Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program

PA State Grant and Special Programs Training

Waiver Review & Certification

October 2020
Agenda

1. BACKGROUND
   Learn the history of the Fostering Independence Tuition (FosterEd) Waiver Program including the what requirements institutions have for program participation.

2. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY PROCESS
   Review the steps taken by PHEAA and by schools when determining students’ FosterEd eligibility.

3. WAIVER AND DENIAL LISTINGS
   Take a closer look at how to calculate waiver amounts and certify listings for eligible students, as well as how to interpret denial listings to determine what additional actions students can take to attain waiver eligibility.

4. RESOURCES & REMINDERS
   Receive a few program reminders and discover what resources are available to help streamline program management.

The content included in this presentation is intended to provide supplemental instruction on the FosterEd Program and does not supersede program policy as written in the current FosterEd Guidelines.
Program Background

- Enacted by Act 16 (and amended by Act 91 of 2019)
- Established to assist Pennsylvania foster youth with the financial challenges of accessing higher education
- Waives tuition and mandatory fees for eligible postsecondary students in the foster care system
  - No Commonwealth appropriation
  - Student’s tuition and mandatory fees must be waived
    - Waiver will not need repaid even in cases of eligibility changes
Program Background

Institutional Participation

- Institutions must:
  A. Be located in Pennsylvania
  B. Have federal Title IV eligibility
  C. Have an executed PHEAA Remote Access Agreement (RAA)

Program legislation provides details regarding institutional participation. Questions should be directed to your Legal Department.
Program Background

Institutional Participation – Point of Contact (POC) Requirements

Institutions must designate one or more staff as an official POC

- PRIMARY STUDENT CONTACT
  Serve as primary contact for potentially eligible foster youth applying to and attending the institution

- RESOURCE REFERRALS
  Provide students with information and referrals for both on-campus and off-campus resources (e.g., tutoring, mental health, medical insurance, transitional housing, etc.)

- FINANCIAL AID ASSISTANCE
  Assist students in attaining FosterEd eligibility, as well as ensure students apply for applicable federal, state, and/or other financial aid
Program Background

- POC information must be:
  - Publicly available; and
  - Posted online

Provide POC information to PHEAA via the FosterEd POC & FAA Contact Form available on PHEAA.org.
# Student Eligibility Process

## Student Eligibility Requirements

Student applicants must meet the initial requirements for the PA Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program:

- Pennsylvania resident
- Under the age of 26
- Have a high school diploma or have received a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
- Eligible for services under Pennsylvania's John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood
- Identified as a youth in foster care or a youth discharged or adopted from foster care on or after attaining age 16
  - Or a youth that has exited foster care on or after age 16 due to adoption or permanent legal guardianship

- File a FAFSA® and application for the Chafee ETG Program by May 1
  - Chafee ETG application not required for renewal applicants
  - Student does not have to be awarded Chafee ETG funds
- Have “unmet costs” for the Chafee ETG Program

Students not awarded Chafee ETG due to funding limitations or application submission after December 31 may still be eligible for FosterEd.
Student Eligibility Process

Student Eligibility Requirements

• Student must:
  – Enroll as an undergraduate, on at least a half-time basis
  – Be enrolled in an approved Federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree program of study at an eligible PA institution
  – Maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress, as determined by the institution
  – Not be in default on a federal student loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid
  – Have not previously received a waiver for five (5) years, consecutive or not
    • Defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent
Application

Student applies or renews Chafee ETG eligibility directly with PHEAA

Student self-identifies and is verified by POC then application is forwarded to PHEAA

Confirmation

PHEAA runs initial eligibility checks and advises the student

Listings

Eligible students provided on a biweekly Waiver Listing

Students deemed ineligible by PHEAA or requiring additional DHS review are provided on a biweekly Denial Listing with reasons

Certification

Institution confirms eligibility, calculates waiver amounts, and returns updated listing to PHEAA

Institution reviews Denial Listing to determine if students may attain eligibility
Waiver Listing

• Available biweekly (on Tuesdays) in PageCenter
  – Located in the STEP application
  – New versions generate regardless of changes
• Contains students who have been determined as initially eligible by PHEAA
  – PHEAA eligibility checks include, but are not limited to: FAFSA status, PA residency, age criteria, default status, waiver counter, foster care eligibility, etc.
• Certify student eligibility within 30 days of student appearing on Waiver Listing or beginning of the term, whichever is later
• Only submit additional listings when changes/updates need to be reported
  – Additional waiver listings report institution totals
Waiver amount must cover remaining balance of the student’s tuition and mandatory fees, after gift aid is applied

– Mandatory fees are those assessed to all students or associated with credential completion (e.g., technology fee, student activity fee, uniform fee, etc.)

