

**RCW 26.18.020 Definitions.** Unless the context clearly requires otherwise, the definitions in this section apply throughout this chapter.

(1) "Department" means the department of social and health services.

(2) "Dependent child" means any child for whom a support order has been established or for whom a duty of support is owed.

(3) "Disposable earnings" means that part of the earnings of an individual remaining after the deduction from those earnings of any amount required by law to be withheld.

(4) "Duty of maintenance" means the duty to provide for the needs of a spouse or former spouse or domestic partner or former domestic partner imposed under chapter 26.09 RCW.

(5) "Duty of support" means the duty to provide for the needs of a dependent child, which may include necessary food, clothing, shelter, education, and health care. The duty includes any obligation to make monetary payments, to pay expenses, including maintenance in cases in which there is a dependent child, or to reimburse another person or an agency for the cost of necessary support furnished a dependent child. The duty may be imposed by court order, by operation of law, or otherwise.

(6) "Earnings" means compensation paid or payable for personal services or remuneration for employment, whether denominated as wages, salary, commission, bonus, or otherwise, and, notwithstanding any other provision of law making the payments exempt from garnishment, attachment, or other process to satisfy support or maintenance obligations, specifically includes periodic payments pursuant to pension or retirement programs, or insurance policies of any type, but does not include payments made under Title 50 RCW, except as provided in RCW 50.40.020 and 50.40.050, or Title 74 RCW.

(7) "Employer" includes the United States government, a state or local unit of government, and any person or entity who pays or owes earnings or remuneration for employment to the obligor.

(8) "Health care coverage" means fee for service, health maintenance organization, preferred provider organization, and other types of private health insurance and public health care coverage under which medical services could be provided to a dependent child or children. The term "health care coverage" includes, but is not limited to, health insurance coverage.

(9) "Health insurance coverage" is another term for, and included in the definition of, "health care coverage." Health insurance coverage includes any coverage under which medical services are provided by an employer or a union whether that coverage is provided through a self-insurance program, under the employee retirement income security act of 1974, a commercial insurer pursuant to chapters 48.20 and 48.21 RCW, a health care service contractor pursuant to chapter 48.44 RCW, or a health maintenance organization pursuant to chapter 48.46 RCW, and the state through chapter 41.05 RCW.

(10) "Income withholding order" means an order regarding withholding of income of amounts payable as a support obligation that complies with the requirements in 42 U.S.C. Sec. 666.

(11) "Insurer" means a commercial insurance company providing disability insurance under chapter 48.20 or 48.21 RCW, a health care service contractor providing health care coverage under chapter 48.44 RCW, a health maintenance organization providing comprehensive health care services under chapter 48.46 RCW, and shall also include any

employer or union which is providing health insurance coverage on a self-insured basis.

(12) "Obligee" means the custodian of a dependent child, the spouse or former spouse or domestic partner or former domestic partner, or person or agency, to whom a duty of support or duty of maintenance is owed, or the person or agency to whom the right to receive or collect support or maintenance has been assigned.

(13) "Obligor" means the person owing a duty of support or duty of maintenance.

(14) "Public health care coverage," sometimes called "state purchased health care," means state-financed or federally financed medical coverage, whether or not there is an assignment of rights. For children residing in Washington state, this includes coverage through the department of social and health services or the health care authority, except for coverage under chapter 41.05 RCW; for children residing outside of Washington, this includes coverage through another state's agencies that administer state purchased health care programs.

(15) "Remuneration for employment" means moneys due from or payable by the United States to an individual within the scope of 42 U.S.C. Sec. 659 and 42 U.S.C. Sec. 662(f).

(16) "Support or maintenance order" means any judgment, decree, or order of support or maintenance issued by the superior court or authorized agency of the state of Washington; or a judgment, decree, or other order of support or maintenance issued by a court or agency of competent jurisdiction in another state or country, which has been registered or otherwise made enforceable in this state. [2021 c 35 s 5; 2018 c 150 s 102; 2008 c 6 s 1027; 1993 c 426 s 2; 1989 c 416 s 2; 1987 c 435 s 17; 1984 c 260 s 2.]

**Reviser's note:** The definitions in this section have been alphabetized pursuant to RCW 1.08.015(2)(k).

**Part headings not law—Severability—2008 c 6:** See RCW 26.60.900 and 26.60.901.

**Effective date—1987 c 435:** See RCW 26.23.900.