



## OTHER STATES' POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

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### POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

Many states provide postsecondary educational financial assistance to former foster children. Some of these children have been adopted from the child welfare agency while others continue to live in foster homes or other out-of-home placements until their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The amount of assistance varies considerably. Connecticut offers one of the more generous assistance packages, paying the Central Connecticut State University or UConn equivalent of tuition, room, and board.

The duration of the assistance also varies. In Connecticut, the student can receive the subsidy until his or her 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday, while in other states there is no maximum age as long as the student applies for the assistance by a certain age.

Typically, the amount of the waiver is based on any other financial aid for which the student qualifies. This necessitates completion of the Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA) and other financial aid forms. Most states limit

### QUESTION

Which other states offer postsecondary tuition waiver financial aid to former foster children, including children adopted from foster care?

### SUMMARY

According to the National Resource Center for Youth Development (NRCYD), 21 states offer tuition waivers to former foster children, including those who are adopted before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. (NRCYD is a service of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Children's Bureau that provides technical assistance and capacity building for states and Indian tribes to provide high-quality services to children and youth in the child welfare system.)

These programs typically waive tuition (and sometimes fees) at one of the state's public higher education institutions. It appears that only Connecticut allows the student to take the value of that assistance and use it at an out-of-state institution.

### STATE POSTSECONDARY TUITION WAIVER PROGRAMS FOR FORMER FOSTER CHILDREN

The NRCYD reports that 21 states provide tuition waivers to former foster children who wish to attend an institution of higher education once they complete high school or its equivalent. The amount of assistance varies, ranging from a waiver of tuition at a state school to the equivalent of tuition, fees, and room and board that can be used out-of-state (Connecticut's

Table 1 (Cont.)

the waivers by specifying a particular number to be offered each year or tying them to available funding. To continue to receive these waivers students must maintain good academic standing (typically a 2.0 GPA) and be working towards earning a degree or certificate.

Connecticut is unique among these states in having a waiver program that pays for room and board in addition to tuition. Likewise, the state requires students to agree to remain in state care through their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in order to maximize federal child welfare funding.

Many students eligible for the waiver may also qualify for Education and Training Vouchers (ETV). This federally funded program, authorized by Congress in 2002, provides up to \$5,000 toward the cost of attending a postsecondary program of education or training. To be eligible, a child must be in foster care on or after his or her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The amount of assistance is based on the student's unmet need after other financial aid is considered.

Table 1 describes the postsecondary tuition waivers in the states.

**Table 1: Postsecondary Tuition Waivers for Former Foster Youth**

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Alaska</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children must be in foster care on or after 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and no older than 21 when applying</li> <li>Accepted for full-time attendance at qualifying education or training program</li> </ul>	Tuition	Four years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Maximum of 12 waivers per year</li> <li>Assumption that student also receives ETV and other federal financial aid</li> </ul>

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in foster care on 18<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> <li>• Former foster children adopted after December 31, 2004</li> </ul>	<p>Amount equivalent to in-state tuition, room and board, and fees at Central Connecticut State</p> <p>Amount equivalent to University of Connecticut tuition, room and board, and fees University</p>	Until age 23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must sign form indicating desire to continue to receive DCF services through 21<sup>st</sup> birthday</li> <li>• \$500 student contribution</li> </ul>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>			
<b>Florida</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in foster care at age 18</li> <li>• Children in the custody of a relative at age 18</li> <li>• Children placed in guardianship by court</li> <li>• Children adopted from the child welfare department after May 5, 1997</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees, including lab fees	Until age 28	Valid at all state public universities, community colleges, and public vocational schools

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Kansas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in the custody of the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> <li>• Children adopted from the department on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> <li>• Children who left foster care for guardianship care on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees	Semester during which child turns 23	Valid at all Kansas educational institutions, including vocational schools, vocational-technical schools, and community colleges

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Kentucky</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s family receives state-funded adoption assistance</li> <li>• Children in a foster home</li> <li>• Children in an independent living program and the placement is funded by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services</li> <li>• Children who were in cabinet custody, were adopted, and are living out of state</li> <li>• Children for whom the cabinet was the student’s legal custodian on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> </ul>	Tuition and mandatory fees for any undergraduate program of any state public postsecondary institution	Waiver is good for five years from once issued and students must apply for it within four years of high school graduation	All public postsecondary institutions in the state

