



In This Issue:

- *Celebrating 2020 Graduates*
 - *Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program*
 - *Chafee Educational Training Grant*
 - *Extension of Aftercare Services*
 - *Advocating for Social Change: Racial Equity and Social Justice*
 - *Returning to School in the World of COVID-19*
 - *Safety Staying Connected While Social Distancing*
 - *Voter Registration*
 - *Budget-Friendly Ideas for Summer & Fall Fun Resources*
 - *Save the Dates*
 - *Resources*
-

Graduation



*To **all graduating** students of the class 2020 high school and college, the COVID-19 pandemic changed your lives in ways no one thought possible. We understand that with everything going on in the world, many youths who graduated did not have the opportunity to celebrate their many years of great perseverance, hard work, and ultimately success in gaining their diploma.*

With that being said, **CONGRATULATIONS CLASS OF 2020!**

- **Aleah** - graduated from Scranton High and she plans to attend Empire Beauty School
- **Xander** - graduated from Scranton High and he plans to become a trucker
- **Colby** - graduated from Valley View High School
- **Bella** - graduated from West Scranton High School and she plans on attending a school for dog grooming.
- **Blaze** - Dedicated YAB Core member, Artist - Graduated from Hazelton Area HS
- **Tazhne** - Local YAB member - Graduated from Wilkes Barre Area HS
- **Alex** - graduated from Valley View High School and will be attending Wilkes University
- **Jade** - graduated from Scranton High School



Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program

The Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program, created by Act 16 of 2019, seeks to remove barriers in accessing a postsecondary education for youth who are or have been in foster care. This will allow eligible foster youth to complete their studies, graduate with less debt, and have the opportunity to build a network of support. The program is being administered collaboratively by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA) in conjunction with the PA departments of Education, Human Services, and Labor & Industry!

Am I Eligible?

To be eligible for the tuition waiver, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a Pennsylvania resident*
- Be under age 26*
- Received a high school diploma or equivalent approved credential*
- Be eligible for services under Pennsylvania's John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood*
- Be identified as a youth in foster care or a youth discharged from foster care at age 16 or older*
 - Exited foster care on or after age 16 to adoption or permanent legal guardianship*
 - Be enrolled as an undergraduate, at least half time in a postsecondary institution that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV student assistance programs*
- Demonstrate financial need for the PA Chafee Education and Training Grant (Chafee ETG), as determined by the postsecondary institution*
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress, as determined by the postsecondary institution*
 - Not be in default on a federal student loan*

Visit: [Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program Website](#) - for more information.

Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG)

The Chafee Education and Training Grant (ETG) Program is a federally funded program that offers grant assistance to Pennsylvania undergraduate students aging out of foster care who are attending a postsecondary institution approved for Federal Title IV student financial assistance programs.

PHEAA will administer the Grant Program for the academic year on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). This program is authorized under the Foster Care Independence Act of 1999 as amended by the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Amendments of 2001.

Maximum awards under this program are up to \$5,000 per academic year. However, no award may exceed the student's cost of attendance minus other financial aid the student is receiving. Awards are contingent upon federal funding and are not guaranteed.

Eligibility requirements

To be considered for this grant, you must:

- Be eligible for services under the Commonwealth's Chafee Foster Care Independence Program
- Be identified as a youth in foster care or a youth adopted from foster care after attaining age 16
- Be a new applicant participating in the Chafee Program prior to your 23rd birthday, or be a renewal applicant who has not reached your 26th birthday by July 1 of the upcoming academic year in which Chafee funds will be awarded
- Be enrolled at least half time in a college or career school that is approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Title IV student assistance programs
- Maintain "satisfactory academic progress" and demonstrate financial need for the grant as defined by the postsecondary institution

To apply

1. Students must annually complete the [FAFSA \(Free Application for Federal Student Aid\)](#)
2. [Download the Chafee ETG Program Application \(118 KB PDF\)](#). <http://www.pheaa.org/funding-opportunities/other-educational-aid/chafee-program.shtml>
3. Mail your completed Chafee ETG application to:

