



Foster to College Scholarships: Frequently Asked Questions

1. How will this bill improve outcomes?

The Foster to College Scholarship is not a tuition waiver. It has **three key provisions that work together to promote student success**, focusing on preparation, retention and completed certifications and/or degrees.



a.) Two K-12 Foster Care Education Coordinators to support and require school districts to comply with the federal Every Students Succeed Act which requires every school district to assign Foster Care Liaisons to support students K-12 in/from foster care. Often, these positions exist on paper, but not in practice. These two state-level coordinators would provide oversight, training and support to Ohio's 611 public school districts.

b.) Two State-Level Post-Secondary Navigators to support current and former foster youth by referring them to existing resources, and helping them navigate how to access those resources, including Ohio Reach, Ohio Means Jobs, campus programs, etc.

c.) The Foster to College Scholarship will provide "last dollar" support after grants and scholarships are applied, to cover unmet cost of attendance including tuition, room and board. **Eligibility includes vocational training programs, colleges, and universities.** This bipartisan remedy provides a last-dollar amount to assist with housing, food and transport *after other resources have been provided, such as the annual amounts listed below:*



2. What are the costs-benefits to society regarding this provision?

Ohio ranks in the bottom 10% of the nation when it comes to outcomes for older youth in foster care. Ohio foster youth are less likely to graduate high school or obtain a GED, secure employment, and enroll in post-secondary education. **Within eight years, 50% experience homelessness and 70% rely on public assistance.**

With post-secondary support, these outcomes can be improved. In 2017, an economic research study was conducted by the University of Cincinnati's Economics Center for Education and Research. This study demonstrated that investing in post-secondary supports for foster youth not only created a positive effect on social outcomes but also led to lower net costs per county. **The return on investment for the one-year sample period was 248 percent.**

Table 14: Comparison of Outcomes in Education, Employment, and Pregnancy rates between HEMI Participants 18-25, Emancipated Youth, and General Population Ages 18-24⁶⁴

	HEMI age 18-25	Emancipated youth age 18-24	General population age 18-24
Education			
HS Degree/GED	88.1%	71.8%	90.9%
Some College or Degree Earned	46.9%	30.8%	57.1%
Employment			
Employed	70.6%	46.7%	65.9%
Estimated Mean Hourly Wages	\$12.83 ⁶⁵	\$8.91	\$11.96
Females with at least one dependent	16.9%	51.5%	21.9%

Sources: HEMI, Midwest Study, and Add Health Study⁶⁶

Thirty-five states have instituted a form of tuition waiver or scholarship for this population, and increased graduation rates as a result. Foster youth who received post-secondary support were more likely to graduate, obtain employment, and had a higher median wage. **They were less likely to require social and emergency support services. These positive effects on social outcomes contribute to lower net costs for the county.**

3. What does this bill cover, and how much does it cost?

An average of 1,000 Ohio youth age out of foster care each year. Approximately 120 are in college at age 21; fewer finish (>3%). The initial ask was for \$7.5 million to cover four staff salaries and last-dollar scholarships. We understand that recent amendments have been proposed to this bill, and that there will be one or more Interested Party Meetings.

Our Ask is that the voices and insights of current and former foster youth be prioritized in discussions and decision-making: *Nothing about us without us.* At this time, the OHIO YAB and ACTION Ohio are **not** in favor of proposed age caps, a two-year pilot or removing mention of the need to ensure K-12 state-level compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act.