

Student's Name _____ Westmoreland Student ID# _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

The primary responsibility for financing a college education rests with the student and parents. Many students feel they are independent because they are currently living on their own or because their parents no longer claim them on their income taxes. The Financial Aid Office is required by federal law to consider parent information unless the student meets specific criteria as defined on the FAFSA. **Parent refusal to contribute to education costs or provide income information is not, by itself, a basis for a review.**

We may be able to override your dependent status if **unusual family circumstances exist that make it impossible for you to have contact with your parents.**

Dependency Override Warrants

| May Warrant | Does Not Warrant |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented abandonment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent refusal to provide information on the FAFSA or verification form |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental Drug Abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents do not claim student as a dependent for income tax purposes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parental mental incapacity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent(s) unwilling or unable to contribute to student's education |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical or emotional abuse | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student demonstrates self-sufficiency |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Severe estrangement from parent(s) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student reluctant to request income information from parent(s). |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your parent(s) live out of the country and you are unable to maintain contact with them. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student does not wish to communicate with parent(s). |

If your family situation involves extreme circumstances defined as "May Warrant" in the paragraph above, you may appeal your dependent status. **Decisions made at other institutions are not accepted.**

Before our office will consider any changes regarding dependency status, you must complete the appropriate sections of this form and provide supporting documentation. This office may request additional information for consideration of your review.

Documentation

Check one of the options below, attach the required documents to this form, and either mail, fax, or deliver original documents to the Financial Aid Office for review:

- Received Financial Aid as an Independent Student in a prior year at this college.
 - Provide an updated letter describing your current situation and relationship with your parent(s).

OR

- A detailed letter from you describing your relationship with both parents. Letter should address:
 - Last known location of your parents,

- Your last contact with your parents,
- How you have been supporting yourself,
- Where and with whom you have been living, and
- The extreme extenuating circumstances that have caused it to be unreasonable or impossible for you to provide your parent(s) information on the FAFSA. **Include supporting documentation such as police, medical, and/or court documents.**

You must attach two reference letters describing your relationship with both of your parents from people not related to you that are involved in your situation. (a teacher, counselor, medical authority, clergy member, prison administrator, government agency must be signed, etc.) The letter should be on professional letterhead, include contact information from your reference, and must be signed.

Certification and Signature

Your request for independent status will be reviewed once all documents are submitted.

- If appeal is approved, the Financial Aid Office will submit the override to the Central Processing System (CPS). Your financial aid will then be packaged based on independent status. **PLEASE NOTE:** Additional documents may be required after the CPS has processed the revision to your dependency status. If so, they will be listed in your student portal.
- If the appeal is not approved, you will be notified through your Westmoreland email address. In order to receive financial aid, you will have to re-file your FAFSA at <https://studentaid.gov> and include your parent’s information and FSA ID (electronic signature).
- Processing of completely documented Dependency Override Requests may take up to two weeks. **ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL.**

I certify that the submitted information is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. If asked by an authorized official, I agree to provide additional proof of the information provided on this form.

WARNING: I understand that purposely providing false or misleading information on this form may result in reduction or repayment of aid, fines and/or imprisonment in this and/or future years. I authorize the use of this information and any supporting documentation to be utilized at Westmoreland County Community College.

Student’s Signature (**Must** be signed in blue or black ink)

Date

Submit your completed request form along with all supporting documentation to the Financial Aid Office by electronic submission from your Westmoreland student email account to financialaid@westmoreland.edu (SUBJECT LINE: DEPENDENCY OVERRIDE), by uploading to your student portal, in person (Student Enrollment Center located in the Student Achievement Center), or by mail (Westmoreland County Community College, Financial Aid Office, 145 Pavilion Lane, Youngwood, PA 15697).

Please allow 3 business days to confirm receipt of documents in your student portal and 2 weeks for processing **AFTER** we receive **ALL** requested documents.