



**TARRANT COUNTY
DOMESTIC RELATIONS OFFICE
COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT**

WELCOME

TARRANT COUNTY

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT

ORIENTATION PROGRAM

A MESSAGE FROM THE COURT

There are similarities to this type of supervision and a criminal probation, in that if you violate the terms and conditions of supervision, you can expect to be arrested without notice. The Community Supervision Unit is an arm of the Court. They supervise you at the judge's request.

You should assume that anything that you do or don't do with respect to your supervision will get back to the Court. Even though contempt and community supervision are obviously a punishment for failing to pay support, you will get through this more easily and maybe quicker if you look at this as an opportunity for assistance rather than as a burden. If you have issues such as addictions or unemployment, start here for help and accept the assistance the program can offer. They will help you if you let them.

If you fall behind in payments, lose your job etc., the worst thing you can do is not report. Remember, reporting is as much a condition of your supervision as is paying your support. A lost job or other problems paying support is the very time you need to be in touch with your counselor. Turn to them for assistance, don't hide from them. The Judge can and will revoke your probation simply for not reporting.

PURPOSE OF THIS ORIENTATION

- Orientation is being provided to help you better understand how community supervision will affect *you, your child, and the child's other parent.*
- We will explain the processes required and provide you with important information to help you successfully complete your supervision term.
- We will give you information about the Community Supervision Unit (CSU), its main goals and duties, and who to contact when you have questions about your order.
- We will also provide referral information to agencies in Tarrant County who may be able to help you successfully complete the supervision requirements.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY SUPERVISION?

- Our judges want you to obey the court's order for child support and that can include sentencing you to jail if you don't pay. Rather than imposing jail this time, the judge *suspended* your sentence and placed you on community supervision for a specific period of time.
- Community Supervision is a probation program that provides close monitoring of how well you are following the terms and conditions of your court order.
- We may send you back to court for the judge to take further action if you do not follow the terms and conditions of your court order.

THE GOALS

- Avoid jail time.
- Pay-off Child Support Arrearage.
- Establish Timely Child Support Payments.
- Remove the obstacles that prevent you from reaching these goals!

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT

- In addition to monitoring how well you are obeying the court's order, Community Supervision will try to help you understand the importance of supporting your children and will provide you with as much information as possible to help you follow the orders.
- The Community Supervision Unit also provides guidance when events, obstacles, or changes occur that may prevent you from obeying the order, such as unemployment.
- When you were in our office, you were assigned a specific counselor who will monitor your case each month. The counselor is your direct contact with the office or, if the counselor is not immediately available, you may leave a voicemail message. If it is an emergency, you may contact the main office number to speak with another counselor.

CONTACT INFORMATION

- Community Supervision Unit
- Family Law Center
- 200 E. Weatherford Street
- Fort Worth, Texas 76196-0291
- Phone: 817-884-1848
- Fax: 817-212-7020

- Office Hours 7:30 A.M. – 4:30 P.M.
- Reporting Hours 8:00 A.M. – 4:00 P.M.

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT STAFF

- Donna Larson Director
- Thomas Chenault Assistant Director
- Christine Alviar Counselor
- Jimmy Cantu Counselor
- Heather Helton Counselor
- Chris Kemp Counselor
- Laura Ramos Counselor
- Laura Remington Counselor
- Isaac Samaniego Counselor

HELPFUL NUMBERS

- Tarrant County Child Support Office
 - (817) 884-1475
- Attorney General Child Support
 - 1-800-252-8014
- Domestic Relations Office- Visitation Enforcement
 - (817) 884-1879
- New Day Services (FOCUS)
 - (817) 884-3800
- Adult Probation Dept. (CSCD)
 - (817) 884-1600
- Parenting Order Legal Clinic
 - (817) 336-3943
- Lawyer Referral Services
 - (817) 336-4101

HOW TO RELATE TO YOUR COUNSELOR

- Be Honest.
- Discuss Your Problems.
- Follow Your Court Order.
- Follow Your Community Supervision Officer's Directions.
- Honor All Appointments.

THE COUNSELOR'S DUTIES

- **Maintain the history of your case:** From the date you were placed on community supervision, we will keep all monthly reports received from you and make a record of any contact such as letters and phone calls. We also record your attendance in all classes and/or counseling you were directed to attend. We will check for child support payments and for any fees you were ordered to pay. We may visit you at your home or work place.
- **Review for Compliance:** Every month, your counselor checks to see how well you are following the court order. If you did not report or make a payment on your account, the counselor *will be* in contact with you.
- **Revocation Request:** If the counselor is unable to contact you or if you continue to disobey the court's order, a request to revoke your sentence will be forwarded to the judge, who may issue a warrant for your arrest.
- **Discharge Request:** When you have successfully met all terms and conditions of the court's order, your counselor may request an early discharge, which would release you from community supervision.

