



FEDERAL DEPENDENCY APPEAL REQUEST FOR 2026-2027

Federal Aid Programs include Pell Grants, Subsidized Loans, Unsubsidized Loans, TEACH Grants, Work-study, Parent PLUS Loans, Perkins Loan, and other programs. When awarding these aid programs, the federal government classifies all students as either *dependent* upon their parents for aid purposes or *independent*. Dependent students are required to include parental information on their FAFSA, such as income and asset data, while independent students are not. By default, the federal government considers all students dependent for aid purposes unless the student meets one of the following conditions:

- Satisfies one of the federal automatic criteria for independence; or
- Unusual circumstances beyond a student's control warrant a dependency override

Note that a student's dependency status for aid purposes is a different designation than their dependency status for tax purposes. Because of this, a student can be considered independent for tax purposes, yet dependent for aid.

AUTOMATIC CRITERIA

Below is a list of the federal automatic criteria for independence. If a student satisfies any one of these, the federal government considers them independent for aid purposes and parental information is not required on the FAFSA.

1. Born on or before January 1, 2003
2. Married or graduate student
3. Serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training
4. A veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces
5. Have children who will receive more than half of their support from the student
6. Have dependents who live with the student and who receive more than half of their support from the student
7. An orphan, ward of the court, or in foster care at any time since age 13
8. Emancipated minor as determined by a court in the student's state of legal residence
9. In legal guardianship as determined by a court in the student's state of legal residence
10. Unaccompanied homeless youth, determined by high school homeless liaison, director of an emergency shelter, or director of runaway youth basic center

DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE

Federal regulations allow the Financial Aid Office to use professional judgment to grant dependency overrides on a case-by-case basis for students with *unusual circumstances beyond their control that are documented by reliable third party sources*. Federal regulations specifically state that **none** of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as circumstances meriting a dependency override:

- Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education;
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification;
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency

Examples of circumstances that may merit a dependency override include a physically or sexually abusive family environment, abandonment by parents, parental drug or alcohol addiction, or other documented unusual circumstances that are beyond a student's control. These circumstances generally create a situation in which it is in the best interest of the student to be in little to no contact with the parents again. Follow the instructions on the reverse side to request a dependency override.

REQUEST FOR A FEDERAL DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE FOR 2026-2027

Student Name

NCCC Student ID

Below please find the instructions for requesting a dependency override. There are four sections to submit: cover page, letter from student, at least two letters from reliable third parties, and signature certification. Any information submitted to our office or discussions with our staff are strictly confidential.

The Financial Aid Office will make a determination regarding the dependency override based upon the *unusual circumstances beyond a student's control that are documented by third parties*. The burden of proof rests upon the student, not the Financial Aid Office. After reviewing the appeal, the Financial Aid Office will notify the student via e-mail regarding the outcome. Allow two to three weeks for notification.

Note that dependency overrides do not carry over from one year to the next. The Financial Aid Office must reaffirm each year that the circumstances that warranted an appeal persist and that an override is still justified.

COVER PAGE

1. Include this page as the first page of your request.

LETTER FROM THE STUDENT

1. Explain the unusual circumstances that were beyond your control.
2. Describes your current living situation.
3. Summarizes your method of financial support since leaving your parents' home.

AT LEAST TWO LETTERS FROM RELIABLE THIRD PARTIES

1. Include a signed letter from a reliable third party who can support and verify your circumstances. Third parties may include adults who are familiar with your situation, such as a counselor, teacher, clergy, and attorney. Third parties do not include your parents or adult relatives besides your parents. Letters must be signed and also on letterhead if the third party is a professional (ex. school counselor).
2. Include a second signed letter from a different third party who can also support and verify your circumstances. If this is not possible, you can substitute a signed letter from an adult relative besides your parents who can support and verify your circumstances. Letters must be signed and also on letterhead if the third party is a professional (ex. school counselor).
3. Any additional signed letters of support per your discretion (optional). Letters must be signed and also on letterhead if the third party is a professional (ex. school counselor).

SIGNATURE CERTIFICATION

By signing below, I certify that this request for a dependency override does not include any false or misleading information.

Student's Ink Signature

Date

Submit all four sections of the appeal to the Financial Aid Office. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Financial Aid Office.