

TURNING DREAMS INTO DEGREES: EDUCATION COURSE 2



Trainer's Guide
April 2024

Acknowledgments

John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) operates the Foster Youth College Advancement Project, which works to increase foster youth postsecondary attainment in L.A. County. This effort is accomplished under the umbrella of the Los Angeles Opportunity Youth Collaborative, whose vision is for transition age youth in Los Angeles County to have the knowledge and skills necessary to allow them to achieve economic mobility and flourish in their personal lives.

This initiative recognizes the important role that caregivers play in supporting foster youth in their college journeys and has designed these training materials to empower caregivers both locally within LA County, and throughout California, with comprehensive information to support foster youth through early college awareness and preparation.

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Education

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Introduction

Thank you for your work to empower caregivers with the information they need to support foster youth in their college planning. Together with the accompanying Turning Dreams into Degrees presentation slides for Education Course 2, this trainer's guide will prepare you to train caregivers on how to support successful transitions from high school to college. It will also provide you with helpful background information, general facilitation tips, and additional resources for further reference.

It is worth noting that the college matriculation process is a complex and multifaceted process. As such, caregivers and foster youth should begin preparing for this process early. It is not uncommon for foster youth to postpone college planning until they reach their senior year of high school, or to even wait until after high school graduation to begin making a college plan. This type of delayed planning can greatly reduce the likelihood that a foster youth will complete college, as well as limit their college enrollment options and financial aid resources.

As such, we recommend engaging youth in early and sustained conversations about college planning. Education Course 1 is designed for caregivers who have youth in grades 6-10 in their care. As a companion to this course, Education Course 2 provides information that is appropriate for caregivers with youth in grades 11 and 12. Education Course 2 may also be useful for caregivers with recent high school graduates who have not yet entered college. Both courses are tailored for a California context, taking into account California's unique systems of higher education, state financial aid programs, and local campus programs and student support services. Caregivers who complete Education Course 1 are encouraged to enroll in Education Course 2 once the youth in their care are in grades 11 or 12.

This guide summarizes key learning objectives and provides additional context and ideas for facilitation across various modalities and group sizes. This guide is intended to complement, rather than duplicate, the PowerPoint slide notes. The guide concludes with a list of suggested readings for those looking to further deepen their knowledge on this topic. **It is strongly recommended that trainers take the time to review this guide in advance of presenting the course material.**

Education Course 2 Overview: Supporting Successful Transitions from High School to College

Duration: 3 hours

Target Audience: This course is targeted towards caregivers in California with students in the foster care system in grades 11 and 12. There are a small number of slides that offer LA County specific resources, however, caregivers facilitating this course outside of LA County can easily adapt those slides to include the contact information for their local community partners. Please see page 11 for more information.

Course Terminology: Throughout the training and this trainer’s guide, the term “caregivers” is utilized to be inclusive of the various types of caregivers. For the purposes of this course, the term caregivers includes resource parents, as well as Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) staff and Foster Family Agency staff that support caregivers to implement the content of this training. Trainers may adjust the language to be specific to their audience, such as using the term resource parent in lieu of caregivers.

In addition, postsecondary education is generally any formal education that happens after high school. This can include apprenticeships, trade school, career and technical education, such as Job Corps, community college, or a traditional 4-year college or university. This training utilizes the terms higher education, college, and postsecondary education interchangeably to refer to the various education pathways following high school.

Course Description: Life after high school is a big transition and many foster youth do not start preparing early enough. This training will help caregivers understand how to support youth to make a smooth transition from high school to college and the key steps youth must take in their junior and senior year of high school. Caregivers will be equipped with the essential information needed to help youth navigate the college matriculation process, including applying to college and financial aid. In addition, caregivers will learn about a range of resources to assist students both while in high school and once enrolled in college to ensure their success. The goal of this course is to empower caregivers to play an active role in supporting their youth into postsecondary education.

Learning Objectives: Upon completion of Education Course 2, participants should be able to:

- Explain the benefits of postsecondary education;
- Identify resources to help students explore their career interests and higher education options;
- Describe key educational planning milestones between 11th -12th grade;
- Explain key steps and resources for applying for college and financial aid; and
- Describe specific resources, benefits and supports available to help foster youth achieve their postsecondary educational goals.

Accompanying Materials

All *Turning Dreams into Degrees* Education Course 2 materials, including this Trainer's Guide, can be found on the John Burton Advocates for Youth (JBAY) website found here:

www.jbay.org/resources/education-course-2/

For trainers interested in administering Education Course 1 for caregivers with youth in grades 6-10, materials can be found here: www.jbay.org/resources/education-course-1/

Within the link for Education Course 2, trainers can find the following additional materials:

PowerPoint slides - Contained within the PowerPoint slides are embedded links, slide animation, and detailed presenter's notes. The presenter's notes include scripted text as well as additional "Trainer's Notes" highlighted in bold that provide instructions and various options for facilitating the interactive activities either in-person or via Zoom. The PowerPoint slides are designed to be utilized on a Mac or PC.

Caregiver Supporting Materials – Supporting materials for caregivers attending this training can currently be found here: <https://jbay.org/resources/edcourse2-materials/>. This includes the *Postsecondary Education Planning Guide for Adults Supporting California's Foster Youth* - a comprehensive guide that includes all the information and resources referenced in the presentation. This step-by-step guide provide detailed checklists, resources, and strategies to assist youth with lived experience in foster care to prepare for high school graduation and postsecondary education, including career technical programs, community college, and four-year universities. This guide condenses information that was previously available in multiple handouts into one convenient guide.

This link should be provided to caregivers to easily access the supplemental materials for this course. For in-person trainings, trainers are encouraged to [print materials](#). For virtual trainings, this link can be provided to caregivers in the "chat" or emailed to attendees as well.

This link includes the following handouts and guides:

1. Postsecondary Education Planning Guide for Adult's Supporting California's Foster Youth
2. College and Career Bound: A Planning Guide for 9th-11th Grade Students in Foster Care
3. Collee and Career Bound: A Planning Guide for 12th Grade Students in Foster Care
4. Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth
5. Foster Youth Benefits Eligibility Chart
6. Foster Youth Education Law Fact Sheet
7. Youth & Supportive Adult Career Guides
8. LA County College Planning Resources
9. Student Vignette

Train-the-trainer webinar - This pre-recorded webinar provides a train-the-trainer for Education Course 2 that can be accessed at any time. This webinar is not intended for caregivers.

Archived materials: Additional resources from prior trainings are archived at <https://jbay.org/resources/edcourse2-materials/>

General Facilitation Tips

These materials are intended for public use, to be distributed widely and at no cost, provided that proper citation is noted. Each course is intended to be delivered over a 3-hour timeframe to allow sufficient time to review technical information, incorporate interactive opportunities, provide participants with a break, and allow for a question-and-answer period.

Presentation slides also contain notes that further explain each slide's content. As the text on some slides may be limited to make the slide more visually accessible for the audience, the notes section contains detailed talking points as well as additional "**Trainer's Notes**" highlighted in bold that provide instructions and options for facilitating the interactive activities either in-person or via Zoom. Instructions on how to facilitate these interactive activities are also found within this guide so that presenters may prepare accordingly depending on the modality, group size, timing and platform being utilized.

It is highly recommended that trainers familiarize themselves with the PowerPoint slides and notes to become comfortable with both the content and the technology. Trainers may wish to print a copy of the slide notes to review in advance and to have on hand during a presentation. It's most successful and engaging if a trainer puts the presenter notes into their own words and vernacular, rather than reading from the script.

This training is best facilitated by at least two trainers. Co-facilitation allows trainers to break up the content between speakers and have a more engaging experience for the audience. It's also helpful to have a co-facilitator to help answer questions, monitor audience participation, and assist with technology needs.

Tips:

- Read this guide and the PowerPoint, including the slides and the notes, in advance of the training to become familiar with the content.
- Read the interactive activity suggestions and determine how you will facilitate these exercises based on your modality, access to technology and group size.
- If you are presenting this training outside of LA County, update slides 68, 69, and 72 with the contact information for your local community. See page 11 for more information.
- Practice going through the slides in "Slide Show Mode" to become familiar with the embedded links and animation.
- Use voice dynamics, such as consciously varying your pitch, tone, volume and pace, to keep

your speech interesting. Try not to use the same cadence, vocal rhythm and tone.

- When presenting online, make sure your email and any messaging programs like Teams or Slack are closed or set to “Do Not Disturb” so you and the participants won’t be distracted by notifications during the presentation.

