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Dependency overrides are determined on a case by case basis to otherwise dependent students who can demonstrate a complete and total breakdown of the parental relationship. This situation must be documented.

We will make every effort to process your information in a timely fashion, however dependency status appeals can take up to two weeks to process.

Required Documentation:

Supporting documentation by at least two disinterested third parties such as police, counselor, doctor, minister, teacher, etc.

You must provide a copy of your *current* lease agreement or mortgage statement. If you share housing, please explain how the household bills are divided. If you are living with someone and your name does not appear on the lease, please explain your living arrangements in your letter and include a copy of their lease.

Provide a detailed statement describing the unusual circumstance(s) relevant to determining your dependency status. The last statement must be worded as follows, **“I certify that all information provided in this letter and all documentation submitted to support my appeal are true to the best of my knowledge.”**

1. Monthly financial support from parents: \$ _____
2. Other support paid on your behalf by your parents Car insurance Car payment
 Medical insurance Other _____
3. Your signature and the date: _____

Printed Student Name

Student ID Number

Note: Failure to provide all required information will result in denial. Additional information/documentation may be requested after initial review by an administrator.

2019-2020 INDEPENDENT STUDENT DEFINITION
SEC.480(d) Federal Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1992

An individual who meets one of the following criteria will be considered independent when applying for financial aid (Refer to 2019-2020 FAFSA questions #46-58.):

1. Is at least 24 years old (born before 1/1/1996);
2. Is married;
3. Is working on a master's or doctorate program;
4. Has children for whom they provide over 50 percent of support in a calendar year;
5. Has dependents (other than children or a spouse) for whom they provide over 50 percent of support in a calendar year;
6. At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court;
7. Emancipated prior to the legal age of majority as determined by your state of legal residence;
8. Is a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces;
9. At any time on or after July 1, 2018 was an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or a self-supporting youth who was at risk of being homeless as documented by either a high school or school district homeless liaison, director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by HUD, or director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program.

Students who do not meet the above criteria are considered dependent for financial aid purposes. Parental data is required when completing the 2019-2020 FAFSA. If a student is adopted, the adoptive parent is considered to be a parent, and their information must be provided. If a student's biological parents are divorced, the student should report the information of the biological parent with whom the student lived the most during the past year. If the student did not live with either parent, or lived equally with each parent, then the parental information must be provided for the parent from whom the student received the most financial support, or the parent from whom the student received the most support the last time support was given. If that parent has remarried, the stepparent's information is also required on the FAFSA. **There are no exceptions to this requirement.**

Requirement of Parental Information

The law governing the Federal Student Aid (FSA) program is based on the premise that the family is the first source of a student's support, and the law provides several criteria that decide if a student is considered independent of his/her parents for aid eligibility. Note that a student reaching the age of 18 or 21 or living apart from his/her parents does not affect his/her dependency status (U.S. Department of Education, Student Financial Aid Handbook, 2018 – 2019 application and verification guide, Chapter 2, page 24).

The Higher Education Act allows an aid administrator to make dependency overrides on a **case-by-case** basis for students with unusual circumstances. If the administrator determines that an override is appropriate, he/she must write a statement detailing the determination and must include the statement and supporting documentation in the student's file. **However, none of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as unusual circumstances meriting a dependency override:**

- 1) Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education;
- 2) Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification;
- 3) Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
- 4) Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency. (U.S. Department of Education, Student Financial Aid Handbook, 2018 - 2019 application and verification guide, AVG-113).

Use of Legal Guardian Information

A foster parent or a legal guardian is not treated as a parent for FSA purposes. If at any time since the age of 13 both of the student's parents were deceased (and they did not have an adoptive parent) or they were in foster care, then they are independent. If they are now, or was when they became an adult, an emancipated minor or in legal guardianship, they are independent. If a student is living with his/her grandparents or other relative, the same principle applies. Unless the relatives have adopted the student, the income of the relatives should not be reported on the FAFSA. (U.S. Department of Education, Student Financial Aid Handbook, 2018 - 2019 application and verification guide, page 28)