

# Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)

## Frequently Asked Questions as of May 2019

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*The following information has been created as a result of collaborations between the Department of Human Services, Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Oregon Tribes, Office of Student Access and Completion, the Oregon Public Universities and Oregon Health and Sciences University. We hope this document will assist you to determine a student's eligibility, enrollment options, and awards.*

Note: Effective May 16, 2013 (Summer Term 2013), the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver eligibility was amended.

### **Eligibility:**

#### **1. What are the required qualifications that determine if a current or former foster youth is eligible for Oregon's Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** The student must be in the care and **custody** of DHS, or one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon, and is or will be an undergraduate student; or must be a former foster youth who has spent at least 180 days in substitute care after age 14, **AND** did not leave substitute care and **custody** of (DHS or Tribe) prior to the youth's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. The undergraduate student must access the Tuition and Fee Waiver prior to the age of 25.

#### **2. How do eligible students apply for the Tuition and Fee Waiver and is there a filing deadline?**

**Answer:** Eligible applicants may submit a completed FAFSA (available at: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)) as early as October 1<sup>st</sup> each year. The deadline to submit a FAFSA is June 30 of the award year, or the student's last day of class for the academic year (whichever is earliest). Students who file their FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 each year will maximize their federal, state, and private grants and scholarships.

#### **3. When is the earliest a student could access or receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** The Tuition and Fee Waiver program began with the 2012-2013 academic year.

# **Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions** as of May 2019

---

### **4. Who will notify the school of a student's eligibility for the Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** Oregon's Department of Human Services (DHS) will work with the community colleges, Oregon public universities and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to create a method of notification.

### **5. How long can a student be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver?**

**Answer:** Eligible students may receive the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver for the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate study. Less than full time enrollment would be prorated accordingly. Students may take a break from school, but must return prior to his or her **25<sup>th</sup> birthday** in order to continue to eligibility and access the Tuition and Fee Waiver. After age 25, a student must remain enrolled at an eligible post-secondary institution until completion of their undergraduate studies. A student must remain in good standing and may not "stop out" of school after age 25 or they will lose their eligibility for the tuition and fee waiver.

### **6. What about the student who is eligible for Tuition and Fee Waiver but doesn't need it?**

**Answer:** If a student meets all other criteria for eligibility, but does not have a need for a Tuition and Fee Waiver, the student shall remain eligible until the student receives the equivalent of 4 years of undergraduate education.

### **7. Is a current college student eligible for Tuition and Fee Waiver if they have not received the Waiver or if they declined the Waiver previously?**

**Answer:** Yes, as long as the student meets the eligibility requirements listed in #1. above, and the student accesses the Waiver prior to age 25.

### **8. Can a youth transfer from a private or other school to an eligible school and receive Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes, if the student's transfer occurs and the student receives the Tuition and Fee Waiver prior to the age 25.

# Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)

## Frequently Asked Questions as of May 2019

---

**9. Can an eligible student begin at an Oregon community college and then transfer to a 4-year university and be eligible for the Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes, as long as the university is an Oregon public university or OHSU, and the student begins receiving the Tuition and Fee Waiver prior to the age of 25.

**10. Can an Oregon foster youth who has been placed/residing in another state return to Oregon and be eligible for the tuition waiver?**

**Answer:** To be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, an Oregon foster youth must be deemed a resident of Oregon. See more details below, in question 11.

**11. When an Oregon foster youth who has been residing in another state returns to Oregon and enrolls at an eligible institution, will the student have to pay out-of-state tuition?**

**Answer:** Possibly. For all Oregon public universities and OHSU, student residency is determined first at the campus level, following Oregon Administrative Rules, 580-010-0029 through 580-010-0047. A student should check with his/her campus to determine if he/she is considered a resident or not. If not, the student will be required to pay out-of-state tuition.

**12. Does a youth in a voluntary placement qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?**

**Answer:** No. A youth must be in the legal care and custody of DHS (or one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon) for at least 180 days after age 14 and did not exit substitute care prior to the age of 16.

**13. Does a youth who was adopted or entered a guardianship qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes, if the youth was in the care and custody of DHS (or one of the nine federally recognized Tribes in Oregon) for at least 180 days after age 14 and did not exit substitute care prior to the age of 16. Youth who were adopted or enter a guardianship prior to the age of 16, or had less than 180 days of care after 14 years of age at the time of the adoption/guardianship, are NOT eligible.

# **Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions** as of May 2019

---

**14. May a student remain in foster care to age 21 and receive the tuition and fee waiver while in foster care?**

**Answer:** Yes, as long as the youth meets the eligibility criteria listed in question 1 above.

**15. May a student receive a modified diploma and still qualify for the tuition and fee waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes. However, the student must be taking credits/courses that will count towards an undergraduate certificate or degree.

