



The 2024-2025 FAFSA: Helping Homeless and Foster Youth

Q&A From 2024 FAFSA Webinars

On January 16, 2024, SchoolHouse Connection hosted a webinar in partnership with John Burton Advocates for Youth and Youth Law Center about the new 2024-2025 FAFSA and the implications for homeless and foster youth. You can view the recording [here](#) and download the Powerpoint [here](#). Below are some of the Q&As from the webinar.

On October, 2 2024, SchoolHouse Connection hosted a webinar about the upcoming 25-26 FAFSA and the implications for homeless and foster youth. You can view the recording [here](#) and download the Powerpoint [here](#). Below are some of the Q&As from the webinar.

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Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Questions	Answers
For unaccompanied youth, does it really matter what reason they are leaving their	The reason why a student is homeless should not be considered. All that is relevant is that the student meets the definition of homeless and unaccompanied.

<p>home? What if all we know is that they ran away? What if they ran away, we don't know why, and the parents want them to come home and we don't have any reason to think home is unsafe?</p>	
<p>Is there an age group that fits unaccompanied youth?</p>	<p>There are no specific age requirements to qualify as unaccompanied, but once a student turns 24 they are automatically considered independent.</p>
<p>Student family is homeless- Can we write student a FAFSA letter and parent must submit income documentation or do we not provide a FAFSA letter?</p>	<p>You do not need to provide a student who is experiencing homelessness a FAFSA determination letter because they are not considered an independent student and would need to include parental information on the FAFSA.</p>
<p>What if the student had a toxic home life and their parent sent them away to live with their grandparents but didn't give the grandparents legal guardianship and the parent doesn't help financially or stay in contact? Would they be able to fill the FAFSA out as independent?</p>	<p>If the student is stably housed with the grandparents, they wouldn't meet the definition of homelessness. Instead, they might qualify as an independent student and request a dependency override based on "unusual circumstances." The financial aid office has discretion to determine whether the student's situation qualifies for independent status. More information about unusual circumstances overrides can be found here</p>
<p>Who can write the Unaccompanied Youth FAFSA letter for an Unaccompanied Youth that attends a private school?</p>	<p>The McKinney-Vento Act does not apply to private schools. Therefore, unaccompanied homeless youth (UHY) who attend private high schools may receive determinations of their UHY status for the FAFSA from the other authorized entities – organizations providing services to homeless individuals, TRIO or GEAR Up programs, or the financial aid administrator.</p>
<p>If you have a student who lives unsheltered with their family but no one works or files taxes can the FAFSA still be completed?</p>	<p>The FAFSA can be completed, but the parents will need to complete their portion. If the parents have no income, the student should qualify for maximum student aid.</p>
<p>If a student changes institutions, do they need a redetermination/need to provide additional documentation of independent</p>	<p>The financial aid officer from school #1 can provide the verification to school #2 and this suffices as documentation.</p>

status if they still meet the definition of UHY?	
Are there any requirements for the designee?	No. Any staff person can be designated as a “designee” to provide the verification. It is up to the agency.
If a student meets the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, (not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian), why wouldn't they be considered independent? If the court has appointed someone as a legal guardian, they would no longer be "unaccompanied". Am I misunderstanding the definition?	A student who meets the definition would be independent. Students with a legal guardian are also independent under a separate criteria.
Related to K-12 Liaison, do we have to submit the name of our designee to anyone specific for the academic year OR can we designate at the time of the request?	The names of the designees do not need to be submitted to anyone. The McKinney-Vento liaison can designate at the time of the request.
Is there a specific form for Shelters to complete or do they use the same FAFSA letter provided by the state.	SchoolHouse Connection has this template that you can use to provide determinations
What are the recommendations for LEAs to streamline these identifications so that the identification data is properly reported to the Liaison and then to the SEA, and so on?	Liaisons are responsible for making sure school staff, including counselors, are trained in the McKinney-Vento Act. If the liaison designates someone else to make FAFSA determinations, that person must receive training so that UHY are properly identified for all services and supports, including FAFSA determinations, and so that the data is accurate. LEAs should implement a system or process (such as a Google form that any staff person can use to send information to the liaison directly) to ensure that the liaison receives that information and that the data is entered into the Student Information System (SIS).
For the additional designee, do they need some sort of training, or is it any TRIO or Gear Up program automatically?	No training is required. The program can designate whoever they choose.

