



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
01/20/2026	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Garcia) recommended the following:

1 **Senate Amendment (with directory and title amendments)**

2

3 Delete lines 72 - 105

4 and insert:

5 Section 2. Paragraphs (a) and (e) of subsection (2) and
6 paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 409.1451, Florida
7 Statutes, are amended, and paragraphs (d) and (e) are added to
8 subsection (6) of that section, to read:

9 409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

10 (2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—



964050

11 (a) A young adult is eligible for services and support
12 under this subsection if he or she:

13 1. Was living in licensed care on his or her 18th birthday
14 or is currently living in licensed care; or was at least 14
15 years of age and was adopted from foster care or placed with a
16 court-approved dependency guardian after spending at least 6
17 months in licensed care within the 12 months immediately
18 preceding such placement or adoption;

19 2. Spent at least 6 months in licensed care before reaching
20 his or her 18th birthday;

21 3. Earned a standard high school diploma pursuant to s.
22 1002.3105(5), s. 1003.4281, or s. 1003.4282, or its equivalent
23 pursuant to s. 1003.435;

24 4. Has been admitted for enrollment as a full-time student
25 or its equivalent in an eligible postsecondary educational
26 institution as provided in s. 1009.533. For purposes of this
27 section, the term "full-time" means 9 credit hours or the
28 vocational school equivalent. A student may enroll part-time if
29 he or she has a recognized disability or is faced with another
30 challenge or circumstance that would prevent full-time
31 attendance. A student needing to enroll part-time for any reason
32 other than having a recognized disability must get approval from
33 his or her academic advisor;

34 5. Has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 26 23 years
35 of age;

36 6. Has applied, with assistance from the young adult's
37 caregiver and the community-based lead agency, for any other
38 grants and scholarships for which he or she may qualify;

39 7. Submitted a Free Application for Federal Student Aid



40 which is complete and error free; and

41 8. Signed an agreement to allow the department and the
42 community-based care lead agency access to school records.

43 (e)1. The department must advertise the availability of the
44 stipend and must provide notification of the criteria and
45 application procedures for the stipend to children and young
46 adults leaving, or who were formerly in, foster care;
47 caregivers; case managers; guidance and family services
48 counselors; principals or other relevant school administrators;
49 and guardians ad litem.

50 2. If the award recipient transfers from one eligible
51 institution to another and continues to meet eligibility
52 requirements, the award shall be transferred with the recipient.

53 3. The department, or an agency under contract with the
54 department, shall evaluate each Road-to-Independence award for
55 renewal eligibility on an annual basis. In order to be eligible
56 for a renewal award for the subsequent year, the young adult
57 must:

58 a. Be enrolled for or have completed the number of hours,
59 or the equivalent, to be considered a full-time student under
60 subparagraph (a)4., unless the young adult qualifies for an
61 exception under subparagraph (a)4.

62 b. Maintain standards of academic progress as defined by
63 the education institution, except that if the young adult's
64 progress is insufficient to renew the award at any time during
65 the eligibility period, the young adult may continue to be
66 enrolled for additional terms while attempting to restore
67 eligibility as long as progress towards the required level is
68 maintained.



964050

69 c. Not have exceeded the lifetime limit of 60 months of
70 financial assistance for services and support provided under
71 this subsection. The lifetime limit applies without exception
72 and regardless of whether the award recipient receives the
73 services and support under this subsection in consecutive or
74 nonconsecutive months.

75 4. Funds may be terminated during the interim between an
76 award and the evaluation for a renewal award if the department,
77 or an agency under contract with the department, determines that
78 the award recipient is no longer enrolled in an educational
79 institution as described in subparagraph (a)4. or is no longer a
80 resident of this state.

81 5. The department, or an agency under contract with the
82 department, shall notify a recipient who is terminated and
83 inform the recipient of his or her right to appeal.

84 6. An award recipient who does not qualify for a renewal
85 award or who chooses not to renew the award may apply for
86 reinstatement. An application for reinstatement must be made
87 before the young adult reaches 26 23 years of age. In order to
88 be eligible for reinstatement, the young adult must meet the
89 eligibility criteria and the criteria for award renewal for the
90 program.

91 7. The department, or an agency under contract with the
92 department, shall work with the young adult to create a
93 financial plan that is guided by the young adult's financial
94 goals in meeting his or her needs while in postsecondary
95 education. The financial plan must be included in the transition
96 plan required under s. 39.6035. The department, or an agency
97 under contract with the department, shall review and, if



964050

98 necessary, update the financial plan with the young adult every
99 6 months until funding under this subsection is no longer
100 provided.

101 8. The department, or an agency under contract with the
102 department, shall review with the young adult the transition
103 plan required under s. 39.6035 during the year before the young
104 adult graduates from postsecondary education or the year before
105 the young adult reaches 26 ~~23~~ years of age, whichever occurs
106 first. The transition plan must include an assessment of the
107 young adult's current and future needs and challenges for self-
108 sufficiency and address, at a minimum, how the young adult will
109 meet his or her financial needs and obligations when funding
110 under this subsection is no longer provided.