PHEAA
State Grant and Special Programs
PO Box 8114
Harrisburg, PA 17105-9923

Extension of Aftercare Services

*Under the provisions of the Family First Prevention Services Act, **Pennsylvania will extend aftercare services to age 23** and Chafee ETG to age 26 beginning state fiscal year 2020-21. The extension of aftercare services from ages 21 to 23 will allow former foster youth to receive IL services, which include needs assessment/case planning, life skills training, prevention services, education, support services, employment, location of housing, room and board, retreats and camps, indirect services, and program administration. Youth who achieved permanency through adoption or permanent legal guardianship prior to age 16 are not eligible for stipends, ETG or the Fostering Independence Tuition Waiver Program, known as FosterED. In addition, Family First amended the Chafee ETG program and allowed states to extend eligibility to youth up until their 26th birthday (previously 23rd birthday) and allow youth to participate in the program for up to five years, whether or not the years are consecutive. Pennsylvania opted into this provision effective July 1, 2020*

Visit: <http://www.payab.pitt.edu/ChafeeILP.htm> for more information.

Advocating for Social Change: Racial Equity and Social Justice

Dear Stakeholder,

The recent events unfolding across our Country are the latest examples that structural inequalities, racism, and injustice exist to this day. From the shooting death of Ahmaud Arbery, to the murder of George Floyd and countless others, we must do better and be better. As a University, a School of Social Work, and a Child Welfare Resource Center, we have a moral and ethical responsibility to speak out against the hatred, racism, and bigotry that gives space for these horrific acts. We have a responsibility to challenge policies and systems that continue to perpetuate gaps in opportunity. We are committed to being vocal advocates for change that's long overdue. We will be working to ensure racial equity and justice are centered in all of our services and products. We look forward to partnering with you as we work together to address these most fundamental of rights; liberty and justice.

Sincerely,

Helen Cahalane, Ph.D., ACSW, LCSW

Principal Investigator

Michael Byers, MSW

Director CWRC

The PA Youth Advisory Board Stands With #BlackLivesMatter

#BlackLivesMatter was founded in 2013 in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer. Black Lives Matter Foundation, Inc. is a global organization in the US, UK, and Canada, whose mission is to eradicate white supremacy, and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives. (1.)



Returning to School in the World of COVID-19



Even though some of us may forget to grab our mask from our car on our way into the store, it is important to remember what it looks like to continue moving forward in the world of COVID-19 while remaining safe. It is also important to remember to source check your information before you take it for a fact! If you'd like to see where we got these tips below, don't hesitate to check out tips on [the CDC website here!](#)

Students: Let's work together to stop the spread of COVID-19

DID YOU WASH YOUR HANDS?

stop



think



wash hands



ASK YOURSELF:

Did I just go to the bathroom?

Am I about to eat?

Did I just eat?

Did I cough or sneeze?

Did I touch supplies or objects
that other people have touched?

Did I touch garbage?

Did I touch my mask?

If you can't wash your hands,
ask your teacher or another
adult for hand sanitizer.



CS 118011-A May 22, 2020 11 AM

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

BACK-TO-COLLEGE TIPS

Protect Yourself from COVID-19

Watch your distance

Stay at least 6 feet apart from others, when possible



Wash your hands

or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol



Wear a mask

in public spaces and common areas



The more closely you interact with others and the longer that interaction, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spread.



CS 318011-A 08/20/2020

DORM

- Avoid sharing items with roommates or others.
- If you do, clean and disinfect before sharing or using.

SHARED BATHROOM

- Avoid placing toothbrushes directly on counter surfaces.
- Use totes for personal items to limit contact with other surfaces in the bathroom.

CLASSROOM

- Enroll in online classes if they fit your educational needs.
- Wipe down your desk with a disinfectant wipe if possible.
- Skip seats or rows to create physical distance between other students.
- Avoid placing your personal items (e.g., cell phone) on your desk.

DINING HALL & MEALS

- Avoid sharing food, drink, utensils or other items with people.
- Pick up grab-and-go options for meals if offered.
- Avoid buffets and self-serve stations.

LAUNDRY ROOM

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that others have touched (e.g., buttons on the washing machine).
- Wash masks in warmest appropriate water setting for the fabric.



BEFORE YOU GO OUT,
TAKE THE FOLLOWING:

- Mask
- Tissues
- Hand sanitizer
- Disinfection wipes (if possible)

[cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus)

Voter Registration



Young voters notoriously neglect the importance of voting, but their voice is an important one on both sides of the aisle. Key issues in every election increasingly relate to the concerns of students and professionals between the ages of 18 and 29, making it essential for members within that age group to educate themselves on political issues and take to the polls. While millennials represented nearly 50% of the entire voter population in the 2016 election, they were further divided along race, gender, and education lines when considering key issues from both candidates. (2.)

