



## 2023-2024 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).
- A letter of support from a mental health/social service professional who is familiar with your situation (i.e. therapists, school counselors, members of the clergy, etc.). The letter should state that in their professional opinion having contact with your parents would create an unsafe or unhealthy environment that would be detrimental to you.
- 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.