

For Immediate Release
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Contact: Deborah Lopez, DCFS
312-937-0050

Illinois DCFS offers college scholarships to current and former youth in care ***DCFS Scholarship Program applications accepted until March 31***

CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services is currently accepting applications for the 2020 DCFS Scholarship Program. Through the program, 53 academic scholarships will be awarded to current and former youth in care for the upcoming school year, with four awards reserved for the children of veterans.

Nearly 1,400 current and former youth in care have had an opportunity to pursue a college degree since the DCFS scholarship program began in 1971. Scholarship recipients receive up to five consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly grant of \$537 to offset other expenses and a medical card.

“Scholarships reduce the financial burden of a college education and allow students more time and energy to focus on studies rather than worrying about their college expenses,” said Illinois DCFS Acting Director Marc D. Smith. “We want our current and former youth in care to access higher education that can pave the way to numerous workforce opportunities.”

The DCFS Scholarship Program is open to youth who have an open DCFS case, whose cases were closed through adoption or guardianship or who aged out of care at 18 or older. Youth who are at least 16 years old and not yet 21 on March 31 may apply.

Scholarship recipients will be selected based on their scholastic record and aptitude, community and extracurricular activities, three letters of recommendation from non-relatives and a written statement illustrating their purpose for higher education. In 2019 the department received 205 application packets.

Applications are available at any DCFS regional office and on the DCFS website:
www2.illinois.gov/dcfs (Form CFS 438 under DCFS Features on the homepage). Students or caregivers

may call the DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services at 217-557-2689 with questions about the application process or for more information.

About the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Founded in 1964, DCFS is responsible for protecting children from abuse or neglect by responding to calls received on the Child Abuse Hotline, 1-800-25-ABUSE (1-800-252-2873). With the goal of keeping children safe, DCFS strengthens and supports families with a wide range of services. When keeping a child safe means removing them from the home, DCFS makes every effort to reunite them with their family. When the best interest of the child makes this impossible, DCFS is committed to pursuing adoption by loving families to provide children with a safe and permanent home. DCFS is also responsible for licensing and monitoring of all Illinois child welfare agencies.

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