**16. Does a student who is in, or has been in, an Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) foster home qualify?**

**Answer:** No, unless the student had been in Oregon DHS or Tribal care and custody for at least 180 days after the age of 14 AND did not exit substitute care prior to their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and meets all other eligibility criteria.

### **Enrollment:**

**1. What is the definition of “enroll”?**

**Answer:** A student is considered enrolled when they have applied and been admitted as an undergraduate student at an Oregon public university, OHSU, or a community college.

**2. What is the definition of “must enroll prior to age 25”?**

**Answer:** A student must enroll for the term in which the student will turn age 25. After age 25, a student must remain enrolled at an eligible institution until completion of their undergraduate studies. A student must remain in good standing and may not “stop out” of school after age 25 or they will lose their eligibility for the Tuition and Fee Waiver.

**3. Must an eligible student pay Advanced Tuition Deposits when requested by the school?**

**Answer:** Yes. If the student is determined to be eligible for the tuition and fee waiver, the school will need to refund the amount of tuition deposit(s) paid. This would be determined at the time the school is finalizing a student’s financial aid.

# **Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions** as of May 2019

---

### **4. Can a student participate in Summer Term and receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes. The term will count toward the 4 year maximum.

### **Award:**

### **1. Who determines the actual Tuition and Fee Waiver amount?**

**Answer:** Each school will be responsible for packaging a youth's financial aid. The tuition and fee waiver will be a component of the financial aid process.

### **2. How does the tuition and fee waiver work?**

**Answer:** A student's federal aid (Pell, Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant), Oregon Opportunity Grant and any other institutional (school) aid will be used to cover the student's tuition and fees. Any amount of tuition and fees remaining after the Pell, FEOG, OOG and other school aid is applied will be waived.

### **3. Are Foster Youth guaranteed to receive an Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG)?**

**Answer:** No. The Higher Education Coordinating Commission (HECC) Office of Student Access and Completion (OSAC) will be prioritizing current and former foster youth for the Oregon Opportunity Grant. However, there will be deadlines. At this time, a student must register for and attend Fall Term in order to be prioritized for the OOG.

### **4. Does the Chafee Education & Training Grant (ETG) lower the amount of a student's tuition and fee waiver?**

**Answer:** No. The Chafee ETG is not to be considered when determining the amount of a student's tuition and fee waiver. In addition, a student's private scholarships, grants and loans are NOT to be applied toward a student's tuition and fees.

### **5. What is included in the Tuition and Fees waived?**

**Answer:** A qualified student for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver is entitled to a waiver of tuition and fees as follows: tuition for

# **Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095)**

## **Frequently Asked Questions** as of May 2019

---

academic credit courses (at base or differential rates depending upon program to which student is admitted) but not for noncredit courses; Mandatory enrollment fees: building, incidental, health service, recreation center, or other mandatory fees that may be added from time to time; One-time fees: matriculation, transcript for life (OIT only); Fees required for instruction related services such as lab or course fees that are assessed upon registration for a particular course  
Fees that are not covered under the tuition and fee waiver include, but are not limited to: books, supplies, parking, personal incidentals, fines, and room and board fees. Fees considered as “pass through” fees, paid to an outside provider, are exempt from the Tuition and Fee Waiver.

### **6. How are students notified of the Tuition and Fee Waiver amount?**

**Answer:** The college or university the student has been accepted to attend will inform the student of the Tuition and Fee Waiver amount. The amount may be reflected on the student’s financial aid award letter.

### **7. How are Independent Living Program (ILP) Providers notified of the student’s Tuition and Fee Waiver and amount?**

**Answer:** The student will need to inform the ILP Provider.

### **8. May a student use the Tuition and Fee Waiver for graduate school?**

**Answer:** No. The Tuition and Fee Waiver may be used for an Associates degree, certificate programs, and a Bachelors degree, but does not continue beyond the level of an initial Bachelors degree.

### **9. May a student decline the Tuition and Fee Waiver?**

**Answer:** Yes. A student may decline the Tuition and Fee Waiver. The student must provide the school with a reason for the decision to decline the waiver.

### **10. If a student declines the Tuition and Fee Waiver, will they be able to receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver the next year?**

**Answer:** Yes, if the student is continuing to work towards an undergraduate degree or certificate.

# Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver (HB2095) Frequently Asked Questions as of May 2019

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## Volunteer Hours:

The requirement that foster and former foster children complete volunteer service hours to qualify for the tuition waiver was removed effective January 1, 2019 (per HB 4014).

For additional questions, contact DHS at:  
503-945-6612 or email: [foster.care@state.or.us](mailto:foster.care@state.or.us)