

Child Desertion Unit FAQ:

1. **How do I submit a case to the Child Desertion Unit of the Attorney General's Office?**
Complete and mail in a Case Submission Form (see link on this website). After reviewing your case, our office may decide that criminal prosecution is appropriate. However, please remember that submitting a Case Submission Form does not guarantee that our office will be able to prosecute your case.
2. **If I need help collecting child support, who should I contact?**
The Attorney General's Office does not collect child support. Please contact the Department of Human Services or a private attorney for help with child support collection matters.
3. **Who has authority over the Department of Human Services?**
The Governor of Mississippi has authority over the Department of Human Services. The Attorney General has no authority over DHS.
4. **What is the criminal punishment for being convicted of non-support of a child?**
It is a felony and, the punishment is:
for a first offense by a fine between \$100.00 and \$500.00, **or** by commitment to the custody of the Department of Corrections for not more than five (5) years, or both; and for a second or subsequent offense, by a fine between \$1,000.00 and \$10,000.00, **or** by commitment to the custody of the Department of Corrections for not less than two (2) years nor more than five (5) years, or both, in the discretion of the court.
5. **I live in another state, can you take my case?**
We may be able to prosecute your case if the suspect (non-custodial parent) lives in Mississippi and/or if the support order is a Mississippi order. The State of Mississippi must have jurisdiction. If you have a difficult interstate case with a large arrearage you may want to seek federal prosecution.
6. **What is the age limit of the child for your office to consider a case for criminal prosecution?**
The Non-Support of a Child statute limits cases to children 18 and under.
(Mississippi Code Annotated § 97-5-3)
7. **In addition to the Case Submission Form, what information do you need from me?**
Gather all necessary information to make a case against the non-custodial parent, including, but not limited to: Birth Certificates, Paternity Papers, Divorce Decrees, Modifications in the case involving the minor child/children, Child Support Withholding Orders, and an Affidavit of Accounting from DHS. We ask that you submit certified copies.