-of-living alteration is a special type of administrative modification. Parents must agree to this type of change in writing. Instead of determining the support obligation by using the guidelines, we use the consumer price index to calculate the support amount.

Review and Adjustment

We use the Review and Adjustment (Review) process to determine if the current support amount should be changed or if medical support provisions should be added to the order.

- We ask the courts to approve a change in the support amount if the difference between the old and the new child support amount is more than 20%.
- If the difference is not more than 20% and medical support provisions need to be added to the order, we will ask the court to add medical support and also adjust the child support amount.

The Review process does not change the amount of your past due support.

Who Can Request a Review?

You may ask for a Review if:

- You are ordered to pay child support, or
- You are entitled to receive child support, **AND**
- The current support amount ends more than 12 months from the date we receive your request, **AND**
- It has been more than 24 months since your order was entered, changed, or determined not appropriate for adjustment, whichever occurred last.

Another state's child support agency may also ask us to review the order.

The person asking for a change may have to pay for costs of serving the forms on the other parent or other fees charged by other states for completing the process. Service fees in Iowa are often $55 or more for each person served. Serving someone in another state often costs $100 or more.

We cannot move forward on your request for a Review if we do not know the location of both parents at the time we receive the request.

Administrative Modification

We use the Administrative Modification (ADMOD) process to ask the court to change the amount of the current support order in some situations when we can't use Review and Adjustment.

The ADMOD process does not change the amount of your past due support.

We use ADMOD when:

- It is **less** than 24 months since your order was entered, changed, or determined not appropriate for adjustment, **and** either parent's net income (after taxes) has changed by 50% or more.
- A child should be added to the current support order and:
  - the child's parents are the same as the other children in the order, and
  - the child's paternity is legally established (such as through marriage, adoption, court order, or paternity affidavit.)
- The order:
  - set child support at zero,
  - did not set a cash amount of support and stated a reason, which no longer exists, or
  - is for medical support only.
- There was an error in the child support amount and/or medical support provisions of the order when it was prepared or filed.

Who Can Request an ADMOD?

You may ask for an ADMOD if one of the above is true and:

- You are ordered to pay child support, or
- You are entitled to receive child support, AND
- The current support amount ends more than 12 months from the date we receive your request.

Another state's child support agency may also ask us to review the order.

The person asking for a change may have to pay for costs of serving the forms on the other parent or other fees charged by other states for completing the process. Service fees in Iowa are often $55 or more for each person served. Serving someone in another state often costs $100 or more.

We cannot move forward on your request for an ADMOD if we do not know the location of both parents at the time we receive the request.

How is a support order modified?

- The parties are served with notice of our intent to review or modify the order and a request for financial information is sent to the parents. The requestor accepts service of the notice packet at the time the request to modify is signed. The non-requestor can waive personal service by signing a waiver.
- Next, we evaluate the financial information provided by the parents and other sources to determine if the order should be adjusted or modified.
- After that, we issue a notice of decision to the parties telling them whether an adjustment or modification is appropriate, and if so, the new amount of support.

  The notice explains how parties can contest our decision:

  - In some selected cases, we begin the review by gathering income and deduction information from automated sources.
  - Our initial contact with the parties is the Notice of Decision.
  - In these special cases, the parties have 30 days to contest and send financial information.
- If we receive a challenge to our review and adjustment decision, we complete a second review and notice of decision. In the administrative modification process, parties can ask for a conference.
- If an adjustment or modification is appropriate, one of three things happens:
  - Both parties may consent or voluntarily agree to the change. If so, we prepare and present an administrative order for adjustment or modification to the court for approval.

- The parties may not respond. If this happens, we prepare and present an administrative order to the court for approval.
- At least one of the parties may contest the change. Different things happen depending on the type of action being contested. To contest the support amount resulting from a cost-of-living alteration, a party must request a full review and adjustment. To contest a finding in either the review and adjustment or administrative modification process, a party may request a court hearing.
    - This hearing may require us to take legal action to obtain evidence needed to determine the appropriate amount of support.
    - We do not represent either party.
    - We certify the results of our review of the case and provide supporting information to the court.

♦ If the court determines that an adjustment or modification is appropriate, an order is prepared and filed.

What is the legal basis for this service?

♦ Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 302.70, 303.4 and 303.8

♦ Iowa Code Chapter 252H, and sections 252B.5, and 598.21C

♦ Iowa Administrative Code 441-101, Adjustment and Modification of Support

How many Review & Adjustments, Modifications and Cost-of-Living orders are done?

We received 2,604 requests for review and adjustment of orders in state fiscal year 2026. We received 1,476 requests for administrative modifications of orders. Three cost-of-living alteration requests were received.

