

Appeal for Independent Status

If you are a dependent student wishing to be granted Independent Status based on unusual circumstances in your household, you will need to make an appointment with a Financial Aid Advisor to request an appeal for independent status and present supporting documentation of your claim.

Please note that according to the Department of Education it is the parents' primary responsibility to pay for their children's educational expenses. **Federal regulations state that parents' unwillingness to assist the student is not, by itself, grounds for a dependency override.** Therefore, a student cannot be considered independent because the parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or documentation needed for verification.

The following unusual circumstances are the examples of instances that might be considered to grant you independent status. If any of them apply to you, please submit a signed statement explaining your situation along with the required supporting documentation. In addition you must submit an Independent Verification Worksheet with proof of income. See your Financial Aid Advisor for additional information and obtain the necessary documents.

<p><i>Your custodial parent has died and you have never had contact, nor received any financial support from the living parent.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Required Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A signed statement from you explaining your circumstances in detail. (Use form in reverse side) 2) A copy of the death certificate of the deceased custodial parent. 3) A statement in letterhead from an objective third party (i.e. social worker, counselor, minister, doctor or other professional) that supports your claim that you had no contact with, nor received any financial support from the non-custodial parent, or Documentation showing custodial relationship such as a court order or divorce decree as evidence that the deceased parent had legal custody. 	<p><i>You are a political refugee or eligible non-citizen; your parent(s) do not reside in the U.S. and cannot be contacted by normal means, therefore, unable to provide financial support.</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Required Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A signed statement from you explaining in detail where your parent(s) reside and confirming they cannot be contacted by normal means. (Use form in reverse side) 2) U.S Citizenship and Immigration Services (former INS) documents verifying your status (i.e. I-94 record or I-551 Permanent resident card, etc.) 	<p><i>Your family situation is unreasonable, physical or emotional abuse in the household, drug/alcohol abuse etc.) and as a result a judge or professional has counseled you to live apart from your parent(s).</i></p> <p>-----</p> <p>Required Documents:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) A signed statement from you explaining your circumstances in detail. (Use form in reverse side) 2) A statement on letterhead from an objective third party (i.e. social worker, counselor, minister, doctor or other professional) explaining the situation in detail. 3) Any other documents that support your claim such as: Police Reports Court Orders Documentation from a social worker or agency.
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In addition, if you have been deemed as homeless or as an unaccompanied minor **by the director of a housing program or youth runaway center**, bring an official letter from the agency to assess your eligibility for independent status.

Note: The decision made by the Financial Aid Office concerning your Appeal for Independent Status is final, and cannot be appealed to the Department of Education.

