

# Fostering Independence Through Education Annual Report for Academic Year 2020-2021

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*August 2021*



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
333 Market Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
[www.education.pa.gov](http://www.education.pa.gov)



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Voice Telephone: (717) 783-3750, Fax: (717) 783-6802

If you have any questions about this publication or for additional copies, contact:

Pennsylvania Department of Education  
Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education  
333 Market Street, 12th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333  
Voice: (717) 783-6786, Fax: (717) 772-3622  
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## Introduction

Act 16 of 2019 (Act 16) added Article XXVI-K Fostering Independence Through Education (FosterEd) to the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 (24 P.S. § 26-2603-K). The statute requires institutions of higher education (IHEs), as defined by the Act, to provide a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees to Pennsylvania resident students who have been in foster care.

Under Act 16, IHEs include the following:

- A community college operating under Article XIX-A of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 19-1901-A et seq.);
- A university within the State System of Higher Education;
- The Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University, or any other institution designated as state-related by the Commonwealth;
- Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology;
- A college established under Article XIX-G (24 P.S. § 19-1901-G et seq.);
- An IHE located in and incorporated or chartered by the Commonwealth and entitled to confer degrees as provided under 24 Pa.C.S. § 6505 (relating to power to confer degrees) and as provided for by the standards and qualifications prescribed by the State Board of Education under 24 Pa.C.S. Ch. 65 (relating to private colleges, universities, and seminaries);
- A private school licensed under the Private Licensed Schools Act of 1986 (24 P.S. § 6501 et seq.); and
- A foreign corporation approved to operate an educational enterprise under 22 Pa. Code Ch. 36 (relating to foreign corporation standards) (22 Pa. Code § 36.1 et seq.).

FosterEd is jointly administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry (L&I), and Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA).

To determine and maximize the effectiveness of the program, Act 16 requires PDE, in conjunction with DHS, to collect information from IHEs and annually report the following information by August 31 to the chair and minority chair of the Education Committee of the Senate, the Education Committee of the House of Representatives, the Health and Human Services committee of the Senate, and the Children and Youth Committee of the House of Representatives:

- The number of students receiving the Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999;

- The number of students who apply for the program;
- The number of students participating in the program;
- The number of students who are participating in the program and have unmet financial need;
- Recommendations on how to improve outreach to students who are or are potentially eligible for the program;
- Impediments to retaining students who are eligible under section 2602-K(c); and
- Recommendations on ways in which to improve delivery of services to students who are eligible for the program under section 2602-K(c) and to address the identified impediments.

Act 16 requires IHEs to provide the above data and information to PDE beginning no later than June 30, 2021, and by June 30 each year thereafter.

The numerical data shown in the 2020-21 Annual Report was taken from the information IHEs submitted during this reporting cycle of January 1 through March 1, 2021. IHEs submit data electronically using PDE's electronic Higher Education Reporting system. This reporting website allows IHEs to submit all mandatory reporting to PDE in a single submission.

This report is based on estimated data and statistics submitted by IHEs to PDE. In June 2021, institutions began to reconcile their data with the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) and include any enrollment changes after March 1, 2021. Data on retention also is a lagging indicator and cannot be produced until numbers are fully reconciled for the academic year. Therefore, to meet the August 31 deadline to submit the annual report to the General Assembly, PDE is using data estimates for 2020-21 and will report the final data in the 2021-22 annual report.

## **Program Data**

In the 2020-21 academic year, the first year of the program, 77 IHEs reported having students eligible for the FosterEd program. At those institutions:

- 368 students received a Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and were therefore eligible to receive the waiver under the FosterEd program;
- 563 students applied for the waiver; and
- 290 students were participating in the program as of March 1, 2021.

Although the majority met the eligibility criteria, often applicants did not participate in the program because they received enough aid from other sources to meet their tuition cost and

mandatory fees. As a result, those who did not participate, but were eligible, were labeled ineligible by PHEAA to maintain their eligibility for future FosterEd tuition waivers.

## Student Program Participation by Sector\*

Sector	Chafee Grant	Applied for Tuition Waiver	Participating as of March 1, 2021	Unmet Financial Need**	Percentage of Participating Students
Community Colleges	79	176	78	35	44.9
PASSHE	93	128	63	48	76.2
State-Related	80	104	47	25	53.2
Thaddeus Stevens	5	5	0	0	0
Rural Regional College	0	0	0	0	0
Private IHEs	92	120	84	60	71.4
Private Licensed Schools	19	30	18	12	66.7
Education Enterprise***	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>368</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>62.1</b>

\*The data are estimates. Final AY20-21 data will be reported in the 2021-22 Annual Report.

