

Washington State

Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Program Guidelines

A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS



As a dedicated foster parent,

you are one of the many caring individuals in Washington who has opened your home and heart to youth in foster care.

You take on many roles when you decide to care for these young people. You not only provide food, shelter and clothes, but you also offer emotional support, serve as a role model, listen to their dreams and advocate for their goals.

Several programs have been developed in recent years to help youth in foster care help meet cost of going to college or vocational and technical school. Among the programs is the Education and Training Voucher (ETV). This program provides financial assistance to the youth in your care.

Advocating and supporting youth in your home to complete high school or a GED program is the first step on their journey to post secondary education. The ETV program along with other available funds can help pave the road for a lifetime of benefits for youth.

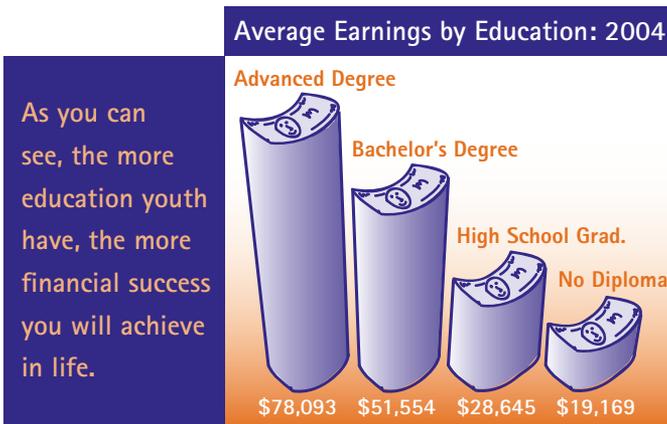
This guide will help you support youth who enroll in ETV and get the most out of the program. It provides you and the youth in your care with information about:

- Who qualifies
- What are the program benefits
- What documents youth need to turn in to apply
- What the program application deadlines are and
- Where to get more information

You are valuable partners in contributing to positive and productive outcomes for youth in your care. Your guidance on their journey to greater education will lead them to gainful employment, independence and productive adulthood experiences.

The Power of Education

Completing post secondary education is a strong component to a good financial future for youth. The chart below shows the average annual income an individual can expect based on how much education they have completed.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Educational Attainment in the U.S.: 2005

What can you do to help encourage youth to continue their education?

You have a critical role and opportunity to help youth see the value of education and how much it will contribute to their success in life.

You can:

- Help youth to identify their educational goals
- Recognize and praise their strengths and help build their confidence
- Increase your expectations of what foster youth can accomplish through education
- Improve their ability to plan their course selection and learn how to apply and receive financial aid to complete their application process
- Support, guide and encourage foster youth to achieve post-secondary education
- Focus on both short and long term educational goals

You can contribute a great deal as a caregiver when you advocate and help plan for youth's educational goals and related expenses.



Most of all, you can advocate, advocate, advocate! Help youth understand the program.

So, what exactly is ETV?

- It is a program designed for current and former foster youth who have left foster care or are likely to leave foster care because they have turned 18
- ETV offers financial assistance for foster youth once they complete high school or obtain a GED. The assistance helps them attend colleges, universities, vocational or technical training programs
- The maximum amount available per year per student is \$5,000.
- ETV awards are specific to each student. They are based on:
 - The cost of attending the student's school of choice, which is a formula set by the school
 - Other financial aid the student may receive and
 - The student's unmet financial need
- Total financial aid, including ETV, cannot exceed the cost of attending school, so not every student will receive a full \$5,000
- ETV is designed to add to the student's financial aid package so the student can attend college or technical/vocational school
- ETV is available anywhere in the United States a student may want to attend school
- The ETV program in Washington State is overseen by a program manager, who is a state employee. The contact information is as follows;

- **ETV PROGRAM**

P.O. Box 45710

Olympia, WA 98505

Toll-free -1-877-433-8388 or 360-902-8482

Fax: 360-902-7588

E-mail: ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov



Who Qualifies for ETV?

Foster youth may qualify if they:

- Are accepted into or are enrolled in a degree, certificate or other program at an accredited college, university, technical or vocational school; and
- have not yet reached their 21st birthday; or
- were eligible for ETV and received funds before their 21st birthday then the youth will continue to be eligible until their 23rd birthday
- are currently a dependent youth in foster care; or
- were a dependent of the State of Washington and aged out of foster care system at age 18, emancipated (court action to release the youth from dependency status to an independent adult) or were adopted from foster care after their 16th birthday; and
- show they are making progress towards their educational goals

How does a student apply for the ETV Program?

