

EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM GUIDELINES

March 26, 2012

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 postsecondary 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 exited out-of-home care (i.e., foster home, group home, child caring institution or court ordered Kinship Care) at age 18 or went into court ordered guardianship or were adopted after the age of 16.
- Youth participating in the voucher program (locally or via the DCF Scholarship) 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 postsecondary education or training program, participating in ETV and are making satisfactory progress toward completion of that program at 21 and beyond. Note: IL Services end at age 21, regardless of if a youth continues involvement in the ETV program.
- Youth may participate in the local ETV program prior to high school graduation IF they are enrolled in a certificate program that is directly connected to employment that can be obtained without a high school diploma such as Certified Nursing Assistant. A student must have senior standing to receive funding.

Program Requirements

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

1. Each youth must have an education plan included in their Independent Living Plan (ILP) The education section of the ILP 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 postsecondary educational or training attendance;
 - a plan for applying for other financial aid.
2. Youth must be involved in the designing of their own program activities.
 3. Youth receiving assistance accept responsibility for living up to their part of the program. For example, maintaining satisfactory progress and other procedural requirements for obtaining funds.
 4. The total amount of ETV and Department of Children and Families (DCF) Scholarship expenditures per youth shall not exceed the cost of attendance at an institution of higher education (and may not exceed \$4,000 per year).

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 or
- Is a vocational program that provides training for gainful employment with not less than one year of training and has been in existence for at least two years or
- Is Accredited or pre-accredited,
- Is Public or nonprofit

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.

*ETV funds may NOT be used for activities related to college search, completing high school coursework or count for high school credit, etc.