



March 12, 2025

Notice of Child Support Liens

Dear Reader:

The following document was created from the CTAS website (ctas.tennessee.edu). This website is maintained by CTAS staff and seeks to represent the most current information regarding issues relative to Tennessee county government.

We hope this information will be useful to you; reference to it will assist you with many of the questions that will arise in your tenure with county government. However, the *Tennessee Code Annotated* and other relevant laws or regulations should always be consulted before any action is taken based upon the contents of this document.

Please feel free to contact us if you have questions or comments regarding this information or any other CTAS website material.

Sincerely,

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Reference Number: CTAS-812

Federal law has tried to create a uniform system for enforcing child support. The federal law is found at 42 U.S.C.A. § 651 *et seq.*—most notably, sections 654, 654(a), and 666. These sections require states to adopt certain centralized procedures for enforcing child support. Tennessee’s procedures are set forth in T.C.A. § 36-5-901 and in regulations found at *Tenn. Comp. R. & Regs. 1240-2-5-.01 et seq.* The agency in Tennessee that is responsible for enforcement of child support liens is the Department of Human Services. To enforce these liens, the Department can file locally (in the register’s office) or file the liens online.

The Department may require that the register furnish space in his or her office for a computer terminal dedicated to providing information regarding persons with overdue child support obligations. The overdue child support obligation causes, by operation of law, a lien to be placed on the real and personal property of the obligor whenever notice of such lien is placed on the computer showing the existence, amount and date of the lien. T.C.A. § 36-5-901. The register appears to have no obligation regarding the computer terminal other than the provision of space and allowing the public access to the computer terminal.

Issues sometimes arise with regard to out of state liens. Pursuant to T.C.A. § 36-5-902, Tennessee must honor liens arising out of state, as long as the liens are filed in accordance with Tennessee’s procedural rules. Furthermore, the Department is authorized to enforce these out of state liens. T.C.A. § 36-5-902. Because the procedural rules in Tennessee direct the Department to file child support liens and name the Department as the enforcement agent, it is our opinion that out of state liens should be filed with the Department and not directly with the local register.

Source URL: <https://www.ctas.tennessee.edu/eli/notice-child-support-liens>