

Changing a Child Support Order

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CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

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General Overview

This guide offers information to help parents, custodians, or people who work with parents and custodians, understand the child support review and adjustment process, sometimes called a modification. It explains how parents can ask to have their child support order changed because of a change in their financial situation. Parents or custodial parties who want more information about this process should start with this guide.

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement prepared this guide, consulting with the state and territorial child support offices. If a tribal program issued an order, please check with that program. Note that programs evolve and may offer newer information, so check with your local child support agency for updates.

Materials include:

- “Changing a Child Support Order” guide
- “[State by State - How to Change a Child Support Order](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order)” (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order>) a map with links to modification information for each state.

This guide is available on the Office of Child Support Enforcement website. It will also be available at federal correctional institutions.

This guide was prepared by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement. This guide does not have any binding legal authority and does NOT constitute legal advice. It should be a starting point for child support information. You may wish to consult a lawyer before using the forms or information provided in this guide.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

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Overview of the Child Support Program

Congress created the child support program in 1975 through Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. People often call it the IV-D (“Four-D”) program. The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) oversees, regulates, and funds the Title IV-D program and conducts outreach. OCSE is within the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

In every state, and also in some federally recognized Indian tribes and organizations, the IV-D agency is responsible for providing child support services. Child support agencies are operated by state, tribal, county, or local governments according to program guidelines set forth in Title IV-D of the Social Security Act. The agency may be located in the Department of Social Services, the Office of the Attorney General, or the Department of Revenue. Child support agencies help parents support their children by locating noncustodial parents; establishing legal parentage; establishing, enforcing, and modifying child support and medical child support obligations; and collecting and distributing child support money. They provide the day-to-day services to process child support cases.

While child support programs vary, some may provide these services:

- Help parents early on to solve problems
- Encourage parents to participate in establishing child support orders
- Educate parents about the child support program
- Establish realistic child support order amounts
- Use automated systems to discover missed payments as early as possible
- Notify noncustodial parents about missed payments before taking enforcement actions
- Modify (change) a support order so that it stays consistent with a parent’s ability to pay
- Reduce that portion of child support debt owed to the government if the parent starts paying current support
- Pass through more support to families in public assistance cases instead of keeping it to repay the government for cash assistance

Applying for child support services: Any parent or custodial party can apply for services to establish a child support or medical support order, collect support payments, or request their order be reviewed for possible modification. People who have received services under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or federally assisted Foster Care programs (and sometimes Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP], or child care programs are automatically referred for child support services. An individual can apply for services to establish parentage – a legal relationship with his/her child. A noncustodial parent whose case is not in the child support program can apply for services to make payments through the program. Parent’s or custodial party can apply through the local, state, territory, or tribal child support agency. Usually, applying to the local child support agency is most effective.

Asking for a review or modification: Either parent or custodial party can ask to have a child support order reviewed at least every three years or whenever there is a substantial change of circumstances (such as loss of employment or incarceration), to make sure that the order remains current. When parents have a significant change in their financial situation, and they have a case with a child support agency, it is important to contact that child support agency as soon as possible to make sure that the child support order accurately reflects the new circumstances.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Questions and Answers

What is the purpose of this guide?

This guide offers information to help parents, custodians, and people who work with parents and custodians, understand the child support review and adjustment process, sometimes called a modification. It explains how parents can ask to have their child support order modified because of a change in their financial situation. Parents or custodians who want more information about this process should start with this guide.

I am a parent or custodian.

How do I use this guide?

Find the state, territory, or tribe where you have or think you might have a child support order, and review the information about their specific child support program.

Read the general information in this guide and use the “[State by State – How to Change a Child Support Order](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order)” map (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order>) to find your state, territory, or tribe’s website with information on the modification process for that jurisdiction. Only the state, territory, or tribe that has your child support order can take any action on your case.

Which child support agency should I contact?

Identifying where to request a change to a child support order may vary based on state or tribal law. Start by contacting the local child support agency handling your case. If you are not sure which state handles your case, then contact the nearest child support agency where you live or where your child and the custodial parent live. If you have a tribal order, contact the tribal child support program.

How do I contact a child support agency?

