The Role of the FosterEd POC

PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program

PA State Grant & Special Programs
November 2021
Agenda

Housekeeping
PA State Grant & Special Programs (SGSP) staff introduce themselves, explain how to acquire program materials, and review agenda items

Background
PHEAA staff provides high-level information on the history of the program, as well as institutional and student eligibility requirements

Point of Contact (POC) Responsibilities
Presenters discuss the legislatively defined responsibilities of the POC and share resources that are available to support the POC

Wrap-Up
Panelists will issue reminders, provide additional resources, and share responses to questions posed during the session by attendees

This content has been abridged and does not supersede current program policy. For complete guidance on program administration, please refer to the appropriate year FosterEd Program Guidelines.
• Enacted into law under Act 16 of 2019
  – Jointly administered by PHEAA and the PA departments of Education (PDE), Human Services (DHS), and Labor & Industry (L&I)
• Program created to remove barriers in accessing postsecondary education for youth who are or have been in foster care
  – Waives tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students in the foster care system
    • Program legislation amended by Act 91 of 2019 to require students to apply for federal and state grants
  – Assists students in completing studies, reducing student loan debt, and building a network of support
• No Commonwealth appropriation
  – Student’s tuition and mandatory fees must be waived
    • Waiver will not need repaid even in cases of eligibility changes
A participating institution:

- Must be located in Pennsylvania, have federal Title IV eligibility, and complete a Remote Access Agreement (RAA)
- Must identify a POC and publicly publish their contact information
  - Share with PHEAA via POC & FAA Contact Form
- Should notify PHEAA when institutional changes occur (e.g., name, location, status, etc.)
Student Eligibility

- Student must:
  - Be a resident of Pennsylvania
  - Meet the program’s age requirement (under the age of 26)
  - Possess a high school diploma or Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
  - Be eligible for services under Pennsylvania’s John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood
    - Be identified as a youth in foster care or a youth discharged or adopted from foster care on or after attaining age 16 or has exited foster care on or after age 16 due to permanent legal guardianship
  - File a FAFSA® and application for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program by May 1
    - Chafee ETG application not required for renewal applicants
    - Student does not have to be awarded Chafee ETG funds
  - File a PA State Grant Form or PA State Grant Summer Application, if applicable
    - Student does not need to be eligible for PA State Grant
Student Eligibility

• Student must:
  – Have unmet costs for the Chafee ETG Program
    • Unmet costs = student’s cost of attendance – federal gift aid
  – Enroll as an undergraduate, on at least a half time basis 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 exhausted the FosterEd award counter (defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent)

Non-federal gift aid (e.g., loans, PA State Grant awards, PA Targeted Industry Program awards, etc.) is not included in the unmet costs calculation for the Chafee ETG Program.
Students will establish FosterEd eligibility via one of two ways:

**Option 1**
1. Student applies/renews Chafee ETG eligibility directly with PHEAA
2. PHEAA runs eligibility checks and advises the student and school
3. Eligible students presented on biweekly Waiver Listing

**Option 2**
1. Student self-identifies to school’s POC
2. Student and school verify student’s eligibility and advise PHEAA; Student applies/renews Chafee ETG eligibility
3. PHEAA runs eligibility checks and advises the student and school
4. Eligible students presented on biweekly Waiver Listing
Point of Contact

• POC is primary contact for prospective and eligible FosterEd students
  – Will support both admitted students and students applying to the institution

• Each institution must determine who is most qualified for the role
  – May name multiple individuals
  – May delegate duties to other campus individuals/offices
  – Contact information for POC must be publicly available and posted online
    • Will be a program review finding if not published
POC Responsibilities

• Assists students in obtaining verification of foster care status if student self identifies or is listed on FosterEd Denial Listing
  – Acceptable sources for verification:
    1. Court order that verifies that the youth was in foster care from the local Court of Common Pleas
    2. A statement (verbal or written) from the County of Placement Office or Department of Human Services
    3. A statement from a private provider agency that delivers child welfare services that the youth was in foster care
    4. A statement from an attorney, guardian ad litem, or court-appointed special advocate verifying the person’s relationship to the student and that the youth was in foster care
  – Document verification source, date, and method in institutional records
  – Report eligibility verifications to PHEAA via email
POC Responsibilities

