

Presentation to Florida's McKinney-Vento District Liaisons

Thursday, March 2, 2023
2 - 3 p.m.



Presentors



Dr. Steve J. Rios
Senior Director



Jasmine Moore
Success Coach



Lisa Jackson MSW, LCSW
Senior Program Director
Academic Support and Engagement
Center for Academic Retention and
Enhancement (CARE)



FLORIDA STATE
UNIVERSITY



Questions for Attendees

- How familiar are you with the tuition waiver processes of the state universities? (Very Familiar, Somewhat Familiar, Not Familiar)
- How familiar are you with the tuition waiver process of your **local public** college(s)? (Very Familiar, Somewhat Familiar, Not Familiar)
- How many students are you currently working with to access the Florida homeless tuition and fee exemption? (0,1-5, 6-15, 16-25, 25+)
- How many unaccompanied homeless youth are you working with to provide verification for the independent status for FAFSA purposes? (0,1-5, 6-15, 16-25, 25+)
- What question do you have about campus-based homeless student contacts that you would like to have answered?



Agenda

1. Welcome and Overview
Dr. Steve J. Rios, Senior Director
Florida Department of Children and Families Positive Pathways Program
Administered by Educate Tomorrow

2. Introduction to Professional Development Series
Courtney J. Walker, Director
McKinney-Vento Program
Bureau of Federal Educational Programs
Florida Department of Education

3. Self-introductions, Attendee Poll Presentation
& **Steve Rios**
Jasmine Moore, Success Coach
Educate Tomorrow
Lisa Jackson, MSW, LCSW, Senior Program Director
Academic Support and Engagement
FSU Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement (CARE)

4. Invitation to Join Positive Pathways and the Facebook Page
Steve Rios
www.PositivePathwaysFlorida.org
www.Facebook.com/Groups/FloridaReach

5. Questions and Answers
Jasmine Moore, Facilitator

6. Close Out
Courtney J. Walker, Director

Guiding Statement

The Florida Department of Children and Families established the Positive Pathways Program to help support students from foster care as they transition to postsecondary education. The contract for this program has been run by Educate Tomorrow for eight years. Last year's HB 1577 has added to the scope of Positive Pathways and the work of many campus professionals who can help support students using the homeless waiver. However, these are unfunded mandates. For this reason, we are all learning and growing together to implement these requirements with limited resources. Today is a good start!

Today's Major Topics

1. House Bill 1577 requirements related to Florida's public colleges, universities, and technical colleges
2. Number of Homeless Students and Number of Unaccompanied Youths in Florida
3. Positive Pathways Program, Network and Members
4. Roles, Responsibilities, and Limitations of Campus-based liaisons
5. Insight on these topics from one postsecondary institution (Florida State University)
6. Suggested Best Practices to Interact with Campus-based liaisons about students transitioning from high school



**House Bill 1577 requirements related to
Florida's public colleges, universities,
and technical colleges**



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

BILL #: CS/CS/HB 1577 Homeless Youth

SPONSOR(S): Health & Human Services Committee and Children, Families & Seniors Subcommittee, Woodson and others

TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 1708

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 117 Y's 0 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Approved

CS/CS/HB 1577 addresses the needs of homeless children and young adults. Specifically, the bill:

- requires district school boards to issue a certified unaccompanied homeless youth a card that includes information on the youth's rights and available benefits, and allows health care providers to accept the issued card as proof of the status as a certified unaccompanied homeless youth.
- expands the Keys-to-Independence program to unaccompanied homeless youth who meet certain requirements.
- waives fees for copies of a birth certificate for certified unaccompanied homeless youth and young adults who aged out of foster care.
- requires postsecondary institutions to have liaisons to assist former foster children and young adults and those experiencing homelessness to help students with issues related to the use of a tuition and fee exemption, and directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to evaluate their effectiveness.
- requires postsecondary institutions to retain original documents on a student's tuition and fee exemption, and prohibits additional requests for such documentation.
- aligns Florida's eligibility for a tuition and fee exemption with federal law.
- requires any student determined to be an unaccompanied homeless youth for a tuition and fee exemption for a preceding year to be presumed homeless for subsequent years unless an institution has conflicting information.



Requirements of Colleges and Universities

409.1452

(1)(a) Each school district program, Florida College System institution, or state university at which a student is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees under s. [1009.25](#) **must have**, at a minimum, a **knowledgeable, accessible, and responsive** employee who acts as a liaison and provides assistance to those students who are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees to assist in resolving any problems related to such exemption. The liaisons shall provide such students with on-campus support and must be employees of the program, institution, or university. The name and contact information of the liaison must be:

1. Provided to each student who is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees and who is attending that program, institution, or university.
2. Published on the website of the program, institution, or university.
3. Provided to the department and each community-based care lead agency.

(b) Each school district program, Florida College System institution, and state university **must maintain the original documentation** submitted by the student regarding his or her eligibility for the tuition and fee exemption under s. [1009.25](#) and may not make additional requests for such documentation.

(2) A school district program, Florida College System institution, or state university **may also provide campus coaching services** and other support to a student who is exempt from the payment of tuition and fees under s. [1009.25](#) to promote his or her successful completion of postsecondary education and transition to independent living.



**Number of Homeless Students
and Unaccompanied Youths
Statewide and Using
the Homeless Tuition Waiver at
Postsecondary Colleges and Universities**





**Number of Homeless Students Statewide
2020-21**

63,946

**Number of 12th-Grade Homeless Students
Statewide
2020-21**

**4,784
(2,100 UHY)**



**Number of Students Using Homeless Waiver in
Florida College System Colleges
2020-21**

723



**Number of Students Using Homeless Waiver in
State Universities
2021-22**

344

Table 1. Course Enrollments and Student Success Rates of Students with a Homeless Exemption, 2020-21

	Homeless Exemption
Average GPA	2.76
Course Enrollments	3,378
C or Higher	2,024
D, F, U	747
Withdrawals	500
Other	107

Source: Bureau of PK-20 Education and Reporting, Florida Department of Education. Note: "C" or Higher includes "A", "B", "C", Pass, and Satisfactory. "Other" includes Incomplete, Progress, No Grade, and Audit.