You can find [contact information](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts) (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts>) for your local child support agency on the OCSE website. When you contact the child support agency, it may help to provide your full name, date of birth, Social Security number, the case name or docket number if known, the children’s names and dates of birth, and the other parent’s known information like their address and date of birth. It is important to contact your local child support agency and ask to have your order changed **as soon as your situation changes**. You will not be allowed to modify an ordered amount or past-due amount prior to the date of your request.

I work with parents or custodians.

How do I use this guide?

You can use this guide to talk to parents or custodians about the importance of asking to change an order. Encourage parents to act as soon as possible when their financial situation has changed. You can help them identify and contact their local child support agencies. You can learn more about how to collaborate with local child support offices (see below).

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Changing an Order

Most of the information in this guide relates to changes handled by the child support program. Some parents or custodians have child support cases that are not handled by the child support program. For example, some parents hire lawyers to address child support in a divorce case that does not involve the child support program. A person who has a support order not handled by the child support agency can also file legal papers requesting the court to review the order.

How are child support orders generally changed?

All states are required by federal law to have procedures for periodic review and adjustment (if appropriate) of child support orders handled by state child support agencies.

The child support agency automatically reviews the support orders in “TANF” cases at least *once every three years*. In “non-TANF” cases, the child support agency will provide notice to either parent or custodian of their right to request a review of their child support order at least *once every three years*. However, either party may request a review *at any time* based on a substantial change in circumstances.

Child support agencies conduct reviews in a variety of ways. Working with parents or custodians, they may:

- Review and, if appropriate, adjust the order according to the child support guidelines if the amount of child support under the order differs from the amount that would be awarded according to the guidelines.
- Apply a cost-of-living adjustment to the order according to a formula developed by the state or tribe.
- Use automated methods (including automated comparisons with wage or state income tax data) to identify orders eligible for review, conduct the review, identify orders eligible for adjustment, and apply the appropriate adjustment.

What is the difference between a judicial modification and an administrative modification?

The method for a modification or change to a child support order may depend on the process you use and the type of child support program in your state, territory, or tribe. Some programs can change a child support order through an administrative process, which is usually less formal than a judicial procedure held in a courtroom where judicial officers make and enforce child support orders. Many child support programs use a court process to change child support orders, while others provide multiple ways to request a change. Often, the same method used to establish the order (administrative or judicial) is used to modify the order.

If I ask to have my child support order changed, will my support amount decrease?

Not necessarily. The reviewing authority will decide if there has been a “substantial change in circumstances.” If your financial situation has improved, for example, your order may be increased. If you’ve lost a job, your order may be decreased, but it depends on your overall income and some other factors. The court or administrative officer makes the final decision.

If I’m incarcerated, can I try to change my order?

Once a child support order is established, child support agencies have varied procedures for modifying or suspending a child support order for incarcerated parents. **Federal law requires states to review an order if the parent makes a request and shows that there has been a “substantial change in circumstances.”** If an individual will be incarcerated for more than 180 days, the state may automatically start a review of the child support order or send notice to both parents letting them know they have a right to request that the case be reviewed for modification. Contact your state or local child support agency to see if your child support order can be changed while you are incarcerated.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Why is it so important to try to change my child support order? Can't I just wait until I'm released?

Generally, child support orders can be changed when your ability to pay changes substantially. Child support programs typically rely on one of the parents to request the change in amount. Child support orders may not be reduced automatically when a parent becomes incarcerated, even if you don't have the ability to pay your order anymore. That's why it is important for you to contact your local child support agency as soon as possible and ask for a modification to your order. If you wait until you are no longer incarcerated, you will still owe the full amount of child support that has built up while you were incarcerated. **You will not be allowed to have your order modified retroactively or backdated, so it's important to ask for a review and change as soon as your situation changes.** Some states also charge interest on unpaid support.

For federal inmates, the Bureau of Prisons Program Statement, Inmate Financial Responsibility Program, outlines procedures for Bureau staff to help inmates develop a financial plan and monitor progress in meeting their obligations, including child support payments. To determine the amount owed, Bureau staff must have documentation like a court order or judgment, or a letter with the inmate's obligation from a state child support enforcement unit.

What if I'm in a correctional facility in one state, but I think my child support order was issued by another state, or my child (or their caregiver) lives in another state?

When the parent that is obligated to pay child support lives in one state and the child and custodian or custodial parent live in another, the case is called an "interstate" or "intergovernmental" case. Certain laws apply to these cases. All child support agencies must address child support matters, including locating parents, establishing parentage, and establishment of support obligations, for children who live outside their borders. These cases may take more time to resolve because they involve more than one state or jurisdiction.

