

Fostering Independence Through Education Annual Report for Academic Year 2023-2024

August 2024



**COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

607 South Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17120
www.education.pa.gov



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For Inquiries Concerning Nondiscrimination in All Other Pennsylvania Department of Education Programs and Activities:

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School Services Unit Director
Voice: (717) 783-3750

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

Pennsylvania Department of Education
Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education
Division of Higher Education, Access, and Equity
607 South Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17120
Voice: (717) 783-6786
Email: ra-highereducation@pa.gov

All Media Requests/Inquiries: Contact the Office of Press & Communications at (717) 783-9802.

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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 and meet certain eligibility requirements. FosterEd intersects with Act 1 of 2022: Assisting Students Experiencing Education Instability as a pathway for students in foster care to access postsecondary education without additional barriers.

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 (Chafee ETG) 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 by June 30 each year. 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.

Statutory Requirements

Beginning with the 2020-2021 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 ETG 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;
- Prove 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 ETG 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 each year all of the following:
 - The number of students receiving the Pennsylvania Chafee ETG 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 Data

Numerical data for this annual report is taken from information submitted by the IHEs during the Higher Education Reporting cycle, which occurs annually from January to March. During this period, 210 institutions reported on FosterEd. To meet the August 31 deadline for the submission to the General Assembly, the data provided in the 2023-2024 report was estimated until the institutions were able to complete the reconciliation of numbers with PHEAA and include any enrollment changes after March 1. In this year's report, the 2022-2023 data is reconciled and accurate, while the 2023-2024 data is estimated for the previously mentioned reasons.

For the 2022-2023 academic year, 54 IHEs had students who received tuition waivers under FosterEd. Reconciled data showed that:

- 445 students received a Pennsylvania Chafee ETG under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 and applied for the waiver under the FosterEd program¹
- 149 students participated in the FosterEd program²
- The average retention rate at IHEs was 73.6 percent³

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.

In addition, while the student may have received a Chafee grant but was deemed ineligible to receive the FosterEd waiver due to having all tuition and mandatory fee costs met, they still may have an unmet need due to the costs associated with room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses not defined under tuition and mandatory fees.

2022-2023 Student Program Participation by Sector[±]

Sector	Received Chafee Grant/ Applied for Tuition Waiver	Received Tuition Waiver	Unmet Financial Need^{±±}
Community Colleges	125	6	68
PASSHE	106	11	45
State-Related	82	49	50
Thaddeus Stevens	3	1	0
Rural Regional College	0	0	0
Private IHEs	95	66	66
Private Licensed Schools	30	16	13
Education Enterprise ^{±±±}	0	0	0
Total	441	149	242

[±]The 2022-2023 data reflects reconciled information reported to PHEAA in June 2024.

^{±±}Unmet Financial Need includes costs associated with room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses as reported by the IHE; these numbers are supplied by the reporting IHEs and include participating and nonparticipating students.

^{±±±}An Education Enterprise is an out-of-state IHE that is authorized to operate at a physical location in Pennsylvania.

¹ PHEAA Chafee Program Statistics 2022-2023 Academic Year (6/28/2024)

² PHEAA 2022-2023 FosterEd Waiver Recipients By School (June 2024)

³ 2022-2023 Higher Education Reporting Collection

2023-2024 Student Program Participation by Sector*

Sector	Received Chafee Grant/ Applied for Waiver	Received Tuition Waiver	Unmet Financial Need**
Community Colleges	200	2	83
PASSHE	69	4	47
State-Related	55	48	46
Thaddeus Stevens	5	3	0
Rural Regional College	0	0	0
Private IHEs	116	81	76
Private Licensed Schools	34	28	13
Education Enterprise***	0	0	0
Total	479	166	265

*The data are estimates. Final AY 2023-2024 data will be reported in the 2024-2025 Annual Report.

** Unmet Financial Need includes costs associated with room and board, books, transportation, and other expenses as reported by the IHE; these numbers are supplied by the reporting IHEs and include participating and nonparticipating students.