Considerations for In-Person or Virtual Trainings

This course is designed to be delivered either in-person or virtually. Throughout the course, there are various interactive activities designed to engage the audience. Within the presenter’s notes, as well in the section overviews within the Trainer’s Guide, there are suggestions on how to facilitate these engagement opportunities either in-person or via Zoom. While Zoom is referenced for this training, there are many other platforms and tools that can be utilized by trainers.

In-Person Delivery:

To ensure a successful presentation, it is also recommended that trainers providing this training in person have the following resources available:

- Laptop or desktop computer
- Projector and projection screen
- Education Course 2 PowerPoint slides
- Internet access
- Printed slide notes and Trainer’s Guide (for personal reference)
- Post-It notes (optional depending on how the interactive activities are facilitated)
- Pens for attendees to take notes
- Printed copies of the handouts found within the [Caregiver Supporting Materials](#) including hard copies of the [Foster Youth Postsecondary Education Planning Guide](#) and [Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth](#).

Note: The Caregiver Supporting Materials have been consolidated into the updated Foster Youth Postsecondary Education Guide. The guide is available to download for free and to order for print at jbay.org/resources/ed-planning-guide/. Printing and postage fees will vary depending on the quantity ordered.

Online Delivery:

As mentioned above, this course provides suggestions on how to facilitate this training via Zoom, however, other platforms can also be utilized. Please note though that each platform has different functionality and trainers will need to adapt as needed. Throughout the trainer’s notes, various tools available on **Zoom Meeting** (not Zoom Webinar) will be referenced. Some of these Zoom tools must be enabled in your Zoom account prior to creating a meeting or when you schedule your meeting in Zoom. Refer to the Zoom Support links below for more information. Below is a list of some of those features as well as links to online tutorials about how to utilize those tools within Zoom Meeting:

- **Whiteboard feature** - The whiteboard feature allows you to share a whiteboard that you and other participants (if allowed) can [annotate](#). Learn more [HERE](#).

- **Polls** - The polling feature allows you to create single choice or multiple-choice polling questions for your meetings. You will be able to launch the poll during your meeting and gather responses from your attendees. You also have the ability to download a report of the polling after the meeting. Polls can also be conducted anonymously. Learn more [HERE](#).
- **Breakout rooms** - This feature allows you to split your Zoom meeting in up to 50 separate sessions. The meeting host can choose to split the participants of the meeting into these separate sessions automatically or manually, or they can allow participants to select and enter breakout session as they please. The host can switch between sessions at any time. Breakout sessions allow attendees to engage in deeper discussion and exploration, as well as benefit from peer learning. Learn more [HERE](#).
- **In-meeting chat** - This feature allows you to send chat messages to other users within a meeting. You can send private messages to an individual user, or you can send a message to the entire group. As the host, you can choose who the participants can chat with or to disable chat entirely. This is a great way to get feedback and engagement from your audience, as well as peer learning. Learn more [HERE](#).
- **Non-verbal feedback and meeting reactions** - If the meeting organizer enables this feature, meeting participants can place an icon on their video panel and beside their name to communicate with the host and other participants without disrupting the flow of the meeting. Attendees can access these reactions by clicking “reactions.” For example, attendees can use the “raise hand” function to indicate if they would like to participate or ask a question. In addition, the host can ask attendees yes or no questions and get their feedback by utilizing the “thumbs up” reaction or the “Yes” or “No.”

Below is a list of additional interactive tools that can be utilized throughout this course. When providing this class online, it is important to take into account access to technology as well as the level of proficiency of your attendees. For example, caregivers who are elderly may need more assistance with interactive tools such as Mentimeter that may require connection via a smart phone or browser while simultaneously being connected via Zoom.

- **Mentimeter** - This tool, found at www.mentimeter.com/, allows for tools such as live polls, quizzes, word clouds, and Q&A’s to get real-time input and engagement with your audience virtually or face-to-face. Attendees will need internet access to participate on either a computer or smartphone. This tool is ideal for large group trainings. For seamless integration, Mentimeter can be embedded into the PowerPoint slides by downloading a plugin. Learn more [HERE](#). Another similar tool for audience engagement is Poll Everywhere found at www.poll Everywhere.com
- **Padlet** - This tool, found at www.padlet.com, allows for quick virtual collaboration and peer-to-peer sharing in real time. Participants can easily add posts with comments, questions or suggestions, for all attendees to view simultaneously.

Technology Tips for Embedded Videos

This training uses embedded videos, so participants can hear directly from young people about their postsecondary education journeys. Here are some tips to make sure the videos play correctly during the training:

- Whether you are hosting the training online or in-person, it's always a good idea to arrive to the space early and test the video/sound components of the presentation.
- The links in the course open YouTube video links and there are typically advertisements that play prior to the video. It may be helpful to open these video links in a separate browser window and fast forward to the point where the ads end, prior to starting the training. When you get to the video, you'll have to exit the PowerPoint and share the video from the browser (Don't forget to re-share your screen if you are presenting online!).

Contents and Suggested Pacing

The table below provides an overview of each course section and the suggested amount of time to facilitate each section.

Education Course 2: Supporting Successful Transitions from High School to College			
Presentation Section	Slides #s	Timing for Content Delivery	Timing for Optional Interactive Activities
Section I: Welcome & Introduction	1 – 6	6 mins	N/A
Section II: Why College?	6 -15	10 mins	Slide 10 (poll) = 3 minutes Slide 15 (reflection) = 5 minutes
Section III: A College Path for Everyone	16 – 28	18 mins	Slide 28(quiz) =7 minutes
Section IV: Resources on College and Career Exploration	29 – 34	8 mins	Slide 33 (activity)= 2-10 minutes
Section V: 11 th & 12 th Grade Educational Planning Milestones	35 – 41	18 mins	N/A
Break [One 10-minute or two 5-minute breaks]	42	10 mins	N/A
Section VI: Reflection and Applying to College	43 – 50	14 mins	Slide 43 (reflection) = 5 minutes Slide 50 (quiz) = 7 minutes
Section VII: Paying for College	51 – 68	22 mins	Slide 68 (quiz) = 8 minutes
Section VIII: Setting Up Foster Youth for College Success	69 – 79	15 mins	Slide 79 (quiz) = 7 minutes
Section IX: Closing- handouts, vignette, and reflection	80 – 82	2 mins	Slide 81 (vignette) = 15 mins Slide 82 (reflection) = 6 mins
Q & A [Either throughout the training or at the end]	83	10 mins	N/A
TOTAL		133 mins	

***This training offers many options for interactive activities, however, it is not possible to do ALL**

interactive activities and content within 3-hours. Given this, it is recommended that trainers select which interactive activities they would like to do to fit within the 3-hour (180 minute) training. This training consists of 133 minutes of content, including time for Q & A and a 10-minute break, which leaves room for up to 45 minutes of interactive activity opportunities. If a trainer facilitates all the potential interactive activities, the actual training will be approximately 3.5 hours in length.

For facilitators providing this training to an audience that will be receiving BOTH Education Course 1 and Education Course 2, such as FFA or STRTP staff, the content may be augmented to meet the needs of the audience. Several of the sections in Education Course 2 are duplicative of Education Course 1, with the understanding that many caregivers may only take one course. Below is a summary of content that is similar in Education Course 1:

- Why College? - This section includes similar content with the addition of a new reflection opportunity on slide 15.
- A College Path for Everyone - This section includes similar content with the addition of information about priority transfer options from California community colleges and additional information about out-of-state colleges.
- Resources on college and career exploration - This section is largely the same with the addition of information about the TILP on slide 33.
- Help is Available for Caregivers - This section includes similar information, however the handout on Educational Planning Supports and Resources has been updated to include additional information on campus-based resources and supports.

County Specific Trainer's Information

There are a few slides which should be updated with local programs' contact information and resources within the specific county in which the training is being held. Suggested changes are listed within the trainer's notes on the PowerPoint as well as below:

Slide 72- Help is Available at the K-12 Districts

The slide is currently set to reflect general information about the County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (COE FYSCP). Please add the local county name and contact information to the slide as well as any relevant information about their structure and services to the notes. While all COE FYSCP's provide the same general services, there is regional variation in services and structure. Contact information for each COE can be found here:

www.cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy/



LA County College Planning Resources (Handout)

This handout is a supplemental material provided to all caregivers receiving this training in LA County. This handout includes relevant resources and their contact information, such as ILP, Foster Youth District Liaisons, LACOE FYSCP and other foster-youth specific academic enrichment programs. Trainers are encouraged to create their own handout with local resources and programs that caregivers can access for their youth. This handout is mentioned on slide 68 and should either be deleted from the slide or replaced with an updated handout for your regional community.

