

NYC Administration for Children's Services
College Choice Program
Updates To Program
Specific Guidelines
Academic Year 2025-2026
Effective Fall 2025

Dear Students:

This document is intended to provide you with important updates to the College Choice Program benefits, academic advisement, and eligibility requirements during the 2025-2026 academic year. You must be aware that, during the 2025-2026 school year, all college housing and tuition payments will be administered by ***The New York Foundling's College Choice Support Services (CCSS)***. Your Housing and Tuition payments will continue to be dispersed on a per-semester basis. Your foster care agency will continue to distribute your \$60 per day direct cash assistance directly to you. Therefore, you must coordinate and be responsive to your foster care agency and the College Choice team.

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the College Choice Program will be able to support up to 500 college-going foster youth. As a youth enrolled in the program, you will be able to attend college at no cost to you and will be able to access individual college and academic advisement services, which include tutoring. The program model offers you the **choice** and **flexibility** to apply for the benefits that meet your needs as a college youth. Please be aware that admission into the program, as well as your ability to receive continued support while in college, is contingent upon you meeting program requirements, which are,

- Earning and maintaining at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average in each of the Fall and Spring semesters.
- Enrolling in at least 12-course credits (or your college/university full-time equivalent) and earning at least 65% of credits attempted in each of the Fall, Spring, and summer semesters.
- Completing financial aid grant applications for which you are eligible (PELL, TAP, ETV, FYCSI)
- Enrolling in college support programs offered by your college/university for which you are eligible (H/EOP, SEEK, CD & others).
- Meeting college choice application deadlines and being responsive to outreach from your foster care agency and the College Choice team.

Please keep in mind, if you do not maintain a 2.0 cumulative grade point average (GPA) it will result in ineligibility for College Choice financial benefits, including the \$60 per day direct cash assistance during the upcoming semester. However, you can still access the one-on-one support and academic advisement to help you become eligible during the subsequent semester. College Choice is committed to supporting your educational journey; therefore, should you exit school midway through a semester, we will satisfy your outstanding bill, should you have one, to avoid barriers when you consider enrolling in college later.

If you are considering off-campus private housing, you should not sign a lease or make any monetary housing deposit until you receive notification that you are approved for the College Choice Program. In addition, please consult and be responsive to your foster care provider, Fair Futures coach, and, if you are already enrolled in the New York Foundling College Choice Support Services program (aka FCSI), your college advisor, for assistance with applying for safe and appropriate off-campus housing.

The \$60 per day direct cash assistance benefit will start on the date you are approved for and admitted into the College Choice program. During the summer months, youth must be enrolled in summer course(s) to be eligible for the direct cash assistance and other program benefits such as tuition and housing. Youth who wish to remain on campus in their college/university dorm must follow the guidelines and requirements set forth by the college/university. Youth must follow college dorm guidelines related to the length of stay in dorms during the summer months and appropriately plan with their college advisor and foster care agency.

Meeting application timelines are very important. If you do not apply by the application deadline, you will have to reapply during the following semester. The College Choice team will communicate directly with you regarding your application, and they will be able to guide you on how to obtain college enrollment documentation, so please check your emails and College Choice Application Portal daily and respond to outreach. Upon admission into the program, you will receive notifications as needed, and we will also require that you recertify your enrollment in college courses midway through each of the Fall and Spring semesters. This recertification will ensure that College Choice has the most up-to-date information about your enrollment status, and you have an accurate account of what your college bill is after financial aid is applied.

Please review the subsequent listing of all the benefits that are available should you be accepted into the program - more details, as well as eligibility requirements, can be found after the listing. (Note that these guidelines may be updated in the future; revised versions will be shared with you and posted on the ACS and New York Foundling Website [Fostering College Success Initiative website](#).)

For access to an application to enroll in any/all benefits, and for support with any questions or concerns, please contact the College Choice team at CollegeChoiceProgram@NYFoundling.org.

