



NC Reach Fact Sheet

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What is NC Reach?

NC Reach is a state-funded scholarship program for foster youth and adoptees administered by the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA). It is a groundbreaking program – the first of its kind in the country. NC Reach funds up to a given institution’s full cost of attendance after all other public funds and scholarships have been applied. In addition, the program provides comprehensive student support including case management services, mentoring, internship opportunities, professional workshops, and care packages – vital elements that help ensure academic success.

Who is eligible for NC Reach?

Residents of North Carolina are eligible for NC Reach if they were adopted from North Carolina DSS foster care after age 12 or if they aged out of North Carolina foster care at age 18. Program participants must be enrolled in one of the 74 North Carolina public universities community colleges. Students remain eligible until their 26th birthday. Students can access funding for a maximum of four full years, including fall, spring, and summer semesters. For more detail on eligibility requirements, visit www.NCReach.org.

How do eligible students apply?

Eligible students may go online at www.NCReach.org and click on “*Apply Here*” for applications and forms. Complete directions are available on the site. Applications are accepted and awarded year round.

How many young people are eligible in North Carolina?

The North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS) estimates that approximately 5200 youth are currently eligible for NC Reach. This figure includes 3400 who have aged out of foster care since 2004, and approximately 1800 who were adopted from foster care between the ages of 12 and 18 since 1995. Approximately 600 – 650 students age out of foster care in North Carolina each year.

What specifically does NC Reach funding cover?

NC Reach covers the full cost of attendance as determined by a qualified North Carolina state-affiliated university or community college after all other funding has been applied. Funding is determined by each school but typically covers tuition, books and supplies, housing and personal living expenses.

What is the desired outcome of the program, in terms of its impact on a student’s life?

The goal of the program is to help eligible students finish school without financial burden, enable them to launch professional careers and become assets in the workforce.

Why did the State of North Carolina launch this initiative?

Education and workforce development are high priorities in North Carolina. Foster care and adoption are key concerns as well. Within the state, there are a number of foster care and adoptive parenting groups advocating for these young people and who helped drive the development of this program.

How is the program going? How many students are being supported?

The program is gaining momentum and making a difference in young lives. Since its inception in February 2008, more than 250 young people have been awarded or are in the process of applying for NC Reach scholarships, totaling nearly \$700,000 in funding (as of 10/24/08). We are vigorously promoting the program and encouraging more eligible young people to learn more and apply.

Which colleges and universities can students attend in the NC Reach program?

Any of the 74 North Carolina public colleges, universities, or community colleges is an eligible educational institution for the NC Reach program. Students should go to the NC Reach website at www.ncreach.org and click on “Choose College Here” to find a complete guide to North Carolina state universities and community colleges.

How does NC Reach complement Educational Training Voucher (ETV) funding?

By providing up to \$5000 annually to eligible foster youth and adoptees, Educational Training Voucher (ETV) grants provide an important way for students to pay for college and its related expenses. ETV grants are only available until the age of 23 in North Carolina. Also, ETV is not available to those who were adopted before the age of 16. These requirements leave some people behind and this is where additional funding opportunities become so important. Without them, students would have significant financial burdens.

What is the Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) and how is it related to NC Reach?

Founded in 1981, OFA is the only national organization focused solely on helping foster youth who have aged out of the system pursue their post-high school educational goals. More than 25,000 age out every year and face a difficult transition into adulthood without family or financial support. OFA awards scholarships and other funding and provides mentoring and internship opportunities, coaching, care packages and family-like support. OFA administers NC Reach for the state of North Carolina, the first program of its kind in the U.S. For more information on OFA, visit www.orphan.org.

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