



Q&A for Students Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver (HB 3471)

The following information has been created as a result of collaborations between the Department of Community Colleges & Workforce Development, Department of Human Services, Oregon Student Access Commission, Oregon Tribes, the Oregon University System and Oregon Health and Science University.

1. What is the Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver?

The Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver is intended to help current and former foster children to go to college by minimizing what the student has to pay. HB3471, the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver, requires Oregon community colleges, the Oregon University System (OUS) and Oregon Health and Science University (OHSU) to provide current and former foster youth with a Tuition and Fee Waiver, eliminating what is called the “family portion” of what the student usually has to contribute. HB 3471 was passed into legislation in July 2011 and is effective with the 2012-2013 academic year that starts in September 2012. Eligible students may receive the Waiver for the equivalent of four years of undergraduate education.

2. Who is eligible for the Waiver?

To qualify for the Waiver, a student must:

- a. Have spent at least 365 days (one year) in substitute care after age 16, with either the Oregon Department of Human Services or one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon.
- b. Enroll as an undergraduate student no later than three years after the earlier of:
 - The date the student was removed from the care of the Department of Human Services or one of the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon;
 - The date the student graduated from high school; or
 - The date the student received the equivalent of a high school diploma, such as a GED.
- c. Submit a completed FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for every year the student is in college while eligible for the Foster Youth Waiver.
- d. Complete a minimum of 30 volunteer service hours each academic year (*see question 6*).

3. Will the Waiver apply to any college in Oregon?

In order to receive the Waiver, a **student must enroll/register at one of the following: an Oregon community college, an Oregon University System (OUS) campus, or OHSU campus.** Eligible OUS campuses include: Eastern Oregon University, Oregon Institute of Technology, Oregon State University, Oregon State University-Cascades, Portland State University, Southern Oregon University, University of Oregon, and Western Oregon University.

4. I might be eligible for a Foster Youth Tuition and Fee waiver. What are my requirements for enrolling in college?

A student must enroll in any college (whether or not it is an eligible college or university) within 3 years of completing high school/GED or from leaving care when legal wardship was dismissed, whichever comes first, in order to keep the chance to receive this benefit. For example, a student who completes high school/GED by November 2011 would need to be enrolled by Fall Term 2014. If a student waited until Winter term 2015, he/she would have exceeded 3 years. A student is considered enrolled when they have registered at a college as an undergraduate student or applied and been admitted to a bachelor’s degree program.

5. Can I transfer in from another ineligible institution and become eligible for the Waiver?

A student may transfer from a private or public college or university to an eligible college or university. The student may receive the tuition and fee waiver at the eligible college or university **if the student meets the eligibility criteria and transfers prior to age 25.**

6. How will the college I'm interested in know if I'm eligible?

The Department of Human Services (DHS) will be responsible for determining initial eligibility for the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver, and will notify institutions of eligible students. DHS will send each college or university a list of youth who have listed their school on the FAFSA as a potential for enrollment. If a student may be eligible for the Waiver, but the school does not have notice of their eligibility, the student should:

- Update his/her FAFSA to reflect the correct institution.
- Contact DHS (ILP Fiscal Assistant, 503-945-6612) to request a review of their eligibility status. If eligible, the student will be provided a Wardship document that will confirm the student's eligibility.
- Provide the institution a copy of the Wardship document.

7. What are the requirements for volunteer service hours?

Students receiving the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver are required to complete 30 hours of volunteer service each academic year, with work beginning the first year the Waiver is received as a requirement for the second year. Policies for this requirement are to be developed by the college or university at which the student is enrolled. It is the responsibility of the student receiving the waiver to document compliance with the 30-hour requirement to the satisfaction of the college or university.

8. If I go to college part time, will I still be eligible?

Yes. No minimum amount of credits/courses are required.

9. Can the Waiver be used after I have a bachelor's degree and want to continue on to graduate school?

The Tuition and Fee Waiver is an undergraduate student benefit. It may be used for an Associate's degree, certificate program, or a Bachelor's degree, but does not continue beyond the level of a Bachelor's degree.

