

Postsecondary Options for Students

Financial aid programs for students who have been in foster care or who have experienced homelessness

Agenda

- Overview of eligibility, award amounts, and application process
 - ETV program
 - FosterEd program
 - EmpowerEd program
- Contact information



Education and Training Voucher

The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program is federally funded and administered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

The program provides financial assistance for students who have experienced foster care as they pursue a postsecondary education.



ETV Eligibility Criteria

Students can receive ETV funds for five years (consecutive or intermittent) of post-secondary education, regardless of the number of credit hours completed during their enrollment.

- Between the ages of 17 and 25,
- A U.S. citizen, or qualified non-citizen,
- Current Colorado resident,
- Were in foster care on or after their **14th birthday**,
 - Or were in a Division of Youth Services community placement on or after their **14th birthday**,
 - Or had a finalized adoption with adoption assistance on or after their **16th birthday**,
 - Or had guardianship assistance established on or after their **16th birthday**.
- Accepted into and enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, or vocational school, and
- Meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP).

Award Amount



Tuition & Fees

Books &
Supplies

Housing

Transportation

Living
Expenses

Childcare

Other School-
Related
Expenses

- Students can receive up to \$5,000 per academic year (individual student cases may vary).
- ETV funds are sent directly to the institution for disbursement.



How to Apply

1. Complete the FAFSA for the appropriate school year.

2. Obtain a Confirmation of Foster Care Experience Form.

3. Submit an ETV Application.

*Foster care confirmation form is required to submit application

**Please note that since the ETV program is federally funded, CDHE does not receive funding until late October and the disbursement of this money can take several weeks after it is received to be distributed by the institutions to students (subject to delays).

FosterEd: A Pathway to Higher Education

The FosterEd program is state-funded and administered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education.

The program provides financial support for post-secondary education at in-state public institutions of higher education for students that have experienced foster care.



Eligibility Criteria

FosterEd will cover up to 132 semester credit hours or 198 quarter credit hours starting from the time a student enrolls in the program. Credits earned prior to joining this program will not count towards the credit limit.

****Please note, there is no age limit for this program.**

- Current Colorado resident,
- Was in foster care in Colorado on or after their **13th birthday**,
 - Or was in a noncertified kinship care placement in Colorado on or after their **13th birthday**, and, at any age, were adjudicated neglected or dependent pursuant to the Colorado Children's Code - Article 3 of Title 19,
- Attending a state public institution of higher education, local district college, or area technical college, and
- Currently enrolled in courses leading toward a certificate of completion, associate, bachelor's, or postgraduate degree and in Satisfactory Academic Progress as defined by the institution of attendance.

Award Amount



Tuition & Fees

Books &
Supplies

Housing

Transportation

Living
Expenses

Childcare

Other School-
Related
Expenses

- FosterEd covers the remaining balance of a qualifying student's total cost of attendance after all other financial aid awards have been applied.
- The institution's financial aid office will determine the award amount on an individual student level.
- The state pays 50% and the institutions pay 50%.
- FosterEd funds are sent directly to the institution for disbursement.

How to Apply



1. Complete either the FAFSA or the CASFA for the appropriate school year.

2. Complete the ETV application, if eligible.

3. Complete the FosterEd application.

*Foster care confirmation form is required to submit application

*Students must provide proof of foster care eligibility on a court affidavit or the Confirmation of Foster Care Experience form from the child welfare database. If a student does not have one of those forms, they should contact the County in which they experienced foster care. This may include their caseworker, Chafee worker, or contacting the county's Department of Human Services (DHS) to request this documentation.

[Contact information for Colorado county's DHS](#)

What Documents are Accepted?

- Confirmation of Foster Care Experience form(s)
- Foster Care Dependency form
- Confirmation of Non-Certified Kinship Care**

**Non-Certified Kinship Care needs to be verified with the Colorado Dept. of Human Services

Students who do not have these documents should contact the county they experienced foster care in.

Documentation may be requested from their caseworker, Chafee worker, or the county's human services office.

If the school wants to obtain the form(s) directly, the student must sign a release of information that must be provided to CDHS and/or the county.



