



**ASSISTING YOUTH PURSUING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION:  
KEY DATES & DEADLINES FOR APPLYING & ATTENDING**

This attachment is intended to provide social workers and probation officers with information about key dates and deadlines associated with applying to and attending post-secondary education. Note that some dates and deadlines may vary by institution so ensure students are aware of the academic calendar at the school they are planning on attending. For more in-depth planning information, and for student-friendly materials, visit [www.cacollegepathways.org](http://www.cacollegepathways.org).

**Fall Semester Prior to Attending College:**

- Coursework: If a high school senior, ensure the youth is completing final “a-g” course requirements if planning on attending a four-year university. Determine if youth is eligible for partial credits to assist with on-time high school graduation.
- Testing: If a high school senior planning on applying to four-year universities, youth should register for the October American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) in early September. If retaking the exam, youth should register for the December ACT or SAT in early November. Foster youth may request a fee waiver for these exams.
- Four-Year University Applications: For foster youth, applying to up to four UC and four CSU campuses is free. Youth will need assistance with their personal essay, gathering letters of recommendation, submitting transcripts and scholarship applications in addition to the college application. They should also apply for on-campus housing for each college they are applying to that has on campus housing. Foster youth have priority access to on-campus housing at most institutions.

*California State University (CSU):*

- The priority application deadline for fall admission is generally November 30<sup>th</sup> prior to the year of attendance, however some extended deadlines vary by school.
- Find out more information and apply for CSUs at <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>.
- Make sure youth apply for the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP) when they submit their application; this is the only opportunity to apply for EOP.
- Specific high school (“a-g”) courses required for admission; ACT or SAT required unless student has a GPA above 3.0 and is a California resident.

*University of California (UC):*

- The application deadline for fall admission is generally November 30<sup>th</sup> prior to the year of attendance.
- Find out more information and apply for UCs at <http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/>.
- Specific high school (“a-g”) courses required for admission; GPA of 3.0 or higher in “a-g” courses, with no grade lower than a C; ACT Plus Writing or SAT Reasoning Test required no later than December of senior year; SAT Subject Tests not required but recommended for certain programs.

*Private and/or vocational schools*: See the school’s individual website for information about application deadlines and process.

- Campus Support Programs and Key Contacts: It is best to connect youth to campus supports early on (a year prior to beginning college, or at least sometime prior to starting school). Most college campuses have a foster youth support program or individual designated to support foster youth. Community colleges have Foster Youth Success Initiative (FYSI) Liaisons, and some have foster youth-specific programs within the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) program called CAFYES/NextUp. Many four-year universities have Guardian Scholars or other programs for current and former foster youth. These programs and/or individuals can support students with a range of activities including college and course planning, getting connected to critical resources on campus, navigating financial aid, and accessing books and supplies. **Search for campus support programs here: <http://www.cacollegepathways.org/find-campus-support-programs/find-campus-support-programs-for-foster-youth/>**. If no foster youth-specific programs exist on the campus, general campus support programs are available such as EOPS at community colleges, EOP at CSUs, and disabled student services across colleges. NOTE: In order to participate in EOP at CSUs, you must apply when you submit your admissions application to the school.

### Spring Semester Prior to Attending College:

- California Community College (CCC) Application:
  - Application deadlines vary by school but are generally during the spring prior to the fall of attendance.
  - Use the CCCApply website (<https://home.cccapply.org/>) to find out more information about the individual school the youth is planning on attending, and to submit an application.
  - No Grade Point Average (GPA) minimum; no tests or essays required with application.
  - No high school diploma is required for admission however a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate (i.e. GED) is required to receive federal financial aid.
  - Encourage youth to check the box to self-identify as a foster youth on the application.
  - If the youth intends to ultimately transfer from a community college to a CSU, visit [www.calstate.edu/transfer/](http://www.calstate.edu/transfer/) for transfer pathways.
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Financial Aid Priority Deadline: March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the priority deadline for California students to submit either the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the California Dream Act Application (CADAA) for the upcoming academic year. (Students can begin to apply as early as October 1<sup>st</sup>). The CADAA is a state financial aid application for eligible undocumented immigrant students that is administered by the California Student Aid Commission; CADAA application information is kept private and is not shared with federal government agencies.

March 2<sup>nd</sup> is also the deadline for California high schools to submit the supplemental Cal Grant GPA Verification Form to the California Student Aid Commission. Students planning on attending community college can apply up until September 2<sup>nd</sup>, however may receive less funding. Legislation passed in 2018 will extend the deadline from March 2<sup>nd</sup> to September 2<sup>nd</sup> for foster youth attending community college to receive the entitlement Cal Grant, which means they would be guaranteed a grant if eligible. See the *Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth* for the most up-to-date information.

Foster youth should also be advised that March 2<sup>nd</sup> is the priority deadline for submitting a supplemental Chafee Grant application, which may qualify them for an additional \$5,000 per year and is awarded on a first come, first served basis. Students who miss the March 2<sup>nd</sup> priority deadline should still apply but may qualify for less money.

