

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER  
FAMILY SUPPORT AND CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FSCWS-03-08**

**TO:** County Directors of Social Services

**ATTENTION:** Adoption Supervisors, Foster Care Supervisors, LINKS Liaisons

**DATE:** March 13, 2008

**SUBJECT:** NC REACH SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** IMMEDIATELY

Session Law 2007-323, section 10.34 provided funding for a new scholarship program that will benefit college students who either aged out of N.C. public foster care or whose adoption from N.C. public foster care was finalized on or after their twelfth birthday. This scholarship program, called **NC Reach**, will not only provide significant funding for scholarships, but will also provide comprehensive case management services for participating students.

**Eligibility:**

Individuals who are now aged 18 through 25 who either aged out of N.C. public foster care or whose adoption from N.C. public foster care was finalized on or after the student's 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. The student must meet the criteria for admissions at the university or community college and be accepted as a student. Eligibility ends on the student's 26<sup>th</sup> birthday. The student must be pursuing an undergraduate degree, diploma, or certificate at a qualifying school on at least a half time basis. The student must make satisfactory progress toward the completion of undergraduate study.

Students must comply with registration requirements for military service unless they are exempt from registration. Students may not be in default or owe a refund under any federal or state loan or grant program.

**Qualifying Schools**

The scholarships apply to the costs of attendance at any of the 16 branches of the University of North Carolina or at any of the 58 public North Carolina community colleges. This scholarship only applies to undergraduate level educational programs.

**How Benefits are Determined**

Federal and state grants and scholarships, including the Pell Grant, the Education Training Voucher and state scholarships such as the Lottery Scholarship are applied first to the predetermined costs of attendance at the qualifying school. The NC Reach Scholarship will pay the balance of the predetermined costs of attendance. Legitimate student loans which were incurred after July 31, 2007 for costs of attendance for qualifying students are also eligible for repayment through this program.

**Costs of Attendance**

Costs of attendance are defined by the Higher Education Act of 1965 and include tuition, fees, room and board, supplies, transportation, and personal expenses. This amount is established at each qualifying institution.

**Application Procedure**

Students will apply on line by going to the website [www.NCReach.org](http://www.NCReach.org) and clicking on the application. Eligibility will be verified by the contractor through the county DSS or state Division of Social Services.

## Case Management Services

The contractor, Orphan Foundation of America, has provided oversight to North Carolina's Education Training Voucher Program for four years and is well equipped to provide services that will help students successfully complete their educational program. The menu of services will include:

- Processing and accepting applications for the program;
- Certifying eligibility and determining the amount of the scholarship to be awarded;
- Compiling accurate databases of resources in the students' academic communities that can help students succeed in school;
- Providing or arranging for counseling regarding academic issues as well as other concerns that may affect the student's academic performance;
- Maintaining consistent, regular contact with the student throughout their postsecondary experience;
- Being immediately available to students experiencing crisis;
- Providing or arranging for emergency housing up to two weeks for students who have no safe place to live when school is out of session;
- If allowed by the student, being available to consult with students' families and staff of local Departments of Social Services regarding the student's postsecondary progress;
- Monitoring grades and the individual's course of study, and evaluating progress toward goal achievement;
- Maintaining records for each student regarding the student's progress and services provided; and
- Providing quarterly program reports of case management services.

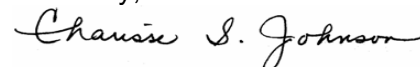
### Notification of eligible students:

Most students who are currently eligible for the ETV scholarships are also eligible for the NC Reach Scholarships. Orphan Foundation will notify these students to apply, as well as students who are approaching the upper limits of eligibility for ETV. The most significant new population that will be served under this program are individuals who are now 18-25 and who were adopted from DSS custody on or after their 12<sup>th</sup> birthday. Adoptive families whose children were adopted as adolescents should be informed immediately about the availability of these scholarships.

Youth who entered guardianship placements from N.C. foster care on or after the age of 12 and who were subsequently adopted will also qualify for this scholarship. Youth who entered guardianship or were adopted from N.C. public foster care prior to age 12 do not qualify for NC Reach scholarships.

Thank you for your close attention to this information. We are very excited about the availability of this resource for our youth and hope that we will see an increase in adoptions of adolescents from foster care as a result of the passage of this law. If you have questions about the NC Reach program, contact Joan McAllister, LINKS Program Coordinator, at [Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net](mailto:Joan.McAllister@ncmail.net) or at (919) 733-2580.

Sincerely,



Charisse Johnson, Chief  
Family Support and Child Welfare Services

cc: Sherry Bradsher  
Jo Ann Lamm  
Sarah Barham  
Family Support and Child Welfare Team Leaders  
Children's Programs Representatives  
Work First Program Representatives  
Local Business Liaisons  
Private Adoption Agency Directors