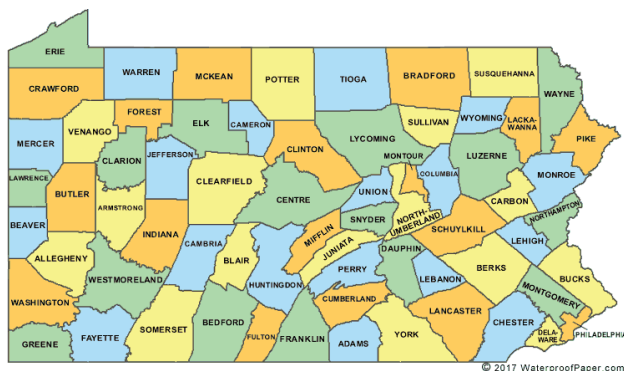


What Child Support Teammates in Other States Should Know About Pennsylvania

2025



Number of counties:	67 counties, 64 Domestic Relations Sections
Number of cases:	301644
Intergovernmental cases:	-37660
Initiating cases:	-22699
Responding cases:	-14961

Structure of State IV-D Program

- In Pennsylvania, the Title IV-D program is administered by the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement (BCSE), under the Department of Human Services (DHS). Title IV-D services are provided locally by cooperative agreement with 64 Courts of Common Pleas. The Court of Common Pleas has designated an office for each county, usually the Domestic Relations Section (DRS), which is responsible for managing and processing family support matters. The DRS is supervised by the Court of Common Pleas with the DRS Director reporting to the county President or Administrative Judge.
- The Intergovernmental Case Reconciliation (ICR) project is managed by the Bureau of Child Support Enforcement.
- The Bureau of Child Support Enforcement exercises audit oversight of Title IV-D funds.
- Pennsylvania's current computer system is PACSES (Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System).
- Individuals may apply for Title IV-D services by either submitting an online application on the Pennsylvania Child Support Website (<https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/csww/>) or a paper application at the local Domestic Relations Section.
- Domestic Relations Sections ensure that paternity and support orders are established. They are responsible for review and adjustment of child support orders, sending IWOs and NMSNs to employers, and initiating judicial enforcement proceedings, both civil and criminal. They are also the record keepers of payments and orders.

Interstate Central Registry

- The Pennsylvania Central Registry reviews all incoming UIFSA packets. If there is something missing or incorrect, the initiating state may be contacted by phone, email, EDE, or through the Communication Center. If the corrections are not made by the other state within a reasonable timeframe, or if deemed appropriate by Central Registry staff, the packet may be returned to the initiating state, or it may be forwarded to the county as-is. In the latter case, the county will be responsible for obtaining the correct documents.
- The Central Registry receives and processes all incoming Limited-Service requests, and forwards them to the appropriate county.

- The Central Registry maintains the Pennsylvania putative father registry. Other states may contact the Central Registry for certified copies of Acknowledgment of Paternity forms. Please see the “Intergovernmental problem-solving” section for contact information.

Judicial and Administrative Processes

- Please see below for specific information on judicial and administrative processes. For order establishment the judicial process is used. Paternity establishment can be either administrative (AOP) or judicial. Enforcement actions are judicial or administrative depending on the enforcement action.

