

TOP 5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT COLLEGE FOR FOSTER YOUTH

Community College is Available to Anyone

Most community college programs don't require that students have a certain grade point average (GPA) and there are no tests to take or essays to write in order to be admitted. Community colleges offer students training and education in more than 175 different fields, many of which are hands-on career education programs that can lead directly to good paying careers through short-term certificates and 2-year associate degrees. A high school diploma or GED is not required for enrollment, although this is a requirement for most forms of financial aid.

The Community College Promise Grant pays tuition costs for low-income students, making this an affordable option for most students.

The Priority Deadline for Financial Aid is March 2

Students must submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or California Dream Act Application (CADAA) for undocumented students by March 2 to qualify for maximum financial aid. Download the [Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth](#) (also available in Spanish) for a detailed step-by-step guide on how to complete the FAFSA. Any youth in foster care after the age of 13 is not required to provide any income or asset information for their parents or caregivers, and foster youth can qualify for thousands of dollars in grant aid. Students with [dependents](#) under 18 years old may qualify for even more aid. In addition to completing a FAFSA or CADAA, students should submit a [Chafee grant](#) application to qualify for even more money. If a student does miss the March 2 deadline, they should still apply for aid as many sources remain available after the deadline.

Enrollment in a 4-Year University is a Viable Option for Foster Youth with Advance Planning

Over 5,000 students with experience in foster care are currently enrolled at Cal State University and University of California campuses. In order to qualify for admission, students must take specified courses in high school known as "[a-g courses](#)" and meet minimum GPA and test score thresholds, and so careful planning is required beginning in the 9th grade. Download the Foster Youth Educational Planning Guide for grade-by-grade checklists (also available in Spanish) and make sure the student is receiving guidance from a school counselor regarding the classes necessary for CSU/UC admission.

Matriculation into College Requires Several Steps

Successful matriculation typically involves applying for admission, completing skills assessments, and orientation, applying for housing, applying for campus support programs, creating an educational plan, paying fees and registering for classes. The community colleges are now utilizing the student's previous high school coursework, course grades and grade point average to place students into math and English courses. Resources such as the [Foster Youth Educational Planning Guide](#) provides students a step-by-step guide to successfully complete the college matriculation process.

Support is Available

All public colleges and universities in California have a foster youth liaison and most campuses now have dedicated support programs for foster youth. A variety of other programs also exist including EOPS/EOP, disabled student programs and programs for parenting students. Visit the [CA College Pathways website](#) for a list of foster youth campus support programs. Programs such as EOPS and EOP tend to fill up, so early application is essential.