

**Chapter 74.20A RCW**  
**SUPPORT OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN—ALTERNATIVE METHOD—1971 ACT**

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*Child support enforcement: Chapter 26.18 RCW.*

*Child support registry: Chapter 26.23 RCW.*

**RCW 74.20A.010 Purpose—Remedies additional.** Common law and statutory procedures governing the remedies for enforcement of support for financially dependent minor children by responsible parents have not proven sufficiently effective or efficient to cope with the increasing incidence of financial dependency. The increasing workload of courts, prosecuting attorneys, and the attorney general has made such remedies uncertain, slow and inadequate, thereby resulting in a growing burden on the financial resources of the state, which is constrained to provide public assistance grants for basic maintenance requirements when parents fail to meet their primary obligations. The state of Washington, therefore, exercising its police and sovereign power, declares that the common law and statutory remedies pertaining to family desertion and nonsupport of minor dependent children shall be augmented by additional remedies directed to the real and personal property resources of the responsible parents. In order to render

resources more immediately available to meet the needs of minor children, it is the legislative intent that the remedies herein provided are in addition to, and not in lieu of, existing law. It is declared to be the public policy of this state that this chapter be construed and administered to the end that children shall be maintained from the resources of responsible parents, thereby relieving, at least in part, the burden presently borne by the general citizenry through welfare programs. [1971 ex.s. c 164 s 1.]

**RCW 74.20A.020 Definitions.** Unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context, the following words and phrases as hereinafter used in this chapter and chapter 74.20 RCW shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Department" means the state department of social and health services.

(2) "Secretary" means the secretary of the department of social and health services, the secretary's designee or authorized representative.

(3) "Dependent child" means any person:

(a) Under the age of eighteen who is not self-supporting, married, or a member of the armed forces of the United States; or

(b) Over the age of eighteen for whom a court order for support exists.

(4) "Support obligation" means the obligation to provide for the necessary care, support, and maintenance, including medical expenses, of a dependent child or other person as required by statutes and the common law of this or another state.

(5) "Superior court order" means any judgment, decree, or order of the superior court of the state of Washington, or a court of comparable jurisdiction of another state, establishing the existence of a support obligation and ordering payment of a set or determinable amount of support moneys to satisfy the support obligation. For purposes of RCW 74.20A.055, orders for support which were entered under the uniform reciprocal enforcement of support act by a state where the responsible parent no longer resides shall not preclude the department from establishing an amount to be paid as current and future support.

(6) "Administrative order" means any determination, finding, decree, or order for support pursuant to RCW 74.20A.055, or by an agency of another state pursuant to a substantially similar administrative process, establishing the existence of a support obligation and ordering the payment of a set or determinable amount of support moneys to satisfy the support obligation.

(7) "Responsible parent" means a natural parent, adoptive parent, or stepparent of a dependent child or a person who has signed an affidavit acknowledging paternity which has been filed with the state office of vital statistics.

(8) "Stepparent" means the present spouse of the person who is either the mother, father, or adoptive parent of a dependent child, and such status shall exist until terminated as provided for in RCW 26.16.205.

(9) "Support moneys" means any moneys or in-kind providings paid to satisfy a support obligation whether denominated as child support, spouse support, alimony, maintenance, or any other such moneys intended to satisfy an obligation for support of any person or

satisfaction in whole or in part of arrears or delinquency on such an obligation.

(10) "Support debt" means any delinquent amount of support moneys which is due, owing, and unpaid under a superior court order or an administrative order, a debt for the payment of expenses for the reasonable or necessary care, support, and maintenance, including medical expenses, of a dependent child or other person for whom a support obligation is owed; or a debt under RCW 74.20A.100 or 74.20A.270. Support debt also includes any accrued interest, fees, or penalties charged on a support debt, and attorneys fees and other costs of litigation awarded in an action to establish and enforce a support obligation or debt.

(11) "State" means any state or political subdivision, territory, or possession of the United States, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(12) "Account" means a demand deposit account, checking or negotiable withdrawal order account, savings account, time deposit account, or money-market mutual fund account.

(13) "Child support order" means a superior court order or an administrative order.

(14) "Financial institution" means:

(a) A depository institution, as defined in section 3(c) of the federal deposit insurance act;

(b) An institution-affiliated party, as defined in section 3(u) of the federal deposit insurance act;

(c) Any federal or state credit union, as defined in section 101 of the federal credit union act, including an institution-affiliated party of such credit union, as defined in section 206(r) of the federal deposit insurance act; or

(d) Any benefit association, insurance company, safe deposit company, money-market mutual fund, or similar entity.

(15) "License" means a license, certificate, registration, permit, approval, or other similar document issued by a licensing entity to a licensee evidencing admission to or granting authority to engage in a profession, occupation, business, industry, recreational pursuit, or the operation of a motor vehicle. "License" does not mean the tax registration or certification issued under Title 82 RCW by the department of revenue.

(16) "Licensee" means any individual holding a license, certificate, registration, permit, approval, or other similar document issued by a licensing entity evidencing admission to or granting authority to engage in a profession, occupation, business, industry, recreational pursuit, or the operation of a motor vehicle.

(17) "Licensing entity" includes any department, board, commission, or other organization authorized to issue, renew, suspend, or revoke a license authorizing an individual to engage in a business, occupation, profession, industry, recreational pursuit, or the operation of a motor vehicle, and includes the Washington state supreme court, to the extent that a rule has been adopted by the court to implement suspension of licenses related to the practice of law.

(18) "Noncompliance with a child support order" for the purposes of the license suspension program authorized under RCW 74.20A.320 means a responsible parent has:

(a) Accumulated arrears totaling more than six months of child support payments;

(b) Failed to make payments pursuant to a written agreement with the department towards a support arrearage in an amount that exceeds six months of payments; or

(c) Failed to make payments required by a superior court order or administrative order towards a support arrearage in an amount that exceeds six months of payments.

(19) "Noncompliance with a residential or visitation order" means that a court has found the parent in contempt of court under RCW 26.09.160(3) for failure to comply with a residential provision of a court-ordered parenting plan. [1997 c 58 s 805; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 s 15. Prior: 1989 c 175 s 151; 1989 c 55 s 1; 1985 c 276 s 4; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 3; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 2.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Effective dates—Intent—1997 c 58:** See notes following RCW 74.20A.320.

**Effective dates—Severability—1990 1st ex.s. c 2:** See notes following RCW 26.09.100.

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.030 Department subrogated to rights for support—Enforcement actions—Certain parents exempt.** (1) The department shall be subrogated to the right of any dependent child or children or person having the care, custody, and control of said child or children, if public assistance money is paid to or for the benefit of the child, or for the care and maintenance of a child, including a child with a developmental disability if the child has been placed into care as a result of an action under chapter 13.34 RCW, under a state-funded program, or a program funded under Title IV-A or IV-E of the federal social security act as amended by the personal responsibility and work opportunity reconciliation act of 1996, and the federal deficit reduction act of 2005, to prosecute or maintain any support action or execute any administrative remedy existing under the laws of the state of Washington to obtain reimbursement of moneys expended, based on the support obligation of the responsible parent established by a child support order. Distribution of any support moneys shall be made in accordance with RCW 26.23.035.

(2) The department may initiate, continue, maintain, or execute an action to establish, enforce, and collect a support obligation, including establishing parentage and performing related services, under this chapter and chapter 74.20 RCW, or through the attorney general or prosecuting attorney under chapter 26.09, 26.18, 26.20, 26.21A, 26.23, 26.26A, or 26.26B RCW or other appropriate statutes or the common law of this state, for so long as and under such conditions as the department may establish by regulation.

(3) Public assistance moneys shall be exempt from collection action under this chapter except as provided in RCW 74.20A.270.

(4) No collection action shall be taken against parents of children eligible for admission to, or children who have been discharged from, a residential habilitation center as defined by RCW 71A.10.020 unless the child with a developmental disability is placed as a result of an action under chapter 13.34 RCW. The child support obligation shall be calculated pursuant to chapter 26.19 RCW. [2019 c 46 s 5051; 2007 c 143 s 7; 2004 c 183 s 5; 2000 c 86 s 7; 1997 c 58 s 934; 1993 sp.s. c 24 s 926; 1989 c 360 s 14. Prior: 1988 c 275 s 20; 1988 c 176 s 913; 1987 c 435 s 31; 1985 c 276 s 5; 1984 c 260 s 40; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 4; 1979 c 141 s 371; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 4; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 3.]

**Severability—2007 c 143:** See note following RCW 26.18.170.

**Effective date—2004 c 183:** See note following RCW 13.34.160.

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Severability—Effective dates—1993 sp.s. c 24:** See notes following RCW 28A.310.020.

**Effective dates—Severability—1988 c 275:** See notes following RCW 26.19.001.

**Effective date—1987 c 435:** See RCW 26.23.900.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.035 Augmentation of paternity establishment services.** The department of social and health services shall augment its present paternity establishment services through the hiring of additional assistant attorneys general, or contracting with prosecutors or private attorneys licensed in the state of Washington in those judicial districts experiencing delay or an accumulation of unserved paternity cases. The employment of private attorneys shall be limited in scope to renewable six-month periods in judicial districts where the prosecutor or the attorney general cannot provide adequate, cost-effective service. The department of social and health services shall provide a written report of the circumstances requiring employment of private attorneys to the judiciary committees of the senate and house of representatives and provide copies of such reports to the office of the attorney general and to the Washington association of prosecuting attorneys. [1987 c 441 s 3.]

**Legislative findings—1987 c 441:** "The state of Washington through the department of social and health services is required by state and federal statutes to provide paternity establishment services. These statutes require that reasonable efforts to establish paternity be made, if paternity of the child is in question, in all public assistance cases and whenever such services are requested in nonassistance cases.

The increasing number of children being born out of wedlock together with improved awareness of the benefits to the child and society of having paternity established have resulted in a greater demand on the existing judicial paternity establishment system." [1987 c 441 s 1.]

**RCW 74.20A.040 Notice of support debt—Service or mailing—**

**Contents—Action on, when.** (1) The secretary may issue a notice of a support debt accrued and/or accruing based upon RCW 74.20A.030, assignment of a support debt or a request for support enforcement services under RCW 74.20.040 (2) or (3), to enforce and collect a support debt created by a superior court order or administrative order. The payee under the order shall be informed when a notice of support debt is issued under this section.

(2) The notice may be served upon the debtor in the manner prescribed for the service of a summons in a civil action or be mailed to the debtor at his or her last known address by certified mail, return receipt requested, demanding payment within twenty days of the date of receipt.

