



Number of Counties:	58
Number of Local / Regional Child Support Offices:	47
Number of Cases:	982,753
Intergovernmental Cases:	147,045
Initiating cases:	94,761
Responding cases:	52,284

Data as of December 31, 2025

Structure of State IV-D Program

The Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) oversees the State of California's IV-D child support program. DCSS is a department under the California Health and Human Services Agency. The Health and Human Services Agency also oversees departments such as Social Services, Health Care Services, Public Health, Rehabilitation, and State Hospitals.

Child support services in California are provided directly to the public at the county level through a network of 47 local child support agencies (LCSAs). DCSS is responsible for statewide oversight of the child support program.

California Case Numbering Format

California case numbers have three possible formats:

- 15 characters: All numbers with no leading zeroes.
 - Example: 200000001234567 (California's most current format).
- 13-14 characters: Includes an integral leading zero and may include one alpha character.
 - Example: 0370620502435A
- 13 characters: Includes integral leading zero and a dash.
 - Example: 0750000001-01

Interstate Central Registry

The California Central Registry, also known as Intergovernmental Services (IGS), is comprised of three teams including the Central Registry, Interstate, and International Units. IGS handles responsibilities for the state such as:

- Intake of incoming interstate referrals and other jurisdiction correspondence via Electronic Document Exchange (EDE), postal mail, email, and fax.
- Analytical review of incoming UIFSA referrals to ensure completeness, requesting missing or corrected documents, opening or updating cases to a responding interstate perspective, and assigning the case to the appropriate LCSA for case management responsibilities.
- Liaise between jurisdictions to resolve complex interstate and international case escalations and complaints received from in-state and out-of-state child support professionals.
- Primary contact for Tribal IV-D programs within California.
- Process out-of-state and foreign locate service requests when CA does not have a case. (CaParentLocateService@dcss.ca.gov)
- Oversee the annual Interstate Case Reconciliation (ICR) project (NICR@dcss.ca.gov).
- Administer California's electronic UIFSA forms application (e-UIFSA).
- Assist with the processing of limited-service requests.
- Review incoming and outgoing Hague Convention application packets to ensure compliance.

California Central Registry Average Monthly Processing Numbers (2025)

1.	Incoming Transmittal #1 Referrals	411
2.	Transmittal #2 – Subsequent Actions	173
3.	Transmittal #3 – Request for Assistance/Discovery	152
4.	Other Jurisdiction Correspondence Mail	247
5.	International Referrals	11
6.	Incoming Email and Communication Center Messages	292
7.	Incoming Phone Calls Requesting Assistance	4

Data as of 12/31/25

Judicial and Administrative Processes

California is mainly a judicial state.

- Parentage and orders for child support are established by the California Superior Courts.
- Both judicial and administrative processes are utilized to enforce and to modify child support orders.

Paternity and Support Establishment Requirements

Paternity

The California [Parentage Opportunity Program](#) (POP) offers eligible parents the opportunity to establish a legal parent-child relationship free of charge by signing and filing a Voluntary Declaration of Parentage (VDOP). The Program is one of only two ways to legally establish parentage, and the POP program significantly decreases the time and money required to establish legal parentage compared to the lengthy and expensive court process. A filed VDOP has the same force and effect as a judgment for parentage issued by a court.

A VDOP may be rescinded within 60 days of signing, and it may be set aside up to two years after it was signed due to fraud, duress, or material mistake of fact. The setting aside of a VDOP must be done in court.

- Child support professionals in other states may request a certified copy of a VDOP by completing the [Authorized Agency Request for a Filed Voluntary Declaration of Parentage](#) form.
- The father's name listed on the birth certificate does constitute a conclusive presumption of paternity in certain situations, see [CA Family Code 7610–7614](#).
- California law mandates a 99% probability of parentage through genetic testing, as per [Family Code Section 7555](#).
- Birth and death certificates may be requested through the [California Department of Public Health - Vital Records](#).

Support Establishment

For a determination of paternity and for child support order establishment, states should submit a complete UIFSA packet to the California Central Registry. Please send the intergovernmental forms listed in the [OCSS Intergovernmental Forms Matrix](#) for paternity and order establishment. Other documents such as birth certificate(s), identification cards, pay stubs, tax returns, postal verification, childcare expenses, and photo(s) should also be included (if available).

California does not establish retroactive child support and orders will only be backdated to the beginning of the month in which the petition was received.

