

2025-2026 Independent Status Appeal

A. Student Information

First Name	M.I.	Last Name	Student ID # (DO NOT INCLUDE SSN)
Phone Number (include area code) or Email			Date of Birth

B. Reason for Appeal

The Department of Education determines a student's status as dependent or independent by the answers the student provides on the questions listed in Step Three of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). There are situations when a student may have unusual circumstances in which s/he should be considered independent.

Unusual circumstances that may warrant a dependency override include but are not limited to:

1. Abandonment by parents
2. An abusive family environment that threatens the student's health or safety
3. The student being unable to locate his/her parents.

However, 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 for verification;
3. Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
4. Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

Renewal of an Independent Appeal for Future Years:

Students who were granted an Independent Appeal in the previous academic year must renew their appeal each subsequent year. Students should submit documentation regarding their current status to the financial aid office for review.

Please contact the office of Financial Aid with any questions:

Iowa Western Financial Aid | Clark Hall | 2700 College Road | Council Bluffs, IA 51503
FinancialAid@iwcc.edu | 800.432.5852 or 712.325.3277 | Fax 712.388.6803 | iwcc.edu

C. What You Should Do

For your appeal to be considered, you must provide the following documentation. Please keep in mind that appeals without sufficient documentation will be automatically denied.

1. **Required:** Attach a signed statement describing your reason(s) for appeal and why you cannot provide parent information. In your letter be very specific about your situation. Try to include dates as to when specific circumstances occurred.
2. **Required:** Third party documentation supporting the extenuating circumstances you described. Examples of adequate documentation include but are not limited to letters/documents from:
 - a. High School Guidance counselor/teacher
 - b. Case worker/Social worker
 - c. Government agencies, medical personnel, court personnel
 - d. Homeless shelter/transitional living staff
 - e. Lawyer
 - f. Pastor, priest, rabbi, imam, monk, nun or other clergy member
 - g. Other Third Party who is familiar with your situation

Letters from any official source should be sent on letterhead.

*If you have no third party to provide a letter of support in your case you should provide any other supporting documentation you can. Example: You are unable to locate your parents and have been living on your own. Include your lease agreement, utility bills, etc.

D. Certification and Signature

I understand that this information will be reviewed and I may be asked to provide additional documentation or clarification pertaining to my situation stated above. By signing this form I certify under penalty of perjury, that all the information reported to qualify for federal student assistance is complete and accurate. If I give false or misleading information on this worksheet, I may be fined, be sentenced to jail, or both.

Student's Signature

Date