

Homelessness Reported for Federal Student Aid Applicants

Important Information

Because the FAFSA only collects limited data on homeless applicants, we release this information with a detailed explanation. If you include this information in writing or in a presentation, please ensure that you provide a clear understanding of what the data mean. Data on unaccompanied homeless youth collected on the FAFSA should not be construed to be representative of the entire population of homeless applicants.

Limited Population of Applicants Included in this Report

The FAFSA does not collect homelessness information for the purpose of determining the population of homeless students attending postsecondary institutions. Rather, homelessness questions on the FAFSA are for the sole purpose of determining an applicant's dependency status for Federal Student Aid and are presented only to a subset of the applicant population.

There are ten other questions on the FAFSA that also are used to determine dependency status and homelessness questions are the last ones presented. Once an applicant provides a positive response on FAFSA on the Web for any of the questions, most of the additional questions, including those for homelessness, are not presented (skipped).

Based on the priority order of questions on FAFSA on the Web, homelessness questions were not presented to applicants who were 24 years or older, married, or who answered "Yes" to the any of the questions: in a graduate program, in active duty, veteran, orphan, in foster care, ward of the court, emancipated minor, in legal guardianship or providing more than half of a dependent's support. Therefore, this report excludes applicants in any of these situations (see exception in note below). Counts also exclude applicants who were determined to be independent by a school financial aid administrator for a special circumstance when homelessness was not specified.

Year to year changes in homelessness reported here do not necessarily represent trends in homeless populations. Federal Student Aid requirements, including skip logic on the FAFSA, could impact counts of homeless applicants between cycles. Additionally, changes in other applicant characteristics between cycles could impact the numbers of applicants presented with homelessness questions, and, because of skip logic, mask or falsely indicate underlying changes in homeless populations.

Determining Homelessness

There are three questions on the FAFSA that ask an applicant if he/she has been determined by an authority (school, HUD or youth center/program) to be (or at risk of becoming) unaccompanied and homeless (reference questions 55-57 on the 2022-23 paper FAFSA). If an applicant cannot provide a positive response to any of the questions, he/she can request consideration for determination of a homelessness status by a school financial aid administrator.

There are two groups of applicants reported here.

1. Applicants determined to be (or at risk of becoming) unaccompanied homeless youth, either by an authority (self-reported on the FAFSA) or by a school financial aid administrator, are considered independent for the purposes of Federal Student Aid and do not need to report parents' financial information on the FAFSA.
2. The homelessness status remains unknown for applicants who had requested consideration by a school for a determination of homelessness, but for whom no determination had been made by the end of an application cycle. This could be due to several reasons, including a student not following up with a school financial aid administrator, not satisfying the requirements for a homelessness determination, or even not attending school.

Notes:

- Although 99% of initial applications were submitted by students via FAFSA on the Web in application cycle 2022-23, a similar logic does not exist for skipping questions on applications or corrections submitted via paper or directly from a school. Therefore, in some cases, homelessness might not be the only reason an applicant was determined to be independent, especially in earlier years when fewer applications were submitted online.
- Counts in these reports include all application sources, include both rejected and completed applications, and are based on last transaction.

Table 1. Homelessness determinants. Counts represent unique applicants.

Application Cycle	¹ Unaccompanied Homeless Youth					² Undetermined Requests for Homelessness Consideration
	Agency Determinant (Self-Reported on FAFSA)			School Financial Aid Administrator Determinant	Sum	
	High School or School District	HUD Program	Youth or Transitional Program			
2021-2022	19,735	3,697	4,684	3,633	31,749	40,228
2022-2023	21,972	4,300	5,426	4,313	36,011	43,949
2023-2024	28,475	5,373	6,567	5,564	45,979	43,083

¹Unaccompanied Homeless Youth

Applicants determined to be (or at risk of becoming) unaccompanied homeless youth, either by an agency (self-reported on the FAFSA) or by a school financial aid administrator.

²Undetermined Requests for Homelessness Consideration

Applicants whose homelessness statuses remain unknown because no determination had been made in response their requests for schools to consider their special circumstance of being homeless. Reasons for this are unknown but could include not attending or following up with school or not being determined to be unaccompanied homeless.

Note: Data retrieved from CPS on 1/16/25. The counts in this report include only a portion of applicants who might be homeless and should not be construed to be representative of the entire population of homeless applicants. Additionally, year to year changes in homelessness reported here do not necessarily represent trends in homeless populations.

Table 2. Unaccompanied homeless youth by state. Counts represent unique applicants.

State	Application Cycle		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
AK	89	96	92
AL	378	450	521
AR	316	343	427
AZ	659	757	981
CA	4,568	5,319	7,332
CO	523	581	733
CT	199	209	253
DC	119	120	122
DE	74	83	109
FL	2,035	2,251	2,862
GA	1,020	1,112	1,376
HI	45	61	76
IA	263	276	354
ID	229	263	251
IL	1,808	2,022	2,467
IN	474	452	598
KS	284	314	359
KY	300	401	514
LA	471	607	698
MA	590	661	789
MD	637	718	948
ME	159	194	258
MI	1,179	1,293	1,594
MN	520	481	572
MO	987	1,011	1,323
MS	219	205	258
MT	128	144	181
NC	705	777	960
ND	63	77	95
NE	195	192	220

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Table 2. Unaccompanied homeless youth by state. Counts represent unique applicants (continued).

State	Application Cycle		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
NH	72	88	130
NJ	373	369	457
NM	184	242	315
NV	291	297	374
NY	1,124	1,225	1,575
OH	674	773	963
OK	491	536	641
OR	870	1,015	1,258
PA	747	865	1122
RI	48	69	104
SC	236	229	341
SD	42	59	62
TN	715	774	1020
TX	3,705	4,647	6,002
UT	204	213	273
VA	460	455	565
VT	38	43	56
WA	1,366	1,603	2,194
WI	418	539	641
WV	203	230	273
WY	134	165	188
Other	118	105	102
Sum:	31,749	36,011	45,979

Table 3. Total applicants by dependency (for reference)

Dependency Status (for Federal Student Aid)	Application Cycle		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Dependent	8,288,977	8,189,852	8,551,203
Independent	9,241,951	8,854,909	9,377,079
Sum:	17,530,928	17,044,761	17,928,282

Note: Data retrieved from CPS on 1/16/25. The counts in this report include only a portion of applicants who might be homeless and should not be construed to be representative of the entire population of homeless applicants. Additionally, year to year changes in homelessness reported here do not necessarily represent trends in homeless populations.