New Hampshire

CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

Supporting Families with Children
Your Child Support Dictionary

ARREARAGES – Child support that was not paid when due
BCSS – Bureau of Child Support Services
CHILD SUPPORT – A way for parents to share the responsibility of providing financial and medical support for their child
CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES – A calculation table available on the BCSS website, which provides guideline support amounts based upon the income and expenses of both parents
CHILD SUPPORT ORDER – A court or administrative order for the amount of child and medical support to be paid
CURRENT SUPPORT – The ongoing dollar amount the Obligor pays the Obligee as stated in a legal order
DEBIT CARD – A NH Child Support Debit Card issued to Obligees by a BCSS vendor as one of three methods to disburse payments
DHHS OR DEPARTMENT – Department of Health and Human Services
EFT – Electronic Fund Transfer, also known as Direct Deposit, is one of three methods to disburse payments
INTERGOVERNMENTAL/INTERSTATE CASE – A case in which BCSS works with another state or country’s child support agency to establish or enforce a court order when a parent responsible for paying child support resides in another state or country
LIEN – A legal claim against personal or real property to pay child support arrearages
MEDICAID – State health care assistance
MEDICAL SUPPORT ORDER – A court or administrative order to provide health insurance, and/or an ongoing monetary sum toward health care costs for dependent children
OBLIGEE – The person that receives child support payments
OBLIGOR – The person obligated to pay child support
PATERNITY – The establishment of a child’s father, legally
PATERNITY TEST – Genetic test to determine the biological father of a child
REASONABLE COST OF MEDICAL SUPPORT – NH-state law defines as four (4) percent of a parent’s gross income
SDU – State Disbursement Unit which receives, records and disburses child support payments to a payee
TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Cash Assistance)
Introduction

This brochure explains child support services. These services are available even if one of the parents lives in another state or country, and include:

- Locating a responsible parent
- Determining paternity for a child
- Establishing and enforcing a financial and medical child support order
- Collecting, distributing, and monitoring child support payments
- Reviewing an order to see if it continues to meet guideline amounts

BCSS deducts a $35.00 annual service fee from child support collected on behalf of all dependents who have never received Public Assistance (TANF). BCSS charges the fee only after a minimum of $550.00 has been collected and disbursed. If an Obligee has multiple cases in which the dependents have never received TANF, BCSS will charge for each case with at least $550.00 in disbursements. If an Obligee has received TANF from another state or tribal jurisdiction, he or she must inform BCSS and provide proof of his or her receipt of TANF. BCSS will not charge that Obligee a $35 annual service fee.

BCSS assesses the fee each year during the federal fiscal year (not calendar year), which runs from October 1 to September 30. If an Obligee paid a fee to another State or tribal jurisdiction, he or she must inform BCSS and provide proof of his or her fee payment. BCSS will not charge the Obligee a $35 annual service fee for the current federal fiscal year.

According to federal and state law, BCSS may charge fees for any of the services it provides, for example, services related to payment processing, case maintenance, IRS intercept, and/or the establishment or enforcement of court orders, etc. For more information regarding BCSS service-related fees, visit the BCSS website at www.dhhs.nh.gov/dcss/.

All cases administered by BCSS must contain a provision for medical support. Medical support is the obligation of either or both parents to provide health insurance and/or cash medical support for their dependents when that insurance is available at reasonable cost.

What to Expect

BCSS will work to ensure that both parents are treated fairly, kept informed as appropriate, and that their concerns are recognized.
In NH, the court establishes the child support order, including decisions on where the children will reside. BCSS will enforce your financial and medical child support order only. Custody and visitation issues are between the parents and the court. BCSS will send collected child support directly to the Obligee identified in the order. While BCSS will use the tools available to enforce Child Support, we may not always be successful. A great deal of our success relies upon the quality and timeliness of the information you provide to us.