<p>What if a family is homeless however, the oldest turned 18, do they fill out two different FAFSA? Does the parent report homeless and list the 18 year old on the app? Or does the 18 year old create their own FAFSA as independent homeless?</p>	<p>Students are always the initiators of the FAFSA regardless of age. For students who are not independent, they then invite the parent to provide their information as a “contributor.”</p>
<p>What is an unaccompanied homeless youth determination? What does the school need?</p>	<p>This is determination that a student meets the definition of unaccompanied and homeless. The determination can be a written statement, letter, or documented phone call.</p>
<p>How does this impact youth that were made McKinney-Vento eligibility in prior years before the Simplification Act came into effect? What is the ongoing LEA's (Liaisons) responsibility? Are those students grandfathered into this new process?</p>	<p>The new process expands who can determine homeless status, but any students previously eligible remain so and liaisons can continue to provide determinations as before.</p>
<p>Do documents need to be notarized?</p>	<p>No, that would add extra documentation and barriers for students.</p>
<p>Who can make the determination for a current college student? I have had former students who have become homeless and have asked me to do their determination.</p>	<p>A McKinney Vento liaison can provide determination for a former student if the liaison has knowledge of their current circumstance. Any other of the people included in the list can also provide determinations.</p>
<p>If I heard you correctly, you're saying that a student who now is in college and might be 20 years old but now is an unaccompanied youth at that time, their financial aid administrator can qualify them for their FAFSA? Just want to make sure that this applies to young adults even if they were not identified as an unaccompanied youth before they turned 18 years old.</p>	<p>Yes. Your understanding is correct.</p>

<p>Can a basic needs coordinator or EOPS provide a determination?</p>	<p>Possibly, if the program is considered a “program serving individuals who are experiencing homelessness.”</p>
<p>I identified and coded a HS senior as an UHY in the 2018-2019 school year. He has continued to live on his own without his parent's support and is now enrolled in a trade school but they are not accepting my letter and are telling him he has to provide more documentation of his finances. Is there anything more I can do to help him?</p>	<p>If the FA office is asking for information about this student’s finances, he might need to provide evidence of his income, or that he didn’t file a tax return. If, however, the FA office is questioning whether or not he should be considered an independent student, and if he is still UHY or at risk of being UHY, then the FA office must make a determination based on a documented interview or a written statement. You could help him advocate for himself by sharing the most recent federal guidance on UHY with him and offering to help him with the determination process. If he is no longer UHY or at risk of UHY, but still under age 24, then he will need to request a dependency override, and you could help share what you know of the circumstances that led him to live on his own.</p>
<p>If they become independent after age 18 (still in high school), are they still considered an unaccompanied homeless youth?</p>	<p>It depends. If the student is financially independent, but still living with a legal parent or guardian, then they would not be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth. If the student is not in the physical custody of a legal parent or guardian and is financially independent, self-supporting, and experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, they would be considered an UHY.</p>
<p>Why are institutions requiring Dependency Overrides for unaccompanied youth?</p>	<p>Institutions should be conducting unaccompanied homeless youth determinations, not dependency overrides</p>
<p>Can a college student go back to hs liaison for status if they are still in contact and have a relationship with the HS?</p>	<p>Yes, a liaison can provide a determination for a former student if they have knowledge of the student’s current circumstance.</p>
<p>Who is responsible for providing professional leadership for the post-secondary institutions regarding McKinney-Vento and how this process is to play out?</p>	<p>We encourage higher education institutions to stay informed and involved by tuning into professional development opportunities by SchoolHouse Connection, Federal Student Aid, our partners at John Burton Advocates for Youth, Youth Law Center, NASFAA, and NCAN.</p>
<p>If you are making a homeless youth or unaccompanied and at risk of homelessness determination can you</p>	<p>When you are making a UHY determination, you are looking specifically at the living situation; does it lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime? All that is necessary is this template. Requesting an eviction notice is adding an extra barrier for students to provide. Remember, if</p>

request documentation such as eviction notices?	the student has a determination from an authorized entity, that suffices as enough documentation.
Do the post-secondary institutions know who Liaisons are, how to connect with them, etc? Is there a list provided to them?	Typically the institutions will not know who these people are. The student must make a request at their high school.
Is there a benefit to being determined unaccompanied homeless youth vs “provisionally independent” and getting a dependency override? I ask because I was determined a homeless youth my first year of college and then every year after that they just made me do a dependency override process and never determined me homeless again even though I continued to be at risk.	Before the FAFSA Simplification Act, UHY needed to provide a determination every single year they were filling out the FAFSA. If you did a dependency override, once you were determined to be independent, you didn’t need to go through that process again. With the new changes, once you are determined, you don’t need to provide a new determination as long as your situation hasn’t changed.
Is a student considered unaccompanied if they are living with a parent but financially independent?	No, the student would not be an UHY.
Students that are living with a friend or family and qualify as UHY are legally still dependent on their parent(s). Does it matter if their parents are still counting them as dependents (on taxes, food benefits, etc)? They still qualify as independent?	Dependency on taxes and the FAFSA are different processes. A student who is claimed by their parents on their taxes can still qualify as UHY if they meet the definition.
Can you say, or reiterate what students should see after selecting yes in the homelessness question? What will we see after FSA fixes the issue? Or is that unclear?	They will see a follow up question about whether they have a determination from an authorized entity.
The determination letter form MKV-UHY liaison will be enough for FAFSA?	Yes, financial aid administrators must consider and accept MKV-UHY liaison letters

