



Navigating RDS

July 25, 2025

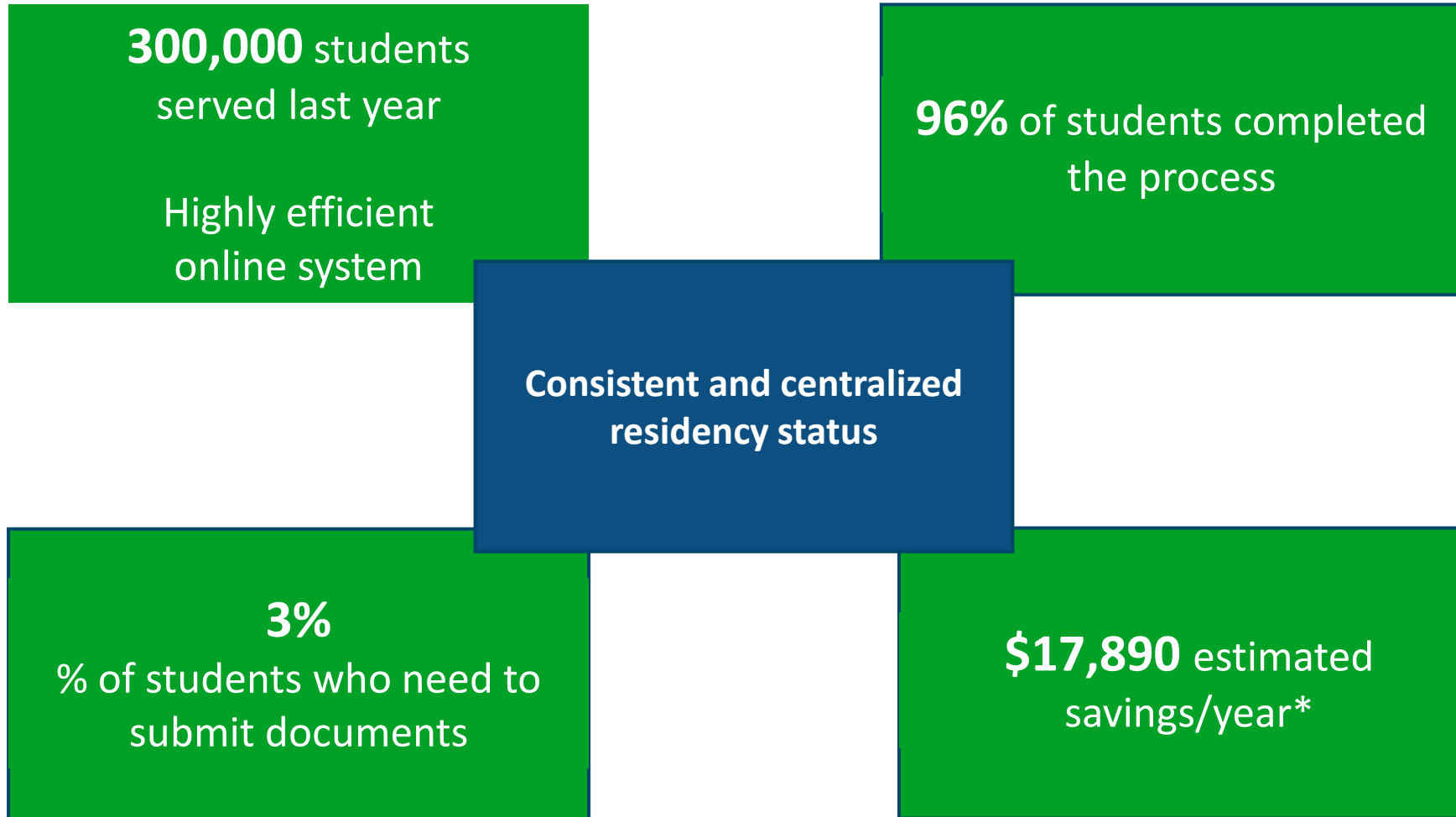




Agenda

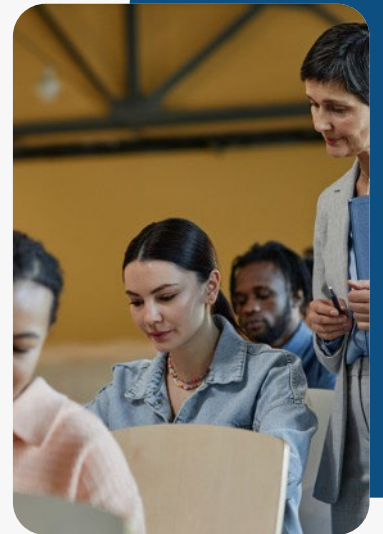
- 01** RDS Basics
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RDS By the Numbers



RDS

- State Law defines requirements for residency for tuition & state grants
- RDS provides the centralized service for these determinations. The system was developed with college/university staff
- RDS processes requests for over 300,000 new students each year
- Electronic validation utilized whenever possible. On initial consideration, only about 3% of students need to submit documents.





RDS Basics

Legal Requirements

Basic Concepts – Residency Law

- ✓ **Legal Capacity** is required to establish a primary, permanent residence (domicile)
- ✓ **Domicile** – Must have the *intent* and *take actions* to establish a *domicile* in North Carolina.
- ✓ **Duration** - Have established a *domicile* in NC and been present for a minimum of the past 12 months.





Legal Requirements

Basic Concepts – Residency Law

- ✓ **Domicile of a student** is generally presumed in law to be the same domicile as the parent 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. A student can have multiple residences, but **only one domicile**.

