



Who can apply for a grant?

To be eligible for the FAMILY Fund Grants, you must meet the following criteria:

- Have emancipated (or will emancipate) from Hamilton County, Ohio on or after your 18th birthday;
- Have been accepted into or are enrolled in a degree, certificate, or other accredited program at a college or university that provides transferable credits;

OR

Have been accepted into OR are enrolled in an apprenticeship, military, or other job training program that has been preapproved by the FAMILY Fund;

- Have had a JFS Program Specialist (Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.gov) confirm your eligibility after you filled out the [Educational Funding Inquiry Form](#);
- Have already applied to FAFSA and Ohio ETV (*if these are applicable to your educational program*);
- Will use awarded funds before you turn 27 years old;
- Have met your institution's requirements for satisfactory academic progress (*applies to students who have started their postsecondary program*).

What is FAFSA and Ohio ETV?

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Most schools will require that students fill out the FAFSA to receive need-based financial aid. To find out if you qualify for federal or school-based financial aid via the FAFSA, please contact the financial aid office at your chosen institution.

Ohio Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV): The Ohio ETV program is a federally funded program designed to assist current and former foster youth with postsecondary education expenses.

How do I apply to FAFSA or the Ohio ETV program?

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): You may fill out the FAFSA application at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

Ohio Education and Training Voucher Program (ETV): To apply (*or find out if you are eligible*) for Ohio ETV funding, please visit <https://fosteredservices.org/ohio-etv/>. If you have questions regarding the Ohio ETV program, please email amanda@fosteredservices.org. Some short-term job training programs do not qualify for ETV funding. Even if your short-term training program does not qualify for ETV funding, you may still apply for a FAMILY Fund grant if the JFS Program Specialist determines that your program is eligible.

How much money could I be awarded by the FAMILY Fund?

The purpose of our FAMILY Fund grants is to fill postsecondary funding gaps for qualifying students. How much money you may be awarded will depend on your financial need, which FAMILY Fund grant you apply for, and whether House Bill 164 (details below) passes. We offer two types of grants:

1. Title IV Grants: This grant can only be applied to postsecondary academic and job training programs that qualify for Title IV federal financial aid such as the Pell Grant. Award amounts can vary up to \$5,000. Your award amount depends on your financial need, as well as the responses you provided in the application, and your academic situation. Applicants are eligible for one Title IV grant per calendar year.
2. One-Time Grants: Applicants are eligible to receive this grant just one time. Award amounts can vary up to \$2,000 and tend to be under \$500. This grant is primarily for students who have most of their postsecondary academic and job training costs covered but need money to cover one expense, such as a certification fee, to purchase tools, to create a portfolio, or for other expenses that either enhance the student's educational experience or facilitate program engagement and completion. *Title IV grantees may only apply for this grant if they experience a life-altering event, such as a debilitating injury, new child, etc., that dramatically changes their financial need.*

[House Bill 164 \(HB 164\)](#) was proposed in the Ohio legislature. *If this bill passes*, a new foster-to-college scholarship program would be set up in Ohio to fund postsecondary financial gaps for qualifying current or former foster youth. Since HB 164 has not yet passed, we do not yet know how it will impact our grant program. You may read more about the bill and follow it using the blue link above. If you have any additional questions, reach out to Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.gov.

Which grant should I apply for?

This depends on your educational program and needs. Please fill out the [Education Funding Inquiry Form](#) and a JFS Educational Specialist will work with you to figure out which FAMILY Fund grant, if any, to apply for. The JFS Educational Specialist may direct you to other financial aid resources unrelated to the FAMILY Fund.

Does my program qualify for Title IV federal financial aid funding?

Your academic institution or job training program will know if your degree or certificate program qualifies for Title IV Federal Financial Aid such as the Pell Grant. Please reach out to your institution's financial aid office. Make sure to also ask if you might be eligible for other financial aid and how to apply.

When should I apply?

