

BENNINGTON COLLEGE

Dependency Override/Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination

The Financial Aid Office has the authority, through Section 480(d)(7) of the Higher Education Act, to change a student's status from dependent to independent in cases involving unusual circumstances.

We cannot process a dependency override for any of the following reasons:

- Parental refusal to contribute to the student's education
- Parental unwillingness to provide information on the application or for verification
- Student is financially self-sufficient
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes

If a student does not fall into one of the categories above, they can petition the College to consider them independent based on their personal circumstances. Reasons that the College may grant a student independent status include, but are not limited, to the following:

- Abandonment by the parents
- Parents' location is unknown
- Safety issue in contacting the parents
- Parent incarceration
- Parent long-term hospitalization or institutionalization
- An unaccompanied youth who is homeless or at risk of being homeless

Please follow the steps below to be considered for either a Dependency Override or Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination Request. Your application will not be reviewed unless all requirements are met.

1. Complete the certification on this form.
2. Attach a typed personal statement indicating the relationship with both biological parents and/or a letter which states that you are: unaccompanied and homeless; or unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at risk of homelessness. Include details regarding your current housing situation and how you are supporting yourself.
3. Attach at least two (2) personal statements by professional third parties. Professional third parties can include clergy, counselor, teacher, lawyer, etc. A personal acquaintance or family member is not considered a professional third-party reference.
4. Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if not already submitted.

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Dependency Override/Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination

Definitions:

Unaccompanied: when a student is not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Homeless: lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing.

At risk of being homeless: when a student's housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate.

Self-supporting: when a student pays for their own living expenses, including fixed, regular, and adequate housing.

I am requesting consideration for a Dependency Override or Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination at Bennington College. I certify that I qualify for consideration because I meet one of following criteria:

Dependency Override

Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determination

I request to be considered as an independent student for financial aid purposes and have attached the required documentation to this form. I understand that I must sign and return this form for my financial aid to be processed.

Handwritten signature is required. Electronic signatures are not accepted.

Student Signature and Date _____