

PROMOTING POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION AFTER FOSTER CARE



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

DFS Division of
Family Services



Great Expectations

FOSTERING POWERFUL CHANGE

Aaran Kelley & Felicia Howard, VDSS

Rachel Strawn, Great Expectations

INTRODUCTIONS

- Aaran Kelley, MSW, Youth Services Program Specialist
- Felicia Howard, MSW, ETV Program Specialist
- Rachel Mayes Strawn, Ph.D., Great Expectations Program Director



DISCUSSION

- What are some of the academic and non-academic challenges that youth in and aging out of foster care face in achieving post-secondary educational success?





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Great Expectations

An Initiative of Virginia's Community Colleges & the
Virginia Foundation for Community College Education



About

- Focuses on the value of a college education as the best way to gain employment and achieve independence.
- Provides education that leads to employment opportunities that will improve the likelihood of success for foster youth.
- Offers individual support for youth as they finish high school, leave their foster homes and transition to living on their own.



What We Do

- a Great Expectations coach for each student
- Help with college admissions
- Applying for financial aid
- Career exploration and coaching
- Job preparation
- Life skills training
- Mentoring
- Connection to area resources



History

In 2008, the need for a solution to the *high number of foster youth aging out* of the foster care system was identified in Virginia.

Program Growth:

Students Served – year over year

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
84	182	343	515	706	599	873	1087	1144	1401

participating colleges – year over year

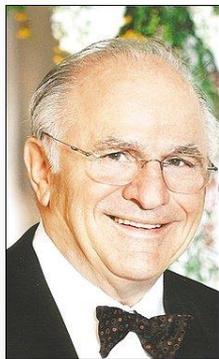
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
5	7	12	15	16	17	17	18	18	21