\*\*These numbers include participating and nonparticipating students, as “Unmet Financial Need” includes costs associated with room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses.

\*\*\*An Education Enterprise is an out-of-state IHE that is authorized to operate in Pennsylvania.

## Statutory Requirements

Beginning with the 2020-21 academic year, IHEs must provide eligible students with tuition waivers for the balance of tuition and mandatory fees for undergraduate courses after the eligible student has been awarded all federal and state grants and other grants and scholarships for which the student qualifies.

An eligible student is defined as an individual who is a current resident of the Commonwealth and eligible for the Chafee Education and Training Grant program under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-169, 113 STAT.1882) as administered by the Department of Human Services.

Students may receive the waiver for a total of five years or until the individual reaches 26 years of age, whichever occurs first.

Act 16 requires IHEs to do the following:

- Through a designated point of contact (POC), provide technical assistance to eligible students under section 2602-K (c) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(c)) in completing admissions applications and financial aid applications:
  - Assist students in obtaining verification of eligibility for the program from the courts, the county agency, or DHS;

- Assist eligible individuals in accessing available federal and state financial aid resources and identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities, in consultation with the institution's financial aid department;
- Serve as the primary contact for all eligible individuals applying to or attending the institution who are eligible under section 2602-K (c) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(c));
- Provide all individuals applying to or attending the institution who voluntarily disclose that they are eligible under section 2602-K (c) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(c)) with information and referrals for on-campus support services and resources, including admissions, housing, financial aid, health, mental health, tutoring, career, academic advising, and other services;
- Provide all eligible individuals applying to or attending the institution with information and referrals as available for off-campus support services, including transitional housing and medical insurance and services; and
- Post POC information on the publicly accessible website of the institution.
- Disseminate the information prepared under section 2602-K(a)(1) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(a)(1)) to recipients of a Chafee Education and Training Grant under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and post the information on the institution's publicly accessible website.
- To improve retention, report to PDE by June 30, 2021, and June 30 each year thereafter all of the following:
  - The number of students receiving the Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999;
  - The number of students who apply for the program;
  - The number of students participating in the program;
  - The number of students who are participating in the program and have unmet financial needs;
  - Recommendations on how to improve outreach to students who are or are potentially eligible for the program;
  - Impediments to retaining students who are eligible under section 2602-K (c) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(c)); and
  - Recommendations on ways in which to improve delivery of services to students who are eligible for the program under section 2602-K (c) of the Public School Code (24 P.S. § 2602-K(c)) and to address the identified impediments.

## **Program Start-Up Activity**

Prior to the commencement of the FosterEd program, PHEAA, PDE, and DHS met weekly to develop policies and procedures that the institutions could utilize to facilitate the program effectively and efficiently.

Despite the unprecedented and ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic to agencies and IHEs, coordination of efforts to provide outreach, education, and guidance to stakeholders were extensive. Marketing and communications included the publication of a brochure aimed at students, social workers, and guidance counselors (see Appendix A), as well as broad collaboration to ensure consistent and accessible forms and information via new PHEAA website sections:

- Students: [www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml](http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/foster-education.shtml).
- Schools: [www.pheaa.org/partner-access/training/state-grant-training.shtml](http://www.pheaa.org/partner-access/training/state-grant-training.shtml).
  - General Resources: [FosterEd Contact Form](#) and [FAQs](#).
  - 2020-21 Resources:
    - [Program Overview Presentation](#) (see Appendix B)
    - [Program Guidelines](#)
    - [Reconciliation Presentation](#)
    - [Program Waiver Review & Certification Presentation](#).

Multiple online presentations and social media events were provided in advance of and during the 2020-21 application and enrollment period:

- April 20, 2020: Program Overview Webinar;
- August 11, 2020: Foster Youth Virtual Retreat – Q&A Session with Youth in Foster Care;
- October 2, 2020: Facebook Live - Q&A with PHEAA's Higher Education Access Partners;
- October 23, 2020: Waiver Review and Certification Webinar;
- April 21, 2021: Reconciliation Webinar; and
- May 21, 2021: Facebook Live – Field Center Overview of Foster Care to College.

