



Foster Care and Higher Education Participation

2023

Report Requirements

Education Article § 24-703.1(c), Annotated Code of Maryland, requires the MLDS Center to develop a clear and easy-to-understand graphic data dashboard on the Center’s website with information regarding the experience of foster care recipients and homeless youth and how foster care and homelessness effected participation in higher education. This dashboard focuses on foster care youth. Homeless youth are addressed in a separate dashboard.

Specifically, the requirement directs the MLDS Center to report, disaggregated by county, age, race, and ethnicity:

1. The rate of enrollment in institutions of higher education by placement type;
2. The type of institution of higher education in which children in foster care are enrolled;
3. The type of financial support provided to children in foster care enrolled in an institution of higher education; and
4. The graduation rate for children in foster care placements from institutions of higher education.

Education Article § 24-703(h)(4), Annotated Code of Maryland, states that, "data that may be identifiable based on the size or uniqueness of the population under consideration may not be reported in any form by the Center." Due to the small population under consideration data are suppressed and disaggregations are omitted in compliance with the above requirement.



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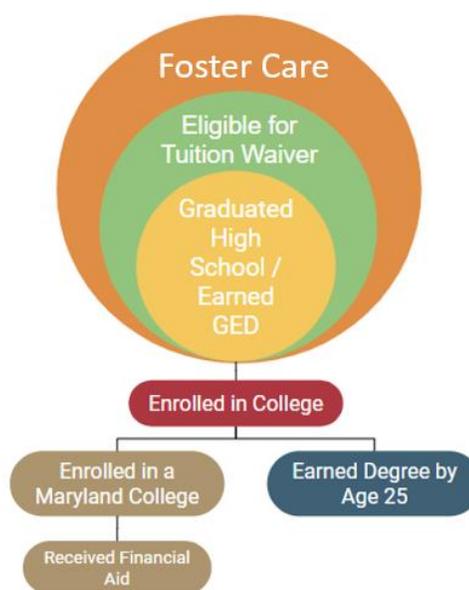
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Report Population

The baseline population for this report was defined in accordance with the eligibility requirements for the State of Maryland's *Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients*. This tuition waiver was established in State law in 2014 (see Education Article § 15-106.1).

Eligibility for the Tuition Waiver

- Students under the age of 25 who are or were in foster care in Maryland, as reported by the Maryland Department of Human Services (DHS), and who are attending a Maryland public college or university are eligible to apply.
- At the time of applying, the student must have been placed in or was in an out-of-home placement by DHS.
- The student must have:
 - a) Been placed in foster care by DHS; and
 - b) Resided in an out-of-home placement on the individual's 18th birthday or at the time of graduation from high school or upon successful completion of the General Education Development (GED) examination; OR
 - c) Resided in an out-of-home placement for at least one year on or after the individual's 13th birthday and entered into guardianship, been adopted, or reunited with at least one of the individual's parents; OR
 - d) Been the younger sibling of an individual who met the qualifications outlined in section (a) and (b) above, and was concurrently placed into the same guardianship by the same parent, or was adopted by the same adoptive family with the older sibling.



All majors are eligible to apply, both credit bearing and non-credit bearing courses.

Additional information on the scholarship program can be obtained from the Maryland Higher Education Commission's website:

https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_fostercare.aspx/.

The annual report completed by the Maryland Higher Education Commission on tuition waivers is also available on the commission's website: <https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Pages/research/index.aspx>.

As the reporting requirement focuses on college-going patterns, only those foster care youth eligible for the tuition waiver who graduated from high school or earned a GED diploma are included in this analysis as earning a high school diploma is a prerequisite to college enrollment. Additionally, the financial aid data that the MLDS Center receives only provides information for students who enroll in college in Maryland. Some foster care youth enroll in college out-of-state so they are excluded from the financial aid analysis.

Data on the baseline population are linked to Maryland public high school records, Maryland GED records, and in-state and out-of-state college records. Each year, around 300 youth in foster care in Maryland are adopted.¹ Linking data on foster care youth who are adopted presents unique challenges. A youth's social security number, last

name and first name may all change at the time of adoption. These identity changes impact the ability to link data across different data sources as the three key elements for linking, *social security number, last name and first name*, that appeared in the foster care record may be partially or fully altered preventing linkage to any education and workforce records after adoption. Therefore, the results presented here should be interpreted with caution. Foster care youths *not* reported as college-going, receiving financial aid, and earning a college degree may have indeed gone to college, earned a degree, and leveraged financial aid, but done so with an identity that cannot be linked to the original out-of-home placement record.

