
DEFINITION

The Chafee Educational and Training Vouchers Program (ETV) provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care. This program provides vouchers of up to \$5,000 per fiscal year (amount to be determined by available federal and state funds) to eligible youth attending post-secondary education and vocational programs.

**ELIGIBILITY
CRITERIA**

Youth eligible for the ETV program include:

- Youth who are or have been in an eligible foster care placement, on or after their 14th birthday, through the State of Michigan.
- Youth adopted from foster care or placed in a relative guardianship from foster care [42 USC 677(a)(7) and (i)(2)] after attaining age 16.
- Youth must have a high school diploma or GED and be attending, at least part-time, an accredited post-secondary institution.

**Eligible
Placements or
Living
Arrangements**

Eligible foster care placements include:

- Licensed foster family homes.
- Relative provider homes.
- Group homes.
- Emergency shelters.
- Licensed child care institutions.
- Pre-adoptive placements.
- Independent living placements.

**Ineligible
Placements**

A child caring institution must be licensed or approved by the state and may **not** include:

- Any secure facility.

- A public child caring institution for more than 25 children.
- Detention facilities, forestry camps, training schools, or other facilities operated primarily for the detention of children determined to be delinquent.
- Jail.

A youth in one of these facilities may be eligible for ETV funding after release, *if* the youth is released to an eligible placement as listed above.

Age

There are no minimum age restrictions for the ETV program. A youth must be participating in the ETV program on or before the youth's 21st birthday to remain eligible until the youth attains 23 years of age. Eligibility to age 23 requires enrollment in a post-secondary education or training program and satisfactory progress toward completion of that program.

Adopted Youth

A youth who is adopted or placed in a permanent legal guardianship is only eligible for the ETV program if the adoption or guardianship was finalized on or after the youth's 16th birthday.

Juvenile Justice

Youth with a current or previous delinquency case who were placed in an eligible child care placement as listed above under the supervision of DHS are eligible to receive an ETV, provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

MICHIGAN YOUTH LIVING OUT OF STATE

Open out-of-state foster care cases: The state responsible for placement and care is obligated to provide a voucher to an eligible youth.

Closed out-of-state foster care cases: The state in which a former foster youth resides is responsible for providing an eligible youth with a voucher. This provision, however, does not apply to a former foster care youth who is already receiving an ETV and moves to another state for the sole purpose of attending an

institution of higher education. In that instance, the youth's original state of residence must continue to provide an ETV to the youth for as long as the youth remains eligible for the program.

TYPE OF INSTITUTION YOUTH CAN ATTEND

Youth must attend an institution of higher education, as defined by the federal Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 USC 1001(a)), that:

- Awards a bachelor's degree or is not less than a two-year program (associate's degree) that provides credit towards a degree.
- Provides not less than one year of training towards gainful employment.
- Provides vocational training for the purpose of obtaining gainful employment and has been in existence for at least two years.

The institution must also meet all three of the following criteria:

- Admits as regular students only persons with a high school diploma or equivalent, or persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance.
- Be designated as a public, private or non-profit institution.
- Be accredited and authorized to operate in that state.

GPA

A student may receive ETV funds as long as he or she is in good standing and making progress towards completing his or her program or graduating. A student must earn no less than a cumulative 2.0 Grade Point Average (GPA). If the GPA goes below a cumulative 2.0 the youth will not be awarded ETV funds again until it is brought to a 2.0 or above.

If a youth is attending a technical/vocational program that does not provide a GPA the youth must have passing marks by the program's standards. If it goes below passing marks in a technical/vocational program, the youth will not be awarded ETV funds again until they are passing.

**POST SECONDARY
SCHOOL
ENROLLMENT**

Youth can attend school on either a full-time or part-time basis to receive an ETV. No minimum number of credit hours is required to receive ETV funds. However, the ETV grant amount will vary depending on the number of enrolled credit hours.

A youth must not drop or have an incomplete from more than one class in a semester. If he/she does, the youth will not be awarded ETV funds again until a semester is completed without a dropping a class or having an incomplete from more than one class.

**ETV AND OTHER
FUNDING SOURCES**

A youth may receive a Pell grant, Tuition Incentive Program (TIP) and ETV funds at the same time.