Table 2. Total Number of Program Completions of Students with a Homeless Exemption, 2020-21

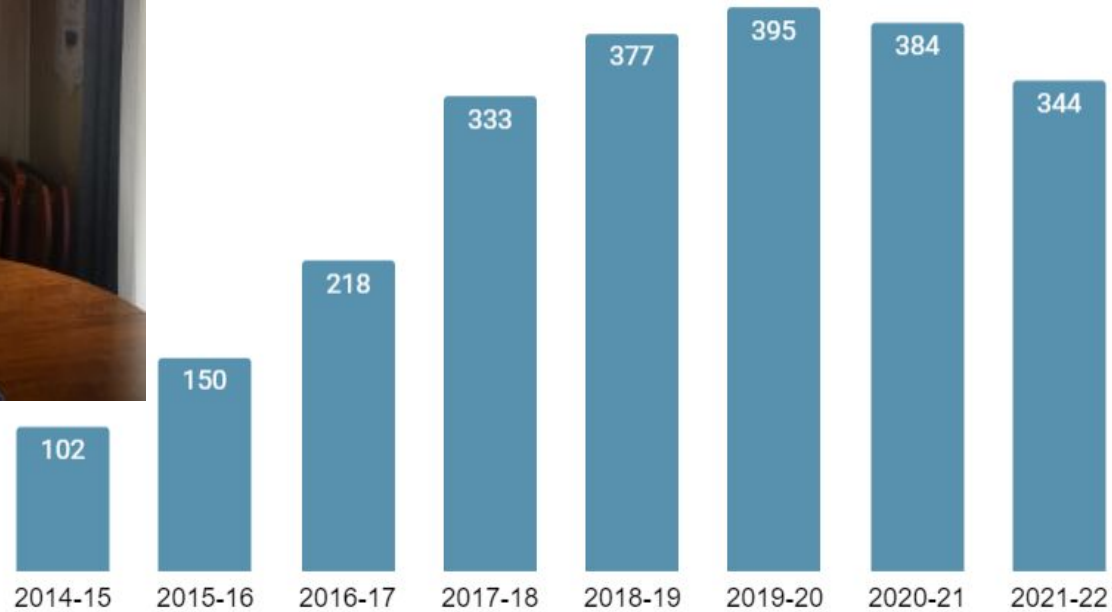
	Overall Total	Associate In Arts (AA)	Associate in Science/ Associate in Applied Science (AS/AAS)	College Credit Certificate (CCC)	Career Certificate (CC)	Applied Technology Diploma (ATD)	Baccalaureate
FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM	83	32	11	30	*	*	*

Source: 2020-21 Student Database. Note: "*" indicates data have been masked to indicate less than 10 students to maintain FERPA compliance. The symbol "-" indicates no students in this category.



STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA

Students Using State of Florida Homeless Tuition and Fee Exemption 2014-'15 to 2021-'22



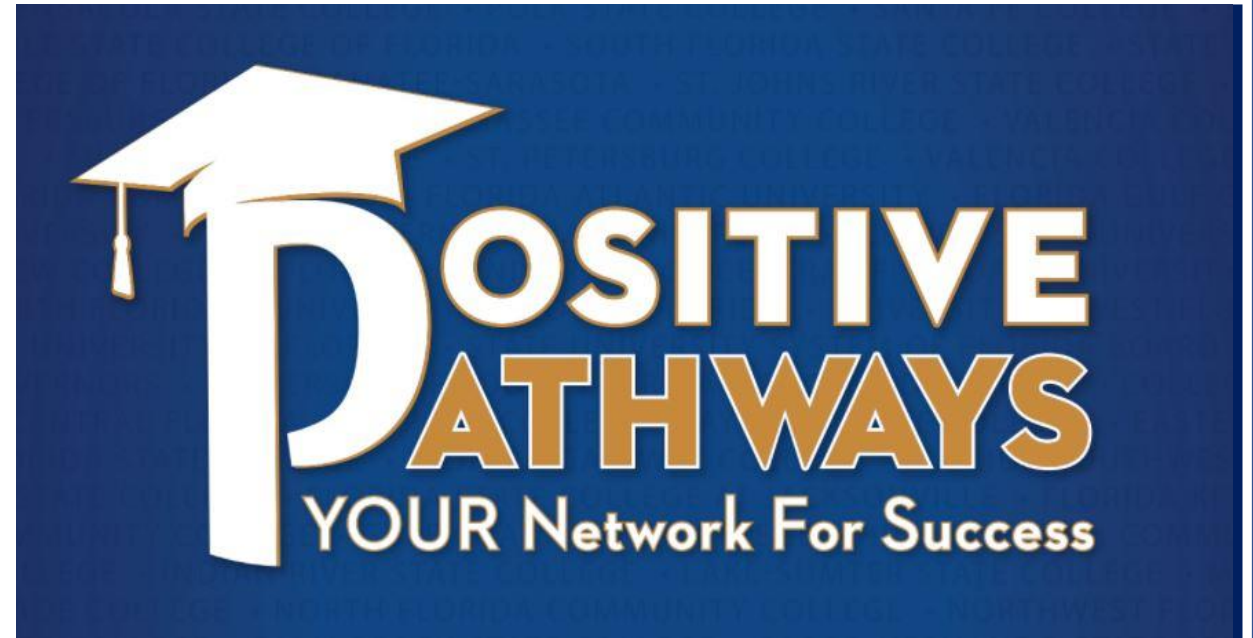
Institution	Count	Amount
SUS	344	\$1,666,951
FAMU	28	\$191,538
FAU	53	\$230,333
FGCU	29	\$142,927
FIU	65	\$313,096
FPOLY	**	\$22,560
FSU	32	\$154,751
UCF	45	\$119,660
UF	**	\$3,530
UNF	39	\$240,932
USF	40	\$199,240
UWF	**	\$8,425



