

# INDEPENDENCE REQUIREMENTS

MT. HOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
OFFICE OF FINANCIAL AID  
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**EXCEPT IN VERY UNUSUAL CASES AND WITH MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES THAT CAN BE DOCUMENTED**, parents have the primary responsibility to financially support their dependent child(ren)'s education to the fullest extent possible. Students who fail to meet the congressional definition of "independent", as outlined in the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), must meet the requirements listed below to be considered "independent".

## CRITERIA

- Parents are **UNABLE**, due to incapacitation, institutionalization, or disappearance, to participate in the application process,

OR

- Student is **UNABLE**, based on fear of physical and violent confrontation OR because of past abuse issues, to obtain parental information.

## DOCUMENTATION

1. The student must **WRITE OR TYPE A LEGIBLE LETTER** explaining why they **CANNOT** provide parental information, and why they should be considered independent.
2. The student must **PROVIDE A MINIMUM OF TWO LETTERS** from objective, responsible, third party adults who know and are willing to verify the statements of the student.

- Letters should be on letterhead and **CLEARLY** address:

- \* Who is writing and their relationship to the student
- \* What situation exists between the student and the parents
- \* Agreement with other information presented by the student
- \* Signature, date, address, title and phone number of the author

- Examples of "responsible adults" or other acceptable documents:

- \* Group / person sponsoring the student
- \* High School Counselor
- \* Clergy
- \* Teacher
- \* Social Worker
- \* Court Documents
- \* Agency Documents

Students who meet the above criteria must first submit the above documentation and wait for a decision. Please leave a telephone number where you wish to be contacted. If the independence override is not granted, you may then make an appointment for the next day with a Financial Aid Coordinator. Further information may be requested as a result of this meeting. Appointments can be made by calling 503-491-7262. **DO NOT** schedule appointments without first submitting this information.