



California
Department of
Child Support
Services

California State Disbursement Unit

Changing How Payments Are Processed—

What You Need to Know

California's child support program is changing. Using new technology, the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) will now have a greater ability to track, collect and send out child support payments statewide. The automated system will make it easier for parents to receive their support dollars and for parents and employers to make child support payments.

Part of this change is the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). Today, child support payments previously handled by local child support agencies are being processed at a single location: the State Disbursement Unit.

This summer California's child support program will take another step forward when payment processing changes take effect and parents and employers start to send child support payments directly to the SDU.

If you are a family receiving child support or a parent making support payments, the following information should help answer some general questions about how you will be affected by these changes. If you need more information, please call your local child support agency for specific information about your case.

Need help?

*Visit the SDU
website at
www.casdu.com*

What is the State Disbursement Unit (SDU)?

Federal law requires states to have a single unit responsible for collecting and processing child support payments. California has met this federal requirement with the State Disbursement Unit (SDU). Today, the SDU processes all payments that used to be handled at the local child support agencies. Now, when payments are received at local child support agencies they are forwarded to the SDU.

Starting in September 2006, all child support payments and wage withholding payments will be sent to a new address—directly to the SDU. Parents who pay support and employers responsible for wage withholding payments will receive information about the address change.

How does the SDU benefit my family?

The SDU helps families who receive support and parents who pay support. Benefits include:

- Web and phone access to information;
- Immediate access to direct deposit services for families receiving support payments—a new service in many counties;
- Instant access to support dollars through electronic payment cards, similar to ATM cards, which can be used at ATM machines as well as retail outlets; and
- Parents making support payments can access accounts on-line, make payments using credit cards over a secure internet connection, and set up electronic payment transfers from a checking or savings account.



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California State Disbursement Unit—What You Need to Know, continued

Information for Families Receiving Support Payments

I get my child support check from the SDU now—what will change for me?

Starting in late summer 2006, if a noncustodial parent has more than one case, payments will be divided between the cases. How a payment is divided between cases depends on many things, including how much child support is owed and paid, and whether the payment is for current or past-due child support.

This is called “statewide allocation” of payments and is required by federal law.

Example: A paying parent owes child support in counties A and B. The parent sends a child support payment for the case in county A. In the past, the entire payment was sent only to the case in county A. Now, the payment will be divided between the case in county A and the case in county B.

The new process will only affect cases in which the paying parent has more than one child support order. As a result, some families may experience an increase or decrease in the amount of the child support payment they receive.

With statewide allocation, more families receive the financial support they are legally entitled to.

How will I know if statewide allocation affects me?

The Department of Child Support Services has identified families it believes will be directly affected by this process. Those families are being contacted by mail. If you believe you may be affected or if you have questions, please call your local child support agency for specific information about your case.

I'm on CalWORKS—will my disregard payment change?

Maybe. Your disregard could change if the paying parent has more than one case. Starting in late summer 2006, the automated system will match each payment to the person who made the payment and to each of their cases. This is called “statewide allocation” of payments and is required by federal law.

Example: If the paying parent has three cases and makes a \$90 payment, that payment must be divided between each of the parent's three cases. Each case would get \$30 dollars instead of the \$50 disregard. Only cases with support orders against the same paying parent will be affected by this process. Some families may experience an increase or decrease in the amount of the child support payment they receive.

For specific information about how your payment could possibly be affected, please contact your local child support agency.

What can I do to make sure I get my check as fast as possible?

Ask for direct deposit! It's easy—sign up at www.casdu.com or call the SDU Help Desk toll-free at 1-866-325-1010. Direct deposit forms are also available at your local child support office.

I'm still not getting my check in the mail at the same time I used to. Why?

Getting child support payments out to families as quickly and accurately as possible is our “number-one priority.” Every effort is being made to eliminate payment delays.

As counties transitioned to the new system, payments were forwarded to the SDU for processing. That extra step caused checks to be delayed due to added mailing time.



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California State Disbursement Unit—What You Need to Know, continued

In September 2006, payment delays will end when child support payments start being sent directly to the SDU—not the local child support agencies. Parents and employers are being notified of the change of address for making payments.

Keep in mind that, because the SDU is sending your payment from its central office, it may reach you a day or two later than when it was mailed by your local office.

To make sure your payments arrive as quickly as possible, sign-up for direct deposit today at www.casdu.com, or call the SDU Help Desk toll-free at 1-866-325-1010. Direct deposit forms are also available at your local child support office.

Can I still call my child support office if my check is late or if I have questions?

Yes. Your local child support office will be able to answer specific questions about your case.

Information for Parents Making Support Payments

Will I be notified about the change?

Yes. The Department of Child Support Services will contact you by mail with the change of address information. You should receive your first notice in June—about 45 days before September 2006.

If the new address information is lost or misplaced, call the SDU Help Desk toll-free at 1-866-325-1010.

Remember, your September child support payment MUST BE RECEIVED at the SDU by September 30, 2006 to avoid being late and your account being charged interest.

How will I make my payments?

If you currently send your payments to the local child support agency, starting with your September payment you will be sending it to the SDU at a new payment address. If you have lost or misplaced the address, call the SDU Help Desk toll-free at 1-866-325-1010.

Remember, your September child support payment MUST BE RECEIVED at the SDU by September 30, 2006 to avoid being late and your account being charged interest.

Can I continue to make credit card payments?

Yes. Contact your local child support agency for details on how to pay by credit card. You can also pay your child support through Western Union—by phone at 1-800-634-3422; at a nearby Western Union agent location; or online at www.westernunion.com.

Can I go to my child support office and make a cash payment?

If you have cash, you may convert it to a money order. If you need to make a cash payment, you should contact your local child support agency to see if they accept cash. Please keep in mind that your local office will then have to mail your payment to the SDU; only the SDU can credit your account when it receives the payment.

If you pay cash at the end of the month, your payment may be received late by the SDU, causing your account to be charged interest.

Note: Do not send cash through the mail to the SDU.

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My payment is taken out of my paycheck. How will I be affected?

Employers are being contacted with the change of address information for all wage withholding payments for their employees.

Do I need to tell my employer to do anything differently?

No. Employers are receiving instructions where to send wage withholding payments for all affected employees.

Can I still call my child support office if I have questions about my account?

Yes. Your local child support office will be able to help you and answer your questions.

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