

**Chapter 388-422 WAC  
CHILD SUPPORT**

Last Update: 6/15/22

**WAC**

388-422-0005	What happens to my child and spousal support when I get public assistance?
388-422-0010	Do I have to cooperate with the division of child support (DCS)?
388-422-0020	What if you are afraid that cooperating with the division of child support (DCS) may cause physical or emotional harm for you or the child in your care?
388-422-0030	What happens if my support is more than my TANF or SFA cash benefit?

**WAC 388-422-0005 What happens to my child and spousal support when I get public assistance?** (1) The following definitions apply to this chapter:

(a) **"We"** means the department of social and health services.  
(b) **"You"** means a person applying for or getting benefits from us.

(c) **"Benefits"** means TANF or SFA cash assistance.

(d) **"Support"** means the money paid to meet a support order whether it is called child support, spousal support, alimony, maintenance, or medical support.

(e) **"Medical support"** means either or both:

(i) The set dollar amount for health care costs in a support order; or

(ii) Health insurance coverage for a dependent child.

(f) **"Assistance unit"** or **"AU"** means the group of people who live together and whose income and resources we count to decide your eligibility for benefits and the amount of those benefits.

(2) When you apply for TANF or SFA cash benefits, you permanently assign to the state your current cash support for the months you get assistance. If you applied for TANF or SFA cash benefits before October 1, 2008, support for months before you begin receiving assistance (also called "arrears" under WAC 388-14A-2036) is temporarily assigned to the state. For more information about permanently and temporarily assigned support see:

(a) Permanently assigned arrears, WAC 388-14A-2037.

(b) Temporarily assigned arrears, WAC 388-14A-2038.

(3) When you receive TANF or SFA cash benefits, DCS will open up a full support enforcement services case for you. "Full support enforcement services" is defined in WAC 388-14A-1020.

(4) You assign your rights to cash support when your application for benefits is approved by the department.

(5) If you have a good reason (WAC 388-422-0020) DCS may not be able to establish or collect child support (WAC 388-14A-2060).

(6) If you receive any support payments before you assign your rights to support, we count this as unearned income to your AU (WAC 388-450-0025).

(7) If you receive any direct support payments during the month you apply, you must report these payments and we may count them as unearned income in determining your eligibility for benefits.

(8) If you keep any support payments you receive after you assign your rights to support, DCS may collect this money from you (WAC 388-14A-5505).

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 15. WSR 13-18-005, § 388-422-0005, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.005, 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, 74.08.090, and 74.20.330.]

WSR 10-02-037, § 388-422-0005, filed 12/30/09, effective 1/30/10. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090. WSR 02-19-041, § 388-422-0005, filed 9/11/02, effective 10/12/02; WSR 98-16-044, § 388-422-0005, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98. Formerly WAC 388-505-0560.]

**WAC 388-422-0010 Do I have to cooperate with the division of child support (DCS)?** (1) When you get benefits, you must cooperate with DCS as required to establish or collect child support, unless you have a good reason for not cooperating.

(2) DCS defines what cooperating with them to establish or collect child support means in WAC 388-14A-2040.

(3) If you are a two-parent household, you and the other parent must help DCS establish paternity for each child in your AU, if necessary.

(4) DCS determines whether you are cooperating with them. See WAC 388-14A-2041(1) for reasons why DCS might determine that you are not cooperating.

(5) If you get TANF or SFA and do not have a good reason for not cooperating with DCS, we reduce your cash benefits by twenty-five percent.

(6) If you are afraid that cooperating with DCS may be dangerous for you or a child in your care, see WAC 388-14A-2045 for a definition of what a good reason to not cooperate with DCS is. We also call this "good cause."

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 15. WSR 13-18-005, § 388-422-0010, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090. WSR 02-19-041, § 388-422-0010, filed 9/11/02, effective 10/12/02; WSR 98-16-044, § 388-422-0010, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98. Formerly WAC 388-505-0560.]

**WAC 388-422-0020 What if you are afraid that cooperating with the division of child support (DCS) may cause physical or emotional harm for you or the child in your care?** (1) You can be excused from cooperating with DCS when you have a good reason. A good reason not to cooperate is also called good cause. You have a good reason when you can prove that:

(a) Cooperating with DCS would result in serious:

(i) Physical harm to you or the child in your care; or

(ii) Emotional harm to you or the child in your care.

(b) Establishing paternity or getting support would be harmful to the child who:

(i) Was conceived as a result of incest or rape; or

(ii) Is the subject of legal adoption proceedings pending before a superior court; or

(iii) Is the subject of ongoing discussions between you and a public or licensed child placement agency to decide whether you will keep the child or put the child up for adoption. The discussions cannot have gone on for more than three months.

(2) Once you claim good cause for TANF/SFA, you have 20 days to give us the information that proves you have good cause not to cooperate with DCS. This information can include official records, sworn

statements, or other information that supports your good cause claim. If you need to, you may ask for:

- (a) More time to give proof; or
- (b) Help in getting proof.
- (3) While we review your good cause claim, DCS does not take any action to establish or enforce support on your case.
- (4) You have the right to:
  - (a) Be told of your right to claim good cause for not cooperating with DCS;
  - (b) Get benefits while we are deciding your good cause claim, as long as you have given the proof needed to make a decision;
  - (c) Get a decision within 30 days from the date you made your good cause claim, as long as you have given the proof needed to make a decision within 20 days; and
  - (d) Get information about how to request a fair hearing if we deny your good cause claim.
- (5) If we approve your good cause claim, we periodically review the claim depending on your circumstances.
- (6) To see what DCS does when good cause is approved see WAC 388-14A-2060.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.04.510, and 74.08.090. WSR 22-13-112, § 388-422-0020, filed 6/15/22, effective 7/16/22. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 15. WSR 13-18-005, § 388-422-0020, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090. WSR 02-19-041, § 388-422-0020, filed 9/11/02, effective 10/12/02; WSR 98-16-044, § 388-422-0020, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98. Formerly WAC 388-505-0570 and 388-505-0560.]

**WAC 388-422-0030 What happens if my support is more than my TANF or SFA cash benefit?** (1) If DCS collects current support that is more than your TANF or SFA cash benefit for two months in a row, your cash benefit stops at the end of the third month.  
(2) You may be able to get continued food assistance benefits.  
(3) You can read WAC 388-310-0800 to see what kinds of support services you may be able to get.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090, 74.04.510, and 2011 1st sp.s. c 15. WSR 13-18-005, § 388-422-0030, filed 8/22/13, effective 10/1/13. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.04.050, 74.04.055, 74.04.057, 74.08.090. WSR 02-19-041, § 388-422-0030, filed 9/11/02, effective 10/12/02; WSR 98-16-044, § 388-422-0030, filed 7/31/98, effective 9/1/98.]