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Maine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) custody</li> <li>• Children whose parent received adoption assistance</li> <li>• Children under permanent guardianship through DHHS at the time of high school graduation or GED receipt</li> </ul>	Tuition at one of the University of Maine's system colleges, Maine Maritime Academy, or the state's vocational technical colleges	Continues as long as student remains in good standing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximum of 30 freshmen per year</li> <li>• Must apply for financial aid</li> <li>• Not available to student enrolled full-time for more than five years</li> </ul>
<b>Maryland</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in foster care at the time of high school or GED completion</li> <li>• Children formerly in foster care and adopted after their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday or adopted with a sibling who was adopted after his or her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees at a two- or four-year Maryland public higher education institution	Five years after initial enrollment	Must enroll by age 25

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children adopted from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) since 2000</li> <li>Children in foster care at age 18</li> <li>Children in guardianship through DCF</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees at any public college or university	Until age 25	Fee waiver is subject to available funds
<b>Minnesota</b>	Wards of the state (parental rights terminated)	Tuition	Until age 21	
<b>Missouri</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children in foster care or other residential care on or after (1) the day they graduate from high school or receive their GED, (2) the day before their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, or (3) the day of their 14<sup>th</sup> birthday if they were eligible for adoption</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees at Missouri colleges and universities	Students must apply before their 21 <sup>st</sup> birthday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>18-25 students</li> <li>Students must apply before their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday</li> </ul>

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children in foster care when turning 18</li> <li>• Children in state guardianship or custody at age 18</li> <li>• Children adopted while in state guardianship or adopted from the care, custody, and control of the Department of Human Services following a surrender of parental rights</li> <li>• Children living in out-of-home juvenile justice placement on their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees at New Hampshire public institutions	Until age 23	Maximum of 20 new and renewal waivers each year
<b>New Jersey</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children who have been homeless or in foster care for at least nine months at age 16</li> <li>• Youth who have lived in DCF-funded transitional housing</li> </ul>	Tuition at state public colleges and universities	Until age 23	Students qualifying for ETV must choose it or the waiver (ETV can be used outside the state)

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>North Carolina</b>	Children who are in foster care at age 18	Tuition	Until age 23	2012 study by legislative fiscal office found waiver program ineffective, structured to be a "last resort"
<b>Oklahoma</b>	Children who, within the previous three years, have been in Department of Human Services custody for any nine of the 24 months after their 16 <sup>th</sup> but before their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday	Tuition at any institution that is a member of the state system of higher education or postsecondary vocation-technical program (vo-tech)	Earlier of age 26 or receipt of baccalaureate degree or vo-tech certificate	
<b>Oregon</b>	Children who have spent at least a year in substitute care after age 16	Tuition and fees (including lab fees) at state's public universities and colleges	Must begin taking the waiver by age 25; after age 25, study must be continuous	Must complete a minimum of 30 volunteer hours each semester, preferably with foster youth
<b>Rhode Island</b>	Children in Department of Children, Youth, and Families' legal custody on their 18 <sup>th</sup> birthday	A portion of costs at any of state's public colleges and universities—supplement to any other assistance	Until age 23, if a full-time student	Technically not a waiver but rather a grant program (NRCYD included on its list)
<b>South Carolina</b>	Children in the custody of the Department of Social Services or those who have aged out	Up to \$2,500, plus an additional \$2,000	Unknown	Youth must self-identify their foster care status and complete a foster care waiver form

Table 1 (Cont.)

<b>State</b>	<b>Eligibility Requirements</b>	<b>Subsidy Amount</b>	<b>Subsidy Duration</b>	<b>Other Requirements or Limits</b>
<b>Texas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children who were in foster care on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday</li> <li>Children who were adopted on or after September 1, 2009</li> </ul>	Tuition and fees at state-supported higher education institutions	Must enroll by age 25	
<b>Utah</b>	Children who have been a ward of the state for at least 24 months	Tuition for up to nine semesters at any public institution	Up to age 26; must first apply by age 21	
<b>Virginia</b>	Children certified to be in foster care, in the custody of a social service agency, adopted when completing high school or equivalent, or in foster care at age 18	Tuition and fees at any Virginia community college	Unknown	Must be enrolled at least half time
<b>West Virginia</b>	Children must be in foster care or other residential care for at least one year before the waiver is awarded	Tuition and fees at state higher education institutions	Unknown	Initial waiver must be granted within two years of high school or equivalent completion

**SOURCES**

Legal Center for Foster Care and Education, [Postsecondary Education Resources for Youth in and Transitioning Out of the Child Welfare System](#), 2012

North American Council on Adoptable Children, [How to Cover College Expenses for Your Adopted Child](#), website last visited on December 10, 2013

[Tuition Waivers Policy](#), National Resource Center for Youth Development, website last visited 12/20/2013

Various state legislative websites

Table 1 (Cont.)

*Tuition Assistance for Foster and Other Children*, OLR Report [2012-R-0067](#),  
February 2, 2012

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