(3) The notice of debt shall include:

(a) A statement of the support debt accrued and/or accruing, computable on the amount required to be paid under any superior court order to which the department is subrogated or is authorized to enforce and collect under RCW 74.20A.030, has an assigned interest, or has been authorized to enforce pursuant to RCW 74.20.040 (2) or (3);

(b) A statement that the property of the debtor is subject to collection action;

(c) A statement that the property is subject to lien and foreclosure, distraint, seizure and sale, or order to withhold and deliver; and

(d) A statement that the net proceeds will be applied to the satisfaction of the support debt.

(4) Action to collect a support debt by lien and foreclosure, or distraint, seizure and sale, or order to withhold and deliver shall be lawful after twenty days from the date of service upon the debtor or twenty days from the receipt or refusal by the debtor of said notice of debt.

(5) The secretary shall not be required to issue or serve such notice of support debt prior to taking collection action under this chapter when a responsible parent's support order:

(a) Contains language directing the parent to make support payments to the Washington state support registry; and

(b) Includes a statement that income-withholding action under this chapter may be taken without further notice to the responsible parent, as provided in RCW 26.23.050(1). [2013 c 23 s 215; 1989 c 360 s 8; 1985 c 276 s 2; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 5; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 4.]

**RCW 74.20A.055 Notice and finding of financial responsibility of person required to pay support—Service—Hearing—Decisions—Rules.**

(1) The secretary may, if there is no order that establishes a person's support obligation or specifically relieves the person required to pay support of a support obligation or pursuant to an establishment of parentage under chapter 26.26A or 26.26B RCW, serve on the person or persons required to pay support and the person

entitled to receive support a notice and finding of financial responsibility requiring those persons to appear and show cause in an adjudicative proceeding why the finding of responsibility and/or the amount thereof is incorrect, should not be finally ordered, but should be rescinded or modified. This notice and finding shall relate to the support debt accrued and/or accruing under this chapter and/or RCW 26.16.205, including periodic payments to be made in the future. The hearing shall be held pursuant to this section, chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the rules of the department. A person who has physical custody of a child has the same rights under this section as a parent with whom the child resides.

(2) The notice and finding of financial responsibility shall be served in the same manner prescribed for the service of a summons in a civil action or may be served on the person required to pay support by certified mail, return receipt requested. The receipt shall be prima facie evidence of service. The notice shall be served upon the person required to pay support within sixty days from the date the state assumes responsibility for the support of the dependent child or children on whose behalf support is sought. If the notice is not served within sixty days from such date, the department shall lose the right to reimbursement of payments made after the sixty-day period and before the date of notification: PROVIDED, That if the department exercises reasonable efforts to locate the person required to pay support and is unable to do so the entire sixty-day period is tolled until such time as the person can be located. The notice may be served upon the person entitled to receive support who is the nonassistance applicant or public assistance recipient by first-class mail to the last known address. If the person entitled to receive support is not the nonassistance applicant or public assistance recipient, service shall be in the same manner as for the person required to pay support.

(3) The notice and finding of financial responsibility shall set forth the amount the department has determined the person required to pay support owes, the support debt accrued and/or accruing, and periodic payments to be made in the future. The notice and finding shall also include:

(a) A statement of the name of the person entitled to receive support and the name of the child or children for whom support is sought;

(b) A statement of the amount of periodic future support payments as to which financial responsibility is alleged;

(c) A statement that the person required to pay support or the person entitled to receive support may object to all or any part of the notice and finding, and file an application for an adjudicative proceeding to show cause why the terms set forth in the notice should not be ordered;

(d) A statement that, if neither the person required to pay support nor the person entitled to receive support files in a timely fashion an application for an adjudicative proceeding, the support debt and payments stated in the notice and finding, including periodic support payments in the future, shall be assessed and determined and ordered by the department and that this debt and amounts due under the notice shall be subject to collection action;

(e) A statement that the property of the person required to pay support, without further advance notice or hearing, will be subject to lien and foreclosure, distraint, seizure and sale, order to withhold and deliver, notice of payroll deduction or other collection action to



satisfy the debt and enforce the support obligation established under the notice;

(f) A statement that the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support who is a parent of the child or children covered by the order, are responsible for either:

(i) Providing health care coverage for the child if accessible coverage that can cover the child:

(A) Is available through health insurance or public health care coverage; or

(B) Is or becomes available to the obligated person through that person's employment or union; or

(ii) Paying a monthly payment toward the premium if no such coverage is available, as provided under RCW 26.09.105; and

(g) A statement that the support obligation under the order may be abated to ten dollars per month per order as provided in RCW 26.09.320 if the person required to pay support is confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility.

(4) A person required to pay support or a person entitled to receive support who objects to the notice and finding of financial responsibility may file an application for an adjudicative proceeding within twenty days of the date of service of the notice or thereafter as provided under this subsection.

(a) If the person required to pay support or the person entitled to receive support files the application within twenty days, the office of administrative hearings shall schedule an adjudicative proceeding to hear the party's or parties' objection and determine the support obligation for the entire period covered by the notice and finding of financial responsibility. The filing of the application stays collection action pending the entry of a final administrative order;

(b) If both the person required to pay support and the person entitled to receive support fail to file an application within twenty days, the notice and finding shall become a final administrative order. The amounts for current and future support and the support debt stated in the notice are final and subject to collection, except as provided under (c) and (d) of this subsection;

(c) If the person required to pay support or the person entitled to receive support files the application more than twenty days after, but within one year of the date of service, the office of administrative hearings shall schedule an adjudicative proceeding to hear the party's or parties' objection and determine the support obligation for the entire period covered by the notice and finding of financial responsibility. The filing of the application does not stay further collection action, pending the entry of a final administrative order, and does not affect any prior collection action;

(d) If the person required to pay support or the person entitled to receive support files the application more than one year after the date of service, the office of administrative hearings shall schedule an adjudicative proceeding at which the party who requested the late hearing must show good cause for failure to file a timely application. The filing of the application does not stay future collection action and does not affect prior collection action:

(i) If the presiding officer finds that good cause exists, the presiding officer shall proceed to hear the party's objection to the notice and determine the support obligation;

(ii) If the presiding officer finds that good cause does not exist, the presiding officer shall treat the application as a petition for prospective modification of the amount for current and future support established under the notice and finding. In the modification proceeding, the presiding officer shall set current and future support under chapter 26.19 RCW. The petitioning party need show neither good cause nor a substantial change of circumstances to justify modification of current and future support;

(e) If the support obligation was based upon imputed median net income, the grant standard, or the family need standard, the division of child support may file an application for adjudicative proceeding more than twenty days after the date of service of the notice. The office of administrative hearings shall schedule an adjudicative proceeding and provide notice of the hearing to the person required to pay support and the person entitled to receive support. The presiding officer shall determine the support obligation for the entire period covered by the notice, based upon credible evidence presented by the division of child support, the person required to pay support, or the person entitled to receive support, or may determine that the support obligation set forth in the notice is correct. The division of child support demonstrates good cause by showing that the support obligation was based upon imputed median net income, the grant standard, or the family need standard. The filing of the application by the division of child support does not stay further collection action, pending the entry of a final administrative order, and does not affect any prior collection action;

(f) The department shall retain and/or shall not refund support money collected more than twenty days after the date of service of the notice. Money withheld as the result of collection action shall be delivered to the department. The department shall distribute such money, as provided in published rules.

(5) If an application for an adjudicative proceeding is filed, the presiding or reviewing officer shall determine the past liability and responsibility, if any, of the person required to pay support and shall also determine the amount of periodic payments to be made in the future, which amount is not limited by the amount of any public assistance payment made to or for the benefit of the child. If deviating from the child support schedule in making these determinations, the presiding or reviewing officer shall apply the standards contained in the child support schedule and enter written findings of fact supporting the deviation.

(6) If either the person required to pay support or the person entitled to receive support fails to attend or participate in the hearing or other stage of an adjudicative proceeding, upon a showing of valid service, the presiding officer shall enter an order of default against each party who did not appear and may enter an administrative order declaring the support debt and payment provisions stated in the notice and finding of financial responsibility to be assessed and determined and subject to collection action. The parties who appear may enter an agreed settlement or consent order, which may be different than the terms of the department's notice. Any party who appears may choose to proceed to the hearing, after the conclusion of which the presiding officer or reviewing officer may enter an order that is different than the terms stated in the notice, if the

obligation is supported by credible evidence presented by any party at the hearing.

(7) The final administrative order establishing liability and/or future periodic support payments shall be superseded upon entry of a superior court order for support to the extent the superior court order is inconsistent with the administrative order.

(8) Debts determined pursuant to this section, accrued and not paid, are subject to collection action under this chapter without further necessity of action by a presiding or reviewing officer.

(9) The department has rule-making authority to enact rules consistent with 42 U.S.C. Sec. 652(f) and 42 U.S.C. Sec. 666(a)(19) as amended by section 7307 of the deficit reduction act of 2005. Additionally, the department has rule-making authority to implement regulations required under 45 C.F.R. Parts 302, 303, 304, 305, and 308. [2020 c 227 s 10; 2019 c 46 s 5052; 2018 c 150 s 107; 2009 c 476 s 7; 2007 c 143 s 8; 2002 c 199 s 5; 1997 c 58 s 940; 1996 c 21 s 1; 1991 c 367 s 46; 1990 1st ex.s. c 2 s 21; 1989 c 175 s 152; 1988 c 275 s 10; 1982 c 189 s 8; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 12; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 25.]

**Effective date—2020 c 227 ss 3-13:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Findings—Intent—2020 c 227:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Rule-making authority—2020 c 227:** See RCW 26.09.916.

**Effective date—2009 c 476:** See note following RCW 26.09.105.

**Severability—2007 c 143:** See note following RCW 26.18.170.

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

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

**Effective dates—Severability—1990 1st ex.s. c 2:** See notes following RCW 26.09.100.

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Effective dates—Severability—1988 c 275:** See notes following RCW 26.19.001.

