



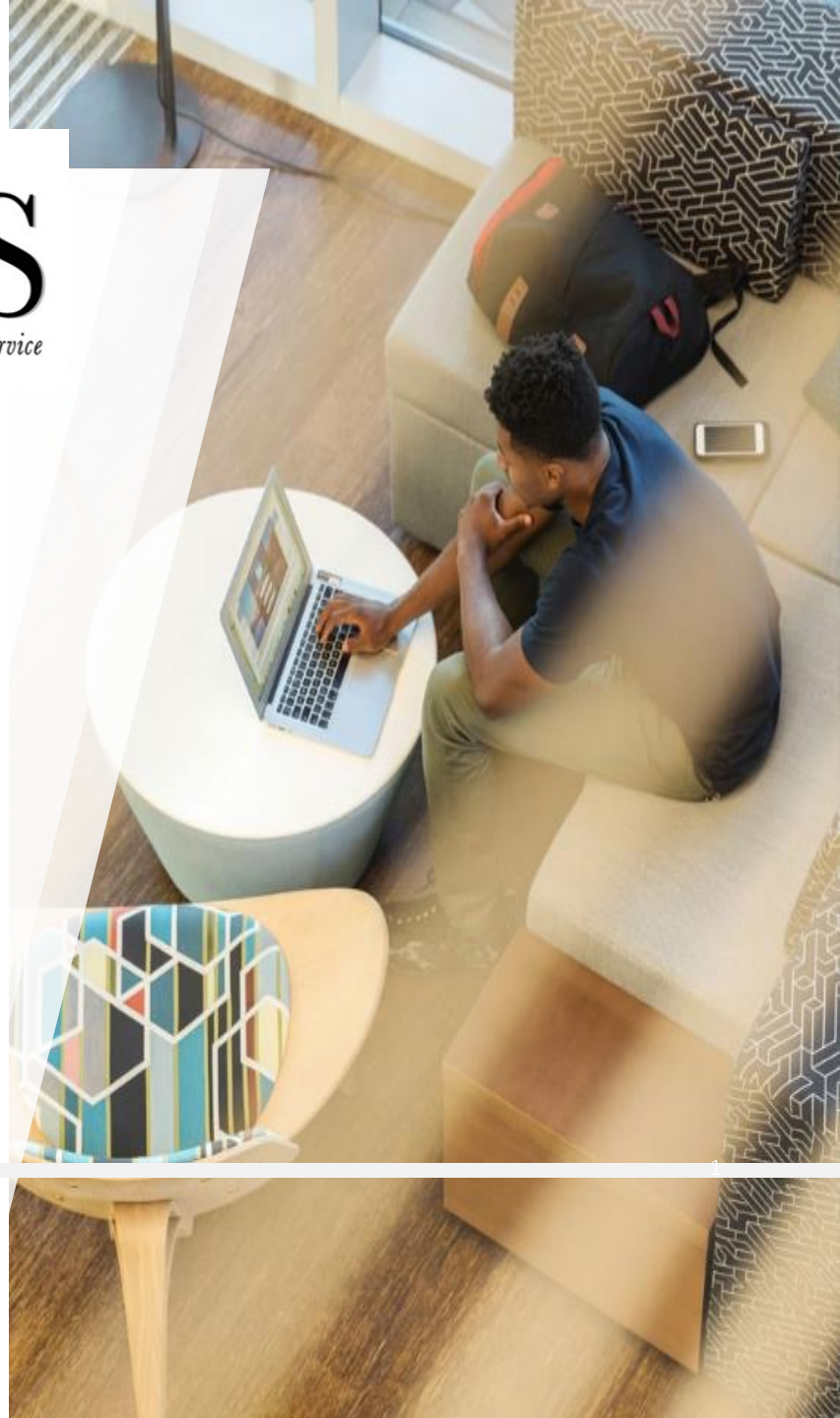
Understanding the RDS Process

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Today's Topics

- History/Role of RDS
- Basic statutory requirements
- Special provisions
- Student online experience
- Helpful Hints for your students
 - Understanding what RDS needs
- Q & A



Residency Determination Service (RDS) is operated by College Foundation, Inc. (CFI) under contract, authority and guidance of the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA)

The College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC), a collaborative partnership, assists with informing students about RDS and other issues surrounding college access.