***An Education Enterprise is an out-of-state IHE that is authorized to operate at a physical location in Pennsylvania.

NOTE: The above charts should not be compared at this time until reconciliation is complete and shown in next year's report due to the 2022-2023 chart reflecting reconciled data and the 2023-2024 chart reflecting estimated data.

Recommendations on How to Improve Outreach to Eligible Students

As in previous years, among the IHEs that responded with recommendations, the most common were the following:

- Engage with agencies that assist foster children and provide information on available programs.
- Ensure that college admissions, advising and student services staff/administrators know and understand the program to promote and encourage applications from prospective and continuing students.
- Provide direct outreach to and dedicated training for K-12 school counselors and offices.
- Develop targeted marketing campaigns utilizing social media, email newsletters, and community events to raise awareness.
- Create collaboration opportunities between college admissions staff and community agencies.
- Maintain a centralized database of college and postsecondary schools' Point of Contact (POC) website address and contact information. (NOTE: This database is available at [Foster Care Contact Directory \(center-school.org\)](http://center-school.org)).

Recommendations on How to Improve Delivery of Services

Of the recommendations provided by IHEs for service delivery, many focused on the following:

- Provide additional resources for students at the high-school level including direct connections to institutions of higher learning, a comprehensive guide for students, and assistance with the transition from high school to postsecondary education.
- Collaborate with local/regional community partners to provide wraparound services.
- Change roster delivery methods to a web-based response system; everything should be available electronically on a web-based platform.
- Allow institutions to view the student's Chafee/FosterEd application's status throughout the process.

Impediments to Retaining Students

IHEs identified the primary impediments to retention as the following:

- Lack of access to stable housing and transportation.
- Lack of academic preparedness.
- History of adverse childhood experiences and unaddressed trauma due to lack of access to mental-health resources.
- Students in this population often are reluctant to seek help or do not know whom to contact when they do need assistance.
- Financial assistance does not address expenses such as books, laptops, housing, food, and transportation.
- External obligations such as childcare and work schedules.
- Lack of access to food and housing outside of the academic year and between semesters.

Program Activity

In the 2023-2024 reporting year, DHS, PHEAA and PDE expanded efforts to ensure consistent and accessible forms and information.

PHEAA distributed 1,679 brochures and 117,385 Student Aid Guides at sites across the commonwealth. PHEAA also built up its offerings across [PHEAA.org](https://www.pheaa.org):

- Students: [PHEAA.org/FosterEd](https://www.pheaa.org/FosterEd)

- Schools: [PHEAA.org/FosterEd School Page](https://PHEAA.org/FosterEd)
 - [2023-2024 FosterEd Program Guidelines](#)
 - [FosterEd Brochure](#)
 - [FosterEd POC & FAA Contact Form](#)
 - [FosterEd POC FAQ](#)
- Other Resources
 - [DHS County Agency List](#)
 - [PDE Annual Reporting Site](#)

PHEAA conducted 37 high school workshops, for a total of 950 attendees, and participated in multiple conferences and training events during the 2023-2024 year where FosterEd was a topic of discussion:

- Training for Montgomery County Office of Children and Youth (June 2023) - An overview of Chafee/FosterEd and PA State Grant.
- Five Individual School Training Sessions (July 2023-April 2024) – 1:1 school training sessions between PHEAA and postsecondary schools where Chafee/FosterEd was mentioned.
- *Fostering Success in Higher Education* (July 19, 2023) – An enhanced learning session workshop during the PHEAA summer workshops. Attendees included postsecondary schools and community partners.
- Training for Adams County Children and Youth (August 2023) – An overview of financial aid with an emphasis on the Chafee/FosterEd.
- PA State Financial Aid Administrators Fall Conference (October 2023) – Mentioned Chafee/FosterEd during various presentations and conversations over the 3-day conference.
- University of Pittsburgh workshop on Chafee/FosterEd (January 2024).
- NEPA Independent Living Presentation (January 2024) – Included information on Chafee/FosterEd for the Department of Human Services Office of Children Youth and Families Coordinator for Children and Youth agencies in Northeast Pennsylvania.
- Valley Youth House training on Chafee/FosterEd (February 2024).
- PA State Financial Aid Administrators Spring Training Conference (March 12 and March 14, 2024) – Chafee/FosterEd mentioned during presentations and conversations at the conference.
- *Paving the Way for Foster Students ILC Spring Training* (April 10, 2024) – Independent Living Coordinators across the Commonwealth (See Appendix C).

