

Scholarships for Youth Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What are the educational scholarship opportunities available for youth experiencing foster care?**

Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program

The Chafee Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) Program is a federally-funded, state-administered program which provides eligible youth up to \$5,000 a year to cover the costs associated with post-secondary education or training programs. ETV funds can be used for direct costs, such as tuition, books, meal plans and on campus housing, and indirect costs, such as transportation, utilities, childcare, or off campus housing.

Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund

The Ivyane D.F. Davis Memorial Scholarship Fund (Memorial Scholarship) is a state-funded program established in 1989 in honor of a woman who advocated for vulnerable children in Delaware through her work as a foster parent and Court Appointed Special Advocate. The Memorial Scholarship is limited to covering the direct costs associated with post-secondary education or training programs.

- 2. What types of post-secondary education and training programs are eligible for funding through the scholarships?**

The scholarships can be applied to most post-secondary education and training programs. This includes two year colleges, four year colleges/universities, trade schools, and other technical programs.

- 3. How do youth qualify for the scholarships?**

- Youth must be a current or former Delaware youth, who is or has experienced foster care, and:
- Youth must be under age 26, and:
 - At least 14 years old and currently in DSCYF Custody (foster care); or
 - Exited DSCYF Custody to adoption or guardianship and were at least 16 years old; or
 - Aged out of DSCYF Custody at age 18.
- Youth must have a high school diploma or GED.
- Youth must be accepted or attending an institution of higher learning or trade school, AND if already attending, youth must be making satisfactory academic or vocational progress toward completion of that program.
- Youth must be a Delaware resident.
- Youth must be a U.S. citizen or a qualified non-citizen.

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- g. Youth must annually complete the federal [Free Application For Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).
- h. Youth must complete an online application and complete an interview with the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA).

Renewal Requirements

- a. Youth must be under age 26.
- b. Youth must be attending an institution of higher learning or trade school AND making satisfactory academic or vocational progress toward completion of that program. Satisfactory academic progress is defined as a 2.0 GPA or greater.
- c. Youth must annually complete the federal [Free Application For Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#).
- d. Youth must resubmit financial information and complete an interview with OCA. Virtual accommodations will be made for applicants as needed.

4. How can youth use the scholarship funds?

The allowable expenses are listed below. The ETV and the Memorial Scholarship cover different expenses, so OCA may award one or both funding sources depending on the needs of the youth.

- Tuition
- Required Fees
- School Supplies (e.g. books, laptops)
- Meals plans or groceries
- Childcare
- Transportation (e.g. bus passes, gas)
- On/Off Campus Housing

5. Where do youth go to apply for the scholarships?

Youth can apply online through OCA's website using the link below:

<https://courts.delaware.gov/childadvocate/cpac/scholarships.aspx>

6. When do applications open and close?

Applications open April 1st and close May 15th. *(Please note application deadlines may change annually.)*

7. What supporting documents are needed to complete the application?

In order to complete the application, youth will need an acceptance letter, financial aid award letter, and cost of attendance for the school. Documentation of GPA and attendance may be required for additional funds to be disbursed.

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8. How are applications processed?

All applications and required documents are received and processed by OCA staff. In addition, applications are processed on a first come, first served basis so long as the application is complete and the youth meets the eligibility requirements.

9. Who determines eligibility for the scholarships?

The OCA Youth in Transition Coordinator screens applicants to determine initial eligibility. Final eligibility and award decisions are determined jointly by OCA and Department of Services for Children, Youth and Their Families (DSCYF) staff through the interview process.

10. How long is the application valid?

Applications are valid for the entire school year. Youth will be required to reapply every school year; however, youth will only need to submit a Financial Worksheet and update personal information if it has changed. A full application is not needed to renew a scholarship.

11. What is a Financial Worksheet?

A Financial Worksheet is a document that is completed by applicants each year. The document details the amount and type of funding needed, as well as the amount and type of funding received. The applicant will also be asked to estimate his or her annual income. The OCA Youth in Transition Coordinator will assist the youth and independent living worker, upon request, with completing the worksheet.

12. What occurs during the interview process?

Applicant interviews will occur during the month of June, and three dates will be identified, one for each county. Thirty minutes will be allotted per interview. Independent living workers will be invited to attend.