Initial Application – Two choices

Common Application

This application should be used for students that are planning to attend 2 and 4 year Universities and College Degree Programs. The application can be obtained at: independence.wa.gov or by contacting the ETV Program Manager.

- The common application is for current and former foster youth in Washington State and allows the youth to apply for up to four of the programs below; these programs provide money to pay for college and other training beyond high school.
 - Education and Training Voucher Program
 - Governor's Scholarship for Foster Youth
 - YMCA Transitions Scholarship
 - Treehouse Coaching to College Scholarship

ETV Technical/Vocational/Certificate Application (TVC)

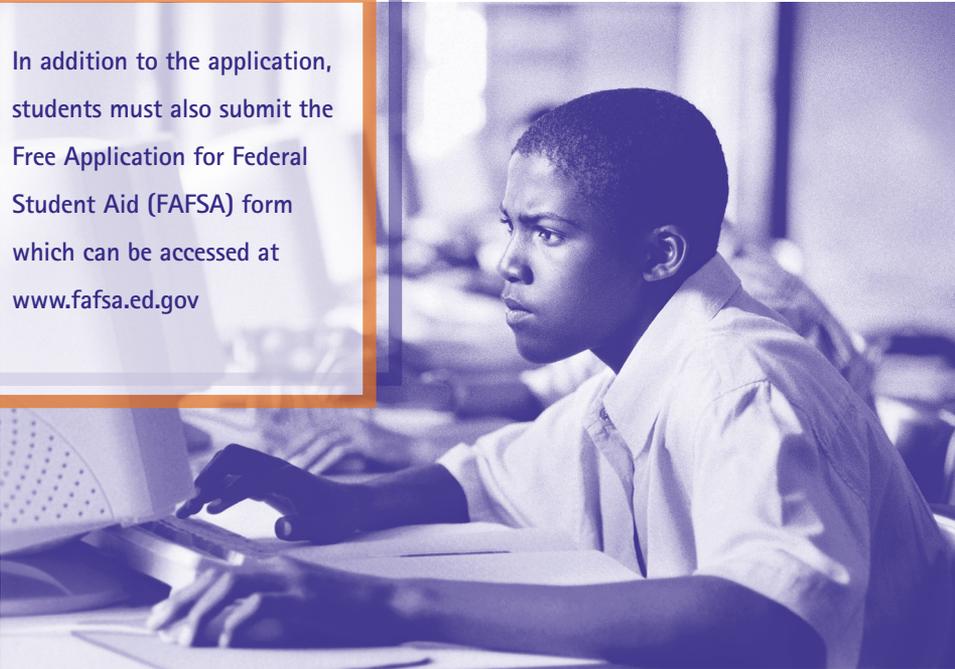
Students that are planning to attend Technical, Vocational or Certificate Programs may use the Common Application or the TVC Application.

- If the student wishes to apply for the other three scholarships they must use the Common Application

In addition to the application, students must also submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form which can be accessed at www.fafsa.ed.gov for federal and state financial aid. This form is required for a student to receive other federal and State financial aid.

- Be aware of a similar website that charges a fee for this free application
- The student may also need to update their FAFSA to turn in to the ETV program if they are planning to take summer classes

In addition to the application, students must also submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form which can be accessed at www.fafsa.ed.gov



Does the Common Application and the Technical/Vocational/Certificate Application require additional documentation?

Yes.

WHEN APPLYING FOR THE FIRST TIME

As a part of the Common Application and TVC application the student will need to provide:

- An essay stating the youth's goals
- Current High School transcripts or GED score report
- Copy of their college financial aid award letter
- A letter from the youth's social worker on agency's letter head documenting the youth's dependency status and dates which the youth was in foster care
- Registration for their upcoming term

The ETV Program requires the student to also submit:

- If available, documentation from the school about the cost of attendance

FOR ONGOING ETV AID

If ETV financial aid has been received in previous years, submit:

- ETV Renewal Application
- Letter of acceptance from an accredited college, university or technical vocational school program or class schedule from the school
- Documentation from the school about the cost of attendance
- Financial aid award letter
- Grades from previous term, if applicable

The ETV Program requires the student to also submit:

- If available, documentation from the school about the cost of attendance
- Grades at the end of each quarter/semester

Initial applications and renewal applications are available at: independence.wa.gov or by contacting the ETV Program Manager

Can someone help navigate the system?

Yes.