The FAMILY Fund will accept One-Time Grant applications anytime during the year.

The Title IV application submission period happens two times during the year (summer and fall). Students are eligible to receive one Title IV Grant per year and may apply anytime during the year. For more guidance on when to apply, see the table below.

Title IV Grant Application			
Who should apply	Application Period	Application Opens	Application Closes
Eligible students who will start using the grant funds for a program* that starts in August through December OR who are enrolled (or will enroll) in an upcoming autumn semester or term.	Summer	June 1	July 31
Eligible students who will start using the grant funds for a program* that starts in January through July OR who are enrolled (or will enroll) in the upcoming winter/spring/summer semester or term.	Autumn	October 1	November 30

**Some job training programs start on a rolling basis throughout the year.*

How do I get an application for FAMILY Fund grants?

Application materials and instructions on how to apply for the FAMILY Fund grants are provided to eligible students by a JFS Program Specialist. You need to complete the [Education Funding Inquiry Form](#) first, then a JFS Program Specialist will reach out to you and let you know about your next steps after this form has been submitted. These specialists are also knowledgeable about other aid sources and can help you with more than just providing the FAMILY Fund application materials.

Do I have to pay back the money if I receive an award?

No, the grant you receive does not need to be paid back. However, sometimes your institution may require you to pay back other financial aid you have received when these funds are distributed if your total aid exceeds your cost of attendance. If you run into this issue, please send a note to Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.edu immediately.

How and when will I know whether I received a grant?

You will be contacted via email about three weeks after the application closes. We realize that you may need to make loan decisions prior to this date. If this is the case, please send an email to Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.edu so that we can prioritize your application. We also encourage you to

talk with the financial aid office at your institution. There is often flexibility around changing loan dates or amounts.

To check the status of your grant application, visit (https://www.hcjfs.org/initiatives/family-fund/Educational_Funding_Status_Check). Enter your Confirmation Number to see the status.

How do I access my awarded funds?

To use awarded funds, you must submit an Award Utilization Form to a JFS Program Specialist at Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.edu. This form will be provided when students are awarded a grant. Students need to allow a couple of weeks for this request to be processed.

How do I receive my awarded funds?

All awarded money will be paid directly to the institution or accredited program in which the student is enrolled. Half of the awarded funds will be distributed each semester after the student submits their Award Utilization Form. If you are in school all year or close to aging out of other aid sources (e.g., Ohio ETV or Federal Financial Aid), please alert your JFS Program Specialist. The JFS Program Specialist can adjust our distribution protocols when necessary.

If our grant award results in excess allowable funds in your school account, your institution will send you the excess money. If, however, your financial aid exceeds your institution's cost of attendance AND you took out a federal loan during the semester, your institution will likely use this funding to reduce your federal student loan. Your JFS Program Specialist at Hamil-TAY@jfs.ohio.gov can help you better understand this process.

What can I use the grant money to pay for?

Awards can be used for services and supplies that help students to engage in, enhance, or complete their postsecondary education and training program. For example, awarded funds may be used toward a variety of expenses such as tuition, books, school supplies (i.e., pens, paper, pencils, notebooks, etc.), computers or laptops, lab uniforms, lab supplies, testing fees, licensure, and items needed for technical and vocational programs.

Is it possible that my grant award amount changes or is not distributed?

Yes, the award amount may change because it is contingent upon both aid and enrollment levels. Your grant award amount may be adjusted if you receive new sources of aid during the award year, change your enrollment level (e.g., number of credit hours), or choose not to enroll.

Yes, it is possible that an award will not be distributed. If the JFS Program Specialist does not receive documentation confirming your enrollment level each academic period, then the awarded funds will not be delivered to your institution.

Do my grant funds expire?

From the date of award, you will have one year to use the money awarded as long as you are under age 27 OR have not aged out of other aid sources (e.g., Ohio ETV or Federal Financial Aid). If the funds are not used in the allotted timeframe, your award will be returned to the grant fund pool.