Network and Members

Highlights

- Created in 2016 and funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), in response to a Florida law requiring collaboration between DCF and the Florida Department of Education
- Dramatic increase in number of students from foster care using tuition and fee exemption
- Unique state-level program aimed at increasing post-secondary educational success among college students who lived in foster care in Florida
- Administered by Educate Tomorrow, a statewide non-profit organization
- Maintains and expands a network of members
- Began as Florida Reach, a volunteer statewide network





ACTION MODEL



Homeless and Foster Youth Services

Report 22-08

December 2022



Florida Statute 409.1452

State Legislation and Funding to Address the Educational Needs of Foster Youth Students

State Legislation

The 2013 Florida Legislature required the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to collaborate with the Board of Governors (BOG), Florida College System (FCS), and Florida Department of Education (FDOE) to help address the need for a comprehensive support structure in colleges and universities for youth who have been in or remain in the foster care system.³⁸ Select colleges and universities (as determined by DCF) were required to establish postsecondary educational campus coaching positions to provide foster youth students with dedicated, on-campus support.³⁹ These coaches (often referred to as liaisons) were required to be institution employees who are focused on supporting these youth.

In 2022, the Legislature modified statute to require every school district Adult and Career Education program, FCS institution, and state university that has at least one student using the foster care tuition waivers to have, at a minimum, a knowledgeable, accessible, and responsive employee who acts as a liaison and provides assistance to those students who are eligible for the tuition waiver to assist in resolving any problems related to the waivers and provide on-campus support.^{40,41,42} This requirement also now applies to students receiving a tuition waiver due to homelessness, many of whom may have received services through the school district homeless liaison while in primary and secondary school.⁴³ The Chancellors of the Division of Career and Adult Education, the FCS and the State University System (SUS) are required to annually report to DCF specific data about the students served by the campus liaisons, including academic progress, retention rates for students enrolled in the program, financial aid requested and received, and information required by the National Youth in Transition Database.⁴⁴

To meet these statutory requirements, DCF contracts with a nonprofit organization, Educate Tomorrow, to assist institutions in establishing campus liaisons. The Educate Tomorrow liaison contract, referred to as Positive Pathways, requires the organization to coordinate, develop, and maintain a network of postsecondary campus-based support initiatives across the college and university systems. Positive Pathways works to help liaisons understand the value of supporting the students on their campuses and to create a network of child welfare professionals, both on and off college and university campuses. This assistance is provided through technical assistance, trainings, monthly calls, and funding.



About Educate Tomorrow / Pathways Staff

- Established in 2003 as a mentoring organizations exclusively for students using the DCF tuition and fee exemption
- Award-winning, nationally recognized
- Serves current and former foster youth, homeless youth, and other vulnerable transitioning young adults
- Strives to make higher education an attainable goal for all
- Provides multi-year, goal-oriented academic and career coaching, intensive skill-building workshops and enrichment activities
- Began to administer the Pathways Program in 2016 under a contract with DCF.



Brett McNaught
Chief Executive Officer
Educate Tomorrow
Positive Pathways Program Supervisor



Dr. Steve J. Rios
Senior Director
Positive Pathways

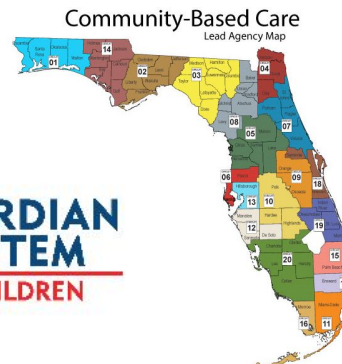


Jasmine Moore
Success Coach at Educate Tomorrow






Partners

- **Florida College Access Network (FCAN)**: plays a leading role in promoting postsecondary education throughout Florida
- **Southern Scholarship Foundation**: Provides no-cost housing on a competitive basis.
- **AOK Scholar Foundation**: Provides emergency funding to students who receive the homeless or DCF waiver
- **Florida Guardian ad Litem**: Florida Guardian ad Litem represent the legal interests of Florida's most vulnerable children, the abused, abandoned and neglected.



Quarter Newsletters



Statewide Government Study Sheds Light on Campus Foster Care and Homeless Liaisons

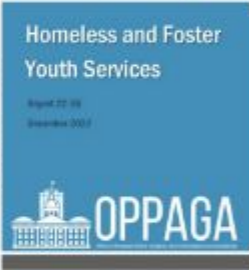
The State of Florida's consistent efforts to provide free tuition to students from foster care and homeless backgrounds, and the work of Positive Pathways Program (PPP) members, have resulted in impressive academic outcomes for students who can make it into a postsecondary educational program.

That is a major conclusion that can be drawn from a first of its kind report by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). OPPAGA, the research arm of the Florida Legislature, released a report last December that focused on the work of school district McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons and post-secondary campus-based foster care liaisons, many of whom are part of the Positive Pathways Program.

The report included new information about the opinions and academic progress of thousands of postsecondary students using Florida's generous homeless and foster care tuition and fee exemptions. For instance, the report stated that the number of students using tuition waivers in the SUS increased from 940 in academic year 2016-17, when Positive Pathways began, to 1,458 in 2020-2021, a 55% increase, despite COVID-19. The percent of students using the DCF waiver at Florida College System (FCS) institutions increased from 3,701 in 2016-17 to 4,375 in 2020-19, an 18% increase, before dipping to 3,966, a 9% decrease. Furthermore, the number of students from foster care that attend an institution with a campus-based program increased from 905 in 2013-14 to 3,042 in 2021-22, a 236% increase.

The report also revealed that of the 10,681 foster youth who began using the post-secondary waiver from 2013-14 to 2020-21, the majority of students had at least a 2.0 GPA at the end of their first year of education, which demonstrates adequate academic progress as defined by the state.

Click [Here](#) for OPPAGA's Website. - Continued on Page 3 - OPPAGA, 2022



"All of Florida's postsecondary institutions have at least one staff member designated as working specifically with foster care students."



