

## CHAPTER 252C

## CHILD SUPPORT DEBTS — ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Referred to in §234.39, 252A.3A, 252A.6, 252B.3, 252B.4, 252B.5, 252B.7A, 252B.9, 252B.14, 252B.20, 252B.20A, 252B.26, 252D.1, 252D.16, 252D.16A, 252E.1, 252E.1A, 252E.16, 252H.2, 252H.4, 252H.21, 252I.2, 252J.1, 598.21C, 598.21G, 598.22, 598.22B, 598.23A, 600.11

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**252C.1 Definitions.**

As used in [this chapter](#), unless the context otherwise requires:

1. “*Caretaker*” means a parent, relative, guardian, or another person who is responsible for paying foster care costs pursuant to [chapter 234](#) or whose needs are included in an assistance payment made pursuant to [chapter 239B](#).
2. “*Child support services*” means child support services created in [section 252B.2](#).
3. “*Court order*” means a judgment or order requiring the payment of a set or determinable amount of monetary support. For orders entered on or after July 1, 1990, unless the court specifically orders otherwise, medical support, as defined in [section 252E.1](#), is not included in the amount of monetary support.
4. “*Department*” means the department of health and human services.
5. “*Dependent child*” means a person who meets the eligibility criteria established in [chapter 234](#) or [239B](#) and whose support is required by [chapter 234](#), [239B](#), [252A](#), [252F](#), [598](#), or [600B](#).
6. “*Director*” means the director of health and human services.
7. “*Medical support*” means medical support as defined in [section 252E.1](#).
8. “*Public assistance*” means foster care costs paid by the department pursuant to [chapter 234](#) or assistance provided pursuant to [chapter 239B](#).
9. “*Responsible person*” means a parent, relative, guardian, or another person legally liable for the support of a child or a child’s caretaker.

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §1](#); [90 Acts, ch 1224, §14, 15](#); [93 Acts, ch 79, §44](#); [97 Acts, ch 41, §32](#); [2007 Acts, ch 218, §158, 187](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1019, §18, 20](#); [2015 Acts, ch 110, §89](#); [2018 Acts, ch 1111, §1, 10](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §872](#)

Referred to in [§252H.2](#)

Section amended

**252C.2 Assignment — creation of support debt — subrogation.**

1. If public assistance is provided by the department to or on behalf of a dependent child or a dependent child’s caretaker, there is an assignment by operation of law to the department of any and all right in, title to, and interest in any support obligation, payment, and arrearages owed to or for the child or caretaker up to the amount of public assistance paid for or on behalf of the child or caretaker. Unless otherwise specified in the order, an equal and proportionate share of any child support awarded is presumed to be payable on behalf of each child subject to the order or judgment for purposes of an assignment under [this section](#). For family investment program assistance, [section 239B.6](#) shall apply.

2. The payment of public assistance to or for the benefit of a dependent child or a dependent child’s caretaker creates a support debt due and owing to the department by the responsible person in an amount equal to the public assistance payment, except that the support debt is limited to the amount of a support obligation established by court order or by the department. The department may establish a support debt as to amounts accrued and accruing pursuant to [section 598.21B](#). However, when establishing a support obligation

against a responsible person, no debt shall be created for the period during which the responsible person is a recipient on the person's own behalf of public assistance for the benefit of the dependent child or the dependent child's caretaker, if any of the following conditions exist:

a. The parents have reconciled and are cohabiting, and the child for whom support would otherwise be sought is living in the same residence as the parents.

b. The child is living with the parent from whom support would otherwise be sought.

3. The provision of child support collection or paternity determination services under [chapter 252B](#) to an individual, even though the individual is ineligible for public assistance, creates a support debt due and owing to the individual or the individual's child or ward by the responsible person in the amount of a support obligation established by court order or by the department. The department may establish a support debt in favor of the individual or the individual's child or ward and against the responsible person, both as to amounts accrued and accruing, pursuant to [section 598.21B](#).

4. The payment of medical assistance pursuant to [chapter 249A](#) for the benefit of a dependent child or a dependent child's caretaker creates a support debt due and owing to the department. The department may establish an order for medical support.

5. The department is subrogated to the rights of a dependent child or a dependent child's caretaker to bring a court action or to execute an administrative remedy for the collection of support. The department may petition an appropriate court for modification of a court order on the same grounds as a party to the court order can petition the court for modification.

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §2; 89 Acts, ch 166, §4; 92 Acts, ch 1195, §401, 402; 94 Acts, ch 1171, §20; 97 Acts, ch 175, §50; 2005 Acts, ch 69, §12, 13; 2008 Acts, ch 1019, §4, 7; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §873](#)

Referred to in [§252C.3, 598.21B](#)

Section amended

### **252C.3 Notice of support debt — failure to respond — hearing — order.**

1. The department may issue a notice stating the intent to secure an order for either medical support as provided in [chapter 252E](#) or payment of an accrued or accruing support debt due and owed to the department or an individual under [section 252C.2](#), or both. The notice shall be served upon the responsible person in accordance with the rules of civil procedure. The notice shall include all of the following:

a. A statement that the support obligation will be set pursuant to the child support guidelines established pursuant to [section 598.21B](#), and the criteria established pursuant to [section 252B.7A](#), and that the responsible person is required to provide medical support in accordance with [chapter 252E](#).

b. The name of a public assistance recipient and the name of the dependent child or caretaker for whom the public assistance is paid.

c. (1) A statement that if the responsible person desires to discuss the amount of support that a responsible person should be required to pay, the responsible person may, within ten days after being served, contact child support services and request a negotiation conference.

