

TITLE 89: SOCIAL SERVICES
CHAPTER III: DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
SUBCHAPTER a: SERVICE DELIVERY

PART 312
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Section

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AUTHORITY: Implementing and authorized by Section 8 of the Children and Family Services Act [20 ILCS 505/8].

SOURCE: Adopted by emergency rulemaking at 20 Ill. Reg. 924, effective December 19, 1995, for a maximum of 150 days; emergency expired May 27, 1996; new Part adopted at 23 Ill Reg. 6784, effective June 1, 1999; amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 8456, effective June 4, 2004; amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 1144, effective January 30, 2008; amended at 33 Ill. Reg. 7880, effective June 15, 2009; amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013; amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 349, effective December 31, 2014.

Section 312.10 Purpose

The purpose of this Part is to describe eligibility requirements, the application and selection process, and financial provisions of the Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program.

Section 312.20 Definitions

"Accredited high school", as used in this Part, means any high school that has met all compliance rules and regulations as required by the State of Illinois.

"ACT" means American College Test.

"Adopted child" means a child for whom the Department was legally responsible immediately before the adoption was finalized.

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"Children for whom the Department is legally responsible" means children for whom the Department has temporary protective custody or guardianship via court order or children whose parent has signed an adoptive surrender or voluntary placement agreement with the Department.

"Children of veterans" means youth who are either wards of the Department or in the subsidized guardianship program or who have been adopted and whose birth parent or adoptive parent has served honorably in a branch of the United States Armed Services.

"Department" means the Department of Children and Family Services.

"FAFSA" means Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

"GED" means General Educational Development certificate/diploma.

"KinGap Program" means the subsidized guardianship program that allows the State to enter into guardianship agreements to provide assistance payments to grandparents and other relatives who have assumed the legal guardianship of children for whom they have cared as a licensed foster parent and for whom they have committed to care on a permanent basis.

"SAT" means Scholastic Aptitude Test.

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

Section 312.30 Description

The DCFS Scholarship Program provides a maximum of 48 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans. Scholarship recipients receive up to four consecutive years of supplemental services and maintenance payments (see Section 312.90) that will include annual tuition and fee waivers if the student attends an Illinois State community college or university. Scholarships do not cover room, board, or dormitory fees. Students may attend other colleges or universities, if scholarships are awarded them, and receive the same maintenance benefits as those students attending State-supported community colleges or universities.

(Source: Amended at 32 Ill. Reg. 1144, effective January 30, 2008)

Section 312.40 Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for a DCFS scholarship:

- a) the applicant must be at least 16 years of age and have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution, or a General Education Development certificate/diploma, or have met the State criteria for high school graduation by the end of the current school year;

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- b) the Department must have court-ordered legal responsibility for the applicant, the applicant must have aged out of the Department's care at age 18 or older, or the Department must have had legal responsibility for the applicant immediately prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the KinGap Program.

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

Section 312.50 Application

- a) The application package will contain the following:
 - 1) completed DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application, CFS 438;
 - 2) transcript of high school grades through the first semester of the senior year and class standing information, copy of GED and score, or copy of alternative acceptable high school transcript;
 - 3) college transcript if applicable;
 - 4) ACT or SAT test and score;
 - 5) documentation of legal relationship with the Department; and
 - 6) three letters of recommendation from persons unrelated to the applicant.
- b) Applications must be postmarked no later than March 31. Applications received with a postmark after that date will be ineligible for consideration.

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

Section 312.60 Selection

- a) The Office of Education and Transition Services shall coordinate the Scholarship Awards Selection Committee (SASC). SASC shall include senior leadership of the Department, including, but not limited to, persons who oversee the offices of guardian, legal services, clinical and operations, and key representatives from Department advisory groups, including the Child Welfare Advisory Committee, Child Care Association of Illinois, Illinois Foster Parent Association, Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council and Council on Adoptable Children.
- b) The SASC shall meet in April to evaluate the applications.
 - 1) Each application will be reviewed by 3 randomly selected SASC members, who will rate it according to the criteria in this subsection (b)(1). The reviewers will receive detailed scoring rubrics regarding

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subsections (b)(1)(B) through (D) to maximize consistency among reviewers.

