

**WAC 388-14A-6400 The division of child support's grievance and dispute resolution method is called a conference board.** (1) The division of child support (DCS) provides conference boards for the resolution of complaints and problems regarding DCS cases, and for granting exceptional or extraordinary relief. A conference board is an informal review of case actions and of the circumstances of the parties and children related to a child support case.

(a) The term conference board can mean either of the following, depending on the context:

(i) The process itself, including the review and any meeting convened; or

(ii) The DCS staff who make up the panel which convenes the hearing and makes factual and legal determinations.

(b) A conference board chair is an attorney employed by DCS in the conference board unit. In accordance with section WAC 388-14A-6415, the conference board chair reviews a case, and:

(i) Issues a decision without a hearing, or

(ii) Sets a hearing to take statements from interested parties before reaching a decision.

(2) A person who disagrees with any DCS action related to establishing, enforcing or modifying a support order may ask for a conference board.

(3) DCS uses the conference board process to:

(a) Help resolve complaints and problems over agency actions;

(b) Determine when hardship in the paying parent's household, as defined in RCW 74.20A.160, justifies the release of collection action or the refund of a support payment;

(c) Determine when hardship in the custodial parent's household justifies the waiver of any required fee;

(d) Set a repayment rate on a support debt; and

(e) Determine when it is appropriate to write off support debts owed to the department based on:

(i) Hardship to the paying parent or that parent's household;

(ii) Settlement by compromise of disputed claims;

(iii) Probable costs of collection in excess of the support debt;

or

(iv) An error or legal defect that reduces the possibility of collection.

(4) A conference board is not a formal hearing under the Administrative Procedure Act, chapter 34.05 RCW.

(5) A conference board does not replace any formal hearing right created by chapters 388-14A WAC, or by chapters 26.23, 74.20 or 74.20A RCW.

(6) This section and WAC 388-14A-6405 through 388-14A-6415 govern the conference board process in DCS cases.

[Statutory Authority: 2007 c 143, §§ 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9. WSR 08-12-029, § 388-14A-6400, filed 5/29/08, effective 7/1/08. Statutory Authority: RCW 74.08.090, 26.23.035, 34.05.220, 74.20A.310. WSR 01-03-089, § 388-14A-6400, filed 1/17/01, effective 2/17/01. Formerly WAC 388-14-385.]