

**RCW 26.09.330 Child support—Department duties when order contains abatement language and obligated person is incarcerated—Procedures.**

(1) When a child support order contains language regarding abatement to ten dollars per month per order based on incarceration of the person required to pay support, and that person is currently confined in a jail, prison, or correctional facility for at least six months, or is serving a sentence greater than six months in a jail, prison, or correctional facility, the department must:

(a) Review the support order for abatement once the department receives notice from the person required to pay support or someone acting on his or her behalf that the person may qualify for abatement of support;

(b) Review its records and other available information to determine if the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated; and

(c) Decide whether abatement of the person's support obligation is appropriate.

(2) If the department decides that abatement of the person's support obligation is appropriate, the department must notify the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, that the incarcerated person's support obligation has been abated and that the abatement will continue until the first day of the fourth month after the person is released from confinement. The notification must include the following information:

(a) The payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support may object to the abatement of support due to incarceration;

(i) An objection must be received within twenty days of the notification of abatement;

(ii) Any objection will be forwarded to the office of administrative hearings for an adjudicative proceeding under chapter 34.05 RCW;

(iii) The department, the person required to pay support, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, all have the right to participate in the administrative hearing as parties; and

(iv) The burden of proof is on the party objecting to the abatement of support to show that the person required to pay support has possession of, or access to, income or assets available to provide support while incarcerated;

(b) The effective date of the abatement of support;

(c) The estimated date of release;

(d) The estimated date that the abatement will end;

(e) That the person required to pay support, the payee under the order, the person entitled to receive support, or the department may file an action to modify the underlying support order once the person required to pay support is released from incarceration, as provided under RCW 26.09.320(3)(d); and

(f) That, if the abated obligation was established by a court order, the department will file a copy of the notification in the court file.

(3) If the department decides that abatement of the incarcerated person's support obligation is not appropriate, the department must notify the person required to pay support and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support, that the department

does not believe that abatement of the support obligation should occur. The notification must include the following information:

(a) The reasons why the department decided that abatement of the support obligation is not appropriate;

(b) The person required to pay support and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support may object to the department's decision not to abate the support obligation;

(i) An objection must be received within twenty days of the notification of abatement;

(ii) Any objection will be forwarded to the office of administrative hearings for an adjudicative proceeding under chapter 34.05 RCW; and

(iii) The department, the incarcerated person, and the payee under the order or the person entitled to receive support all have the right to participate in the administrative hearing as parties;

(c) That, if the administrative law judge enters an order providing that abatement is appropriate, the department will take appropriate steps to document the abatement and will provide notification to the parties as required in subsection (2) of this section. [2020 c 227 s 6.]

**Reviser's note:** For the purposes of this section, "department" appears to refer to the department of social and health services, division of child support.

**Effective date—2020 c 227 ss 3-13:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.

**Findings—Intent—2020 c 227:** See note following RCW 26.09.320.