Slide 73- Independent Living Program

Replace the contact information on this slide with your local Independent Living Program. While all ILP programs offer similar services and have the same eligibility criteria, there is regional variation on services and structure. In addition, some programs may go by the name of Independent Living Services Program (ILSP). It is recommended that trainers contact their local ILP to determine the best language to include on this slide. JBAY maintains a roster of ILP Coordinators for each county that can be found here: jbay.org/resources/ilp-roster/

Education Course 2: Section Content and Interaction Opportunities

Section I: Welcome and Introduction (slides 1-6)

Life after high school is a big transition and many foster youth do not start preparing early enough. Caregivers assume responsibility for many aspects of a youth's life, including responsibility for physical safety and holistic health and wellbeing. Compared to many of the day-to-day responsibilities that caregivers must juggle, college can seem like a remote concern that lacks the urgency of other matters. This training will empower caregivers to support youth in their care to make a smooth transition from high school to college. For many students, and even caregivers, navigating the pathway to higher education can feel intimidating, confusing, or overwhelming. The goal of this training is to help caregivers feel prepared to assist youth through this process.

This section introduces the [*Foster Youth Postsecondary Education Planning Guide*](#). This guide includes all the resources and information shared throughout the training, including a checklist of recommended activities and milestones for youth to prepare for college, by grade level. This guide will be referenced throughout the training as a resource for caregivers.

This introductory section provides context for the audience about the overall learning objectives and course materials. When people think about a college education, it is often a traditional 4-year college pathway. It is important to clarify early in the course that postsecondary education refers to any formal education after high school, including career and technical education, 2-year and 4-year pathways. These pathways will be explained in further detail in the course, however, clarifying this definition at the onset may help to encourage caregivers to be more receptive to thinking about the youth in their care as college material.

Section II: Why College? (slides 7-15)

Section II orients all caregivers, irrespective of previous college exposure, to the urgency of college. It connects postsecondary education attainment to the greater goal of self-sufficiency for foster youth by laying out the economic returns to a college degree. Slide 8 highlights the higher annual earnings that college graduates enjoy, relative to adults who only have a high school diploma. Section II builds off this economic argument to demonstrate the many other ways that earning a college degree or credential can benefit individuals, such as improved health outcomes and greater civic participation. A video in this section highlights how young people have been impacted by their postsecondary journeys.

There is good reason to believe that foster youth are hearing the message that a college education pays; as shown in Slide 10, 91% of foster youth in California say they want to go to college.¹

¹ Courtney, M., et al (2016).

However, the reality is that only 48%² of youth in California who graduate from high school enroll in postsecondary education within one year after graduation, and just 10.9%³ succeed in completing a 2- or 4-year degree by the age of 23 as compared to 35.8%⁴ of 23-year-olds in California with an AA degree or higher. As this training will show, foster youth face many barriers, due to no fault of their own, that lead to these poor outcomes. While youth may know the benefit of a higher education, caregivers can play a critical role in helping them realize their own potential to attend college and successfully navigate the college matriculation process.

The content in this section is very similar to Education Course 1. Trainers providing this course to staff who will receive BOTH courses, may wish to omit this section to avoid redundancy. However, there is a new opening reflection activity on slide 15 unique to this course to get caregivers to reflect on how frequently they are speaking to the youth in their care about college. While it is ideal for these conversations to start early in middle school, it's never too late. Eleventh and 12th grade are critical years in the college planning process, and it's important to start conversations with youth as early as possible and often. Waiting until the end of a student's senior year can leave the student missing out on valuable resources and options for their future. The content reminds caregivers that using a growth mindset is useful at any point in a student's academic journey.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 10): “What percentage of foster youth in California...”

Estimated time: 3 minutes

This slide provides a brief opportunity to engage the audience in thinking about the college outcomes for foster youth in California. Animation is built into the slide to allow the trainer to ask attendees to place their guesses for the three questions on the slide before revealing the correct answers.

In-person: The facilitator can ask some attendees to share their guess before revealing each correct answer. Alternatively, the facilitator can give various options and ask attendees to raise their hands to cast their votes.

For example, for question 1: “How many people think the correct answer is between 20-30%? 30-50% 50-80%? Or 80-95%?” Facilitators may consider partnering with their local college to get college related swag to provide as prizes for audience participation.

Via Zoom: If facilitating a small group, attendees can unmute themselves to share a guess. Alternatively, attendees can be asked to share their guess in the chat function or a poll can be created via Zoom to allow attendees to guess the correct answer for each question.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 15): “How often do you talk to the youth...”

Estimated time: 5-minutes

² <https://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/>

³ <https://www.chapinhall.org/research/cal-youth-wave4-report/>

⁴ [https://data.census.gov/mdat/#/search?ds=ACSPUMS1Y2019&vv=AGEP\(23:24\)&rv=ucgid,SCHL&wt=PWGTP&g=0400000US06](https://data.census.gov/mdat/#/search?ds=ACSPUMS1Y2019&vv=AGEP(23:24)&rv=ucgid,SCHL&wt=PWGTP&g=0400000US06)

Via Zoom: Trainers can launch a Zoom poll or use polling platforms such as Menti to gather feedback from the audience. Depending on the size of your group, attendees can enter their response in the chat function by indicating the letter associated with the correct response.

In-person: Attendees can simply be asked to raise their hand with the response that corresponds best to them. Given that this process is not anonymous, it could be helpful to remind caregivers that this is a judgement-free space.

Whether this is done in-person or virtually, facilitators may reflect back to the group any themes or patterns that emerge from the responses.

Section III: A College Path for Everyone (slides 16-28)

The term “college” can mean a lot of things. While the common college experience portrayed in the media is that of a first-time college freshman enrolling directly at a four-year university, there are in fact many more paths available. Foster youth should be empowered with information about these various paths so that they can make the choice that is best for them. For some foster youth, this will mean enrolling directly at a four-year university while others will choose to enroll in a community college. Some foster youth may decide to start at a community college with the goal of transferring to a four-year university while others may set a goal to complete an associate degree or a short-term job training certificate or career and technical education program.

Regardless of what a student’s ultimate goal is and where they want to begin their college journey, one thing is consistent: they will be best set up for success if they get started right away. Foster youth students who enroll in community college directly after high school are 40% more likely to persist in college than are students who take a year or more off.⁵ As such, it is important for caregivers to understand the different options available and to help students transition directly into the program that is the best fit for them. Oftentimes, students are not encouraged to pursue college if their current academic performance is poor. This section is meant to illuminate the many pathways available, including non-traditional pathways available at community colleges. Community colleges do not have a minimum GPA requirement and are open access to all students. All youth, regardless of their academic performance, can still be encouraged to pursue a postsecondary education.

The presentation conveys that there are good reasons to be cautious when selecting a proprietary or for-profit institution. In recent years, there have been several high-profile cases of proprietary and for-profit institutions offering credentials that do not lead to favorable employment outcomes, wage gains, or expanded career opportunities. This is of particular concern when students are expending their financial aid funds and taking out student loans to cover high tuition costs. As such, government agencies have moved to more closely monitor these institutions. For example, the California Student Aid Commission currently restricts use of state Cal Grant and

⁵ Frerer, K., et al (2013), as cited in California College Pathways (2015).

Chafee grant dollars at for-profit institutions that do not demonstrate favorable student outcomes. Foster youth can confirm that an institution is approved by the California Student Aid Commission as one indicator of an institution's quality before they decide to enroll or visit the Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs found at: <https://ope.ed.gov/dapip/#/home>. Even approved institutions, however, are significantly more expensive than comparable programs found at community colleges.

While the content in this section is largely the same as in Education Course 1, one notable difference is the additional slide about out-of-state colleges. While attending a college out-of-state can be a great option for some youth, in many cases it is typically more expensive, and some youth may struggle without a safety net and support network in place. The key message is that students should do their research, with the support of their caregivers, to determine if this is the right fit for them based on their interests, needs and financial resources. In addition, there are some interstate regional agreements that provide in-state tuition, or nonresident tuition savings programs such as the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE). To learn more about WUE, please visit <https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue/>.