- The ETV Program Manager will work with students who seek help to plan for their education and related expenses
- After the application is submitted, the program manager will arrange for a discussion with the student
- During this time the program manager will explain the program, required follow up forms, the student's ETV budget and covered expenses
- Again, you can contact the program manager at:

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P.O. Box 45710

Olympia, WA 98505

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Fax: 360-902-7588

E-mail: ETVWASH@dshs.wa.gov

Are there application deadlines?

Yes.

There are specific "priority deadlines" to submit ETV applications based on the system for dividing the school year into quarters.

ETV Priority Deadlines:

Applications received after priority deadlines will receive funds based on availability.

August 1 fall quarter

January 1 winter quarter

March 1 spring quarter

June 1 summer quarter

The completed application can be submitted to the ETV Program Manager by:

The student

The caregiver

Social Worker

Independent Living Coordinator or Independent Living Services Provider

Are there any forms my youth will need to use?

Yes.

Our goal is to streamline the process to get the youth's needs met as soon as possible. Once the student has submitted their application and is determined to be eligible, the ETV Program Manager will send out these 3 forms:

- Participant Agreement, signed by the student; this outlines the student's responsibilities
- ETV Payment Request Form, signed by the student; this ensures timely payment
- ETV Participant Release/Cashier Statement, this allows the ETV Program to speak with the school regarding financial aid and the student's needs. The top section is a release, which needs to be signed by the student. The bottom section needs to be completed, signed and faxed by the school's Financial Aid Office or Cashier Office to the ETV Program Manager
- The ETV Program Manager will review and complete the Budget Work Sheet during the financial consultation; the student does not need to complete this. It is recommended that the student review the form prior to their discussion with the ETV Program Manager

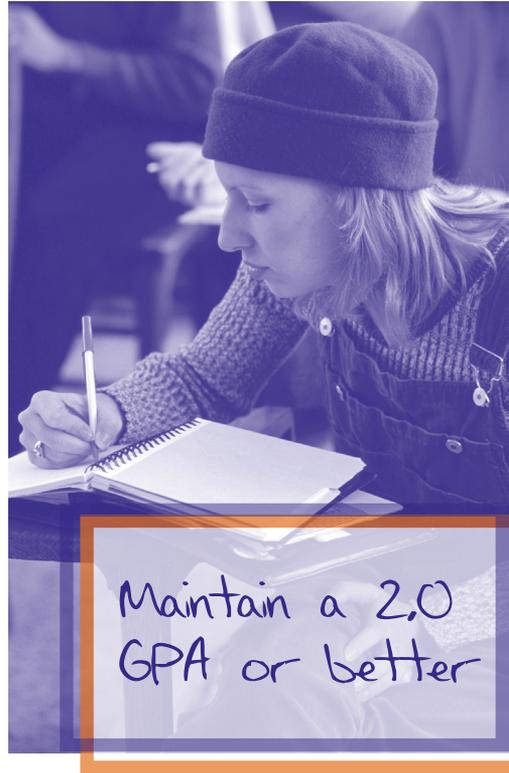
How is the cost of attendance determined?

- Cost of attendance (how much it costs to attend the school of the student's choice) is determined by the school of choice
- The cost usually includes: tuition, fees, books, housing, transportation and other school-related costs unique to their needs
- Students may ask their financial aid office to adjust the cost of attendance if the school program requires a purchase of special equipment, such as a computer, or if the student is a parent responsible for the care of a child while in college
- For information on the cost of attendance, go to www.nces.ed.gov

Once in the Program, how does a student remain eligible for ETV assistance?

As a participant in the program, students are responsible to:

- Read and understand the Washington State ETV Guidelines regarding the application process and specific program information
- Sign the ETV Participant Agreement Form and abide by it
- Open and maintain a free e-mail account and check it frequently
- Notify the ETV Program if there is a change in:
 - Contact information
 - Financial situation
 - Classes or enrollment status
 - Financial aid probation/termination or if they are placed on academic probation
 - Change in college, university or technical/vocational school
- Submit a transcript of grades at the end of every quarter or semester in order to continue eligibility for funding
- Maintain a 2.0 GPA or better
- Complete the Participant Release and Cashier Statement and submit it every quarter/semester to the ETV Program
- Track their budget and ETV payment requests
- Submit a payment request form for payment needs in a timely manner



Maintain a 2.0
GPA or better

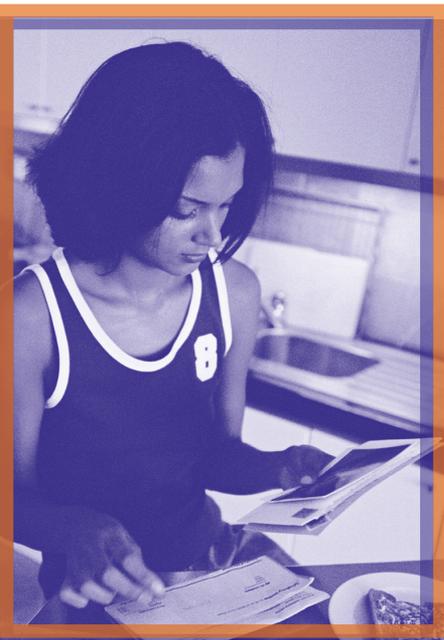
As a caregiver how can I advocate and help an eligible foster youth with their educational needs after high school?

