



## Families Forward

**Families Forward**, a time-limited OCSS workforce development program, is actively recruiting participants who owe child support for its free job training programs. Families Forward is part of a study that includes occupational skills training in several industries: cable installation, construction, cybersecurity, IT support, transportation, and woodworking. Enrollment ends in September. Job placement and advancement, financial counseling, and child support navigation services are available to participants. All training programs are free, full-time, and meet Monday to Friday. To learn more, email OCSS at [FFD@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:FFD@dfa.state.ny.us) or call us at 929-221-5015.



## Child Support Applications

In our switch to phone appointments from in-person interviews for parents applying for Cash Assistance, we are mailing the child support application (LDSS-5145) to clients. Parents have 10 days to complete, sign, and return it. If they need help filling it out, they can call OCSS at 929-221-7656. To avoid an interview and having their benefits reduced or discontinued, parents need to sign and return the form. If information or documents are missing, OCSS will schedule a phone appointment to assist. Clients will also receive reminder notices about their application deadline and phone appointment. These initiatives are expected to be in place in the next month. Clients who want to apply for child support services without getting Cash Assistance can email OCSS to request an email reply or a phone appointment at [dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us).



## Pay It Off

From March 1 to 31, noncustodial parents can pay off their NYC DSS child support arrears twice as fast! OCSS will match their payments made during March of at least \$200 toward arrears (up to the amount they owe). Learn more at [nyc.gov/payitoff](http://nyc.gov/payitoff).

## Free and Low-Cost Mediation

For child support parents, working out communication issues for the benefit of their children can be a complex process. That's why free and low-cost mediation services can help start the hard discussions about child support debt, custody and visitation, and more. Many noncustodial parents owe considerable debt beyond their ability to pay to both DSS and the custodial parent. OCSS can help reduce DSS arrears but not debt owed to the custodial parent. We know debt can be harmful to families, so there's value in finding ways to lower it. Through mediation, debt can be addressed and each parent can really be heard. Mediation services are more critical than ever during the pandemic. Our [mediation providers](#) are listed on our [website](#). Here's how the process works:

- Both parents talk with a trained, neutral mediator
- The mediator leads a conversation about the parents' needs and differences to come to a realistic agreement
- The parents make the decisions, not the mediator



## In The Know

### 6,040 Views

From August 20 last year, when our social media campaign launched on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#) for Child Support Awareness Month, through January this year, #parentpledge has had over 6,000 views. We are encouraging parents to take the #parentpledge: "I pledge to spend time regularly with my child – reading, singing, talking, cooking, dancing, laughing, playing." Please share and retweet!