- FosterCare to College Network Quarterly Meeting (April 16, 2024) – Community partners across the Commonwealth.
- Center for Schools and Communities Retreat (April 2024) - information was given about Chafee/FosterEd.
- Virtual Event-Philadelphia Foster-Care to College training on Chafee/FosterEd (April 30, 2024).

During the 2023-2024 reporting year, DHS Office of Children, Youth, and Families (OCYF), in collaboration with The Child Welfare Resource Center (CWRC), conducted the following activities:

- Information about Chafee/FosterEd is included in every Quarterly Administrative Update (set of written updates) that is provided to all participants at the Statewide Adoption and Permanency Network/Independent Living (SWAN/IL) network and available online at <https://www.diakon-swan.org/swan/documents>.
- During OCYF’s announcements at the SWAN/IL Quarterly Meetings held across the state in October 2023 and April 2024, and statewide meetings held in January 2024 and June 2024, information about Chafee/FosterEd eligibility was provided to all participants.
- In October 2023, information related to supporting foster youth with their postsecondary education was presented at the Paving the Way to Educational Success Conference.
- During OCYF’s announcements at the SWAN/IL Winter Statewide (January 2024) information about Chafee/ FosterEd eligibility was provided to all participants.
- Statewide Youth Advisory Board (YAB) developed a guide entitled *Making Informed Decisions with Older Youth* which includes Chafee/FosterEd eligibility requirements for youth and staff. This guide is available on the YAB website located at [Pennsylvania Youth Advisory Board \(pitt.edu\)](http://pitt.edu) .
- During the statewide YAB meetings held in September 2023, November 2023, March 2024, and May 2024, youth and IL coordinators/staff present were provided with information on Chafee/FosterEd. This format presented an opportunity for youth and staff to ask questions.
- On April 10, 2024, a collaborative training between OCYF, PHEAA and PDE was held for IL staff to provide updated information on Chafee/ FosterEd (See Appendix C).
- In June 2023, PHEAA provided a presentation at the 31st Annual Pennsylvania Permanency Conference, which is attended by staff from CCYAs, IL providers, foster care agencies and SWAN affiliates, as well as foster and adoptive families. A similar training is planned for the 32nd Annual Permanency Conference in June 2024.
- Youth and IL Coordinators were presented with information about Chafee/FosterEd at the YAB Summit held on June 14, 2023.
- Additionally, for every Chafee/ FosterEd inquiry received during this reporting period from youth/young adults and/or parents, advocates, and IL workers, responding correspondence includes information about FosterEd along with the website link.

- OCYF continues to be responsive to inquiries from postsecondary institutions regarding a youth's eligibility for Chafee/FosterEd.
- OCYF continues to collaborate with PHEAA to validate youth/young people for Chafee allowing eligibility for FosterEd.
- Information about FosterEd is made available at the YAB website: www.payab.pitt.edu.

Conclusion

As highlighted in the 2023-24 list of activities, PDE, DHS, and PHEAA continued to use data and recommendations provided in the 2022-23 Higher Education Report to enhance the FosterEd program and increase awareness and participation for the 2023-24 academic year. For example, PHEAA leaned into the creative use of social media to encourage applications and to remind students of deadlines (see Appendix B).

In addition, due to a number of inaccuracies in IHE recommendations, PDE's annual statutory and regulatory notice to IHEs highlighted key FosterEd elements, including the mandate that IHEs establish a FosterEd Point of Contact (POC) and publish the information on their website, as well as resource and contact information for FosterEd partners DHS and PHEAA.

