

JUSTICE FOUNDATION

California Child Support Recovery System

Enforcement Tools, Templates, and AI Prompts for Custodial Parents

Delivered with your free evaluation response.

Educational use only. Not legal advice.

How to Use This Kit

This kit is your enforcement system. Work through it in order. Section 1 tells you which tools apply to your situation. Sections 2–9 give you the templates and instructions to use them. Section 10 contains 12 Claude AI prompts — fill in your facts, paste into claude.ai (free), get a strategy tailored to your case.

Section 1 — Enforcement Decision Tree

Step 1: Is your case enrolled with DCSS?

- YES — DCSS handles tax intercept, FIDM bank search, license suspension automatically for enrolled cases. Your job is to request specific tools in writing.
- NO — You can still enforce directly through the courts using the templates in this kit. Consider enrolling with DCSS for access to the automatic tools.

Step 2: Does the payer have a job?

- YES, employer known — use Earnings Withholding Order (Section 3) immediately. This is the fastest path to consistent payment.
- YES, employer unknown — request FIDM bank search and parent locator through DCSS. Use the demand letter in Section 5.
- SELF-EMPLOYED — use license suspension (Section 4) and income imputation motion (Section 7).
- UNKNOWN — request federal Parent Locator Service through DCSS. Use written demand letter in Section 5.

Step 3: Are there arrears?

- YES — record Abstract of Judgment immediately (Section 6). Every month of arrears accrues 10% interest.
- OVER \$2,500 — passport denial is automatic for enrolled DCSS cases. Confirm referral in writing.
- WILLFUL NON-PAYMENT — file FL-410 contempt motion (Section 8). Each missed month is a separate count.

Section 2 — DCSS Written Demand Templates

How to Get DCSS to Act

DCSS caseworkers respond to written demands citing specific statutes faster than to phone calls. Every request should be in writing, sent by certified mail, citing the Family Code section that requires the action.

Template: Written Demand for License Suspension

[Date]

California Department of Child Support Services

Case Number: [YOUR CASE NUMBER]

Re: Written Demand for License Suspension — Family Code §17520

I am writing to formally request that DCSS initiate license suspension proceedings against [PAYER NAME] pursuant to Family Code §17520.

[PAYER NAME] is currently [30 / 60 / ____] days past due on child support payments. The total amount of arrears is approximately \$[AMOUNT].

Under Family Code §17520, DCSS is authorized to suspend the following licenses when a payer is 30 or more days past due:

- Driver's license
- Professional license (if applicable): [SPECIFY IF KNOWN]
- Contractor's license (if applicable)
- Recreational license

Please initiate suspension proceedings immediately and confirm in writing within 10 business days.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME]

[CONTACT INFORMATION]

Template: Written Demand for FIDM Bank Search

Re: Written Demand for Financial Institution Data Match — Family Code §17450

I am writing to request that my case be enrolled and prioritized in the Financial Institution Data Match (FIDM) program under Family Code §17450.

The payer, [NAME], currently owes \$[AMOUNT] in arrears. I request that DCSS run an immediate FIDM search and initiate bank levy proceedings upon locating any accounts.

Please confirm enrollment and search status within 10 business days.

Section 3 — Earnings Withholding Order

What an EWO Does

An Earnings Withholding Order served on the employer requires them to withhold child support from each paycheck before the payer sees the money. The employer remits directly to the California State Disbursement Unit. The payer cannot intercept or redirect the payment.

How to File Directly (Bypassing DCSS)

- Obtain the support order from the court that issued it
- Complete Judicial Council Form WG-004 (Earnings Withholding Order for Support)
- File with the Superior Court clerk — pay the filing fee or request a fee waiver
- Have the county sheriff or a registered process server serve the order on the employer
- The employer must begin withholding within 10 days of service

Withholding Limit	Rule
Supporting another family	50% of disposable earnings
Not supporting another family	60% of disposable earnings
Arrears more than 12 weeks past due	Add 5% to above limits

Section 4 — License Suspension Demand

Family Code §17520 authorizes DCSS to suspend the payer's driver's license, professional license, recreational license, and contractor's license when arrears are 30 or more days past due. This does not happen automatically — it requires a written request from the custodial parent.

Most Effective For

- Contractors (CSLB license required to bid or work legally in California)
- Real estate agents, attorneys, doctors, nurses — any licensed professional
- Anyone whose livelihood depends on a license

Action Item

Send the demand letter from Section 2 to your DCSS caseworker by certified mail. Keep the tracking number. Follow up in writing if no response within 10 business days. If DCSS fails to act, you can petition the Superior Court directly for an order requiring suspension.

Section 5 — Tax Intercept Checklist

The November 30 Deadline

The federal tax intercept program requires case data to be submitted by November 30 for the following tax season. If your case is not certified before that date, you miss the entire cycle.

What to Confirm With DCSS Before November 30

- Case is enrolled in both state AND federal tax intercept programs
- Arrears amount on file is current and accurate
- Payer's Social Security number is correctly recorded
- No administrative holds on the case
- Get written confirmation of enrollment status

Injured Spouse Warning

If the payer files jointly with a new spouse, the new spouse may file IRS Form 8379 (Injured Spouse Allocation) to protect their portion of the refund.

DCSS will process the injured spouse claim and may return a portion of the intercepted refund.

