



Division of Child Support Services

The services of the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) are available to Georgia parents who need assistance. Any parent may apply at the OCSS office that serves his/her county or online using *Customer Online Services* at www.ocse.dhr.georgia.gov. There is an application fee of \$25, but it is free for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

DCSS's budget for state fiscal year 2009 is \$89.6 million, including \$66.9 million in federal funds and \$22.7 million in state funds.

Child support services include:

- Locating non-custodial parents;
- Establishing paternity;
- Establishing and enforcing child support orders;
- Establishing and enforcing medical support orders;
- Collecting and distributing support payments.

Recent customer service enhancements and recognitions:

- The Warner Robins office received the 2009 Team Excellence in Customer Service Award by the Governor's Office of Customer Service. The award is presented by the Governor annually to the team that sets the most exceptional example of customer service in the State of Georgia.
- The DCSS Fatherhood/Paternity Program was named the 2008 Customer Service Team of the Year by the Governor's Office of Customer Service.
- DCSS won the Outstanding Process Improvement Award in 2007 from the Governor's Office of Customer Service for its Rapid Process Improvement initiative. The award is given to the program that has designed and implemented a planned process improvement initiative that has resulted in a significant positive impact on their customers. DCSS reduced its establishment process from 71 days to same day service.
- Custodial and non-custodial parents may now check payment information, enter and receive information about their case, apply for services or make a payment online by using the *Customer Online Services* at www.ocse.dhr.georgia.gov. Users receive a password to protect confidentiality.
- Same Day Service processes the application for services in one day for any customer who provides all necessary documentation at the time of application.
- All Georgia child support recipients now receive payments through direct deposit or debit cards. This has eliminated the problems of checks lost, stolen, or returned because the recipient moved with no forwarding address, and it has shortened the time between collection and distribution.
- Non-custodial parents who cannot pay through paycheck deductions may request that payments be transferred automatically from their bank account.

Collection and Services tools available to DCSS:

- Withholding child support from paychecks or unemployment benefits;
- Intercepting federal and/or state income tax refunds to pay child support arrears;
- Garnishing workers' compensation benefits;
- Reporting parents delinquent in child support payments to credit bureaus;

fact sheet

- Suspending or revoking driver's, professional, occupational, hunting or fishing licenses for failure to pay child support;
- Reviewing and modifying child support orders periodically;
- Intercepting lottery winnings of more than \$2,500;
- Filing contempt of court actions which may result in a jail sentence if the non-custodial parent is found in contempt;
- Filing liens and levy on tangible or intangible property;
- Denying passports if more than \$2,500 in child support is owed;
- Seizing bank accounts after notice.

Child Support Distributed to Families:

- Georgia distributed \$588.9 million to child support recipients in federal FY 2009.
- Since 2005, Georgia has distributed over \$2.3 billion in child support payments.
- Georgia ranked 31st in the nation in federal FY 2008 in the percentage of parents current on their child support payments. Georgia was ranked 47th in federal FY 2006.

Caseload:

- DCSS has 386,000 cases in Georgia.
- The cases represent 495,000 children.
- Georgia child support agents have an average caseload of 705 cases each.

Parents under court order to pay child support through DCSS:

- 329,600 in Georgia;
- 58.17 percent of non-custodial parents are consistently current on their child support payments;
- 91 percent of non-custodial parents owing child support in Georgia are fathers and 9 percent are mothers.

Fatherhood Program:

The Fatherhood Program helps non-custodial parents paying child support through DCSS who lack the ability to adequately do so because they are unemployed or underemployed. The program offers job counseling and placement assistance, the opportunity to earn a GED and classes on parenting, job interviewing and financial management.

Child Access and Visitation Program:

The Child Access and Visitation Program helps non-custodial parents who want visitation with their children. Research has shown that payment of child support is related to parent-child contact and that the father's involvement improves children's development and self-esteem. The non-custodial parent must have an active case with DCSS to be eligible for the program.

DCSS does not:

- Help anyone get a divorce;
- Find custodial parents;
- Take legal action about visitation rights or custody;
- Enforce court-ordered payment of unpaid bills not related to child support payments.