

Informed, empathetic, and united action to help youth from foster care succeed in college!



# 2019 New Member Orientation









#### **New Member Orientation**

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#### Welcome!

Thank you for your dedication to support students from foster care as they pursue postsecondary success!

As a foster care liaison or community youth advocate, you have the opportunity to encourage, guide, and support students who are eligible to receive the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Tuition and Fee Exemption.

The Positive Pathways Program, aka Positive Pathways, one of the few programs of its kind in the nation, provides a forum for coordinated and united action to support the postsecondary dreams of these resilient students.

This presentation provides an overview of Positive Pathways. This program was created by DCF, which funds the program through a contract with Educate Tomorrow. Educate Tomorrow is a Miami-based non-profit organization with a history of convening proactive partners to help students from foster care and related background reach their educational dreams.

As you serve students, remember Positive Pathways is here to help you. Together we can help these young adults succeed.

Thank you,

Steve



**Dr. Steve J. Rios**Senior Director











#### **Educate Tomorrow**

Educate Tomorrow was created in 2003 to serve current and former foster youth, homeless youth, and other vulnerable transitioning young adults by striving to make higher education an attainable goal for all.

Educate Tomorrow's programs primarily serve these youth and young adults by providing multi-year, goal-oriented academic and career coaching, intensive skill-building workshops and enrichment activities.

As the contracted provider that administers Positive Pathways, Educate Tomorrow ensures the program operates efficiently and effectively to offer the support that campuses and communities need to serve the students using the DCF tuition and fee exemption.

Brett McNaught, Chief Executive Officer of Educate Tomorrow, is the program supervisor of Positive Pathways.

Dr. Steve J. Rios is the senior director of the program, and Racqui Perry, Esq., is the program assistant. For more information on the leadership team, click <a href="here">here</a>.







Steve



Raqui



www.EducateTomorrow.org





Reach us through <a href="mailto:Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org">Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org</a> or at (305) 374-3751.



## **Positive Pathways Program Overview**

The Positive Pathways Program was created by the DCF to improve postsecondary outcomes and career transitions for former foster youth who are attending Florida's public postsecondary educational system and eligible for the state's generous tuition and fee exemption.

The Florida Legislature, in 2013, mandated that DCF collaborate with the Board of Governors (BOG), the Florida College System (FCS), and the Florida Department of Education (DOE) to help eligible youth transition to and through postsecondary educational settings.

DCF contracted with Educate Tomorrow, a 501(c)(3) organization, to manage the program.

Positive Pathways provides guidance, training, and technical assistance for all members. Members meet online every month, network, participate in workshops, and attend an annual conference to strengthen relationships with colleagues throughout Florida and learn about effective ways to serve students from foster care.











## **DCF Tuition and Fee Exemptions**

The State of Florida provides tuition and fee exemptions to eligible students. The waiver is authorized at state public universities, public colleges, and technical colleges run by local school districts. Fee exemptions may be available to a student who:

- is or was in the custody of the Department of Children and Families when he or she reached age 18;
- was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997;
- is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a relative under <u>s. 39.5085</u>, <u>F.S.</u>;

- is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a non-relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.; or,
- was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least six months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age.

Note: The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age. See § 1009.25(1)(c), (d), Fla. Stat.

For questions regarding eligibility or how to obtain a tuition and fee exemption form, CF-FSP 5220, contact your local Community Based Care Lead Agency or call Florida's Independent Living Resource Center, operated by daniel, at 1-844-ILYOUTH (844-459-6884).









## **College Students Receiving DCF Tuition Exemptions**

Academic Year 2017-2018

| College                               | Number | College                                    | Number |
|---------------------------------------|--------|--|--------|
| Broward College                       | 392    | North Florida Community College            | 8      |
| Chipola College                       | 20     | Northwest Florida State College            | 47     |
| College of Central Florida            | 75     | Palm Beach State College                   | 259    |
| Daytona State College                 | 207    | Pasco-Hernando State College               | 115    |
| Eastern Florida State College         | 117    | Pensacola State College                    | 139    |
| Florida Gateway College               | 36     | Polk State College                         | 153    |
| Florida Keys Community College        | 9      | Santa Fe College                           | 219    |
| Florida Southwestern State College    | 120    | Seminole State College of Florida          | 117    |
| Florida State College at Jacksonville | 255    | South Florida State College                | 31     |
| Gulf Coast State College              | 42     | St. Johns River State College              | 52     |
| Hillsborough Community College        | 285    | St. Petersburg College                     | 227    |
| Indian River State College            | 151    | State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota | 113    |
| Lake-Sumter State College             | 38     | Tallahassee Community College              | 208    |
| Miami Dade College                    | 465    | Valencia College                           | 301    |

Total: 4,201

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2017-2019 Student Database

Note: These numbers include adopted, relative-care and non-relative care students using the exemption.





## **University Students Receiving DCF Tuition Exemptions**

Academic Years 2016-17 / 2017-18

| University                                     | 2016-17 | 2017-18 |
|--|---------|---------|
| Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University | 107     | 163     |
| Florida Atlantic University                    | 91      | 137     |
| Florida Gulf Coast University                  | 41      | 94      |
| Florida International University               | 105     | 143     |
| Florida Polytechnic University                 | *       | *       |
| Florida State University                       | 68      | 96      |
| New College of Florida                         | *       | *       |
| University of Central Florida                  | 141     | 191     |
| University of Florida                          | 53      | 71      |
| University of North Florida                    | 33      | 54      |
| University of South Florida                    | 82      | 162     |
| University of West Florida                     | 64      | 71      |
| Total  | 785     | 1,182   |



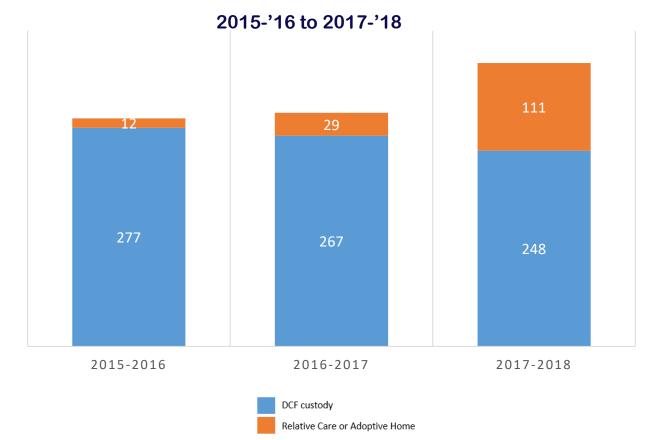






## Career and Technical College Students Using DCF Tuition Exemption

The number of students using the tuition and fee exemption are Florida Technical Colleges and Centers is increasing. For this reason, and because it is part of our mission, Positive Pathways has been strengthening its ties to the Career and Technical Education Division of the Florida Department of Education.







#### **Campus-Based Programs**

One of Positive Pathway's main objectives is to identify public colleges and universities where there is an urgent need for a dedicated program to serve students using the DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption. Fortunately, a number of college and universities with high numbers of students in this category, such as those shown on this page, have established programs to work specifically with this population. The leaders of these programs are experienced liaisons and active members of Positive Pathways and Florida Reach.



Educate Tomorrow@
Miami-Dade College Single Stop



TCC Fostering Academic
Achievement Fellows



Educate Tomorrow @ Florida
Atlantic University



Florida International
University Fostering
Panther Pride



<u>Unconquered</u> Scholars Program



University of Central Florida Knight Alliance Network



Machen Florida
Opportunity Scholars
Program





## **Campus-Based Programs**

#### Additional Program Information

| College/<br>University                       | Program Name  | Department  | Year<br>Founded | Staff                            | Website   |
|--|---|---|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Florida Atlantic<br>University (FAU)         | Educate<br>Tomorrow at<br>Florida Atlantic<br>University      | University<br>Advising Services   | 2017            | 1 FT, 1<br>graduate<br>assistant | www.fau.edu/uas/<br>educate_tomorrow  |
| Florida<br>International<br>University (FIU) | Fostering<br>Panther Pride                                    | Office of Student<br>Access & Success   | 2014            | 2 FT                             | sas.fiu.edu/fpp/  |
| Florida State<br>University (FSU)            | Unconquered<br>Scholars                                       | Undergraduate<br>Studies/Division<br>of Student<br>Affairs/Center<br>for Academic<br>Retention and<br>Enhancement<br>(CARE) | 2012            | 1 FT, 1<br>intern                | care.fsu.edu/USP  |
| University of<br>Central Florida<br>(UCF)    | Knight Alliance<br>Network                                    | Student<br>Development<br>and Enrollment<br>Services/<br>Multicultural and<br>Support Services                              | 2014            | 1 FT, 1 PT                       | mass.sdes.ucf.edu/<br>programs/kan/   |
| Miami Dade<br>College (MDC)                  | Educate<br>Tomorrow at<br>Miami Dade<br>College               | Division of<br>Student Services   | 2013            | 2 FT                             | www.mdc.edu/main/<br>singlestop/educate_<br>tomorrow_at_single_<br>stop.aspx  |
| Tallahassee<br>Community<br>College (TCC)    | Fostering<br>Academic<br>Achievement<br>Fellowship<br>Program | Division of<br>Student Services   | 2011            | 1 FT                             | www.tcc.fl.edu/<br>student-life/student-<br>services/accessibility-<br>and-resources-center/<br>fostering-achievement-<br>fellowship-program/ |







#### The Value of Association



Success within Reach

Positive Pathways is, in essence, a professional association sponsored by DCF. Through this association you have access to like-minded colleagues striving to provide the best possible service to students receiving the DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption.

Our headquarters can connect you to the right professionals at other campuses or with state level leaders who can help you quickly resolve challenges or questions you have, regarding serving former foster students on your campus.

Our monthly calls provide immediate access to professionals in your field all over Florida. These professionals can help you answer pressing questions by providing you guidance and resources to help your students.

Together Positive Pathways and our members are joining to provide an unprecedented amount of united action to serve students receiving the DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption.



Foster care liaisons from Miami Dade College, Tallahassee Community College, Broward College, Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and St. Petersburg College jointly presented at the 2019 Positive Pathways Conference in June.





## **Community Forums**

Several times a year, the Educate Tomorrow Positive Pathways team visits communities around the state to promote our cause. We collaborate with community organizations, colleges and universities to help a wide variety of stakeholders (i.e., funders, parents, child welfare and education professionals, youth advocates, guardians ad litem, etc.) learn about the benefits available to students from foster care who want to pursue postsecondary education. This year we have had highly successful community forums at St. Petersburg College, Florida Atlantic University, Florida State College at Jacksonville, and Daytona State College.



#### **Partners**

We are proud of our strong partnership with the Florida College Access Network (FCAN), which plays a leading role in promoting postsecondary education throughout Florida. We are also excited about our developing partnership with the Florida Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Program, which has decided to begin helping its most experienced GALs learn about our network and how their extensive experience can be used in an educational mentoring capacity with students from foster care using the tuition exemption.

Positive Pathways recently launched a partnership with the Division of Career and Adult Education of the Florida Department of Education, which is currently educating more than 350 students who are using the tuition and fee exemption. Our goal is to increase the level of focused support for these students on Florida's 49 accredited technical colleges and centers.



Heather Conley, Heather Conley, of the Office of Federal and State Initiatives with the Division of Career and Adult Education of the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), presented at the 2019 Positive Pathways conference and gained a number of converts to the value of increasing awareness about the potential of career and technical education programs to help students from foster care earn sustainable postsecondary credentials.