On April 10, 2024, DHS, PDE, and PHEAA collaborated to provide the webinar *Paving the Way for Foster Students* for members of the Independent Living Project, sponsored by the University of Pittsburgh. In addition to providing an in-depth review of the Chafee ETG and FAFSA process, the webinar also introduced participants to [PA MASLOW](#), a PDE initiative that connects institutions of higher education with resources and partners across the commonwealth to create supportive collegiate environments for all Pennsylvania learners (see Appendix C).

Finally, DHS/OCYF continue to offer all Chafee eligible young people services and supports through Aftercare Services until their 23rd birthday through the Independent Living Program in counties where they reside. Aftercare services are defined as: "IL services available to any Chafee eligible youth who exited foster care and has not reached their 23rd birthday." Aftercare services may include the full range of services and supports which can include needs assessment/case planning, life skills training, prevention services, education, support services, employment, location of housing, room and board, retreats and camps, indirect services and program administration. Supports for postsecondary education, room and board and supplies such as textbooks would be included. Information about the Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood can be found here: [Chafee Foster Care | Department of Human Services | Commonwealth of Pennsylvania](#).

Appendix A: FosterEd Brochure



The PA 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 PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program provides tuition waivers at postsecondary institutions for eligible youth who are or have been in foster care.

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PA 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 custodianship
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, at least half time in a postsecondary institution that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV student assistance programs
- Have unmet cost for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program, 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 by May 1
- Submit a PA State Grant Form, if applicable
- Enroll in an eligible PA postsecondary institution

Visit PHEAA.org for additional information.



FAQs

What is a Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver?

An eligible student's remaining charges for tuition and mandatory fees are eliminated after all federal, state, and gift aid are 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, Chafee ETG application for the current year, and a PA State Grant Form, if applicable, for the postsecondary institution to which you are applying. Your Point of Contact is able to assist 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

Appendix B: PHEAA Social Media

Late 2023: Dec 31 Chafee Deadline



Late April 2024



April 18, 2024: Application Deadline Reminder



I need to fill out my Chafee form by **MAY 1**

PHEAA

PHEAA

Apr 18: The PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program can help cover remaining tuition costs for eligible students who are, or were in foster care. The 2023-24 waiver is coming to a close (including consideration for the 2024 summer), so head to pheaa.org/fosterEd now to submit the required Chafee Education & Training Grant application by May 1!

Week of April 22, 2024



PHILLY FOSTER CARE TO COLLEGE WITH PHEAA

This event, organized with the Philadelphia School District and the Philadelphia College Prep Roundtable, will be helpful for those supporting foster youth.

REGISTER BY APRIL 30

RSVP BY 4/30

Appendix C: Paving the Way for Foster Students – PA State Grant & Special Programs Training (April 10, 2024)

This content has been abridged and does not supersede current program policy. For complete guidance on program eligibility and requirements, please refer to the appropriate year program guidelines.

Paving the Way for Foster Students

PA State Grant & Special Programs Training



Institutional Eligibility

Chafee ETG Program

- Must be approved by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for Title IV funding
- May be located in PA or out-of-state

FosterEd Program

- [Program legislation](#) provides details regarding required institutional participation
 - All PA schools eligible for Title IV funding must offer the waiver



Awards are to be credited directly to eligible student accounts and are not to be used for institutional costs.

PHEAA – Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)



2

Student Eligibility

- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and submit the [Chafee ETG application](#) by the program's deadline
 - **2023-24 Chafee ETG application deadline = December 31, 2023**
 - **2023-24 FosterEd application deadline = May 1, 2024**
 - Chafee ETG application not required under either program for applicants who received a Chafee ETG award in the prior year
- Students can enroll in more than one program if they:
 - Have not previously exhausted their program award counter (defined as 5 years)
 - Enroll in 6 semester credits or the equivalent as an undergraduate, in an approved federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree program of study at an eligible institution
- Academic Progress is defined by the federal Title IV guidelines and determined by the institution
 - If students fail to meet academic progress, they will not be eligible until they are meeting federal guidelines
 - PA State Grant academic progress standards are different and do not apply for Chafee ETG awarding and FosterEd waivers