This section also provides an opportunity to provide caregivers with knowledge about some of the similarities and differences between California community colleges, public 4-year universities and private colleges or universities. While out-of-state college is also a viable option for students, each state and college vary, so caregivers and youth will need to do their research. There are many similarities across the public, private and out of state schools. Time may be well spent reviewing the primary differences between each type of institution. For example:

- **Selective Admission:** Private colleges typically require more admission requirements than any other type of institutions while community colleges are *open access institutions* which means they do not require SAT/ACT or GPA requirements for admission.
- **Room and Board:** CSUs and UCs provide priority housing for current and former foster youth while private institutions may not provide priority housing status, and community colleges typically do not offer housing.
- **Degrees Offered:** While community colleges primarily offer associates degree and certificate programs, there are a limited number of community colleges that offer bachelor's degrees similar to the four-year institutions.

A video in this section describes how several foster youth chose their postsecondary institution. Several mention college tours and this is a helpful reminder to caregivers that this is a great activity to help support their youth's interest in postsecondary education, even in the last years of high school.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 28): Quiz #1

Estimated time: 7 mins

Use this slide as an opportunity to create competitive quizzes to test your attendee's knowledge and help reinforce key concepts from the "Applying to College" Section. Platforms such as Kahoots or Mentimeter are encouraged for this activity and can be utilized on people's smart

phones or browsers for both in-person and Zoom trainings. Alternatively, polls could be created via Zoom. If the trainer would like to download and view individual responses to the questions, the poll should not be set to anonymous. If possible, try to provide a prize for the winner of each quiz. This can include free college swag donated by your local college or e-gift cards that can be sent via email. Get creative! For attendees that are not as tech savvy, utilizing a quiz via Kahoots or Mentimeter may be challenging. The format may need to be adapted based on the technology proficiency of your audience.

Below are some sample questions that could be used on an online quiz platform:

#1- Career and Technical Education programs are:

- a) Career focused that can lead to direct entry into the workforce
- b) Short-term programs, leading to a certificate
- c) Offered at community colleges and eligible for financial aid
- d) All of the above **[CORRECT ANSWER]**

#2- Community colleges offer a wide variety of postsecondary programs in career education as well as majors for transfer to a 4-year university.

- a) True **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- b) False

#3- What is one way caregivers can encourage a growth mindset?

- a) Punish the youth for performing poorly on a test.
- b) Help youth reframe failure as an opportunity for growth **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- c) Discourage the youth from attending postsecondary education

#4- CSUs and UCs offer priority access to campus housing for foster youth.

- a) True **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- b) False

#5- If applying to out-of-state universities, caregivers should:

- a) Do research with the youth on all options to ensure a good fit **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- b) Assume the out-of-state universities have the same application deadlines as California
- c) Discourage the youth from taking the ACT/SAT, because it won't be necessary.

Section IV: Resources on College and Career Exploration (slides 29-34)

This section provides caregivers with tangible ways to engage youth in early career exploration as a means to helping them determine which postsecondary pathway is the best fit. A youth's interest and goals will likely change and evolve over time, so this is meant to be an ongoing conversation and process with youth. This section recommends some websites that caregivers can use to guide foster youth in exploring career paths. Some of these tools enable foster youth to take self-assessments to determine what types of careers align with their interests and identified

strengths. Other tools enable youth to see what types of jobs are hiring, and what median earnings are in a given profession. These tools can help caregivers and youth learn about professions and fields that are beyond their own frames of reference. In addition to these tools, this section provides suggestions on ways that caregivers can engage youth in these conversations, motivate them and assist them in realistic goal setting throughout their process. It is recommended that caregivers have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with these websites before engaging with youth.

Tip: Some of these websites (like CA Career Zone and Gladeo) require users to pre-register, even to access free services. If you plan to demo these websites to caregivers, make sure you register in advance and have your login and password information ready.

This content is largely the same as in Education Course 1, however the term “TILP” is introduced within the conversation of Goal Setting on slide 33. TILP stands for the Transitional Independent Living Plan and Agreement. Social workers and probation officers are required to complete this form every 6 months for youth ages 16 or older. The TILP outlines the *youth’s* goals, concrete activities that can be completed to reach those goals, the responsible parties assigned to assist the youth in reaching those goals and the planned completion date. As caregivers engage with the youth in their care in goal setting, this can be an opportunity to collaborate and coordinate their goals with those outlined in the TILP and encourage teaming to reach those goals. Caregivers can play a role in helping youth reach those goals. Goal setting should be based on the youth’s interests, desires, and needs.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 33): Reality Testing

Estimated time: 2-10 minutes

Utilize slide 26 as an opportunity to demonstrate one of the tools on the Reality Testing slide. One example is Salary Surfer, which is hyperlinked on the PowerPoint slide. This can take about two minutes.

Alternatively, the facilitator can allow attendees to explore some of these websites at their own pace to get more comfortable with these tools, which can take up to 10 minutes

In-person: Have participants get into pairs and pick a website to explore on their smart phone. This can also be structured as a roleplay, with one person acting as the caregiver and the other as a youth.

Via Zoom: Randomly put people into breakout rooms of two people. Have one person pick a website and share their screen. This can also be structured as a roleplay, with one person acting as the caregiver and the other as a youth. If this training is being provided to a large audience virtually, the trainer may also use this time to demonstrate an additional website from the slide.

Section V: 11th and 12th Grade Educational Planning Milestones (slides 35-41)

This section provides an overview of the key educational planning milestones in 11th and 12th grade. While this section does not cover every step in the process, the [Foster Youth Postsecondary Education Planning Guide](#) provides detailed information and a checklist of recommended activities and milestones for youth to prepare for college, by grade level, for students in grades 6 through 12. These milestones build upon each other, with some key activities (such as enrolling in A-G college preparatory courses or meeting with the high school counselor) repeating year after year. Every child is at a different place developmentally and emotionally and some youth may need more time and support along the way. If students have missed a recommended step, they should not be discouraged from continuing to pursue postsecondary education as there are still many options. A youth video reminds participants that every youth's journey is different and even youth who struggled with high school can still go on to achieve postsecondary success.

The summer between 11th and 12th grade is an ideal time for youth to get work experience to help them develop career readiness skills and further explore their interests and strengths. To get a job, youth will need to gather their "right to work" documents. For U.S. Citizens, this includes a photo ID, such as a driver's license, CA State ID card or school ID, as well as a U.S. Social Security Card. For non-U.S. Citizens, they will need their Permanent Resident Card, also known as their Green Card. Employers will generally ask to see originals of these documents, not photocopies. Even if a student is not actively job searching, these are important documents for students to have when they graduate high school and transition into postsecondary education. If a student does not have these documents, caregivers can reach out to the youth's social worker or probation officer for assistance. Caregivers may need to educate youth that they should only carry their CA State ID or driver's license in their wallet, and not their social security card or birth certificate to avoid the risk of identity theft. Additionally, youth under the age of 18 will need a work permit from their high school to work. Caregivers will need to give consent for youth to work. Youth may need to maintain a certain GPA to be eligible to work. Youth are legally authorized to work beginning at age 14, if they are able to receive a work permit.

For students considering a 4-year college or university, it is recommended that they take the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) starting in 11th grade. These two exams are used by some private colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. While students can also take these exams in the beginning of their senior year, it's ideal that they take these exams first in the 11th grade to allow them an opportunity to retake the exam if they are not satisfied with their score. Youth can begin preparing in the 10th grade by taking the PSAT practice exam.

There have been many recent changes to requirements with the SAT and ACT exams. It's important for trainers to know that the CSUs and UCs no longer require this exam. Steps in the college matriculation process can change regularly, therefore, it is important for trainers to review the most current guidance before providing this training.

Section VI: Reflection and Applying to College (slides 43-50)

Just as there are numerous college options available, there are different considerations that foster youth should be aware of when it comes to the college application process. Different types of higher education institutions have different eligibility requirements, application components, and application timelines. While the prior section provides a broad overview of educational planning milestones in 12th grade, this section provides more details on key aspects of the application and enrollment processes for the California State University (CSU), the University of California (UC) systems, private colleges and universities and California Community Colleges (CCC). Navigating the application process can feel overwhelming and confusing, even for caregivers, which is why this section begins with a reflection opportunity for trainers to check-in with caregivers about how they feel navigating this process with youth.