The BCSS attorney and/or Child Support representative assigned to your case represents the NH Department of Health and Human Services and does not represent you, the other party, of the child(ren). BCSS can explain court process to you and help you understand the paperwork, but we cannot give you legal advice. For the most effective case management, BCSS must and will decide what actions to take. If you do not agree with a BCSS decision, you have the right to hire your own attorney or represent yourself.

Obligors generally pay child support until the youngest child turns 18 or graduates from high school, whichever occurs last. Child support will also end when a child joins the military or marries.

If one parent lives in another state or country, the BCSS Interstate Child Support Unit may be able to work with the other state or country’s child support agency to establish and enforce a child support order.

**Locating a Parent**

You can help BCSS locate a parent by giving as much information as possible to your child support worker, such as:

- Name and nicknames
- Social Security Number and date of birth
- Previous addresses
- Bank and credit union accounts
- Names and addresses of family, friends, and current or previous employers
- Property and assets such as cars (make, model, color, year, license plate state and number), land, houses, boats, snowmobiles, business property and equipment, and other valuables

You can find some of the above-listed information on old income tax returns, bank statements, paycheck stubs, insurance forms, union membership cards, driver’s licenses, and loan or credit card applications or statements.
Determining Paternity

BCSS must be able to prove who the child’s father is to establish a support order. If the parents were not married at the time of the child’s birth, it is best to establish paternity as early as possible. By establishing paternity your child benefits:

- Financially, through qualifying for child support, certain disability benefits, and inheritance rights
- Medically, through rights to the father’s health insurance benefits and information about his health
- Emotionally, through a sense of identity and security

To determine paternity, BCSS will need information about the child’s father and the relationship between the parents at the time of the child’s conception or birth. If a Birth Certificate does not name the father of a child, BCSS must provide proof of paternity and may use genetic testing to do so. If genetic testing is required, in most instances, the mother, possible father and the child provide DNA samples to determine whether a biological father-child relationship exists. A medical professional collects the samples by means of a simple and painless swab of the mouth with a long “Q-tip.”

Affidavit of Paternity

When the child’s parents are unmarried and want to establish paternity they can do so in court or they can complete an Affidavit of Paternity. The Affidavit of Paternity is a simple way for unmarried parents to establish paternity for their child. For more information, contact any birthing hospital, town or city clerk’s office, or a BCSS District Office.

Establishing an Order

Once paternity is determined, BCSS will work to establish a legal order for support in court. Both parents’ income and ability to pay, and access to health insurance for their child(ren), will be factors used to determine an appropriate child support amount.

Usually, when a court order is established, one parent will be required to pay child support in the amount and frequency stated in the order. BCSS sends collected child support payments to the Obligee within two (2) business days of receiving the payment.
Child Support Guidelines

BCSS calculates the amount of current child support according to the New Hampshire Child Support Guidelines, as set by NH law in keeping with current federal tax structures. The court will usually order the calculated amount, unless it finds that the amount would be unjust or inappropriate due to special circumstances. If you believe your financial circumstances supports an amount different from the recommended Guideline amount, be certain to bring supporting documentation to the court hearing.

Enforcing an Order

Most child support payments are paid through income assignment where a portion of the Obligor’s paycheck is withheld and sent to the BCSS State Disbursement Unit (SDU). The SDU processes and sends the money to the Obligee electronically by one of the following three options: 1) direct deposit into Obligee’s bank account (checking or savings account), or 2) direct deposit to a Debit Card account provided to the Obligee by a BCSS-contracted vendor, or 3) by check, if requested. When a case opens for enforcement, the BCSS-contracted vendor will provide the Obligee information regarding these options and include an enrollment form so that s/he can select a preferred option. Failure to return the enrollment form within thirty (30) days will default to payment disbursement by Debit Card.

When payments are 1) not paid; 2) not paid on time; or 3) not paid in full (according to the court order), BCSS may take enforcement action. It is important that you understand that BCSS or the court, not the Obligee, decides the type and level of enforcement action.

