



The Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program provides tuition waivers at postsecondary institutions for eligible youth who are or have been in foster care.

The Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program, created by Act 16 of 2019, seeks to remove barriers in accessing a postsecondary education for youth who are or have been in foster care. This allows eligible foster youth to complete their studies, graduate with less debt, and have the opportunity to build a network of support.

The program is being administered collaboratively by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in conjunction with the PA departments of Education, Human Services, and Labor & Industry.



The information contained in this document is believed to be accurate at the time of printing.

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Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

Postsecondary Tuition Waiver
for Eligible Foster Care Youth



Am I Eligible?

To be eligible for the tuition waiver, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Pennsylvania resident
- Have not reached age 26 by July 1 immediately prior to the upcoming academic year for which the FosterEd waiver is received
- Have graduated from high school or received a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
- Be eligible for services under Pennsylvania's John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood
- Be identified as a youth in foster care or a youth discharged from foster care at age 16 or older OR exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal custodianship
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, at least half time in a postsecondary institution that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV student assistance programs
- Have unmet cost for the PA Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG), as determined by the postsecondary institution.
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the postsecondary institution
- Not be in default on a federal student loan

How to Participate

Eligible foster youth must take the following steps:

- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
- Submit a Chafee ETG Application (visit PHEAA.org for additional info)
- Enroll in an eligible PA postsecondary institution

FAQs

What is a Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver?

An eligible student's remaining tuition and mandatory fees will be eliminated after all federal and state gift aid is applied.

Does the tuition waiver cover room and board?

No, the tuition waiver applies only to tuition and mandatory fees. It does not cover room and board.

Will the tuition waiver cover existing education debt?

No, the tuition waiver will only be applied to tuition and mandatory fees charged for the current academic year.

Do I need to fill out a specific application?

Yes, you must submit a FAFSA® and a PA Chafee ETG application. You also may be required by your institution to apply for state aid. Your Point of Contact will be able to assist you in identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities.

How long does the tuition waiver apply?

The tuition waiver may be applied up to 5 academic years defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent, whether or not consecutive, until age 26.

Is there anyone at my postsecondary institution who can help?

Each school has a Point of Contact available to support eligible students throughout their college careers with the following:

- Assistance in completing admissions and financial aid applications
- Obtaining verification of eligibility
- Providing referrals for on- and off-campus resources and support services

For additional information visit
PHEAA.org/FosterEd