In addition, ongoing visits and sessions were conducted throughout the 2020-21 reporting year, including the following:

- PHEAA conducted high school counselor workshops on the financial aid process, which included FosterEd materials and provided information at approximately 330 individual school visits (most were conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic);
- PHEAA conducted a training session for 88 individuals at the Western PA Homeless and Foster Care Liaisons annual conference in February 2021, which featured information about FosterEd and financial aid programs;



- PHEAA and the Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice, and Research at the University of Pennsylvania collaborated on a presentation at the Together as Adoptive Parents Annual Conference in April 2021, which featured information on FosterEd and financial aid programs. Emphasis was placed on resources and campus supports available to students once they reach the postsecondary campus; and
- PHEAA featured FosterEd information at the 2020 Don Raley Institute Conference for the Pennsylvania Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (PASFAA).

The DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), in collaboration with The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC), also disseminated FosterEd program information to youth, county children and youth agencies, and private providers who work with youth:

- September 2019: DHS provided an overview of the FosterEd program to youth at the Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB) meeting;
- October 2019: DHS used the Independent Living (IL) listserv, which reaches all county and private provider agencies that provide Independent Living Services, to issue a press release about Act 16 and the FosterEd program to county and private providers;
- December 2019: The CWRC distributed FosterEd materials to regional practice improvement specialists; used the IL listserv to send information to County Children and Youth Administrators, OCYF regional staff, and private provider agencies; and posted information and brochures on the Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) and FosterEd program on the YAB website at [www.payab.pitt.edu](http://www.payab.pitt.edu);
- January 2020: DHS provided information and brochures about FosterEd at the SWAN/IL statewide meeting and continues to include information in every quarterly administrative update that is sent out to the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network/Independent Living (SWAN/IL) network;
- April 2020: With the assistance of CWRC, OCYF, and PHEAA, DHS presented a webinar for the IL network on FosterEd and financial aid, including completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) application and review of how to interpret a postsecondary education financial aid award letter. This webinar was recorded and is housed on CWRC’s website (<https://www.pacwrc.pitt.edu/>);
- June 2020: DHS staff again provided youth with information and answered questions about the FosterEd program during a YAB meeting; DHS also disseminated information on FosterEd and ETG during a regional IL networking session;
- October 2020: OCYF presented information about ETG and FosterEd in collaboration with PHEAA and PDE to higher education points of contact (POC) and other advocates through the Field Center for Children’s Policy, Practice, and Research at the University of Pennsylvania; and
- May 2021: OCYF participated in a webinar titled “To and Through Higher Education,” sponsored by the Center for Schools and Communities and DHS for county education

liaisons, school district POCs, and higher education POCs; and reviewed ETG and FosterEd during the statewide YAB meeting.

## **Recommendations on How to Improve Outreach to Eligible Students**

Of the 53 IHEs that responded with recommendations, the majority supported expanding outreach and providing training/networking opportunities to high school counselors, social service agencies, and community-based organizations. Examples include:

- Foster care agencies;
- Group homes;
- Homeless shelters; and
- Children and Youth Services;

Ideas for outreach and marketing include:

- Ensuring brochures are placed at all schools, relevant agencies, and organizations;
- Creating dedicated page(s) on Commonwealth and IHE websites;
- Producing marketing videos featuring students currently in the program;
- Directing marketing to foster parents and families; and
- Employing social media.

The second most cited recommendation was to provide training and support for a dedicated staff person in the IHE's financial aid and/or admissions office who could perform both outreach and administration of the program. This position would include working with schools and agencies as well as identifying and recruiting eligible students.

Ideas for training and support include:

- Developing a best-practices document for IHEs;
- Providing an electronic forum for IHE contacts to network, share ideas, and problem solve; and
- Organizing an annual meeting for IHEs, high schools, other agencies, and community partners to collaborate.

The third most cited recommendation was closer coordination with PHEAA. As one respondent noted: "Much of this portion is difficult to answer as we do not know the number of applicants. We receive a roster from PHEAA on who is approved and who is either incomplete or denied." A possible solution is for PHEAA to flag students who have a FAFSA comment with Code 166 and

send information on the Chafee application and the FosterEd waiver information at the same time.

Other recommendations include:

- Developing a need analysis checkpoint in the FAFSA where applicants can indicate that they are in foster care or are a ward of the court;
- Incorporating the program into general FAFSA information sessions; and
- Developing frequently asked questions for the program.

