

Families face challenges every day. There are communication issues, problems with money, disagreements about how to raise the kids. When a family splits up, those things don't go away. When one of the partners is in a different province, territory, or country, a whole new set of challenges is created.

The world has become a smaller place. People move, they get different jobs, they go into new relationships. But their families – especially if there are children – continue. And so do the challenges.

For many families one of the hardest parts to deal with is money – family support, or maintenance. That's why the *Interjurisdictional Support Orders Act* exists. The *Act* gives you a way to ask a court to decide about the financial part of your family relationship, even though the other person is in a “reciprocating jurisdiction”. The forms are a way to organize the information the court needs. The FormSupport guides will help you prepare your application.

What's a reciprocating jurisdiction?

If a couple lives in the same province, territory, or country and their relationship ends, one of them can go to the local court and apply for a support (or maintenance) order. The other person will be summoned to court and there will be a hearing. Unless the two people agree, and get a written agreement or consent order, the court will decide how much support will be paid. The court follows the laws of the place where the couple lives.

When the two people live in *different* places, which laws do the court use? Many years ago one person would have to travel for a court hearing in one place or the other. With ‘reciprocity’, Newfoundland and Labrador (“NL”) has agreements with about 40 different places to honour and recognize each other's support laws and orders. They include all the Canadian provinces and territories, all of the United States, and several other foreign countries. This means that a person can start an application in NL and an order can be made, or changed, or enforced, where the other person lives. The order is ‘good’ in both places.

In NL, and in Canada, most of the reciprocal cases are between Canadian provinces and territories. The Canadian ‘reciprocating jurisdictions’ have developed standard laws and forms for the whole country.

Will this apply to my case?

Probably. If, when you asked for the application forms, you said the other person was in one of the ‘reciprocating jurisdictions’, you can use the forms. Your application must be about support (maintenance).

If you are applying to change an order made under Canada's *Divorce Act*, this is not the application for you. The *Divorce Act* is a federal law. It has its own rules about making and changing its orders. All applications must be made to the Supreme Court of the province. You may wish to talk to a lawyer if you want to change your *Divorce Act* order.

Are there other ways of doing this?

Yes, there are. If both of you agree, you can choose to apply to one court, or another. It's as though you both lived in one province, territory, or country. The order could then be ‘registered’ in the other place. When registered, the order has the same effect as if it is made in both places. This is another thing that ‘reciprocating jurisdictions’ have agreed to do.

Or you can hire a lawyer and talk about applying in a Provincial Court or Supreme Court, or having a lawyer in the other person's jurisdiction go to court for you.

Or, if you both agree, you can write a formal agreement. That, too, can be ‘registered’ in both places, and will be legal. It's another part of ‘reciprocity’.

Or, you can discuss your situation with a Support Applications Social Worker with the Department of Human Resources and Employment. They provide assistance to individuals who wish to obtain child support either through agreement or by court order. You can contact a Support Applications Social Worker through the court in your area.

Finally, you can consider mediation. Usually, mediation happens when both people can sit down together with a mediator. With the two of you in different places, there are some location differences to work out. But if you and the other person want to come to your own agreement about support, you can make mediation work for you. Even if you can't agree on everything, you may be able to reduce the number of decisions you ask the court to make for you. If you're interested, look up mediation in the yellow pages of the telephone book. You can also ask friends, a lawyer, social worker, or a community agency or counselling centre that works with families. If you do not use mediation, the public library, the internet, and many family-centred groups can give you valuable information on how mediation methods can help you talk with the other person about sensitive issues.

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To obtain a court order, is it necessary to complete these forms?

Yes. You are asking a court in a different province, territory, or country to make an order for you. To do that the court needs evidence. You are not going to be there, so your documents will speak for you. Putting the documents together is not something

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FOR SUPPORT

Use this part if you *do not* have a support (maintenance) order now. You are the 'claimant'; the other person is the 'respondent'.

you can do in an evening. You must decide whether you want to put in the time and effort to give the court what it needs. The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice has prepared the FormSupport guides to help you. If you have legal questions, you may need to talk to a lawyer.

