

## FAFSA TIPS FOR HOMELESS AND YOUTH TRANSITIONING FROM FOSTER CARE

Questions on the 2011-2012 FAFSA which may cause difficulty for youth who are, or have been, in foster care or homeless are listed below. Question **numbers** refer to the paper FAFSA. **Steps** refer to the FAFSA itself.

“Unaccompanied” means you are not living in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

“Homeless” means lacking fixed, regular, and adequate housing, including living in shelters, motels, cars, and temporarily with other people because you have nowhere else to go.

<p><b>Question #4</b> <b>FAFSA Step 1</b> Your permanent mailing address</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I don't have a permanent mailing address because I don't have a stable home. What address should I use? <b>A:</b> Use an address where you will be able to receive mail reliably. The address of your school or a trusted mentor or family member might be appropriate.</p>
<p><b>Question #33</b> <b>FAFSA Step 2</b> “For 2010, have you (the student) completed your IRS income tax return or another tax return listed in question 34?”</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I did not file a tax return, and I am not sure if I was required to file. How can I get information about whether I was required to file a tax return and how I can file now, if necessary? <b>A:</b> You must consult the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules to determine your obligation to file a tax return. IRS information is available at <a href="http://www.irs.gov/">http://www.irs.gov/</a>. For the FAFSA, you should indicate whether you have filed or intend to file and continue to the following questions, as indicated.</p>
<p><b>Question #44</b> <b>FAFSA Step 2</b> Welfare Benefits / TANF</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> My foster parents receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or welfare benefits because I was a ward of the court. Is this my income? <b>A:</b> No. These benefits are income for the person receiving them. Do not include as part of your income any TANF or welfare benefits received by another person, even if they are designated for your support and care. <b>(See 45c.)</b></p>
<p><b>Question #52</b> <b>FAFSA Step 3</b> “At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?”</p>	<p><b>(Option 1)</b> Answer “Yes” if you had no living parent (biological or adoptive) at any time since you turned age 13, even if you are now adopted. <b>(Option 2)</b> Answer “Yes” if you were in foster care at any time since you turned age 13, even if you are no longer in foster care as of today. <b>(Option 3)</b> Answer “Yes” if you were a dependent or ward of the court at any time since you turned age 13, even if you are no longer a dependent or ward of the court as of today. Note that for deferral student aid purposes, a ward of the court is not someone who is incarcerated.</p> <p><b>*Note</b> that the financial aid administrator at your school may require you to provide proof that you were in foster care or a dependent or ward of the court.</p>
<p><b>Question #53</b> <b>FAFSA Step 3</b> “As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you an emancipated minor?”</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I was emancipated at age 15 but lived with my aunt and uncle during my last semester of high school. How should I complete the FAFSA? <b>A:</b> Check “Yes” and complete the FAFSA as an independent student if you have a copy of a court order that you are an emancipated minor. The court must be located in your state of legal residence. If you do not have such a court order, you should check “No” for this question. However, you should review <b>Questions 55-57</b> carefully, to determine if you qualify as an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or at risk of homelessness.</p>
<p><b>Question #55</b> <b>FAFSA Step 3</b> “As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you in legal guardianship?”</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I have been living with a family member/friend who provides for some of my financial needs, but that person has not been appointed my legal guardian by a court. How should I complete the FAFSA? <b>A:</b> A caregiver or other person with whom you are living is only considered a legal guardian if a court in your state of legal residence has established guardianship. You should check “Yes” if you have a copy of a court order indicating that legal guardianship was established. If you are living with a caregiver, but that caregiver is not your legal guardian as determined by a court in your state of legal residence, you should check “No” for this question. However, you should review <b>Questions 56-58</b> carefully, to determine if you qualify as an unaccompanied youth who is homeless.</p>
<p><b>Question #55</b> <b>FAFSA Step 3</b> “At any time on or after July 1, 2010, did your high</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I ran away from home during my senior year in high school and am staying temporarily with a friend. Am I considered an independent student? <b>A:</b> You are considered an independent student if you received a determination any time on or after July 1, 2010, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless, or</p>

<p>school or school district homeless liaison determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?"</p>	<p>an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless. The financial aid administrator at your college may require you to provide a copy of the determination.</p> <p>If you do not have a determination but you believe you are/were an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless, contact your high school counselor, school district McKinney-Vento homeless liaison, school's financial aid office, or the National Center for Homeless Education at 1-800-308-2145 for assistance. More information and a template homelessness determination form are also available at <a href="http://www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc">www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc</a>.</p>
<p><b>Question #56 FAFSA Step 3</b> "At any time on or after July 1, 2010, did the director of an emergency shelter or transitional housing program funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?"</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I stayed in a shelter last year. How do I complete the FAFSA? <b>A:</b> Check "Yes" if you received a determination any time on or after July 1, 2010, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless, or an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless. The financial aid administrator at your college may require you to provide a copy of the determination or other documentation.</p> <p>If you do not have a determination but you believe you are/were an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless, contact your high school counselor, school district McKinney-Vento homeless liaison, school's financial aid office, or the National Center for Homeless Education at 1-800-308-2145 for assistance. More information and a template homelessness determination form are also available at <a href="http://www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc">www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc</a>.</p>
<p><b>Question #57 FAFSA Step 3</b> "At any time on or after July 1, 2010, did the director of a runaway or homeless youth (RHYA) basic center or transitional living program determine that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?"</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I am living in a transitional housing program. Am I an independent student? <b>A:</b> Check "Yes" if you received a determination any time on or after July 1, 2010, that you were an unaccompanied youth who was homeless, or an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless. The financial aid administrator at your college may require you to provide a copy of the determination or other documentation.</p> <p>If you do not have a determination but you believe you are/were an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or an unaccompanied youth providing your own living expenses who is at risk of being homeless, contact your high school counselor, school district McKinney-Vento homeless liaison, school's financial aid office, or the National Center for Homeless Education at 1-800-308-2145 for assistance. More information and a template homelessness determination form are also available at <a href="http://www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc">www.naehcy.org/dl/uy_higher_ed.doc</a>.</p>
<p><b>FAFSA Step 4</b></p>	<p>If you (the student) answered "Yes" to <b>any</b> question in Step 3, skip Step 4 and go directly to Step 5 on page 8.</p>
<p><b>Question #93 FAFSA Step 5</b> "How many people are in your household?"</p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I am staying with a friend's family. Are they part of my "household"? <b>A:</b> No. If you are considered independent (for example, because you are an unaccompanied youth who is homeless), and you have no dependent children of your own, you are a family of one (yourself). For this question, as well as <b>Questions 94-101</b>, you should not count people with whom you share housing as part of your household.</p>
<p><b>Question #103 FAFSA Step 7 Signatures</b></p>	<p><b>Q:</b> I have filled out this form as an independent student because I have been determined to be an unaccompanied youth who is homeless or a youth who was a ward of the court. Do I need my father's and/or mother's signature(s)? <b>A:</b> No. Because of your status as an unaccompanied youth, you are considered an independent applicant; parental signatures are not required.</p>
<p><b>*PLEASE NOTE</b></p>	<p><b>STATUS OF THE FAFSA DOES NOT GUARANTEE NEW JERSEY FOSTER CARE SCHOLARS PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY</b></p>

Amended from [www.naehcy.org/dl/fafsa\\_tips\\_10-11.doc](http://www.naehcy.org/dl/fafsa_tips_10-11.doc) and the California Student Aid Commission