

Winter 2019



In this issue

Florida College System report	2019 Positive Pathways Conference
How to serve college students from care	Free national research collaborative webinars
AOK Scholars Program provides money for students from care	Join our Facebook page
If you have suggestions for stories, write us at Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org .	

Number of Students Using the DCF Tuition Exemption Increases: Financial Aid and Passing Courses Remains a Challenge

Although more students than ever are using the DCF tuition exemption, many still are not receiving all the financial aid they need and are struggling to pass courses. Those are key conclusions that can be drawn from a recently released report from the Florida College System.

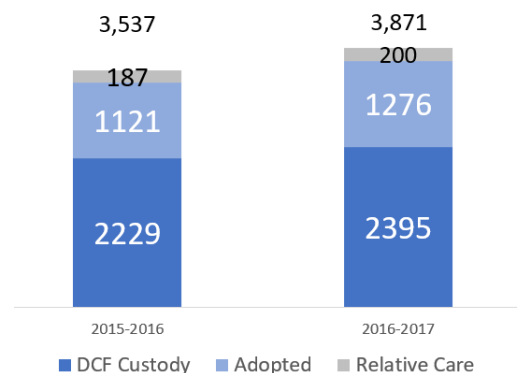
The number of students in Florida's public colleges using the DCF tuition exemption increased from 3,537 in 2015-16 to 3,871 in 2016-17, a 9% increase during a time when Florida's public college growth rates was less than 5%. During the 2016-17 academic year, 273 postsecondary degrees or certificates were awarded to students with the DCF exemption, and 58% of these students earned Associate in Arts (AA) degrees.

Jhenai Chandler, Director of Student and Administrative Affairs for the Florida College System (FCS), presented the good news during a recent Positive Pathways call as part of the FCS' annual report to the Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF).

The report is filled with valuable information, by colleges, including the number of students using the DCF exemption from foster care, from adopted homes and from relative care. The report also provides information about financial aid, data that Ms. Chandler highlighted because only 46% of students using the DCF tuition exemption also receive any type of financial aid. Furthermore, while students using the DCF tuition exemptions enrolled in 19,922 courses, only 48% received a grade of C or higher. These facts indicate a need for continued strong support for these students, Ms. Chandler said.

A copy of the FCS report is available on the Positive Pathways website by clicking [FCS Report](#).

Number of Students Using DCF Tuition at Florida's Public Colleges



Source: Bureau of PK-20 Education and Reporting, Florida Department of Education

New Free Online Training Available for Foster Care Liaisons

During a recent monthly Positive Pathways conference call, two veteran foster care campus liaisons shared their experiences in a practical webinar for network members throughout Florida.

Wendy Joseph, MA and Sandra Seymour Obas, MSW presented an hour-long session titled *A Step by Step Guide to Serving Students on Campus from Foster Care*.

The presentation covered how liaisons can position themselves as effective campus-based support professionals for this growing subpopulation of students.

The duo shared practical advice about how to identify students from foster care on your campus, how to prepare for appointments, and how to handle initial and follow-up meetings.

The webinar also contained inside information on the DCF Tuition Exemption Form, how to work with community-based care agencies, and the latest information on financial aid, academic services, and scholarships available specifically for young adults from foster care. Ms. Joseph and Mrs. Obas lead the Educate Tomorrow @ Miami Dade College program, which is accessible to more than 400 students on the college's seven campuses and centers. The program began in 2013 and has seen more than 30 students graduate with degrees.

The presenters also spoke about the program's award-winning Changemaker Program, which offers peer tutors and regular community building activities for students.

"It is important for liaisons to help students feel connected, like they are not alone and there are other students right here on campus that are going through similar difficulty," said Mrs. Obas, who is on temporary assignment as the program assistant for Positive Pathways.

Click [here](#) for the Power Point or contact us as Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org for the full audio recording of this valuable session.



Wendy Joseph (left) and Sandra Obas (right) presenting webinar.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS STEP-BY-STEP SNAPSHOT

Step 1:

- Educate your Campus Community

Step 2:

- Retrieve Referral(s) from Various Sources

Step 3:

- Initiate contact with students.

Pathways Partner Program AOK Scholars Program Adds 62 New Students for Spring Semester, Aims for 1,000 Students

The AOK Scholars Program, supported by the Lawrence E. White Family Foundation (LWFF), has selected 62 new students to enter the AOK Program beginning in the Spring 2019 semester. This brings the total number of students participating in the innovative program to 270. However, program leaders are aiming for 1,000 students and will open applications up again in April for the Fall 2019 semester.



