



## **PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program**

The FosterEd Program, created by Act 16 of 2019 and amended by Act 49 of 2019, mandates postsecondary institutions in the Commonwealth waive tuition and mandatory fees for youth who are or were in foster care.

This waiver applies only to charges that remain after all other gift aid (federal, state, and other scholarships or grants) have been applied to the student's account.

The program is being administered collaboratively by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in conjunction with the PA departments of Education, Human Services, and Labor & Industry.

The point of contact for Jersey College is the Director of Institutional Effectiveness, who may be contacted at [FosterEd@jerseycollege.edu](mailto:FosterEd@jerseycollege.edu).



The PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program provides tuition waivers at postsecondary institutions for eligible youth who are or have been in foster care.

The PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program, created by Act 16 of 2019, seeks to remove barriers in accessing a postsecondary education for youth who are or have been in foster care. This allows eligible foster youth to complete their studies, graduate with less debt, and have the opportunity to build a network of support.

The program is being administered collaboratively by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in conjunction with the PA Departments of Education, Human Services, and Labor & Industry.



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## PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

Postsecondary Tuition Waiver for Eligible Foster Care Youth



# Am I Eligible?

To be eligible for the tuition waiver, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Pennsylvania resident
- Have not reached age 26 by July 1 immediately prior to the upcoming academic year for which the FosterEd waiver is received
- Have graduated from high school or received a 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 from foster care at age 16 or older OR exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal guardianship
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, at least half time in a postsecondary institution that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV student assistance programs
- Have unmet cost for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program, as determined by the postsecondary institution
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the postsecondary institution
- Not be in default on a federal student loan

## How to Participate

Eligible foster youth must take the following steps:

- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)
- Submit a Chafee ETG Application by May 1
- Submit a PA State Grant Form, if applicable
- Enroll in an eligible PA postsecondary institution

Visit [PHEAA.org](https://www.pheaa.org) for additional information.



# FAQs

## What is a Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver?

An eligible student's remaining charges for tuition and mandatory fees are eliminated after all federal, state, and gift aid are applied.

## Does the tuition waiver cover room and board?

No, the tuition waiver applies only to tuition and mandatory fees. It does not cover room and board.

## Will the tuition waiver cover existing education debt?

No, the tuition waiver will only be applied to tuition and mandatory fees charged for the current academic year.

## Do I need to fill out a specific application?

Yes, you must submit a FAFSA, Chafee ETG application for the current year, and a PA State Grant Form, if applicable, for the postsecondary institution to which you are applying. Your Point of Contact is able to assist in identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities.

## How long does the tuition waiver apply?

The tuition waiver may be applied up to 5 academic years, defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent, whether or not consecutive, until age 26.

## Is there anyone at my postsecondary institution who can help?

Each school has a Point of Contact available to support eligible students throughout their college careers with the following:

- Assistance in completing admissions and financial aid applications
- Obtaining verification of eligibility
- Providing referrals for on- and off-campus resources and support services

For additional information visit  
[PHEAA.org/FosterEd](https://www.pheaa.org/FosterEd)

# Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program Point of Contact FAQs

## General Information

### Q. What is the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program?

- A. This program was established to assist Pennsylvania youth who are or have been in foster care with the financial challenges of accessing higher education. The program offers students up to the age of 26 a tuition waiver for undergraduate studies at most colleges and universities in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### Q. What does a waiver mean?

- A. A waiver means that the remaining balance of the student's tuition and mandatory fees, after all federal and state grants and outside scholarships have been applied, will be eliminated or paid for by the institution.

### Q. For how many terms and for what terms can a student receive a waiver?

- A. A student may receive a waiver for up to 5 years, which is equal to ten semesters or the equivalent (this is adjusted accordingly for quarter schools). The waiver can apply to all terms: fall, winter, spring, or summer.

### Q. If a student has already covered the term balance before receiving notice of FosterEd eligibility, how should my school proceed?

- A. If a student has already covered the term balance via alternate means (e.g., out of pocket, loans, etc.), then the school must refund any money received from the student for tuition and mandatory fees within 30 days of receipt of the student's name on the Waiver Listing. The student remains responsible for room, board, and non-mandatory fees.

### Q. What fees are deemed mandatory?

- A. Mandatory fees are defined as either charges that are typically assessed to all students at the beginning of a term or fees that are required as a part of a student's academic program or credential completion. For a list of mandatory fees, please see the Waiver Certification section of the FosterEd Program Guidelines.

### Q. We are not a state school or a state-related school. Are we required to waive the student's remaining balance?

- A. Postsecondary institutions in Pennsylvania approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV funding must provide the waiver to all eligible students. The legislation governing this program is very specific regarding the postsecondary institutions that must participate. We recommend that you consult your legal department if you have questions surrounding your institution's participation.

## Point of Contact (POC)

### Q. Is the POC required to have any specific training or background?

- A. No, the POC is not required to have any specific training. Given the responsibilities, the POC should be knowledgeable about financial aid and admissions processes, available resources and referrals at the institution, and external resources or offices, as listed below.

**Q. Are any resources or trainings available for the POC?**

- A.** Yes, PHEAA is collaborating with stakeholders to conduct trainings and share additional resources. PHEAA training resources can be found on [PHEAA.org/training](https://www.pheaa.org/training).

**Q. What verification of student eligibility is needed from the foster care system?**

- A.** The student's eligibility is typically verified by the County Children and Youth Agency or PA Department of Human Services as part of Chafee ETG application processing. The student may have eligibility documentation to share with the POC, but is not required to do so.

The student may self-identify to the POC at the institution and request assistance in confirming eligibility. The student could also be identified via a FosterEd Denial Listing from PHEAA as pending confirmation of eligibility. If so, legislation requires the POC to assist the student.