A total of 2,459 modification of support orders were filed, including:

♦ 1,827 orders adjusting support through the review and adjustment process

♦ 631 orders adjusting support through the administrative modification process

♦ 1 cost-of-living alteration orders

Suspension and Reinstatement of Support

What is Suspension and Reinstatement of support?

Support can be suspended when:

- The parents have reconciled and are residing together with some or all the children entitled to support under the order; or
- There has been a change of residency so that some or all the children entitled to support under the order live with:
  - The parent ordered to pay support; or
  - A new caretaker who does not want services from CSS.

To qualify for suspension when not all the children change their living arrangements, the order must state the amount of support as the number of children entitled to support changes.

To qualify for suspension when the child(ren) entitled to support under the order are on public assistance, the parent ordered to pay support must be reported in the home or it must be reported that the child(ren) left the public assistance home.

Support may be reinstated within six months if conditions change.

How is support suspended, satisfied, and reinstated?

- To end support, parents must first ask us to suspend it.
- For most of the cases, parents must agree in writing to end support by asking for Suspension. Their request must be to end support for one or more of the children covered by the order. Suspension does not change the amount of past due support.
- If the request to suspend support is for fewer than all the children, the order must contain a step change. A step change is language that specifies the amount of support that is due as the number of children entitled to support changes. If the request is for fewer than all the children and the order does not contain a step change, we cannot help end the order. A private attorney must be contacted to end the current support.
- If the parties do not both agree to end support, we may not be able to end the order. We can sometimes suspend support when the person receiving support will not sign the request form. However, we can only use this process for certain kinds of court orders.
- If the person receiving support wants to satisfy support, we file a request with the court and satisfy support owed to the person receiving support upon approval by the court. The person receiving support cannot satisfy support that is assigned to the state of Iowa.
- If conditions remain unchanged for six months, the order is terminated.
- If conditions change within six months of suspension, at either party's request or at our own initiative, we may ask the court to reinstate the prior order.

- If the order isn't eligible for suspension, we send a notice denying the request.

Are there other ways to end a support obligation?

Court Processes:

- Temporary Modification – Clerk of court offices have forms to complete when a permanent modification is pending with the court.
- Private modification through the court.
- Juvenile court changes custody and informs the district court – The district court has the forms to complete asking to end support.
- *Pro se* (self-help) forms to apply to the court for modification.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Iowa Code, sections 252B.20 and 252B.20A
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-102, Suspension and Reinstatement of Support

How is Support Enforced?

There are several ways support is enforced, including:

- Income Withholding
- Federal and State Tax and Non-Tax Offsets, and Passport Sanctions
- Administrative Levies, Contempt and other Enforcement Actions

Income Withholding

What is Income Withholding?

Income withholding is the withholding of support payments from wages, unemployment benefits, periodic earnings, trust income, Social Security benefits, worker's compensation, certain retirement and Veteran's benefits, and lump sum and irregular income. The amount of income that the employer or income provider may withhold is limited by the federal Consumer Credit Protection Act.

We use two types of income withholding:

- Immediate withholding is used to collect support for cases, regardless of whether support payments are in arrears in an amount payable for the month.
- Lump sum withholding is used to collect delinquent support from periodic or irregular income.

Federal and state laws require income withholding to be used in all cases even if child support is not past due. When employers receive Income Withholding Notices, they have ten days to process the paperwork. Once that is done, the employer must withhold child support from the next paycheck.

The amount withheld includes the amount due for that payment and an additional amount for past due support may be included. If these amounts total more than 50% of wages, the employer can only withhold 50%.

Employers have seven business days to send the payment to the Collection Services Center and may withhold an additional $2.00 from each payment to cover their costs.

When the income withholding payment is received, the Collection Services Center has two business days to process the payment.

If the person owing child support has more than one case, the income withholding payments are divided among all cases.

How is Income Withholding implemented?

- We, or a court, may notify the person ordered to pay support about income withholding through the support order.
- When we first find an employer or other source of income, we prepare an administrative order for income withholding, file it with the clerk of court, and send a copy to the person ordered to pay support. We send a notice of income withholding to the income provider and to the person ordered to pay support.
- The notice of income withholding has all the information the income provider needs to withhold support and mail payments. The notice of income withholding is a federal form that gives the income provider:
  - The name of the person ordered to pay support, person ordered to receive support, and children on the case
  - The person ordered to pay support's case number and the amounts to withhold
  - Other information the income provider needs, such as:
    - Where to send the payments, and
    - The rules and laws (both federal and state) surrounding income withholding.
- Our automated system tracks receipt of payments and case circumstances to enforce, modify, or terminate the income withholding as needed.