Kathy McDonald, assistant director of network partnerships with FCAN, provided practical insight into how to grow the Positive Pathways network. FCAN is a strong partner that has cohosted the Pathways conference and a webinar for a research brief cowritten by Helios and Educate Tomorrow.







Calvin Martin, Statewide Director for Advocacy for Guardian ad Litem (GAL) Florida, with Racquell "Racqui" Perry, PPP Program Assistant. We have begun to partner with GAL in an effort to increase the number of GALs that may begin to work with students transitioning from care to college.









#### **Sponsors**

Positive Pathways is funded by the DCF and overseen by the youth and young adult transition services specialist. This year and last year, the AOK Scholars Foundation has become an important sponsor of the annual conference. Also last year, the Helios Education Foundation provided funding to enable Educate Tomorrow to help them produce a major publication with information related to the Positive Pathways primary population, students using the DCF tuition exemption in Florida.



Brandie McCabe, youth and young adult transition services specialist with DCF, oversees Positive Pathways for the department.





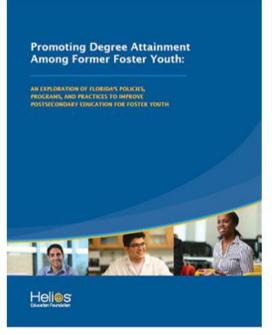
Dr. Amy Rubinson, far left, joins AOK Scholars leaders Patrick White, trustee, and Christine Stillwell, director, as well as JR Fry at the 2019 conference.

AOK, which provides emergency funds and monetary incentives to 270 students using the DCF and homeless waivers, aims to support up to 1,000 Florida students. Sign your students up!

AOK Scholars Foundation Lawrence E. White Family Foundation



Dr. Paul G. Perrault, vice president of research and evaluation, and Braulio Colon, vice president, Florida Student Success Initiatives, Helios Education Foundation, at the conference. Helios awarded a major grant to Educate Tomorrow to support its work with network member institutions. Dr. Perrault was instrumental in a recently-released report on the growth of enrollment among students using the DCF tuition exemption in Florida's public postsecondary institutions.



Click here to access the full report.



## **Expectations of Members**

The following activities represent some, but not all, of the things that members can do to support college students using the DCF tuition and fee exemption on their campuses.

- Help with enrollment, financial aid applications, and exploration of career opportunities;
- Connect students with academic resources, scholarship opportunities, and community resources and support;
- Notify key campus leaders (i.e., Student Services, Financial Aid, Casher's Office, Registrar, Deans, etc.) that you are the designated campus contact for students utilizing the tuition and fee exemption.

- Provide updates to changes at your institutions (i.e., potential additional members, programs available for foster care alumni);
- Participate in monthly program conference calls;
- Voice opinions and concerns on matters of importance related to the students;
- Provide current contact information to program leaders.



Phillip Hamilton, Director of Outreach and Program Development with Florida International University, presents a training about collaboration.



Representatives from eight of Florida's 10 public universities, as well as seven colleges, attended the 2019 Positive Pathways conference, hosted by St. Petersburg College and sponsored by Helios, Educate Tomorrow, AOK Scholars Foundation, and the Florida Department of Children and Families.





## Community-based Care Agencies

The Florida Department of Children and Families contracts with community-based care agencies throughout the state to provide child welfare services in their areas. Through these agencies, you can contact the independent living workers who will provide information about the young people in their care who may want to attend college. These agencies provide support for these young adults and often help foster care liaisons as they work with students receiving the tuition exemption.

The Positive Pathways website lists all the agencies. You can find this information by clicking here.



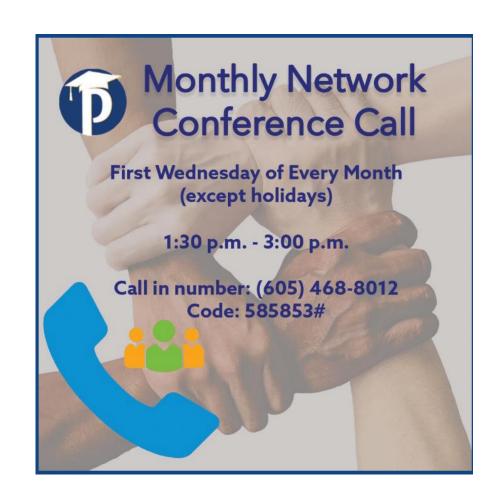




## **Monthly Network Call**

Each month, between 15 and 25 members from all over the state join our monthly network conference call to ask questions of other members, share information about upcoming events, or participate in training activities.