Modification or Review and Adjustment

Modification of a child support order is completed by a judicial process in California as the local child support agency will seek to adjust the order via a Notice of Motion, order to show cause, or stipulation. The exception to the judicial process is when the person ordered to pay support is incarcerated for a period that exceeds 90 consecutive days. See the "Incarcerated Parents" section for more specific details.

When requesting California to modify a child support order, please refer to the [OCSS Intergovernmental Forms Matrix](#) to determine the required forms to submit. Please also include a certified court order (if not a California order) and a certified pay record. Modification requests may be made retroactive to the beginning of the month in which the petition to modify was received.

Medical Support

Per [Family Code Section 3751\(a-c\)](#), in any case in which an amount is set for current support, the court must order that health insurance coverage, if available at no cost or at a reasonable cost, be maintained by either or both parents for a supported child. Health insurance includes vision, dental, and health care services. All court orders shall contain a provision that reasonable uninsured health care costs must be shared by the parents ([CA Family Code 4063](#)).

California must enforce cash medical support to the extent it is included in a court order as ongoing medical support or lump-sum reimbursement.

Duration of Support

California generally considers a child emancipated once the child reaches the age of 18. There are circumstances that allow for child support to continue after the age of 18 and details may be found in [CA Family Code 3901](#), [CA Family Code 3910](#), and [CA Family Code 3587](#).

Child support will terminate when a child that is under the age of 18 marries or registers a domestic partnership, joins the U.S. Military, becomes legally emancipated by obtaining a Declaration of Emancipation from court, or passes away ([22 CCR §118203](#)).

Case Closure and Non-IV-D Cases

Case Closure

California will continue to enforce an order and maintain records after all parties have left the state until the case can be closed pursuant to federal closure rules. Income withholding orders (IWOs) that are currently in place will remain unless termination is requested by another state agency where enforcement services are requested by the person receiving support.

Non-IV-D Cases

See the "Payment Processing" section (pg. 7) for details regarding non-IV-D cases.

Interest, Costs & Fees

Interest

California charges interest on child support arrears. Interest is only charged on the principal balance and accrues at a rate of 10% per month for orders issued in California.

If California is the responding state and the other state's order requires that interest be charged, California must give full faith and credit to the order and enforce the collection of the interest. The interest charges at the legal rate of the other state as specified in their order.

Intergovernmental Costs and Fees

California is not a cost recovery state. However, when California is the responding agency, California must collect a processing fee for an initiating agency if the fee is specified in the court order. If the fee is not specified in the court order, the initiating agency must recover the fee.

Enforcement

Administrative Enforcement

Enforcement actions automatically occur in California's Child Support Enforcement (CSE) database for initiating and responding cases. See the chart below for automated enforcement actions.

Automatic Enforcement Action	CA Initiating	CA Responding
Income Withholding Order		X
National Medical Support Notice		X
Real Property Lien		X

Credit Reporting		X
Unemployment / Disability Insurance Intercepts *		X
State Tax / Lottery Intercept	X	X
Administrative Offset	X	X
Passport Denial	X	X
License Suspension	X	X
Bank Levy		X
IRS Tax Offset	X	
Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM)		X
Multi-State FIDM	X	X
Unclaimed Property	X	

*Note: Unemployment Insurance Benefit Intercepts

- o California does not allow the direct withholding of Unemployment Insurance benefits by another state.
- o To intercept unemployment insurance benefits, the other state must send a complete UIFSA package for enforcement to the California Central Registry.

Contempt

California defers to county rules for considering contempt. Requests for contempt will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Grounds to Contest Registration

Details regarding contesting the registration and enforcement of a foreign order may be found in California Family Code sections [5700.605](#), [5700.606](#), [5700.607](#), and [5700.608](#).

Incarcerated Parents

A California child support order automatically stops if the PPS is incarcerated for more than 90 days in a row. The only exception is if the PPS has the funds to pay support. California's regulations regarding an incarcerated person ordered to pay support are found in [California Family Code Section 4007.5](#).

Parentage may be established even if the respondent is incarcerated or residing in a mental health facility. To establish parentage, please follow the standard UIFSA initiating process.

Payment Processing

IV-D Case – Payment Processing

Allocation rules are assigned to each payment source to ensure consistency in the application of collections to cases. The allocation rules determine how payments are applied to current support and arrears among all of the parent paying support's (PPS's) eligible cases. Once collections are allocated, the distribution within each case will follow the federal distribution hierarchy.

Non-IV-D – Payment Processing

Non-IV-D cases are handled by the California Superior Court System. If the payments made by the PPS are through an IWO, a shell case will be opened by the California SDU for payment processing services only. California DCSS may not be involved in the processing of payments on non-IV-D cases.