## **Recommendations on How to Improve Delivery of Services**

Of the recommendations provided by IHEs for service delivery, the majority focused on coordinated communication and efforts among staff in financial aid, counseling, and student support/success offices, as well as identifying a central point of contact within the institution.

Other recommendations include:

- More information and coordinated communication from PHEAA;
- Implementing a standardized electronic system and process for application and delivery;
- Training for the campus administrative team;
- Better follow-up with students on program eligibility;
- Communication strategies that are individualized for the students;
- Strengthening partnerships with agencies and community organizations; and
- Providing mentoring and tutoring programs for eligible students that incorporate regular “check-ins” early and often.

Several respondents cited the need for better outreach and support before the student even arrives on campus. As noted by one respondent: “One option to improve delivery of services to eligible students would be a pre-enrollment interview. This would give the opportunity to meet with this population of students early in the admissions process to learn about their context.”

A continuing theme is the need for an electronic communications process that extends from the IHE to the student. For example, one respondent stated: “Rosters should no longer be a paper transaction, and schools not only should be able to certify electronically using their AES credentials but should only be notified of when a new transaction or change in record needs to be processed.” At the student level, another respondent noted: “It would be useful if there was an app to direct students to. They all use their phones and do not follow up with websites we direct them to.”

## **Impediments to Retaining Students**

IHEs identified impediments ranging from academic preparedness and lack of basic necessities to physical and mental health challenges. Specific challenges include:

- Lack of academic preparedness;
- Lack of resources/support for academic success;
- Lack of strong support systems at home;
- Food, housing, and transportation insecurity;
- Overwhelming application process;
- Lack of financial literacy;
- Lack of mentorship programs;
- Lack of awareness about institutional support; and
- Embarrassment about foster-care status.

One respondent noted the complicated and interrelated challenges facing many students in this cohort: “Many students may not understand what they need to do, when they need to do it, and how to do what is required. Some are afraid to ask for assistance because they believe the tasks are too overwhelming for them. Many wait too long to reach out.”

Others cited the unpredictability of daily life and historical challenges for students, such as trauma and abuse, lack of family and financial support, and homelessness. While the tuition waiver program is helpful financially, room and board expenses and general housing concerns have an outsized impact on students’ ability to focus on academic success.

Several respondents suggested creating cohort mentoring programs that would provide ongoing academic, emotional, and social support for students, while others noted the importance of providing viable support services earlier in the student’s academic career, including programs such as the Spark career exploration and self-discovery program for middle-school students.

## **Conclusion**

PDE, DHS, and PHEAA used preliminary data and the IHE’s recommendations provided from the first year of implementation to enhance the FosterEd program and increase awareness and participation for the 2021-22 academic year.

- Last year, PHEAA and DHS distributed more than 18,000 brochures. In the 2021-22 academic year, brochures again will be distributed to include foster care agencies, group homes, homeless shelters, and children and youth servicers. Brochures also will be distributed to high-school guidance counselors.

- PDE will collect data and recommendations from area career and technical schools that participate in the program. All are career and technical schools have been added to the PDE reporting website and will begin submitting data in the 2021-22 school year.
- Agencies determined a shared definition of “retention” for IHEs to use beginning with the 2021-22 school year. “Retention” is enrollment at the same school from fall semester to fall semester, academic year over academic year. As defined, it does not count enrollment from one school to another.
- PHEAA will continue to train POCs at IHEs. The next training webinar is scheduled for the fall of 2021.
- All agencies will continue to encourage institutions to share their POC information with the [Center for Schools and Communities](mailto:pafostercare@csc.csiu.org) at pafostercare@csc.csiu.org. The Center for Schools and Communities anticipates providing information to institutions and creating a network of service providers.

# Appendix A: FosterEd Brochure



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.

