

Family Data Collection and Notification

521.1 OVERVIEW

Welfare and Institutions Code 309 (applicable to Child Welfare Services) and Welfare and Institutions Code 628 (applicable to Probation) require that diligent efforts must be exercised in locating relatives when a youth needs out-of-home placement. These procedures underscore the importance of relative participation and support in all aspects of a youth's life.

521.2 DETAINED YOUTH

When a youth is detained, and the Probation Officer (PO) has reason to believe the youth is at risk of entering foster care (placement with a resource family, foster home, Residential Treatment Facility or Short Term Residential Therapeutic Program), the PO has 30 days from the date of the youth's removal from the home to:

- (a) Conduct an investigation to identify and locate relatives, including all:
 1. Grandparents;
 2. Adult siblings; and
 3. Other adult relatives (as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code 319(h)(2)).
- (b) Unless otherwise indicated, provide all adult relatives who have been located with both written and, when appropriate, oral notification of the youth's situation.

The notification requirement applies unless a history of family or domestic violence makes notification inappropriate, as noted in: ACL 18-42. The PO may be relieved of having to provide written notification if the Social Worker already provided the written notification to the family members.

521.3 SENDING NOTIFICATIONS

Notifications shall only be sent to relatives as defined by Welfare and Institutions Code 319(h)(2), and only those with whom the youth and family identify as supportive. When out of home placement is considered, the PO shall begin the notification process. The PO is to send:

- (a) AB 938 Information for Relatives form
- (b) J1015 AB 938 Letter to Relatives form

Notification should be done through regular mail. Additionally, oral notification should also be provided in person or by telephone to relatives to expedite the process. Note that when a PO provides oral notification, it is not required to provide detailed information about the various options to help with the youth's care and placement. Relatives may choose to provide a letter to court, or they may be provided form JV-285, Relative Information if they wish to provide the Court with written information.

If the court makes a foster care order for a case in which the notification process was not initially completed; the PO shall send the notifications within 30 days of the placement order.

San Diego County Probation Department

Administrative Services Procedure Manual

Family Data Collection and Notification

521.4 COMPLETING A FAMILY FINDING SEARCH WHEN THERE ARE NO IDENTIFIED RELATIVES

Should the youth and parent or guardian be unable to identify supportive, immediate, or extended relatives to list on the J509, the PO will initiate a family finding search by submitting J1079 Family Finding Referral Form to the Placement Division's Probation Aide or other designee. The Probation Aide (PA) or designee will complete an online search for the youth's family members and will obtain contact information for any identified individuals. Upon completion of the search, the PA will provide all names and contact information to the PO. The PO will contact the identified family members and provide notification as outlined in section 521.5.

521.5 NON-RELATIVES

If the youth or youth's parents or guardians are unable to identify supportive, immediate, or extended relatives to list on the J509, the PO may expand the Family Finding and Engagement (FFE) search to include other supportive adults, or Non-Relative Extended Family Members (NREFM). A sociogram shall be used for every case and will be especially helpful when needing to identify and engage supportive adults.

In the absence of supportive relatives, the PO may provide written or verbal notifications to NREFM, as authorized by the PO's chain of command.

521.6 DOCUMENTING FAMILY NOTIFICATION

The PO is to record the information regarding the notification process in Probation Case Management System (PCMS). The PO will also include a section in the Juvenile Social Study (JVSS) that addresses efforts to locate relatives and the appropriateness of placement with a relative or NREFM. The statement will read: "In consideration of AB 938, the Probation Department has made diligent efforts to locate an appropriate relative with whom the youth could be placed." At the dispositional hearing, the court will make a finding regarding whether Probation exercised due diligence to identify, locate and notify relatives.