Over-Collections

Regulations regarding over-collections may be found in [California Code of Regulations Title 22 § 119905](#).

Futures Payments

Futures payments cannot be held from any collection, including IWOs, resulting from involuntary enforcement action unless authorized by the PPS regardless of case status. California must have written authorization from the PPS to hold any excess payment as a futures payment. Excess monies from IRS tax intercepts cannot be applied to futures and must be returned to the PPS.

Change of "Payee"

In California, a change of payee due to a change in physical custody but not legal custody does not suspend the support. The local child support agency is required to complete the review and adjustment process if the change in custody is reasonably expected to last more than 3 months. Enforcement activities on the current support order will continue where the PPS must continue to comply with the support order until the order is modified.

If the child on an order is now residing with a third party non-aided caretaker, child support payments may be redirected to the caretaker if the court-designated payee provides a written authorization to forward the payments to the caretaker. The authorization must be signed by the person ordered to receive support and notarized unless the parent verifies his/her identity and signs the agreement in the presence of an LCSA representative.

Process Improvements

Enforcement Ideology

DCSS is engaging more positively with PPSs with regards to child support policy perspectives to add more flexibility and less stringent enforcement rules. Examples of these changes include:

- [Debt Reduction Program](#)
- [Driver License Suspension](#) – As of January 2025, driver's licenses will not be suspended if an individual misses a child support payment and their annual income is at or less than 70 percent of the median income for the county where they live.

Change of Support Payment Location – 319(b)

California will process a change of payment location request where the payee listed on the order is changed from the California SDU to the state's SDU that is providing services to the person receiving support. There are requirements that must be met for the request to be valid and include:

- The obligee receives IV-D services from the requesting agency.
- A tribunal in California issued the child support order.
- Neither the obligee, obligor, nor the child(ren) reside in California.
- There are no California state owed arrears.

The 319(b) Change of Support Payment Location is an alternative to opening a two-state case or payment forwarding. To request this action, please submit a [Child Support Agency Request for Change of Support Payment Location Pursuant to UIFSA § 319](#) form and a [Confidential Information Form](#) to the California Central Registry.

Paperless Processes

California has adopted a web-based application that has improved customer service and satisfaction by allowing customers to request services and complete required forms online. Moving services online, such as the initial application for services, electronic versions of the UIFSA forms, Debt Reduction Program applications, and the intercounty transfer process has improved efficiency, reduced errors, and lowered costs.

Also, California's Child Support Enforcement (CSE) system interfaces with nearly all county court systems electronically to file cases that involve the establishment of paternity (apart from administrative or stipulated paternity) and child support orders,

medical support, modifications to existing orders, and enforcement actions such as liens and civil and criminal complaints.

Formerly Assisted Arrears Passthrough

Effective May 1, 2024, DCSS began passing through collections distributed to government-assigned arrears obligations to families who formerly received cash public assistance through the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program instead of recouping collections to reimburse federal, state and county funds for assistance paid on behalf of the person ordered to receive support. Payments are not retroactive and only affect collections received after May 1, 2024.

Usage of OCSE Portal Communication Tools

OCSS Child Support Portal

California utilizes the following applications on the OCSS Child Support Portal:

○ Communication Center	○ International Forms (iForms)
○ DoD Entitlement	○ Locate
○ eEmployer	○ QUICK
○ eTermination	• Financial
○ Electronic Document Exchange (EDE)	• Case Participants
○ FCR Query	• Case Activities
○ Federal Collection and Enforcement	• Contact Information
○ Insurance Match	• SSN or Case Search
○ International Reference Guide (IRG)	

Intergovernmental Support

IGS is the point of contact for California intergovernmental case escalations or when needing information regarding child support in the State of California.

To contact IGS, please use one of the following contact methods:

- California Central Registry
 - DCSSCCR@dcss.ca.gov - use when sending intergovernmental documents or forms to California via email.
 - Phone 1-888-851-6314
 - Fax 1-916-464-2410
 - Mailing Address:
California Central Registry

P.O. Box 419072
Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9072

- IGS General Inquiries
 - DCSSIIGS@dcss.ca.gov – use when sending requests for assistance (i.e., case issues, case management questions) regarding a specific California case or process. Please include the following:
 - California case number or participant information
 - Pertinent case details and a summary of the issue/question
- Tribal Inquiries
DCSSTribalCaseManager@dcss.ca.gov – maintains best practices, and contacts with other states, tribes, and local office case workers to provide guidance with Tribal IV-D cases.