

March 16, 2012

RE: HB3471 Tuition and Fee Waiver for Foster Youth

You may have heard about the Tuition and Fee Waiver for foster youth implemented by Oregon's legislature. In an effort to ensure the information makes it to youth across Oregon, I would like to provide you with the following documents:

Frequently Asked Questions (for supportive adults)
Protocol for Post-secondary Institutions
Flyer (for youth)
Flyer (for general use)
Policy Brief (for post-secondary institutions)

Please share the attached documents with anyone who may be interested. My contact information is listed in my signature block. Please contact if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Rosemary Iavenditti
DHS, ILP Coordinator
500 Summer Street NE, E76
Salem, OR 97301
503-945-5688
Fax: 503-945-6969
BB/Cell: 503-884-8821
rosemary.iavenditti@state.or.us

FOSTER YOUTH? EVER BEEN IN FOSTER CARE?



IF YOU HAVE THE
MOTIVATION AND THE DREAM TO
GO TO COLLEGE, YOU CAN

DETAILS
ON BACK

If you are on the path to “aging out” of Oregon’s foster care system, college might seem impossible. With little to no family support or savings, a college degree can seem out of reach.

Can you relate to these feelings? If so, you should know that relief is here. A new law guarantees that YOU have access to Oregon community colleges and public universities tuition-free!

Can I go to college tuition-free?

- Were you in Oregon foster care for one or more years between the ages of 16-21?
- Are you under 25 years of age?
- Are you applying to an Oregon community college or public university?
- Has it been less than 3 years since you left foster care OR since earning your high school diploma/GED? (Whichever is earliest)
- Are you planning to get a Bachelors and/or Associates degree

If you answered **YES** to all of these questions, you can attend college in Oregon tuition-free.

What do I need to do to receive the waiver?

- 1). Apply for financial aid using the Free Application for Federal Student Aid:
www.fafsa.ed.gov
- 2). Apply for Chafee ETV to help you with housing and book costs. Don’t know what Chafee is? Talk to your caseworker or ILP worker ASAP!
- 3). Start volunteering now so you’ll be ready to complete 30 hours of community service each academic year during college.

Because of local foster youth just like you, Oregon started offering tuition assistance for the 2012-2013 academic year. Current and former foster youth, who are members of Oregon Foster Youth Connections (OFYC), traveled to the state capitol and asked lawmakers to offer this generous support. You too can join Oregon Foster Youth Connection and make a difference for other youth in Oregon...and fulfill your 30 hours of volunteer service!

For more information about going to college tuition-free, or about Oregon Foster Youth Connection, visit:

www.ORYouthconnection.org

or contact Pamela Butler, Policy & Outreach Associate

Children First for Oregon

503-236-9754

Pamela@cfo.org





POLICY BRIEF

January 2012

What Colleges Can Do to Support Students from Foster Care

By definition, foster youth have been subjected to two traumatic experiences: the neglect or abuse that brought them to the attention of authorities and the removal from their family. Some are traumatized a third time by the treatment they receive while in the foster care system. These traumatic experiences are the root of the unique barriers to higher education opportunities faced by foster youth. As a result of these traumas, foster youth often do not achieve the level of adult skill and maturity needed to live and act independently in the inherently adult world of higher education.”¹

In today’s world, a degree of higher education is critical to securing a well paying job and guaranteeing future success. An educated work force is considered critical to the economic and social health of society. Youth transitioning out of foster care struggle to access and complete higher education. Less than two percent of youth who age out of foster care go on to complete a bachelor’s degree or higher.² Research cites a lack of meaningful support and cost as the greatest barriers to youth achieving post-secondary educational goals.³

The Oregon Legislature responded to this need in 2011 by passing HB 3471-A, which created tuition and fee waivers at state and community colleges for youth who spent 12 or more months in foster care between the ages of 16-21. The waiver is “last-dollar”, meaning youth must apply for financial aid and the waiver is applied only to the portion of tuition and fees not covered by federal Pell and Oregon Opportunity Grants. Chafee grants will be retained by the student for cost of living expenses. The law states that a foster youth:

- Must enroll in an institution of higher education within three years of leaving the foster care system OR earning their high school diploma/ GED, whichever is earliest; and
- Must begin accessing the waiver by age 25, for the maximum of 4 years of undergraduate education.