STATE OF COLORADO
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
DIVISION OF CHILD WELFARE
1575 SHERMAN STREET
DENVER, COLORADO 80203-1714

CONFIRMATION OF FOSTER CARE

Confirmation of Foster Care Experience Form

To Whom it may concern,

The purpose of this letter is to confirm that (State ID), born on , was in foster care in the legal custody or placement authority (Section 19-1-103(51.3), C.R.S.) within the state of Colorado for

The following counties had legal custody during the dates provided:

County:

Removal Begin Date

Removal End Date

Removal Length (Days)

Program:	FosterEd	Education and Training Voucher (ETV)
Type:	State Program	Federal Program (administered by individual states)
Age Limit:	No age limit	Between the ages of 17 and 25
Eligibility:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Colorado resident • In foster care from age 13+ in Colorado • OR in noncertified kinship care in CO and, at any age, were adjudicated neglected or dependent pursuant to the Colorado Children’s Code - Article 3 of Title 19 • Attending in-State Public IHE, ATC, or LDC • Currently enrolled in classes • Completed FAFSA or CASFA • Completed ETV Grant Application, IF ELIGIBLE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Colorado resident • U.S. citizen or qualified non-citizen • Was in foster care on or after their 14th birthday • OR had a finalized adoption with adoption assistance on or after their 16th birthday • OR had a guardianship assistance established on or after their 16th birthday • OR was in a Division of Youth Services community placement on or after their 14th birthday • Has been accepted into/enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other accredited program at a college, university, technical, or vocational school.
Amount of Funding Available:	This program covers the total cost of attendance at eligible public Colorado institutions.	Up to \$5,000 per year
Time Limits:	None, as long as they are in good academic standing, and have less than 132 semester credit hours, or 198 quarter credit hours.	5 years (consecutive or intermittent)

EmpowerEd

EmpowerEd is a state-funded program, administered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education, to provide higher education funding and support to individuals who experienced homelessness and were identified as eligible for McKinney-Vento by a designated school personnel while enrolled in a Colorado high school.



What is McKinney-Vento?

The [McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) is a federal law that provides important educational rights and services to students experiencing homelessness from the time they enroll in kindergarten until their high school graduation.

Two types of designations:

- “Homeless children and youth” refers to school-aged individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.
- “Unaccompanied youth” includes homeless children and youth who are not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian.

Eligibility Criteria

****Please note:** EmpowerEd cannot be utilized to pursue a second degree of the same type. For example, if you indicate that you have already received a bachelor's degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or an associate degree. If you have an associate degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or a bachelor's degree. EmpowerEd will cover up to 132 semester credit hours or 198 quarter credit hours.

1. Identified by designated school personnel as a homeless child or youth pursuant to the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act while residing in Colorado anytime between the start of 9th grade and end of 12th grade,
2. Is at least 17 years of age, and has not yet reached 27 years,
3. Is a current Colorado resident,
4. Has completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) for the applicable school year,
5. Has been accepted into an in-state, public institution of higher education, local district college, or area technical college, and
6. Is currently enrolled in courses leading towards the qualifying student's **first*** bachelor's degree, associate degree or certificate of completion at an accredited institution of higher education while meeting Satisfactory Academic Progress.

Award Amount



Tuition & Fees

Books &
Supplies

Housing

Transportation

Living
Expenses

Childcare

Other School-
Related
Expenses

- EmpowerEd covers the remaining balance of a qualifying student's total cost of attendance after all other financial aid awards have been applied.
- The institution's financial aid office will determine the award amount on an individual student level.
- The state pays 50% and the institutions pay 50%.
- EmpowerEd funds are sent directly to the institution for disbursement.

How to Apply



1. Complete the FAFSA or CASFA and indicate past or current experience of homelessness.

2. Be accepted and enrolled at an accredited in-state public institution of higher education.

3. Complete the EmpowerEd application for the appropriate school year.

**Recent graduates are required to submit an [EmpowerEd Student Verification Form](#) that has been signed by their district's McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison with the EmpowerEd application.

