TUITION WAIVER LAW

Free College Tuition for Former Foster Youth in New Mexico

WHAT IS THE TUITION WAIVER LAW?

The tuition waiver law (NMSA 21-1-4.7) took effect in New Mexico in 2014 and was expanded in 2019, giving transition-age foster youth access to free college tuition to pursue education and career goals. The waiver only covers tuition costs and some administrative fees, but it does NOT cover expenses such as lab fees, art fees, books, food, or housing.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Young people can take advantage of the tuition waiver law if they were in foster care at any time on or after the day of their 14th birthday. IMPORTANT: Participants must be enrolled in a school of higher education before their 25th birthday.**

COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING STEPS TO ACCESS YOUR FREE COLLEGE TUITION:

1. ***Request a tuition waiver letter:*** Contact a young person's CYFD Youth Transition Specialist (YTS) and request the tuition waiver letter that verifies they were in foster care.* Eligible young people who currently do not have a YTS may contact the CYFD Youth Services Bureau Chief at 505-690-0722 to request a letter.
2. ***Give the tuition waiver letter to the school:*** A copy of the letter must be given to the Admissions and Financial Aid Departments of the school the young person plans to attend. If they transfer to a different college, university, or trade school, they must submit a new tuition waiver letter to the new school they are attending.

*Foster care means a young person was in the legal custody of the State of New Mexico's Children, Youth, & Families Department (CYFD); a New Mexico Indian Nation, Tribe, or Pueblo; or the US Department of the Interior Bureau of Indian Affairs, Division of Human Services.

**A school of higher education includes any publically-funded and accredited state college or university or any of their branches, a community college, or a technical/vocational institute in New Mexico.

LEARN MORE by contacting:

Arika E. Sánchez
Director of Policy and Advocacy
NMCAN
505-217-0220
arika.sanchez@nmcan.org
nmcan.org