

Dependent students must report their parents' income and assets on the FAFSA as well as their own. If you're considered a dependent student, your parents are expected to contribute toward the cost of your education. Federal student aid programs are based on the concept that a dependent student's parents have the primary responsibility for paying for their child's education.

DEPENDENCY STATUS

For the 2006-07 academic year,* you're an **independent student IF at least one of the following applies to you:**

- You were born before Jan. 1, 1983.
- You are or will be enrolled in a master's or doctoral degree program (beyond a bachelor's degree) at the beginning of the 2006-07 academic year.*
- You're married on the day you apply (even if you are separated but not divorced).
- You have children who receive more than half their support from you.
- You have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half their support from you at the time you apply and through July 2, 2007.
- Both your parents are deceased, or you are (or were until age 18) a ward or dependent of the court.
- You're a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. (A "veteran" includes students who attended a U.S. service academy and were released under a condition other than dishonorable. For more detail on who is considered a veteran, see the explanatory notes on the FAFSA.)

If none of these criteria apply to you, you're a dependent student.

I would be considered a dependent student; however, I have no contact with my parents. What do I do about reporting my parents' income?

In unusual cases:

- An aid administrator can determine that a student who doesn't meet the above criteria should still be treated as an independent student.
- The financial aid administrator can change your dependency status from dependent to independent based on adequate documentation of your special circumstances.
- You must provide this documentation.
- The financial aid administrator cannot automatically change your status simply because you request it.
- The decision is based on the financial aid administrator's judgment of the facts of your situation and is **final**.
- You cannot appeal that decision to us.

Independent students report their own income and assets (and those of a spouse, if married).

Not living with parents or not being claimed by them on tax forms does not determine dependency status for federal student aid.

If I am a dependent student, whose information do I report if my parents are divorced or separated?

- You report information about the parent you lived with for the greater amount of time during the 12 months preceding the date you file your FAFSA application.
- If you didn't live with either parent, or if you lived with each parent an equal amount of time, then use information about the parent who provided the greater amount of financial support during the 12 months prior to the date you file your FAFSA application.
- If you didn't receive any parental financial support during that time, you must report information about the parent who **most recently** provided the greater amount of parental support.

Do I report stepparent's information?

Your stepparent's financial information is required on the FAFSA.

- If the parent you received financial support from was a single parent who is now married, or
- If the parent you received financial support from was divorced or widowed but has remarried.

DID YOU KNOW ...

FAFSA submissions reach their peak in March. For example, our team handles up to 800,000 applications a week during the first three weeks in March every year.