Getting started

The first step is to look at the charts below this section to determine which forms you will need to complete. The first one is about the forms you need to make a support application. It lists the types of support, and the forms for each type. You will have one copy of each of the forms, and one copy of the matching FormSupport guide. Mark one copy of each of the forms as your 'working' copy. Put another copy aside – it is your 'good' copy.

If you have access to the internet, all the forms are available on-line at: <http://www.gov.nl.ca/just>. You can also obtain the forms in person from any Supreme Court or Provincial Court in the Province which deals with family law matters.

Below each chart there are examples. They may help you decide if you have the right forms for your application.

If your claim is for	Fill out Form(s)
Any application for support	A and B
A determination that the respondent is the parent of the child(ren) named in your application. This is about 'parentage'. The court will want to declare (include in the order) that the other person is a parent who has a duty to support a child. See the guide for Form C to find out if you need Form D for your application.	C, and D if necessary.
Child support	E and F
That the respondent obtain and maintain medical and/or dental insurance coverage for the child(ren) and/or yourself	E and F
Child support for a child over the age of majority (age 19 in NL)	G, and L (1 form for each child)
Child support if you and the respondent have split, or shared, custody	G
Child support if you are making a claim for an order that is not according to the child support guidelines tables, because that amount would cause you or the child(ren) undue hardship	G
Child support, when the respondent makes over \$150,000 per year	G
Special expenses, for childcare, health, insurance, extracurricular, or education expenses for a child or children	H
Support for yourself	J and F
If you choose any of Forms G, H, or J	K

Examples:

1. Cathi is asking for an order that Ryan pay support for their child, Emma who is 7. Cathi is not asking for support for herself, and Emma has no ‘special expenses’ for health, education, or for child care. Cathi will fill out Forms A, B, C, E, and F. *Unfortunately, Wally has not been paying what he promised. Mary is going to ask the court in the ‘reciprocating jurisdiction’ to make a support order. For Mary, there will be a lot of forms to fill out. She will use Forms A, B, C, E, F, G, L, and K.*
2. In another example, Wally and Mary separated a few months ago, and Wally moved to a ‘reciprocating jurisdiction’. He said he would pay support for the 15-year old, and for the 19-year old who lives at home and is going to school. He was also going to pay support for Mary – she has worked part-time for many years. The younger child has a disability and needs medicine, physical therapy, and goes to a private school which can handle his needs.
3. Michelle and Dan were together for over 10 years, and have two children. They adopted the 8-year old, and the 12-year old is from a former relationship Michelle had. Dan always acted as a parent to the older child. Michelle is asking the court in Dan’s ‘reciprocating jurisdiction’ to make a support order for both children. She will fill out Forms A, B, C, D, E, and F.

For SUPPORT VARIATION

Use this part if you *have* a support order or written agreement now, and you want to change it. You are the ‘applicant’; the other person is the ‘respondent’.

If you are a support Recipient (the person receiving support)

If your claim is to change or end an order	Fill out Form(s)
Any application to change or end a support order	A, B, and M
For the amount of child support	E and F
Child support for a child over the age of majority (age 19 in NL)	G and L (1 Form L for each child)
Child support if you and the respondent have split, or shared, custody	G
Child support if you are making a claim for an order that is not according to the child support guidelines tables, because that amount would cause you or the child(ren) undue hardship	G
Child support, when the respondent makes over \$150,000 per year	G
Special expenses, for childcare, health, insurance, extracurricular, or education expenses for a child or children	H
Support for yourself	J and F
If you choose any of Forms G, H, or J	K

If you are a support Payor (the person paying support)

If your claim is to change or end an order	Fill out Form(s)
Any application to change or end a support order	A, B, K, and M
If you want the court to make an order even if the respondent does not go to court or file documents	F
For child support for a child over the age of majority (age 19 in NL)	I
For child support if you and the respondent have split, or shared, custody	I
To change the amount of child support you pay, if you are making a claim for an order that is not according to the child support guidelines tables, because that amount would cause you or your family undue hardship	I

