



Professional Judgment Appeal

Year 2025 - 2026

What is a Professional Judgment Appeal?

The federal laws governing financial aid allow financial aid administrators to reevaluate financial need in cases of documented special circumstances not taken into consideration by the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)*. To ensure compliance with the federal regulations and fairness to the process, there are limits to which circumstances can be considered. These circumstances are considered on a case-by-case basis.

Your eligibility for financial aid was originally calculated based on the information you provided on the FAFSA. The income and asset information you submitted was evaluated using a formula established by Congress. The formula assumes that 2023 income, assets, and family size are good predictors of the family's financial strength during the student's 2025-2026 enrollment. Based on this standard assumption, financial aid eligibility is determined using 2023 income information.

The Financial Aid Administration (FAA) office recognizes that many families experience changes in income, assets, or personal situations that are not reflected in the 2023 tax return data. Therefore, it is possible for students to submit an appeal to have their aid offer reviewed if special financial circumstances exist. Counselors will help you determine if your situation can be considered and if a potential "Special Circumstance" is likely to lead to additional aid eligibility.

How to start an appeal:

You can initiate a Professional Judgment appeal by completing the reverse side of this form and submitting it to our office at the address or fax number listed below. All appeals require that the student and spouse/parents (if applicable) submit **signed copies of their 2023 and 2024 federal 1040 income tax return and wage statements (W-2)** to the FAA Office if they have not already done so. Once your appeal is received and the situation has been documented, FAA administrators will review it and notify you of the result. The review process may take as long as six weeks and often, more documentation may be requested. The changes and/or decisions made by FAA **may or may not change** a student's financial aid. Since federal aid eligibility is determined through a needs-analysis formula by the Federal Student Administration, additional funding is not guaranteed. Review decisions by the FAA are final.

Required Documentation:

Step 1: Submit this completed form along with a personal statement explaining the situation and provide third-party documentation confirming this information. Check the appropriate box:

- Decrease in Income/Unemployed/Disabled for at least 8 weeks:** (copies of pay stubs, federal tax returns, termination/release letter from employer, unemployment benefits award, notice of disability status, letter from SSA regarding commencement/termination of benefits, copy of severance pay documents)
- Excessive Out of Pocket Medical Expenses:** (copies of Explanation of Benefit (EOB) statements, receipts, pay stubs showing health/dental insurance premiums, medical letter(s) indicating cost of future care)
- Divorce or Legal Separation which took place after filing of FAFSA:** (Copy of court documents showing separation or divorce or copy of divorce decree indicating filing date of divorce, documentation of living in two separate residences, i.e. utility bills, proof of mortgage, leases, rent receipts)
- Death of parent/spouse which occurred after filing of FAFSA:** (Copy of death certificate and any proof of receipt of benefits)
- Other** _____

Please include student's name and student identification number on each page of your documents.

Student Name: _____ **Student ID:** _____



Professional Judgment Appeal

Professional Judgment

Step 2: In addition to the documentation required, you must also complete the following section requesting anticipated taxable and non-taxable income from January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024. Provide annual amounts, not monthly amounts. If you are unsure, make an estimation of how you think you/your family will be able to support yourselves this year.

2024 Gross Income	Student	Spouse	Parent(s)
Wages, Salaries, Tips			
Interest Income			
Pension			
Business/Farm Income			
Alimony			
Unemployment			
Other:			
Totals			

2024 Untaxed Income	Student	Spouse	Parent(s)
Social Security/SSI			
TANF			
Child Support received			
Pension (Untaxed)			
Earned Income Credit			
Worker's Compensation			
Disability Benefits			
Military Benefits			
Veteran's Benefits			
Cash Support			
Other:			
Totals			

Step 3: I declare that all the information I provided on this form is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Student Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Spouse Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Parent Signature _____ Date ____/____/____

Please include student's name and student identification number on each page of your documents.

Student Name: _____ **Student ID:** _____