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- Page 2: Member Survey Results
- Page 3: Student Success Story
- Page 3: FAU Program Receives Award
- Page 4: FSU Professor to Present Study

DCF ESTABLISHES OFFICE OF CONTINUING CARE, DIRECTOR TO SPEAK TO PPP NETWORK



Taylor Peck

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) has established a new office to help meet the needs of students over age 23 who had been in foster care in Florida. The Office of Continuing Care (OCC), which will be the new home of the Positive Pathways Program, began on October 1. The OCC will provide services to students from foster care who have reached age 23 when DCF's core services end.

OCC will be led by Taylor Peck, who is transitioning from her role as director of Florida's Foster Information Center, which serves foster parents. Ms. Peck is a former foster parent and a guardian ad litem. She also served as a legislative aide to a former Florida senator. A Florida State University graduate, Peck holds a bachelor's degree in writing and media and a master's in public administration. Ms. Peck will introduce herself and share a bit of her vision for OCC during the Nov. monthly conference call. Register [HERE](#).



Cal Walton, III, J.D.

Cal Walton III, who oversees Positive Pathways for DCF, moved from the DCF Office of Child Welfare to the OCC and will continue to oversee Positive Pathways, which is administered by Educate Tomorrow and has been led by Dr. Steve J. Rios since it was created by DCF in 2016.

Mr. Walton, Youth and Young Adult Transitions Services, presented about the OCC and other positive changes related to the state's independent living program during the October Positive Pathways meeting. Click [HERE](#) to view Mr. Watson's presentation.

Sample Professional Development Trainings Available for your use



Students' Needs and Well-Being Survey Spring / Summer 2022 Students Using the DCF Tuition Waiver

Summer 2022 Positive Pathways Quarterly Webinar
Wednesday, August 10, 2022



From Group Home to College

Quarterly Webinar
Spring, 2021



Statewide Survey of Students Experiencing Homelessness



Spring 2022 Positive Pathways Quarterly Webinar
Wednesday, February 2, 2022

PRELIMINARY RESULTS OF SURVEY OF FLORIDA STUDENTS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

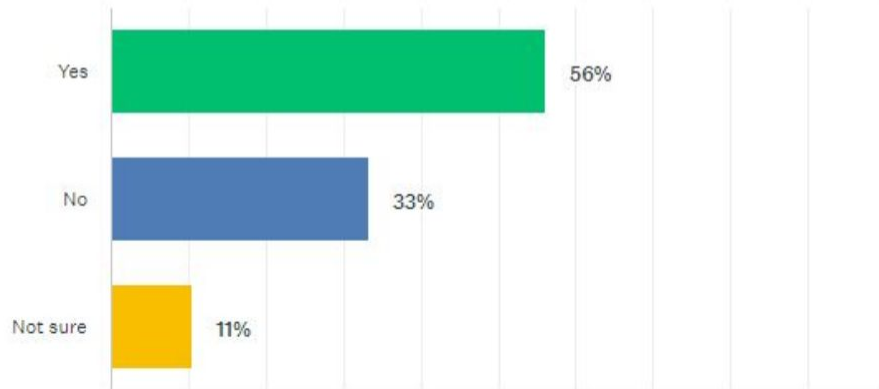
Dr. Steve J. Rios, Senior Director
Positive Pathways Program



Results of Survey of Students Experiencing Housing Insecurity

Did your college or university reach out to offer you help?

N = 57

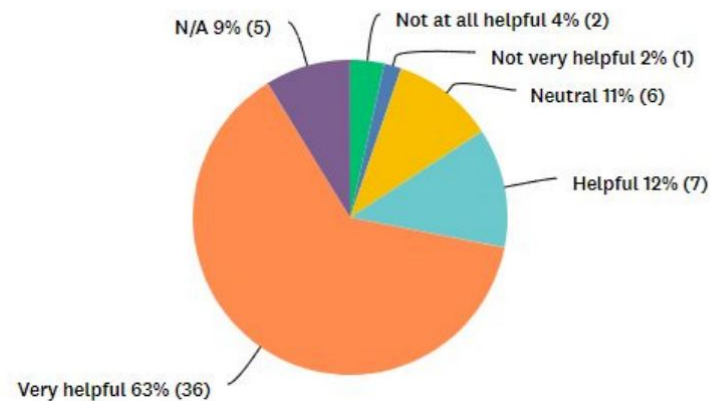


WHAT SERVICES DID YOUR COLLEGE OFFER YOU?

- Information about the homeless waiver
- Additional financial aid (CARES Act funds, Federal Pell Grant, scholarships)
- Food assistance
- Housing support
- Hygiene maintenance
- Counseling
- Some students indicated that they were offered assistance from outside organizations such as AOK scholars and Educate Tomorrow.

HOW HELPFUL HAVE THESE SERVICES BEEN?

N = 57



Which Departments Handle the Homeless Waiver?

- Financial Aid
- Student Support Services then Financial Aid
- Dean of Students
- Homeless Committee
- Multiple Departments (The Office of Financial Aid, Student Business Services, Department of Student Support and Transition, Center for Academic Retention and Enhancement)
- Homeless Waiver Committee with multiple members from various departments (Dean of Students, Student Outreach and Support, Financial Aid, Cashiers)
- Dean of Students / Student Financial Services
- Cashier / Bursar, Financial Aid assists
- Admissions who process into students' accounts and waiver the fees
- Admissions / Records and Financial Aid
- Enrollment services / VP of Enrollment Management and Student Affairs
- Student Accounts
- Financial Aid
- Student Financials
- Admissions x 3
- Admissions and Seahawk Outreach Services (for students not affiliated with an agency)

WHAT SERVICES WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL TO YOU?



Food assistance



Transportation assistance



Homeownership



Domestic violence resources



Affordable housing



Emergency funds



Lockers and showers



Healthcare

Student Voices

HOW HELPFUL HAVE THESE SERVICES BEEN?



“Having a counselor to talk to was great for me when I was in the darkest time of my life. With her help, I was able to graduate. I’m extremely grateful to have [..] as my support agent”.