A) Test Scores/GPA (40 points total)

The highest two scores of the following shall be counted at 20 points each:

i) High School GPA, on a 4-point scale (weighted if possible; otherwise unweighted is acceptable):

$$\text{GPA} \times 5 = \underline{\quad} \text{ (20 points possible)}$$

ii) College GPA (if applicable), on a 4-point scale (weighted if possible; otherwise unweighted is acceptable):

$$\text{GPA} \times 5 = \underline{\quad} \text{ (20 points possible)}$$

iii) ACT Score (if the applicant is submitting an SAT score instead, it is converted to the corresponding ACT score using the ACT-SAT Concordance available at <http://www.act.org/aap/concordance>):

$$\text{ACT Score} \times 20/36 = \underline{\quad} \text{ (20 points possible)}$$

iv) GED Test Score (if applicable):

$$(\text{GED} - 200) \times 20/600 = \underline{\quad} \text{ (20 points possible)}$$

B) Activities/Jobs/Awards/Other (10 points total)

Applicants will be awarded the sum of the following scores. No applicant may receive more than 10 points total:

i) Interests/activities: (8 points possible)

Interests and activities may include, but are not limited to, participation in athletics or clubs through school or in the community, personal interests such as reading or swimming, etc.

ii) Employment experience: (8 points possible)

iii) Volunteer experience: (8 points possible)

Volunteer experience may include, but is not limited to, Boys and Girls Club, community food drives, church daycare, assisting the elderly with daily tasks, etc.

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- iv) Leadership experience: (8 points possible)

Leadership experience may include, but is not limited to, organizing/leading a community event, serving as an officer for a school class or organization, speaking at local event or school assembly, captain/co-captain of an athletic team, etc.

- v) Awards/honors/recognition: (8 points possible)

This category may include, but is not limited to, earning Honor or High Honor Roll status, membership in various academic honor societies, recognition for athletics, Dean's list recognition, etc.

- C) Letters of Recommendation (10 points total)

Each of the 3 required letters will be scored on a 10 point scale. The score for this category is the average of the 3.

- i) How well does the writer know the applicant? (3 points possible)
- ii) How objective is the reference? (3 points possible)
- iii) How strong is the recommendation? (4 points possible)

- D) Student statement (40 points total)

Student statements will be evaluated according to the following framework. (childhood trauma, multiple moves in foster care, academic challenges),

- i) Grammar, Organization, Clarity: (15 points possible)
- ii) College Plan: (5 points possible)
- iii) Sincerity of Desire to Attend College: (10 points possible)
- iv) Circumstances the Applicant has Overcome (examples may include, but are not limited to, multiple foster care moves, extreme childhood trauma, education deficiencies, etc.) (10 points possible)

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- 2) Score sheets are collected and tabulated. Each application will be assigned a final score, which is the average of the three scores received from the SASC reviewers. The applicants with the highest composite scores shall be awarded a Department Scholarship. Applicants will be notified no later than May 1 of their award status.
- 3) In case of a tie for the lowest-placed scholarship recipient, two reviewers will be randomly selected to score both of the tied applications. The additional scores will be included in each tied applicant's average, and the applicant with the higher average will be awarded the scholarship. If the scores are still tied, the process is repeated until a recipient can be selected.

(Source: Amended at 39 Ill. Reg. 349, effective December 31, 2014)

Section 312.70 Service Planning and Living Arrangements

- a) A service plan will be developed with each scholarship recipient for whom the Department has legal responsibility. At a minimum, plans will be reviewed every six months or at the beginning of each academic quarter or semester.
- b) Children under the care of the Department selected to receive a Department scholarship shall have a living arrangement plan established by their caseworker prior to beginning school. Scholarship recipients may not live in a Department funded placement while attending post-secondary school. However, Department funded placements may be available to these youth during extended college breaks.

(Source: Amended at 28 Ill. Reg. 8456, effective June 4, 2004)

Section 312.80 Ongoing Eligibility Requirements

Scholarship recipients are required to take a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester or quarter during fall and spring term and 6 credit hours in the summer term (see Section 312.90(b)(2)(A)), maintain a "C" grade point average and provide a copy of their semester or quarter grades to their caseworker and OETS Business Office. Recipients who are under the care of the Department shall also notify their caseworkers and the OETS Business Office if they transfer to another school, change their address, attend summer school or withdraw from school. Youth who are no longer the legal responsibility of the Department shall submit the above-required documentation to the OETS Business Office. Scholarship recipients are responsible for filing a FAFSA form and applying for other forms of financial aid annually, if needed, and for paying their own room and board, as well as other costs not covered by the Department scholarship.

