



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Rick Scott
Governor

Mike Carroll
Interim Secretary

DATE: August 5, 2014

TO: Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs
DCF Regional Managing Directors
CBC Contract Managers

THROUGH: Pete Digre, Deputy Secretary
Janice Thomas, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare

SUBJECT: Tuition exemption for students in or formerly in nonrelative custody

INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides clarification about the implementation of a new law, passed during the 2014 legislative session, expanding the provision of the tuition fee exemption to students who are or were in the custody of a nonrelative under section 39.5085, Florida Statutes, at the time he or she reached 18 years of age.

BACKGROUND: During the 2014 session, the Legislature approved an amendment to section 1009.25, Florida Statutes, to read:

1009.25 Fee exemptions.—

(1) The following students are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees, including lab fees, at a school district that provides workforce education programs, Florida College System institution, or state university:

(d) A student who is or was at the time he or she reached 18 years of age in the custody of a relative or nonrelative under s. 39.5085 or who was adopted from the Department of Children and Families Family Services after May 5, 1997. Such exemption includes fees associated with enrollment in applied academics for adult education instruction. The exemption remains valid until the student reaches 28 years of age.

Based on the July 1, 2014 effective date of the law, the tuition exemption is available for students ages 18-27 who were in the custody of a nonrelative pursuant to section 39.5085, Florida Statutes, on his or her 18th birthday.

Form CF-FSP 5220 has been updated for Community-Based Care Lead Agencies to use to certify that a student receiving or formerly receiving services meets one of the following

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

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criteria necessary to obtain exemption from paying tuition and fees at a Florida public state university, public Florida College System institution or public postsecondary career and technical program, pursuant to the "Florida K-20 Education Code," section 1009.25(1)(c)-(d), Florida Statutes:

- He or she is or was at the time he or she reached age 18 in the custody of the Department of Children and Families;
- He or she was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997;
- He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.;
- He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a non-relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.; or
- He or she was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least 6 months in the custody of the department after reaching 16 years of age.

The form will be available via DCF Forms and has included as an attachment. The link to DCF Forms is: <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/dcfforms/Search/DCFFormSearch.aspx>.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please share this memorandum with all child welfare staff and partners serving students who are eligible for the tuition exemption as referenced above.

CONTACT INFORMATION: Individuals seeking a tuition exemption should contact their respective Community-Based Care Lead Agency. For adoption related questions, please call 800-96-ADOPT or visit adoptflorida.org. All other questions related to this memorandum may be directed to JoShonda Guerrier, Director of Child Welfare Strategic Projects, at joshonda_guerrier@dcf.state.fl.us or (850) 717-4382.

ATTACHMENT: Tuition and Fee Exemption Request Form pursuant to s. 1009.25(1)(c)-(d), F.S.

cc: JoShonda Guerrier, Director of Child Welfare Strategic Projects
Traci Leavine, Director of Child Welfare Practice
Kellie Sweat Darnell, Director of Child Welfare Operations
Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Pat Badland, Director of Operations
Grainne O'Sullivan, Children's Legal Services Statewide Director
Rebecca Kapusta, Interim Director, Office of General Counsel
Alan Abramowitz, Guardian ad Litem
Christina Spudeas, Florida's Children First
Chancellor Randy Hanna, Division of Florida Colleges, Department of Education
Dr. Julie Alexander, Vice Chancellor, Division of Florida Colleges
Kathleen Taylor, Bureau Chief, Florida Department of Education
Lynda Page, Associate Director, Board of Governors, State University System of Florida



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Date: _____

To: Florida Public State University, Public Florida College System Institution, or
Public Postsecondary Career and Technical Program

From: _____, Department of Children and Families
or Community-Based Care Lead Agency

Title: _____

Subject: Tuition and Fee Exemption for Students Receiving or Formerly Receiving Services from the
Department of Children and Families

Please accept this letter certifying that _____ (name),
whose date of birth is _____, meets one of the following criteria necessary to obtain
exemption from paying tuition and fees at a Florida public state university, public Florida College System
institution or public postsecondary career and technical program, pursuant to the "Florida K-20 Education
Code," Section 1009.25(1)(c)-(d), Florida Statutes, (check one):

- He or she is or was at the time he or she reached age 18 in the custody of the Department of Children
and Families;
He or she was adopted from the Department of Children and Families after May 5, 1997;
He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a relative under s. 39.5085, F.S.;
He or she is or was at the time of reaching age 18 in the custody of a non-relative under s. 39.5085,
F.S.; or
He or she was placed in a guardianship by the court after spending at least 6 months in the custody
of the department after reaching 16 years of age.

The tuition and fee exemption CANNOT be used at an out-of-state educational institution or in-state private
university, private community college or private postsecondary career and technical program. Please contact
the financial aid office at the school to determine whether alternative tuition and fee exemptions or scholarships
are available through the school.

Effective July 1, 20101, this exemption remains valid until the young person reaches the age of 28,
which will occur on _____.
(MM/DD/YEAR)

Please contact _____, Florida Department of Children and Families
or Community-Based Care Lead Agency, at _____ to verify information contained
in this form or for additional information.

Signature of Community-Based Care Lead Agency representative

Date Signed

1 Please note: If you are receiving this form when leaving the custody of DCF, but are not ready to use the exemption at this time,
you will need to read Section 1009.25(1)(c), F.S., to ensure that the statute still provides the tuition and fee exemption for former
foster youth in the category in which you qualify. Florida laws may change from year to year.