



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 649**

January Session, 2023

Substitute House Bill No. 6563

*House of Representatives, April 18, 2023*

The Committee on Children reported through REP. LINEHAN of the 103rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

***AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OF ADOPTED YOUTH.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

- 1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) As used in this section:
- 2 (1) "Department" means the Department of Children and Families;
- 3 (2) "Postsecondary education program" means any program that  
4 leads to an academic degree or certification in a vocation or employment  
5 training; and
- 6 (3) "Postsecondary education funding program" means the program  
7 set forth in department policy 28-1 under which it funds the  
8 postsecondary education of a youth who is committed to the  
9 department, remains committed at the age of eighteen and meets the  
10 requirements established by the department in its policies and  
11 regulations.

12 (b) The Commissioner of Children and Families shall amend the  
13 department policies and regulations regarding the postsecondary  
14 education funding program to (1) increase the age until which a youth  
15 can qualify for funding from the department under the postsecondary  
16 education funding program from twenty-one to twenty-six years of age,  
17 (2) increase the age until which a youth who is enrolled in a  
18 postsecondary education program and continues to meet the  
19 requirements established by the department is eligible for funding to  
20 complete such postsecondary education program under the  
21 postsecondary education funding program from twenty-three to  
22 twenty-eight years of age, and (3) require any youth who is eligible for  
23 funding under the postsecondary education funding program to  
24 complete for each year such youth is enrolled in a postsecondary  
25 education program, as a condition to receiving such funding, the Free  
26 Application for Federal Student Aid and applications for any  
27 appropriate scholarships and grants, including, but not limited to,  
28 through any scholarship application portal administered by the  
29 provider of such postsecondary education program. Nothing in this  
30 section shall be construed to require the department to continue  
31 providing case management services for any youth who begins  
32 receiving funding under the postsecondary education funding program  
33 when such youth is older than twenty-one years of age.

34 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2023*) (a) Not later than January 1, 2024,  
35 the Commissioner of Children and Families shall establish a pilot  
36 program to provide financial assistance for the postsecondary education  
37 of any youth who (1) is adopted by a state resident through another  
38 state's foster care program on or after January 1, 2005, (2) completes the  
39 Free Application for Federal Student Aid for each year such youth is  
40 enrolled in a postsecondary education program, as defined in section 1  
41 of this act, and (3) meets and continues to meet the postsecondary  
42 education assistance program requirements set forth in the Department  
43 of Children and Families policy 25-2, except the requirement that such  
44 youth be adopted through the department's foster care program. A  
45 youth who qualifies for financial assistance pursuant to this subsection  
46 may apply to the department in the form and manner prescribed by the

47 commissioner. The commissioner shall approve a youth's application to  
 48 receive such financial assistance until the completion of such youth's  
 49 postsecondary education program, within the limits of available  
 50 funding and on a first-come, first-served basis. The amount of financial  
 51 assistance provided by the commissioner to a youth pursuant to this  
 52 subsection (A) shall include the cost of tuition, fees, room and board and  
 53 books, but may not exceed the maximum cost of attendance at a state  
 54 university within the Connecticut State University System for an in-  
 55 state, full-time residential student, and (B) may be paid on a semester,  
 56 trimester or quarterly basis as required by the postsecondary education  
 57 program in which such youth is enrolled.

58 (b) Not later than January 1, 2025, the Commissioner of Children and  
 59 Families shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of  
 60 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committees of  
 61 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to children,  
 62 higher education and employment advancement, and appropriations  
 63 and the budgets of the state agencies concerning the pilot program  
 64 established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section. Such report shall  
 65 include, but need not be limited to, the (1) number of youth who  
 66 received financial assistance, (2) amount of such financial assistance,  
 67 and (3) feasibility of making such pilot program permanent.