There are four possible sources of verification:

- A copy of a court order from the local Court of Common Pleas; or
- A statement (verbal or written) from the County of Placement Office (County Children and Youth Agency) or PA Department of Human Services (a list of County Children and Youth Agencies can be found on the [PA Department of Human Services Provider Directory](#)); or
- A statement from a private provider agency that delivers child welfare services; or
- A statement from an attorney, guardian ad litem, or court-appointed special advocate including verification of the person's relationship to the student.

The POC should document that eligibility was verified or the reason that eligibility was denied, including the source or office, and information should be shared with PHEAA.

**Q. What type of services should be offered to students who identify themselves as eligible for the waiver program?**

- A.** Students known to be eligible or who self-identify as eligible for services under FosterEd should be offered assistance with the following:
- Completing the admission application and gathering required documents
  - Completing all applicable financial aid applications (e.g., FAFSA®, Chafee ETG, PA State Grant Form, etc.)
  - Identifying and applying for any other applicable scholarships or grants

Students should also be given information regarding on- or off-campus resources or services, including tutoring, academic advising, career, housing, medical insurance, and health and mental health counseling.

Students who were in foster care at age 14 or older are eligible to receive Independent Living (IL) aftercare services through the County Children and Youth Agencies up until their 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday. Students can be assisted with aftercare services by contacting their County Children and Youth Agency for services that can include assistance with housing, counseling, and other supports offered by their county.

Another resource is the website of the Center for Schools and Communities at [pafostercare.org](https://www.pafostercare.org).

## Student Eligibility

**Q. How will I know that a student is eligible to receive a FosterEd waiver?**

- A.** PHEAA provides a FosterEd Waiver Listing biweekly to institutions' PageCenter mailboxes. As outlined above, the POC could be required to determine foster care eligibility. If the student appears on the Waiver Listing, it means PHEAA has already determined that the student meets foster care eligibility and several other requirements:
- Is a current resident of Pennsylvania
  - Has completed the current academic year's Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

- Has completed the PA Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) application
- Has graduated from high school or received a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
- Has not reached the age of 26 by July 1<sup>st</sup> prior to the upcoming academic year
- Is not in default on a federal student loan or does not owe a refund on other Title IV aid

In addition to the FosterEd Waiver Listing, institutions will also receive Chafee ETG and FosterEd Denial Listings. The Denial Listings are to be used by the POC at the institution to identify and assist students in establishing eligibility for the FosterEd waiver; this may include determining the students' foster care eligibility, as outlined above.

- Q. If PHEAA is checking the student's eligibility under PA's John H. Chafee Foster Care Program, why does the POC have responsibility for this?**
- A.** The legislation requires the POC to assist. If the student completes the FAFSA and the Chafee ETG application, PHEAA runs an eligibility check against available records and provides this verification when possible. In that case, the POC will not have to check eligibility. If foster care eligibility is not verified and the student appears on a Denial Listing for this reason, the POC must offer assistance.
- Q. What does the student need to do to receive the waiver?**
- A.** The Student Eligibility Requirements section of the Program Guidelines and the [student page](#) at PHEAA.org outline these details. Students must meet eligibility criteria and complete the FAFSA and the Chafee ETG application for the current year. If the student received ETG funds in the 2019-20 Academic Year, a new Chafee ETG application is not required. Applications for Chafee ETG are available on [PHEAA.org/Chafee](#).
- Q. If the student receives the waiver for the upcoming academic year, is the Chafee ETG application needed for the next academic year?**
- A.** No, the Chafee ETG application is not required, but all renewal students must submit the FAFSA each year to receive the waiver.
- Q. What happens if a student drops down to less than half-time status?**
- A.** In the case of a student who drops to less than half-time status **before** charges are applied to the student's account, the student is no longer eligible for a waiver for that term.
- If the student drops to less than half-time after the waiver has been applied, the waiver will remain in place. If the student's change results in adjustments to charges and financial aid, the amount of the waiver would be increased or decreased to cover all remaining charges.
- Q. After a waiver has been applied, will an eligible student ever be required to repay a waiver due to withdrawal or loss of eligibility?**
- A.** No, a student will not be required to repay a waiver.
- Q. Can a student be ineligible for Chafee ETG and still appear as eligible on a Waiver Listing?**
- A.** Depending on the ineligible reason for Chafee ETG, the student may still be eligible for the FosterEd waiver and appear on the FosterEd Waiver Listing. Please contact PHEAA staff for questions regarding specific student accounts.
- Q. How will the institution know if a transfer student is eligible for the waiver?**
- A.** The student should notify PHEAA immediately of the intent to transfer. If the student is eligible, the student record will be updated to appear on the new institution's next Waiver Listing. The POC must work with the student to support the completion of all necessary processes for the transfer.

**Q. For what costs can Chafee ETG funds be used?**

**A.** Chafee ETG funds can be used toward all costs of attendance, including expenses such as room and board, books, computers, supplies, and transportation. Institutions may apply Chafee ETG funds toward these costs if the student is eligible for the FosterEd waiver.

**Q. A student who wishes to attend my institution provided evidence of Chafee ETG eligibility, a key component in determining FosterEd eligibility, in advance of PHEAA confirming that eligibility. How should our institution proceed?**

**A.** When verification of the student's foster care eligibility has been provided to the institution, the institution should proceed with conditional aid packaging or preliminary crediting of FosterEd benefits for the student's account towards tuition and mandatory fees. The POC also should ensure the student has applied for all federal and state aid for which the student is eligible.

