



# INDEPENDENT YOUTH at the University of Northern Colorado

## What does it mean to be an Independent Youth (IY)?

There are several reasons that a student could be classified as Independent Youth. Classification of dependency status begins with completion of the FAFSA and is determined by the Department of Education and verified by the Office of Financial Aid. Students may be independent youth if it has been determined that they fall into one of the following categories:

- They have or will have children who will receive more than half of their support from them.
- Student has dependents, other than children or spouse, that receive half of their support from the student.
- At any time since the age of 13, the student's parents were deceased, they were in foster care, or they were a dependent or ward of the court.
- Student is an emancipated minor or someone other than their parents/stepparents has legal guardianship of them, such as their grandparents.
- Student was determined as unaccompanied youth who was homeless or were self-supporting and at risk of being homeless.
- Students can also receive independent status through an appeals process in situations involving unusual circumstances. Some examples of such circumstances include the following:
  - Student has an abusive family environment (e.g. sexual, physical, or mental abuse)
  - Abandonment by parents
  - Incarceration of both parents

*An Office of the U.S. Department of Education (November 2017) Federal Student Aid  
FinAid Page (2018). Dependency Overrides*

## What happens after a student is classified as IY?

Once a student is classified as IY, they are automatically placed into the **Academic Bridge** program to receive academic support throughout their entire time at the University of Northern Colorado. There is NOT an application process for students to enter the program.

### IY ACADEMIC STATISTICS

According to the Colorado Department of Education (2018), in 2017 students in foster care had a high school graduation rate of 33.6% in four years compared to the state average of 79%.

A study completed by the U.S. Department of Education (2011) found that 72% of foster youth enrolled in a two- or four-year college DID NOT receive their degree or certificate within six years.

The National Conference of State Legislatures (2013) stated that 40% of teen mothers finish high school nationally. Fewer than 2% finish college by age 30.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, at least 32,000 college students were homeless in 2017.



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## Center for Human Enrichment's Academic Bridge Program



### CONTACT INFORMATION:

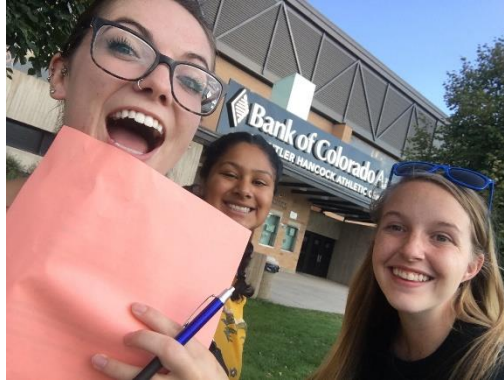
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Academic Bridge is one of the student support programs in the Center for Human Enrichment (CHE). This program assists students throughout their educational journey to earning a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Northern Colorado. Academic Bridge serves Independent Youth, Denver Scholarship Foundation (DSF) Scholars, and first generation college students referred to the program.

## Program Services for IY Students:

- One-on-one academic advising
- Navigating the college experience
- Schedule changes and schedule building
- Assistance with navigating the financial aid process (FAFSA and verification)
- Success workshops (time management, science study skills, stress management, off-campus housing information, etc.)
- Grade checks
- Resource referrals
- Study night events
- Social events (Bingo Night, Spaghetti Night, Game Night, etc.)
- Peer mentoring
- Major and career exploration
- Scholarship guidance and information
- Toiletry items and food item assistance

### CITATION INDEX

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