If you have questions on this form, please the McKinney-Vento District Liaison for the district you graduated from for assistance. A full list of Colorado public school district McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons can be found at [https://www.cde.state.co.us/student-support/homeless liaisons](https://www.cde.state.co.us/student-support/homeless-liaisons).



EmpowerEd Student Verification Form 2026-2027

This verification form is to be used for students who **graduated after October 2025** and were identified by a legally designated school personnel as a homeless child or youth pursuant to Section 725 of the Federal “[McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#)” (42 U.S.C. SEC. 11434a), while residing in Colorado anytime between the start of 9th-grade and end of 12th-grade. Students verified as McKinney-Vento eligible prior to this time period do not need to fill out this form, as the Colorado Department of Higher Education can verify eligible status internally.

The following verification can **only** be completed by a Colorado public school district McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison. A full list of Colorado McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaisons can be found at: https://www.cde.state.co.us/studentsupport/homeless_liaisons

Student’s Legal Name: _____

Name at time of designation, if different from current name: _____

DOB: ____/____/____

SASID (State Assigned Student Identification): _____

Last Four Digits of Student’s Social Security Number, if applicable: _____

Student Graduation Year: _____

School District of Graduation: _____

With this form, I verify that the student listed above met the definition and was identified by a legally designated Colorado public school district McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison as a homeless child or youth pursuant to Section 725 of the Federal “[McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#)” (42 U.S.C. SEC. 11434a), while residing in Colorado anytime between the start of 9th-grade and end of 12th-grade.

Authorized Signature of McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Liaison:	Date:
Print Name:	Telephone Number:
Title:	
School District/ Agency:	

EmpowerEd Program Overview:

EmpowerEd (HB 24-1403) is a state-funded program administered by the Colorado Department of Higher Education to provide higher education funding and support to eligible individuals who experienced homelessness while enrolled in a Colorado high school. This assistance covers the remaining balance of the total cost of attendance after any other private, state or federal financial aid has been applied.

Students who meet the following criteria are eligible to have the remaining cost of attendance (after scholarships, grants and other financial aid awards have been applied) covered through this program for up to 132 semester credit hours or 198 quarter credit hours.

- Identified by designated school personnel as a homeless child or youth under the Federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, while residing in Colorado anytime between the start of 9th-grade and end of 12th-grade,
- Is at least 17 years of age, and not yet 27 years old,
- Is a current Colorado resident,
- Has completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Colorado Application for State Financial Aid (CASFA) for the applicable school year,
- Has been accepted into an in-state, public institution of higher education, local district college or area technical college, and
- Is enrolled in courses leading towards the qualifying student’s first bachelor’s degree, associate degree or certificate of completion at an accredited institution of higher education.

*Please note that EmpowerEd cannot be utilized to pursue a second degree of the same type. For example, if a student has already received a bachelor’s degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or an associate degree. If a student has an associate degree, EmpowerEd can only be used towards a certificate or a bachelor’s degree.

Application Process:

1. Complete the FAFSA or CASFA and indicate past or current experience of homelessness,
2. Be accepted and enrolled at an accredited Colorado public institution of higher education and
3. Complete the EmpowerEd Application and upload the McKinney-Vento EmpowerEd Verification form to the application, if applicable.

For more information on EmpowerEd and the application process, please visit:

<https://cdhe.colorado.gov/empowered>

For questions on accessing EmpowerEd, please contact eenavigator@dhe.state.co.us.

Common Questions

- What if I am in foster care or experience homelessness for one day?
- What if I qualify for multiple programs?
- Can you retroactively apply funding to outstanding balances or previous loans?
- I plan on living off campus, is there anyway funding can be sent before classes start to help with expenses?
- Can funding be utilized for summer classes?
- Are students who are undocumented able to participate in these programs?



Contact Us



FosterEd/ETV Navigator Inbox:

fcnavigator@dhe.state.co.us

EmpowerEd Navigator Inbox:

eenavigator@dhe.state.co.us

Websites:

[ETV Website](#)

[FosterEd Website](#)

[EmpowerEd Website](#)

Thank You!

