



Montana University System

Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education

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Montana Foster Youth Higher Education Assistance Program (MFYHEAP)

September, 2024

MFYHEAP Program Overview:

- With passage of HB 482, and funding appropriation, during the 2023 Legislative Session, the Board of Regents through the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) was charged with administering a Montana Foster Youth Higher Education Assistance program with the overall purpose of helping youth who have aged out of the foster care system (Chafee Program) meet their educational, vocational, and professional goals without accruing debt.
- The OCHE office works to identify students who are enrolled in the Chafee Program and have applied to, or are enrolled at one of the MUS institutions, Community Colleges, Tribal Colleges, or publicly funded vocational training programs. Once identified, OCHE sends the institution(s) a list of eligible students along with an invitation to apply for grant funding. To receive grant funds, campuses must develop a program that serves Chafee-eligible students who meet all eligibility criteria when they age out of foster care. In addition, campuses must provide support services as described in the bill to each participant. The program provides last-dollar scholarship awards to students, not to exceed 50% of the cost of attendance, each fall and spring semester the student is eligible.
- Grant applications are then submitted by participating schools. OCHE reviews and confirms the amount of eligible funding for students, both new and currently enrolled, in accordance with bill language/provisions. OCHE works to process payment to the school, who then applies the funds to the student's account. Additional funding requests may be submitted throughout the year as estimates become actuals and/or new students are approved for funding.

Student Eligibility Criteria Includes:

- Be a resident of Montana (per Policy 940.1);
- Be enrolled full-time and taking courses that lead to an associate or bachelor's degree offered by the institution or a vocational or entry-level professional credential or certification offered by the institution;
- Have graduated from high school or received a secondary education equivalency certificate;
- Have completed and submitted a FAFSA for the current academic year, and has accepted all federal and state grants available;
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP);
- Maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 2.0;
- Work a minimum of 10 hours per week from the second semester onward; and
- Accept support services, including tutoring and life skills classes, offered by the institution.

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Campus Support Services:

- Campuses must provide the following services to eligible students:
 - Access to on-campus, year-round room and board, including meals plans (if available); and
 - Support services including but not limited to; help with admission and enrollment, assistance completing financial aid paperwork and scholarship applications, life skills training, academic tutoring, job search and career assistance, and a community family or mentor for the purpose of creating a family-like and nurturing connection in the community

Additional Details:

- Students may have gaps in enrollment. OCHE will provide a list of students each year after confirming Chafee program eligibility.
- No funding will be provided during summer semesters
- Students can only receive funds before turning age 26. A student cannot receive funds if they turn 26 in that semester. This is something Chafee tracks and will notify OCHE of
- If the funds appropriated are insufficient, then financial assistance to students is awarded on a first-come first-served basis.
- If funded by OCHE, it is the responsibility of the participating campus to alert the student(s) of their award, funding amount, and requirements for continued eligibility.

Funding Allocated to Program:

FY 24 Allocated: \$56,132

FY 24 Spent: \$37,282.60

FY 25 Allocated: \$115,631

FY 25 Spent: TBD, grant applications are still being processed. Current awarded amount \$29,193.00

Students Supported to Date:

FY 24 Students Supported: 5 total

FY 25 Current Supported Students: 3

Number of participating campuses:

FY 24: 2, MSU & DCC

FY 25: Current participating campuses: 1 (MSU)