

You Can Go to College!

Financial Aid and Academic Supports for Students in Foster Care

If you have been in foster care, programs are available to help you continue your education beyond high school. You can pay for college through exemptions that cover the cost of college tuition and fees. There is also support on college campuses to help you succeed. **Here is what you need to know:**

State of Florida Benefit Covers the Cost of College Tuition and Fees

The state provides tuition and fee exemptions (form CF-FSP 5220) for use at public state universities and colleges and Workforce Education Programs at your school district. You can qualify starting at age 16 under certain circumstances:

- **State care:** You are in the custody of the Department of Children and Families
- **Adoption care:** You were adopted from the Department of Children and Families after 5/5/1997
- **Relative care:** You are in the custody of a relative
- **Non-relative care:** You are in the custody of a non-relative
- **Guardian care:** You are in the custody of a guardian, or
- **Guardianship:** You were placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the Department of Children and Families after reaching 16 years of age.

The exemption is valid until you reach 28 years of age. This means, even if you delay your education you can still access this financial support when you decide to go, as long as it is before you turn 28.

Campus-Based Support

- **College contacts:** Many campuses offer academic support, on-campus and community resources, financial aid opportunities, and community support with students in similar situations. Connect with your college's foster student liaison or college coach who can advise you on how to submit the form to access your benefits. Find who to contact at the school you plan to attend: [College Liaisons](#) and [University Liaisons](#).
- **The AOK Scholars program** provides crucial elements for success such as mentoring and financial support. Review the requirements and connect with an AOK specialist through their [website](#).

Questions?
Contact your local [Community-Based Care \(CBC\) Lead Agency Independent Living Contacts](#) or [Florida's Independent Living Resource Center](#) on eligibility and how to get the Tuition and Fee Exemption form, CF-FSP 5220.

Independent Living Services

Contact your community-based care agency to access these additional supports:

- **Financial support for independent living:** A program called Postsecondary Education Services and Support ([PESS](#)) offers a stipend to help you pay for living expenses to attend postsecondary or vocational school. If you turn 18 in licensed care after spending at least 6 months in care you could be eligible. PESS provides this monetary stipend for you until you turn 23.

- **Aftercare services:** These services may include mentoring, tutoring, mental health, substance abuse, counseling, parenting, job/career skills training, and temporary financial assistance for necessities as you transition to independent living.

Office of Continuing Care

- The [Office of Continuing Care](#) offers free, one-on-one help to those who have or will transition out of foster care and are between the ages of 18-26. You will be connected to resources in your area, special services, and a support system to help you with the next steps to adulthood. If you are in foster care currently, visit the [Independent Living Program page](#) for Youth and Young Adult information.
- Call the Hope Line, 850-300-4673, to speak with a Care Navigator for more resources and supports.