3

Student Costs and Awards

- **Chafee ETG awards** are applied to unmet costs of attendance
 - Unmet cost = student's cost of attendance – federal gift aid
 - Federal gift aid includes Pell Grant, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grants, and Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant
 - Student Aid Index (SAI – formerly EFC) and non-federal gift aid (e.g., loans, PA State Grant, institutional scholarships, etc.) is not included in the calculation
 - Allowable costs may include both direct and indirect costs
- Institutions are encouraged to use other aid to cover charges not waived under FosterEd, as appropriate
 - Room, board, non-mandatory fees, or other excluded charges may be the student's responsibility

Students should schedule a face-to-face meeting with a financial aid officer for questions regarding withdrawal policies and tuition refunds. PHEAA staff are unable to advise regarding use of refunds, and withdrawal policies vary across institutions.



4

Additional FosterEd Student Eligibility Requirements



- To be eligible for a FosterEd waiver, students:
 - Do not have to be awarded Chafee ETG funds
 - May enroll during the academic year and/or summer term
 - Chafee ETG awards are available only during the academic year
 - Must file a PA State Grant Form or PA State Grant Summer Application, if applicable
 - Student does not need to be eligible for PA State Grant
 - May still need alternate sources of aid (e.g., loans) to cover educational costs beyond those covered by the waiver

PHEAA – Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)

5

Student Eligibility Process

Application

Student applies or renews Chafee ETG eligibility directly with PHEAA

Student self-identifies to the Point of Contact (POC) then application is forwarded to PHEAA

Confirmation

PHEAA runs initial eligibility checks and advises the student

Listings

Eligible students provided on biweekly lists made available to the institution's financial aid office

Students deemed ineligible by PHEAA or requiring additional DHS review are provided on separate biweekly lists with reasons

Certification

Institution confirms eligibility, determines award/waiver amount, and returns list to PHEAA after crediting awards / applying waivers

Institution reviews Denial Listing to determine if students may attain eligibility

POCs should work with students to continue to attempt to resolve eligibility issues throughout the academic period.



6

FosterEd Point of Contact (POC)

- Institutions **must** designate one or more staff as the POC
 - Each institution must determine who is most qualified for the role
 - Contact information for POC must be publicly available and posted online



PRIMARY STUDENT CONTACT

Serve as primary contact for potentially eligible foster youth applying to and attending the institution



FINANCIAL AID AND ELIGIBILITY ASSISTANCE

Assist students in attaining FosterEd eligibility, as well as ensure students apply for applicable federal, state, and/or other financial aid



RESOURCE REFERRALS

Provide students with information and referrals for **both** on-campus and off-campus resources (e.g., tutoring, mental health, medical insurance, transitional housing, etc.)

PHEAA - Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)

7


FosterEd POC Duties




- Identify local support services and contacts
 - Share brochures with local schools, relevant agencies and organizations
 - Develop readily available FAQ documents
- Coordinate regular check-ins with current FosterEd students
- Assist students who self-identify with completing FAFSA and Chafee ETG applications
- Advocate for all foster students in working with financial aid and other campus departments
- Incorporate the program into the school's admissions materials and applications
 - Share program information with university faculty and staff

PHEAA - Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)

8




- PHEAA administers programs designed to ensure students have every opportunity to access affordable higher education
- Students may be eligible for these programs in conjunction with or instead of the PA State Grant Program
- Full program details can be found at PHEAA.org



Beyond
PA State
Grant

RTSS



- Created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 2014
 - Administered by PHEAA with support from the PA Department of Education (PDE)
 - Funded via an annual Commonwealth appropriation
- Designed to assist middle-income families who do not meet traditional PA State Grant 'need' requirement and could benefit from free financial aid
 - Program aims to reduce student loan indebtedness
 - Maximum award for the 2023-24 Academic Year was \$2,500

PHEAA - Providing affordable access to higher education. (Public Information)
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RTSS Program Student Eligibility

Academic Achievement

- GPA of at least 3.25
 - Do not round cumulative GPA
- Determine GPA at the same time as PA State Grant Academic Progress checks are completed

Academic Year Completion

- Students must complete one academic year
 - At least 24 credits or equivalent
- Determination made at the same time as GPA

Income & PA State Grant Award

- Annual family income must be less than \$126,000
- PA State Grant awarded to the student must be no more than \$2,000
 - PA State Grant applicants with income or resources higher than eligibility thresholds may be awarded

RTSS has no student application. PHEAA relies on schools to nominate eligible candidates.



