

---

**WEBINAR #2: Foster Youth College Success Initiative** • Presented Thursday, June 14, 2020

---

**1. Who is an eligible foster youth for FYCSI funding?**

- Students who have spent time in foster care after their 13th birthday.
- Students adopted from foster care after their 13th birthday.
- Students living with a relative or kin under a kinship guardianship foster care agreement.
- Students must reside in New York State.
- Undocumented students who (spent time in foster care after their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday) fall within a category of individuals outlined in Section 661(b)(i) of the NY Education Law are eligible for FYCSI consideration.

**2. Who is an eligible orphan for FYCSI funding?**

Orphans are **ONLY eligible** if both parents are deceased and the student was NOT adopted prior to age 13.

SPECIAL NOTE: According to the Office of Federal Student Aid, professional judgment can be used when determining eligibility if students can document unusual circumstances (i.e., students can document the prolonged absence and/or abandonment of a parent and the other parent is deceased) are warranted for a dependency override. More information can be found [here](#) under Section 479A [20 USC 1087tt] DISCRETION OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID ADMINISTRATORS.

**3. Are students living with a guardian eligible for FYCSI funding?**

If a student is living with another family member, kin, or friend under a documented guardianship agreement or informal guardianship agreement, and the youth DOES NOT have a foster care history or documented orphan status after their 13th birthday then they are **NOT eligible**.

If a student's parents are deceased (both parents) after the youth's 13th birthday, and the youth subsequently enters into a legal guardianship agreement, they would be **eligible**.

**4. Are FYCSI funds available for students pursuing graduate, professional, or second bachelor's degrees?**

No, FYCSI funds are not available to graduate students or to students seeking a second baccalaureate degree.

Webinar #2 attendees submitted the following questions:

**5. Will the slides/presentation be made available?**

Yes. A recording of the FYCSI Webinar #2, and the presentation slides is available on the *College Success Resource Guide* website [here](#).

**6. What are the signature requirements for the consent form OCFS-3165? Can students use e-signature?**

The consent form allows students to enter their name as the signature.

**7. Is a kinship foster care agreement a court document?**

A Kinship guardianship agreement through foster care is an acceptable document (however, it probably won't be on court letterhead, it may be from a foster care agency, or department of social services).

**8. Is it possible to get a copy of the guide?**

The Guide is primarily an online resource, however, we hope to provide a downloadable PDF in the future. In the meantime, you may take screenshots or bookmark pages that are most relevant to you.

**9. When will funds for 2019-2020 be received?**

Questions about 2019-20 FYCSI funds should be directed to [FosterYouth@nysed.gov](mailto:FosterYouth@nysed.gov).

**10. Would it be a good idea to ask students receiving these funds to complete some sort of financial literacy program, such as SUNY Smartrack?**

There are no state requirements for financial literacy for students to receive FYCSI funding. Campuses may offer students additional support regarding financial literacy, but are unable to mandate it as a condition of funding.

**11. Can these funds exceed the student's Cost of Attendance as determined by federal standards?**

Cost of Attendance is determined by the IHE. IHE may adjust a student's COA based on identified need of the student. Please visit the *College Success Resource Guide* section on [cost of attendance](#) for more information and tips on ways adjustment COA for foster youth, and our [cost of attendance adjustment form](#) sample for additional information.

**12. Getting the students to complete the consent form has been problematic. If we cannot get the completed form returned by the student, can we still submit them on the report, or do they have to be removed? And, any thoughts on how we can get the potential new applicants to complete the form?**

Yes, you can still include those students on the report. However, those students who are thought to be eligible as Foster Youth after their 13th birthday, must submit a consent form to be verified as eligible. Please let students know that they could lose out on funding they could be eligible to receive if they do not provide the verification consent form. The consent form can be completed digitally with an electronic signature.

**13. Eligible students at private schools include HEOP and non-HEOP students, correct?**

Yes, as long as the private school currently operates an HEOP program, all students attending school there are eligible to apply (if they meet the foster youth/orphan definition) even if they are not enrolled in the HEOP.

**14. Who selects and notifies SUNY of their sector liaison? Can we email [FYCSI@suny.edu](mailto:FYCSI@suny.edu) to give the individuals contact information and can there be more than one?**

It is up to the campus to designate a liaison for their FYCSI students. It is usually a financial aid office professional. Once the liaison is designated, you can email the contact information to [FYCSI@suny.edu](mailto:FYCSI@suny.edu). You can have more than one liaison, but remember you are submitting one consolidated list.

