

Postsecondary Education Services and Supports (PESS)

Independent Living Services Advisory Council

Purpose

- * To provide an understanding of Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) including relevant Florida Administrative Code and Statute.
- * To provide an understanding of how services are implemented
- * To provide an understanding of Due Process
- * FSFN Data Entry

Florida Statute 409.1451 (2)

- * 2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—(a) A young adult is eligible for services and support under this subsection if he or she:
 1. Was living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday or is currently living in licensed care; or was at least 16 years of age and was adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption;
 2. Spent at least 6 months in licensed care before reaching his or her 18th birthday;
 3. Earned a standard high school diploma pursuant to s. [1002.3105\(5\)](#), s. [1003.4281](#), or s. [1003.4282](#), or its equivalent pursuant to s. [1003.435](#);
 4. Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time student or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational institution as provided in s. [1009.533](#). For purposes of this section, the term “full-time” means 9 credit hours or the vocational school equivalent. A student may enroll part-time if he or she has a recognized disability or is faced with another challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time attendance. A student needing to enroll part-time for any reason other than having a recognized disability must get approval from his or her academic advisor;
 5. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age;
 6. Has applied, with assistance from the young adult’s caregiver and the community-based lead agency, for any other grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify;
 7. Submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid which is complete and error free; and
 8. Signed an agreement to allow the department and the community-based care lead agency access to school records.

Florida Statute 409.1451 (2) cont.

- * (b) The amount of the financial assistance shall be as follows:
 1. For a young adult who does not remain in foster care and is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), the amount is \$1,256 monthly.
 2. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is attending a postsecondary school, as provided in s. [1009.533](#), and continues to reside in a licensed foster home, the amount is the established room and board rate for foster parents. This takes the place of the payment provided for in s. [409.145\(4\)](#).
 3. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but temporarily resides away from a licensed foster home for purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), the amount is \$1,256 monthly. This takes the place of the payment provided for in s. [409.145\(4\)](#).
 4. For a young adult who remains in foster care, is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), and continues to reside in a licensed group home, the amount is negotiated between the community-based care lead agency and the licensed group home provider.
 5. For a young adult who remains in foster care, but temporarily resides away from a licensed group home for purposes of attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), the amount is \$1,256 monthly. This takes the place of a negotiated room and board rate.
 6. The amount of the award may be disregarded for purposes of determining the eligibility for, or the amount of, any other federal or federally supported assistance.
 7. A young adult is eligible to receive financial assistance during the months when enrolled in a postsecondary educational institution.

Florida Statute 409.1451 (2) cont.

- * (6) The Aftercare Services Plan shall:
 - * (a) Include the amount of temporary financial assistance being provided and the specific reason(s) for the assistance; and,
 - * (b) Include the specific activities the young adult will complete in order to achieve self-sufficiency or transition into extended foster care or PESS.
- * (7) In assessing the young adult's needs, designated staff may consider such details as eviction notices, utility terminations, and moving expenses.
- * (8) The designated staff shall re-assess the Aftercare Services Plan every three (3) months for as long as services are provided. The community-based care lead agency may discontinue Aftercare Services if the young adult has not made efforts to complete the activities outlined in his or her Aftercare Services Plan.
- * (9) Processing Application for Aftercare Services.
 - * (a) Designated staff shall have 10 business days from the date of submission to review the application and approve or deny the award.
 - * (b) If the application is denied, designated staff shall notify the young adult within 10 business days of submitting the application. Designated staff shall also provide the young adult with information detailing the procedure for appeal and the brochure "Due Process Rights," CF/PI 175-74, which is incorporated by reference in subparagraph 65C-42.002(3)(f)3., F.A.C. Designated staff shall notify the young adult of other available services, including Extended Foster Care, funding through PESS or Education and Training Vouchers, and services that are locally available.

Florida Statute 409.1451 (2) cont.

- * (c) Payment of financial assistance for a young adult who:
 1. Has chosen not to remain in foster care and is attending a postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), shall be made to the community-based care lead agency in order to secure housing and utilities, with the balance being paid directly to the young adult until such time the lead agency and the young adult determine that the young adult can successfully manage the full amount of the assistance.
 2. Has remained in foster care under s. [39.6251](#) and who is attending postsecondary school as provided in s. [1009.533](#), shall be made directly to the foster parent or group home provider.
 3. Community-based care lead agencies or other contracted providers are prohibited from charging a fee associated with administering the Road-to-Independence payments.