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PA Blind or Deaf Higher Education Beneficiary Grant (BDBG) Program

- Program designed to assist blind and/or deaf students in reducing the expenses of postsecondary education
 - Students can receive up to \$500 per academic year
- To be eligible for a BDBG award, a student must:
 - File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) and complete a BDBG application each year
 - Applications released annually via [PHEAA.org/BlindDeaf](https://pheaa.org/BlindDeaf)
 - Provide written documentation of the visual and/or hearing impairment with the initial application via either:
 - Documentation through the Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) **OR**
 - Medical Professional Certification Form completed by a medical professional
 - Be a resident of Pennsylvania
 - Maintain satisfactory academic progress according to institutional requirements
 - Be enrolled on at least a half-time basis

PA Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP)



- Enacted in 2012 and funded by a Commonwealth Appropriation
- Jointly administered with the PA Departments of Education (PDE) and Labor & Industry (L&I) and designed to:
 - Target programs of study that train individuals for areas of immediate employment needs
 - Focus on fields of Energy, Health, Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing, and Agriculture and Food Production
 - Provide need-based grants to eligible students
- Maximum award for 2023-24 Award Year: \$6,000

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PA-TIP

- Students cannot receive PA-TIP and a PA State Grant for the same enrollment
- Students that have completed a bachelor's or graduate degree are still eligible to apply for and receive a PA-TIP award
- PA-TIP students must:
 - Have received a high school diploma, GED or homeschool certificate
 - Complete a PA-TIP application and file a FAFSA®
 - Application released annually at [PHEAA.org/PA-TIP](https://www.pheaa.org/PA-TIP)
 - Not be in default or owe a PA State Grant refund
 - Maintain federal Title IV Satisfactory Academic Progress
 - Have not exhausted their 1.0 PA-TIP award counter
 - Have financial need, as determined by the program policies and the institution
 - Be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen, and be a resident of Pennsylvania who is not incarcerated



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PA-TIP Eligible Programs



- Programs included in PA-TIP awarding **must**:
 - Be offered at PA-TIP approved Commonwealth institutions
 - Be between 10 weeks and two academic years in length
 - Be full-time programs
 - Approved nonprofit institutions may be approved to offer half-time programs
 - Correspond to [PHEAA's 2023-24 Eligible Classification of Instructional Program \(CIP\) Codes](#)
- Programs included in PA-TIP awarding **must not**:
 - Be offered as 100% asynchronous distance education (i.e., online)
 - Lead to the awarding of an associate's degree
 - Also be eligible for a PA State Grant

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Aid for Military & PA National Guard

PA National Guard Educational Assistance Program (EAP)

- PA National Guard members who have entered into a service commitment for a period of 6 years
- Enroll in a degree- or certificate-granting program of study at an approved Pennsylvania institution

PA National Guard Military Family Education Program (MFEP)

- Dependents (spouses and children) of PA Guard Members who have entered into an additional 6-year service commitment with the PA National Guard
- Enroll in a degree or certificate-granting program of study at an approved Pennsylvania institution

PA Postsecondary Educational Gratuity Program (PEGP)

- Residents of PA under 25 who are children of servicemembers who died in the line of duty
- Enroll at a Pennsylvania community college, state-owned institution, or state-related institution as a full-time undergraduate student pursuing an associate or bachelor's degree
- PEGP application available at PHEAA.org/PEGP

The PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) determines eligibility for EAP and MFEP. Students apply via Account Access and must contact their unit of assignment with any questions or concerns.

