

# Hot Off The Press

## **Electronic Child Support Payments**

The ability to send a child support payment to a recipient via ACH has been around for a few years now. With more and more recipients requesting child support payments via ACH, the B/P/P Operations Center will now offer this option. Keep in mind, payments via ACH is an option. Payment by check will still function as it always has.

Effective Thursday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>, an electronic method for sending child support payments deducted from employee's wages to the Texas SDU (State Disbursement Unit) via ACH will be implemented. The only state participating at this time is Texas. Each state has their own requirements and additional programming changes will be required to implement this process for each state.

## **Screen 127 - Tax Levy/Student Loans**

The Tax Levy and Student Loan deductions have been removed from Screen 113 and are now located on newly developed Screen 127.

## **Screen 113 - Court Ordered Deductions**

Screen 113 will now only be used for maintenance of Court Ordered Deductions. The ACH Flag, SDU field, and Case Number fields have been added. These three fields are necessary for Child Support Payments to be sent via EFT. The SDU field will always be populated with 'TX'. The case number will have to be obtained from the Texas SDU. Once the ACH flag is set to 'Y', a check will no longer be produced. Maria Garza from the Texas SDU has requested that each component contact her office prior to setting up an employee for ACH. This is necessary to obtain case numbers and confirm cases that are eligible to have payments submitted via EFT. Maria can be reached toll free at 877-474-4463 ext. 6552 and her email address is maria.garza@acs-inc.com.

## **Screen 321 - Modify COD Work File**

With the implementation of this new process, disbursements to the recipients of the CODs will change significantly, which will mean a change to your operations. Funds will flow quickly to the Texas State Disbursement Unit (SDU). COD ACH transactions will be produced after each payroll, based on entries made on Screen 113. Screen 321 has been developed to allow Payroll Offices to correct the COD transaction file prior to submission if necessary. A final file will be created containing the COD payment information to be used by the Bank of America to generate a debit settlement to the workstation's payroll disbursement account. Included in the file will be the employee's SSN, COD amount, case number, etc. The file will be encrypted and FTP'd to the Bank of America after normal working hours the day after the payroll is calculated (prior to pay day). If corrections are necessary, they will have to be made using Screen 321 before the file is sent to the Bank of America. You will have one full working day, after the payroll calculation, to enter corrections. Once the submission has taken place, transactions can be seen but not modified. The file will be forwarded by the Bank of America to the Federal Reserve System for disbursement to the Texas SDU.

If you have suggestions, comments or questions, please e-mail [bpphelp@tamu.edu](mailto:bpphelp@tamu.edu).



Addendum to HOP #487

**Child Support Payments FAQ's from the Texas SDU**

1. Can a cause number be used in the ACH files or is the case number the only accepted case identifier?

The 10-digit case number, also referred to as the AG number, is the preferred case identifier for ACH payments, however, a cause number can also be used to identify child support cases. Once the file is received at the SDU, any transactions in question will be researched by a team of experienced individuals to ensure the payment is posted to the correct child support case.

2. Can an ACH payment be sent if the case number is unknown?

When reading court orders, you will notice, the vast majority of them will list the AG Case number and the Cause Number (tribunal case number). If the Case number is not listed, please call 877-474-4463 and any representative can provide you the case number or email me at maria.garza@acs-inc.com and I will reply with the case number to use. IF payroll is being done and there is not enough time to call the SDU, then the CAUSE number can be used in the ACH file.

3. Are all cases eligible to be processed at the TxCSDU?

No, not all cases are eligible. The Texas Child Support Disbursement Unit (TXCSDU) was created in 2000 to comply with the Federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA). Also known as Welfare Reform, PRWORA mandated the creation of State Disbursement Units, designed to improve the collection of child support monies. This law also stated that payments for any case created Prior to January 1, 1994 should continue to be processed at the county level. There are 3 counties that are the exception to this rule: Bexar, Wichita, and Harris County. All cases for these 3 counties should be sent to the TxCSDU. There are also situations in which the custodial parent does not want the payments to be processed through the TxCSDU, if so, these are considered Case Types 3 and if so the payments will need to be processed through the county. If a Case Type 3 is accidentally sent to the SDU, the SDU will simply forward the monies to the appropriate county. This will of course delay the payment to the custodial parent, but they will receive it. The SDU will notify employers if a case has been changed to a Case Type 3 so that the payments can go directly to the county and avoid any delays of the payments.

4. What can be done if an ACH payment was sent to the SDU in error?

When payroll finds that a payment was sent in error, they should immediately contact 877-474-4463 and inform any representative that answers the phone of the situation. IF the payment has not reached the SDU we can flag it and once received we can refund the employer the monies via a check. If the payment has already been received and has been processed, the SDU can request an adjustment and the payment will again be refunded to the employer via a check.