**Couldn't find your question?**

Email [FosterEd@pheaa.org](mailto:FosterEd@pheaa.org) or visit [PHEAA.org](http://PHEAA.org) for more information.



# PA Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver Program

2023-24 Program Guidelines



# Document Changes

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## Summary of Changes

Section	Description	Change
Appendix A	PageCenterX Reports	Updated PageCenter references to PageCenterX.

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## 2023-24 Program Guidelines

# PA Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver Program

## Introduction

In 2019, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania passed Act 16, as amended by Act 91, creating the PA Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program. FosterEd provides tuition waivers at postsecondary institutions for eligible youth who are or have been in foster care. The program is being administered collaboratively by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in conjunction with the PA Departments of Education (PDE), Human Services (DHS), and Labor & Industry (L&I).

Under this program, postsecondary institutions in Pennsylvania are required to designate a Point of Contact (POC) and waive all institutional charges for tuition and mandatory fees that remain after all federal, state, and other gift aid has been applied to the accounts of all eligible students.

The 2023-24 program guidelines provide postsecondary institutions with the requirements for participation and administration of FosterEd for this program year. PHEAA will publish updates to this document if additional changes become necessary. The most recent version of the 2023-24 FosterEd Program Guidelines can be accessed on [pheaa.org/sgspResources](https://pheaa.org/sgspResources). This document is valid only for the 2023-24 Academic Year and should not be referenced for processing any prior years.

## I. Institution Participation

Postsecondary institutions in Pennsylvania approved by the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for Title IV funding must provide the waiver to all eligible students. Eligible students are those who self-identify to the school and are subsequently determined as eligible or those students identified by PHEAA via a waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).

To administer the FosterEd Program, institutions need the following:

### A. Point of Contact

Each institution is required to designate one or more staff as a Point of Contact (POC) for individuals eligible for FosterEd. It is the responsibility of the institution to determine who is most qualified.

#### i. POC Responsibilities

The POC shall have or ensure the delegation of the following duties:

- Serve as the primary contact for all eligible individuals applying to or attending the institution.
- Provide all applicants with information and referrals for on-campus support services and resources, including but not limited to:
  - Admissions

- Housing
- Financial aid
- Health
- Mental health
- Academic advising
- Tutoring
- Career services
- Provide all applicants or students with information and referrals as available for off-campus support services, including transitional housing, medical insurance, and services.
- Assist students in obtaining verification of foster care status on or after age 16, as specified in II. Student Eligibility Requirements. There are four possible sources of verification:
  - A copy of a court order that verifies that the youth was in foster care from the local Court of Common Pleas; or
  - A statement (verbal or written) from the County of Placement Office (County Children and Youth Agency) or Department of Human Services (a list of County Children and Youth Agencies can be found in the PA Department of Human Services Provider directory); or
  - A statement from a private provider agency that delivers child welfare services that the youth was in foster care; or
  - 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 that eligibility was obtained, or the reason that eligibility was denied, and the source of this verification.
- Eligibility may be verified via documentation, email, or phone call.
  - Eligibility verified by any method should be documented by the POC in the student's file.
  - The student is not required to obtain verification but may provide a form of acceptable documentation.
  - Verification of eligibility must be shared with PHEAA, if not already on file, by submitting an email to [fostered@pheaa.org](mailto:fostered@pheaa.org) within 30 days of obtaining eligibility.
- Assist students in accessing available federal and state financial aid resources and in identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities.
  - Resources to support students in applying for additional aid can be found at [pheaa.org](http://pheaa.org).

## ii. Contact Information for the POC

Must be posted on the publicly accessible website of the institution and should be shared with PHEAA for the purposes of program administration. The FosterEd POC and FAA form is available at [pheaa.org/sgspResources](http://pheaa.org/sgspResources) and may be submitted to [fostered@pheaa.org](mailto:fostered@pheaa.org).

## B. Access to PHEAA Documents & Reports

### Business Partner Access Management System

Business Partner Access Management System (BPAMS) is the web interface designed to manage requests for access to PHEAA systems. With this application, business partners—their users, requesters, and their Authoritative Sources—can submit requests for access to PHEAA systems.

All institutions must have a signed and executed Remote Access Agreement (RAA) and Authoritative Source Form on file. Questions regarding the remote access agreement (RAA) can be directed to [sgsp\\_bpams\\_processing@pheaa.org](mailto:sgsp_bpams_processing@pheaa.org).

All institutions are required to review and maintain access requests for their users.

Once processed, the forms grant access to the following PHEAA systems and School Portal (Alec<sup>SM</sup>):

- **PageCenterX** is a secure report repository. Each institution will have its own folder within PageCenterX to which all reports and listings will be delivered and divided into separate applications. FosterEd reports will be in the STEP folder.

**ATTENTION!** PageCenter has been upgraded to PageCenterX with a new and more modern interface and options. Please refer to [pheaa.org/documents/sgsp/ph/PageCenterX-user-guide.pdf](https://pheaa.org/documents/sgsp/ph/PageCenterX-user-guide.pdf) and other resources housed on [pheaa.org/sgspResources](https://pheaa.org/sgspResources).

- **Document Library** is an online repository, storing and organizing documents, such as program guidelines, memoranda, etc.
- **myFileGateway** is a web-based product that allows for the sharing and transferring of files between PHEAA and the institution through secure mailboxes. Users can upload to and download from only those mailboxes to which they have access.

For additional resources on how to access and use PHEAA systems, visit [pheaa.org/sgspResources](https://pheaa.org/sgspResources). Specific documents can be found by selecting **State Grant and Special Programs Resources**, then **General Resources**.

