West Virginia Department of 

 **Bureau for Social Services**

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| **Announcement of Funding Availability (AFA)** |
| **Administration of the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program** |



***Proposal Guidance and Instructions***

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| **AFA Title: Administration of the Chafee Education and Training Voucher Program** |
| **Targeting Regions: Statewide** |
| **AFA Number: BSS-ETV-FY2024** |

**West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources**

**Bureau for Social Services**

***For Technical Assistance please include the AFA # in the***

***Subject line and forward all inquiries to:***

*dhhrbssgrants@wv.gov*

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| **Key Dates** |
| **Date of Release:** | **05/22/2023** |
| **Technical Assistance:** | **05/31/2023** |
| **Application Deadline:** | **06/16/2023** |
| **Funding Announcement(s) To Be Made:** | **06/30/2023** |

* Responses must be submitted using the required Proposal Template available at <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/grantforms/Pages/Grants-Notice-of-Funding-Availability-3.aspx>
* Responses must be submitted electronically via email to *dhhrbssgrants@wv.gov* with “Proposal for Funding” and the corresponding AFA number in the subject line. Paper copies of the proposal will not be accepted. Notification that the proposal was received will follow via email from the Announcement mailbox.
* A Statement of Assurance agreeing to these terms is required of all proposal submissions available at <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/grantforms/Pages/Grants-Notice-of-Funding-Availability-3.aspx> This statement must be signed by the agency’s CEO, CFO, and Project Officer and attached to the Proposal Template.
* To request additional Technical Assistance, forward all inquiries via email to *dhhrbssgrants@wv.gov*and include “Proposal Technical Assistance” in the subject line. Proposal related questions should be submitted by 05/31/2023 to guarantee a response in advance of the application deadline.

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# I. Introduction

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (Department), Bureau for Social Services (BSS) is soliciting applications from legal entities interested in developing and supervising the Education and Training Voucher Program throughout the state.

The goals of this initiative, as well as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families (ACF), include aid to current and former foster care youth to achieve self-sufficiency; provide activities and programs to complete post-secondary education programs; provide opportunities for connections to caring adults.

Applicants interested in applying for this initiative are limited to legal entities in both public and private sectors who have experience working with current and former foster care youth, universities or colleges, and federal financial aid.

# II. Background

The John H. Chafee Education and Training Vouchers Program (ETV) for Youths Aging out of Foster Care was added to the Chafee Foster Care to Independence Program in 2002. The ETV program provides resources specifically to meet the education and training needs of youth aging out of foster care. The education and training voucher program makes available vouchers of up to $5,000 per year, per youth for post-secondary education and training for eligible youth.

During the Federal fiscal year 2021, West Virginia reported that approximately 153 young adults exited/emancipated from foster care (AFCARS 202103 & 202109). Data on youth who have utilized ETV for post-secondary education indicates between 200 and 280 youth annually will be served by the program. As youth graduate or fail to renew their funding, it is anticipated that new students will be added at a rate of 50 to 75 annually.

The chart below demonstrates the history of youth receiving ETV funds through the existing program. The applicant can utilize this information to understand the number of youth who may be served by the ETV program.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Total ETVs Awarded**  |
| Final Number: **2016-2017 School Year** (July 1, 2016, to June 30, 2017) | 265  |
| **2017-2018 School Year\*** (July 1, 2017, to June 30, 2018) | 215  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Final Number: **2019-2020 School Year** (July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020)  | 224  |
| **2020-2021 School Year** (July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2021)  | 279  |

# III. Program Requirements

**A. Target Population**

Former foster care youth who meet the criteria below are eligible to receive educational assistance up to $5,000 per calendar year, for up to five years total or until the youth’s 26 birthday. The money may be used to cover the costs of attending college, or vocational training, including all expenses related to a course of study such as computers, special clothing, shoes or boots, books, housing, transportation, and other related educational expenses. The target population is limited to the following:

* Must be less than age 26.
* Youth adopted from foster care after the age of 16 years
* Youth placed in legal guardianship after the age of 16 years
* Youth who have aged out of foster care or have been emancipated, and
* Has been accepted to a West Virginia public college or university, or a vocational training program that receives federal financial aid (such as the PELL Grant).

