



# Office of Child Support Services

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

OCSS's budget for state fiscal year 2009 is \$91.6 million, including \$66.7 million in federal funds and \$24.9 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 OCSS Fatherhood/Paternity Program was named the 2008 Customer Service Team of the Year 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.
- OCSS 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. OCSS reduced its establishment process from 71 days to same day service.
- Custodial and non-custodial parents may now enter and receive information about their case and apply for services through an expanded Internet portal at [www.ocss.dhr.georgia.gov](http://www.ocss.dhr.georgia.gov), using a password to protect confidentiality.
- 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 OCSS:**

- 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 owing more than \$1,000 in child support payments to credit bureaus;
- Suspending or revoking driver's, professional or occupational 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;

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- Filing liens and levy on tangible or intangible property;
- Suspending passports for failure to pay \$2,500 or more;
- Seizing bank accounts after notice.

**Collections:**

- Georgia distributed \$584.8 million to child support recipients in federal FY 2008.
- Since 2003, Georgia has distributed over \$2.6 billion in child support payments.

**Caseload:**

- OCSS has 398,900 cases in Georgia.
- The cases represent 407,200 children.
- Seventeen percent of all children under 18 in Georgia have a case with OCSS.
- Georgia child support agents have an average caseload of 718 cases each.

**Parents under court order to pay child support through OCSS:**

- 333,200 in Georgia;
- 58 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 OCSS who lack the ability to adequately do so because they are unemployed or underemployed. The program offers job counseling and placement assistance, vocational training, educational assistance 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 OCSS to be eligible for the program.

**OCSS 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.