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Director



**DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**
DIVISION OF WELFARE AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES
Helping people. It's who we are and what we do.



Robert Thompson
Administrator

July 29, 2024

Kimberly Surratt, Chair
Child Support Guidelines Committee
3705 Lakeside Drive
Reno, NV 89509

RE: Child Support Committee Charge

Chair Surratt,

Thank you and all the other members for serving on the Committee to Review Child Support Guidelines. The inaugural committee produced a modernized child support guideline methodology that greatly benefits Nevada's children and families.

As you may know, Assembly Bill 278 of the 2017 Nevada Legislature tasked the Committee with the specific responsibility to review the criteria, at least once every four years, for determining child support obligations, and to make recommendations for revisions to the Administrator of the Division of Welfare and Supportive Services (DWSS) of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). The objective of the Committee's review is to ensure effective, efficient, and appropriate guidelines that best serve Nevada's families while ensuring compliance with federal mandates.

Federal law (42 USC 667 and 45 CFR 302.56) requires states to establish one set of guidelines for setting and modifying child support obligations based on specific descriptive and numeric criteria that result in a computation of the child support order amount. When reviewing and formulating child support guidelines, states must consider several factors including:

- Economic data on the cost of raising children.
- Labor market data including unemployment rates; employment rates by occupation and skill level for the state; as well as local job market data.
- Factors that influence employment rates among noncustodial parents and compliance with child support orders.
- The impact of guideline policies and support amounts on custodians and noncustodial parents who have family incomes below 200 percent of the Federal poverty level.

Federal law also requires child support guidelines address the following factors when ordering a child support amount:

- The noncustodial parent's earnings, income, and other evidence of ability to pay. States may elect to also consider the custodian's income.
- The basic subsistence needs of the noncustodial parent, who has a limited ability to pay, by incorporating a low-income adjustment mechanism specified in the guidelines. States may elect to also consider the custodian's subsistence needs.
- Incarceration may not be treated as voluntary unemployment.

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2505 Chandler Ave • Suite 1 • Las Vegas, Nevada 89120-4066
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- How the parents will provide for the child's health care needs through private or public health care coverage and/or through cash medical support.
- Imputation of income, if authorized, must consider the specific circumstances of the noncustodial parent, including such factors as the noncustodial parent's assets, residence, employment history, job skills, education, literacy, health, employment barriers and the local job market.

Pursuant to Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) 425, any recommendation for revisions to the existing guidelines made by the Committee will be submitted to the Administrator for review. The Administrator shall consider any such recommendations and may revise or adopt any regulations that the Administrator deems appropriate. The Administrator must also ensure any recommendations for revisions are made available to the public. Any recommendations the Administrator revises or adopts will be adopted in accordance with the Nevada Administrative Procedures Act.

During the review, the Committee may identify other aspects of child support law that could benefit from revision. However, any proposed changes to child support statutes, other than the guidelines for establishing child support obligations, are not within the purview of the Committee. Further, my authority pursuant to NRS 425, is limited to promulgating regulations specific to guidelines for determining child support amounts. Individual committee members may address any other recommendations through the normal legislative process.

Once again, thank you for your willingness and commitment to serve on this Committee.

Sincerely,



Robert H. Thompson, Administrator
Division of Welfare and Supportive Services
Department of Health and Human Services
State of Nevada

cc: Kiersten Gallagher, Chief, Nevada Child Support Enforcement Program