Former foster care youth may qualify for ETV as well as meet the requirements for the West Virginia Foster Care Tuition Waiver as defined in WV Code §18B-10-7b, which is provided below. The selected grantee should be familiar with the waiver legislation as it impacts cost of attendance in the total financial aid package of this population.

*The governing boards shall make provision for institutions under their respective jurisdictions to award a tuition and fee waiver for undergraduate courses at state institutions of higher education*

*for any student, beginning with incoming freshmen in the fall, two thousand, semester or term, who graduate from high school or pass the GED examination while in the legal custody of the state Department of Health and Human Resources. The student must be in foster care or other residential care for at least one year prior to the waiver award. If the foster care or other residential care is provided in another state, the student must first be returned to this state for waiver award eligibility. To be eligible for a waiver award, a student must first: (1) Apply to and be accepted at the institution; and (2) apply for other student financial assistance, other than student loans, in compliance with federal financial aid rules, including the federal Pell grant. Waiver renewal is contingent upon the student continuing to meet the academic progress standards established by the institution. The waiver provided by this section for each eligible student may be used for no more than four years of undergraduate study. An initial waiver must be granted within two years of graduation from high school or passing the GED examination. The waiver may only be used after other sources of financial aid that are dedicated solely to tuition and fees are exhausted. Any award under this section is in addition to the number of fee waivers permitted in sections five and six of §18B-10-7b for undergraduate, graduate, and professional schools. No student who is enrolled in an institution of higher education as of the effective date of this section is eligible for a waiver award under the provisions of this section. The governing boards may establish any limitations on the provisions of this section as they consider proper.*

**B. Required Services**

Applicants must have the ability to provide (or subcontract) training to staff to remain accurate and current with West Virginia Foster Care Policy. A thorough understanding of the West Virginia Foster Care and Children’s Bureau, Office of the Administration for Children & Families, Child Welfare Manual (section Independent Living 3.5A) policies that outline which youth are eligible for ETV and the Foster Care Tuition Waiver (West Virginia State Code §18B-10-7b). Tuition waivers for high school graduates in foster care.is necessary to accurately distribute funds to West Virginia public universities, colleges and post-secondary education, or vocational training programs that receive federal financial aid.

The grantee will be required to obtain documentation of the prior foster care status, or the prior adoption or legal guardianship status for the youth to be served. The grantee will work collaboratively with BSS programmatic staff to develop the protocols for the required documentation.

The grantee must have the ability to disburse funds directly to West Virginia public universities, colleges, and post-secondary education or vocational training programs. The grantee will be able to provide data upon request that include the number of ETV payments made, amount of each payment, the institution to whom payment is made, and the student for which each payment is made.

Additionally, the applicant must have the ability to provide (or to subcontract) assistance to complete the annual Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA ®), documentation of Student’s Independent Status as a person who experienced foster care, documentation of graduation from high school or attainment of a General Equivalency Diploma (GED) or Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC) while in foster care, and disburse Chafee Education Voucher funds directly to each student’s financial aid office for the target population.

Applicants must have a plan to utilize FAFSA applications or to develop an application process for students to request ETV.

Applicants will be responsible for review of current students who have received ETV funding and provide each student with a determination of acceptance for continued funding beginning October 1, 2022.

Applicants also must be able to complete the following responsibilities:

* Provide supervision and accountability of staff on policies, programs, and federal and state laws.
* Provide reports to the Department as agreed upon, as necessary, or as requested.
* Collaborate with the Department to develop meaningful outcomes.
* Distribute grant funding appropriately and necessary to programs.
* Continue the provision of funding to existing BSS contracted programs unless they cease to meet program performance standards as determined by state and federal requirements.
* Monitor youth’s academic progress for continued ETV eligibility.
* Annually report the number of awards given in total, the number of new awards given, as well as track the awards distributed to prevent any youth from receiving more than five years of ETV.

**C. Service Delivery Area**

Applicants must have the ability to provide the required services to individuals statewide during regular business hours, except for West Virginia observed holidays.

