



# OLR RESEARCH REPORT

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## **TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR FOSTER AND OTHER CHILDREN**

By: Robin K. Cohen, Principal Analyst

You asked for a chart showing the assistance that the Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides to young adults (generally ages 18-23) who (1) at one time were committed to DCF as abused, neglected, or uncared for and (2) enroll in post-secondary educational institutions. You also asked about such assistance for children who never are committed to DCF custody but instead live with grandparents to whom the probate court grants guardianship.

### **SUMMARY**

DCF provides post-secondary educational assistance to certain young adults who, before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, were adjudicated as abused, neglected, or uncared for children and committed by the Superior Court to DCF. This includes children who are (1) in foster care through their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, (2) adopted from DCF after December 31, 2004, or (3) cared for by guardians whom DCF licenses and subsidizes. No subsidies are available to children who are not committed to DCF and whose guardianship a local probate court transfers to a grandparent.

For young adults who are adoptees or children in foster care at age 18, the DCF subsidy covers tuition, fees, and room and board equivalent to these amounts at the University of Connecticut (UConn) (adoptees) or Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) (foster children). Young

adults whose care costs were subsidized by the Subsidized Guardianship Program (SGP) continue to receive that subsidy (equivalent to the monthly foster care rate).

To qualify for the post-secondary assistance, the young adult must be a high school graduate or have a GED. Those adults who were adopted children and those living in foster care at age 18 must maintain a 2.0 G.P.A. to receive an ongoing subsidy. The policy for the SGP is silent on the student's academic standing. Adopted children must contribute \$500 annually toward their educational costs. The subsidies generally continue until the young adult's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, except they stop at age 21 for children in the SGP.

## **DCF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

### ***Eligibility***

Young adults may be eligible for post secondary educational assistance if they were (1) in DCF custody on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or (2) in DCF custody, adopted before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, and adopted after December 31, 2004. Among other things, these prospective students must (1) be accepted into a full-time accredited or licensed program, (2) maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0 or its equivalent each year, (3) annually document school enrollment and grades to DCF, and (4) apply annually for the DCF assistance.

These adults must be accepted to their chosen educational institution before they turn 21 and can remain eligible for the assistance until the end of the school year in which they turn 23.

Young adults whose guardianship was transferred by the Superior Court and for whom DCF pays monthly SGP payments also can get help with post secondary educational expenses. This benefit is limited to the SGP payment and lasts only until the child turns 21.

### ***Subsidy Amount***

The DCF subsidy amount varies depending on whether the child was adopted, in foster care, or had a subsidized guardian. Generally, DCF pays the equivalent of tuition, room, and board at UConn for young adults who were adopted from DCF after December 31, 2004. It pays the CCSU rate to young adults who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. (DCF policy states that adoptees receive assistance equivalent to UConn in-state tuition, room and board, and fees. But in 2009, the legislature, through the budget process, directed DCF to change the policy to make the assistance the same for adoptees and foster children at the lower

CCSU rate, according to the Office of Fiscal Analysis (OFA 2009 Budget Book, pp. 434-435), but this never happened.) For young adults cared for by subsidized guardians, the postsecondary assistance is the monthly SGP payment.

Table 1 shows which children qualify for DCF postsecondary assistance, the requirements for receiving it, and the assistance amounts.

**TABLE 1: DCF POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE**

<b>Child's Status with DCF</b>	<b>Subsidy</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>DCF Policy Manual Citation</b>	<b>Amount of Subsidy</b>	<b>Duration of Subsidy</b>
Foster children on 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Yes	-Exhibit adequate social, behavioral, and life skills -sign form indicating a desire to continue to receive DCF services through their 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday -maintain cooperation with DCF though a signed contract -immediately begin a full-time post-secondary program following completion of high school or equivalent -be in good academic standing (2.0 or school's standard) -provide proof of applying for financial aid	<a href="#">§ 36-94</a>	Amount equivalent to in-state tuition, room and board, and fees at Central Connecticut State University	Until child reaches age 23
Children adopted from DCF after December 31, 2004 [1]	Yes	Young adult must be accepted to their chosen full-time accredited or licensed program before 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday -provide proof of applying for financial aid  \$500 contribution per year	<a href="#">§ 48-20-2</a>	UConn tuition, room and board, and fees	Same as above
Children adopted from DCF before January 1, 2005	No				
Children in subsidized guardianship program	Yes	Full-time attendance at technical school or state-accredited job training program	<a href="#">§ 41-50-6</a>  See also CGS <a href="#">§ 17a-126(f)</a> ;	Continuation of the <a href="#">monthly subsidized guardianship payment</a> , about \$850 per month	Until child reaches age 21
Children whose guardianship was transferred by the probate court	No				

[1] In 2005, Governor Rell instituted this policy as a way to induce more adults to adopt older foster children. Previously, no subsidies were available to these children.

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