**Independent Student Status of Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**

**Determination for the 2022-23 FAFSA**.[[1]](#footnote-2)

To Whom It May Concern:

I am providing this letter to convey my determination that after [CURRENT DATE], [NAME OF STUDENT] was

* Unaccompanied youth experiencing homelessness are not living with, or supported by, a parent or guardian. Therefore, under the Higher Education Act, they are considered independent students and do not need to provide a parent’s signature or information about parents’ income on the FAFSA.

***Note****: Under the FAFSA Simplification Act[[2]](#footnote-3), any student who is determined to be an unaccompanied homeless youth, or a former foster youth, for a preceding award year is presumed to be independent for each subsequent year at the same institution, unless the student informs the institution that circumstances have changed, or the institution has specific conflicting information about the student’s independence and has informed the student of this information.*

* An unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Student’s SSN:  | Student’s DOB:  |
| Student’s Mailing Address [*if the student does not have a stable address, you may list the name, phone number, and mailing address of a friend or relative, or the school*]:  |

As per the College Cost Reduction and Access Act (Public Law 110-84), I am authorized to document this student’s living situation and determine his/her independent student status as an unaccompanied homeless youth or unaccompanied, self-supporting youth at risk of homelessness. The financial aid office is not required to confirm this determination in the absence of conflicting information. It is not conflicting information if the financial aid administrator disagrees with my determination.[[3]](#footnote-4) Feel free to address any questions to me at the number or email address listed below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Signature:  | Date:  |
| Print Name:  | Phone:  |
| Email:  |
| Title:  | Agency:  |
|  |
| Role (Choose One): *McKinney-Vento Liaison; Director/Designee of a HUD-funded shelter; Director/Designee of an RHYA-funded shelter; Financial Aid Administrator* |

**Pertinent Definitions[[4]](#footnote-5)**

***Homeless***

A student is considered homeless if he lacks fixed, regular, and adequate housing. This is broader than just living “on the street.” It includes temporarily living with other people because he had nowhere else to go; living in substandard housing (if it doesn’t meet local building codes or the utilities are turned off, it is generally not adequate); living in emergency or transitional shelters, for example, trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) after disasters; or living in motels, camping grounds, cars, parks, abandoned buildings, bus or train stations, or any public or private place not designed for humans to live in. It also includes living in the school dormitory if the student would otherwise be homeless. A student living in any of these situations and fleeing an abusive parent may be considered homeless even if the parent would provide support and a place to live.

***Unaccompanied***

When a student is not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

***Youth***

The Application and Verification Guide defines youth as a student under 22 years old. However, the July 29, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter states: “Applicants who are between the ages of 21 and 24 and who are unaccompanied and homeless or self-supporting and at risk of being homeless qualify for a homeless youth determination, and will be considered independent students.”

***Finical Aid Administrators (FAA) Acceptance of Determinations by Other Parties***

A school district homeless liaison or the director or designee of an emergency shelter, basic center, or 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.

***Financial Aid Administrators (FFA) Determination Based on Third-Party Documentation***

As mandated by the HEA, if a determination by any of the parties listed in the previous section cannot be made, the FAA must make the determination of unaccompanied and homeless status, or unaccompanied, self-supporting, and at risk of homelessness status.

*Does the student have documentation that attests that he/she has experienced homelessness at any time since July 1, 2022, from a homeless shelter or service provider, FAA from another college, college access program such as TRIO or GEAR UP, college or high school counselor, mental health professional, social worker, employer, mentor, doctor, clergy, or other relevant third parties?*

If the FAA feels that additional supporting documentation is needed, he/she may request contact information for the third party listed above to follow up by phone or email.

1. Applicable for a student enrolling in college between July 1st, 2023 - June 30, 2024; See <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/fafsa-deadlines> for more information. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. U.S. Dep’t. of Educ., Dear Colleague Letter: Unaccompanied Homeless Youth Determinations (July 29, 2015), <https://fsapartners.ed.gov /knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2015-07-29/unaccompanied-homeless-youth-determinations>; *See also* U.S. Dep’t. of Educ., 2022-2023 Federal Student Aid Handbook (July 14, 2022), <https://fsapartners.ed.gov/knowledge-center/fsa-handbook/2022-2023>; *See also* U.S. Dep’t. of Educ., Dear Colleague Letter: FAFSA Simplification Act Changes for Implementation in 2023-24 (Nov. 4, 2022), <https://fsapartners .ed.gov/knowledge-center/library/dear-colleague-letters/2022-11-04/fafsar-simplification-act-changes-implementation-2023-24>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)