



Kinkade FAITH Scholarship

During the 2022 Mississippi legislative session, First Place, Mississippi Youth Voice, and the MS Association of Child Caring Agencies lead efforts to increase the access to post-secondary education for current and former foster youth. Following the lead of 35 other states, Mississippi now has the State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship for current and former foster youth to attend university, community college, and technical skill training programs. The scholarship will be available for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Eligibility:

1. Current and former foster youth who were in custody on or after their 13th birthday but who have not reached their 25th birthday.
2. Current and former foster youth who were in a qualified residential child care agency (ie. Baptist Children's Village, Sunnybrook Children's Home).
3. Includes those adopted or reunified with family after their 13th birthday who meet the eligibility listed above.

Scholarship includes:

1. The scholarship will be administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board and has a initial annual funding of \$1 Million.
2. Cost of Attendance (COA) less any federal, state or private aid available to the eligible awardee based on being admitted to the particular institution.
 - a. Cost of Attendance is a calculation made by each institution based on the full costs associated with attending that school. Factors include full-time/part-time status, living on or off campus, tuition, fees, books, and living expenses.
 - b. Renewals are based on meeting each institution's satisfactory academic progress standards.
3. Scholarships are awarded for attendance at any state or private not-for-profit private institution of higher learning, including community colleges.
 - a. For private institutions, the Cost of Attendance is set at the COA for the highest state university, at this time that is the University of Mississippi. Additional costs will need to be waived by the private institution or students will need to secure additional financial aid.
4. Scholarship includes costs for housing for holiday and breaks where such accommodations are available.
5. Awardees can receive scholarships for up to 5 years or 144 credit hours, whichever occurs first.

Support Services:

1. A mentor/navigator service will be provided by the Department of Child Protective Services to support scholarship recipients and aid in successful completion of degree or certificate programs.
2. Provides leasing authority for current and former foster youth that were in custody on or after their 13th birthday to allow them to secure safe housing. (Mississippi's Age of Majority is 21 years so youth cannot currently sign leases or enter into contracts until age 21.)
3. Allows MDCPS to share necessary information on current or former foster youth to verify eligibility for scholarships and other financial aid.

To learn more, review the Conference Report for House Bill 1313 of the 2022 Legislative Session.

<http://www.legislature.ms.gov/legislation/>

A special thank you to the MS Department of Child Protective Services, the MS Institutes of Higher Learning, the MS Community College Board, the MS Postsecondary Financial Aid Board, Refill Jackson Initiative and all of the other foster care advocates that helped to make this initiative possible!