WHAT THE COUNSELOR DOES NOT DO

- We do not give out legal advice.
- We do not monitor matters that are not specifically listed in terms of supervision such as custody or property issues.
- We will not give out your address, employment or phone number to anyone except the prosecuting attorney, sheriff and court. We will not give you the custodial parents address, employment or phone numbers.
- We cannot reinstate passports or drivers licenses – Please contact the Attorney General and/or Department of Motor Vehicles for information on reinstatement.
- We do not supervise the other party.

OVERVIEW OF GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF COMMUNITY SUPERVISION

- Suspended Sentences – The judge found you in contempt for not obeying the court's order and sentenced you to jail. Rather than serving your sentence in jail, the court placed you on community supervision.
- Term of Community Supervision – This is the *length of time* you are on community supervision and *the length of time* you will report to the Community Supervision office.
- Child Support – Regular child support payments usually continue until each child or all child(ren) have turned 18 and graduated from high school. But each order is different! Be sure you know what your order requires!
- Arrearage Payments - Additional money ordered to be paid toward the unpaid child support you owe may be included in your order. This is paid until the total amount owed is paid. Be sure you know what your order requires!
 - **DO NOT PAY THE OBLIGEE DIRECTLY- YOU MAY NOT GET CREDIT FOR DIRECT PAYMENTS!!!**

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

CONTINUED

- Interest – If the court gives a judgment on the unpaid child support you owe, interest maybe ordered. The interest accrues at the rate of 6% per annum. Interest also accrues on current child support payments if they are not paid in full before 30 days after the payment is due. Interest is computed by the Tarrant County Child Support Office and the Attorney General’s Office, not by the Community Supervision counselors.
- Health Care & Medical Insurance - CHECK YOUR ORDER TO FIND OUT IF HEALTH CARE, INSURANCE AND/OR REIMBURSEMENT IS ORDERED!
- If the court ordered medical support, it may be included in the child support ordered or as a separate payment. Be sure you know where to send payments.
- You may be ordered to maintain insurance coverage or to reimburse the other parent for insurance premiums. You will be required to provide proof of coverage or payment to your counselor.
- Unreimbursed medical expenses are usually paid directly to the other parent. When these payments are requested and you make the payment, proof of this payment must be given to your counselor immediately.
- Call your counselor if you have any questions.

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Fees

- The Court may have ordered you to pay several different types of fees. They may include Community Supervision fees, filing fees and/or court costs and attorney fees.
- Fees are a specific term of the community supervision and instructions on how and where to pay the fees are included in your court order. Of course if you have questions, please contact your counselor.
- Personal checks will not be accepted.
- Do not send cash in the mail.

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Income Withholding Orders and Administrative Writs

- These are orders and information packets that are sent to your employer to have the child support and/or arrearage payments withheld from your pay check.
- Any time you change employment, you are required to notify your counselor. The counselor will have the income withholding order sent to your new employer. Until the employer begins withholding the amounts, you must make the payments yourself at the Child Support Office. Do not pay the other parent directly.
- Address Changes - Any changes in your residence address and/or phone numbers should be reported to your counselor *immediately*

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Field Visits

- Counselors may visit you at your home, work, or elsewhere. They may contact your employer regarding the wage withholding and/or writ and to verify employment. They may also contact other probation officers or family members for information or for help in monitoring your case.

Counseling/Referrals

- You may be directed to attend counseling on financial planning, budget management, conflict resolution, parenting skills, drug or alcohol abuse or any other matters that may cause you to be unable to follow the court's order. If you feel that you need counseling, please contact your counselor. They have access to resources in the community that may be helpful for a minimum or no charge.

GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS CONTINUED

Tax Returns

- Your order may require you to pay any money received as a refund toward your past due arrears. Your order may also require that you provide a copy of your return to your counselor each year. This will help pay the arrearage down faster and, in some instances, pay it in full. This is an additional payment – not in lieu of regular payments due.

Windfall Money

- Your order may also include that you pay any windfall money received from such sources as chance games, lottery, legal settlements, inheritances and/or personal injury settlements toward the arrearage.

FOCUS PROGRAM

TARRANT COUNTY COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT
PARTNERSHIP WITH OAG, IV-D COURTS AND NEW DAY SERVICES

- The FOCUS Class for Men is a series of 10 weekly classes for non-custodial fathers who are behind in their child support payments.
- It is an interactive, educational program addressing the challenges connected with child support and co-parenting. It educates fathers in the importance of remaining physically, emotionally and financially active in the lives of their children. Overall, the class helps men focus on themselves and their children in order to improve their role as a father.