Examples:

4. *Trina has learned that Suresh has now finished his training, and has a well-paid permanent job in his 'reciprocating jurisdiction'. The order for support for their 2 young children was made using the child support guidelines. It was based on the income Suresh had when he was a student. Trina would like a new order, according to the income Suresh has now. She will use Forms A, B, E, F, and M.*
5. *In another example, Gordon and Lisa have a support order which they got soon after they separated. Gordon moved to BC and has a good job, but was laid off. After being out of work for 6 months, he now has a new job, but it doesn't pay as well, and he has child support arrears and other debts and can't keep up with the payments. He is asking the court to change the amount of support he pays. He believes the child support guidelines table amount will cause his new family undue hardship. He will use Forms A, B, F, I, K, and M.*
6. *And finally, Roger wants to stop paying Cecile support for their son, Martin. Martin is only 17, but he has dropped out of school, has left home and is living with his girlfriend. He is working full-time. Roger asks to pay support for the two younger children, still living with their mother, at the child support guidelines amount for his income. But he wants the support for Martin to end as of the date Martin quit school. Roger will fill out Forms A, B, F, K, and M.*

When you have all the forms you need

First, make sure you have a 'working' copy of each of the forms, and put a 'good' copy aside. When you have filled out your 'working' copy, and put together the documents you need, then you can write on your 'good' copy. Use the FormSupport guide that goes with each form – it has information you need.

When you fill in the 'good' copy of each form, be sure to sign each of them, except Form A. Your whole application package will be 'sworn'/'affirmed' (see the next section), but the courts like to see a signature showing that you have thought about each claim you make, and about the facts to support your statements.

Your application forms are not something you can, or should, do in a hurry. You are taking an important step for yourself and your family. Take your time, and give this task the effort it deserves.

Swearing / Affirming your application

The information you have put in your forms is part of your application. Any documents you attach to the forms are part of the application too. Your application – the whole package – is evidence. Remember, you will not be at court in the 'reciprocating jurisdiction'. Your application package will speak for you.

If you *were* in court, you would give your evidence under oath. You would have to swear (using the Bible) or affirm (a formal promise, without a connection to religion) that what you are saying is true. This step is very serious. It goes far back in history. Giving sworn or affirmed evidence is an important part of any court action.

But you will not be in court, and your application package will speak for you. For that to happen, it must be sworn or affirmed. When your application package is complete, these are the steps you follow:

1. Make sure you have all the Forms for your application, and any documents that go along with them.
2. *Do not* sign Form A. It is the Form which will be sworn/affirmed.
3. Have you signed the bottom, or last page, of each of the Forms, except Form A?
4. Put the Forms and documents in order, from the first letter (A) to the last one you used. *Do not* include the FormSupport guides – they are not part of your application.
5. Make one photocopy of your whole application – Forms, documents, and any other papers you are including with your application. Make the copy on one side of white paper only. Use a paperclip (not a staple) to keep the copy together.
6. Go to a Notary Public to have your application sworn/affirmed. A Notary Public is a person who is authorized to take oaths. Many lawyers in NL are also Notaries Public, and there are also Notaries who are not lawyers. Many Support Application Social Workers are Notaries Public. Check your yellow pages for lawyers, or notaries, to find someone near you. Call the office and say that you have one document to be notarized, and ask for an appointment. There may be a small fee. Ask what the fee will be. If

you are asked what kind of document, say it is a “reciprocal support application, being sent outside NL”.

7. When you see the lawyer or notary, take your original package (all your Forms and documents), and the photocopy of the whole package. It may not be required, but take along photo identification if you have it.
8. Tell the lawyer or notary that you want to swear/affirm the *photocopy* of your package. If you are asked, show that you have all the original documents, and that the photocopy is a true copy of the original.
9. The lawyer or notary will ask you if you swear or affirm that you have read the documents and that the contents are true. If you say yes, you will be asked to sign on the last page of Form A. When you have signed, the lawyer or notary will fill in part of the form, sign it, and ‘seal’ the page with a tool that puts a raised stamp on the page.

