

2024-2025 Dependency Status Appeal Instructions



Office of Scholarships and Financial Assistance

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Dependency status is determined by the responses to a series of questions on the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA) and schools may override the dependency status in limited situations. Northwest will use this authority in circumstances where there is a serious family problem beyond the control of the student (potential situations include an abusive and/or unsafe family environment, abandonment, inability to locate parents, etc.).

Students must be able to document their situation. Please be aware that appeals are not able to be approved for any of the following reasons:

- Parents refuse to contribute to the student's education.
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification.
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes.
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

If you believe you have a situation that warrants additional review, please use these guidelines to submit an appeal to determine whether a dependency override is justifiable and can be processed for you.

1. For our office to consider your initial request, provide the following information to our office:

- A signed personal letter of appeal explaining the reason for your request for a dependency status appeal. The letter should provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents.
- Letters from at least two adult professionals who can attest to your situation. Each letter should provide as much detail as possible describing your separation from your parents. Adult professionals include:
 - clergy members
 - family counselors
 - social workers
 - therapists
 - law enforcement officers
 - guidance counselors

If you were raised by a family member or another person who is not your parent, additional statements may be provided from that person. Each letter must include the individual's name, title/position, address, phone number, email address, signature and date.

2. For our office to consider your renewal request, provide a personal statement re-affirming your situation.

This statement should include detailed information about your current living arrangements, frequency and nature of contact with your parents, and any changes in your family circumstances since your previous appeal documentation was provided.

You should submit your FAFSA online and indicate there is a special circumstance that prevents you from providing parental information. Your FAFSA submission will not initially result in a calculated SAI. If your appeal is approved, our office will make updates to your FAFSA, allowing a financial aid award letter to be provided.