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PA State Work-Study Program (SWSP)

- Administered by PHEAA since inception in 1982 and made possible through PA General Assembly funding
 - Relies on the cooperation of PA employers and postsecondary institutions
 - Employers can come from all industries and non-profits as well as governmental and educational institutions
- Provides students with:
 - Opportunities to gain career-related work experience
 - Chance to earn while they learn and reduce reliance on student loans
- Managed separately from Federal Work-Study Programs



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SWSP Eligibility & Employment

- Eligible students must:
 - Be a Pennsylvania resident and apply by the appropriate deadline
 - Applications released annually at [PHEAA.org/SWSP](https://www.pheaa.org/SWSP)
 - Be enrolled on at least a half-time basis at a PA State Grant-approved school
 - Undergraduate students must be eligible for a PA State Grant award
 - Graduate students must have unmet need as confirmed by their school
 - Summer eligibility is based on enrollment during the academic year either preceding or following the applicable summer term
 - Not be in default or pending default on an education loan or owe a PA State Grant refund
- Students locate participating employers:
 - [PHEAA.org/SWSP-JobSearch](https://www.pheaa.org/SWSP-JobSearch)
 - Work with existing employers identified by their school, or
 - Find a new employer who completes the steps to be approved for participation
- Employers receive reimbursements up to award maximums for eligible employment
 - Wage reimbursements for non-profit employers equal 50%; for-profit employers receive 40% or wages paid
 - Maximum 2023-24 student award was \$17,500 (\$10,000 for the academic year and \$7,500 for the summer term)

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Student Self-Help Tools



Consumer Portal

- Account Access
 - All students can see eligibility for PA State Grant for years prior to 2024-25
 - Recipients of PA National Guard aid and SWSP awards can also view relevant information
 - Students can update mailing and email addresses online
- File Upload
 - Allows secure submission of required documentation for some PHEAA-administered programs
 - Uploaded documents will appear in processing workflows in 24-48 hours
- Paperless Inbox
 - Eligibility notices and additional follow-up letters
 - Retains up to 100 documents for up to 12 months

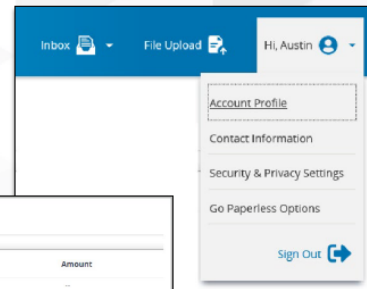
PA State Grant			
2023-24 Academic Year			
Term	School	Status	Amount
–	–	Incomplete	–

Your [Pennsylvania State Grant Form](#) is incomplete.

If the status above does not reflect recent changes you made with your school, on your FAFSA, or with PHEAA, don't worry - it can take up to 15 days for us to process these changes. Check back soon.

[Update School Information](#)

Application Received Date: 02/20/2023



What is GrantUs?



- PHEAA's initiative to modernize our grant administration platform
 - Announced in May 2023
- Platform will house PA State Grant Program and the PHEAA-administered special programs
 - Currently administering over 20 boutique programs
- Tool will be a cloud-based and feature-rich off-the-shelf product
 - PHEAA teams actively working to customize platform to ensure improved user experience at all levels

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What Should My Students Know?



- Complete the 2024-25 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) **as soon as possible**
- Unique and valid email address is required
- **All students** should be encouraged to create a GrantUs account when available in order to:
 - Complete an application for PA State Grant or other programs
 - View eligibility determinations and award status
 - Update demographic or personal information
 - Respond to requests for additional information
 - Communicate with PHEAA via Contact Us feature
- Parents may need an account if required to sign documents or provide information
 - Student will be required to invite parent into portal
 - Parents will be limited in what information can be viewed

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When Will GrantUs Launch? What Should I Expect?

