

# Maine Child Support Services

## Thank you for your interest in Maine's Child Support Services

Whether you are considering applying, or have recently applied, welcome. We have a lot of resources available to help you collect your child support. If you would like an application or have questions at any point in your child support journey, please feel free to reach out to us. You can do this by :

- Calling us between 10am – 3pm @ 207-624-7830 or 800-371-7179
- Emailing us at [Case.Review@Maine.Gov](mailto:Case.Review@Maine.Gov)
- Using our customer portal @ <https://gateway.maine.gov/DHHS/m-cportal/auth>

## What happens when a Child Support case is opened?

Before a new or reopened case can be sent to the field office where enforcement work is done, DSER's Central Office must create or amend the computer file for the case and confirm the information you have provided. Once your application is complete, your case could be in a field office in 4-6 weeks, often even less. If you have little information about the other parent, it could take longer as we must verify the individual's address before the case can be assigned.

Once your case goes to a field office it is assigned to an agent who will manage the case.

## Services DSER can help provide:

- Locating the non-custodial parent
- Establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock including arranging genetic testing for both parents and child.
- Establishing child support orders for current and past support; also including medical support/insurance and childcare.
- Enforcing child support, spousal support that accompanies child support, medical support/insurance, and childcare obligations.
- Collecting, recording and disbursing child support payments.
- Reviewing and taking necessary steps to modify child support orders when circumstances change. The timeframe of this service is subject to the availability of resources.

## Services DSER cannot provide:

- Legal advice.
- Obtaining divorce judgments or spousal support orders.
- Enforcing visitation rights or getting involved in custody matters.
- Enforcing property settlements.
- Services to children seeking child support from a parent. Your guardian or custodian, however, may seek assistance from DSER.
- Legal representation to you or the non-custodial parent. When an Assistant Attorney General is assigned to a case, that attorney's client is DHHS, not you or the other parent. You may hire your own attorney representative if you desire.
- Charging interest on child support debts.
- Establishing or enforcing orders for tuition.

DSER will decide which actions should be taken to achieve success for you. We cannot guarantee success, but we will give our best effort given our resources. By signing the application, you acknowledge your understanding of what we can and can't provide for you.

#### **Distribution of non- Federal Tax child support collections in non-TANF cases:**

- Non-TANF collections normally are processed within two days of the date payment is received by DHHS.
- If the other parent is ordered to pay support for more than one family, collections are divided among the families according to a federally established formula.
- Current support is always paid first.
- If you are owed past support, your debt will be paid first from collections applied to your case.

#### **Distribution of Federal Tax Offset collections in non-TANF cases:**

- Federal Tax Offset collections are first applied to public assistance debt.
- Collections from federal income tax refunds may not be disbursed for up to 6 months as they may be subject to adjustment.

#### **When services end:**

If at any time you no longer want DSER's want services, tell us in writing. We will need your signature. If DSER wants to end services, we will tell you in writing and explain why. We will give you a chance to respond before ending services. Some of the reasons for ending services are:

- The other parent no longer owes child support.
- You or your representative will not cooperate with us.
- We cannot contact you because we do not have your current address.

#### **Child Support –Annual Federal Fee of \$35**

Under 42 United States Code, section 654(6)(B)(ii), states are required to pay a \$35 annual federal fee for certain child support cases. To reimburse this fee, Maine Revised Statutes, Title 19-A, section 2103(3-A) requires DSER to charge the custodial parent a \$35 fee every year for each case in which:

- DSER has disbursed at least \$550 of child support to the family; and
- the family has **never** received cash assistance from Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Each year, in each eligible case, DSER will redirect \$35 from the custodial parent's child support payments, but only after it has disbursed \$550 to the custodial parent. DSER will collect the fee on each of the custodial parent's eligible cases. The federal fiscal year (October 1 to September 30) is used to determine when DSER has disbursed \$550 of support in an eligible case. If you have questions after reading this page, or you believe you are exempt from this fee, please contact the Case Review Unit at 1-800-371-7179 or 207-624-7830, or e-mail [case.review@maine.gov](mailto:case.review@maine.gov), or the Client Portal at: <https://gateway.maine.gov/DHHS/m-cportal/auth>