

CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT IS BOTH A STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORY SYSTEM. THE GUIDELINES FOR AMOUNTS AND PROCEDURES FOR SETTING A CHILD SUPPORT ORDER ARE HANDLED BY THE STATE.

Child support cases are either be handled in Cook County's Domestic Relations Court (typical if it is part of a divorce and/or domestic violence case) or in the Administrative Process of the Illinois Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS).

DHFS can order paternity testing; assist in finding absent parents; enter an order for child support; help with getting medical insurance for the child; and enforce a child support order.

DHFS cannot handle living arrangements, school expenses, holiday schedules or any domestic or family disputes.

HFS can do several things to help collect unpaid child support, such as intercept tax returns, ask for suspension of professional or drivers' licenses or passports, place liens and file lawsuits. HFS uses private collection agencies for out of state cases of unpaid child support



ORDERS IN TANF/MEDICAID CASES ARE AUTOMATICALLY REVIEWED BY HFS EVERY 36 MONTHS TO SEE IF MODIFICATION IS NECESSARY, BUT EITHER PARENT EXPERIENCING A MAJOR CHANGE IN LIFE OR INCOME—UNEMPLOYMENT OR OTHER INCREASE OR DECREASE IN INCOME; A PARENT'S INCARCERATION OR NEW DISABILITY; CHANGE IN HEALTH INSURANCE; CHANGE IN WHERE THE CHILDREN LIVE MOST OF THE TIME; INCREASE IN THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD; CHILD TURNED 18 AND IS NO LONGER IN HIGH SCHOOL; OR CHILD NO LONGER LIVES WITH THE PARENT—CAN REQUEST A MODIFICATION.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHILD SUPPORT PROCESS IN ILLINOIS

THE HFS ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS PROVIDES A LIMITED RANGE OF SERVICES TO ALL PARENTS, FREE OF CHARGE, SUCH AS ESTABLISHMENT OF PATERNITY; PARENTAL LOCATIONS; CHILD SUPPORT ORDERS AND ENFORCEMENT; AND ENSURING A CHILD IS ON MEDICAL INSURANCE.

***DHFS will not retain cases** where family violence is indicated; where any order for child support for ANY child of this parent exists; where income is complicated or deviation from standard child support amounts is likely; or where one parent lives out of state. DHFS administrative orders may be appealed. DHFS will recalculate orders if a parent demonstrates an appropriate change in circumstance; DHFS orders will be superseded by court orders.*

***Cases go to the court system** if income is complicated; deviation from standard child support is expected; a court order for child support already exists; family violence is indicated; or the other parent lives out of state. Either parent can tell HFS that they want to move to the judicial system and stop the administrative process, particularly if they need a divorce or need assistance with family disputes (called "parenting time and responsibilities" by the court).*

PARENTS RECEIVING TANF OR MEDICAID ARE AUTOMATICALLY ENROLLED IN ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, BUT MAY REQUEST TO BE TRANSFERRED TO THE COURT OR THEY MAY BE SENT TO THE COURT IF ADDITIONAL LEGAL MATTERS ARE PRESENT.

Part of the child support paid to will "reimburse" the State of Illinois for TANF assistance, regardless of whether a child support order is entered in the administrative system or by a judge. Parents not receiving TANF are allowed to apply for DHFS services but will not necessarily receive them. HFS child support services are free regardless of income.