**Effective date—1982 c 189:** See note following RCW 34.12.020.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.056 Notice and finding of financial responsibility pursuant to an acknowledgment of parentage—Procedure for contesting—Rules.** (1) (a) If an acknowledged parent has signed an acknowledgment

of parentage that has been filed with the state registrar of vital statistics:

(i) The division of child support may serve a notice and finding of financial responsibility under RCW 74.20A.055 based on the acknowledgment. The division of child support shall attach a copy of the acknowledgment or certification of the birth record information advising of the existence of a filed acknowledgment of parentage to the notice;

(ii) The notice shall include a statement that the acknowledged parent or any other signatory may commence a proceeding in court to rescind or challenge the acknowledgment or denial of parentage under RCW 26.26A.235 and 26.26A.240;

(iii) A statement that the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support who is a parent of the child or children covered by the order, are responsible for providing health care coverage for the child if accessible coverage that can be extended to cover the child is or becomes available to the obligated person through employment or is union-related as provided under RCW 26.09.105;

(iv) The party commencing the action to rescind or challenge the acknowledgment or denial must serve notice on the division of child support and the office of the prosecuting attorney in the county in which the proceeding is commenced. Commencement of a proceeding to rescind or challenge the acknowledgment or denial stays the establishment of the notice and finding of financial responsibility, if the notice has not yet become a final order; and

(v) A statement that the support obligation under the order may be abated to ten dollars per month per order as provided in RCW 26.09.320 if the person required to pay support is confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility.

(b) If neither party to the notice files an application for an adjudicative proceeding or the signatories to the acknowledgment or denial do not commence a proceeding to rescind or challenge the acknowledgment of parentage, the amount of support stated in the notice and finding of financial responsibility becomes final, subject only to a subsequent determination under RCW 26.26A.400 through 26.26A.515 that the parent-child relationship does not exist. The division of child support does not refund nor return any amounts collected under a notice that becomes final under this section or RCW 74.20A.055, even if a court later determines that the acknowledgment is void.

(c) An acknowledged parent or other party to the notice who objects to the amount of support requested in the notice may file an application for an adjudicative proceeding up to twenty days after the date the notice was served. An application for an adjudicative proceeding may be filed within one year of service of the notice and finding of parental responsibility without the necessity for a showing of good cause or upon a showing of good cause thereafter. An adjudicative proceeding under this section shall be pursuant to RCW 74.20A.055. The only issues shall be the amount of the accrued debt and the amount of the current and future support obligation.

(i) If the application for an adjudicative proceeding is filed within twenty days of service of the notice, collection action shall be stayed pending a final decision by the department.

(ii) If the application for an adjudicative proceeding is not filed within twenty days of the service of the notice, any amounts collected under the notice shall be neither refunded nor returned if the person required to pay support under the notice is later found not to be required to pay support.

(d) If neither the acknowledged parent nor the person entitled to receive support requests an adjudicative proceeding, or if no timely action is brought to rescind or challenge the acknowledgment or denial after service of the notice, the notice of financial responsibility becomes final for all intents and purposes and may be overturned only by a subsequent superior court order entered under RCW 26.26A.400 through 26.26A.515.

(2) Acknowledgments of parentage are subject to requirements of chapters 26.26A, 26.26B, and 70.58A RCW.

(3) The department and the department of health may adopt rules to implement the requirements under this section.

(4) The department has rule-making authority to enact rules consistent with 42 U.S.C. Sec. 652(f) and 42 U.S.C. Sec. 666(a)(19) as amended by section 7307 of the deficit reduction act of 2005. Additionally, the department has rule-making authority to implement regulations required under 45 C.F.R. Parts 302, 303, 304, 305, and 308. [2020 c 227 s 11. Prior: 2019 c 148 s 38; 2019 c 46 s 5053; 2018 c 150 s 108; 2009 c 476 s 8; 2007 c 143 s 9; prior: 2002 c 302 s 707; 2002 c 199 s 6; 1997 c 58 s 941; prior: 1994 c 230 s 19; 1994 c 146 s 5; 1989 c 55 s 3.]

**Effective date—2020 c 227 ss 3-13:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Findings—Intent—2020 c 227:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Rule-making authority—2020 c 227:** See RCW 26.09.916.

**Effective date—Rule-making authority—2019 c 148:** See RCW 70.58A.901 and 70.58A.902.

**Effective date—2009 c 476:** See note following RCW 26.09.105.

**Severability—2007 c 143:** See note following RCW 26.18.170.

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.057 Jurisdiction over responsible parent.** A support obligation arising under the statutes or common law of this state binds the responsible parent, present in this state, regardless of the presence or residence of the custodian or children. The obligor is presumed to have been present in the state of Washington during the period for which support is sought until otherwise shown. The department may establish an administrative order pursuant to RCW 74.20A.055 that is based upon any support obligation imposed or imposable under the statutes or common law of any state in which the

obligor was present during the period for which support is sought.  
[1985 c 276 s 15.]

**RCW 74.20A.059 Modification of administrative orders establishing child support—Petition—Grounds—Procedure.** (1) The department, the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, or the person required to pay support may petition for a prospective modification of a final administrative order if:

(a) The administrative order has not been superseded by a superior court order; and

(b) There has been a substantial change of circumstances, except as provided under RCW 74.20A.055(4)(d) or subsection (2) of this section.

(2) The department, the person entitled to receive support, the payee under the order, or the person required to pay support may petition for a prospective modification of a final administrative order if the person required to pay support is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, and the support order does not contain language regarding abatement due to incarceration.

(a) The petition may be filed at any time after the administrative support order became a final order, as long as the person required to pay support is currently incarcerated.

(b) As part of the petition for modification, the petitioner may also request that the support obligation be abated to ten dollars per month per order due to incarceration, as provided in RCW 26.09.320.

(3) An order of child support may be modified at any time without a showing of substantially changed circumstances if incarceration of the person required to pay support is the basis for the inconsistency between the existing child support order amount and the amount of support determined as a result of a review.

(4) An order of child support may be modified one year or more after it has been entered without showing a substantial change of circumstances:

(a) If the order in practice works a severe economic hardship on either party or the child; or

(b) If a child is a full-time student and reasonably expected to complete secondary school or the equivalent level of vocational or technical training before the child becomes nineteen years of age upon a finding that there is a need to extend support beyond the eighteenth birthday.

(5) An order may be modified without showing a substantial change of circumstances if the requested modification is to:

(a) Require medical support under RCW 26.09.105 for a child covered by the order;

(b) Modify an existing order for health care coverage; or

(c) Modify an existing order when the person required to pay support has been released from incarceration, as provided in RCW 26.09.320(3)(d).

(6) Support orders may be adjusted once every twenty-four months based upon changes in the income of the parties to the order without a showing of substantially changed circumstances. This provision does not mean that the income of a person entitled to receive support who is not a parent of the child or children covered by the order must be

disclosed or be included in the calculations under chapter 26.19 RCW when determining the support obligation.

(7) (a) All administrative orders entered on, before, or after September 1, 1991, may be modified based upon changes in the child support schedule established in chapter 26.19 RCW without a substantial change of circumstances. The petition may be filed based on changes in the child support schedule after twelve months has expired from the entry of the administrative order or the most recent modification order setting child support, whichever is later. However, if a party is granted relief under this provision, twenty-four months must pass before another petition for modification may be filed pursuant to subsection (6) of this section.

(b) If, pursuant to subsection (6) of this section or (a) of this subsection, the order modifies a child support obligation by more than thirty percent and the change would cause significant hardship, the change may be implemented in two equal increments, one at the time of the entry of the order and the second six months from the entry of the order. Twenty-four months must pass following the second change before a petition for modification under subsection (6) of this section may be filed.

(8) An increase in the wage or salary of the person entitled to receive the support transfer payments is not a substantial change in circumstances for purposes of modification under subsection (1)(b) of this section. The voluntary unemployment or voluntary underemployment of the person required to pay support, by itself, is not a substantial change of circumstances. The income of the person entitled to receive support is only disclosed or considered if that person is a parent of the child or children covered by the order.

(9) The department shall file the petition and a supporting affidavit with the office of administrative hearings when the department petitions for modification.

(10) The person required to pay support or the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support shall follow the procedures in this chapter for filing an application for an adjudicative proceeding to petition for modification.

(11) Upon the filing of a proper petition or application, the office of administrative hearings shall issue an order directing each party to appear and show cause why the order should not be modified.

(12) If the presiding or reviewing officer finds a modification is appropriate, the officer shall modify the order and set current and future support under chapter 26.19 RCW. [2020 c 227 s 12; 2019 c 275 s 3; 2018 c 150 s 109; 2009 c 476 s 9; 1991 c 367 s 47.]

**Effective date—2020 c 227 ss 3-13:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Findings—Intent—2020 c 227:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Rule-making authority—2020 c 227:** See RCW 26.09.916.

**Effective date—2009 c 476:** See note following RCW 26.09.105.

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

**RCW 74.20A.060 Assertion of lien—Effect.** (1) The secretary may assert a lien upon the real or personal property of a responsible parent:

(a) When a support payment is past due, if the parent's support order contains notice that liens may be enforced against real and personal property, or notice that action may be taken under this chapter;

(b) Twenty-one days after service of a notice of support debt under RCW 74.20A.040;

(c) Twenty-one days after service of a notice and finding of financial responsibility under RCW 74.20A.055;

(d) Twenty-one days after service of a notice and finding of parental responsibility;

(e) Twenty-one days after service of a notice of support owed under RCW 26.23.110; or

(f) When appropriate under RCW 74.20A.270.

(2) The division of child support may use uniform interstate lien forms adopted by the United States department of health and human services to assert liens on a responsible parent's real and personal property located in another state.

(3) The claim of the department for a support debt, not paid when due, shall be a lien against all property of the debtor with priority of a secured creditor. This lien shall be separate and apart from, and in addition to, any other lien created by, or provided for, in this title. The lien shall attach to all real and personal property of the debtor on the date of filing of such statement with the county auditor of the county in which such property is located.

(4) Whenever a support lien has been filed and there is in the possession of any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision or department of the state having notice of said lien any property which may be subject to the support lien, such property shall not be paid over, released, sold, transferred, encumbered or conveyed, except as provided for by the exemptions contained in RCW 74.20A.090 and 74.20A.130, unless:

(a) A written release or waiver signed by the secretary has been delivered to said person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision or department of the state; or

(b) A determination has been made in an adjudicative proceeding pursuant to RCW 74.20A.055 or by a superior court ordering release of said support lien on the basis that no debt exists or that the debt has been satisfied. [1997 c 58 s 906. Prior: 1989 c 360 s 9; 1989 c 175 s 153; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 5; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 7; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 6.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Effective dates—1989 c 360 ss 9, 10, 16, and 39:** "(1) Sections 9, 10, and 16 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, and safety, the support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and shall take effect immediately [May 12, 1989].

