

What if the defendant resides in another country?

Many State Child Support Enforcement agencies have agreements with foreign countries to recognize child support judgments made in other countries, or to help establish orders when there is none. The U.S. Government has reciprocity declarations with other countries on behalf of all U.S. jurisdictions. These international child support agreements specify procedures for establishing and enforcing child support orders across borders. While requirements for getting enforcement action may vary depending on the other nation involved, a parent will be asked to provide the same information as in a domestic case, including as much specific information, such as address and employer of the noncustodial parent, as is possible.

The following countries were declared by the U.S. government as foreign reciprocating countries* for child support purposes: Australia, Canada (Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland/ Labrador, Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and Yukon), Czech Republic, El Salvador, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The State of Pennsylvania has established separate reciprocity agreements with these countries*: Australia; the Canadian Provinces of British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Quebec, and Saskatchewan; France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, including England, Northern Island, Scotland, and Wales. In addition, the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act 2008 and The Hague Convention expands the number of countries the U.S. will interact with and share in managing international support cas-

es. These countries include*: Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

*This list is subject to change.

If there is no Federal or State reciprocal arrangement for child support enforcement, an individual seeking child support may want to consult an attorney in the foreign country to learn if there are any remedies available under foreign law.

Review Legal Considerations at the U.S. Department of State web site (<http://www.travel.state.gov>) for information regarding retaining a foreign attorney.

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**Lawrence County
Domestic Relations**

430 Court Street
New Castle, PA 16101

**Lawrence County
Domestic Relations**

LawrenceCountyPA.gov/drs

Intergovernmental Support Filings

(When a Plaintiff or Defendant
resides outside of Lawrence County)



430 Court Street

New Castle, PA 16101

Tel: 724-656-2179

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Defendant Resides Outside of Lawrence County:

If you are requesting child support services and the defendant resides outside of Lawrence County, specific paperwork may need to be filed. Rules have been established to determine when a petition is to be filed to another jurisdiction.

If you are receiving monies from the Department of Human Services (DHS), you must file a complaint for support against a defendant in order to be in compliance with DHS.

According to Pa R.C.P. 1910.2 and 1910.2-1, support actions may be brought in any of the following:

- The county in which the defendant resides;
- The county in which the defendant is regularly employed;
- The county in which the plaintiff resides and that county is the county in which the last marital domicile was located and in which the Plaintiff has continued to reside;
- The county in which the child resides if the relief sought includes child support.

If the defendant resides in another state, there are specific rules for filing. These can be found at 23 Pa C.S. §7100 and §8100.

Because of the unique circumstances of each case, the DRS Officer will determine the appropriate place to file.

One of the primary principles of the intergovernmental regulations mandates that there will be only one child support order per defendant per child. If a child support order has already been established in another State or Country, request

two (2) certified copies of that order from the issuing court and bring them with you when you file for support in the Lawrence County Domestic Relations office.

Plaintiff Resides Outside of Lawrence County:

A Plaintiff that resides outside of Lawrence County should request services from their local court. That court will then help to facilitate the proper paperwork to Lawrence County, if appropriate.

Frequently Asked Questions

- **How do I get support established?**
You can appear in the DRS office or call for an Intake packet. You may also file online at www.childsupport.state.pa.us. Once you have completed the packet, an appointment will be scheduled and you will receive a Notice to Appear. Attached to your notice will be additional paperwork that will need to be completed and returned when you appear for your appointment. Bring photo identification and all other information listed on your appointment notice. If the requested information is not provided at the time of your appointment, your appointment may be rescheduled and/or your case may be closed.

Not all states will establish and/or enforce spousal-only support cases. Inquire at the Domestic Relations Section prior to filing.

- **Can I get paternity established?**
Yes. Once again, the appropriate paperwork will need to be completed. If the defendant resides outside of Lawrence County, the Domestic Relations office will take the appropriate action to establish paternity.
- **Do I need to appear for the scheduled appointment and how long is the appointment?**

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Yes. If you fail to appear for your scheduled appointment and you are in receipt of public assistance, your public assistance could be jeopardized. If you do not receive public assistance, your case can be closed. The appointment lasts approximately 45-60 minutes.

- **How long will it take to get a support order established?**
Due to other State/Country requirements, it can take **at least six to nine months** from the time you appear for your appointment at Domestic Relations for a support order to be entered. Lawrence County Domestic Relations routinely requests status updates every 90 days until the entry of the Order. Any pertinent information received by our office during this timeframe will be forwarded to you.
- **Do I have to appear for a support conference in another County, State or Country?**
Generally, you are not required to appear for the hearing. Sometimes you will be required to appear at the Domestic Relations Section for a phone conference. If you receive a notice that you are to appear, a copy of the notice should be forwarded to the Lawrence County Domestic Relations Section and our office will contact the other Court for clarification.
- **What do I do if I have an existing Order in another State or Country?**
Contact the other court and request two (2) certified copies of the current Order. Bring those with you when you first appear at the Domestic Relations Section to request services.