
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1745 Session of
2017

INTRODUCED BY HICKERNELL, BOBACK, CHARLTON, CUTLER, FEE,
HEFFLEY, PHILLIPS-HILL, MENTZER, MILLARD, MURT, RAPP,
ROEBUCK, SAYLOR, SCHWEYER, WARD, WATSON AND ZIMMERMAN,
AUGUST 24, 2017

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, AUGUST 24, 2017

AN ACT

1 Providing for a tuition and fee waiver program for youth who are
2 or have been in substitute care.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Fostering
7 Independence Through Education Act.

8 Section 2. Definitions.

9 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
10 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
11 context clearly indicates otherwise:

12 "Adoption." Adoption of an individual who has been in the
13 care and custody of a county agency and in substitute care.

14 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance
15 Agency.

16 "County agency." The term as defined under 23 Pa.C.S. § 6303
17 (relating to definitions).

1 "Dependent child." The term as defined under 42 Pa.C.S. §
2 6302 (relating to definitions).

3 "Permanent legal custodian." A person to whom legal custody
4 of a child has been given by order of a court pursuant to 42
5 Pa.C.S. § 6351(a)(2.1) (relating to disposition of dependent
6 child).

7 "Program." The tuition and fee waiver program established in
8 section 3.

9 "SPOC." The single point of contact designated in section 5.

10 "State postsecondary educational institution." The term
11 includes any of the following:

12 (1) A community college operating under Article XIX-A of
13 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the
14 Public School Code of 1949.

15 (2) A university within the State System of Higher
16 Education established under Article XX-A of the Public School
17 Code of 1949.

18 (3) The Pennsylvania State University.

19 (4) The University of Pittsburgh.

20 (5) Temple University.

21 (6) Lincoln University.

22 (7) The Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology.

23 (8) Any other institution designated as State-related by
24 the Commonwealth.

25 "Substitute care." The term includes any placement
26 authorized by a court for a dependent child or a child with
27 shared case management in dependency and delinquency proceedings
28 under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).

29 Section 3. Tuition and fee waiver program.

30 (a) Establishment.--There is established a tuition and fee

1 waiver program for individuals who satisfy the eligibility
2 requirements under subsection (c).

3 (b) Award.--Beginning with the semester starting in the fall
4 of 2019, each State postsecondary educational institution shall
5 award a tuition and fee waiver for undergraduate courses at the
6 institution for each individual who is eligible under subsection
7 (c). The tuition and fee waiver shall be equal to the amount of
8 the tuition and all fees at the State postsecondary educational
9 institution the individual attends, minus the amount of any
10 Federal grants, State grants or other scholarships or grants the
11 individual receives.

12 (c) Eligibility.--In order to receive a tuition and fee
13 waiver under this section, an individual must meet all of the
14 following requirements:

15 (1) Be at least 16 years of age but under 23 years of
16 age and be in or have been in substitute care for no less
17 than 30 days before, on or after the effective date of this
18 section, including any of the following:

19 (i) Placement in substitute care as a dependent
20 child at any time while 16 years of age or older.

21 (ii) Placement in substitute care with shared case
22 management in dependency and delinquency proceedings
23 under 42 Pa.C.S. Ch. 63 (relating to juvenile matters).

24 (iii) Adoption from substitute care as a dependent
25 child.

26 (iv) Placement with a permanent legal custodian from
27 substitute care as a dependent child.

28 (2) Have graduated from high school or received a
29 Commonwealth secondary school diploma or another equivalent
30 approved by the Department of Education.

1 (3) Have been accepted for admission to, or be currently
2 attending, a State postsecondary educational institution.

3 (4) For those individuals already attending a State
4 postsecondary educational institution when the tuition and
5 fee waiver is sought, have maintained satisfactory progress
6 as defined by the State postsecondary educational institution
7 attended.

8 (5) Have applied for all available Federal and State
9 grants.

10 (d) Accessibility.--Each State postsecondary educational
11 institution, through the SPOC required under section 5, shall
12 work with the agency as well as the Department of Labor and
13 Industry and the Department of Human Services to ensure that
14 individuals eligible for the program under subsection (c) apply
15 for all available Federal and State grants.

