



REPLACES:

SECTION:
PAGE NO.:
ISSUED/REVISED: 12-03-08

Ward of the Court
Verification Letter

SECTION: 31-236.21
PAGE NO.: 1
EFFECTIVE: 02-28-17

I. BACKGROUND

The proof of Dependency/Wardship Identification Card (Manual of Policies and Procedures Section 31-236.2) was designed to avoid confusion and delays with obtaining financial aid for emancipating youth. Its purpose was to enable those youth to apply for sources of post-emancipation financial support, including emancipation stipends, Supportive Transition Emancipation Program (STEP), Transitional Housing Programs, educational scholarships and grants, and health care.

Some financial aid offices' interpretation of the word "Dependency" in the verification document differs from the child welfare services program identification. As a result, some financial aid offices have requested that youth provide further foster care verification resulting in delays in processing 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 "ward" in this manner.

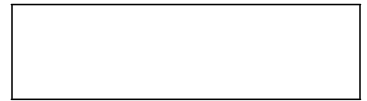
With the introduction of Assembly Bill (AB) 2310, Welfare and Institutions Code (W&I) Section 391 was amended to include that at the hearing to terminate jurisdiction over a dependent child who has reached the age of majority, the county welfare department shall prepare a letter that includes: the child's name and date of birth, the dates during which the child was within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, and a statement that the child was a foster youth in compliance with state and federal financial aide documentation requirements.

This Department Manual section provides procedures for providing foster care verification documentation to youth upon emancipation from foster care.

II. POLICY

In an effort to remain in compliance with W&I Code Section 391, every youth emancipating from foster care shall be provided with a **Ward of the Court Verification letter**. 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.

~~The Proof of Wardship Card continues to be an option that may be provided to youth emancipating from foster care (ACL 05-32). If a youth requests to have the Proof of Wardship Card, the procedure for producing the card under DM Section 31-236.2 should be followed.~~



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III. PROCEDURE

A. Social Worker

1. Upon emancipation, even if the Proof of Wardship card is not requested, complete and provide a copy of the Ward of the Court Verification letter to the emancipating youth. The Ward of the Court Verification letter will be:
 - a. The appropriate Ward of the Court Verification letter (located in FormSTAR) based upon the youth's circumstances.
 - b. Printed on Department letterhead paper (located in FormSTAR)
 - c. Signed by the Social Worker
 - d. The signed Ward of the Court Verification will be filed in the youth's case file.

B. Social Worker Supervisor

1. Ensure that upon emancipation that every eligible youth is provided with the appropriate Ward of the Court Verification letter.
2. Ensure that a copy of the Ward of the Court Verification letter is maintained in the youth's case file.

IV. FORMS

[Ward of the Court Verification Letter \(ILP 13\)](#)
[Ward of the Court Verification Letter \(ILP 18\)](#)
[Ward of the Court Verification Letter \(ILP AB 12\)](#)

V. REFERENCES

AB 2310
[ACL 05-32 Foster Youth Proof of Dependency/Wardship Document](#)
[ACL 07-33 Foster Youth Proof of Wardship Documentation](#)
[ACL 07-33E Errata to Foster Youth Proof of Wardship Documentation](#)
MPP Section 31-236.2
W&I Section 391

CONTACT PERSON: Persons with questions concerning this department manual section may contact the Permanency Program Analyst.