(2) Section 39 of this act shall take effect July 1, 1990." [1989 c 360 s 43.]



**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.070 Service of lien.** (1) The secretary may at any time after filing of a support lien serve a copy of the lien upon any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state in possession of earnings, or deposits or balances held in any bank account of any nature which are due, owing, or belonging to said debtor.

(2) The support lien shall be served upon the person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state:

(a) In the manner prescribed for the service of summons in a civil action;

(b) By certified mail, return receipt requested; or

(c) By electronic means if there is an agreement between the secretary and the person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state to accept service by electronic means.

(3) No lien filed under RCW 74.20A.060 shall have any effect against earnings or bank deposits or balances unless it states the amount of the support debt accrued and unless service upon the person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state in possession of earnings or bank accounts, deposits or balances is accomplished pursuant to this section. [1997 c 130 s 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 8; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 7.]

*Civil procedure—Commencement of actions: Chapter 4.28 RCW.*

**RCW 74.20A.080 Order to withhold and deliver—Issuance and service—Contents—Effect—Duties of person served—Processing fee.**

(1) The secretary may issue to any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States, an order to withhold and deliver property of any kind, including but not restricted to earnings which are or might become due, owing, or belonging to the debtor, when the secretary has reason to believe that there is in the possession of such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States property which is or might become due, owing, or belonging to said debtor. Such order to withhold and deliver may be issued:

(a) At any time, if a responsible parent's support order:

(i) Contains notice that withholding action may be taken against earnings, wages, or assets without further notice to the parent; or

(ii) Includes a statement that other income-withholding action under this chapter may be taken without further notice to the responsible parent;

(b) Twenty-one days after service of a notice of support debt under RCW 74.20A.040;

(c) Twenty-one days after service of a notice and finding of parental responsibility under RCW 74.20A.056;

(d) Twenty-one days after service of a notice of support owed under RCW 26.23.110;

(e) Twenty-one days after service of a notice and finding of financial responsibility under RCW 74.20A.055; or

(f) When appropriate under RCW 74.20A.270.

(2) The order to withhold and deliver shall:

(a) State the amount to be withheld on a periodic basis if the order to withhold and deliver is being served to secure payment of monthly current support;

(b) State the amount of the support debt accrued;

(c) State in summary the terms of RCW 74.20A.090 and 74.20A.100;

(d) Be served:

(i) In the manner prescribed for the service of a summons in a civil action;

(ii) By certified mail, return receipt requested;

(iii) By electronic means if there is an agreement between the secretary and the person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States to accept service by electronic means;

(iv) By regular mail to a responsible parent's employer unless the division of child support reasonably believes that service of process in the manner prescribed in (d)(i) or (ii) of this subsection is required for initiating an action to ensure employer compliance with the withholding requirement; or

(v) By regular mail to an address if designated by the financial institution as a central levy or garnishment address, and if the notice is clearly identified as a levy or garnishment order. Before the division of child support may initiate an action for noncompliance with a withholding action against a financial institution, the division of child support must serve the order to withhold and deliver on the financial institution in the manner described in (d)(i) or (ii) of this subsection.

(3) The division of child support must use income withholding forms adopted and required by the United States department of health and human services to take withholding actions under this section.

(4) Any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States upon whom service has been made is hereby required to:

(a) Answer said order to withhold and deliver within twenty days, exclusive of the day of service, under oath and in writing, and shall make true answers to the matters inquired of therein; and

(b) Provide further and additional answers when requested by the secretary.

(5) The returned answer or a payment remitted to the division of child support by the employer constitutes proof of service of the order to withhold and deliver in the case where the order was served by regular mail.

(6) Any such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States in possession of any property which may be subject to the claim of the department shall:

(a) (i) Immediately withhold such property upon receipt of the order to withhold and deliver; and

(ii) Within seven working days deliver the property to the secretary;

(iii) Continue to withhold earnings payable to the debtor at each succeeding disbursement interval as provided for in RCW 74.20A.090, and deliver amounts withheld from earnings to the secretary within seven working days of the date earnings are payable to the debtor;

(iv) Deliver amounts withheld from periodic payments to the secretary within seven working days of the date the payments are payable to the debtor;

(v) Inform the secretary of the date the amounts were withheld as requested under this section; or

(b) Furnish to the secretary a good and sufficient bond, satisfactory to the secretary, conditioned upon final determination of liability.

(7) An order to withhold and deliver served under this section shall not expire until:

(a) Released in writing by the division of child support;

(b) Terminated by court order;

(c) A person or entity, other than an employer as defined in Title 50 RCW, who has received the order to withhold and deliver does not possess property of or owe money to the debtor; or

(d) An employer who has received the order to withhold and deliver no longer employs, contracts, or owes money to the debtor under a contract of employment, express or implied.

(8) Where money is due and owing under any contract of employment, express or implied, or is held by any person, firm, corporation, or association, political subdivision, or department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States subject to withdrawal by the debtor, such money shall be delivered by remittance payable to the order of the secretary.

(9) Delivery to the secretary of the money or other property held or claimed shall satisfy the requirement and serve as full acquittance of the order to withhold and deliver.

(10) A person, firm, corporation, or association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States that complies with the order to withhold and deliver under this chapter is not civilly liable to the debtor for complying with the order to withhold and deliver under this chapter.

(11) The secretary may hold the money or property delivered under this section in trust for application on the indebtedness involved or for return, without interest, in accordance with final determination of liability or nonliability.

(12) Exemptions contained in RCW 74.20A.090 apply to orders to withhold and deliver issued under this section.

(13) The secretary shall also, on or before the date of service of the order to withhold and deliver, mail or cause to be mailed a copy of the order to withhold and deliver to the debtor at the debtor's last known post office address, or, in the alternative, a copy of the order to withhold and deliver shall be served on the debtor in the same manner as a summons in a civil action on or before the date of service of the order or within two days thereafter. The copy of the order shall be mailed or served together with a concise explanation of the right to petition for judicial review. This requirement is not jurisdictional, but, if the copy is not mailed or served as in this section provided, or if any irregularity appears with respect to the mailing or service, the superior court, in its discretion on motion of the debtor promptly made and supported by affidavit showing that the debtor has suffered substantial injury due

to the failure to mail the copy, may set aside the order to withhold and deliver and award to the debtor an amount equal to the damages resulting from the secretary's failure to serve on or mail to the debtor the copy.

(14) An order to withhold and deliver issued in accordance with this section has priority over any other wage assignment, garnishment, attachment, or other legal process.

(15) The division of child support shall notify any person, firm, corporation, association, or political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States required to withhold and deliver the earnings of a debtor under this action that they may deduct a processing fee from the remainder of the debtor's earnings, even if the remainder would otherwise be exempt under RCW 74.20A.090. The processing fee shall not exceed ten dollars for the first disbursement to the department and one dollar for each subsequent disbursement under the order to withhold and deliver.

[2021 c 35 s 17; 2002 c 199 s 7; 2000 c 86 s 8; 1998 c 160 s 1. Prior: 1997 c 130 s 7; 1997 c 58 s 907; 1994 c 230 s 20; prior: 1989 c 360 s 10; 1989 c 175 s 154; 1985 c 276 s 6; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 6; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 9; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 8.]

**Effective date—1998 c 160 ss 1, 5, and 8:** "Sections 1, 5, and 8 of this act take effect October 1, 1998." [1998 c 160 s 9.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Effective dates—1989 c 360 ss 9, 10, 16, and 39:** See note following RCW 74.20A.060.

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.090 Certain amount of earnings exempt from lien or order—"Earnings" and "disposable earnings" defined.** Whenever a support lien or order to withhold and deliver is served upon any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state asserting a support debt against earnings and there is in the possession of such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state, any such earnings, RCW 6.27.150 shall not apply, but fifty percent of the disposable earnings shall be exempt and may be disbursed to the debtor whether such earnings are paid, or to be paid weekly, monthly, or at other intervals and whether there be due the debtor earnings for one week or for a longer period. The lien or order to withhold and deliver shall continue to operate and require said person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state to withhold the nonexempt portion of earnings at each succeeding earnings disbursement interval until the entire amount of the support debt stated in the lien or order to withhold and deliver has been withheld. As used in this chapter, the term "earnings" means compensation paid or payable for personal services, whether denominated as wages,

salary, commission, bonus, or otherwise, and, notwithstanding any other provision of law making such payments exempt from garnishment, attachment, or other process to satisfy support obligation, specifically includes periodic payments pursuant to pension or retirement programs, or insurance policies of any type, but does not include payments made under Title 50 RCW, except as provided in RCW 50.40.020 and 50.40.050 or Title 74 RCW. Earnings shall specifically include all gain derived from capital, from labor, or from both combined, not including profit gained through sale or conversion of capital assets. The term "disposable earnings" means that part of the earnings of any individual remaining after the deduction from those earnings of any amount required by law to be withheld. [1982 1st ex.s. c 18 s 12. Prior: 1982 c 201 s 21; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 10; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 10; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 9.]

**Severability—Conflict with federal requirements—1982 1st ex.s. c 18:** See notes following RCW 50.12.200.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.095 Support enforcement services—Action against earnings within state—Notice.** When providing support enforcement services, the office of support enforcement may take action, under this chapter and chapter 26.23 RCW, against a responsible parent's earnings or assets, located in, or subject to the jurisdiction of, the state of Washington regardless of the presence or residence of the responsible parent. If the responsible parent resides in another state or country, the office of support enforcement shall, unless otherwise authorized by state or federal law, serve a notice under RCW 74.20A.040 more than sixty days before taking collection action. [2000 c 86 s 9; 1991 c 367 s 48.]

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

**RCW 74.20A.100 Civil liability upon failure to comply with order or lien—Collection.** (1) Any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, or department of the state shall be liable to the department, or to the agency or firm providing child support enforcement for another state, under Title IV-D of the federal social security act and issuing a notice, garnishment, or wage assignment attaching wages or earnings in satisfaction of a support obligation, in the amount that should have been withheld, together with costs, interest, and reasonable attorney fees if that person or entity:

- (a) Fails to answer an order to withhold and deliver, or substantially similar action issued by the agency or firm providing child support enforcement for another state, under Title IV-D of the federal social security act, within the time prescribed herein;
- (b) Fails or refuses to deliver property pursuant to said order;
- (c) After actual notice of filing of a support lien, pays over, releases, sells, transfers, or conveys real or personal property subject to a support lien to or for the benefit of the debtor or any other person;

(d) Fails or refuses to surrender property distrained under RCW 74.20A.130 upon demand; or

(e) Fails or refuses to honor an assignment of earnings presented by the secretary.