111 (3) AFTERCARE SERVICES.—

112 (a) 1. Aftercare services are available to a young adult who
113 has reached 18 years of age but is not yet 26 ~~23~~ years of age
114 and is:

115 a. Not in foster care.

116 b. Temporarily not receiving financial assistance under
117 subsection (2) to pursue postsecondary education.

118 2. Subject to available funding, aftercare services are
119 also available to a young adult who is between the ages of 18
120 and 25 ~~22~~, and is:

121 a. Receiving financial assistance under subsection (2), is
122 experiencing an emergency situation, requires services as
123 specified in subparagraph (b)8., and whose resources are
124 insufficient to meet the emergency situation. Such assistance
125 shall be in addition to any amount specified in paragraph
126 (2) (b); or



964050

127 b. Was placed by a court in out-of-home care pursuant to
128 chapter 39, lived in out-of-home care for at least 6 months
129 after turning 14 years of age, and did not achieve reunification
130 with his or her parent or guardian.

131 (6) ACCOUNTABILITY.—The department shall develop outcome
132 measures for the program and other performance measures in order
133 to maintain oversight of the program. No later than January 31
134 of each year, the department shall prepare a report on the
135 outcome measures and the department's oversight activities and
136 submit the report to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of
137 the House of Representatives, and the committees with
138 jurisdiction over issues relating to children and families in
139 the Senate and the House of Representatives. The report must
140 include:

141 (d) Specific metrics for postsecondary education services
142 and support provided under subsection (2). Such metrics must be
143 aggregated on a statewide basis and disaggregated by community-
144 based care lead agency, age, race, and postsecondary educational
145 institution type as provided in s. 1009.533. Such metrics must
146 include, but are not limited to, the following information for
147 the preceding state fiscal year:

148 1. The total number of young adults eligible for services
149 and support under subsection (2).

150 2. The total number of applicants and the total number of
151 applicants approved for financial assistance under subsection
152 (2).

153 3. The rate of housing instability or homelessness
154 experienced by award recipients during their enrollment period.

155 4. The percentage of award recipients described in



964050

156 subparagraph 3. who also received financial assistance under
157 subsection (3) and the average amount of such assistance.

158 5. The primary reason for an award recipient's termination,
159 discontinuation, or nonrenewal under the program, including, but
160 not limited to, academic deficiency, voluntary withdrawal,
161 reaching the age limit, or reaching the lifetime limit.

162 6. The educational achievements of award recipients,
163 including, but not limited to:

164 a. The postsecondary student retention rate, expressed as a
165 percentage of award recipients who remain continuously enrolled
166 or reenroll for the subsequent academic term.

167 b. The postsecondary degree, certificate, or vocational
168 program completion rate.

169 c. The average time in which award recipients complete
170 their program of study.

171 d. The average unweighted grade point average of award
172 recipients, aggregated on a statewide basis and disaggregated
173 only by postsecondary educational institution type as provided
174 in s. 1009.533.

175 e. The percentage of award recipients who graduated from a
176 postsecondary educational institution.

177 (e) Specific metrics for aftercare services provided under
178 subsection (3). Such metrics must be aggregated on a statewide
179 basis and disaggregated by community-based care lead agency,
180 age, race, and postsecondary educational institution type as
181 provided in s. 1009.533. Such metrics must include, but are not
182 limited to, the following information for the preceding state
183 fiscal year:

184 1. The total number of young adults eligible for the



964050

185 aftercare services under subsection (3).

186 2. The total number of young adults who received aftercare
187 services.

188 3. The average duration of a young adult's participation in
189 the program.

190 4. The primary reason that a young adult seeks aftercare
191 services.

192 5. The total number of financial assistance disbursements
193 made under subparagraph (3)(b)7. for necessities or under
194 subparagraph (3)(b)8. for emergency situations.

195 6. The utilization rate of key aftercare components,
196 including, but not limited to, the percentage of participants
197 who:

198 a. Receive mentoring or tutoring services.

199 b. Receive mental health or substance abuse counseling
200 referrals.

201 c. Complete a life skill class, which may include, but is
202 not limited to, a financial literacy or credit management class.

203 d. Receive job or career skills training.

204 e. Report housing stability within 90 days after receiving
205 housing-related assistance, which may include, but is not
206 limited to, security deposits for rent and utilities.

207 f. Enroll in educational or vocational programs, including,
208 but not limited to, the postsecondary education services and
209 support provided under subsection (2), while receiving at least
210 one aftercare service disbursement.

212 ===== D I R E C T O R Y C L A U S E A M E N D M E N T =====

213 And the directory clause is amended as follows:



964050

214 Delete lines 18 - 19
215 and insert:
216 Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
217 39.407, Florida Statutes, is
218
219 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====
220 And the title is amended as follows:
221 Delete lines 7 - 9
222 and insert:
223 circumstances; amending s. 409.1451, F.S.; increasing
224 the maximum age of eligibility for certain
225 postsecondary education services and support and
226 aftercare services; revising the requirements for a
227 renewal award of postsecondary education services and
228 support; requiring the inclusion of specific metrics
229 for measuring outcomes and performance of
230 postsecondary education services and support and
231 aftercare services in a certain annual report;
232 conforming provisions to changes made by the act;
233 amending s. 409.175, F.S.; revising the