

Provincial Tuition Waiver Program

Student FAQs

Statement of Intent:

The aim of the Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (PTWP) is to improve access, services and educational outcomes for former youth in care by waiving tuition fees starting in September 2017.

Tuition fees are defined as all tuition and mandatory fees a student must pay an institution in order to successfully complete the program/courses they are enrolled in.

The intent of the PTWP is to be inclusive. If an individual falls outside of the following eligibility criteria, the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST) will consider exceptions on an individual basis.

Eligibility Criteria

You are eligible for the PTWP if you:

- Are a B.C. student 19-26 years old (inclusive) attending a B.C. public post-secondary institution or an approved union trades training provider.
- Were formerly in a B.C. Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) category of care for at least 24 months (consecutive or accumulated) – **see detailed summary of eligible categories of care on page 2.**

Or

- Were formerly in the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction program **Child in Home of Relative.**

Not eligible for the PTWP or for an appeal:

- Students claiming tuition fee reimbursements from the previous fiscal year¹.
- Are 27 or older when you sign the waiver consent form.
- Have spent less than 24 total months in care.
- Student in Masters, PhD or post-graduate courses or programs.

If you do not meet the eligibility criteria:

- If you do not meet the eligibility criteria, and you are not in either of the “not eligible” categories, you may submit a request to the System Navigator (tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca) for consideration.
- The Navigator is a system liaison, connecting government, institutions, students and stakeholders around tuition waivers for former youth in care.

Step-by-Step – What you need to do to participate:

1. Complete institution application and self-identify as former youth in care meeting the PTWP eligibility.
2. Complete the consent form to disclose information and verify identity through your signature. This consent allows your institution to validate your eligibility with MCFD.

¹ The Ministry fiscal year runs from April 01 to March 31 of each year.

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3. Your institution will request validation of student eligibility from MCFD through AEST. See attached validation process information.
4. Your institution will admit you to your program of study without collecting tuition fees once you have met the admission requirements and if there is space in your program of choice. If you have already been verified and paid your fees for this current study period, your fees will be reimbursed. Application fees for the institution you are attending can be included in this amount.

Eligible Categories of Care

You are eligible for the PTWP if:

You are a B.C. student 19-26 years old (inclusive) attending a B.C. public post-secondary institution or one of the 10 union trades training providers

and

You have received care² from MCFD or a Delegated Aboriginal Agency (DAA) through the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* for a minimum of twenty-four months (consecutive or accumulated) in any, or a combination, of the following categories:

- **Continuing Custody Order** pursuant to sections 41 (1) (d), 42.2 (4) (d) or (7) or 49 (4), (5) or 10 (a) of the Act
 - *A protective order in which the court has assigned permanent custody of the child to the Director of Child Welfare (the Director).*
- **Temporary Custody Order**
 - *A protective order in which the court has assigned custody of the child to the Director on a temporary basis.*
- **Special Needs Agreement** pursuant to section 7 of the Act
 - *A parent of a child with special needs may voluntarily and temporarily agree to place the child in the care of the Director.*
- **Voluntary Care Agreement** pursuant to section 6 of the Act
 - *A parent voluntarily and temporarily places the child in the care of the Director*
- **Youth Agreement** pursuant to section 12.2 of the Act
 - *The Director enters into an agreement with a youth (ages 16 – 19) who needs assistance to live independently and cannot be re-established with family.*
- **Extended Family Plan** pursuant to section 8 of the Act
 - *A parent voluntarily and temporarily places the child in the care of an adult who has an established familial, relational, or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Permanent Transfer of Custody Order** pursuant to section 54.01 or 54.1 of the Act
 - *An order in which the court permanently transfers custody to another (non-parent) family member or another adult with an established relational or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Temporary Transfer of Custody** pursuant to section 41(1)(b) of the Act

² Includes both in care and out of care arrangements.

