



CREATING PATHWAYS & REMOVING BARRIERS TO HIGHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS
WITH EXPERIENCE IN FOSTER CARE

Advocating for and Implementing Effective Tuition Waivers

PRESENTED BY FOSTERING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT NATIONWIDE
(FAAN) AND JOHN BURTON ADVOCATES FOR YOUTH (JBAY)

FAAN and JBAY Three-Part Webinar Series

- ***State Implementation of Chafee Education and Training Vouchers*** presented by Embark Georgia representative Lori Tiller on Wednesday, February 16 (11 am-12:30 pm PST)
- ***Developing a Policy Agenda to Support Education Success for Students with Experience in Foster Care*** presented by Foster Scholars representative Dr. Molly Sarubbi on Wednesday, March 16 (11 am-12:30 pm PST)

A graphic for FAAN featuring a blue background with a white silhouette of the United States map. Inside the map silhouette is a photograph of a diverse group of smiling graduates in black caps and gowns, with some throwing their caps. To the left of the map are several small yellow stars.

FOSTERING
ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT
NATIONWIDE

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Tuition and Fee Waiver Programs for Students with Experience in Foster Care: Policy and Practice Recommendations



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Authors and Acknowledgments

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Background/Purpose

- 37 states have tuition wavier or scholarship programs
- Varied approach to:
 - Funding SEFC's education
 - Eligibility (age, type of institution, etc.)

The purpose of this report is to offer advice to states who currently have a waiver program and to offer a guide to states who want to implement a new program.

Previous Research

- 50% of states with waiver programs distributed fewer than 50 waiver per year (Hernandez, Day, and Henson, 2017).
- Waivers had only marginally higher postsecondary enrollment rates for SEFC compared to states without waivers (Watt, Kim, and Garrison, 2019).
- SEFC who use the waiver are 3.5 times more likely than their SEFC peers to graduate with a degree (Watt, Faulkner, 2020).
- Gaps in literature and knowledge:
 - Constructing waiver legislation
 - Degree of impact from implementing waiver programs

Methodology



Literature Review



Interviews with select states



Case study - Texas

A photograph of four students in a classroom setting, all focused on their work. In the foreground, a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue denim shirt, is writing in a notebook with a silver pen. To his right, a young woman with long brown hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is also writing with a yellow pen. In the background, a young woman with blonde hair in a bun, wearing a maroon shirt, is writing, and further back, a young man with dark hair, wearing a white shirt, is also working. The desk is cluttered with various school supplies like pens, pencils, and notebooks. The word "Recommendations" is overlaid in a large, white, outlined font across the center of the image.

Recommendations

A small, light-colored wooden block with a dark number '1' painted on its top face. The block is positioned centrally on a textured, light brown background.


1. Expand Availability

2. Financial Aid: Use the Waiver First

- Apply the waiver first in the financial aid process before other types of aid (i.e., Chafee Educational and Training Voucher, state and federal need-based grants, etc.)
- Reduces the amount left to pay for living expenses

3. Define Eligibility Broadly

No minimum requirements for how long
in care



No or few restrictions on waiver usage



No limits on age

4. Streamline Application and Verification Requirements



- Problems with access
- FAFSA completion
- Submitting documentation
- Data sharing and matching

5. Avoid Academic or Service Requirements for Eligibility

- Avoid requirements for:
 - GPA/Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) – problematic for both SEFC and Students of Color
 - Work
 - Full-time status
- Do not create waiver programs with competitive criteria

6. Increase Cost of Attendance (COA) to Help Maximize Available Aid



MINUS



EQUALS



Cost of Attendance (COA) - Expected Family Contribution (EFC) = Eligibility for Aid (Need)

7. Adequately Cover Institutional Costs

Waivers should be built with state or federal funds

8. Include SEFC Voice



9. Provide Additional Supports

Statewide Liaisons

Campus Support Programs

Extended Foster Care

Statewide Backbone Organizations

10. Evaluate and Monitor Impact and Equity

Statewide data sharing and yearly monitoring

Constructing waivers similarly for better comparisons

More research on differences across identities to determine equitable approaches to implementing waiver programs

Conclusion

- 10 recommendations
- Research shows increased graduation rates with waiver usage
- Waiver programs vary in implementation and structure
- Provide additional help – waivers are only 1 type of support
- SEFC voice is critical
- Statewide backbone organizations bolster support
- Evaluate and monitor

Questions?

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THANK YOU



RESOURCES

FAAN Website: <https://www.faannetwork.com>

John Burton Advocates for Youth:
<https://jbay.org/>

Education Reach for Texans:
<http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/>

UW Tuition Waivers by State:
<https://depts.washington.edu/fostered/tuition-waivers-state>