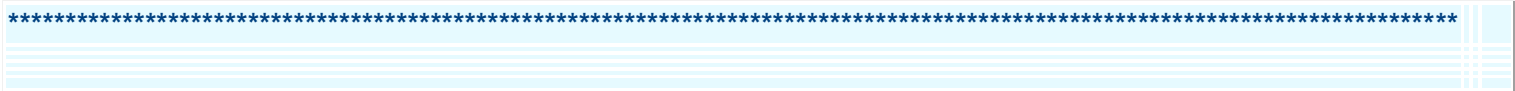


Department of Social and Health Services  
Community Services Division  
**Social Services Manual**

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Issued: April 13, 2017  
Revision Author: Angie Aikins  
Division: CSD  
Mail Stop: 45440  
Phone: 360-725-4784  
Email: [angie.aikins@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:angie.aikins@dshs.wa.gov)

**Summary**

Revised and updated the entirety of this page for accuracy.



**Good Cause**

~~Created~~ Updated on:  
~~Oct 21 2014~~ April xx, 2017

**Purpose:**

This chapter provides the department’s policy and procedures for determining if a custodial parent has “Good Cause” (GC) for non-cooperation with department program requirements.

**Clarifying Information**

**Good Cause (GC)** means that an individual is relieved of certain program requirements when the individual is unable to participate for various reasons as outlined by each program. The individual must claim and the department must ~~approve~~ determine good cause.;

Department programs that have requirements that can be waived as a result of an individual having good cause are:

- Division of Child Support (DCS)
- Aged, Blind or Disabled (ABD) cash
- Housing and Essential Needs (HEN) Referral
- Pregnant Women Assistance (PWA)
- WorkFirst
- Basic Food Employment and Training (BFE&T)

## Worker Responsibilities

**Equal Access/NSA:** Ensure that the individual was screened for Equal Access/~~Necessary Supplemental Accommodation~~ and that the information is current. If the person's limitation or impairment prevents her/him from following through on all program requirements, determine if she/he has Good Cause per [WAC 388-472-0050](#). If she/he has Good Cause, the Department will not take adverse action.

### Program Requirements

#### 1. **Division of Child Support (DCS) - Cooperation with Child Support Collection:**

**TANF/SFA** - The Division of Child Support (DCS) helps families with a variety of services including the collection and disbursement of ~~by providing full~~ child support ~~services~~. Parents/caretaker's receiving TANF/SFA for themselves and or their child(ren) are required to cooperate with DCS to help establish paternity, set a child support order, and enforce child support. "Child Support" includes health insurance coverage, medical expenses, birth costs, and child care or special child rearing expenses. Either or both parents are required to provide health insurance for the children, and both parents are required to contribute to uninsured medical expenses, regardless of whether the children received medical assistance. This cooperation requirement is waived if you determine that establishing and/or enforcing child support may result in serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker. This requirement may also be waived in instances of rape (including rape of a child), ~~or~~ incest, or when an adoption discussion is taking place. See [WAC 388-422-0020](#) and the [EA-Z Manual - Child Support](#) for more information.

#### 2. **ABD Cash:** To continue receiving ABD cash, the individual must:

- Apply for and follow through with the SSI application process.
- Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Follow through an assessment and required drug or alcohol treatment if dependent. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in [WAC 388-449-0220](#).

#### 3. **HEN Referral:** To continue receiving HEN Referral, the individual must:

- Be incapacitated as defined in [WAC 388-447-0001](#) through [388-447-0100](#).
- Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Follow through an assessment and required drug or alcohol treatment if dependent. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in [WAC 388-447-0120](#).