COLLEGE CHOICE PROGRAM BENEFITS:

One-on-One Support	Students can receive advising, tutoring, career counseling, and related support provided online and in-person by NY Foundling staff. Students can also be matched to a Fair Futures Coach.
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Housing for On Campus and Off Campus Living	Students attending a college/university in New York City can choose to live in housing sponsored by that college or university or in one of the following six housing options (subject to availability): • The Towers at City College of New York (must attend a CUNY college) • The Summit at Queens College (must attend a CUNY college) • Hunter College Residence Hall (Only for students attending Hunter College) • International House (can attend any college/university located in NYC) • 92Y Residence (can attend any college/university located in NYC) • Outpost-club Student Housing NYC (can attend any college/university located in NYC) Students attending in-person classes at a college or university outside of NYC can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in safe and appropriate private housing. Students enrolled only in online classes at a college or university can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in one of the housing options that allow students to attend any college/university. For all students: ACS will pay your housing costs above for all three semesters during an academic year (fall, spring, summer) that are not covered by your financial aid award.
Tuition and Fees	ACS will pay for tuition and mandatory fees that are not covered by your financial aid award.
Direct Cash Benefit	ACS will provide you with \$60 per day, paid through your foster care agency to cover food and other living and college-related expenses. This benefit is available for up to 6 months after graduation.

To be eligible for any or all of the above, including direct cash assistance, students need to meet the following ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Foster Care Status	Be in foster care through the NYC Administration for Children's Services at the time you first begin participating in the College Choice program.
Full-Time Courseload	Be enrolled in at least 12 credits during each of the fall and spring semesters or have the equivalent full-time status at a college/university that isn't on a semester system.
Academic Progress	Maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA (or the equivalent of your college/university grades on a different scale) after your first semester. As well as earn 65% of credits attempted each of the Fall, Spring, and Summer semesters if enrolled in summer courses. Students who do not meet the 2.0 GPA requirement will need to submit an Academic Success Plan and meet with the College Choice team. Students who are not meeting academic expectations have two consecutive

	semesters to show academic progress and improvement. If no or little progress is demonstrated students will be declared ineligible.
Financial Aid	Apply and submit all required documentation for all the following by the deadline prior to the start of school year in which you wish to participate in College Choice: • Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and • New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and • Education and Training Voucher (ETV), and • Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI), and • Any other financial aid programs for which you are eligible that are offered by your college/university
College/University Support Programs	Enroll in all college support programs which are offered by your college/university for which you are eligible. These include ASAP, SEEK, CD, EOP, and HEOP.
Responsiveness	Respond to any questions, concerns, and document requests from ACS and NYF staff, and Case Planner or Fair Futures Coach, as well as be responsive to any plans that might be put in place by them to help you with school.
Degree Type	Be an associate's degree student, which enables you to participate in the College Choice program for up to a total of nine semesters (including summers), or a bachelor's degree student, which enables you to participate for up to a total of fifteen semesters (including summers and including any time you spent in the program as an associate's degree student). This will be pro-rated for students who already have college credits as of August 1, 2022, and then for any new students entering the program after that date. Please note that students who complete their degrees in under this time are not entitled to receive any further support should they choose to return for additional degrees.
6 Month Post Grad Direct Cash Benefit	Students must have previously participated in the College Choice Program to be eligible for the 6 month post grad direct cash benefit This one time benefit may only be accessed within one year of the student's graduation date.

Also, the following apply to parts of the College Choice program:
ADDITIONAL PROGRAM-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

Housing for On-campus and Off-campus Living	• Students who want to stay in college/university housing or private off-campus housing during Summer intersession are required to be enrolled in summer courses. • Some housing options (namely, CUNY dorms) require proof of vaccination against Covid-19. Students must meet these requirements to be eligible to live there. • Students are responsible for arranging their housing, including making sure any licensing agreements and other paperwork are filed by deadlines set by colleges/universities/private landlords. • ACS will cover up to \$30,000 in housing costs, after financial aid, during each academic year/three-semester period (fall, spring, summer).
Tuition and Fees	• Fees include expenses that are directly linked to the classes you are taking and ones that are assessed to all students. They must be listed on your tuition bill to be covered by ACS. Examples include orientation fees, health fees, Photo ID service fees, transcript fees, and student activity fees. (This is not a complete list and you're encouraged to ask ACS if you're unsure whether a fee will be covered). • The college/university you attend must be accredited and a not-for-profit or public institution. • ACS will cover up to \$15,000 in tuition and fees, after financial aid, during each academic year/three-semester period (fall, spring, summer).
Direct Cash Benefit	• The increased amount of the direct cash benefit is meant to cover food costs. Students who are graduating can request to receive the \$60 per day direct cash benefit for up to six months after graduation. To qualify, you're required to engage in meaningful activities (such as participating in an internship, job, or job search; or taking additional classes) during the six-month period.