



**STATE STATUTES**  
CURRENT THROUGH APRIL 2020

# Educational Supports for Older Youth in Foster Care

To find statute information for a particular State, go to the [State Statutes Search](#).

Youth who are or have been in foster care often encounter challenges in maintaining progress in achieving their educational goals.<sup>1</sup> The John H. Chafee Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (Chafee program), as authorized under title IV-E of the Social Security Act, provides funding to States for services and supports to ensure these youth receive the educational services they need to make a successful transition to adulthood. These funds may be used to aid youth in their efforts to obtain a high school diploma and pursue postsecondary education or vocational training.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Further discussion of this issue is provided in the publication from the Legal Center for Foster Care and Education [website](#).

<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. 677(a) (2019)

## WHAT'S INSIDE

Support for completing high school

Planning for postsecondary education

Financial supports for postsecondary programs

Eligibility requirements

For this publication, statutes, regulations, and policies regarding the services and programs available to support the achievement of the educational goals of youth in foster care were collected from across all States, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories. An analysis of the information collected informs the content that follows.

## **SUPPORT FOR COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL**

Through the Chafee program, youth who are or have been in foster care are eligible for certain educational supports that focus on enabling youth to seek a high school diploma or its equivalent. Approximately 38 States and the District of Columbia have laws or policies that describe the services that support youth in reaching their secondary education goals.<sup>3</sup>

Examples of the specific types of assistance that State laws and policies allow include the following:

- Academic counseling
- Preparation for a general educational development (GED) high school equivalency certification, including studying for the GED exam
- Tutoring, help with homework, and study-skills training
- Literacy training
- Help accessing educational resources

<sup>3</sup> The word "approximately" is used to stress the fact that States frequently amend their laws. This information is current through April 2020. The States that have laws or policies that describe the educational services provided include Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

<sup>4</sup> Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin

- Credit recovery programs for youth who are behind in school or dropout recovery programs for youth who have dropped out of school and fallen behind academically to help them take or repeat a course through classroom, online, small-group, or one-on-one instruction

## **PLANNING FOR POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION**

Approximately 38 States<sup>4</sup> and the District of Columbia have laws or policies that describe the services that help youth plan and prepare to enter postsecondary education programs, including college attendance or vocational training. These postsecondary educational supports may include counseling, mentoring, career planning, assistance with completing applications for admission, and financial assistance.

Examples of the specific types of assistance that State laws and policies allow include the following:

- College preparatory programs and planning assistance
- Classes to prepare for college aptitude tests
- Assistance with completing college applications and financial aid applications
- Payment of fees for college aptitude tests and college applications
- College tours

- Tutoring while in college
- Designated on-campus personnel to assist the student in accessing available supports and services<sup>5</sup>

## FINANCIAL SUPPORTS FOR POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS

Any youth may be eligible for Federal financial assistance, such as a Pell grant, to help pay for college attendance.

To determine eligibility for this assistance, the youth must complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). In general, Federal financial assistance recognizes that youth who were in foster care are in unique circumstances with regards to how aid is considered. For example, neither legal guardians nor foster parents are considered parents when the youth completes the FAFSA, and information regarding their income and household size do not need to be included.

A source of financial support specifically for youth who have been in foster care is the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program. The ETV program is a federally funded, State- or Tribe- administered program that was added to the Chafee

program in 2002. It provides limited financial assistance for postsecondary training and education to youth who have aged out of foster care or who have left foster care after age 16 through kinship guardianship or adoption. Eligible students may receive grants of up to \$5,000 per year for up to 5 years or until their 26th birthday. The ETV program can only help students pay for items as established in the institution's "Cost of Attendance" such as tuition, room and board, meal cards, and books and school supplies.

Approximately 34 States<sup>6</sup> provide their own State-funded financial assistance to students who are or were formerly in foster care,<sup>7</sup> usually in the form of vouchers, waivers, grants, or scholarships that cover the full cost of tuition and fees to attend the State's public universities.<sup>8</sup> These tuition waivers can be applied to 2- and 4-year degree programs or vocational training programs. In 15 States,<sup>9</sup> the amount of financial assistance may be sufficient to cover some of the student's other expenses, including room, board, books, supplies, and transportation costs.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> In Alabama, California, Florida, Indiana, Maine, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and the District of Columbia

<sup>6</sup> Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa (covers one-half the average cost of tuition), Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont (for up to \$3,000 annually), Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia

<sup>7</sup> Four other states—Indiana, Nebraska (for one-half the cost of tuition), Ohio, and South Carolina—have scholarships programs for students demonstrating financial need that is also available to youth currently or formerly in foster care.

<sup>8</sup> In Pennsylvania, eligible institutions of higher education include private colleges and universities.

<sup>9</sup> California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire (through a separate application for a room-and-board scholarship), New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Rhode Island, and Washington

<sup>10</sup> The University of Washington maintains a web page, [Tuition Waivers by State](#), that provides information by State on tuition waivers and contact information for each waiver program manager.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A youth may qualify for the ETV program if he or she meet the following criteria:

- Is age 14 or older and currently in foster care
- Was in foster care at age 18 and is not yet age 21
- Was adopted or placed in a guardianship from foster care after his or her 16th birthday

A State or Tribe may allow youth participating in the voucher program to remain eligible until they reach age 26, as long as they are enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program. A youth may participate in the program for more than 5 years (whether or not the years are consecutive).<sup>11</sup>

Eligibility requirements for State tuition assistance programs vary from State to State, but typically the applicant will need to meet at least the following criteria:

- Be a resident of the State
- Be a U.S. citizen or a noncitizen who is lawfully present in the country

<sup>11</sup> For more information on Federal ETV requirements, see the Program Instruction [ACYF-CB-PI-18-06](#), issued by the Children's Bureau on May 31, 2018.

- Has been accepted into or enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other accredited program at a State-funded college or university
- Has completed and submitted the FAFSA
- Maintains a minimum grade point average and makes satisfactory academic progress toward completion of the educational or vocational program

This publication is a product of the State Statutes Series prepared by Child Welfare Information Gateway. While every attempt has been made to be complete, additional information on these topics may be in other sections of a State's code as well as agency regulations, case law, and informal practices and procedures.

## SUGGESTED CITATION:

Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Educational supports for youth in foster care*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau



This material may be freely reproduced and distributed. However, when doing so, please credit Child Welfare Information Gateway. This publication is available online at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/educationalsupports>.