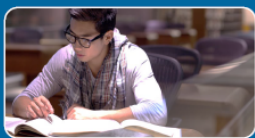
- **GrantUs targeted to go-live in mid-April 2024**
 - Delays with federal Institutional Student Information Records (ISIR) pushed prior deployment plans
 - PHEAA will need time to test ISIR ingestion and remediate discrepancies
- Initial functionality will focus on PA State Grant Program only
 - Deployment will only include the 2024-25 academic year
 - New PA State Grant functionality or special programs functionality will be deployed every two months
- All public-facing resources including webpages, portal links, brochures, etc. will be updated throughout the project
- Individual program processes and timelines during this transition year may be altered

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What is the Student User Experience on Day 1?

- Process will commence with ISIR receipt
 - PHEAA will manage volume of student notifications on Day 1



Sam is a first-year student that recently completed his FAFSA.



- Receive email from GrantUs with account creation and log-in instructions



- Change password and enable multi-factor authentication



- First time students will complete PA State Grant Form
- Invite parent into platform, if required

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PHEAA's mission is to provide affordable access to higher education.

- The Agency maintains several resources for students and those who support them as they navigate the journey to higher education
- In addition to PHEAA.org, encourage your students to visit:
 - <http://www.educationplanner.org/>: This site is a one-stop career and college planning website which provides practical and easy-to-understand advice to help prepare students for the important decisions they will face in the future
 - <http://www.mysmartborrowing.org/#intro>: Not just for students with loans, this mobile-friendly site allows career and college exploration as well as budgeting tips
 - <http://www.youcandealwithit.com/>: Featuring advanced budgeting help and explanations for the student, this site provides practical advice on how to deal with common financial solutions facing today's college students and recent graduates as well as sections for those who support students
- Student support personnel can order brochures, fact sheets, and other materials free of charge from <https://www.pheaa.org/materials-ordering/selectMaterial.shtml>

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PA Act 101 (Act 101) Program

- PHEAA offers assistance to those schools maintaining an eligible [Act 101 Program](#)
 - Act 101 funds support services to academically and financially eligible students to assist them in successfully completing postsecondary study
- Students may be permitted entry into the Act 101 Program during terms other than the fall term
 - Transfer students and students with a break of enrollment of one year or more must be verified for eligibility
- Eligible students:
 - Are PA residents
 - Are enrolled at least half time in an undergraduate degree program
 - Meet Economic and Educational Eligibility:
 - Economic Criteria - Household Income \leq 200% Poverty Level
 - Educational Criteria - As determined by the institution
 - Complete required signatory agreements indicating participation in the program

Generally, students who are receiving services under TRIO, Perkins or other grants that offer similar program services are not eligible for Act 101 services.

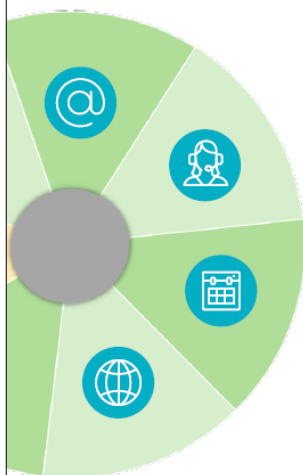


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Basics of Federal Student Loans

- Federal student loans are managed by servicers appointed by the US Department of Education
 - Servicers include: Mohela, EdFinancial, Aidvantage, Nelnet, and ECSI
 - Defaulted borrowers are serviced by the Default Resolution Group
- Direct Loans (also known as Stafford Loans) have a 6-month grace period immediately following the student's separation from school
 - Separation can be due to graduation, withdrawal, or leave of absence, changing to a non-approved program of study, or dropping below half-time enrollment
 - If students re-enroll at least half time in an approved program of study before the grace period is over, it will reset
- Any student with Stafford Loans can enter an income-driven repayment plan
 - PLUS loans used for graduate school are also eligible
- Students should contact their loan servicer with specific questions
 - If students are not sure who their servicer is, they can find the information by logging on at <https://studentaid.gov/manage-loans/repayment/servicers>

Connect With Us!



- Email addresses for each program can be found on our [Contact List](#)
- Phone at 1.800.443.0646
- Attending PHEAA Sponsored Events & Other Financial Aid Events
- Visiting PHEAA.org

Interact With Us on Social

