

Opening the Door to Your Child's Future

**Oregon Child
Support Program**

Oregon Department of Justice

WHAT IS CHILD SUPPORT?

- Regular cash payments from a parent, for their child, based on guidelines established by Oregon law (or by the law of another state or tribal jurisdiction),
- Health care coverage through an employer or a private medical policy, and
- A cash amount to pay for medical expenses when medical coverage is not available or to help pay for costs not covered by insurance.

Detailed information on child support, including a child support calculator, is available on the Department of Justice Division of Child Support website at oregonchildsupport.gov.

WHO WILL HAVE TO PROVIDE SUPPORT?

- Children have the right to financial support from both parents, even if the parents do not live together or were never married.
- Usually the parent who does not have primary physical custody of the child is ordered to provide support.
- Both parents may be ordered to provide support if neither parent has physical custody of the child.

HOW DO I GET A SUPPORT ORDER FOR MY CHILD?

Here are the ways to get a support order:

- Through the Department of Justice Division of Child Support or a District Attorney Child Support office (these offices work with you and the courts but do not represent either party or give them legal advice).
- File directly in court, work with an attorney, or obtain self-help forms through the courthouse.

Contact information for the child support office nearest you can be found on the website at oregonchildsupport.gov or by calling (800) 850-0228 (toll free in Oregon).

WHAT SERVICES ARE PROVIDED BY THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM?

- Establishing paternity. (For information on paternity, see the section *What is Paternity?*)
- Establishing and enforcing child support and medical support orders.
- Modifying support orders.
- Locating the parent who owes support.
- Accounting.

The Child Support Program provides services after you sign an application or your family receives public assistance benefits. You should give as much information as you can to your case manager when you apply for services. Remain in regular contact with your case manager to get the money you are owed and to establish paternity.

WHAT SERVICES ARE NOT PROVIDED BY THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM?

- Legal advice.
- Establishing or changing spousal support.
- Parenting time and legal custody enforcement: The Child Support Program has no authority to enforce a parenting plan but may use the parenting plan to help decide the amount of child support.

WHEN DOES SUPPORT END?

- When the order is terminated.
- When the youngest child becomes a legal adult:
 - A child becomes 18, or age 21 if the child continues in school.
 - A child marries or in many cases when the child joins the military.
 - A child obtains a legal order of “emancipation.”

WHO IS THE OBLIGOR?

- The obligor is the parent who pays support.
- Either the mother or the father can be the obligor.
- The obligor is usually the parent who does **not** have primary physical custody of the child.

WHO IS THE OBLIGEE?

- The obligee is the parent who has the right to receive support payments.
- Either the mother or the father can be the obligee.
- The obligee is usually the parent who has primary physical custody of the child.
- The obligee may be the child's caretaker and not the parent.

WHAT IS A CARETAKER?

- Sometimes the child does not live with either legal parent. A caretaker is a person other than a parent who has primary physical custody of the child.
- A caretaker does not have a legal obligation to support the child.
- A caretaker may be the obligee.
- Support payments may be sent to the caretaker.

WHAT IS PATERNITY?

- Establishing paternity is the process of determining who is the legal father of a child.
- When parents are married to each other, paternity is presumed to be established by the marriage.
- When parents are not married, paternity can be established by:
 - Completing a form called a Voluntary Acknowledgment of Paternity and filing it with the Center for Health Statistics, Vital Records; or
 - Through a judicial or administrative legal process.
- The Child Support Program can enter a paternity order for you either with or without genetic testing by using an administrative legal process.

WHAT ARE GENETIC TESTS?

- The test uses genetic material gathered by swabbing the inside of the cheek of the child, mother, and alleged father.
- These tests are simple and accurate and will tell how likely it is that the person tested is the biological father of the child.
- The Department of Justice Division of Child Support or a District Attorney child support office may complete genetic testing as part of the process to establish a child support order or when paternity establishment has been challenged.
- For more detailed information on paternity, see the brochure *You Owe it to Your Child*.

WHY DOES PATERNITY MATTER?

- Children have the right to financial support from both parents.
- Child support, custody, and parenting time can't be ordered until paternity has been legally established.
- Establishing paternity may provide:
 - Access to important medical records;
 - Access to medical, veterans, Social Security, inheritance and other benefits from both parents;
 - Emotional benefit of knowing who one's parents are.

WHAT IF PARENTS NEED HELP ESTABLISHING PATERNITY?

- Free paternity establishment services may be available even if you don't need a child support order.
- The Child Support Program can provide the right forms and give you free genetic tests.
- For more information:
 - o Visit oregonchildsupport.gov
 - o Come to any of the 40 child support offices in Oregon
 - o Call the Child Support Program main number
 - Phone (503) 373-7300
 - Toll free (800) 850-0228
 - TTY (800) 735-2900

Oregon Department of Justice

CAN I CHALLENGE THE ISSUE OF PATERNITY THROUGH THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM?

- Possibly, if it has been less than one year since a Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity has been filed with the Vital Records office.
- Possibly, if it has been less than a year since an Oregon order establishing paternity has been entered.
- The issue of paternity may not be challenged if genetic tests were completed and the man found to be the father was included in the genetic test results.
- The issue of paternity may not be challenged if the man named on the birth record is deceased.
- There are other court processes outside the Child Support Program that can be used to challenge paternity. You should talk to a lawyer about these options.

THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM WILL OFFER YOU THE OPTION OF RECEIVING COMMUNICATIONS FROM US BY:

- Text message
- Email message
- Recorded phone message

TO MAKE SURE THE CHILD SUPPORT PROGRAM CAN REACH YOU, THE PROGRAM WILL ASK FOR UPDATED INFORMATION WHENEVER YOU CONTACT A CHILD SUPPORT OFFICE, INCLUDING:

- Your phone numbers
- Your email address
- Your language preference (if not English)

Oregon Department of Justice

Websites of Interest

Oregon Child Support Program:

oregonchildsupport.gov

Oregon Child Support Calculator:

oregonchildsupport.gov/calculator

Oregon State Bar Public Information:

www.osbar.org/public/index.html

Legal Aid Services:

Oregonlawhelp.org

Judicial System:

www.courts.oregon.gov/OJD/

24-Hour telephone payment and case status information

From the Salem area 503-378-5567

Outside the Salem area 800-850-0228
(toll free in Oregon)

From outside Oregon 503-378-5567

TTY number (800) 735-2900
(toll free in Oregon)

24-Hour internet payment and case status information

oregonchildsupport.gov

Vision

Children can depend on their parents to provide the support they need.

Mission

To enhance the well-being of children by providing child support services to families.

**State of Oregon
Department of Justice
Division of Child Support**

To order additional copies of this brochure, contact the Child Support Program Forms Team at:
Forms.Questions@doj.state.or.us