See details in the box to the right. Click <a href="here">here</a> to our website and the meeting agenda. You can join us for some or all of the meeting. We usually handle urgent questions and concerns during the first 15 minutes of the monthly call. So if you are short on time, that is often a way to get quickly caught up and hear answers from your fellow Positive Pathways members.







#### **Annual Conference**



Each year, we host a conference for our members, partners, and others interested in Positive Pathways. The conference, which rotates locations throughout the state, provides a valuable networking opportunity as well as trainings and workshops on best practices used around the state and nation to increase the number of students from foster care that enroll in and graduate from post-secondary institutions. Each year about 100 people attend. Let us know if you would like to host the conference on your campus next year or beyond!



Jack Levine, Founder of 4Generations Institute, moderated the Beyond 2020 Vision Meeting during which statewide leaders shared their thoughts about what the Positive Pathways program can become in the future and indicated their support for the cause.



Dr. Cheryl Kerr, Director of the Human Service Program at St. Petersburg College, did great job as the conference cochair. Thank you Cheryl!











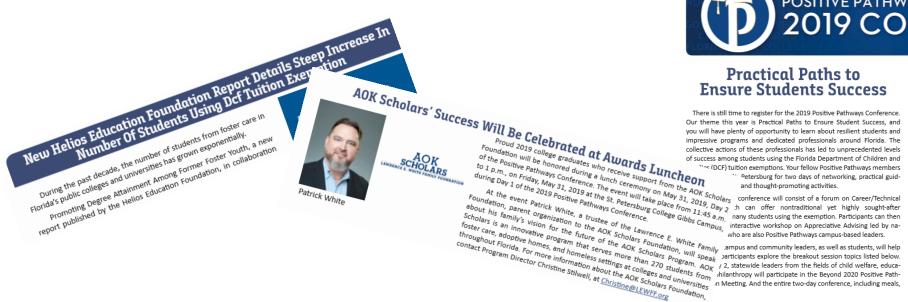


Local programs that serve young adults from foster care, like Ready for Life shown here, received free vendor space to inform conference participants about their work.



## **Quarterly Newsletter**

Our quarterly newsletter, The Path, includes the following sections to keep members informed about the program's work and activities. Feel free to submit information to be included!







#### **Practical Paths to Ensure Students Success**

There is still time to register for the 2019 Positive Pathways Conference.

