

Benefits for College-Bound Students in Foster Care

Programs and resources are available for students in foster care to assist with their college-going journey. Here is information to help you understand the supports and how to connect students to postsecondary contacts, forms, and services.

Tuition and Fee Exemptions

The state of Florida provides tuition and fee exemptions for use at public state universities/colleges and School District Workforce Education Programs. This exemption is available until the student reaches 28 years. Students can qualify starting at age 16 under certain circumstances:

- **State care:** Student is or was in the custody of the Department of Children and Families
- **Adoption:** Student was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after 5/5/1997
- **Relative care:** Student is or was in the custody of a relative
- **Non-relative care:** Student is or was in the custody of a non-relative
- **Guardian care:** Student is or was in the custody of a guardian
- **Guardianship:** Student was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age

Campus-Based Support

- **College contacts:** Connect students with their college's foster student liaison or college coach for academic support, on-campus and community resources, financial aid opportunities, and community support with students in similar situations. The liaison will advise students how to submit the waiver. To access a list of contacts, visit: [College Liaisons](#) and [University Liaisons](#).
- **The AOK Scholars program** provides crucial elements for success such as mentoring and financial support. Help students connect with an AOK Specialist through their [website](#).

Questions?

Contact your local [Community-Based Care \(CBC\) Lead Agency Independent Living Contacts](#) or [Florida's Independent Living Resource Center](#) on eligibility and how to get the [Tuition and Fee Exemption form, CF-FSP 5220](#).

Independent Living Services

- **Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) stipend:** PESS provides a monetary stipend to help pay for living expenses to attend postsecondary or vocational school for those who turned 18 in licensed care after spending at least 6 months in care until age 23.
- **Aftercare services:** Services may include mentoring, tutoring, mental health, substance abuse, counseling, parenting, job/career skills training, and temporary financial assistance for necessities.



Local Resources

Identify organizations in your community that may offer tutoring, scholarships, and jobs. This could be community-based care agencies, [Local College Access Network coordinators](#), foster parents and caregivers.

Support for Professionals

- **School counselors:** Get to know your local [Community-Based Care \(CBC\) Lead Agency](#) [Independent Living Contacts](#) and the [college liaisons](#) at your local institutions to ensure a smooth transition for students from high school to college. If you have a question or are not sure who to contact, Positive Pathways has [regional points of contact](#) who can assist you and students in your area.
- **Campus-based professionals:** If you are a campus-based professional, such as a college coach/advisor serving this population, please join the [Positive Pathways](#) network for ongoing support, professional development, and community resources.

Office of Continuing Care

- The [Office of Continuing Care](#) offers free, one-on-one help to those who have or will transition out of foster care and are between the ages of 18-26. Students will be connected to resources in their area, special services, and a support system to help with the next steps to adulthood. If a student is in foster care currently, visit the [Independent Living Program page](#) for Youth and Young Adult information.
- Call the Hope Line, 850-300-4673, to speak with a Care Navigator for more resources and supports.