



Senate Bill 12 (Beall) Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the goal of the Senate Bill 12?

The goal of SB 12 is to increase the rate of college retention and completion among current and former foster youth in California by increasing access to the Pell Grant. In California, foster youth are 29% less likely than non foster youth to persist at least one year in Community College.¹ By age 26 just 8% of former foster youth have achieved an Associate's degree or higher as compared to 47% of the same-age population of non-foster youth.²

2. Why is it important for foster youth to achieve a college degree?

Without a college degree, foster youth have a much lower likelihood of long-term economic security. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median weekly earnings of an individual with a Bachelor's degree is \$1,137. In contrast, the median weekly earnings of a worker with only a high-school diploma is roughly half of that figure, at \$678.³

3. What role does financial aid play in college retention and degree completion?

Student success increases with improved access to financial aid. A February 2017 report on community college students in California found that 47 percent of students with a zero-expected family contribution who received more than \$7,500 in financial aid graduated or transferred, compared to 17 percent of those who received between \$1,001 and \$2,500.⁴

4. How many foster youth receive the Pell Grant and why?

Just 50% of foster youth receive the Pell Grant, despite the fact that 85% are eligible.⁵ There are a range of reasons why current and former foster youth receive the Pell Grant at such a low rate.

- **Lack of application assistance:** A key reason is a lack of assistance in the application for financial aid. Currently there is no requirement in state or federal law that specifies a foster youth must be assisted in the completion of financial aid. A 2016 survey of 19-year-old youth in California found that roughly half of foster youth reported they did not receive enough assistance with college planning.⁶
- **Verification process:** Many foster youth lose access to the Pell Grant through the verification process. On many campuses, current and former foster youth must provide documentation of their dependency status. This is required because students who were in foster care on or after age 13 are regarded as independent students for the purposes of financial aid. Many students are unable to secure verification of their dependency status and lose access to the Pell Grant along with other critical sources of funding.
- **Lack of support on campus:** Finally, foster youth often fail to receive the Pell Grant because they don't receive assistance that they require at the campus level. A 2015 report found that just 12% participated in Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) and 8% participated in Disabled Student Programs and Services (DSPS).⁷

5. Why is the low rate of Pell grant receipt among foster youth problematic?

The low rate of Pell Grant receipt is problematic for several reasons.

- **Foster youth don't have parents to help pay for college:** Parental earnings and borrowing is the number one source of funding for college in the U.S. Without parents to help them pay for college, foster youth are at a significant disadvantage, making access to financial aid critical.⁸
- **Pell Grant is an entitlement, unlike other sources that run out of funding:** Unlike the Chafee Education and Training Voucher, the Pell Grant is an open-ended entitlement. As such, every student who meets the eligibility criteria will receive a grant.
- **Receipt of financial aid is a predictor of retention and degree completion:** Evidence shows that student success increases with improved access to financial aid. A February 2017 report on community college students in California found that 47 percent of students with a zero-expected family contribution (EFC) who received more than \$7,500 in financial aid graduated or transferred, compared to 17 percent of those who received between \$1,001 and \$2,500.⁹
- **The Pell Grant may be used for career and technical education (CTE) programs:** The Pell Grant may be used for the over 1,000 career and technical education training programs available through the California Community Colleges. As such, the Pell Grant provides essential financial support for foster youth who enroll in short-term training programs to move them out of the minimum wage and into a living wage.

6. What are the three provisions of SB 12?

- **Increased assistance:** SB 12 would require every county child welfare agency to identify a person to assist the foster youth in the financial aid application process, starting at age 16.
- **Automated verification:** SB 12 would streamline the financial aid verification process for foster youth who apply through FAFSA by replacing the current paper-based system with a data match between the California Department of Social Services and the California Student Aid Commission.
- **Expanded campus support:** SB 12 would expand an existing on-campus based support program known as CAFYES from the current level of 10 community college districts to up to 20 districts, thereby enabling more foster youth to receive the support they need to succeed.

7. How would the provision to automate financial aid verification work?

SB 12 would automate financial aid verification for foster youth by authorizing the California Department of Social Services to provide information to the California Student Aid Commission about who was in foster care on or after their 13th birthday. The California Student Aid Commission would then conduct an eligibility determination and upload its findings to its statewide grant delivery system. Once input to the grant delivery system, financial aid officials would be able to easily verify eligibility for the Pell Grant. This process has been used successfully for the verification of eligibility for the Chafee Education and Training Voucher.

