

Child Support News

Helping
Support
Our
Community



VOLUME I ■ OCTOBER, 2001

Automated Phone System

To better serve the needs of our customers, new features have been added to the Tarrant County Child Support Interactive Voice Response System (IVR). Most importantly, more options have been added to allow you to speak directly to a Customer Service Representative. Also, we have included a *News* option, which is designed to provide you with up-to-date information regarding changes that could affect the processing of your child support payments.

To access the IVR, dial (817) 884-1475. You will be asked to press **1 for English** or **2 for Spanish**. From this point forward, the options are the same, whether in Spanish or English. The subsequent "tree" of options will help you successfully navigate through the IVR.

MAIN MENU

Press 1 - Specific and General Information

This option requires your Tarrant County Child Support account number and your social security number. After your account and SSN have been validated, you can choose from the following:

- 1- General information on your child support account.
- 2- Information on Income Withholding Orders.
- 3- Address Information.
- 4- Direct Deposit Information.
- 5- Fee Payments, lost or stolen checks, NSF checks and mailing labels.
- 6- The date and the amount of your last two payments.
- 8- Repeat the above options.
- # - Voice Mail



MAIN MENU

- Press 2 - General information only
- Press 3 - News
- Press 0 - Customer Service Queue

Please use the automated telephone system to retrieve account and general information whenever possible. This will allow our customer service representatives to focus on providing information that cannot be accessed through the IVR.

The system is generally online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you receive a busy signal when accessing the system, please try again at a later time. Optimal calling times are those outside our regular business hours: after five p.m. and on the weekends.

It is our desire to provide you with excellent customer service. Please help us by using the IVR during non-business hours for your inquiries whenever possible.

AVAILABLE NOW AT

www.tarrantcounty.com

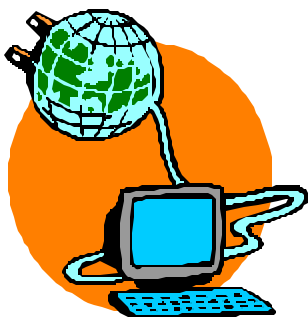
Departments & Services

Domestic Relations

■ Child Support Forms

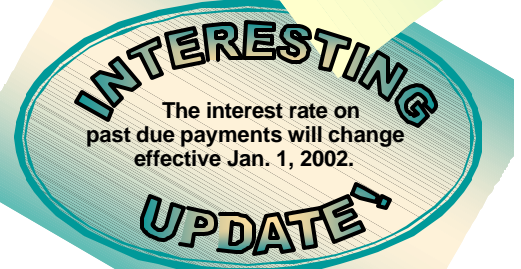
- ✓ Address Change Form
- ✓ Child Support Payment Instructions
- ✓ Income Withholding Order
- ✓ Request for Reissuance of IWO
- ✓ Obligor Debit Form & Letter
- ✓ Obligee Direct Deposit Letter & Form
- ✓ Record of Support & ROS Information

fill out forms & mail or fax in or email us at Childsupport@tarrantcounty.com



COMING SOON!

Secure Internet Access to your Child Support Payment information



Effective January 1, 2002, the rate of interest on child support arrearages, required in Section 157.265 of the Texas Family Code, decreases from twelve percent (12%) to six percent (6%). The following is a brief explanation of the effects this change will have on the calculation of interest in child support cases.

Child support arrearages occur whenever the total amount paid by the obligor since the date on which payments were ordered to start is less than the total amount of child support that has come due since the date on which payments were ordered to start.

Interest does not begin to accrue until after arrearages total an amount that exceeds the current monthly support obligation and becomes delinquent by remaining unpaid for thirty days. At that point, the portion of this *delinquent child support* that exceeds the current monthly support obligation accrues interest from the date the support is delinquent until the date the support is paid.

Child support arrearages plus accrued interest, if any, that have not been confirmed and reduced to money judgment by the court are referred to as unconfirmed arrearages.

All unconfirmed arrearages that accrue interest prior to January 1, 2002, do so at the rate of 12%. All unconfirmed arrearages that accrue interest on or after January 1, 2002, do so at the rate of 6%.

All arrearages confirmed and reduced to money judgment prior to January 1, 2002, accrue interest at the rate of 12% until the date the judgment is paid or until a subsequent cumulative order on or after January 1, 2002, confirms and reduces the arrearages to money judgment.

All arrearages confirmed and reduced to money judgment on or after January 1, 2002, accrue interest at the rate of 6% from the date the order is rendered until the date the judgment is paid.



On Payment Coupons on page 2 under **QUESTIONS? ANSWERS!**

State Disbursement Unit

What is the Texas State Disbursement Unit?

With the implementation of the federal welfare reform legislation in 1996, all states are now required to redirect child support payments to a centralized location within their respected state. The State Disbursement Unit (SDU) has been set up in San Antonio, TX to collect and disburse child support payments for the state of Texas.