Youth In Transition (YIT) funds cannot be used to supplement the ETV program. A youth who receives an ETV cannot use YIT funds to pay for ANY post-secondary expenses. A youth receiving ETV may access YIT funds for other needs not related to post-secondary pursuits or costs of attendance. Such requests must be carefully reviewed prior to approval.

**ALLOWABLE
EXPENSES**

Allowable expenses reflect the cost of attendance outlined for the youth. They include but are not limited to:

- Tuition, fees, and registration.
- Books and supplies.
- Computer - a maximum of \$1,500 will be allowed for the purchase of a computer, including accessories, not more than once in a five year period.
- Transportation costs:
 - Insurance.
 - Travel expenses such as gas.
 - Vehicle repair and maintenance.
 - The vehicle must be registered in the youth's name.

- The cost of repairs must not exceed \$900.
- Vehicle purchase
 - The vehicle must be used as a primary means of transportation to support the youth's educational goal.
 - The youth must have a valid driver's license, registration, and insurance.
 - The youth must demonstrate the ability to maintain any payments, insurance or other expenses associated with owning a vehicle.
 - A vehicle inspection by a licensed mechanic is required that supports the purchase price.
- Room and board.
- Phone expenses - The purchase of a phone must not exceed \$100, and monthly phone bill is not to exceed \$100 per month.
- Daily living expenses, such as groceries.
- Child care expenses for a student who is a parent:
 - Based on the number and age of the student's children and may not exceed the reasonable cost for child care in the community where the youth lives.
 - May be covered for class attendance, periods of study, field-work, internships and commuting time.
 - Youth should first apply for DHS Child Daycare assistance prior to utilizing ETV.
- Accommodations related to the student's disability, such as a personal assistant or specialized equipment that is not paid from another source.
- Expenses related to the youth's work experience in a cooperative education program.
- Student loan fees or insurance premiums on the student loan.

Items not covered by ETV funds:

- Entertainment appliances or expenses; televisions, video games, stereos, concert tickets.
- Vacation travel.
- Graduation parties or gifts.
- Birthday party or wedding expenses.
- Court costs, probation fines and costs, parking/traffic tickets.
- Beauty products (nails, hair dye, etc.) other than basic personal hygiene products.

DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

The amount awarded to a youth is dependent on the availability of federal and state funds, but will never exceed \$5,000 in a year. The term 'year' applies to the state fiscal year beginning on October 1 and ending the following year on September 30. The total possible amount is split into two separate awards and distributed in two separate semesters.

If the youth owes the school payment, the ETV will first be applied to that payment, to ensure the student remains in good financial standing. Remaining ETV funds may be used for any of the allowable expenses listed above.

ETV funds are distributed based on a youth's individual needs and priorities outlined in his/her cost of attendance. A check is written to the vendor (for example, a landlord) and mailed to the youth. When funding is being used for daily expenses, checks may be written directly to the youth. In all cases, a youth must provide receipts/documentation as proof that the money was used on costs of attendance items/services as indicated in his/her individual plan.

A student is awarded on a per-semester basis. A student may apply for the second semester of the ETV award with all of the following documentation:

- Proof of successful completion of the semester at the post-secondary institution.
- Verification of current enrollment in a post-secondary institution.

- Required receipts and/or documentation of the ETV expenditures.
- Transcripts showing a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0 and that no more than one class was dropped in a given semester.
- An updated class schedule for the next semester.

**Documentation of
Education
Expenses**

All documentation and/or receipts must verify that ETV funding was used for educationally relevant items or daily expenses that supported the student in completing his/her education.

If a student cannot provide all the above documentation after the first semester of the fiscal year, he/she will not be awarded the second semester's ETV funds. The student may reapply the following fiscal year, if he/she has the proper documentation.

**WHERE TO APPLY
FOR THE ETV**

Lutheran Social Services of Michigan
Attn: ETV
209 E. Washington, Suite 284
Jackson, MI 49201
Phone toll-free: 1-877-660-METV(6388)
Fax: (517) 789-6809
Web: www.mietv.lssm.org

**LEGAL AND
RELATED
REFERENCES**

The Chafee ETV Program was established by Congress as part of reauthorization of the Promoting Safe and Stable Families Act. PL 107-133, Title 2, Section 201 of the Act amended the Foster Care Independence Act (Chafee Act) by adding ETVs as the sixth purpose of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program.