



▶ FLORIDA'S FOSTER YOUTH COLLEGE ACCESS INFORMATION ..... 1



▶ HOW TO PREPARE FOR COLLEGE ..... 1



▶ FAFSA (FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID) INFORMATION ..... 2

○ ISSUE I | ○ VOLUME I | ○ 2008



# College *Is Possible for You!*

## Florida's Foster Youth College Access Information

Financial aid information presented by the Florida Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators and Partners



## College Is Possible for You!

We want to help you achieve your future goals

To assist students coming out of foster care in believing that college is possible for them, an early awareness project was approved by the Executive Board of the Florida Association of Financial Aid Administrators.

FASFAA joined with our partners in the foster youth community including agencies such as the Department of Children and Families, Family Services of Metro Orlando, Orange County Public Schools, Florida Department of Education, and with advice from the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA), to promote ideas that will help students realize their college potential.

We want students to know that college is an exciting place to be and doors can open up to students who want college in their future.

### Do you want college in your future?

#### What does college mean to you?

Does it mean a better job? Do you like the idea of getting up in the morning excited to go to work? Is college life fun? Is it hard work?

#### What do you think?

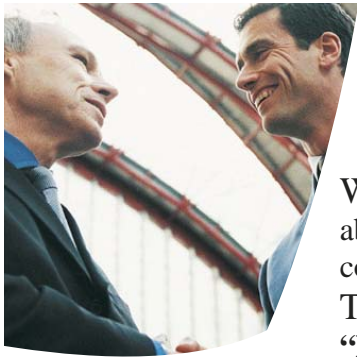
As you already know, college life is very much like life everywhere. It is what you make of it. We bet that you already know this. There are times when life can and will be very hard. But, as a student coming out of the foster care system, you have advantages that will help you get started. In this brochure, we will point out ideas which can help you believe that college is for you.



## How do You Prepare for College?



Start when you are in middle school. Ask yourself what is important to me? Know that when you work on your grades and do well in middle school, this sets the stage for a successful high school and college career. Be involved with middle school activities that help you focus on school and meeting other kids that are focused too. Sports, band, chess club, music, and choir, are just a few examples of the activities that can make you a better student. **Let your teachers help you.** They want you to succeed. If you show them that you want to work hard, they will be there for you. Don't be afraid to go to them and ask questions. When you are having trouble, go see your advisor. **Your advisor can help you – even on difficult problems. Be bold – it's your future!**



# Start Picturing Yourself in College!!!

When you are a sophomore and junior in high school, think about the colleges you would like to attend. Get on a computer and check out the college websites.

Take notes and **keep them in a folder marked, "My College Folder."**

**In February of your senior high school year, complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) for the upcoming college academic year. This is a free service. You should not pay for college financial aid advice. The colleges will have websites that provide you with all the information you need – even free scholarship searches. **In mid-February, you should complete the FAFSA for the next fall. Never be late on this. It is the single most important thing you can do to get a good financial aid package of grants. Go, each year, to the website <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> to complete the FAFSA or renewal FAFSA. If you need help completing the FAFSA, contact the colleges' financial aid office. In mid-February of every year, we support College Goal Sunday events across the country to help students complete their FAFSA every year. We are all here to help you.****

You will need to have access to a computer. Public and school libraries are a quiet place to use the computer. Make sure you keep your information (passwords, pin numbers, etc.) **secure** and **safely** in your "My College Folder."

If possible, make a college visit to the college/s you are considering. This will take some major planning, but will help you get a feeling for the school and decide which college is right for you. Community colleges are great places to start your college career. Technical schools can be a good option too. NOTE: Check the college/s website for their admission deadlines.

## Am I considered Independent when completing the FAFSA?

There is a change in the Independent Student Definition starting on the FAFSA for 2009-2010. The FAFSA will ask:

Were you in foster care when you were age 13 or older?

Were you a dependent/ward of the court when you were age 13 or older?

**If you are able to answer either of these questions "YES", you will be considered an independent student for financial aid purposes, and will not provide any parent information on the FAFSA. \*You may need to provide documents to the financial aid office to support your answer.**

## How do I plan to live independently?

The best resource we have found to answer all of your questions, is on the Florida's Children First, Inc website under "**Frequently Asked Questions**" for foster youth transitioning to

adulthood. To view this document visit <http://www.floridaschildrenfirst.org> click on "Resources" then "FCF Publications", here you will find the link for "**Frequently Asked Questions for Foster Youth Transitioning to Adulthood**".

This FAQ talks about programs for youth under age 18, over 18 and older, the Road to Independence Program, transitional assistance, and aftercare.

Also, there is a great section on "Education." This is where you find out about tuition exemptions (free tuition and fee waivers) for the state college you are considering. Private colleges may have some of expenses covered. Your Independent Living Coordinator will help you understand all of this, along with your high school counselor and college financial aid office.

You have a network behind you of dedicated people to help get you to college.

**SMART INVESTING: High School & Beyond**



WHEN YOU GET TO HIGH SCHOOL, BE PROUD OF YOURSELF FOR GETTING TO THIS EXCITING PART OF YOUR LIFE. WE KNOW THAT IT IS NOT EASY BUT KEEP THOSE GRADES UP!! SIGN UP FOR TEST PREP COURSES IF OFFERED BY YOUR HIGH SCHOOL.

FIND A QUIET PLACE AND DEVOTE 1 ½ HOURS EACH WEEK NIGHT FOR STUDYING. NO TV, NO CELL PHONE, JUST YOU AND THE BOOKS. DO YOUR HOMEWORK FIRST, THEN READ AS MUCH AS YOU CAN. THIS HELPS YOUR TEST SCORES.

TAKE THE CLASSES THAT WILL HELP YOU GET THE BRIGHT FUTURES SCHOLARSHIP. GO TO [WWW.FLORIDASTUDENTFINANCIALAID.ORG](http://WWW.FLORIDASTUDENTFINANCIALAID.ORG) AND CHECK OUT THE CRITERIA FOR THIS SCHOLARSHIP.

KEEP A JOURNAL AND PLAN OUT YOUR DAY, WEEK AND YEAR. STAY BUSY WITH SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AND GOOD FRIENDS THAT BUILD YOU UP!



## Do you know now that "COLLEGE IS POSSIBLE" for you?

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