



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
Maryland's Social Services Agency



For immediate release:

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For more information:

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**PUBLIC COMMENT SOUGHT AS STATE CONSIDERS
REVISING OUTDATED CHILD SUPPORT GUIDELINES**

Six regional forums scheduled

BALTIMORE – The Department of Human Resources – the state agency responsible for collecting and distributing child support payments – seeks public comment on the possibility of revising the child support guidelines in Maryland. Child support amounts have not increased since 1988 and more than 200,000 children in the state currently rely on child support.

The department will sponsor six regional forums to solicit public comments on revising the Child Support Guidelines, which govern the child support amounts. The public is welcome to attend any session. Target jurisdictions are reflected below. Regional forums will take place according to the following schedule:

<p><u>October 28: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Allegany County Department of Social Services Room 240 One Frederick Street Cumberland, MD 21502 (Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties)</p>	<p><u>October 29: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Montgomery College - Rockville Campus 51 Mannakee Street Theatre Arts Building Theatre Arts Arena – Room 156 Rockville, MD 20850 (Frederick, Montgomery and Prince George's Counties)</p>
<p><u>November 4: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Charles County Department of Social Services 200 Kent Avenue Lobby La Plata, Maryland 20646 (Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties)</p>	<p><u>November 5: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Anne Arundel Community College Arundel Mills Campus Lecture Hall – Room 104 7009 Arundel Mills Circle Hanover, MD 21076 (Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford and Howard Counties and Baltimore City)</p>

<u>November 18: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Wicomico County Department of Social Services 201 Baptist Street, Suite 27 Room 1149 Salisbury, Maryland 21801 (Dorchester, Somerset, Wicomico and Worcester Counties)	<u>November 19: 6 pm – 8 pm</u> Talbot County Department of Social Services 301 Bay Street Room 111 Easton, Maryland 21601 (Caroline, Cecil, Kent, Queen Anne’s, and Talbot Counties)
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The community is encouraged to attend. Please contact Ms. Melody Lewis via phone at 410 – 767 – 7065 or via email at mlewis2@dhr.state.md.us to confirm your attendance.

The child support guidelines are reviewed every four years, in accordance with federal and State law, to ensure that appropriate child support amounts are awarded to families. During the last six months, a 40-member advisory committee consisting of stakeholders, practitioners, judiciary, and advocates working in the field of child support have developed recommendations on revisions to the child support guidelines in Maryland.

Key proposed changes include updating the child support amounts to reflect the current cost of raising a child and increasing the dollar amount a low-income non-custodial parent minimally needs for shelter, food, and clothing. The dollar amount is currently based on the 1988 federal poverty guidelines. The proposed increase will reflect the 2009 poverty guidelines.

The Department plans to submit legislation during the 2010 legislative session to modify the guidelines based on public comments and the advisory committee’s recommendations.

The State of Maryland is committed to ensuring that individuals with disabilities are able to participate in public meetings. Anyone planning to attend a meeting who wishes to receive auxiliary aids, services, or accommodations may contact the agency representative listed above at least 48 hours in advance.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state’s social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also funds programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland’s fourth largest state agency.