

How to Appeal for Independent Status

You should complete the 2026-27 Appeal for independent Status if you do not meet the criteria for independent status but have extenuating circumstances and filed your 2026-27 FAFSA without parent information. As a result, you would have been granted provisional independent status by the federal processor.

The Higher Education Act allows financial aid administrators to consider dependency overrides on a case-by-case basis for students with extenuating circumstances.

The following scenarios are not grounds for a dependency override:

- Parents are unwilling to provide their information on the FAFSA.
- Parents are unwilling or unable to provide financial support.
- Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.
- Student is not claimed as dependent on parent tax return.

Documented situations that could merit a dependency override include the following:

- An abusive home situation that is detrimental to your physical or mental well-being.
- Abandonment by parents.
- Incarceration or institutionalization of both parents.
- Parents lack the physical or mental capacity to raise their children.
- Parents whereabouts unknown or parents cannot be located.
- Parents hospitalized for an extended period.
- An unsuitable household (e.g., student removed from the household and placed in foster care).

Dependent students who do not have documented extenuating circumstances but filed the FAFSA without parental information shall only be eligible for Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan from the FAFSA unless they subsequently correct the FAFSA to include parental information.

Follow the instructions on the 2026-27 Appeal for Independent Status form and submit all requested documentation to the Financial Aid Office.

2026-27 Appeal for Independent Status

Student Name _____

Student ID or last four digits of SSN _____

1. Use this space and an additional sheet, if necessary, to provide a statement that must include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Why do you feel you should be considered an independent student?
- How do you support yourself?
- What is the nature of your relationship with your parent(s)?
- What is the date of your last contact with your parent(s)?

2. Living arrangements and financial support

Where did you live in 2025?	<input type="checkbox"/> With parents From ____ / ____ / ____ To ____ / ____ / ____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Away from parents From ____ / ____ / ____ To ____ / ____ / ____
Where do you currently live?	<input type="checkbox"/> With parents <input type="checkbox"/> Away from parents
	As of what date? ____ / ____ / ____

Did your parents claim you as an exemption on their 2024 federal tax return?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did/will your parents claim you as an exemption on their 2025 federal tax return?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did your parents provide your health insurance in 2025?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do your parents provide your health insurance in 2026?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Did your parents provide your auto insurance in 2025?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do your parents provide your auto insurance in 2026?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

3. Check the applicable box and respond accordingly.

- ☐ Attached is a signed copy of my 2024 federal income tax return.
- ☐ I did not file a 2024 federal income tax return because I had no income from work.
- ☐ I did not file a 2024 federal income tax return, but I had income from work.
- ☐ Attached are my W2 form(s)

4. How do you currently support yourself?

2026 Student Income Resources	Monthly Amount	Source (work, parents, etc.) <i>Put N/A if not applicable.</i>
Income from work	\$	
Unemployment compensation	\$	
Untaxed Social Security benefits	\$	
Housing assistance	\$	
Food stamps	\$	
Other income (e.g., monetary gifts)	\$	
Total	\$	

5. Documentation

You must submit letters from at least two individuals/agencies who can attest to your situation. Letters must include the individual's name, title or position, address, phone number, and signature.

Examples: Child welfare agency · Case worker · Public or private agency, facility or program servicing victims of abuse, neglect, assault, or violence · Court-appointed advocate · Social Worker · Police · Teacher · Clergy

6. Certification Statement

I understand that if I purposely give false or misleading information on this form or in my supporting documentation, I will be committing a federal crime and could be fined up to \$20,000, sent to prison, or both.

I also understand that if my situation changes and I move back in with my parent(s) or begin receiving financial support from them, I must immediately report this information to the Carlow University Financial Aid Office.

I understand that completion of this form is a request for independent status and does not guarantee approval of the appeal.

Student's Signature

Date

To avoid delays, before submitting this form to the Financial Aid Office, make sure it is complete, and all requested documents are attached. Scan and email the form and documents to finaid@carlow.edu, upload to your Self-Service record, or mail to Carlow University, Financial Aid Office, 3333 Fifth Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213.

You will be notified via email of the outcome of your appeal. If you have any questions, contact the Financial Aid Office at finaid@carlow.edu or 412-578-6389.