

# **Bucks County Domestic Relations Section**

**Wants You To**

**Get Informed  
Be Informed  
Stay Informed**



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**Director's Message**

**Laura LoBianco, Director**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section focuses on the well-being of children and families.**

All children need the financial support of both parents to grow into healthy, productive adults. Bucks County Domestic Relations is a court office committed to promoting the health and well-being of children by establishing support orders and ensuring parents pay child support on a regular and timely basis.

In 2011, Bucks County Domestic Relations collected more than \$83 million of support for more than 17,000 children. Bucks County Domestic Relations established paternity for more than 800 children, scheduled more than 6,000 support conferences and more than 4,300 contempt hearings, and in collaboration with the Bucks County Sheriff's Office, is actively pursuing approximately 300 outstanding support warrants.

**Bucks County Domestic Relations recognizes the importance of parental involvement**

Bucks County Domestic Relations consists of 100 dedicated professionals who are committed to making a difference in the lives of children. Bucks County Domestic Relations recognizes the importance of child support to children and families and applauds those parents who financially support their children.

## **Get Informed**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations, a department within the Family Court Division, enters and enforces support orders**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations does NOT handle custody, visitation, protection from abuse or divorce.**

**If you need assistance regarding these services, Bucks County Domestic Relations will refer you to the correct Family Court department**

## **Family Violence**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section is committed to the safety of its clients.**

If you believe sharing your personal information may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child(ren), contact Bucks County Domestic Relations immediately. Bucks County Domestic Relations will designate your information such as address, phone number and employer information CONFIDENTIAL from the other party.

If you believe pursuing child support may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child(ren), contact our office immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

If you or your child(ren) are the victim of domestic violence and you receive notice to appear for a support conference or hearing, contact our office immediately and appropriate safety steps will be taken.

## **Be Informed**

**Do not let the threat of domestic violence  
prevent you from pursuing support**

**You may request your personal case  
information be designated CONFIDENTIAL**

## **Available Services**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section establishes and enforces support orders per Pennsylvania State guidelines.**

Any adult or agency with physical custody of a child may file for support.

**There are approximately 4 to 6 weeks between filing date and the scheduled conference date**

Parties and attorneys can pick up petitioning information at the Domestic Relations Intake Unit, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown or Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol. Parties can file on their own at the Intake Unit in Doylestown.

Bucks County Domestic Relations assists parties in filing against non-custodial parents who live out of county, state or country at either office location.

Bucks County Domestic Relations will attempt to establish paternity in all cases in which the child(ren) were born out of wedlock and no paternity acknowledgment has been signed. If defendant denies paternity, DNA testing is done by an on-site lab the day of the scheduled conference. Results are received in approximately four weeks. The cost is paid by the defendant if he is found to be the father or signs an acknowledgement based upon the results. No cost is paid if the defendant is excluded and the plaintiff's complaint is dismissed.

Bucks County Domestic Relations performs locate services if a non-custodial parent's whereabouts are unknown. Once a good address is found, the process of establishing a support order will continue. If a good address can not be found, your case may be closed due to lack of information.

Bucks County Domestic Relations will enforce all court orders payable through its office.

Interpreter services will be provided if you speak a language other than English or are hearing impaired. Contact our office prior to your scheduled appointment.

## **Stay Informed**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations wants to work with non-custodial parents to help them meet their support obligation**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations staff recognizes support decisions are often emotional and difficult to make**

## Support Conferences

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section establishes support orders based on both parties' incomes.**

Parties are required to attend a support conference and provide income and expense sheets, 6-months of pay stubs, last filed income tax returns, and documentation of additional expenses.

The goal of a support conference is an agreed order based on the PA guideline

**Parties' communication and cooperation is essential**

calculations. If parties cannot agree, the matter is scheduled for a court hearing for entry of an order.

