

	INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES CHILD WELFARE MANUAL	
	Chapter 11: Independent Living	Effective Date: September 1, 2011
	Section 15: Post-Secondary Education	Version: 2

POLICY

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) will assure that all youth receiving Independent Living (IL) services are aware of the options available for post-secondary education.

DCS will encourage all youth to take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) and prepare for taking the SAT.

DCS will ensure that DCS wards in 6th through 12th grade are enrolled in the Twenty-First Century Scholars program.

DCS will ensure that all youth are provided with information about:

1. Pell grants;
2. Chafee grants;
3. Federal supplemental grants;
4. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
5. Individual Development Accounts (IDA); and
6. The State Student Assistance Commission.

Code References

1. [IC 21-12-6: Twenty-first Century Scholars Program; Tuition Grants](#)
2. [IC 21-12-6.5: Eligibility for Twenty-First Century Scholars Program for Foster Care Youth](#)
3. [IC 31-25-2-21: Transitional Services Plan](#)
4. [42 USC 675\(5\)\(H\): Transition Plan for Children Aging Out of Foster Care](#)
5. [IC 21-12-6-14: Foster care children; caseworker to provide information](#)

PROCEDURE

The Family Case Manager (FCM) will:

1. Ensure that youth in 7th through 12th grade who have not already enrolled in the Twenty-First Century Scholars program submit an application. Applications for the Twenty-First Century program may be obtained by calling toll free 1-888-528-4719, by visiting www.scholars.in.gov, or through the youth's school. Applications for students in grades 9th through 12th must also be accompanied by [Twenty-First Century Scholars Program Enrollment Letter](#). The application process requires the FCM to:
 - a. Assist the youth in completing the application, and
 - b. Sign the application to verify the youth is in foster care.
2. Update the youth's address with Twenty-First Century Scholars annually;

3. Ensure that the youth signs the Twenty-First Century Scholars Affirmation Statement during their senior year of high school. See <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2384.htm> for more information;
4. Provide youth with information regarding Pell grants, Chafee grants, federal supplemental grants, the FAFSA, and the State Student Assistance Commission at the Child and Family Team (CFT) Meeting held at age 17. See separate policy, [11.6 Independent Living/Transition Plan](#).

Note: This information may be provided earlier if the youth will be applying to colleges prior to age 17.

5. Provide youth who have obtained over \$400 in earned income with information about opening an IDA;
6. Have the youth and caregiver sign an [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\)](#). Give the youth and caregiver a copy and place the original in the youth's case file.
7. Support the youth in researching financial aid options, completing necessary forms and paperwork, and following up to ensure that the proper aid is received;
8. Visit <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> for information about federal financial aid and <http://www.in.gov/ssaci/2359.htm> for information about state financial aid with youth prior to completing the FAFSA;
9. Assist all youth in completing the FAFSA by **March 10th** of the student's final year of high school:
 - a. Ensure the youth has all information needed to complete the FAFSA (i.e., social security number, place of birth, etc.),
 - b. Pay special attention to questions in the Student Dependency Status section. See Related Information, and
 - c. Discuss Independent Student Status with the youth to ensure they understand the meaning of this term and that youth in foster care do not have to provide information about their biological parents, foster parents, or guardians to their college of choice or on their FAFSA.
10. Assist the youth in applying for the Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program:
 - a. Ensure the youth has all needed information to complete the ETV application (i.e., FCM contact information, IL worker contact information, etc.),
 - b. Ensure the youth completes the ETV application each year after July 1st,
 - c. Ensure the youth has submitted all necessary ETV documents to his or her financial aid office, and
 - d. Follow up with the youth and school to ensure ETV has received the proper documentation from the school.
11. Engage the youth and CFT to develop a plan for emotional support and guidance the youth can rely on once they are in college.

Note: There are two (2) post-secondary educational support programs in Indiana that target former foster youth. See Related Information.

PRACTICE GUIDANCE

N/A

FORMS AND TOOLS

1. [Acknowledgement of Receipt of Information about Various Educational Programs \(ACRCPT070901FRM\)](#) – Available in the Indiana Child Welfare Information System
2. [Twenty-First Century Scholars Program Enrollment Letter](#)

RELATED INFORMATION

Twenty-First Century Scholars Program

The Twenty-First Century Scholars Program was established in 1990 to ensure that all Indiana families could afford a college education for their children. This program guarantees eligible students up to four (4) years of undergraduate college tuition at any participating public college or university in Indiana.

