

**2020-2021 Independent Status Appeal**

Student ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Many students feel they are independent because they are currently living on their own and/or because their parent(s) no longer contribute to their support. **However, the Department of Education requires parental information unless one of the following conditions apply:**

- Student is 24 years of age or older – born before January 1, 1995;
- Student is a documented orphan or ward of the court;
- Student is a veteran of the Armed Forces of the United States;
- Student is an active member of the United States Armed Forces or currently serving on active duty for purposes other than training;
- Student is working on a Master's or Doctorate program during the academic year 2019-2020;
- Student is married on the day the FAFSA is initially completed;
- Student has legal dependents other than a spouse; OR
- Student is someone for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of extenuating family circumstances.

**Note: The Department of Education issued guidelines to clarify conditions under which financial aid administrators may appropriately consider dependency overrides. They do not include:**

1. Parents refusing to contribute to 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. Student demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

**❖ TO BE CONSIDERED FOR A REVIEW**

1. Read Section I carefully and collect appropriate documentation.
2. Complete Sections II and III. **If none of the circumstances in Section I apply to your situation, do not complete this form.**
3. Complete the certification statement.
4. Submit the FAFSA, with all the student information completed.
5. Return the required information and documentation to the Financial Aid Office.

**SECTION I – EXTENUATING FAMILY CIRCUMSTANCES**

We may be able to override your dependent status if unusual family circumstances exist that make it impossible for you to have contact with your parents. Examples are: a parent is institutionalized; or you have been physically or emotionally abused by parent(s). If your family situation involves an extreme situation such as those described above, you may appeal your dependent status by submitting the following:

- A personal letter of explanation: describing your special circumstances and means of support
- A letter on professional letterhead from a third party: who is familiar with and will verify your family situation and the fact that it is unsafe for you to contact your parents to complete the FAFSA (examples: clergy, teacher, counselor, social worker, psychologist, doctor or lawyer)
- A letter from a relative or a friend: to confirm the circumstances you describe
- Independent Verification Worksheet: including all required documents

