

BENCH WARRANTS & SHOW CAUSE HEARINGS:

Many payers wrongfully believe that if they attend a Friend of Court show cause hearing they will be arrested for failure to pay. However, please be assured the Ingham County Friend of the Court's goal at the hearing is to work with the payer to assist him/her in becoming compliant with the court order. Our goal is **NEVER** incarceration. Please note:

- **When a payer attends a show cause hearing, the payer will not be arrested for appearing for that case.**
- **Attending a show cause hearing provides the payer with the opportunity to present information regarding the reasons for non-payment and make payment arrangements.**
- **A bench warrant is issued when the payer fails to appear at the show cause hearing.**

Commonly Asked Questions:

If I appear at a show cause hearing will I go to jail? As stated above, you will not be arrested when you appear at the Friend of Court office for a show cause hearing on a specific case.

What if a bench warrant has already been issued for my arrest? If you have an active bench warrant and you wish to resolve it, contact your Ingham County Friend of the Court Enforcement Caseworker or one of the FOC Court Services Officers for resolution. *It may be possible to make payment arrangements over the phone to resolve the bench warrant.* Please refer to the contact information tab on the home page of this website for calling hours and phone numbers.

What if I receive SSI (Supplemental Security Income)? Contact your caseworker immediately and provide proof of your SSI benefits to the FOC. In some situations the show cause hearing can be canceled or adjourned if your caseworker can verify that you are the recipient of SSI. You are required to appear for the hearing unless your caseworker has agreed to cancel or adjourn the hearing. Please refer to the contact information tab on the home page of this website for calling hours and phone numbers.

Do I need to appear at the show cause hearing if I made a recent payment? Contact your caseworker immediately to discuss the payment. In some situations the show cause hearing can be canceled or adjourned based on the payment received. You are required to appear for the hearing unless your caseworker has agreed to cancel or adjourn the hearing. Please refer to the contact information tab on the home page of this website for calling hours and phone numbers.

Do I need to appear at the show cause hearing if I just got a new job? Contact your caseworker immediately to provide your employment information. In some situations the show cause hearing can be canceled or adjourned if your caseworker can verify your employment and/or that payments are being received. You are required to appear for the hearing unless your caseworker has agreed to cancel or adjourn the hearing. Please refer to the contact information tab on the home page of this website for calling hours and phone numbers.

I didn't receive notice of the show cause hearing and a bench warrant was issued for my arrest. How did that happen? Not receiving notice is typically the result of a failure to keep the FOC informed of your change of address. The FOC is only required to send notice to your last known legal address of record. It's important to always advise the FOC of your change of address in writing, and to read your mail upon receipt. Please refer to the contact information tab on the home page for instructions to change your address online or you can mail your change of address via USPS, or stop by the FOC and complete a change of address form.

How does the Court determine if a payer of support has the ability to pay? The Court considers many comprehensive financial and socioeconomic factors when determining an individual's ability to pay. One tool that is utilized is the Ability-To-Pay Worksheets. These worksheets ask questions about income, assets, education/training, and personal background. The Ability-to-Pay Worksheet – Payer Information is intended to be completed by the payer. The Ability-to-Pay Worksheet – Payer Information from Payee is intended to be completed by the payee. These worksheets can be found here: [PAYER INFORMATION](#)

[PAYER INFORMATION FROM PAYEE](#)