California State University and University of California

While there are several paths that allow community college students to transfer to a baccalaureate program at a California State University or University of California campus, students who wish to enroll at a CSU or UC campus directly from high school should begin their college planning much earlier. While CSU and UC campuses will look closely at coursework and academic performance in grades 9 through 12, caregivers should begin conversations with youth about college in the middle school years.

Foster youth should build strong relationships with their high school teachers and counselors to get support in reaching these milestones, particularly when it comes to ensuring that their coursework aligns with CSU and UC admissions requirements. The CSU and UC systems require that students complete subject area requirements, which are known as the “A-G” requirements. The “A-G” requirements stipulate certain levels and years of study in subject areas like social science, English, math, science, foreign language, visual and performing arts, and approved electives. As these requirements may change slightly from year to year, trainers should emphasize the importance of building and maintaining a strong relationship with a high school counselor. While the traditional deadline for applying to a CSU or UC is November 30th, this information may change. For example, some CSU’s may extend their priority deadline to December 15th for the fall 2023 academic school year if they are not academically impacted. It’s important that trainers revisit the CSU and UC admissions website to ensure that the most current information is provided in the training. The training slides include the links to the general admissions websites. As noted in the above section, [HERE](#) is the link to recent guidance from the CSU on the admissions process for first time freshman.

The CSU and UC systems offer several benefits to foster youth which they should know to look for at the time of application. These benefits include priority consideration for campus housing, and access to priority registration. Trainers should again emphasize, however, that these benefits are only available if students self-identify as foster youth. Students might be concerned about the stigma associated with foster care or may feel a sense of shame about being in the foster care system and may not want to self-identify. It is very important that caregivers emphasize the

advantages of self-identifying for the purposes of accessing these benefits in college. In addition, a student's foster care status is kept confidential and is not shared with professors or other students. Most foster youth are also eligible to receive up to four application fee waivers for the CSU system and four for the UC system. However, it's important to note that this waiver is based on income and is not exclusive to youth in the foster care system. For more information on CSU fee waiver eligibility, visit: [HERE](#). For more information on UC fee waiver eligibility, visit: [HERE](#).

Lastly, when applying to a CSU or UC, students are encouraged to apply for EOP (Educational Opportunity Program), which offers both admissions exceptions and additional support once enrolled. While EOP exists at all the CSUs, it is only at a few UCs, however additional support programs for educationally disadvantaged students exist at many of the UC campuses. The training slides provide a general overview of the EOP program and application process at the CSUs. Additionally, it's important to note that the EOP program does have an extended application period until January 15th for students applying for the fall semester. Students who do not apply for EOP at the time of application cannot access the program once enrolled. Further information about the CSU EOP application process can be found [HERE](#). The key recommendation for students is to apply to submit the EOP application when completing the CSU application, and to ensure that they are connected to support while completing the application. In addition to EOP, all CSU and UC campuses have support programs for foster youth.

Private Colleges and Universities

Given the wide variance across private institutions, this presentation focuses primarily on California's public higher education systems. Private schools may have different applications, deadlines and requirements so students may need additional assistance in successfully navigating the college application process at private schools. Trainers should note that some private colleges and universities may offer similar benefits and resources, though each institution has discretion in what policies, programs, and services they tailor for foster youth.

California Community Colleges

It is a common misconception that students can arrive at a community college campus the day before classes begin to complete the application and course registration process. Caregivers should be prepared to assist youth with the steps involved in application and registration well before the start of the term. Trainers should emphasize that there is no fee to apply for community college and foster youth have the opportunity to also apply for a college's Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) or foster-youth support programs, such as NextUp or Guardian Scholars. Section VIII provides more information on these programs and the resources that they provide. If foster youth check the box on the CCCApply.org online application indicating their foster care status colleges might also follow up with them about additional financial resources and student support services for which they may qualify.

Many community colleges in Los Angeles County (as well as elsewhere in the state) have high enrollments and limited course offerings so priority registration can be key for foster youth to gain access to the courses they need for graduation or transfer. California law stipulates that all foster youth under the age of 26 who were in care on or after their 13th birthday are eligible to receive priority registration at both the California community colleges and the California State University

system. However, students must complete three steps to receive priority registration: orientation, assessment, and education planning.

These registration steps may vary slightly at each campus. For example, some colleges offer orientation online while others only offer orientation in-person. If a school offers an extended orientation or summer bridge program for new students, it is highly recommended that the caregiver discusses this option with their youth. These programs can help a student learn about campus resources, build connections with peers and with faculty and staff, and further develop their academic skills.

The passage of Assembly Bill 705 marks a new era in community college assessment practices. Previously, community colleges often used a single test, such as the Accuplacer exam, to determine students' English and math course placement. Under this old system of high-stakes assessment testing, many students placed into non-credit remedial courses (also called developmental courses). In some cases, students would place several levels below the college-level course that was required for graduation or transfer. Research showed that students placed into remedial courses often struggled to reach their college completion goals.

Instead of taking a placement exam, students must now report the grades they received in the last English and math course completed in high school to determine which math and English courses they will need for their degree or certificate goal. If a student completes the admissions application in the fall term of their senior year, they will report grades from spring/ summer semester of their junior year.

Upon completing this process, youth will next need to meet with an academic advisor or counselor to complete their education plan. Entering foster youth may be directed to Student Success counselors, but they should also inquire about counseling that is tailored for foster youth and that is often available through programs like NextUp (see Section VIII). Trainers should emphasize the importance of forming an early relationship with a counselor who can guide foster youth in exploring academic programs and clarifying their educational goals, such as whether they wish to transfer onto a baccalaureate program.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 43): Reflection

Estimated Time: 5-minutes

It's normal for students and adults to feel a range of feelings in relation to the college matriculation process. They may feel scared, confused, intimidated, overwhelmed, or confident and excited. This is a great opportunity for caregivers to reflect on their own feelings about the process to help normalize the feelings that may come up for both caregivers and youth as well as the importance of connecting them to support.

In-person:

- ***Pair and Share:*** Ask participants to introduce themselves to one person seated next to them. As a pair, participants will discuss the question listed on the slide. Once the facilitator calls participants back into one large group, volunteers will share back what

responses they shared. The facilitator will then guide the discussion to identify common themes and experiences.

- **Post-It Collage:** Before the presentation, the facilitator can place 3 Post-It notes at each seat. The facilitator can ask audience members to jot down their answer on up to three Post-It notes. Participants can then stick their notes up on a wall. The facilitator can cluster common responses together and read aloud the messages that were most common and guide group discussion.
- **Poll the Audience:** The facilitator can share some typical responses and ask people to react by a show of hands. For example, “raise your hand if you feel intimidated.” Facilitator can then call on 1-2 volunteers to share their feelings about the process and facilitate a short group discussion.

Via Zoom:

- Participants could be asked to respond through a Word Cloud feature on Menti which will highlight the more common responses, or through pre-created options via a poll on Zoom. Additionally, given the size of the group, people can also put their responses into the chat function, which the trainer can facilitate, and react to by noticing high-level themes and commonalities.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 50): Quiz #2

Estimated Time: 7-minutes

Use this slide as an opportunity to create competitive quizzes to test your attendee’s knowledge and help reinforce key concepts from the “Applying to College” Section. Platforms such as Kahoots or Mentimeter are encouraged for this activity and can be utilized on people’s smart phones or browsers for both in-person and Zoom trainings. Alternatively, polls could be created via Zoom. If the trainer would like to download and view individual responses to the questions, the poll should not be set to anonymous. If possible, try to provide a prize for the winner of each quiz. This can include free college swag donated by your local college or e-gift cards that can be sent via email. Get creative! For attendees that are not as tech savvy, utilizing a quiz via Kahoots or Mentimeter may be challenging. The format may need to be adapted based on the technology proficiency of your audience.

Below are some sample questions that could be used on an online quiz platform:

#1- To apply for EOP at the CSU’s, students must:

- a) Apply within the general application [**CORRECT ANSWER**]
- b) Complete a separate application
- c) No additional application is required.

#2- Students can receive a fee waiver at up to how many CSU’s and UC’s each?

- a) 2
- b) 3
- c) 4 [**CORRECT ANSWER**]
- d) 5

#3- To access priority registration at the community colleges, students must:

- a) Meet the priority deadline set by each college
- b) Be in care on or after their 13th birthday to be eligible
- c) Complete orientation, assessment and education planning
- d) All of the above **[CORRECT ANSWER]**

#4- Students applying to a private 4-year college or university in California have the same deadlines and application process at the CSU's and UC's.

