STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

DIVISION FOR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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November 6, 2024

Senator Regina Birdsell, Chair
Health and Human Service Oversight Committee
Room 302, State House
Concord, NH 03301

Representative Mark Pearson, Chairman
Children and Family Law Committee
Room 206, Legislative Office Building
Concord, NH 03301

Re: Report on the RSA 187-A: 20-b, Tuition Waiver Program for Foster and Adopted Children

Dear Committee Members,

As you may recall, SB 168 (2007) (Chapter Laws 2007, 366:1) established a tuition waiver program for foster and adopted children. This legislation requires the Department to report annually to the Health and Human Services Oversight Committee and to the Children and Family Law Committee on the status of the program. Accordingly, please accept the following as the Division's report on the status of the program:

The University System of New Hampshire (USNH) and the Community College System of New Hampshire (CCSNH) continues to manage the Tuition Waiver program. The application process for this academic year started in October of 2023 with the posting of the application on the DCYF website and the websites of participating schools. Granite Edvance, formerly known as the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation (NHHEAF) Center for College Planning, continued to be a resource for foster care youth, caregivers and DCYF staff who had questions about how to navigate the college admissions, application and financial aid process. Granite Edvance had a resource table at the annual DCYF Youth Summit, held on 8/8/24, and their college counselors met with youth and caregivers upon request.

We continue to see a significant positive change to the Tuition Waiver Program through the passage of House Bill 2-FN-A-Local, when our youth driven work with the state legislature created a welcomed expansion of the program. These changes included increasing the number of waivers per system from 15 to 35, moving the age limitation for application from 23 to 26 and allowing youth who left DCYF care for guardianship and remain in guardianship until the age of 18 or who were placed with a relative out of state to be eligible for a waiver.

This year there was an unprecedented eighty-four certified applicants for the tuition waiver program. By comparison, there were sixty-eight applicants in 2024, forty-nine applicants in 2023, and forty-eight applicants in 2022. Thirty-five waiver slots were awarded to the USNH, thirteen of them to returning students, and thirty to the CCSNH, fourteen of them returning. We are still processing waiver requests from students who have not followed a traditional path of starting college in the fall after graduating high school and those who are just now deciding to pursue higher education and need assistance.

DCYF and the USNH and Community College system have continued to maintain regular contact in support of the tuition waiver program. This has included both systems recording educational outcomes of waiver recipients that attended their institutions.

The chart below consists of the ninety-four tuition waiver recipients that attended a USNH school since the 2013-14 academic year, through the Fall of 2024. Fifty nine percent of recipients are newly enrolled, have graduated or are continuing to work towards graduation.

USNH

New	22	23%
Continuing	13	14%
Graduated	21	22%
Waiver Discontinued / Did Not Graduate	38	40%
Total	**94**	

The chart below consists of the 132 waiver recipients that attended a CCSNH school from 2012 through the Fall of 2024. Thirty eight percent of recipients are newly enrolled, have graduated or are continuing to work towards graduation.

CCSNH

New	16	12%
Continuing	14	11%
Graduated	20	15%
Waiver Discontinued / Did Not Graduate	82	62%
Total	**132**	

DCYF has continued to explore ways to increase academic achievement among waiver recipients in order to raise graduation rates. DCYF has continued to meet with representatives from both college systems to explore ways to solidify the connection of DCYF youth to campus supports and resources. DCYF has also been participating in meetings with the USNH and CCSNH schools, the DHHS Bureau of Homeless Services and the Youth Success Project to discuss the creation of a SPOC (Single Point of Contact) at each institution. DCYF has also continued to meet with the New Hampshire Technical Institute (NHTI) along with other stakeholders in pursuit of a pilot project to support homeless youth attending NHTI.

The DCYF Youth Engagement Specialist has maintained contact with waiver recipients and provided guidance to students who encountered academic and social/emotional hurdles. She has sent out reminders to reapply and provided information about the FAFSA process and other scholarship opportunities. She also supported several youth who testified to the state Finance Committee in support of the aforementioned changes to House Bill 2, previously referenced in the report.

A complete breakdown of the applicants and recipients of the Tuition Waiver Program for Foster and Adopted Children Program is available on the subsequent pages of this report.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any additional questions you may have regarding the status or implementation of this program.

