

# Federal Student Aid - Am I Dependent or Independent?

Answer the following questions to determine if parental information will be required on your 2017-2018 FAFSA:

Were you born before January 1, 1994?	Y	N
As of today, are you married? (Also answer 'Yes' if you are separated but not divorced.)	Y	N
As of July 1, 2017, will you be working on a master's or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.)?	Y	N
Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training? <sup>1</sup>	Y	N
Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces? <sup>2</sup>	Y	N
Do you now have or will you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2017 and June 30, 2018?	Y	N
Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who will live with you and receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2018?	Y	N
At any time since you turned the age of 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court? <sup>3</sup>	Y	N
As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor? <sup>4</sup>	Y	N
As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you in legal guardianship? <sup>5</sup>	Y	N
At any time on or after July 1, 2016, did your high school or school district homeless liaison or director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development or director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless? <sup>6</sup>	Y	N

If you answered **"No"** to every question, you are considered **DEPENDENT** and are required to include parental information on your FAFSA. Whether you believe you are independent or not does not change your dependency status on the FAFSA. Many students each year attempt to file as independent students because they are living on their own and are self-sufficient or their parents refuse to contribute to their education. However, under federal regulations, they are still classified as dependent students. You must file your FAFSA based on the dependency requirements listed above or *you risk getting no federal financial aid.*

If you are unable to provide parental information because of one of the following circumstances and can provide written documentation from a third party confirming the situation, you may request a dependency override from the Financial Aid Administrator at your school:

- 1) Both of your parents are incarcerated; or
- 2) You have left home due to an abusive family environment; or
- 3) You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them.

<sup>1</sup> Answer **"No"** if you are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee who is on active duty for state or training purposes.

<sup>2</sup> Answer **"Yes"** if you (1) have engaged in active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces or are a National Guard or Reserves enlistee who was called to active duty for other than state or training purposes, or were a cadet or midshipman at one of the service academies, and (2) were released under a condition other than dishonorable. Also answer **"Yes"** if you are not a veteran now but will be one by June 30, 2018. Answer **"No"** if you do not meet both of the previous conditions or if you are currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces and will continue to serve through June 30, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Answer **"Yes"** if at any time since you turned age 13: 1) You had no living parent (biological or adoptive), even if you are now adopted; or 2) You were in foster care, even if you are no longer in foster care today; or 3) You were a dependent or ward of the court, even if you are no longer.

<sup>4</sup> Answer **"Yes"** if you can provide a court's decision that as of today you are an emancipated minor or are in legal guardianship or that you were immediately before reaching the age of being an adult in your state. Answer **"No"** if you are still a minor and the court decision is no longer in effect or the decision was not in effect at the time you became an adult.

<sup>5</sup> The definition of legal guardianship does not include your parents, even if they were appointed by a court to be your guardians. You are also not considered a legal guardian of yourself.

<sup>6</sup> **"Homeless"** means lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing. **"Unaccompanied"** means you are not living in the physical custody of your parent or guardian. **"Youth"** means you are 21 years of age or younger or you are still enrolled in high school as of today. Answer **"No"** if you do not have a determination from one of the agencies listed.