10. How long will I be eligible for the Waiver? Is there an age limit?

Eligible students may receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver for up to 12 terms of full-time study or the equivalent. **A student may take a break from school, but must return prior to his or her 25th birthday** in order to continue to qualify for Tuition and Fee Waiver. After age 25, a student must remain enrolled at an eligible college or university institution until completion of their undergraduate studies. A student must remain in good standing and may not "stop out" of school after age 25 or they will lose their eligibility for the Waiver.

11. What kinds of expenses are waived and what kinds of expenses are not waived?

A qualified student for The Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver is entitled to waiver of the following tuition and fees expenses:

- Tuition for academic credit courses but not for noncredit courses
- Mandatory enrollment fees: building, incidental, health service, recreation center, or other mandatory fees that may be added from time to time
- One-time fees: matriculation, transcript for life (OIT only)
- Fees required for instruction related services such as lab or course fees that are assessed upon registration for a particular course

The waiver **excludes** (does not cover the cost of) all fees and fines for non-instruction related services and materials such as residence hall room and board, dining services, parking fees and fines, library fines, etc. In addition, text books and other course materials not assessed as part of a course fee are also excluded.

12. If I'm interested in dual enrollment program, how does this impact the Waiver?

When students are dual enrolled (such as at both a community college and a university at the same time), each school is responsible for calculating and implementing the Tuition and Fee Waiver and requirements.

13. Will the Waiver apply if I go to college during the Summer Term?

Yes. Eligible students may attend Summer Term and receive the Tuition and Fee Waiver. The term will count toward the 4 year maximum.

14. How is the amount of the Waiver calculated?

The Waiver will be a component of the college/university's financial aid process. Awards made under the Foster Youth Tuition and Fee Waiver shall be applied after the following, if available to the student:

- Student's federal financial aid (Pell, FSEOG),
- Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG) (if awarded), and
- Other campus aid.

Any amount of tuition and fees remaining after the Pell, FEOG, OOG and other school aid is applied will be waived.

Financial aid sources **not** allowed as a reduction to the tuition and fees waived include:

- Non-tuition scholarships from sources outside the university or college (including those passed through Oregon Student Access Commission),
- Chafee Education and Training Grant,
- Loans

15. Does the Waiver affect my Oregon Opportunity Grant?

HB 3471 requires the Oregon Student Access Commission (OSAC) to prioritize current and former foster youth for awards through the Oregon Opportunity Grant (OOG). OSAC will notify the schools of the OOG awards through normal channels. **Note: at this time, students from foster care must attend Fall Term in order to receive an OOG award.** OOG awards are not issued for Summer Term.

16. I have been placed/residing in another state; if I return to Oregon will I be eligible for the Waiver?

To be eligible for the Tuition and Fee Waiver, an Oregon foster youth must be deemed a resident of Oregon for tuition purposes by the college's or university's residency officer.

17. I have been residing in another state, and I want to return to Oregon and enroll at an eligible institution. Will I have to pay out-of-state tuition?

Possibly. For all OUS and OHSU institutions, student residency is determined first at the campus level, following Oregon Administrative Rules, 580-010-0029 through 580-010-0047. A student should check with his/her campus residency officer to determine if he/she is considered a resident or not. If not, the student will be required to pay out-of-state tuition.

18. I have a modified diploma; may I still qualify for the tuition waiver?

Yes. However, the student must be taking credits/courses that will count towards an undergraduate certificate or degree.

19. I believe I am eligible for a Foster Youth Tuition & Fee Waiver but my college asked me for a Tuition Deposit anyway. Is this a mistake?

Institutions may continue to request Advanced Tuition Deposits from potentially eligible students. If the student is determined to be eligible for the Waiver, the school will need to refund the amount of tuition deposit(s) paid. This would be determined at the time the school is finalizing a student's financial aid.

20. May I decline the Waiver?

Yes, students who wish to decline the Waiver will need to do so in writing and on a year-by-year basis. Declining for one year does not make them ineligible for future years.