



# fact sheet

## Office of Child Support Services

Office of Child Support Services (OCSS) services 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 2008 is \$77 million, including \$61.1 million in federal funds and \$15.9 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:

- 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.
- Custodial and non-custodial parents without internet access may request notification of events in their case through short messaging services (text messaging or automated phone messages).
- 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;
- 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 \$651 million to child support recipients in FY 2007.

- Of the \$651 million distributed in FY 2007, \$8.5 million was collected from intercepted state tax refunds, \$47.8 million from federal tax refunds, \$9.4 million from unemployment compensation benefits, \$121,865 from lottery winnings and \$40.9 million in payments by the Family Support Registry for parents whose case was not established by OCSS.
- Since 2003, Georgia has distributed over \$3 billion in child support payments.

**Caseload:**

- OCSS has 447,570 cases in Georgia.
- The cases represent 486,300 children.
- Twenty-five percent of all children under 18 in Georgia have a case with OCSS.
- Georgia child support agents have an average caseload of 745 cases each.

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

- 50,866 in Georgia;
- 57 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.