



**AUSTIN**  
Independent School District

## Information for foster care families

There is an abundance of resources available to support foster care students as they pursue an education. Should you have questions, please contact Edna Ramon Butts at [edna.butts@austinisd.org](mailto:edna.butts@austinisd.org) or 512-414-3960.

### School Assignments

Students in foster care may attend:

- The school they attended before placement in foster care or while in foster care (transportation not provided)
- The school in the boundary area where the foster/kinship parent resides or where shelter or facility is located

### School Credits

Austin ISD offers many programs to help students recover credits towards graduation, including:

- Evening classes offered through Austin ISD's [Twilight Program](#);
- Online credit earning through [Garza's Online High School program](#) or TxVSN; and
- Graduation Preparatory Academy at either [Travis High School](#) or [Lanier High School](#)

Contact your school counselor for more information. Students older than 18 are able to attend school and graduate.

### GED

Students 17 years old or younger are required to obtain permission from a guardian (CPS for foster care students) to take the GED in place of obtaining a high school diploma.

### Nutrition Assistance

Students in foster care are eligible for all USDA nutrition programs. All that is required is [DFPS form 2085](#), which must be provided to the school's food service department.

### Music Lessons

Information on mentoring and free, in home music lessons can be found by visiting, [Kids in a New Groove](#).

### Driver's License

A Texas driver's license is free to any foster youth who is either 1) 15–18 years of age and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is the legal custodian, or 2) 18–21 years of age and residing in a paid DFPS foster care placement.

## **Jobs and After-Care Transitional Services**

Youth 17 ½–20 years of age who are currently in DFPS custody or who were in DFPS custody as of their 18th birthday may be eligible for programs at [LifeWorks Youth & Family Alliance](#). Assistance includes helping individuals establish a home, get a job, pursue education, access health care and manage their money. The law requires state agencies to give certain employment preference to former foster youth. [Workforce Solutions Capital Area](#) is a good place to start looking for a job.

## **Legal Advice**

Legal advice and assistance for current and former foster youth can be found by visiting the [Texas Foster Youth Justice Project](#). For more information on education issues for students in foster care visit [Educational Issues for Students in Foster Care](#).

## **College Assistance**

**Free Tuition and Fees:** Certain students who are in or were in DFPS managing conservatorship qualify for free tuition and fees at two- and four-year public colleges and universities if they take one college course before their 25th birthday. Enrolling in a dual-credit course also activates the tuition and fees waiver. Students are encouraged to enroll in at least one dual-credit course and seek opportunities to activate the tuition and fees waiver while in high school. [Click here for more information](#). For information on dual-credit courses offered at Austin Community College, ask your college counselor or visit [ACC's website](#). The Freshman Success Fund [Provides \\$1000 for Texas freshman](#).

**College or Vocational Training Funding:** Through the Texas Education Training Voucher, former foster youth who enroll in a college or training program may be eligible to receive up to \$5,000 per year to help with housing, food, books, computer equipment, tuition and other expenses. This is in addition to the Texas tuition waiver program. Generally, students must be:

- 16- or 17-years-old and in DFPS foster care and likely to stay in care until the age of 18;
- not yet 21, but aged out of DFPS foster care or
- not yet 21, and were adopted from DFPS foster care after turning 16 years old.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid:** Make sure to file the FAFSA forms correctly. All students who were in foster care from the age of 13 file as an “independent” and qualify for the maximum amount of federal and state grants. Be on the lookout for Financial Aid Saturdays - FREE assistance to Central Texas high school seniors, prospective and current college students and parents/guardians needing help to complete federal and state financial aid applications to fund college enrollment.

**Austin Community College:** Offers specialized programs tailored for former or current foster care students. For more information, visit ACC's [Foster Care Alumni Program website](#).

### Higher Education Information: Making College a Reality

- [www.ownyourownfuture.com](http://www.ownyourownfuture.com)
- [www.texasgearup.com](http://www.texasgearup.com)
- <http://www.educationreachfortexans.org/postsecondary.html>
- Austin Community College Foster Student Resources

### Texas Youth Hotline

Counseling, information, referrals and help finding services for foster youth (800)98-YOUTH, (800)989-6884, or visit [Texas Youth Connections](#) to obtain tips and information for foster youth.

### Additional Resources

Texas Youth Connection - DFPS's programs for foster students - [DFPS's website](#).

[austinisd.org/foster-care](http://austinisd.org/foster-care)