(2) The secretary is authorized to issue a notice of noncompliance under RCW 74.20A.350 or to proceed in superior court to obtain a judgment for noncompliance under this section. [1997 c 296 s 15; 1997 c 58 s 895; 1989 c 360 s 5; 1985 c 276 s 7; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 11; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 10.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 1997 c 58 s 895 and by 1997 c 296 s 15, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section under RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.110 Release of excess to debtor.** Whenever any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision or department of the state has in its possession earnings, deposits, accounts, or balances in excess of the amount of the debt claimed by the department, such person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision or department of the state may, without liability under this chapter, release said excess to the debtor. [1979 ex.s. c 171 s 7; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 11.]

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.120 Banks, savings and loan associations, credit unions—Service on main office or branch, effect—Collection actions against community bank account, right to adjudicative proceeding.** A lien, order to withhold and deliver, or any other notice or document authorized by this chapter or chapter 26.23 RCW may be served on the main office of a bank, savings and loan association, or credit union or on a branch office of such financial institution. Service on the main office shall be effective to attach the deposits of a responsible parent in the financial institution and compensation payable for personal services due the responsible parent from the financial institution. Service on a branch office shall be effective to attach the deposits, accounts, credits, or other personal property of the responsible parent, excluding compensation payable for personal services, in the possession or control of the particular branch served.

If the department initiates collection action under this chapter against a community bank account, the debtor or the debtor's spouse, upon service on the department of a timely application, has a right to an adjudicative proceeding governed by chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act, to establish that the funds in the account, or a portion of those funds, were the earnings of the nonobligated spouse, and are exempt from the satisfaction of the child support obligation of the debtor pursuant to RCW 26.16.200. [1989 c

360 s 30; 1989 c 175 s 155; 1983 1st ex.s. c 41 s 3; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 12.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 1989 c 175 s 155 and by 1989 c 360 s 30, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section pursuant to RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1983 1st ex.s. c 41:** See note following RCW 26.09.060.

**RCW 74.20A.130 Distraint, seizure and sale of property subject to liens under RCW 74.20A.060—Procedure.** Whenever a support lien has been filed pursuant to RCW 74.20A.060, the secretary may collect the support debt stated in said lien by the distraint, seizure, and sale of the property subject to said lien. Not less than ten days prior to the date of sale, the secretary shall cause a copy of the notice of sale to be transmitted by regular mail and by any form of mailing requiring a return receipt to the debtor and any person known to have or claim an interest in the property. Said notice shall contain a general description of the property to be sold and the time, date, and place of the sale. The notice of sale shall be posted in at least two public places in the county wherein the distraint has been made. The time of sale shall not be less than ten nor more than twenty days from the date of posting of such notices. Said sale shall be conducted by the secretary, who shall proceed to sell such property by parcel or by lot at a public auction, and who may set a minimum reasonable price to include the expenses of making a levy and of advertising the sale, and if the amount bid for such property at the sale is not equal to the price so fixed, the secretary may declare such property to be purchased by the department for such price, or may conduct another sale of such property pursuant to the provisions of this section. In the event of sale, the debtor's account shall be credited with the amount for which the property has been sold. Property acquired by the department as herein prescribed may be sold by the secretary at public or private sale, and the amount realized shall be placed in the state general fund to the credit of the department of social and health services. In all cases of sale, as aforesaid, the secretary shall issue a bill of sale or a deed to the purchaser and said bill of sale or deed shall be prima facie evidence of the right of the secretary to make such sale and conclusive evidence of the regularity of his or her proceeding in making the sale, and shall transfer to the purchaser all right, title, and interest of the debtor in said property. The proceeds of any such sale, except in those cases wherein the property has been acquired by the department, shall be first applied by the secretary to reimbursement of the costs of distraint and sale, and thereafter in satisfaction of the delinquent account. Any excess which shall thereafter remain in the hands of the secretary shall be refunded to the debtor. Sums so refundable to a debtor may be subject to seizure or distraint by any taxing authority of the state or its political subdivisions or by the secretary for new sums due and owing subsequent to the subject proceeding. Except as specifically provided in this chapter, there shall be exempt from distraint, seizure, and

sale under this chapter such property as is exempt therefrom under the laws of this state. [2013 c 23 s 216; 1987 c 435 s 32; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 12; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 13.]

**Effective date—1987 c 435:** See RCW 26.23.900.

**RCW 74.20A.140 Action for foreclosure of support lien—**

**Satisfaction.** Whenever a support lien has been filed, an action in foreclosure of lien upon real or personal property may be brought in the superior court of the county where real or personal property is or was located and the lien was filed and judgment shall be rendered in favor of the department for the amount due, with costs, and the court shall allow, as part of the costs, the moneys paid for making and filing the claim of lien, and a reasonable attorney's fee, and the court shall order any property upon which any lien provided for by this chapter is established, to be sold by the sheriff of the proper county to satisfy the lien and costs. The payment of the lien debt, costs and reasonable attorney fees, at any time before sale, shall satisfy the judgment of foreclosure. Where the net proceeds of sale upon application to the debt claimed do not satisfy the debt in full, the department shall have judgment over for any deficiency remaining unsatisfied and further levy and sales upon other property of the judgment debtor may be made under the same execution. In all sales contemplated under this section, advertising of notice shall only be necessary for two weeks in a newspaper published in the county where said property is located, and if there be no newspaper therein, then in the most convenient newspaper having a circulation in such county. Remedies provided for herein are alternatives to remedies provided for in other sections of this chapter. [1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 13; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 14.]

**RCW 74.20A.150 Satisfaction of lien after foreclosure**

**proceedings instituted—Redemption.** Any person owning real property, or any interest in real property, against which a support lien has been filed and foreclosure instituted, shall have the right to pay the amount due, together with expenses of the proceedings and reasonable attorneys' fees to the secretary and upon such payment the secretary shall restore said property to him or her and all further proceedings in the said foreclosure action shall cease. Said person shall also have the right within two hundred forty days after sale of property foreclosed under RCW 74.20A.140 to redeem said property by making payment to the purchaser in the amount paid by the purchaser plus interest thereon at the rate of six percent per annum. [2013 c 23 s 217; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 14; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 15.]

**RCW 74.20A.160 Secretary may set debt payment schedule, release**

**funds in certain hardship cases.** With respect to any arrearages on a support debt assessed under this chapter, the secretary may at any time consistent with the income, earning capacity and resources of the debtor, set or reset a level and schedule of payments to be paid upon a support debt. The secretary may, upon petition of the debtor providing sufficient evidence of hardship, after consideration of the child support schedule adopted under \*RCW 26.19.040, release or refund



moneys taken pursuant to RCW 74.20A.080 to provide for the reasonable necessities of the responsible parent or parents and minor children in the home of the responsible parent. Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the secretary to take any action which would require collection of less than the obligation for current support required under a superior court order or an administrative order or to take any action which would result in a bar of collection of arrearages from the debtor by reason of the statute of limitations. [1988 c 275 s 11; 1985 c 276 s 8; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 8; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 16.]

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 26.19.040 was repealed by 1991 sp.s. c 28 s 8, effective September 1, 1991.

**Effective dates—Severability—1988 c 275:** See notes following RCW 26.19.001.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.170 Secretary may release lien or order or return seized property—Effect.** The secretary may at any time release a support lien, or order to withhold and deliver, on all or part of the property of the debtor, or return seized property without liability, if assurance of payment is deemed adequate by the secretary, or if said action will facilitate the collection of the debt, but said release or return shall not operate to prevent future action to collect from the same or other property. [1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 15; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 17.]

**RCW 74.20A.180 Secretary may make demand, file and serve liens, when payments appear in jeopardy.** If the secretary finds that the collection of any support debt, accrued under a support order, based upon subrogation or an authorization to enforce and collect under RCW 74.20A.030, or assignment of, or a request for support enforcement services to enforce and collect the amount of support ordered by any support order is in jeopardy, the secretary may make a written demand under RCW 74.20A.040 for immediate payment of the support debt and, upon failure or refusal immediately to pay said support debt, may file and serve liens pursuant to RCW 74.20A.060 and 74.20A.070, without regard to the twenty day period provided for in RCW 74.20A.040: PROVIDED, That no further action under RCW 74.20A.080, 74.20A.130, and 74.20A.140 may be taken until the notice requirements of RCW 74.20A.040 are met. [2000 c 86 s 10; 1985 c 276 s 9; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 16; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 18.]

**RCW 74.20A.188 Request for assistance on automated enforcement of interstate case—Certification required.** (1) Before the state may assist another state or jurisdiction with a high-volume automated administrative enforcement of an interstate case, the requesting state must certify that:

(a) The requesting state has met all due process requirements for the establishment of the support order;

(b) The requesting state has met all due process requirements for the enforcement of the support order, including that the obligor has

been notified that another state may take action against the obligor's wages, earnings, assets, or benefits, and may enforce against the obligor's real and personal property under the child support statutes of this state or any other state without further notice; and

(c) The amount of arrears transmitted by the requesting state is due under the support order.

(2) Receipt of a request for assistance on automated enforcement of an interstate case by the state constitutes certification under this section. [2000 c 86 s 11.]

**RCW 74.20A.200 Judicial relief after administrative remedies exhausted.** Any person against whose property a support lien has been filed or an order to withhold and deliver has been served pursuant to this chapter may apply for relief to the superior court of the county wherein the property is located. It is the intent of this chapter that jurisdictional and constitutional issues, if any, shall be subject to review, but that administrative remedies be exhausted prior to judicial review. [1985 c 276 s 10; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 9; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 18; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 20.]

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.220 Charging off child support debts as uncollectible—Compromise—Waiver of any bar to collection.** Any support debt due the department from a responsible parent may be written off and cease to be accounted as an asset if the secretary finds there are no cost-effective means of collecting the debt.

The department may accept offers of compromise of disputed claims or may grant partial or total charge-off of support arrears owed to the department up to the total amount of public assistance paid to or for the benefit of the persons for whom the support obligation was incurred. The department shall adopt rules as to the considerations to be made in the granting or denial of partial or total charge-off and offers of compromise of disputed claims of debt for support arrears. The rights of the payee under an order for support shall not be prejudiced if the department accepts an offer of compromise, or grants a partial or total charge-off under this section.

