

2024-2025 Determination of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

The 2024-2025 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) stipulates that a student may be considered independent for financial aid purposes if they received a determination at any time on or after July 1, 2023 that they were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or at risk of being homeless.

According to the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), the definition of independent student includes youth who are 1) unaccompanied and homeless, or 2) unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at-risk of homelessness. The HEA uses the McKinney-Vento Act's definitions of homeless, which includes youth who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; and unaccompanied, which includes youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian. The HEA also uses at-risk of homelessness to refer to students whose housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate.

A school district homeless liaison or the director or designee of (e)4 (of)3d-1 (oV4 56482ce1-2r(a)-16 (y)2 transitional living program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act (RHYA) is authorized to determine that a student is eligible for independent student status as an unaccompanied homeless youth. In that instance, no further action is required to confirm a student's status as independent.

School district homeless liaisons or their designee;

The director or a designee of a director of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving individuals who are experiencing homelessness

The director or a designee of a director of a program funded under a TRIO or Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for an Undergraduate program ("GEAR UP") grant;

A financial aid administrator at another institution who previously made a determination.

If yes, please provide a copy of the supporting documentation within _____ of receipt to the *Office of Student Financial Aid*.

If no, please contact the Office of Student Financial Aid for more discussion.



3. When would I have needed to experience homelessness to be considered a homeless youth on the FAFSA?	You would have needed to experience homelessness on or after July 1st of the preceding award year. For example if you're filling out the 2024-2025 FAFSA, you would have needed to experience homelessness on or after July 1, 2023.
4. What if I am experiencing homelessness with my family?	If you are experiencing homelessness with your family, you are not unaccompanied. You would fill out the FAFSA as instructed and include parental information.

5. What if I'm unaccompanied and experiencing or at risk of homelessness, but still have some contact with my parents?

You can still be in contact with your parents and meet the above definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, or unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness and self-supporting. Contact with parents is not part of the legal definition of homelessness or unaccompanied.

6. Who are all the authorized entities that can provide me with a homeless youth determination?

Authorized entities include school district homeless liaisons or their designee; a director or designee of a director of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other programs serving individuals experiencing homelessness; a director or designee of a director of a program funded under a TRIO or GEAR UP

11. What do I do if my institution is making me do something called a dependency override or provisional independent student status?

If you believe you meet the above definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, or an unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness and self-supporting, reach out to the financial aid administrator and explain that you are requesting an unaccompanied homeless youth determination outlined by federal guidance [here](#). Financial aid administrators can provide determinations by using this [template](#).

12. I was identified in high school as homeless and took a gap year. I'm still in the same living situation, how do I fill out the FAFSA now?

If you are still in touch with your school district liaison, reach out and see if they would write another letter for you and send it to your financial aid administrator and they must accept the determination. If you don't have a letter or aren't in touch with your liaison, reach out to the financial aid administrator using the following template [here](#).

13. How do I find out who my school district liaison is?

View this directory [here](#). There is high turnover, so if the entry for the liaison in your school district is not up to date, you can also reach out to your [state homeless coordinator](#).

14. How do I prepare for an interview with a financial aid administrator or write a letter documenting my situation?

For an unaccompanied homeless youth, or an unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness, reach out to the financial aid administrator using the interview letter

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