16 Section 4. Outreach.

17 (a) Duties of Department of Human Services.--The Department
18 of Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of
19 Education, shall do all of the following:

20 (1) By December 1, 2018, prepare information to be
21 disseminated by county agencies, the Department of Education
22 and State postsecondary educational institutions that
23 describes the availability of the program established under
24 this act and explains how to participate in the program.

25 (2) Ensure that identified individuals who may be
26 eligible for services and programs under section 1738-E of
27 the act of April 9, 1929 (P.L.343, No.176), known as The
28 Fiscal Code, are informed of these services and programs.

29 (b) Duties of State postsecondary educational
30 institutions.--Each State postsecondary educational institution

1 shall do all of the following:

2 (1) Assist the Department of Human Services and the
3 Department of Education in the preparation of information
4 that describes the availability of the program established
5 under this act and explains how to participate in the program
6 as required under subsection (a)(1).

7 (2) Through the SPOC required under section 5, provide
8 technical assistance to individuals who are eligible under
9 section 3(c) in completing admissions applications and
10 financial aid applications.

11 (3) Disseminate the information prepared under
12 subsection (a)(1) to all applicants for admission and to
13 prospective applicants for admission. A State postsecondary
14 educational institution may comply with this paragraph by
15 including a paper or electronic copy of the information with
16 other information or notifications provided to the applicant
17 for admission and by posting the information prepared under
18 subsection (a)(1) on the institution's publicly accessible
19 Internet website.

20 (4) To improve retention, all of the following:

21 (i) Track the retention rates of students that
22 voluntarily disclose to the institution their eligibility
23 for the program.

24 (ii) Provide the Department of Education and the
25 Department of Human Services with recommendations on ways
26 in which to improve the delivery of services to students
27 who are eligible under section 3(c).

28 (iii) Annually review and identify impediments to
29 retaining students who are eligible under section 3(c).

30 (5) Report the information required under paragraph (4)

1 to the Department of Education and the Department of Human
2 Services by June 30, 2019, and by June 30 of each year
3 thereafter.

4 Section 5. Single point of contact.

5 Each State postsecondary educational institution shall
6 designate an appropriate staff person as the single point of
7 contact for students eligible for the program. The SPOC shall
8 have the following duties:

9 (1) Assist students in obtaining verification of
10 eligibility for the program from the courts, the county
11 agency or the Department of Human Services.

12 (2) Assist individuals who are eligible under section
13 3(c) in accessing available Federal and State financial aid
14 resources and in identifying further scholarship and grant
15 opportunities, in consultation with the institution's
16 financial aid department.

17 (3) Serve as the primary contact for all individuals
18 applying to or attending the institution who are eligible
19 under section 3(c).

20 (4) Provide all individuals applying to or attending the
21 institution who are eligible under section 3(c) with
22 information and referrals for on-campus support services and
23 resources, including admissions, housing, financial aid,
24 health, mental health, tutoring, career, academic advising
25 and other services.

26 (5) Provide all individuals applying to or attending the
27 institution who are eligible under section 3(c) with
28 information and referrals for off-campus support services,
29 including transitional housing and medical insurance and
30 services.

1 Section 6. Report.

2 In order to determine and maximize the effectiveness of this
3 act, the Department of Human Services, with the assistance of
4 the Department of Education, shall collect information obtained
5 from all State postsecondary educational institutions under
6 section 4(b)(5) and prepare a report to be submitted by August
7 31, 2019, and by August 31 of each year thereafter, to the
8 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education Committee
9 of the Senate, the chairperson and minority chairperson of the
10 Health and Human Services Committee of the Senate, the
11 chairperson and minority chairperson of the Education Committee
12 of the House of Representatives and the chairperson and minority
13 chairperson of the Children and Youth Committee of the House of
14 Representatives that contains all of the following:

15 (1) Information relating to the participation of
16 students in the program.

17 (2) Retention rates of those students who are
18 participating in the program.

19 (3) Retention rates of those students who have
20 voluntarily disclosed to their State institution of higher
21 education their eligibility for the program under section
22 3(c) but who are not participating in the program.

23 (4) Identification of impediments to retaining students
24 who are eligible under section 3(c).

25 (5) Recommendations on ways in which to improve the
26 delivery of services to students who are eligible for the
27 program under section 3(c) and to address the impediments
28 identified under paragraph (4).

29 Section 7. Effective date.

30 This act shall take effect in 60 days.