HOW HELPFUL HAVE THESE SERVICES BEEN?



“This has helped me in so many ways giving me so much hope for a better future for myself. This program is incredible and in the year and a half I have been in it has drastically helped my goals, emotional well-being, self-esteem, etc. This opportunity has been exactly what I needed”.

HOW HELPFUL HAVE THESE SERVICES BEEN?



“They provide me with a peace of mind knowing they have programs set up for my best interest”.

HOW HELPFUL HAVE THESE SERVICES BEEN?



“I really appreciate this homeless waiver it has allowed me to study without worrying so much.”

Regional Forums to Inform Campus Coaching About the New Legal Requirements. You are welcome to join us!



Regional Community Forum

Miami Dade College North Campus, AI Center (Building 1, Room 1230)
Wednesday, September 14, 2022, 2-3:30 p.m.

Miami Dade's Response to the Requirements of Florida's Chapter No. 2022-65

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Welcome | Crystal Lewis, Dean of Student Services
Miami Dade College North Campus |
| 2. Overview of Event and Introductions | Dr. Steve J. Rios, Senior Director
DCF Positive Pathways Program |
| 3. Legislators' Comments - The Intent of the Law | State Representative Marie Woodson (D, District 101) |
| 4. Background and Context | Brett McNaught, CEO, Educate Tomorrow |
| 5. Panel of Students Using Homeless Waiver | Janessa Collins, Graduate Fellow / Changemaker (Moderator)
Educate Tomorrow |
| 6. Response to the Law | Dr. Elisabet Vizoso, Registrar and Director of Admissions
Miami Dade College (MDC)

Janet Mapp, Collegewide Director of Single Stop, Miami Dade College

Ana Ramos, Director, Fostering Panther Pride
Florida International University |
| 7. Miami Dade County's Collaborative Approach | Devin Floyd, Care Coordinator
Educate Tomorrow
Amy Christopoulos, Director, Community Outreach, Project Upstart
Miami Dade County Public Schools |
| 8. Questions and Answers | Participants |
| 9. Close Out | |

PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

In This Issue

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- Page 3: Student Success Stories
- Page 4: New Law Requirements

Nov. - Dec. 2022

Pathways Launches Series of Community Forums on Homeless Student Tuition & Fee Waiver

Positive Pathways launched a new series of Regional Community Forums recently at Miami Dade College's North Campus. The first forum, which took place in September at MDC's brand new Artificial Intelligence Lab, featured students using the state's innovative homeless tuition exemption, campus and community leaders sharing best practices, and Florida State Representative Marie Woodson, Dem., District 101, Hollywood.

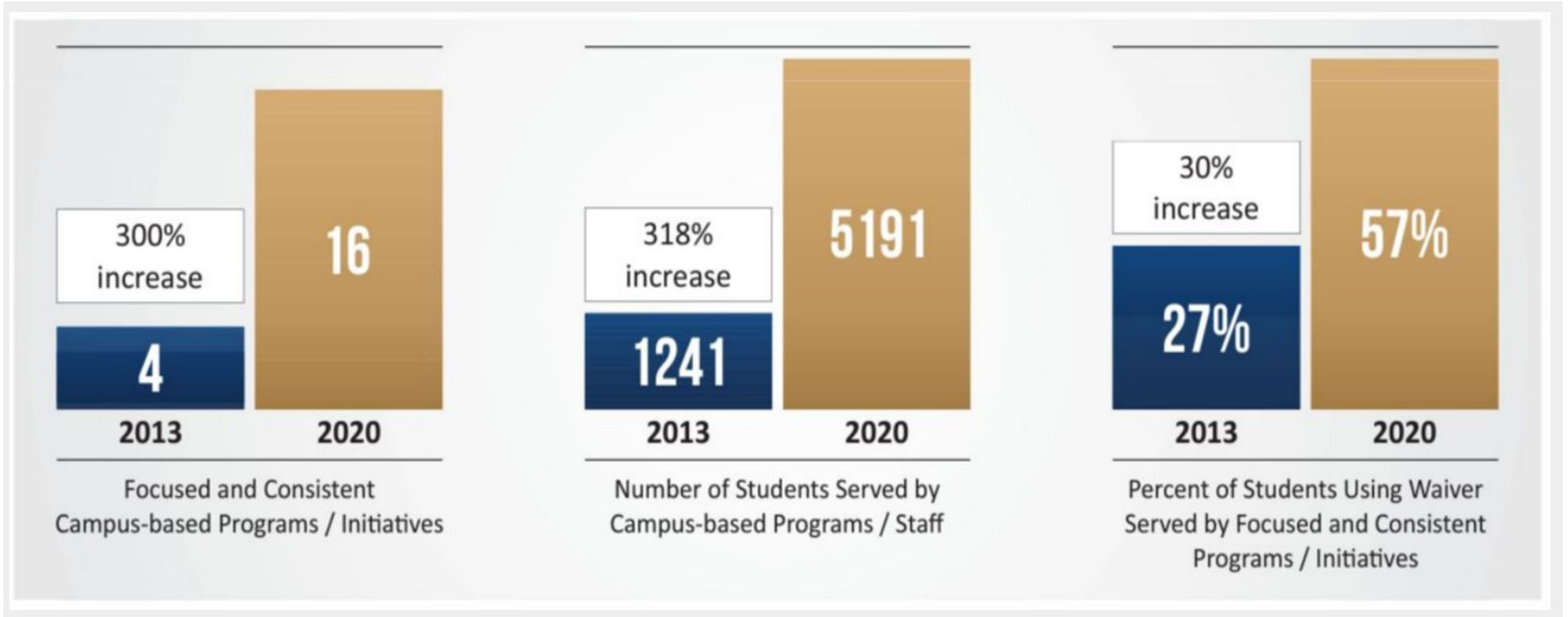
More than 50 people attended the event, both in person and virtually from throughout the state. In October, a similar virtual event took place with representatives from Palm Beach County's public college, university, and school district.