## II. Student Eligibility Requirements

To be eligible for a FosterEd waiver, a student must:

- Be a current resident of Pennsylvania at the start of and during the term for which the waiver is awarded
- Have not reached age 26 by July 1 immediately prior to the upcoming academic year in which the waiver will be awarded
- Have graduated from high school or have received a 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 who is in foster care or was discharged from foster care on or after attaining age 16, OR has exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal guardianship
- Be enrolled as an undergraduate, on at least a half-time basis, in a postsecondary institution that is approved by ED for Title IV student assistance programs in Pennsylvania
- Have unmet cost for the Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) Program, as determined by the postsecondary institution
- Maintain federal satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the institution
- Not be in default on a federal student loan or owe a refund on other Title IV aid
- File a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA<sup>®</sup>) for the academic year for which the waiver is being requested
- File an application for Chafee ETG by May 1, 2024
- File a PA State Grant Form or PA State Grant Summer Application, if applicable, for the terms for which the waiver is being requested
- Have not previously received a waiver for 5 years (consecutive or not), defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent, for undergraduate study

**NOTE:** A student may be eligible for Chafee ETG but not receive an award for reasons including, but not limited to, missing the application deadline, funding limitations, or reaching the maximum Chafee ETG award counter. A student may still be eligible for FosterEd in these situations.

An eligible student who transfers to another institution should contact PHEAA immediately at [fostered@pheaa.org](mailto:fostered@pheaa.org); the student should also communicate with the POC at the transfer institution.

### III. Waiver Determination Process

#### A. PHEAA Responsibilities

PHEAA is responsible for the initial FosterEd eligibility checks and confirming a student:

- Is a resident of Pennsylvania
- Has not reached age 26 by July 1 immediately prior to the upcoming academic year for which the FosterEd waiver would be received
- Has graduated from high school or received a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma
- Is eligible for services under Pennsylvania’s John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood
- Is not in default on a federal student loan or does not owe a refund on other Title IV aid
- Has filed the required applicable year FAFSA
- Has submitted a complete Chafee ETG application
- Has not previously received a waiver for 5 academic years (consecutive or not), defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent

Once it is determined a student meets the above criteria, the student will appear on the FosterEd Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) of the institution the student is attending. The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) is made available to postsecondary institutions via their PageCenterX folder and is updated on a biweekly basis. A student who does not meet the eligibility criteria will appear on the FosterEd Denial Listing (Document FCFSXH321) with the reasons for denial.

#### B. Institution Responsibilities

##### i. Waiver Listing

Upon receipt of the waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) from PHEAA, the institution must confirm a student:

- Is enrolled at least half-time in undergraduate courses in an approved program of study.

#### Credit Enrollment Minimums

Academic Period	Semester Schedule	Quarter Schedule Using Semester Credits	Quarter Schedule Using Quarter Credits
Full-time Term	12 credits	8 credits	12 credits
Full-time Year	24 credits	24 credits	36 credits
Half-time Term	6 credits	4 credits	6 credits
Half-time Year	12 credits	12 credits	18 credits

## Clock Hour Enrollment Minimums

Academic Period	Two Payment Periods	Three Payment Periods
Full-time	Minimum of 450 clock hours of instruction per payment period	Minimum of 300 clock hours of instruction per payment period
Half-time	Minimum of 225 clock hours of instruction per payment period	Minimum of 150 clock hours of instruction per payment period

- Has “unmet cost” as determined by the postsecondary institution (the difference between a student’s cost of attendance, as defined by the Federal Student Aid Handbook, and all federal or federally supported gift aid)
  - The federal Expected Family Contribution (EFC) is not used when determining eligibility
- Has made satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the postsecondary institution

Upon receipt of the waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) from PHEAA for FosterEd, the institution must confirm if a student should complete additional applications for state or federal grants.

- The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) provided by PHEAA will indicate whether a student has applied for the PA State Grant.
- The POC shall assist students in identifying further scholarship and grant opportunities, in consultation with the institution’s financial aid department, but eligibility for the waiver is not contingent upon receiving additional sources of aid.

Once the institution determines a student meets the requirements in the Student Eligibility section, the institution must then:

- Waive or apply a credit for all institutional charges for tuition and mandatory fees which remain after all other scholarships and grants have been applied on a term-by-term basis
  - Other scholarships include all gift aid, defined as student aid that is not required to be earned or repaid
  - Institutions may choose to waive charges in addition to tuition and mandatory fees.
- Refund any payments received on a student’s account from the student for tuition or mandatory fees within 30 days from the generation date of the Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) provided by PHEAA

**NOTE:** An institution should not delay conditional aid packaging or preliminary crediting of a student account for tuition and mandatory fees for a student who meets all institutional eligibility checks when the institution has verification of the student’s foster care eligibility.

An institution may not withhold a FosterEd waiver if a student meets all requirements listed in the Student Eligibility section, unless a student declines the waiver.

It is not an eligibility requirement that a student be PA State Grant eligible nor receive other sources of gift aid.

An institution may not reduce the waiver by the amount of gift aid a student might have received but did not, regardless of the reason.

### Example

A student applies for and is eligible for the FosterEd waiver in the amount of \$10,687. The student applied for the PA State Grant but was denied because the application was late. The school, in the original

packaging of the waiver, assumed the student would receive the PA State Grant and, therefore, decreased the waiver value by the PA State Grant estimated award. The school will now have to repackage the student without the assumed PA State Grant award, increasing the waiver by the assumed award.