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

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Section 312.90 Benefits

a) Tuition and Fee Waiver

The OETS Business Office will request a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for scholarship youth that attend an Illinois State university or community college if the youth does not have a tuition and/or fee scholarship from another source.

b) Monthly Grant

1) Youth must provide their caseworkers with written verification of their acceptance/enrollment in a college or university and their school address prior to the beginning of their initial semester or quarter. Caseworkers will verify the information and forward it to the OETS Business Office. Youth that no longer have a legal relationship with the Department must forward the information directly to the OETS Business Office. The OETS Business Office will forward payment information to the Central Payment Unit (CPU). Grant payments will be effective the first day the youth is at school and continue throughout the school year. Youth will receive their first payments the following month. The amount will be prorated based on the day of the month the youth was first located at the school.

2) Caseworkers must provide youth with an explanation of the financial and security benefits of having their grant checks directly deposited and assist the youth with completing the C-95, Authorization for Deposit of Recurring Payments. Youth who do not choose direct deposit will have their grant checks mailed directly to them. Youth are required to report their address change immediately to the OETS Scholarship Administrator at 217/557-2689 and their caseworker to ensure timely receipt of correspondence and their grant payments.

A) Summer Grant Payments

i) The OETS will continue grant payments through the summer when the youth is enrolled in summer school and taking a minimum of six college credit hours, or participating in an approved internship program. Youth that choose to continue their education through the summer months must submit an official class schedule or documentation of participation in an approved internship program to the OETS Business Office and their caseworker no later than the first Monday in May.

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- ii) Youth that choose not to attend summer school or participate in an approved internship program will continue to receive their grant payments through the summer months if the Department has guardianship of the youth or the Department's guardianship of the youth was terminated at age 21 after the youth entered the scholarship program and the youth has a grade point average of "C" or better, submits requested class schedules, has current contact information on file with OETS, and submits documentation of college or university enrollment for the fall semester to the OETS Business Office no later than June 1.

B) Terminating Payment

- i) When a youth no longer meets the requirements to remain in the DCFS Scholarship Program, the youth's caseworker will notify the OETS Business Office immediately. Youth who are no longer the legal responsibility of the Department shall notify the OETS Business Office when they no longer meet the requirements of the program. The OETS Business Office will notify the CPU of the effective payment termination date for the youth.
- ii) The OETS Business Office will notify the youth in writing 30 days prior to stopping grant payments for any reason other than summer breaks. If the youth has a legal relationship with the Department and resides in Cook County, the Cook County Public Guardian will also receive a copy of the termination notification. Youth may request a review of the decision to suspend or discharge them from the Scholarship Program in accordance with 89 Ill. Adm. Code 337 (Service Appeal Process). If the youth's grant does not continue during the appeals process, it will be issued retroactively if the youth's appeal is successful.

C) Marriage or Termination of Guardianship

Marriage or termination of guardianship does not terminate a Department scholarship. The Department will continue to make monthly grant payments to the youth, and the youth's medical needs will continue to be met under the Medicaid program.

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c) Start-Up Grant

This is a \$200 one time grant youth will receive upon entrance into the DCFS Scholarship Program. The purpose of the grant is to assist the youth with their initial college living expenses. Youth will receive the Start-Up Grant payment in July.

d) Medical and Dental Payments

- 1) Medical and dental services are available to DCFS scholarship youth. Medical and dental services are provided through the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Medical Assistance Program via the DCFS issued medical card.
- 2) Medical case management services are provided to pregnant and parenting youth and their children, zero to five years of age, through the Department of Human Services.

e) Mandatory Supplies and Book Payments

The Department may pay for required textbooks and supplies for youth that do not have sufficient resources to purchase the required items.