At both events, attendees learned about the requirements of revisions to state law that took effect on July 1, 2022, as well as what campus and district leaders were doing to respond to the new requirements, which include the requirement to designate a homeless liaison at each campus. The revisions to the law were the result of House Bill 1577, sponsored by Rep. Woodson. See page 4 for specifics.

Broward College North Campus in Coconut Creek hosted the next forum, on October 28, 2022.

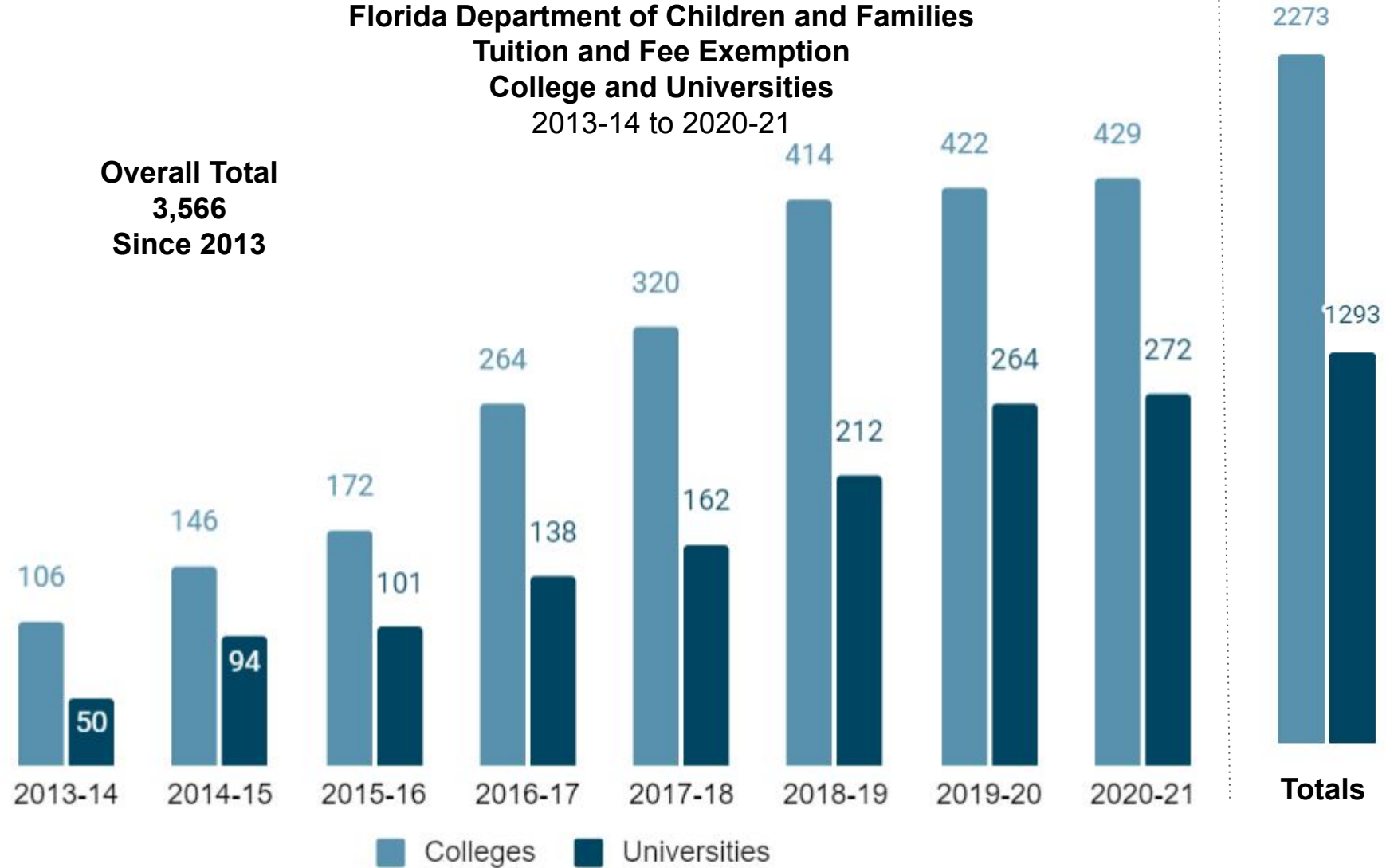


University and State College Campus-Based Programs and Number and Percent of Students Using DCF Tuition Exemption 2013 to 2020



Students who Graduated Using the Florida Department of Children and Families Tuition and Fee Exemption College and Universities 2013-14 to 2020-21

**Overall Total
3,566
Since 2013**



Sources: Florida SUS BOG, 2022; Florida College System, 2022



Purpose and Benefits

Purpose

To develop and support a statewide network of informed and empathetic, and dedicated education and child welfare professionals to support students from foster care and homeless settings through their journeys to post-secondary completion.

- Monthly network calls
- Targeted professional development
- Extensive and consistent networking opportunities
- Daily access to immediate technical support
- Alliance to Foster Transition x Education Research (AFTER)
- Small group support (College Connection)
- Updated resources and directory of campus-based and community-based liaisons

Roles, Responsibilities, and Limitations of Campus-based liaisons

Liaison: The institution's employee or employees who are responsible for providing on-campus support for students related to tuition and fee exemptions and related issues, as required by Section 409.1452(1) F.S.

Tuition Waivers for Youth Who Have Experienced Foster Care

- The State of Florida provides tuition and fee exemptions, to eligible students, through age 28.
- The waiver is authorized at state public universities, public colleges, and technical colleges.
- Fee exemptions may be available to a student who:
 - He or she is, or was at the time of reaching 18 years of age, in out-of-home care.
 - He or she was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997.
 - He or she is, or was at the time of reaching 18 years of age, placed in the custody of a relative or non-relative under s. 39.5085, s. 39.6221, or s. 39.6225, F.S.
 - He or she was reunited with his or her parents after spending at least 18 months in out-of-home care after reaching 14 years of age, including a reunification pursuant to s. 39.8155, F.S.