Keep in Mind

30% of foster youth experienced 10+ schools from kindergarten through high school.⁴



Keep in Mind

Former foster youth have PTSD at a rate up to twice as high as Iraq War veterans.⁵

Former Foster Youth

War Veterans

To access the waiver, an eligible youth must:

- Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and;
- Complete 30 hours of community service in each academic year that they utilize the waiver.

When youth from foster care get support and assistance during the transition to adulthood, their chances for continued success are vastly improved. Oregon has made an investment that removes the largest barrier to post-secondary educational attainment for foster youth who have no support system.

As foster youth begin to utilize the tuition waiver, college campuses will need to re-evaluate the services they offer this population of students. There are a variety of ways college campuses can integrate small changes into existing services or programs that will have a positive impact on students from foster care.

FINANCIAL AID

It is important that foster youth in high school know the waiver exists; financial aid and admissions offices should include information about the waiver on their websites and in their recruitment materials. It may take

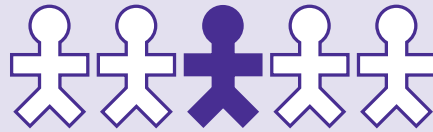
some time to create a seamless tuition waiver system, and until then, former foster youth need to know that they can count on timely financial aid checks. Foster youth do not have parents or relatives they can call for an advance when a financial aid check is delayed, and landlords don't often make exceptions for late rent. Similarly, delayed tuition and fee payments can result in a youth being unable to register for classes on time – making it difficult to complete degree requirements. With the passage of HB 3471-A, students should be guaranteed the ability to enroll in courses, even while the financial aid office works out the intricacies of state aid, federal aid, and the tuition waiver. Each year over 65% of Oregon Chafee recipients have their financial aid flagged for review because of their orphan status, causing delays in enrollment and aid distribution.⁶ For foster youth with no other means of support, these delays can mean the difference between staying in school and dropping out.

HOLIDAY AND SUMMER HOUSING

Youth who age out of foster care and move directly to college housing experience unique difficulties during holidays and summer vacations. Most college dormitories and cafeterias close for spring, winter, and summer breaks. Most foster youth, however, do not have bedrooms “back home”. When a foster youth leaves their final foster home, their bed is made available to another child. Regardless of a young person's positive relationship with their previous foster parents, returning to the home is rarely an option. Policies regarding persons over the age of 18 staying overnight in a certified foster home are also a barrier, as the young adult would need to be cleared by the state to rejoin the household. Lastly, former foster youth cannot return to the home of their biological parents because of the dangers that led to their initial placement in foster care. This dilemma forces many foster youth to couch surf during holiday breaks and the desperation of finding somewhere to sleep can place them in unsafe and vulnerable situations. Too often, this instability is enough to force a youth to give up on achieving their higher education goals. Former foster youth do not have co-signers available to help them obtain loans to remain in holiday or summer housing, which is often expensive and does not always include access to food, or facilities in which to prepare food. College campuses should investigate ways to extend year-round housing to students from foster care. Foster youth, who have no credit history, frequent address changes, and no one to co-sign, face great obstacles in obtaining off-campus housing during their

early college years and summer vacations. Colleges should build relationships with local Independent Living Program (ILP) offices and guide students to them for assistance in obtaining non-collegiate housing.

