

# Welcome to the Dad Allies Learning Series

We  
know  
that:

Child and family well-being improve when fathers are positively engaged in their children's lives.

Fathers play a unique and important role in children's development.

Fathers should have support and resources to become the fathers they aspire to be.



Thomas V.  
Giddens Jr.  
Foundation

Washington  
Fatherhood  
Council



# Child Support 101

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Division of Child Support (DCS)

# Introduction to IV-D child support

- **Federal, state, and tribal child support agencies work together to:**
  - Establish paternity for children
  - Establish and modify child support orders
  - Obtain child support payments
  - Provide access to health care coverage
  - Provide access to child care assistance
- **Funding**
  - 34% State
  - 66% Federal

# Washington DCS Basics

- 9 field offices statewide
- 1000+ employees
- 318,000+ open Cases
- Support Officers – 700+ cases each
- SFY 2021
  - Collected \$765 million
  - Public Assistance Cost Avoidance \$171.1 million
  - Distribute \$4.23 for every \$1.00 spent



# How does DCS get involved?

- **TANF Application**
- **Application from either parent**
- **Application from physical custodian**
- **Court Clerk**
  - **WA State Support Registry [WSSR]**
- **Foster Care**
- **State, Country or Tribe**



# Multiple Cases for one Child

1. Parent and Child in Washington on TANF
2. Paternity Debt Case
3. Child in Foster Care
4. Child and Grandparent in WA on TANF
5. Parent and Child in Oregon on TANF
6. Other Parent and Child in Washington

# How is parentage established?

- **Marriage = presumption**
- **Court Order**
- **Acknowledgement of Parentage**
  - **Voluntary Paternity Testing Program**



# Challenges

- **Default orders**
- **Acknowledgements don't address custody or visitation**
- **DCS will not dis-establish parentage**



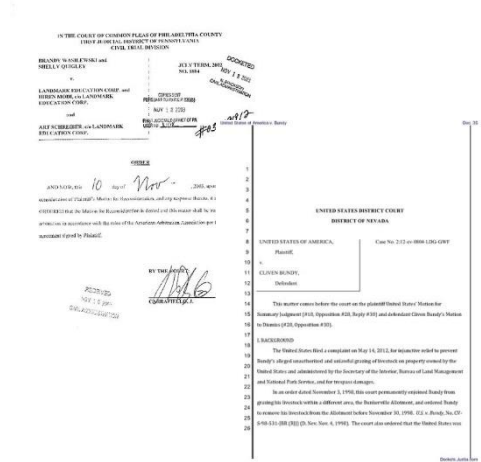


# How are orders established?

- **Court Orders –**
  - Paternity
  - Divorce Decree
  - Parenting Plan
  - Non-parental custody
  - Contempt/Judgments/Other

- **Administrative Orders**

- **Similar Process in other States, Countries & Tribes**



# How is child support calculated?

## Washington State Child Support Schedule

- **Best available income information**
- **Income can be imputed**
- **Both parents income used**
- **Less mandatory deductions**
- **Split Child Support Proportionally**
- **Deviations**
  - For other biological children and income limits
  - DCS can't always address 50/50 custody splits



# Collection Actions

- **Order to Withhold Income**
  - Federal requirement
  - Withhold from wages, unemployment benefits, workers compensation, or Social Security benefits
  - Limited to 50% of net
  - Automatically generated
  - Minimum of current support + payment on debt.
- **Communication is key.....**



# More Collection Actions

- **License Suspension**

- Drivers, hunting & fishing, professional
  - 6+ months of debt
  - No payments in last 60 days
  - Warning, Notice and Call required
  - Sign agreement for release
- Can be suspended again without further notice

- **Our goal is payment, Not punishment**



# More Collection Actions

- Bank accounts – 100% up to amount owed
- IRS Interception
- Passport Denial
- Liens – property and vehicles
- Credit Bureau Reporting
- Lottery winnings
- Unclaimed Property
- Contempt/Criminal Non-Support



# Inaccurate Orders

## Court and Administrative Orders–

- Change is not automatic
- *Both MUST be Modified*



Modification request from either party

– or –

DCS if children are on TANF or in Foster Care

*Our Goal is Accurate Orders*

# Court Order Modification

Only a judge can change

## Three Options

- 1) Hire an attorney
- 2) Pro Se (represent yourself)
  - Courthouse Facilitator [www.courts.wa.gov](http://www.courts.wa.gov)
- 3) Submit Request to DCS – Criteria



# DCS Review Criteria

## Must meet the following:

- Order 2.5 years old or substantial change in circumstance
- Change must = 15% and \$100 per month
- \$2400 over the life of the order
- DCS must have a good address for both parties



# Administrative Mod

## Administrative Orders

- **Can only be modified by DCS**
- **Can be superseded by a court order**
- **Turn in paperwork**
- **2-4 months**



# Abatement of Child Support for Incarcerated Parents

## Criteria: Effective 2/1/2021

- Sentenced to 6 months or more
- Dropped to \$10 per month
- Reinstated 4<sup>th</sup> month after release at 50% / \$50 min
- Original amount at 1 year

## Is the Language in the Order

- Yes – Notify the parties
- No – Modify the order

# Hardship - Refund

**Non custodial parents may request a refund due to hardship:**

- **Monthly expenses exceed monthly income**
- **Documented emergent need**



***Must show hardship***

# Reducing The Debt

- **Conference Board Hardship Write Off**
  - State debt only
- **Custodian May Write off the Debt**
- **Late Hearing on Admin Orders**
- **Court Order**

# What about domestic violence?

- **DCS must be made aware**
  - No court order or police report required
- **Either party can report concerns**
- **Case will be flagged**
- **DCS will deny a request for an address**

# Additional Protections

- **Address Confidentiality Program**
  - Office of the Secretary of State
  - Referral from an Advocacy Program
- **Good Cause Claim**
  - Made through the CSO



# DCS Supporting Parents

## Alternative Solutions –

- SEO's provide Info – Client self refers
- Dedicated SEOs connect clients with local resources
  - Housing
  - Food
  - Employment
  - Counseling
- 1-800-604-1146



# Key Concepts

- **Our Goal is Payment NOT Punishment**
- **DCS acts on the best information available**
- **Make ALL payments through our agency**
  
- ***Communication, Communication, Communication***



# Resources

## Division of Child Support

- [www.childsupportonline.wa.gov](http://www.childsupportonline.wa.gov)

## Washington Courts

- [www.courts.wa.gov](http://www.courts.wa.gov)

## Information

- [www.washingtonlawhelp.org](http://www.washingtonlawhelp.org)



# Contact Information

## The Community Relations Unit

- 1-800-457-6202
- [DCS-CRU@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:DCS-CRU@dshs.wa.gov)
- CRU Fax: 360-586-3274
- Generic Fax: 1-866-668-9518



# Thank you

# Any Questions?

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