## ii. Denial Listing

Upon receipt of the denial listing (Document FCFSXH3210—see [Appendix D on Page 22](#)), the institution must review the denial reasons for each student. The POC must work with students on the denial listing (Document FCFSXH3210) with a correctable denial to help students become FosterEd eligible. Correctable denial reasons include, but are not limited to:

- Eligibility pending DHS review
- No FAFSA or FAFSA is incomplete
- Incomplete Chafee ETG application

## IV. Waiver Certification Process

### A. Waiver Listing

Institutions with FosterEd eligible students are required to certify student eligibility and waiver amounts for tuition and mandatory fees each term by returning the certified waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).

Institutions are also required to return a Reconciliation Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXH510) at the end of each academic year.

#### i. Mandatory Fees

Mandatory fees are defined as either charges that are typically assessed to all students at the beginning of a term or fees that are required as a part of a student's academic program or credential completion. The following categories of fees must be waived, notwithstanding the particular labels that institutions may assign:

- Fees for student activities, any health services, technology, facilities and capital improvements, and orientation
- Fees specific to an academic program or any of its required elements, such as lab, software, and materials fees (includes uniforms or other required items)
- Other fees, such as college or comprehensive fees, should be waived if they are assessed to students at the institution at the beginning of the term or as part of the institutional bill

**NOTE:** Institutions must waive or apply a credit for any other fees not listed above that meet the definition of mandatory.

Eligible FosterEd recipients are provided to institutions on the waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) which is made available via PageCenterX on a biweekly basis.

Institutions are required to certify FosterEd eligibility within 30 days of a student appearing on a waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) or within 30 days of the term starting, whichever comes later. The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) provides student detail and summary information, as well as a certification page to be signed by an authorized school official.

## ii. Certification

The institution must complete the following fields for each student:

- **Graduation Date**–Should be submitted in MMDDYYYY format. If the actual date of the student’s graduation cannot be determined, a reference to expected month and year is sufficient.
- **Enrollment Status**–The FosterEd recipient must be enrolled on at least a half-time basis for each term a FosterEd waiver is received. The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) enrollment status field must be populated with one of the following codes:
  - 1–Full-time
  - 2–At least half-time
  - C–Not enrolled/withdrawn (not charged)
  - E–Enrolled less than half-time
- **Academic Progress**–In order to receive a FosterEd waiver, a student must make satisfactory academic progress, as defined by the institution. A student granted academic progress due to an appeal to retain other financial aid should be considered as meeting academic progress for FosterEd.
- **Approved Program of Study**–The eligible FosterEd recipient must be enrolled in a federal Title IV approved undergraduate certificate, diploma, or degree (associate or bachelor’s degree) program of study during each term for which a FosterEd waiver is received.
- **Waiver Amount**–The amount of tuition and mandatory fees to be waived based upon the total tuition and mandatory fees minus federal, state, and other gift aid, as defined in the Student Eligibility section. The waiver amount should include aid awarded by the institution on the sole basis of FosterEd eligibility. Institutional aid awarded on the basis of other eligibility criteria as part of a student’s financial aid package is considered gift aid and should not be included. If a student is currently not enrolled or has withdrawn and has not been charged, a zero should be entered and the related reason should be notated in the “Comments” section of the waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).

### Examples of Calculating a Student’s Annual Waiver

Student	Cost of Attendance	Tuition & Mandatory Fees	Total Amount of Gift Aid	Amount to be Waived Annually
A	\$32,608	\$18,564	\$11,485	\$7,079
B	\$25,259	\$13,457	\$12,787	\$670
C	\$10,467	\$8,160	\$8,160	\$0

- **Reasons for Waiver Value of Zero** (if applicable)–Any waiver with a zero-dollar balance must be accompanied by an explanation. This free form area allows institutions to provide the reason for a zero-dollar balance. Some examples include “no unmet cost” or “student declined waiver.”

### iii. Term Dates

The dates listed below as term start dates should serve as a guide to determine the award terms for the program.

#### Semester Award Periods

Term Awarding	Start Dates
Fall term	July 1–November 15
Spring term	November 16–March 15
Summer term	March 16–June 30

#### Quarter Award Periods

Term Awarding	Start Dates
Fall term	July 1–November 1
Winter term	November 2–February 1
Spring term	February 2–May 1
Summer term	May 2–June 30

Clock hour schools with continuous enrollment should issue awards according to semester term start dates.

### iv. Crediting

Modules are defined in the Federal Student Aid Handbook as shorter nonstandard terms. Two or more consecutive modules may be combined and treated as a single, standard quarter or semester term.

Institutions that offer modular enrollment must consider the student’s enrollment across all modules that comprise the term. FosterEd waiver must be credited once the student meets the enrollment and eligibility requirements and should not be delayed until the student’s final enrolled module begins to certify or credit the waiver.

#### Example

#### Students Enrolled in Modules

	Module 1–5 Weeks	Module 2–5 Weeks	Module 3–5 Weeks	Chafee ETG Award	School Action
Student A	3 credits	3 credits	6 credits	\$2,500.00	Certify or credit the FosterEd waiver after the start of Module 2 and report as a half-time student. Once Module 3 begins, update the student’s enrollment to full-time status
Student B	3 credits	No enrollment	6 credits	\$2,500.00	Certify or credit the FosterEd waiver after the start of Module 3 and report as a half-time student
Student C	No enrollment	3 credits	No enrollment	N/A	Not eligible; Report as a less than half-time student after Module 2 begins

**ASSUMPTIONS:** School offers three 5-week modules to make a 15-week semester.

## v. Award Adjustments

Student award adjustments should be handled as follows:

- If a student's change in status results in adjustments to charges and financial aid, the amount of the waiver would be increased or decreased to cover charges for all remaining tuition and fees.
- If a student loses eligibility after the waiver has been applied, the waiver must remain in place and should be increased or decreased to cover charges for all remaining tuition and fees.
- If a student withdraws or drops to less than half-time status prior to charges being applied to the student account, the student is ineligible for the waiver for that term.
- If a student ceases at least half-time enrollment or becomes ineligible after the waiver for the term has been applied, the waiver should remain in place.
- Students who withdraw, transfer, or become ineligible should be identified to PHEAA via the FosterEd Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).