Statewide Analysis

Table 1 reports college-going rates for Maryland youth in foster care. Each youth is assigned to a cohort year based upon the year the youth graduated from high school or earned a General Education Development (GED) high school diploma.

College-going is reported for those who enroll in college either full-time or part-time as degree-seeking or non-degree seeking students at any point after earning a high school diploma (Complete College-Going). Complete College Enrollment is not reported until three years have lapsed since earning a high school diploma.ⁱⁱ The totals reported for the college enrollment are impacted by the number of years that have passed since high school graduation or GED attainment. The totals reported for college enrollment should not be interpreted as declines in college enrollment as not all cohorts have had the same amount of time since high school graduation or GED attainment. Overall, 58% of youth who experienced a foster care placement enrolled in college after earning a high school diploma.

Table 1. College-Going Rates for Youth in Foster Care, State of Maryland, 2011-2012 to 2017-2018

Cohort Year	Foster Care Youth with a High School Diploma ⁱⁱⁱ	Complete College-Going ^{iv}	
		Total	%
2011-2012	243	163	67%
2012-2013	288	173	60%
2013-2014	288	177	61%
2014-2015	242	147	61%
2015-2016	291	148	51%
2016-2017	280	152	54%
2017-2018	231	126	55%
Total	1,863	1,086	58%

Table 2 below reports college-going rates by college type for youth experiencing foster care. Over 85% of foster care youth enroll at least once in a Maryland community college, while 24% enrolled at least once in a four-year institution.

Table 2. College-Going Rates for Youth in Foster Care by College Type, State of Maryland, 2011-2012 to 2017-2018

Cohort Year	Foster Care Youth with Complete ^{iv} College Going	College-Going by College Type					
		Maryland Community College		Maryland Four-Year Institution (Public or State-Aided Independent) ^v		Out-of-State Institution ^{vi}	
		Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
2011-2012	163	150	92%	45	28%	18	11%
2012-2013	173	150	87%	37	21%	25	14%
2013-2014	177	159	90%	34	19%	19	11%
2014-2015	147	123	84%	35	24%	19	13%
2015-2016	148	125	84%	38	26%	13	9%
2016-2017	152	121	80%	43	28%	14	9%
2017-2018	126	99	79%	26	21%	14	11%
Total	1,086	927	85%	258	24%	122	11%

Note: Distribution by *College Type* does not sum to total because some youth enrolled in more than one college type. Enrollments may be consecutive or concurrent. For example, enrollment may be sequential, from a community college to a four-year institution or concurrent, at both a four-year institution and community college simultaneously.

Table 3 below reports college-going rates by placement type for youth in foster care. Overall, 58% of foster care youth enroll in college. This rate is highest for youth in foster care who are placed in a family home at the time of earning a high school diplomaⁱⁱⁱ. This rate drops fourteen percentages points to 44% for youth who are not in foster care at the time the youth earns a high school diplomaⁱⁱⁱ.

Table 3. College-Going Rates for Youth in Foster Care by Placement Type, State of Maryland, 2011-2012 to 2017-2018

Cohort Year	Foster Care Youth			College-Going by Placement Type											
	High School Diploma ⁱⁱⁱ	Complete College Going ^{iv}	%	Community-Based Residential			Family Home			All Other Types			Not in Placement at Graduation		
				HS Diploma	College-Going	%	HS Diploma	College-Going	%	HS Diploma	College-Going	%	HS Diploma	College-Going	%
2011-2012	243	163	67%	39	28	72%	130	91	70%	9	4	44%	65	40	62%
2012-2013	288	173	60%	44	31	70%	124	84	68%	10	9	90%	110	49	45%
2013-2014	288	177	61%	57	44	77%	140	90	64%	12	7	58%	79	36	46%
2014-2015	242	147	61%	46	33	72%	101	66	65%	14	8	57%	81	40	49%
2015-2016	291	148	52%	43	22	51%	135	77	57%	17	7	41%	96	42	44%
2016-2017	280	152	54%	50	28	56%	129	88	68%	11	6	55%	90	30	33%
2017-2018	231	126	55%	42	21	50%	115	77	67%	5	4	80%	69	24	35%
Total	1,863	1,086	58%	321	207	64%	874	573	66%	78	45	58%	590	261	44%

Note: Community-based residential placement includes group or residential facilities operated by public or private agencies. Family home placement includes youth residing with a relative or nonrelative adult. Non-community based residential placements, hospitals and other types of residential arrangements are included in the *All Other Types* category. Youth placed in foster care may experience more than one type of placement over their time in care. The placement type included in this analysis is the placement at the time of earning a high school diplomaⁱⁱⁱ.

