

FILING A CHILD SUPPORT GRIEVANCE

Oregon Law (ORS 25.243) allows anyone whose child support case is being handled by a state or county agency to file a grievance concerning any child support service provided. It is important to know which agency is handling your case so that you will know who to contact if you are having a problem. The agency involved in your case may be the Division of Child Support (DCS) of the Department of Justice or the county District Attorney (DA). The Child Support Accounting Unit (CSAU) of DCS handles all of the accounting for all child support cases. If you don't know which DCS or DA office is handling your case, you can get that information by calling 1 (800) 850-0228.

WHY SHOULD I FILE A GRIEVANCE?

When you have been mistreated or someone gives you the "run around" or you think there is a problem with your child support case and no one is able to help you, or if it seems to be taking too long to get the help you need, then filing a grievance is a way to protest that treatment and demand action from Oregon's child support agencies. It lets your child support worker know that you know how to stand up for your rights and that you demand respectful treatment and good service. Since Oregon has a lot of different agencies working on child support cases, filing a grievance will let the state agency responsible for overseeing the whole child support program know that there is a problem. The grievance you file is sent to the office in charge of overseeing the statewide child support program. This helps to spot the problems in the child support system. By filing a grievance, you are not just helping yourself, you are making the system better for everyone.

HOW DO I FILE A GRIEVANCE?

If you have complaints about the way DCS, the DA, or CSAU is handling your case, and the worker cannot help you, you may go up the chain of command. Begin by calling the DCS or DA worker's supervisor, then the branch manager or county DA.

To file a formal grievance, you may contact the local DCS or DA's office to get a grievance form or call 1 (800) 850-0228 or Constituent Services at (503) 947-4388. Your grievance form should be completed and mailed to Constituent Liaison, Child Support Program, 1162 Court Street NE, Salem, OR 97301.

The grievance will be reviewed to determine if it is appropriate and then sent to the agency that you are complaining about to try to resolve the grievance. That office must investigate the grievance and take some action to resolve it. The agency will then send a report back to the statewide grievance coordinator and include it in a quarterly report. Your grievance must be resolved within 90 days.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FILING A GRIEVANCE AND ASKING FOR A HEARING?

Yes! There is a big difference. Whenever the child support enforcement agency takes some action and sends you a notice, the notice will tell you if you have the right to request a hearing. Hearings are allowed when the child support agency tries to establish paternity or child support, modify child support, assess an overpayment and do certain kinds of collection proceedings. Be sure to review all notices you receive to see what you have to do to request a hearing and how long you have from the date of the notice to request a hearing.

If you aren't sure whether you should request a hearing or file a grievance, then you should request a hearing to protect your rights and then call the Child Support Helpline at 1-800-383-1222.

WHAT IF FILING A GRIEVANCE DOESN'T WORK FOR ME?

When a grievance doesn't work for you, call Legal Aid's Child Support Helpline at 1-800-383-1222.

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