This guide does not provide in-depth information about how these cases are handled. You should consult one of the local child support offices for specific information. As a first step, contact the agency where your child support order is or was established. For tribal child support orders, contact the [tribal child support agency \(https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/training-technical-assistance/tribal-child-support-agency-contacts\)](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/training-technical-assistance/tribal-child-support-agency-contacts).

What if I have more than one child support order?

State and tribal guidelines, or case law, indicate how to share child support in cases with more than one support order, or when a parent has multiple children. Each family must receive a portion of the available money. Depending on each state or tribe's child support guidelines, having more than one support order may provide a reason to change the initial child support order. Ask your local child support agency for more information on how to request a change to more than one order.

How do local child support offices determine if an order should be changed?

As part of the request form, or as the next step in the process, most agencies require a financial statement (some refer to it as a worksheet) of wages, income, and standard allowable expenses. Most agencies also require a paystub or documentation of current income. Both parents should complete and return the income verification forms and attachments. If you don't have the most recent wage information, the child support agency may use previous earnings from other sources, such as reported wages or tax filings. After applying the updated income information to the child support guidelines, many agencies require the newly calculated support amount to vary from the existing amount by a certain dollar amount or a certain percentage to enter a modified support order.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Establishing Orders, Parentage, and Visitation

How do states and tribes determine the initial child support amount?

All states and tribes have laws or rules that establish child support guidelines to determine the child support amount. Support guidelines are numerical formulas that the court or administrative agency uses to calculate how much a parent should contribute to a child's financial support based on parental income. State and tribal support guidelines vary. Most factor in the income of both parents. When a court or an administrative agency initially establishes a support order, it should set a realistic child support amount based on the parents' incomes. Contact your state or tribal child support agency for more information if you are incarcerated.

What if I want to establish parentage?

Under state law, a child born during marriage is presumed to be the child of those married parents. When a child is born outside of a marriage, parentage must be legally established for the child and parents to have certain legal rights and responsibilities. Establishment of parentage in tribal communities will depend on their own laws, codes, and customs. If you want to establish parentage for your child, contact your local state or tribal child support agency.

There are a variety of ways to establish parentage:

- Marriage
- Signing a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity
- Court order established by:
 - Admission
 - Default
 - Genetic testing
- Adoption

Either parent or the custodian can apply with the local child support agency to establish parentage. Once parentage is established, a child support order can be entered. Also, the child gains legal rights and privileges, such as rights to inheritance, coverage under the parents' medical and life insurance benefits, and possible entitlement to the parents' Social Security and veterans benefits.

How do I get a genetic test?

If parties are not certain who the father is, the child support agency can arrange for genetic testing. The test involves a cheek swab of the man, mother, and child. Genetic test results can establish the probability of paternity to such a high degree that they often result in a legal presumption of paternity. However, in most states, the test alone does not automatically result in a legal establishment of paternity. Instead, the genetic test results provide evidence of paternity in legal cases. The genetic tests can also exclude a man who is not the biological father. Inmates in Federal Bureau of Prison institutions should make arrangements with their Unit Team to have a genetic test performed.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

What if I want to see my children?

Visitation and custody seem closely connected to child support, although the law separates the issues. Most states factor visitation and custody arrangements into their child support guideline calculations when establishing the amount of child support. Custodial parents cannot legally deny visitation rights because noncustodial parents have failed to pay child support. Similarly, noncustodial parents cannot legally withhold child support because custodial parents will not allow them to visit the children.

Child support agencies must provide child support services but aren't legally required to provide visitation services, and most do not directly provide them. Your child support agency may inform you about the access and visitation programs and other resources through the courts or other systems.

Debt

I have a lot of child support debt. What can I do?

Arrears are child support payments that are past due. Even if your current child support order changes, you may still have arrears, or debt. Many child support offices have programs to reduce the portion of child support debt you owe to the government if you start paying current support. Contact your local child support agency and ask about debt compromise, debt forgiveness, or arrears management programs.

Disability

What if I get disability (SSI or SSDI) – does that affect my child support?

It depends on the type of disability payments you receive. Low-income individuals who are disabled and have limited employment history may receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. The child support program cannot use the garnishment process to collect child support from SSI payments because SSI is not related to employment.

