

12th Grade Checklist

This checklist includes activities that you can complete to move to the next step in your educational journey.

This checklist references sections found in *College and Career Bound: A Planning Guide for 12th Grade Students in Foster Care*. Visit jbay.org/resources/ed-planning-guide to access the complete guide.

TIP



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS!

Learn about all the rights of foster youth and what to do if your rights are violated at: fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov/foster-youth-rights. Share this resource with your caregiver, counselor, or other trusted adult who can help you advocate for your educational rights.

EDUCATION PLANNING



- Work with your school counselor, or another trusted adult, to identify which postsecondary pathway is best for your interests.** See Section 5 for more information on the different postsecondary education pathways.
- If you have a disability,** request a copy of your most recent Individualized Education Program (IEP) plan that includes your diagnosis. For youth 16 or older, the IEP should include a plan, along with goals, to support you in the transition to postsecondary education. Remember, you may be eligible for services through the Department of Rehabilitation. Learn more in Section 9.
- If you haven't already done so, create a physical or online folder to store important documents and add report cards from 12th grade along with any certificates or awards earned.** You can use google.com/drive to store important documents online.
- Develop a system to safely store all login usernames and passwords.** You will be creating new accounts in the college and financial aid application process.
- Create an email address that is only for college and financial aid application information.** Avoid using a high school email address since those often expire once you graduate.
- Determine which colleges you want to apply to.**
 - If you are interested in applying to a four-year college or university and have taken the necessary courses, work with your counselor to make a list of colleges that include both colleges that you are likely to be accepted to ("safety schools") and "reach schools" that have more competitive entrance requirements.
 - If you are interested in community college, explore which colleges have the programs you are interested in.
- Schedule tours/informational interviews to help narrow down choices and learn more about available services.** Schedule an in-person or virtual visit to a college campus or attend a college fair to explore options. See Section 9 and visit cacollegepathways.org for more information.



HIGH SCHOOL COURSEWORK AND GRADUATION



- Students interested in attending four-year universities:** Talk to a high school counselor to make sure you are enrolled in approved “a-g” coursework and on track to apply to a four-year college or university. Learn more about these courses in Section 2 and by visiting calstate.edu/how-to-get-to-calstate or bit.ly/UCOP-AG. Don’t worry though if you haven’t taken “a-g” classes in high school. You can go to community college first and transfer to a university!
- Request tutoring or other supports as needed.** If you struggle with your classes, talk to a high school counselor, Foster Youth District Liaison, or County Office of Education Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) to help you get tutoring and/or complete an assessment for additional support. Learn more about tutoring resources in Section 9.
- Talk with your high school counselor to see if you are a good candidate for dual enrollment.** Dual enrollment courses allow students to earn college credit while also satisfying a requirement for high school graduation. Sometimes you can take these classes at your high school!
- Create an account at californiacolleges.edu, if you haven’t yet, and update the High School Education Planner every semester with your grades earned.** If you decide to apply to a California State University (CSU), course information will automatically transfer to your college application.
- Review your academic record(s) throughout the year and, if you are behind in credits, identify opportunities for credit recovery** such as summer school, adult school, continuation school, or remaining in high school for a fifth year. Your school district must consult with you and your Education Rights Holder (ERH), if you are under the age of 18, to see which option is best for you. An ERH can be a parent, legal guardian, or other responsible adult who will represent your interests when making decisions about your education.

- If you are not on track to graduate high school by June**, work with your ERH to explore options such as staying in high school for a fifth year, graduation exemptions for foster youth (AB 167/216), or getting a high school equivalency certificate (i.e., GED or HiSET). Learn more about these options in Section 2.
- If you change schools during the school year**, your old school must provide the new school with all records regardless of any outstanding fees. Work with your school counselor or Foster Youth District Liaison to review your transcript for partial credit options.



Student Spotlight:
Selecting Your Postsecondary Institution

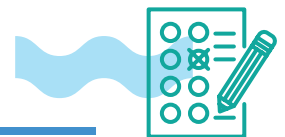


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TESTING

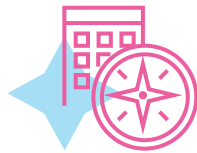


- Optional (fall semester only): Sign up to take or retake the SAT and/or ACT. If possible, register for an earlier test date so you have a chance to take the exam again if desired.** The SAT and ACT are no longer required for admission to the CSUs or UCs, however, some private universities and out-of-state colleges still require the exam(s) as part of their admissions process.
- To learn more about when to register for the SAT go to satsuite.collegeboard.org. For the ACT go to act.org.

