Memo

To: Financial Aid Administrators

From: Elizabeth K. McCloud
Vice President, State Grant and Special Programs

Date: July 2019

Subject: 2019-20 Pennsylvania Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee) Program Guidelines

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) continues to partner with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) in the administration of the 2019-20 Chafee Program, which is authorized under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 as amended by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001. The Chafee Program offers grant assistance to Pennsylvania undergraduate students aging out of foster care who are attending an approved Federal Title IV postsecondary institution.

The PA Chafee Program Guidelines provide student eligibility criteria and related certification steps, in addition to disbursement and refund information. It is important that participating institutions that post and credit Chafee funds review these guidelines. An electronic copy of the 2019-20 PA Chafee Program Guidelines is available on the Document Library on PHEAA.org.

Any questions regarding these guidelines or the related eligibility/disbursement processes should be directed to State Grant and Special Programs staff at 800-443-0646, option 3, option 2, a private number reserved for the use of financial aid administrators, or by emailing Chafee staff at paetg@pheaa.org.
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I. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY

To receive a Chafee Grant, the student must meet the following criteria:

A. Complete a Chafee Application (available on PHEAA.org) by December 31, 2019. The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) will then forward the completed application to the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) for verification that the student was in a foster care program based on the following guidelines:

- The youth was eligible for services under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program,
- The youth was in foster care or was discharged or adopted from foster care after attaining age 16,
- The youth is a new applicant participating in the Chafee Program on or prior to their 21st birthday, or
- The youth is a renewal applicant who has not reached their 23rd birthday by July 1 of the upcoming academic year in which Chafee funds will be awarded.

B. File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) for the academic year in which Chafee funds are being requested.

C. Attend an eligible Federal Title IV postsecondary institution.

D. Be enrolled as an undergraduate on at least a half-time basis.

E. Be enrolled in an approved Federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree (associate or bachelor’s degree) program of study for each term or quarter during which a Chafee Grant is received.

F. Have “unmet cost” as determined by the postsecondary institution. “Unmet cost” is the difference between the student’s cost of attendance (as defined by the Federal Title IV student assistance guidelines) and all other gift aid the student is receiving. The Federal Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is not used when determining eligibility for the Chafee Grant with the anticipation that the student’s need for loan assistance may be reduced or eliminated.

G. Maintain Federal Title IV academic progress guidelines.

H. Must not be in default on a Federal Title IV educational loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid.

I. Must be a Pennsylvania resident at the start and during the term in which Chafee funds are awarded.

J. If funding is not sufficient to provide a Chafee Grant to all students who have applied by December 31, 2019 and have been determined eligible to participate, awards will be given on a first-come first-served basis.

II. AWARD DETERMINATION PROCESS

A. PHEAA is responsible for confirming the initial Chafee student eligibility checks:

- Verification with DHS that the applicant is an eligible foster youth.
- The student has filed the required academic year FAFSA.
- If a new applicant, the student has not reached their 21st birthday.
- If a renewal applicant, the student has not reached their 23rd birthday by July 1 of the upcoming academic year in which Chafee funds will be awarded.
- The student is attending an approved Federal Title IV postsecondary institution.
- The student is not in default on a Federal Title IV education loan.
- The student is a Pennsylvania resident.

B. Once it is determined that the student meets the above criteria, the student will appear on the Chafee Applicant Certification and Status Listing (ACSL) (see Appendix A) of the institution provided by the student on their application. The ACSL is made available to postsecondary institutions via their PageCenter mailbox on a biweekly basis (every other Tuesday).
III. MINIMUM & MAXIMUM AWARDS

As determined by DHS, all eligible Chafee Grant recipients are initially awarded an estimated maximum award of $5,000 for the academic year, which is equally distributed over each term or quarter. It is ultimately the postsecondary institution’s responsibility to provide PHEAA with the student’s final Chafee Grant eligibility based on the Certification Process outlined in Section IV. The minimum annual amount that can be awarded is $500. There is no summer Chafee Grant program.

If a student is only eligible for a partial year Chafee award (i.e., only an award in the fall, winter, or spring) and the partial award amount is below $500, the student is not eligible to receive the Chafee award. If one term’s award has already been paid to the student and then the student does not return for a subsequent term, these funds do not have to be returned even if the amount is less than $500.

Please note that both the maximum and minimum award amounts are subject to change at the discretion of DHS due to Federal Grant levels.

IV. CERTIFICATION PROCESS

As outlined in Section II, eligible Chafee Grant recipients are provided to institutions on the ACSL, which is made available to them via their PageCenter mailbox on a biweekly basis (every other Tuesday). Institutions are required to certify Chafee Grant eligibility as a condition of disbursement. All pending students must be certified by July 1, 2020. PHEAA retains the right to cancel awards for any students who remain pending after this time. The ACSL provides student detail and summary information as well as a certification page to be signed by an authorized school official. Once completed, the listing should be returned to PHEAA via fax at 717-720-3786. Please note that once an ACSL has been certified and returned, the institution does not need to return subsequent ACSLs for the same academic year to PHEAA if there are no status changes needed. Status changes can be marked with a pound sign (#) or an asterisk (*) on the ACSL, as detailed further in Appendix B.

The recommended Chafee Grant provided by PHEAA on the ACSL has no official standing and is considered an estimate until an amount is provided and certified by the institution. The following fields to be completed on the ACSL include:

- Graduation Date
- Degree Program/Approved Program of Study
- Academic Progress
- Enrollment status
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC) - optional
- Unmet Cost/Need
- Certified Award Amount
- Signature and Date

**NOTE:** When certifying a record, always remember to circle Y or N for Program of Study, Academic Progress, and Unmet Cost/Need.

**Graduation Date:** Must be submitted in MMDDYYYY format. If the actual date of the student’s graduation cannot be determined, a reference to expected month and year is sufficient.

**Approved Program of Study:** Eligible Chafee Grant recipients are required to be enrolled in an approved Federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree (associate or bachelor’s degree) program of study for each term/quarter during which a Chafee Grant is received. **Circle Y (for yes) or N (for no) in the ACSL degree program field.**

**NOTE:** The recipient can be enrolled in a certificate, diploma, or degree (associate or bachelor’s degree) program of study to be eligible.
**Academic Progress:** In order to receive a Chafee Grant, recipients are required to be making satisfactory academic progress as defined by the Federal Title IV guidelines. **Circle Y (for yes) or N (for did not maintain academic progress) in the ACSL academic progress field.**

**Enrollment Status:** Chafee Grant recipients must be enrolled on at least a half-time basis (as defined by the Federal Title IV guidelines) for each term or quarter Chafee funds are received. The ACSL enrollment status field must be populated with one of the following codes:

- 1 - Full-time
- 2 - At least half-time
- C - Not enrolled
- E - Enrolled less-than-half-time

**Unmet Cost/Need:** Indicates the student has unmet costs after all other grants and scholarships have been awarded. **Circle Y (for yes) or N (for no) in the ACSL unmet cost/need field.** Refer to Section I. F for further clarification on unmet cost/need

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** This is optional for Chafee, however this is where the federal EFC would be populated.

**Certified Award Amount:** The award amount the Chafee Grant recipient is eligible to receive based upon the “unmet cost” calculation as defined in Section I. F. If the student is currently not enrolled or has withdrawn, a zero should be entered and the related reason should be notated in the “Comments” section of the ACSL.

**Refund on Title IV Aid Due:** If a student owes a refund on previous Title IV aid, the Chafee award must be cancelled.

**Signature and Date:** An authorized financial aid administrator at the postsecondary institution is required to sign, date, and return the Certification Page of the Chafee Disbursement Roster, validating that all information provided on the roster is accurate.

**V. CREDITING CHAFEE GRANT FUNDS**

**A.** If the student does not meet all eligibility requirements as outlined in these Program Guidelines for the term or quarter being reviewed, the student’s account should not be credited. The ineligible reasons should be noted on the ACSL. If there is a questionable situation, Chafee funds should not be credited and Chafee staff should be contacted.

**B.** Chafee funds should be credited on a term-by-term basis. Crediting a student’s account indicates that the institution has met the following requirements:

- Performed all eligibility checks for the student as set forth in these Program Guidelines.
- Provided PHEAA with certification of the student’s Chafee Grant eligibility for the terms or quarters.

For auditing purposes, Chafee funds must be identified as a credit on the student’s account, ledger card, or auditable record. Crediting should include the date the funds were posted and the amount and term to which the funds were applied, and should be clearly identified as a Chafee Grant.

**C.** If the final credit to the student’s account creates a credit balance, a refund must be made to the student in a timely fashion, according to Title IV cash management guidelines.

**VI. DISBURSEMENT PROCESS**

**A.** Disbursement Schedules

Chafee funds are disbursed on one of two disbursement schedules:

1. Semester (twice per academic year – fall and spring) for institutions that operate on a semester or trimester calendar.
a. Fall semester disbursements typically run the third week of September.

b. Spring semester disbursements typically run the third week of January.

c. Quarter (three times per academic year – fall, winter, and spring) for schools that operate on a quarter calendar. In cases where schools have continuous enrollment or terms of irregular length, disbursements are made on the schedule that coincides as closely as possible to the school’s calendar.

d. Fall quarter disbursements typically run the third week of September.

e. Winter quarter disbursements typically run the second week of December.

f. Spring quarter disbursements typically run the third week of January.

2. Chafee funds are not awarded in the summer.

3. PHEAA reserves the right to hold disbursement to an institution that is closing or is on a restriction or oversight by the United States Department of Education (USDE) for participation in any Title IV program. We also reserve the right to hold disbursements to an institution if the accrediting agency suspends or cancel approval for the school. Any questions regarding holding disbursement should be directed to PHEAA via email at paetg@pheaa.org. PHEAA will exercise this right to determine the eligibility of the institution or recipients to receive further funding.

B. Disbursement Roster Processing

1. All Chafee Disbursement Rosters are placed in the institution’s PageCenter mailbox (see Appendix B); a memo regarding the disbursement is sent to schools via email. Schools can also choose to be automatically notified through PageCenter when a roster has been placed in their PageCenter mailbox.

2. The Chafee Disbursement Roster will include all students that the school has certified as eligible on the Chafee ACSL. Once eligibility is certified and funds are credited to each recipient’s student account, one complete copy of the roster must be returned to PHEAA with the signed certification page. If there are no changes or adjustments to the roster, only the signed certification page, indicating that there were no changes to the roster, must be returned.

   a. The Chafee Disbursement Roster with the Certification Page or the Certification Page (if there are no changes) should be returned to PHEAA using the following information:

      Fax Number: 717-720-3786

      Mailing Address: PHEAA
      State Grant and Special Programs
      Chafee
      P.O. Box 8157
      Harrisburg, PA 17105-8157

   b. Schools are required to certify and return each Chafee Disbursement Roster within 30 calendar days of receipt of the roster or within 30 days of the first day of the term (whichever is later) and no later than November 8, 2019 in the case of the fall term roster. Subsequent disbursements will be withheld until the certified Chafee Disbursement Roster with the Certification Page or the Certification Page (if there are no changes) is returned. Disbursement of 2019-20 funds will not occur until all refunds from the prior year have been returned.

C. Disbursement of Funds

1. Funds are only disbursed through the Automated Clearing House (ACH). These funds are deposited directly into the designated bank account of the school at which the student is enrolled; institutions are notified of the disbursement via email and should allow at least 14 business days for the transfer to occur. When funds are transferred from the Agency to the school’s bank the entry description associated with the transfer is “CHAFEE.” If the entry description does not appear when the funds are transferred to the school, the bank may have removed this information.
2. An Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) account can be established by contacting fmeftdadmin@pheaa.org. If you would like to use an existing account, indicate which account you would like the Chafee funds to go to (example would be State Grants). If you wish Chafee funds to go to a different account, request an ACH Form. Once the form is completed, please fax it to the number at the bottom of the form or scan it and email it back to fmeftdadmin@pheaa.org.

VII. RECONCILIATION

A. The annual Chafee Reconciliation Roster provides the school with a final opportunity to report ineligible students or changes to a student’s status. The Reconciliation Roster must indicate the student’s final status for the Chafee Program, in accordance with the school’s records, and must be returned to PHEAA within 30 days of receipt. Any future disbursements will be withheld until the certified Chafee Reconciliation Roster with the Certification Page or the Certification Page (if there are no changes) or refunds are returned.

B. If the school determines that there are changes to a student’s eligibility status after reconciliation, the school should contact Chafee staff to request another Reconciliation Roster.

VIII. REFUNDS

A. If, after complete review of the student’s status according to these Program Guidelines, the student is not eligible for all or any portion of the Chafee funds for the term being reviewed, or if the school questions the student’s Chafee eligibility for any reason, the student’s account should not be credited nor should a preliminary credit be allowed to stand. If the Chafee funds have been disbursed, the school should indicate on the disbursement roster the reason that the student is ineligible and the Chafee funds should be returned.

B. If a student withdraws or drops to a less-than-half-time enrollment status during a term in which Chafee funds have been disbursed and credited to the student’s account, a refund to PHEAA for all or a portion of the Chafee Grant may be required, depending upon the date of the student’s withdrawal and the standard tuition refund policy of the institution.

C. Refunds returned via ACH or wire transfer should be transferred to M&T Bank, PHEAA Operations with a brief description of the payment reason and identifying the funds as “Chafee Grant Award.” An email should be sent to fmeftdadmin@pheaa.org indicating the program the refund is for, the refund amount and the date the refund was sent. Specific account information can be found on the Chafee disbursement roster. All Chafee Grant refund payments being made by check should be addressed to PHEAA, P.O. Box 64849, Baltimore, MD 21264-4849.

IX. PROGRAM REVIEW

As part of the Program Review process of State Grant and Special Programs, PHEAA may conduct further examinations of student aid and related records as it deems necessary to protect the financial interests of the Agency or its student aid recipients [§ 121.59 b]. A list of common administrative issues that could be cited in a Program Review can be found in Chapter 5 of the Pennsylvania State Grant Program Handbook for 2019-20, which is available on PHEAA.org.

X. RETENTION OF CHAFEE RECORDS

In accordance with these Program Guidelines, institutions are required to retain, for possible review by PHEAA, all records necessary for the certification of student eligibility and the crediting of Chafee Grant funds to student accounts. Such records must be retained for at least 5 years from the date the institution completes certification of the Chafee Disbursement Roster and are subject to audit.
APPENDIX A
APPLICANT CERTIFICATION & STATUS LISTING (ACSL)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENT INFORMATION</th>
<th>TERM AND CURRENT STATUS (5)</th>
<th>DGR</th>
<th>ENRLMNT STATUS (9)</th>
<th>UNMET NEED/COST (10)</th>
<th>EFC (11)</th>
<th>AWRD AMNT (12)</th>
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<td>Y</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</table>

# Indicates that the student was not on the previous ACSL
* Indicates that there has been a status or award change since the previous ACSL.

CODE DEFINITIONS (NOTE: Bolded codes/definitions are required fields.)

1. Institution’s OE Code
2. Student’s Name
3. Student’s SSN
4. Expected/Actual student graduation date; in MMDDCCYY format; if the exact graduation day is unknown use the last day of the month.
5. Provides specific fall, winter or spring term award status from Legend 1.
6. If applicable, this field indicates the reason the student is ineligible (see Legend 2).
7. Student must be enrolled in an approved Federal Title IV certificate, diploma or degree program of study; enter “Y” if Yes, “N” if No.
8. Student must maintain Title IV satisfactory academic progress; enter “Y” if yes, “N” if No (if student is a freshman enter “Y”).
9. This field will be pre-populated with information from the FAFSA/State Grant record; if incorrect, use the appropriate code from Legend 3.
10. Indicates if the student has unmet cost; indicate with a “Y” for Yes and an “N” for No.
11. Lists the student’s federal EFC.
12. This award amount is system generated based on FAFSA enrollment information; students enrolled at least half-time are eligible for a full award.
13. The institution is required to enter the certified award amount in this field; maximum award amount for 2019-20 is $5,000.
14. Once funds have been disbursed, the “Certified Amount” will be blank.
15. Total Award Disbursed will reflect net disbursed, i.e., refunds are deducted from the total disbursed.
Legend 1 - Award Status

CERTIFIED  School has certified the student’s eligibility
DISBURSED  Chafee funds have been disbursed to the institution of record for the specific term
INELIGIBLE  Ineligible code will be listed (see Legend 2 below)
PENDING  Awaiting school certification
REFUND DUE  Chafee funds need to be returned to PHEAA due to student ineligibility.
REFUNDED  Chafee funds have been returned to PHEAA due to student ineligibility.

Legend 2 Ineligible Reasons Codes

01  Student does not meet the age requirement
02  Student does not meet residency requirement
03  No FAFSA or FAFSA is incomplete
05  Title IV Educational loan in default status or a refund on Title IV aid is due
08  No unmet cost as it relates to Chafee
09  School is not an eligible Federal Title IV postsecondary institution
14  Eligibility pending DHS review
18  Student is not enrolled
22  Student is not eligible per DHS
23  Student’s address does not comply with the Patriot Act
24  Student is not enrolled in an approved Federal Title IV certificate, diploma or degree [associate or bachelor’s degree] program of study
25  Student did not make academic progress
26  Student is enrolled less-than-half-time
27  Award has been cancelled by the school
28  Award is less than $500, which is the program minimum
29  Student did not submit the Chafee application by the December 31 deadline date

Legend 3 Enrollment Status

1  Full-time (a minimum of 12 credit hours or 450 clock hours)
2  Half-time (at least 6 credit hours but less than 12 credit hours or the equivalent)
E  Less-Than-Half-Time
C  Not enrolled
PageCenter is a tool that provides schools with student status and disbursement roster reports/information via the internet in a secure environment. PageCenter is used for accessing information only and cannot be used to make changes electronically. Following are the three Chafee reports that are placed in the institution’s PageCenter mailbox:

1. **Applicant Certification and Status Listing (ACSL):** The ACSL provides certification data and award information for those students who have submitted a Chafee Application and have been identified by DHS as an eligible foster youth. The ACSL is placed in the PageCenter mailbox of the institution and will include those applicants who listed the institution as first choice when filing the FAFSA. The ACSL serves as the school’s certification roster and must be returned to PHEAA to complete the Chafee certification process.

   a. The ACSL is accessed on PageCenter via the secure school portal at [PHEAA.org](http://PHEAA.org).

   b. The most recent version of the ACSL is automatically placed on PageCenter biweekly (every other Tuesday). Following are student status change indicators:

      • A pound sign (#) next to the student’s name indicates that the student was not on the previous ACSL.
      • An asterisk (*) next to the student’s name indicates that there has been a status or award change from the previous ACSL.

   c. Once an ACSL has been certified and returned, the institution does not need to return subsequent ACSLs for the same academic year to PHEAA if there are no status changes needed.

2. **Chafee Disbursement Roster:** The Disbursement Roster provides detailed information related to each student the institution has certified as a Chafee Grant recipient. The Roster will include the total of Chafee funds students received for each term and the total amount that was disbursed to the school on the student’s behalf. If there is an error related to the student’s eligibility or disbursement, the institution is required to provide the correct information on the roster and return it to PHEAA along with the signed certification page.

   a. The Disbursement Roster is accessed on PageCenter via the secure school portal at [PHEAA.org](http://PHEAA.org).

   b. The Disbursement Roster must be returned within 30 days of receipt; if there are no changes to the roster, the institution is only required to sign and return the certification page. Subsequent disbursements will be withheld until the certified roster or certification page is returned.

3. **Chafee Reconciliation Roster:** The annual Reconciliation Roster provides the school with a final opportunity to report ineligible students or changes to a student status and reports the student’s final eligibility status for Chafee in accordance with the school’s records. The roster must be returned within 30 days of receipt; if there are no changes to the roster, the institution is only required to sign and return the certification page. Subsequent disbursements will be withheld until the certified roster or certification page is returned.

If the school determines that there are additional funds to be disbursed after reconciliation, the school should contact Chafee staff to request another Chafee Reconciliation Roster.
APPENDIX C
CHAFFEE STUDENT CERTIFICATION BEST PRACTICES

The Chafee Applicant Certification and Status Listings (ACSL) is a biweekly report generated to the STEP application of an institution’s PageCenter mailbox. This report provides certification data and award information for those students who have submitted a Chafee application, listed the institution as first choice when filing the FAFSA®, and have been identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) as an eligible foster youth. As a prerequisite for disbursement, institutions must confirm eligibility and award amounts for students who are potentially eligible.

Best Practices

ACSLs are printed, completed and returned via fax to 717-720-3786 by the institution to be manually processed by PHEAA staff. Incomplete or incorrect certification could delay or prevent funds transfer. Follow the best practices below to facilitate efficient student certification.

DO:

- Work from the most recently generated ACSL
- Circle “Y” or “N” in all three fields
  - Degree Program (degree, diploma or certificate seeking)
  - Academic Progress
  - Unmet Cost/Need
- Insert information in these fields
  - Graduation Date (optional)
  - Certified Amount
- Correct Enrollment Status information
- Indicate “$0” in the Certified Amount field to cancel an award for the term
- Send one completed ACSL (signed and dated)
- Only send subsequent program year ACSLs if there are changes/updates (pages with changes and certification page only)
- Leave fields blank for students not yet certified but expected to be certified during the program year
- Review the Chafee Program Guidelines for field definitions, descriptions and additional certification information
- Allow 7-10 business days for processing

DON’T:

- Link fields for students who are being certified
  - Degree Program (Circle “Y” or “N”)
  - Unmet Cost/Need (Circle “Y” or “N”)
  - Academic Progress (Circle “Y” or “N”)
  - Certified Amount
  - Graduation Date (optional)
- Indicate “$0” in the certified amount if intending to certify
- Send ACSLs with no changes
- Send duplicate ACSLs or duplicate information
- Certify for terms that the student has not yet started
Created in 1963 by the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) has evolved into one of the nation’s leading student aid organizations. Today, PHEAA is a national provider of student financial aid services, serving millions of students and thousands of schools through its loan guaranty, loan servicing, grant administration, outreach, and other student aid programs.

PHEAA’s earnings are used to support its public service mission and to pay its operating costs, including the administration of the Pennsylvania State Grant and other state-funded student aid programs. PHEAA continues to devote its energy, resources and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts its student loan servicing activities nationally as FedLoan Servicing and American Education Services (AES). For more information, visit PHEAA.org.

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