

**RCW 74.20.220 Powers of department through the attorney general or prosecuting attorney.** In order to carry out its responsibilities imposed under this chapter and as required by federal law, the state department of social and health services, through the attorney general or prosecuting attorney, is hereby authorized to:

(1) Initiate an action in superior court to obtain a support order or obtain other relief related to support for a dependent child on whose behalf the department is providing public assistance or support enforcement services under RCW 74.20.040, or to enforce a superior court order.

(2) Appear as a party in dissolution, child support, parentage, maintenance suits, or other proceedings, for the purpose of representing the financial interest and actions of the state of Washington therein.

(3) Petition the court for modification of a superior court order when the office of support enforcement is providing support enforcement services under RCW 74.20.040.

(4) When the attorney general or prosecuting attorney appears in, defends, or initiates actions to establish, modify, or enforce child support obligations he or she represents the state, the best interests of the child relating to parentage, and the best interests of the children of the state, but does not represent the interests of any other individual.

(5) If public assistance has been applied for or granted on behalf of a child of parents who are divorced or legally separated, the attorney general or prosecuting attorney may apply to the superior court in such action for an order directing either parent or both to show cause:

(a) Why an order of support for the child should not be entered, or

(b) Why the amount of support previously ordered should not be increased, or

(c) Why the parent should not be held in contempt for his or her failure to comply with any order of support previously entered.

(6) Initiate any civil proceedings deemed necessary by the department to secure reimbursement from the parent or parents of minor dependent children for all moneys expended by the state in providing assistance or services to said children.

(7) Nothing in this section limits the authority of the attorney general or prosecuting attorney to use any and all civil and criminal remedies to enforce, establish, or modify child support obligations whether or not the custodial parent receives public assistance. [1991 c 367 § 44; 1979 c 141 § 367; 1973 1st ex.s. c 154 § 112; 1969 ex.s. c 173 § 15; 1963 c 206 § 7.]

**Severability—Effective date—Captions not law—1991 c 367:** See notes following RCW 26.09.015.

**Severability—1973 1st ex.s. c 154:** See note following RCW 2.12.030.