Persons who meet ALL the following criteria may apply for the Twenty-First Century Scholars Program:

1. Be a resident of Indiana as both an applicant and an award recipient (determined by residency of parent/legal guardian) and a U.S. Citizen;
2. Be a student in the 6th, 7th, or 8th grade;
3. Meet program income guidelines or be in foster care;

Note: Children in grades 9 -12 who are in foster care are also eligible for the program. Applications for children in foster care must be accompanied by the [21st Century Scholars Program Enrollment Letter](#).

4. Attend a charter school, freeway school, or other Indiana school recognized by the Department of Education; and
5. Make a commitment to fulfill the Scholars Program.

For more information, visit: <http://www.scholars.in.gov>.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is a document that must be completed to apply for both federal and state financial aid. The FAFSA collects a family's financial information to determine how much assistance a prospective student may receive. The FAFSA must be completed each year between January 1st and **March 10th** (for Indiana residents). Be aware that some colleges may have earlier deadlines – please check with the specific college for more information.

In order to be eligible to receive federal student aid, a youth must:

1. Be enrolled in or accepted to college;
2. Have a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) Certificate;
3. Be a United States (US) citizen or an eligible non-citizen;
4. Be registered with the selective service, if required;
5. Have a valid Social Security number; and
6. Not have a drug conviction that occurred while receiving federal student aid.

Foster youth need to pay special attention to the Student Dependency Status section (section 2):

1. I was in foster care since turning age 13;

2. I was a dependent or ward of the court since turning age 13;
3. I am currently or I was an emancipated minor; or
4. I am currently or I was in legal guardianship since turning age 13.

Note: If the student can answer yes to any of the above questions (which youth in foster care, relative placement, and in-home CHINS can) they are eligible for Independent Student Status.

Independent Student Status means that a student is a 'family of one' and only his or her individual income is considered when determining how much federal and state aid the student needs. Foster youth do not include their biological parent, foster parents, guardian, or anyone else's financial information on the FAFSA. Taxes must be completed before the FAFSA can be completed (if applicable).

For more information and to complete the online application, visit <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/index.htm>.

State Student Assistance Commission

The State Student Assistance Commission of Indiana's (SSACI) mission is to make college affordable through need-based grants and to allow choice by granting awards to those attending public, independent & proprietary colleges. In order to be considered for any state based assistance, a student must meet Indiana residency requirements and **must complete the FAFSA by March 10th**. Visit www.ssaci.in.gov or call 1-888-528-4719 for more information.

Pell Grants

The Federal Pell Grant Program provides need-based grants to undergraduate and certain postbaccalaureate students to promote access to postsecondary education. Financial need is determined by the U.S. Department of Education, using a standard formula established by Congress, to evaluate the financial information reported on the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA) and to determine the family's estimated financial contribution (EFC). Federal Pell Grants are direct grants awarded through participating institutions to students with financial need. In order to apply for Pell Grants, students must submit a FAFSA form before their state's deadline. For more information about Pell Grants, visit <http://www.ed.gov/programs/fpg/index.html>.

Post-Secondary Educational Support Programs

The Education Successes Program (ESP!) offers assistance to any current or former foster youth attending any college in Marion County. Visit <http://www.uwci.org/index.asp?p=194> for more information. This voluntary program serves youth until age 24 and offers support in the following areas:

1. Admission and financial aid information;
2. College Application;
3. College tours and visits;
4. Educational advocacy while in school; and
5. Scholarship research assistance.

Individual Development Accounts (IDA)

An IDA is a 4-year matched savings account program designed to assist individuals in achieving self-sufficiency through financial literacy and asset generation. There are a limited number of IDAs available in Indiana. In order to open an IDA, individuals must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. Indiana resident;
2. Below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines;
3. Have at least \$400 per year in earned income;
4. Be able to save a minimum of \$35 per month; and
5. Meet minimum screening requirements.

Youth interested in opening an IDA should visit www.ihcda.in.gov or call 1-317-232-7777 for county specific information.

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