



## Request for Independent Status 09-10

Office of Financial Aid  
1665 Hampshire Pike, Columbia, TN 38401  
(931) 540-8267 | (931) 540-2793 fax

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Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
CoSCC ID A \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Street City State Zip*

The Federal government's philosophy for receiving financial aid is that a student's family has the primary responsibility for paying the student's educational expenses. The Higher Education Act allows an aid administrator to make dependency overrides on a case-by-case basis for students with unusual circumstances. If the administrator judges that an override is appropriate, he/she must document the unusual circumstances. **However, none of the conditions listed below, individually or in combination, qualify as unusual circumstances or merit a dependency override:**

1. Parents refusal to contribute to the student's education;
2. Parents are unwilling to provide information on the application or for verification;
3. Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes;
4. Student demonstrates total self-sufficiency.

If however, there is an *unintentional, involuntary, and uncontrollable* break in the relationship between parents and student, Columbia State may be able to consider the student independent for financial aid purposes. To make the determination that the break has occurred, we will need a detailed written explanation and substantiating documentation from the student.

If one of the following circumstances applies to you, please check the category and **provide a detailed personal letter of explanation that should include the current living arrangements of the student, supporting documentation along with a copy of 2008 signed Federal Income Tax Return and W2's.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **A student's family situation is dysfunctional.**

The dysfunction may result from physical abuse, emotional abuse or drug or alcohol abuse. In many cases a professional counselor has counseled the student to live apart from the parent(s).

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

- 1. A letter on official letterhead explaining the situation in detail from a minister, a social worker, a psychologist, a high school counselor or teacher, a doctor or another counseling professional.
- 2. One or more of the following:
  - A. A letter, preferably from someone other than a relative or a friend of the student.
  - B. Police reports.
  - C. Court reports.
  - D. Documentation from a social agency.

\_\_\_\_\_ **A student's custodial parent has died and the other natural parent is still living.**

However, the student has neither had contact with nor received any financial support from the living parent for a significant length of time.

**REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

- 1. A copy of the death certificate for the deceased custodial parent;
- 2. Documentation of the custodial relationship (for example: a court document, a copy of the divorce decree, or other strong evidence that the deceased was the custodial parent);
- 3. A letter from an objective third party (Preferably someone other than a relative or a friend) which supports the student's claim that the student has not lived with nor had contact with or received financial support from the non-custodial parent for significant length of time.



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\_\_\_\_\_ **Other unusual circumstances.**

### **REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

- A detailed written explanation and substantiating documentation of other unusual circumstances. For example: Student was married, but now divorced or separated and under age 24 living apart from your parents.

***NOTE: Not living at home with parents, providing your own total financial support, parents unwillingness to provide information, and living with a boy/girlfriend who is providing support are not reasons in and of themselves to be declared an independent student. Circumstances must be unusual and not simply a choice of the student and/or parent to reside in separate households.***

To the best of my knowledge, all of the information in my appeal is complete and correct.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **The Appeal Process**

1. Return the signed form and the documentation to:  
Columbia State Community College  
Financial Aid Office  
1665 Hampshire Pike  
Columbia, TN 38401
2. CSCC Financial Aid Staff will check your appeal to be certain that you have provided detailed information and substantiating documentation.
3. If your appeal is incomplete, we will return it to you with instructions on how to complete.
4. Your complete, documented appeal will be reviewed and you will be notified in writing of the decision. Please allow 2-4 weeks for processing and notification.
5. If you have any questions, please call the Financial Aid Office at 931-540-8267

### **For Office Use Only:**

Approved       Denied

Reason: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Financial Aid Administrator/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date processed in EDE: \_\_\_\_\_ Processed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Notification sent to student: \_\_\_\_\_