An order contains terms regarding the support amount, arrears payment, health insurance coverage, child care costs, school tuition, and/or mortgage. Order amounts are based on parties' combined net incomes.

**Bring all documentation to the conference verifying income, expenses and health insurance coverage**

Continuance requests must be made in writing prior to the conference and must note the position of the other side. Do not assume the conference will be continued. The officer will make a decision and notify parties and counsel.

In a new or modification matter, if parties are both legally represented, the attorney(s) may submit agreement terms or a stipulation, as long as a petition has been filed. If only one party is legally represented, or neither party is legally represented, a conference must be held and guideline calculations must be completed. A copy of orders made on the record in divorce proceedings must be sent to Domestic Relations for the order to be entered or modified. All agreements must state the order is payable through Bucks County Domestic Relations.

A request for a telephone conference must be made prior to the conference and all income information and contact information must be received before the request will be considered. Approval is at the discretion of the officer.

Parties may represent themselves or hire an attorney. Only parties and attorneys can attend conferences.

## Get Informed

**Being informed allows you to make quality decisions about support**

## **Paying Support**

### **How to meet your support responsibility.**

State Law requires wage attachments on all support cases.

PA SCDU will send one payment coupon each month to parents ordered to pay child support and who do not have income withholding. You must write on the coupon the amount of money you are paying. Make your personal check, cashier's check or money order payable to PA SCDU. A coupon should be sent with every payment to PA SCDU. However, if you do not have a payment coupon, write your PACSES member number, which is found on your court order, or Social Security number (SSN) on your check or money order and:

If you live in Pennsylvania,  
send payments to:

PA SCDU  
PO Box 69110  
Harrisburg, PA 17106-9110

If you live outside Pennsylvania,  
send payment to:

PA SCDU  
PO Box 61167  
Harrisburg, PA 17106-1167

PA SCDU cannot accept checks that are considered non-negotiable by banking standards. Some examples of non-negotiable items are: checks that are stale dated, post dated, not signed; checks that are not payable to PA SCDU; the amount in numbers does not match the written amount. PA SCDU also does not accept temporary checks or starter checks.

#### **You may also pay child support by:**

- **Personal Check, Cashier's Check or Money Order.** Send your payment coupon with the check or money order so your amount is credited. Write your PACSES member number or SSN on the check or money order and make it payable to PA SCDU.
- **Pay-By-Phone.** To request a PBP Authorization Form, call PA SCDU at 1-877-727-7238, or register your case at [www.ExpertPay.com](http://www.ExpertPay.com).
- **Recurring Automatic Withdrawals.** To request a RAW Authorization Form call PA SCDU at 1-877-727-7238, or register your case at [www.ExpertPay.com](http://www.ExpertPay.com).
- **Credit/ Debit Card. SCDU accepts Visa or Mastercard.** To pay by MasterCard or Visa through PA SCDU-AVR, call 1-800-955-2305, or visit [www.e-childspay.com](http://www.e-childspay.com). A convenience fee is charged for all credit card payments.

## **Be Informed**

<p><b>Do NOT make payments at BCDRS</b> <b>Do NOT pay Plaintiff directly</b> <b>Do NOT bounce a check</b></p>
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## **Receiving Support**

### **How payments are received.**

All child support payments are disbursed via Direct Deposit or the Pennsylvania *EPPICard*.

To sign up for **Direct Deposit**

- Complete the Direct Deposit enrollment form at [www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us) or contact BCDRS Client Services 215-340-8068

**If you have a checking or savings account, you may arrange to receive child support payments by Direct Deposit. Direct Deposit is FREE, FAST, SECURE, and CONVENIENT.**

If you do not sign up for Direct Deposit, you automatically receive the **EPPICard**. EPPICard is a debit card accepted everywhere MasterCard is accepted. There is a minimal transaction fee for ATM cash withdrawals and balance inquiries. It is not a credit card. Funds are only available if support is paid.