<p>When you mentioned that once an unaccompanied/ homeless youth or foster youth are given the correct forms (determination letter) to be approved that they are identified as those youth, it transfers to 4 year, does that include if they transfer out of state?</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>I work for an adult education program independent from the school system in Boston how do we go about helping our students get this determination</p>	<p>Once a student is 24, they will automatically be independent on the FAFSA and will not need to go through the process of providing a determination. If they are under the age of 24, the student can reach out to the financial aid administrator at the school for a determination or any other of the authorized entities.</p>
<p>So the determination letter goes to the student, then it's up to the college they plan to attend to reach out for the determination letter? Or, is there a way to upload the letter to the FAFSA?</p>	<p>The letter will be requested by the college. It is not uploaded through the FAFSA.</p>
<p>Is there a master list of local universities/colleges on who to contact should we have a senior identified as MV?</p>	<p>No. The financial aid office will reach out to the student with instructions about how to provide verification.</p>
<p>What to do if a student becomes homeless and unaccompanied after they have already completed the fafsa?</p>	<p>They should reach out to their financial aid office for assistance.</p>
<p>For 12th grade high school students WITH an Independent Student Status form/letter from their MKV Liaison, who do they give this to? Is there a way to upload it into the FAFSA application? Will the Financial Aid Office ask for it in a separate way? Do they just indicate via the FAFSA check box choices they have it and that is enough?</p>	<p>The student will be contacted by their college with instructions on how to provide the verification.</p>

<p>If a student was not UY in HS - and now is trying to enroll in a Tech School - Is it the school responsibility to write a letter or should the institute enroll him as Independent Student? If the HS has any responsibility to assist the student what will it be.</p>	<p>Once a student has graduated from high school, it is the Financial aid administrator's responsibility to make the determination. The liaison can help educate the financial aid administrator about the UHY process, but no longer needs to write a letter.</p>
<p>This is such a niche question so I apologize, but I have twins who are Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and both living in different places currently... my Homeless Liaison wrote one letter to cover both students.. will this be accepted by FAFSA or do we need one letter per student?</p>	<p>It would be preferable to have a letter specific to each student.</p>
<p>I have a student that lives in an apartment with her girlfriend, parents did not like some choices that she has made. She is 19. Parents will still speak to her, but the relationship is not the same as before. Is she considered UHY?</p>	<p>She would not be. She could request independent status based on "unusual circumstance" but this may or may not be approved.</p>
<p>What to do if the financial aid administrator will not accept the MV Liaison determination letter?</p>	<p>Please share the April guidance with the financial aid administrator that states that they must accept it</p>
<p>Should students who experience homelessness when completing the FAFSA 'secure' housing during the academic year report that?</p>	<p>If the student experienced homelessness on or after July 1st of the year they are filling out the FAFSA they would answer "yes" to the homelessness question. If the youth became housed during that academic year, they would not have to report it. If they become stably housed, when they fill out the FAFSA for the following year, they would not answer "yes" to the homeless question and should inform the institution of the change.</p>
<p>How long does an Independent Student Status Determination Letter from a high</p>	<p>It must demonstrate that the youth was homeless on or after July 1st of the year prior to the award year (e.g. for the 25/26 FAFSA after July 1 2024).</p>

<p>school MKV Liaison last? If a student is an UHY in 12th grade but then waits to go on to college, does this letter only apply to students doing the FAFSA for the fall following high school graduation?</p>	
<p>If a student graduated last year and now wants to attend college, still homeless. Does she need parent financial information?</p>	<p>If the student meets the definition of UHY, they do not need parent information.</p>
<p>Would a student be considered an unaccompanied youth if they are living with or under the custody of a grandparent? Since it states parent or step-parent?</p>	<p>For FAFSA purposes, the student must be both unaccompanied and experiencing homelessness. In this situation, if the student is in legal custody of a grandparent, the student would not be considered unaccompanied. The student may be experiencing homelessness with the grandparent, but because they are in the legal custody of a grandparent, they would not answer yes to the homeless question.</p>
<p>Do we need to get documentation from another institution regarding their determination or can we just base it on another FAA's changes to the FAFSA?</p>	<p>No additional documentation is needed. Determinations from a previous FAA counts.</p>
<p>My student is a UHY senior but living with his uncle. His uncle will probably not provide financial info for him to complete the FAFSA. Could the student qualify for independence?</p>	<p>Possibly. If the housing is fixed, regular and adequate, he would need to request unusual circumstances. Otherwise, he might qualify as UHY.</p>
<p>Can a college financial aid administrator accept documentation from a high school liaison that is 2 years old (ie. high school document to a community college; student transfers to a 4-year institution their 2nd year)?</p>	<p>Yes, once a student has been determined as an UHY, their status as an independent student will remain as long as their living situation hasn't changed. If the student transfers, the financial aid administrator at the community college will then provide a determination to the 4-year institution</p>
<p>I was helping a student living in a motel with mom due to an eviction. The school coded</p>	<p>If the student was living with his mom in the motel, he would not be considered in unaccompanied homeless youth. He would be a dependent student on the FAFSA and need to</p>