## B. Reconciliation Waiver Listing

Reconciliation for the FosterEd Program is scheduled for mid-June. A FosterEd Reconciliation Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXH510) will only be generated in the PageCenterX folder for an institution that has previously completed certification for all students on its waiver listings (Document FCFSXGZ210).

Institutions must review and confirm a student's record matches the final status reported on the reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510). Changes must be noted on the reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510) and returned to PHEAA with a completed certification page. If the institution determines there are no changes, the completed certification page must be returned by the institution. The institution must return its certification of the reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510) within 30 days of generation.

If the institution determines that there are changes to a student's eligibility status after reconciliation, the institution should contact FosterEd staff to request another reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510).

## V. Annual Reporting Requirements

By March 1, 2024, all institutions of higher education must report the following information directly to PDE:

- Number of students receiving a Chafee ETG (found at the end of the biweekly waiver listings)
- Number of students who apply for the FosterEd Program (equivalent to number who applied for the Chafee ETG Program, and can be found at the end of the biweekly waiver listings)
- Number of students participating in the program that received a FosterEd waiver (found at the end of the biweekly waiver listings)
- Retention rate of students participating in the program
- The number of participating students with remaining unmet financial need
- Recommendations on how to improve outreach to students who are or may potentially be eligible for participation
- Recommendations on how to improve delivery of services to eligible students
- Impediments to retaining eligible students

### A. How to Report

To report the required information to PDE, the data must be submitted to [collab.pde.pa.gov/OPHE/HigherEdReporting/SitePages/Home.aspx](https://collab.pde.pa.gov/OPHE/HigherEdReporting/SitePages/Home.aspx)

## i. Login Directions

Institutions should use their PA Login information to access the report. A user's Keystone Login will NOT work.

An institution that is not registered with a PA Login from the previous year should:

- Register for a new username and password at [PAlogin.state.pa.us/login/user/RegisterNew](https://PAlogin.state.pa.us/login/user/RegisterNew).
- Once a new username is established, access must be granted. Send the username and email address to [ra-highereducation@pa.gov](mailto:ra-highereducation@pa.gov) with the subject line "Request Access." DO NOT send your password.

## ii. Deadline

The deadline for reporting required information is March 1, 2024. Other general questions should be directed to PDE at [ra-highereducation@pa.gov](mailto:ra-highereducation@pa.gov).

# VI. Administrative Capability, Retention of Records & Program Review

All institutions must comply with all other administrative requirements promulgated by PHEAA. Institutions are expected to demonstrate administrative capability in regard to the program. Administrative capability includes maintaining an adequate number of staff, as well as ensuring proper internal training of staff managing the program. Resources that institutions can utilize as part of their internal training of new staff are available on [pheaa.org/training](https://pheaa.org/training), as well as in the Document Library.

In accordance with these guidelines, institutions are required to retain, for possible review and audit by PHEAA, all records necessary for the certification of student waiver eligibility and the crediting of FosterEd waivers to student accounts. Such records must be retained for at least 5 years from the date the institution completes certification of the Reconciliation Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXH510).

As part of the Program Review process, PHEAA may conduct further examinations of student accounts and records as it deems necessary. Findings in the Program Review may result in adjustments to the applied waiver or be considered in combination with other PHEAA-administered program findings to determine if four or more administrative findings have been identified. Four or more administrative findings indicate a high error rate, and a follow-up Program Review will be scheduled for the next academic year. Review [pheaa.org/ProgramReview](https://pheaa.org/ProgramReview) for more details.

Below are examples of Program Review Findings for FosterEd:

- POC not designated or POC contact information incorrect or missing from institution's public website
- Student not certified on the Waiver Listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) by the deadline
- Institution did not refund student payment within the required time frame
- Waiver amount credited to student account is insufficient
- Required documentation not on file for the student who declines the waiver
- Institution did not follow published institutional policy with regard to SAP and unmet cost
- Waiver amount credited to the student account does not match what was reported to PHEAA

# Appendix A

## PageCenterX Reports

# FosterEd PageCenterX Reports



**ATTENTION!** PageCenter has been upgraded to PageCenterX with a new and more modern interface and options. Please refer to the [pheaa.org/documents/sgsp/ph/PageCenterX-user-guide.pdf](https://pheaa.org/documents/sgsp/ph/PageCenterX-user-guide.pdf) and other resources housed on [pheaa.org/sgspResources](https://pheaa.org/sgspResources).

## PageCenterX Reports

The following PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program reports are placed in the institution's PageCenterX folder:

- **FosterEd Waiver Listing** (Document FCFSXGZ210)–The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) provides certification data for those students who have been identified by PHEAA as FosterEd Eligible. The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) is placed in the PageCenterX folder of the institution and will include those students who listed the institution on their Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) application. The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) serves as the school's certification roster and must be returned to PHEAA to complete the FosterEd certification process.
  - The waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) is accessed in PageCenterX via the secure school portal at [pheaa.org](https://pheaa.org).
  - The most recent version of the waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) is automatically placed on PageCenterX biweekly. The following are student status change indicators:
    - A pound sign (#) next to a student's name indicates the student was not on the previous waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).
    - An asterisk (\*) next to the student's name indicates that there has been a status change from the previous waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210).
  - Once a waiver listing (Document FCFSXGZ210) has been certified and returned, the institution does not need to return subsequent waiver listings (Document FCFSXGZ210) for the same academic year to PHEAA if there are no status changes needed.
- **FosterEd Denial Listing** (Document FCFSXH3210)–The denial listing (Document FCFSXH310) is generated on a biweekly basis, listing all students who have been identified by PHEAA as FosterEd ineligible. The denial listing (Document FCFSXH310) is placed in the PageCenterX folder of the institution and will include those students who listed the institution on their Chafee ETG application. The denial listing (Document FCFSXH310) serves to help identify those students who are attending the institution that may need assistance in completing documentation to become FosterEd eligible. Correctable denial reasons include:
  - No FAFSA or FAFSA Incomplete
  - No PA State Grant Application
  - Student Loan in Default
  - Student is not a PA Resident
- **FosterEd Reconciliation Waiver Listing** (Document FCFSXH510)–The annual reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510) provides the school with a final opportunity to report ineligible students or changes to a student status and reports a student's final eligibility status for FosterEd in accordance with the school's records. The reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510) must be returned within 30 days of receipt; if there are no changes to the reconciliation waiver listing (Document FCFSXH510), the institution is only required to sign and return the certification page.

- **SGSP Items Due to PHEAA Report** –The SGSP Items Due to PHEAA Report provides schools and employers with a list of outstanding rosters, reports, and refunds due to PHEAA across most PHEAA-administered programs. The report generates nightly, using Document LWT41LWT41R3 in the institution’s STEP folder.
- **SGSP Institutional Contacts Report** –The SGSP Institutional Contacts Report, available via the STEP folder within an institution’s PageCenterX folder, is designed to ensure that the delivery of important program communication is sent to the appropriate staff by providing a monthly list of the current institutional contacts on file for PHEAA-administered programs. So that the correct personnel at your institution can receive information needed to resolve operational and processing issues and find out about PHEAA-developed resources and events, it is critical that your institution regularly review the contacts listed and email the appropriate program inbox with any corrections and adjustments. Review subsequent reports to confirm that the updates were made. You may also contact PA State Grant & Special Programs staff for confirmation and additional details.

# Appendix B

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## FosterEd Waiver Listing

# FosterEd Waiver Listing



FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM 2023-24 WAIVER LISTING						09/06/2023	
Acct: Financial Aid Admin. & Point-of-Contact						DOC ID TPWL	
PHEAA UNIV OF PA						PAGE 1	
1200 NORTH SEVENTH STREET							
HARRISBURG, PA. 17102							
STUDENT LISTING							
00000000(1)							
111-11-1111 (2)						(4) EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE:05/15/2025	
ANGELA A APPLICANT (3)						(5) WAIVER COUNTER: /5.000	
						(6) FILED PA STATE GRANT FORM: Y	
TERM (7)	ENROLLMENT STATUS	ACADEMIC PROGRESS (8)	DEGREE PROGRAM (9)	WAIVER VALUE (10)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (11)		
FALL	FULL	Y	Y	\$0	INELIGIBLE		
SPRING	FULL	Y/N	Y/N				
SUMMER	FULL	Y/N	Y/N				
222-22-2222 (2)						(4) EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE:05/15/2026	
SMITH S STUDENT (3)						(5) WAIVER COUNTER: 0.500/5.000	
						(6) FILED PA STATE GRANT FORM: Y	
TERM (7)	ENROLLMENT STATUS	ACADEMIC PROGRESS (8)	DEGREE PROGRAM (9)	WAIVER VALUE (10)	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (11)		
FALL	FULL	Y	Y	\$8,972			
SPRING	FULL	Y/N	Y/N				
SUMMER	FULL	Y/N	Y/N				
(12) Number of students receiving a PA Chafee Education and Training Grant: 2							
(13) Number of students who completed a PA Chafee Education and Training Grant Application: 7							
(14) Number of students who received the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver: 1							
(15) Total amount of fees waived: \$8,972							

## Legend 1–Waiver Listing Codes

# Indicates the student was not on the previous PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Listing

Indicates that there has been a status or award change since the previous FosterEd Waiver Listing

**NOTE:** Bold codes and definitions are required fields.

(1) Institution's OE code

(2) Student's SSN

(3) Student's name

**(4) Expected or actual student graduation date; in MMDDCCYY format; if the exact graduation day is unknown, use the last day of the month**

(5) Number of terms student has received the waiver out of 5 years, defined as 10 semesters or the equivalent

(6) Indicates if a student has filed a PA State Grant Form

(7) Provides specific fall, winter, or spring term enrollment status from Legend 3

**(8) Student must maintain Title IV satisfactory academic progress; circle "Y" if Yes, "N" if No ("Y" for a freshman)**

**(9) Student must be enrolled in an approved federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree program of study; circle "Y" if Yes, "N" if No**

**(10) This waiver amount is populated by the institution and is the total amount of tuition and fees remaining after all gift aid has been applied. The waiver amount should include any institutional aid awarded on the sole basis of FosterEd eligibility**

**(11) Comments populated by the school, explaining zero-dollar waiver amount**

- (12) Number of students who received Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG) for the current academic year
- (13) Number of students who applied for the Chafee ETG for the current academic year (equivalent to number of FosterEd applicants)
- (14) Number of students who received the FosterEd waiver for the current academic year
- (15) Total amount of tuition and fees waived

## Legend 2 – Ineligible Reason Codes

**NOTE:** The list below indicates all reasons a student may be ineligible for FosterEd. It is important to understand that not all reasons will appear on your Waiver Listing, but they will appear on student status letters.