Eligibility for Subsidized In-State Tuition



- ✓ Each state sets its eligibility criteria
- ✓ Requirements are similar in most states
- ✓ In NC, statutes date back to the 1970s with few changes since that time.
- ✓ There are some provisions in law to allow for tuition exceptions in very specific situations.

Residency Determination Process



- ✓ NC has some of the lowest in-state tuition rates in the country, and there have been historic concerns about non-resident students seeking eligibility.
- ✓ In 2015, the legislature after reviewing issues and concerns, passed a bill to require that these determinations would be handled by one centralized process.
- ✓ NC State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA) is designated in statute to be the entity to establish and oversee the process.

Residency Determination Process



- ✓ Residency Determination Services (RDS) is operated by College Foundation, (CFI) under contract by SEAA.
- ✓ RDS is an online application process, utilizing electronic validation whenever possible.
- ✓ RDS System was developed in collaboration with UNC, NC Community Colleges, and NC Independent Colleges & Universities.
- ✓ RDS utilizes the existing laws and cannot change the legal requirements.



Basic Legal Requirements: Residency for Tuition Purposes

Basic Concepts – Residency Law



- ✓ **Legal Capacity** is required to establish a primary, permanent residence (domicile)
 - At least 18 and a US Citizen *or* hold eligible immigration status
- ✓ **Domicile** – Must have the intent and take actions to establish that the residence in NC is their primary, permanent home.
- ✓ **Duration** - Have established a domicile in NC and been present for a minimum of the past 12 months.
 - Merely residing in NC, even for more than 12 months is not sufficient; It must be a primary, permanent residence.

Basic Concepts – Residency Law



✓ **Domiciliary Acts** – Evidence that the person has taken actions typically associated with establishing a permanent residence

○ *Some Examples:*

- driver license / vehicle registration / NC State ID Card
- voter registration
- Claiming NC as primary residence on filed taxes
- NC Medicaid recipient or other DHHS program participation
- State of residence claimed on FAFSA

Basic Concepts – Residency Law



- ✓ **Domicile of a *parent or court-appointed legal guardian*** – is presumed in law to be the student's domicile unless the student can prove their own domicile and independence, including financial independence. The dependent student does *not* have to be living with the parent or legal guardian.
- ✓ **Preponderance of Evidence** – When there are two or more states in the picture, RDS looks for a *preponderance of evidence* to point to NC as the permanent residence or domicile.

**STUDENT
EXPERIENCE
USING THE RDS
ONLINE SYSTEM**



Special Provisions



There are several **special provisions** carved into law for students in certain circumstances that *RDS will screen for* including:

- Ward of the State
- Emancipated minor (by marriage or court-order)
- Orphans
- Split families
- Living long-term in NC with adult relative(s)
- Marrying a NC resident
- Military-affiliated families

Immigration Status of Student – Reviewed by RDS


- Permanent vs Temporary
- No evidence of an eligible status





Eligible Immigration Categories

Once conferred, eligible categories include:

- Lawful Permanent Resident
 - Refugee
 - Asylee
 - Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
 - Eligible Non-Immigration Visas
- 

***What type of
information is
requested by RDS?
for student or
parent?***



RDS Online – Student Experience



Information Needed to Complete FAFSA and Residency Determination Service (RDS)

