

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

January 20, 2009

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the ETV Program is to help youth make the transition to self-sufficiency and receive the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment. The Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program is a federally funded initiative under the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act to make vouchers for post-secondary education and training available to youths who have aged out of foster care.

### **Eligibility**

Youth eligible to receive ETV assistance or funds must meet current State eligibility criteria for the Independent Living (IL) Program and Federal ETV eligibility requirements:

- Youth that have been in out-of-home care (i.e., foster home, group home, child caring institution or court ordered Kinship Care) at least six months after the age of 15 years or older and aged out of care or adopted after the age of 16. Eligibility for IL services ends when the youth turns 21 years of age.
- Youth participating in the voucher program on the date that they attain age 21 shall remain eligible until they attain 23 years of age, as long as they are enrolled in a post-secondary education or training program, participating in ETV and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

### **Program Requirements**

ETV funds must be utilized to help establish, expand or strengthen post-secondary educational assistance for IL eligible youths.

1. Each youth must have an education plan included in the Independent Living Transition Plan (ILTP) required for all youth eligible for and receiving independent living services. The ILTP should include:
  - a plan for successful completion of secondary education;
  - links/communication with secondary or postsecondary educational counselors (as appropriate), officials and support persons;
  - a plan for completion of required applications, tests and financial aid forms;
  - a plan for providing support during post-secondary educational or training attendance.
2. Youth must be involved in the designing of their own program activities.

3. Programs must have procedures for ensuring that eligible youth receiving assistance accept responsibility for living up to their part of the program. For example, maintaining satisfactory progress, procedural requirements for obtaining funds, etc.
4. The total amount of ETV and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Scholarship expenditures per youth shall not exceed the lesser of \$5,000 per year or the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education. A higher education institution is defined as one that:
  - Admits as regular students only persons with a high school diploma or equivalent, or
  - Admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance
  - Awards a bachelor's degree or not less than a two-year program that provides credit towards a degree
  - Public or nonprofit
  - Accredited or pre-accredited
  - Provides not less than one year of training towards gainful employment, or
  - Is a vocational program that provides training for gainful employment and has been in existence for at least two years
5. Expenditures for "cost of attendance" may include, but are not limited to:
  - Tuition, fees and books\*
  - Room and board
  - Rental or purchase of required equipment, materials or supplies
  - Allowance for books, supplies, transportation
  - Required residential training
  - Special study projects
  - Tutors
  - Child care
  - Testing required for entry to program

\*It is recommended that, where possible, youth first utilize the DCF Scholarship Program and other grants rather than local ETV funds for payment of tuition, fees and books.