The United States Congress passed a law effective July 28, 2008 which requires a \$25.00 annual fee each year for certain child support cases. This yearly fee is collected to cover some of the Federal Government's costs of providing child support enforcement services.

In Pennsylvania, this fee will only be deducted from the custodial parent after \$2000.00 of child support is collected in a year from the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent has never received cash assistance.

## **Stay Informed**

**Use EPPICard at point of sale devices, cash withdrawals at ATMs, retail and grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, retail outlets, medical service locations, pharmacies, and other locations worldwide**

**Child support does not automatically stop when a child is emancipated (reaches 18 and graduates high school); a petition must be filed**

**Child support may continue beyond emancipation if there are extraordinary circumstances**

**Enforcement Action**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section takes enforcement when a party does not comply with terms of an order.**

To request enforcement for missed support, parties can contact BCDRS directly.

Officers review cases and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

To request enforcement for unreimbursed medical/dental, daycare costs, tuition and other ordered expenses, contact BCDRS Client Services at 215-340-8068.

**Provide copies of your medical card to Bucks County Domestic Relations**

**The outstanding support balance is called arrears.**

If you fail to make payments, BCDRS may take any of the following enforcement remedies against you:

**It can take years to repair bad credit**

- Wage Attachment
- PA Unemployment Compensation Attachment
- Contempt Hearing
- Credit Bureau Reporting
- Passport Denial
- Driver’s License Suspension
- Professional License Suspension
- Recreational License Suspension
- Lottery Intercept
- Federal and State Tax Refund Intercept
- Financial Institution Data Match
- (Bank account balances are seized and applied to support arrears)
- Child Support Lien Network
- (Law suit settlements are seized and applied to support arrears)
- Intercept of Worker’s Compensation
- Property Lien

No credit will be given for payments made outside the court directly to plaintiff except where specifically ordered by the court.

## Get Informed

**Bucks County Domestic Relations wants to immediately address any issue which may prevent you from making support payments**

## **Court Hearings**

**Bucks County Domestic Relations Section schedules prompt court hearings.**

Court hearings are held approximately 3 to 4 weeks from the date of the conference. Court notices advise you to appear at 9 a.m. Domestic Relations officers attempt to work out agreements prior to parties seeing the judge. Parties may represent themselves or hire an attorney.

In contempt matters, parties listed for contempt run the risk of incarceration. Public defenders are available to defendants and assistant district attorneys are available to plaintiffs.

In new and modification matters, even if one party does not appear, a judge can enter an order.

Judges issue bench warrants for defendants who fail to appear for court.

Continuance requests must be made in writing prior to the hearing and must note the position of the other side to the request. Do not assume the hearing will be continued. The officer will make a decision and notify parties and counsel.

The Domestic Relations' Interactive Voice Response System includes an outbound calling feature that will make DRS appointment reminder phone calls to plaintiffs and defendants.

## **Be Informed**

**No children are allowed in the courtrooms  
No child care services are offered while parties  
are in a hearing or conference**

**Contact Bucks County Domestic Relations  
immediately if you have questions about your  
support order terms**

**Bench Warrants  
Court Orders to Appear should not be ignored.**

When judges issue bench warrants due to defendant's non-appearance for a hearing or a conference, the defendant is charged a \$50 bench warrant fee. This is in addition to any arrears balance.

If the defendant does not voluntarily appear at Domestic Relations, the Bucks County Sheriffs or a State Constable will apprehend the defendant. The defendant is charged transportation costs when apprehended plus the \$50 bench warrant fee. Every attempt is made to notify plaintiffs when defendants are apprehended.

Parties must inform BCDRS of any change in their employment or personal address within 7 days per 23 CSA 4553(a).

Defendants with outstanding bench warrants may have their driver's or recreational licenses suspended and/or bank accounts frozen and seized.