- Ask your high school counselor for a **fee waiver** for the exam and about any **test prep courses** available through the school.
- Ask your social worker/probation officer about **funding available to help pay for the prep courses**.

- **If applicable, work with your counselor to register in the fall to take the Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams for 12th grade courses in the spring, usually in May.** Ask a school counselor about AP/IB exam fee waivers. Try to have a list of colleges you are interested in attending on hand so you can identify the colleges where you want your scores sent.

COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION



- **Explore interests.** Take or update a career interest assessment like the ones in Section 6.
- **Participate in extracurriculars.** Find activities you enjoy, like sports, clubs, or volunteering. Participating in these activities can help you explore interests, build skills, and strengthen college and job applications!
- **Get work experience.** If you are under the age of 18 and still enrolled in high school, you will need a work permit to get a job. Your school counselor or social worker/probation officer can assist in getting a work permit. Visit laoyc.org/guides to learn more about getting your first job.
- Students with a documented disability may be eligible for career services through the Department of Rehabilitation. See Section 9 for more information.

CHILD WELFARE AND PROBATION DEPARTMENT RESOURCES



- **Transitional Independent Living Plan & Agreement (TILP).** If you are living in out-of-home foster care and are 16 years or older, the TILP is a form that must be completed every six months to guide the activities that you, your social worker/probation officer, and other adults will work on to support your transition to adulthood. The TILP should reflect **your goals**, including college and career goals, and should specify which adults will support you in completing the steps necessary to meet your goals.
- **Postsecondary Education Support Person.** Social workers/probation officers must identify a postsecondary education support person(s) to assist all foster youth ages 16 or older who express an interest in college with completing their college applications, including career and technical education, as well as their financial aid applications.
- **Child & Family Team (CFT) Meeting.** This is YOUR meeting. The CFT meeting brings together a group of people, including you, to help make the best plans for your safety, well-being, and future. A meeting should happen at least every six months. You can invite your postsecondary education support person(s), teacher, counselor, coaches, and other trusted adults to your CFT meeting to help you plan for your postsecondary education and career goals.



Student Spotlight:
Advice for Seniors

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- ❑ **Independent Living Program (ILP).** Connect with your social worker/probation officer or local ILP to determine your eligibility and to learn more about what resources and activities ILP provides. Each county's program varies. Find a statewide ILP roster at: jbay.org/resources/ilp-roster.
- ❑ **Housing Options.** Work with your social worker/probation officer or ILP coordinator to explore your housing options. If you are eligible for Extended Foster Care (EFC), you may have multiple housing options. Make sure to start making a housing plan six to nine months prior to graduation.
- ❑ **Vital Documents.** Social workers/probation officers can assist you in gathering original vital documents, and should provide copies to all youth 16 years or older. Make sure to upload these documents into a secure electronic storage system such as ifoster.org or google.com/drive.

IMPORTANT VITAL DOCUMENTS FOR ADULTHOOD



- Photo ID, such as a CA State ID card, CA REAL ID or driver's license.
- U.S. Social Security Card or Permanent Resident Card (aka Green Card) if a non-US Citizen.
- Original birth certificate.
- Verification letter (dependent/ward of the court letter) to access foster youth benefits in college. See the "Applying for Financial Aid" section for more information.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID



Go to jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide/ to get the comprehensive Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and companion FAFSA and CADAA Step-by-Step Guides for California Foster Youth. The checklist below provides a brief overview:

- ❑ **Apply for financial aid by completing either the FAFSA or CADAA.** Not sure which one? Speak to your school counselor for assistance.
 - U.S. Citizens and permanent residents should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at fafsa.gov.
 - Eligible undocumented students should complete the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) at dream.csac.ca.gov.
- ❑ **Create an FSA-ID if completing the FAFSA online.** You will need to provide your name (exactly as it appears on your social security card), date of birth, social security number and an email address. It is recommended that students create an FSA ID 3-7 days in advance of completing the FAFSA to allow for processing time at studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch.
- ❑ **Submit your FAFSA or CADAA by the March 2nd priority deadline.** Applications open as early as October 1st for the following year. Students can apply after the deadline but may receive less aid.
 - If you plan to attend a four-year university, apply by the March 2nd deadline.
 - Students attending a California Community College have until September 2nd to submit the FAFSA or CADAA to receive a Cal Grant and Student Success Completion Grant award, but applying as early as possible (e.g., March 2nd) is recommended as some sources, such as the Chafee Grant, are granted on a first-come-first-served basis.

Ask your social worker/probation officer for assistance to make sure you are connected to individual support when completing your financial aid applications to prevent errors and get more money in your pocket!



❑ Gather documents and information necessary to complete the FAFSA or CADAA:

- Name and social security number, exactly as it appears on your Social Security Card, or Alien Registration Number [FAFSA applicants only].
- Statewide Student Identifier number (SSID) or Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) [CADAA only].
- Email address that you check often (avoid using a high school email that will likely expire once you leave high school).
- List of up to 20 colleges where you plan to apply. At least one must be listed.
- When you complete the FAFSA online, you must provide consent to electronically share federal tax information from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), even if you didn't file a tax return. You may also need to provide information about your current assets, like how much cash is in your checking and savings accounts. Students who receive certain federal benefits, such as CalFresh or Medi-Cal, are exempt from having to provide information on current assets. In some limited cases, certain tax information may need to be input manually.

❑ Make sure to identify as a foster youth on the FAFSA or CADAA to receive "Independent Status."

If you lived in out-of-home foster care placement for at least one day after the age of 13, or if you are in legal guardianship currently or were when you turned 18, you can complete the FAFSA or CADAA as an "Independent Student." This means that you do not need to report any financial information about your biological parents, foster parents/resource parents, guardians, or adoptive parents on the FAFSA or CADAA, and may qualify for more money.

❑ Complete the Chafee Grant application at chafee.csac.ca.gov.

If you were in out-of-home foster care placement for at least one day between the ages of 16 to 18 you can receive up to \$5,000 per academic year for up to five years (whether or not consecutive) until age 26.

❑ Create a Webgrants 4 Students account at mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov once the FAFSA or CADAA is processed in order to manage state aid like the Cal Grant Chafee Grant, and Middle Class Scholarship online. It can take one to two weeks for the FAFSA to process before an account can be created. Once created, use Webgrants to:

- Check for errors related to state grants.
- Indicate where you plan to attend college and self-certify your high school graduation date.
- Verify that your high school GPA has been received by the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC) and matched on your Webgrants account to receive the Cal Grant. You can also reach out to your local Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program (FYSCP) for help. Please note, students must have a 2.0 minimum high school GPA to be eligible for a Cal Grant. For a list of FYSCP contacts by county, visit cde.ca.gov/ls/pf/fy.

❑ Work with your school counselor to research and apply for additional private scholarships. See the Financial Aid Guide for California Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth for more info: jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide.

❑ Obtain a dependency or "ward of the court" letter to verify that you were in foster care. Campus programs may request this letter to confirm eligibility for certain foster youth benefits, including financial aid. TIP: Be sure to save a digital copy for easy access in the future.

- Current foster youth can contact their social worker/probation officer or Independent Living Program (ILP or ILSP) Coordinator.
- Former foster youth can call the California Foster Care Ombudsperson's office at 877-846-1602 or visit fosteryouthhelp.ca.gov.

❑ Check your email at least weekly and respond promptly to any requests for additional information.



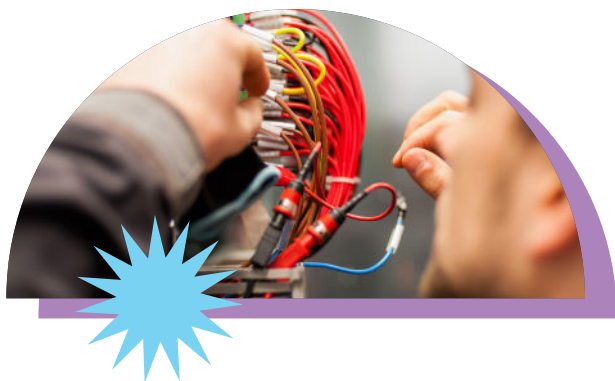
Student Spotlight:
Tips for Applying for Financial Aid

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Scan here to watch.



