

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

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October 2, 1986

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 1-90-86

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: UNACCOMPANIED MINOR PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS; AND, RELEASE OF INFORMATION
TO VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES

REFERENCE: ACL 86-13

The purpose of this letter is to provide the County Welfare Departments (CWDs) with preliminary instructions necessary to implement changes to the refugee Unaccompanied Minor Program and to authorize release of confidential information to Voluntary Resettlement Agencies. These changes are a result of Federal regulations recently released by the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. State regulations for these provisions are currently in process, and will tentatively become effective March 1, 1987.

REFUGEE UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

DEFINITION:

The definition that will apply to refugee Unaccompanied Minors when the State regulations become effective is as follows:

"Unaccompanied Minor" means a refugee who:

- 1) Meets the age requirements of Manual of Policies and Procedures (MPP) Section 42-101.1; and
- 2) Entered the United States unaccompanied by and not destined to a parent, a close nonparental adult relative who is willing and able to care for the child, or any other adult with a clear and court-verifiable claim to custody of the minor; and
- 3) Has no parents in the United States.

UNACCOMPANIED MINOR STATUS TERMINATION

The CWDs will be required to terminate Unaccompanied Minor status when the refugee child:

- 1) No longer meets the age requirements of MPP Section 42-101.1.
- 2) Is reunited with parent(s); or
- 3) Is united with a nonparental adult (either relative or nonrelative) willing and able to care for the child to whom legal custody and/or guardianship is granted.

LEGAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

Per 45 CFR 400.115(a), the CWDs will initiate arrangements to establish protective legal responsibility for the minor under Welfare and Institutions Code Section 300 or Probate Code Section 1500 or 1501, within thirty days after the minor initially arrives at the location of resettlement.

When adoption occurs, the child's status as an Unaccompanied Minor will terminate.

SOCIAL SERVICES FOR UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

The CWDs will be required to provide unaccompanied minors with the same range of child welfare services (MPP, Division 30) and foster care payments (MPP, Division 45, Chapter 200) as provided to nonrefugee children in Foster Care.

Additionally, case planning for unaccompanied minors must include:

- 1) Orientation, assessment, and counseling to facilitate the adjustment of the child to American culture; and
- 2) Preparation for participation in American society with special emphasis on English language instruction and occupational as well as cultural training as necessary to facilitate the child's social integration and to prepare the child for independent living and economic self-sufficiency.

INTERSTATE MOVEMENT

After the initial placement of an unaccompanied minor, the procedures for interstate movement (MPP Section 30-366) that govern the movement of nonrefugee foster care cases to other states will also apply to Unaccompanied Minors.

RELEASE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION TO
VOLUNTARY RESETTLEMENT AGENCIES (VOLAGS)

Counties are currently required to contact the appropriate VOLAG when a refugee, who has been in the United States less than 36 months, applies for cash assistance to determine if the refugee has been offered assistance or a job offer. The new regulations will require the counties to additionally contact the VOLAG at redetermination. The counties will also be required to share the refugee's current address and telephone number with the VOLAG, when requested during the first 36 months the refugee is in the United States.

IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

As previously stated, the policy instructions contained in this letter shall be implemented by the counties when the new State regulations become effective.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Fred Schack, Chief, Refugee Support Management Bureau at (916) 322-3141.

Carl B. Williams

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Deputy Director

Employment and Community Services Division

cc: CWDA
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