



Office of Scholarships & Financial Aid

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2025-2026 PETITION TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID AS AN INDEPENDENT STUDENT

Fall Deadline: August 30th

Spring Deadline: December 2nd

Summer Deadline: May 5th

Financial aid regulations assume that the family has primary responsibility for meeting the educational costs of students. If you are considered a dependent student according to the U.S. Department of Education definition, your aid eligibility is determined by using parent income and asset information in addition to your information. Dependent students are required by law to provide parental information and signatures to be considered for financial aid.

If you can document what facts may change your status from dependent to independent, you may petition for a waiver of federal regulations requiring parental information. The US Department of Education has identified four conditions that, individually or in combination with one another, do not qualify as “unusual circumstances” and do not merit a dependency override. Those circumstances are:

1. Parents refusing to contribute to the student’s education;
2. Parents unwilling to provide information on the application or for verification;
3. Parents not claiming the students as a dependent for income tax purposes;
4. Students demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

Federal regulations allow financial aid administrators to use professional judgment to change dependency status to “independent” on a case-by-case basis. The student must demonstrate that there is an unusual circumstance other than the fact that the student is self-sufficient or that the parents are unwilling to contribute to the student’s education.

The following information is used by our financial aid committee in reviewing a student’s petition for independent status.

Meeting all the guidelines does not mean that a petition will be granted. The committee will decide on an individual basis whether to change a student’s status to “independent”.

In your petition, you should answer each of the following items:

1. Provide a typed, signed, dated and detailed explanation of what circumstances may warrant an independent status. Identify, if known, the location of both your parents. Describe the last time you had contact with each of your parents, when and the nature of the contact. Describe how you have been self-supporting: a) when did you start meeting your expenses without parental support; and b) how have you provided for yourself?
2. Provide detailed statements from two responsible adults who are aware and can document your unusual circumstances. At least one statement must be from someone who is not a relative or friend. Copies of appropriate court documents are acceptable to support your petition.
3. **Tax Filers:** Provide a copy of your 2023 Tax Return Transcript or a signed copy of your 2023 Tax Return Forms.
Non-Filers: Provide a copy of your 2023 Verification of Non-Filing Letter and any 2023 W-2’s if you worked in 2023.
4. Certify below: I have attached statements from the following persons (give name, address, phone number, job title and relationship to you):

NAME: _____ JOB TITLE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (_____) _____ RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

NAME: _____ JOB TITLE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (_____) _____ RELATIONSHIP TO YOU: _____

I certify that the information provided in this petition is true and correct.

SIGNATURE: _____ DATE: _____