8. What is CAFYES?

Cooperating Agencies Foster youth Educational Services Program was established by Senate Bill 1023 (Liu) in 2014 and funded by the California State Legislature in the 2015-16 budget. It is a campus-based support program for current and former foster youth.

9. How many students participate in CAFYES currently and what services do they receive?

In the fall semester of 2016, 1,157 students participated in the CAFYES program at the 26 funded campuses.¹⁰ These young people receive a wide range of services, including matriculation and transfer

counseling, monitoring of academic progress, tutoring, academic mentoring, counseling and mental health services, direct financial assistance and more.

10. Who is eligible for CAFYES-funded and why?

A person is eligible for CAFYES if they were a dependent of the California foster care system on or after their 16th birthday and is younger than age 26. Eligibility for CAFYES is closely aligned with other major child welfare and foster care programs. These include the Chafee Education and Training Voucher, the Independent Living Skills Program, priority registration, guardianship benefits to age 21, and adoption assistance benefits age 21.

11. Isn't it too soon to expand CAFYES?

No. CAFYES was funded by the California State Legislature in July 2015. After a competitive application process, the California Community College Chancellor's Office awarded funds to 26 campuses in November 2015 and the program was implemented in January 2016. If successful, SB 12 will be signed into law in October 2017 and the California Community College Chancellor's Office will conduct another competitive application process in the Spring of 2018. Given this time frame, the program expansion will take effect in the fall semester of 2018. This is a period of almost three years since the initial implementation.

12. Why do so many child welfare and foster care programs link eligibility to age 16, instead of linking it to age 13 or another age?

Many child welfare and foster care programs link eligibility to age 16 in recognition of the fact that youth in foster care at age 16 are less likely to be reunified, adopted or exited to guardianship than youth in foster care at age 13. In California, a youth is:

- 38% less likely to be reunified, adopted or exited to guardianship at age 16 than at age 13
- 79.3% less likely to be reunified, adopted or exited to guardianship at age 17 than at age 13.¹¹

13. What special challenges does a college student without a family face?

The challenges facing a young person attending college without a family are considerable:

- **Nowhere to live:** In 2014, 54% of college students chose to live at home to make school more affordable.¹² In 2016, living with a parent is the most common young adult living arrangement, with 32% of the 18 to 34-year-olds living with a parent.¹³ Combined, this speaks to the important role that families play in the housing stability of their adult children, including college students.
- **No one to help pay for college:** In 2016, parental savings and borrowing paid for 38 percent of the cost of college in the United States.¹⁴ This is a greatest single source of funding used by students to pay for college, and exceeds all other sources, including grants, scholarships and student income and student savings. This holds for low-income students and students attending 2-year colleges

14. Is their thought to expanding the eligibility to age 13, instead of increasing the number of funded CAFYES campuses?

Yes, this option was carefully considered. However, this would create a serious inequity by expanding access to campus support programs at a select number of campuses (26) and leaving most campuses (87) with no dedicated funding to support foster youth in college.

15. Does participation in CAFYES increase rate of Pell Grant receipt?

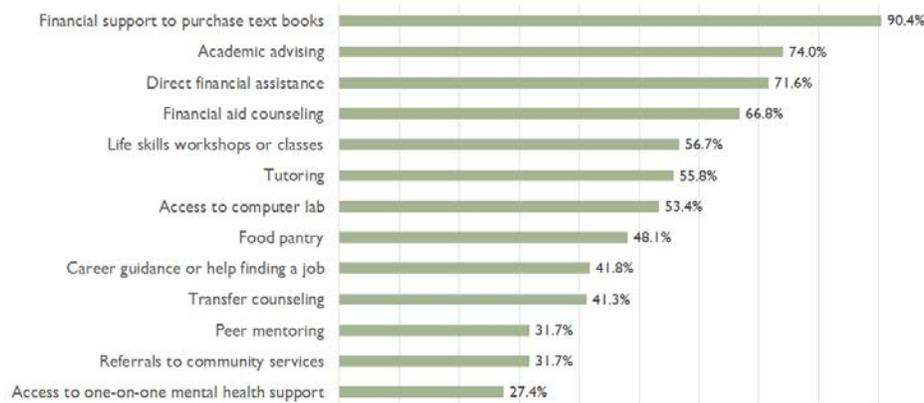
Yes, foster youth who participate in a CAFYES program are 46% more likely to receive a Pell grant than a foster youth not enrolled in a CAFYES program.¹⁵

16. Is CAFYES available to most foster youth in California?

No. Just 23% of California's 113 community college campuses have a CAFYES program and just 28% of foster youth are enrolled at a community college in California with a CAFYES program. Additionally, there are campuses with large numbers of foster youth that do not have this essential resource. There are two community college campuses with over 700 enrolled foster youth without a CAFYES program. There are 13 campuses that have between 500 to 749-year-old foster youth without a CAFYES program. Finally, there 34 campuses with between 250 to 499 enrolled foster youth without a CAFYES program.