Disabled individuals with sufficient employment history may receive Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. The child support program may use the garnishment process to collect child support from SSDI payments because SSDI is related to employment.

Tribal Orders

What if I have a tribal child support order?

At least 60 tribes operate tribal child support programs, providing services to Native American families consistent with tribal values and cultures. Tribal child support programs locate custodial and noncustodial parents, establish parentage, establish child support orders, enforce orders, and offer services and referrals. Contact your [tribal child support agency](#) for more information.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Military and Veterans

There are many legal resources to help current and former members of the military with child support matters.

- [A Handbook for Military Families](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/handbook-military-families) (<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/handbook-military-families>) provides information on child support for military families.
- [Stateside Legal](https://statesidelegal.org/) (<https://statesidelegal.org/>) - assists military members, veterans and their families in finding free legal assistance help.
- [U.S. Air Force Legal Assistance](https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil/) (<https://aflegalassistance.law.af.mil/>) provides general information about many legal topics and a Legal Services Locator to help you find your nearest Department of Defense legal assistance office.

If I'm a veteran, active, or reserve military– how do I get help modifying my order?

If you are a current or former member of the military and your support order does not reflect your current ability to pay, check with the child support agency or court to see if the order is eligible for modification. Most child support agencies have designated military or veteran liaisons that can help you. Some child support agencies also have special projects to assist homeless and low-income veterans who owe past-due child support or need their orders modified.

What if I'm an activated National Guard or US Reserves member and my income changes?

When you are called to active duty, your child support order will not automatically change. You will need to request a modification to your child support order. The procedure for seeking a modification varies among the states. You may want to seek advice from a judge advocate, military legal assistance officer, or private attorney.

What if I'm active duty and my support order has changed?

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) needs to receive legal notice of the change because nothing will happen automatically. If a child support agency is handling your case, that agency usually issues the new income withholding order to DFAS. Once DFAS receives the new income withholding order, it will change the amount it withholds from your military pay.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Parents Who are Incarcerated in Federal Prison

I am incarcerated in a federal prison – how can their staff help me?

Work with your Unit Team and let them know that you have children you must support financially. Give them any documentation about your obligations. The Unit Team can direct you to institution resources to help you locate your child support agency. You can also contact the institution Reentry Affairs Coordinator (RAC) to direct you to resources and programs to help you with child support modifications.

I reside in a federal Residential Reentry Center (RRC) – what do I need to know about child support?

As a resident of an RRC, you are expected to pay both subsistence and child support. However, you can request a change to the subsistence amount to enable you to make your child support payments. When you arrive at the RRC, inform the RRC staff or counselor about your child support obligation. Also inform the child support agency about your release and location. The Bureau of Prisons must approve modification of the subsistence amount collected by the RRC. If the state garnishes your paycheck while you reside at an RRC, you and your case manager at the RRC can request a modification in the amount of subsistence collected at any time during your designation to the RRC or Home Confinement.

How can I make child support payments while I am incarcerated in a federal institution?

Discuss your obligations with your Unit Team during initial classification and subsequent program reviews. They will enroll you in the inmate Financial Responsibility Program and include your child support obligation in developing your financial plan. Your progress in meeting that obligation will be monitored during your program reviews. Normally child support payments are collected after any special assessments, court-ordered restitution and fines, and court costs have been paid in full.

Bureau of Prisons Staff Who Work With Incarcerated and Reentering Parents

I work in a federal correctional institution and would like to do more to help incarcerated parents with their child support. Where do I start?

For staff in the Federal Bureau of Prisons, coordinate with your Reentry Affairs Coordinator (RAC) to discuss how you can further develop collaborations and strategies in this area. The RAC may already be in contact with the appropriate child support agency. Many state and local institutions have successful collaborations with child support.

I work in an RRC – how can I help residents with child support?

When residents arrive at the RRC, staff should determine if they have child support obligations. You may be able to help them contact the appropriate child support agency, and encourage them to use this “Changing a Child Support Order” guide to address other questions.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Glossary

Administrative procedure – the method that an executive agency uses to make and enforce support orders. It is typically less formal than a judicial procedure held in a courtroom, and in which judicial officers make and enforce support orders.

Administrative modification – the method an executive agency uses to modify a child support order, typically without having a court hearing. (See *administrative procedure*)

Arrears/arrearage – past-due child support payments.