Paternity & Support Establishment Requirements

- Under current Pennsylvania law, when a child is born to a married woman, the husband is the presumed legal father of the child. This presumption can be challenged in court, but only with clear and convincing evidence.
- Paternity can be established either by execution of a Voluntary Acknowledgement of Paternity or by judicial process.
- An action or proceeding to establish paternity of a child born out of marriage must be initiated before the child’s 18th birthday.
- Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an acknowledgment of paternity shall constitute conclusive evidence of paternity without further judicial ratification in any action to establish support. The court shall give full faith and credit to an acknowledgment of paternity signed in another state according to its procedures.
- Common law marriage was declared proactively invalid effective January 2, 2005, stating "no common-law marriage contracted after January 1, 2005, shall be valid."
- When requesting that Pennsylvania establish paternity, the following documents are necessary:
 - Transmittal #1
 - Child Support Agency Confidential Information Form
 - Personal Information Form for UIFSA 311
 - Uniform Support Petition
 - General Testimony
 - Declaration in Support of Establishing Parentage (one per child)
 - A birth certificate is helpful, but not required
- Child support in Pennsylvania is established using an Income Shares Model - A child of separated, divorced or never-married parents should receive the same proportion of parental income that they would have received if parents lived together.
- Child support is established through judicial process. The following documents are necessary when requesting establishment:
 - Transmittal #1
 - Child Support Agency Confidential Information Form
 - Personal Information Form for UIFSA 311
 - Uniform Support Petition
 - General Testimony
 - Information on paternity establishment

- The following financial information is required for both parties, as applicable: most recently filed individual federal tax return (including all schedules, W-2s and 1099s); partnership or business tax returns with all schedules (including K-1), if the party is self-employed or a principle in a partnership or business entity; pay stubs for the preceding six months; verification of child care expenses; child support, spousal support, alimony pendente lite, or alimony orders or agreements for other children or former spouses; proof of available medical coverage; Income Statement and, if necessary, Expense Statement on the forms provided by the Domestic Relations Section.
- Support will be retroactive only to the date of filing.

Modification or Adjustment and Review

- When requesting a modification of a Pennsylvania order, the following documents are required:
 - Transmittal #1
 - Child Support Agency Confidential Information Form
 - Personal Information Form for UIFSA 311
 - Uniform Support Petition
 - General Testimony
- When requesting a modification of a court order of another jurisdiction, the following documents are required:
 - Transmittal #1
 - Child Support Agency Confidential Information Form
 - Personal Information form for UIFSA 311
 - Uniform Support Petition
 - General Testimony
 - Letter of Transmittal Requesting Registration
 - Two copies of the order (one must be certified)
 - Certified payment records
- A petition for modification of an existing support order may be filed by either party. After filing, the petition may not be withdrawn unless both parties consent or with leave of court. At the time of the conference or hearing, the trier of fact may modify or terminate the existing support order in any appropriate manner based on the evidence provided without regard to which party filed the petition for modification. The effective date of the resulting modified order is the date the modification petition was filed.
- The court may administratively modify a charging order for support if it appears to the court that the support order is no longer able to be enforced under state law or the obligor is unable to pay, has no known income or assets, and there is no reasonable prospect that the obligor will be able to pay in the foreseeable future.
- The Domestic Relations Section must initiate administrative review and order modification proceedings upon determining that an obligor's incarceration will exceed 180 calendar days.
- Pennsylvania law provides that a petition for modification or termination of an existing support order must specifically claim the material and substantial change in circumstances upon which the petition is based. Examples of what constitutes a substantial change include:
 - Existence of additional income or income sources and assets.
 - Increases in childcare expenses.
 - Change or loss of medical coverage.
 - Change in custody.

- Emancipation of a child.
- Death of an obligee receiving spousal support or Alimony Pendente Lite.
- A new guideline amount resulting from revised guidelines.
- Three years have elapsed since the most recent child support order.

