

Information for Dependency Override Appeal

Financial aid regulations assume that a student's family has primary responsibility for meeting educational costs. If you are considered a dependent student according to the standard financial aid definition, your aid eligibility is determined by using parent income and asset information in addition to your information.

Am I a Dependent or Independent Student?

A student's dependency status is determined based on their responses to specific questions on the FAFSA or CA DREAM Act application. For financial aid purposes, an independent student is defined as someone who **meets any** of the following conditions:

- Born before January 1, 2000;
- Married as of the date aid application signed;
- Attending Graduate level program of study during the 2023-24 academic year;
- Currently serving on active duty in U.S. Armed Forces (other than for training);
- Veteran of U.S. Armed Forces (*or will be a veteran as of June 30, 2024*), or have attended a service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable;
- Have children who receive more than half their support from the student, or has legal dependents, other than a spouse or children, who live with student and who receive more than half their support from the student between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024;
- Is/was an Emancipated Minor or in Legal Guardianship as determined by the court in his/her state of legal residence;
- At any time since you turned age 13, both your parents deceased (Orphan), were you in foster care or, a dependent or ward of the court
- At any time on or after July 1, 2023, a self-supporting unaccompanied youth who is homeless or at risk of homelessness (as certified by a high school, school district homeless liaison, governmental or school agency).

A student that *does not* meet *any* of the above conditions is classified as a dependent student.

What is a Dependency Override?

A dependency override occurs when a financial aid administrator exercises professional judgment and overrides the standard criteria on the FAFSA or CA DREAM Act application for dependent students. An override may only be granted on an individual case-by-case basis for students with unusual and exceptional circumstances. These circumstances must show a compelling reason for a student to be considered independent.

What conditions *might* warrant a Dependency Override?

A dependency override might be warranted for unusual circumstances which includes, but is not limited to:

- The student is unable to locate their parents,
- Abandonment by parents or
- An abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual orientation)

What conditions *do not* warrant a Dependency Override?

Federal regulations state that 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 CA Dream Act application or for verification.
3. Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
4. Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

Dependency Override Appeal Requirements – All information reported and provided remains strictly confidential

1. **Financial Aid Application** – Complete either the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or the [CA Dream Act Application](#) *prior* to submitting the Dependency Override Appeal.
Dependency Override Appeal Form – Complete all sections of the appeal form. Note: your personal statement is a critical requirement to the dependency override process.
2. **Third-Party Statements** – Provide at least two letters from third-party (e.g., a teacher, counselor, medical authority, member of the clergy, prison administrator, government agency, or court) adult individuals who personally have knowledge of your situation and who can verify your circumstances. Letters must include details as to how the person knows you, how long they have known you, and how they have been involved and/or have first-hand knowledge of your situation. One of the letters must be from an adult in a professional capacity on agency letterhead and must include their official title, phone number and full agency address. Note: third-party statements are a critical requirement to the dependency override process.
3. **Required Documentation** – In addition to your appeal form and third-party statements, you must provide a copy of your current lease or rental agreement. If you do not have either, attach a signed statement from your current landlord verifying your tenancy.
4. **Submit your completed appeal to the Financial Aid Office.**

Outcome of Appeal

If your appeal is approved, we will notify you via your email and will submit the override information to the relevant aid application. Your financial aid will be packaged based on your independent status. Additional documents may be required after your override is accepted and processed by the application processor system. Be sure to check your financial aid portal for any additional items.

If your appeal is denied, we will notify you via your email account of our decision. It is the student's responsibility to update their aid application to provide parent information, income and signatures. All decisions on dependency overrides are made based on Professional Judgment by the MPC Financial Aid Office.

Dependency Override Appeal

A. Student Information

Student's Name: _____ MPC ID:

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This appeal is valid for only one academic year – you will need to renew your status every year.

B. Aid Application – Select the application you completed

FAFSA Application

CA Dream Act Application

C. Student's Personal Statement – Use a separate sheet of paper to write/type your personal statement.

A signed, dated, clear and concise letter from you, the student, explaining your situation in as much detail as you feel comfortable in sharing. A dependency override might be warranted for unusual circumstances which includes, but is not limited to:

- The student is unable to locate their parents,
- Abandonment by parents or

An abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety (physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, sexual orientation)

D. Third-Party Statements – Be sure your name and MPC ID number are on each statement and attach to this appeal.

Provide at least two letters from third-party (e.g., a teacher, counselor, medical authority, member of the clergy, prison administrator, government agency, or court) adult individuals who personally have knowledge of your situation and who can verify the circumstances you provided in your personal statement. Third-party letters **must include details as to how the person knows you, how long they have known you, and how they have been involved and/or have first-hand knowledge of your situation.** One of the letters must be from an adult in a professional capacity on agency letterhead and must include their official title, phone number and full agency address. Note: third-party statements are a critical requirement to the dependency override process.

E. Additional Documentation –

Additional documentation may be required once the appeal has been reviewed. If additional documentation is required, we will notify you via your email account of what is needed.

F. Certification and Signatures – Each person signing this worksheet certifies that all the information reported on it, including any attachments, is complete and correct. The student whose information was reported on the FAFSA must sign and date. Warning! If you purposely give false or misleading information you may be fined, sentenced to jail, or both.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

This worksheet must be signed and dated to be valid. Electronic and/or digital signatures are not valid.

For Office Use Only

Dependency Override Approved Processed via FAA/CPS Dependency Override Denied

If approved, update Dependency field to (I) for Independent

Comment(s):

Processed/Reviewed By:

Date: