

# Transition Services to Support College and Career



## California Foster Youth Education Task Force

### INTRODUCTION

Many youth in foster care turn 18 years of age before graduating from high school. Several safeguards exist to help them complete their education and transition successfully into adulthood.

Under the federal Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008, foster youth may remain eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children-Foster Care (AFDC-FC) payments and other benefits until age 21 under certain conditions. *WIC 11403.*

Youth who do not qualify for extended foster care benefits under AB 12 but are attending high school, vocational program or a GED program full-time, and are reasonably expected to complete the program or receive a high school equivalency certificate, before their 19th birthday, may retain their AFDC-FC, Kin-GAP, or Cal-WORKS payments until they graduate or reach their 19th birthday. *WIC 11253, 11403.01, 11405.*

See <http://www.cafosteringconnections.org> for more information.

### Enrollment in High School (Until Age 18)

Youth are subject to compulsory full time education until age eighteen unless they are exempt. *EC 48200.* There is no obligation for local education agencies (LEAs) to serve youth over age 18 unless they are receiving special education services or if they qualify for a waiver of local graduation requirements under AB 167/SB 216. Youth over age 18 may enroll for additional years in alternative education programs until a diploma is awarded.

### Enrollment in Adult Education Programs

A student may be able to enroll in an adult education program, subject to the district's availability. *EC 52500.1.*

### Students With Special Needs

Youth are entitled to special education services under California law until age 22. *EC 56041. See Special Education Fact sheet.* Additionally, college campuses have disabled student support programs that can offer a range of accommodations. Sample accommodations and modifications are found on the CDE website at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/accomod.asp>

### HIGHER EDUCATION

#### Campus Support Programs

There are a wide range of academic support programs for former foster youth attending college in California. Programs such as Guardian Scholars and Next Up-Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES), are comprehensive programs that support former foster youth in their efforts to gain a university, community college or vocational education. Campus support programs vary and students may receive: financial aid, housing, academic and personal advisement, and employment services. All community colleges have a designated Foster Youth Success Initiative Liaison. The best way to find out about a specific campus support program is to contact the program coordinator.

See: <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/find-campus-support-programs-for-foster-youth/>

#### Board of Governors Fee Waiver

The Board of Governors Fee Waiver (BOG) is funded by the State of California for California residents to waive the full amount of enrollment fees for eligible students at community colleges, including foster youth. While most students are subject to loss of the BOG fee waiver if they do not make Satisfactory Academic Progress, foster youth are exempt from this provision. *5 CCR 58621.*



### Chafee Grant (Education and Training Voucher-ETV)

Current or former foster youth who have not reached their 22nd birthday and have financial needs, may qualify for up to \$5,000 a year for career and technical training or college. Funds may be used to pay for childcare, transportation, and housing while in school. The student must have had an open dependency/foster care case between ages 16 and 19, and the California Department of Social Services will verify eligibility status. Information is available at [www.chafee.csac.ca.gov](http://www.chafee.csac.ca.gov).

### Financial Aid

When filling out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), students currently or formerly in foster care should indicate they are/were a dependent/ward of the court, were in foster care, or were in a legal guardianship after age 13 in order to qualify for the maximum amount of aid. In order to qualify for maximum financial aid, students must submit the FAFSA by March 1. Those who miss this deadline should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible.

<http://www.cacollegepathways.org/financial-aid/>

# Transition Services to Support College and Career



## Priority Registration

Foster youth attending a public college or university are entitled to priority registration for classes. In order to access priority registration at community colleges, students must first complete an orientation, assessment, and educational plan. Students

should contact the admissions and records office or foster youth contact to ensure access. *EC 66025.9*

## FOSTER YOUTH VERIFICATION

Current and former foster youth may be required to provide written verification of foster care status in order to qualify for certain benefits. Youth who are unable to obtain verification from their county can request verification from the Foster Care Ombudsman's office by calling 1-877-846-1602.

## TRANSITIONAL SERVICES AND SUPPORTS

State law specifies that before terminating dependency jurisdiction, the state must assist youth in foster care with applying for admission to college, a vocational training program, or other educational institution and obtaining financial aid, where appropriate. If the youth has not received this assistance along with other important documents, and is not prepared to exit the system, the court may retain jurisdiction so long as it takes the department to comply with assisting the youth. *WIC 391.*

## INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICES

Youth may be eligible for Independent Living Program (ILP) services through various county agencies depending on their status. These ILP services may include: life skills training, transitional housing, assistance with

transportation, and scholarships. Youth who are in foster care age 16 and older are required to have a Transitional Independent Living Plan that is updated every six months. *WIC 16501.1.*

If the youth qualifies for special education services, they should have an Individualized Transition Plan starting at age 16. *20 USC 1414; EC 56341.5.* If they are transition age youth (16-25 years) they may also be eligible for services through the Department of Mental Health under the full service partnership, funded by the Mental Health Services Act. Public Counsel has prepared a comprehensive manual, ABC's of Transition and the Independent Living Program, available at

<http://www.publiccounsel.org/publications?id=0042>.

In addition, California Department of Social Services (CDSS) has a website at

<http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/Foster-Care/Independent-Living-Program>