- ❑ **EXPLORE HOUSING OPTIONS.** Start Early! With your social worker/probation officer and ILP Coordinator explore housing options located close to your top three college choices. While most community colleges do not offer on-campus housing, a few do—and campus foster youth support program staff may be able to connect you with housing resources.
- ❑ **REGISTER FOR CLASSES.** Foster youth who were in care for at least one day after the age of 13 should take advantage of priority registration to register for classes early. Deadlines to register for classes vary by campus but are typically in the spring of the student’s senior year. Students must first complete orientation, assessment, and an education plan to qualify to sign up for classes. Students may need to provide a dependent or ward of the court letter as proof of foster care status. See Section 8 for *Tips on Registering for and Succeeding in Classes*.
- ❑ **PAY FEES.** Once you register for classes, you will see enrollment fees appear in your student portal. In most cases, enrollment fees do not need to be paid until after your financial aid has been processed. You can reach out to the foster youth campus support program, such as NextUp, to find out the best way to pay for any enrollment, health, and/or student activity fees.
 - Most foster youth will qualify for the CA College Promise Grant (CCPG) to waive course tuition fees when they complete the FAFSA or CADAA.
 - Some fees, such as health and student activity fees, may not be covered by the CCPG.



FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES: APPLICATION AND ENROLLMENT



Applying to a California State University (CSU) or University of California (UC)

- ❑ **BEGIN YOUR PERSONAL ESSAY.** Begin writing as early as the summer before senior year to make time for teachers and counselors to review your essay. This essay can be used for the CSU Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) application, UC applications, and private scholarships. Learn about EOP in Section 9.
- ❑ **SELECT CAMPUSES AND MAJOR(S).** Determine which CSU and/or UC campuses you may want to attend, and which major (or program of study) most interests you. Do your research and ask your high school counselor about “impacted campuses and majors.” “Impacted” means that a particular campus or major does not have enough space for all students that apply.
- ❑ **APPLY.** Start your application to the CSUs and/or UCs early! ***Make sure that a counselor or adult supporter is available to review your application before you hit “submit.”*** Foster youth, based on their income and household size, are typically eligible to receive fee waivers to waive application fees for up to four CSU and four UC applications.
 - **CSUs (calstate.edu/apply):** ***Apply between Oct. 1st – Nov. 30th.*** Some CSU’s may have extended application deadlines. Refer to the Applications and Deadlines section of calstate.edu/apply to learn more. Students who used the High School Planner at californiacolleges.edu will automatically have their records transferred to the application. If you did not use the High School Planner located at californiacolleges.edu, you will need to manually enter high school coursework and grades by referring to your high school transcript(s). **DO NOT** enter your grades based on memory as this can lead to errors.
 - **UCs (universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions):** ***Applications open Aug. 1st and can be submitted Oct. 1st – Nov. 30th.*** You will need to manually enter your high school coursework and grades. Refer to your high school transcripts (or academic records) to make sure you enter the correct information.

- **ON-CAMPUS HOUSING.** Indicate your interest in on-campus housing (i.e., “dorms” or “residence halls”) within your admissions application to receive information on housing options, even if you aren’t sure. Most foster youth qualify for priority access to on-campus housing, and if you are eligible for Extended Foster Care, the Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) stipend can help cover the cost of room and board.
- **APPLY FOR EOP (OPTIONAL BUT RECOMMENDED).** The Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) application can be found within the CSU application. The EOP program is available at all CSUs, but is only available at some of the UCs. EOP can provide book grants and scholarships, and can potentially help a student be admitted to the university who does not meet the regular admission criteria. Learn more here: calstate.edu/attend/student-services/eop/apply-to-eop.
- Ask at least two people (teachers, counselors, coaches, etc.) to write letters of recommendation and remind them to check their emails for the recommendation link.
- Ask the recommenders to let you know when they have submitted the recommendations to make sure your EOP application is complete.
- **REQUEST TRANSCRIPTS.** Send one copy of your official transcript as requested in January and the other before July 15th to confirm completion of required courses. You can request an extra copy of your transcript to save for the future.