4. **PWA:** To continue receiving PWA cash, the individual must:
  - Follow through with a chemical dependency assessment, and participate in treatment, if there is an indication of a substance use disorder. Follow an assessment and required drug or alcohol treatment if dependent. Good Cause for not doing so is defined in [WAC 388-449-0220](#)
5. **WorkFirst:** WorkFirst policy requires parents to participate up to 40 hours a week in approved activities unless the parent is determined to be exempt per WAC 388-310-0350, WAC 388-310-0300 and WAC 388-310-145 or have a valid Good Cause reason for not participating per WAC 388-310-1600. See: [EA-Z Manual - WorkFirst - A. - Sanctions and WorkFirst Handbook 1.2 - Sanction Chapter 3.6 - Required Participation.](#)
6. **Basic Food Employment & Training (BFE&T):** Persons receiving Basic Food are required to register for work and must participate in BFE&T unless exempt per [WAC 388-444-0015](#) and WAC 388-444-0020 or have a valid Good Cause reason for not participating per [WAC 388-444-0050](#).

See: [EA-Z Manual - Basic Food Employment and Training - F. - Good Cause](#)

## Non-Cooperation with Division of Child Support

All requests for Good Cause for non-cooperation with DCS due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/[Basic Food Employment and Training \(BFET\)](#) caretaker are referred to the WorkFirst Social [Service Specialist Worker \(SSS\)](#). The [SSS social worker](#) will review any documents associated with the referral including but not limited to:

- [DSHS 18-334\(X\)](#), Your Options for Child Support Collection, for the parent's/caretaker's statement of claim outlining their fears and concerns; and
- Additional documents, statements or other types of verification that has been gathered that support the parent's/caretaker's Good Cause request.

**Note:** Even without other documentation, you must accept a sworn statement in support of the good cause claim.

## Parent Interview

When ever possible, interview the parent/caretaker on the same day you receive the Good Cause referral. If the interview is not done the same day the referral is received, schedule the interview within 30 days. if possible.

During the interview the WorkFirst Social [Worker Service Specialist](#) will:

1. Find out why the parent/caretaker does not want to pursue Child Support. Ask if there are current issues around Family Violence, rape, incest or pending adoption. Review eJAS for possible Family Violence. If you feel that the parent, caretaker, or child(ren) is endangered, or at risk of serious harm, seek assistance from an on-site or community-based domestic violence advocate.
2. Talk with the parent/caretaker about what she/he views as the pros and cons of establishing paternity and/or collecting Child Support. If you feel the parent/caretaker is misinformed about a child's rights to resources, benefits, or entitlements, help the parent to seek advice from appropriate resources. [RServices and resources](#) may include legal advocacy, [a DCS staffer located in the CSO](#), the local DCS office, a family violence advocate, etc.
3. Inform the parent/caretaker:
  1. About the advantages and disadvantages of pursuing Child Support.

2. About their choice between Good Cause Level A and Level B options. (See Section 7 for more information about Level A and B)
  3. If there is more than one noncustodial parent (NCP) for the children in the assistance unit, the parent/caretaker must be given the option of claiming Good Cause for each NCP.
  4. Once a support order has been established, the NCP has an obligation to pay child support for the child. Granting either level of Good Cause does not cancel the support ~~order-obligation~~ or any existing child support order. However when Good Cause Level A is ~~granted~~approved, DCS closes the case and does not take any action to establish paternity or to establish/ enforce a child support order against that NCP until the Good Cause claim is withdrawn or the parent/caretaker applies for non-assistance support enforcement services. This makes it important to obtain and maintain accurate information about the basis for the Good Cause exemption.
  5. If Good Cause is ~~granted~~approved now, but later withdrawn, DCS will begin necessary actions to establish paternity and/or to establish/enforce both past and current child support from the NCP. It is important that a victim of family violence understand this if there are any continuing safety risks at the time DCS action begins.
  6. If Good Cause Level A is approved and has not been denied or withdrawn at the time the parent/caretaker's cash assistance is terminated, DCS will not ~~re~~open the case at that time. DCS will reopen the case only if the parent/caretaker applies for TANF again without claiming Good Cause, or submits a non-assistance support enforcement application to DCS.
  7. If cash assistance ~~is closed~~closes after Good Cause Level A ~~is approved~~approval, the Good Cause claim will not close. It will remain open through the next review period.
  8. If the NCP is in another state, DCS may need to ask the other state to help. DCS may be required to provide the parent/caretaker address to the other state and rely on that state to keep it confidential.
4. Ask the parent/caretaker for verification. Discuss with the parent/caretaker the types of verification that can be used~~provided~~ to substantiate the Good Cause claim. Verification may include one the following:
- o Completed 18-334(X) or other signed statement from the survivor herself or himself, outlining his/her fears and concerns;~~if~~
  - o Civil or criminal court orders (domestic violence protection orders, restraining orders, no-contact orders);~~if~~
  - o Medical, police, or court reports;~~if~~ or
  - o Written statement from clergy, friends, relatives, neighbors or co-workers.