## **Stay Informed**

**To avoid arrest, contact Bucks County Domestic Relations immediately if you have an outstanding bench warrant**

**Failure to appear as directed by the court is a serious matter which could result in an order being entered in your absence, fines or imprisonment**

## Contact Information

**The key to managing your support case easily and effectively.**

An Officer of the Day is available from 8 am to 4:00 pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown, to speak to parties regarding their cases. No appointment necessary.

The Client Service Unit is available from 8 am to 4:30 pm at 215-340-8068 to answer telephone questions from parties regarding their cases. The Client Service Unit can also be contacted by email at [csbucks@pacses.com](mailto:csbucks@pacses.com).

A computer automated system is accessible 24-hours/day at 1-877-727-7238. Hearing impaired number is 1-877-676-9582.

**To access account information, have your PACSES case number ready**

The state provides a secure website [www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us) for plaintiffs and defendants to update address and employer information, view payment history,

**Always keep contact information current**

account balances and docket entries, and receive e-reminders for scheduled appointments. Employers can update address information and view a list of employees under wage attachment.

The Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol is available from 8 am to 4 pm to obtain petitioning forms, request enforcement, and ask questions regarding support cases.

Bucks County Domestic Relations offers REACH OUT, a free course providing information to the public, to better understand how support orders are established and enforced.

**BCDRS Goal is to increase compliance and parental involvement through education**

Ask about scheduled classes or contact the Bucks County Domestic Relations PACSES Administrator at 215-340-8068 to schedule a presentation for your agency or organization.

## Get Informed

**Bucks County Domestic Relations staff are not permitted to give legal advice or discuss cases outside the courtroom or hearing room**

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Who is the plaintiff?** The party with physical custody of child and/or person receiving payments is the plaintiff.

**Who is the defendant?** The non-custodial parent and/or person making payments is the defendant.

**Must I file for child support?** No. Only plaintiffs receiving cash assistance must file for support. If you are not receiving assistance, you may choose to file or not file for support.

**Can a relative or friend come with me or attend in my place?** A friend or relative may pick up petitioning information on your behalf but for both parties' privacy, only attorneys and parties may attend conferences. Third parties may not accompany you into the conference or hearing. Because you are a party in the case you are required to attend. Third parties may not attend in place of you.

**What if I have no transportation to BCDRS Doylestown Office?** Call Bucks County Transport 1-888-795-0740 (English and Spanish)

**What happens if plaintiff or defendant moves out of Bucks County?** The order can still be modified and/or enforced by Bucks County. Contact the Intake Unit in Doylestown or the Bristol Office for more information.

**Am I charged for using Domestic Relations?** There is no filing fee. There is a one-time judicial computer fee upon entry of an order. There is a \$50 bench warrant fee and transportation costs.

**What is a PACSES number and why do I need one?** It is the number assigned to your case statewide and necessary to access your specific case information.

**What is a member number and why do I need one?** It is the number assigned to you statewide and necessary to access your specific member information.

**What is a docket number and why do I need one?** It is the number assigned to your case and necessary to access your original file.

**How do I change my assigned officer?** Officers are assigned by the first letter of the defendant's last name. You cannot change officers.

**How can I modify my support order amount?** If there is a significant change in circumstances, you may file a petition to modify the order. You may contact this office for filing instructions.

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**Case Information**

Your specific case information necessary to manage your case efficiently.

**PACSES Case Number:**

**PACSES Member Number:**

**Docket Number:**

**Case Management Team:**

**Order History:**

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

Effective Date \_\_\_\_\_

Amount \$ \_\_\_\_ Order \$ \_\_\_\_ Arrears

Health Insurance provided by \_\_\_\_ Defendant \_\_\_\_ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio \_\_\_\_% Defendant \_\_\_\_% Plaintiff

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Register at the state's secure website  
[www.childsupport.state.pa.us](http://www.childsupport.state.pa.us)  
to update address and employer information;  
view payment history, account balances and  
docket entries; and receive e-reminders for  
scheduled appointments



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