



# CHILD SUPPORT ROADMAP

## General Tips Before You Start

- This Roadmap can be used to help you complete the steps to modify child support orders. Child support is the amount of money that a court orders a parent to pay every month to help support a child (or children) and pay the child's living expenses.
- You can download the forms referred to in this Roadmap on the Court's website ([www.saccourt.ca.gov](http://www.saccourt.ca.gov)) or the Judicial Council's website ([www.courts.ca.gov/forms](http://www.courts.ca.gov/forms)).
- Once you have determined which forms you must complete, you can use Guide and File, a free program for completing forms. It will ask you a series of questions to complete your forms. Visit the Guide and File website (<https://california-efm.tylertech.cloud/SRL>) for more information.
- This Roadmap explains how to obtain or modify child support orders on your own. You can also contact the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) for assistance. They can be reached at (866) 901-3212. You can find more information on the web at [www.childsupport.ca.gov](http://www.childsupport.ca.gov).

### **STEP 1: Status of Court Case**

- Before you can obtain an order for child support, you must have a case already open with the Court and a case number assigned. If you already have a case open that includes your children, skip to Step 2.
- If you do not already have a case open, you must open a case. There are different types of cases, depending on your circumstances. Please read all of the descriptions carefully before deciding on the right case type for you:
  - Dissolution/Legal Separation/Nullity Case: You can open this type of case if you are married and would eventually like to end the marriage.
  - Custody and Support Case: You can open this type of case if you are married and do not wish to end your marriage OR you are not married to the other parent and you both signed a Voluntary Declaration of Paternity/Parentage for each child.
  - Parentage Case: You can open this type of case if you are not married to the other parent and parentage has not already been legally established for one or more of the children.
- Complete the forms to open your case. After you have signed and completed the forms, you must make three copies.
- There is a filing fee to open a case. If you are unable to pay the filing fee, you can complete the forms to request a Fee Waiver.
- Refer to the Court's website, contact the Family Law Facilitator's Office through e-Correspondence, or speak to a private family law attorney for further instructions on opening a case and serving the other parent ("service of process"). The remainder of this Roadmap does not apply to your circumstances.

### **STEP 2: Status of Current Orders**

- If there are no prior child support orders and this is your first time requesting a child support order, skip to step 3.

- If there is a current child support order, has there been a significant change of circumstances? “Significant” means resulting in a change of 10% or more in the amount of the support the Court will order. Potential changes include but are not limited to loss of employment or reduction of hours/pay.
- If there has been a significant change of circumstances, proceed to step 3. If you are unsure whether there has been a significant change of circumstances and/or the impact on your particular case, you may wish to speak to a private attorney for legal advice/strategy.
- STEP 3: Complete Request for Order and Income and Expense Declaration**
  - You must complete a Request for Order (FL-300) to schedule a court hearing to modify child support and require the other party to appear in court.
  - You must also complete an Income and Expense Declaration (FL-150). Be sure to accurately complete this form and attach any necessary documentation. The information you provide on this form will be used for calculating the amount of child support.
  - After you have completed these forms, sign the originals and make three copies of each document (five copies if the Department of Child Support Services is also a party).
- STEP 4: Serve Documents**
  - You must then have the other parent and any other parties to your case (e.g., Department of Child Support Services) served with unfiled copies of the Request for Order and Income and Expense Declaration. The documents will not yet have a court date.
  - Anyone other than you who is over 18 years old and not a party to the case can serve court forms. The forms can be served by mail. Once they have been served, have the person who served the documents complete and sign a Proof of Service By Mail (FL-335).
  - Note: Have your documents served **as soon as possible**. Although your hearing may be months into the future, the order made at your hearing may be made retroactive to the date that the documents were served on the other parent .
- STEP 5: File Documents**
  - File your documents with the Court by mail. File the original plus two copies of each document (three copies if the Department of Child Support Services is a party to your case). Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope to have your filed copies returned.
  - Once the Court processes your documents, the filed copies will be returned to you. These will have the Court’s stamp and will have the information regarding your hearing.
- STEP 6: Re-Serve Documents**
  - You must have the filed copies served on the other parent. The filed copies will have the Court’s stamp and the information regarding your hearing. You do not need to have the same person serve the documents as before. Have your server complete another Proof of Service By Mail (FL-335) that indicates the filed-endorsed copies were served.
- STEP 7: Court Hearing**
  - You must attend your hearing. Depending on when your hearing is scheduled and the status of the closure, you may need to appear by telephone or computer. Refer to the Court’s website for the most current orders regarding court hearings during the closure instructions on how to appear by phone.