Why is it important to vote, especially if you fall within a crucial age demographic? Below are some of the most compelling reasons that young voters are needed more than ever in local, state, and national elections.

Here Are 9 Reasons Why You Should VOTE!

1. YOUNG VOTERS ACCOUNT FOR HALF OF THE VOTING POPULATION, MAKING THEM A POWERFUL POLITICAL FORCE.

The youth vote has the potential to be extremely influential in this country. While young voter participation in 2016 declined by 2% from a record 52% at the 2008 election, today the voting population includes almost equal parts millennials and baby boomers. As the boomer electorate decreases in size, experts suggest it is merely a matter of time before millennials become the largest and most powerful group driving future elections in the U.S. Unfortunately, not all who *can* vote *will*, meaning that fewer young people get to directly influence issues that might affect their lives for years to come, including college tuition reform and federal job programs.

2. YET OLDER AMERICANS ARE MORE LIKELY TO VOTE.

While young people make up a large portion of the voting-eligible population, they're much less likely than those who are older to get out and vote. In 2016, only 19% of people aged 18-29 cast their ballot in the presidential election; at 49%, 45-64-year-olds accounted for the largest electorate last year. Some reports have attributed the outcome of the election to a "missed opportunity" on the part of millennials to affect change en masse: while the majority of young voters actually cast ballots for Hillary Clinton, their low turnout was not enough to counter the ballots of older voters. For this, researchers are increasingly interested in methods of successfully mobilizing young voter groups. Duke University recently initiated an innovative project designing policy reform to increase turnout among the youth.

3. EVERY VOTE COUNTS.

Many young people cite feeling as though their vote doesn't count as their reason for not participating in elections. Millennials reported feeling especially disillusioned by both presidential candidates before the election in 2016, and many chose to sit out altogether as a result. In an America divided perhaps more than ever, every vote counts, especially those from one of the country's largest voting groups. President Barack Obama's election in 2008 is an example of this theory in motion, as his popularity with youth voters was one of the key elements of his campaign, giving him a large margin over competitors in a number of strategic states. Other elections in recent years have come down to just a few votes (Minnesota senator Al Franken won by just 312 votes in 2009 as one example), proving your vote does matter, maybe more than you realize.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE WERE HIT HARDEST BY THE GREAT RECESSION.

College debt and a lack of jobs dealt some of the most crippling blows to the financial futures of many young voters after the Great Recession in the late-2000s. Though unemployment rates have declined, and millennials have found their footing in a new economy, policy change and reform in areas affecting college students, such as debt forgiveness and healthcare, are as crucial now as they were in the 2008 election.

5. YOUNG VOTERS ARE AN INCREDIBLY DIVERSE GROUP.

The divisive nature of partisan politics is alive and well among young voters in today's world. So much so that the millennial electorate is expected to be the first demographic group with the ability to challenge the basic two-party system, potentially driving the need for alternative political parties whom millennials feel can represent the needs of a diverse population through a more inclusive agenda.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE NEED TO CONNECT WITH POLITICS EARLY ON.

Participating in politics is a hard-won right in our nation. Some experts argue that young Americans with such potential for affecting political change don't exercise the right to vote as often as they should. Many even suggest that the voting age should be lowered in an effort to promote earlier voting among teenagers and young adults. Building a relationship with the political process as early as possible is key to making voting a lifelong habit: you may already be familiar with the phrase, "Vote early, vote often." If you're historically a repeat voter, you're much less likely to skip a trip to the polls in the future. This sort of habit-forming participation is key to driving policy and electing leaders who represent the needs of voters of all ages.

7. IT'S EASIER THAN EVER TO BE AN EDUCATED VOTER.

In today's tech-savvy world, there is no excuse not to vote because you don't know enough about the candidates. In fact, one might find it harder to escape day-to-day political news than subscribe to it. In an era in which Twitter is the preferred means of communication for the President of the United States, Instagram, YouTube, and Snapchat have become as crucial as the candidates' own websites for disseminating information about relevant issues. As this type of civic education in everything is typical for most Americans today, it isn't just beneficial in the months leading up the election but also on a day-to-day basis. The current online climate allows young voters to form a fuller picture of the candidates and their platforms in a medium they're familiar with.