**NOTE:** DSHS cannot require a parent to provide documents such as court orders or police records in order to support a claim of Good Cause. There are many reasons why a victim of family violence would not be in possession of these. For example, if s/he has fled and left these papers behind, or if seeking copies of these documents would alert a perpetrator to her/his whereabouts. In addition, many victims, for a variety of good reasons, have never sought help from systems like the police, courts or medical facilities.

5. Offer a referral to the on-site or community-based domestic violence advocate.
6. If the parent/caretaker does not want to proceed with the Good Cause claim they can withdraw their request at any time. Remind the parent that she/he may request Good Cause at any time if her/his circumstances change. Document the parent's request to withdraw the claim. Send a DSHS 18-444 (X) ~~if~~ Good Cause Decision, to the parent/caretaker, DCS, and ~~FSS~~financial marked "withdrawn." If the

parent/caretaker has questions or fears about issues related to custody, visitation or paternity, refer the parent/caretaker to the legal services CLEAR line (1-888-201-1014).

7. If it is necessary for you to conduct a review of the parent's/caretaker's statement or other verification provided, consult ~~as needed~~ with the on-site or community-based family violence advocate to ensure the parent's/caretaker's safety as needed. ~~Only and~~ make third party contacts ~~, as needed, only~~ with the knowledge and consent of the parent/caretaker. Inform the parent/caretaker of each specific contact.
  - a. Offer the parent/caretaker the opportunity to obtain the information on his/her own.
  - b. If the parent/caretaker needs help getting verification and consents to your helping her/him, have the parent/caretaker complete and sign the DSHS 14-012 - Authorization to Release Information.
    - ~~i.~~ If the parent/caretaker does not consent to department assistance, talk with the parent/caretaker ~~in more depth to either:~~
      - ~~ii.i. Be convinced of the efficacy of her/his claim, or~~
      - ~~iii.i. Problem solve with her/him to in order to~~ identify other ~~\_~~ ways to get the verification.
  - c. When the decision is based upon phone verification, document the date, phone number, and the person you talked with, ~~along with~~ the information you received.
8. Explain to the parent/caretaker that ~~when Good Cause is approved,~~ the parent/caretaker ~~will have~~ has the opportunity to decide what level of Good Cause protection is necessary. There are two levels:
  - o **Level A:** DCS **will not** pursue the establishment of paternity, establishment of a support order, or enforcement/collection of child support ~~or~~ from the NCP because any contact with the NCP poses a risk of serious harm to the child or parent/caretaker. DCS closes the child support case, takes no actions on the child support case and the parent/caretaker will not receive child support. Even though DCS closes the child support case, any child support owed under an existing child support order continues to accumulate each month that it is not paid. In the future, if the good cause is not claimed claim is withdrawn or if the parent/caretaker files an application for DCS nonassistance services, ~~is not an issue~~, DCS will reopen the case and collect both current and past due child support.
  - o **Level B:** DCS **will** pursue the establishment of a support order and collect child support **without** the parent/caretaker's cooperation. DCS keeps the parent/caretaker advised of case actions, but the parent/caretaker is not required to cooperate with DCS; she/he may elect to cooperate or not. Generally, paternity establishment is not pursued in Level B cases because these proceedings require the cooperation and involvement of the child and custodial parent.}

Note: If either Level A or Level B good cause is granted approved after ~~after~~ a case has been filed in court by the prosecutor's office, the prosecutor must request the permission of the court to withdraw from or dismiss the action.

See [Appendix II](#) for information about DCS that provides additional information to the parent about DCS functions and the DCS Handbook for Child Support policies.