(2) A statement that if a negotiation conference is requested, then the responsible person shall have ten days from the date set for the negotiation conference or thirty days from the date of service of the original notice, whichever is later, to send a request for a hearing to child support services.

(3) A statement that after the holding of the negotiation conference, the department may issue a new notice and finding of financial responsibility for child support or medical support, or both, to be sent to the responsible person by regular mail addressed to the responsible person's last known address, or if applicable, to the last known address of the responsible person's attorney.

(4) A statement that if the department issues a new notice and finding of financial responsibility for child support or medical support, or both, then the responsible person shall have thirty days from the date of issuance of the new notice to send a request for a hearing to child support services. If the department does not issue a new notice and finding of financial responsibility for child support or medical support, or both, the responsible party

shall have ten days from the date of issuance of the conference report to send a request for a hearing to child support services.

d. A statement that if the responsible person objects to all or any part of the notice or finding of financial responsibility for child support or medical support, or both, and a negotiation conference is not requested, the responsible person shall, within thirty days of the date of service send to child support services a written response setting forth any objections and requesting a hearing.

e. A statement that if a timely written request for a hearing is received by child support services, the responsible person shall have the right to a hearing to be held in district court; and that if no timely written response is received, the department may enter an order in accordance with the notice and finding of financial responsibility for child support or medical support, or both.

f. A statement that, as soon as the order is entered, the property of the responsible person is subject to collection action, including but not limited to wage withholding, garnishment, attachment of a lien, and execution.

g. A statement that the responsible person shall notify the department of any change of address, employment, or medical coverage as required by [chapter 252E](#).

h. A statement that if the responsible person has any questions, the responsible person should telephone or visit child support services or consult an attorney.

i. Such other information as the department finds appropriate.

2. The time limitations for requesting a hearing in [subsection 1](#) may be extended by the department.

3. If a timely written response setting forth objections and requesting a hearing is received by child support services, a hearing shall be held in district court.

4. If timely written response and request for hearing is not received by child support services, the department may enter an order in accordance with the notice, and shall specify all of the following:

a. The amount of monthly support to be paid, with directions as to the manner of payment.

b. The amount of the support debt accrued and accruing in favor of the department.

c. The name of the custodial parent or agency having custody of the dependent child and the name and birth date of the dependent child for whom support is to be paid.

d. That the property of the responsible person is subject to collection action, including but not limited to wage withholding, garnishment, attachment of a lien, and execution.

e. The medical support required pursuant to [chapter 598](#) and rules adopted pursuant to [chapter 252E](#).

5. The responsible person shall be sent a copy of the order by regular mail addressed to the responsible person's last known address, or if applicable, to the last known address of the responsible person's attorney. The order is final, and action by the department to enforce and collect upon the order, including arrearages and medical support, or both, may be taken from the date of approval of the order by the court pursuant to [section 252C.5](#).

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §3](#); [90 Acts, ch 1224, §16 – 21](#); [92 Acts, ch 1195, §202, 203, 403](#); [95 Acts, ch 52, §3, 4](#); [97 Acts, ch 175, §51 – 53](#); [2005 Acts, ch 69, §14](#); [2007 Acts, ch 218, §159, 160, 187](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1019, §18, 20](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §874](#)

Referred to in [§234.39, 252C.12](#)

Section amended

#### **252C.4 Certification to court — hearing — default.**

1. A responsible person or child support services may request a hearing regarding a determination of support. If a timely written request for a hearing is received, the department shall certify the matter to the district court as follows:

a. If the child or children reside in Iowa, and child support services is seeking an accruing obligation, in the county in which the dependent child or children reside.

b. If the child or children received public assistance in Iowa, and child support services is seeking only an accrued obligation, in the county in which the dependent child or children last received public assistance.

c. If the action is the result of a request from another state or foreign country to establish

support by a responsible person located in Iowa, in the county in which the responsible person resides.

2. The certification shall include true copies of the notice and finding of financial responsibility or notice of the support debt accrued and accruing, the return of service, the written objections and request for hearing, and true copies of any administrative orders previously entered.

3. The court shall set the matter for hearing and notify the parties of the time and place of hearing.

4. The court shall establish the monthly child support payment and the amount of the support debt accrued and accruing pursuant to [section 598.21B](#), or medical support pursuant to [chapter 252E](#), or both.

5. If a party fails to appear at the hearing, upon a showing of proper notice to that party, the court shall find that party in default and enter an appropriate order.

6. Actions initiated by the department under [this chapter](#) are not subject to [chapter 17A](#) and resulting court hearings following certification shall be an original hearing before the district court.