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

Section 312.100 Discharge from the Scholarship Program

- a) Students will be discharged from the Scholarship Program for the following reasons:
- 1) completion of four years in the Scholarship Program, or the student reaches age 23, whichever occurs first;
 - 2) failure to enroll in school;
 - 3) failure to maintain a "C" grade point average;
 - 4) failure to maintain an academic load of 12 credit hours each semester or quarter during the fall and spring semesters;
 - 5) withdrawal from school; or
 - 6) dismissal from school due to disciplinary reasons.

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- b) With the exception of a scholarship recipient completing four years in the Scholarship Program, the Deputy Director of the Bureau of Operations may waive the requirement to discharge a scholarship recipient when the recipient provides information mitigating the reason or reasons for discharge (family illness or other emergency that necessitated withdrawing from the program and college or university for the semester/quarter/term, assuming the recipient is under the age of 23).

(Source: Amended at 38 Ill. Reg. 1988, effective December 31, 2013)

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

POLICY GUIDE 2019.01

TUITION AND FEE WAIVERS FOR YOUTH SERVED BY THE DEPARTMENT

DATE: January 3, 2019
TO: All Department and Purchase of Service Agency Staff
FROM: Beverly J. Walker, Acting Director
EFFECTIVE: January 1, 2019

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to provide procedures for implementing P.A. 100-1045 that amended the Children and Family Services Act [20 ILCS 505/8]. These amendments provide for tuition and fee waivers for youth that are not selected to receive a Department scholarship through the annual scholarship application process.

This Policy Guide is effective January 1, 2019 and shall remain in force until rules are promulgated.

II. PRIMARY USERS

All Department and Purchase of Service Agency Staff.

III. STATUTORY SUMMARY

Tuition and fee waivers are available to a youth or former youth in care for the first 5 years the youth or former youth in care is enrolled in a community college, university, or college maintained by the State of Illinois so long as the youth or former youth in care makes satisfactory progress toward completing his or her degree.

The community college or public university that an eligible student attends must waive any tuition and fee amounts that exceed the amounts paid to the eligible student under the federal Pell Grant Program or the State's Monetary Award Program.

The age requirement and 5-year cap on tuition and fee waivers under this subsection shall be waived and eligibility for tuition and fee waivers shall be extended for any eligible youth or former youth in care who the Department determines was unable to enroll in a qualifying post-secondary school or complete an academic term because they:

- (i) were called into active duty with the United States Armed Forces;
- (ii) were deployed for service in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps; or
- (iii) volunteered in the Peace Corps or the AmeriCorps.



The Department shall extend eligibility for a qualifying youth or former youth in care by the total number of months or years during which the youth or former youth in care served on active duty with the United States Armed Forces, was deployed for service in the United States Public Health Service Commissioned Corps, or volunteered in the Peace Corps or the AmeriCorps. The number of months a youth or former youth in care served on active duty with the United States Armed Forces shall be rounded up to the next higher year to determine the maximum length of time to extend eligibility for the youth or former youth in care.

The Department may provide the youth or former youth in care with a stipend to cover maintenance and school expenses, except tuition and fees, during the academic years to supplement the youth or former youth in care earnings or other resources so long as the youth or former youth in care consistently maintains scholastic records which are acceptable to the student's school and to the Department.

The Department will reach out to all high school students in grades 9 through 12 and those enrolled in a high school equivalency testing program to promote awareness of the Tuition and Fee Waiver Program.

IV. ELIGIBILITY

Youth that apply for and are not selected to receive a Department scholarship shall receive a tuition and fee waiver to assist them in attending and completing their post-secondary education at any community college, university, or college maintained by the State of Illinois. Only required college fees may be waived under this program.

Eligible students are youth for whom the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility, youth who aged out of care at age 18 or older, or youth formerly under care who have been adopted and were the subject of an adoption assistance agreement or who have been placed in private guardianship and were the subject of a subsidized guardianship agreement.

To receive a waiver under this subsection, an eligible student must:

- (1) have earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution or a high school equivalency certificate or have met the State criteria for high school graduation before the start of the school year for which the eligible student is applying for the waiver;
- (2) enroll in a qualifying post-secondary education before the eligible student reaches the age of 26; and
- (3) apply for federal and state grant assistance by completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

V. ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION PROCEDURES

2010 through 2018 Scholarship Applicants:

Youth or former youth in care that applied for the Department Scholarship, who were not awarded a scholarship and are under the age of 26 that would like to receive tuition and fee waivers, must submit the following documents to the Office of Education and Transition Services, Attn: DCFS Waiver Program, Department of Children and Family Services, 406 E. Monroe Street, Station #23, Springfield, IL 62701, via fax to 217-524-2101, or via email to DCFS.TuitionWaiver@illinois.gov.