– Gift aid includes institutional aid awarded based on other (non-FosterEd) criteria, as well as federal grants (e.g. Pell, FSEOG, etc.) state grants, scholarships, etc.

Room, board, non-mandatory fees, or other excluded charges may be the student’s responsibility

– Institutions are encouraged to use other aid to cover charges not waived under FosterEd, as appropriate
• Michael attends PHEAA College a semester school, and appears on the Fall 2020 Waiver Listing.

• The minimum amount the institution must waive for Michael is $7,300 ($15,000 – $7,700 = $7,300).

• The school may opt to waive up to the total amount charged.
  – This could allow the students’ gift aid to be applied towards other expenses (e.g., room & board, books, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Michael Costs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$14,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Fees</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room &amp; Board</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$18,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Aid</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Pell Grant</td>
<td>$3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA State Grant</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA Chafee ETG</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>$7,700</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Waiver Listing

Waiver Calculation Examples

• Mazikeen attends PHEAA College a semester school, and appears on the Fall 2020 Waiver Listing.

• The minimum amount the institution must waive for Mazikeen is $9,800 ($15,000 – $5,200 = $9,800).

• The school may opt to waive up to the total amount charged.
  – This could allow the students’ gift aid to be applied towards other expenses (e.g., living expenses, board, books, supplies, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$14,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Fees</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room &amp; Board</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$15,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gift Aid</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Pell Grant</td>
<td>$3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA State Grant</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA Chafee ETG</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>$5,200</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PHEAA - Creating affordable access to higher education.
To certify the Waiver Listing
- Circle Y or N for Degree Program and Academic Progress
- Certify Waiver Amount (even if $0)
- Correct Enrollment Status information, if necessary
- Include Additional Comments (required when waiver amount is $0)
  - Examples: student declines waiver, no “unmet costs,” etc.
- Provide Graduation Date (optional)
- Sign and date the final (certification) page

Certification best practices are available in the Program Guidelines!
### Waiver Listing

#### Common Certification Errors

- **Don’t:**
  1. Wait for more than 30 days to certify
  2. Wait to receive additional gift aid to certify
  3. Forget to circle the Y or N
  4. Certify future terms
  5. Fail to add comments when waiver amount is $0
  6. Forget to sign and date the certification page
  7. Send duplicate Waiver Listings with no new information

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Financial Aid Admin. &amp; Point-of-Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>PEARL STATE UNIVERSITY 1500 N 7th STREET HARRISBURG, PA. 17102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### STUDENT LISTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Federal aid not received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>CHEER DECKER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>FALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll Status</td>
<td>FULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Program</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver Value</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: 5/7/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Federal aid not received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>KELLY LOPEZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>FALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll Status</td>
<td>FULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Program</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver Value</td>
<td>$508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: 5/7/2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Federal aid not received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>LINDA MARTIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>FALL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enroll Status</td>
<td>FULL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Program</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Y/N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiver Value</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

Sending duplicate waiver listings with no new certification and/or listings with incomplete waiver certification can delay processing.
Example: Malcom Graham received Chafee ETG funds in 2019-20, is not enrolled for Fall 2020, but in September registers full-time at PHEAA U for Spring 2021. According to the Spring 2021 packaging, all but $50 of the bill is expected to be covered by gift aid. Because Malcom is a foster student, PHEAA U applies a “general” institutional scholarship to cover the remaining bill plus $1,300 for other educational expenses. In this case, PHEAA U should include the $1,350 as the FosterEd Waiver in the packaging and, when the spring term begins, certify the amount on the Waiver Listing and document the student’s account with the $1,350 FosterEd Waiver.
Waiver Listing