## Claim Determination and Processing

1. If possible, make a determination within 30 days. Social ~~Workers Service Specialists (SSS)~~ are required to use the Barcode Good Cause program for claim determination and processing. Good Cause is found if the parent or caretaker's written statement outlining their fears and concerns, or other verification,

indicates that the likelihood of harm to the parent/caregiver or child(ren) is too great to safely seek collection of child support. When verification has been received and/or the review of the verification is completed, you are ready to make a decision.

2. If you approve Good Cause, set the review date for six-twelve months or shorter if circumstances warrant.
3. If TANF/SFA benefits are provided to the parent who requested Good Cause due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker but assistance is terminated while the claim is still pending, the ~~CSO Social Worker Service Specialist~~SSS must complete the Good Cause determination. DCS must be informed to know if further action concerning the child support case is necessary.
4. If a determination cannot be made, because of loss of contact or some other reason, ~~the CSO Social Worker Service Specialist is unable to make a determination~~, the default decision is approval of the good cause claim.
5. ~~Later, if~~ the parent reapplies for cash assistance after a default approval decision, ~~the CSO Social Worker Service Specialist can explain that the CSO granted approved Good Cause due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker in the absence of verification in order to err on the safe side. Now, with a new cash application, Gg~~ Good Cause must be re-determined according to the standard process. Advise that the prior Good Cause was approved in the absence of verification in order to err on the safe side.

~~5.1.~~

6. If the parents/caretaker's cash is terminated before the Good Cause decision is made, you must a determination must be completed the Good Cause determination.
7. Supervisory approval ~~of the decision~~ is required on all Good Cause claimsdecisions before the decision letter can be generated. The supervisor approves the DSHS 18-444(X) ~~Good Cause Decision~~ by checking the 'reviewed by Supervisor' box in the Barcode Good Cause system.
8. Notify the parent/caretaker of the final decision on the DSHS 18-444(X) ~~Good Cause Decision~~. Copies of the decision must also be provided to the FSS and DCS.
9. If Good Cause is denied, advise the parent/caretaker that:

a) ~~She/he~~ has a right to an Administrative Hearing. See- (EA-Z Manual - Administrative Hearings).

a)

~~1.~~ If circumstances change, the parent/caretaker may, at any time, request another good cause determination due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker by completing and signing another Your Options for Child Support Collection (DSHS 18-334(X)).

b)

~~b)c) Offer the parent/caretaker a referral to the On-site or community based domestic violence advocates are available.-~~

9.10. Document essential case information in the appropriate confidential notes section (Barcode Good Cause Program, ~~ACES~~, and eJAS). ~~Your~~ The notes may be needed in the future to:

- a) Support the decision;
- b) Aid at review; and
- c) Provide information if the decision goes to an Inform the Administrative Hearing process.

## Reviewing Good Cause Determinations

Review Good Cause determinations at intervals consistent with the family circumstances. Social Service Specialists~~Workers~~ are required to use the Barcode Good Cause program for reviewing good cause determinations.

1. If Good Cause is approved because the child was conceived as a result of rape or incest, it is not necessary to review the Good Cause decision. The rReview date can be set for the child's eighteenth

birthday. However, advise the parent/caretaker that they can withdraw their claim of Good Cause at any time if she/he wishes to do so.

2. If Good Cause is approved based on any other circumstance (e.g., physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker or adoption discussions or proceedings), Good Cause will be reviewed periodically, usually every ~~six~~twelve months.
3. At the time of review:
  1. Review the documented facts in the case record. Determine if contact with the custodial parent/caretaker is necessary to make the determination to continue Good Cause.
  2. If there is sufficient verification in the record to continue the Good Cause determination without contacting the parent/caretaker, authorize continued Good Cause and establish a new review date at an appropriate time in the future.

3. If contact is necessary:

~~3.1.~~

- a) Interview the parent/caretaker to determine if the circumstances have changed since the last Good Cause determination. If additional verification is available and necessary to make a re-determination, inform the parent/caretaker about what she/he will be expected to provide. Ask the parent/caretaker if she/he expects to have any problems in providing the information and offer to assist the parent if she/he needs special accommodations or is unable to obtain the verification.
- b) Evaluate the new verification and circumstances against the previous Good Cause determination.