To challenge this action:

- The person ordered to pay support can contest the withholding by asking us for an informal conference if they believe the withholding is in error.
- The person ordered to pay support can file a motion to quash the withholding with the district court.
- The person ordered to pay support can also request an amendment of the amount of withholding due to a hardship. To qualify for an amendment, the person ordered to pay support's situation must meet certain criteria and the request must be in writing.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.6, 303.100
- Iowa Code Chapter 252D
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-98.6 through 98.21
- Iowa Code, sections 252K.501 through 252K.506

How many Income Withholding orders and notices are issued?

In state fiscal year 2026, we established 2,344 income withholding orders and issued 107,328 income withholding notices. Income withholding, including from unemployment benefits, represents an estimated 91 percent of the payments received and 80 percent of total dollars collected.

Medical Support Enforcement

Health Care Coverage

We begin to enforce dependent health care coverage when:

- The payor[4] on the case is ordered to provide a health benefit plan for a child,
- The child is not currently covered by a plan, other than Medicaid, and
- A health benefit plan is or may be available to that parent.

When the conditions above are true, we send the *National Medical Support Notice* (NMSN) to that parent's employer to enforce the court-ordered health care coverage. The employer must follow the requirements in the notice. The employer or health benefit plan administrator notifies us:

- That a plan is not available and the reason it is not available, or
- The child is enrolled and supplies details of the plan.

[4] Parent we are enforcing against.

Cash Medical Support

We enforce cash medical support when there is an order for the payor on the case to provide cash medical support for the child(ren) by using all enforcement tools available.

How is an order for health care coverage enforced?

When the payor on the case is also ordered to provide health care coverage, we send the *National Medical Support Notice* (NMSN) to that parent's employer to enforce the court-ordered health care coverage. The employer must follow the requirements in the notice. The employer or health benefit plan administrator notifies us:

- That a plan is not available and the reason it is not available, or
- That the child is enrolled and supplies details of the plan.

Once the children are enrolled, the employer must withhold premiums, provide coverage information, and notify us of a termination or change in health benefit plan coverage.

To challenge this action:

- The payor can contest the enforcement of medical support by asking for an informal conference with us.
- The payor can also file a motion to quash with the district court.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(19)
- 45 Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.30, 303.31, 303.32
- Iowa Code Chapter 252E and section 252B.5
- Iowa Administrative Code 441 Chapter 98
- 29 Code of Federal Regulations, section 2590.609.2

Federal Offsets, State Offsets, and Passport Sanctions

What are federal offsets?

An offset can happen when the federal government has a payment owed to the person ordered to pay support. If the person ordered to pay support has past due support, the money is used to the pay the support.

Federal Tax (FED) and Federal Administrative Offsets (FAO)

When a person ordered to pay support has past due support, we can hold their federal payments, including tax refunds, to pay the support due. A person ordered to pay support's federal tax refund or federal administrative payment can be offset if they owe:

- At least $150 of past due support to the state. If the person ordered to pay support has multiple cases, we include each case with at least $50 of past due support.
- At least $500 of past due support to a family. If the person ordered to pay support has multiple cases, we include each case with at least $50 of past due support.

How are federal payments offset?

We send information to the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to:

- Add people ordered to pay support who meet the requirements for the first time or have become past due again.
- Remove the person ordered to pay support if their past due support no longer qualifies.
- Change the past due amount on file at the federal government. We can increase or decrease the amount.

OCSE sends a pre-offset notice to people ordered to pay support that are submitted for the first time or if a new case qualifies. The notice explains that OCSE will forward that person's name to the U.S. Department of Treasury's Fiscal Services (FS) for offset. The notice also explains that the person ordered to pay support can challenge the accuracy of the information or pay the past due support within 30 days. At this point the offset has not happened.

Once the 30 days have passed, OCSE forwards the person ordered to pay support's name to the U.S. Department of Treasury's Fiscal Services (FS). When the federal government identifies money owed to the person ordered to pay support, FS sends the money to OCSE and sends a notice to the person ordered to pay support explaining the offset. The money is sent to us in about two weeks. Before paying support, we send another notice explaining the right to challenge the offset.

The tax refunds or administrative payments continue to be offset until the amount of past due support is less than $150 owed to the State of Iowa or $500 owed to the family. Updated balance information is provided to the federal government monthly.

How do you challenge a federal offset?

To challenge this action:

- The person ordered to pay support may ask for an administrative review within 30 days of the pre-offset notice. If they disagree with the final decision from the

administrative review, the person ordered to pay support may ask for an appeal. The appeal is a hearing before an administrative law judge.

