

# **Unit Clerk General Responsibilities**

C300-090 | Revision Date: 11/22/2019

## **Overview**

This policy guide outlines the general tasks for clerical staff including protocol for answering the telephone and the description of some responsibilities and duties that may be specific based on the program and its functions.

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## **Version Summary**

This Policy Guide was updated from the 04/10/98 version and merges content from Policy Guides: C300-082, Adding Health Information; C300-083, Adding School Information; C300-084, Answering the Telephone and C300-089, Closed Referrals and Cases; C300-101, Reports: Generating Caseload Summary Reports; C300-102, Reports: Generating Caseload Court Calendar Reports; C300-103, Reports: Generating Caseload Reminder Reports, thereby canceling those Policy Guides. It includes instruction regarding Unit Clerk general tasks. The title of this Policy Guide was changed from: General Responsibilities to: Unit Clerk General Responsibilities.

# POLICY

## General Tasks

This policy applies to Unit Clerks who hold [Intermediate Clerk](#) or [Intermediate Typist-Clerk](#) items.

The Unit Clerks perform clerical tasks in support of various sections and programs within the department.

Unit Clerks perform specialized clerical duties requiring a working knowledge of departmental subject matter and the clerical functions involved. Performance of assigned duties requires initiative and independent judgment within procedural and policy limits.

The following Procedures provide instructions for all the general tasks the Unit Clerk may be performing including, but not limited to:

- [Answering the telephone](#)
- Document retrieval/delivery
- Faxing or scanning
- [Filing](#)
- [Obtaining reports & documents](#)
- [Mail](#)
- [Ordering supplies](#)
- Photocopying
- [Preparing closed referrals and cases for Suspense](#)
- Reading & responding to email
- [Typing](#) (light typing only for Intermediate Clerks)
- [Data Entry to Various Applications](#)
- Emergency Response specific duties
- Dependency Investigator specific duties
- [Preparing cases for Historical](#)
- Translations (with bi-lingual bonus)
- Continuing Services (specific duties)
- Other program specific duties

All DCFS Case information is to be kept confidential [per State law](#). This means that staff may neither confirm or deny knowledge of DCFS Case information to non-DCFS staff.

## Health and Education Passport Information

The Unit Clerks maintain ongoing control logs for both Health and Education Information.

### Health

Unit Clerks are responsible for updating the CWS/CMS Health Notebook upon receipt of the DCFS 561(a) or (b) from Unit/Section staff.

## Education

Unit Clerks, annually, or as requested, will FAX requests for school records and current Education Rights Holder information. With this information the Unit Clerk will either add or update the Education and Education Provider Notebooks in CWS/CMS with such information as, the school enrollment date, the name of the school, and report card information (i.e., grades).

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## PROCEDURE

### Answering the Telephone

1. Incoming calls are to be answered promptly when the Unit Clerk is at her/his desk and available. When the Unit Clerk is not going to be at her/his desk, the phone should be set up to transfer to a back-up Unit Clerk.
  - Professionalism and courtesy must be extended to the caller at all times, regardless of the caller's behavior.
2. Answer the phone by saying {"Department of Children and Family Services, (state your name), speaking, how can I help you?"}
  - a. If the caller is requesting to speak to a staff person in your Unit/Section, inform the caller that (s)he will be put on a brief hold.
  - b. Place the caller on-hold and call the staff person to confirm availability.
3. If the staff person is available, inform the caller of the staff person's phone number and transfer the call.
4. If the caller is requesting to speak to a staff person in your Unit/Section who is unavailable, offer to take a message or to transfer to voice mail.
  - a. Record messages on a two-part phone message book (carbonless duplicates) or send by email and cc the Supervisor by listing:
    - Who the message is for
    - The date and time
    - Caller's first and last name
    - Agency they are with (if applicable)
    - Caller's phone number with area code
    - Ask what case and/or child is this regarding
    - Any detailed message
    - Your initials
  - b. Deliver written message to the requested staff person.

