

Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)

Describe the specific accomplishments and progress to establish, expand or strengthen the State's postsecondary educational assistance program to achieve the purpose of the Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) program:

Missouri continues to expand the ETV program to serve eligible youth. Missouri does not have a state tuition waiver program and currently uses ETV funding to assist youth with costs of attendance for post-secondary educational and training programs.

In SFY 2007, the CD contracted the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) to provide ETV services. The CD, through specific contract requirements, plans to utilize all of the ETV funding received. The contracted provider has been able to offer outreach programs, probationary services, mentoring and care packages to identify eligible youth. They have included descriptive material such as brochures, posters, and a website to market the Missouri ETV program.

Setting and monitoring educational goals will assist youth in understanding the importance of having a vision of educational success. Current requirements for eligible youth to receive assistance are:

- Youth must demonstrate academic success or motivation in school (generally a "C" average or its equivalency or as otherwise agreed upon with the plan) or in a training program;
- Youth must be accepted to an accredited college/university, vocational school or certified training program;
- Appropriate scholarships, grants and other financial assistance must be explored and utilized, and;
- There must be reasonable assurance the youth will graduate from the educational or training program.

The major portion of the ETV funding will be used to continue and expand the current program by increasing the number of youth served.

An on-line application process requires youth to provide information on financial need. The application process and a database track services and expenditures to ensure that vouchers do not exceed the total cost of attendance or \$5,000 per year.

Currently, eligible youth access the ETV program through the OFA website at www.statevoucher.org. Eligible youth are those who currently qualify for Chafee services and are in the process of transitioning out of foster care or are former foster care youth between the ages of 17.5 – 21. Foster and former foster care youth participating in ETV on their 21st birthday shall remain eligible until their 23rd birthday, provided they are making satisfactory progress. Post-secondary ETVs will also be offered to youth who were adopted or achieved legal guardianship after age 16.

Current and former foster care youth are eligible to receive the federally funded Pell Grants. CD requires all youth applying for ETVs to submit a copy of their financial aid letter from their chosen school providing all other financial aid awarded. Youth may choose to attend public, private or non-profit four-year universities or colleges, two-year community colleges, vocational/technical schools or specialized one-year training programs. Educational or training programs must be accredited/pre-accredited or certified. Youth must be willing to participate in federal Work Study program or work part-time.