Very truly yours,



Marie Noonan
Director

Att.

cc Beth Dorian, Community College System of NH
Kara-Lee Beau, University System of NH

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2008 Spring Semester			
11	4	7	♦ 3 were no longer enrolled in college ♦ 2 had sufficient financial assistance from grants or scholarships ♦ 2 did not complete the Federal Financial Application for Student Assistance (FAFSA) as required by the Postsecondary Education Commission.
2008-2009 Fall/Spring Semesters			
34	13 (3 for Spring '09 Semester only.)	21	♦ 7 were no longer enrolled in college ♦ 9 had sufficient financial assistance from grants or scholarships ♦ 2 did not complete the Federal Financial Application for Student Assistance (FASFA)* ♦ 2 missed the deadline for completing the application ♦ 1 was already 23 at the time of application
2009-2010 Fall/Spring Semesters			
56	20	36	While a complete breakdown regarding those who did not receive the waiver is unavailable the majority of non-recipients were determined by the college to which they applied, to be missing required financial documentation.
2010-2011 Fall/Spring Semesters			
53	20*	33	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources, opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school or being determined by the college to which they applied, to be missing required financial documentation. *Two students dropped out of college after the semester started. These waiver slots will be filled for the spring of 2011 through an application process currently underway.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2011-2012 Fall/Spring Semesters			
38	20*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *One student is scheduled to graduate in December of this year. This will create a waiver slot for the Spring semester that will be awarded to one of the 18 youth who had applied but did not receive a waiver.
2012-2013 Fall/Spring Semesters			
35	20*	15	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *One student is scheduled to graduate in December of this year and another student has dropped out. This has created two waiver slots for the Spring semester that will be awarded to one of the 15 youth who had applied but did not receive a waiver.
2013-2014 Fall/Spring Semesters			
38	20*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Three waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full-time students, which is a requirement. The three slots were filled by selecting new recipients from a pool of alternate candidates.
2014-2015 Fall/Spring Semesters			
40	20*	20	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Three waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full-time students, which is a requirement. The three open

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			slots were subsequently filled by other applicants.
2015-2016 Fall/Spring Semesters			
43	20*	23	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Five waiver recipients did not utilize the waiver either because they decided not to attend college or were not full-time students, which is a requirement. The five open slots were subsequently filled by other applicants.
2016-2017 Fall/Spring Semesters			
44	22*	22	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources or opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school. *Four students are splitting two waiver slots. This is due to one student graduating early and another student opting not to start college until the spring semester.
2017-2018 Fall/Spring Semesters			
53	21*	32	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included being able to access adequate financial resources from other sources, opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school and the lack of additional waiver slots as the program is capped at 20 per year. *One student awarded the waiver choose not to attend school so that slot was filled by another student.
2018-2019 Fall/Spring Semesters			
42	20*	22	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for a youth not to receive the waiver included opting not to attend college or not attend a NH state school, being unable to attend full time, having been determined as not having made satisfactory academic progress by the college they previously attended and the lack of additional waiver slots as the program is capped at 20 per year.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
			*Three students awarded the waiver dropped out of school and a fourth opted to enter the military instead. These open slots were subsequently filled by four other students.
2019-2020 Fall/Spring Semesters			
37	30*	7	All applicants that attended a NH State school were able to receive a waiver slot due to the increase from twenty to thirty slots. The seven students who did not receive a waiver opted not to go to college or did not enroll full time which is a requirement. *Four students awarded the waiver dropped out of school, one opted to attend a private online school instead and one opted not to attend college.
2020-2021 Fall/Spring Semesters			
46	30*	16	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having been determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *One applicant awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and that slot was filled by another applicant.
2021-2022 Fall/Spring Semesters			
48	30*	16	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having sufficient resources through participation in the HOPE Extended Foster Care Program and/or receiving federal funds, determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *Two applicants awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and those slots were filled by two other applicants.

Number of Students who applied for Waiver	Number of Students who received and used the Waiver	Number of students who did not receive the Waiver	Reasons why students did not receive the Waiver
2022-2023 Fall/Spring Semesters			
49	30*	18	The waivers were provided to the youth with the greatest level of financial need. Other reasons for applicants not receiving a waiver included opting not to attend college or not to attend a NH state school, having sufficient resources through participation in the HOPE Extended Foster Care Program and/or receiving federal funds, determined as not making satisfactory academic progress, and the waiver slots being capped at 30 per year. *One applicant awarded the waiver opted not to attend school and their slot was filled by another applicant.
2023-2024 Fall/Spring Semesters			
65	52	N/A	The waivers were provided to all youth who followed through with the necessary application requirements and met the admission standards of the institution for higher learning that they applied to. Some students changed their minds about attending school or attending one of the schools participating in the waiver program.
2024-2025 Fall/Spring Semesters			
84	65*	N/A	The waivers were provided to all youth who followed through with the necessary application requirements and met the admission standards of the institution for higher learning that they applied to. Some students changed their minds about attending school or attending one of the schools participating in the waiver program. *As of this writing there were three additional waiver applicants which would bring the number of recipients to 67.