

**05 Budgeting Child, Medical, and Spousal Support**

**REVISION 48**

(01/01/20 - 12/31/20)

Child, Spousal and Cash Medical support payments are considered income of the participant to whom support is court ordered to be paid. Key support payments next to the participant court ordered to receive the support payment. This is usually the custodial parent or person.

**EXCEPTION**

Do not key support income when the person court ordered to pay the support income and the person court ordered to receive the support income are in the same household.

Child support is not countable as income for Hopi Tribal TANF and Pascua Yaqui Tribal TANF. When the household is also receiving NA, key the following Unearned Income Code in the INC TYPE field on UNIC:

- OF for child support income that is countable for NA only
- OX for child support income that is not countable for NA or CA.

Only court ordered child support payments are budgeted as child support. When the absent parent gives money to the participant without being ordered by the court, the income is budgeted as a gift. Support income displaying on CHSP is verified as court ordered.

Discuss with the participant the court ordered amount of support and the amount they normally receive. All recurring arrearages received must be budgeted.

**WARNING**

When there are no arrears, fees, or judgments owed and the amount of support income paid is over the court ordered amount, budget the amount that is over as a gift unless the amount over is due to averaging.

The Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) is Arizona's Title IV-D Child Support Enforcement agency. Support income issued through DCSS and displaying on CHSP is based on court ordered support and considered verified.

Review CHSP for support payments issued through DCSS. This support

information is automatically sent by DCSS to CHSP in AZTECS after the first month that NA benefits are issued when the absent parent was connected at one time to the AZTECS case.

The following support income is issued through DCSS and displays on CHSP as follows:

- Current Child Support (CS RE or BC RE)
- Current Alimony or Spousal Maintenance Support (SP RE)
- Current Cash Medical Support (CM RE)
- Support Arrearages (CS AR, CS LS, BC AR, BC LS, SP AR, SP LS, CM AR or CM LS)

NOTE AR displaying on CHSP indicates a support arrearage payment that is recurring. LS indicates a [Lump Sum](#) payment. A lump sum payment is considered a one-time lump sum and is not expected to continue. Lump sum payments are not countable as income. Lump sum payments are countable as a resource.

A discrepancy may occur between CHSP and the participant's statement or the participant's verification. When this occurs, discuss with the participant the amount that is normal to be received. When the discrepancy cannot be explained or is questionable, elevate the case situation to the [Policy Support Team](#) (PST) via email for resolution.

NOTE DCSS has the authority to attach additional support arrearages. When the discrepancy is due to additional recurring child support arrearages added to the support order by DCSS, it is not necessary to elevate to the PST. Budget the arrearages that are recurring.

**WARNING**

CHSP screens can be uploaded to [OnBase](#) or HEAplus only. Per FAA's Data Sharing Agreement (DSA) with DCSS, do not print CHSP screens to give to a participant. (See [Release of Confidential Information](#))

NOTE For a listing of state websites that provide child support income information on-line, see [Child Support On-line Information](#).

To budget support income, the following applies:

- Discuss with the participant the amount of support that is court ordered and the amount that is normally received. Ensure the participant explains the amount of support income expected and, when possible, have the participant write a statement. Do not convert support income. Key the actual income received using the MO frequency code.
- When CHSP is available and is an accurate reflection of the participant's expected support income, use the income reflected on CHSP. When the support income displayed on CHSP fluctuates, use the most recent prior three months available and average.
- When it is determined that the prior 30 days is not an accurate reflection of the participant's expected support income, review additional consecutive months of support income history. Establish an accurate reflection of the expected support income and document how the income was determined. (See Budgeting Support Example 7.) Support income history includes but is not limited to the following:
  - Court records
  - Pay records or histories from the Clerk of the Court in Arizona or another state
  - DCSS documents showing the amount of support paid
  - Copies of checks or money orders made out to the custodial parent indicating that the payment is for support
  - Receipts and pay histories from any state's child support centralized payment processing center
- When the participant is not available, and a normal amount cannot be determined, attempt a collateral contact. Send a request for information when needed.
- When the court ordered amount or the amount received is different due to an additional recurring arrearage, budget the additional recurring support income as arrearages.
- Document the case notes with how the amount of support income budgeted was determined.

**NOTE** Budget support income over the court ordered amount only when the amount over is due to averaging. Any support income actually received for current support that is over the court ordered amount (not due to averaging) is countable as a gift.

**WARNING**

When support income is received more often than monthly, determine an average monthly amount. Add the support payments

received within each month together and divide by the number of months used in the income period.

Include any zero months in the averaging determination when the zero months are expected to continue (See Example [Budgeting Support 5](#)).

Participants who receive support income on a regular basis may, at times, receive an extra support payment for reasons including any of the following:

- A change in issue dates.
- Weekends or holidays cause an interruption in issuing schedules.
- Payment was not received in the month for which it was intended. (See Example [Budgeting Support 2](#))

Count the support income in the month for which it is intended rather than the month in which it is made available.

**WARNING**

When the support income received in the application month is for a full month, the amount is known. For initial applications, budget the known amount that is court ordered and is expected to be received for the application month.

For ongoing months, use the last 30 days or more when necessary, to budget a true reflection of support income normally received on a monthly basis.

The participant or payment history may indicate that support income is sporadic and may include zero income months. When this occurs, and is expected to continue, add the support income amounts in the months that income was received along with the zero income months to calculate the average amount. (See Example [Budgeting Support 4](#)).

**WARNING**

Recurring support arrearage payments are countable as unearned income and must be budgeted.

When the arrearage payment is recurring and can be expected, budget the support income using the appropriate Unearned Income Code in the INC TYP field on UNIC. (See Example [Budgeting Support 6](#))

Follow the same budgeting procedures when the participant does not surrender support payments assigned to DCSS. Key the CS NS Unearned Income Code in the INC TYP field on UNIC.

Budget support income passed through by DCSS, for children not included in the CA benefit, such as a family benefit cap (BC) child or a child receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI). This income displays as BC RE, BC AR and BC LS on CHSP. Budget the support income for the child not included in the CA benefit. Key the appropriate Unearned Income Code in the INC TYP field on UNIC.

**CA WARNING**

When support income, received from any source, is assigned to and retained by DCSS, do not budget the support income during the following times:

- Beginning the month after the month CA is approved.
- While CA remains in open status.

When support income is received directly from a private collection agency, do not deduct fees retained by the collection agency. (See [Direct Pay Support Income](#).)