



2025-2026 Academic Year Dependency Override Appeal

Name: _____

Student ID: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

What is a Dependency Override?

Most students age 23 and younger are considered “dependent” when completing the FAFSA and must include their parents’ information. However, the U.S. Department of Education allows students who are experiencing unusual circumstances to apply for a Dependency Override through an appeal process. Unusual circumstances include abandonment by parents, an abusive family environment that threatens the student’s health or safety, or the student being unable to locate the parents. In such cases a Dependency Override might be warranted. This means a student who otherwise would have a “dependent” status (and must report their parents’ information on the FAFSA) may apply for financial aid as “independent” (and will not have to report his/her parents’ information on the FAFSA).

What Will Not Qualify for a Dependency Override

The following situations **will not qualify** a student as independent, as per federal regulations set forth by the U.S. Department of Education:

- 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 (i.e. lives on his/her own, pays all bills).

Instructions for Appeal Process

The Office of Financial Aid will review only one appeal per student, per circumstance. **Students submitting a Dependency Override appeal must include all of the following.** (Use the check boxes to keep yourself organized.)

Your custodial parent has died and the other natural parent is still living or your family situation is unattainable. You, however, have neither had contact with nor received any financial support from the living parent for a significant period of time.

- ☐ Submit a detailed, typed letter outlining the reasons for your appeal; verbal appeals will not be accepted.
- ☐ Complete the 2025–2026 Verification worksheet.
- ☐ Provide a copy of the original death certificate for the deceased custodial parent.
- ☐ Include **one or more** letter(s), on official letterhead, from an objective third-party source explaining the situation in detail:
 - ☐ Minister ☐ Social Worker ☐ High School Guidance Counselor ☐ Teacher ☐ Doctor ☐ Counseling Professional
- ☐ Include **one or more** points of official documentation or testimony from the following sources:
 - ☐ Police Reports ☐ Court Reports ☐ Documentation from Social Service Agency
 - ☐ Statement from Friend’s Parent ☐ Statement from Employer ☐ Statement from Coach ☐ Statement from Neighbor

(Written statements should demonstrate the source’s knowledge of the situation.)
- ☐ Provide a copy of your 2023 Tax Return Transcripts (only if you filed taxes).
- ☐ Provide a copy of your 2023 and 2024 W-2s (only if you were employed).

What Happens After Your Appeal

- Students will be informed of the appeal decision by email. The RCSJ email address will be used. Results of appeals will not be given or discussed over the phone for privacy reasons.
- Appeals may take more than 30 days to review and during such time the committee may request additional information.
- **Approved appeals** will result in your financial aid filing status changing from “dependent” to “independent.” The Office of Financial Aid will only review your, the student’s, personal and financial information on the FAFSA and for verification purposes.
- **Denied appeals** will require you to report your parents’ personal and financial information on the FAFSA and for verification purposes.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the information provided on this form. I also confirm the information provided is true and accurate.

Financial Aid Office Use Only

Date Received: _____ If package incomplete, date notice sent to student: _____

PJ Decision: ☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

FAO Comments:

Financial Aid Officer: _____ Date: _____

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____