

## Homelessness/Risk of Homelessness Status Supporting Documentation and Instructions

Federal financial aid regulations assume that the student and their family have the primary responsibility for meeting the educational expenses for the student. If a student is considered dependent, according to the federal definition, aid eligibility is determined by using parent income information in addition to the student's information. Dependent students are required by regulation to provide parental information and signatures in order to be considered for financial aid.

You indicated on your most recent FAFSA that you are homeless or at risk of being homeless. This is one of a few circumstances that would allow a student under the age of 24 to be considered as an independent student for federal student aid. Homelessness/risk of homelessness is a very different situation than being 'self-supporting'. A student who is self-supporting by choice is not considered independent and is required to provide parent income information on the FAFSA.

### **Federal Definitions:**

- **At risk of being homeless:** when a student's housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate.
- **Homeless:** lacking fixed, regular and adequate housing.
- **Self-supporting:** when a student pays for his own living expenses, including fixed, regular and adequate housing.

### **Situations that could support homelessness status:**

The following examples *could* be submitted for consideration. This list is not exhaustive but provides examples:

- A student's voluntary removal from their parent's home due to an extreme situation that threatened the student's health or safety
- Incapacity of parent(s) such as incarceration, mental/physical illness or the inability of the student to locate the parent(s)
- Determination from local school district homeless liaisons, or state homeless education coordinators
- Confirmation of housing from a local coordinator of a homeless shelter

The following situations, by themselves, WOULD NOT be considered:

- Student does not live with parent(s)
- Student is self-supporting
- A parent(s) refusal to provide income information vital to the completion of the FAFSA
- A parent(s) inability or unwillingness to pay for college expenses for the student
- A student not being claimed as a dependent on parent(s) tax return

### **Things to consider when indicating homelessness/risk of homelessness on FAFSA:**

- A status of homelessness will be evaluated on a yearly basis.
- Federal Verification is required of all students who indicate on their FAFSA that they are homeless/risk of being homeless.
- Supporting documentation of the homelessness status must be submitted each year.

**Please continue to next page.**

**Steps to follow when FAFSA indicates homelessness/risk of homelessness:**

1. Meet with a financial aid counselor to discuss the situation.
  - You may be required to amend your FAFSA with parent information if homelessness status is not appropriate for you situation.
  - If homelessness status seems to be appropriate, continue through the following steps.
2. Complete the Independent Verification worksheet sent to you by the Financial Aid Office.
  - Use of the IRS Data Retrieval Tool on the FAFSA **or** copies of your 2020 Tax Return Transcript **or** 2020 1040 Tax Return with Schedules 1, 2 and 3 are required
  - Copies of your 2020 W-2s are required
3. **Provide a personal signed and dated letter explaining your living situation.** Include the name(s) of the persons with whom you are living and for how long.
4. **Provide three signed and dated letters of support from responsible adults who know of your living situation.**
  - These letters should include the length of time this person has known you.
  - At least one letter should come from a professional person (clergy, counselor, homeless shelter director, teacher), submitted on professional letterhead if at all possible.
5. Return completed appeal documents:
  - BY MAIL  
Capital University Financial Aid Office  
1 College and Main  
Columbus, OH 43209
  - or-
  - IN PERSON  
Financial Aid Office  
Yochum Hall, first floor  
Student Services Center
6. When all documentation has been submitted, federal verification will be completed.
7. Confirmation of the homelessness status will qualify you to be awarded federal student aid as an independent student.
8. Financial Aid awards will be sent electronically to current/returning students to their Capital email address or by paper notice to the address on record for incoming first year students.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at:

Phone: 614-236-6511 or 1-866-544-6175

Fax: 614-236-6926

E-mail: [finaid@capital.edu](mailto:finaid@capital.edu)

Website: [www.capital.edu/finaid](http://www.capital.edu/finaid)

Office hours: 8:30am – 5pm (summer hours may vary)