- The person ordered to pay support may challenge at the time the payment is held by asking for an appeal. They must ask within 15 days of the notice from FS or the notice from us. The person ordered to pay support must appeal in writing by doing one of the following:
  - Complete an appeal electronically at https://hhs.iowa.gov/appeals, or
  - Write a letter telling us why they think a decision is wrong, or
  - Fill out an *Appeal and Request for Hearing* form available from a local CSS office.

  Send or take the appeal to a local child support office or submit it directly to the Appeals section: Department of Health and Human Services, Appeals Bureau, 321 E 12th St Fl 4, Des Moines IA 50319-1002, fax to 515-564-4044 or email appeals@hhs.iowa.gov. For assistance in filing an appeal, contact the local CSS office.

How do you get your spouse's share of the federal tax refund?

The person ordered to pay support, or their spouse must file form 8379, *Injured Spouse Allocation*, with the IRS to get the spouse's share of a federal tax refund.

How does a federal tax refund offset (FED) distribute?

We hold a federal tax return to allow individuals time to request an appeal or file needed forms. If the payment is from a single filer's return, we hold the payment for 30 days. If the payment is from a joint return, the time we hold the payment depends upon whether the IRS tells us it received and processed IRS form 8379, *Injured Spouse Allocation*, along with the joint tax return. If the IRS processed the injured spouse form and the return at the same time, we hold the payment for 30 days. If they were not processed at the same time, we hold the payment for five months. During this five-month period, the person ordered to pay support, or their spouse can file IRS form 8379 to claim the injured spouse's portion of the refund. Get form 8379 from the IRS by calling 1-800-829-1040 or from the IRS website at https://www.irs.gov or from a tax preparer. Since the IRS does not notify us when form 8379 is processed if it is later than the return, we continue to hold the payment for five months.

Payments from federal tax refunds are paid first to past due support owed to the state of Iowa. Any remaining money is paid to past due support owed to the family. If there is any money left after all past due support is paid, that amount is returned to the person ordered to pay support.

How does a federal administrative offset (FAO) distribute?

If the family is receiving public assistance, the state of Iowa keeps the money. If the family is not receiving public assistance, federal payments pay first to any support

due to the family. Any remaining amounts are then paid to any past due support owed to the family. If money remains, it is then paid to past due support owed to the state of Iowa. If there is any money left after all past due support is paid, that amount is returned to the person ordered to pay support.

What are passport sanctions?

CSS can put a hold on a passport. The hold is called a passport sanction. This happens when a person ordered to pay support owes more than $2,500 in overdue support. The hold means that the U.S. State Department can:

- Deny an application for a new passport.
- Refuse to renew a passport.
- Restrict or limit how the passport may be used.
- Revoke (take away) a passport.

How are passports sanctioned?

When a person ordered to pay support owes more than $2,500 in overdue support, we send the information to the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). They send the information to the U.S. Department of State to deny or revoke (take) the person ordered to pay support's passport. We do not remove the hold until the overdue support is paid below the $2,500 threshold.

We send updates to OCSE every month. Contact us if the person ordered to pay support makes a large payment. We can send the update sooner.

How do you challenge a passport sanction?

To challenge this action:

- The person ordered to pay support may ask for an administrative review within 30 days of the pre-offset notice.
- If the person ordered to pay support disagrees with the final decision from the administrative review, they may ask for an appeal. An appeal is a hearing before an administrative law judge.

What are state tax refund offsets (STT)?

When a person ordered to pay support has at least $50 past due support, we can hold their state tax refund to pay the support due.

How are state tax refunds offset?

When a case qualifies, we ask the Iowa Department of Revenue (IDR) to watch for state tax refunds. When IDR finds a state tax refund, they send the Notice of Setoff of Public Payment to the person that owes support. They tell the person that they plan

to use the state tax refund to pay the support due. They also explain that the person can challenge the offset. All or part of the state tax refund is sent to us to pay support. We receive the payments from the IDR once per week.

How do you challenge a state tax refund offset?

To challenge this action the person ordered to pay support must submit a written challenge to the Iowa Department of Revenue (IDR) within 15 days from the date of the IDR notice.

The person ordered to pay support must challenge in writing by doing one of the following:

- Complete a challenge electronically at govconnect.iowa.gov by clicking on Respond to a Letter, or
- Write a letter telling IDR why the debt is not a qualifying debt or why there is a mistake of fact, Send the challenge to State Setoff Program, Iowa Department of Revenue, PO Box 3065013, Des Moines, IA 50306-5013 or
- Send an email explaining the reason for the challenge to IDRChallenges@iowa.gov.

