

SECTION 25. THE ACT IS AMENDED BY ADDING ARTICLES TO READ:

ARTICLE XXVI-J

(RESERVED)

ARTICLE XXVI-K

FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EDUCATION

SECTION 2601-K. DEFINITIONS.

THE FOLLOWING WORDS AND PHRASES WHEN USED IN THIS ARTICLE SHALL HAVE THE MEANINGS GIVEN TO THEM IN THIS SECTION UNLESS THE CONTEXT CLEARLY INDICATES OTHERWISE:

"ADOPTION." ADOPTION OF AN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BEEN IN THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF A COUNTY AGENCY AND IN SUBSTITUTE CARE.

"AGENCY." THE PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY.

"COUNTY AGENCY." THE TERM AS DEFINED UNDER 23 PA.C.S. § 6303 (RELATING TO DEFINITIONS).

"DEPARTMENT." THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

"DEPENDENT CHILD." THE TERM AS DEFINED UNDER 42 PA.C.S. § 6302 (RELATING TO DEFINITIONS).

"FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER." A WAIVER OF TUITION AND MANDATORY FEES AT AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

"INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION." THE TERM INCLUDES ANY OF THE FOLLOWING:

(1) A COMMUNITY COLLEGE OPERATING UNDER ARTICLE XIX-A.

(2) A UNIVERSITY WITHIN THE STATE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

(3) THE PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH, TEMPLE UNIVERSITY, LINCOLN UNIVERSITY OR ANY

OTHER INSTITUTION DESIGNATED AS STATE-RELATED BY THE
COMMONWEALTH.

(4) THE THADDEUS STEVENS COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY.

(5) A COLLEGE ESTABLISHED UNDER ARTICLE XIX-G.

(6) AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION LOCATED IN AND
INCORPORATED OR CHARTERED BY THE COMMONWEALTH AND ENTITLED TO
CONFER DEGREES AS PROVIDED UNDER 24 PA.C.S. § 6505 (RELATING
TO POWER TO CONFER DEGREES) AND AS PROVIDED FOR BY THE
STANDARDS AND QUALIFICATIONS PRESCRIBED BY THE STATE BOARD OF
EDUCATION UNDER 24 PA.C.S. CH. 65 (RELATING TO PRIVATE
COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES AND SEMINARIES).

(7) A PRIVATE SCHOOL LICENSED UNDER THE ACT OF DECEMBER
15, 1986 (P.L.1585, NO.174), KNOWN AS THE PRIVATE LICENSED
SCHOOLS ACT.

(8) A FOREIGN CORPORATION APPROVED TO OPERATE AN
EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISE UNDER 22 PA. CODE CH. 36 (RELATING TO
FOREIGN CORPORATION STANDARDS).

"PERMANENT LEGAL CUSTODIAN." A PERSON TO WHOM LEGAL CUSTODY
OF A CHILD HAS BEEN GIVEN BY ORDER OF A COURT PURSUANT TO 42
PA.C.S. § 6351(A)(2.1) (RELATING TO DISPOSITION OF DEPENDENT
CHILD).

"POC." THE POINT OF CONTACT DESIGNATED IN SECTION 2604-K.

"PROGRAM." THE FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER PROGRAM
ESTABLISHED IN SECTION 2602-K.

"SUBSTITUTE CARE." OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT IN A SETTING THAT
PROVIDES 24-HOUR CARE FOR A DEPENDENT CHILD AS DEFINED IN 42
PA.C.S. § 6302 MADE PURSUANT TO AN ORDER OF THE COURT.
SECTION 2602-K. FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER PROGRAM.

(A) ESTABLISHMENT.--THERE IS ESTABLISHED A FOSTERING

INDEPENDENCE WAIVER PROGRAM FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO SATISFY THE
ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS UNDER SUBSECTION (C) .

