Fostering Independence Waiver Program Questions:

1. I didn't see a slide on the age of 14 included. Can you put that slide in?

   This speaks to the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood. Youth are eligible for services beginning at age 14 through 21 with Aftercare services to age 23.

2. I need more clarity about 30% of Chafee funds being able to be used for room and board. Our students Chafee awards go directly to the school.

   ETG awards go directly to the schools. Your county can use 30% of you Chafee allocation from your NBBP process each year towards room and board expenses. This information is outlined in the IL Bulletin (pg. 30).

3. Why wouldn't the state include all school related costs (room and board, meals, etc.) to simplify this as they are all part of going to school most of the time?

   The law was written by legislators.

4. For clarification - all grants, scholarships, etc. have to be applied to tuition first and then the waiver covers the rest of tuition? This could then result in students having to pay the full amount for housing, meals, etc.

   Any grant or scholarship a student receives must be applied to the cost of attendance before the waiver is applied.

5. Will there (or are there) examples of hypothetical college bills to show how this actually will play out? Just curious because I just looked back on a bill from one of my youth and all the financial aid, and he qualified for more than covered his tuition and housing, etc. He wouldn't have benefitted from the waiver it seems.

   In this case, the tuition waiver is not a benefit for him. If that is the case, he does not have to accept the tuition waiver.

6. In order to be eligible for tuition waiver for fall 2020, when must the youth's PLC or adoption be completed? My youth is planning for college in the fall but her PLC is not yet finalized.

   Youth are eligible for ETG & the tuition waiver if they were in foster care at the age of 16 or older. If a youth's adoption or PLC was finalized prior to age 16, they are not eligible.

7. What do students do if a school does not want to participate in the waiver; but they are title IV? I'm thinking for-profit tech schools.

   Schools don’t have a choice. Institution believes their interpretation means they don’t have to honor the wavier.

8. At least in the past the Chafee ETG grants didn't come into the colleges until later in the year or the second semester, so the college put holds on students' accounts so they couldn't register for classes, etc. Is this going to be a problem going forward?

Chafee ETG funds are released after the state budget is passed. Youth/institution should know eligibility by June/July.

9. What about when kids are dependent in Agency custody? Does the Agency caseworker need to have a FAFSA associated with that student? All of our kids are "dependent"

   Youth who were in foster care at the age of 13 or older, can apply as an independent person. If a student answers yes to the following question on the FAFSA, he or she will be deemed independent would not need to provide parental information in the FAFSA. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?

10. If a youth has been adopted after age 16, would they still put adoptive parents info on FAFSA?

    Youth who were in foster care at the age of 13 or older, can apply as an independent person. If a student answers yes to the following question on the FAFSA, he or she will be deemed independent would not need to provide parental information in the FAFSA. At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?

11. If a youth aged out of care in PA and has since moved out of state, are they eligible for FosterEd if they decide to attend a PA college or university?

    They have to be a PA resident to be eligible for the program.

12. For Chafee and the Tuition Waiver, the age is 16, correct?

    ETG in PA is age 16.

13. To clarify - filing as an independent person just helps qualify them for the max financial aid from federal sources.

    Correct, again that age is for the FASFA only. Eliminates the need to have applicant submit parental information

14. Does it carry over to PA State Grant too?

    Age 13 is only applicable if the students answers yes to the following question on the FAFSA: At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?

    There is another age-related question that a student can answer to determine whether or not they are dependent – For the 20-21 FAFSA Form if they answer yes to the following question, they will be deemed independent: Were you born before January 1, 1997.

    Please keep in mind this has no relevance to foster youth.

15. To clarify: any foster youth should be filing as "independent" to max their federal money, though they are technically "dependent" and in Agency custody?

The FASFA allows youth who are in foster care at age 13 to file as independent which means their parents income does not count in relationship to income for the student. It has nothing to do with their CCYA custody.

16. If a student receives the tuition waiver, and their scholarship money goes to the tuition also, are there any suggestion how they can cover room and board; which is often more than loan amount students are awarded?

    Counties can assist youth with room and board for eligible youth with their IL Chafee funds. Up to 30% of your counties funds can be used for room & board. See pg. 30 in IL Bulletin.

17. Regarding FosterEd, will outside scholarships awarded to students be applied towards tuition and fees or will the student be able to apply those outside scholarships to books, room, and board?

    The law includes outside scholarships but that doesn't mean schools cannot allow students to use that towards their other expenses. We are hoping schools allow this to occur.

18. If a student is offered $8,000 in loans for two semesters and is awarded $4,000 in state grants but decides to decline a large amount of their loans, will the state grants awarded be reduced?

    No state grant won't be reduced. PHEAAs formula is based on student need.

