

NYC Administration for Children’s Services
College Choice Program
Guidelines for the 2022-2023 Academic Year
(current as of June 28, 2022)

Dear Students:

Based on your feedback, ACS is excited to offer the College Choice Program for youth in foster care who are attending college. College Choice makes significant enhancements to several programs you’re already familiar with: Fostering College Success Initiative (the “Dorm Project”), Fostering College Success Stipend, and College Room and Board. The purpose of these changes is to give you more flexibility and options around what types of support you need while attending college, including where you can live.

Here’s a listing of all the benefits that are available to eligible students at no cost to you – more details, as well as eligibility requirements, can be found after the listing. (Note that these guidelines may be updated in the future; revised versions will be shared with you and posted on the [Fostering College Success Initiative website](#)).

For access to an application to enroll in any/all benefits, and for support with any questions or concerns, please contact Sonia Gonzalez at collegechoicebenefitsprogram@acs.nyc.gov. Thank you!

BENEFITS

Fostering College Success Initiative (FCSI)	Students can receive coaching, tutoring, career counseling and related support provided online and in-person by NY Foundling staff.
Housing	<p>Students attending a college/university in New York City can choose to live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in one of the following six housing options (subject to availability):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Towers at City College of New York • The Summit at Queens College • Hunter College Residence Hall (Only for students attending Hunter College) • International House (Morningside Heights; for students age 20 and older) • 92Y Residence (Upper East Side) • Outpost-club Student Housing NYC (Multiple Locations) <p>Students attending in-person classes at a college or university outside of NYC can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in safe and appropriate private housing.</p> <p>Students enrolled only in online classes at a college or university can live in housing sponsored by that college or university, or in any of the six housing options for NYC students.</p> <p>For all students: ACS will pay your housing costs above for all three semesters during an academic year (fall, spring, summer) that are not covered by your financial aid award.</p>
Tuition and Fees	ACS will pay for tuition and mandatory fees that are not covered by your financial aid award.
Stipend	ACS will provide you with a stipend of \$60 per day, paid through your foster care agency every two weeks, to cover food and other living and college-related expenses, while you are attending school. This benefit is also available for up to 6 months after graduation.

To be eligible for any or all of the above, including stipend, students need to meet the following ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Foster Care Status	Be in foster care through the NYC Administration for Children’s Services at the time you first begin participating in the College Choice program.
Full-Time Courseload	Be enrolled in at least 12 credits during each of the fall and spring semesters or have the equivalent full-time status at a college/university that isn’t on a semester system. If taking less than 12 credits, submit a formal letter from your college/university advisor that explains why you are attending less than full time and lays out a plan to return to full-time status, or if it is your final semester, noting how many credits you need to graduate.
Academic Progress	Maintain a 2.0 cumulate GPA (or the equivalent of your college/university grades on a different scale) after your first semester. If your GPA falls below a 2.0, to maintain eligibility you’re required to work with your college/university advisor to develop and submit an Academic Success Plan that outlines tasks/steps you will take to improve academically.
Financial Aid	Apply and submit all required documentation for all of the following by the deadline prior to the start of school year in which you wish to participate in College Choice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and • New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), and • Education and Training Voucher (ETV), and • Foster Youth College Success Initiative (FYCSI), and • Any other financial aid programs for which you are eligible that are offered by your college/university
College/University Support Programs	Enroll in all college support programs which are offered by your college/ university for which you are eligible. These include ASAP, SEEK, CD, EOP and HEOP.
Responsiveness	Respond to any questions, concerns, and document requests from ACS and NYF staff, and Case Planner or Fair Futures Coach, as well as be responsive to any plans that might be put in place by them to help you with school.
Degree Type	Be an associate’s degree student, which enables you to participate in the College Choice program for up to a total of nine semesters (including summers), or a bachelor’s degree student, which enables you to participate for up to a total of fifteen semesters (including summers and including any time you spent in the program as an associate’s degree student). This will be pro-rated for students who already have college credits as of August 1, 2022, and then for any new students entering the program after that date.

Also, the following apply to parts of the College Choice program:

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who want to stay in college/university housing during Summer intersession are required to be engaged in meaningful activities (such as participating in an internship or taking classes) over the summer. • Some housing options (namely, CUNY dorms) require proof of vaccination against Covid-19. Students must meet these requirements in order to be eligible to live there. • For a college, university, or private housing landlord to be paid for a student’s housing, the college, university, or private landlord must register with the NYC Comptroller. More information is available from ACS. (This doesn’t apply to the six options listed above for students living in NYC.) • Students are responsible for arranging their housing, including making sure any licensing agreements and other paperwork are filed by deadlines set by colleges/universities/private landlords. • ACS will cover up to \$30,000 in housing costs, after financial aid, during each academic year/three-semester period (fall, spring, summer).
Tuition and Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees include expenses that are directly linked to the classes you are taking and ones that are assessed to all students. They must be listed on your tuition bill to be covered by ACS. Examples include orientation fees, health fees, Photo ID service fees, transcript fees, and student activity fees. (This is not a complete list and you’re encouraged to ask ACS if you’re unsure whether a fee will be covered). • The college/university you attend must be accredited and a not-for-profit or public institution. • Students must show proof of completing all financial aid for which they are eligible to receive. • Students who lose financial aid due to not meeting satisfactory academic progress (SAP) must show proof of submitting a financial aid appeal request. • ACS will cover up to \$15,000 in tuition and fees, after financial aid, during each academic year/three-semester period (fall, spring, summer).
Stipend	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the increased amount of the stipend is meant to cover food costs, ACS is unable pay for college/university meal plans in addition to the stipend. Students who are graduating can request to receive the \$60 per day stipend for up to six months after graduation. To qualify, you’re required to engage in meaningful activities (such as participating in an internship, job, or job search; or taking additional classes) during the six-month period.