Change of Circumstances – the condition that indicates a need for modification of a support order.

Child support agency – an agency in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, as well as 60 Native American tribes, that handle child support cases. It's often called the "IV-D" (pronounced "Four-D") agency because the federal legislation that established the child support program is in Title IV, Part D of the Social Security Act.

Child Support Enforcement Program – the federal, state, local, and tribal partnerships established under Title IV, Part D of the Social Security Act to locate parents; establish paternity; and establish, modify, and enforce child support orders.

Custodial parent (CP)/ Custodian – the person who has primary care, custody, and control of a child. Some states use the term "residential parent." Some states use the term "custodial party" or "caretaker" if the child resides with a relative, legal guardian, or some other legally responsible adult. When parents are separated or divorced, the court order usually designates which parent is the custodial parent.

Custody order – a legal determination that establishes who has care and control of a child, and who the child lives with. State and tribal laws vary with regard to custody issues (such as joint custody, sole custody, shared custody).

Default – the failure of a defendant to appear, or file a timely answer or response, in a civil case after the person has been served with a summons and complaint.

Default judgment or default order – a decision that a tribunal makes when the defendant fails to respond or appear after proper notice.

Defendant – the person against whom a civil or criminal proceeding is begun. The defendant in a civil proceeding is also called the "respondent."

Enforcement – the process of obtaining payment of a child support or medical support obligation. The most effective enforcement remedy is income withholding. Other enforcement remedies include federal and state income tax refund offset, license suspension, lottery intercept, passport denial and seizure of bank accounts.

Establishment – the legal process of determining parentage or obtaining a child support order.

Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) – the federal agency responsible for oversight of the Title IV-D child support program. OCSE writes regulations that govern the state child support agencies, which are responsible for day-to-day processing of child support cases. OCSE also operates the Federal Parent Locator Service. OCSE is part of the Administration for Children and Families within the Department of Health and Human Services.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Federally Assisted Foster Care – a federal/state/tribal program that provides financial support to individuals, families, or institutions raising children who are not living with their parents.

Financial Responsibility Program (FRP) – a policy directive in the Federal Bureau of Prisons that encourages each sentenced inmate to meet their legitimate financial obligations. Staff will help the inmate develop a financial plan for meeting those obligations and monitor the inmate’s efforts to fulfill the plan throughout their period of incarceration.

Finding – the formal determination by a court or an administrative agency that has a legal effect.

IV-D (pronounced “Four-D”) Child Support Program – the federal/state/local and tribal child support programs established under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

Garnishment – an enforcement remedy to withhold part of a person’s wages and other types of income for the payment of a debt. Some states refer to a garnishment as a “withholding” or an “attachment.”

Genetic testing – DNA analysis of inherited factors (usually by tissue or saliva test) of the mother, child, and alleged father that can help prove or disprove that a particular man fathered a particular child.

Guidelines – the numerical formulas that states and tribes use to set child support obligations. Support guidelines are based on the income of the parent(s) and other factors as determined by state and tribal law. Tribunals must use guidelines to determine the child support amount, unless there is a written finding that applying the guidelines would be inappropriate in a particular case.

Interest accrual – the amount of interest that accrues on an unpaid child support obligation.

Judicial procedure – the method by which judicial officers make and enforce support orders. It is usually held in a courtroom.

Judicial modification – the method by which a modification occurs in a court proceeding. (See *judicial procedure*)

Judgment – the legally binding decision by a tribunal on the rights and claims of the parties to an action. A judgment may also be called a “decree” or an “order.”

Jurisdiction – the legal authority that a court or an administrative agency has over particular persons, certain types of cases, and in a defined geographical area.

Legal father – a man recognized by law as the male parent.

Medicaid program – a program administered state by state that provides federally funded medical support for low-income families.

Medical support – health care coverage provided to a child according to a support order. It includes insurance coverage; cash medical support, including paying health insurance premiums; and paying health care bills (including dental and eye care). Indian Health Service and TRICARE are also acceptable forms of medical support.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Noncustodial parent (NCP) – the person who does not have primary care, custody, and control of a child.

Obligation – the duty of support that a parent or spouse owes to a child or spouse. A support order usually expresses that obligation as an amount of money that the parent or spouse must pay as financial support or medical support for the child(ren) or spouse.