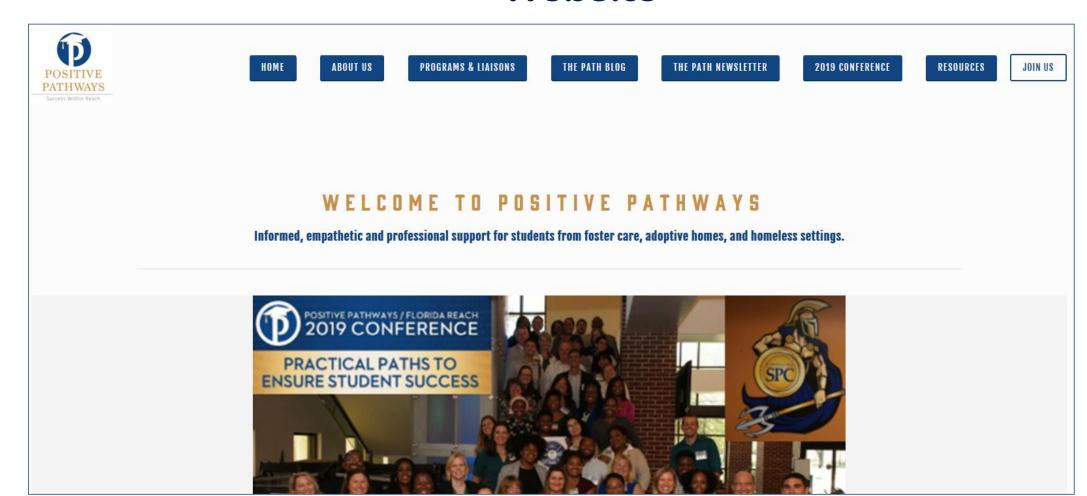


Click here for the latest edition of The Path!





#### **Website**







#### **Youth Voices**

We make consistent efforts to ensure that the voice of young people who have lived through foster care and homeless situations, the students we exist to serve, is heard. During the year, we ensure that students are included on our conference calls when possible, as well as on our webinars. At the conferences, students are provided a number of opportunities to share their stories and offer pointed advice to improved services meant to make their academic paths smoother and more successful. The students on this page, for instance, all helped to make the 2019 Positive Pathways Conference a success by adding candid comments to discussions about how to serve them and their peers.



Shay Surprise, University of Central Florida and Florida Knight Alliance Network student.



Florida State University student Asia Lavender and Caitlin Cates presented on the Unconquered Scholars Program at the 2019 Positive Pathways Conference.



DeMarco Mott, FIU Graduate Student, Fostering Panther Pride and AOK Scholar.



Enrique Sepulveda, a junior at Florida International University, shares about the challenges he faced along his pathway to earn his associate of arts degree from Miami Dade College with honors.



The Rosario sisters, Paoli and Dominique, from the University of South Florida, wrote and performed a poignant skit at the PPP conference.







#### **Facebook Group Page**



Our Facebook page serves as platform to inform and update program members.

The Facebook group page provides an immediate way for program leadership to provide important announcements to all members, partners, and interested parties. Users can join the group, post their thoughts on a wall, and interact through discussion threads.

www.Facebook.com/Groups/FloridaReach



#### Join The Network!

#### To join, click <u>here</u>



#### JOIN THE POSITIVE PATHWAYS NETWORK

Use the form below to join the Positive Pathways network. There is no cost and you will immediately have access to technical assistance from the Positive Pathways team and be able to network with like-minded professional throughout. Network members participate in monthly calls, regional workshops, and learn about vital issues about young adults from foster care. Join us today!

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| irst Name      | Last Name |
| mail Address * |           |
|                |           |
|                |           |





## **Positive Pathways Program Staff**



Brett McNaught, Positive Pathways Program
Supervisor, is CEO of Educate Tomorrow, a
Miami-Dade County based 501c3 that serves
disadvantaged and foster youth through
education, mentoring and the life skills training.
Brett has an M.S.Ed in Community and Social
Change from the University of Miami. He is cochair of the Education and Employment
committee for the Miami-Dade County Homeless
Youth Collective Impact.



Dr. Steve J. Rios, Senior Director of Positive
Pathways, is a long-time youth advocate. Dr.
Rios holds a master's degree in Public
Administration and a Doctorate in Adult
Education and Human Resource Development.
In 2013, Dr. Rios also is president of Community
Funding Partners, which supports local
education-promoting efforts related to MiamiDade local college access network, Graduate
Miami Dade!



Racquell "Racqui" Perry, Program Assistant with Positive Pathways, is a licensed attorney with the Florida Bar Association who handles casework and policy issues related to the network. She also is the Statewide Outreach Lead for Keys to Independence at Educate Tomorrow. Racqui graduated Miami Northwestern Senior High, from FAMU with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a then from FAMU law school in 2015 with her Juris Doctorate. She passed the Florida bar in 2016.







## **Positive Pathways Brochure**



In Florida, former foster youth may be eligible for tuition and fee exemptions at public colleges and universities, as well as post-secondary certification programs, until they are 28-years old.