To enforce payment of arrearages, BCSS may:

File Liens Against an Obligor’s Personal & Real Property - Includes financial accounts, real estate holdings, etc.

Intercept an Obligor’s Tax Refunds – BCSS receives Tax return money directly for appropriate disbursement

Inform Credit Bureaus – Provide the amount of the arrearages to credit bureaus

Take a Portion of an Obligor’s Unemployment Compensation Benefits

Suspend a License – Notify a licensing board to suspend, deny, or take back an Obligor’s license, including:

• Driver’s
• Occupational/Professional (medical, plumbing, teaching, cosmetology, etc.)
• Sporting (hunting and fishing)
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- Inform Credit Bureaus – Provide the amount of the arrearages to credit bureaus
- Take a Portion of an Obligor’s Unemployment Compensation
- Suspend a License – Notify a licensing board to suspend, deny, or take back an Obligor’s license, including:
  • Driver’s
  • Occupational/Professional (medical, plumbing, teaching, cosmetology, etc.)
  • Sporting (hunting and fishing)
- Request Passport Denial – Notify the federal passport agency to deny issuing a passport
- Intercept Lottery Prizes – Take the portion of a lottery prize equal to the amount of the arrearage
- Schedule a Court Hearing – BCSS presents the arrearage history to the court for the judge to decide next steps that may include immediate payment or, in certain cases, incarceration

Modifying your order

Either parent may request BCSS to petition the Court review their child support order and determine if the order can be raised or lowered, based on the NH Guidelines. Upon written request, BCSS will request the Court review your order if:

- It has been three (3) years since your order was issued or a court order ruled on a modification request, or
- Medical support, including a reasonable cost of health care coverage, is not included or appropriately addressed in your current order, or

If you wish for BCSS to petition the Court to review your order, you must apply for child support services (see the “Applying for Child Support Services” section).

You must also submit a written request to BCSS as follows:

1) Submit a written request with your application or to your BCSS case worker (please include the other party’s and your name and BCSS case ID [if you have one] on your request)
2) Email BCSS at BCSS-CIU@dhhs.nh.gov and request a review (include your Case ID and the other party’s name in the email); or
3) Request a review through your case’s e-childsupport account (see “NH e-childsupport” section for more information)
Mandatory review for TANF & Medicaid cases

Federal regulations require BCSS review any order when financial assistance and some types of medical assistance are being provided for the child(ren) named in the order, if any of the following apply:

- It has been three (3) years since the court issued your order or an order ruled on a modification request
- Medical support was not included in your order and the child(ren) do not have health insurance other than Medicaid

When BCSS determines an order is eligible for mandatory review BCSS will 1) provide notice to the Obligee and Obligor and 2) require the Obligee and Obligor provide current financial and/or health insurance information, appear at, and participate in scheduled hearings.

Incarceration

BCSS will automatically initiate review of child support orders without the specific need for an Obligor’s request, upon learning that the Obligor is expected to be incarcerated for more than 180 days.

TANF and Medicaid

If you receive TANF cash assistance with Medicaid or Medicaid-Only, you must:

- **Assign your rights to child/spousal support and/or medical support.** – When you receive TANF with Medicaid, BCSS has the authority to collect and keep your support payments as reimbursement for assistance provided

- **Cooperate with BCSS** – To locate the other parent, establish paternity if not already established, and establish and enforce an order for child/medical support

The state and federal government may use support collected (up to the amount of assistance spent) to repay the cash and medical assistance given to you and your child.
If one parent lives in another state or country, the BCSS Interstate Child Support Agreement will end when a child joins the military or marries. BCSS will automatically initiate review of child support orders without the need for an Obligor's request, upon learning that the Obligor is expected to be incarcerated for more than 180 days. The Obligors generally pay child support until the youngest child turns 18 or graduates from high school, whichever occurs last. Child support will also be reviewed if the Obligor provides current financial and/or health insurance information, attorney or represent yourself.