Keep in Mind



1 in 5 former foster youth experiences homelessness after leaving foster care.⁷

ILP programs are agencies that contract with the state to provide transitional services to foster youth. ILP offices are often at capacity and unable to accept new cases, but they can offer information and refer youth to other community resources. Programs such as *Ready To Rent* are designed to help renters overcome barriers to housing while assisting landlords in filling vacancies. *Ready to Rent* gives landlords a guarantee that those who complete the program have: learned about their responsibilities as a tenant; learned about Landlord Tenant Law; taken real steps towards repairing credit and establishing a realistic budget; and earned a Ready to Rent Certificate of Completion that can be presented to landlords as proof of their achievement.⁸ Colleges that can network with existing organizations and refer foster youth directly will help retain students and prevent housing instability.

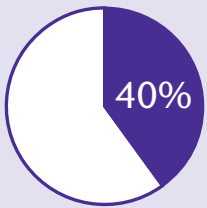
STUDENT SERVICES

Youth who leave foster care often have a host of emotional obstacles between them and achieving any type of post-secondary education. Students from foster care have rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder up to twice that of Iraq war veterans, and more than half have clinical levels of at least one mental health problem.⁹ While the Department of Human Services must continue to work to ensure that the experience of foster care does not impede a youth's future success, colleges can do much to provide support to youth on their campuses. Identifying a *Foster Care Liaison* on each campus who understands the challenges foster youth face and who has knowledge of all available community resources would go a long way toward ensuring foster youth get connected to what is already available in their college community.

Advocates for increasing services to foster youth in higher education, such as the Oregon Student Access Commission and Casey Family Programs, have long promoted the concept of a single point person on

each campus who understands how the foster care experience affects a student's academic success and social integration.¹⁰ The designated *Foster Care Liaison* could be a staff member within admissions, financial aid, or other student service offices. Alameda County in California has a Liaison at each of their 121 campuses, and states like Texas, Washington, Connecticut, and North Carolina have all developed targeted supports for students from foster care. *Foster Care Liaisons* should be seen as the primary contact for available support.¹¹

Keep in Mind



Only 40% of eligible youth are able to access transitional living services to help them prepare for life on their own.¹²

Foster Care to Success (FCS), formerly the Orphan Foundation of America, combines financial resources with online mentors, and has a record 60% graduation rate after five years. FCS's skilled staff and national network of trained volunteers provide one-on-one support to help students adapt, stay on track, overcome obstacles, and graduate.¹³ FCS scholars also receive care packages throughout the year, and even birthday cards. FCS has proven that financial resources, combined with emotional supports, can bolster former foster youth's ability to achieve their higher education goals and overcome the many obstacles they face. Colleges will see higher success rates among students from foster care when the schools are able to offer on-campus student support services specific to this population.

PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING

Another avenue for supporting students from foster care is through connecting them with other students from care who are already in school and have successfully navigated the transition to college. Peer mentoring helps with academic, social, and emotional development. This is of particular importance for students from foster care because the many temporary homes these youth often grow up in may prevent them from feeling a sense of belonging to a supportive community.¹⁴ Additionally, "because the help foster youth received in the past may have been transitory, inconsistent, and impersonal, many of them have difficulty trusting adults who may be in a position to assist them", reports Casey Family Programs, an expert

on foster youth in higher education.¹⁵

Research suggests that peer-to-peer mentoring can produce positive outcomes for both the mentees and the mentors.¹⁶ Although research on peer mentoring programs lags behind that of more traditional adult-youth models, preliminary findings show that the peer-to-peer mentoring approach has the following impacts:

- 1) For youth mentees, these programs have shown a positive impact on
 - a. Connectedness to school and peers;
 - b. Feelings of competency and self-efficacy;
 - c. Grades and academic achievement;
 - d. Prosocial behavior and attitudes.
- 2) For youth mentors, there have been reported improvements in
 - a. Connectedness to school;
 - b. Self-esteem;
 - c. Empathy and moral reasoning;
 - d. Intrapersonal communication and conflict resolution skills;
 - e. Relationships with parents.¹⁷

Research is also finding that peer-to-peer matches meet with greater frequency and for longer periods of time than traditional adult-youth matches.¹⁸ Those who advocate strongly for mentoring programs advise that buy-in, and promotion from school administrators, is critical to the success of any program. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime agrees that youth are more likely to listen to youth. This can be because they understand each other's stage in life better, or simply because they can share information in a way that the other easily understands.