15. If a student was raised by a mother, who is now deceased, and the father is unknown, is the student considered an orphan? *Response is pending.*
16. You mentioned a separate process for orphans. Please elaborate. *Response is pending.*
17. Is there any specific documentation needed from Financial Aid. In determining that the student is an orphan? Are homeless students considered orphans?  
A student's status as homeless does not independently make them eligible for orphan status. More information about foster youth or orphan eligibility and documentation can be found [here](#) and [here](#).
18. Can you elaborate on situations where Financial Aid offices would make a determination that a student is eligible for FYCSI? For example, a student only knows one parent, who has passed. If we determine they should be considered an orphan, how does that work? Would you need documentation from us, or do we just indicate our decision on the roster? *Response is pending.*
19. You state the consent form is to be submitted by us, but the form actually informs the student to send it to [FCY4College@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:FCY4College@ocfs.ny.gov). This might be confusing to the student.  
Duplicate submissions of the student's consent form is fine. We recommend that you do both just to be sure that the consent form was submitted.
20. Where do we get the consent form?  
The FYCSI student consent form is available on the *College Success Resource Guide* website (under the Webinar #2 recording) [here](#). In addition, SED will be posting the form on their FYCSI website [here](#).
21. Are students eligible for funds to obtain a second Associate degree?  
FYCSI funds are not to be used to obtain a second associate degree.
22. How can you find out if the annual application for 2020/21 has been submitted and what the fund allocation is?  
SUNY and CUNY system administrations will submit one central application on behalf of all colleges/campuses within their systems. For questions about the CUNY or SUNY specific applications please contact: **Shirley de Peña** at [Shirley.dePena@sunys.edu](mailto:Shirley.dePena@sunys.edu) or **Osei Agyeman** at [FYCSI@SUNY.edu](mailto:FYCSI@SUNY.edu). FYCSI Liaisons for independent IHEs will submit the FYCSI application to SED after they submit the 2020-21 student applicants list. Feel free to email [FosterYouth@nysed.gov](mailto:FosterYouth@nysed.gov) for a copy of the application.
23. Does the SUNY admissions application have a question regarding foster youth that is similar to the question on the FAFSA?  
Yes. There is a question addressing this under the Profile Tab in the Demographic Section.
24. Usually on-campus tutoring is free. What if a student shows proof of receiving and paying for tutoring?  
Tutoring is an allowable expense.

**25. Do we need any documentation about student additional expenses?**

You don't need to collect receipts, but many campuses develop signed agreements with the students that they will be using funds in the designated area.

**26. Question #53 on the FAFSA is: "As determined by a court in your state of legal residence, are you or were you an emancipated minor?" See Notes page 10. I believe for 2020-21 the correct FAFSA question is #52 "At any time since you turned age 13, were both your parents deceased, were you in foster care or were you a dependent or ward of the court?"**

Correct, on the [2020-21 FAFSA](#) question 52 is the correct question to use to identify as independent from parents as a foster youth, orphan or dependent ward of the court.

**27. Is there an age limit when a foster child can apply to college and get this financial support? For example, if a student who was in foster care when they were 14 years old but did not decide to enter college until they turned 21 or 22?**

There is no upper age limit for students to access FYCSI funding. As long as the applicant can verify foster care experience they remain eligible. Please note, FYCSI is only available to students seeking two-year or four-year degrees. Professional/advanced degrees (MA, MS, JD, etc.) are not eligible.

**28. Can you explain how you work with foster care agencies on issues relating to funding, (i.e., if a student needs financial assistance for food, personal care items, and clothing) and the agency is not stepping in to provide sufficient funding? This is for the SUNY and CUNY FYCSI.**

You would roll the funds needed by the students into their packages. For example, food would be rolled into personal expenses, where the student would use those tangible funds to address their needs.

**29. How are FYCSI funds different from ETV funds?**

Please visit Chapter 3 of the *College Success Resource Guide* for a program comparison chart: [Know the Differences: FYCSI vs ETV.](#)

**30. Who completes the annual application? I get the emails but have never submitted the annual application. Would it be the EOP Director?**

Annual applications are completed by the designated Sector Liaisons at SUNY, CUNY, and SED (for private schools).

**31. For private institutions: where do we access the initial application?**

FYCSI Liaisons for independent IHEs will submit the FYCSI application to SED after they submit the 2020-21 student applicant list. Feel free to email [FosterYouth@nysed.gov](mailto:FosterYouth@nysed.gov) for a copy of the application.

