

# Unusual Circumstances Appeal

## Dependent to Independent Status

### 2025-2026



#### General Information:

The deadline for submitting this form is the end of the 2025-2026 term in which you were last enrolled. Students who do not meet the standard requirements for independent status may complete this appeal to be considered independent for financial aid purposes. Submission of this appeal form does not guarantee approval.

#### Standard Requirements for Independent Status (Personal Circumstances):

- You were born before January 1, 2002.
- As of today, you are married.
- At the beginning of the 2025–2026 school year, you will be working on a master’s or doctorate program (such as an MA, MBA, MD, JD, PhD, EdD, graduate certificate, etc.).
- You are currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training.
- You are a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- You have or will have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2025 and June 30, 2026.
- You have dependents (other than your children or spouse) who live with you and who receive more than half of their support from you, now and through June 30, 2026.
- At any time since you turned age 13, you were an orphan, in foster care or a dependent or ward of the court.
- As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, you are an emancipated minor.
- Someone other than your parent or stepparent have legal guardianship of you, as determined by a court in your state of legal residence.
- At any time on or after July 1, 2024, you were unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.

If you do not meet any of the conditions above, but you still feel that you should be considered independent, you may complete an appeal for independent status. These appeals are reviewed on a *case-by-case* basis and are only granted for **unusual**, documented circumstances. Note: According to Webster’s dictionary, “**unusual**” means *rare, extraordinary, uncommon, unexpected, distinctive*.

#### Examples that constitute unusual circumstances *may* include:

- Student’s voluntary or involuntary removal from parents’ home due to an abusive situation that threatened the student’s safety and/or health
- Incapacity of parents (such as incarceration, disability, or mental or physical illness)
- Inability of the student to locate parents after making reasonable efforts
- Other extenuating circumstances sufficiently documented by third parties

The following conditions are **not** considered unusual, and **do not qualify** for this appeal:

- Parents refuse to contribute to the student’s education
- Parents are unwilling to provide information on the FAFSA or for verification
- Parents do not claim the student as a dependent for income tax purposes
- Student demonstrates that he or she is totally self-sufficient
- Student’s marital status changed since filing the FAFSA (Note: students in this category should view the “Change in Student’s Marital Status Appeal” at [bethel.edu/offices/financial-aid/appeal](http://bethel.edu/offices/financial-aid/appeal) )

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## Certification

I affirm that all data elements contained on this form and any accompanying documentation are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. All information provided as a part of this request is considered confidential. Upon request I will provide additional documentation to substantiate the information provided.

Office Use Only:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please allow a minimum of 2-3 weeks for the financial aid committee to review your appeal.