INFORMATION NEEDED	FAFSA		Residency (RDS)
Student's Personal Identifying information (SSN, ARN, USCIS, or ITIN)	YES		YES
Parent's Personal Identifying information (SSN, ARN, USCIS, or ITIN)	YES		YES
Student and/or Parent's Federal Tax information	YES		Potentially
Student and/or Parent's State Tax Information	NO		YES
Permanent Residence Information	YES		YES
Vehicle or Driver License Information	YES		YES
Military Information (if applicable)	YES		YES
US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Documentation (if applicable)	NO		YES
Where Do I Go To Complete the Process	Fafsa.gov		ncresidency.org
What Information Should I Save	*FSA ID		**RCN
Is Residency Information Needed	YES		YES



Online RDS requests

- ✓ An Initial Consideration is the primary step student takes to request residency determination
- ✓ Students complete an online interview with skip logic
- ✓ Student receives a Residency Certification Number (RCN) to supply to any NC college and university to which they apply. Student retains this same number for future determinations



Online RDS requests

- ✓ Whenever possible, RDS validates the information provided electronically with state agencies.
- ✓ Only about 5 percent of students are required to submit documents for their Initial Consideration.
- ✓ A student may be requested to submit more information, or choose to, if the electronic process could not verify their residency and they need to return to RDS.



Online RDS requests

- ✓ The student's determination is downloaded by college campuses and is also sent to the State Grants System
- ✓ If the student believes the determination is not correct, they can request a *Reconsideration or Appeal*



Student Dashboard Status Summary

Your Residency Certification Number (RCN) is **1100212005**

[\(Click to know more about RCN\)](#)

CURRENT REQUEST (EXPIRES ON OCTOBER 13, 2020 - [CLICK TO KNOW MORE](#))

ARE YOU A NORTH
CAROLINA RESIDENT ?

YES

[\(Click to know more\)](#)

ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR IN-
STATE TUITION ?

YES

[\(Click to know more\)](#)

HAS MY INFORMATION BEEN
VALIDATED ?

NO

[\(Click to know more\)](#)

- RDS checks the information you provided in your online interview. You will be emailed if your in-state status changes due to this review. This page will update once this review is complete.
- You may continue to submit your admission application(s) or register for classes.

[VIEW CFNC APPLICATION\(S\)](#)

[VIEW REQUEST SUMMARY](#)

[RECONSIDERATION / APPEAL](#)

All of the Status pages have a “Reconsideration/Appeal” button.

Informational screens then direct you through the process of requesting a Reconsideration or Appeal.

***Navigating the
RDS System:***

***Homeless /
Unaccompanied
Students***



Navigating the System - 1

- ✓ The easiest path would be for students to provide any information on a parent who is a resident in NC. The student does NOT have to be living with them.
- ✓ Even if the parent information is incomplete, this can serve as a foundation for RDS to do additional research on the parent.

Navigating the System - 2

- ✓ Students who indicate that they have a special housing situation are given a list of qualifiers, including McKinney-Vento criteria, and asked to answer yes or no if any of these apply to them.
- ✓ If the student answers “yes” to this question, then they do not get an immediate determination. Instead, it comes in for review by the RDS staff who will ask for more information about the situation and the parent(s).

