

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | April 3, 2020

Child Support Program continues to serve parents online and by phone during COVID-19 pandemic

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Human Services' Child Support Division wants parents, employers and other partners to know that services continue to be available despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Good communication between parents and Child Support is always important, but even more so during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Jim Fleming, director of the Child Support Division. "We understand parents who pay support and parents who receive support may have reduced work hours and reduced income related to COVID-19. We want to work with parents so they are safe and healthy and can help their children through these uncertain times."

Fleming said child support case managers have some flexibility to delay taking certain enforcement actions like suspending driver's licenses or placing liens on bank accounts if a parent's income has been significantly reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, Child Support leaders are monitoring unemployment benefits available under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act and considering the long-term effect of changes in income in case it becomes necessary to ask the court to change the amount due each month. They are also in the process of determining if intercepting the upcoming stimulus payments is required in all cases where a parent owes past-due support.

Fleming said the Child Support Program has been working on expanding its already robust website to operate as a "virtual office." Most Child Support team members have transitioned to telework and continue to provide services that enhance the well-being of children and families.

"Payments continue to be received and sent to families on a daily basis, with over 95 percent of outgoing child support payments being deposited electronically in a parent's bank account or on a debit card," he said.

Parents who owe child support and employers are encouraged to use Child Support's website to make payments electronically. Employers should also use the website to report layoffs and terminations of employment for their employees who owe child support.

Parents with child support cases who have been impacted by job loss or reduced work hours are encouraged to monitor their accounts online at childsupportnd.com or can contact Child Support customer service at 701-328-5440, toll-free 800-231-4255 or 711 (TTY) during regular business

hours and until 7 p.m. CT on Mondays or by email at childsupport@nd.gov. Parents can also find resources and information and access online Child Support services at childsupportnd.com.

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