



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: January 10, 2020

TO: Regional Managing Directors
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs

THROUGH: Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary *Pat Babcock*

FROM: Patricia Medlock, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *PM*

SUBJECT: Tuition and Fee Exemption for Former Foster Youth and Positive Pathways Program (Positive Pathways)

PURPOSE: The purpose of this memorandum is to provide information regarding updates to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Tuition and Fee Exemption for former foster youth and collaboration with Florida's Board of Governors, State University System, College System, and Department of Education through Positive Pathways.

BACKGROUND: For over two decades Florida public postsecondary education institutions have provided eligible former foster students tuition and fee exemptions. In order to have the tuition and fees waived, students must obtain a signed DCF form letter, CF-FSP 5220, validating eligibility from a Community-Based Care Lead Agency Representative. Effective July 1, 2019, s. [1009.25](#) Florida Statutes (F.S.), was amended to include eligible former foster care students that reach 18 years of age while in the custody of a relative or nonrelative participating in the Guardianship Assistance Program. Currently, the following students are eligible for the exemption until the young person reaches the age of 28 years of age:

- He or she is or was at the time he or she reached age 18 in the custody of DCF; or,
- He or she was adopted from DCF after May 5, 1997; or,
- He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a relative under s. [39.5085](#), F.S.; or,
- He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a non-relative under s. [39.5085](#), F.S.; or,
- He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a guardian under s. [39.6225](#), F.S.; or,
- He or she was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age.

In May of 2017, Positive Pathways was established to coordinate, develop, and maintain a network of postsecondary education liaisons to improve outcomes and career transitions for former foster youth eligible for the DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption. This work is a continuation of support, networking, and collective impact that began in 2013 with the establishment of Florida Reach and in response to s. [409.1452](#), F.S., relevant to the required collaboration with postsecondary educational institutions.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

For more information about Positive Pathways and to gain access to additional resources for former foster care students visit: <https://www.positivepathwaysflorida.org/>.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please share this memorandum with all child welfare professionals with the Community-Based Care Lead Agency, all relevant staff, and caregivers as appropriate.

CONTACT INFORMATION: If you have any questions or need clarification regarding this memorandum, please contact Vanessa Snoddy, Case Management and Well Being Manager at Vanessa.Snoddy@myflfamilies.com or 850-717-4769.

cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Sheriff Offices Conducting Child Protective Investigations
Florida Foster and Adoptive Parent Association
Florida Guardian Ad Litem
Brett McNaught, Educate Tomorrow
Steve Rios, Positive Pathways Program
Lynda Page, Board of Governors, State University System of Florida
Shana Autry, Florida College System
Kathleen Taylor, Florida Department of Education
Center for Child Welfare