Professional Judgment

Special Circumstances refer to financial situations (loss of a job, etc.) that justify an aid administrator adjusting data elements in the COA (cost of attendance) or in the SAI (Student Aid Index) calculation.

Special circumstances may include:

- Change in employment status, income or assets
- Change in housing status (e.g., homelessness)
- Tuition expenses at an elementary or secondary school
- Medical, dental, or nursing home expenses not covered by insurance
- Child or dependent care expenses
- Severe disability of the student or other member of the student's household
- Other changes or adjustments that impact the student's costs or ability to pay for college

If you have a special circumstance, you may fill out a **Dependent Income Reduction** form if you are a dependent student or an **Independent Income Reduction** form if you are an Independent Student. Please read the instructions on the form and provide the necessary documentation. The forms are available online at: **https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/financial-aid-forms.html**

Unusual Circumstances refer to the conditions that justify an aid administrator making an adjustment to a student's dependency status based on a unique situation. Financial Aid Administrators have the authority to determine independent status based on unusual circumstances which must be based on instances in which the student is unable to contact a parent or where contact with parents poses a risk to the student:

Unusual circumstances may include:

- Human trafficking;
- Legally granted refugee or asylum status;
- Parental abandonment or estrangement; and
- Student or parental incarceration

If you have unusual circumstances and are unable to provide your parent information on your FAFSA application you may submit a Dependency Change form. Please read the instructions on the form and provide the necessary documentation. The form is available online at: **https://studentservices.southtexascollege.edu/finaid/financial-aid-forms.html**