Approximately 3,000 former foster youth students in Florida currently receive the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Tuition and Fee Exemption. The annual number of post-secondary graduates from foster care is steadily rising. Nevertheless, many students receiving the waiver need a strong support network to do well in school and to graduate. Most of these students have unique housing, academic and social-emotional needs that are often not understood or addressed by their colleges or universities.

In response to the many needs of these young adults, the Florida Legislature mandated that all public colleges, universities, and technical colleges appoint a foster care liaison to help students succeed. In response to that requirement, DCF created Positive Pathways to identify and support these liaisons. Our members work together to increase the number of students on the DCF waiver who attend and graduate from Florida's post-secondary institutions.

Housed in the Miami offices of Educate Tomorrow, and working in partnership with the Florida Reach Network, Positive Pathways provides support to foster care liaisons. The program also supports community-based transitioning independent living professionals throughout Florida, who work with transitioning students in college. The goal is for these individuals to become members of Positive Pathways.

For more information, or to join us as a member or a partner, visit www.educatetomorrow.org Help us improve educational outcomes for students in and from foster care.

Educate Tomorrow
1717 N. Bayshore Drive
Miami, FL 33132







Success Within Reach



Informed, empathetic, and united action to help youth from foster care succeed in college!









## **Positive Pathways Brochure**

#### THE FACTS

At Florida's 28 colleges and 12 universities, administrators have identified a foster care liaison, as required by law. Positive Pathways exists to serve these individuals, who in turn serve more than 3.000 students.

Students who Received DCF Tuition and Fee Exemption 2015-2016





STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM of FLORIDA Board of Governors

785

Source: Florida Department of Education, 2015-2016 student database, latest statewide information available.

#### Message from a Leader



"Positive Pathways consistently provides valuable networking opportunities and training for student service professionals working with former foster youth. This type of alliance is rare within our country - and already serves as a model for other states. I encourage Florida public colleges and universities to ensure that the foster care liaisons they appoint connect to this effective, state-sponsored network."

Dr. Malou C. Harrison, President of Miami Dade College, North and Inter American Campuses

MDC has more than 400 students receiving the DCF waiver to attend college, making the Educate Tomorrow@ MDC Single-Stop program the nation's largest campus-based program serving students from foster care. For many years, President Harrison and MDC President Eduardo J. Padron have been strong champions of support services for students from foster care.



The following schools have programs dedicated to students receiving the DCF tuition and fee exemption. Other programs are in development.

#### COLLEGES

Miami Dade College Tallahassee Community College

#### **UNIVERSITIES**

Florida Atlantic University Florida International University Florida State University University of Central Florida

#### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Dr. Steve J. Rios Senior Director

Office: 305.374.3751 Cell: 954.990.3848

Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org 1717 N. Bayshore Drive, Ste. 203 Miami, FL 33132

#### MONTHLY NETWORK CONFERENCE CALL

First Wednesday of Every Month (except holidays)
1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Call in number: (605) 468-8012
Code: 585853#





#### MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Positive Pathways provides its members with training, technical assistance, and access to other members and partners who are committed to improving the educational outcomes of former foster youth through effective and compassionate guidance tailored to the individual needs of students.

Members have the chance to meet online every month, network with their counterparts throughout Florida, participate in practical regional workshops, and attend an annual conference focused on the best ways to increase the number of former foster youth that succeed in Florida colleges, universities, and technical colleges. They also have immediate access to technical assistance during working hours, 9 to 5 p.m., every day of the week with a simple phone call.







#### Message from a Student

"When I started college I honestly didn't know what I wanted to do or what career I wanted to pursue. During my first semester, l met Wendy Joseph, a college coach with the Educate Tomorrow @ Miami Dade College program. Wendy, who also is a part of the Positive Pathways Network, mentored and guided me in the right direction. With her support, I decided on a major and successfully completed my first two years at MDC. I earned my AA in Information System Technology at MDC.



Claudia Gourdet Student, Miami Dade College