• Medical support was not included in your order and the Obligor provides medical support for the child.
• It has been three (3) years since the court issued your order
• Property and assets such as cars (make, model, color, year, and year of purchase)
• Names and addresses of family, friends, and current or former roommates
• Bank and credit union accounts
• Previous addresses
• Social Security Number and date of birth

Cooperation with BCSS

You must tell your FS Specialist and your child support worker if you receive support directly from the Obligor and if there is any change in the amount you receive. You must cooperate in making your child support payments payable through BCSS.

When you stop receiving TANF cash assistance, BCSS will continue to send current support payments received by BCSS to you. It usually takes a few weeks for payments to start coming to you after your TANF case closes. However, even if you get current support payments directly, BCSS may also continue to try to collect any state and federal assistance given to you and your child.

If you have questions about how child support payments affect your eligibility for TANF or Medicaid, contact your FS Specialist.

BCSS’s ability to locate a parent, establish paternity and support, and enforce or modify an order depends on current verifiable information. Please promptly notify BCSS if your address or telephone changes.

BCSS must be able to contact you to complete necessary forms or to provide you information regarding payments or a child support order.

You can also help by being patient as your child support attorney or child support representative decides and takes suitable action on your case. Limiting your calls to BCSS to those that provide updates permits your worker valuable time. If you want payment information, please call the Voice Response System first at 800 371-2244, then call the Central Information Response Unit or email BCSS (see “Central Information Unit” section below). Accurate information about the Obligor’s address, phone number, occupation and income can all affect enforcement activity. Further, the Obligor’s employment status affects his or her ability to comply with a child support order.

Good Cause

If working with BCSS may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child, or your child was conceived by incest or rape, or your child was adopted, you can claim “good cause.” For more details, contact your TANF Family Services Specialist (FS Specialist) or your child support worker.
three methods to disburse payments

- Electronic Fund Transfer, also known as Direct Deposit, is one of EFT DHHS OR DEPARTMENT by a BCSS vendor as one of three methods to disburse payments

- DEBIT CARD – A NH Child Support Debit Card issued to Obligees

- The Obligee as stated in a legal order

- CURRENT SUPPORT LIEN support arrearages

- the amount of child and medical support to be paid

- CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

- MEDICAID – A court or administrative order

- MEDICAL SUPPORT ORDER upon the income and expenses of both parents

- A way for parents to share the responsibility

- OBLIGOR

- establishment of a child's father, legally

- father of a child

- state law defines as four (4) percent of a parent's gross income

- For the week the father is employed

- For 52 to 53 weeks, the father is unemployed

- The calculation includes:

- ALL CHILD SUPPORT ORDERED

- THE FATHER’S INCOME

- THE MOTHER’S INCOME

- ALL CHILD SUPPORT ORDERED

- THE MOTHER’S INCOME

- The calculation will be made at the time of your case opened

- is available in Spanish, includes:

- CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES

- Online Access

- Your Child Support Case Information is accessible online! Register to access your case at: https://e-childsupport.dhhs.nh.gov/customer

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- COLLECTING, DISTRIBUTING, AND MONITORING CHILD SUPPORT

- ESTABLISHING AND ENFORCING A FINANCIAL AND MEDICAL CHILD SUPPORT ORDER

- DETERMINING PATERNITY FOR A CHILD

- CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES ARE AVAILABLE:

- Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:15 PM at:

- 800 852-3345 x 4427 OR

- 603 271-4427

- Fax: 603 271-4787 or

- E-mail BCSS at: BCSS-CIU@dhhs.nh.gov

www.dhhs.nh.gov/bcss/

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- • Collecting, distributing, and monitoring child support

- • Establishing and enforcing a financial and medical child support order

- • Determining paternity for a child

Once registered you can:

- • View Payment Information

- • Provide updated information

- • View appointments

- • Email questions and requests to your case worker

Central Information Unit (CIU)

The Central Information Unit (CIU) is the central contact for BCSS. Customer service representatives work with you to answer specific case-related questions as well as general questions about the Child Support program. Customer Service representatives will also update your case as your address or employer changes.

CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES ARE AVAILABLE:

Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM to 4:15 PM at:

800 852-3345 x 4427 OR

603 271-4427

Fax: 603 271-4787 or

E-mail BCSS at: BCSS-CIU@dhhs.nh.gov

www.dhhs.nh.gov/bcss/
Voice Response System

Also available is a 24 hour, 7 day a week Voice Response System at 800 371-8844. When you call this number, you will be given current and past payment information for your child support case. The information, also available in Spanish, includes:

- Last month’s summary balance and arrearages owed
- Last five payments
- Last payment received
- Date of the last payment

Your Child Support Case Information is accessible online! Register to access your case at: https://e-childsupport.dhhs.nh.gov/customer

Once registered you can:

- View Payment Information
- Provide updated information
- View appointments

Applying for Child Support Services

If you would like to apply for child support services, you must complete an application. Even if your child support is ordered payable through BCSS by the court, you must still complete an application to BCSS. Applications are available from Central Information Unit at 603 271-4427, at the district office nearest you, or by contacting BCSS by email at BCSS-CIU@dhhs.nh.gov. The addresses and phone numbers of the district offices are listed on the back page.

If the child support is ordered payable directly to the Obligee, BCSS can only provide child support services under certain circumstances, such as when a one month arrearage exists. For further information, contact BCSS’ Central Information Unit.
CHILD SUPPORT DISTRICT OFFICES

BERLIN DISTRICT OFFICE
650 Main Street, Suite 200
Berlin, NH  03570
603 752-7800 or 800 972-6111
Fax: 603 752-3208

CLAREMONT DISTRICT OFFICE
17 Water Street, Suite 301
Claremont, NH  03743
603 542-9544 or 800 982-1001
Fax: 603 543-8918

CONCORD DISTRICT OFFICE
40 Terrill Park Drive
Concord, NH  03301
603 271-3604 or 800 322-9191
Fax: 603 271-6206

CONWAY DISTRICT OFFICE
71 Hobbs Street
Conway, NH  03818
603 447-3841 or 800 552-4628
Fax: 603 447-1988

INTERSTATE UNIT
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
129 Pleasant Street
Concord, NH  03301
603 271-4431 or 800 852-3345 Ext. 4431
Fax: 603 271-4771

KEENE DISTRICT OFFICE
111 Key Road
Keene, NH  03431
603 357-3510 or 800 624-9700
Fax: 603 355-1542

LACONIA DISTRICT OFFICE
65 Beacon Street West
Laconia, NH  03246
603 524-4485 or 800 322-2121
Fax: 603 528-1652

LITTLETON DISTRICT OFFICE
80 North Littleton Road
Littleton, NH  03561-3814
603 444-6786 or 800 552-8959
Fax: 603 444-0348

MANCHESTER DISTRICT OFFICE
1050 Perimeter Road, Suite 501
Manchester, NH  03103
603 668-2330 or 800 852-7493
Fax: 603 668-4218

ROCHESTER DISTRICT OFFICE
150 Wakefield Street, Suite 22
Rochester, NH  03867
603 332-9120 or 800 862-5300
Fax: 603 332-5204

SEACOAST DISTRICT OFFICE
19 Rye Street
Portsmouth, NH  03801
603 334-4323 or 800 821-0326
Fax: 603 559-8495

SOUTHERN DISTRICT OFFICE
26 Whipple Street
Nashua, NH  03060
603 883-7726 or 800 852-0632
Fax: 603 883-0528

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
BUREAU OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES
129 PLEASANT STREET
CONCORD NH 03301
603 271-4427 or 800 852-3345 Ext. 4427
FAX 603 271-4787

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