• After eligibility certification, institutions will:
  – Waive/apply credit on a term-by-term basis
    • Waivers cannot be withheld or reduced due to expectation of additional gift aid
  – Refund any student payments that were applied to tuition or mandatory fees within 30 days
  – Report if student refuses the waiver and retain documentation

• Report eligibility changes and ineligible students to PHEAA
  – Student withdrawals or drops to less than half-time before charges are applied, the student is ineligible
  – Student ceases at least half-time enrollment or becomes ineligible after the waiver has been applied, the waiver should remain in place

• Waiver adjustments may be required due to financial aid increases or decreases
### Waiver Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Certification Date</th>
<th>Initial Waiver Amount</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Waiver After Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trixie</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>$7,200*</td>
<td>$1,200 scholarship received on October 16</td>
<td>Either apply the scholarship to the gift aid, adjust waiver amount to $6,000 and re-certify or allow the waiver to remain $7,200 and refund $1,200 to Trixie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>$7,200*</td>
<td>Total withdrawal on November 1</td>
<td>No change. The waiver will remain $7,200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*School elects to waive the minimum waiver amount.*

---

- Dan and Trixie appear on the August 24 Waiver listing at PHEAA Tech which starts its Fall 2020 term on September 8.
- The remaining balance of tuition and mandatory fees after gift aid is $7,200 for both students.
Denial Listing

• Available in PageCenter
  – Located in STEP Application
• Contains applicants/renewals who have not met the eligibility criteria
  – Reporting is point in time
  – POC reviews students’ denial reasons to determine whether waiver eligibility may be attained
  – Changes in eligibility must be reported to PHEAA

PHEAA - Creating affordable access to higher education.
Denial Listing

• Report provides:
  – Reason the applicant was denied; and
  – County within which the student received services, if in Pennsylvania
Denial Listing

Common Ineligible Reasons

APPLICATION NOT SIGNED
Counsel the student on Chafee ETG application completion

NO FAFSA OR INCOMPLETE FAFSA
Counsel student on missing items and FAFSA completion

NOT ELIGIBLE PER DHS
Forward any discrepant foster eligibility information

ELIGIBILITY PENDING DHS REVIEW
Review subsequent listings for final determination

Students may also require assistance with attaining eligibility for other aid (e.g., Pell, PA State Grant, scholarships, etc.).
Reminders

• Update POC information with PHEAA and on school website
• Document waiver, including institutional aid (e.g., tuition remission, etc.) provided solely on the basis of FosterEd criteria, on the waiver listing
• Complete waiver certification for eligible students within 30 days
• Adjust waiver as needed (e.g., additional aid is received, changes in tuition/fees, etc.)
• Only send additional waiver listings (pages with changes and certification) when changes have occurred
• Counsel denied applicants if they can attain FosterEd eligibility

Always ensure you have the most recent version of the FosterEd Program Guidelines!
Reminders

2020-21 AY Results (October 2020)

1,024 FosterEd Applicants

85 Total Waiver Recipients

585 Eligible Students

$338,132 Waived

121 Institutional Points of Contact (POC)

PHEAA - Creating affordable access to higher education.
Resources

• **Events:**
  – Webinar Series
  – Conferences/Workshops

• **Print Materials:**
  – Student-facing
  – School-facing

• **Web:**
  – [PHEAA.org](http://PHEAA.org)
  – [Alec](http://Alec)

• **SGSP Staff:**
  – 1-800-443-0646
  – [FosterEd@pheaa.org](mailto:FosterEd@pheaa.org)
Join Us Next Time!

- Wednesday November 18, 2020
- Pennsylvania Targeted Industry Program (PA-TIP)

*Award Certification & Disbursement*

Session descriptions and registration information available via PHEAA.org/SGSPtraining.
Get Social w/ PHEAA

PHEAA
American Education Services
FedLoan Servicing

@PHEAAaid
@FedLoan Servicing
@aesSuccessorg

PHEAA

@PHEAAStudentAid

PHEAA - Creating affordable access to higher education.
Thank You!