

Register at the state's secure website
www.childsupport.state.pa.us
to update address and employer information;
view payment history, account balances and
docket entries; and receive e-reminders for
scheduled appointments



**Get Informed
Be Informed
Stay Informed**

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section
2009

www.childsupport.state.pa.us

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section

Wants You To

**Get Informed
Be Informed
Stay Informed**



What's Inside...

Director's Message	1	Enforcement Action	7
Family Violence.....	2	Court Hearings	8
Available Services	3	Bench Warrants.....	9
Support Conferences.....	4	Contact Information	10
Paying Support.....	5	Frequently Asked Questions	11
Receiving Support.....	6	Case Information.....	12

Case Information

Your specific case information necessary to manage your case efficiently.

PACSES Case Number: _____ **PACSES Member Number:** _____

Docket Number: _____ **Conference Team:** _____

Enforcement Team: _____ **Bench Warrant Team:** _____

Order History:

Effective Date _____

Order Amount \$ _____ Arrears Amount \$ _____

Health Insurance provided by _____ Defendant _____ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio _____% Defendant _____%Plaintiff

Effective Date _____

Order Amount \$ _____ Arrears Amount \$ _____

Health Insurance provided by _____ Defendant _____ Plaintiff

Unreimbursed Ratio _____% Defendant _____%Plaintiff

Effective Date _____

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Director’s Message

Laura LoBianco, Director

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section focuses on the well-being of children and families.

All children need the financial support of both parents to grow into healthy, productive adults. Bucks County Domestic Relations is a court office committed to promoting the health and well-being of children by establishing support orders and ensuring parents pay child support on a regular and timely basis.

In 2008, Bucks County Domestic Relations collected more than \$85 million of support for more than 38,000 children. Bucks County

Bucks County Domestic Relations recognizes the importance of parental involvement

Domestic Relations established paternity for more than 740 children, scheduled more than 8,400 support conferences and more than 5,200 contempt hearings, and in collaboration with the Bucks County Sheriff’s Office, is actively pursuing 1,000 outstanding support warrants.

Bucks County Domestic Relations consists of 100 dedicated professionals who are committed to making a difference in the lives of children. Bucks County Domestic Relations recognizes the importance of child support to children and families and applauds those parents who financially support their children.

Get Informed

Bucks County Domestic Relations, a Department within the Family Court Division, enters, modifies and enforces support orders

Bucks County Domestic Relations does NOT handle custody, visitation, protection from abuse or divorce

If you need assistance regarding these services, Bucks County Domestic Relations will refer you to the correct Family Court Department

Family Violence

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section is committed to the safety of its clients.

If you believe sharing your personal information may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child(ren), contact Bucks County Domestic Relations immediately. Bucks County Domestic Relations will designate your information such as address, phone number and employer information CONFIDENTIAL from the other party.

If you believe pursuing child support may cause physical or emotional harm to you or your child(ren), contact our office immediately and appropriate action will be taken.

If you or your child(ren) are the victim of domestic violence and you receive notice to appear for a support conference or hearing, contact our office immediately and appropriate safety steps will be taken.

Be Informed

Do not let the threat of Domestic Violence prevent you from pursuing support

You may request your personal case information be designated CONFIDENTIAL

Frequently Asked Questions

Answers to what you may be thinking about.

Who is the Plaintiff? Party with physical custody of child and/or person receiving payments.

Who is the Defendant? Non-custodial parent and/or person making payments.

Must I file for child support? No. Only plaintiffs receiving cash assistance must file for support. If you are not receiving cash assistance, you may choose to file or not to file for support.

Can a relative or friend come with me or attend in my place? A friend or relative may pick up petitioning information on your behalf but for both parties' privacy, only attorneys and parties may attend conferences. Third parties may not accompany you into the conference or hearing. Because you are a party in the case you are required to attend. Third parties may not attend in place of you.

What if I have no transportation to BCDRS Doylestown Office? Call Bucks County Transport 1-888-795-0740 (English and Spanish)

What happens if Plaintiff or Defendant move out of Bucks County? The order can still be modified and/or enforced by Bucks County. Contact the Intake Unit in Doylestown or the Bristol Office for more information.