You now have two important packages of documents.

Original Documents

This is the package of documents you filled out. It includes all the signed Forms, and any other evidence. Put the original package aside in a safe place. In the very unlikely event that your documents are lost in the mail, you can ‘re-create’ your application with these originals.

Sworn Original

The sworn package – the photocopy of the whole application – is now the evidence that the court will use to make its order. It has your original signature on it, and it has been notarized. Once the package is sworn/affirmed, *do not add any other documents to it, or make any changes.*

The court in the reciprocating jurisdiction needs three copies of your application package. It needs the sworn/affirmed original, and two photocopies of it. Make two photocopies of the whole sworn/affirmed original package. (If you want to keep a copy for yourself, make an extra copy.)

The Reciprocal Office

Every reciprocating jurisdiction has an office which is responsible for receiving and sending reciprocal support packages. In Newfoundland and Labrador it is the Support Enforcement Program which is part of

the Department of Justice. Staff at the office have a legal duty to review documents to make sure they are complete, and to send them to the Reciprocal Office in the reciprocating jurisdiction. The staff cannot give you legal advice, or tell you what should go in your application. The law says that a government official – the ‘designated authority’ – must send all applications to the reciprocating jurisdiction. The address of the office is:

**SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM
P.O. Box 2006
Corner Brook, NL A2H 6J8**

Send your sworn/affirmed original and two photocopies of the sworn/affirmed original to the Support Enforcement Program. Be sure to attach enough postage.

What happens next?

The staff at the Support Enforcement Program will review your application package. They will check that the package is complete, with enough copies, and includes all the forms you checked off on Form A. They do not check your facts, or your adding. If there is something missing, the office will send the package back to you with a form letter saying what is needed. This is why it is so important to check your forms and documents. If the package comes back, you will have to have it sworn/affirmed again. Your application will also be delayed.

If the application package is complete, the Support Enforcement Program will send it to the reciprocating jurisdiction. When it is sent away, you will get a letter from the Support Enforcement Program saying it has been sent. You can expect a letter from the office within about 3 weeks.

Your package will be reviewed again when it gets to the reciprocating jurisdiction. If more information is needed, the reciprocating jurisdiction will contact you directly, or may contact the NL Support Enforcement Program. When everything is complete, the package goes to court.

At the reciprocating court

The respondent (the other person) will receive formal notice that you have made an application to the court. The respondent will get a copy of your application. A court date is set, and the respondent is told to file a package of sworn documents at the reciprocating court.

On the court date a Judge will look at the package of documents you sent, along with any documents the respondent filed. If the respondent is at court (with or without a lawyer), the court may hear sworn evidence from the respondent. The Judge can then make an order.

Note: Sometimes the Judge will want more information from you before making an order. This may be to get more up-to-date information. Or the respondent might say something in court and the Judge wants to hear what you have to say. If this happens, the court will make a 'Request for Further Information' saying what it needs from you. The court officials will send this document directly to you, or to the NL Support Enforcement Program. What you send back must be sworn/affirmed. The court hearing will be re-scheduled when you return the information.

The Court Order

When the court has all the information it needs, it will make an order. The court will write the order, and you will receive a copy from the NL Support Enforcement Program.

It is important that you know this fact: just because you ask for something, doesn't mean you will get it. You have asked the court to make decisions for you about the financial part of your family life. You may have taken this step because you and the respondent can't work things out between you. The court will look at all the information it is given, and will make a decision on your application. It's what you have asked the court to do. The court may give reasons for making a particular order, and you will get a copy of those reasons. If you do not agree with the order, or think that the court did not have all the facts, you can appeal the decision or make another application.

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If you have looked through the Forms and FormSupport guides, you know that you have a lot of work to do. Take it one step at a time, don't rush, and be sure to include all the information the court needs. Know that there are no guarantees, but that, with care and attention to detail, you can prepare a reciprocal package on your own. You are doing this for yourself, and your family.