History

- Began in 2008
- Donor initiated challenge
- 5 pilot colleges



Anne Holton



Mark Fried



Barbara Fried



Chancellor Glenn Dubois



Difficult Outcomes for Foster Youth



59% incarcerated



**31% homeless
or housing
insecure**



60% rely on public assistance



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Earnings Gap



\$13,989

**Mean earnings
foster youth**

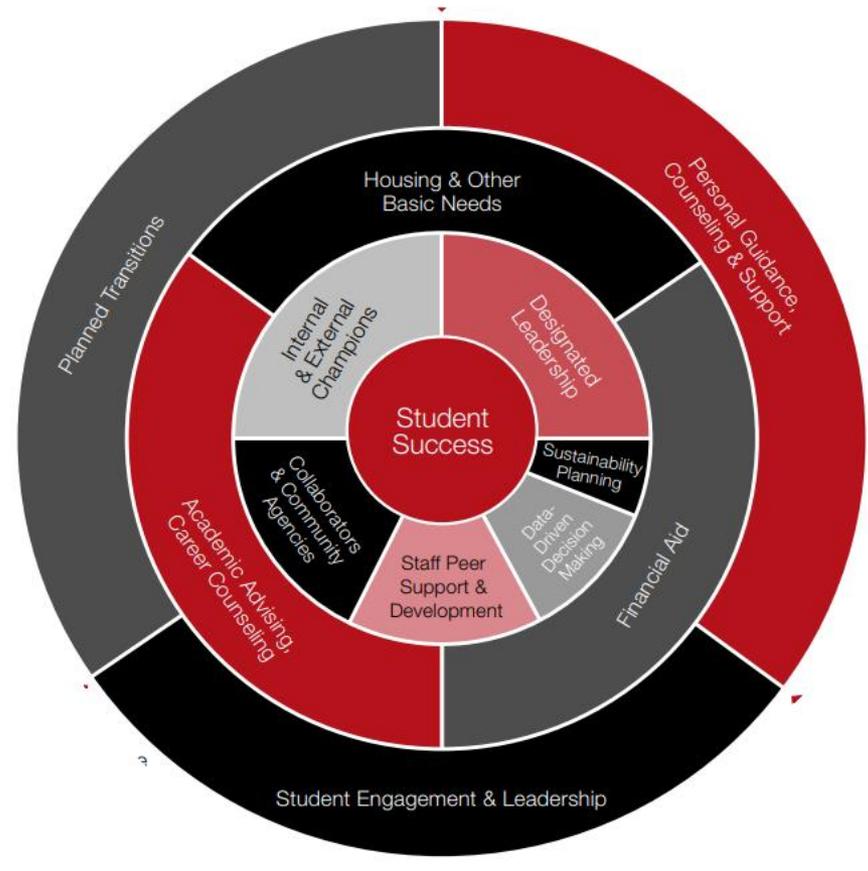


\$32,212

**Mean earnings
peers**



Casey Family Programs





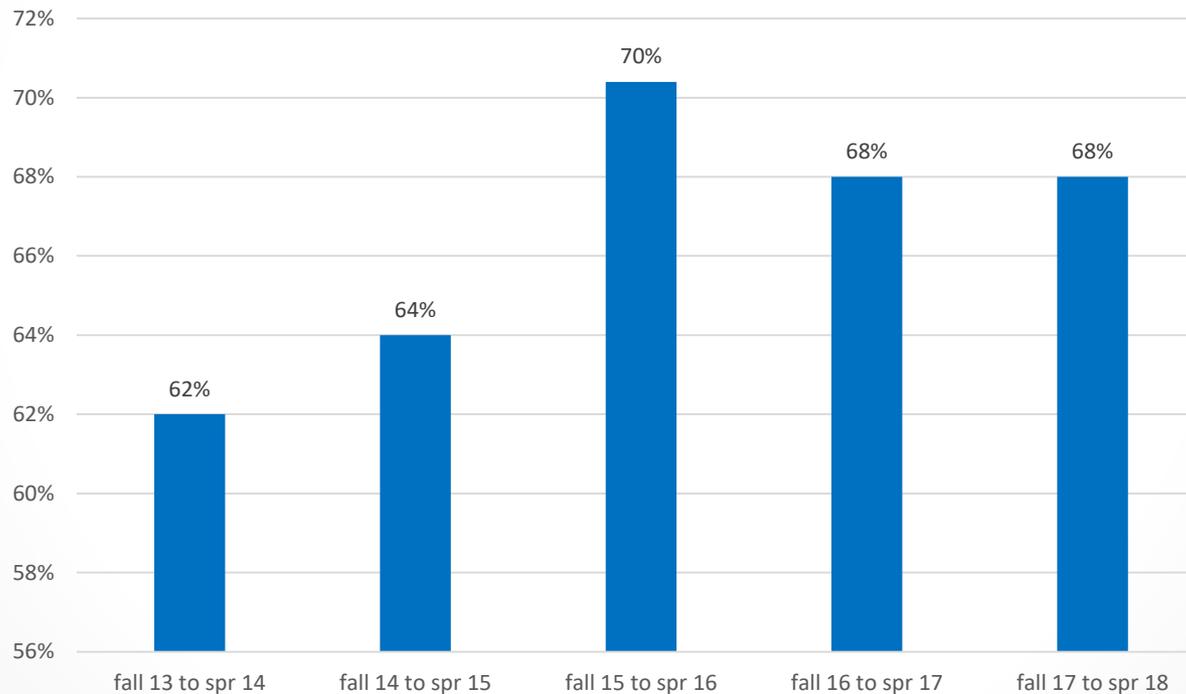
Performance Measures

- **Increasing % of students graduated or retained in following term**
- **Increasing % of students graduated or retained in following year**
- **Increasing % of students served in potential pool**
- **Increasing # of credentials earned each year**



