



Michigan Child Support Services and You!



Office of
Child Support

State of Michigan
Family Independence Agency

CHILD SUPPORT AND YOU

Don't you find it's hard to raise a child today? It takes more than love; it takes sneakers, coats, books, activity fees, dental care and more! Help around the house is not there. Help raising the children and emotional support might be missing. Even financial help may not be available.

Children need and deserve the help of both parents. When the noncustodial parent doesn't provide the support, the children and custodial parent suffer.

We want to help you get the support your family deserves. Working with the Friend of the Court and the Prosecuting Attorney's Office, we can help you establish paternity, obtain a support order, and enforce an order.

To do this, your cooperation is absolutely necessary. You must play your part to reach your goals and protect your child's rights.



THE BENEFITS

There are many benefits to establishing paternity and obtaining child support. When paternity is established:

1. The father's name may appear on the birth certificate.
2. Information about the family health history of both parents may be available for medical treatment, if needed.
3. You ensure your child qualifies for benefits from the father that could include:
 - SOCIAL SECURITY
 - INSURANCE BENEFITS (Both life and health)
 - INHERITANCE RIGHTS
 - VETERANS, AND OTHER TYPES OF BENEFITS
4. Both parents have a chance to experience the companionship and rewards that can come with a parent/child relationship. Each parent uniquely contributes to his or her child's development.

When support is ordered:

- Both the mother and the father can provide financial and emotional support for the child as he or she grows. Receiving child support from the noncustodial parent can make a big difference in the family's finances.
- A *participation payment* of up to \$50.00 per month in extra cash will be available for those with support collected but still needing some public assistance.

IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW AND DO

- **Eligibility for Services**

Any individual has a right to apply for IV-D Child Support Services simply by completing and signing an application form. Additionally, services are automatically provided to current and former recipients of FIP and Medical Assistance. IV-D Services are generally provided without cost to clients who live in Michigan. Other states may charge a fee when they provide a service to a client in Michigan.

- **Cooperation**

Usually, you will be contacted for an interview by the Office of Child Support after your assistance case opening. The Child Support Specialist will need to discuss which services can help you and your children.

Your cooperation is necessary. FIP, Food Stamp, and Medicaid clients are required by federal laws and regulations to cooperate in:

- Identifying and locating the noncustodial parent(s) of a child.
- Establishing paternity of a child born out-of-wedlock.
- Obtaining support for the child for whom assistance is granted.

In Michigan, Day Care services recipients must also cooperate in child support actions.

Your cooperation could include: appearing at child support agencies to provide information, participating in genetic testing, returning directly-received support to the State, and taking any other reasonable steps to obtain support.

- **Disqualification**

Federal and State laws and regulations specify that if you fail to cooperate with the Child Support Specialist, Prosecuting Attorney, or Friend of the Court without good cause, you are **not** eligible for assistance. This action may result in complete closure of your case, depending on the program involved.

- **Good Cause**

When the establishment of paternity or a child support order would not be in the best interest of the child, or if you or your child(ren) would be in danger, you can claim “good cause” for not cooperating. Your Eligibility Specialist or Family Independence Specialist will provide more details regarding this procedure.

- **Assignment of Support**

To be eligible, a FIP client must assign to the State rights to support for all members of the assistance group. This includes rights to present, past, and future support, but only up to the amount received in assistance.

This means that when your FIP case opens, all court ordered child support payments will be forwarded from the Friend of the Court to the State of Michigan. You assign your support rights to the State when you sign the assistance application, but this can mean even **more** money for your family. **READ ON!**

- **Child Support Participation Payments**

Once the child support collections are sent to the Family Independence Agency, you will be eligible for a child support participation payment of up to \$50.00 per month. The amount you receive will be based on the amount of current support paid on behalf of your family. This is \$50.00 a month for each FIP case, not for each noncustodial parent.

The payment is received in addition to the FIP grant and is not budgeted as income against the FIP grant. If no payments of current support are made on your account, there will be no payment.

WHO CAN HELP YOU?

- **Child Support Specialist (FIA)**

The Child Support Specialist can assist you by:

- Helping to locate an absent parent.
- Making a referral to establish paternity and/or obtain a support order.
- Referring an existing order for enforcement.
- Helping decide what action to take in an interstate case.
- Resolving collection problems.
- Assisting with voluntary paternity establishment.

After your public assistance case opens, you may be contacted by the Office of Child Support for an evaluation of what services your family needs.



- **Prosecuting Attorney's Office**

The office of the Prosecuting Attorney (PA) establishes paternity and obtains court orders for support. They can also help locate a non-custodial parent. You may be requested to appear at the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

- **Friend of the Court**

The Friend of the Court (FOC) enforces support orders, modifies orders, can register Michigan Orders in other states, initiates interstate income withholding, and can assist in locating noncustodial parents.



Provide as much information as you can about the **noncustodial** parent, such as:

- Name(s) and nicknames
- Social Security number
- Date and place of birth
- Last known home address
- Last known employer
- Photograph
- Relatives' names and addresses
- Military record
- Assets (home ownership, business, cars, boats, etc.)
- Favorite "hangouts", hobbies, memberships, etc.



FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

Child Support Specialist:

Name _____

Phone _____

Location _____

Times Available _____

Prosecuting Attorney's Office:

Name _____

Phone _____

Location _____

Times Available _____

Friend of the Court:

Name _____

Phone _____

Location _____

Times Available _____

QUANTITY: 50,000
COST: \$5,117.45 (.1020 each)
AUTHORITY: MFIA Director

The Family Independence Agency will not discriminate against any individual or group because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, color, marital status, political beliefs or disability. If you need help with reading, writing, hearing, etc., under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are invited to make your needs known to an FIA office in your county.