

	<b>INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY</b>	
	<b>Chapter 11:</b> Older Youth Services	<b>Effective Date:</b> July 1, 2015
	<b>Section 15:</b> Post-Secondary Education	<b>Version:</b> 5

<b>STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE</b>
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The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will ensure that all youth receiving Older Youth Services (OYS) are aware of the options available for post-secondary education. DCS will encourage all youth to take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) and prepare for taking the SAT. DCS will also ensure that children under the care and supervision of DCS who are in grades seven (7) through 12 are enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars program.

DCS will ensure that all youth are provided with information about:

1. Pell grants;
2. John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) grants;
3. Federal supplemental grants;
4. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA); and
5. Individual Development Accounts (IDA).

Code References

1. [IC 21-12-6: Twenty-First Century Scholars Program; Tuition Grants](#)
2. [IC 21-12-6-5: Qualifications to participate in program](#)
3. [IC 31-25-2-21: Transitional services plan; participation by child representatives](#)
4. [42 USC 675\(5\)\(H\): Transition Plan for Children Aging Out of Foster Care](#)
5. [IC 21-12-6-14: Foster care children; caseworker to provide information](#)

<b>PROCEDURE</b>
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The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Ensure that youth in 7<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade who have not already enrolled in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars program submit an application. Applications for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century program may be completed by visiting [www.scholars.in.gov](http://www.scholars.in.gov). Additional information is available at the youth's school or by calling toll free 1-888-528-4719. The application process requires the FCM to:
  - a. Assist the youth in completing the application, and
  - b. Ensure the youth marks "yes" to the Pre-Application Question concerning foster care status.
2. Update the youth's address with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars annually;
3. Ensure that the youth signs the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars Affirmation Statement during his or her senior year of high school. See <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2384.htm> for more information;
4. Provide youth with information regarding Pell grants, the Chafee Program grants, federal supplemental grants, and the FAFSA during the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting

held at age 17 to develop/modify the youth's [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#). See separate policy, [11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#);

**Note:** This information may be provided earlier if the youth will be applying to colleges prior to age 17.

5. Provide youth who have obtained over \$400 in earned income with information about opening an IDA;
6. Have the youth and caregiver sign an [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(SF 55743\)](#). Give the youth and caregiver a copy and place the original in the youth's case file;
7. Support the youth in researching financial aid options, completing necessary forms and paperwork, and following up to ensure that the proper aid is received;
8. Visit <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> for information about federal financial aid and <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2359.htm> for information about state financial aid with youth prior to completing the FAFSA;
9. Assist all youth in completing the FAFSA prior to the deadline of **March 10<sup>th</sup>** of the student's final year of high school;
  - a. Ensure the youth has all information needed to complete the FAFSA (i.e., social security number, place of birth, etc.),
  - b. Pay special attention to questions in the Student Dependency Status section (see Related Information), and
  - c. Discuss Independent Student Status with the youth to ensure he or she understands the meaning of this term and that youth in foster care do not have to provide information about biological parents, foster parents, or guardians to their college of choice or on their FAFSA (see Related Information).
10. Assist the youth in applying for the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program; and
  - a. Ensure the youth has all required information to complete the ETV application (e.g., FCM contact information, OYS worker contact information, etc.),
  - b. Ensure the youth completes the ETV application each year after July 1<sup>st</sup>,
  - c. Ensure the youth has submitted all necessary ETV documents to his or her financial aid office, and
  - d. Follow up with the youth and school to ensure ETV has received the proper documentation from the school.
11. Engage the youth and CFT, including the youth's child representatives, to develop a plan for emotional support and guidance the youth can rely on once he or she is in college.

#### **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

N/A

#### **FORMS AND TOOLS**

1. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(SF 55743\)](#)
2. [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)

## RELATED INFORMATION

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars Program**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars Program was established in 1990 to ensure that all Indiana families could afford a college education for their children. This program guarantees eligible students up to four (4) years of undergraduate college tuition at any participating public college or university in Indiana.

Persons who meet ALL of the following criteria may apply for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Scholars Program:

1. Be a resident of Indiana as both an applicant and an award recipient (determined by residency of parent/legal guardian) and a U.S. Citizen or eligible non-citizen;
2. Be a student in the 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade;

**Note:** Children in grades 9 -12 who are in foster care are also eligible for the program.

3. Meet program income guidelines or be in foster care;
4. Attend a charter school, freeway school, or other Indiana school recognized by the Department of Education; and
5. Make a commitment to fulfill the Scholars Program.

For more information, visit: <http://www.scholars.in.gov>.

### **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**

The FAFSA is a document that must be completed to apply for both federal and state financial aid. The FAFSA collects a family's financial information to determine how much assistance a prospective student may receive. The FAFSA must be completed each calendar year between January 1<sup>st</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup> (for Indiana residents). Be aware that some colleges may have earlier deadlines- please check with the specific college for more information.

In order to be eligible to receive federal student aid, a youth must:

1. Be enrolled in or accepted to college;
2. Have a high school diploma or verification of completion of the high school equivalency test;
3. Be a United States (US) citizen or an eligible non-citizen;
4. Be registered with the selective service, if required;
5. Have a valid Social Security number; and
6. Not have a drug conviction that occurred while receiving federal student aid.

Foster youth need to pay special attention to the Student Dependency Status section (section 2):

1. I was in foster care since turning age 13;
2. I was a dependent or ward of the court since turning age 13;
3. I am currently or I was an emancipated minor; or
4. I am currently or I was in legal guardianship since turning age 13.

**Note:** If the student can answer yes to any of the above questions (which youth in foster care, relative placement, and in-home CHINS can), they are eligible for Independent Student Status.

Independent Student Status means that a student is a 'family of one' and only his or her individual income is considered when determining how much federal and state aid the student needs. Foster youth do not include their biological parent, resource parents, guardian, or anyone else's financial information on the FAFSA. Annual income taxes must be completed before the FAFSA can be completed (if applicable).

For more information and to complete the online application, visit <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>.

### **Pell Grants**

The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to undergraduate and certain post-baccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Financial need is determined by the U.S. Department of Education using a standard formula established by Congress to evaluate the financial information reported on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and to determine the family's estimated financial contribution (EFC). Federal Pell Grants are direct grants awarded through participating institutions to students with financial need. In order to apply for Pell Grants, students must submit a FAFSA form before their state's deadline. For more information about Pell Grants, visit <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/grants-scholarships/pell>.

### **Individual Development Accounts (IDA)**

An IDA is a matched savings account program designed to assist individuals in achieving self-sufficiency through financial literacy and asset generation. There are a limited number of IDAs available in Indiana. In order to open an IDA, individuals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Indiana resident;
2. Below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
3. Have at least \$400 per year in earned income;
4. Be able to save a minimum of \$35 per month; and
5. Meet minimum screening requirements.

Youth interested in opening an IDA should visit [www.ihcda.in.gov](http://www.ihcda.in.gov) or call 1-317-232-7777 for county specific information.