<p>the student as homeless due to unaccompanied and then changed to self-supporting. The college financial aid would not acknowledge this status and made the student change his FAFSA to dependent student. Is this correct?</p>	<p>include his mom's information. However, if the student's living situation changed and he was on his own, he may meet the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth.</p>
<p>I have a few high school students living on their own, not necessarily facing eviction, but struggle to make rent on time each month. Would that count as self-supporting?</p>	<p>Those students would be considered self-supporting, because they are paying for their own living expenses including housing. The "at risk of homelessness" is a bit trickier because based on the federal guidance, there would need to be a high risk of eviction.</p>
<p>Can students who are unaccompanied, homeless, and undocumented fill out the FAFSA?</p>	<p>The student must be a US Citizen or permanent resident to complete the FAFSA. There are some categories of eligible non-citizens, like someone with a green card or conditional green card. The FAFSA lists the full list. Otherwise, the student is not eligible for the FAFSA. Some states have local applications for state financial aid for eligible undocumented students, like the California Dream Act Application in California. If the student is an eligible non-citizen and unaccompanied homeless youth, they would be considered an independent student and not need to include parent information.</p>
<p>If a student is staying with a family friend and the parent says the child can come back home, but the child does not/no abuse confirmed, are they truly unaccompanied?</p>	<p>Determinations of homeless and unaccompanied must be made on the legal definitions, regardless of the reason for the student being in a homeless situation. There is no requirement for a student to prove abuse/neglect, and a student might not be able to provide documentation. If a student is living in a homeless situation and fleeing an abusive parent, they may be considered homeless even if their parent would otherwise provide a place to live</p>
<p>Can you give an example of an unaccompanied student who would not be considered as a student experiencing homelessness? I feel like all unaccompanied students would always be categorized homeless..?</p>	<p>One example might be a youth who has been staying with a relative for many years in a safe, stable place, but relative is not a guardian. Another example might be a youth who is working and is able to pay for their rent on their own. But it is true that most youth, particularly high school students who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian are very likely to be at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness.</p>

<p>Is there a timeframe of stay that must be considered to determine if they are unaccompanied? Ex: Child has lived with grandparent for a few years.</p>	<p>There is no time frame in the law, but a situation that is fixed, regular, and adequate, and has been fixed, regular, and adequate for a while, probably would not be considered homeless. It is a case by case determination.</p>
<p>At the university/college level who should the students go to for help getting FAFSA letters?</p>	<p>For verification at the college/university, the student could go to the financial aid office or any campus based programs serving homeless young people. (As mentioned, outside of the campus, verification could be provided by school district homeless liaison, a TRIO or Gear Up Program, any community based shelter or service providers for homeless young people).</p>
<p>Do UHY students completing the dream act application need a verification letter as well? Who can provide determinations?</p>	<p>Yes, the same authorized entities can provide UHY determinations for dream act application.</p>
<p>What accountability is in place for colleges who are still creating a barrier for students who were not identified in High school and lack the UY FAFSA letter from local liaison? I have several schools who are still creating barriers after sending the blanket letter with the new law.</p>	<p>Federal guidance now states that in all situations, institutions should be able to show that their policies and procedures for reviewing and making homeless youth determinations are compliant with statutory requirements. So we are urging the US Dept of Education to step up its monitoring of these institutions, and we are collecting examples, so please send them to us. Here is the guidance, so you can share it widely.</p>
<p>Our district provides students upon determination of eligibility with a Written Notification of Eligibility Letter that was a sample provided by Arizona Department of Education's Homeless Education Program that we added our school's letterhead to...is this the determination you are speaking about?</p>	<p>No, that is something that is used for K12 eligibility. The form that we are discussing is here,</p>
<p>I noticed that youth who are considered independent for other reasons than being youth experiencing homelessness or at risk of experiencing homelessness don't see the</p>	<p>It depends. A student may qualify for independent for a variety of factors, such as age, a veteran or foster youth status. In California, there is an automated process to verify foster youth status and no verification status is required, but this varies by state and students who check the box based on foster youth status may be flagged to provide a verification letter.</p>

<p>questions about verification. Do these youth not need verification letters?</p>	
<p>What would be situations that qualify "at risk of being homeless"?</p>	<p>This may be someone who has been evicted or told that they may not continue to remain in their current place of residence.</p>
<p>How do they fill out the FAFSA in subsequent years? For example, if they move out of dorms into a house with roommates, they might not be considered experiencing Unaccompanied Homelessness? But if they don't check it then it would ask about information from parents</p>	<p>If a student's living situation has changed and they no longer meet the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth, they would not answer "yes" to the homeless question. In the example provided, if the student is in stable housing, but cannot provide parent information due to unusual circumstances, they may be considered a provisionally independent student and still not need to include parent information.</p>
<p>What category would a Homeless Education Case Manager at a county department of education fall into for selecting who made the determination?</p>	<p>The category would be the designee of the LEA homeless liaison. Be sure that your liaison is on the same page, in case the liaison needs to confirm you are a designee.</p>
<p>What happens if someone fills out a documentation form claiming a student is UHY, however the homeless liaison has no knowledge of the information being sent out? How will a college/university know that a designee is authorized? I am concerned about people making letters for students who are not truly MV.</p>	<p>If the McKinney-Vento liaison decides to designate other people to provide unaccompanied homeless youth determination, there should be clear expectations and understanding of this process. SchoolHouse Connection's sample form is updated to include both designee and McKinney-Vento liaison contact information so colleges/universities are aware that a designee is authorized. View our achieved webinar here about designees and the FAFSA here.</p>
<p>Last year I had a couple of students who became homeless/unaccompanied after they had done their FAFSA as a dependent student, but by the time I started working with the student we would have to go back</p>	<p>Yes, you can make revisions to their FAFSA when their status changes, which can lead to their financial aid being repackaged. Encourage the student to reach out to the financial aid office during this process.</p>

