

## **REQUEST FOR INDEPENDENCE OVERRIDE**

Finger Lakes Community College understands that under certain conditions students not meeting the federal definition for independence should be considered independent. You may be eligible for an independence override, if any of the following unusual circumstances apply:

- You voluntarily or involuntarily left home due to an abusive situation that threatened your health and safety.
- Your parent is incapacitated due to incarceration, significant physical or mental illness or other disability.
- You are unable to locate parents after making reasonable efforts.
- You have other extenuating circumstances sufficiently documented by third parties.

Not living with your parents or not being claimed by them on tax forms does not make you an independent student for purposes of applying for federal student aid. If your parent is providing any support to you, including, allowing you to live in their home, including you on their car or health insurance, providing a car to drive on a regular basis, and payment of your tuition or fees.

### **Step 1: Start your FAFSA**

Complete all student sections on the FAFSA. The FAFSA will not fully process without the parental information. However, once we receive this form and documentation, we can work with you to finalize your FAFSA.

### **Step 2: Personal Statement**

Please write a statement explaining why you should be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes. The statement should be physically signed, indicate when you became independent from your parents and why you are unable to live at home.

### **Step 3: Supporting Documentation**

We understand that sometimes your situation is very personal and private, with very few people knowing details. However, to fully assess your request, supporting documentation is required. Please submit at least 2 items from the list below:

#### 1. One letter from a third party professional

A third-party professional is a high school guidance counselor, social worker, clergy, counselor, doctor or other professional who is not related to you and can confirm that your situation warrants independent status. Their letter must be on official letterhead, physically signed and should indicate their relationship/affiliation with you and must explain why you are unable to live at home.

#### 2. Two different letters from close friends and/or family members

Their letter must be physically signed and should indicate their relationship/affiliation with you and must explain why you are unable to live at home and can affirm that your situation deserves independent status.

3. Documentation affirming your personal statement supporting documentation may include court or law enforcement documents; social service statements indicating benefits you qualify for as independent; incident reports; school records, death certificates; incarceration records, etc.

