

#SupportRivCo

Your Support Makes the Difference!



Riverside County Child Support Services gives parents the support they need to thrive

PRINCIPLES OF SUPPORT



Services provided by the Riverside County Child Support Services department makes a difference in ways that many residents don't realize. Numerically, the impact is significant.

\$175 mil.

collected by CSS in child support for the 2018-19 fiscal year.

83%

of which went directly to families. The remainder reimbursed to public assistance services.

89,000

children covered for 2019, the most recent year measured.

37%

of income for low-income custodial families, came in the form of child support funds.

What difference does it make?

Studies have shown children who have the support of both parents do better academically and in terms of health, leading to greater financial and emotional security.

While the department deals with matters of divorce, paternity establishment, custody, visitation, restraining orders, and spousal support; its staff members also stand on firm principles of service to the families that rely on them.

Serving the Interests of the Whole Family

Child support benefits
children and parents

BY MATT JOCKS



When parents separate, things can get complicated and emotions can run high. The Riverside County Child Support Services is available as a partner to help families navigate through difficult times.

"It's a very emotional process," said Department Director Kimberly Britt. "When you're dealing with parents, the two issues that are going to be the most emotional are their children and their money."

While the situation between separated parents doesn't have to be adversarial, it often is. That's why the mission of Riverside's CSS is to assist the entire family.

"We want parents to know that we don't take sides," Britt said. "We're not here for Mom. We're not here for Dad. We're here to guide them through the process."

A child support department is most often associated with tracking down child support payments from non-custodial parents. That may be the biggest part of the workload for CSS, but it's only part of the picture.

One of the key services CSS provides is the most essential — giving children the chance to know who their parent is. Establishing paternity is the first chapter.

"It's something most people take for granted," Britt said. "But it's a big issue. It's a huge first step in life."

When it comes to money, CSS is about more than pursuing support payments. The

**"We are here
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Kimberly Britt
*Department Director, Riverside
County Child Support Services*

department also works with parents to modify orders, which can save parents money but also the trouble and expense of hiring attorneys.

The department also partners with other county agencies to facilitate access to public assistance. For cases in which lack

of employment is the issue, CSS partners with Riverside County Workforce to find job openings or trainings.

Britt acknowledges that there remains some resistance in the community to accessing CSS, stemming from its origins as an arm of the district attorney's office.

"We've had to rebuild our image," she said. "We don't want people to see this as a punitive program. It's a social services agency."

The emphasis is on working in the interests of the entire family. When child support is maintained, she said, everyone benefits, including the paying parent.

"It builds that relationship and they can feel confident they are taking care of business," Britt said. "They feel good about themselves and the child knows they are an active participant in their life."

The complications from a separation don't disappear, but they can be managed.

"It's still going to be hard," she said. "We do not have a magic wand. But we want them to know they have a partner to navigate the system."

Breathing Easier

One mother gains a windfall from past-due child support

BY MATT JOCKS

It was part of the morning routine, logging on to check the bank balance and measure it against bills paid and bills outstanding.

But this one was anything but routine.

"There was \$54,000 in the account," said Stephanie Emde. "I thought I must be dreaming. I logged out and logged back in. And there it was.

"My daughter came in and I was sitting there crying. I said, 'Jordan, there's \$54,000 in the account' and she said, 'That can't be right.'"

It was right. It was also the end of a battle that lasted more than 10 years, trying to track down delinquent child support from Jordan's father.

In addition to battling the day-to-day financial struggles of keeping a family going and trying to work toward her Master's degree and a better future, Emde had also fought against the stress and feelings of hopelessness and resignation.

"Jordan asked me what we were going to do, and I said, 'We're going to breathe.'"

Stephanie Emde
Parent Receiving Child Support

"You get to that point where you just throw your hands up in the air and it becomes a little hopeless," she said.

But Emde had been working with the Riverside County Child Support Services, who



had resources that showed when the father received a substantial injury settlement.

After such a long battle, the resolution came so quickly that Emde didn't know the money was coming.

"Jordan asked me what we were going to do," Stephanie said. "And I said, 'We're going to breathe.' I spent about a week in shock. Breathing is so nice."

Until the settlement, Emde had learned that dealing with financial strain is about more than dollar amounts. The stress and time pressures were affecting everything, including her ability to work on her dissertation.

"I just couldn't find the time to get my research done," she said. "I felt like I had a rudderless brain."

