



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 will allow 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.



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF 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  
Waivers 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
- Be under age 26
- Received a high school diploma or equivalent approved credential
- 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
- 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
- Demonstrate financial need 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](http://PHEAA.org) for additional info)
- Enroll in an eligible PA postsecondary institution

For a list of postsecondary institutions, visit [www.ips.pa.gov](http://www.ips.pa.gov).

## 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 starting in Fall 2020.

### Do I need to fill out a specific application?

Yes, you must submit a FAFSA® and a PA Chafee ETG Application. You may also be required to apply for additional state and institutional aid.

### How long does the tuition waiver apply?

The tuition waiver may be applied up to 5 academic years, whether or not consecutive, or until age 26.

### Is there anyone at my postsecondary institution who can help?

Each school has a Point-of-Contact staff member 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](http://PHEAA.org/FosterEd)