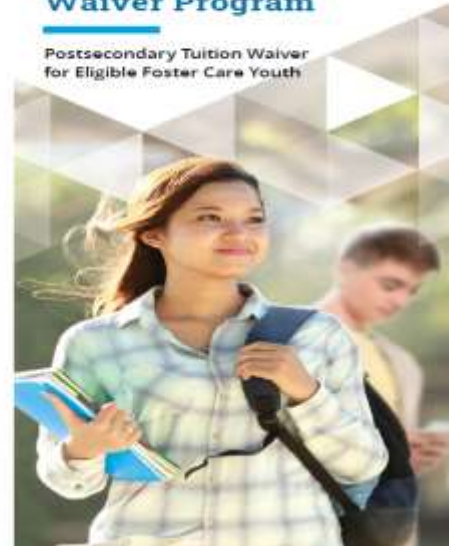


The information contained in this document is believed to be accurate as of the date of printing.  
 OR PHEA 122820



## 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 guardianship
- 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](http://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](http://PHEAA.org/FosterEd)

## Appendix B: Program Overview Webinar Slides (April 2020)



PA STATE GRANT &  
SPECIAL PROGRAMS

### PENNSYLVANIA FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW



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April 2020



## OBJECTIVE

Understand the program basics of the  
PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program



#### PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Understand  
background for  
the Fostering  
Independence  
Tuition Waiver  
Program



#### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Explain the  
student and  
institutional  
eligibility  
requirements



#### POINT OF CONTACT

Examine the  
role of the  
Point of  
Contact (POC)  
for each  
institution



#### WAIVER CERTIFICATION

Review the  
waiver  
determination  
and  
certification  
processes



#### REMINDERS & RESOURCES

Recap program  
reminders and  
highlight  
additional  
resources  
available

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## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- Enacted into law under Act 16 of 2019
  - Amended by Act 91 of 2019 to require students to apply for federal and state grants
- Program created to remove barriers in accessing postsecondary education for youth who are or have been in foster care
  - Provides a tuition and mandatory fee waiver for eligible students in the foster care system beginning Fall 2020
  - Assists students in completing studies, reducing student loan debt, and building a network of support

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## PROGRAM BACKGROUND

- Jointly administered by PHEAA and the PA departments of Education (PDE), Human Services (DHS), and Labor & Industry (L&I)
- No Commonwealth appropriation
  - Program is a waiver
  - Student's tuition and mandatory fees must be eliminated or paid for by institutional funds
    - Funds will not need repaid regardless of eligibility changes



## INSTITUTION PARTICIPATION

- No institution application required for participation
  - Legislation provides details surrounding participation
  - Questions regarding your institution’s participation should be directed to your Legal Department
- Institutions must:
  - Be located in Pennsylvania
  - Have federal Title IV eligibility
  - Have an executed PHEAA Remote Access Agreement (RAA) on file



## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

### Option 1

- Application
  - Student applies/renews Chafee ETG eligibility directly with PHEAA
- Confirmation
  - PHEAA runs eligibility checks and advises the student
- Waiver Listing Generated
  - Eligible students presented on a biweekly Waiver Listing

### Option 2

- Application
  - Student self-identifies to school’s Point of Contact
- Verification
  - Student & school verify student’s eligibility and advise PHEAA
  - Student applies/renews Chafee ETG eligibility
- Confirmation
  - PHEAA runs eligibility checks and advises the student
- Waiver Listing Generated
  - Eligible students presented on a biweekly Waiver Listing

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## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY



- Student must be:
  - A resident of Pennsylvania
  - A recipient of a high school diploma or Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
  - Under the age of 26
  - Eligible for services under Pennsylvania’s John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood
  - Identified as a youth in foster care or a youth discharged or adopted from foster care on or after attaining age 16
    - Or be a youth that has exited foster care on or after age 16 due to adoption or permanent legal guardianship

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Public Information



## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Student must:
  - File a FAFSA® for the award year coinciding with the waiver request (e.g., 2020-21 FAFSA for 2020-21 Award Year)
  - File an application for the PA Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program
    - Chafee ETG application not required for renewal applicants
    - Student does not have to be awarded Chafee ETG funds
  - Have “unmet costs” for the Chafee ETG Program as determined by the postsecondary institution
    - “Unmet costs” is the difference between the student’s cost of attendance and all other gift aid the student is receiving

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Public Information



## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

- Student must:
  - Enroll on at least a half-time basis
  - Be enrolled as an undergraduate student at an eligible PA institution
  - Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, as determined by the institution
  - Not be in default on a federal student loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid
  - Have not previously received a waiver for five (5) years, consecutive or not (defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent)



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## POINT OF CONTACT

- Each institution must identify one or more staff to serve as the Point of Contact (POC)
- POC is primary contact for eligible FosterEd students
  - Assist students in attaining FosterEd eligibility and financial aid
  - Provide students with information/referrals for on-campus and off-campus resources (e.g., tutoring, mental health, medical insurance, transitional housing, etc.)
- Institution determines who will fill the role
- Contact information for POC must be publicly available and posted online
  - Provide POC contact information to PHEAA

