

## Petition for Independent Status

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

Most unmarried undergraduates under the age of 24 are considered **dependent** for federal financial aid purposes. If, however, after answering questions in Step 3 on the FAFSA, you are classified as a dependent student, and you believe you should be considered independent due to unusual circumstances, you may request consideration for a **dependency override**.

**The following conditions, individually or in combination with one another, do not qualify as “unusual circumstances” and do not merit a dependency override. Those circumstances are:**

- A student’s reluctance to request the income information from the parent(s) is not justification for granting an override.
- The parents’ unwillingness to pay or provide information is not a valid reason for granting an override.
- In all cases, independence must have occurred out of **necessity rather than choice**.
- Students’ demonstrating total self-sufficiency.
- The parents’ tax filing/exemption status, e.g., not including the student as a tax dependent.

*For more information regarding dependency determination, please see **Appendix A***

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Please complete the following steps to petition for independent status and allow 2-3 weeks for your petition to be reviewed. **Please note:** Your ability to provide specific information and documentation is crucial for a successful petition for a dependency override. Please be as complete as possible.

### **Step 1: Complete the following information:**

If known, identify the location of both of your parents:

Parent 1 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in contact?  Yes  No

Parent 2 Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in contact? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No

**Step 2: Attach a typed letter addressing the following statements:**

1. Describe the last time you had contact with each of your parents - when, where, and the nature of the contact.
2. Please explain the extenuating circumstances that make it inappropriate to expect a parental contribution toward your educational expenses.
3. Please explain how you currently support yourself and plan to support yourself for the upcoming year.

**Step 3: Supporting Documentation and/or letter of support**

4. Submit at least two signed letters from third parties who have personal knowledge of your situation and can verify your circumstances. All letters must include a telephone number and email address where the individual can be reached for follow-up questions. If one of these letters is from someone who is known to you in a professional capacity, the letter should be printed on letterhead and/or include a business card or copy of a business card.
5. Complete the following information:

**I have attached a statement from the following person(s):**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to you: \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Employer: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 4: Initial and Sign:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand the Office of Student Financial Aid Services may request additional information/documentation to validate that which is contained in this petition.

\_\_\_\_\_ By signing this worksheet, I certify that all information reported to qualify for federal student aid is complete and correct. The signature(s) listed on this form and that accompany this form are that of the original person.

\_\_\_\_\_ I understand that if I purposefully provide false information on this petition, I may be reported to the US Department of Education Office of Inspector General.

\_\_\_\_\_ I permit the Office of Student Financial Aid Services to verify the information in this petition and contact the individuals who have provided letters of support.

*I have read and understand the terms of petitioning for independent status. I have attached all required documentation outlined within this form and certify that the information in this petition is true and correct:*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix A**

### **Who must provide parental information on the FAFSA?**

Federal Financial Aid regulations assume that the family is primarily responsible for meeting a student's educational costs. If you are considered a dependent student according to the financial aid 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. For Federal Student Aid Programs, the North Idaho College Financial Aid Office follows the definition of an independent student as set by the Department of Education.

**Under the federal definition, an undergraduate student is considered independent for 2023-2024 if they can answer “yes” to any of the following scenarios:**

You were born before January 1, 2001.

You have a child or children.

You are a ward or dependent of the court, an orphan, and/or since turning age 13, you were in foster care.

You are a veteran of the United States Armed Forces or currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.

You are married or separated.

You are providing significant financial support to dependents other than a spouse or child(ren).

It has been determined by a court in the state of legal residence that you are an emancipated minor or in a legal guardianship.

It was deemed that you are a homeless, unaccompanied youth or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.

### **Who may petition for independent status?**

If you do not meet any of the above criteria but you believe that you should be considered independent because truly exceptional circumstances make it inappropriate to expect a parental contribution, you may complete this form to petition for a waiver of federal regulation requiring parental information. Examples of unusual circumstances are situations such as when a student's parents cannot be located, or where an otherwise dependent student has been a victim of domestic violence or abuse and is no longer able to reside with their parents. Federal regulations allow Financial Aid Administrators to use professional judgment to change dependency status to "independent" on a case-by-case basis.

**Please Note:** The U.S. 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:

- Parents refusing to contribute to the student's education
- Parents unwilling to provide information on the application or for verification
- Parents not claiming the students as a dependent for income tax purposes and/or
- Student demonstrating total self-sufficiency.

### **Under what circumstances might a dependency override be granted?**

Documented cases of:

- Abandonment
- Parental drug abuse
- Parental mental incapacity
- Physical or emotional abuse
- Parental incarceration
- Severe estrangement.