

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

Policy Guide 2015.01

**Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program
Rule and Procedure 312**

DATE: January 2, 2015
TO: All DCFS and Private Agency Child Welfare Staff and Supervisors
FROM: Bobbie Gregg, Acting Director *Bobbie Gregg*
EFFECTIVE: Immediately

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy Guide is to communicate the recent changes to the Department's Scholarship Program, Rule and Procedure 312.

II. PRIMARY USERS

Primary users of this Policy Guide are DCFS and Private Agency Child Welfare Staff and Supervisors.

III. BACKGROUND

This Policy Guide clarifies the recent changes to the Department's Scholarship Program as the result of Public Act #098-0805.

IV. SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

- a) The Department will now award scholarships and fee waivers to 53 students attending any community college, university or college maintained by the State of Illinois.
- b) Youth are eligible if:
 - 1) the Department currently has court-ordered legal responsibility of the youth;
 - 2) the youth aged out of care at age 18 or older;
 - 3) the youth was formerly under care of the Department but has been adopted; and



- 4) the youth was formerly under care of the Department but has been placed in private guardianship.
- c) The scholarship and fee waiver will be available for five (5) years provided the student is “continuing to work toward graduation”. The student must meet the following requirements to be considered as “continuing to work toward graduation”:
- 1) take a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester or quarter during fall and spring term and 6 credit hours in the summer term (or the program’s equivalency of full time status);
 - 2) maintain a "C" grade point average and provide a copy of their semester or quarter grades to their caseworker and OETS;
 - 3) notify their Permanency Worker and OETS, if they are under the care of the Department, if they transfer to another school, change their address, attend summer school or withdraw from school. Youth shall submit the above-required documentation directly to OETS if the Department no longer has a legal responsibility of the youth; and
 - 4) file a FAFSA form and apply for other forms of financial aid annually, if needed, and for paying their own room and board, as well as other costs not covered by the Department Scholarship.
- d) The unused scholarships and fee waivers shall be reallocated to new recipients. The process for reallocating the unused scholarships and fee waivers is:
- 1) upon confirmation that a scholarship recipient has withdrawn from school or no longer is “continuing to work toward graduation”, the OETS will review the spreadsheet from the Program Year to determine the next youth in line to receive a scholarship;
 - 2) the information from the next student in line to receive a scholarship will be submitted to the National Student Clearinghouse to determine if he/she is still enrolled and attending an accredited post secondary institution. If so, the student will be notified that they are eligible to receive the remaining unused portion of the scholarship being forfeited. If no information is found on the student, attempts will be made to contact the student via the last contact information on file with OETS to determine school enrollment; and
 - 3) OETS will continue to allocate all unused scholarships to students in order on the spreadsheet from the Program Year.

- e) Before the start of the school year for which they are applying for the scholarship, the youth must have:
 - 1) earned a high school diploma from an accredited institution;
 - 2) earned a General Education Development certificate or diploma; or
 - 3) met the State criteria for high school graduation.
- f) The Scholarship selection committee will include at least two (2) individuals who were formerly under the care of the Department who have completed their post-secondary education.

V. QUESTIONS

Questions regarding this Policy Guide may be directed to the Office of Child and Family Policy at 217-524-1983 or via Outlook at OCFP – Mailbox. Non Outlook users may e-mail questions to cfpolicy@idcfs.state.il.us.

VI. FILING INSTRUCTIONS

File this Policy Guide immediately following Rule and Procedure 312, Scholarship Program.

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