• Provides students with information and referrals for support services
  – Referrals may be for on-campus or off-campus assistance
    • Services needed may vary between students (e.g., transitional housing, academic advising, religious services, career services, etc.)
    • Students may not understand what/how/when to do things (e.g., finding medical insurance)
  – Connect students with Act 101 or TRIO programs on campus, if applicable
  – Support students transferring by connecting them with POC at the new institution
POC Responsibilities

• Assist students in accessing available federal and state financial aid resources and in identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities
  – Different types of financial aid available
  – Waivers are not contingent upon receiving additional aid sources
  – Students not required to apply for PA State Grant if attending a non-approved institution or enrolled in a non-approved program of study
    • Encourage students to consider other PHEAA-administered programs (e.g., PA Targeted Industry Program)
  – Waivers do not cover existing loan debt, room, board, and non-mandatory fees
  – PHEAA offers free FAFSA events and other events to explore covering funding gaps

The PA State Work-Study Program is an opportunity for students to earn while they learn! Your institution could become an approved employer and support your FosterEd students. Learn more at PHEAA.org/SWSP.
Denial Listing

- Contains applicants/renewals who have not met the eligibility criteria
  - Generates on a biweekly basis
  - Only includes students that have listed your institution on their Chafee ETG application
    - Advise transfer students to report new institution to PHEAA immediately
- POC must routinely review report to determine whether waiver eligibility may be attained
- Report provides the reason the applicant was denied and the county where the student received services
  - Most common ineligibility reasons include: application not signed, no PA State Grant application, missing or incomplete FAFSA, and no eligibility per DHS
  - Changes in eligibility must be reported to PHEAA
POC Responsibilities

- Jason B., Marissa M., and Benny C. are attending PHEAA College
  - Jason has recently aged out of foster care and relocated to the area to attend college
  - Marissa is a senior scheduled to graduate in Spring 2022 and has completed both the FAFSA and Chafee ETG application
  - Benny is on the Denial Listing due to an incomplete FAFSA, incomplete address, and is ineligible per DHS. Benny is also considering transferring to another PA institution in Spring 2022

Questions

- What are some things that the POC will want to discuss with Jason?
- How can the POC support Marissa as the student prepares for graduation?
- What should the POC review with Benny to establish FosterEd eligibility?
  - If Benny intends to transfer, what items should the POC discuss with this student?
POC Responsibilities

Answers

• Jason: POC will want to initiate conversations with Jason to establish FosterEd eligibility
  – POC may need to assist with completing the FAFSA and other forms of financial aid
  – Other services/referrals may be needed once the POC makes contact with Jason (e.g., disability services, tutoring, etc.)

• Marissa: POC may wish to discuss post collegiate plans including housing, loan repayments, further schooling, etc.
  – POC should discuss internships and work-study opportunities

• Benny: The POC should:
  – Advise Benny to complete the FAFSA and report a complete address to PHEAA
  – Gather information from Benny about the time spent in foster care to verify the youth was eligible for foster care services in PA
  – Review Benny's transfer plans and connect the student with the POC at new institution to discuss financial aid, housing, admissions, and other services at the new institution
Waiver Listings

• Available biweekly (on Tuesdays) in PageCenter
• Contains students who have been determined as initially eligible by PHEAA
• Certify student eligibility within 30 days of student appearing on Waiver Listing or beginning of the term, whichever is later
  – Waiver amount must cover remaining balance of the student’s tuition and mandatory fees, after gift aid is applied
    • Gift aid includes institutional aid awarded based on other (non-FosterEd) criteria, as well as federal grants (e.g., Pell), state grants, scholarships, etc.
    – Refund any student payments that were applied to tuition or mandatory fees within 30 days
• Waivers must be designated as FosterEd on the student account
• Should be included in the conditional aid packaging when the institution has verification of the student’s foster care eligibility