8. THE YOUTH VOTE CAN SWAY THE ELECTION.

As mentioned before, your vote does matter, so much so that the collective "youth vote" could actually sway the election. Millennials have been credited with the decisive vote in the 2012 election of Barack Obama for a second term as president; Obama won 67% of the national youth vote, proving more popular in crucial states such as Florida, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, over his opponent Mitt Romney. In 2016, candidates campaigned hard for the 18-29 set, singling out initiatives to target millennials as a powerful electorate group. Why? Because they understand the necessity of winning approval from this voting majority.

9. YOU MAY NOT CARE NOW, BUT YOU MIGHT IN FOUR YEARS.

You may feel that choosing a president or a senator just is not something that affects your life right now. You might not yet be struggling with issues like college debt or finding a full-time job. For many millennials, adulthood brings many new challenges, like college, marriage, buying a house, paying for your own health insurance, and/or starting a business, all of which could radically change your perspective on political issues. While you can't predict who or where you'll be in four years, you can be sure that the political officials elected to office and the policies they implement will impact your life in the coming months and years. Why not have a say? Speak up, make a choice, and take part in the election to protect your interests in your first few years in the real world.

How and Where to Register to Vote



There are 4 convenient ways to register to vote or update your registration.

You must register to vote at the address where you actually live – your residence address.

To register to vote:

1. Fill out a voter registration application form.
2. Your county voter registration office reviews the form.
3. If your registration is accepted, you will get a voter registration card in the mail. The voter registration card will show your name, address, party affiliation, and the address where you will vote.

You have 4 ways to register to vote. You can register: (Click on each underlined word below to follow hyperlink)

- Online
- By mail
- In person at your county voter registration office
- At PennDOT and some other government agencies.

Deadline to register to vote in the November Election: October 19, 2020

Budget-Friendly Ideas for Fall Fun



When it comes to the end of summer and school beginning again, it is important to remember a few things, especially when we are trying to navigate this new world of social distancing!

- Plant a garden
- Have a picnic. Bonus idea: Use ingredients from a garden to create your meals with
- Fly a kite
- Go camping
- Rent a kayak at your local state park
- Make an obstacle course
- Go on a scavenger hunt around your neighborhood
- Go hiking
- Go apple picking
- Carve pumpkins

Save the Dates!

Youth Advisory Board Statewide Meetings

- November 19, 2020
- January 21, 2021
- March 18, 2021
- May 20, 2021

Youth Advisory Board Leadership Summit

- June 24-24, 2021

Older Youth Retreat Steering Committee Meetings

- December 10, 2020
- January 28, 2021
- March 25, 2021
- May 27, 2021
- July 8, 2021

Older Youth Retreat Week

- August 9-13, 2021

Resources

Here are some resources for older youth to take advantage of!

Racial Equality & Equity Videos:

- [Dr. Robin DiAngelo discusses 'White Fragility'](#)
- [The urgency of intersectionality](#) by Kimberlé Crenshaw
- [What it takes to be racially literate](#) by Priya Vulchi and Winona Guo
- [Color blind or color brave?](#) by Mellody Hobson

Housing: Information in this section is intended to educate and assist youth in understanding practical housing issues and to aid in locating and securing safe and adequate housing prior to discharge.

- [Find a Local Housing Authority](#)
- [Looking for Housing?](#)
- [National Homelessness Shelter Directory](#)

COVID-19 Resources:

- [Article: "This Pandemic of Grief"](#)
- [Managing Stress Associated with the COVID-19 Virus Outbreak](#)
- [Resources for Families affected by COVID-19 Outbreak](#) (*Compiled by the Community Team at UPMC Children's Hospital*)
- [Neighbors in Need Crisis Fund](#)

Employment: Information in this section will support youth in locating resources that support them in the workforce.

- [Career Link](#)
- [Office of Vocational Rehabilitation](#)
- [Job Corps](#)
- [Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act](#)
- [Transition Guide](#)
-

Works Cited:

- (1.) About. (2020, May 22). Retrieved October 06, 2020, from <https://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>
- (2.) Telegram. (n.d.). FOUR REASONS WE NEED YOUNG VOTERS MORE THAN EVER. Retrieved October 06, 2020, from <https://www.telegramnews.net/story/2020/07/30/lifestyles/four-reasons-we-need-young-voters-more-than-ever/1061.html>
- (3.) Writers, S. (2019, July 01). 9 Reasons We Need Young Voters More Than Ever. Retrieved October 06, 2020, from <https://www.thebestcolleges.org/9-reasons-we-need-young-voters-more-than-ever/>

Thank you for your reading. Have wonderful day!
