

Responsibilities of the Recipient

Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP)

The Maintenance Enforcement Program (MEP) uses the term recipient (creditor) for those individuals who are entitled to receive maintenance awarded in a court order or agreement.

Recipient Registration

Recipients who wish to register with the MEP must complete a Registration Request available online through fsos.alberta.ca. Choose 'Access MEP', then you will need to log on to your Alberta.ca Account to start a registration.

Another option is to print and complete the *Registration Request* and a *Direct Deposit* form. To request collection of maintenance amounts owed from the past (arrears), an *Affidavit of Arrears* must be completed. This form can be found on the MEP's website.

If a party wishes to re-open a previously registered MEP file, a \$205 re-registration fee may apply. For more information, refer to the MEP's information sheet *Service Fees*, available on the MEP's website.

Payor Registration

When a payor registers, the MEP notifies the recipient by mail about their MEP file registration. Registration allows the MEP to act as a financial intermediary between payors and recipients and ensures that all maintenance payments are properly recorded and credited.

Payments Made Directly to Recipients

Once a file is registered with the MEP, recipients must not accept payments directly from payors. If a recipient accepts a direct payment, the payment must be reported to *MEP Accounts Online* or the *MEP Info Line* within seven days of receiving it, or a \$51.50 penalty will be charged. Continued acceptance of direct payments by a recipient, even if it is reported to the MEP, will result in file closure.

Non-sufficient Funds

When a payor's payment is returned to the MEP as non-sufficient funds (NSF), and the payment was already advanced to the recipient, the MEP must recover the missed payment from the payor at the first possible opportunity. In these cases, maintenance payments to the recipient may be delayed until the full missed payment is recovered from the payor.

Personal Information

Recipients are required to keep their contact and banking information up to date with the MEP. The MEP makes payments to recipients by direct deposit into their bank accounts. Recipients must advise the MEP of any changes that affect their direct deposit information (e.g. changing account numbers or closing or re-opening accounts at different branches or banks). Failure to notify the MEP results in delayed payments.

Child Status Reports

Recipients should notify the MEP immediately of any changes in child status that may affect eligibility for maintenance. If the MEP is notified that there are changes to a child's circumstances that may impact payment of child support, the MEP conducts a child status review by requesting the recipient to complete a Child Status Report. The MEP also automatically conducts a child status review for a child who is about to reach their age of majority (in Alberta, the age of majority is 18). These reviews help the MEP to make administrative decisions on the collection of maintenance. For more information, refer to the information sheets *Child Status Reviews* and *Maintenance for Adult Children*, available on the MEP's website.

Income Support

When recipients receive income support from the government (often known as welfare or social assistance), the government has the right to their maintenance payments when the government is fully supporting recipients and their families. In such cases, payors continue to make maintenance payments to the MEP, and the MEP forwards these payments to the provincial government to offset the income support being provided. For more information, refer to the MEP's information sheet *Income Support and the Government's Right to Receive Maintenance Payments*, available on the MEP's website.

Withdrawal from the MEP

To close a file with the MEP, the registering party must provide a written notice to the MEP requesting file closure, or complete the *Withdrawal Request* form, available on the MEP's website. The file closure will be processed once any amounts owed to the government are paid in full and if the recipient is not receiving income support from the government.