Special Provisions

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

- Immigration status of non-US citizen students
- Ward of the State
- Emancipated minor (by marriage or court-order)
- Orphans (no legal guardian appointed)
- Split families
- Living long-term in NC with adult relative(s)
- Marrying a NC resident
- Military-affiliated families



RDS Conditional Determinations

- The process involves an online application that uses sophisticated skip-logic.
- About 99% of students receive a provisional decision right away, subject to validation.
- Requests for RDS determination should be part of the college application process.
- **Pro Tip:** They should NOT be submitted prior to the student's senior year in HS!



RDS Dashboard

Student Dashboard Summary

Students can log in to see status

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 been updated with a “Reconsideration/Appeal” button. Informational screens then direct you through the process of requesting a Reconsideration or Appeal.

Options for students who receive a non-resident status

And believe that status is incorrect

- Submit a Reconsideration Request
 - Used if a student needs to correct mistakes or if they did not submit required documents
- Submit an Appeal Request
 - Used if a student believes residency classification is incorrect or if they have special/complex circumstances
- Submit a level 2 Appeal to SEAA (limited grounds for appeal)
 - Reviews the RDS decision based on the facts and documents already presented to RDS.
 - Used primarily if a student believes RDS disregarded or made a mistake in interpreting the requirements of the law or RDS Guidebook when making the decision.
- Work with specific college for possible eligibility for a campus-based tuition exception

Reconsideration vs Appeal

A student should complete an RDS reconsideration if:

- They did not supply correct information when asked (like guessing on a question without looking it up)
- They did not supply information when asked (like selecting “no” to a question they should have selected “yes” for)
- They missed the 25-day deadline to submit documentation
- They missed the 10-day deadline to request an RDS Appeal
- They have had a change in circumstance since completing the online interview



Reconsideration vs Appeal

A student should complete an RDS appeal if:

- They have special circumstances in which they may need to provide additional information not asked of them in the online interview
- They believe their residency classification is incorrect and that their situation supports that they are domiciled in NC as defined by State law at least 12 months prior to request for residency

(During an appeal, students work one-on-one with an RDS Appeals Specialist to review their request for residency)



Options for students who receive a non-resident status

- For a Reconsideration or Appeal, the student provides a short statement about their situation.
- McKinney-Vento designation, while considered by RDS, does not provide a legal exemption of requirements for state residency. They qualify using other criteria.
- Do not submit additional “support” documents. Wait for RDS to review and request additional documents if needed.



Student Notifications

- Students will receive email and text reminders (they must opt-in to receive texts)
- In-Progress Requests
 - Reminders will be emailed (and texted if opted-in) and are sent on Day 8, 15, and 24
 - If they do not complete within 25 days, they can start over
- Documentation Deadlines
 - Reminders will be emailed (and texted if opted-in) and are sent on Day 8, 15, and 24
 - They can log back in at any time to submit the documentation
 - Can be uploaded, faxed, or mailed

Options for students who do not meet legal requirements for in-state residency



Campus-Based Tuition Exceptions

These are all handled by the specific campus, **not RDS.**

- Very specific tuition exceptions and criteria are carved into law and vary by sector (UNC and NCCC Systems). *RDS Guidebook* has a list of these
- Non-resident students who use a VA educational benefit are entitled to a tuition adjustment

Common Mistakes

Top reasons students receive a non-resident determination on their first submission

Ranked in order of frequency

1. Incorrect SSN and/or DOB
2. Skipping too many questions
3. Keying in other incorrect information
4. Student is not independent & declined to provide parent info
5. Living in NC less than 12 months
6. Failure to submit documents requested by RDS
7. Ineligible immigration status

Helpful Tips



Helpful Tips

- Students should *NOT* complete RDS prior to fall of the senior year!
- Student needs to carefully enter information
- Student needs to provide as much parent information as possible (NOT other adults)
- Student does NOT have to be living with the parent

Helpful Tips

- The student must be a US Citizen or they must currently hold an *eligible* immigration status
- RDS does NOT request information or ask about the citizenship or immigration status of a parent
- For dependent students, documentation that the parent is a resident of NC *is* required

Helpful Tips

- RDS system can accommodate most scenarios
- Filing for appeal may assist students who have special or unique circumstances
- Generally, a student will not be able to qualify as independent prior to the age of 19
- Don't try to give detailed advice/guidance in unique situations. Encourage the student to contact the RDS Call Center or submit an appeal

Planning for Working with Students Who Need Help



Tips

- Consider sending home a basic information sheet about what RDS is & why students need to complete it
- Explain why it's helpful to have it complete before College Application Week
- Offer timeline for students and families for this process:
 - September = RDS at home with family
 - October = College Applications
 - November = Scholarships
 - December = FAFSA
- Use ProTools to track RDS completion

Tips

- For the small number of students who may struggle with the RDS interview:
 - **Pro Tip:** Consider in-person or virtual "office hours" to help with basic Q&A
- Refer students and families to the [FAQ](#) on the RDS site
- **Remember:**
 - **Reconsideration** is a chance to "re-do" the process if an error was made on the application
 - An **appeal** is for when a student does not agree with their determination or needs human eyes on their RDS application

Resources



Resources

RDS Guidebook

- Revised March 2024
- Available on the public RDS website
- Details about laws, policies, and procedures

https://www.ncresidency.org/media/3safqses/rds_guidebook.pdf



Resources

RDS Website – www.ncresidency.org

- FAQs: What to Know
- Resources guides – one-pagers

Student Help Line – 844.319.3640

- 3rd party release
- Hours: 8 AM – 6 PM Monday – Thursday

8 AM – 5 PM Friday

(Extended hours available in peak periods)

Student Email – rdsinfo@ncresidency.org



Thank you!

Questions?



Presented by:

First Last Name

