

Vacating a Default Child Support Order

Do you believe your child support order is higher than it should be? If so, you should read this notice about a program that could help you if you have a child support order issued by Alaska CSSD!

The Alaska Child Support Services Division (CSSD) may be able to **vacate** your present child support order and **replace** it with a new order in a different amount.

This program is available to you if CSSD set your support order without having specific information about your income -- and if your actual earnings are generally lower than the average wages in Alaska. ***If you qualify for this program, your child support debt and monthly payments could be reduced.***

If you believe you meet the requirements of this program, please read this material and complete the form in the back of this booklet.

Background of the program

A child support order establishes the amount you pay or receive for child support. This amount should be based upon the paying parent's income and ability to pay. The paying parent usually provides income information such as tax records and pay stubs, and CSSD uses a formula developed by the Supreme Court under Civil Rule 90.3 to determine the monthly child support amount.

We requested such information from you but, for whatever reason, you could not or would not provide sufficient proof of income. Under law, we had to complete a child support order quickly and established the order without full information on your income.

Despite the lack of information, the order, called a default order, is a legal order. Unfortunately, many default orders often don't have much to do with the paying parent's actual ability to pay. CSSD knows when a default order exceeds the parent's ability to pay, the paying parent may decide to pay nothing or far less than the amount owed. As the debt grows larger, the likelihood of payment grows smaller. That's why we asked the legislature to pass a law to help parents with default orders. If parents have an order they can afford to pay, the chances are much better their children will receive the child support they need.

*This material probably includes some unfamiliar terms.
Please turn to glossary on Page 4 to familiarize yourself with these terms*

Why is CSSD asking if I want to change my order?

We know you have had a default order at some time in your case. This means we set your support order without your income information. CSSD wants you to know you have this opportunity to get an order based on actual earnings.

Alaska Statute 25.27.195 -- which became law on October 1, 1996 -- allows CSSD to vacate its own default orders and replace them with new orders. The agency has the authority to go back and issue an order to reflect your ability to pay - but only if you formally ask us to vacate the default order and give us enough information about your income.

How can a default order be changed?

If you have a default order issued by Alaska CSSD and you completed the motion to vacate and provided the information requested, CSSD will begin working on your case.

When CSSD determines that we have enough information to work on the case, we will notify you and the custodial parent by first class mail.

To oppose the request, the custodial parent must file their opposition to CSSD within 30 days. They must supply documents and information in support of the opposition to the request. If they do not respond within 30 days; the request will be processed by the Child Support Specialist.

When the Child Support Specialist vacates the default order, a new order will be sent to you and the custodial parent.

Does everyone qualify for this program?

No! Alaska Statute 25.27.195 only allows CSSD to vacate its own orders and replace them with a new order covering the same period of time. We can't vacate a court order or a support order issued by another state.

Even if we can vacate the default order, it's still up to you to provide enough information to establish a new order. If you fail to provide income information, the agency will cease our actions on your motion for a new order and the original order remains in effect.

*This means the total child support debt owed in the case
could be much smaller than it is today*

What to do if I want a new child support order?

There is a form on Page 5 called **Motion to Vacate Default Order**. This must be completed by you or your legal representative to request that the division vacate the existing support order and replace it with a new order. You must complete this form and provide proof of earnings for each year of the child support order.

What you should do now

Please write neatly or type your answers on the form. And please make sure the copies of your pay stubs, tax returns and other financial records are clear and legible.

Mail the form to the Alaska Child Support Services Division with the affidavits requested and with your proof of earnings.

DO NOT SEND ORIGINALS. They will not be returned or maintained by CSSD.

The quicker you submit the information, the quicker you'll see a result.

*If you have any questions, and live outside of Anchorage, call a
Child Support Representative at 1-800-478-3300, option 1 extension 6861.
In Anchorage, call 269-6861*

Glossary:

- Arrears** Interest is charged on late payments at the rate of 6% per year.
- Child Support Order** The legal document tells you how much child support you owe and how much you should pay each month. There are two kinds of child support orders: Court orders are established by a judge or other court official, and administrative orders are set by a child support services division.
- Default Order** A support order established without accurate information about the parent's actual income and ability to pay. Sometimes this is because the parent never provided the child support division with information about his or her income and/or failed to answer the division's letters. Many default orders may be too high for the parent to pay. ***Default orders may be set by the child support division or by a court, but this program applies only to default orders issued by the division.***
- Vacate an Order** Stop an order and make it void.
- Custodial Parent** The parent who has primary custody of the children and who receives the child support payments on behalf of the children.
- Paying Parent** The parent who does not have primary custody of the children. Sometimes if a judge orders shared custody, and the children live with each parent for part of the year, the parents take turns being the custodial and paying parent. More often, the children live mostly with one parent and visit the other.
- Custodian** A court-approved caretaker who is responsible for the children. This is usually a relative such as a grandparent, aunt or uncle. The custodian can have temporary custody of the children or may have full legal custody. If the children are in foster care, the custodian may even be the State of Alaska or another state.