This is normal — it does not mean your interception failed. You still receive the payer's portion.

Section 6 — Abstract of Judgment / Property Lien

How to Record a Property Lien

- Obtain Judicial Council Form EJ-001 (Abstract of Judgment) from courts.ca.gov
- Complete with case information, total arrears including 10% annual interest, and payer's full name
- Take to the County Recorder's office — fee is approximately \$15-25
- Record in every county where the payer owns or may own property
- The lien appears on every title search — payer cannot sell or refinance without paying it

The 10% Interest Calculation

Child support arrears accrue interest at 10% per year in California.

Formula: Annual interest = Total arrears × 0.10

Daily interest = Annual interest ÷ 365

Example: \$20,000 in arrears × 10% = \$2,000/year = \$5.48/day

Record a new Abstract periodically to capture accrued interest in the lien amount.

Section 7 — Self-Employed Payer Toolkit

Income Imputation Motion

If the payer is self-employed and claims minimal income, file a motion in family court to impute income based on earning capacity under Family Code §4058. Request bank records and business records in discovery — deposits do not lie the way tax returns sometimes do.

What to Subpoena

- Bank statements for the past 24 months
- Business invoices, contracts, and estimates
- Client lists
- Business license and contractor's license records

Contractor License Suspension

A contractor without a CSLB license cannot legally bid on or perform work in California. License suspension for a self-employed contractor has immediate income consequences — making payment more attractive than continued non-payment.

Section 8 — FL-410 Contempt Motion

When to File

File when the payer has willfully failed to pay court-ordered support and has the ability to pay. Each missed month is a separate contempt count. Twelve missed months is twelve counts — each carries up to 5 days in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

The Process

- Obtain Judicial Council Form FL-410 from courts.ca.gov
- File in the family court that issued the original support order
- Serve the payer personally — not by mail
- Attend the hearing with documentation of every missed payment
- The burden shifts to the payer to prove inability to pay

Why Contempt Works

Contempt is effective not because most courts imprison non-payers on first motion — they often do not.

It works because the formal court appearance and threat of jail creates urgency that no caseworker letter does.

Many payers make significant payments immediately before or after a contempt hearing. Even a suspended jail sentence gives you a tool to enforce payment going forward.

Section 9 — Interstate Enforcement

When the Payer Lives in Another State

UIFSA (Uniform Interstate Family Support Act) is the law in all 50 states. California DCSS can register the California order in the payer's state for enforcement. That state must use all its enforcement tools — wage garnishment, license suspension, bank levy — to collect. The custodial parent does not need to appear in the other state's court.

Federal Parent Locator Service

DCSS has access to the federal Parent Locator Service, which can locate a payer's address, employer, and financial accounts across all 50 states using Social Security number. Request access through your DCSS caseworker in writing.

Section 10 — 12 Claude AI Prompts

Copy each prompt. Fill in your specific facts in the [BRACKETS]. Paste into claude.ai (free). Get a detailed strategy for your situation.

Claude AI Prompt — Enforcement Strategy

My child support situation:

- Payer name: [NAME]
- Monthly support amount: \$[AMOUNT]
- Arrears: \$[TOTAL OWED]
- How long unpaid: [MONTHS/YEARS]
- Court order state: [CALIFORNIA / OTHER STATE]
- Payer employment: [EMPLOYER NAME / SELF-EMPLOYED / UNKNOWN]
- Payer has property: [YES / NO / UNKNOWN]

Please: (1) Identify every enforcement tool that applies to my situation in priority order,
 (2) Tell me exactly what to do first and why, (3) Draft the written demand letter to DCSS
 citing the specific Family Code sections, (4) Calculate the 10% annual interest on my arrears.

Note: Educational use only. Not legal advice.

Claude AI Prompt — Contempt Motion Analysis

I want to file a contempt motion (FL-410).

- Months of missed payments: [NUMBER]
- Amount missed each month: \$[AMOUNT]

- Does the payer have income I can show? [YES/NO – describe]
- Prior contempt filings? [YES/NO]

Please: (1) Calculate total contempt counts and maximum exposure,
 (2) Identify what evidence I need to bring to the hearing,
 (3) Anticipate the payer's likely defenses and how to counter them,
 (4) Tell me what outcome to realistically expect on a first contempt motion.

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Claude AI Prompt — Self-Employed Payer Strategy

The payer is self-employed.

- Type of business/trade: [DESCRIBE]
- Licensed contractor? [YES/NO]
- Professional license? [YES/NO – type]
- Claimed annual income: \$[AMOUNT]
- Actual lifestyle indicators: [CAR, VACATIONS, HOME, EQUIPMENT – describe]

Please: (1) Identify every license subject to suspension,
 (2) Explain the income imputation standard under Family Code §4058,
 (3) List every document I should subpoena in a contempt or modification proceeding,
 (4) Draft the license suspension demand letter to DCSS.

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Claude AI Prompt — Interstate Collection

The payer lives in [STATE].

- Original order issued in: California
- Payer's employer (if known): [NAME]
- Arrears: \$[AMOUNT]
- DCSS enrolled? [YES/NO]

Please: (1) Explain UIFSA registration process for [STATE],
 (2) Tell me what enforcement tools [STATE] law provides,
 (3) Draft the written request to California DCSS to register the order in [STATE],
 (4) Identify whether [STATE] has stronger or weaker enforcement than California.

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