

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor




Erwin McEwen
Director

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

INFORMATION TRANSMITTAL

Distribution: X and Z

DATE: January 7, 2009
TO: Rules and Procedures Bookholders and Permanency Staff
FROM: Erwin McEwen 
SUBJECT: 2009 Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program

LAST DATE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED: MARCH 31, 2009
ANNOUNCEMENT OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS: MAY 15, 2009

The purpose of this information transmittal is to announce that the Department is accepting applications for the 2009 Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program.

The DCFS Scholarship Program provides a maximum of 48 scholarships each year, four of which are awarded to children of veterans, to youth the Department has court-ordered legal responsibility for, or youth that the Department had legal responsibility for prior to the youth's adoption being finalized, or youth that are in the Subsidized Guardianship Program. Scholarship recipients receive up to four consecutive years of tuition and academic fee waivers to be used at participating Illinois state community colleges and universities, a monthly stipend and a medical card. Youth that graduated from high school in previous years or youth that are currently enrolled in college are eligible to apply for the Department scholarship.

BENEFITS

Scholarship recipients will receive a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees if they attend an Illinois state community college or any of the following Illinois state universities and if the student does not have a tuition and fee scholarship from another source.

Chicago State University
Western Illinois University
University of Illinois

Eastern Illinois University
Illinois State University
Southern Illinois University

Governors State University
Northeastern Illinois University
Northern Illinois University

Note: Tuition and fee waivers are provided only to scholarship recipients that attend an Illinois state community college or university. Scholarship recipients that attend private Illinois or out-of-state colleges or universities do not receive tuition and fee waivers.



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All scholarship recipients receive a monthly grant of \$471 regardless of whether they attend an Illinois state community college or university. The grant is effective the first day of school and will terminate at the end of the academic year unless the recipient attends summer school and maintains an academic load of six credit hours or participates in a college or university approved summer internship program. Youth that choose not to attend summer school or participate in an approved internship program will continue to receive their grant payments through the summer months if the Department has guardianship of the youth or the Department's guardianship of the youth was terminated at age 21 after the youth entered the scholarship program, are registered to attend a post-secondary program for the upcoming fall semester, and the youth is in compliance with all other requirements of the scholarship program.

Scholarships DO NOT cover room, board, dormitory fees, other non-academic fees or college/university fines. Students are **STRONGLY** encouraged to use their monthly grant in combination with other scholarships, grants, benefits or loans to pay these expenses. Information concerning any of the following sources of educational funding may be obtained from high school counselors or college/university financial aid officers.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Pell or MAP Grants | Illinois State Scholarship Commission Grants |
| Student loans | National Defense Student Loans |
| Basic Education Grant | Social Security |
| Supplemental Education Grant | Veteran's Benefits |
| Work Study | |

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Department scholarship applicants must:

- Be at least 16 years of age and under 21 years of age on the scholarship application deadline date of March 31, 2009.
- Possess a diploma from an accredited high school or an accredited General Equivalency Diploma (GED) program by the end of the current school year.
- The Department must have court-ordered legal guardianship for the applicant or the Department must have had legal guardianship for the applicant prior to the adoption being finalized, or the applicant must be in the Subsidized Guardianship Program.

APPLICATION

Scholarship applicants are required to submit their applications to the Office of Education and Transition Services (OETS) **no later than March 31, 2009**. Applications postmarked after that date will not be eligible for consideration. Incomplete applications will be ineligible for consideration. Applications submitted by facsimile will be ineligible for consideration.

It is mandatory that scholarship applications contain the following documents:

- A completed **CFS-438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**;
- The applicant's transcript of high school grades or copy of GED;
- The applicant's ACT or SAT test scores;
- College transcript (if attending college); and
- Three letters of recommendation from persons unrelated to the applicant.

Note: Documentation of the applicant's legal relationship with the Department must be attached to the application to expedite confirmation of this eligibility requirement.