- a) True
- b) False **[CORRECT ANSWER]**

#5- Caregivers can be a postsecondary support person to help a youth with their college and career applications.

- a) True **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- b) False

Section VII: Paying for College (slides 51-68)

This section will provide caregivers with a brief overview of the financial aid process, and how to access and maintain financial aid. While plenty of financial aid resources exist for foster youth to assist with the costs of college, many struggle to access this money. Foster youth may lack accurate information about financial aid and how to apply for it or lack support in completing the application steps. Another barrier that deters foster youth is misperceptions of cost. Indeed, many students assume that college will require an upfront investment that they simply cannot afford. Foster youth may believe that, because of their own lack of financial resources or familial financial support, they will not be able to self-finance a college education. In addition, foster youth and caregivers might incorrectly assume that a foster youth must supply personal and financial information for biological parents on their financial aid application, which can deter a youth from even beginning an application. A youth video gives several examples of how much aid a youth received to attend college.

Given the complexities of the financial aid process, it is important that foster youth get connected to accurate information and support. Available in both Spanish and English, the [**Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth**](#) and corresponding Visual Guide (Slide 53) provides a more in-depth overview of the financial aid process, including an explanation of the types of aid available, a step-by-step guide to completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), tips on what to do after the FAFSA, and how students can maintain their financial aid. Slide 53 provides a link to these resources and other that can support caregivers and youth through the process.

Foster youth can qualify for state, federal, and institutional financial aid that can help them finance college through a combination of tuition waivers, grants, work-study awards, scholarships, and even student loans. Slide 52 explains the different types of financial aid and Slide 55 explains how

“financial need” is determined for need-based financial aid such as the federal Pell Grant and federal work-study. It is important for caregivers to understand the basic difference between gift aid, such as grants and scholarships, and other types of aid that must be earned or repaid. Facilitators should emphasize that, unlike student loans, gift aid is free money that does not need to be repaid, so long as students successfully complete their coursework and make satisfactory progress toward completion. There are two main types of federal student loans that may be offered to a student applying with the FAFSA. With a **subsidized loan**, the government or lender pays for interest while the student is in school. Once the student leaves school, they will be responsible for the loan amount and any interest that begins to accrue. For students that receive an **unsubsidized loan**, the interest accumulates while the student is in school. Once the student leaves school, they are responsible for paying the full loan amount, plus any interest already accumulated and any interest that will accrue going forward. It’s important that students are aware of these key differences in the types of financial aid. If a student is offered a loan, they can always decline it.

Slides 54-56 orient caregivers to key steps in the financial aid application process, such as how to apply, when to apply, and what youth need to complete the FAFSA or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) if they are an eligible undocumented immigrant student. To understand the full eligibility criteria for the CA Dream Act Application, visit: dream.csac.ca.gov. It’s also important to be aware of caregivers who are working with youth who are eligible for Special Juvenile Immigration Status (SIJS). Youth with a pending application for SIJS are not eligible for federal financial aid and should submit the CADAA until they have received permanent resident status (i.e., a Green Card). If an undocumented youth does not have an application for SIJS pending, the child welfare agency should be contacted for eligibility screening and to determine if that is the right option for the youth since it is recommended that the referral happens before they turn 18.

Slides 57 and 58 give a brief overview of what is needed to complete the FAFSA and CADAA, including new changes to the FAFSA that were implemented for the 2024-25 school year. The key message for caregivers is that navigating the financial aid process can be complicated, so it is important that youth are supported through this entire process to ensure that they access all the aid that they are eligible for.

Within these applications there are unique considerations for foster youth. Slide 59 reviews how to determine independent status on the FAFSA or CADAA. Because caregivers may not be familiar with the current FAFSA and CADAA questions or may have not navigated the online version of the application, facilitators can direct them to reference the *Visual Guide* which provides screenshots of each FAFSA and CADAA question and detailed instructions on how to accurately complete each question. This information can help caregivers feel more at ease when assisting youth with submitting their application forms.

While application submission is a critical first step, caregivers need to understand what comes next in the financial aid process. Each year, many students miss out on thousands of financial aid dollars simply because they do not complete all of the necessary follow-up steps. Slides 60-61 provide caregivers with information about critical next steps to maximize aid, such as completing the

Chafee Grant application to access up to \$5,000 in aid for eligible current and former youth and creating a WebGrants account. It is important to note that if a student is eligible for the Chafee Grant, the funding is not guaranteed. There is a prioritization process, which leads to some students being placed on a wait list. If a student is eligible but not awarded a Chafee Grant, they do not need to reapply the following year.

Creating a WebGrants 4 Students Account is a simple and often missed step in the process. It allows students to view the status of their Chafee Grant and Cal Grant awards, as well as update their contact information and school of attendance. Students can apply once their FAFSA or CADAA is successfully processed, which can take up to two weeks. Many foster youth are highly mobile, so it is critical that they keep their information current on this account. When students are completing their Chafee Grant application, they are only able to indicate one college, often before knowing where they will be accepted into college or where they chose to attend. As soon as a foster youth determines where they plan to attend college it is important that they update their Webgrants account with this college to guarantee that the funding is sent to the correct campus. If this step does not occur, funding may be delayed, or the student may not receive the aid. In addition, foster youth status is automatically verified for youth that apply for the Chafee Grant through a match with CDSS. However, sometimes there is an error in the process and students will be requested via WebGrants to submit a manual foster youth verification. WebGrants allows the student to check if their foster care status has been successfully verified. This foster youth verification match only happens once per month and may not show automatically when a student applies.

Another key step for students within their WebGrants account is to ensure that their high school submits verified GPA information to the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). This step is critical in order to receive the Cal Grant if they are planning on attending college in California. While all public high schools and charters are required to submit this information, it is important that facilitators understand that some schools do not automatically submit this information. At times, a student may change schools and addresses, which can make it difficult to match the student's GPA record to their FAFSA/CADAA record. This puts the responsibility on the student to contact their high school, verify if their GPA has been submitted, and manually submit a *Cal Grant GPA Verification Form*, if needed, which can be found on the general CSAC website. Students will not be alerted to do this step, so it is important that caregivers assist youth in determining if their GPA Verification has been submitted. Students can contact their high school counselor or log in to their WebGrants account to view this information. For students planning on attending a 4-year college or university in California, it is essential that their GPA is submitted by March 2nd. However, for foster youth pursuing a community college path, they have until September 2nd to submit this GPA.

Information about follow-up steps after the FAFSA or CADAA are often communicated via email and can be easy to miss if a student does not know that they should be attentive to requests for additional information or documentation. While cumbersome, being responsive to these parts of the financial aid application process is essential for a student to be able to access all of the aid programs for which they are eligible. Upon successfully submitting a FAFSA, students will receive a Student Aid Report that states their expected family contribution. This information is used by a

college or university to determine how much aid they qualify for, after factoring in the costs of attendance at that particular institution.

Colleges and universities may request additional documentation to verify information that was provided on the application. Delays in obtaining such documentation can adversely affect a student's ability to enroll on time and to access aid to cover tuition expenses. Students may also need to verify foster care status with their institution. The state of California recently automated the foster care verification process by matching student records from the California Student Aid Commission and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). For students who indicated on their FAFSA/CADAA that they were in care at least one day after the age of 13 and who are currently under the age of 26, foster care status should be automatically verified. In the unlikely event that a match is not made with CDSS, foster youth may need to provide verification through another source. There are many ways a foster youth can provide this verification including through a court order or official state document that the student was in foster care, verification of eligibility for the Chafee Grant, and/or a written statement or phone call from a state, county, or tribal child welfare agency, a state Medicaid agency, a public or private foster care placing agency or foster care placement/facility, an attorney or Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), or a financial aid administrator who documented the student's circumstances in the same or prior award year. The [Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth](#), provides further information about these key follow-up steps.

Caregivers and foster youth may both have justified concerns about taking on student loans. To reduce student debt levels, foster youth should proactively seek out additional resources beyond state and federal financial aid. For example, many high schools, banks, community centers, religious organizations, employers, and nonprofit organizations offer private scholarships that foster youth can apply to. Applying to scholarships can be time-intensive so we strongly suggest that foster youth target their search to include scholarship programs that are specific to foster youth and/or that have a narrow geographic focus. The *Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth* includes additional helpful tips and an appendix with private scholarship resources. The Independent Living Program (ILP), described further in Section VIII, can also be a great resource to connect students to other scholarships and financial assistance.