Medical Support

- For child support cases, if medical support is available at reasonable cost, the support order directs medical support be provided according to the following priority:
 - Obligor is ordered to provide medical support.
 - If both parents are obligors, one or both is/are ordered to provide medical support.
 - Obligee is ordered to provide medical support unless adequate medical support is already being provided by the obligor.
 - One or both parents is/are ordered to provide medical support in shared custody cases.
 - If neither party has medical support available at reasonable cost, the court may order the custodial parent to apply for government-sponsored coverage, such as CHIP.
- “Reasonable cost” is defined as the cost of health care coverage that does not exceed 5 percent of the party’s monthly net income, and if the obligor is to provide health care coverage, the cost of the premium when coupled with a cash child support obligation and other child support-related obligations does not exceed the amounts allowed by the federal threshold set forth in the Consumer Credit Protection Act (CCPA).
- Health insurance premiums are allocated as follows:
 - If the obligor pays the health insurance premium, deduct the obligee’s share from the obligor’s basic child support obligation.
 - If the obligee pays the health insurance premium, add the obligor’s share to the obligor’s basic child support obligation.
 - If the obligee pays the health insurance premium, add the obligor’s share to the obligor’s basic child support obligation.
- Unreimbursed medical expenses are allocated to each party in proportion to their incomes. The obligee is responsible for the first \$250 per calendar year.
- Documentation of unreimbursed medical expenses that either party seeks to have allocated between both parties shall be provided to the other party not later than March 31st of the year following the calendar year in which the final bill was received by the party seeking allocation.
- Pennsylvania will issue a National Medical Support Notice (NMSN) to the employer of either party ordered to provide medical insurance.
- Either or both parents may be required to pay a designated percentage of the birth-related expenses paid by the obligee or incurred by the Department of Human Services prior to the filing of the complaint for support or expenses reasonably obtained by the obligee that were not specifically set forth in the order of support.

Termination of support – Law and Process

- In the absence of other factors, child support will accrue until the child has turned 18 or graduated from high school, whichever occurs last.
- Orders do not automatically terminate. An emancipation inquiry and notice are sent out six months prior to the child’s 18th birthday, seeking the following information: confirmation of the child’s date of birth and date of graduation or withdrawal from high school; whether the

child has left the obligee's household, and if so, the date of departure; existence of any agreement between the parties requiring payments for the benefit of the child after the child has reached age 18 or graduated from high school; and any special needs of the child which may be a basis for continuing support for that child beyond the child's 18th birthday or graduation from high school, whichever occurs later.

- Support may be ordered for a child who has special needs which may be a basis for continuing support after the child's 18th birthday or graduation from high school.
- Pennsylvania no longer recognizes a statutory cause of action for post-secondary educational support.
- Termination of the charging order does not affect any arrears accrued through the date of termination.
- The Domestic Relations Section has the authority to require the obligor to pay on arrears in an amount equal to the amount of the charging order until all arrears are paid.
- The statute governing emancipation can be found in the Pennsylvania Rules of Civil Procedure (Pa.R.Civ.P) 1910.19(e)(1-4).

Case Closure and Non IV-D Cases

- The Pennsylvania Cooperative Agreement dictates all records must be retained for a minimum of four years.
- Physical records of both IV-D and non-IV-D cases are maintained by individual Domestic Relations Sections.
- Pennsylvania continues to enforce an order and maintain records after all parties leave the state until the case can be closed pursuant to federal closure rules.

Interest, Fees & Costs

- Pennsylvania will collect fees owed to the initiating state in those instances when the initiating state established the child support order and fees are incorporated as a part of the child support order.
- In Pennsylvania, the Department of Human Services (DHS) pays the annual federal user fee from its own funds for cases in which the annual child support collection is between \$550 and \$1,999.99. DHS collects the annual federal user fee from the obligee in cases where the annual child support collection is \$2000 or greater. The fee is automatically deducted from the obligee's next disbursement once the \$2000 child support collections threshold is reached.
- Pennsylvania does not charge interest on support orders but will collect on a registered support order.

Enforcement

Administrative Remedies

- Income Withholding
- Withholding of Unemployment Compensation
- Credit Bureau Reporting – Obligor with verified Social Security numbers, except for interstate initiating cases, who have overdue arrears equal to or greater than two months of the support obligation are eligible for credit bureau reporting.
- Federal and State Tax Offsets
- Passport Denial – Once this action is initiated, the obligor must pay the balance to \$0 for the passport to be released.