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).



Florida Statute 409.1452

The Department of Children and Families shall work in collaboration with the Board of Governors, the Florida College System, and the Department of Education to:

- help address the need for a focused and consistent campus-based comprehensive support structure in the academic arena
- to assist children and young adults who have been or continue to remain in the foster care system or who are experiencing homelessness to succeed in postsecondary education
- to help them make the transition from a structured care system into an independent living setting.
- provide educational campus liaison coaching positions
 - integrated into Florida College System institutions' and university institutions' general support services structure
 - provide current and former foster care children and young adults who have been or continue to remain in the foster care system or who are experiencing homelessness with dedicated, on-campus support.
 - employees of the selected educational institutions
 - focused on supporting children and young adults who have been or continue to remain in the foster care system or who are experiencing homelessness.

Collaboration



Membership Expectations

- Help students with enrollment, financial aid applications, and exploration of career opportunities
- Connect students with resources (academic and community)
- Develop campus connections and internal networks
- Participate in monthly program conference calls
- Voice opinions and concerns on matters of importance related to the students
- Provide current contact information to Positive Pathways Program leaders

Student Services
We're here to help

Academic Resources



Limitations

- Funding may not support a specific full time dedicated coach
- Multiple responsibilities within their role
- Navigating through their college/universities policies





Educate Tomorrow @ Miami Dade College

Educate Tomorrow at Miami Dade College is a student support program that supports MDC students from foster youth, as well as homeless, unaccompanied or other disadvantaged youth. We also help students who receive the Department of Children and Families tuition waiver. We offer academic support and mentoring services through our Changemaker Corps Peer Mentor Program with the goal of creating a strong network of support, streamlined academic and financial advising, and access to services in the community in order to increase academic progress and graduation rates. For more information click [here](#).



Sandra Seymour Obas

Campus Coach, MDC

(305) 237-8888

Sobas@EducateTomorrow.org

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



GROW WITH RISE

The mission of the *Road to Independence, Success, and Excellence* program, better known as RISE, is to increase the graduation rate of students using the Florida Department of Children and Families Tuition and Fee Exemption and students using the Homeless Fee Exemption, as well as to enhance their overall academic experience.

The RISE program is housed at the St. Petersburg/Gibbs Campus but serves all 11 SPC locations.



Austin Crawford, Program Coordinator, crawford.austin@spcollege.edu

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



Seahawk Outreach Services (SOS)

The Mission of Seahawk Outreach Services (SOS) is to provide wrap-around services and holistic support to students by connecting them to key campus resources and referring them to community organizations. The goal of SOS is to help reduce food and housing insecurities, stress/mental health challenges, homelessness, and financial obstacles among our student population.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



**Tallahassee
Community
College**

Emerging Eagles

The Emerging Eagles Program (Fostering Achievement Program) was established to address the overwhelming need for a comprehensive support structure to assist foster youth in making the transition from a structured foster care program to independent young adulthood. The Fellowship program will provide financial, academic, and social support to assist college-bound youth aging out of foster care to pursue a college education. These supports come in many forms, including individual and group meetings, the creation of educational plans, as well as the continued linkage of resources both within the TCC community and the Tallahassee community at large.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.



Educate Tomorrow at FAU

The Educate Tomorrow at FAU Program is a student support program designed to support FAU students who receive the DCF or homeless tuition waiver. We provide students with wrap around support services from admission to graduation, with a goal of creating a strong foundation of support, academic coaching and advising, and access to services on and off campus in order to increase academic progress and graduation rates. For more information click [here](#).



Catherine Aroca Ave
Academic Advisor/Coach
(561) 297 3064
educatetomorrow@fau.edu

OVERVIEW



Joseph Contes, LMHC, MCAP, NCC
Director - Tampa and St. Petersburg campus

ABOUT US

USF Pearls is a program designed and created for students emerging from the foster-care system. The USF Pearls program aims to close the degree attainment gap for these motivated and talented students by providing intentional supportive coaching.

Phone	Email	Office Location
727-873-4872	USFPEARLS@USF.EDU	SLC 2402

[CLICK HERE](#) for more information.



Fostering Panther Pride

Florida International University's Fostering Panther Pride (FPP) program offers tailored academic and support services to students identified as formerly in foster care or homeless.

Launched in 2013, the primary goal of FPP is to assist former foster care youth and homeless students in their transition to FIU, their retention and graduation, and their pursuit of securing employment or graduate studies upon receiving their bachelor's degree.



Ana Ramos
Program Director
Fostering Panther Pride
Anramos@FIU.edu
(305) 348-6106



The Unconquered Scholars Program

The Unconquered Scholars Program provides an array of support services promoting overall success to youth who experienced foster care, homelessness, relative care, or ward of the State status. Many Scholars have faced profound hardships during childhood that may increase their risk of leaving academia without a degree. In fact, research indicates former foster youth are far less likely to earn a degree than their non-foster care peers. Florida State University is committed to meeting the unique needs of Unconquered students so they experience the long-term professional and personal benefits associated with educational attainment. For more information click [here](#).



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Unconquered Scholars
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Florida's Colleges have designated individuals in a variety of types of positions to be their campus contacts
Green Arrows indicate Representatives of Fully Established Campus Programs



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Florida's Colleges have designated individuals in a variety of types of positions to be their campus contacts

Green Arrows indicate Representatives of Fully Established Campus Programs



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Florida's Universities have designated individuals in a variety of types of positions to be their campus contacts

Green Arrows indicate Fully Established Programs



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Ana	Ramos	Florida International University	Miami	Program Director, Fostering Panther Pride	anramos@fiu.edu	305-348-6106
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Caitlin	Cates	Florida State University	Tallahassee	Coordinator, Unconquered Scholars	cmcates@fsu.edu	850-644-3605
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Message from The Field



Lisa Jackson MSW, LCSW

Senior Program Director
Academic Support and Engagement
Center for Academic Retention and
Enhancement (CARE)



FLORIDA STATE
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Unconquered Scholars Program



The mission of the Unconquered Scholars Program is to provide qualified Florida State University students guidance, continual mentor-ship, advocacy, security, and a voice to further ensure their personal academic success and long-term independence.