(B) AWARD.--BEGINNING WITH THE SEMESTER STARTING IN THE FALL
OF 2020, EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL AWARD A
FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER FOR UNDERGRADUATE COURSES AT THE
INSTITUTION FOR EACH INDIVIDUAL WHO IS ELIGIBLE UNDER SUBSECTION
(C) . THE FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER SHALL HAVE SUBTRACTED
FROM IT THE AMOUNT OF ANY FEDERAL GRANTS, STATE GRANTS OR OTHER
SCHOLARSHIPS OR GRANTS THE INDIVIDUAL RECEIVES. AN INDIVIDUAL
SHALL RECEIVE A FOSTERING INDEPENDENCE WAIVER UNDER THIS ARTICLE
FOR FIVE YEARS, WHETHER OR NOT CONSECUTIVE, OR UNTIL THE
INDIVIDUAL REACHES 26 YEARS OF AGE, WHICHEVER OCCURS FIRST,
PROVIDED THAT THE INDIVIDUAL REMAINS ELIGIBLE UNDER SUBSECTION
(C) .

(C) ELIGIBILITY.--IN ORDER TO RECEIVE A FOSTERING
INDEPENDENCE WAIVER UNDER THIS SECTION, AN INDIVIDUAL MUST BE A
CURRENT RESIDENT OF THIS COMMONWEALTH AND ELIGIBLE FOR THE
PENNSYLVANIA CHAFEE EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRANT PROGRAM UNDER
THE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 (PUBLIC LAW 106-169,
113 STAT. 1882) AS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES.

(D) ACCESSIBILITY.--THE DEPARTMENT SHALL WORK WITH THE
AGENCY AS WELL AS THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ENSURE THAT INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE
FOR THE PROGRAM UNDER SUBSECTION (C) APPLY FOR ALL AVAILABLE
FEDERAL AND STATE GRANTS.

SECTION 2603-K. OUTREACH.

(A) DUTIES OF DEPARTMENT.--THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONJUNCTION
WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, SHALL DO ALL OF THE

FOLLOWING:

(1) BY JANUARY 1, 2020, AND JANUARY 1 EACH YEAR
THEREAFTER, PREPARE AND PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR DISSEMINATION
BY COUNTY AGENCIES, THE DEPARTMENT, THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES AND INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION THAT:

(I) DESCRIBES THE AVAILABILITY OF THE PROGRAM
ESTABLISHED UNDER THIS ARTICLE.

(II) EXPLAINS HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM.

(III) INCLUDES INFORMATION ON ALL AVAILABLE FEDERAL
AND STATE GRANTS.

(2) ENSURE THAT ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS WHO MAY ALSO BE
ELIGIBLE FOR SERVICES AND PROGRAMS UNDER SECTION 1738-E OF
THE ACT OF APRIL 9, 1929 (P.L.343, NO.176), KNOWN AS THE
FISCAL CODE, ARE INFORMED OF THESE SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.

(B) DUTIES OF INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION.--EACH
INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL DO ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

(1) THROUGH THE POC REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 2604-K,
PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE
UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) IN COMPLETING ADMISSIONS APPLICATIONS
AND FINANCIAL AID APPLICATIONS.

(2) DISSEMINATE THE INFORMATION PREPARED UNDER
SUBSECTION (A) (1) TO RECIPIENTS OF A PENNSYLVANIA CHAFEE
EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRANT UNDER THE FOSTER CARE
INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 (PUBLIC LAW 106-169, 113 STAT. 1882)
WHO ARE INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) AND POST
THE INFORMATION PREPARED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) (1) ON THE
INSTITUTION'S PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE.

(3) TO IMPROVE RETENTION, REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT BY
JUNE 30, 2021, AND JUNE 30 EACH YEAR THEREAFTER ALL OF THE

FOLLOWING:

(I) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A PENNSYLVANIA CHAFEE EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRANT UNDER THE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 (PUBLIC LAW 106-169, 113 STAT. 1882) .

(II) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM.

(III) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

(IV) THE RETENTION RATES OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

(V) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM AND HAVE UNMET FINANCIAL NEED.

(VI) RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO STUDENTS WHO ARE OR ARE POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM.