The **CFS-438, DCFS Scholarship Program Student Application**, may be obtained from:

- Any Department Regional office;
- The Department website at www.state.il.us/dcf (Click on “forms” at the left side of the screen);
- The Department Intranet site (Click on resource link, download and then CFS forms); or
- Telephone 217 557-2689 (Springfield) or 312 814-5959 (Chicago)

Send completed scholarship applications to: Office of Education and Transition Services
Attn: YIS Program
Department of Children and Family Services
406 E Monroe, Station #22
Springfield, IL 62701

SELECTION OF SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Applicants that do not meet the eligibility criteria for the scholarship program or do not meet the application deadline will not be considered. Scholarship recipients will be selected on the basis of their scholastic record and aptitude, community and extracurricular activities and interests in higher education. The Scholarship Awards Selection Committee will meet in April to select the scholarship recipients for the year 2009. Applicants will be notified by mail of the committee’s decisions by May 15, 2009.

2009 Scholarship Awards Selection Committee

Deputy Director, Division of Field Operations
Deputy Director, Division of Placement/Permanency
Deputy Director, Division of Service Intervention
Deputy Director, Division of Child Protection
Deputy Director, Division of Clinical and Professional Development
Deputy Director, Division of Communications
Deputy Director, Division of Guardianship and Advocacy
Deputy Director, Division of Budget and Finance
Deputy Director, Division of Monitoring/Quality Assurance
Representative, DCFS Legal
Six Department Regional Administrators
Director’s Office Representative
Chairperson, Child Welfare Advisory Committee
Department Legislative Liaison
Chairperson, Child Care Association of Illinois
Chairperson, Illinois Foster Parent Association
Chairperson, Statewide Foster Care Advisory Council
President, Council on Adoptable Children
Representative, Walter & Connie Payton Foundation

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS FOR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Permanency workers for scholarship recipients shall establish a living arrangement plan with their scholarship students prior to the beginning of the school year. Scholarship recipients may not live in a Department funded placement while receiving monthly grant payments under the Scholarship Program. However, Department funded placements may be available to the youth under DCFS guardianship during extended academic breaks and summers. Youth also have the option of remaining in their current paid placement and not receive the monthly Scholarship grant payments. Youth in DCFS care may also participate in the Employment Incentive Program or be involved with an internship program during the summer.

QUESTIONS

Questions concerning the Department of Children and Family Services Scholarship Program may be directed to either of the following OETS offices.

Springfield 217-557-2689
Chicago 312-814-5959

Please share the attached scholarship program information sheet with all potential scholarship applicants.

Rod R. Blagojevich
Governor



Erwin McEwen
Director

Illinois Department of Children & Family Services

DATE:

TO: Scholarship Applicants

FROM: DCFS Office of Education and Transition Services

SUBJECT: 2009 DCFS Scholarship Application Process

Thank you for your interest in the annual Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) Scholarship Program. Enclosed you will find the materials you need to apply for this merit-based scholarship. Please note that even if you are currently enrolled in college we still need a copy of your high school transcript as well as verification of your ACT/SAT scores. We encourage you to also include your college transcripts if applicable.

Every year DCFS awards 48 scholarships that include a full tuition waiver to any of the state-supported public schools in Illinois. Last year there were 260 applicants. For that reason, we strongly urge you to look into other forms of financial assistance for college. If you have not already completed the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA), you should do so as soon as possible. It is through that application process that you are able to get grant assistance, such as the Illinois MAP grant or the federal Pell grant. You are also encouraged to explore websites, such as www.collegezone.com or www.orphan.org where you may find other scholarship or grant programs that you can apply for.

We would also like to offer just a couple of helpful hints as you complete your scholarship application packet:

1. Be sure to proofread your essay. There are some things that “spellcheck” just will not catch, so be sure to proofread it yourself, as well as asking someone else to do the same.
2. Your three letters of reference should come from individuals who know you well and can address your accomplishments as well as your potential for success.
3. Your complete application packet must be returned to our office by 5:00 pm on March 31, 2009. The packet should include the application (completely filled out), your essay, high school transcript, college transcript (if applicable), office verification of your ACT or SAT scores, three letters of recommendation, and verification of your relationship with the Department of Children and Family Services. If any of these items are missing, your application will be returned to you.

Good luck!

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