5. If the caller is requesting to speak to someone who is not in your Unit/Section, inform the caller you will put them on a brief hold.
  - a. Refer to the office roster to locate the person.
  - b. If able to locate the staff person, inform the caller of the staff person's correct telephone number and offer to transfer the call, or take a message.
    - Refer to Section 4.a. above for instructions on how to take a message.
  - c. If unable to locate the requested staff person on the office roster, perform a search on CWS/CMS or the online DCFS Directory or in the Outlook Address Book.
    - Refer to the [Guide to CWS/CMS Application Mapping](#) for instructions on how to perform a search.
      - i. If the requested staff person is located in another office, inform the caller of the staff person's correct telephone number, the phone number of his/her supervisor and the telephone number of reception in the other office.
6. Dissatisfied callers are to be transferred to the Unit Clerk's immediate supervisor. If the immediate Supervisor is not available, then the Duty Supervisor is to be contacted.

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## Voice Mail

1. All voicemails are to be retrieved and responded to as soon as possible on the same day they were received.

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## Filing

1. File paper work for all open or closed Referrals or Cases into folders for the SCSW and CSWs within the Unit. Spend a reasonable amount of time filing in keeping with a balance of tasks within the regular work schedule.
  - Model Case Format (MFC) is required so it is recommended to use the [Model Case Format Document Filing Guide](#).

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## Mail

1. Pick up, sort and deliver mail to the Unit/Section staff.
2. Mail out letters (including Certified or Registered), documents and forms to other DCFS offices, various agencies, foster homes and group homes, etc.

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## Preparing Closed Referrals and Cases for Suspense

1. Receive a hard copy case from the SCSW.
  - Prior to sending to the Unit Clerk, the SCSW will check for [Model Case Format \(MCF\)](#) and orderly filing of all documents in the case. The SCSW will send the case back to the CSW when correction is needed.
2. Confirm that the case is in [MCF](#).
  - Use the [Model Case Format Document Filing Guide](#).
  - a. If not in Model Case Format, return to the SCSW for correction.
3. Verify that the referral or case is closed on CWS/CMS. If not, return the referral or case to the SCSW for closure on CWS/CMS.
4. [Discontinue the referral or case in LRS](#) on the Case File Folder Tracking Page.
  - a. Verify the mother's name is in LRS.
    - i. If not in LRS, submit the [DCFS 265](#), SAAMS Request to Add Mother as Primary Applicant in LRS.
    - ii. Upon verification that the mother's name has been added, enter the date closed and the date sent to Suspense.
5. Attach one copy of the LRS Case Summary document and the completed Child Protective Services (CPS) Detail Page to the top of the master case folder.
6. Complete the following fields on a [DCFS 261](#), Inactive Record Transmittal and Control:
  - a. Case Name
  - b. Adoption Name (ADOPTIONS ONLY)
  - c. Closing Control Date
  - d. State ID # and Assistance Unit #
  - e. Adoption Number (ADOPTIONS ONLY)
  - f. Check The Box – “To: Suspense”
  - g. Check The Box – “From: CSW”
    - i. Indicate the CSW's last name
    - ii. Indicate the CSW's File #
  - h. Adoption Cases (ADOPTION'S ONLY) - Check the appropriate boxes.
7. Attach the completed DCFS 261 to the top of the master case folder.
8. Forward the master case folder with the attached LRS Case Summary document, CPS Detail Page and the DCFS 261 to the Suspense Clerk.

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## Preparing Open Cases for Historical

1. Prepare and deliver open cases to Historical.
  - a. Complete the Historical Log.

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## Ordering Supplies

1. Complete the [DCFS 197 A, Request for In-House Supplies](#) form and obtain the Unit Supervisor's signature.
  - a. Submit the approved DCFS 197A to the office Stock Room.
  - b. Upon notification from the Stock Room Clerk, pick up the supplies and provide signature.
2. Keep Unit/Section staff adequately supplied with the materials they need to perform their jobs.

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## Typing

1. Type letters, documents, forms, and any other required miscellaneous typing tasks.
  - Light typing only for [Intermediate Clerks](#)
2. Perform data entry in DCFS utilized applications and platforms.
  - Unit Clerks are not responsible for Field Itineraries, Daily Activity Reports (DARS), or Mileage Authorization and Reimbursement System (MARS).

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## Obtaining Reports and Documents

1. Obtain various reports and documents using DCFS utilized applications and platforms. For example: The CWS/CMS Caseload Summary, Court Calendar and Reminder Reports.
  - a. Search various reports and retrieve, print and disseminate as requested.

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## Health and Education Passport Information

### Updating the Health Notebook in CWS/CMS

1. Upon receipt of a DCFS 561(a), Medical Examination form or a DCFS 561(b), Dental Examination form, update the client's Health Notebook in CWS/CMS.

- How to Enter Health Information.