<p>in to edit it to reflect their current living situation as an independent student. Is there anything we should keep in mind when we make these revisions?</p>	
<p>In PA, the Homeless Liaisons are listed by school district. Is there a list similarly for Higher Ed HL contact info?</p>	<p>There are not general homeless liaisons in Higher Ed, but there are foster higher ed liaisons for youth with experience in foster care. Here is the list.</p>
<p>I have a student who moved out of her fathers home due to abuse and is now living at the community college dorms because she is in Dual Enrollment. Can I qualify her as an UHY for her, and help her fill out FAFSA for next year to transfer to a four year college.</p>	<p>Yes, if you are one of the authorized entities on the FAFSA and she meets the definition of an unaccompanied homeless youth or unaccompanied youth at risk of homelessness and self-supporting. Even though she is living in the residence hall, if she would otherwise have no place to go, she still is considered homeless.</p>
<p>Can students qualify who became homeless over the summer after they graduated?</p>	<p>Yes! Many students become homeless after graduating from high school. In these situations, the student should reach out to the financial aid administrator at their institution and request an unaccompanied homeless youth determination. Additionally, if the student is utilizing services from TRIO/GEAR UP or any other program or shelter providing support for individuals experiencing homelessness, they can also provide a determination.</p>
<p>How long is the letter valid? Should the institution or college check if they still meet the definition of unaccompanied homeless?</p>	<p>The determination form should clearly state what FAFSA application cycle it is for. For example, the 25-25 FAFSA determination form is for the upcoming 25-26 FAFSA. Once a student has been determined as an unaccompanied homeless youth, the student will have presumed independent and will not need to provide a new determination. The institution may reach out to ask if their living situation has changed, but should not be requesting a new determination or additional documentation.</p>
<p>For the FAFSA UHY form, are we supposed to know the student's social security number?</p>	<p>The FAFSA requires the student's social security number. The SchoolHouse Connection form has a place for the student's social security number to confirm the identity of the student.</p>

<p>What counts as “enrollment” for students experiencing homelessness in terms of timing of UHY determinations?</p>	<p>If the student requests a determination on or before they enroll (defined by ED as when the student completes registration requirements (except for the payment of tuition and fees) at the institution they are attending), the institution has 60 days to make the determination after the enrolls. If the student requests a determination after enrolling, the institution has 60 days from the request to make the determination, even if the request came more than 60 days after the student enrolling.</p>
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Foster Youth

Questions	Answers
<p>How long do they have to be in foster care after age 13 to qualify? Any specific amount of time?</p>	<p>There is no specific amount of time. They qualify if they were in care for one day after their 13th birthday.</p>
<p>For 12th graders who are youth in foster care, their Independent Student Status Determination Letter should come from their Child Welfare Social Worker/Agency, correct? And not from their public high school Foster Care Point of Contact or school staff?</p>	<p>Correct, but there are other sources for verification that you can use. In addition to using the letter from the child welfare agency, you can also use:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a court order or official State document that the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older; (2) a documented phone call, verifiable electronic data match that confirms the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older from a state or tribal agency administering the foster care program, a State Medicaid agency, or a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement; (3) a documented phone call or a written statement from an attorney, a guardian ad litem or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) that confirms that the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older and documents that person’s relationship to the student or (4) verification that the youth is eligible for an education and training voucher (ETV) under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program under 42 U.S.C. A. §677
<p>Before the application was updated the foster care, ward of the state question used</p>	<p>Questions are not numbered on the electronic FAFSA, but on the paper FAFSA, all status questions are now #5.</p>

<p>to be question # 53. Do you know what number it is now?</p>	
<p>If a foster youth is residing on campus full time, should they check off both boxes - foster care and homeless? Will they need to provide documentation regarding their homelessness?</p>	<p>They should check all boxes that apply, but should only need to verify one of the criteria to qualify as independent.</p>
<p>If the youth is a foster youth and we check the appropriate boxes, we are not clicking homeless or unaccompanied youth unless they are homeless, right?</p> <p>For instance, if we have a foster youth in a foster home, we will check foster youth but not check homeless because they are living in a foster home?</p>	<p>Yes, you are only checking foster youth in this circumstance and not UHY.</p>
<p>How would we go about having a youth that is former foster youth but are currently in a Transitional housing program for homeless young people?</p>	<p>The youth could check the boxes for foster youth (if they were in foster care after the age of 13) and homeless youth, however, the verification process for being in foster care tends to be the most straightforward to navigate from the financial aid office side.</p>
<p>If a 19 year old student is in extended foster care and living with an aunt, what documentation do they need? Can a homeless/foster liaison provide a letter?</p>	<p>Any of the following are acceptable to show foster care status:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) a court order or official State document that the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older; (2) a documented phone call, verifiable electronic data match that confirms the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older from a state or tribal agency administering the foster care program, a State Medicaid agency, or a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement; (3) a documented phone call or a written statement from an attorney, a guardian ad litem or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) that confirms that the youth was in

