2020–2021 INDEPENDENT STATUS VERIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

On the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and/or the CSS Profile Form, you indicated that you were an orphan (both parents were deceased before you turned 13), ward of the court, were in foster care, or were in a legal guardianship as ordered by a court in your state of residence. You will need to provide additional documentation before we can continue to process your financial aid.

**Action Required**

Please determine which of the following situations below applies to you:

- If you are an orphan, please provide death certificates for both of your parents (biological or adoptive).
- If you are a ward of the court provide the court document that shows that you were a ward of the court after age 13 in the state of your legal residence.
- If you were in foster care, please provide the court document that shows that you were in foster care after age 13.
- If you were in a legal guardianship, please provide copies of the court order in the state of your legal residence showing that you are in a legal guardianship.

**What if I have lost my court documents?**

Copies of documents may be obtained from your caseworker if you no longer have them.

**What if I made a mistake and I was not an orphan, ward of the court, in foster care or a court ordered legal guardianship?**

You will need to correct your FAFSA and CSS Profile and include your parents’ information and signature in order for your application to be official.

**What if I have unusual family circumstances and have no contact with my biological parents?**

Please provide the Financial Aid Office with the following:

- A detailed personal statement that explains your situation (specifically address your relationship with your biological or adoptive parents)
- At least two additional letters of support from professionals who are familiar with your situation (i.e. therapists, school counselors, members of the clergy, etc.).
- Any additional documents that are relevant to your situation.

The Financial Aid Office will review all documentation provided and make a determination of your dependency status for federal, state, and institutional aid.