



## OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

### 2026-2027 Documentation of Ward of Court / Orphan / Emancipation / Legal Guardianship / Homelessness

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On the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you indicated that you were an orphan, ward of the court, in foster care, emancipated minor, unaccompanied homeless youth, or under legal guardianship. 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 and provide proper documentation:

- A student is an **orphan** if both parents are dead and the student doesn't have an adoptive parent. Such a student is considered an orphan even if she has a legal guardian. *If only one parent is deceased*, student must provide information for the living parent on the FAFSA.
  - A student qualifies as a **ward of the court** if the court has assumed custody of him/her. In some states, the court may impose its authority over a juvenile who remains in the legal custody of her parents; such a student is **not** a ward of the court. Also, neither emancipation (when a child is released from control of a parent or guardian) nor incarceration of a student qualifies him/her as ward of the court.
  - A student qualifies as an **emancipated minor** if they have been deemed emancipated by the court system, and have documentation to support such decision by the court.
  - A student qualifies as being in a **legal guardianship** situation if documentation exists that your biological parents have given legal guardianship to another party at any time before you turned the age of 18.
  - A student qualifies as an **unaccompanied homeless youth** if they have been deemed so any time on or after July 1, 2024 by an educational agency homeless liaison, the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program, director of a federal TRIO program or the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center. This may also be documented by a federal aid administrator.
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Below is a list of acceptable documentation which you may submit to confirm your Ward of the Court/Orphan/ Emancipation/Legal Guardianship/Homeless status. If you submit a document which has an expiration date, additional documentation may be requested in subsequent years. **SUBMIT COPIES OF BOTH FRONT AND BACK OF ALL DOCUMENTS.**

- a) Death Certificate for both Parents.
- b) Documentation that the court has assumed custody of the student.
- c) Documentation of Emancipation
- d) Documentation of Legal Guardianship
- e) Documentation of Homelessness by any of the above-mentioned individuals

Please use your Financial Aid Student portal to submit appropriate documents. You may also email scanned copies to [financialaid@zanestate.edu](mailto:financialaid@zanestate.edu) or bring them in person to the Office of Financial Aid in College Hall.