If you are requesting a challenge due to a Mistake of Identity, Mistake of Amount Owed or Debt Not Qualified, only mark one of these options on the IDR portal. Do not mark Split Request as that option is only used for split requests (aka division of a jointly held payment).

For assistance in filing a challenge, contact IDR at 1-833-825-0800.

How do you request the spouse's share of the state tax refund offset?

The person ordered to pay support, or their spouse has 15 days from the date of the Iowa Department of Revenue (IDR) Notice of Setoff of Public Payment to contact IDR to request the spouse's share of the state tax refund (aka split request or division of a jointly held payment).

To request a split do one of the following:

- Complete a split request electronically at govconnect.iowa.gov by clicking on Respond to a Letter, **or**
- Write a letter to IDR requesting a split of the state tax refund. Send the split request to State Setoff Program, Iowa Department of Revenue, PO Box 3065013, Des Moines, IA 50306-5013, **or**
- Send an email requesting a split of the state tax refund to IDRChallenges@iowa.gov.

If you are only requesting a split, mark Split Request on the IDR portal. Do not mark Mistake of Identity, Mistake of Amount Owed or Debt Not Qualified.

For assistance in filing a split request, contact IDR at 1-833-825-0800.

How does the state tax refund offset distribute?

State tax refund payments are processed by the Collection Services Center as soon as they are received from the IDR. However, the payment will not distribute until the challenge period has expired. When the challenge period expires, IDR will notify you and Child Support Services that the offset is complete. You will receive the Notice of Completed Setoff from IDR.

If the family is receiving public assistance, the state of Iowa keeps the money. If the family is not receiving public assistance, state tax refunds pay first to any current support due to the family. Any remaining amounts are then paid to any past due support owed to the family. If money remains, it is then paid to past due support owed to the state of Iowa. If there is any money left after all past due support is paid, that amount is returned to the person ordered to pay support.

What are debtor offset payments (DOP)?

When a person ordered to pay support has past due support, we can hold other payments from the State to pay the support due. These types of payments are called debtor offset payments (DOP). The other payments can include payments to contractors, lottery winnings, claims from the Great Iowa Treasure Hunt, state employee expense claims, payments to childcare or other providers and large winnings at Iowa gaming facilities. The person ordered to pay support must owe at least $50 of past due support.

How are debtor offset payments offset?

When a case qualifies, we ask the IDR to watch for money owed to the person ordered to pay support by the state of Iowa. When money is found, IDR sends the Notice of Setoff of Public Payment to the person that owes support. They tell the person that they intend to use the money to pay the support due. They also explain that the person can challenge the offset. All or part of the money is sent to us to pay support. We receive payments from the IDR once per week.

How do you challenge the debtor offset payment?

To challenge this action the person ordered to pay support must submit a written challenge to the IDR within 15 days from the date of the IDR notice.

The person ordered to pay support must challenge the offset in writing by doing one of the following:

- Complete a challenge electronically at govconnect.iowa.gov by clicking on Respond to a Letter, or
- Write a letter telling IDR why the debt is not a qualifying debt or why there is a mistake of fact, Send the challenge to State Setoff Program, Iowa Department of Revenue, PO Box 3065013, Des Moines, IA 50306-5013, or

- Send an email explaining the reason for the challenge to IDRChallenges@iowa.gov.

If you are requesting a challenge due to a Mistake of Identity, Mistake of Amount Owed or Debt Not Qualified, only mark one of these options on the IDR portal. Do not mark Split Request as that option is only used for split requests (aka division of a jointly held payment).

For assistance in filing a challenge, contact IDR at 1-833-825-0800.

How do you get the co-owners share of the debtor offset payment?

The person ordered to pay support, or the co-owner of the payment has 15 days from the date of the Iowa Department of Revenue (IDR) Notice of Setoff of Public Payment to contact IDR to request the co-owner's share of the money (aka split request or division of a jointly held payment).

To request a split do one of the following:

- Complete a split request electronically at govconnect.iowa.gov by clicking on Respond to a Letter, or
- Write a letter to IDR requesting a split of the debtor offset payment. Send the split request to State Setoff Program, Iowa Department of Revenue, PO Box 3065013, Des Moines, IA 50306-5013, or
- Send an email requesting a split of the debtor offset payment to IDRChallenges@iowa.gov.

If you are only requesting a split, mark Split Request on the IDR portal. Do not mark Mistake of Identity, Mistake of Amount Owed or Debt Not Qualified.

For assistance in filing a split request, contact IDR at 1-833-825-0800.

How are debtor offset payments distributed?