- a. Open the Health Notebook Well Child tab and if the visit information recorded on the DCFS 561(a) or 561(b) is not listed, open the Contacts tab in the Service Management section and enter the visit date, type and provider information. Save to the database.
  - Do not add any information to the following pages: Summary, Immunization, Diagnosed Condition, Observed Condition and Medications.
  - i. If the Health Provider is not listed, Search for and add. Save to the database
  - ii. If the Health Provider is not found, notify the CSW to request assistance from the PHN.
- b. If any information is documented in the sections to be completed by the health care provider on the DCFS 561(a) or (b), attach the form(s) to the Purple Folder and forward to the PHN.
- c. Complete the Health and Education Log.

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## Updating a Current Education Notebook in CWS/CMS

1. As requested, update the current Education Notebook by taking the following step:
  - a. Fax, scan or mail the DCFS 1726, School Report with Part I completed to the school indicated in Part I of the DCFS 1726. If mailing, include a self-addressed stamped envelope, with "Attn: {CSWs name}" written on the envelope.
2. Upon receipt of a CSWs request to enter information from the completed DCFS 1726 into CWS/CMS, open the client's case and the existing Education Notebook and take the following steps: Update the Notebook pages with the current date of enrollment, grade level, the new information and save to the database.
  - a. Annotate in the margin of the DCFS 1726 that the information was entered into CWS/CMS and forward the DCFS 1726 to the CSW for filing.

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## Updating a Current Education Provider Notebook in CWS/CMS

1. As requested, update the current Education Provider Notebook by taking the following step:
  - a. Fax, scan or mail the DCFS 1726, School Report with Part I completed to the school indicated in Part I of the DCFS 1726. If mailing, include a self-addressed stamped envelope, with "Attn: {CSWs name}" written on the envelope.

2. Upon receipt of a CSWs request to enter information from the completed DCFS 1726 into CWS/CMS, open the client's case and the existing Education Provider Notebook and take the following steps:
  - a. Conduct a Search for the Education Provider.
  - b. When a record is found, compare name, address and phone number to that on the DCFS 1726. Any discrepancies found between the information on the form and the search are to be annotated on the form in order to correspond to that of the search.
  - c. When no record is found, proceed to step 3.
3. In the event that the Education Provider listed on the DCFS 1726 is not found in CWS/CMS, contact the DCFS Education Section and request that the identified education provider be added to the Provider list in CWS/CMS.
  - a. Send an email to [Youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov](mailto:Youth.education.support@dcfs.lacounty.gov) with the following information:
    - Subject Line: Request to Add Education Provider
    - Body of email: Name of School and City School is located in.The response may take up to two (2) days.
  - b. Upon notification that the Education Provider has been added, take the following steps:
    - i. Conduct a Search for the Education Provider.
    - ii. When found, Select School and add the Start Date for the school
    - iii. Add Grade Level and Start Date (same as School Start Date).
    - iv. Save to the Data Base.
    - Refer to the [Guide to CWS/CMS Application Mapping](#) for completion of the Education and Education Provider Notebooks.
4. Annotate in margin of the DCFS 1726 that the information was entered into CWS/CMS and forward the DCFS 1726 to CSW for filing.

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## APPROVALS

None

## HELPFUL LINKS

### Attachments

[Case File and Document Archives Procedure Guide](#)

[DCFS Model Case Format Document Filing Guide](#)

[Guide to CWS/CMS Application Mapping](#)

[How to Discontinue Cases/Referrals in LRS](#)

[How to Enter Health Information](#)

[Unit Clerk Duties and Responsibilities Quick Reference List](#)

## **Forms**

CWS/CMS

None

LA Kids

[DCFS 197 A](#), Request for In-House Supplies

[DCFS 261](#), Inactive Record Transmittal & Control

[DCFS 265](#), SAAMS Request to Add Mother as Primary Applicant on LRS

[DCFS 1726](#), School Records Request FAX

[Health and Education Log](#)

Hard Copy

None

## **Referenced Policy Guides**

[1200-500.90](#), Model Case Format (MFC)

## **Statutes**

[Welfare and Institutions Code \(WIC\) Section 827](#) – Lists who may inspect a child welfare case file.

[WIC Section 10850](#) – Addresses the levels of confidentiality DCFS must adhere to regarding client information.

[Penal Code \(PEN\) Section 11164-11174.3](#) – Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (CANRA)

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