Acceptance, Course Enrollment, and Fees at a CSU or UC

- **MAKE A DECISION.** Submit a Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) by May 1st. When making a decision, consider factors such as campus culture, available support, on-campus housing, and the out-of-pocket cost based on how much financial aid you were offered. Learn more about comparing financial aid award letters in the *Financial Aid Guide for CA Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth*: jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide.
- **CONNECT TO ON-CAMPUS FOSTER YOUTH SUPPORT PROGRAMS,** and other relevant resources, as soon as you know where you plan to attend. All CSUs and UCs have foster youth support programs. To qualify, students must be in foster care at least one day. Program names and services vary by campus. To learn more about the various programs and find contact information, see Section 9 and visit cacollegepathways.org.
 - **If applicable, contact the Students with Disabilities’ Services** office on your future campus to learn about any accommodations you may be eligible for. You can submit your latest Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan with your diagnosis or learn more about other ways to qualify for services. Start early to be able to receive special accommodations before the start of the fall term. Students may also submit a letter from a mental health therapist or medical professional to qualify for services.
- **PAY A DEPOSIT.** A non-refundable deposit is required to hold your spot. Contact the campus foster youth support program to help explore potential arrangements to postpone payment until your financial aid funds are awarded.
- **APPLY FOR ON-CAMPUS HOUSING (I.E., “DORMS”).** Eligible foster youth may be entitled to priority access to on-campus housing. Limited family housing for students with children may be available at some colleges. Many applications will require a non-refundable deposit. Work directly with the foster youth campus support program to ask if the housing department will waive housing

fees until financial aid is processed in the fall. If not, reach out to your ILP Coordinator for possible assistance.

- **Students planning to live on campus will also be asked to provide updated vaccination records** for childhood vaccinations (MMR, Tetanus, etc.). Other vaccinations may be recommended or required by the campus housing department (e.g., Covid-19, meningitis).
- **Use the summer to help gather the items you will need for your dorm.** Items you will need include sheets, bedding, laundry basket and detergent, hangers, toiletries, school supplies, and more! Connect with the campus foster youth support program or with your local ILP program to determine what support is available. See Section 9 for college resources.
- **REGISTER FOR CLASSES.** Work with the foster youth campus support program to find out if you are eligible for priority registration, and if so, take advantage of it to enroll in classes early. See Section 8 for *Tips on Registering for and Succeeding in Classes*.

WARNING

Avoid “for-profit” or “proprietary” vocational colleges like those you may have seen advertised on television.

They offer programs at a higher cost than similar community college programs. Many students end up with tens of thousands of dollars of debt. Units earned in for-profit programs may not always transfer. Do your research!

Applying to a Private College or University

- **DO YOUR RESEARCH.** Admission criteria, applications, and deadlines vary at each private college or university. Do your research early, starting the summer before senior year, to have time to plan.
- **BEGIN YOUR PERSONAL ESSAY(S).** Ask a school counselor or other adult supporter to review your drafts. If comfortable, you can include information about your foster care experience in your essay, which may help you qualify for more financial aid.
- **REQUEST RECOMMENDATION LETTERS.** Ask school counselors, teachers, or other individuals who can speak to your skills, talents, and strengths. It is helpful to provide your recommender with a “Brag Sheet” that lists your skills, education, and achievements throughout high school. Visit the Common App Ready Toolkit commonapp.org/counselors-and-recommenders/common-app-ready for a sample brag sheet and other resources.
- **APPLY.** Many private colleges use the Common Application (commonapp.org). Most applications are due by January 1st. Foster youth are typically eligible for an application fee waiver for up to four campuses. Use a copy of your high school transcripts to enter coursework and grades correctly.
- **MAKE A DECISION.** Once you find out which colleges you have been accepted to, consider factors such as campus culture, available supports, on-campus housing, and the cost of attendance based on how much financial aid is offered. Learn more about comparing financial aid award letters in the *Financial Aid Guide for CA Foster and Unaccompanied Homeless Youth*: jbay.org/resources/financial-aid-guide.