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## POINT OF CONTACT

- POC must assist students in obtaining verification of foster care status if student self-identifies
  - Verification will come from Commonwealth courts, County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYA), private provider agencies, or the student’s legal representative
  - No other sources of verification will be accepted
- Document verification source, date, and method in institutional records
  - Verification methods should be documented regardless of approval or denial
- Report approved eligibility verifications to PHEAA via email

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Public Information



## POINT OF CONTACT

- 
- A decorative horizontal band with a green and blue abstract pattern, possibly representing a field or water.
- POC will also assist student in accessing Federal, State, and other financial aid resources
    - Students not required to apply for PA State Grant if attending a non-approved institution or enrolled in a non-approved program of study
    - Resources to support students in applying for additional financial aid are available on [PHEAA.org](https://www.pheaa.org)

*Reminder: Some sources of financial aid (e.g., PA Chafee ETG, PA State Grant, etc.) can be used for various costs of attendance (e.g., room, board, transportation, books, supplies, etc.).*

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## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

### • Scenario:

- Raymond R. and Liz K. are enrolled at PHEAA College of the Arts, a Title IV eligible institution.
- Raymond, an 18-year old freshman, has never received a Chafee ETG award and heard about the program from a friend.
- Liz, a 25-year old junior, most recently had a Chafee ETG award in 2018-19. The school is aware of her prior eligibility.
- Liz and Raymond reach out to Harold C., the POC for PHEAA College, at the start of the Fall 2020 term to inquire about the FosterEd Program.

### • Questions:

- What is the first thing Harold should do to begin assisting Raymond?
- How can Harold assist Liz in establishing FosterEd eligibility?



## STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

### • Answers:

- To assist:
  - **Raymond:** As a first-time applicant, Raymond's eligibility must be established by outreaching to external sources (e.g., CCYA, etc.). Once eligibility is verified, this should be routed to PHEAA and the POC should ensure he has submitted a Chafee ETG Application and FAFSA. Harold would also initiate discussion on additional support Raymond may need (e.g., other financial aid, tutoring, etc.)
  - **Liz:** Harold should advise Liz to submit a Chafee ETG Application and FAFSA and then discuss the additional support services she may need.
    - Although Liz has prior Chafee ETG eligibility, her last award was the 2018-19 Academic Year so she would not be considered a renewal and must submit a new application.

## WAIVER CERTIFICATION



- FosterEd waiver covers remaining balance of the student's tuition and mandatory fees
  - Applicable after all gift aid applied (e.g., federal grants, state grants, outside scholarships, etc.)
  - Mandatory fees are those assessed to all students at the beginning of the term or fees associated with credential completion
    - Examples: health services fee, technology fee, student activity fee, laboratory fee, uniform fee, materials fee, etc.
  - Other charges (e.g., room, board, non-mandatory fees, etc.) are excluded and may be the student's responsibility

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Public Information



## WAIVER CERTIFICATION

### PHEAA

- Initial eligibility checks performed by PHEAA
  - Example: FAFSA status, PA residency, age requirements, default status, etc.
- Students notified of eligibility determination via letter
- Eligible students move forward for school certification on Waiver Listing
  - Ineligible students added to Denial Listing

### Schools

- Institution checks occur after PHEAA assesses eligibility
- Schools review Waiver Listing to confirm enrollment status, waiver amount, Satisfactory Academic Progress, etc.
- POC should:
  - Review Denial Listing and work with students to resolve eligibility issues
  - Assist students in identifying further financial aid, where needed

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## WAIVER CERTIFICATION

- Certify eligibility within 30 days of student appearing on Waiver Listing or 30 days of the term beginning, whichever is later
- After eligibility certification, institutions will:
  - Waive/apply credit for tuition and mandatory fees remaining after gift aid is applied
    - Waivers must be applied on a term-by-term basis
    - Waivers cannot be withheld or reduced due to optional gift aid
  - Refund any student payments on the student's account that were applied to tuition or mandatory fees within 30 days
- Document terms when a student elects to decline the waiver

