

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

744 P Street, Sacramento, California 95814



September 21, 2007

ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 07-33

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS  
ALL COUNTY ILP PROGRAM MANAGERS  
ALL COUNTY ILP COORDINATORS  
ALL COUNTY PROBATION OFFICERS

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

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

SUBJECT: FOSTER YOUTH PROOF OF WARSHIP DOCUMENTATION

REFERENCE: ALL COUNTY LETTER NO. 05-32

The purpose of this All County Letter (ACL) is to provide counties with revised instructions and standardized language for the foster care verification document given to youth upon emancipating from foster care. The verification, known as "proof of dependency/wardship" document, is provided to youth to eliminate delays in the processing of the application for Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) and financial aid.

The ACL No. 05-32, dated November 2, 2005, provided counties with protocols for the purpose of standardizing compulsory information and defined county responsibility when preparing a "proof of dependency/wardship" document. The document included confirmation that the youth was in fact a dependent until age 18. The Manual of Policies and Procedures Section 31-236(i)(4)(F) states that a youth be provided with "a proof of county dependency status..." which may be used to enable them to apply for sources of post-emancipation financial support, including emancipation stipends, transitional housing programs, educational scholarships and grants, and health care. This document may also be used to verify the eligibility of a probation youth who was in a foster care placement.

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has been informed that the financial aid offices' interpretation of the word "dependency" in the verification document differs from the child welfare services program definition. As a result, some financial aid offices have requested that youth provide further foster care verification resulting in delays in the processing of their applications. In California, a "ward of the court" is defined as a probation youth who is under the jurisdiction of the county probation department. However, the financial aid office views a "ward of the court" as a youth in the child welfare system and has indicated that California is the only state that defines "wards" in this manner. Therefore, for the purpose of reducing delays in the processing of the financial aid applications for foster care youth and eliminating any hardship associated

with locating additional proof of dependency documents, counties are advised to remove the word "dependency" on the proof of foster care status documentation.

The financial aid office has developed acceptable language which may be included on the "proof of wardship" documentation for financial aid purposes (see attachment). Students should be encouraged to present the "proof of wardship" documentation to the financial aid office when applying for financial aid to eliminate delays in the processing.

### **California Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV)**

Youth can complete the California Chafee ETV Program application online at <https://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov/default.asp> or download a copy and mail it to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) office for processing. Students can check the status of their Chafee ETV award by accessing the Chafee WebGrants for Students website at <https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov>. If it indicates in red "Department of Social Services Record," foster care verification is required in order to complete the processing of the application. In this case, students should be encouraged to submit a copy of their "proof of wardship" county documentation, or submit the completed Independent Living Program (ILP) Eligibility Certification Form either by mail or fax to:

California Department of Social Services  
Foster Care Support Services Bureau  
Chafee ETV Program Consultant  
744 P Street, M.S. 14-78  
Sacramento, California 95814  
FAX: (916) 657-4357

Previously, students and county social workers were informed that the ILP Eligibility Certification Form was no longer required to verify the foster care eligibility for the Chafee ETV Program. However, when a "proof of wardship" is not available, in an effort to expedite the Chafee ETV application, the Eligibility Certification Form will be necessary. This form will be sent to youth who do not have their "proof of wardship" through CSAC. Please note that the 2006/2007 Chafee ETV application now has a section that the student must sign authorizing CDSS and CSAC to receive and to release their foster care eligibility information from county welfare departments for the processing of applications.

Counties are reminded that youth who are/were in legal guardianship or the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Payment program are ineligible to receive the Chafee ETV grant unless the youth is/was in a foster care placement at any time between the ages of 16-18.

The CDSS is asking each county welfare and probation department to identify a point person who can assist in foster care eligibility verification for the purpose of the Chafee

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ETV Program. Please e-mail that person's name to Vebra Switzer, ILP Unit, within two weeks from the date of this ACL at the following e-mail address:  
[vebra.switzer@dss.ca.gov](mailto:vebra.switzer@dss.ca.gov).

It is our intent to ensure that every eligible foster youth seeking higher education receives the financial aid assistance they are entitled to in a timely manner. Should you have any questions regarding the above, you may contact the Chafee ETV Program Consultant in the Independent Living Program Policy Unit, Foster Care Support Services Bureau, at (916) 651-7465.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:***

MARY L. AULT  
Deputy Director  
Children and Family Services Division

c: CWDA

Attachment

**Sample County “Ward of the Court” Verification Language**

**RE:** (child’s name)  
**DOB:** (child’s date of birth)  
**SSN:** xxx-xx-xxxx  
**Current Mailing Address:**  
**County Contact Number:**  
**County Identification Number:**  
**Start Date of Wardship:** (xx/xx/xxxx)  
**Close Date of Wardship:** (xx/xx/xxxx)

This letter is to confirm that (child’s name) was under the supervision and care of the court until the age of 18 in (county name) County from (dates of care; i.e., xx/xx/xxxx to xx/xx/xxxx). (Child’s name) was placed in out-of-home care in a foster care placement. This means that (child’s name) is considered a “ward of the court” for the purpose of responding to questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Financial Aid Administrators should be advised that recent or current wards of the court typically have little or no income and for purposes of the FAFSA Application, the federal Verification Guide states that **“Payments and services received from states for foster care or adoption assistance,** under Part A or Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act” are not to be reported on Worksheet B of the FAFSA.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name