Debtor offset payments (DOP) are processed by the Collection Services Center as soon as they are received from the IDR. However, the payment will not distribute until the challenge period has expired. When the challenge period expires, IDR will notify you and CSS that the offset is complete. You will receive the Notice of Completed Setoff from IDR.

If the family is receiving public assistance, the state of Iowa keeps the money. If the family is not receiving public assistance, debtor offset payments pay first to any current support due to the family. Any remaining amounts are then paid to any past due support owed to the family. If money remains, it is then paid to past due support owed to the state of Iowa.

Who do you contact with questions about the Iowa Department of Revenue (IDR) notices?

If you have questions about the Notice of Setoff of Public Payment or Notice of Completed Setoff, you may contact IDR at 1-833-825-0800.

What is the legal basis for this service?

Federal Tax

- 26 United States Code sections 36, 6401 and 6402
- 42 United States Code, sections 652(b, c) and 664
- Title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, section 285.3
- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.72, 301.1 and 302.60
- Code of Iowa 252B.5(4)
- Iowa Administrative Code sections 441-98.1, 441-98.30 and 441-7
- Iowa Administrative Code section 441-98.42, CARES Act PL 116-136 COVID-Related Tax Relief Act PL 116-260 American Rescue Plan Act PL 117-2

Federal Non-Tax Offsets

- 31 United States Code, sections 3701(b)(2) and 3716(h)
- Title 31, Code of Federal Regulations, section 285.1
- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, section 301.1
- Code of Iowa 252B.5(4)
- Iowa Administrative Code sections 441-98.1, 441-98.30, 441-98.42 and 441-7

State Tax Offsets

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(3)
- Title 45, Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.102, 301.1, and 302.70(a)(3)
- Code of Iowa sections 252B.5(4), 421.17(21) and 421.65
- Iowa Administrative sections Code 441-98.1, 441-98.29 and 701—26

State Non-Tax Offsets

- Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations section 301.1
- Code of Iowa 421.65

- Code of Iowa 252B.5(4)
- Code of Iowa 99D.28 and 99F.19 (gambling other than lottery)
- Code of Iowa 99G.41 (lottery)
- Code of Iowa 642.2(4) (Great Iowa Treasure Hunt claims)
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-98.1, 441-98.28 and 701—26

Passport Sanctions

- 42 United States Code sections 654(31) and 652(k)
- Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations section 303.7(d)(6)(iv)
- Code of Iowa 252B.5(12)
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-7 and 441-98.42

How much was collected through Federal, State, and Non-tax Offsets?

In state fiscal year 2026:

- $14.2 million was collected in federal tax offsets,
- $4.55 million in state tax offsets
- $1,483,931 was collected through the state non-tax offset program
- $282,060 was collected for passport sanctions

Administrative Levy

What is an Administrative Levy?

When support is collected by taking money from bank or financial accounts, it is called administrative levy. This method is used to collect past due support.

Iowa law allows us to take up to 50 percent of the balance in many types of accounts. This may include joint accounts, even if the deposits were made by a person who does not owe child support.

Notice of the possibility of administrative levy is given in the child support order.

If the form called "Administrative Levy Notice to Obligor" is received by mail, the levy has happened. This means a part of the account balance has been frozen and is not available to the person ordered to pay support or any joint owner of the account.

The notice will also tell the person ordered to pay support or any joint owner of the account what to do if they disagree with this action.

To challenge this action:

- The person ordered to pay support and/or joint account holder may send a challenge to us.
- We must review the facts and modify, release, or uphold the levy.
- If we uphold the levy and the person ordered to pay support/account holder disagrees, they can ask for a court hearing.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(17), (c)(1)(G)(ii), 669A
- Iowa Code Chapter 252I
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-98.31

How much was collected through Administrative Levy?

In state fiscal year 2026, $4.0 million was collected through administrative levy.

Contempt

What is Contempt?

When a person ordered to pay support is not paying, we may file a contempt action with the court asking the court to determine whether that person has an ability to pay and is willfully violating the support order.

What are the steps in a Contempt action?

We file an application for a contempt citation, including the facts supporting the application, with the clerk of court, and serve it on the person ordered to pay support. The court holds a hearing to decide whether the violation of the support order is willful.

The criminal standard of evidence must be met and there must be proof beyond a reasonable doubt that the person ordered to pay support had a duty to obey a court order and willfully failed to perform that duty, having had the ability to pay. If contempt is found, the court issues an order that may require incarceration, payment of support, posting of a bond and/or community service. The court may also prohibit a person ordered to pay support from practicing a profession or occupation under a license.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 45 Code of Federal Regulations, sections 303.6, 303.104
- Iowa Code Chapters 598, 665 and section 252B.5

Garnishment

What is Garnishment?

