

## Office of Financial Aid **Dependency Override Request Form 2011-2012**

Federal regulations have determined that a student who meets one of the following is considered to be an independent student:

- Born before 1/1/1988
- Married
- Veteran of U.S. Armed Forces
- Serving on Active Duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training
- Have legal dependents other than spouse
- Orphan or Ward of the Court or in Foster Care after age 13
- Emancipated Minor
- Under Legal Guardianship determined by the Court
- Homeless Unaccompanied Youth
- Working on a Master's or Doctorate program
- Have children and provide more than half of their support

If you do not meet any of the above criteria which the federal government designed around the belief that families have the primary responsibility to pay for higher education. You have the opportunity to dispute this belief based on **extreme circumstances** such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, parent's use of drugs or alcohol, or other similarly extreme situations that result in the separation of a family.

A dependency override can be made to change a student's status from dependent to independent. A dependency override may not be used to make an otherwise ineligible student eligible for federal aid or because the parents are unwilling to provide financial data or support. Bowie State University **will not** grant a dependency override when the sole basis for the request is the parents do not claim the student on income tax returns, or when parents simply do not wish to contribute to educational expenses

When the university grants a dependency override, the student can apply for aid in the same manner as an independent student, using only his or her income and asset information. Each institution is required to institute its own policies regarding the granting of dependency appeals. Students who receive a dependency override from one school do not necessarily receive one from the next school they attend.

Students who wish to apply for a dependency override must submit the following documentation:

1. A letter of explanation, written by the student explaining the extraordinary family circumstances that led to the student leaving the parent's household. The letter must include information on the student's means of support since leaving the parent's household.
2. Letters (on letterhead) from three professionals verifying the family circumstances described by the student. Professionals may include guidance counselors, clergy members, teachers, doctors, family counselors, mental health professionals, and law enforcement.
3. Signed copies of the student's federal income tax return for 2010 and W-2's.
4. Completed copy of the Independent Verification Worksheet for 2011-2012.

Submission of documents **does not guarantee** approval of your request. Approval of your request **does not guarantee** receipt of additional aid. Students approved for a dependency override must renew their dependency appeal each year until the student is automatically considered independent by federal criteria.

Please submit all information and documentation by mail, fax or in person to the Office of Financial Aid. The Appeals Committee will send written notification of its decision to you within two weeks after receipt of all documentation. Please note that additional information may be requested.