Lastly, once a student receives financial aid, it's important that they are educated proactively about how to maintain financial aid throughout their college career as over 1/3 of foster youth fail to make Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) within their first year of community college. SAP is a policy enforced by institutions to ensure that students are progressing towards completion of their educational goal. SAP requires that students complete their courses in a reasonable amount of time, complete with a high enough GPA and pass enough classes along the way. Each school has a SAP policy that determines who is eligible to continue receiving financial aid. Slides 62-64 provide some general information about this process and key tips for caregivers.

This section can be particularly dense, however the reason this section is so critical is that while we know the benefits of financial aid, and the many resources available to foster youth, students still struggle to access financial aid.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 68): Quiz #3

Estimated Time: 8 minutes

Use this slide as an opportunity to create competitive quizzes to test your attendee's knowledge and help reinforce key concepts from the "Paying for College" Section. Platforms such as Kahoots or Mentimeter are encouraged for this activity and can be utilized on people's smart phones or browsers for both in-person and Zoom trainings. Alternatively, polls could be created via Zoom. If the trainer would like to download and view individual responses to the questions, the poll should not be set to anonymous. If possible, try to provide a prize for the winner of each quiz. This can include free college swag donated by your local college or e-gift cards that can be sent via email. Get creative! For attendees that are not as tech savvy, utilizing a quiz via Kahoot or Mentimeter may be challenging. The format may need to be adapted based on the technology proficiency of your audience.

Below are some sample questions that could be used on an online quiz platform:

#1- Eligible undocumented students must fill out which financial aid application:

- a) FAFSA
- b) CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- c) WebGrants 4 Students
- d) None of the above

#2- The priority deadline to apply for financial aid for students planning to attend a 4-year college is:

- a) Trick question- there is no priority deadline
- b) March 2nd **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- c) November 30th
- d) June 1st

#3- When filling out the FAFSA or CADAA, Resource Parents do not count as parents:

- a) True **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- b) False

#4- Eligible foster youth may receive up to \$5,000 in Chafee Grant funding if they:

- a) Do nothing- foster youth are auto-enrolled into the Chafee Grant
- b) Complete a separate application for the Chafee Grant **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- c) Participate in Extended Foster Care

#5- One critical step after creating a WebGrants 4 Students account is:

- a) Indicating if you will have on-campus housing
- b) Verifying that your GPA was successfully submitted **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- c) Submitting your SAT/ACT scores

#6- Satisfactory Academic Progress is:

- a) Passing enough classes along the way

- b) Completing in a reasonable time
- c) Completing with a high enough GPA
- d) All of the above **[CORRECT ANSWER]**
- e) None of the above.

Section VIII: Setting Up Foster Youth for College Success (slides 69-79)

A continuum of resources and supports are available at both the community colleges and at the 4-year public universities throughout California to help foster youth succeed. In addition, many private colleges are beginning to offer similar support services. This section encourages caregivers to proactively connect students through a warm handoff to these campus support services as a strategy to prevent summer melt and increase persistence and retention. Summer melt is when high school students are accepted into college but fail to enroll in college in the fall after high school due to factors such as lack of support, resources, guidance, and encouragement.

All California State University (CSU) and University of California (UC) campuses and community colleges also have support programs specifically designed to meet the needs of foster youth. Many foster youth lack a support system in their lives and can feel alone at college. In addition to the tangible resources these programs may provide such as transportation assistance or food, these programs also help to create a community that feels safe and supportive to foster youth. A youth video talks about how impactful these programs were to their postsecondary success and a comprehensive list of campus programs and contact information is available on the California College Pathways website, which is listed on slide 69.

At CSUs and UCs, these programs can vary widely in name and services offered, and are available to students who were in foster care for at least one day at *any time*. Many of these programs go by the name of “Guardian Scholars,” but not all. Foster youth may need assistance in learning about these various programs and their unique names, such as REACH, STARS, LINC, Resilient Scholars, RISE, and so on.

, As of January 2023, every community college in California now has a state-funded foster youth support program called NextUp. This program provides services and funding that go above and beyond those that are typically offered to EOPS students. Students are eligible for NextUp programs if they have been in care on or after their 13th birthday and enter the program before the age of 26. Some community colleges also offer other foster youth support programs for students who are not eligible for NextUp.

While there are a wide range of supports available specifically for foster youth, it is important for caregivers to recognize that some students may not want to self-identify once in college. Some youth may feel a negative stigma about their involvement in the foster care system or may want to no longer have involvement with the foster care community. Caregivers should take the time to educate youth about the benefits of disclosing their foster youth status and the range of supports available to them.

In addition to the above programs, there are also a range of support services that colleges provide, regardless of foster care status. Slide 70 provides an overview of these resources, which include: EOP and EOPS, CalWorks and CARE, Counseling and Psychological Services, student disability services, basic needs center, tutoring, cultural programming and student clubs, Rising Scholars, Dream Centers and the College Promise. Students can access multiple programs simultaneously, depending on what is available at their college, to meet their holistic needs and interests.

Students may associate a negative stigma with these services and may hesitate to ask for help, especially when it comes to mental health counseling and disability services. Foster youth may have an even harder time asking for help due to their past experiences of trauma, neglect, and abandonment. Trainers should emphasize that caregivers can play a tremendous role in normalizing these services, in explaining the benefits, and in reducing any negative stigma. It is helpful to proactively inform foster youth of the services available to them so that they can get connected to support early on. Starting college with the rights supports can help ensure that foster youth have a positive experience and succeed in reaching their educational goals.

“Help is Available for Caregivers” (slides 71-74) provides a list of resources for caregivers to remind them that they are not alone in this process. There are many adult professionals who can provide support, including within their child’s school, within the child welfare system, and at local community-based organizations (CBO’s). Caregivers are encouraged to leverage the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM) to discuss the youth’s college and career goals and get them connected to the appropriate resources and supports to assist them in reaching their goals. Staff from the child’s school are also encouraged to attend education-focused CFTM’s to support teaming and collaboration.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 79): Quiz #4

Estimated Time: 7-minutes

Use this slide as an opportunity to create competitive quizzes to test your attendee’s knowledge and help reinforce key concepts from the “Setting Up Foster Youth for College Success” Section. Platforms such as Kahoots or Mentimeter are encouraged for this activity and can be utilized on people’s smart phones or browsers for both in-person and Zoom trainings. Alternatively, polls could be created via Zoom. If the trainer would like to download and view individual responses to the questions, the poll should not be set to anonymous. If possible, try to provide a prize for the winner of each quiz. This can include free college swag donated by your local college or e-gift cards that can be sent via email. Get creative! For attendees that are not as tech savvy, utilizing a quiz via Kahoots or Mentimeter may be challenging. The format may need to be adapted based on the technology proficiency of your audience.

Below are some sample questions that could be used on an online quiz platform:

#1. Which of the following is a support program found at all California community colleges just for foster youth:

- a) Rising Scholars

- b) NextUp [**CORRECT ANSWER**]
- c) CARE
- d) Dream Centers

#2. Accommodations for students with disabilities applies to:

- a) Physical disabilities only.
- b) Mental health disabilities only.
- c) Learning disabilities only.
- e) All of the above. [**CORRECT ANSWER**]

#3. CFTMs can be a place for caregivers to discuss a youth's college and career goals.

- a) True [**CORRECT ANSWER**]
- b) False

#4. To be eligible for the Independent Living Program, youth MUST:

- a) Be in extended foster care
- b) Have an open case
- c) Be suitably placed in care or Kin-Gap between ages 16-18 [**CORRECT ANSWER**]
- d) Have been in care at least one day at any age.

Section IX: Closing- handouts, vignette, and reflection (slides 80-83)

This closing section provides an opportunity for caregivers to engage with their peers and apply the information discussed throughout this course through a student vignette. In addition, caregivers are left to reflect on the content to determine how they will apply this information to the youth in their care. The goal of this course is to not only increase the knowledge of caregivers about how to support youth in care with college planning, but to also influence their behaviors to lead to increased support.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 81): "Let's Practice- What would YOU do?"

Estimated Time: 15 minutes

Now that trainers have reviewed all information, it is time to practice applying these concepts! Caregivers should be provided the student vignette found within the caregiver materials under "Student Vignette."