- **CFS 438-A**, DCFS Tuition and Fee Waiver Program form,
- A school schedule that includes the student's name, school name, student's school ID number, and total number of credits.

VI. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide may be directed to the Office of Education and Transition Services at 217-557-2689 or via Outlook at OETS – Tuition Waiver Program. Non-Outlook users may e-mail questions to DCFS.TuitionWaiver@illinois.gov.

VII. NEW FORM

CFS 438-A, Tuition and Fee Waiver Program (1/2019)

The form is available on the Department's website and templates drive and can be ordered in the usual manner.

VIII. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide immediately following **Rules 312 Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program** and immediately following **Procedures 312 Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program**.

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DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Policy Guide 2015.01

**Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program
Rule and Procedure 312**

DATE: January 2, 2015
TO: All DCFS and Private Agency Child Welfare Staff and Supervisors
FROM: Bobbie Gregg, Acting Director *Bobbie Gregg*
EFFECTIVE: Immediately

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to communicate the recent changes to the Department's Scholarship Program, Rule and Procedure 312.

II. PRIMARY USERS

Primary users of this Policy Guide are DCFS and Private Agency Child Welfare Staff and Supervisors.

III. BACKGROUND

This Policy Guide clarifies the recent changes to the Department's Scholarship Program as the result of Public Act #098-0805.

IV. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- a) The Department will now award scholarships and fee waivers to 53 students attending any community college, university or college maintained by the State of Illinois.
- b) Youth are eligible if:
 - 1) the Department currently has court-ordered legal responsibility of the youth;
 - 2) the youth aged out of care at age 18 or older;
 - 3) the youth was formerly under care of the Department but has been adopted; and



- 4) the youth was formerly under care of the Department but has been placed in private guardianship.
- c) The scholarship and fee waiver will be available for five (5) years provided the student is “continuing to work toward graduation”. The student must meet the following requirements to be considered as “continuing to work toward graduation”:
- 1) take a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester or quarter during fall and spring term and 6 credit hours in the summer term (or the program’s equivalency of full time status);
 - 2) maintain a "C" grade point average and provide a copy of their semester or quarter grades to their caseworker and OETS;
 - 3) notify their Permanency Worker and OETS, if they are under the care of the Department, if they transfer to another school, change their address, attend summer school or withdraw from school. Youth shall submit the above-required documentation directly to OETS if the Department no longer has a legal responsibility of the youth; and
 - 4) file a FAFSA form and apply for other forms of financial aid annually, if needed, and for paying their own room and board, as well as other costs not covered by the Department Scholarship.
- d) The unused scholarships and fee waivers shall be reallocated to new recipients. The process for reallocating the unused scholarships and fee waivers is:
- 1) upon confirmation that a scholarship recipient has withdrawn from school or no longer is “continuing to work toward graduation”, the OETS will review the spreadsheet from the Program Year to determine the next youth in line to receive a scholarship;
 - 2) the information from the next student in line to receive a scholarship will be submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse to determine if he/she is still enrolled and attending an accredited post secondary institution. If so, the student will be notified that they are eligible to receive the remaining unused portion of the scholarship being forfeited. If no information is found on the student, attempts will be made to contact the student via the last contact information on file with OETS to determine school enrollment; and
 - 3) OETS will continue to allocate all unused scholarships to students in order on the spreadsheet from the Program Year.

- e) Before the start of the school year for which they are applying for the scholarship, the youth must have:
 - 1) earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution;
 - 2) earned a General Education Development certificate or diploma; or
 - 3) met the State criteria for high school graduation.
- f) The Scholarship selection committee will include at least two (2) individuals who were formerly under the care of the Department who have completed their post-secondary education.

V. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide may be directed to the Office of Child and Family Policy at 217-524-1983 or via Outlook at OCFP – Mailbox. Non Outlook users may e-mail questions to cfpolicy@idcfs.state.il.us.

VI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide immediately following Rule and Procedure 312, Scholarship Program.

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