All the while, she was in contact with Child Support Services, confident that if

something could be found, it would be.

"I didn't really have high expectations when I started," she said. "What I liked is that every time I sent a message or had a question, they got right back to me. It's not like I don't realize they have a million cases to work on. But it never felt that way."

And things don't feel the way they did before.

The money has gone to things large, like finding a better place to live and paying off her daughter's car. And smaller, like paying her son Brody's way to the Homecoming dance.

"They had gotten so used to knowing certain things we couldn't afford that they stopped asking," Emde said. "But they should have those things. They've been my partners through all of it."

A RANGE OF CSS SERVICES



Although establishing and enforcing child support orders may seem the most closely associated with Child Support Services, the department provides help in many other ways.

RivCoDCSS will:

- Facilitate genetic testing to establish paternity
- Assist custodial parents in locating absentee parents
- Help in modifying child support orders due to changes in circumstances related to income or custody status

Through its County partners, RivCoDCSS can help parents with other issues, including:

- The Family Law Assistance Center can answer questions and assist in the completion of legal forms.
- The Riverside University Health System connects parents to public assistance and health programs.
- Workforce Development Systems provides job placement and training.

And parents who are late on their support may qualify for reduction of their debt through the Compromise of Arrears or Compromise of Assigned Arrearages-Family Reunification programs.

All of these programs can be accessed through the Child Support Services department.

PAYMENT OPTIONS



Clients seeking to pay their child support have plenty of options available:

PayNearMe

- Barcode needed and obtained from www.paynearme.com/california
- Locations: CVS, 7-Eleven, Family Dollar and ACE Cash Express
- \$1.99 fee
- Participant ID Required

PayPal

- Accessed through either www.childsupportbillpay.com/california
- OR www.childsupport.ca.gov
- 2.49% (\$3.95 min) processing fee
- Participant ID Required

MoneyGram

- Receiver code 14630
- Locations: Walmart, CVS, and other retail locations throughout CA (not available online)
- Participant ID Required
- No Fee

Touchpay

- Payment kiosk in office and at Riverside meet & confer hearing office (3760 12th Street, Riverside, CA 92501)
- Accepts cash, credit card, and e-checks
- No fee
- Pay with Participant ID, state ID/ drivers license, SSN OR TouchPay card that is made in office at reception or CST

Phone

- 866-901-3212
- No fee
- Participant ID Required

Mail

- PO Box 989067, West Sacramento, CA 95798-9067
- No fee
- Participant ID Required

Online

- <https://childsupport.ca.gov/state-disbursement-unit/>
- No fee
- Participant ID Required

*Allow 3-4 business days to post to account for all method of payments.

* PIN may be necessary for some forms of payment; obtain from customer Service Center.

Paying Off Old Debts

Becoming a better father means facing old fears

BY MATT JOCKS

For years, Jeffrey Kompelien dodged his child support responsibilities and avoided agencies like Riverside County Child Support Services, worried what they might take from him.

What he didn't realize, until he came forward, is that working with the department could actually help him.

"I felt like the shackles had been taken off me," Kompelien said of reaching a settlement. "I was talking to my wife and saying, 'We have options now.' Now I'm not having this weight on me all the time. I feel like my whole life has changed."

Kompelien reached an agreement under the state's Compromise of Arrears Program, which allows non-custodial parents to reduce their past-due child support owed to the state for children who are eligible for public assistance.

"They really try to help you out and to get your problem solved."

Jeffrey Kompelien
Parent Paying Child Support

For Kompelien, that total had reached a point he knew he had no chance of paying in full. It had led him to a life filled with hiding and worry, as he struggled to make a living.

"When I was a kid, my dad had a company," he said. "All the workers were 20 or older and it seemed like they all were getting paid under the table because they all had child support. I grew up thinking that's the way it was supposed to be."

When it came to be his time, with three children in need, he grew to realize it was supposed to be a different way.

Realizing it was time to face his responsibilities, Kompelien decided to face his fears and work with Child Support Services to handle his case. And it turned out in a way he didn't expect.

"They really try to help you out and to get your problem solved," he said. "Honestly, it was shocking to me. I thought they would be trying to take my life away."

While expressing regret that he had not acted sooner, Kompelien said he can look forward with his wife, making plans for the future without fear of his past chasing him down.

And he has moved forward to a different phase in his relationships with his children.

"I have a great relationship with them now," he said. "I have a chance to be a father figure instead of just some deadbeat. A real dad instead of someone they're just supposed to call Dad. They can respect me now."