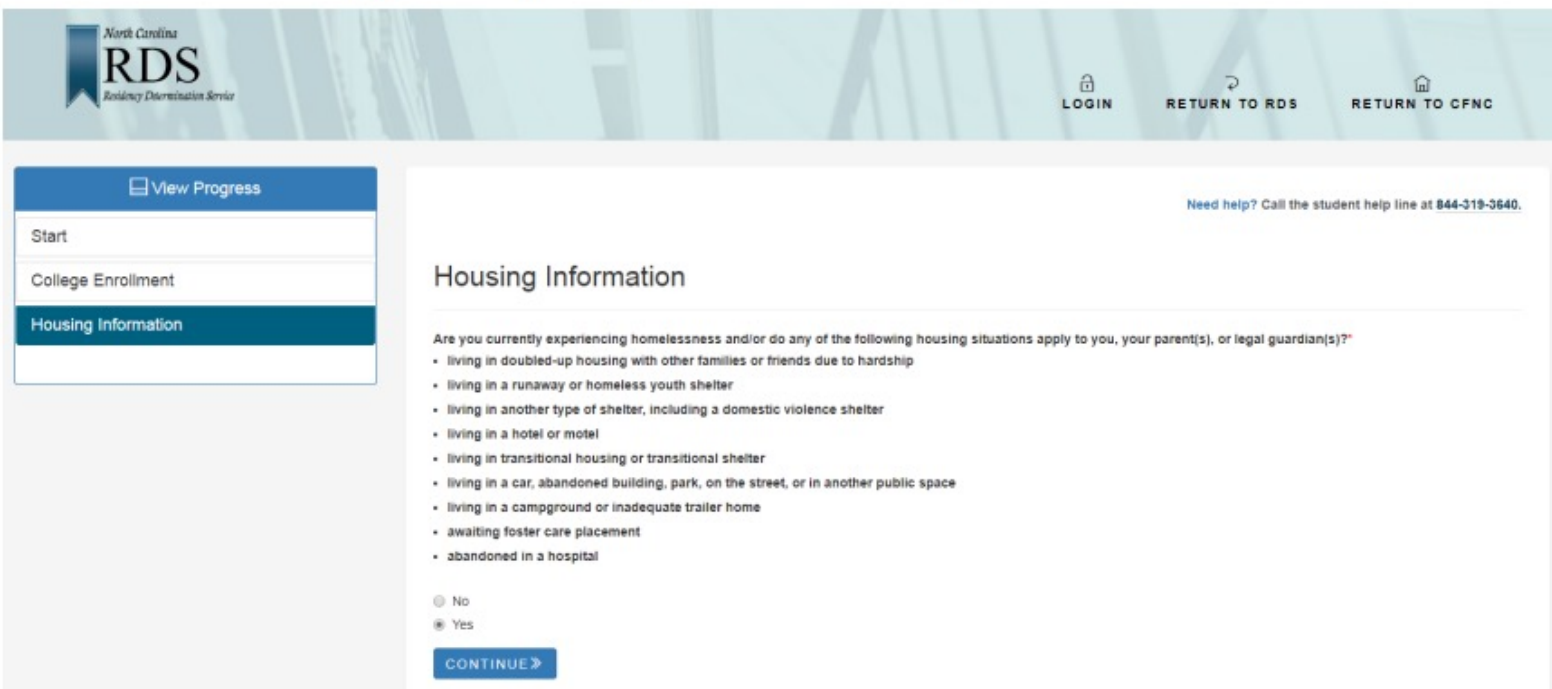
Navigating the System - 3

There is a resource online on the RDS website for students experiencing homelessness to assist with navigating the system.

This document is to assist counselors with students who may be in an alternate living situation and/or experiencing homelessness.

RDS Online Interview:

1. Once a student completes the college enrollment questions (i.e. are you currently enrolled/do you know when you want to enroll), the next section is housing.
2. A listing of McKinney Vento classifiers is immediately presented.
3. If the student selects “Yes” to the housing situations list, the student’s interview is flagged as “experiencing homelessness/needing assistance”. If the student selects “No”, the student’s interview is not flagged as “experiencing homelessness/needing assistance”.



The screenshot shows the RDS Online Interview interface. At the top, there is a header with the North Carolina RDS logo and navigation links: LOGIN, RETURN TO RDS, and RETURN TO CFNC. Below the header, there is a sidebar with a 'View Progress' button and a list of sections: Start, College Enrollment, and Housing Information (which is currently selected). The main content area is titled 'Housing Information' and contains a question: 'Are you currently experiencing homelessness and/or do any of the following housing situations apply to you, your parent(s), or legal guardian(s)?'. Below the question is a list of housing situations: living in doubled-up housing with other families or friends due to hardship, living in a runaway or homeless youth shelter, living in another type of shelter, including a domestic violence shelter, living in a hotel or motel, living in transitional housing or transitional shelter, living in a car, abandoned building, park, on the street, or in another public space, living in a campground or inadequate trailer home, awaiting foster care placement, and abandoned in a hospital. At the bottom of the list are two radio buttons: 'No' and 'Yes' (which is selected). Below the radio buttons is a 'CONTINUE' button.

