

## Welcome to the Maintenance Enforcement Program

The Maintenance Enforcement Program's (MEP) mission is to help families achieve compliance with court orders and agreements for maintenance. We look to a future where all individuals accept and meet their support obligations. Parties wishing to have their file enforced by MEP must complete a registration package. Either party may register. Once a file is opened, the other party is automatically registered.

### MEP's Responsibilities

MEP collects support payments from debtors (payors) and forwards those payments to creditors (recipients) or the Crown (government). MEP has the legal authority to enforce support collection from debtors when required. Although there is generally no cost to clients for MEP's enforcement services, service fees and penalties may apply in some cases.

MEP:

- keeps clients' personal information confidential
- collects payments from debtors and forwards them to creditors
- enforces on the file as needed

MEP enforces court orders and certain agreements for the payment of support, and recalculation decisions provided by the Alberta Child Support Recalculation Program. MEP does not obtain court orders for clients and cannot change the amount of support ordered by a court. MEP does not provide legal representation or advice to clients.

In Alberta, child access and support payments are treated as separate matters. If debtors are not receiving access to their children, MEP still requires child support to be paid. MEP also encourages creditors to live up to their court orders for access, even if child support is not being paid. Although MEP does not deal with access disputes, the MEP website provides information on laws and services that help parents who are denied access to their children.

MEP cannot guarantee the collection of funds on all MEP files. MEP achieves the best collection results when we work in partnership with our clients. As MEP operates through a trust account, payments must clear the bank before MEP can deposit them directly into creditor bank accounts. Depending on the source of the payment and the method of payment, it may take up to 10 days for a payment to clear and be released to the creditor.

### Creditor Responsibilities

Once a file is registered, creditors must keep their contact and banking information up to date with MEP, and they must notify MEP immediately of any changes in child status that may affect eligibility for support.

When MEP is enforcing their order, creditors should not accept payments directly from debtors. If a direct payment is accepted by a creditor, it 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.

More detailed information about creditor responsibilities is provided in the Information Sheet *Responsibilities of the Creditor*, available at MEP's website.

## Debtor Responsibilities

Newly registered debtors should contact MEP promptly to ensure they are aware of their file status. While MEP is involved, debtors must keep their contact, banking, and employment information up to date with MEP, and they must notify MEP immediately of any changes in child status that may affect eligibility for support. When MEP is enforcing their order, debtors should not pay creditors directly.

To avoid penalties and interest charges, debtors should make all payments to MEP on time according to the court order. If this is not possible, debtors should contact MEP immediately. Payments to MEP are best made by Authorized Bank Withdrawal, deductions from the debtor's paycheque, or by telephone or Internet banking.

More detailed information about debtor responsibilities is provided in the Information Sheet *Responsibilities of the Debtor*, available at MEP's website.

## Communicating with MEP

The *MEP Info Line* and *MEP Accounts Online* provide general information about MEP and provide clients with automated information about their file 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Clients can use the *MEP Info Line* by calling 780-422-5555 in Edmonton and area or toll free in Alberta at 310-0000. To access *MEP Accounts Online*, clients visit MEP's website at [www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca](http://www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca) and select "Account login".

## Speaking with MEP Staff

Staff at MEP's Client Services Centre are available to take incoming calls from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 to 4:00 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, except government holidays. On Wednesdays, staff are available to take calls between 12:00 and 4:00 p.m. Clients call the *MEP Info Line* number above, and follow the prompts to speak with a staff person.

## Information Sheets

MEP has a library of useful information sheets to help answer your questions and provide more detailed information about MEP. Clients can read these information sheets online at the MEP website, or they can order them through the *MEP Info Line*.

MEP forms are also available through the website and the *Info Line*. Some of the commonly used forms available are:

- Registration Package
- Child Status Report
- Section 7 Expenses Information and Report
- Authorized Bank Withdrawal
- Statement Of Finances

- MEP has other Information Sheets, on a variety of helpful topics. To see them, visit MEP's website at [www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca](http://www.albertamep.gov.ab.ca).
- To contact MEP, phone 780-422-5555 or toll-free in Alberta at 310-0000.
- To view information about your MEP file, log in to *MEP Accounts Online* on MEP's website and select "Account login".