

Fall 2010

WHAT'S NEW

This is the first issue of the Family Responsibility Office's new bulletin. Its purpose is to educate the public about the work we do, and help support payors and recipients understand how we can serve them better. The bulletin will be published four times a year and be made available online at www.ontario.ca/fro.

FRO CLIENT TIPS

- Always be ready to identify your Family Responsibility Office case number when you call our office. It will help us serve you faster.
- Need help finding a lawyer? Contact the Lawyer Referral Service at 1-800-268-8326 (toll free), 416-947-3330 (GTA) or 416-644-4866 (TTY) for a free half-hour consultation.
- Support payors - Keep your own records (pay stubs, copies of cancelled cheques, receipts). We do not provide a year-end statement for income tax purposes.
- Support recipients – Fill in the forms in the registration package as completely as possible. We use this information to enforce your support order. Don't forget to attach a VOID cheque for your Direct Deposit.

STATS AND FACTS

Between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010, the Family Responsibility Office:

Collected **\$647,200,000**

Answered **524,133** in-person calls

Answered **2,441,723** calls through the automated information line

Suspended **3,965** driver's licenses

Garnished **\$247,685** in lottery winnings

Registered **14,404** new cases

MYTHS AND FACTS

There are many misconceptions about what the Family Responsibility Office has the authority to do, and what we do not have power over. Here are some common examples of myths we often hear, and the truth about what really happens:

myth: The Family Responsibility Office determines the amount of the support payments in a support order.

fact: The judge determines the amount of the support payment in a support order. The Family Responsibility Office works to help support payments flow from the payor to the recipient, but cannot change the amount of support that must be paid.

myth: When my child turns 18 years old, the Family Responsibility Office automatically stops asking me for support payments.

fact: Under Ontario law, children are usually entitled to support up to age 18, and for a period of time after that if they are attending school full-time. Some support orders or separation agreements set out a specific date or event when support will end (e.g., a child leaving school). This is called a “terminating event.” If you believe that a terminating event has happened, you need to contact the Family Responsibility Office to ask about stopping your support payments.

If your order or agreement does not have a terminating event, you need to get the consent of the other parent or a court order to end your support payments.

myth: The Family Responsibility Office pays missed support payments when the support payor falls behind.

fact: The Family Responsibility Office **does not** pay missed support payments. The Family Responsibility Office sends support payments to the recipient **only after** support money has been received from the payor.

GETTING RESULTS: FRO collects \$66,000 in owed child support in a single case

The Family Responsibility Office collects support payments owed to families. In a recent case, we had already sent numerous warning letters and suspended the driver's licence and passport of a payor who owed more than \$66,000 in child support. So when he did not show up to his scheduled default hearing in April 2009, we asked the judge to issue a warrant for the payor's arrest, saying he either had to pay the money he owed or he would be put in jail for 120 days.

On March 15, 2010, the police picked up the support payor and immediately jailed him. Two days later, he agreed to pay the full amount, and FRO collected just over \$66,000 in owed support payments for the family.

THANKS TO FRO...

On May 12, 2010, a client wrote to FRO:

"I just wanted to say a really big THANK YOU for all of your help. I can't even begin to tell you how much I appreciate it. Thank you for really listening and following up on it. I really had given in to the fact that I would probably never get any of the money back. You have given me back hope and belief that if you do the right thing and follow the proper channels that you will get what you deserve."

DID YOU KNOW?

The Family Responsibility Office call centre handles an average of 2,000 calls per day. If you don't need to speak to someone in person, you can call our automated information line instead to get updated information about your case 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The number to call is 416-326-1818 (GTA) or 1-800-267-7263 (toll-free). You'll need your case number and PIN number to access your information.

Q&A

I've been ordered to pay support. What happens now?

When an Ontario court orders you to pay support, the court also automatically sends a "support deduction order" to the Family Responsibility Office (FRO). This gives us the authority to ask your employer or income sources to deduct support payments from your wages and forward them to FRO.

You are still responsible for making support payments to FRO until your employer starts making deductions. You also need to let us know immediately if you change employers.

If you are not on a regular payroll, are self-employed or unemployed, you are responsible for making all payments directly to FRO.

There are many different payment options, including payroll deduction, telephone or internet banking, preauthorized payments, or cheque or money order. If you're having financial trouble, FRO can help you develop a plan so you can meet your court-ordered obligations.

When making payments, it is important to remember to:

- Make your support payments through FRO.
Do not pay the recipient directly.
- Always include your case number and your name on all payments sent to FRO.
- Keep a record of all support payments you make.

Learn more by reading our [Payment Options](#) fact sheet.
Visit www.ontario.ca/fro and click on "fact sheets".

How to Contact Us

24-Hour Automated Information Line

Tel: 416-326-1818

Toll-free: 1-800-267-7263

Client Services Call Centre

Monday to Friday, 8 am to 5 pm

Tel: 416-326-1817

Toll-free: 1-800-267-4330

TTY: 1-866-545-0083

www.ontario.ca/fro

The Family Responsibility Office (FRO) helps people meet their child and spousal support responsibilities. Every year, FRO handles approximately 190,000 cases, representing over 400,000 people, and collects approximately \$650 million in support payments. This bulletin is published every quarter and is available online at www.ontario.ca/fro.