7. If a responsible person contests an action initiated under [this chapter](#) by denying paternity, the following shall apply, as necessary:

a. (1) If paternity has been legally established by one of the methods enumerated in [section 252A.3, subsection 10](#), or by operation of law due to the established father's marriage to the mother at the time of conception, birth, or at any time during the period between conception and birth of the child, the provisions of [section 600B.41A](#) are applicable.

(2) If the court determines that the prior determination of paternity should not be overcome pursuant to [section 600B.41A](#), and that the responsible person has a duty to provide support, the court shall enter an order establishing the monthly child support payment and the amount of the support debt accrued and accruing pursuant to [section 598.21B](#), or medical support pursuant to [chapter 252E](#), or both.

b. Notwithstanding paragraph "a", subparagraph (1), if the prior determination of paternity is based on an administrative or court order or other means, pursuant to the laws of another state or foreign country, an action to overcome the prior determination of paternity shall be filed in that jurisdiction. Unless the responsible person requests and is granted a stay of an action initiated under [this chapter](#) to establish child or medical support, the action shall proceed as otherwise provided by [this chapter](#).

84 Acts, ch 1278, §4; 89 Acts, ch 166, §5; 89 Acts, ch 179, §1; 90 Acts, ch 1224, §22; 92 Acts, ch 1195, §204; 93 Acts, ch 78, §9; 94 Acts, ch 1171, §21, 22; 95 Acts, ch 67, §19; 2005 Acts, ch 69, §15, 16; 2015 Acts, ch 110, §90, 91; 2023 Acts, ch 19, §875; 2023 Acts, ch 123, §6, 7

Referred to in [§252C.5, 598.21B](#)

See Code editor's note on simple harmonization at the beginning of this Code volume

Section amended

### **252C.5 Filing and docketing of financial responsibility order — order effective as district court decree.**

1. A true copy of any order entered by the department pursuant to [this chapter](#), along with a true copy of the return of service, if applicable, may be filed in the office of the clerk of the district court in the manner established pursuant to [section 252C.4, subsection 1](#).

2. The department's order shall be presented, ex parte, to the district court for review and approval. Unless defects appear on the face of the order or on the attachments, the district court shall approve the order. The approved order shall have all the force, effect, and attributes of a docketed order or decree of the district court.

3. Upon filing, the clerk shall enter the order in the judgment docket.

4. If the responsible party appeals the order approved by the court under [this section](#), and the court on appeal establishes an amount of support which is less than the amount of support established under the approved order, the court, in the order issued on appeal, shall reconcile the amounts due and shall provide that any amount which represents the unpaid

difference between the amount under the approved order and the amount under the order of the court on appeal is satisfied.

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §5](#); [89 Acts, ch 179, §2](#); [92 Acts, ch 1195, §504](#); [94 Acts, ch 1171, §23](#); [97 Acts, ch 175, §54](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §876](#)

Referred to in [§252C.3](#)  
Section amended

#### **252C.6 Interest on support debts.**

Interest accrues on support debts at the rate provided in [section 535.3](#) for court judgments. The department may collect the accrued interest but is not required to maintain interest balance accounts. Child support services may waive payment of the interest if the waiver will facilitate the collection of the support debt.

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §6](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §877](#)

Section amended

**252C.7 Employers — assignments of earnings.** Repealed by [97 Acts, ch 175, §55](#).

#### **252C.8 Temporary restraining order or bond.**

If the department reasonably believes that the responsible person is not a resident of this state, is about to move from this state, or is concealing the responsible person's whereabouts, or that the responsible person has removed or is about to remove, secrete, waste, or otherwise dispose of property which could be made subject to collection procedures to satisfy the support debt, the department may petition the district court for a temporary restraining order barring the removal, secretion, waste, or disposal. However, if the responsible person furnishes a bond satisfactory to the court, the temporary restraining order shall be vacated.

[84 Acts, ch 1278, §8](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §878](#)

Section amended

**252C.9 and 252C.10** Reserved.

#### **252C.11 Security for payment of support — forfeiture.**

Upon entry of a court order or upon the failure of a person to make payments pursuant to a court order, the court may require the person to provide security, a bond, or other guarantee which the court determines is satisfactory to secure the payment of the support obligation. Upon the person's failure to pay the support obligation under the court order, the court may declare the security, bond, or other guarantee forfeited.

[85 Acts, ch 100, §2](#)

#### **252C.12 Waiver of time limitations by responsible person.**

1. A responsible person may waive the time limitations established in [section 252C.3](#).
2. Upon receipt of a signed statement from each responsible person waiving the time limitations established in [section 252C.3](#), the department may proceed to enter an order for support and the court may approve the order, whether or not the time limitations have expired.
3. If a responsible person waives the time limitations established in [section 252C.3](#) and an order for support is entered under [this chapter](#), the signed statement of the responsible person waiving the time limitations shall be filed with the order for support.

[92 Acts, ch 1195, §205](#); [2007 Acts, ch 218, §161, 187](#); [2008 Acts, ch 1019, §18, 20](#); [2023 Acts, ch 19, §879](#)

Section amended