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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
01/20/2026	.	
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The Committee on Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (Garcia) recommended the following:

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

Delete lines 72 - 105  
and insert:

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

409.1451 The Road-to-Independence Program.—

(2) POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT.—



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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



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which is complete and error free; and

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

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

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

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

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

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



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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



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

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

(3) AFTERCARE SERVICES.—

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

a. Not in foster care.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The percentage of award recipients described in



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. The total number of young adults eligible for the



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aftercare services under subsection (3).

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

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

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

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

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

a. Receive mentoring or tutoring services.

b. Receive mental health or substance abuse counseling referrals.

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

d. Receive job or career skills training.

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

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

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

And the directory clause is amended as follows:





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214 Delete lines 18 - 19

215 and insert:

216 Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section  
217 39.407, Florida Statutes, is

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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