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Public Information



## WAIVER CERTIFICATION



- Return Waiver Listings to PHEAA after eligibility is verified
  - Only return subsequent listings to report status changes or to verify eligibility for new students
- Report eligibility changes and ineligible students to PHEAA
  - Student withdrawals or drops to less than half-time **before** eligibility is certified, are ineligible
  - Student withdrawals or drops to less than half-time **after** eligibility is certified, retain waiver
- Waiver adjustments may be required due to financial aid increases or decreases

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Public Information



## WAIVER CERTIFICATION – EXAMPLE

- Dembe, a student at PHEAA College of the Arts, is listed on the Fall 2020 Waiver Listing. His cost of attendance information is:



Costs	
Tuition	\$17,000
Mandatory Fees	\$1,000
Room & Board	\$0
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$18,000</b>
Gift Aid	
Federal Pell Grant	\$3,000
PA State Grant	\$2,000
PA Chafee ETG	\$0
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>

- The minimum amount the institution must waive is \$13,000.
  - Eligible costs (\$18,000) minus gift aid (\$5,000) leave \$13,000 uncovered.
- The school may opt to waive a higher amount however and allow Dembe's gift aid to be applied towards other expenses (e.g., books, supplies, transportation, etc.).

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## WAIVER CERTIFICATION – EXAMPLE

- Aram, a student at PHEAA College of the Arts, is listed on the Fall 2020 Waiver Listing. His cost of attendance information is:



Costs	
Tuition	\$6,000
Mandatory Fees	\$500
Room & Board	\$3,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$9,500</b>
Gift Aid	
Federal Pell Grant	\$2,000
PA State Grant	\$1,000
PA Chafee ETG	\$2,500
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>\$5,500</b>

- The minimum amount the institution must waive is \$1,000.
  - Eligible costs (\$6,500) minus gift aid (\$5,500) leave \$1,000 uncovered.
- The institution may elect to waive a higher amount and allow Aram to reserve his gift aid (e.g., PA Chafee ETG award) for other expenses (e.g., room, board, etc.).

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## REPORTING

- Reconciliation Listing must be submitted to PHEAA at the end of the award year
- Year-end annual report due to PDE by March 1, 2021
  - Legislatively required for institutions to report directly to PDE
  - Report focuses on student eligibility information, retention, and recommendations from the institution about the program



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## WHAT'S NEXT?



- 2020-21 Academic Year Chafee ETG Student Application now available on [PHEAA.org/Chafee](https://PHEAA.org/Chafee)
- FosterEd and Chafee ETG eligibility processes will begin running in mid-May
- Waiver Listings begin generating to institution's PageCenter mailboxes by mid-May
- FosterEd Program Guidelines and program FAQ available by early June

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## REMINDERS

- Eligibility begins with 2020-21 Award Year
- Ensure your institution has a designated and published POC
  - [Update this information](#) with PHEAA
- Waivers must be applied to tuition and mandatory fees
  - School choice if additional charges will also be waived
- Retain all records used in certifying and crediting student waiver eligibility for five (5) years
  - Program will be included in Program Reviews conducted by PHEAA staff

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Public Information



## RESOURCES

- [PAFosterCare.org](#)
  - Features POC directories
- [PA DHS Provider Directory](#)
  - Contains a list of County Children and Youth Agencies
- [Education Planner](#)
  - Provides advice to help students prepare for college and a career
- [StudentAid.ed.gov](#)
  - U.S. Department of Education's site providing information on preparing and funding education

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## RESOURCES

- ▶ • Web Resources:
  - [PHEAA.org](https://pheaa.org)
    - [Funding Opportunities](#)
    - [Partner Access](#)
    - [Online Order System](#).... and more!
  - [Alec](#)
    - Document Library
    - PageCenter
- ▶ • Other Resources:
  - Contact Us:
    - Phone: 1-800-443-0646
    - Email: [FosterEd@pheaa.org](mailto:FosterEd@pheaa.org)



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Public Information



## TUNE IN NEXT TIME!

### Pennsylvania State Grant Program (PA SG)

*Performing Satisfactory Academic Progress Reviews*  
Tuesday, May 12, 2020  
10:00-11:30 AM (ET)

### Military Family Education Program (MFEP)

*Program Overview*  
Tuesday June 2, 2020  
2:00-3:30 PM (ET)

Spring 2020 series registration and session descriptions available on [PHEAA.org/SGSPtraining](https://PHEAA.org/SGSPtraining)

Have a specific session that you would like to see featured?

Send us an email via the [program mailbox](#) with the subject line: Training Topic.

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Public Information