- Real Property Liens – An overdue support obligation in this or any other state which is on record at the Domestic Relations Section constitutes a lien of record by operation of law against the obligor's real property located within Pennsylvania.
- Lottery Intercept – Obligor's who have normal arrears of more than \$100 and claim winnings more than \$2,500 from the Pennsylvania Lottery Commission are eligible for lottery intercept.
- Collection of Overdue Support from Monetary Awards
- Publishing Delinquent Obligor's Names – At the discretion of the Domestic Relations Section.

Judicial Remedies

- Civil Contempt – Hearings may result in fines, probation, work search orders, or imprisonment.
- Bench Warrants
- Posting of Bond or Security
- Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) – Obligor's with overdue support in an amount equal to or greater than one month of the support obligation which accrued after entry or modification of a support order are eligible.
- Denial or Suspension of Driver's License – Obligor's are eligible if the support case has no active income withholding order and the total arrears balance is greater than or equal to three times the monthly support obligation; or, the obligor has failed, after appropriate notice, to comply with subpoenas or warrants relating to paternity or child support proceedings.
- Denial or Suspension of Occupational/Professional License – Obligor's are eligible if the support case has no active income withholding order and the total arrears balance is greater than or equal to three times the monthly support obligation; or, the obligor has failed, after appropriate notice, to comply with subpoenas or warrants relating to paternity or child support proceedings. The types of professional licenses that can be suspended include, but are not limited to: Architect, barber, engineer, funeral director, nurse, pharmacist, real estate salesperson, public adjuster, insurance administrator, motor vehicle physical damage appraisers, and other insurance-related professional licenses.
- Denial or Suspension of Recreational License – Obligor's are eligible if the support case has no active income withholding order and the total arrears balance is greater than or equal to three times the monthly support obligation; or, the obligor has failed, after appropriate notice, to comply with subpoenas or warrants relating to paternity or child support proceedings.
- Thrift Savings Plan Account Garnishment

Special Enforcement Notes

- Pennsylvania will accept AEI requests for the following enforcement actions: Seizure of Financial Institution Assets; Suspension of Driver's, Recreational, Occupational and Professional Licenses. The Pennsylvania Bureau of Child Support Enforcement has interfaces established with the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Insurance Department, and the Pennsylvania Department of State to obtain license information.
- All AEI requests for seizure of financial institution assets must include the following information- Child Support Agency Confidential Information form and, provide the following information: requestor's name and direct telephone number; and name, address, and account number for the financial institution where the asset is located; certified Copy of the

Order; and certified Affidavit of Arrears. All AEI requests for license suspensions must include the following information - Child Support Agency Confidential Information form and, provide the requestor's name and direct telephone number); certified Copy of the Order; certified Affidavit of Arrears; and most recent three-month payment history.

- Pennsylvania accepts requests for direct Unemployment Compensation Withholding from other states. Fax direct income withholding orders to: (717) 787-8040 ATTN: CSI or mail to: Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Labor and Industry Building ATTN: CSI 651 Boas Street, Room 501 Harrisburg, PA 17121.
- An income attachment direct from the issuing state will be accepted to intercept collections of Workers' Compensation (WC). There are three separate agencies that handle WC claims in Pennsylvania. 1) The State Workers' Insurance Fund (SWIF) is administered by the Department of Labor and Industry. Court orders for income attachment or seize orders for lump sum should be mailed to: State Workers' Insurance Fund, ATTN: Claims Supervisor, 100 Lackawanna Avenue, P.O. Box 5100, Scranton, PA 18505-5100. Phone (570) 963-4635. 2) The State Employee's Workers' Compensation Program is managed by the Office of Administration, Absence and Safety Division, and provides benefits to State employees with WC claims. Call (717) 346-4667 and the agency representative will determine the appropriate mailing address for your income attachment or seize order for lump sum. 3) The Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Security Fund is administered by the Insurance Department. The fund provides PA WC benefits to injured workers if the original insurance company has been placed into liquidation by a court. Court orders for income attachment or seize orders for lump sum should be mailed to: Pennsylvania Insurance Department, Bureau of Special Funds, Workers' Compensation Security Fund, 901 North 7th Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102. Phone (717) 783-8093.