Performance Measures

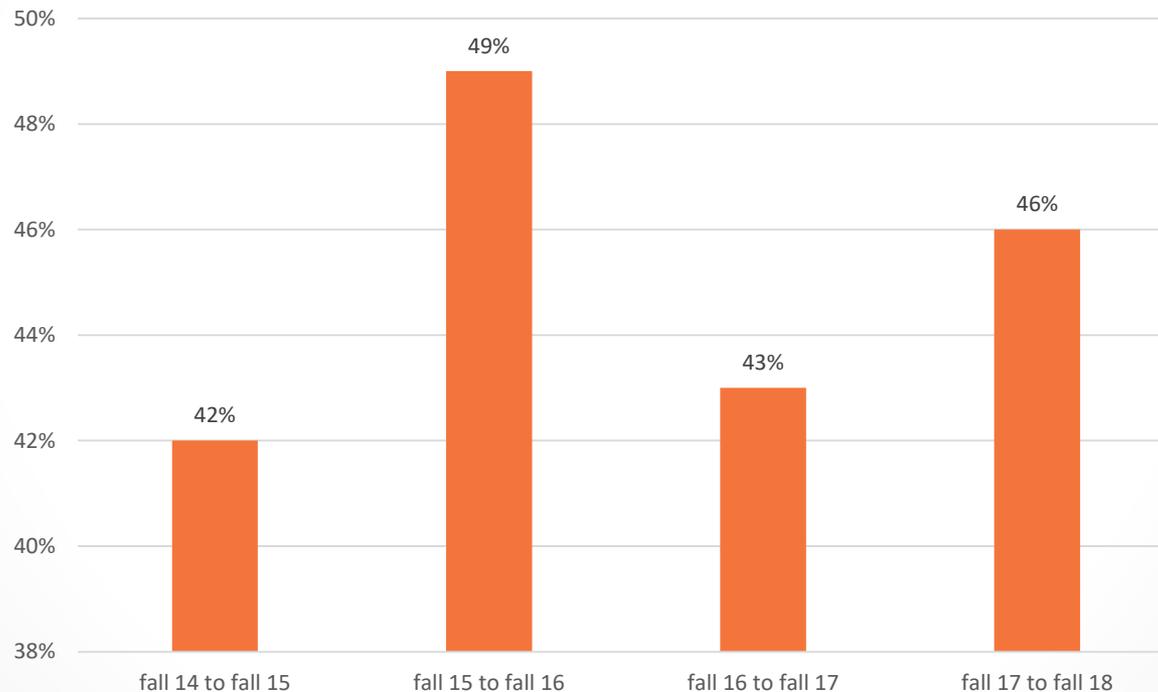
GE PERSISTENCE FALL TO SPRING





Performance Measures

GE PERSISTENCE FALL TO FALL



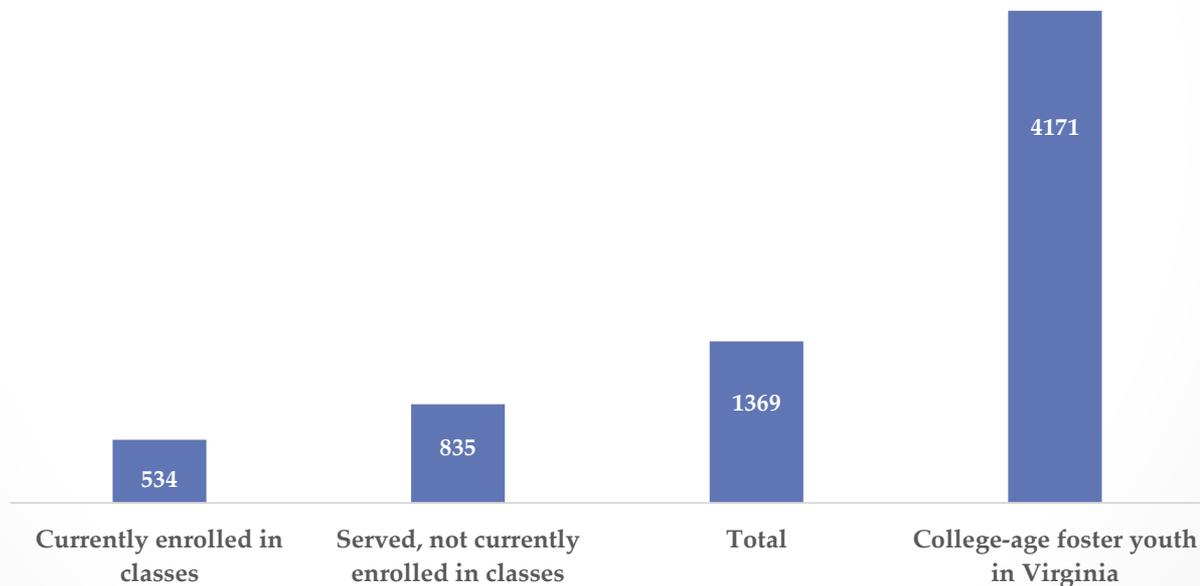


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Performance Measures

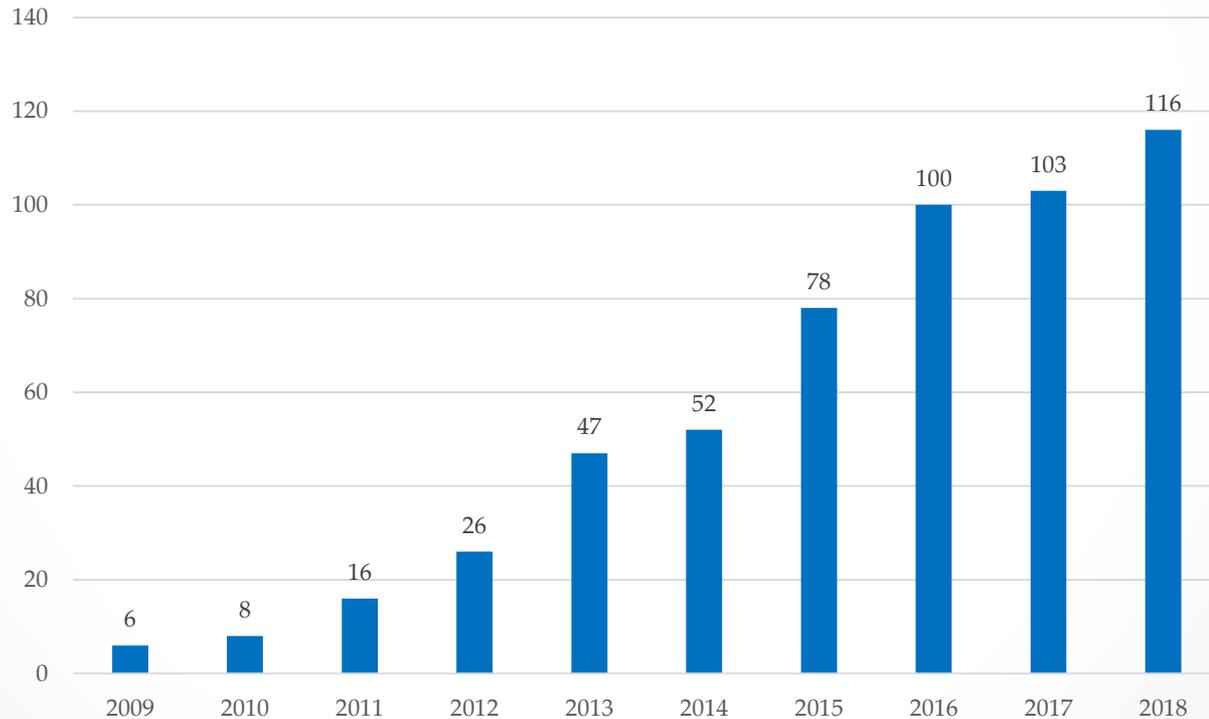
Great Expectations Reach in Virginia





Performance Measures

GREAT EXPECTATIONS GRADUATES





Student Success

College Graduation Rate Comparison

8%



Nationally

20%



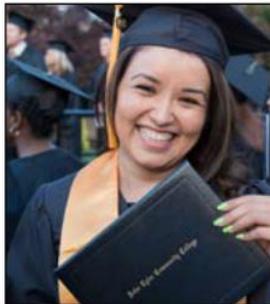
Virginia's GE Students



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Virginia Tuition Grant for Former Foster Youth



COLLEGE WITHIN REACH

Tuition grants for community college courses, both credit and non-credit are available for students who were in foster care, the custody of social services or who were special needs adoptees at time of graduation or GED.

TUITION GRANTS

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM?

In 2000, legislation passed that created the Tuition Grant program to provide tuition and fees at any Virginia community college for high school graduates or GED completers in foster care or the custody of a social services agency, or considered a special needs adoption. This legislation was revised in 2009 and again in 2017. See below for provisions.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Anyone certified to be in foster care, in the custody of a social service agency or a special needs adoption at the time they received their high school diploma or equivalency, or was formerly in foster care when turning 18 and subsequently received a high school diploma or equivalency is eligible as long as he or she:

- Enrolls in and maintains at least half-time enrollment (with a minimum of six credits) in an eligible program of at least one academic year in length or enrolls in a non-credit workforce program
- Is a resident of Virginia according to Section 23-7.4 of Code of Virginia
- Meets the satisfactory academic standards of the college for federal student financial aid
- Has not been previously enrolled full-time in a post-secondary institution more than five years and does not have a prior bachelor's degree
- Demonstrates financial need

HOW DO STUDENTS APPLY?

