



Financial Aid and more...

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CA Foster Youth Education Summit 2019

Discussion Outline

- Ward of Court Definitions
- How to assist with the FAFSA
- How to get documentation
- Chafee applications
- Verification process
- Hear from our student
- We want to hear from you



Foster Youth – Dependency Status

- Select Yes to foster youth question if the youth had foster care experience one day after the age of 13
 - Even if:
 - They were adopted or enter a legal guardianship after 13**
 - They were reunified after 13
 - Reached the age of majority
- Select No to foster youth question if:
 - Legal custody remained with parent(s)
 - Ward of the state solely due to incarceration



Foster Youth Status – State vs. Federal

- State definition of foster youth is 1 day of foster care experience after the age of 16
 - Gives access to:
 - Chafee
 - NextUp
 - Priority registration for community colleges
- Federal definition of foster youth is 1 day of foster care experience after the age of 13
 - Gives independent status for financial aid

Letter from county or Ombudsman's office will be required by:

Admission and Records	-	priority registration
Financial Aid	-	independent status for FAFSA
EOPS/NextUp	-	priority access to program
Guardian Scholars	-	required to apply to program

When assisting with the FAFSA

- Do not include extended foster care payments
 - If payments are from any other state support program it is counted under untaxed income
- Consult the experts – FYSI identified at each campus. All can be found on the JBAY website
- Encourage early submission and early experience with student portals





NO Parental Information

Do not provide parent information for:

- **Foster parent(s)**
 - Student is automatically considered an independent student
- **Grandparents, other relatives, or guardian(s)**
 - Exception is adoptive parents; however, **ONLY** if they were adopted prior to 13 years old



Dependency Status Complications

- Adoption
 - If the youth was prior to 13 years of age this youth is dependent and needs to provide adoptive parent income information
 - If the youth was in foster care until 1 day after the age of 13 and then adopted the student selects “yes” to the foster youth dependency question and is independent
- Dependency Override
 - If the youth must answer no to all dependency questions but does not have ANY contact with parent or receive support
 - THIS IS NOT for the youth that have parents unwilling to provide information on FAFSA

Acceptable Documentation

Sample County "Ward of the Court" Verification Language

RE: (child's name)
DOB: (child's date of birth)
Current Mailing Address:
County Contact Number:
County Identification Number:
Start Date of Wardship: (xx/xx/xxxx)
Close Date of Wardship: (xx/xx/xxxx)

This letter is to confirm that (child's name) was under the supervision and care of the court until the age of 18 in (county name) County from (dates of care; i.e., xx/xx/xxxx to xx/xx/xxxx). (Child's name) was placed in out-of-home care in a foster care placement. This means that (child's name) is considered a "ward of the court" for the purpose of responding to questions on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

Financial Aid Administrators should be advised that recent or current wards of the court typically have little or no income and for purposes of the FAFSA Application, the federal Verification Guide states that "**Payments and services received from states for foster care or adoption assistance**, under Part A or Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act" are not to be reported on Worksheet B of the FAFSA.

Signature

Date

Print Name

- Copy of court order
- Statement of a state or county child welfare agency
- Statement of a private provider agency that delivers services
- Statement from an attorney
- Statement from a CASA
- Letter from Probation officers – this must clearly state there was "foster youth placement"

New processes to obtain proper documentation

- Financial Aid Officers now have access to Foster Youth verification through California Student Aid Commission
- Chafee application DSS matching process

NOTE: The financial aid officers have the information but may have restrictions on sharing that information with other support programs (EOPS, NextUp, etc)





Case study #1 - Laura

- Laura is now a senior in high school and is filling out their FAFSA. She was placed in a treatment facility when she was 15 years old and when her term was complete at the treatment facility she was then placed in a group home due to lack of parent involvement at the end of the treatment process. What does Laura answer in the foster youth question?
 - a. Yes, she was in out of home placement at least one day after 13.
 - b. No, she is dependent and needs to add parent information.
 - c. No, she should speak to financial aid office about dependency override.



Case study #2 – John

- John was in foster care until he was 12 years old and then was placed in a legal guardianship with a family member. His CPS case was closed at the time of the legal guardianship placement and it has continued until now. How should John answer the dependency questions of the FAFSA?
 - a. Yes to former foster youth, he will be independent.
 - b. No to former foster youth and yes to legal guardianship.
 - c. No to both legal guardianship and foster youth. John should speak to financial aid office about a dependency override.



Case study #3 - Sarah

- Sarah was placed in foster care at 6 years old and adopted at 10 years old. She was with her adoptive family until she was a senior in high school when she was kicked out of her adoptive family's home. She completed her senior year while living with a friend and the friend's parents.
 - a. Independent. If so, what criteria supports that?
 - b. Dependent.
 - c. Dependency Override



Chafee



Overview

- Up to \$5,000 award

Steps to applying for Chafee

- Must complete Chafee application (one time)
- DSS must confirm youth meets eligibility requirement (one time)
- Must complete FAFSA or CA DREAM (yearly)
- School must complete certification and request payment (by semester)



Student Eligibility

Basic eligibility

- Be a current or former foster youth who was a dependent or ward of the court between 16 and 18
- Youth who are/were in Kin-GAP, a non-related legal guardianship or were adopted, are eligible only if the dependency case remained open after 16th birthday
- Not have reached their 22nd birthday as of July 1st of the award year

Leniencies

- Do not have to meet selective service requirement
- Do not have to clear loan default
- Do not have to clear federal overpayment



Priority Awarding Criteria

- Paid renewal students
- New and non-paid renewal students who will be 26 years old as of July 1st of the award year
- New and non-paid renewal students who have dependents
- New and non-paid renewal students with an unmet need greater than \$5,000
- New and non-paid renewal students with an unmet need less than \$5,000

Next Up Eligibility/Services

- Eligibility:
 - EOPS eligible
 - Experienced foster care one day after 16th birthday
- Services
 - Extended academic, personal, and career counseling
 - Possibly additional support through direct services – transportation, grants, supplies
- **Every school is different!!**



NEXT
UP

The graphic features the words "NEXT" and "UP" in a bold, distressed, hand-painted font. "NEXT" is in a gradient of red and pink. "UP" is split: the "U" is yellow and the "P" is teal. A yellow arrow points upwards from the top of the "U" towards the "NEXT" text.



Verification Process

Why do financial aid administrations ask for the information they do? Where does it go?

Verification Process

Fill out
Application

- Complete either the FAFSA or the CADAA depending on citizenship status after completing application to the institution the student desires to attend.

Selected for
Verification

- Students can be selected by the Dept of Ed or by the institution if there is conflicting information. This is to ensure accuracy of application.

Submit
documentation

- Appropriate documentation is determined by type of verification needed. Could include HS diploma, identity, income, household information and more.

Documents are
reviewed by staff

- Staff ensures documents submitted meet federal and state guidelines and information on FAFSA/CADAA is accurate.

Considerations while verifying information

Student is passing courses at an appropriate pace and GPA.

Documents supporting application correctness

SAP status

Verification

Awards available to student

Enrollment

Pell, Cal Grant, FSEOG, Completion Grant, scholarships, etc.

Number of units enrolled and attending.





Challenges in the process

- Documents are specific and can take some time to get from the necessary entities
 - Ward of Court documentation from social workers (2-3 weeks)
 - IRS documentation if mailed (2-4 weeks)
 - Retrieving socials/ID cards (time dependent on if student has access and ability to these items)
- Knowing where to look on student portals to find documents required and standing



NextUp

In depth academic, personal, and career assistance



Alyssa Laney-King

Current Sierra College student at Nevada
County Campus