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- *A protective order in which the court temporarily places the child in the custody of an adult who has an established familial, relational, or cultural connection to the child.*
- **Interim Custody of Care** pursuant to section 36(1) of the Act
 - As a result of an order made under one of the following sections of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*: 35(2)(d), 41(1)(b), 42.1(6)(b), 42.2(4)(a), 42.2(4)(c), 49(7)(b)

Students who fall under the program **Child in Home of Relative**, which is administered by the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, need to contact the System Navigator at tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca.

Student FAQs

Q1. How do I know if I qualify?

You will be asked to complete a consent form to disclose information and verify identity through your signature. A completed consent form provides the institution permission to verify your eligibility. The institution will submit your completed consent form to AEST for verification from MCFD. The verification process can vary from a couple of days to up to four weeks depending on the complexity of your records search.

Q2. For the current school year, some students have already paid. What happens for them?

If you have already paid tuition and mandatory fees and are eligible for the PTWP, you will be reimbursed by your institution. See **Q10: Can I claim a waiver retroactively?**

Q3. What are tuition fees and what is covered?

Tuition fees are all tuition and mandatory fees you pay your institution in order to successfully complete the program/courses you are enrolled in. Starting July, 01 2018, students that are qualified for the PTWP can also be reimbursed their application fees.

There are other government programs that can assist with other costs associated with post-secondary education. See the financial aid department at your institution for more information.

Q4. Can I still access other/existing programs?

The PTWP serves the specific purpose of waiving tuition fees for former youth in care and is not intended to replace existing programs. Other programs that help offset educational costs for former youth in care will continue. Contact your institution's financial aid department to determine eligibility for other programs and bursaries.

Q5. What if I am already receiving funding through another program (e.g., YEAF or AYA), am I still eligible for a tuition waiver?

Yes.

Q6. Where can I find information about the PTWP?

Information will be available on Agedout.com as well as government websites such as AEST, MCFD, and DAA websites.

Q7. Tuition is just one piece. What other supports are available?

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Students who were formerly in care represent a wide spectrum of the population. In many cases, these students will require additional supports and a dedicated point of contact. These supports will be considered for the 2018/19 school year.

Your government will engage with stakeholders, including institutions and students, to determine what these supports might look like and how they could be implemented.

Many institutions have various supports in place already. Please contact your financial aid office.

Q8. Does the PTWP also apply to private institutions?

No. The PTWP applies only to B.C. public post-secondary institutions, Native Education College and union trades training providers. A list of all public post-secondary institutions can be found at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/post-secondary-education/find-a-program-or-institution/find-an-institution>

Q9. What happens if I have to drop out after having my tuition fees reimbursed?

You will be reimbursed by your institution upon verification of eligibility by AEST. If you have to drop out after the course/program drop date, you are not required to repay tuition.

Q10. Can I claim a waiver retroactively?

Students may claim reimbursement for tuition paid at any time during the current fiscal year. The one exception will be those institutions that require early application deadlines i.e. January application deadlines for September intakes.

Q11. What about part-time students?

The PTWP applies to part-time students as long as you remain enrolled beyond your institution's drop date for each study period.

Q12. Is successful completion a determinant of whether or not a tuition waiver is issued?

The PTWP applies as long as you are still enrolled in a course or program beyond the drop date for each study period.

Q13. What are the limits on the type of programs (e.g., can students get tuition waived for a masters or medical degree)?

The PTWP does not apply to Masters, PhD or post-graduate courses or programs. It does not apply to any Adult Basic Education fees whatsoever.

Unlike StudentAid, there is no income test to be eligible. The PTWP will cover a wide range of study programs outlined below and there is no minimum course duration, course load, or maximum tuition fee coverage.

- Credit and non-credit courses leading to a certificate, diploma, credential or undergraduate degree. Dual degrees, except for those that are undergraduate and post-graduate in nature, also fall into this category.
- Courses taken during unclassified qualifying years, non-credit-based trades programs and continuing education programs eligible for student financial assistance.
- Apprenticeship training.

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- Any non-credit courses associated with lifelong learning or competencies related to the labour market.