Institutions are encouraged to use other aid to cover charges not waived under FosterEd, as appropriate.
Waiver Listings

• Submit additional listings when changes_updates need to be reported
  – Student withdraws 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
  – Report if student refuses the waiver and retain documentation
  – Waiver adjustments may be required due to financial aid increases or decreases

• Waiver value may exceed the total cost of tuition and mandatory fees
• Waivers cannot be withheld or reduced due to expectation of additional gift aid
Waiver Certification Example

- Students Chunk and Taylor are attending PHEAA Career and Technical Center and are listed on the Fall 2021 FosterEd Waiver Listing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Chunk Costs</th>
<th>Taylor Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>$19,250</td>
<td>$34,765</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandatory Fees</td>
<td>$2,650</td>
<td>$2,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room &amp; Board</td>
<td>$0</td>
<td>$8,971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Costs</strong></td>
<td><strong>$21,900</strong></td>
<td><strong>$46,386</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gift Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Pell Grant</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA Targeted Industry Program Grant</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>$4,600</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Gift Aid</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal Pell Grant</td>
<td>$3,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chafee ETG Award</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Resources</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The minimum amount the institution must waive for:
  - Chunk = $17,300 ($21,900 - $4,600)
  - Taylor = $31,315 ($37,415 - $6,100)

- The school may elect to waive up to the total amount charged for each student
  - This could allow the students’ gift aid to be applied towards other expenses (e.g., room, board, transportation, etc.)
### Additional resources for students and schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>StudentAid.ed.gov</strong></td>
<td>ED’s site providing information on preparing for and funding education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education Planner</strong></td>
<td>Provides advice to help students prepare for college and a career</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MySmartBorrowing</strong></td>
<td>Interactive tool where students create different scenarios to see how career and college choices may affect college borrowing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>YouCanDealWithIt</strong></td>
<td>Helps students learn to manage money, student loans, a budget, and credit card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PA DHS Provider Directory</strong></td>
<td>Contains a list of County Children and Youth Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PAFosterCare.org</strong></td>
<td>Features POC directories</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Check out PHEAA's Toolkit for Counselors/Partners!**
Resources & Tips

• Flag students who have a FAFSA comment with Code 166 and share FosterEd and Chafee ETG information

• Incorporate the program into your school’s admissions materials

• Employ social media to reach current and prospective students

• Identify local support services and contacts
  – Share brochures with local schools and relevant agencies and organizations
  – Develop FAQ documents that can be readily available

• Coordinate regular check-ins with current FosterEd students
Reminders

• Encourage students to submit their FosterEd application as soon as possible
  – 2021-22 Chafee ETG deadline is December 31
  – Discuss application deadlines/processes for other financial aid programs
    (e.g., PA State Grant, PA Targeted Industry Program, etc.)

• Chafee ETG student eligibility flexibilities provided through the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) of 2021 do not impact FosterEd
  – FosterEd eligibility does not change to match Chafee ETG changes (e.g., age 27, academic progress exemption, etc.)

• Share program feedback and recommendations with PDE via annual reporting

• Retain records associated with eligibility verification, certification, and crediting for at least five (5) years
Join Us Next Time!

Spring 2022 Webinar Series to be announced by January!

- Session descriptions and registration information will be available on PHEAA.org/SGSPtraining
- Recordings and presentation slides from the other Fall 2021 sessions available on training webpage

Have a specific session that you would like to see featured? Send us an email via the program mailbox with the subject line: Training Topic.
Resources

Web
• PHEAA.org
• Alec

Events
• Webinar Series
• Conferences
• Workshops

SGSP Staff
• Email: fostered@pheaa.org
• Phone: 800-443-0646

Print Materials
• Brochures
• Calendars
• FAQs

Connect with PHEAA socially!
Thank You!