

PASSPORT DENIAL PROGRAM

One of the enforcement tools provided to state child support enforcement agencies by federal law under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) is Passport Denial. PRWORA requires that the Secretary of State deny the issuance of a passport to any person certified by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) as owing \$2,500 or more in past due child support. Further, the Secretary of State may take action to revoke, restrict, or limit a passport previously issued to an individual owing such past due child support.

How does the process work?

States submit all cases receiving full child support enforcement services through the local or state child support enforcement agency that meet the criteria for Federal Tax Refund and/or Administrative Offset to the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE). A Pre-Offset Notice, which includes information about the Passport Denial, Federal Tax Refund, and Administrative Offset programs, is sent to the individual who was submitted to OCSE. OCSE automatically forwards those cases where \$2,500 or more in past due child support is owed to the State Department for passport denial unless the case has been specifically excluded from the Passport Denial Program.

When an individual who has been submitted to the Passport Denial Program applies for a passport, the State Department denies the application based on the child support obligation owed by the applicant. When the State Department denies an application for a passport, a notice is sent to the applicant explaining that the passport application was denied because of past due child support, and advising the applicant to contact the appropriate state child support enforcement agency listed on the notice, for further information.

What steps should I take if my passport has been denied because of past due child support?

You must contact the state child support enforcement agency who submitted you to OCSE to make arrangements to pay your outstanding child support obligation. Please note that you may be required to pay all outstanding child support amounts owed before you are allowed to obtain a passport. The Hawaii Child Support Enforcement Agency has a policy that requires a \$0 balance before allowing passport issuance to an individual who was previously in arrears. All questions regarding the amount that you have to pay before you are allowed to obtain a passport must be addressed to the appropriate state child support enforcement agency. The State Department will not make any determination of the amount that must be paid before a passport will be issued. If more than one state reported past due child support in excess of \$2,500, you must reach an agreement with all states involved before you can be issued a passport.

Once all of the past due child support amount has been paid or a satisfactory agreement has been reached, the state(s) child support enforcement agency will request that OCSE remove you from the Passport Denial Program. It takes approximately two (2) weeks from the time OCSE receives a request for removal for the State Department to update their records so that a new application for a passport is not denied. After the State Department has updated their records, you must reapply for a passport and pay any accompanying fees. Fees are not refunded when your passport application is denied.