The responsible parent owing a support debt may execute a written extension or waiver of any statute which may bar or impair the collection of the debt and the extension or waiver shall be effective according to its terms. [1989 c 360 s 4; 1989 c 78 s 2; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 16; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 20; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 22.]

**Reviser's note:** This section was amended by 1989 c 78 s 2 and by 1989 c 360 s 4, each without reference to the other. Both amendments are incorporated in the publication of this section pursuant to RCW 1.12.025(2). For rule of construction, see RCW 1.12.025(1).

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.230 Employee debtor rights protected—Remedies.** No employer shall discharge or discipline an employee or refuse to hire a person for reason that an assignment of earnings has been presented in settlement of a support debt or that a support lien or order to

withhold and deliver has been served against said employee's earnings. If an employer discharges or disciplines an employee or refuses to hire a person in violation of this section, the employee or person shall have a cause of action against the employer. The employer shall be liable for double the amount of lost wages and any other damages suffered as a result of the violation and for costs and reasonable attorney fees, and shall be subject to a civil penalty of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars for each violation. The employer may also be ordered to hire, rehire, or reinstate the aggrieved individual. [1985 c 276 s 11; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 21; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 23.]

**RCW 74.20A.240 Assignment of earnings to be honored—Effect—Income withholding forms—Processing fee.** (1) Any person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States employing a person owing a support debt or obligation, shall honor, according to its terms, a duly executed assignment of earnings presented by the secretary as a plan to satisfy or retire a support debt or obligation. This requirement to honor the assignment of earnings and the assignment of earnings itself shall be applicable whether said earnings are to be paid presently or in the future and shall continue in force and effect until released in writing by the secretary. Payment of moneys pursuant to an assignment of earnings presented by the secretary shall serve as full acquittance under any contract of employment. A person, firm, corporation, association, political subdivision, department of the state, or agency, subdivision, or instrumentality of the United States that complies with the assignment of earnings under this chapter is not civilly liable to the debtor for complying with the assignment of earnings under this chapter. The secretary shall be released from liability for improper receipt of moneys under an assignment of earnings upon return of any moneys so received.

(2) An assignment of earnings presented by the secretary in accordance with this section must include income withholding forms adopted and required by the United States department of health and human services.

(3) An assignment of earnings presented by the secretary in accordance with this section has priority over any other wage assignment, garnishment, attachment, or other legal process except for another wage assignment, garnishment, attachment, or other legal process for support moneys.

(4) The employer may deduct a processing fee from the remainder of the debtor's earnings, even if the remainder would be exempt under RCW 74.20A.090. The processing fee shall not exceed fifteen dollars from the first disbursement to the department and one dollar for each subsequent disbursement under the assignment of earnings. [2021 c 35 s 18; 1997 c 296 s 16; 1994 c 230 s 21; 1985 c 276 s 12; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 22; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 24.]

**RCW 74.20A.250 Secretary empowered to act as attorney, endorse drafts.** Whenever the secretary has been authorized under RCW 74.20.040 to take action to establish, enforce, and collect support moneys, the custodial parent and the child or children are deemed,

without the necessity of signing any document, to have appointed the secretary as his or her true and lawful attorney-in-fact to act in his or her name, place, and stead to perform the specific act of endorsing any and all drafts, checks, money orders or other negotiable instruments representing support payments which are received on behalf of said child or children to effect proper and lawful distribution of the support moneys in accordance with 42 U.S.C. Sec. 657. [1985 c 276 s 13; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 20; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 23; 1971 ex.s. c 164 s 25.]

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.260 Industrial insurance disability payments subject to collection by office of support enforcement.** Disability payments made pursuant to Title 51 RCW shall be classified as earnings and shall be subject to collection action by the office for support enforcement under this chapter and all other applicable state statutes. [1987 c 435 s 34; 1973 1st ex.s. c 183 s 24.]

**Effective date—1987 c 435:** See RCW 26.23.900.

**RCW 74.20A.270 Department claim for support moneys—Notice—Answer—Adjudicative proceeding—Judicial review—Moneys not subject to claim.** (1) The secretary may issue a notice of retained support or notice to recover a support payment to any person:

(a) Who is in possession of support moneys, or who has had support moneys in his or her possession at some time in the past, which support moneys were or are claimed by the department as the property of the department by assignment, subrogation, or by operation of law or legal process under chapter 74.20A RCW;

(b) Who has received a support payment erroneously directed to the wrong payee, or issued by the department in error; or

(c) Who is in possession of a support payment obtained through the internal revenue service tax refund offset process, which payment was later reclaimed from the department by the internal revenue service as a result of an amended tax return filed by the obligor or the obligor's spouse.

(2) The notice shall state the legal basis for the claim and shall provide sufficient detail to enable the person to identify the support moneys in issue.

(3) The department shall serve the notice by certified mail, return receipt requested, or in the manner of a summons in a civil action.

(4) The amounts claimed in the notice shall become assessed, determined, and subject to collection twenty days from the date of service of the notice unless within those twenty days the person in possession of the support moneys:

(a) Acknowledges the department's right to the moneys and executes an agreed settlement providing for repayment of the moneys; or

(b) Requests an adjudicative proceeding to determine the rights to ownership of the support moneys in issue. The hearing shall be held pursuant to this section, chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the rules of the department. The burden of proof to

establish ownership of the support moneys claimed is on the department.

(5) After the twenty-day period, a person served with a notice under this section may, at any time within one year from the date of service of the notice of support debt, petition the secretary or the secretary's designee for an adjudicative proceeding upon a showing of any of the grounds enumerated in RCW 4.72.010 or superior court civil rule 60. A copy of the petition shall also be served on the department. The filing of the petition shall not stay any collection action being taken, but the debtor may petition the secretary or the secretary's designee for an order staying collection action pending the final administrative order. Any such moneys held and/or taken by collection action after the date of any such stay shall be held by the department pending the final order, to be disbursed in accordance with the final order.

(6) If the debtor fails to attend or participate in the hearing or other stage of an adjudicative proceeding, the presiding officer shall, upon showing of valid service, enter an order declaring the amount of support moneys, as claimed in the notice, to be assessed and determined and subject to collection action.

(7) The department may take action to collect an obligation established under this section using any remedy available under this chapter or chapter 26.09, 26.18, 26.23, or 74.20 RCW for the collection of child support.

(8) If, at any time, the superior court enters judgment for an amount of debt at variance with the amount determined by the final order in an adjudicative proceeding, the judgment shall supersede the final administrative order. The department may take action pursuant to chapter 74.20 or 74.20A RCW to obtain such a judgment or to collect moneys determined by such a judgment to be due and owing.

(9) If a person owing a debt established under this section is receiving public assistance, the department may collect the debt by offsetting up to ten percent of the grant payment received by the person. No collection action may be taken against the earnings of a person receiving cash public assistance to collect a debt assessed under this section.

(10) Payments not credited against the department's debt pursuant to RCW 74.20.101 may not be assessed or collected under this section. [1997 c 58 s 896. Prior: 1989 c 360 s 35; 1989 c 175 s 156; 1985 c 276 s 14; 1984 c 260 s 41; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 18.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.275 Support payments in possession of third parties—Collection.** (1) If a person or entity not entitled to child support payments wrongfully or negligently retains child support payments owed to another or to the Washington state support registry, those payments retain their character as child support payments and may be collected

by the division of child support using any remedy available to the division of child support under Washington law for the collection of child support.

(2) Child support moneys subject to collection under this section may be collected for the duration of the statute of limitations as it applies to the support order governing the support obligations, and any legislative or judicial extensions thereto.

(3) This section applies to the following:

(a) Cases in which an employer or other entity obligated to withhold child support payments from the parent's pay, bank, or escrow account, or from any other asset or distribution of money to the parent, has withheld those payments and failed to remit them to the payee;

(b) Cases in which child support moneys have been paid to the wrong person or entity in error;

(c) Cases in which child support recipients have retained child support payments in violation of a child support assignment executed or arising by operation of law in exchange for the receipt of public assistance; and

(d) Any other case in which child support payments are retained by a party not entitled to them.

(4) This section does not apply to fines levied under \*RCW 74.20A.350(3)(b). [1997 c 58 s 892.]

**\*Reviser's note:** RCW 74.20A.350 was amended by 2018 c 150 s 202, changing subsection (3)(b) to subsection (4)(b), effective January 1, 2019.

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.280 Department to respect privacy of recipients.**

While discharging its responsibilities to enforce the support obligations of responsible parents, the department shall respect the right of privacy of recipients of public assistance and of other persons. Any inquiry about sexual activity shall be limited to that necessary to identify and locate possible fathers and to gather facts needed in the adjudication of parentage. [1987 c 441 s 2; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 23.]

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.290 Applicant for adjudicative proceeding must advise department of current address.** Whenever any person files an application for an adjudicative proceeding under RCW 74.20A.055 or 74.20A.270, after the department has notified the person of the requirements of this section, it shall be the responsibility of the person to notify the department of the person's mailing address at the time the application for an adjudicative proceeding is made and also to notify the department of any subsequent change of mailing address during the pendency of the administrative proceeding and any judicial review. Whenever the person has a duty under this section to advise the department of the person's mailing address, mailing by the

department by certified mail to the person's last known address constitutes service as required by chapters 74.20A and 34.05 RCW. [1989 c 175 s 157; 1979 ex.s. c 171 s 21.]

**Effective date—1989 c 175:** See note following RCW 34.05.010.

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.300 Medical support—Health care coverage required.**

(1) Whenever a support order is entered or modified under this chapter, the department shall require either or both parents to provide medical support for any dependent child, in the nature of health care coverage or a monthly payment toward the premium, as provided under RCW 26.09.105.

(2) A parent ordered to provide health care coverage shall provide proof of such coverage or proof that such coverage is unavailable to the department within twenty days of the entry of the order.

(3) A parent required to provide health care coverage must notify the department and the other parent when coverage terminates.

(4) Every order requiring a parent to provide health care coverage shall be entered in compliance with \*RCW 26.23.050 and be subject to direct enforcement as provided under chapter 26.18 RCW. [2018 c 150 s 110; 2009 c 476 s 6; 1994 c 230 s 22; 1989 c 416 s 6.]

**\*Reviser's note:** The reference to RCW 26.23.050 appears to refer to the amendments made by 1989 c 416 s 8 that were subsequently vetoed by the governor.