19. Will outside scholarship money be required to be applied to tuition prior to applying FosterEd funds, or will students be able to apply those funds to room, board, and books?

    This varies by scholarship type and institutional policy.

20. Is discharged from foster care on or after age 16, defined? For example, in the most extreme of hypotheticals, if a child is removed on sixteenth birthday and returned to legal guardian 1-2 days later at a shelter hearing, would they qualify?

    The definition is defined by being adjudicated dependent. The youth must be adjudicated dependent and be or have been in out-of-home placement**.**

21. What does it mean when you have to be at least half time?

    The student must take enough credit hours (classes) to be considered a half-time student.

22. Are private colleges included in the waiver?

    Yes.

23. Is there any regulation (provided either by the Department of Ed, or some other entity) for the institutions in their acceptance process for foster youth? Will they be able to require higher standards for accepting foster youth to "get around" the waiver?

    There are no regulations for the FosterEd program at this time.

24. Is there a way to submit verification of eligibility at the same time as submitting the application for the grant to avoid any delays in processing?

    Youth can provide the institutions POC with eligibility verification from the county to help speed up the process.

25. Will there also be regulation on institutions determining what "maintaining academic progress" means? A standard?

    The common standard institutions follow is the federal student aid standard, but this also provides institutional flexibility. The institution should likely have a copy or documentation of their policy available to the student.

26. If a student has to withdraw in the middle of the semester for medical or any other reason, will they have to repay the amount waived by FosterEd funds?

    Our program guidelines provide some general guidance to institutions in this instance and directs them to maintain the waiver if it was applied prior to the withdrawal. If the waiver was not yet applied and the student withdraws, they may not receive the benefit and may owe charges incurred as a result.

27. So foster youth must file the ETG each year, but will not have to do anything for FosterED, correct? Or only have do to the ETG once?

    The ETG application will serve as the application for FosterED.

28. Will the waiver cover costs for college semesters abroad?

    It's possible the FosterEd waiver will be applicable to students studying abroad. In order to determine eligibility, the student must verify with the institution's point-of-contact or financial aid office to determine who is charging the tuition of fees, as to determine the eligibility of the institution.

29. If a student graduates in four years, would the waiver cover a year of graduate school?

    Act 16 indicates the waiver is for undergraduate courses only.

30. Who decides where the free money goes first?

    Free money, or presumably, grants or scholarships are typically applied based on the grant or scholarship authority (legislation, regulations or program policy), institutional policy or the institutions automated financial aid process.

31. In referencing IL room and board to provide assistance with housing, the youth would still have to been discharged from agency custody at age 18 or older, correct? So, youth discharged prior to age 18 cannot use room and board funds?

    Youth would still be eligible for Aftercare services including room and board. Please refer to the IL Bulletin for guidance on IL services for youth who have extended their care past the age of 18 and those that have aged out of care. Aftercare services are being extended to age 23 beginning with SFY 20/21.

32. Which schools will not be participating in the fee waiver?

Below is a list of institutions, from the legislation, that must apply from the waiver. Schools not listed, such as out of state schools, are not required to apply the waiver, but may choose to do so. Because it is legislative, there's no participation component, but rather law. Its recommended that the student confirm with the institution, their interpretation to the legislation as far as the requirement to apply the tuition waiver.

"INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION." THE TERM INCLUDES ANY OF

THE FOLLOWING:

(1) A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OPERATING UNDER ARTICLE XIX-A.

(2) A UNIVERSITY WITHIN THE STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER

EDUCATION.

(3) THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF

PITTSBURGH, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, LINCOLN UNIVERSITY OR ANY

OTHER INSTITUTION DESIGNATED AS STATE-RELATED BY THE

COMMONWEALTH.

(4) THE THADDEUS STEVENS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY.

(5) A COLLEGE ESTABLISHED UNDER ARTICLE XIX-G.

(6) AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION LOCATED IN AND

INCORPORATED OR CHARTERED BY THE COMMONWEALTH AND ENTITLED TO

CONFER DEGREES AS PROVIDED UNDER 24 PA.C.S. § 6505 (RELATING

TO POWER TO CONFER DEGREES) AND AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE

STANDARDS AND QUALIFICATIONS PRESCRIBED BY THE STATE BOARD OF

EDUCATION UNDER 24 PA.C.S. CH. 65 (RELATING TO PRIVATE

COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND SEMINARIES).

(7) A PRIVATE SCHOOL LICENSED UNDER THE ACT OF DECEMBER

15, 1986 (P.L.1585, NO.174), KNOWN AS THE PRIVATE LICENSED

SCHOOLS ACT.

(8) A FOREIGN CORPORATION APPROVED TO OPERATE AN

EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE UNDER 22 PA. CODE CH. 36 (RELATING TO

FOREIGN CORPORATION STANDARDS).