



For Foster Students

Follow these steps to securing financial aid:

- **Get an email address.** This should be business-like and if possible contain your first and last name. You will use this to contact various educational institutions, agencies and programs. You can use yahoo, ymail or gmail.

Be sure to write down the information for your email address and your password.

- **Get a Federal Student Aid ID.** Go on the website www.FSAID.ed.gov and apply for your ID. You will use this to fill out and correct information on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and to sign for the student federal loans.
- **Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).** You must complete and file the FAFSA each academic year in order to qualify for the federal and state grants. Go on the website, www.fafsa.ed.gov to complete your financial aid. Questions 1-31 are about you. Questions 32-44 are about your finances – money that you earned in 2014, current savings, investments, etc. Questions 45-57 help to determine that you are an independent student. **You will answer “YES” to question 52.** You then will not be required to answer questions about your parents, grandparents or foster parents. Answer Questions 93-100 (if asked). You should answer questions 93 and 94 with the number 1. Finally, list the schools/colleges that you have applied to or will apply to so that they will receive your information. In order to be eligible for the Ohio grant (OCOG), you must have completed the FAFSA by October 1st.
- **Educational and Training Voucher (ETV)** - this is a federally funded program to help former foster students meet their post-secondary expenses. The expenses can include living costs (rent and maintenance), health care, purchase of a computer, the supplies necessary for your program (tools for auto mechanics or uniforms for a healthcare field) or previous student loans.

To be eligible, the applicant must have been in the foster care on their 18th birthday and aged out OR your foster care case will be closed between the ages of 18 and 21 OR your adoption was finalized after your 16th birthday; be a US citizen or qualified non-citizen; have personal assets of no more than \$10,000; must be 20 or younger when you first apply to the ETV program; and must have been accepted or be enrolled in a degree, certificate or other accredited program at a college, university, technical or vocational school. To remain eligible for ETV funding, you must show progress towards a degree or certificate. Complete the on-line application at www.fc2sprograms.org after July 1st. The application includes information about you, who your social worker was, what you feel your greatest needs will be, and asks you to write a short essay about your educational plans.

The ETV program will keep in touch with you by your email. Once you are accepted in the ETV Program, you may be eligible for the Ohio College Opportunity Grant if attending a two-year institution. Please see a College Now advisor for further information.

- **Ohio Reach** – check with the Ohio Reach advisor at your school. They are a good asset for helping with any difficulties once you are at school.

Follow these steps to succeed in college:

- **Realize that college-level work will require extra studying time.** It takes motivation to be a successful college student. Make sure that you are considering a post-secondary option that is the right fit for you.
- **Look for a supportive college** that offers services geared toward your circumstances. Be sure to **visit that college** – sit in on classes and talk with current students.
- **Meet with the academic advisor** at least 8 weeks prior to your first day of classes to make sure you are taking the correct classes for your program of study
- **Attend the orientation programs and workshops** that are put on by your college.
- **Consider taking a special study skills class** offered by your college. Similar programs are also available through individual tutoring and private agencies.
- **Become a self-advocate.** Learn to explain your circumstance so that you will receive all of the benefits you can obtain from your college.
- **During the summer, get a part-time job and/or volunteer position.** A job (whether paid or volunteer) will help you build responsibility and confidence in something other than academics. You will also gain valuable work experience and begin building a resume!
- **Become a member of an organization that interests you.** This is a great source for making friends, information and networking.
- **Keep a planner or calendar and be intentional about using it** to remember your appointments and assignments. With more on your plate, you will need to find a good organization system to keep on schedule.
- **Increase your independent living skills.** You should be able to balance a checking account, budget your money, do your own laundry, and make yourself a simple, balanced meal.