**32. Is this funding treated like a "last dollar in" type of scholarship where after all forms of Financial Aid grants are applied, then this funding is applied to cover any remaining costs – so the student does not receive a refund from the FYCSI funding, only from Financial Aid grants?**

FYCSI funds are not last dollar in funds. Yes, students may receive FYCSI funds if their "unmet need" allows for them to receive a financial aid refund. Please visit the *College Success Resource Guide's* section on [cost of attendance](#) for more information on additional financial needs foster youth may have, and for tips on ways to make adjustments to COA for foster youth.

**33. Is there guidance on how to determine a student's need?**

Cost of Attendance is determined by the IHE. IHE may adjust a student's cost of attendance based on identified need by the student. Please visit the *College Success Resource Guide's* section on [cost of attendance](#) for more information and tips on ways to make adjustments to COA for foster youth. There also is a [cost of attendance adjustment form](#) template available for download.

**34. If a student has a consent form from another institution and then transfers to our institution, do we need to get a new consent form or does the previous consent form stand?**

Duplicate submissions of the student's consent form is fine. We recommend that you do both just to be sure that the consent form was submitted. Reminder, consent forms are only required from foster youth who are NEW applicants.

**35. Your consent form indicates the student to submit the form to [FCY4College@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:FCY4College@ocfs.ny.gov). But in another section, you indicate the school should send the consent form with the spreadsheet. Which is correct?**

Duplicate submissions of the student's consent form is fine. We recommend that you do both just to be sure that the consent form was submitted.

**36. The consent form states to send it to an [ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:ocfs.ny.gov) email. A student might not send it to the financial aid office.**

Duplicate submissions of the student's consent form is fine. We recommend that you do both just to be sure that the consent form was submitted.

**37. Is the key eligibility criterion that a student had to be in foster care after their 13th birthday? What if a grandparent was caring for the youth before and/or after they were 13 years old, and the student is given a dependency override -- are they eligible for FYCSI?**

Students intending to participate as a foster youth must provide proof of time in foster care. Guardianship (without foster care experience after a student's 13th birthday) would not qualify. More information about foster youth or orphan eligibility and documentation can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

**38. Would you consider changing the consent form to include information regarding orphan status? If a student who is an orphan, but not in foster care, receives this form, it might be confusing.**

Orphans do not need to submit consent forms, this is only necessary for foster youth who are new FYCSI applicants.

**39. Who completes the annual application? I get the emails but have never submitted the annual application. Would it be the EOP Director?**

The annual applications are completed by the designated Sector Liaisons at SUNY, CUNY, and SED (for private schools).

- 40. I am from a community college and I still don't know who completes the annual application? I am the contact in Financial Aid, but have never completed an annual application for the program.**

The annual application is completed by the designated Sector Liaisons at SUNY, CUNY, and SED (for private schools). In addition to managing all of the student eligibility steps (i.e., preparing the student applicant roster list), the campus only has to complete the end of the year report about how the funds were spent. These two documents are not to be confused.

- 41. What plan do you have to support campus liaisons professionally to ensure the success of this program in the long term?**

The [College Success Resource Guide](#) and [Webinar Series](#) are intended to provide information and strategies for supporting the college success of foster youth. To request more information or training, please visit the [Fostering Youth Success Alliance \(FYSA\)](#) website, or contact [fysa@childremsaidnyc.org](mailto:fysa@childremsaidnyc.org).

- 42. Since this aid applies to tuition, does that mean these students will not be eligible for the Excelsior Scholarship?**

Because the Excelsior Scholarship is a tuition-only program, students should apply for those funds first. FYCSI funds can be used to meet the entire COA for students and are not limited to tuition.

- 43. What about community colleges? Do we need to submit applications?**

SUNY and CUNY system administrations will submit one central application on behalf of all colleges/campuses within the system. Community colleges within those sectors should contact the FYCSI sector liaisons at CUNY or SUNY: **Shirley de Peña** at [Shirley.dePena@cuny.edu](mailto:Shirley.dePena@cuny.edu) or **Osei Agyeman** at [FYCSI@SUNY.edu](mailto:FYCSI@SUNY.edu).

- 44. It was mentioned that payments to students will vary depending on the need. We are a SUNY School. Will we be provided with guidelines to determine what award each student should receive?**

Yes, after your FYCSI student roster is confirmed, and when we hear back from SED after the calculation is made, you will be notified by Osei Agyeman at SUNY about the award amount.