Am I charged for using Domestic Relations? There is no filing fee. There is a one-time \$10 Judicial Computer Fee upon entry of an order. There is a \$50 bench warrant fee and transportation costs. These fees are payable by defendant. In addition, plaintiff may be responsible for a \$25 Annual Child Support Fee.

What is a PACSES number and why do I need one? It is the number assigned to your case statewide and necessary to access your specific case information.

What is a Member number and why do I need one? It is the number assigned to you statewide and necessary to access your specific member information.

What is a Docket number and why do I need one? It is the number assigned to your case and necessary to access your original file in the Bucks County Prothonotary Office.

How do I change Support and/or Enforcement Officer? Officers are assigned by the first letter of the defendant's last name. You can not change Officers.

How can I modify my support order amount? If there is a significant change in one

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Contact Information

The key to managing your support case easily and effectively.

An Officer of the Day is available from 8 am to 4:00 pm on the 2nd Floor, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown, to speak to parties regarding their cases. No appointment necessary.

A Client Service Unit is available from 8 am to 4:30 pm at 215-340-8068 to answer telephone questions from parties regarding their cases. The Client Service Unit can also be contacted by email at csbucks@pacses.com.

To access account information, have your PACSES case number ready

A computer automated system is accessible 24 hours a day at 1-877-727-7238. Hearing impaired number is 1-877-676-9582.

Always keep contact information current

The state provides a secure website www.childsupport.state.pa.us for plaintiffs and defendants to update address and employer information, view payment history, account balances and docket entries, and receive e-reminders for scheduled appointments. Employers can update address information and view a list of employees under wage attachment.

The Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol is available from 8 am to 4 pm to obtain petitioning forms, request enforcement, and ask questions regarding support cases.

Bucks County Domestic Relations offers REACH OUT, a free course providing information to the public, to better understand how support orders are established and enforced. Ask about scheduled classes or contact Theresa Whitaker at 215-340-8068 to schedule a presentation for your agency or organization.

BCDRS Goal is to increase compliance and parental involvement through education

Get Informed

Bucks County Domestic Relations staff are not permitted to give legal advice or discuss cases outside the courtroom or hearing room

Available Services

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section establishes and enforces support orders per Pennsylvania State Guidelines.

Any adult or agency with physical custody of a child may file for support.

There are approximately 4 to 6 weeks between filing date and the scheduled conference date

Parties and attorneys can pick up petitioning information at Domestic Relations Intake Unit, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown or Bristol Office, 1240 Veterans Highway, Bristol. Parties can file on their own at the Intake Unit in Doylestown. All attorney filings for support should be directed to Bucks County Prothonotary Office, Family Court Branch, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown.

Bucks County Domestic Relations assists parties in filing against non custodial parents who live out of county, state or country at either office location.

Bucks County Domestic Relations will attempt to establish paternity in all cases in which the child(ren) were born out of wedlock and no paternity acknowledgment has been signed. If defendant denies paternity, DNA testing is done by an on-site lab the day of the scheduled conference. Results are received in approximately four weeks. The cost is paid by the defendant if he is found to be the father or signs an acknowledgment based upon the results. No cost is paid if the defendant is excluded and the plaintiff's complaint is dismissed.

Bucks County Domestic Relations performs Locate Services if a non-custodial parent's whereabouts are unknown. Once a good address is found, the process of establishing a support order will continue. If a good address can not be found, the case may be closed due to lack of information.

Bucks County Domestic Relations will enforce all court orders payable through its office.

Interpreter services will be provided if you speak a language other than English or are hearing impaired. Contact our office prior to your scheduled appointment.

Clients may sign up for Career Link at both Bucks County Domestic Relations offices. Career Link is a service to assist in finding employment for clients.

Stay Informed

Bucks County Domestic Relations wants to work with Non-Custodial Parents to help them meet their support obligation

Bucks County Domestic Relations staff recognizes support decisions are often emotional and difficult to make

Support Conferences

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section establishes and modifies support orders based on both parties' incomes.