	<p>foster care at age 13 or older and documents that person's relationship to the student or (4) verification that the youth is eligible for an education and training voucher (ETV) under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program under 42 U.S.C. A. §677</p>
<p>Although a youth who experiences homelessness after age 18 can apply as an unaccompanied homeless youth. Youth must experience foster care before age 18 (after age 13) to qualify, correct?</p>	<p>The youth must be in foster care at age 13 or older. It would be unusual for a youth to enter foster care after 18, but there is no age by which the youth must enter foster care as long as they are in care at age 13 or older.</p>
<p>Students that are living in a Group Home (DCF custody) qualify for homeless student?</p>	<p>Students in DCF custody qualify as foster youth (not homeless) , and would answer the foster care questions on the FAFSA.</p>
<p>For a student who is an Unaccompanied Refugee Minor but is in foster care, do they file as a foster care youth status or provisional independent student status?</p>	<p>Always pick foster care or UHY over a provisional independent student status determination- foster care and UHY have clearer rules and processes. The student is guaranteed to qualify as independent as a foster youth as long as they can provide documentation.</p>
<p>Can you please confirm we would mark the first box of determining independent student if the Department of Human Services could verify they were in foster care etc - I don't see that DHS is an organization who is authorized to make that determination?</p>	<p>Yes, you would mark that box. DHS is considered a foster care agency and can provide verification as can the child's lawyer, CASA, ILP program, for example.</p>
<p>If they were in foster care prior to age 13 and may have been adopted at some point prior to age 13, would they not qualify as independent any more?</p>	<p>If they remained with the adoptive parent(s) after age 13, they do not qualify as independent. This is not a change and has always been the case.</p>
<p>Can schools provide documentation for students in foster care similar to McKV?</p>	<p>No. It must be one of the listed entities.</p>

<p>Sorry I might have missed it. As a social worker are we able to verify foster care status?</p>	<p>Yes. The social worker can provide verification through a letter or documented phone call.</p>
<p>If youth were a foster youth or independent (self supporting) but not homeless do we still check yes because they are foster youth/self supporting?</p>	<p>Self supporting only matters for homeless verification. A foster youth does not need to be self supporting. They are independent based on their foster care status.</p>
<p>Hello, what if a student was in foster care before they reached the age of 13 for example were in foster care ages 3-9.</p>	<p>They do not qualify as independent unless they meet one of the other criteria (e.g., in guardianship or UHY).</p>
<p>How do they define ward of court v. foster care?</p>	<p>These two terms are essentially synonymous and no guidance has been given from the Department of Education as to a distinction between the two. For FAFSA purposes a youth is a dependent or ward of the court if the juvenile court has taken legal custody of the youth. Legal custody is generally understood to mean that the court has authority to make decisions on a child's behalf. The "ward of the court" language is not meant to cover situations in which someone is a ward of the state due to becoming incarcerated, HOWEVER, someone who is a "ward of court" and was previously in foster care after the age of 13 could still check in "in foster care" box.</p>
<p>So is Chafee ETV money not disclosed on the FAFSA? Or is it just not used against the SAI?</p>	<p>It is not counted when determining unmet need and therefore the maximum aid award.</p>
<p>Foster youth do not qualify as Homeless correct?</p>	<p>Correct. There are two different statuses, each with its own definitions/criteria. But both homeless and foster youth are independent students on the FAFSA.</p>
<p>One of my EFC (extended foster care) youth would be homeless if it weren't for her dorm. She didn't receive enough financial aid this quarter (this is likely because she didn't pass her classes last quarter) and I'm wondering if there's an outstanding</p>	<p>A youth in extended foster care would qualify as independent and therefore establishing homelessness status is not necessary. It sounds like the student didn't meet the Satisfactory Academic Progress requirements for her institution, resulting in a loss of financial aid. She should consult with the financial aid office to determine if she can appeal to have her aid reinstated.</p>

circumstance I need to note so that she can receive the same amount of aid as she did last quarter. Thank you!	
Is the determination verification the dependency verification letter provided from the county?	Yes, this is one form of verification that must be accepted.
Do you have a form template for foster youth determination as well?	There is not a template, but the range of "documentation" for foster care status is now broad and can include: (1) a court order or official State document that the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older; (2) a documented phone call, written statement, or verifiable electronic data match that confirms the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older from a state or tribal agency administering the foster care program, a State Medicaid agency, or a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care facility or placement; (3) a documented phone call or a written statement from an attorney, a guardian ad litem or a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) that confirms that the youth was in foster care at age 13 or older and documents that person's relationship to the student or (4) verification that the youth is eligible for an education and training voucher (ETV) under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program under 42 U.S.C. A. 677.
Can you please clarify if a student is considered independent if they were a foster child after the age of 13 , even if they were eventually adopted?	Yes. If a student was in foster care at any time after age 13, they are considered independent, even if they were adopted.

Provisional Independence

Questions	Answers
Is there a time limit for residing with the grandparent(s). I have students who have	If this is an informal arrangement (no court involvement) the school has the discretion to decide if the student qualifies for "unusual circumstances."