Potential students who fall in one of the three categories listed above must:

- Complete and submit to the U.S. Dept. of Education the FAFSA (credit programs) or complete financial aid forms required by the college's workforce development office (non-credit programs)
- Complete and submit an application for admission to the community college of your choice
- Submit documentation from the Department of Social Services regarding dates in foster care, or assistance received for a special needs adoption to the college's financial aid or workforce development office

HOW MUCH IS THE AWARD?

Awards will be provided to eligible applicants who are not already receiving sufficient grants to pay for their tuition and fees. Students who are already receiving grant funds that cover tuition and fees are not eligible for these awards.

DOES THE GRANT HAVE TO BE REPAID?

If a student's enrollment level drops below six credits or they drop out of their non-credit workforce program, eligibility for the grant is lost, and therefore, needs to be repaid.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To find a Great Expectations coach: www.greatexpectations.vccs.edu
For social services, visit: www.dss.state.va.us
For: Code of Virginia § 23.1-601





Great Expectations Leadership Program

- 5th year
- Hybrid online/in person leadership training
- 10-12 student leaders
- Based on Kouzes & Posner's *Student Leadership Challenge*
- Advocacy





Graduation Celebration

- Honors graduates
- Concurrent sessions
- Advocacy Poster project presentations





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Our Coaches

Blue Ridge Community College

Coach: Wendy Smith
Email: smithw@brcc.edu
Phone: 540-453-2325

Central Virginia Community College

Coach: Mickey Paige
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Phone: 434-832-7215

Danville Community College

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Eastern Shore Community College

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Germanna Community College

Interim Coach: Kermitra Newbill
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J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College

Coach: LaKeisha Doman
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John Tyler Community College

Coach: Elizabeth McKey
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Lord Fairfax Community College

Coach: Whitney Scruggs
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Mountain Empire Community College

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New River Community College

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Northern Virginia Community College

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Phone: 276-656-0224

Paul D. Camp Community College

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Phone: 757-925-6322

Piedmont Virginia Community College

Coach: La'Tisha Jackson
Email: ljackson@pvcc.edu
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Rappahannock Community College

Coach: Rebecca Miller
Email: miller@rappahannock.edu
Phone: 804-758-6732
Coach: Pamela Schwartz
Email: pschwartz@rappahannock.edu
Phone: 804-758-6732

Southside Virginia Community College

Coach: Katie Irby
Email: katie.irby@southside.edu
Phone: (434) 736-2084
Coach: Mora da Silva
Email: mora.dasilva@southside.edu
Phone: (434) 736-2237

Southwest Virginia Community College

Coach: Jennifer Roark
Email: Jennifer.roark@sw.edu
Phone: 276-964-7653

Thomas Nelson Community College

Coach: Sonja Vega
Email: VegaS@tncc.edu
Phone: 757-825-3452

Tidewater Community College

Coach: currently vacant
Email:
Phone: 757-822-5207

Virginia Highlands Community College

Coach: Deborah Ledford
Email: dledford@vhcc.edu
Phone: (276) 739-2434

Wytheville Community College

Coach: April Mullins
Email: amullins@wcc.vccs.edu
Phone: 276-223-4758



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Questions?

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Resources

Chmura, (2011). Measuring the Costs of Foster Care and the Return on Investment for the “Great Expectations” Initiative. Chmura Economics & Analytics: Cleveland, Ohio.