**Effective date—2009 c 476:** See note following RCW 26.09.105.

**RCW 74.20A.310 Federal and state cooperation—Rules—**

**Construction.** In furtherance of the policy of the state to cooperate with the federal government in the administration of the child support enforcement program, the department may adopt such rules and regulations as may become necessary to entitle the state to participate in federal funds, unless such rules would be expressly prohibited by law. Any section or provision of law dealing with the child support program which may be susceptible to more than one construction shall be interpreted in favor of the construction most likely to comply with federal laws entitling the state to receive federal funds. If any law dealing with the child support enforcement program is ruled to be in conflict with federal requirements which are a prescribed condition of the allocation of federal funds, such conflicting law is declared to be inoperative solely to the extent of the conflict. [1989 c 416 s 7.]

**RCW 74.20A.320 License suspension—Notice of noncompliance with a child support order—License renewal and reinstatement.**

(1) The department may serve upon a responsible parent a notice informing the responsible parent of the department's intent to submit the parent's name to the department of licensing and any appropriate licensing

entity as a licensee who is not in compliance with a child support order.

(a) If the support order establishing or modifying the child support obligation includes a statement required under RCW 26.23.050 that the responsible parent's privileges to obtain and maintain a license may not be renewed or may be suspended if the parent is not in compliance with a support order, the department may send the notice required by this section to the responsible parent by regular mail, addressed to the responsible parent's last known mailing address on file with the department or by personal service. Notice by regular mail is deemed served three days from the date the notice was deposited with the United States postal service.

(b) If the support order does not include a statement as required under RCW 26.23.050 that the responsible parent's privileges to obtain and maintain a license may not be renewed or may be suspended if the parent is not in compliance with a support order, service of the notice required by this section to the responsible parent must be by certified mail, return receipt requested. If service by certified mail is not successful, service shall be by personal service.

(2) The notice of noncompliance must include the following information:

(a) The address and telephone number of the department's division of child support office that issued the notice;

(b) That in order to prevent the department from certifying the parent's name to the department of licensing or any other licensing entity, the parent has twenty days from receipt of the notice to contact the department and:

(i) Pay the overdue support amount in full;

(ii) Request an adjudicative proceeding as provided in RCW 74.20A.322;

(iii) Agree to a payment schedule with the department as provided in RCW 74.20A.326; or

(iv) File an action to modify the child support order with the appropriate court or administrative forum, in which case the department will stay the certification process up to six months;

(c) That failure to contact the department within twenty days of receipt of the notice will result in certification of the responsible parent's name to the department of licensing and any other appropriate licensing entity for noncompliance with a child support order. Upon receipt of the notice:

(i) The licensing entity will suspend or not renew the parent's license and the department of licensing will suspend or not renew any driver's license that the parent holds until the parent provides the department of licensing and the licensing entity with a release from the department stating that the responsible parent is in compliance with the child support order;

(ii) The department of fish and wildlife will suspend a fishing license, hunting license, occupational licenses, such as a commercial fishing license, or any other license issued under chapter 77.32 RCW that the responsible parent may possess, and suspension of a license by the department of fish and wildlife may also affect the parent's ability to obtain permits, such as special hunting permits, issued by the department. Notice from the department of licensing that a responsible parent's driver's license has been suspended shall serve as notice of the suspension of a license issued under chapter 77.32 RCW;



(d) That suspension of a license will affect insurability if the responsible parent's insurance policy excludes coverage for acts occurring after the suspension of a license;

(e) If the responsible parent subsequently comes into compliance with the child support order, the department will promptly provide the parent and the appropriate licensing entities with a release stating that the parent is in compliance with the order.

(3) When a responsible parent who is served notice under subsection (1) of this section subsequently complies with the child support order, a copy of a release stating that the responsible parent is in compliance with the order shall be transmitted by the department to the appropriate licensing entities.

(4) The department of licensing and a licensing entity may renew, reinstate, or otherwise extend a license in accordance with the licensing entity's or the department of licensing's rules after the licensing entity or the department of licensing receives a copy of the release specified in subsection (3) of this section. The department of licensing and a licensing entity may waive any applicable requirement for reissuance, renewal, or other extension if it determines that the imposition of that requirement places an undue burden on the person and that waiver of the requirement is consistent with the public interest. [2017 c 269 s 6; 2009 c 408 s 1; 1997 c 58 s 802.]

**Effective dates—1997 c 58:** "(2) Sections 801 through 887, 889, and 890 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect July 1, 1997.

(3) Sections 701 through 704 of this act take effect January 1, 1998.

(4) Section 944 of this act takes effect October 1, 1998." [1997 c 58 s 1013.]

**\*Reviser's note:** Subsection (1) of this section was vetoed by the governor. The vetoed language is as follows:

"(1) Sections 1, 2, 101 through 110, 201 through 207, 301 through 329, 401 through 404, 501 through 506, 601, 705, 706, 888, 891 through 943, 945 through 948, and 1002 of this act are necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety, or support of the state government and its existing public institutions, and take effect immediately."

**Intent—1997 c 58:** "It is the intent of the legislature to provide a strong incentive for persons owing child support to make timely payments, and to cooperate with the department of social and health services to establish an appropriate schedule for the payment of any arrears. To further ensure that child support obligations are met, sections 801 through 890 of this act establish a program by which certain licenses may be suspended or not renewed if a person is one hundred eighty days or more in arrears on child support payments.

In the implementation and management of this program, it is the legislature's intent that the objective of the department of social and health services be to obtain payment in full of arrears, or where that is not possible, to enter into agreements with delinquent obligors to make timely support payments and make reasonable payments towards the arrears. The legislature intends that if the obligor refuses to cooperate in establishing a fair and reasonable payment

schedule for arrears or refuses to make timely support payments, the department shall proceed with certification to a licensing entity or the department of licensing that the person is not in compliance with a child support order." [1997 c 58 s 801.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.322 License suspension—Adjudicative proceeding. (1)**

A responsible parent may request an adjudicative proceeding upon service of the notice described in RCW 74.20A.320. The request for an adjudicative proceeding must be received by the department within twenty days of service. The request must be in writing and indicate the current mailing address and daytime phone number, if available, of the responsible parent.

(2) If a responsible parent timely requests an adjudicative proceeding, the department may not certify the name of the parent to the department of licensing or a licensing entity for noncompliance with a child support order unless the adjudicative proceeding results in a finding that the responsible parent is not in compliance with the order and has not made a good faith effort to comply.

(3) The issues that may be considered at the adjudicative proceeding are limited to whether:

(a) The person named as the responsible parent is the responsible parent;

(b) The responsible parent is required to pay child support under a child support order;

(c) The responsible parent is in compliance with the order; and

(d) The responsible parent has made a good faith effort to comply with the order.

(4) If the administrative law judge finds that the parent is not in compliance with the support order, but has made a good faith effort to comply, the administrative law judge shall formulate a payment schedule as provided in RCW 74.20A.326.

(5) The decision resulting from the adjudicative proceeding must be in writing and inform the responsible parent of his or her rights to review. The parent's copy of the decision may be sent by regular mail to the parent's most recent address of record.

(6) The proceedings under this subsection shall be conducted in accordance with the requirements of chapter 34.05 RCW, the administrative procedure act.

(7) The procedures of this section constitute the exclusive administrative remedy for contesting the establishment of noncompliance with a child support order and suspension of a license under this section, and satisfy the requirements of RCW 34.05.422.

(8) For the purposes of this section, "good faith effort to comply" is a factual determination to be made by the administrative law judge based on the responsible parent's payment history, ability to pay, and efforts to find and maintain gainful employment. [2009 c 408 s 2.]

**RCW 74.20A.324 License suspension—Certification of noncompliance.** (1) The department may certify to the department of licensing and any appropriate licensing entity the name of a responsible parent who is not in compliance with a child support order if:

(a) Within twenty-one days after service of a notice issued under RCW 74.20A.320, the responsible parent does not request an adjudicative proceeding or file a motion with the appropriate court or administrative forum to modify the child support obligation;

(b) An adjudicative proceeding results in a decision that the responsible parent is not in compliance with a child support order and has not made a good faith effort to comply;

(c) The court enters a judgment on a petition for judicial review that finds the responsible parent is not in compliance with a child support order and has not made a good faith effort to comply; or

(d) The responsible parent fails to comply with a payment schedule established pursuant to RCW 74.20A.326.

(2) The department shall send by regular mail a copy of any certification of noncompliance filed with the department of licensing or a licensing entity to the responsible parent at the responsible parent's most recent address of record along with information as to how the parent may get his or her license reinstated.

(3) The department of licensing and a licensing entity shall, without undue delay, notify a responsible parent certified by the department under subsection (1) of this section that the parent's driver's license or other license has been suspended because the parent's name has been certified by the department as a responsible parent who is not in compliance with a child support order. [2009 c 408 s 3.]

**RCW 74.20A.326 License suspension—Payment schedule arrangements.** (1) If a responsible parent contacts the department's division of child support office indicated on the notice of noncompliance within twenty days of service of the notice provided in RCW 74.20A.320 and requests arrangement of a payment schedule, the department shall stay the certification of noncompliance during negotiation of the schedule for payment of arrears up to thirty days from the date of contact by the responsible parent.

(2) In proposing or approving a written payment schedule, the department or the administrative law judge shall take into consideration the amount of the arrearages, the amount of the current support order, the earnings of the responsible parent, and the needs of all children who rely on the responsible parent for support. The department or administrative law judge shall consider the individual financial circumstances of each responsible parent in evaluating the parent's ability to pay any proposed payment schedule and shall propose a fair and reasonable payment schedule tailored to the individual financial circumstances of the responsible parent. A payment schedule may include a graduated payment plan and may require a responsible parent to engage in employment-enhancing activities to attain a satisfactory payment level.

(3) A payment schedule may be for the payment of less than current monthly support for a reasonable time and is not required to include a lump sum payment for the amount of arrears. [2009 c 408 s 4.]

**RCW 74.20A.328 License suspension—Rules.** The department may adopt rules to implement and enforce the requirements of RCW 74.20A.320 and 74.20A.322 through 74.20A.326. [2009 c 408 s 5.]

**RCW 74.20A.330 License suspension—Agreements between department and licensing entities—Identification of responsible parents.** (1) The department and all of the various licensing entities subject to RCW 74.20A.320 shall enter into such agreements as are necessary to carry out the requirements of the license suspension program established in RCW 74.20A.320.