Oregon universities and community colleges should first look toward infrastructure already in place for student support and/or mentorship services and work with knowledgeable community partners to enhance those services for youth from foster care. Services in place for other groups of underserved students may or may not be sufficient for students from foster care. Young adults who age out of foster care are one of the most underrepresented populations in higher education, which is a trend the tuition waiver may, in time, reverse.¹⁹ With increased enrollment of students from foster care, however, colleges will need to review their financial aid, housing, and other support services to reflect the unique needs of this growing student population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

FINANCIAL AID

Include information about the tuition waiver on all web based and print materials.

Ensure students who qualify for the tuition waiver are allowed to register for courses, regardless of status of monetary disbursement to the school.

HOLIDAY & SUMMER HOUSING

Provide holiday housing for former foster youth and others without familial connections.

Coordinate with local organizations, such as Independent Living Programs, faith groups or low-income housing, to help youth find off-campus housing for summer vacation.

Coordinate with local housing agencies to help youth find safe and stable housing that does not require rental history, credit, or co-signers.

STUDENT SERVICES

Designate an individual on campus to become a Foster Care Liaison.

Send designated Foster Care Liaisons to training with the Oregon Foster Youth Connection/Children First for Oregon.

Host informal campus gatherings for alumni from foster care, to connect them to one another and ensure they have timely information regarding available resources.

PEER-TO-PEER MENTORING

Investigate programmatic or structural changes to current mentoring programs, either in the community or on campus, that emphasize former foster youth and/or peer-to-peer mentoring.

Support a local chapter of the Oregon Foster Youth Connection and encourage students to complete the required volunteer service component of the tuition waiver by becoming an advocate with the program.

1. Wolanin, Thomas R. (2005). Higher Education Opportunities for Foster Youth: A Primer for Policy Makers. Washington, DC: Institute for Higher Education Policy. Page v. Available online at <http://www.ihep.org/assets/files//publications/M-R/OpportunitiesFosterYouth.pdf>.
2. Pecora, P.J., Kessler, R.C., Williams, J., O'Brien, K., Downs, A.C., English, D., White, J., Hiripi, E., White, C.R., Wiggins, T., & Holmes, K.E. (2006) Improving Family Foster Care: Findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. Seattle, WA. Casey Family Programs.
3. Pecora, et al.
4. Pecora, et al.
5. Pecora, et al.
6. Oregon Department of Human Services, Independent Living Program data report (2011).
7. Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago (2007) Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth.
8. www.readytorent.org, taken from web August 25, 2011.
9. Pecora, et. al.
10. Casey Family Programs (2010) *Supporting Success: A Framework for Program Enhancement. Improving Higher Education Outcomes for Students from Foster Care*. Available at www.casey.org.
11. Casey Family Programs, page 18
12. Department of Human Services, Independent Living Program data report (2011).
13. www.fc2success.org
14. Casey Family Programs, page 38
15. Casey Family Programs page. 18
16. Garringer, M., & MacRae, P. (Sep 2008) Building Effective Peer Mentoring Programs in Schools. Mentor Resource Center.
17. Garringer, et al., page 3
18. Garringer, et al., page 3
19. Pecora, et al.



**Children First
for Oregon**

Speaking Up for Kids Since 1991

P.O. Box 14914 Portland, OR 97293
(503) 236-9754
www.cffo.org

Support for this report was provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation KIDS COUNT project, and by donations from individuals like you.