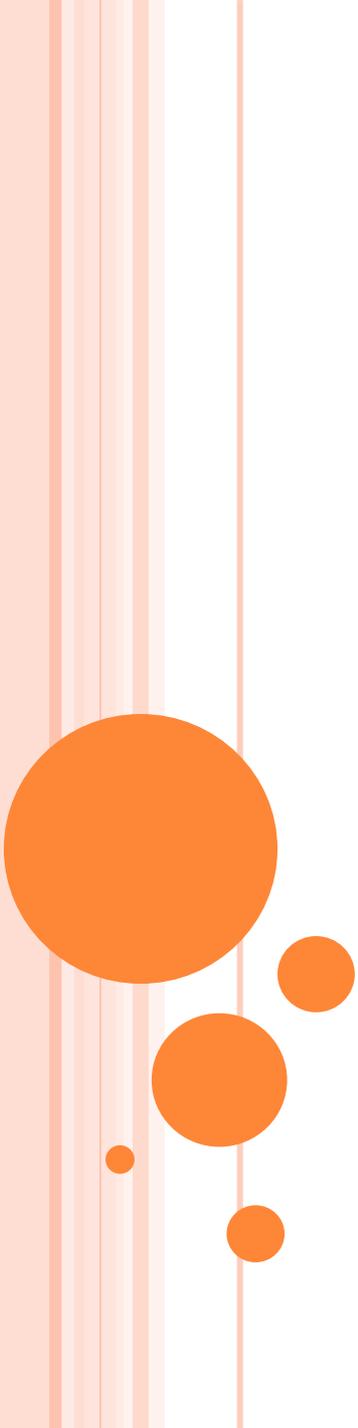
Courtney, M., Dworsky, A., Brown, A., Cary, C., Love, K., Vorhies, V. (2011). Midwest evaluation of the adult functioning of former foster youth: Outcomes at age 26. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Emerson J. & Bassett L., (2016). Supporting success: Improving higher education outcomes for students from foster care. Casey Family Programs: Washington, DC. Available from: <http://cdn.casey.org/media/SupportingSuccess.pdf>

Morton, M.H., Dworsky, A., & Samuels, G.M. (2017). Missed opportunities: Youth homelessness in America. National estimates. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

Great Expectations video: [Ten Years Retrospective](#)

http://greatexpectations.vccs.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/vatutiongrantflyer_rev.pdf



EDUCATION AND TRAINING VOUCHER (ETV) PROGRAM

WHAT IS IT?

- Established in 2001 by congress as a part of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act
- Provides funds to current and former foster youth to help them pursue studies at colleges, universities and vocational training institutions
- Students may receive up to \$5,000 a year for college or vocational training (amount based on available funds and youth need(s)).
- Funds can be used for tuition, books, or qualified living expenses
- Students can access funds for a total of 5 years (whether or not they are consecutive)



WHO DOES ETV COVER?

- Young people between 14 and 26 years old
- The most recent foster care placement must have been provided by Virginia
- Youth adopted or in KinGAP after age 16



WHY IS ETV IMPORTANT?

- Helps youth transition to self-sufficiency
- Assists with barriers that hinder youth from obtaining a post-secondary education
- Can be combined with other grants or scholarships to minimize or eliminate the need for student loans



WHAT IS COVERED?

- Tuition, fees
- Room, board
- Rental or purchase of required equipment, materials, supplies (including a computer)
- Books
- Transportation
- Required residential training
- Special study projects
- Child care
- Expenses related to the youth's work experience in a cooperative education program
- Current student loan fees or insurance premiums on the student loan* not ongoing
- Other educationally related expenses



WHAT ISN'T COVERED?

- Cell phone bill
- Clothing
- Personal loans
- Computer games
- Doctor's visits
- Household items



CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Criminal Justice
- Healthcare
- Facility maintenance
- Cosmetology
- Electrician
- Welding
- Auto mechanics

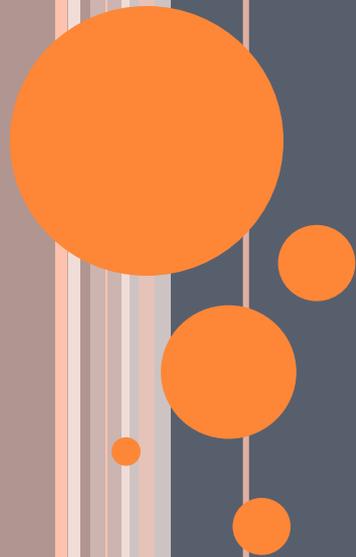


THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- LDSS assists youth with ETV Student Application
- Student completes FAFSA if applicable (with assistance)
- Required documentation provided to LDSS
- LDSS processes application within **two weeks** of receipt
- Copy of application and supporting documentation kept in youth's file



Q & A



DISCUSSION

- How can YOU support youth in and aging out of foster care with post-secondary education and training success?



CONTACT

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