Depending on the number of people in attendance, divide the audience into two or more small groups and provide the student vignette. This can be done either in-person or in small groups via breakout groups on Zoom. Ask one person in the group to report out to the larger group. As the facilitator, be prepared to provide additional responses if key strategies and themes are not addressed in the report out. Below is information about some of the potential responses for the student vignettes:

Student Vignette Discussion Questions Part I:

- **Which college pathway might be a good fit for Kimberly?** There are a few potential options available to Kimberly, depending on which route she chooses. This question will allow caregivers to explore many scenarios. Given that she is behind in credits, she might explore AB 167/217 graduation exemptions if she is not able to reasonably complete her high school's graduation requirements within 4-years of high school. If she chooses to go this route, she will not fulfil the "A-G" requirements required for a CSU or UC, and will likely have to pursue a community college, or a private or out-of-state college that does not require these courses. Kimberly will want to discuss with her Educational Rights Holder which option is best for her based on her interests and goals. However, if she is able to reasonably complete her high school courses, perhaps through summer-school, a CSU could be an option for her given her current GPA. The CSUs have a minimum 2.0 GPA requirement, while UCs have a minimum 3.0 GPA requirement. Alternatively, if she does the graduation exemption requirements, and is still interested in a CSU pathway, she should still apply and be sure to apply to EOP within the CSU application. Students enrolled in EOP may qualify for admissions exemptions. Kimberly could apply to CSUs and community colleges to keep her options open.
- **What strategies could be used to help encourage and motivate Kimberly into postsecondary education?** Kimberly has a career goal of becoming a veterinarian, but does not yet understand the postsecondary educational requirements necessary to pursue a career as a veterinarian. Her interest in this field is a strength that should be built upon. Caregivers could use tools such as CA Career Zone to explore the educational requirements and career trajectory for this field. If Kimberly is deterred by the lengthy schooling requirements, other career exploration tools, like Salary Surfer, CA Career Zone or Gladeo, could help her research related fields that work with animals that may not have the same educational requirements. These tools can also help Kimberly learn about the salary projections in these fields, which could help to be a motivator.

Alternatively, Kimberly could be enrolled into a dual enrollment course to help build her exposure to a college campus and increase her engagement and motivation in school. Academic enrichment programs could also be explored to help her build peer relationships and increase her college readiness. Lastly, volunteer opportunities could help her explore her interests and increase her motivation by finding a career path that is also in line with her educational goals.

- **What resources can be leveraged to help Kimberly graduate from high school and attend college?** Similar to the question above, dual enrollment courses and academic enrichments programs can also be a strategy to assist with helping her graduate from high school. A CFT Meeting could be leveraged to explore a plan to help Kimberly reach her goals. Kimberly may benefit from being connected to resources such as tutoring due to her low GPA and mental health services to address her anxiety disorder which

could be a barrier to her long-term higher education journey.

Student Vignette Discussion Questions Part II:

- **What steps should Kimberly take to apply to community college, including financial aid?** In this scenario, Kimberly ultimately chooses to pursue a degree at a community college. To apply, Kimberly will need to complete an application at www.cccapply.org and should be encouraged to self-identify as a foster youth. To apply for financial aid, Kimberly ideally should complete the CA Dream Act Application (CADAA) by the March 2nd priority deadline, however, since she is planning on attending a community college, she will qualify for state aid as long as she applies before September 2nd. Additionally, she will be eligible for the Chafee Grant and should complete a separate application. Lastly, she should create a WebGrants for Students account to manage her state aid and Chafee Grant. Within WebGrants, she should be sure to confirm whether her GPA was submitted by her high school and take steps to submit a GPA verification form if it was not.
- **Which benefits and programs is she eligible for at the community college?** It is recommended that Kimberly also apply for EOPS. Given her experience in the foster care system, she will likely qualify. Additionally, Kimberly is eligible for the NextUp program, which requires students to be in out-of-home care as a dependent or ward of the court for at least one day after the age of 13. She may also be eligible for another foster youth support program at her campus, such as Guardian Scholars. Given her time in the foster care system, she is also eligible for priority registration and should complete the necessary steps to access this benefit, which includes completing the orientation, assessment and education plan process. Each campus has a different priority registration deadline, typically in the Spring semester of her senior year, which Kimberly will need to research.

There are many other programs at the community college not specific to foster care that Kimberly may want to access. For example, there may be cultural programming or clubs for Latinx students or a Dream Center on campus for undocumented students. In addition, she should be connected to the disability support services department to get an accommodation due to her learning disability and anxiety disorder.

- **What steps can you take to help connect Kimberly to various college resources to ensure a smooth transition to college?** It's important for caregivers to facilitate a warm handoff to these various services and resources before Kimberly graduates high school to help prevent summer melt and get her connected to support proactively. This can happen in many ways, for example, the caregiver could go to campus with the student for an initial meeting with some of the programs or help facilitate an initial Zoom meeting or phone call to learn more about the program with the student. Given her current fears or concerns, it may be intimidating for Kimberly to initiate these new relationships and services. Additionally, the caregiver could take Kimberly to the campus to feel more comfortable with the transition to a new school and environment

and build her college-knowledge. Kimberly may be hesitant to self-disclose her foster care system or IEP status, given the negative stigma that is often associated with these labels. A caregiver can take time to normalize these experiences and services for Kimberly. Lastly, it is recommended that Kimberly be proactively connected to mental health services to address her anxiety, which is impacting her current schooling and could continue to impact her college coursework.

Interaction Opportunity (slide 82): Reflection Question

Estimated Time: 6 minutes

As discussed throughout the training, caregivers can play an active role in supporting their youth to enroll in college. Ask the group to reflect on the information that they have learned in the training and ask the question on the slide that states, “What is at least one thing that you will do differently with your youth within the next 30 days to support them in achieving a higher education?” This is an opportunity for caregivers to reflect on how they will apply the knowledge. Depending on the size of your group, there are many different ways to facilitate this.

In-person:

- **Pair and Share:** Ask participants to introduce themselves to one person seated next to them. As a pair, participants will respond to the question on the slide. Once the facilitator calls participants back into one large group, the facilitator will select a few volunteers to share back what responses their group discussed.
- **Group share:** If it is a small group, ask each participant to go around the room and share their response.
- **Post-It Collage:** Before the presentation, the facilitator can place post-its at each person’s desk. Ask participants to write at least one thing that they will do differently with their youth within the next 30 days onto the post-It and then post it on the wall. If they have more than one idea, have them write each idea on a separate post-it. As the facilitator, read aloud some of the responses and highlight any themes.

Via Zoom:

- **Pair and Share:** Use a break-out room feature to break attendees into small groups or pairs to answer the question using the “Pair and Share” interaction opportunity listed above.
- **Group share:** If it is a small group, ask each participant to unmute themselves and share their response. If it is a large group, ask each person to write their responses in the chat. As the facilitator, read aloud some of the responses and highlight any themes.

Via Mentimeter:

- For larger groups online, Mentimeter can be a great way to poll your audience and engage them in a discussion. Using the “open-ended questions” response option, people can type in their future plans and have it scroll on the screen. The facilitator can

read some of the responses aloud as they are entered, noticing any high-level themes or patterns.

Further Reading

California College Pathways (2013). At Greater Risk - California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College. Available online at:

http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/at_greater_risk.pdf.

California College Pathways (2015). Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success. Available online at: http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/charting_the_course_final.pdf.

Courtney, M. et al (2011). Midwest Evaluation of Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26. Available online at:

http://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/Midwest%20Evaluation_Report_4_10_12.pdf

CalYOUTH Study- A Series of reports designed to evaluate the impact of California's extended foster care program on outcomes during the transition to adulthood for foster youth, including educational outcomes from 2014-2020. Available online at:

<https://www.chapinhall.org/research/cal youth/>

Gross, J. (2016). Challenges and Experiences of Former Foster Youth in Postsecondary Education. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin Center for the Advancement of Postsecondary Education (WISCAPE). Available online at: <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/FFE-in-PSE.pdf>.

Lopez, K. and B. T. Duran (2016). Transition Age Foster Youth: Getting Them Into and Through College. Fresno, CA: Central Valley Higher Education Consortium. Available online at:

http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Foster-Youth_CVHEC_report_final_2-1.pdf.

National Working Group on Foster Care and Education (2014). Fostering Success in Education: National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care. Available online at:

http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/datasheet_jan_2014_update.pdf.

Wiegmann, W., et al. (2014). The Invisible Achievement Gap Part 2: How the Foster Care Experiences of California Public School Students Are Associated with Their Education Outcomes. Available online at:

<http://www.cacollegepathways.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/the-invisible-achievement-gap-part-2.pdf>.