

Foster Care Education: Higher Education

Higher Education for Young Adults from Foster Care

College students coming from foster care require more attention than most other first generation students because of their background and their early independent status. Students can arrive at college in a survival mode, focused on basic needs such as safe and stable housing (especially during school breaks and summers), food, transportation, healthcare, and adequate financial aid. This document was created to address some general information around Foster Care and Higher Education access and resources.

Foster Care Definition

The 2011-12 Federal Student Aid (FSA) Application and Verification Guide (AVG) states the definition of foster care is a student who at any time since the age of 13, was a foster child or a dependent/ward of the court is independent, for the purposes of Title IV financial aid, even if her status changed later. A foster parent or a legal guardian is not treated as a parent for FSA purposes. When a dependency court creates a guardianship over a dependent child and “closes the court case,” the court still retains jurisdiction over the child. This is true even when the court-appointed legal guardian is not a relative. The child is therefore a ward of the court for purposes of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

FAFSA Question 53

At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?

A youth applying for FAFSA should answer yes to question 53 as stated below. The college will then ask for a court document that proves that they were placed in care. For the purposes of federal financial aid, access the “Confirmation of Foster Care Dependency Form” to be completed at the county last in custody at. The document can be accessed at:

https://www.courts.state.co.us/Courts/Supreme_Court/Committees/Committee.cfm?Committee_ID=8

Educational Training Vouchers (ETV)'s

Students may receive up to \$5000 a year for qualified school related expenses. Funding is limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis to eligible students.

National Facts

- Students that were in foster care are unlikely to attend and graduate from college.
- Over 30 states now have policies that provide state-funded scholarships, grants, or tuition waivers to youth in foster care who are making the transition from foster care to higher education.
- Many states have extended Medicaid coverage to age 21 for youth in foster care as allowed under the federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.
- The federally funded and state administered Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program provides up to \$5,000 annually to college students from foster care in every state.



Eligibility Requirements Include:

- You must be a current or former foster student who: Is currently in out-of-home care, 15 up to 18 years of age, and who has been in out-of-home care a minimum of six months; **OR**
- Is age 16 to 21 who meets requirements for Relative Guardianship Assistance and entered Relative Guardianship Assistance on or after age 16; **OR**
- Is age 16 to 21 who meets requirements for Adoption Assistance and entered Adoption Assistance on or after age 16; **OR**
- Is age 18 to 21 who was in out-of-home care on your 18th birthday, **AND**

- You must be a U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen.
- Your personal assets (bank account, car, home, etc.) are worth less than \$10,000.
- You must be at least 15 but younger than 21 to apply for the first time. You may reapply for ETV funds, if you have a current grant, up to the age of 23.
- You must have been accepted into or be enrolled in a degree, certificate or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, vocational school. To remain eligible for ETV funding, you must show progress toward a degree or certificate.

College In Colorado

A free website to discover paths, design plans and own futures through higher education.

College in Colorado offers college advice, college admission applications, pay for college, financial aid, scholarships, apply online for admission, and online applications. Go to: <https://www.collegeincolorado.org/>

Scholarship

The Denver Foundation has a higher education scholarship for Foster Care & Emancipating Youth.

The scholarship was created to provide educational scholarships for foster care youth who are emancipated or are in the process of preparing to emancipate from the foster care system in Colorado. For more information on the Helen M. McLoraine Scholarship go to: <http://www.denverfoundation.org/grants/page/scholarships>

Where can I learn more?

- Foster Care Education Webpage: http://www.cde.state.co.us/dropoutprevention/fostercare_index
- State Coordinator of Foster Care Education: 303-866-6007
- Colorado Department of Higher Education: <http://highered.colorado.gov> 303-866-2723