Table 4 reports the college funding received by youth placed in foster care. Funding is reported as funds received during the first year of college. Some students received more than one type of funding while others did not receive any funding in their first year of college.

Overall, 86% of youth placed in foster care who enroll in college in Maryland have some type of financial aid. The majority (81%) received federal financial aid, which includes Pell grants and student loans. About half of all youth in foster care received financial aid from the State of Maryland, including the 35% who received the *Tuition Waiver for Foster Care Recipients*. It should be noted that this waiver was not available until academic year 2014-2015, therefore it is not surprising that earlier cohorts are not utilizing the waiver. Indeed, the presence of the waiver for cohorts 2010-2011 through 2013-2014 indicates that these youth delayed entering college until 2014-2015 or later as the aid reported in **Table 4** reflects aid during the first year of college. Had these youth enrolled in college immediately following high

school graduation or GED/NEPD attainment, the waiver would not have been available.

Lower utilization of the waiver may also suggest that some youth did not meet the full criteria for receiving the waiver. For example, to utilize the tuition waiver, a student must be under the age of 25 while attending a Maryland public community college or four-year public institution. The enrollment data demonstrate that some youth experiencing out-of-home placement attended a state-aided independent institution, which is not eligible for the waiver. There are several restrictions on eligibility for the tuition waiver, including age, enrollment status, and filing status for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the Maryland State Financial Aid Application (MSFAA). Those restrictions and conditions for renewal of the waiver can be reviewed on the Maryland Higher Education Commission's website:

https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/pr og_fostercare.aspx.

Table 4. College-Funding during First Year of College in Maryland for Foster Care Youth by Funding Source, State of Maryland, 2011-2012 to 2017-2018

Cohort Year	Complete ^{iv} College Going		College-Going by Funding Type during First Year of Undergraduate College in Maryland											
			Received Any Aid		Federal Aid		State Aid				Institutional Aid		None	
	Any State Aid						Foster Care Tuition Waiver							
	All	Maryland Only	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
2011-2012	163	158	140	89%	140	89%	40	25%	4	3%	15	9%	18	11%
2012-2013	173	160	132	83%	130	81%	58	36%	23	14%	22	14%	28	18%
2013-2014	177	169	150	89%	145	86%	78	46%	52	31%	10	6%	19	11%
2014-2015	147	141	123	87%	112	79%	79	56%	49	35%	16	11%	18	13%
2015-2016	148	142	118	83%	108	76%	97	68%	87	61%	19	13%	24	17%
2016-2017	152	145	126	87%	116	80%	91	63%	76	52%	20	14%	19	13%
2017-2018	126	117	98	84%	89	76%	79	68%	71	61%	10	9%	19	16%
Total	1,086	1,032	887	86%	840	81%	522	51%	362	35%	112	11%	145	14%

Note: Financial Aid can only be reported for students who enroll in college in Maryland. Some students received more than one type of funding while others did not receive any funding in their first year of college, thus counts reported by Fund Type do not sum to the total.

Table 5 reports college graduation rates for youth placed in foster care. Overall, 12% of youth placed in foster care graduate from college by age 25. College graduation is reported only when youth within a cohort have turned age 25. It is possible that some youth earn a college degree after age 25, those youth are not reported in this table.

Note: College-going is reported for those who enroll in college either full-time or part-time as degree-seeking or non-degree seeking students at any point after high school graduation (Complete College-Going). Complete College Enrollment is not reported until three years have lapsed since high school graduation and degree attainment is only reported for cohorts that have reached age 25.

Table 5. College Graduation Rates for Youth in Foster Care, State of Maryland, 2011-2012 to 2014-2015

Cohort Year	Complete ^{iv} College Going	College Degree by Age 25	
		Total	%
2011-2012	163	25	15%
2012-2013	173	21	12%
2013-2014	177	15	8%
2014-2015	147	19	13%
Total	660	80	12%

State Agencies and Data

The **Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center** (MLDS Center) is the State of Maryland's central repository for student and workforce data. The MLDS Center develops and maintains the MLDS to provide analyses, produce relevant information, and inform choices to improve student and workforce outcomes in the State of Maryland.

The **Department of Human Services** is the State of Maryland's primary social service provider. The Department, through its 24 local departments of social services, aggressively pursues opportunities to assist people in economic need, provide preventive services, and protect vulnerable children and adults in each of Maryland's 23 counties and Baltimore City.