Florida Statute 409.1451 (2) cont.

- * (d)1. The department must advertise the availability of the stipend and must provide notification of the criteria and application procedures for the stipend to children and young adults leaving, or who were formerly in, foster care; caregivers; case managers; guidance and family services counselors; principals or other relevant school administrators; and guardians ad litem.
- * 2. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible institution to another and continues to meet eligibility requirements, the award shall be transferred with the recipient.
- * 3. The department, or an agency under contract with the department, shall evaluate each Road-to-Independence award for renewal eligibility on an annual basis. In order to be eligible for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult must:
 - a. Be enrolled for or have completed the number of hours, or the equivalent, to be considered a full-time student under subparagraph (a)4., unless the young adult qualifies for an exception under subparagraph (a)4.
 - b. Maintain standards of academic progress as defined by the education institution, except that if the young adult's progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during the eligibility period, the young adult may continue to be enrolled for additional terms while attempting to restore eligibility as long as progress towards the required level is maintained.
- * 4. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department, or an agency under contract with the department, determines that the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational institution as described in subparagraph (a)4. or is no longer a resident of this state.
- * 5. The department, or an agency under contract with the department, shall notify a recipient who is terminated and inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.
- * 6. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal award or who chooses not to renew the award may apply for reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must be made before the young adult reaches 23 years of age. In order to be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the program.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATION CODE 65C-42.002

- * **65C-42.002 Postsecondary Education Services and Support.**

- * (1) Application for Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS). Each young adult who wishes to receive a PESS stipend shall complete and sign an application for this program.
- * (2) If it is determined that the young adult is not eligible for PESS, designated staff shall determine whether the young adult is eligible for Education and Training Voucher (ETV) financial assistance utilizing the Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Initial, Renewal and Reinstatement Application, CF-FSP 5382, incorporated in subsection (3) of this rule.
- * (3) Initial Application Process for PESS Stipend. Designated staff shall provide the young adult with the “Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Initial, Renewal and Reinstatement Application,” CF-FSP 5382, March 2018, which is hereby incorporated by reference and available at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-09401>. A community-based care lead agency may add its logo to form CF-FSP 5382.
- * (a) Designated staff shall assist the young adult in completing the application or meeting eligibility requirements.
- * (b) All young adults with diagnosed disabilities or mental health needs shall be provided with an equal opportunity to participate in the PESS program. A young adult with a diagnosed disability or mental health need may need additional support; therefore, the designated staff shall work in consultation with all of the young adult’s service providers, guardian ad litem, and attorney, if applicable.
- * (c) The young adult must obtain and provide documentation of the following:
 - * 1. A high school diploma or its equivalent, in accordance with section 409.1451(2)(a)3., F.S.,
 - * 2. Admittance for enrollment as a full-time student or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational institution or as a part-time student if he or she has a recognized disability or other challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time attendance; and,
 - * 3. A complete and error-free submission of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and application to any grants or scholarships suggested by the post-secondary institution based on the FAFSA submission.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATION CODE 65C-42.002 CONT.

- * (d) Designated staff shall verify the following:
 - * 1. The young adult was living in licensed foster care on his or her 18th birthday or is currently living in foster care; or was at least 16 years of age when adopted from foster care or placed with a court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least six (6) months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately preceding such placement or adoption. A young adult is considered to have been living in licensed care on the date of his or her 18th birthday if the young adult was in the legal custody of the Department on the date of his or her 18th birthday,
 - * 2. The young adult spent at least six (6) months in licensed care before reaching his or her 18th birthday,
 - * 3. The young adult has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 23 years of age; and,
 - * 4. The young adult signed an agreement to allow the Department and the community-based care lead agency access to school records.
- * (e) If the young adult is requesting assistance in choosing and/or enrolling in an eligible post-secondary educational institution, information about aftercare services and an “Application for Aftercare Services,” CF-FSP 5391, August 2014, which is hereby incorporated by reference, and available at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-05834>, shall also be provided. A community-based care lead agency may add its logo to form CF-FSP 5391. Aftercare Services in accordance with section 409.1451(3), F.S., may be utilized temporarily to assist the young adult in working toward qualifying for PESS.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATION CODE 65C-42.002 CONT.