North Carolina
RDS
Residency Determination Service

LOGIN RETURN TO RDS RETURN TO CFNC

[View Progress](#)

Start

College Enrollment

Housing Information

[Need help? Call the student help line at 844-319-3640.](#)

Housing Information

Are you currently experiencing homelessness and/or do any of the following housing situations apply to you, your parent(s), or legal guardian(s)?*

- living in doubled-up housing with other families or friends due to hardship
- living in a runaway or homeless youth shelter
- living in another type of shelter, including a domestic violence shelter
- living in a hotel or motel
- living in transitional housing or transitional shelter
- living in a car, abandoned building, park, on the street, or in another public space
- living in a campground or inadequate trailer home
- awaiting foster care placement
- abandoned in a hospital

☐ No

☒ Yes

[CONTINUE »](#)



TIPS (1)

- Generally, a student will not be able to qualify as independent prior to the age of 19.



TIPS (2)

- When qualifying based on parent information, student does NOT have to be living with them.
- Even partial information about a parent can assist RDS for verification.



TIPS (3)

- Unless RDS determines that the student can qualify under a special provision in law, parent information must be used.



TIPS (4)

- Specific student situations vary and RDS will request what is needed.
- An unofficial transcript might be helpful if it has name of parent(s)



TIPS (5)

- Generally, then, *where* a student is living is not a consideration for RDS purposes.

OPTIONS – NEXT STEPS FOR A STUDENT WHO GETS A NON-RESIDENT CLASSIFICATION

- Submit a Reconsideration Request
- Submit an Appeal Request *(recommended here)
- Consider eligibility for a campus-based exception
- If applicable, submit a Level 2 Appeal to SEAA



Campus- Based Exceptions for UNC System



There are two specific provisions carved into law for the UNC System that are handled by the campus:

- Full-Scholarship Students
- Eligible Full-time permanent employees and their families



Campus- Based Exceptions for NCCCS

There are several sector-specific provisions carved into law:

- US Citizens who are recent NC public high school graduates (good for 12 months from date of graduation).
- Business-Sponsored Students
- Business-and Military-Transferred Families (recent resident arrivals)
- Students Sponsored by a Non-Profit Entity (recent resident arrivals)
- Certain Non-US Citizen NC Public HS Graduates (lawfully admitted to US)
- Recent Arrivals with Refugee Status
- Non-citizen with pending application for Permanent Resident Status

RDS Determinations

By law, only RDS can give an In-State residency determination

Any tuition exceptions for a non-resident will not change residency status.

A student must have an *active* RDS determination on the first day of their enrollment in a program to be eligible for in-state tuition.

Top reasons
students receive
a non-resident
determination
on their first
submission
(ranked in order
of frequency)

- **Incorrect SSN and/or DOB**
 - **Skipping too many questions**
 - **Keying in other incorrect information**
 - **Student is not financially independent & declined to provide parent info**
-
- **Living in NC less than 12 months**
 - **Failure to submit documents requested by RDS**
 - **Ineligible immigration status**

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION

- *RDS Guidebook*
- *Rev. 1-2022 (public document)*



- **RDS Public Website** : www.ncresidency.org
 - Provides general information and one way a student can access RDS system
 - General information about the process
 - A series of helpful Q & As
 - Helpful handouts on various specific topics
 - Provides a link to the official *RDS Guidebook*
- **RDS Call Center (Students)**: 844.319.3640 (toll free)
 - rdsinfo@ncresidency.org | M-Th 8-6; Fri 8-5. Extended hours in peak registration periods
- Dedicated Call Center that assists students with:
 - general questions
 - account/password resets
 - general guidance when a student fills out their application
 - review of status/next steps with student

Questions / Discussion

