



CDSS

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DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

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EDMUND G. BROWN JR.  
GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

November 4, 2014

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 14-75

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS  
ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS  
TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES

SUBJECT: INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACCESSING THE CALIFORNIA PARENT LOCATOR SERVICE (CPLS) AND FEDERAL PARENT LOCATOR SERVICE (FPLS) FOR FINDING NONCUSTODIAL PARENTS

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 1751 (CHAPTER 637, STATUTES OF 2012);  
SENATE BILL (SB) 1460 (CHAPTER 772, STATUTES OF 2014);  
FAMILY CODE SECTIONS 17212, 17505, AND 17506;  
WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (W&IC) SECTION 11478.1.

This ACL provides county child welfare agencies, probation departments, and Title IV-E agreement tribes (hereinafter referred to as “agencies”) with instructions for accessing the CPLS and the FPLS to assist in locating noncustodial parents of dependent children for assessment and potential placement.

The AB 1751 authorizes but does not require county and tribal officials responsible for locating the noncustodial parent or relative of an abused or neglected child to use the state's child support database to access the basic contact information of the child's noncustodial parent. The SB 1460 extended this same search for a child's relatives. This allows the basic contact information of a child's relative to be accessed by agencies to locate a dependent child's potential relative caregiver.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, the Federal Government passed Public Law (PL) 110-351, the “Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008” (Fostering Connections Act) which increased opportunities to promote the safety, permanency and well-being of families and recognized the importance of family preservation. In compliance with

PL 110-351 concerning family preservation, state child welfare agencies must exercise due diligence to identify and notify all adult relatives of a child who has been removed from the custody of his or her parents within 30 days of the removal, subject to exceptions due to family violence. In California, state child welfare agencies must conduct an investigation to "identify and locate all grandparents, adult siblings, and other adult relatives of the child" in an attempt to find a suitable relative for placement, consistent with the child's best interests (W&IC sections 361.3 and 309(e)).

The PL 110-351 also expanded the authority of the Federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) to share data with state child welfare agencies for child welfare purposes. The state child welfare agency may request the state child support agency's help to locate a person who has, or may have parental rights to a child. This is referred to as a "locate-only" request.

In 2010, the OCSE issued revised regulations regarding a state's Parent Locator Service (in California, the CPLS) and the FPLS that permit state child support agencies to share certain information about parents and relatives of a child involved in a child welfare case with local or county state child welfare agencies. The regulations specify requirements for safeguarding confidential information of the state child support program and for authorized disclosures of child support data to state child welfare agencies. In addition, the regulations address how state child support agencies may release information to state child welfare agencies to carry out their program responsibilities. In California, the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) houses the CPLS which compiles contact and/or location information from state sources and can obtain information from the FPLS for an authorized and approved user.

#### CHANGES TO EXISTING LAW

The changes from the passage of AB 1751 and SB 1460 allow and encourage county child welfare agencies and probation departments that administer federal Title IV-E programs for foster care and child and family services, to request from DCSS contact and/or location information regarding the noncustodial parents and relatives to better assist in the assessment for potential placement of dependent children.

This new family finding tool will provide county social workers, tribal workers and probation officers, with more information to allow timely and appropriate decisions regarding the placement of abused and neglected children who have been removed from their homes.

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND THE FAMILY VIOLENCE INDICATOR (FVI)

Requestors must weigh the need to locate the noncustodial parent or relative of a child against the danger posed by releasing confidential information of individuals who are at risk for domestic violence victimization. The DCSS will not disclose information to anyone if there is reasonable evidence of domestic violence or child abuse and the disclosure of such information could be harmful to the custodial parent, relative or child. State child support agencies respond to these situations by placing a FVI on any individual in the automated case file who needs protection. The DCSS will not disclose contact and/or location information on a person who has a FVI.

### THE CPLS AND FPLS

The DCSS maintains the CPLS that contains information obtained from the FPLS and other sources, including but not limited to the Department of Motor Vehicles, utility companies and the Department of Corrections.

The FPLS was developed in cooperation with states, employers, federal agencies and the judiciary. It is an assembly of systems operated by OCSE whose original purpose was to assist states in locating noncustodial parents, alleged fathers and custodial parties for the establishment of paternity and child support obligations, as well as the enforcement and modification of orders for child support, custody and visitation. The Federal Fostering Connections Act of 2008 now extends the use of the FPLS as a family finding tool for the counties in an effort to locate noncustodial parents or relatives of a dependent child.

The FPLS includes two databases: the National Directory of New Hires (a central repository of employment, unemployment insurance and wage data from State Directories of New Hires, State Workforce Agencies and Federal Agencies) and the Federal Case Registry (a national database of child support cases that includes information on individuals involved in those cases). Additionally, the FPLS has access to external location sources such as the Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Defense, the National Security Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In order for DCSS to disclose information in the FPLS, the requestor must be an *authorized person* requesting *specified information* for an *authorized purpose*. (Emphasis added).

When locating a noncustodial parent or relative for Title IV-E program purposes, the DCSS may only share the following six elements:

1. Person's Name
2. Person's Address
3. Person's Phone Number
4. Social Security Number
5. Employer's Name
6. Employer's Address

### ACCESSING THE CPLS

In California, the DCSS is the single state agency that oversees all information potentially accessible to county welfare, probation departments and Title IV-E Agreement tribes. Due to the need to appropriately safeguard this confidential contact and/or location information, requestors are required to meet DCSS's information security requirements. Information security requirements and instructions for requesting access is located on the DCSS public website at:

<http://childsup.ca.gov/ChildSupportProfessionals/ParentLocatorService.aspx>.

Any further questions concerning access to the CPLS and the FPLS should be directed to the DCSS CPLS Liaison at (916) 464-6653 or via email at [caparentlocateservice@dcss.ca.gov](mailto:caparentlocateservice@dcss.ca.gov). Any questions concerning policy matters should be directed to the California Department of Social Services' Foster Caregiver Policy and Support Unit at (916) 651-7465 or via email at [kinship.care@dss.ca.gov](mailto:kinship.care@dss.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:***

GREGORY E. ROSE  
Deputy Director  
Children and Family Services Division