Bucks County
Domestic Relations Section

Wants You To

Get 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 2013, 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 4,700 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 can pick up petitioning information at the Domestic Relations Section, 100 North Main Street, Doylestown or at the Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol. Parties can file on their own at the Intake Unit in Doylestown. Parties may also file online through the state's secure website at www.childsupport.state.pa.us.

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 cannot 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, six 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 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.

Parties' communication and cooperation is essential

Unreimbursed medical expenses do not include cosmetic, chiropractic, psychiatric or psychological expenses unless specified in the support order.

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 may 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, postdated, 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 (PBP).** To request a PBP Authorization Form, call PA SCDU at 1-877-727- 7238.
- **Automatic Bank Account Deduction.** To request authorization, register your case at www.ExpertPay.com.
- **Credit/ Debit Card.** SCDU accepts MasterCard or Visa. To pay by MasterCard or Visa through PA SCDU-AVR, call 1-800-955-2305, or visit www.e-childspay.com. A convenience fee is charged for all credit card payments.

Be Informed

Do NOT make payments at BCDRS
Do NOT pay Plaintiff directly
Do NOT bounce a check

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 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 will 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:

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

It can take years to repair bad credit

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 three to four weeks from the date of the conference. Court notices advise you to appear at 8:30am. 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.

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 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 seven 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 8am to 4:45pm to speak to parties regarding their cases. No appointment necessary.

The Client Services Unit is available from 8am to 4:45pm at 215-340-8068 to answer telephone questions from parties regarding their cases. The Client Services Unit can also be contacted by email at 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 for plaintiffs and defendants to update address and employer information, view payment history, 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.

Always keep contact information current

The Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol, is available from 8am to 4:45pm 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. As 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. A one- time judicial computer fee is charged 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.

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
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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Bucks County Domestic Relations Section