

CHILD SUPPORT LEGAL SERVICES **INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Legal representation may be provided to a Custodial Party (plaintiff) in child support cases, at no cost, by completing and submitting the attached Application for Child Support Legal Services and returning it to the Domestic Relations Section (DRS). The Child Support Staff Attorneys will determine the need and qualifications for these services based on criteria other than financial need.

A Child Support Staff Attorney will routinely provide legal services and an Application will not be needed if:

- The Custodial Party is receiving cash assistance benefits;
- The Custodial Party is seeking to establish paternity;
- The support action was filed under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA) (*Example: you filed for support in another state and you still live in that state*); or
- The support action was filed under the Intrastate Family Support Act (IFSA) (*Example: you filed for support in another Pennsylvania county and you still live in that county*).

In general, a Child Support Staff Attorney will only attend court hearings related to your child support case. The Child Support Staff Attorney can not attend proceedings or provide legal advice related to custody, divorce, alimony, alimony pendente lite, spousal support only, domestic violence or abuse matters.

Additionally, Child Support Legal Services will not be provided if:

- The Application for Child Support Legal Services is not submitted in a timely manner (it is suggested that you submit your application to the DRS at least 1 week prior to the scheduled hearing date);
- You do not keep appointments, return phone calls or provide requested information and documentation promptly;
- You have another attorney representing you in your child support case;
- Your appeal is without merit; or
- You misrepresent critical information or are not entirely honest

The attorneys employed as Child Support Staff Attorneys act as in-house legal counsel for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania through its local Title IV-D Agency, the Domestic Relations Section of the Court of Common Pleas of Lancaster County. Consequently, the legal services provided by the Child Support Staff Attorney are solely on behalf of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the DRS.

While the Child Support Staff Attorneys will take legal action to establish or enforce child support obligations under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act, they (1) do not represent *either* party; and (2) never, at any time, have an attorney-client relationship with the individuals who are the recipients of Title IV-D services. The Child Support Staff Attorneys will not advocate for your interests when those interests are contrary to the interest of the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare and or the Pennsylvania Child Support Program.

Parties are not required to have attorneys in child support cases. However, if you wish to consult with and/or hire a private attorney to represent your interests and you do not know an attorney, you may contact the Lancaster Bar Association Lawyer Referral Service (393-0737) or Mid Penn Legal Services (299-0971).

**LANCASTER COUNTY DOMESTIC RELATIONS SECTION
APPLICATION FOR CHILD SUPPORT LEGAL SERVICES**

Application Date: _____ PACSES No. _____

Name & Address: _____

[Please print] _____

Phone number where you can be reached from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.: _____

Are you presently represented by an attorney in your child support case?

_____ NO _____ YES If yes, name of attorney: _____

Is the defendant represented by an attorney in your child support case?

_____ NO _____ YES If yes, name of attorney: _____

I hereby request child support legal services to be provided by the Lancaster County Domestic Relations Section for the following (“x” appropriate event):

_____ Support Appeal Hearing

_____ Paternity Hearing

_____ Support Contempt Hearing

_____ Other – Please Specify: _____

If a hearing date has already been scheduled, please provide date: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

IMPORTANT NOTICES

- Please complete this form and return it to the Domestic Relations Section (Attn: Legal Services), 150 N. Queen Street, Suite 220, PO Box 83479, Lancaster, PA 17608 (or fax to 717-390-7778).
- You **MUST** complete the application and return it to the DRS in a timely manner. The failure to submit your application in a timely manner may result in the denial of your application.
- You will be contacted by the DRS regarding the approval or denial of your application. If you have any questions, please call 717-299-8141.