4. Complete a DSHS 18-444(X) -, Good Cause Decision:

- a) Mark the box to indicate it is a re-determination; and
- b) Send copies to the parent, DCS, and FSS.

4. If the cash assistance is closed, deny Good Cause to close out the good cause claim. DCS **will not** pursue the establishment of a support order unless the parent/caretaker ~~or~~ files an application for non-assistance child support services through DCS.

5.

1. In the Barcode Good Cause program, take the following steps:

- a) Check "Review Claim"
- b) "Good Cause Established?" - check "No"
- c) "Reason for Good Cause Decision" – Select "No Proof of Good Cause"
- d) Enter Close Date – End date of current review
- a)e) "Reason" - Select "Financial Assistance Closed"

~~4. Complete a DSHS 18-444(X) -, Good Cause Decision:~~

- ~~a) Mark the box to indicate it is a re-determination; and~~
- ~~b)a) Send copies to the parent, DCS, and FSS.~~

## Referrals and Resources

1. Offer the parent/caretaker a referral to the on-site or community-based domestic violence advocates who may be able to help the m parent address the circumstances creating the need for the Good Cause claim. Document ~~the~~ family violence related referrals in ACES and the Barcode Good Cause program.

For TANF parents/caretakers, also document the referral in eJAS in the ~~â€œ~~Family Violence~~€~~ Special Records note type.

2. Explain the use of the Washington Apple Health to obtain health care coverage for the family. Ask the parent/caretaker if she/he needs any special accommodations to seek or access health care coverage services. Tell the parent/caretaker that receiving Medicaid or other state-funded health care coverage will not automatically result in a DCS case, but that they can apply for DCS services if they wish to do so.
3. Give the parent/caretaker available informational brochures related to DCS or Good Cause due to serious physical or emotional harm to the child or parent/caretaker and discuss any other pertinent issues related to the parents/caretaker's situation.
4. Encourage the parent/caretaker at risk of family violence to determine if enrolling in a community support group, counseling activities or contacting legal services (CLEAR 1-888-201-1014) is in their best interest.
5. If the parent would like more information about DCS support enforcement services, have the client call 1-800-442-KIDS.
6. Some parents may be participating in the Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) through the Office of the Secretary of State. The ACP protects the address of persons attempting to escape from family violence or sexual assault situations. Participants use a substitute address in place of their actual physical or mailing address. See the EA-Z Manual if the parent is participating in, or you would like more information about, the Address Confidentiality Program.

Form Number	Title	Use	Distribution
DSHS 14-012(X)	Authorization to Release Information	To obtain evidence when the <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> is unable to provide it directly	Original to verification source, copy to <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> and case record
<u>DSHS 18-334(X)</u>	Your Options for Child Support Collection	<del>Custodial</del> Parent/ <u>Caretaker's</u> statement outlining their fears and concerns why a Good Cause claim is needed	Social Services receives a copy with the referral to determine Good Cause
DSHS 18-444(X)	DCS Good Cause Decision	Notify <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> , DCS and financial services of Good Cause determination	Original to <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> , copies to case record, financial services and DCS
DSHS 22-583(X)	Facts about the DCS Child Support Enforcement Program	Give to <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u>	To <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u>
DSHS 22-688(X)	Support their future	Give to <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> with Toll-free DCS number	To <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u>
DSHS 14-475	Appointment Letter for Division of Child Support (DCS) Good Cause Determination	Send to the <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u> for a Good Cause appointment.	To <del>custodial</del> parent/ <u>caretaker</u>



DSHS 18-011	DCS Information Request	DCS sends to CSD requesting good cause information within 30 days.	CSD staff send back to DCS
DSHS 18-011(A)	DCS Information Update	DCS sends to CSD to begin the good cause process when a parent/ <a href="#">caretaker</a> has informed DCS about family violence in the home.	Copy to case record

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