(2) The department and all licensing entities subject to RCW 74.20A.320 shall compare data to identify responsible parents who may be subject to the provisions of chapter 58, Laws of 1997. The comparison may be conducted electronically, or by any other means that is jointly agreeable between the department and the particular licensing entity. The data shared shall be limited to those items necessary to [for] implementation of chapter 58, Laws of 1997. The purpose of the comparison shall be to identify current licensees who are not in compliance with a child support order, and to provide to the department the following information regarding those licensees:

- (a) Name;
- (b) Date of birth;
- (c) Address of record;
- (d) Federal employer identification number and social security number;
- (e) Type of license;
- (f) Effective date of license or renewal;
- (g) Expiration date of license; and
- (h) Active or inactive status. [1997 c 58 s 803.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**Effective dates—Intent—1997 c 58:** See notes following RCW 74.20A.320.

**RCW 74.20A.350 Noncompliance—Notice—Fines—License suspension—Hearings—Rules.** (1) The division of child support may issue a notice of noncompliance to any person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government that the division believes is not complying with:

- (a) An income withholding order issued under chapter 26.23 RCW;
- (b) A lien, order to withhold and deliver, or assignment of earnings issued under this chapter;
- (c) Any other wage assignment, garnishment, attachment, or withholding instrument properly served by the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state, under Title IV-D of the federal social security act;
- (d) A subpoena issued by the division of child support, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement for another state, under Title IV-D of the federal social security act;
- (e) An information request issued by the division of child support, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement for

another state under Title IV-D of the federal social security act, to an employer or entity required to respond to such requests under RCW 74.20A.360;

(f) The duty to report newly hired employees imposed by RCW 26.23.040; or

(g) The duty of a business, employer, or payroll processor that has received an income withholding order from the department of social and health services requiring payment to the Washington state support registry to remit withheld funds by electronic means imposed by RCW 26.23.065.

(2) Liability for noncompliance with a wage withholding, garnishment, order to withhold and deliver, or any other lien or attachment issued to secure payment of child support is governed by RCW 26.23.090 and 74.20A.100, except that liability for noncompliance with remittance time frames is governed by subsection (4) of this section.

(3) Fines for noncompliance by a business, employer, or payroll processor with the duty to remit withheld funds by electronic means imposed by RCW 26.23.065 are governed by subsection (4)(c) of this section.

(4) The division of child support may impose fines of up to one hundred dollars per occurrence for:

(a) Noncompliance with a subpoena or an information request issued by the division of child support, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state under Title IV-D of the federal social security act;

(b) Noncompliance with the required time frames for remitting withheld support moneys to the Washington state support registry, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state, except that no liability shall be established for failure to make timely remittance unless the division of child support has provided the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government with written warning:

(i) Explaining the duty to remit withheld payments promptly;

(ii) Explaining the potential for fines for delayed submission; and

(iii) Providing a contact person within the division of child support with whom the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government may seek assistance with child support withholding issues;

(c) A business, employer, or payroll processor's noncompliance with the duty to remit withheld funds by electronic means imposed by RCW 26.23.065. The division of child support may not impose fines for failure to comply with this requirement unless it has provided the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government with written warning:

(i) Explaining the duty to remit withheld payments by electronic means;

(ii) Explaining the potential for fines for failure to remit withheld payments by electronic means when required under RCW 26.23.065; and

(iii) Providing a contact person within the division of child support with whom the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government may seek assistance with child support withholding issues.

(5) The division of child support may assess fines according to RCW 26.23.040 for failure to comply with employer reporting requirements.

(6) The division of child support may suspend licenses for failure to comply with a subpoena issued under RCW 74.20.225.

(7) The division of child support may serve a notice of noncompliance by personal service or by any method of mailing requiring a return receipt.

(8) The liability asserted by the division of child support in the notice of noncompliance becomes final and collectible on the twenty-first day after the date of service, unless within that time the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government:

(a) Initiates an action in superior court to contest the notice of noncompliance;

(b) Requests a hearing by delivering a hearing request to the division of child support in accordance with rules adopted by the secretary under this section; or

(c) Contacts the division of child support and negotiates an alternate resolution to the asserted noncompliance or demonstrates that the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government has complied with the child support processes.

(9) The notice of noncompliance shall contain:

(a) A full and fair disclosure of the rights and obligations created by this section; and

(b) Identification of the:

(i) Child support process with respect to which the division of child support is alleging noncompliance; and

(ii) State child support enforcement agency issuing the original child support process.

(10) In an administrative hearing convened under subsection (8)(b) of this section, the presiding officer shall determine whether or not, and to what extent, liability for noncompliance exists under this section, and shall enter an order containing these findings. If liability does exist, the presiding officer shall include language in the order advising the parties to the proceeding that the liability may be collected by any means available to the division of child support under subsection (13) of this section without further notice to the liable party.

(11) Hearings under this section are governed by the administrative procedure act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(12) After the twenty days following service of the notice, the person, firm, entity, or agency of state or federal government may petition for a late hearing. A petition for a late hearing does not stay any collection action to recover the debt. A late hearing is available upon a showing of any of the grounds stated in civil rule 60 for the vacation of orders.

(13) The division of child support may collect any obligation established under this section using any of the remedies available under chapter 26.09, 26.18, 26.21A, 26.23, 74.20, or 74.20A RCW for the collection of child support.

(14) The division of child support may enter agreements for the repayment of obligations under this section. Agreements may:

(a) Suspend the obligation imposed by this section conditioned on future compliance with child support processes. Such suspension shall end automatically upon any failure to comply with a child support process. Amounts suspended become fully collectible without further

notice automatically upon failure to comply with a child support process;

(b) Resolve amounts due under this section and provide for repayment.

(15) The secretary may adopt rules to implement this section. [2021 c 35 s 19; 2018 c 150 s 202; 1997 c 58 s 893.]

**Effective date—2018 c 150 ss 201-401:** See note following RCW 26.23.065.

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.360 Records access—Confidentiality—Nonliability—Penalty for noncompliance.** (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of Washington law, the division of child support, the Washington state support registry, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state under Title IV-D of the federal social security act may access records of the following nature, in the possession of any agency or entity listed in this section:

(a) Records of state and local agencies, including but not limited to:

(i) The state registrar, including but not limited to records of birth, marriage, and death;

(ii) Tax and revenue records, including, but not limited to, information on residence addresses, employers, and assets;

(iii) Records concerning real and titled personal property;

(iv) Records of occupational, professional, and recreational licenses and records concerning the ownership and control of corporations, partnerships, and other business entities;

(v) Employment security records;

(vi) Records of agencies administering public assistance programs; and

(vii) Records of the department of corrections, and of county and municipal correction or confinement facilities;

(b) Records of public utilities and cable television companies relating to persons who owe or are owed support, or against whom a support obligation is sought, including names and addresses of the individuals, and employers' names and addresses pursuant to RCW 74.20.225 and RCW 74.20A.120; and

(c) Records held by financial institutions, pursuant to RCW 74.20A.370.

(2) Upon the request of the division of child support, the Washington state support registry, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state under Title IV-D of the social security act, any employer shall provide information as to the employment, earnings, benefits, and residential address and phone number of any employee.

(3) Entities in possession of records described in subsection (1)(a) and (c) of this section must provide information and records upon the request of the division of child support, the Washington state support registry, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state under Title IV-D of the federal

social security act. The division of child support may enter into agreements providing for electronic access to these records.

(4) Public utilities and cable television companies must provide the information in response to a judicial or administrative subpoena issued by the division of child support, the Washington state support registry, or the agency or firm providing child support enforcement services for another state under Title IV-D of the federal social security act.

(5) Entities responding to information requests and subpoenas under this section are not liable for disclosing information pursuant to the request or subpoena.

(6) The division of child support shall maintain all information gathered under this section confidential and shall only disclose this information as provided under RCW 26.23.120.

(7) The division of child support may impose fines for noncompliance with this section using the notice of noncompliance under RCW 74.20A.350. [1997 c 58 s 897.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.370 Financial institution data matches.** (1) Each calendar quarter financial institutions doing business in the state of Washington shall report to the department the name, record address, social security number or other taxpayer identification number, and other information determined necessary by the department for each individual who maintains an account at such institution and is identified by the department as owing a support debt.

(2) The department and financial institutions shall enter into agreements to develop and operate a data match system, using automated data exchanges to the extent feasible, to minimize the cost of providing information required under subsection (1) of this section.

(3) The department may pay a reasonable fee to a financial institution for conducting the data match not to exceed the actual costs incurred.

(4) A financial institution is not liable for any disclosure of information to the department under this section.

(5) The division of child support shall maintain all information gathered under this section confidential and shall only disclose this information as provided under RCW 26.23.120. [1997 c 58 s 899.]

**Short title—Part headings, captions, table of contents not law—Exemptions and waivers from federal law—Conflict with federal requirements—Severability—1997 c 58:** See RCW 74.08A.900 through 74.08A.904.

**RCW 74.20A.900 Severability—Alternative when method of notification held invalid.** If any provision of this chapter or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this chapter which can be given effect without the invalid provision



or application, and to this end the provisions of this chapter are severable.

If any method of notification provided for in this chapter is held invalid, service as provided for by the laws of the state of Washington for service of process in a civil action shall be substituted for the method held invalid. [1971 ex.s. c 164 s 27.]

*Civil procedure—Commencement of actions: Chapter 4.28 RCW.*

**RCW 74.20A.910 Savings clause.** The repeal of RCW 74.20A.050 and the amendment of RCW 74.20A.030 and 74.20A.250 by this 1979 act is not intended to affect any existing or accrued right, any action or proceeding already taken or instituted, any administrative action already taken, or any rule, regulation, or order already promulgated. The repeal and amendments are not intended to revive any law heretofore repealed. [1979 ex.s. c 171 s 27.]

**Severability—1979 ex.s. c 171:** See note following RCW 74.20.300.

**RCW 74.20A.920 Construction—Chapter applicable to state registered domestic partnerships—2009 c 521.** For the purposes of this chapter, the terms spouse, marriage, marital, husband, wife, widow, widower, next of kin, and family shall be interpreted as applying equally to state registered domestic partnerships or individuals in state registered domestic partnerships as well as to marital relationships and married persons, and references to dissolution of marriage shall apply equally to state registered domestic partnerships that have been terminated, dissolved, or invalidated, to the extent that such interpretation does not conflict with federal law. Where necessary to implement chapter 521, Laws of 2009, gender-specific terms such as husband and wife used in any statute, rule, or other law shall be construed to be gender neutral, and applicable to individuals in state registered domestic partnerships. [2009 c 521 s 180.]