Parties are required to attend a Support Conference and provide income and expense sheets, 6-months of pay stubs, last filed income tax returns, proof of health insurance, and documentation of additional expenses.

The goal of a Support Conference is an agreed order based on the PA Guideline calculations. If parties cannot agree, the matter is scheduled for a Court Hearing for entry of an order. An order contains terms regarding the support amount, arrears payment, health insurance coverage, child care costs, school tuition, and/or mortgage. Order amounts are based on parties' combined net incomes.

Parties' communication and cooperation is essential

Bring all documentation to the Conference verifying income, expenses and health insurance coverage

Bring all documentation to the Conference verifying income, expenses and health insurance coverage

**CHIP provides health insurance to uninsured children for free or low cost and there are no co-payments
Find out if you qualify at
www.chipcoverspakids.com or call 1-800-986-kids**

Continuance requests must be made in writing prior to the conference and must note the position of the other side. Do not assume the conference will be continued. The Officer will make a decision and notify parties and counsel.

In a new matter, parties may submit an agreement as long as a petition has been filed. To modify an existing order, parties may submit an agreement without a petition. A copy of orders made on the record in divorce proceedings must be sent to Domestic Relations for the order to be entered or modified. All agreements must state the order is payable through Bucks County Domestic Relations.

A request for a telephone conference must be made prior to the conference and you must submit all required income information and a telephone number. Approval is at the discretion of the Officer.

Parties may represent themselves or hire an attorney. Only parties and attorneys can attend conferences.

Get Informed

Being informed allows you to make quality decisions about support

Bench Warrants

Court Orders to Appear should not be ignored.

When Judges issues Bench Warrant due to defendant's non-appearance for a hearing or a conference, the defendant is charged a \$50 bench warrant fee. This is in addition to any arrears balance.

If the defendant does not voluntarily appear at Domestic Relations, the Bucks County Sheriffs will apprehend the defendant. The defendant is charged transportation costs when apprehended plus the \$50 bench warrant fee. Every attempt is made to notify plaintiffs when defendants are apprehended.

Parties must inform BCDRS of any change in their employment or personal address within 7-days per 23 Pa CSA § 4353(a)

Defendants with outstanding bench warrants may have their driver's licenses suspended and/or bank accounts frozen and seized.

Stay Informed

To avoid arrest, contact Bucks County Domestic Relations immediately if you have an outstanding bench warrant

Failure to appear as directed by the court is a serious matter which could result in an order being entered in your absence, fines or imprisonment

Court Hearings

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section schedules prompt court hearings.

Court hearings are held approximately 3 to 4 weeks from the date of the conference. Court notices advise you to appear at the Domestic Relations Office, 3rd floor, 30 East Court Street, Doylestown. Domestic Relations Officers attempt to work out agreements prior to parties seeing the Judge. Parties may represent themselves or hire an attorney.

In contempt matters, parties listed for contempt run the risk of incarceration. Public Defenders are available to defendants and Assistant District Attorneys are available to plaintiffs.

In new and modification matters, even if one party does not appear, a Judge can enter an order.

Judges issue Bench Warrants for defendants who fail to appear for court.

Continuance requests must be made in writing prior to the hearing and must note the position of the other side to the request. Do not assume the hearing will be continued. The Officer will make a decision and notify parties and counsel.

The Bucks County Early Intervention Team will call clients before conferences and court hearings to remind them of the scheduled appointment, as well as after the appointment to follow-up.

Be Informed

**No children are allowed in the Courtrooms
No child care services are offered while parties
are in a hearing or conference**

**Contact Bucks County Domestic Relations
immediately if you have questions about your
support order terms**

Paying Support

How to meet your support responsibility.

