

Postsecondary Options for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities in Foster, Kinship, or Adoptive Families in Tennessee



A WAZE To Adulthood Fact Sheet

Thank you to **Formed Families Forward** for their partnership in this resource

Graduation from high school can be a time of uncertainty, especially for youth and young adults in foster care, but it can also open a world of opportunities. There are some postsecondary options that might be helpful as youth and young adults in foster care plan for the transition from high school to college or employment. Here are some of the options and resources available in Tennessee.

The Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program

The Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program provides funding for postsecondary education, training, and services needed for employment. The student can receive up to \$5,000 for school-related expenses.

The ETV Program:

- Funds can be applied towards a technical school, college, university, or program that meets the ETV criteria
- The student can receive funding for up to 5 years

To be eligible for the ETV Program, the youth/young adult must be:

- 16-25 years old, and
- In foster care, Extension of Foster Care (EFC), or aged out of foster care at or after 18 (except those placed in a secure facility or exiting state custody directly from a secure facility), or
- Adopted from foster care through adoption or Subsidized Permanent Guardianship after the age of 16 but have not yet reached the age of 26

Tennessee Bright Futures Scholarship

The Bright Futures Scholarship is a state-funded scholarship administered by the Department of Children's Services (DCS) Office of Independent Living. The ETV and Bright Futures Scholarship cannot be used in the same term.

Tennessee Bright Futures Scholarship offers:

- Up to \$5,000 a year for education-related expenses at a public or post-high school educational institution in Tennessee
- Priority to an eligible youth who does not meet the criteria for the Chafee ETV

To be eligible for the Bright Futures Scholarship, the youth/young adult must be:

- In foster care in the state of Tennessee, or
- In care on or after the age of 16 but not yet reached the age of 26 (includes those placed in a secure facility or exiting state custody directly from a secure facility)

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Tennessee Hope Foster Child Tuition Grant

The [Foster Child Tuition Grant](#) covers the cost of attendance at [eligible public postsecondary institutions](#) after any gift aid (grants and scholarships that do not have to be repaid) the student receives. In addition to meeting either the minimum grade point average (3.0) or test score (980 SAT/21 ACT) and enrolling at college within 16 months after graduation, the student must meet **one** of the following requirements:

- Be in DCS custody at 13 years of age or older
- Be adopted from foster care at or after 13 years of age
- Be in custody at any time and placed in permanent guardianship (such as a grandparent or other kin) by DCS after 13 years of age

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program

[Tennessee Youth Employment Program \(TYEP\)](#) serves both in-school and out-of-school youth and young adults facing barriers to school completion or employment. Services include paid and unpaid work experience, career exploration and counseling, adult mentoring, and supportive services (transportation services, legal aid, and community services). To be eligible for the program, the youth/young adult must be between the ages of 14-24 and have at least one barrier to employment, including having a disability, having low income, has dropped out of high school, is experiencing foster care, is experiencing homelessness, or is an English Language Learner.

Tennessee Vocational Rehabilitation Services

[Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\)](#) is a program that helps youth and young adults with physical, sensory, mental, emotional, or learning disabilities overcome barriers to education or employment. Programs include [Transition School to Work \(TSW\) Program](#), [Pre-Employment Transition Services \(Pre-ETS\)](#), and [Project SEARCH](#)

Check out these other resources:

[College & Your Future](#)

[Disability Resources - collegefortn.org](#)

[TN Department of Children's Services: Youth in Transition](#)

[Youth Resource Centers and other helpful links for transition-age youth](#)



PEATC's mission is to build positive futures by empowering individuals with disabilities through education and training.



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