NOTE: Students must submit a FAFSA/CADAA every year in order to continue receiving federal and state financial aid. The FAFSA is available here: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>. The CADAA is available here: <https://dream.csac.ca.gov/>. Find out more information about the Cal Grant here: <https://www.csac.ca.gov/cal-grants>. Find out more information about the Chafee Grant for current and former foster youth here: <https://chafee.csac.ca.gov/>. View the *Financial Aid Guide for California Foster Youth* here: [www.jbaforyouth.org/ca-fy-financial-aid-guide/](http://www.jbaforyouth.org/ca-fy-financial-aid-guide/).

- March / April / May – Matriculation and Priority Registration: Community colleges and CSUs require students to complete a matriculation process that includes application, assessment, orientation, and counseling to complete an education plan. Youth should inquire with their college about assessment policies and procedures so that they can prepare accordingly (i.e. study for a placement exam) or request any documents (i.e. high school transcripts) that might be needed. If possible, have students meet with an educational counselor through EOP, EOPS or CAFYES/NextUp to receive additional assistance with completing their education plan.

Current and former foster youth under age 26 and homeless youth under age 25 are eligible for priority registration once they complete the matriculation process. Make sure students know their enrollment date, that they seek help from a counselor with selecting classes ahead of time, and that they enroll during their assigned time. Learn more about matriculation and priority registration at community colleges here: <http://stepforward.cccco.edu/>. Priority registration often takes place in April or May at community colleges, however dates vary at each college.

- June/July/August – Summer Bridge Programs: Summer bridge programs are essential for assisting students in becoming prepared for college and familiarized with campus supports. All CSUs and many community colleges and UCs have a bridge program. Colleges without a summer bridge program may offer extended orientation sessions during the summer months.
- July/August – Books, Supplies & Transportation: Ensure youth understand their term bill, including payment deadlines, financial aid disbursement dates, and payment plan options. Youth may need assistance in setting up a bank account to receive and manage their financial aid. In addition to covering tuition and fees, youth must budget their financial aid to also cover non-tuition expenses, such as books, other supplies, transit, parking, and housing. Campus support programs in addition to the county Independent Living Program (ILP) can be great resources for students seeking financial assistance to cover books and supplies.

### **The College Academic Calendar:**

- August/September – Fall Semester Begins: Fall semester begins, depending on the school.
- September 2<sup>nd</sup> – Final Cal Grant Deadlines: Final deadline for community college students to submit a FAFSA or CADAA to receive a Cal Grant.
- October 1<sup>st</sup> – Financial Aid Applications Available: The FAFSA and CADAA become available for applying for financial aid for the next academic year.
- November – Priority Registration: Priority registration occurs for the spring semester. Students should meet with a counselor to discuss current course performance and select courses for the spring semester.
- December – Fall Semester Ends: Students who earn a D/F course grade, who receive an “Incomplete,” or who drop/withdraw from one or more courses should meet with a counselor to

discuss academic progress and make appropriate adjustments to their spring semester course schedule.

- January/February – Spring Semester Begins: Spring semester begins, depending on the school and whether they have a winter intersession.
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> – Financial Aid Priority Deadline: Priority deadline to submit the FAFSA or CADAA for the upcoming academic year and to submit the Chafee application. Students must submit a FAFSA/CADAA each year they are attending college in order to be considered for any federal and state financial aid. Students who previously received the Chafee Grant do not need to reapply.
- Late March/early April – Spring Break
- March/April/May – Priority Registration: Priority registration occurs for the fall semester, depending on the school. Students should meet with a counselor to discuss academic progress, summer school options, and course scheduling for the fall semester.

#### **Other Important Tips Throughout the Academic School Year:**

- Dates for financial aid disbursements vary; be aware and help students plan: Inquire with the individual school about their disbursement dates and consider scheduling a check-in with the students on your caseload on the day (or soon after) they get their disbursement to help them budget. Help the student establish a checking account for receiving financial aid. It is important to remind students to think carefully about how and when they spend their disbursement. If they end up dropping class(es) they may end up owing financial aid back depending on how many units they drop and when they drop them. If they owe back financial aid and they have already spent their entire disbursement, they will incur financial aid debt. Some schools may prohibit a student with financial aid debt from registering in upcoming terms until they have cleared their balance.
- Dropping courses can have bigger consequences than students anticipate: Generally, colleges offer a narrow window for students to add and drop courses after the semester has started. Students should be aware of the add/drop deadline and make any changes to their schedule by that date. Students who drop courses should be advised that changing their enrollment status (i.e. from full-time course load to part-time course load) can impact the amount of financial aid they can receive. They may be required to pay back a portion of their financial aid if they have already received their disbursement.

Following the add/drop deadline, students should meet with a counselor if they wish to withdraw from one or more courses. Withdrawing generally requires that they submit a form or petition and will be noted on their academic transcript with a “W.” Course withdrawals can negatively impact a student’s academic standing and put them at risk for academic probation. In some cases, students may lose financial aid if they are unable to maintain good academic standing.

Make sure students know that simply not showing up for class will not result in the professor dropping them from the course roster. It is up to the student to be aware of course add/drop dates and course withdrawal timelines and processes. Make sure that students meet with a counselor and the financial aid office BEFORE they decide to drop or remain in a class to ensure they fully understand how their decision may affect their academic progress and their financial aid.