State Law requires wage attachments on all support cases. If you are not eligible for wage attachment, or you need to make an additional payment, choose a FAST, SECURE and CONVENIENT alternative payment option from below:

**If you have not received a coupon,
write your PACSES member ID
or Social Security number on
your check or money order**

Coupon

- Mail check or money order to PA SCDU, PO Box 69110, Harrisburg, PA 17106

Master Card

- To register to make Master Card payments call PA SCDU at 1-800-955-2305
- Access www.e-childspay.com
- Processing fee of \$11.75 per transaction
- Payments posted within 3-days

Pay by Phone (PBP)

- To request the PBP Authorization Form call 1-877-727-7238 or contact BCDRS Client Services 215-340-8068
- Each PBP transaction is initiated from your checking or savings account
- No processing fee
- Payments posted within 5-days

Recurring Automated Withdrawal (RAW)

- To request the RAW Authorization Form call 1-877-727-7238 or contact BCDRS Client Services 215-340-8068
- Payments automatically deducted from your checking or savings account
- No processing fee
- Payments posted within 7-days

Western Union

- To find a Western Union location call 1-800-325-6000
- Make payments online through your checking account or debit card at www.speedpay.com
- Western Union fee of \$3.50 per transaction
- Payments posted within 24-hours

ExpertPay (For Employers Only)

- To register to make ExpertPay online payments through your checking account call 1-800-403-0879 or access www.customerservice@expertpay.com
- Processing fee of .85 cents per transaction
- Payments posted within 7-business days

Conference Payments

- Cash, check or debit at initial conference
- Cash or debit only at subsequent conferences

Be Informed

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

Receiving Support
How payments are received.

All child support payments are disbursed via Direct Deposit or the Pennsylvania *EPPICard*.

To sign up for **Direct Deposit**

- Complete the Direct Deposit enrollment form at www.childsupport.state.pa.us or contact BCDRS Client Services 215-340-8068

If you have a checking or savings account, you may arrange to receive child support payments by Direct Deposit.

Direct Deposit is FREE, FAST, SECURE, and CONVENIENT

If you do not sign up for Direct Deposit, you automatically receive the **EPPICard**. EPPICard is a debit card accepted everywhere MasterCard is accepted. There is a minimal transaction fee for ATM cash withdrawals and balance inquiries. It is not a credit card. Funds are only available if support is paid.

The United States Congress passed a law effective July 28, 2008 which requires a \$25.00 annual fee each year for certain child support cases. This yearly fee is collected to cover some of the Federal Government's costs of providing child support enforcement services.

PA will begin collecting a \$25 annual fee effective July 28, 2008

In Pennsylvania, this fee will only be deducted from the custodial parent after \$2,000.00 of child support is collected in a year from the non-custodial parent and the custodial parent has never received cash assistance.

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Use EPPICard at point of sale devices, cash withdrawals at ATMs, retail and grocery stores, restaurants, gas stations, retail outlets, medical service locations, pharmacies, and other locations worldwide

Child support does not automatically stop when a child is emancipated (reaches 18 and graduates high school) Defendant must file a petition

Child Support may continue beyond emancipation if there are extraordinary circumstances

Enforcement Action

Bucks County Domestic Relations Section takes enforcement when a party does not comply with terms of an order.

To request enforcement for missed support, parties can contact BCDRS directly.

Officers review cases and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

To request enforcement for unreimbursed medical/dental, daycare costs, tuition and other ordered expenses, contact BCDRS Client Services at 215-340-8068

Provide copies of your medical card to Bucks County Domestic Relations

The outstanding support balance is called Arrears

If you fail to make payments, BCDRS may take any of the following enforcement remedies against you:

- Wage Attachment
- PA Unemployment Compensation Attachment
- Contempt Hearing
- Credit Bureau Reporting
- Passport Denial
- Drivers License Suspension
- Professional License Suspension
- Lottery Intercept
- Federal and State Tax Refund Intercept
- Financial Institution Data Match
- (Bank Account Balances are seized and applied to support arrears)
- Child Support Lien Network
- (Law Suit Settlements are seized and applied to support arrears)
- Intercept of Worker's Compensation
- Property Lien

It can take years to repair bad credit

No credit will be given for payments made outside the court directly to plaintiff except where specifically ordered by the court.

Get Informed

Bucks County Domestic Relations wants to immediately address any issue which may prevent you from making support payments