

Foster youth can GO TO COLLEGE!

The programs below provide money for post-secondary education and vocational training:

Education and Training Voucher Program

The Education and Training Voucher Program allows \$5,000 per year to students who are in foster care for at least one day after their 14th birthday, OR are adopted from foster care prior to their 16th birthday. Students must have a high school diploma or GED and be under the age of 21. ETV money can be used for:

- Tuition and fees
- Room and board
- Books and supplies
- Transportation
- Computers

To begin the application process, call your local DHS office and schedule an appointment with your foster care worker. To get more information about eligibility, documentation and payment, call (517) 241-8904.

Youth in Transition Program

The Youth in Transition Program pays expenses not covered by other community or government resources. All foster youths between the ages of 14 and 21 who are placed out of the home because of abuse and neglect are eligible. YIT funds can be used for:

- First month's rent and security deposit
- Start-up household goods and furniture
- Transportation
- School fees
- Extracurricular activities and fees
- And many other services and products.

For more information, contact your local DHS foster care worker, or, if you no longer have an active case, please call the Foster Care Program Office at (517) 241-8904.

The Tuition Incentive Program

The Tuition Incentive Program provides funding for foster youths to attend college. To meet eligibility, students must have (or have had) Medicaid coverage for 24 months within a 36 consecutive month period. Your foster care worker can sign you up as early as the 6th grade. For more information, contact:

Michigan Department of Treasury
Office of Scholarships and Grants
1.888.447.2687

The Student Advocacy Program

A strategic approach to improving the educational success of foster care youth



Among the multiple and complex challenges facing youth in foster care, low educational achievement has the most troubling consequences for adult quality of life. An involved advocate can enhance school performance by providing the following services:

- Help youth develop the habits, attitudes and skills they need to succeed in school
- Minimize disruption to educational progress when home placements change
- Monitor school enrollment, attendance, performance, course selection and educational goals
- Identify those children in foster care with disabilities, both diagnosed and undiagnosed
- Serve as a catalyst to start evaluations, support services and accommodations to prevent school disengagement and failure
- Represent the student at court hearings and school meetings
- Develop a strength-based, youth-centered transitional plan and have it in place for every student by age 14.
- Provide creative curriculums to help youth graduate on schedule and prepare for college and post-secondary training
- Improve communication between school personnel and foster parents

Advocates can also serve as community experts, to:

- Teach foster parents to navigate the special education system
- Train foster care staff and school personnel on each system's rules, regulations and roles
- Increase teacher skills for managing student behaviors resulting from childhood trauma
- Consult with attorneys and judges
- Promote available community resources, educational programs, enrichment and supplementary educational experiences and information about post-secondary educational options and funding
- Recruit and train educational mentors
- Educate community groups about the special challenges foster youths face and the importance of a "village" philosophy for successful life outcomes

To schedule trainings, obtain an educational advocate for a foster youth or request additional information, please contact:

Margaret Harner

The Student Advocacy Center of Michigan

1921 W Michigan Avenue

Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197

(734) 482-0489

margaret@studentadvocacycenter.org

The case for investing in efforts to help foster youth while they are in school and to help young adults who are leaving foster care pursue educational opportunities is clear: education is essential for obtaining and maintaining employment. Through employment, former foster youth can meet other needs, such as housing and health care, and can become productive and self-supporting citizens. When the costs of homelessness, incarceration and welfare are considered, investment in educational support makes a great deal of sense.

~ *The National Resource Center for Youth Development*

The Student Advocacy Center was established in 1975 to focus on students' in-school experiences, identify policies and practices that work — and those that don't work — and help eliminate barriers to effective services. Michigan's only organization advocating on behalf of public school students in general and special education programs, the Student Advocacy Center serves children having difficulties accessing needed educational services, explores the effects of their circumstances and offers information about possible remedies to policy makers, educators and the public. Using a strength-based approach, the center works in partnership with parents to encourage and promote school policies and practices that work for children and challenge those that, however well intentioned, have a hurtful impact.