(VII) RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS IN WHICH TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) .

(VIII) IMPEDIMENTS TO RETAINING STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) .

(4) THE DEPARTMENT MAY NOT REQUIRE ANY OTHER INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED BY AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, EXCEPT AS PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (3) .

SECTION 2604-K. POINT OF CONTACT.

EACH INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION SHALL DESIGNATE AN APPROPRIATE STAFF PERSON OR PERSONS AS THE POINT OF CONTACT FOR STUDENTS ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) FOR THE PROGRAM. THE POC MAY BE COMPRISED OF ONE OR MORE QUALIFIED STAFF MEMBERS TO

PROVIDE THE APPROPRIATE SUPPORT OR EXPERTISE REQUIRED FOR THE DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THIS SECTION. THE POC SHALL HAVE OR ENSURE THE DELEGATION OF THE FOLLOWING DUTIES:

(1) ASSISTING STUDENTS IN OBTAINING VERIFICATION OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE PROGRAM FROM THE COURTS, THE COUNTY AGENCY OR THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES.

(2) ASSISTING INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) IN ACCESSING AVAILABLE FEDERAL AND STATE FINANCIAL AID RESOURCES AND IN IDENTIFYING FURTHER SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT OPPORTUNITIES, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE INSTITUTION'S FINANCIAL AID DEPARTMENT.

(3) SERVING AS THE PRIMARY CONTACT FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS APPLYING TO OR ATTENDING THE INSTITUTION WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C).

(4) PROVIDING ALL INDIVIDUALS APPLYING TO OR ATTENDING THE INSTITUTION WHO VOLUNTARILY DISCLOSE THAT THEY ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRALS FOR ON-CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES AND RESOURCES, INCLUDING ADMISSIONS, HOUSING, FINANCIAL AID, HEALTH, MENTAL HEALTH, TUTORING, CAREER, ACADEMIC ADVISING AND OTHER SERVICES.

(5) PROVIDING ALL INDIVIDUALS APPLYING TO OR ATTENDING THE INSTITUTION WHO ARE ELIGIBLE UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) WITH INFORMATION AND REFERRALS AS AVAILABLE FOR OFF-CAMPUS SUPPORT SERVICES, INCLUDING TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND MEDICAL INSURANCE AND SERVICES.

(6) POSTING POC CONTACT INFORMATION ON THE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE OF THE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

SECTION 2605-K. REPORT.

IN ORDER TO DETERMINE AND MAXIMIZE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS ARTICLE, THE DEPARTMENT, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES, SHALL COLLECT INFORMATION PROVIDED FROM INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION UNDER SECTION 2603-K(B) (3) AND PREPARE AN ANONYMIZED REPORT TO BE SUBMITTED BY AUGUST 31, 2021, AND BY AUGUST 31 OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, TO THE CHAIR AND MINORITY CHAIR OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE, THE CHAIR AND MINORITY CHAIR OF THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, THE CHAIR AND MINORITY CHAIR OF THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE SENATE AND THE CHAIR AND MINORITY CHAIR OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUTH COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT CONTAINS ALL OF THE FOLLOWING:

(1) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING A PENNSYLVANIA CHAFEE EDUCATION AND TRAINING GRANT UNDER THE FOSTER CARE INDEPENDENCE ACT OF 1999 (PUBLIC LAW 106-169, 113 STAT. 1882).

(2) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO APPLY FOR THE PROGRAM.

(3) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

(4) THE RETENTION RATES OF STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

(5) THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM AND HAVE UNMET FINANCIAL NEEDS.

(6) RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO IMPROVE OUTREACH TO STUDENTS WHO ARE OR ARE POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM.

(7) RECOMMENDATIONS ON WAYS IN WHICH TO IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR THE PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C) AND TO ADDRESS THE IMPEDIMENTS IDENTIFIED UNDER PARAGRAPH (8).

(8) IMPEDIMENTS TO RETAINING STUDENTS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE
UNDER SECTION 2602-K(C).