

COLLEGE APPLICATION TIMELINE

FOR PENNSYLVANIA YOUTH WHO HAVE
EXPERIENCED THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

FALL OF JUNIOR YEAR



SEARCH FOR CAMPUS-BASED SUPPORT PROGRAMS

Many colleges and universities have campus support programs for students who have experienced foster care. These programs can offer help with things like admissions and financial aid applications, tuition waivers, college tours, community support services, counseling and advising, school supplies, workshops, housing, food, tutoring, or connections with other students in foster care. A directory of campus programs in Pennsylvania is available [here](#).

In Pennsylvania, even schools without campus support programs have a Point of Contact for Foster Youth. View the directory [here](#).



CONSIDER TAKING THE PSAT

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is a chance to practice and prepare for the SAT or ACT. Registration for the PSAT is through high schools. It is not required and does not count towards college admissions applications.

SPRING OF JUNIOR YEAR

MAKE A LIST OF COLLEGES



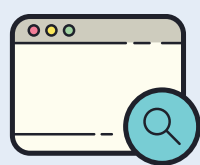
It may be a good idea to consider 3 to 5 schools, including at least one "reach" school and at least one school where there's a high chance of acceptance. Factors to keep in mind are where existing support systems are, the type of school (community, public, trade, or private), cost of the school, financial aid, size and location of the school, available majors/studies, campus-based support programs, what transportation is like there, or what types of support/resources are available.

CONSIDER TAKING THE SAT OR ACT

Colleges and universities may require the SAT or ACT standardized exam. Youth in foster care are eligible for SAT and ACT Fee Waivers, which include registration fees, application fees at participating colleges, study guides, and more. Counselors, social workers, or caseworkers can be contacted about the fee waiver. More information can also be found [online](#).



SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR



SEARCH FOR SCHOLARSHIPS

Search online for scholarships from local and national organizations. Consider searching for scholarships specific to major, specific to any extracurricular interests, or specific to any identities. There is some national information on scholarships for foster youth [here](#) and [here](#), and a Pennsylvania-specific guide [here](#).

VISIT COLLEGES



Sign-ups for college admissions visits can be made through the campus-based support programs for foster youth or by calling the admissions office. Talk with your caseworker about transportation.

TALK WITH CASEWORKER



Caseworkers may assist in obtaining information about housing (consider whether housing will be provided by the foster care agency or what dormitory living will look like), gathering any necessary paperwork or documentation from the agency, and travel arrangements.

WRITE COLLEGE ESSAYS



Summer is a good time to begin college application essays, brainstorming or preparing scholarship application essays, and thinking about letters of recommendation.

Students can also create a [Common App](#) account to streamline applications to multiple colleges.

FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

OCT 1: FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS OPEN



Documentation can be received from the child welfare agency regarding foster care status via a court order or placement letter. Financial aid applications to apply to include:

- [FAFSA](#)
- Supplemental Financial Aid Applications for each college
- Collegeboard College Scholarship Services (CSS) Profile

NOV 1-15: EARLY DECISION APPLICATIONS DUE



For early-decision college applications, acceptance results are typically given by mid-December. These application deadlines range from early to mid-November.

SPRING OF SENIOR YEAR

JAN: COLLEGE AND FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS DUE



College application deadlines vary per college, though common due dates are Jan. 1, Jan. 5, and Jan 15. Many scholarship applications are due between January and April.

APR: APPLY FOR THE CHAFEE EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV)



The Chafee ETV program provides vouchers of up to \$5,000/year for youth in foster care attending higher education. Funds may be used for tuition, dorm fees, books, student loan repayments, and qualified living expenses. More information regarding your state's application process can be found online or through a caseworker.

The link to the PA Chafee grant is [here](#). In PA, the same application is used for the [Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver Program](#).

MAR/APR: REGULAR DECISION ACCEPTANCE RESULTS AND COMMITMENT



Once regular decision college applications are received, next steps include returning acceptance forms, completing any additional financial aid applications, and providing housing selections.

MAY/JUNE: SCHOLARSHIP ACCEPTANCE RESULTS



After committing to an institution, additional scholarships will help determine the final financial aid package.

SUMMER AFTER SENIOR YEAR

SUMMER TO-DO LIST:

- Schedule an orientation session
- Get a copy of immunizations
- Request official final transcripts for the school, ETV program, and scholarships if required
- Talk with caseworker about health insurance and scheduling a medical physical exam if required
- CONSIDER: applying for food stamps, setting up a bank account, registering to vote, and applying to Medicaid if needed



The Field Center
FOR CHILDREN'S POLICY,
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