- 01 Student does not meet the age requirement
- 02 Student does not meet residency requirement
- 03 No FAFSA or FAFSA is incomplete
- 06 No PA State Grant application
- 05 Title IV educational loan in default status or a refund on Title IV aid is due
- 08 No unmet cost for tuition or fees
- 09 School is not an eligible federal Title IV postsecondary institution
- 13 Student refusal of waiver
- 14 Eligibility pending DHS review
- 18 Student is not enrolled
- 20 Maximum eligibility
- 22 Student is not eligible per DHS or County Children & Youth Agency
- 24 Student is not enrolled in an approved federal Title IV certificate, diploma, or degree (associate or bachelor's degree) program of study
- 25 Student did not make academic progress
- 26 Student is enrolled less than half-time

## Legend 3 – Enrollment Status

- 1 Full-time (a minimum of 12 credit hours or 450 clock hours)
- 2 Half-time (at least 6 credit hours but less than 12 credit hours or the equivalent)
- E Less than half-time
- C Not enrolled or withdrawn (no charges)

# Appendix C

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## FosterEd Student Certification Best Practices

# FosterEd Student Certification Best Practices



The PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Listing is a biweekly report generated to the STEP folder of an institution's PageCenterX folder. This report provides a list of students who have submitted a Chafee ETG application, listed the institution as first choice when filing the FAFSA, have been identified by the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS) as eligible foster youth and are eligible for FosterEd according to the waiver determination process outlined in the program guidelines.

## Best Practices

Waiver listings are printed, completed, and returned via fax to 717-720-3786 by the institution, to be manually processed by PHEAA staff. Follow the best practices below to facilitate efficient student certification.

### DO

- Provide information in these fields:
  - Graduation Date
  - Waiver Amount
- Correct Enrollment Status information
- Indicate if a student declines the waiver or does not have unmet need for the waiver in the "Additional Comments"
- Send one completed signed and dated waiver listing
- Only send subsequent program year waiver listings if there are changes/updates (pages with changes and certification Page only)
- Leave fields blank for students not yet certified but expected to be certified during the program year
- Review the FosterEd Program Guidelines for field definitions, descriptions, and additional certification information
- Allow 7-10 business days for processing

### Don't

- Leave Blank fields for students who are being certified
  - Degree Program (circle "Y" or "N")
  - Academic Progress (circle "Y" or "N")
  - Certified Amount
- Leave blank the comments field if the Waiver Amount is zero
- Indicate "\$0" in the certified amount if intending to certify
- Send waiver listings with no changes
- Send duplicate waiver listings or duplicate information
- Leave blank fields for students who are being certified
- Certify for terms a student has not yet started

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM 2023-24 WAIVER LISTING						
Attn: Financial Aid Admin. & Point-of-Contact PHEAA UNIV OF PA 1200 NORTH SEVENTH STREET HARRISBURG, PA. 17102					09/06/2023 DOC ID TFWL PAGE 1	
STUDENT LISTING						
111-11-1111 ANGELA A APPLICANT			EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: 05/15/2025 WAIVER COUNTER: /5,000 FILED PA STATE GRANT FORM: Y			
TERM	ENROLLMENT STATUS	ACADEMIC PROGRESS	DEGREE PROGRAM	WAIVER VALUE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
FALL	FULL	Y/N		\$0	INELIGIBLE	
SPRING	FULL	Y/N		\$4,802		
SUMMER	FULL	Y/N				

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM 2023-24 WAIVER LISTING						
Attn: Financial Aid Admin. & Point-of-Contact PHEAA UNIV OF PA 1200 NORTH SEVENTH STREET HARRISBURG, PA. 17102					09/06/2023 DOC ID TFWL PAGE 1	
STUDENT LISTING						
111-11-1111 ANGELA A APPLICANT			EXPECTED GRADUATION DATE: 05/15/2025 WAIVER COUNTER: /5,000 FILED PA STATE GRANT FORM: Y			
TERM	ENROLLMENT STATUS	ACADEMIC PROGRESS	DEGREE PROGRAM	WAIVER VALUE	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS	
FALL	FULL	Y/N		\$0	INELIGIBLE	
SPRING	FULL	Y/N		\$0.00		
SUMMER	FULL	Y/N				

# Appendix D

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## FosterEd Denial Listing

## Denial Reasons

**NOTE:** The list below indicates all reasons a student may be ineligible for the PA Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver (FosterEd) Program. It is important to understand that not all reasons will appear on your denial listing (Document FCFSXH3210), but they will appear on student status letters.

- Application was not signed
- Does not meet the age requirement
- Does not meet residency requirement
- No FAFSA or FAFSA is incomplete
- Title IV educational loan in default status or a refund on Title IV aid is due
- School is not an eligible federal Title IV postsecondary institution
- Eligibility pending DHS review
- Maximum eligibility
- Student is not eligible per DHS
- No financial need for the grant
- Complete address was not provided
- No academic progress
- County of placement was not provided
- Student not enrolled
- Enrolled less than half-time

The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) was created by the Pennsylvania General Assembly in 1963 to provide affordable access to higher education for PA students and families. Through the years, PHEAA has evolved into one of the nation's leading providers of student financial aid services, including the Commonwealth's state-based student loan program—PA Forward. PHEAA also serves millions of students through guaranty, servicing, financial aid processing, and other programs.

PHEAA's earnings are used to support the Agency's public service mission and to pay operating costs, including the administration of the PA State Grant Program and other state-funded student aid programs. This contribution from PHEAA saves the Commonwealth millions of dollars each year. PHEAA continues to devote energy, resources, and imagination to developing innovative ways to ease the financial burden of higher education for students, families, schools, and taxpayers.

PHEAA conducts student loan servicing operations nationally as American Education Services (AES).

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## Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency

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