Incarcerated Parents

- Paternity and support can be established while a noncustodial parent is incarcerated.
- It is common that a non-financial obligation (NFOB) will be established during the period of incarceration.
- Pennsylvania law allows the court to modify or terminate support orders and remit arrears without prejudice if the court-ordered support obligation can no longer be enforced or collected due to the noncustodial parent's (NCP's) inability to pay, and the NCP has no verifiable attachable income or assets and no reasonable prospect that the NCP will have the ability to pay in the foreseeable future.
- Incarceration, except incarceration for nonpayment of support, shall constitute a material and substantial change in circumstances that may warrant modification or termination of an order of support where the obligor lacks verifiable income or assets sufficient to enforce and collect amounts due.
- The Domestic Relations Section must initiate an administrative review and order modification proceedings upon determining that an obligor's incarceration will exceed 180 calendar days.
- Support is subject to review and modification upon the inmate's release.

Payment processing

- Both IV-D and non-IV-D payments are processed through the Pennsylvania State Collection and Disbursement Unit (PA SCDU).
- Payment will be split across all of the obligor's cases according to the following distribution hierarchy: (1) current support (2) medical, child care or other court-ordered support-related

expenses (3) monthly ordered amount toward child support arrears (4) current spousal support or alimony pendente lite (5) remaining child support arrears (6) monthly ordered amount toward spousal support or alimony pendente lite arrears (7) remaining spousal support or alimony pendente lite arrears (8) court costs and fees.

- After all current support and arrears are paid, up to two additional months of current support are paid to the obligee before money begins to accumulate on futures hold. An obligor may receive a support refund if such an action is deemed appropriate after review by the Domestic Relations Section.
- Ways to Pay: ExpertPay and TouchPay may be used for online payments and MoneyGram accepts child support payments at participating outlets nationwide. Payments may also be remitted directly to the Pennsylvania State Collection and Disbursement Unit.

Change of "Payee"

- Legal custody is not required. However, upon confirmation of a change in custody, Pennsylvania will either close the existing case or suspend the charging order and enforce the collection of arrears only. Upon receipt of a new petition for child support services from the current custodian, a new Title IV-D case with the custodian as payee will be opened and a new order established.

Recent changes of note

None

Computer System info and Status and Usage of Portal Communication Tools

- Pennsylvania's statewide system is PACSES (Pennsylvania Child Support Enforcement System).
- Pennsylvania uses EDE extensively. All 64 Domestic Relations Sections as well as the Central Registry monitor regularly. EDE is the preferred submission method for UIFSA filings and should be sent using FIPS code 42000. It is not necessary to mail documents if submitting through EDE.
- All 64 Domestic Relations Sections as well as the Central Registry have access to QUICK. Pennsylvania provides financial and case participant information via QUICK.
- Pennsylvania began using the Communication Center in March 2024 and it is used statewide.
- CSENet is used extensively in Pennsylvania.
- Pennsylvania's child support website is <https://www.humanservices.state.pa.us/cs/ws/>

Intergovernmental problem-solving

- For copies of court orders and payment records, contact the Domestic Relations Section in the county where the support order was issued. If the county is unknown, submit a Transmittal #3 to the Central Registry via EDE, Communication Center or email ra-crbce@pa.gov.
- For certified copies of Pennsylvania voluntary acknowledgements of paternity, contact the Pennsylvania child support helpline at 800-932-0211 or submit a Transmittal #3 to the Central Registry.
- Pennsylvania IV-D offices do not have access to birth certificates. To obtain copies, please contact the Division of Vital Records at 717-783-2548.
- For intergovernmental problems or questions, email the Central Registry at ra-crbce@pa.gov or call 800-932-0211.

