



Fighting for Children's Rights



Know Your Rights: Florida's Tuition and Fee Exemption for Students who had Child Welfare Involvement.

In March, 2016, the Board of the Governors of the Florida State University System realized the need to revise its Regulation¹ that limited the use of the tuition exemption to a maximum of 120 credit hours in undergraduate courses – which was not correct according to current law.

The revised Regulation will make it clear that there is no limitation on the number of credit hours or type of courses. The only limitation is that the exemption expires when the young adult reaches age 28.

This change was brought about by the persistent advocacy of Florida's Children First and Florida Youth SHINE and accomplished with the help of legislators, their staff, and pro bono attorneys.

Who Is Entitled to the Tuition & Fee Exemption?

- Students who were in out-of-home care at age 18. (Foster care, group home, relative or non-relative placement all count.)
- Students whose child welfare case was closed to guardianship after age 16 so long as they spent at least 6 months in licensed care prior to the case being closed.
- Students who were adopted from state care after May 5, 1997.

Where Can I use the Tuition & Fee Exemption?

- State (public) Universities
- Colleges (public) in the Florida College System
- School District Workforce Education Programs

How Long is the Tuition & Fee Exemption Good For?

- Until age 28.

What Does the Tuition & Fee Exemption Cover?

- Tuition and Fees – including Lab Fees
- Workforce Education provided by School Districts
- Undergraduate Classes
- Graduate School Classes (Master's or Ph.D.)
- Professional School Classes (e.g. Medical, Dental and Law)

¹ Board of Governors Regulation 7.008

How Do I Access the Tuition & Fee Exemption?

- Obtain a document describing your eligibility from the Community Based Care lead agency in the community where your child welfare case was located.
- Contact the financial aid office to determine its process for using the exemption.

Is there a Limitation on How Many Credit Hours I Can Take?

- There is NO LIMIT on the number of credit hours! (NOT limited to 120 hours)

Is the Tuition and Fee Exemption Limited to Undergraduate Courses?

- No. There is NO LIMIT on the type of courses or of the degree you seek. From trade school to medical school – all are included.

What Do I Do if the School Says I Can't Use the Exemption for my Classes?

- Find out the exact reason why you are being denied –get the decision in writing.
- If you need additional documentation to show you qualify for the Tuition and Fee Exemption, contact the Independent Living Specialist at your local Community Based Care agency for assistance.
- If the school denies the exemption based on the old policy (which limited you to 120 hours undergraduate courses only) then ask to have that decision reviewed by the General Counsel to the University.
- If you are stilling having problems, contact us at:
fcf@floridaschildrenfirst.org