Through collaboration with campus partners, the Unconquered Scholars Program offers the following services:

- One-on-One Advising
- Summer Bridge Program
- College Life Coaching
- Academic Advising
- Financial Aid Assistance and Advocacy
- Tutoring Services
- State of the Art Computer Lab and Study Suites
- Mental Health Counseling Services
- Academic and Skills Workshops
- Volunteer Opportunities

For more information on the Unconquered Scholars Program, contact:

Lisa Jackson, Senior Program Director

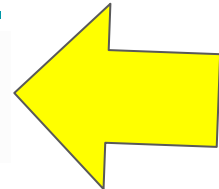
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JOIN THE NETWORK

WELCOME TO POSITIVE PATHWAYS

We Promote Focused and Consistent Campus-based Support to Help Students Succeed

Positive Pathways is a program funded by the Florida Department of Children and Families and is an initiative of Educate Tomorrow.

The Path PROGRAM NEWSLETTER
JANUARY 2023
A FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PROGRAM

EDUCATE TOMORROW
Page 1: Dec. OPPAGA Report
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Page 3: OPPAGA Recommendations
Page 4: Updated Success Plan
Page 5: The Year Ahead
Page 6: Join Us!
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OPPAGA
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
Research Memorandum

Statewide Government Study Sheds Light on Campus Foster Care and Homeless Liaisons

The State of Florida's consistent efforts to provide free tuition to students from foster care and homeless backgrounds, and the work of Positive Pathways Program (PPP) members, have resulted in impressive academic outcomes for students who can make it into a postsecondary educational program.

That is a major conclusion that can be drawn from a first of its kind report by the Florida Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA). OPPAGA, the research arm of the Florida Legislature, released a report last December that focused on the work of school district McKinney-Vento homeless liaisons and post-secondary campus-based foster care liaisons, many of whom are part of the Positive Pathways Program.

The report included new information about the opinions and academic progress of thousands of postsecondary students using Florida's generous homeless and foster care tuition and fee exemptions. For instance, the report stated that the number of students using tuition waivers in the SUS increased from 940 in academic year 2016-17, when Positive Pathways began, to 1,458 in 2020-2021, a 55% increase, despite COVID-19. The percent of students using the DCF waiver at Florida College System (FCS) institutions increased from 3,701 in 2016-17 to 4,375 in 2020-19, an 18% increase, before dipping to 3,968, a 9% decrease. Furthermore, the number of students from foster care that attend an institution with a campus-based program increased from 905 in 2013-14 to 3,042 in 2021-22, a 236% increase.

The report also revealed that of the 10,681 foster youth who began using the post-secondary waiver from 2013-14 to 2020-21, the majority of students had at least a 2.0 GPA at the end of their first year of education, which demonstrates adequate academic progress as defined by the state.

(Continued on Page 3)

Homeless and Foster Youth Services
March 22, 2023
OPPAGA

To read the full report, which includes more encouraging information and recommendations, click [HERE](#).

All of Florida's postsecondary institutions have at least one staff member designated as working specifically with foster care students. - OPPAGA, 2022

Florida Statute 3.493.1424 requires public postsecondary institutions to provide campus liaisons to students who are current or former foster youth and students who are experiencing homelessness.

Review of Independent Living Programs in Florida

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research shows that compared to peers, former foster youth are less likely to finish high school or become employed and have difficulty maintaining employment. When employed, former foster youth often have lower wages and have fewer lifetime earnings. Due in part to a lack of family and social supports, youth previously in care often face challenges while transitioning to adulthood.

Independent Living (IL) programs are established in federal and state law and designed to support a successful transition to adulthood and assist current and former foster youth in achieving self-sufficiency. As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA reviewed the effectiveness of Florida's IL programs using a variety of research methods including agency and other stakeholder interviews and information and data reviews literature and program documentation reviews, program participation and outcomes analyses, surveys with IL team managers and IL participants, focus groups with IL participants, and review of IL participant dependency files.

To meet state and federal requirements for providing IL services to foster youth and young adults formerly in foster care, Florida provides Extended Foster Care, Postsecondary Education Services and Support, and Aftercare Services. The Legislature has enacted several changes to state law since 2013 to increase and expand supports for young adults who age out of care. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for oversight and administration of the programs, which are delivered at the local level through Community Based Care Lead Agencies (lead agencies) that provide service

NOTE:
As directed by the Legislature, OPPAGA reviewed the effectiveness of Independent Living services. Specifically, OPPAGA assessed the implementation of Florida's exchange of transition services provided by the 2013 "Henry G. Borker Community-Based Care and Community Independent Living Act." In addition, OPPAGA sought to define self-sufficiency in terms of education, employment, health, housing and general well-being, and identify best practices to assist if youth are prepared or on track to achieve self-sufficiency.

FLORIDA LEGISLATION – STUDENT EXEMPTIONS



Positive Pathways is funded by DCF and Educate Tomorrow, a non-profit organization.





Join The Positive Pathways Network

Use the form below to sign up for the Positive Pathways Program's monthly on boarding, your gateway to become a member of the Positive Pathways Network.

Learn about valuable member benefits. We look forward to welcoming you!

First Name	<input type="text"/>	* Required
Last Name	<input type="text"/>	* Required
Email Address	<input type="text"/>	* Required
Password For Future Event Registrations	<input type="password"/>	
Title	<input type="text"/>	* Required
Organization	<input type="text"/>	* Required
Please select the Type of Organization you are affiliated with	<input type="text" value="Select Value"/>	* Required



How to Reach Us

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- Website: www.positivepathwaysflorida.org
- <https://twitter.com/FloridaReach>
- www.facebook.com/groups/floridareach

Positive Pathways / Florida Reach

Public group · 269 members

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Room



Anonymous Post



Photo/Video

About

The mission of Positive | post-secondary outcom for foster care youth an support, ... [See More](#)



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