

Need to Know Series: College and Vocational Planning



Youth In Progress

New York State Foster Care
Youth Leadership Advisory Team

“The mission of Youth In Progress is to enhance and advance the lives of today’s and tomorrow’s youth by supporting their sense of self and responsibility. To do this, we pledge to educate everyone involved in the various systems Youth In Progress members represent to the realities of this experience.”

Planning for Your Future

As a youth in care, you have an opportunity to prepare for a successful future. Think about the things you like to do or the things that interest you, such as being with people, a love for animals, working on cars, doing artwork or playing or listening to music. Your caseworker, foster parent or teacher can help you determine your interests, abilities and skills. Some people have an idea of what they want to do at an early age, but it is never too late to start thinking and planning. Middle school is a good time to start.



Exploring and Preparing for Careers

There is a fun way to identify and assess your skills, interests and abilities at www.nycareerzone.org. You will find it under "Assess Yourself." Take a look at careers that are in demand. These are the careers that are predicted to be around for a long time and pay well, too!

Your high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) diploma is the first step to success. Many new jobs require



education beyond high school. Vocational training or college makes you more competitive in the job market, giving you a better chance of getting a job. You will also need a résumé: a list of your education and training, work experience, abilities,

interests and community service. Some employers may ask you for a personal or work-related reference from someone who knows you.



College and Career Planning Resources

Ask your caseworker or youth counselor for the New York State Education and Career Planning Resource Directory. There you will find information about career planning resources such as Job Corps or BOCES. You can also access the directory at www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/ddps/edu_opp/edu_forums.asp



Thinking about College

If you are thinking about going to college, talk with your guidance counselor and/or caseworker or youth counselor about:

- identifying required courses you must complete during high school;
- selecting the right college for you;
- the application process;
- paying for college.



In addition to career planning information, the New York State Education and Career Planning Resource Directory also contains information about degree options and financial aid.



Paying for College – Financial Aid

There are many resources to assist you in paying for college. Most colleges and universities base financial aid determinations on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).



- A student who was an orphan, or ward of the court, at any time when the student was 13 years of age or older is considered an independent student.
- The Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) administers financial assistance programs in New York State. HESC helps make the college funding process faster and easier for students, parents and administrators. HESC administers the New York State tuition program. Visit www.hesc.com for more information.
- The Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program is for eligible youth in foster care or former foster care youth (including some youth in custody of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services). This includes youth who were adopted from foster care after age 16. Eligible youth may receive up to \$5,000 a year to attend a college or vocational training program. Funds may be used to pay for things not covered by other financial aid. If you are making satisfactory progress toward completion of your program, you may continue to apply until you are 23. Ask your caseworker or youth counselor about ETV or visit www.statevoucher.org to apply.
- The Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) has other scholarships for which youth in care may be eligible. Visit www.orphan.org for more information.
- Check www.fastweb.com for other scholarship opportunities.



Supportive Services for Youth in College

HEOP (Private Colleges and Universities)



The Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP) is an academic support program established by the State of New York in 1970. It helps motivated students who lack adequate preparation and financial resources for college to pursue a college degree.

To meet the specific need of its students, HEOP primarily provides testing, counseling, and tutoring. Academic advisement and financial assistance are also available.

www.heop.org/

EOP (Colleges with Universities in the SUNY System)

The State University of New York's Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) provides access, academic support, and financial aid to students who show promise for mastering college-level work, but who may otherwise not be admitted. Support services may include counseling, tutoring, modest financial aid, academic advisement aid and educational/skill building workshops. In addition, students may be required to attend a pre-freshman summer program prior to fall matriculation. Offered primarily to full-time students who are New York State residents, EOP accepts students who qualify, academically and economically, for the program.

www.suny.edu/student/academic_eop.cfm

College Room and Board

If you are in foster care and need assistance paying for college room and board, ask your caseworker if the foster care maintenance payment can be used for this purpose.



For More Information

Mapping Your Future: www.mappingyourfuture.org

New York State Education Department – Higher Education: Information on different types of financial aid in New York State and how to apply for it. www.highered.nysed.gov/NYLearns/finances.htm

Student Aid on the Web: All you need to know about applying for federal student aid. www.studentaid.ed.gov

The Student Guide: Gives youth information on how to apply for financial assistance, different kinds of financial aid, and borrowers' rights and responsibilities. www.studentaid.ed.gov/guide

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