

## ONCE AN ORDER IS ESTABLISHED, HOW ARE PAYMENTS MADE?

The most common method of collecting support is through income withholding. Non-income withholding payments can be made:

- ◆ **By automatic withdrawal:** Make payments automatically from a checking or savings account or by phone. Forms to sign up to make these types of electronic payments are available on our website: [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov)
- ◆ **By mail:** Send a check or money order, including your case number, to:  
Collection Services Center  
PO Box 9125  
Des Moines, IA 50306-9125
- ◆ **Online:** [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov) allows you to:
  - ◆ Pay with a credit or debit card
  - ◆ Pay with a checking or savings account
  - ◆ Get a PayCode to pay with cash at a local retailer using PayNearMe.

## HOW DO I CONTACT THE UNIT?

You can get more information about services, office phone numbers and addresses, and payment options on our website: [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov) or by calling the child support automated information line at 1-888-229-9223 (toll free nationwide). Child Support Recovery Unit offices are open 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday, except state holidays.

### **Policy Regarding Discrimination, Harassment, Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunity**

The Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS) policy on non-discrimination, harassment, affirmative action, and equal employment can be viewed on the DHS website at the bottom of the page at: [dhs.iowa.gov](http://dhs.iowa.gov).

# ESTABLISHING THE SUPPORT ORDER



## **HOW CAN THE CHILD SUPPORT RECOVERY UNIT (UNIT) HELP ME GET A SUPPORT ORDER FOR MY CHILD?**

Before we can help, you must be receiving child support services from the Unit.

## **HOW DO I GET SERVICES?**

- ◆ Your name is sent to us when you are approved for the following:
  - ◆ Family Investment Program (FIP) benefits.
  - ◆ Foster care services.
  - ◆ Medicaid benefits, if you want support services.
- ◆ If you do not receive public assistance, you must file an application for services. Either parent (or a caretaker) may apply for services.
- ◆ You may receive our services even if one of the parents lives in another state.

## **WHAT DO I NEED TO DO TO HELP?**

To serve you better, we need your help. Please:

- ◆ Send us documents that establish paternity.
- ◆ Keep us updated on where the parents live and work.
- ◆ Attend scheduled appointments with the Unit.
- ◆ Complete and provide documents as requested.
- ◆ Appear at court hearings as requested.
- ◆ Let us know of changes that may impact the Unit's action. For example:
  - ◆ Changes in residency/custody
  - ◆ Changes in marital status
  - ◆ Obtaining a private attorney

## **DOES THE UNIT EMPLOY ATTORNEYS?**

Yes, however much of the Unit's work is done by non-attorney support staff. Unit attorneys may become involved in your case. The Unit's attorney **is not your legal representative**. An attorney-client relationship **does not exist** between you and the Unit attorney.

## **WHAT DOES THE UNIT DO TO ESTABLISH A SUPPORT ORDER?**

Once the parents are located, the Unit may establish a support order, and paternity if needed, through an administrative or judicial process. The Unit may establish medical support against either or both parents.

- ◆ Orders established through the administrative process are prepared by the Unit and approved by a judge, often without the need for a court hearing.
- ◆ Orders established through the judicial process are handled through the court system and are presided over by a judge. Before an order is entered,
  - ◆ Legal notices are served on case parties.
  - ◆ Parents are asked to provide financial and health care coverage information.
  - ◆ Case parties have the opportunity to request a conference or a court hearing.

## **HOW IS THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT DETERMINED?**

The Iowa Supreme Court has established guidelines to follow in determining the amount of child and medical support. The Unit uses these guidelines.

## **HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO ESTABLISH A SUPPORT ORDER?**

The length of time depends on how hard it is to find a necessary party and verify income or assets. We must allow more time for legal processes if the other parent lives in another state.

## **ONCE AN ORDER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED, HOW IS IT ENFORCED?**

- ◆ The Unit may withhold payments from wages, unemployment benefits or other income.
- ◆ The Unit may place a lien on the payor's real estate.
- ◆ The Unit may collect from state and federal tax refunds or other government payments.
- ◆ The Unit may file contempt of court proceedings.
- ◆ The Unit may refer the payor's name and past due balance to credit agencies.
- ◆ The Unit may ask licensing agencies to sanction the payor's:
  - ◆ Business or professional licenses.
  - ◆ Recreational or driver's licenses
- ◆ The Unit may take steps to sanction the payor's passport.
- ◆ The Unit may collect from the payor's bank account or other financial institution.

## **HOW DO I GET AN APPLICATION FOR CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES?**

Contact the local child support office or visit our website: [www.childsupport.ia.gov](http://www.childsupport.ia.gov)