

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY	
	Chapter 11: Older Youth Services Section 15: Post-Secondary Education	
	Effective Date: July 1, 2022	Version: 6

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POLICY OVERVIEW

Youth receiving Older Youth Services (OYS) are provided with information about Pell grants, the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood (the Chafee Program) grants, federal supplemental grants, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), Indiana Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program, and the 21st Century Scholars program to ensure they are aware of financial assistance options for post-secondary education.

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PROCEDURE

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will encourage all youth to prepare for and take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT), Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), and/or the American College Test (ACT), as appropriate. 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 21st Century Scholars program.

The Family Case Manager (FCM) or Older Youth Case Manager (OYCM) will:

1. Provide each child in the seventh (7th) through 12th grades with information about the 21st Century Scholars program, including the Scholar Success Program (SSP) and assist the youth with creating a 21st Century ScholarTrack Student Account;

Note: The application for the 21st Century Scholars program for a child in out-of-home care occurs automatically through the child's ScholarTrack Student Account. FCMs and OYCMs have access to the ScholarTrack portal to verify youth enrollment status and enroll a youth if needed. See the 21st Century Scholars Login Instructions for further information. Youth can opt out of the 21st Century Scholars program at any time.

2. Encourage and assist all youth in ninth (9th) through 12th grades to:
 - a. Update the youth's address with 21st Century Scholars annually,
 - b. Comply with all requirements set forth in the SSP and 21st Century Scholars, and
 - c. Sign the 21st Century Scholars Affirmation Statement during the youth's senior year of high school.

Note: The youth may complete required steps through the child's ScholarTrack Student Account (e.g., Affirmation statement).

3. 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 17 years of age to develop/modify the youth's Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood (see policies 5.07 Child and Family Team Meeting and 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.

4. Share information about college from the OYS Thinking About College webpage;
5. Provide youth with the Foster Care Verification Letter;
6. Have the youth and caregiver sign an Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs. Give the youth and caregiver a copy of the form 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 the proper aid is received;
8. Provide youth with information about FAFSA and ensure they have all information needed for completion of the FAFSA (e.g., social security number and place of birth). Also, discuss Independent Student Status to ensure youth understand 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;

Note: Each Indiana emancipated Senior or the parent, guardian, or custodian of an unemancipated Senior is required to be provided an affirmation link by the Senior's school regarding the intent to file a FAFSA. It is recommended to remind the youth and members of the youth's CFT of the affirmation. The FCM will make a referral to DCS Education Services if the youth would like additional support processing and/or applying the career and college information provided on the affirmation link.

9. Assist the youth in applying for the Indiana ETV Program, and:
 - a. Ensure the youth has all required information to complete the ETV application (e.g., FCM contact information, and OYS worker contact information),
 - b. Ensure the youth completes the ETV application each year after:
 - i. July 1st for the Fall Semester,
 - ii. December 1st for Spring Semester, and
 - iii. April 1st for Summer Semester.
 - c. Ensure the youth has submitted all necessary ETV documents to the financial aid office, and
 - d. Follow up with the youth and school to ensure ETV has received the proper documentation from the school (see policy 11.10 Education and Training Voucher).
11. Create a referral to DCS Education Services if assistance is needed regarding the youth's education; and
12. 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 in college (see policy 5.07 Child and Family Team Meetings).

The FCM Supervisor or OYCM Supervisor will provide guidance to the FCM or OYCM, as needed, and ensure documentation is entered accurately in the case management system.

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RELEVANT INFORMATION

Definitions

Independent Student Status

Independent Student Status means that a student is a 'family of one (1)' and only the student's individual income is considered when determining how much federal and state aid the student needs.

Forms and Tools

- [21st Century Scholars](#)
- [21st Century Scholars Affirmation Statement](#)
- [21st Century Scholars Login Instructions](#)
- [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(SF 55743\)](#)
- [DCS Education Services SharePoint](#)
- [Federal Pell Grants- Federal Student Aid](#)
- [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)
- [Foster Care Verification Letter \(SF 56571\)](#)
- [Indiana Commission for Higher Education](#)
- [Indiana ETV Program](#)
- [OYS Thinking About College](#)
- [Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood \(SF 55166\)](#)

Related Policies

- [5.07 Child and Family Team \(CFT\) Meetings](#)
- [11.06 Transition Plan for Successful Adulthood](#)
- [11.10 Education and Training Voucher Program](#)

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LEGAL REFERENCES

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

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PRACTICE GUIDANCE- DCS POLICY 11.15

Practice Guidance is designed to assist DCS staff with thoughtful and practical direction on how to effectively integrate tools and social work practice into daily case management in an effort to achieve positive family and child outcomes. Practice Guidance is separate from Policy.

21st Century Scholars Program

The 21st 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 21st 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 United States (US) Citizen or eligible non-citizen;
2. Be a student in the 7th or 8th 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.
6. Complete all required Scholar Success Program tasks and have a GPA of 2.5 to access funding.

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 school year between October 1st and April 15th, for Indiana specific grants and scholarships. Be aware that some colleges may have earlier deadlines, 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 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.

Youth who turn 13 years of age in foster care may apply for Independent Student Status. Foster youth need to pay special attention to the Student Dependency Status section (section 2), which states:

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.

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).

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 FAFSA and to determine the family's estimated financial contribution (EFC). 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 the Federal Pell Grants- Federal Student Aid webpage.

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