

What if I am unable to provide my parents' information, their income information and signature, due to special circumstances?

Under Federal law your family is primarily responsible-to the extent they are able-for paying for your college expenses. To determine how much your family can afford to pay towards your college expenses, we must collect your financial information and if you are a dependent student, we must also collect your parents' financial information.

Under **very** limited circumstances, an otherwise dependent student may be able to submit the FAFSA without parental information due to special circumstances. Before you proceed to skip the parental section of your FAFSA, consider the following:

Examples of special circumstances where you may be able to submit your FAFSA without providing parental information include:

- Your parents are incarcerated; or
- You have left home due to an abusive family environment; or
- You do not know where your parents are and are unable to contact them (and you have not been adopted).

Not all situations are considered a special circumstance. The following are situations that would **not** be considered a special circumstance:

- Your parents do not want to provide their information on your FAFSA; or
- Your parents refuse to contribute to your college expenses; or
- Your parents do not claim you as a dependent on their income taxes; or
- You do not live with your parents.

If you believe you have a special circumstance and are unable to provide parental information, you should complete information about you and your finances and skip any questions about your parents. You should sign your FAFSA with your PIN and leave your parent's PIN blank. It is important to note:

1. We will allow you to submit your FAFSA without parental information, however **your FAFSA will not be considered complete.**
2. Because your FAFSA is not considered complete, we **will not calculate your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** which is the index used by colleges to determine how much student aid you are eligible to receive.
3. If you are approaching any deadlines for your state, college, or scholarship aid, you may want to contact your financial aid administrator (FAA) **before** submitting your FAFSA without parental data.
4. **Once you submit your FAFSA without parental data, you must follow up with the FAA at the college you plan to attend, in order to complete your FAFSA and receive an EFC. Also note the following:**
 - **Under Federal law, only your FAA has the authority to decide whether or not you must provide parental information on your FAFSA.**
 - **You will have to provide documentation to verify your situation.** Gather as much written evidence of your situation as you can. Written

evidence may include court or law enforcement documents, letters from a clergy member, school counselor or social worker, and/or any other relevant data that explains your special circumstance.

- After reviewing your circumstances carefully, **your FAA will decide** if you must provide parental information or if your circumstances allow you to proceed without providing parental data. **Your FAA's decision is final** and can not be appealed to Federal Student Aid.

***This answer was taken from the list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the Department of Education's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) website. To review the full list of FAQs go to <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/faq001.htm>**