The program works with students from foster care and related populations at 32 Florida colleges and universities, most of which are active members of the Positive Pathways Network. The five schools with the highest numbers of students using the AOK Scholars funds attend Miami Dade College (51), Florida Atlantic

University (42), Florida State University (38), Florida International University (29), and Valencia College (20). Last semester throughout the state, 12 students in the program earned Associates, Bachelors or Masters degrees with the support of the program, which provides mentoring as well as emergency funds.

“We are keen on success and believe that education is an important part of becoming successful,” said Larry White, namesake and founder of LWFF. “We are proud of these scholars and the success they are achieving as part of our program.”

The AOK Scholars Program was established by the Lawrence E. White Family Foundation to help students attending college who are most likely to succeed, with timely and quality assistance. Students may apply to become part of the AOK Scholars Program at: www.portal.aokscholars.org. The link will be open again in April 2019 for the semester of Fall 2019.

National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education (NRC-FAHE) Presents Free Webinars

The National Research Collaborative for Foster Alumni and Higher Education (NRC-FAHE) is starting a webinar series. This series will feature presentations from leaders in the field of foster care and higher education that are directly related to our work with students using the DCF tuition exemption. Here is information about the next two scheduled webinars, which require that you download the free Zoom software by clicking [here](#).

Topic	Presenter	Date / Time	Description	Registration
Preparing foster youth for college: A Pre-college Summer Program Experience	Sebrena Jackson, PhD., LCSW, MSW Program Director at the University of Alabama	Monday, January 28, 2019, Noon-1pm (EST)	Discussion will center on a six-week summer program designed specifically for foster youth.	Click here .
How Former Foster Youth Finance Their Higher Education	Jacob Gross, Associate Professor of Higher Education Administration at the University of Louisville.	Wednesday, February 27th, 2019, 11am-noon	Discussion about the barriers to financing higher education and common ways in which former foster youth finance their education.	Click here .

2019 Positive Pathways Conference
Tampa-St. Petersburg Area



May 30 and 31
St. Petersburg College
6605 5th Ave N, St.
Petersburg, FL 33710

Living Our Themes to Support Their Dreams



- High Expectations
- Academic Excellence
- Consistent Connections
- Community Investment

To help plan or support our conference in any way, email us at Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org

Suncoast Regional Working Group Launches on Florida's Sun Coast

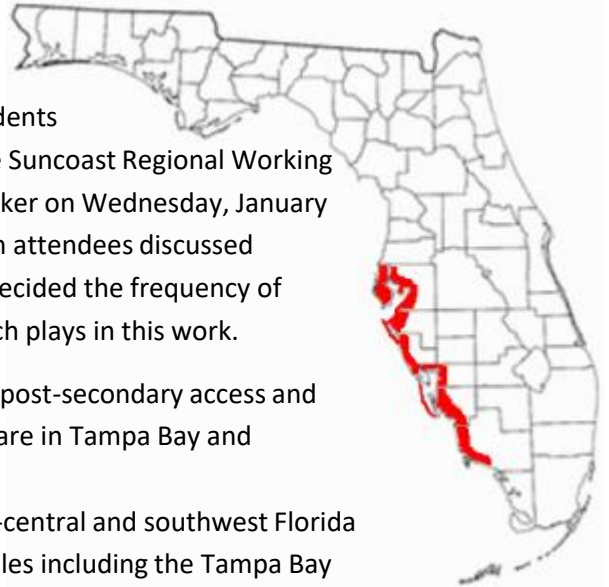
A group of professionals that wants to support college students striving to reach their educational dreams has launched the Suncoast Regional Working Group. The group met for the first time under its new moniker on Wednesday, January 16th at the ICOT Business Center in Clearwater, Florida. Ten attendees discussed opportunities for the group, identified key areas of focus, decided the frequency of meetings, and networked to better understand the role each plays in this work.



Jamie Bennett

The goal of the group is to increase post-secondary access and success for young people from foster care in Tampa Bay and surrounding areas.

Suncoast includes cities by the west-central and southwest Florida coast between Tarpon Springs and Naples including the Tampa Bay Area. If you would like to **join this group**, contact Jamie Bennett at jamie@ceterafl.org or call her at (269) 271-1608.



To join the Positive Pathways Facebook Page! Click [here](#).



To contact the Path: Pathways@EducateTomorrow.org