By seeking the assistance of CSS in Riverside, Jeffrey Kompelien (left) was able to settle his arrears and build a better relationship with his son (right) in the process.

PHOTO BY CARLOS PUMA

Answering Questions About DCSS



Explaining how Riverside County Department of Child Support Services helps its participating parents

“Both parents are equally important to the Department of Child Support Services and we do our absolute best to give them outstanding and professional services.”

Bruce Wagner

Chief Attorney, Riverside County Child Support Services

Bruce Wagner, Chief Attorney for the Riverside County Department of Child Support Services, answers some commonly asked questions about its role in the community.

? What can families expect when they come to DCSS?

They can expect to receive services in a professional and efficient manner. The process is actually very simple and can be done in person, over the phone, or through the Riverside County DCSS website. For case opening services, our intake process is usually done within 10 days of the requests. If there is no prior family law court order in place, DCSS will establish one for the parents. The order can include establishment of parentage, child support and/or medical support. Our staff will work diligently with both parents to get an order that is appropriate for their circumstances.

? Does it make a difference if the parents are unmarried?

It may. If parentage has not been previously established, DCSS will first ensure that's established in accordance with the law. Other than that, DCSS services for unmarried and married parents are the same.

? What can the agency do for paying parents who have lost their jobs?

DCSS has several programs in place to help an unemployed parent obtain access to job services and/or job training in Riverside County. If there is an existing order for child support, our staff will review that order and seek a modification of the amount when needed.

? What does enforcement of a support order look like?

Generally, it involves locating a paying parent's employer and setting up a wage assignment to ensure child support payments are made in accordance with the court order. Most of our cases fall into this category. When a parent isn't paying according to their court order, our staff goes to great lengths to assist that parent to get back into compliance with the order. As a last resort, we utilize the court and DMV to help us help the paying parent get the child support to the receiving parent.

? What is the cost to the parents?

For parents who are not receiving public assistance in Riverside County, the cost is a nominal \$25 per year. Otherwise, our services are free.

? What should people know about the mission of the agency?

We've come a long way since the days when we were part of the District Attorney's office and were much less customer service oriented. First and foremost, DCSS is a group of people that wants the child support experience to be a positive experience for the parents. Both parents are equally important to DCSS and we do our absolute best to give them outstanding and professional services. It's important to note that, legally, we do not represent either parent. Instead, we represent the public interest in getting right-sized and appropriate court orders that, ultimately, benefit the entire family.

? If the applicant is on public assistance, how does that affect the process?

When a parent applies for public assistance, the Department of Social Services is required to refer the case to DCSS. Once we receive a referral, we will proceed with the establishment of orders for parentage, healthcare and child support. Whenever a child support order is being pursued by DCSS, the financial circumstances of the parents, as well as the parent/child relationship, will be taken into account.

CARETAKER RESOURCES



Though the majority of individuals seeking and receiving child support are mothers, Riverside County Child Support Services also assists others who have custody of children, including fathers, grandparents, other relatives and foster parents.

Grandparents make up a significant portion of those with custody or assisting in the raising of children. CSS assists grandparents in locating parents, in addition to the full array of the department's services, such as establishing paternity, and establishing, reviewing and modifying court orders.

Resources specifically geared toward grandparents raising children can be found at the following:

GrandCARE program at Riverside County Department of Child Support Services
866-901-3212
RiversideChildSupport.com

Riverside County Office on Aging — Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) program
800-510-2020 or
951-867-3800
RCAging.org

Riverside County Hemet Service Center — Kin Care Family Life Center
951-791-3573
cfckids.org/kin-care



Reach Out Today!



Whether you're a person paying support or a person receiving support, you can look to Riverside County Child Support Services for help on your particular situation.

Services include opening a case and modifying an existing order. Established to fit into any schedule, many of these services are accessible online and in the office, which is open at least one Saturday each month (2nd Saturday of every month.)

So, if questions arise—especially if you've received a summons—don't hesitate to make that call! Let RivCoDCSS help establish the sufficient support that your children deserve.



OUR LOCATIONS

For existing cases, submit inquiries using

<https://childsupport.ca.gov/>

For other concerns call **866-901-3212**.



Riverside

2041 Iowa Ave.
Riverside, CA 92507



Indio

47-950 Arabia St.
Indio, CA 92201



Blythe

260 N. Broadway
Blythe, CA 92225



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