How do I know if my child support has been redirected to the SDU?

The SDU must collect and disburse child support payments on all Title IV-D cases (Attorney General), and all post January 1, 1994 non IV-D orders with active income withholding. When your case has been redirected, you will receive notification from the Attorney General's office informing you of this change.

How can I get a copy of my child support records once my payments have been redirected?

The Tarrant County Child Support Office will continue to maintain your child support records.

Who do I contact to make changes to my child support account?

All requests for changes and updates to your account should be made to the Tarrant County Child Support Office.

Closing a child support account may be easier than you think

Most Texas orders provide that an obligation to pay child support ends when the only child or the youngest child turns 18 years of age, unless the child is still enrolled in high school. If the child is still enrolled in high school, the obligation to pay child support continues until the child graduates.

The following requirements must be met to close a child support account:

- ✘ There must be no legal action or litigation of any kind currently pending in the case.
- ✘ The child must be eighteen (18) years old.
- ✘ There must be a current address on file for the obligee
- ✘ Child support must be current with no arrearage.
- ✘ Domestic Relations Office fees must be current.
- ✘ Documentation must be provided. The necessary documents are:
 - a) Copy of last Court Order and
 - b) Copy of high school diploma, or
 - c) Certified or notarized letter from school, or
 - d) Certified or notarized high school transcript, or
 - e) GED certificate

If the child support has paid through income withholding, the Child Support Registry will notify the employer to discontinue deductions.

Questions? Answers!

Why am I being asked to use Payment Coupons? I always make my Child Support Payments in a timely manner.

We are providing coupons in order to facilitate the processing of your Child Support payment through our office.

The coupons do not reflect upon the quality of your payment history in any way. They are a tool that will be used to help us in our goal of providing increasingly fast, accurate and reliable payment processing for our customers.

How Can I Get A PrintOut of my Payment History?

A payment history printout may be requested in person or in writing. Your annual fees must be current to receive a printout of your account. Information on the last two payments processed is available on the IVR.

What is the Cost and What are the Fees for?

Both the payor and the payee are responsible for the \$24.00 annual Domestic Relations Office fee. The fee is due and payable when the account is set up and subsequent billings are sent every October. Your annual fee must be paid in full for you to receive a payment history printout.

The \$15.00 Income Withholding Order fee must be paid for the order to be sent by certified mail. Without the \$15.00 fee, the order will be sent by regular mail.

No fees are due on IV-D accounts.

What if I have not received a Payment?

If you have not received your payment within 15 business days of posting, you can initiate a request for replacement by completing an *Affidavit of Lost/Stolen Payments*. Once the 15 days has elapsed, we will process your request. To obtain an affidavit, contact the Child Support Office.

What if the Obligor changes Jobs?

You may request an income withholding order be issued to the new employer by completing the *Reissuance of Income Withholding Order* form. Mail your request to the Tarrant County Child Support Office along with your \$15.00 Income Withholding fee. If you supply a certified copy of the Income Withholding Order along with your fee, the order will be issued within two to three business days of receipt. If you do not have a certified copy, one will be requested from the District Clerk. This process may take up to two weeks.

What if my Child Support Check is Returned by my Bank due to NSF?

Child Support checks that are returned to you due to insufficient funds must be returned to this office if you want to have the credit removed from your account. The original check must be provided and the bank must clearly indicate on the check the reason for non-payment. This office will return the check to the payor for replacement, but we cannot guarantee replacement.

Monitoring Program

The Tarrant County Child Support Office now has a new Child Support Monitoring Program. This program is designed to monitor and enforce child support payments on all divorces finalized on or after October 16, 2000. We are a IV-D office, and, if you are in the program, you will receive correspondence from the Attorney General. Although this may be somewhat confusing, the correspondence you receive is a direct result of your participation in the monitoring program. You DO NOT have a case with the Attorney General. Because we use the Attorney General's computer system, some of your correspondence is generated on Attorney General letterhead.

The monitoring program will enforce your child support order utilizing all means allowable by law. We issue income withholding orders, we send collection

letters and we attempt collections calls. We can also assess additional payments if your case is in arrears, intercept IRS refunds, report delinquent cases to the credit bureau and garnish unemployment benefits, all in an effort to collect current and delinquent child support.

If these efforts fail, we will refer your case to the Tarrant County Domestic Relation's legal department to file contempt charges. There are no fees involved with any of these services.

This is an optional program. However, your child support account will automatically be referred to the monitoring program if it meets the required criteria. If the *obligee* chooses not to participate in the program, s/he must sign an Opt Out form, which can be obtained from the Child Support Office. The obligor **CAN NOT** opt out of the program.

If at any time you need to speak with a caseworker, you may call (817) 884-1475 or visit us at the 3rd floor of the Civil Courts Building, 100 N. Houston, Fort Worth, TX 76196.