If you value the work of Children First, please make a tax deductible donation. We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization and never benefit financially from the programs and services for which we advocate. To maintain our independence, and prevent conflicts of interest, we rely solely on donations from foundations, individuals, and corporations to underwrite our work.



Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Protocols for Eligible Institutions

The following information has been created as a result of collaborations between the Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Department of Human Services, Oregon Student Access Commission, Oregon Tribes, and the Oregon University System.

Overview:

HB3471, the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver, was passed into legislation in July 2011 and is effective with the 2012-2013 academic year. HB3471 requires Oregon community colleges and the Oregon University System to provide current and former foster youth with a Tuition and Fee Waiver. Eligible students may receive the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver for the equivalent of four years of undergraduate education. Following are additional clarifications and requirements:

Eligibility:

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will be responsible for determining initial eligibility for the Tuition and Fee Waiver. The following criteria will be used to determine eligibility:

To qualify for the program, the student must:

1. Have spent at least 365 days in substitute care after age 16, with either the Oregon Department of Human Services or one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon.
2. Enroll as an undergraduate student no later than three years after the earliest of:
 - The date the student was removed from the care of the Department of Human Services or **one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon,**
 - The date the student graduated from high school, or
 - The date the student received the equivalent of a high school diploma.
3. Submit a completed FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for each academic year he/she is eligible for the program.
4. For years after the first academic year, have completed a minimum of 30 volunteer service hours in the previous academic year. (See the Volunteer Program section of this document for more details.)

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Protocols for Eligible Institutions

School Notification:

DHS is currently collaborating with the OUS and community colleges to create a method of notification. The first notice of eligible students is anticipated to be provided in late March.

HB3471 also requires OSAC to prioritize current and former foster youth for the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG). OSAC will continue to notify the schools of the OOG awards through normal channels. At this time, students from foster care must attend Fall Term in order to receive an OOG award.

Duration of Tuition and Fee Waiver:

Eligible students may receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver for up to 12 terms of full-time study or the equivalent. Less than full time enrollment would be prorated accordingly. No minimum credits/courses are required.

Students may take a break from school, but must return prior to his or her 25th birthday in order to continue to qualify for Tuition and Fee Waiver.

A student may transfer from a private or other post-secondary institution to an eligible institution. The student may receive the tuition and fee waiver at the eligible institution if the student meets the eligibility criteria above and transfers to an eligible institution prior to age 25.

If a student meets all other criteria for eligibility, but does not have a need for a Tuition and Fee Waiver, the student shall remain eligible until the student receives the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate education.

Enrollment:

A student is considered enrolled when they have applied and been admitted to a bachelor's degree program at an Oregon University System campus or register at an Oregon community college as an undergraduate student.

A student must enroll for the term that is within 3 years of completing high school/GED or left care and legal wardship was dismissed (whichever comes first). For example, a student who completes high school/GED by

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471) Protocols for Eligible Institutions

November 2011 would need to be enrolled by Fall Term 2014. If a student waited until Winter term 2015, they would have exceeded 3 years.

Institutions may continue to request Advanced Tuition Deposits from potentially eligible students. If the student is determined to be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, the school will need to refund the amount of tuition deposit(s) paid. This would be determined at the time the school is finalizing a student's financial aid.

When students are dual enrolled, each school is responsible for calculating and implementing the Tuition and Fee Waiver and requirements.

Eligible students may attend Summer Term and receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver. The term will count toward the 4 year maximum.

Award:

The tuition and fee waiver will be a component of the institution's financial aid process. Awards made under the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver shall be applied after the following:

- Student's federal financial aid (Pell, FSEOG),
- Oregon Opportunity Grant (if awarded), and
- Other institutional aid

Any amount of tuition and fees remaining after the Pell, FEOG, OOG and other school aid is applied will be waived.