Order – the legally binding decision by a tribunal on the rights and claims of the parties to an action. An order may also be called a “decree” or “judgment.”

Parentage – the legal parent-child relationship as determined by state or tribal law.

Party – a person involved in a legal transaction or court proceeding.

Paternity – the legal determination of fatherhood.

Presumption of paternity – A rule of law that permits a court to assume a man is the father of a child if certain facts exist. This rule may be rebutted by presenting factual information that shows the man could not be the father.

Probability of paternity – the statistical likelihood that the alleged father is the biological father of the child, as indicated by genetic test results.

Public assistance – money granted from the state, tribal, or federal government to a person or family for living expenses. Eligibility is based on need and varies among programs. Applicants for certain types of public assistance (for example, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or TANF) are automatically referred to their state or tribal child support agency for child support services. This allows the state or tribe to seek support payments from the noncustodial parent so the custodial party can become more self-sufficient, and the state or tribal government can recoup some of its public assistance expenditures.

RAC – a federal correctional institution’s Reentry Affairs Coordinator who has responsibility for coordinating local reentry efforts, which include fostering partnerships and developing resources that help offenders successfully return to their communities.

RRC – a Residential Reentry Center (halfway houses) is a Bureau of Prisons contract facility that provides assistance to inmates nearing release. They provide a safe, structured, supervised community environment, as well as employment counseling, job placement, financial management assistance, and other services. RRCs help inmates gradually rebuild their ties to the community and help supervise inmates’ activities during this readjustment phase.

Retroactive support – support for a period prior to the entry date of the order. For example, in paternity cases, state law may require that support be retroactive to the child’s birth date. Some states have laws requiring support retroactive to the date the legal action was filed.

Statute of limitations – the cutoff point on the length of time a person has to take a particular legal action. State and tribal laws vary on the statute of limitations for collecting child support arrears.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – The TANF program, which is time limited, assists families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives cannot provide for the family’s basic needs. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) with TANF. The TANF program provides parents with job preparation, work, and support services to help them become self-sufficient. Applicants for TANF benefits are automatically referred for child support services. This allows the state or tribe to seek support payments from the noncustodial parent so the custodial party can become more self-sufficient, and the state or tribal government can recoup some of its public assistance expenditures. Non-TANF refers to families that have not received TANF assistance.

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

Office of Child Support Enforcement • Administration for Children & Families • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Tribal IV-D Program - a child support program administered by a federally recognized Indian tribe or tribal organization and funded under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

Tribunal – a court, an administrative agency, or a quasi-judicial entity authorized to establish, enforce, or modify support orders, or to determine parentage.

Unit Team – a part of Bureau of Prisons' Unit Management concept to determine inmate program needs, and monitor inmate participation to encourage pro-social institution and community behaviors that benefit inmates, staff, victims, and society. Unit Teams are comprised of a Unit Manager who supervises assigned case managers, correctional counselors, and unit secretaries in a designated housing unit. The Unit Team also includes unit officers, an education advisor, and a unit psychologist.

Visitation – a term for the time a noncustodial parent spends with their children. States may also use the term “access” or “parenting time.” Parents can agree on parenting time in a parenting plan, or the court can establish parenting time in its order.

Voluntary unemployment – a law or policy that prohibits modification when a parent is incarcerated or when an individual decides to stop working or to not seek employment.

Wage withholding – a procedure of automatic deductions from a person's earnings or other income to pay a debt, such as child support. Wage withholding may also be called “income withholding,” “income attachment,” “income assignment,” or “garnishment.”

CHANGING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

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Resources

1. [Child Support Websites and General Contact Information](https://acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts)
(<https://acf.hhs.gov/css/map/state-and-tribal-child-support-agency-contacts>), including tribal child support agencies
2. [How Do I Apply for Child Support Services?](https://acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocse/how_do_i_apply_for_child_support_services.pdf)
(https://acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ocse/how_do_i_apply_for_child_support_services.pdf), a one page printable document
3. [Applying for Child Support](https://acf.hhs.gov/css/parents/how-do-you-get-child-support/applying-child-support)
(<https://acf.hhs.gov/css/parents/how-do-you-get-child-support/applying-child-support>), links to information on each state process for applying
4. [State by State - How to Change a Child Support Order](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order)
(<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/css/outreach-material/state-state-how-change-child-support-order>), links to information on each state process for modification