

## PETITION FOR INDEPENDENT STATUS



The US Congress and Department of Education determine the criteria for whether a student is considered dependent or independent of their parents for financial aid purposes. Generally, how an applicant responds to “Step Three” on the FAFSA determines their dependency status.

The questions in “Step Three” are:

- Were you born before January 1, 2003?
- As of today, are you married? (Also answer “Yes” if you are separated but not divorced.)
- At the beginning of the 2026-2027 school year, will you be working on a master’s or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, or graduate certificate, etc.?)
- Do you have children who receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2026 and June 30, 2027?
- Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2027?
- Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for the purposes other than training?
- Are you a veteran of the US Armed Forces?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor?
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you in legal guardianship?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2026, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?

If you do not meet one of the above conditions, but still feel there are extenuating circumstances which might warrant you being considered independent of your parents, you may explain those circumstances in a petition to your Financial Aid Officer.

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE COMPLETING THIS FORM

The basic premise underlying student financial aid is that it is primarily the responsibility of the student and his or her parents to pay educational costs. When family resources are insufficient, financial aid may be awarded to supplement the resources of the student’s family to help pay educational expenses. By petitioning, you are asking us to relieve your parents of the responsibility for using their resources to pay part of your college costs. Only very extenuating circumstances will make it reasonable to approve such a petition. Being self-sufficient or having enough resources to pay your own expenses is NOT considered an extenuating circumstance for determining dependency status. A parent’s refusal to help pay your education expenses is NOT an extenuating circumstance for the purpose of a dependency change.

To begin the petition process, please answer the questions listed below. Submit this form to Student Financial Services

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To begin the petition process, please answer the questions listed below. Submit this form to Student Financial Services WITH YOUR PETITION ATTACHED.

1. What amount of financial support did you receive from your parents in 2024?	\$
2. What amount of financial support will you receive from your parents in 2026?	\$
3. What other support do you receive from your parent(s) or stepparent(s)? Examples: health or auto insurance, room and board, clothing, use of a vehicle, etc. Please identify the type of support and it's approximate value:	
	\$
	\$
	\$
	\$
Total	\$
4. Do your parents/stepparents own the property in which you reside? (circle)      Yes      No	

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Please attach a separate sheet explaining in detail the answers to these questions:

1. Identify the location of both your parents if known.
2. Describe the last time you had contact with each of your parents—when, where, and the nature of the contact.
3. Explain what unusual circumstances should make you an independent student.

YOUR EXPLANATION OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES MUST BE ATTACHED TO THIS PETITION!.

Additional documentation requirements:

Two references—This should be from a pastor, teacher, or other adult familiar with your situation.

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Student Name (Print)

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Student Signature

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Student ID #

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Date