

Dependency Status Appeal Process

For the 2025–2026 academic year, you're automatically considered an independent student **/**At least one of the following applies to you:

- You were born before January 1, 2002
- You're married on the day you apply (even if you are separated but not divorced).
- You are or will be enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program (beyond a bachelor's degree) at the beginning of the 2025–2026 academic year.
- You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- You're a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. (A "veteran" includes students who attended a U.S. service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable. For more details on who is considered a veteran, see the explanatory notes on the FAFSA.)
- You have children who will receive more than half their support from you between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026.
- You have legal dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half their support from you now and through June 30, 2026.
- At any time since you turned 13, both of your parents deceased, you were in foster care, or you were a dependent or ward of the court.
- As of the day you apply for aid, you are an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- As of the day you apply for aid, you are in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025, your high school or school district homeless liaison determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025, the director of an emergency shelter program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2025 the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determined that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.

If none of these criteria apply to you, you are a dependent student. Unless you meet one of these criteria for independent status for financial aid, then your parent(s) must complete the FAFSA with your parents' information. Your parent(s) must provide income and asset information on the FAFSA.

Appeals to Dependency Status

You may submit an appeal if an unusual, mitigating circumstance exists. It must be based on an unusual situation. Some reasons for an appeal to your dependency status are listed below.

NOTE: The unwillingness of a parent to contribute to the student's educational cost or to complete the FAFSA does not warrant a dependency override. In addition, a student living independent of any parental support does not affect the student's dependency status. **Neither of these circumstances is considered unusual or mitigating.**

Possible mitigating circumstances include the following:

- Your parent(s) are incarcerated.
- Your parent(s) live in a war-torn country, and you are unable to communicate/correspond with them.
- Your parent(s) is/are mentally incapacitated.
- You are estranged from your parent(s) because of an abusive situation.

Instructions for Preparing an Appeal

1. Provide a reason for your dependency appeal on the attached form.
2. Provide documentation to support your reason. This should be from an unrelated third party, such as a counselor, social worker, doctor, or the court system. (Please provide at least three separate forms of documentation.)
3. Complete the income and expense information on the attached form.

You will be notified of the decision after your appeal has been reviewed. The Financial Aid Office may request additional information from you before making a decision.

Dependency Status Appeal

Name (First, MI, Last): _____ Student ID: _____

Who do you live with? _____

When did you last live with your parents? Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

When did either parent last provide any monetary support for you? Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

When was the last time you had contact with your parents? Parent 1: _____ Parent 2: _____

****Please attach a statement describing the reason for your dependency appeal in detail.****

Do you receive other kinds of help from your parents (example: health insurance, room and board while living at home)?

Yes No

Please identify type and approximate value of help from parents: _____

Your income and projected earnings:

Actual 2023 income: \$ _____ *Attach 2023 Federal Tax Return Transcript if not transferred utilizing the IRS/DRT on the FAFSA*

List source of income if no return was filed: _____

Projected 2025 income: \$ _____

Source: _____

Complete the following statement of your calendar year expenses:

Housing:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Food:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Transportation:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Utilities:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Child/Dependent Care:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Personal:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Other:

- Actual 2023: _____
- Estimated 2025: _____

Signature

Date