**D. Time Frames/ Mandatory Start Dates**

Grants will be for the period of July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Selected applicants must begin administration of ETV to existing students,

**E. Organization Experience/ Capability**

Applicants will promote the ETV program in West Virginia through financial aid offices. An awareness of financial aid deadlines, grants and aid administered by the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (Commission) and the outreach activities aimed at FAFSA completion are important for planning and service delivery. Understanding the financial aid process, payment processes, and advocacy methods for the target population are accomplished with:

* Experience or demonstrate the ability to provide financial aid assistance to persons attending West Virginia public universities and colleges.
* Experience or demonstrate the ability to provide financial aid assistance to persons participating in post-secondary education or vocational training programs that receives federal financial aid
* An understanding of the target population.
* Experience or demonstrate the ability to collaborate with West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission’s The Office of Financial Aid and Outreach Services and its members. This collaboration is important for the selected grantee to remain current on financial aid deadlines, grants and aid administered by the Commission.

**F. Staffing Requirements**

Discuss the plan for recruitment and on-going training of direct service workers, and an executive director. Should the applicant utilize subcontractors, administrative staff will be required to monitor subcontractors to ensure the goals are being met, and to provide training support, when necessary, to improve service delivery.

The applicant’s executive director and direct service workers shall have a bachelor’s degree.

**G. Outcomes**

Quarterly and annual reports will be provided to the Department from the applicant. These reports include counts of participants in the applicant’s program.

* Number of participants who are using scholarships, grants, stipends, student loans, or other types of educational financial aid.
* Number of participants who have a high school diploma.
* Number of participants who have a GED or TASC.
* Number of participants who have a vocational certificate or license.
* Number of participants during the reporting period who are currently enrolled in high school or an equivalency program.
* Number of participants during the reporting period currently enrolled in a post-secondary education program.
* Number of participants who graduate from a post-secondary education program.
* Aggregate data for number of ETV payments made, payment amounts, rate of ETV payments by institution, and the number of students accepted for ETV program.

Reports will include information, such as, but not limited to client demographic, services provided and utilized, unmet needs, and an accounting report on the federal and state grant(s) provided through this initiative.

The quarterly and annual reports will determine the success or limitation of the programs and services provided by the applicant.

# IV. Narrative/ Work Plan Requirements

Applicants must demonstrate ability to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations regarding federal financial aid and Chafee Education and Training Vouchers.

Applicants must demonstrate the ability to have access to an electronic management information system to receive and track requests for ETV funding, administer the ETV funds, and collect client data. Client data will include demographics, outcomes as detailed in section III-G, and financial usage up to the annual cap for each youth.

Applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide meaningful outcome data demonstrating program’s sufficiency and success in providing services as required.

Applicants must demonstrate the ability to provide for the transportation needs of individuals and families which cannot be served in their current location, including tours of universities and colleges, and participating in orientation programs.

Applicants must describe how contracted services will be monitored and evaluated.

# V. Department Responsibilities

The Department is responsible for the provision of obtaining and distributing current state grant(s) to the entity selected for this initiative.

# VI. Application Process

**A. Intent to Apply**

Anyone interested in applying must submit a “Letter of Intent” form electronically via the BSS Website at <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/Pages/default.aspx> by 06/09/2023.

NEW PROCESS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION: All proposals must be submitted through the WVOASIS Vendor Self Services (VSS Portal) at <http://www.wvoasis.gov>. For more information and training on application submission, please visit the following links:

* [Locating a Grant Funding Opportunity in VSS](https://youtu.be/MzfnWvvSiU4)
* [Creating a Grant Funding Application in VSS](https://youtu.be/f1rlpaJD3Hw)

All proposals for funding will be reviewed by BSS staff for administrative compliance, service need, and feasibility. A review team, including reviewers independent of BSS, will review the full proposals.

Telephone calls regarding the Funding Announcement will not be accepted. All questions must be submitted electronically via the [BSS website](https://dhhr.wv.gov/bss/Pages/default.aspx) by 05/31/2023. Answers to questions will be posted online 06/09/2023.

All questions submitted must refer to the AFA page number, table of content numbering, and include language from the AFA as much as possible.

