



2025-2026 Dependency Status Petition

INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Student's Name: _____ **ECC Student ID # or SSN:** _____

Complete Address: _____

Email Address: _____ **Telephone #:** _____

Federal regulations require parents to have the primary responsibility to pay for a dependent student's educational expenses. None of the conditions listed below, singly or in combination, qualify as unusual circumstances meriting a dependency override:

- 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

Circumstances that may warrant a dependency override appeal may include but are not limited to:

- Abandonment or estrangement by parents or inability to locate parents
- Physical or emotional abuse by parents
- Victim of human trafficking
- Parental incarceration and contact with parent would pose a risk to the student
- Parental hospitalization for extended time or mental incapacitation
- Have refugee or asylee status and are separated from parents, or parents are displaced in a foreign country

ECC understands unusual circumstances occur and some students may have a unique family situation. If you believe you have an unusual or unique family situation, please complete this form and submit all required documents to the Financial Aid Office. Please note, all decisions are made at the discretion and professional judgment of the ECC Financial Aid Office. Submission of this form and supporting documents does not guarantee approval.

The law requires a determination of unusual circumstances for a dependency override be made each award year. A decision made in one award year does not automatically mean a student would be deemed independent in another year.

Students should be aware ECC is not required to perform dependency overrides, and if the financial aid administrator determines an override is not appropriate, the decision cannot be appealed.

1) Please check one:

- ☐ This is my first dependency status review. Go to #2.
- ☐ I am applying for a renewal of a previous dependency status review granted at ECC during 24/25 academic year and **my situation has not changed** since I originally filed. Skip section 2-6 and sign on page 4
- ☐ I am applying for a renewal of a previous dependency status review granted at ECC **prior** to 24/25 academic year.

Go to #2

2) You are automatically considered to be independent and do not need to submit this form if any of the following applies. If you answer NO to all of these questions, proceed to #3:

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Were you born before January 1, 2001?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	As of today, are you married? "As of today," refers to the day you sign your FAFSA.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2025 & June 30, 2026?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Do you have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2026?

3) You may be independent if any of the following questions apply; however, you are required to submit the required documentation to support your answer.

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?	Provide court documentation.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	At any time <u>since you turned age 13</u> , were your biological parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?	Provide death certificates for your parents; or, provide court documents regarding foster care &/or status as a dependent or ward of the court.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are you or were you in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?	Provide court documentation.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	At any time on or after July 1, 2024, did your high school or school district homeless liaison determine you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?	Provide a letter from your high school counselor or school district homeless liaison.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	At any time on or after July 1, 2024, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development determine you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?	Provide letter from the director of the program.
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	At any time on or after July 1, 2024, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth basic center or transitional living program determine you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?	Provide letter from the director of the program.

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4) Check the reason that best applies to your situation. I do not meet any of the criteria listed in #2 or #3, AND I am unable to provide my parents' information on my 2025-2026 FAFSA because:

- ☐ I have contact with my parents but my parents refuse to complete the FAFSA and do not and will not provide

me any financial support.

Please read next paragraph and submit required notarized statement from your parents with this form; however, you do not need to answer #5- # 6, nor do you have to submit documents requested in #6. You will only be eligible for an unsubsidized loan at the dependent student grade level limit. *Your parents' refusal to complete the FAFSA or their unwillingness to provide financial support does not justify a dependency override. Your parents must write and sign a statement indicating they refuse to provide you the information you need for your FAFSA and they do not and will not provide you any financial support. The statement must include the date the support ended. The statement must be notarized; you may use the Dependency Status Petition Reference Form for this.*

- ☐ Other - I have an unusual situation not listed above. Go to #5.

5) Check the reason that best describes your situation:

- ☐ I have been separated from my parents due to an unsafe home environment.
- ☐ I have been separated from my parents due to unusual circumstances and I live with a relative or friend who is providing support or live alone.
- ☐ Since completing the 2025-2026 FAFSA, my marital status has changed from single to married. I am requesting an update to my 2025-2026 FAFSA to reflect more accurately my ability to pay my educational expenses:
- You must submit a copy of your marriage license. Also include all items listed in #6.
 - You must add your spouse's 2023 income information to your 2025-2026 FAFSA.

6) Submit the following information with this form:

- A detailed letter from you explaining the following,
 - a) the unusual situation selected above;
 - b) name and address of both your parents;
 - c) the last time you had contact with each of your parents – when, where, and the nature of the contact;
 - d) how you have provided for yourself, or explain if someone else has supported you; and
 - e) when you started meeting your expenses without parental support.
- If selected for verification, provide all necessary documents for the Verification process, including but not limited to: a copy of your 2023 Federal Tax Return Transcript (if filed) and W-2's. If appealing due to becoming married, a copy of your spouse's 2023 Federal Tax Return Transcript (if filed) and a copy of all W-2's.
- Completed 2025-2026 Free Application for Federal Student Aid at www.studentaid.gov. (ECC will process your FAFSA if this appeal is approved. If this appeal is denied, you must resubmit the FAFSA with your parent(s)' information

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Acceptable Documentation

- Court Order or Official Federal or State documentation that the students' parents or legal guardian(s) are incarcerated
- A written statement from an attorney, guardian ad litem, a court-appointed special advocate (or similar), or a representative of a TRIO or GEAR UP program that confirms the circumstances
- A documented determination of independence made by a financial aid administrator at another institution in the same or prior away year
- Utility bills, health insurance, or other documents that demonstrate a separation from parents or legal guardians
- Written statement on official letterhead from a State, County or Tribal welfare agency
- Written statement on official letterhead from an independent living case worker who supports current and former foster youth with transition to adulthood
- Written statement on official letterhead from a public or private agency, facility, or program servicing the victims of abuse, neglect, assault, or violence

Your documents will be reviewed faster if they arrive as a group rather than one at a time. All documents should have your name, SSN, and/or ECC Student ID # included. Please allow up to 20 business days for processing. Attach all supporting documents to this form and submit in-person at the campus nearest you, or mail to:

East Central College, Financial Aid Office, 1964 Prairie Dell Road, Union, MO 63084

Or Fax to: (636) 583-6651

Or scan and email to: finaid@eastcentral.edu

Questions? Please call: (636) 584-6588

By signing this form, I agree to provide information will verify the accuracy of my information, if requested. If I purposely give false or misleading information, I will be referred to the United States Department of Education's Inspector General. If I purposely give false or misleading information in order to qualify for Title IV funds, I may be fined \$20,000, sent to prison, or both.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY: Outcome of Dependency Status Petition

Appeal Approved: _____ Date: _____ Appeal Denied: _____ Date: _____

Reason Appeal Denied: _____