Provincial Tuition Waiver Program 2017/18
Student FAQs

Eligibility Criteria

Tuition for former youth in care will be waived for B.C. students who are between 19 - 26 years of age (inclusive), attending a B.C. public post-secondary institution(s) and who meet the following criteria:

- Have received care\(^1\) from the Ministry of Children and Family Development (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
    - *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.*

The intent is to take an inclusive approach. If an individual falls outside of the above eligibility criteria, government will consider exceptions on an individual basis.

Further wrap-around supports will be considered in the 2018/19 school year, including scope and eligibility.

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\(^1\) Includes both in care and out of care arrangements.
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Statement of Intent:
The aim of the Program is to improve access, services and educational outcomes for former youth in care by waiving tuition fees starting in September 2017. Program eligibility and guidelines are:

- B.C. students 19-26 years old (inclusive).
- Attending a B.C. public post-secondary institution.
- Formerly in any B.C. MCFD category of care (except interim care) for at least 24 months (consecutive or accumulated).
- Individuals outside the eligibility criteria will be considered on a case by case basis. You can submit a request to the System Navigator (tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca) for consideration.

Tuition fees are defined as all tuition and mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution that are required to be paid in order for the student to successfully complete the program/courses they are enrolled in.

Step-by-Step Provincial Tuition Waiver Program (the Program):

1. Student completes institution application and self-identifies as former youth in care meeting the Program eligibility (Starting in January 2018. For September 2017, go to Step 2).
2. Student completes the consent form to disclose information and verifies identity through student signature. This consent allows your institution to validate eligibility with MCFD.
3. Your institution will request validation of student eligibility from MCFD by submitting consent form through the MCFD validation process. See attached validation process information.
4. Your institution will admit you to your program of study without collecting tuition fees. If you have already been verified and paid your fees, your tuition fees will be reimbursed.
5. Where an individual falls outside the eligibility criteria, but wishes to be considered, the individual or the institution can submit a request to the System Navigator (tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca) for consideration.
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Q1. How do I know if I qualify?
You will be asked to complete a consent form to disclose information and verify identity through student signature. A completed consent form provides the institution permission to verify student eligibility with MCDF. The institution will submit the completed student consent form to MCDF. 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?
Students who have already paid tuition fees for 2017/18 and are eligible for the Program will be reimbursed by their institution.

Q3. What are tuition fees and what is covered?
Tuition fees are all tuition and mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution which are required to be paid in order for you to successfully complete the program/courses you are enrolled in. 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 Program 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 this program?
Information will be available on Agedout.com as well as Government websites such as the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training and the Ministry of Children and Family Development and delegated Aboriginal agency websites.

Q7. Tuition is just one piece. What other supports are available?
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 program also apply to private institutions?
No. This Program applies only to B.C. public post-secondary institutions. 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
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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 MCFFD. If you have to drop out after the course/program drop date, you are not required to repay tuition.

Q10. Can students claim a waiver retroactively?
The Tuition Waiver Program is effective as of September 1, 2017. Students will not be able to claim tuition fee reimbursements for study periods prior to September 1, 2017. For September 2017 and beyond, students may claim reimbursement at any time during the study period (a study period is defined as the first day of classes to the final class or exam, whichever is later).

If a student has paid for September 2017 enrolment, or in the case of some trades programs, August 2017 enrolment, the Program applies and their tuition fees will be reimbursed.

For cases where an individual falls outside of the eligibility criteria but wishes to make a case to be considered, the individual or the institution can submit a request to the System Navigator (tuitionwaiver@gov.bc.ca) for consideration. The Navigator will be a system liaison, connecting government, institutions, students and stakeholders around tuition waivers for former youth in care.

Q11. What about part-time students?
This Program applies to part-time students as long as you remain enrolled beyond the drop date for each study period.

Q12. Is successful completion a determinant of whether or not a tuition waiver is issued?
The Program 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)?
This Program applies to the wide range of study programs outlined below. 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.
- Courses taken during unclassified qualifying years, non-credit-based trades programs and continuing education programs eligible for student financial assistance.
- Apprenticeship training.
- Any non-credit courses associated with lifelong learning or competencies related to the labour market.

This Program does not apply to graduate or post-graduate courses or programs.
ELIGIBILITY VALIDATION PROCESS
Provincial Tuition Waiver Program

Post-secondary institutions request MCFD to validate young adults who have previously been in care.

1. Student completes consent form at the post-secondary institution

2. Institution signs the consent form to confirm young adult's identity and emails the form to MCFD: waivervalidation@gov.bc.ca

3. MCFD reviews and validates eligibility

4. MCFD sends eligibility letter to post-secondary institution via email