

Tompkins Cortland Community College

Independence Appeal Form
2011-2012

Name _____ Social Security # _____

Students that do not meet the legal requirements for independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) may request a Dependency Override. In order to be considered independent, you must be able to document **unusual** or **exceptional family circumstances**. Please note that living in your own apartment, paying rent, claiming yourself on your federal tax return or having parents refuse to complete the FAFSA or parents refuse to contribute to your education does not constitute unusual circumstances.

Instructions:

Step One: Complete the 2011-2012 FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA as an independent student and submit it to the Financial Aid Office with all documentation. If you have already filed your 2011-2012 FAFSA, submit your rejected Student Aid Report (SAR) instead.

Step Two: Provide the information listed below. We may request signed copies of your parents' federal tax forms (including W-2 forms) for 2009 and 2010 at a later date.

Step Three: Attach your documentation and submit everything to the Financial Aid Office.

A committee will review your appeal form and documentation. If approved, your FAFSA will be forwarded to the federal processor. If your appeal is denied, your form will be returned to you for parental information with a letter of explanation. Until you meet the federal requirements for independence, you must submit this form along with updated documentation each academic year. Transfer students that were granted independence at another college must be re-approved by Tompkins Cortland even if they were granted an override for 2011-2012.

Required Information

Student Information: Please indicate the amount and source(s) of your annual income for 2009 and 2010. Attach signed copies of your 2009 and 2010 federal income tax forms (including W-2 forms), statements from Social Services, etc. Include all taxable and non-taxable income.

2009 Income \$ _____ Source _____

2010 Income \$ _____ Source _____

Where did you live in: (Please circle the appropriate response)

| | | | |
|------|--------------|----------------|-------------|
| 2009 | with parents | with relatives | on your own |
| 2010 | with parents | with relatives | on your own |
| 2011 | with parents | with relatives | on your own |

-over-

Financial Aid Office—170 North St. PO Box 139—Dryden, NY 13053-0139
607.844.6580- fax 607.844.6538

Statement as to why you feel you are independent: Please attach a separate sheet that explains why you feel that you should be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes. The reasons that you describe must be unusual or extenuating in regard to family situation. The statement should explain, in detail, your situation and be legible. Please note that all information is kept confidential.

Supporting Documentation: You must provide supporting documentation to support your claim of independence. This documentation should include third party letters from individuals who are familiar with the conditions you explain above and by individuals that would not be biased in your behalf. They must have first hand knowledge of the facts you describe. This may include counselors, clergy, social workers or medical professionals. The documentation should be on organization stationary and include contact information for the submitting party should more explanation be required.

This policy has been revised to comply with U.S. Department of Education Letter GEN-03-07, May 2003.

Based on the documentation you submit, the committee will make a decision regarding your status. This decision is final. You must submit this appeal and all supporting documentation at the same time; your appeal will be reviewed one time only. The responsibility for proving and documenting your situation rests entirely with you. In light of this, please use the checklist below to make sure that your appeal is complete before you submit it to our office.

The Financial Aid Office reserves the right to request an interview, clarification of submitted documentation or require additional information.

Affirmation: All the information provided is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if I do not provide proof of my circumstances, my appeal will be denied. I also understand that I may submit only one appeal per academic year and that the decision of the committee is final.

Student Signature: _____ **Date** _____

Checklist:

- | | |
|--|--|
| _____ Clear explanation of unusual circumstances | _____ Your signed federal tax forms, W-2's |
| _____ FAFSA, Renewal FAFSA or SAR | _____ Third party documentation |