68 Sec. 3. (Effective July 1, 2023) The sum of one hundred fifty thousand  
 69 dollars is appropriated to the Department of Children and Families from  
 70 the General Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, for the pilot  
 71 program established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 2	July 1, 2023	New section
Sec. 3	July 1, 2023	New section

**KID** Joint Favorable Subst.

The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 24 \$	FY 25 \$
Children & Families, Dept.	GF - Cost	24,997,680	25,803,360

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The bill, which increases the maximum age that an individual that meets the Department of Children and Families-established requirements may apply for the Post-Secondary Education (PSE) program from 21 to 26, increases from 23 to 28 the maximum age until which a student that is enrolled in the program may remain in it, and creates a postsecondary education pilot program<sup>1</sup> for \$150,000 in FY 24, results in a cost to the agency of approximately \$24,997,680 in FY 24 and \$25,803,3650 in FY 25. This estimate assumes that 25% of 176 eligible individuals between 21 and 26 will enter the program in FY 24 (44 students) and that 25% of 352 eligible individuals between 21 and 26 will enter the program in FY 25 (88 students). It is projected that 25% of 4,399 students between 23 and 28 will remain in the program (1,100 students in each fiscal year). The average per fiscal year cost of a school year in the program is approximately \$21,720 per student.

<sup>1</sup>The program is for any youth who is adopted by a Connecticut resident through another state's foster care program on or after 1/1/05.

***The Out Years***

The fiscal impact identified above will continue into the future subject to inflation and program enrollment by the effected population. Funding for the pilot program is provided in FY 24 only.

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**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 6563**

***AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE OF ELIGIBILITY FOR THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING PROGRAM OFFERED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AND ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION OF ADOPTED YOUTH.***

**SUMMARY**

This bill (1) increases the age of eligibility for the Department of Children and Families' (DCF) postsecondary education funding program for youth who are committed to DCF and (2) requires the department to amend its rules and regulations to reflect these increases.

Additionally, the bill requires DCF, by January 1, 2024, to establish a pilot program to provide financial assistance for the postsecondary education funding of any youth adopted in Connecticut through an out-of-state foster care program. It appropriates \$150,000 to DCF from the General Fund in FY 24 to administer the program.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2023

**DCF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING PROGRAM**

Under the bill, the "postsecondary education funding program" is DCF's program that provides funding to youths who remain committed to DCF at age 18 and meet the requirements in the department's policies and regulations (DCF policy 28-1).

The bill increases, from 21 to 26, the age until which a youth can qualify for postsecondary education funding. It also increases, from 23 to 28, the age until which a youth enrolled in a postsecondary education program (i.e., any program that leads to an academic degree or certification in a vocation or employment training) is eligible for funding

to complete the postsecondary education program, so long as he or she continues to meet DCF-established requirements.

The bill also requires any youth eligible to receive postsecondary education funding under the program to complete, as a condition of receiving the funding, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and applications for any appropriate scholarships and grants, including those on the DCF scholarship application portal.

The bill specifies that its provisions should not be construed to require DCF to continue to provide case management services for any youth over age 21 who begins to receive funding under the postsecondary education funding program.

## **DCF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FUNDING PILOT PROGRAM**

### ***Eligibility***

The bill requires DCF, by January 1, 2024, to establish a pilot program to provide financial assistance for the postsecondary education funding of any youth who meets the following requirements:

1. is adopted by a Connecticut resident through another state's foster care program on or after January 1, 2005;
2. completes the FAFSA for each year they are enrolled in the DCF postsecondary education program; and
3. meets and continues to meet the postsecondary education assistance program requirements set forth in current DCF policy, except the requirement that the youth must be adopted through the department's foster care program (DCF policy 25-2).

Under the bill, a youth who qualifies for this financial assistance may apply to the department in a form and manner the DCF commissioner chooses, and the commissioner must approve applications until the youth completes the postsecondary education program. The program's benefits are available to eligible youth within available funds and on a first-come, first-served basis.

**Financial Assistance**

The bill requires the financial assistance to include the cost of tuition, fees, room and board, and books but to not exceed the maximum cost of attendance at a state university within the Connecticut State University System for an in-state, full-time residential student. The financial assistance may be paid to the postsecondary education program on a semester, trimester, or quarterly basis as required.

**Reporting**

By January 1, 2025, the bill requires DCF to submit a report to the Appropriations, Children’s, and Higher Education and Employment Advancement committees on the pilot program and include the (1) number of youths who received financial assistance, (2) amount of financial assistance, and (3) feasibility of making the pilot program permanent.

**BACKGROUND**

**Legislative History**

The House referred the bill (File 85) to the Committee on Children, which reported a substitute (1) requiring that the youth in the postsecondary funding program remain committed to DCF at age 18, (2) adding the FAFSA requirement, and (3) adding the pilot program and its funding.

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 18 Nay 4 (02/28/2023)

Committee on Children

Joint Favorable Substitute  
Yea 12 Nay 5 (04/04/2023)