Example: Section 4.1 Intent to Apply, the AFA states, “all questions submitted must refer,” {insert question}

Questions not submitted in this format will be considered a comment and will not be answered, as comments will not receive a response from BSS.

Applicants must use 12 pt. Arial or Times New Roman font, single line spacing, and one-inch margins. Page numbers must also be included in the footer.

**B. Administrative Data**

The application cover page and assurances shall include:

* name of Applicant,
* service delivery area to be covered,
* applicant’s business address,
* telephone number,
* name of authorized contact person,
* signature of person authorized to act in agency’s behalf, and
* date.

The applicant shall provide a summary of the agency’s organization, its size, and resources and include the following information:

* identifying information,
* date organization was established, and
* type of ownership.

The applicant shall provide a copy of the current license to do business in the State of West Virginia as well as a list of current services being provided, and an organizational chart.

**C. Applicant Capability/ Experience**

Discuss the capability and experience of the applicant organization.

**D. Program Narrative / Work Plan**

Detailed description of activities to be conducted and services to be provided with implementation schedule with time frames for actions, dates, and responsible parties.

**E. Budget**

Detailed line-item budget and narrative for all costs for the grant period.

# VII. Evaluation

Eligible applicants must comply with all requirements provided within this Funding Announcement. Applications that fail to comply with the requirements provided within this document, incomplete applications, or applications submitted after the application deadline will not be reviewed. A Statement of Assurance agreeing to these terms is required of all applications. This statement must be signed by the applicant organization’s CEO, CFO, and Project Officer. All applications will be forwarded to an independent grant review team which will score the application in accordance with the criteria stated. Applicants who best meet the specifications of the Funding Announcement will be eligible for an award. The maximum number of points available is 100.

The Department reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the applications, in whole or in part, without prejudice if to do so is felt to be in the best interest of the Department. The Department also reserves the right to contact applicants to clarify applications and/or negotiate modifications to the applications.

Applications will be evaluated on the following criteria:

* applicant Capability/ Experience,
* program Narrative/Work Plan, and
* budget and Budget Narrative

A. Applicant Capability/ Experience (**30 points**)

1. Did the applicant state the mission of the organization and how it relates to programming?
2. Did the applicant describe the history of the organization within the community and provide evidence that it has the capacity to serve and reach the target population?
3. Did the applicant include an organizational chart showing how the program fits into the organization’s structure?
4. Did the applicant identify who will oversee the administration and supervision of the services and their qualifications?
5. Did the applicant provide a complete list of staff positions for the service reflecting the role of each position, their level of effort/involvement and qualifications?
6. Did the applicant demonstrate experience providing case management and service delivery and referral for the target population?
7. Did the applicant discuss how the key personnel have demonstrated experience, are qualified to serve the target population, and are familiar with the applicable culture?
8. Did the applicant discuss the plan for recruiting, retaining, and training staff to provide services to the target population?

B. Narrative/Work Plan (**50 points**)

1. Did the applicant demonstrate ability to ensure all persons in the target population receive assistance to complete the annual Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA ®), documentation of student’s independent status as a person who experienced foster care, documentation of graduation from high school or attainment of an equivalency (GED, TASC) while in foster care, and disburse Chafee Education and Training Voucher funds directly to each student’s financial aid office?
2. Did the applicant demonstrate ability to maintain compliance with state and federal regulations regarding financial aid and tuition waivers?
3. Did the applicant demonstrate the ability to have access to an electronic management information system?
4. Did the applicant demonstrate the ability to provide meaningful outcome data demonstrating the program's sufficiency and success in providing services as required?
5. Did the applicant demonstrate the ability to provide transportation needs of individuals and families which cannot be served in their current location,

including tours of universities and colleges, and participating in orientation programs?

1. Did the applicant describe how contracted services will be monitored and evaluated?

C. Budget and Budget Narrative (**20 points**)

1. Are the calculations correct?
2. Does the budget reflect costs that are allowable and reasonable?
3. Are costs directly tied to the services?
4. Is sufficient funding available to support staffing?

Applicant’s failure to provide complete and accurate information may be considered grounds for disqualification. The Department reserves the right, if necessary, to ask applicants for additional information to clarify their applications and negotiate changes to the application.