Garnishment is a court procedure in which money belonging or owed to a person ordered to pay support is attached to repay a support obligation. When the person ordered to pay support is delinquent in payment of support, we can attach income or assets available through an estate or lump sum income not subject to income withholding.

How is a Garnishment done?

We start the garnishment process through a request (praecipe) to the clerk of court to issue an execution on a support judgment. The execution is served on the employer/asset holder, who must respond with an answer indicating whether funds or assets in the control or possession of the employer/asset holder are owed to the person ordered to pay support. Notice of garnishment is then served on the person ordered to pay support and an application and order to condemn funds are filed with the clerk of court. The clerk of court receives and forwards funds as appropriate. A garnishment is in force for a period of 70 days.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 45 Code of Federal Regulations section 303.6
- Iowa Code Chapter 642 and section 252B.5

Liens

What is a Lien?

A lien is an encumbrance against property of a person ordered to pay support for enforcement of a support judgment. When a support order is entered, a lien with an initial lifespan of ten years is automatically placed on all real property in the Iowa county where the order is filed. Although normally cleared during a sale, real property may be bought and sold subject to keeping the existing lien holder in place.

How is a Lien processed?

A lien attaches on real estate in Iowa when a support order or notice of lien from another state is filed with the clerk of court in the county where the real property is located. When the person ordered to pay support owns property in another county in Iowa, the order can be transcribed to the other county. **Before property can be sold, all liens still in force should be cleared.** The person ordered to pay support may contact the case manager assigned to the case to discuss whether any specific steps may be taken.

Iowa support judgments create liens on personal titled property when the lien is noted on the title. Liens may also arise for overdue support on support judgments from other states when the notice of lien is filed with the clerk of court in the county where the personal property is titled, and the lien is noted on the title. The person ordered to pay support may contact their case manager to negotiate a release of the lien if support is still owed.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code sections 666(a)(4), 654(9)(E)
- Iowa Code Chapters 321, 624, section 252B.5

License Sanction

What is a License Sanction?

When a person ordered to pay support owes three months of delinquent support, we may notify a licensing agency to stop the issuance or renewal of their professional, recreational, driver's license or motor vehicle registration.

How is a license sanctioned?

We send a notice of potential license sanction to the person ordered to pay support. They have 20 days after the notice was sent to pay the delinquent support, provide employer information, provide verification of valid reasons for exemption as established in rules, or request a conference with us. Based on both parent's financial information and application of the child support guidelines, the person ordered to pay support may enter into a written payment agreement.

If the parent does not respond to the notice of potential license sanction or pay as outlined in the payment agreement, we may send a certificate of noncompliance to Iowa state licensing agencies. This notice instructs the agencies to revoke, suspend or not issue occupational and professional licenses, driver's and recreational licenses, and motor vehicle registrations. The licensing agencies follow their rules and procedures for suspending, revoking or denying the issuance or renewal of a license.

To challenge this action:

- The conference must be held first, then
- The parents may ask for a court hearing.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(16)
- Iowa Code Chapter 252J

- Iowa Administrative Code 441-98.32 through 98.38

How many License Sanctions were done?

In state fiscal year 2026, 6,072 notices of potential license sanction were issued. Licenses were suspended for 6,846 people ordered to pay support.

Credit Reporting

What is Credit Reporting?
Federal and state laws require us to report to credit reporting agencies past due support amounts greater than $1,000. This information goes on the person ordered to pay support's credit history. Credit history can be reviewed by banks and other lending institutions when considering the person ordered to pay support for loans and credit. Some employers also review credit histories when making hiring decisions.

When a case qualifies, before we report the person ordered to pay support's case information to credit reporting agencies, we send the person ordered to pay support form 470-2223, *Notice of Proposed Release to Credit Reporting Agencies*. This form tells them what must be done to avoid the case information from being reported.

How is case information reported to credit reporting agencies?
We notify the person ordered to pay support that their case information will be sent to the credit agencies in 30 days, explain the information to be released, and tell them how to contest the action.

To challenge this action:

- The person ordered to pay support must contact us **within 15 days** of the date on form 470-2223, *Notice of Proposed Release to Credit Reporting Agencies,* to request a conference.
- If the person ordered to pay support does not contest the action, their name is sent to consumer reporting agencies.

What is the legal basis for this service?

- 42 United States Code section 666(a)(7)
- Iowa Code Chapter 252B.9(3)(j)
- Iowa Administrative Code 441-98.39
- 45 Code of Federal Regulations, section 302.70(a)(7)

What are Parental Obligation Pilot Projects (POPP)?