<p>been with their parents since they were toddlers.</p>	
<p>Would they be considered independent if they are living with a relative or friend and there is only a Power of Attorney on file but no court documentation</p>	<p>They wouldn't qualify automatically for independent status but could request a dependency override based on "unusual circumstances." The financial aid office has discretion to determine whether the student's situation qualifies for independent status.</p>
<p>For independent youth -if a grandparent went to court and obtained primary custody, then the youth is considered independent? Even if there was no child welfare system involvement in the court case.</p>	<p>The student would be independent if the grandparent was named as a legal guardian. A student who doesn't qualify automatically as independent could request a dependency override based on "unusual circumstances." The financial aid office has discretion to determine whether the student's situation qualifies for independent status.</p>
<p>I have a tricky situation - 17 year old trans student, turning 18 over the summer, very religious family has promised to cut off all support and kick him out on 18th bday (regularly tell him he's going to hell). So he's not yet homeless, or unaccompanied, but we anticipate that he will be once the 2024-25 school year begins this Fall. How does he go about filing as independent?</p>	<p>They could request a dependency override based on "unusual circumstances." The financial aid office has discretion to determine whether the student's situation qualifies for independent status.</p>
<p>If a Youth was not in the foster care system but Parent wrote letter to give up rights, would they apply as a Foster Youth or Homeless or be considered Independent?</p>	<p>They would not, but they may qualify as independent based on "unusual circumstances."</p>
<p>What if a parent signed over guardianship to a grandparent (no protective services or courts involved) and they've lived with the grandparent since elementary school? Or they have just always resided with the grandparent but the grandparent wasn't</p>	<p>They would have to apply based on "unusual circumstances."</p>

given legal guardianship but the parents have their name on the paperwork to sign for school/medical etc paperwork.	
Regarding Unusual Circumstances. If a student is estranged from their parents (history of drug abuse for parents), but still has contact with them occasionally (to check in on them). Would you consider this student independent? If they are and have been living with other family members or friends for many years.	This resource has more information on unusual circumstances. Based on this example, the student may even be considered an unaccompanied homeless youth if the student hasn't had a safe and stable place to live.
Provisional Independent student.. We have students that are unaccompanied youth, but not homeless unaccompanied. What form do we use for them?	There is not a specific form for students in these situations. However, a letter from you confirming their situation would be really important when they are asked for more information.

General FAFSA

Questions	Answers
Is there a appeal process if the student is deemed not qualified when they apply	There is currently no appeal process.
Do undocumented students qualify for FAFSA?	No, undocumented students do not qualify for federal financial aid. However, depending on the state they live in, they could be eligible for state aid or for aid at specific colleges. Here is a good resource on being an undocumented student or DACA recipient and college options.

<p>I may have missed this, but is FAFSA also for students who enroll in a post-secondary trade school?</p>	<p>In many cases these students can receive aid through the FAFSA, but it depends on the nature of the program. Students that attend trade schools that participate in the federal student aid program are eligible for federal financial aid. This includes grants, loans, and work-study opportunities. The student should consult with the institution to make sure their school is eligible.</p>
<p>For Key Change #8, our Financial Aid Office has further questions about the implementation. They wrote, "I would like to think that both the ETV funds and the emergency grant situations where part of an EFC component won't count towards overall COA but the information that we have from DOE at this time really only address need so that is where a bit of the confusion lies."</p>	<p>While additional federal guidance has not been issued, California has issued this guidance and the description of the federal change would be applicable in any state.</p>
<p>Are all of these changes to FAFSA also the same for the DREAM Act? Or are there any differences in the changes made?</p>	<p>Yes, the changes discussed here also apply to the CA dream act application.</p>
<p>When does emergency funding, or basic needs grant not count towards financial aid? will it take effect during 23/24 or 24/25?</p>	<p>It will take effect during 24/25 year.</p>
<p>How do students get support filling out the application?</p>	<p>High school counselors or financial aid administrators can often provide support. There may also be community based college access programs that can provide assistance.</p>
<p>What would you suggest to do for a student who has left home and does not have access to their SSN to fill out the FAFSA? Our district has revoked access for every staff and admin to have access to a student SSN.</p>	<p>A few options- if the youth has previously had a job where they got a W2, it might be possible to get a copy of their SSN by looking at those or other financial documents. The student could also try requesting a replacement social security card, which will require them to present identification documents. More information can be found here. If these options don't work, I would recommend looking for a legal aid referral in your area- some legal aid offices will do clinics for folks (such as homeless youth) to help them procure identification documents.</p>

