



Office of Financial Aid
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2017-2018 VERIFY STATUS AS UNACCOMPANIED/HOMELESS YOUTH

The **College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA)** expanded the definition of an "independent student" to include unaccompanied homeless youth. Specifically, the CCRAA states that youth who fit the following criteria at any time during the school year in which they sign the FAFSA are considered independent:

- unaccompanied and homeless, **OR**
- unaccompanied, self-supporting **AND** at-risk of homelessness

For the **2017-2018 academic year**, the definition of an "independent student" will be expanded to include any applicant **who has been confirmed on or after July 1, 2016** as either:

- An unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth, as defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- An unaccompanied youth who is at risk of homelessness **AND** is also self-supporting.

Students or high school guidance counselors with questions should submit them to the financial aid office. The student's status at the time they complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) determines their eligibility.

Criteria

Definition of Homelessness: Children who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence which includes

- living in shelters, motels, or cars **OR**
- temporarily living with other people because the applicant had nowhere else to go

A student who chose to leave their parents' home will need to demonstrate that they were at risk for harm if they continued to live with their parents.

Definition of At Risk of Being Homeless: This is when a student's housing may cease to be fixed, regular, and adequate. For example, a student who is being evicted and has been unable to find fixed, regular, and adequate housing.

Definition of Unaccompanied Youth: A youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian who also meets the definition of homeless. "Youth" means that the student is 21 years of age or younger **OR** that the student is still enrolled in high school as of the day they complete the FAFSA. Students between the ages of 21-24 who otherwise meet all other criteria should contact the financial aid office for more information.

Definition of Self-Supporting: This is when a student pays for his or her own living expenses, including fixed, regular and adequate housing.

Confirmation of Homeless/Unaccompanied Youth Status

Salem College **requires** all students to provide copies of the official determination of their status under the McKinney-Vento Act. A student who applies for assistance as an unaccompanied youth who is a homeless child or youth defined in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act should be able to provide documentation of their status from:

- A local educational agency (LEA) homeless liaison
- The director or a designee of the director of a program funded by the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act
- The director of a program funded under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act