REVOCAATION PROCEDURES

- A request for a Motion to Revoke may be prepared by your counselor when you have failed to follow the court's order. It will include alleged violations of the court order, such as missed child support and/or arrearage payments, not reporting as directed, failing to attend classes or failing to pay court ordered fees.
- Once the motion has been filed, it will be sent to the Judge to review and a warrant may be issued for your arrest.
- Once the warrant has been signed it will be sent to the sheriff or constable for service. The warrant will also be entered into Texas Crime Information Center database so that all police and sheriff officers can see that there is a warrant for your arrest. If a cash bond is set by the Judge, this amount may be paid to get out of jail. The bond is cash only and will be applied to your child support account.
- After your arrest, a hearing will be held and the court will determine if the allegations are true and whether your sentence should be revoked.

EARLY DISCHARGE & EXPIRED CASES

- When all terms and conditions have been satisfied (arrearage paid, fees paid, child support current, reporting each month) the counselor may request your case to be discharged early. This will require the courts approval. You should discuss this process with your counselor so you know exactly what happens.
- NOTE: you must continue to report and comply with all terms and conditions until the order to discharge has been signed.
- EXPIRED CASES - Your case will be automatically closed once the term (length of time) of community supervision has been completed.

REPORTING INSTRUCTIONS

- You are required to report to the community supervision office EVERY MONTH. Failure to report is a violation of your community supervision.
- You were given specific instructions at our office on how you should report. Reporting may be done in several different ways and is subject to change as needed.
- If you were instructed to report to the office in person each month, you may report between 8:00 am and 4:00 pm on the date you were scheduled or if you were not given a specific date to report, you should report during the first two weeks of the month.
- If you were instructed to report by mail, you must fill out the report form completely and have it in the mail no later than the 5th of each month. If you are unable to mail the report by the 5th, you need to send it as soon as possible. Explain why the report was late in the space provided on the report.
- If you are permitted to report on the web site, this should be done by the 5th of the month as well, but if you are not able to, please do so before the end of the month

WHEN TO CONTACT YOUR COUNSELOR

- If changes occur *between* the times you report, you should contact your counselor immediately by calling or coming into the office:
- When changes occur in your employment.
- If there are changes in your address or phone numbers.
- If you become unable to work.
- If your child reaches 18 and has graduated from high school.

REPORTING REMINDER

- Report during the first 2 weeks of the month.
- Report early to avoid a long wait.
- Do not bring children.

BUDGET CLASSES

TARRANT COUNTY COMMUNITY SUPERVISION PARTNERSHIP WITH
TEXAS COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OFFICE

- Classes last for one hour.
- There is no cost for the classes.
- Attendance at Budget Class will count as your report for the month.
- If you live or work out of Tarrant County or have a work conflict, contact your counselor immediately, you may be able to complete the class on-line.

TEXAS WORKFORCE

- Employer Services
- Job Seeker Services
- Child Care
- Unemployment Insurance Benefits

- WORKFORCE WEBSITES

- www.workintexas.com
- www.workforcesolutions.net
- www.texasworkforce.org

MILITARY OPPORTUNITIES

- Army www.army.mil
- Navy www.navy.mil
- Air Force www.airforce.com
- Marines www.marines.mil

JOB APPLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS

- Be honest, but don't reveal more than necessary.
- When you get an interview – arrive early, dress appropriately.
- Be prepared to tell the employer why you should be hired – get in there and sell yourself.
- Develop a good attitude and think positively.
- Don't get discouraged.
- Practice patience. Persistence pays off.

JOB SEARCHING!

- Develop Consistency.
- Make looking for a job your full time job until employed.
- Set a goal of so many job contacts per day or week and stick to it.
- Sign up with local Temporary Agencies.
- Go to the nearest Workforce Center daily or several times a week.
- Go to local Job Fairs.

KEEPING A JOB!

- Show up every day!
- Be On Time!
- Work Hard – give 110%!
- Be positive!
- Be responsible!
- Be a leader!

PARENTS' GUIDE TO RECOGNIZING NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR IN YOUR CHILD WHAT TO LOOK FOR:

- Withdrawing from family.
- Declining school attendance, performance or behavior.
- Staying out late without reason.
- Unusual desire for secrecy.
- Confrontational behavior, such as talking back, verbal abuse, disrespect for parental authority.
- Sudden negative opinions about law enforcement or adults in positions of authority.
- Change in attitude or behavior at school, church, sports or other normal activities.

WHAT PARENTS' CAN DO:

- Talk to your children about peer pressure and ways to avoid it.
- Get to know your children's friends and friends' parents.
- Set firm limits with your children and teens.
- Plan family time.

OFFICE HOURS

MONDAY – FRIDAY
7:30 am to 4:30 pm

Reporting Hours

MONDAY – FRIDAY
8:00 am to 4:00 pm

We do not accept reports after 3:30 pm on the last working day of the month

COMMUNITY SUPERVISION UNIT

Thank you for completing
this orientation.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office at

(817) 884-1848.

To print the orientation confirmation page for your counselor, please return to the orientation website and click on the “Orientation Confirmation” form.