The interview panel will consist of three members from OCA and DSCYF. The Youth in Transition Coordinator will notify the applicant and his or her independent living worker, if applicable, by email of the interview date and time.

It is expected that all applicants will attend an in person interview. However, video conferencing will be offered as an option to youth that cannot attend an in person interview, or where circumstances dictate a virtual interview. Refusal to participate in interviews may affect eligibility.

Standardized questions will be asked during the interview, but applicants will also be permitted to share any and all additional information that may be helpful to the committee.

13. How do applicants know if they received an award?

Award letters will be distributed to award recipients and their independent living workers, if applicable, via email. Award letters will detail the amount of funding received, amount awarded for the Memorial Scholarship and ETV Program, expenses covered, payee information, and projected date of payment.

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14. Who receives the payment for scholarship awards?

OCA will not issue awards directly to award recipients.

OCA will be responsible for payment of any direct costs (i.e., tuition, books, meal plans and on campus housing) to the schools after the final payment amounts have been verified.

The independent living providers will be responsible for managing the payment of any indirect costs (i.e., transportation, utilities, childcare, or off campus housing). As a result, full or partial awards covering indirect costs will be issued by OCA to independent living providers on behalf of the award recipients.

15. Will scholarship awards be issued all at once?

No, funds are disbursed semiannually. The second disbursement is based on academic performance and continued enrollment at the award recipient's school of choice.

16. Do all award recipients receive \$5,000?

No, all award recipients do not receive \$5,000. Awards are unique to each recipient and are based on the cost of attendance, enrollment status, GPA, interviews, financial aid package, and available funding.

17. What is the youth's responsibility as an award recipient?

Award recipients must communicate regularly with the OCA Youth in Transition Coordinator and their independent living workers, if applicable. During the school year, recipients must submit proof of satisfactory academic progress, GPA, and attendance. Recipients must also contact OCA if their phone number or email address has changed.

18. What is Satisfactory Academic Progress?

Satisfactory Academic Progress is determined by the policy at the institution the youth is enrolled in for federal financial aid under the Higher Education Act (e.g., Pell Grants). The school's policy will usually include that the student has to maintain a certain grade point average, be meeting a pace/completion rate, and that the student is within a maximum amount of attempt hours as determined by the school. The Office of the Child Advocate will follow the school's policy in regard to Satisfactory Academic Progress.

19. What happens if a scholarship recipient falls below the 2.0 GPA requirement?

If an award recipient falls below a 2.0 GPA for two consecutive terms, funding will not be awarded again until the recipient is able to raise his or her GPA to a 2.0 during the term (not cumulative GPA).

20. If an award recipient changes schools during the school year, will the award amount change?

Yes, changing schools during the school year will affect award amounts. The award recipient will need to submit updated financial information pertaining to the new school.

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21. What happens if an award recipient withdraws from any classes or drops out of school?

If an award recipient withdraws from any classes, he or she **MUST** inform the OCA Youth in Transition Coordinator and the independent living worker, if applicable, immediately. In some cases, the funds can be reallocated to another approved award recipient.

22. What if an award recipient moves out of state to attend school? Will they receive funding through that state?

No, if you were in foster care in the state of Delaware, funding will continue to be disbursed through Delaware's Scholarships Program despite attending school in another state.

23. Can scholarship funds be used to purchase a car?

Scholarship funds may be used for transportation expenses to and from school, such as bus passes, car insurance payments, and car note payments. Applicants will receive an award letter from OCA with the expenses covered, and independent living providers, if applicable, will be responsible for disbursing the funds to the payee.

24. Can scholarship funds help with childcare?

Yes, scholarship funds can be used to cover childcare costs for youth attending school. Applicants will receive an award letter from OCA with the expenses covered, and independent living providers, if applicable, will be responsible for disbursing the funds to the payee.

25. Can scholarship funds help with paying rent?

Yes, scholarship funds can assist with the payment of rent for youth attending school. Applicants will receive an award letter from OCA with the expenses covered, and independent living providers, if applicable, will be responsible for disbursing the funds to the payee.

26. Who should youth contact with questions about the scholarships?

Youth should contact Antonisha Busby, the Youth in Transition Coordinator at the Office of the Child Advocate. She can be reached by email at Antonisha.Busby@delaware.gov or by phone at 302-255-1752.