<https://dhs.maryland.gov/about-dhs/>

MLDS Data

The MLDS connects data from across Maryland's education, child & youth services and workforce agencies. These data are subject to strict data management, security, and privacy requirements. The MLDS may only report aggregated, de-identified data. All research conducted by the MLDS Center focuses on what happens to students before and after critical transitions between education and workforce pathways. All research and analysis using the MLDS is cross-sector. Below is an overview of the available data within the System to support the analysis in this report:

Education Data

The MLDS contains education data on all students from Maryland public high schools, students attending Maryland public and state-aided independent institutions of higher education, and adults completing GED® Testing or the National External Diploma Program® (NEDP®). Education data begin with the 2007-2008 academic year. The MLDS does not contain education data on students in private high schools or private institutions of higher education. Nor does the MLDS contain data on postsecondary students in continuing education or noncredit programs. Further, data on unsuccessful attempts at fulfilling the GED® or NEDP® requirements are not included in the System. The MLDS contains limited information on out-of-state college enrollment and graduation for Maryland public high school graduates.

Child Welfare Data

The MLDS contains data on youth in out-of-home placement from the Department of Human Services (DHS). Out-of-home placement data begin with the 2007-2008 academic year. These data include youth in out-of-home placement for all Maryland counties and Baltimore City. Out-of-home placement, or foster care, is a temporary placement for youth who are unable to remain living at home. Out-of-home placement includes both youth who are residing in private homes and those in group care settings. Youth may experience one or more placement type and location over the duration of their time in out-of-home placement. DHS actively works to develop permanency plans for out-of-placement youth, which include reunification with parents, placement with relatives, or adoption. Each year, around 300 youth in out-of-home placement in Maryland are adopted.^{vii} Linking data on out-of-home placement youth who are adopted presents unique challenges. A youth's social security number, last name and first name may change at the time of adoption. These identity changes impact the ability to link data across different data sources as the three key elements for linking, *social security number, last name and first name*, that appeared in the out-of-home placement record may be partially or fully altered preventing linkage to any education and workforce records after adoption. Out-of-home placement youths *not* reported as earning a high school diploma, enrolling and graduating from college, or engaged in the workforce may have indeed earned a high school diploma, enrolled in and completed college and be gainfully employed in the workforce but done so with an identity that cannot be linked to the original out-of-home placement record.

ⁱU.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2022). Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY 2012-2021. AFCARS data, U. S. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/trends-foster-care-adoption>

ⁱⁱBaseline population for this report is defined as those eligible for the Foster Care Tuition Waiver. Out-of-Home placement youth who are not eligible for the tuition waiver are excluded. Out-of-home placement youth who did not graduate from high school or earn a GED are excluded as they are not eligible for degree-seeking college enrollment. Total exclusions are approximately 100 youth per cohort year. Information on the Foster Care Tuition Waiver can be found here: https://mhec.maryland.gov/preparing/Pages/FinancialAid/ProgramDescriptions/prog_fostercare.aspx

ⁱⁱⁱHigh School diploma includes students who earn a diploma by graduating from high school and those earn a diploma through the General Education Development (GED) test. Out-of-Home youth with a GED diploma constitute about 2% of the total population.

^{iv}An out-of-home placement youth with a high school diploma is considered enrolled in college if the youth meets the definition of Complete College Enrollment. Complete college enrollment is defined as a high school diploma earner who enrolls in college either full-time or part-time as degree-seeking or non-degree seeking at any point after high school graduation or GED attainment. College enrollment is reported for Complete enrollees once three years have lapsed since high school graduation or GED attainment. The totals reported for the Complete enrollment are impacted by the number of years that have passed since high school graduation or GED attainment. The totals reported for college enrollment should not be interpreted as declines in college enrollment as not all cohorts have had the same amount of time lapse since high school graduation or GED attainment.

^v**Four-Year public institutions** include Bowie State University; Coppin State University; Frostburg State University; Salisbury University; Towson University; University of Baltimore; University of Maryland, Baltimore; University of Maryland, Baltimore County; University of Maryland, College Park; University of Maryland Eastern Shore; University of Maryland Global Campus; Morgan State University and St. Mary's College of Maryland. **State-Aided Independents institutions** include Capitol Technology University; Goucher College; Hood College; Johns Hopkins University; Loyola University Maryland; Maryland Institute College of Art; McDaniel College; Mount St. Mary's University; Notre Dame of Maryland University; St. John's College; Stevenson University; Washington Adventist University and Washington College.

^{vi}Out-of-State institutions may be two-year or four-year, and public or private.

^{vii}U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2022). Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY 2012-2021. AFCARS data, U. S. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/report/trends-foster-care-adoption>