- Help identify educational and career goals
- Help review and select appropriate college, university or technical/vocational programs
- Assist with the completion of:
 - College applications
 - FAFSA
 - Scholarship applications
 - ETV application



How do the bills get paid?

- The Payment Request Form is available on the website or from the ETV Program Manager
- On the form the student will provide information regarding who the payment will go to, the amount of the payment and then fax or mail it to the ETV Program Manager
- The ETV Program will pay for their expenses directly to the provider or send reimbursement to the student
- Students **may** need to submit receipts, invoices, leases or other documents that detail expenses to the ETV Program



Is there a payment schedule?

- No, there is no specific payment schedule
 - The sooner the student contacts the ETV Program Manager and completes the ETV Payment Request Form, the sooner the payment can be made
 - Payments usually take 14 working days once ETV receives the submitted request with back up documents, such as receipts, lease agreements or bills
 - Tuition payments are made to schools before the start of the quarter or semester whenever possible
 - The ETV Program does not guarantee pre-payment
- The student may be required to submit additional information and an ETV Participate Release and Cashier Statement, each quarter/semester before funds can be released
 - Unlike a paycheck, ETV funds are not guaranteed to arrive weekly or monthly

Are there other programs, services or support individuals that can provide direction and help?

Yes.

There are several other programs that may be available to youth. The youth's Children's Administration social worker can provide you with additional information on them. The social worker can also provide referrals to these programs.

One of the programs that is especially helpful to youth that receive ETV funding is the Transitional Living program. You may want to discuss with the social worker making a referral to this program that will support your efforts and help the youth in several ways to succeed in becoming an independent adult.

Transitional Living Program

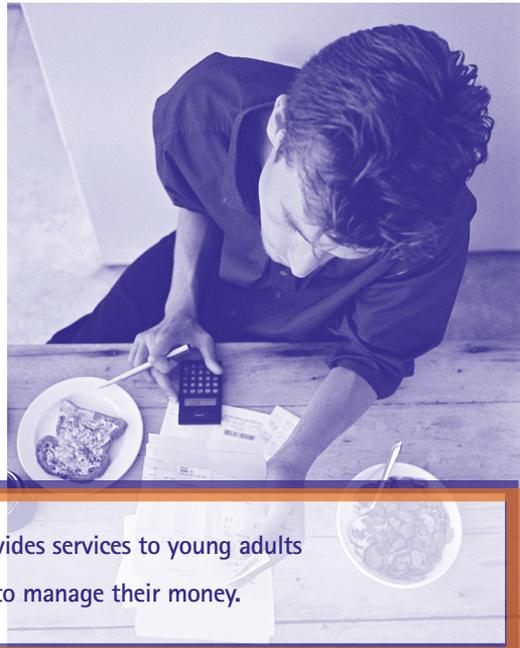
Transitional Living (TL) Services is a voluntary program for youth ages 18-21 that turned 18 while they were still in state or tribal care and are trying to make it on their own. Every region has TL Providers that work to support youth in collaboration with you, the caregiver.

The TL program provides services to young adults to help them succeed; these services include:

- Educational services including everything from learning to read to getting ready for and getting into a college or a training program
- Finding what kinds of jobs are out there, applying for jobs, and preparing for job interviews
- One-on-one counseling and help building skills needed to help youth live on their own such as:
 - How to manage money
 - How to take care of their place
 - How to make smart spending decisions and what to do if they get into money trouble
 - What to do if they have a child and how to be a good parent
 - Where to go if they need a doctor or a dentist
 - Where to go in their community to socialize and find support
 - How to find and keep safe housing

You can get TL services for your youth through classes and workshops and through local agencies who can work with youth one-on-one.

For more information about Transitional Living, email IILSKIDS@dshs.wa.gov or contact the social worker at our local DCFS office.



The Transitional Living Program provides services to young adults to help them succeed, such as how to manage their money.

For more details visit:

independence.wa.gov

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Together we
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difference.





Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

CA Children's Administration
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