In 2001, the Iowa General Assembly directed the Iowa Department of Human Services to develop community-level parental obligation pilot projects. The goal of these projects was to help the person paying support to meet their parental obligations to support their children physically and financially to avoid disruptions in their family relationships. Administrative rules were developed providing child support incentives available to the pilot projects which include partial satisfactions of arrears due to the state for continuous payments of court-ordered child support. Funding for POPP ended in 2009.

In 2010, the administrative rules were reauthorized which allowed for unfunded POPP projects and the child support incentives. The rules were reauthorized annually until 2018 when new administrative rules were adopted ending the Parental Obligation Pilot Projects and creating a new Promoting Opportunities for Parents Program.

What is the Promoting Opportunities for Parents Program (also referred to as POPP or POP2)?

Administrative rules were adopted in 2018 establishing the Child Support Promoting Opportunities for Parents Program. The purpose of this program is to assist parents in overcoming the barriers which interfere with fulfilling their obligations to their children. To encourage participation by parents, we may partner with community providers and resources and offer incentives for participation. The incentives include satisfactions of arrears due to the state for payment of court-ordered child support.

We can request and select community providers to participate in the program. The providers must provide a project plan and offer a parenting curriculum to assist parents in overcoming barriers and fulfilling obligations to their children.

POP2 – Promoting Opportunities for Parents Program

The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services developed the Promoting Opportunities for Parents Program (POPP) to assist parents in overcoming barriers which interfere with meeting their obligations to their children. Child Support Services (CSS) established this program to partner with community providers that offer parenting or fatherhood classes and employment resources. CSS can offer incentives for participation in approved community projects. Participants receive support and education to improve their emotional, physical, and financial responsibilities toward their children.

Current community partners include:

Children & Families of Iowa

Serving Jasper, Wapello, and Jefferson Counties (and all southeastern Iowa)

July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027

Children & Families of Iowa (CFI) is a non-profit agency, providing services across the state of Iowa. Services focus on behavioral health for all ages, career readiness for teens and young adults, childcare services, domestic violence services, and supporting families and individuals involved with the Department of Human Services and Juvenile Court. CFI uses the 24/7 Dad, Understanding Dads for Moms, and Caring Dads curriculums to promote responsible parenting and personal development.

For more information contact: Sara Persons (641) 799-9081 sarap@cfiowa.org.

Evelyn K. Davis Center

Serving Polk and surrounding counties.

July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027

Evelyn K. Davis (EKD) provides opportunities for all parents in a facilitated, peer-driven, small group format that will cover discipline, communication, formative relationships, father-mother partnership, physical and emotional development and social modeling.

For more information contact: Charles Zanders (515) 697-1475 Cwzanders1@dmacc.edu.

St. Vincent de Paul

Serving Polk and surrounding counties.

July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027

St. Vincent de Paul (SVdP) of Des Moines is a trusted and established nonprofit organization committed to addressing the complex needs of individuals and families facing poverty, unemployment, and other barriers to stability.

For more information contact: Mike Collet (515) 282-8328 ext. 220 Mike.Collet@svdpdsm.org.

What are Access and Visitation Grants?

We receive federal Access and Visitation funds to establish programs to support and facilitate parental access to and visitation of their children. Iowa law requires these federal grant moneys be issued to private not-for-profit agencies that offer services, including but not limited to providing

neutral exchange sites, visitation counseling/development of parenting plans, and mediation services.

Currently, we have a three-year contract with Kids First Law Center to provide Access and Visitation services through June 30, 2027. Services are available to any Iowa parents in-person or virtually. For more information parents can call Kids First at (319) 365-5437 or visit the Kids First website.

What is "Preparing Individuals for Adulthood and Live" Curriculum?

Preparing Individuals for Adulthood and Life (PIAL) is a curriculum designed for students in grades 7 through 12. The curriculum is intended to introduce students to the financial realities of being a teen parent, responsible decision-making, healthy relationships, peer pressure, and the concepts related to paternity and child support. The curriculum is divided into 10 modules which can be used independently. The teaching materials are a valuable addition to Family and Consumer Sciences, Life Skills, American Government, Business Law, Health, and Psychology classes. The PIAL curriculum uses a different approach to supplement human growth and development education in Iowa's schools.

We have received national recognition awards for public awareness activities which include the PIAL curriculum and public outreach. For more information about PIAL and to download the curriculum, visit the PIAL website.

PIAL was developed through the Child Support Public Awareness Project by the Iowa Attorney General in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Health and Human Services and Iowa State University (ISU). ISU also sends out monthly e-newsletters to schools and teachers promoting the curriculum.