Financial aid sources **not** allowed to reduce the amount of the tuition and fees waived include:

- Non-tuition scholarships from sources outside the university or college (including those passed through OSAC),
- Chafee Education and Training Grant,
- Loans

Note: There is no state allocation that will assist the institutions with the costs of the tuition and fee waiver. The institutions will absorb the amount waived.

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Protocols for Eligible Institutions

Tuition and Fees waived:

A qualified student for The Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver is entitled to waiver of tuition and fees as noted below:

- Tuition for academic credit courses (at base or differential rates depending upon program to which student is admitted) but not for noncredit courses
- Mandatory enrollment fees: building, incidental, health service, recreation center, or other mandatory fees that may be added from time to time
- One-time fees: matriculation, transcript for life (OIT only)
- Fees required for instruction related services such as lab or course fees that are assessed upon registration for a particular course

The waiver excludes all fees and fines for non-instruction related services and materials such as residence hall room and board, dining services, parking fees and fines, library fines, etc. In addition, text books and other course materials not assessed as part of a course fee are also excluded.

The Tuition and Fee Waiver may be used for an Associates degree, certificate programs, and a Bachelors degree, but does not continue beyond the level of a Bachelors degree.

Volunteer Program:

The Oregon Tuition and Fee Waiver requires students receiving a tuition and fee waiver to complete 30 hours of volunteer service each academic year. Policies are to be developed by the institution of higher education at which the student is enrolled. Additional details:

- It is the responsibility of the student receiving the waiver to document compliance with the 30-hour requirement to the satisfaction of the college or university. The OUS and Community Colleges are collaborating to create a standardized log or reporting document.
- Each institution will be responsible for determining a process for confirming the 30 volunteer hours have been met prior to issuing a tuition waiver in year 2 and all subsequent years. Schools are encouraged to create similar processes to allow students to transfer schools with minimal confusion regarding this requirement.

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Protocols for Eligible Institutions

Miscellaneous Questions:

1. Can an Oregon foster youth who has been placed/residing in another state return to Oregon and be eligible for the tuition waiver?

Answer: Yes. If a student is uncertain of his or her status as an Oregon foster youth, the student can contact Oregon DHS for assistance at 503-945-6612.

2. When an Oregon foster youth who has been residing in another state returns to Oregon and enrolls at an eligible institution, will the student have to pay out-of-state tuition?

Answer: For all OUS institutions, student residency is determined first at the campus level, following Oregon Administrative Rules, 580-010-0029 through 580-010-0047. However, if the student is eligible for the tuition waiver, the student's tuition and fees will be waived regardless of residency status.

3. May a student receive a modified diploma and still qualify for the tuition waiver?

Answer: Yes. However, the student must be taking credits/courses that will count towards an undergraduate certificate or degree.

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information has been created as a result of collaborations between the Department of Human Services, Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Oregon Tribes, Oregon Student Access Commission, and the Oregon University System. We hope this document will assist you to determine a student's eligibility, enrollment options, and awards.

Eligibility:

1. What are the required qualifications that determine if a current or former foster youth is eligible for Oregon's Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Answer: All current and former foster youth who have spent at least 365 days in substitute care after age 16, **AND** either left foster care (had wardship terminated) or completed high school/GED (whichever date is earliest) within the previous 3 years will qualify for this program.

Students who left foster care or completed high school/GED (whichever date is earliest) more than 3 years prior to the start of the Waiver, are NOT included in the eligible population.

2. How do eligible students apply for the Tuition and Fee Waiver and is there a filing deadline?

Answer: Eligible applicants may submit a completed FAFSA (available at: www.fafsa.ed.gov) as early as January 1st each year. The deadline to submit a FAFSA is June 30 of the award year, or the student's last day of class for the academic year (whichever is earliest). The applicant must also apply and enroll at an eligible school within the 3-year eligibility period. Students who file their FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1 each year will maximize their federal, state, and private grants and scholarships.