<p>How do we proceed if the parent does not have an SS#, but the student does as he/she was born in the US</p>	<p>There is a new process for parents without a SS# to obtain an FSA ID and complete their portion of the FAFSA. They have to provide verification of their identity. Details are available on the FSA ID website. As of 3/13/2024 there is guidance from ED with tips in both English and Spanish.</p>
<p>What about students in Kinship care?</p>	<p>If a student is living with family, it depends on their legal status. If the family is legally a foster care placement or legal guardian, the student qualifies for independent status. If the situation is informal, the student would not automatically qualify as independent.</p>
<p>We are currently experiencing families migrating to the Seattle WA and these families are living in Tents outside the church. Some of them want to go to school but have no documentation to be admitted to school, let alone completing FAFSA. what should we do if we come across those families?</p>	<p>A place to start asking these questions might be the Office of Homeless Youth or the McKinney Vento Office at Seattle Public Schools. As a reminder, McKinney-Vento eligible students have the right to enroll in school immediately even if they are lacking documents normally required for enrollment.</p>
<p>Is there a training resource for a non-dreamer student with a contributing spouse without a SSN?</p>	<p>A spouse would need to go through the same process as a parent without a SSN to set up an FSA ID using the alternative method provided for verifying identity.</p>
<p>My student is very stressed about her partner (without SSN) having to answer questions on the application and set up an FSA ID. Is there any resource I can refer her to? She is really scared and stressed.</p>	<p>Is she married to her partner? If not, the partner likely will not need to answer questions on the FAFSA about their income. Here is some general information about Better FAFSA for mixed status families. Here is an overview of information on how marriage impacts FAFSA</p>
<p>I had a youth encounter difficulty in submitting their independent student documentation. The institution refused the paperwork because it did not have a "wet signature" and was digitally signed instead. Is that common?</p>	<p>We haven't encountered that before personally, but it sounds like the sort of thing that a financial aid office might require based on their own policies. There's nothing in federal law requiring a "wet signature" for independent student documentation.</p>

<p>When I filled out the FAFSA with my student it went smoothly. We noticed it didn't ask for taxes or income. Is it not required for an independent student to share income?</p>	<p>All income information is now transferred from the IRS so the student does not need to provide any income information manually anymore.</p>
<p>A parent (undocumented) started the FAFSA application in October (old version), now she wants to start the new FAFSA application and do not let her continue because she was denied her ITIN . Now, what do you recommend? Does she need to open a new email and start a new application with different email?</p>	<p>She most likely started a 23/24 FAFSA. She should start a new application with the 24/25 FAFSA instead.</p>
<p>What about a student who is not unaccompanied but has no contact with one parent? Do they still need to provide financial information with the absent parent?</p>	<p>There are new rules about which parents need to provide information. Most likely in this circumstance only the one parent will need to provide info. The FAFSA has a tool for determining this.</p>
<p>Would housing assistance not be considered other financial assistance - e.g. rapid rehousing rental subsidies or other rental assistance?</p>	<p>The school must determine if this is considered emergency funds or not.</p>
<p>What is the difference between EFC and Student Index will this expand aid for students?</p>	<p>The idea is that more students and families would be eligible for more aid than before, but the impact may vary case by case. Here is the federal fact sheet on SAI</p>
<p>What are examples of emergency financial assistance?</p>	<p>ED has provided the following examples of emergency financial assistance: "unexpected expense for food; housing; course materials or equipment; or transportation (e.g., between campus and home for a death or family emergency)."</p>

<p>Is the FAFSA only filled out for graduating students (12th grade and meeting grad requirements)?</p>	<p>Students would complete the current FAFSA if they are planning or thinking about attending college. The current FAFSA is for the 2025-26 academic year and the prior FAFSA (2024-2025) is for the 2024-25 academic year. The FAFSA must be completed each year once in college as well. A high school diploma or GED is required to be eligible for federal financial aid.</p>
<p>Can you provide more information on special cases and immigration cases, such as having a sponsor or waiting for a student whose parents are in Mexico and who have made living arrangements to finish school in the USA?</p>	<p>Here is a resource on unusual circumstances.</p>
<p>When do students need to fill out the FAFSA completed by?</p>	<p>Students should fill out the FAFSA as they can to ensure the most amount of aid available to them. States and specific institutions have different priority deadlines to receive state financial aid as well. Students can apply after their state's priority deadline, but may receive less aid. For the academic year, they can still apply once school starts.</p>
<p>Does academic probation status / SAP affect the amount of support provided in UHY financial aid packages?</p>	<p>Yes, SAP policies apply to all students. However, if a student is experiencing homelessness while in college that may qualify for the student to do a SAP appeal. In California, homelessness is an allowable reason to do a SAP appeal. Outside of California, it varies and the student should contact their financial aid office to determine their policies, since it can vary by institution.</p>
<p>I had some students get the award amount instantly, and some students had to wait to know how much aid they were getting. Do you know why some find out right away while others have to wait?</p>	<p>Last year, there was a major delay with the processing of the FAFSA and students who applied early when the application launched didn't get their Student Aid Report until a later date. Normally, a student receives a FAFSA Submission Summary that their FAFSA was processed in 1-3 days and they get an estimated SAI (student aid index).</p>
<p>Are there opportunities for people to volunteer with FAFSA if we're in a school district but NOT in a student-facing role?</p>	<p>Yes, usually through local college access programs. They almost always need volunteers.</p>

I have a few early graduates this year. Is the process for completing the FAFSA the same as it is for seniors?	Yes, you would have them select the FAFSA for the academic school year that the student plans to attend (2024-25 or 2025-26).
What is the SAT/ACT Fee Waiver?	There is a fee waiver for low-income students.