- * (f) The young adult must be notified within 10 business days from the date of submission of the application whether the application was approved or denied, or whether additional information, including supporting documentation, is needed.
- * 1. If additional information is needed, the young adult shall have 10 business days from notification to submit the information. Designated staff shall offer to assist the young adult in obtaining the additional information.
- * 2. If the application is denied, designated staff shall notify the young adult of other available services in which he or she may be eligible for, such as Extended Foster Care, funding through ETV, Aftercare Services, and services that are locally available.
- * 3. If the application is denied, designated staff shall also provide the young adult with information detailing the procedure for appeal and the brochure “Due Process Rights,” CF/PI 175-74, August 2014, incorporated by reference and available at <http://www.flrules.org/Gateway/reference.asp?No=Ref-05830>. A community-based care lead agency may add its logo to form CF-FSP 5391.
- * (g) The young adult’s eligibility for or ability to obtain other funding for postsecondary education shall not be considered when determining eligibility for PESS.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATION CODE 65C-42.002 CONT.

- * (4) Renewal Application Process. Designated staff shall offer to assist the young adult in completing an updated “Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) and Education and Training Voucher (ETV) Initial, Renewal and Reinstatement Application,” CF-FSP 5382, incorporated in subsection (3) of this rule. The young adult must obtain and provide documentation of continuing to meet all renewal eligibility requirements. The annual renewal period is based on the initial date of enrollment into PESS.
- * (a) Designated staff shall ask each young adult who is receiving PESS if he or she wishes to apply to renew the award during the 90-day period before the end of the annual award period, and no later than 30 calendar days before the end of the annual award period.
- * (b) Designated staff shall process the application and shall notify the young adult of the approval or denial, as required by subsection 65C-42.002(3), F.A.C.
- * (5) Reinstatement of PESS. The reinstatement process shall be the same as for an initial application pursuant to subsection 65C-42.002(3), F.A.C. The young adult must meet initial and renewal eligibility requirements for reinstatement of PESS.
- * (6) The young adult is eligible for financial assistance under PESS during the summer months if he or she is enrolled in the eligible postsecondary educational institution, as determined by the postsecondary institution.

FLORIDA ADMINISTRATION CODE 65C-42.002 CONT.

- * (7) Termination of PESS. Upon termination of PESS, the Department or contracted agency shall notify the young adult of his or her right to request a fair hearing, pursuant to rule 65C-42.004, F.A.C.
- * (8) A young adult will be terminated from PESS if he or she becomes incarcerated for a period longer than 30 days.
- * (9) Documentation requirements. For each young adult receiving a PESS or ETV stipend, the Department or its contracted service provider shall maintain an active case file in Florida Safe Families Network (FSFN). FSFN is the system of record and must contain:
 - * (a) Documentation of the young adult's current demographic information, including name, address, date of birth, social security number, and the name of the school he or she is attending;
 - * (b) A copy of the young adult's complete application signed by the young adult and approval authority;
 - * (c) Eligibility determination in the Independent Living module;
 - * (d) All supporting documentation required for eligibility; and
 - * (e) Description of the types of services and support provided to the young adult.
- * (10) Portability. The services provided under this rule are portable across county lines and between lead agencies. The service needs that are identified when a young adult applies for PESS shall be provided by the lead agency where the young adult is currently residing but shall be funded by the lead agency that approved the application.
- * *Rulemaking Authority 409.1451(10) FS. Law Implemented 409.1451 FS. History–New 10-4-15, Amended 5-28-18.*

PESS Benefits

- * The young adult will gain skills, education and support to become self sufficient and have lifelong connections to supportive adults.
- * The program provides the young adult monthly financial assistance while attending a Florida Bright Futures postsecondary educational institution.
- * The monthly payment is determined by the minimal wage amount and is currently \$1256.00.
- * The monthly payment is to secure housing and utilities with the balance going directly to the young adult.

PESS Services

- * Once a young adult has been accepted into the PESS program, they are assigned a case worker.
- * The case worker and young adult maintain at least monthly contact.
- * The case worker assist the young adult with setting education and career goals informally or formally through a service plan.
- * The case worker monitors the progress the young adult is making in school.
- * The case worker assists the young adult with any barriers he/she are facing in school.
- * The case worker assists the young adult with the renewal process annually.

FSFN Data Entry

- * The PESS application is documented in FSFN on the independent living tab on the last tab “Ages 18-23”.
- * All supporting documents can be uploaded under the PESS section.
- * All contact and service delivery notes are documented on the narrative tab.