3. When is the earliest a student could access or receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

Answer: The Tuition and Fee Waiver program begins with the 2012-2013 academic year. Oregon colleges and universities will designate the term in which they will begin awarding Tuition and Fee Waivers; for some it will begin summer term 2012, for others fall term 2012.

4. Who will notify the school of a student's eligibility for the Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Answer: DHS will work with the OUS schools and community colleges to create a method of notification.

5. How long can a student be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: Eligible students may receive the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver for up to 12 terms of full-time study or the equivalent. Less than full time enrollment would be prorated accordingly. Students may take a break from school, but must return prior to his or her **25th birthday** in order to continue to eligibility and access the Tuition and Fee Waiver.

6. What about the student who is eligible for Tuition and Fee Waiver but doesn't need it?

Answer: If a student meets all other criteria for eligibility, but does not have a need for a Tuition and Fee Waiver, the student shall remain eligible until the student receives the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate education.

7. Is a current college student eligible for Tuition and Fee Waiver if the student meets the eligibility requirements and was enrolled sometime during the past 3 years?

Answer: Yes, as long as the student left foster care or completed high school/GED within the past 3 years (whichever comes first).

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

8. Can a youth transfer from a private or other school to an eligible school after the 3 years have passed and receive Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Answer: Yes, if all of the following conditions are met: 1) Student initially enrolled at a post-secondary institution within 3 years of completing high school or having wardship dismissed (whichever date was earliest), 2) The transfer occurred prior to age 25, and 3) The student receives the Tuition and Fee Waiver prior to the age 25.

9. Can an eligible student begin at an Oregon community college and then transfer to a 4-year university and be eligible for the Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Answer: Yes, as long as the university is part of the Oregon University System (OUS), and the student begins receiving the Tuition and Fee Waiver prior to the age of 25.

10. Can an Oregon foster youth who has been placed/residing in another state return to Oregon and be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: Yes. If a student is uncertain of his or her status as an Oregon foster youth, the student can contact Oregon DHS for assistance at (503)945-6612, or if still in care, the student's DHS caseworker.

11. When an Oregon foster youth who has been residing in another state returns to Oregon and enrolls at an eligible institution, will the student have to pay out-of-state tuition?

Answer: If the student is eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, the student's tuition and fees will be waived regardless of residency status.

12. Does a youth in a voluntary placement qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

Answer: No. A youth must be in the legal care and custody of DHS (or one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon) for at least 365 days between 16 and 20 years of age.

13. Does a youth who was adopted or entered a guardianship qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: Yes, IF the youth was in the care and custody of DHS (or one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon) for at least 365 days after the youth's 16th birthday. Youth who were adopted or enter a guardianship prior to the age of 17, or had less than 365 days of care after 16 years of age at the time of the adoption/guardianship, are NOT eligible.

14. May a student remain in foster care to age 21 and receive the tuition and fee waiver while in foster care?

Answer: Yes, as long as the youth enrolls at a post-secondary institution within 3 years of graduating from high school or receiving the equivalent of a high school diploma.

15. May a student receive a modified diploma and still qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: Yes. However, the student must be taking credits/courses that will count towards an undergraduate certificate or degree.

16. Does a student who is in, or has been in, an Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) foster home qualify?

Answer: No, unless the student had been in Oregon DHS or Tribal care and custody for at least 365 days after the age of 16 and meets all other eligibility criteria.

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

Enrollment:

1. What is the definition of “enroll”?

Answer: A student is considered enrolled when they have applied and been admitted to a bachelor’s degree program at an Oregon University System campus or registered at an Oregon community college as an undergraduate student.

2. What is the definition of “must enroll within 3 years”?

Answer: A student must enroll for the term that is within 3 years of completing high school/GED or left care and legal wardship dismissed (whichever comes first). For example, a student who completes high school/GED by November 2011 would need to be enrolled by Fall Term (mid-September) 2014. If a student waited until Winter term (January) 2015, they would have exceeded 3 years.