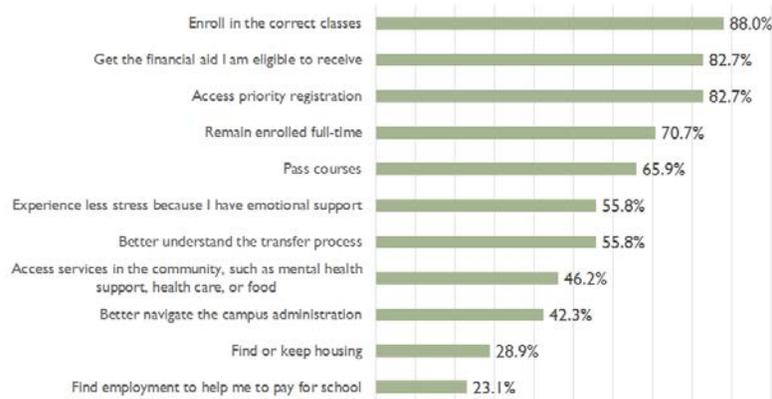
17. What do we know about CAFYES? What services are students using?

We know from a February 2017 survey of students, that they are using a wide range of services. The second most commonly used service is financial aid counseling, with 66.8 percent of students reporting that they have utilized the service.¹⁶ Provided below is a description of services used by CAFYES participants.



18. What do students report these services are helping them achieve?

Students report a wide range of positive outcomes, due to the services provided by CAFYES. The second most commonly reported achievement is getting the financial aid I am eligible to receive. Provided below is the full list of achievements that this important program is making possible.¹⁷



19. Overall, how helpful do students find CAFYES?

Overall, students report a very high level of satisfaction with the program. A full 86.5% report the program is extremely helpful. An additional 11.1% rate it as helpful.¹⁸

20. If implemented, how many additional campuses would receive CAFYES funding?

Senate Bill 12 would authorize the California Community Chancellor's office to provide funding to up to 20 Community College District in California. This is this an increase in the current number authorized, which is 10 Community College Districts.

21. Will the expansion of CAFYES decrease funding for currently-funded campuses?

No. The 10 currently funded Community College districts are utilizing approximately \$9 million of the \$15 million that are appropriated annually to the program.¹⁹ SB 12 would authorize the California Community College Chancellor's office to use the balance of the funds to fund additional CAFYES programs.

22. How would new districts be selected to receive CAFYES funding?

The California Community College Chancellor's Office would be tasked with developing a selection process. Existing statute requires that districts with larger numbers of foster youth be given priority.

23. How much additional funding would SB12 provide to foster youth in college in California?

With SB 12 an estimated 7,090 additional foster youth would receive the federally-funded Pell Grant, increasing the amount received by foster youth in California from \$64.2 million to \$93.9 million, an increase of \$29.5 million.

¹ [At Greater Risk: California Foster Youth and the Path from High School to College, March 2013.](#)

² [Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Age 26.](#) (2011)

³ [US Bureau of Labor and Statistic, Current Population Survey](#) (2015)

⁴ [Aiding Success: The Role of Federal and State Financial Aid in Supporting California Community College Students \(2017\)](#)

⁵ [Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success](#) (2015)

⁶ [Findings from the California Youth Transitions to Adulthood Study: Conditions at Age 19](#) (2016).

⁷ [Charting the Course: Using Data to Support Foster Youth College Success](#) (2015)

⁸ [How America Pays for College 2016](#), Sallie Mae and Ipsos Public Affairs (2016)

⁹ [Aiding Success: The Role of Federal and State Financial Aid in Supporting California Community College Students \(2017\)](#)

¹⁰ [CAFYES: What Do We Know After One Year?](#) John Burton Advocates for Youth, February 2017.

¹¹ University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project [website](#)

¹² [How America Pays for College 2016](#), Sallie Mae and Ipsos Public Affairs (2016)

¹³ Richard Frey. [For First Time in Modern Era, Living With Parents Edges Out Other Living Arrangements for 18- to 34-Year-Olds.](#) Pew Research Center (2016)

¹⁴ [How America Pays for College 2016](#), Sallie Mae and Ipsos Public Affairs (2016)

¹⁵ IBID.

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