3. Must an eligible student pay Advanced Tuition Deposits when requested by the school?

Answer: Yes. If the student is determined to be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, the school will need to refund the amount of tuition deposit(s) paid. This would be determined at the time the school is finalizing a student’s financial aid.

4. Can a student participate in Summer Term and receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver?

Answer: Yes. The term will count toward the 4 year maximum.

Award:

1. Who determines the actual Tuition and Fee Waiver amount?

Answer: Each school will be responsible for packaging a youth’s financial aid. The tuition and fee waiver will be a component of the financial aid process.

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

2. How does the tuition and fee waiver work?

Answer: A student's federal aid (Pell, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant), Oregon Opportunity Grant and any other institutional (school) aid will be used to cover the student's tuition and fees. Any amount of tuition and fees remaining after the Pell, FEOG, OOG and other school aid is applied will be waived.

3. Are Foster Youth guaranteed to receive an Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)?

Answer: No. The Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) will be prioritizing current and former foster youth for the Oregon Opportunity Grant. However, there will be deadlines. At this time, we have been informed that a student must register for and attend Fall Term in order to be prioritized for the OOG.

4. Does the Chafee Education & Training Grant (ETG) lower the amount of a student's tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: No. The Chafee ETG is not to be considered when determining the amount of a student's tuition and fee waiver. In addition, a student's private scholarships, grants and loans are NOT to be applied toward a student's tuition and fees.

5. What is included in the Tuition and Fees waived?

Answer: A qualified student for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver is entitled to a waiver of tuition and fees as follows: tuition for academic credit courses (at base or differential rates depending upon program to which student is admitted) but not for noncredit courses; Mandatory enrollment fees: building, incidental, health service, recreation center, or other mandatory fees that may be added from time to time; One-time fees: matriculation, transcript for life (OIT

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

only); Fees required for instruction related services such as lab or course fees that are assessed upon registration for a particular course

Fees that are not covered under the tuition and fee waiver include, but are not limited to: books, supplies, parking, personal incidentals, fines, and room and board fees.

6. How are students notified of the Tuition and Fee Waiver amount?

Answer: The college or university the student has been accepted to attend will inform the student of the Tuition and Fee Waiver amount. The amount may be reflected on the student's financial aid award letter.

7. How are Independent Living Program (ILP) Providers notified of the student's Tuition and Fee Waiver and amount?

Answer: The student will need to inform the ILP Provider.

8. May a student use the Tuition and Fee Waiver for graduate school?

Answer: No. The Tuition and Fee Waiver may be used for an Associates degree, certificate programs, and a Bachelors degree, but does not continue beyond the level of an initial Bachelors degree.

Volunteer Program:

The Oregon Tuition and Fee Waiver program requires students receiving a tuition and fee waiver to complete 30 hours of volunteer service each academic year.

1. How will students be made aware of potential volunteer opportunities?

Answer: The student will need to check with the school's Office of Student Affairs for further instructions. (The hope is the schools will post volunteer

Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB3471)

Frequently Asked Questions

opportunities for students, as well as coordinate with the Oregon Foster Youth Connection (OFYC), and their local Independent Living Program (ILP) Provider for opportunities to volunteer.)

2. Who is monitoring a student's 30 hours of volunteer service?

Answer: It is the responsibility of the student receiving the waiver to document compliance with the 30-hour requirement to the satisfaction of the college or university. School's are currently in the process of creating a uniform tracking form for students to track volunteer hours.

3. Who monitors students for continued eligibility for the tuition and fee waiver?

Answer: Each school will be responsible for determining a process for confirming the 30 volunteer hours have been met prior to issuing a tuition and fee waiver in year 2 and all subsequent years. Schools are encouraged to create similar processes to allow students to transfer schools with minimal confusion regarding this requirement.

For additional questions, contact DHS at:

503-945-6612 or email: foster.care@state.or.us