Foster Youth FAFSA Tip Sheet for High School Counselors:
You can help foster youth succeed in college!

DID YOU KNOW?

- *Nearly all* foster youth report wanting to go to college, but only **8%** actually receive a 2- or 4-year degree.
- Only **50%** of foster youth attending community college actually receive the Pell grant, even though nearly **90%** are eligible.

Foster Youth Financial Aid Updates for 2019-2020
- The Chafee Grant has been expanded. Eligible foster youth can now receive funding for up to 5 years (whether or not consecutive) and until age of 26!
- Foster youth no longer need to provide documentation to verify their foster care status for the purposes of independent status on the FAFSA. This is now verified through an automated match with California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data.
- Access to the Entitlement Cal Grant has been expanded for foster youth students in care after age 13. These students can now apply up until the age of 26, can receive the grant for up to 8 years and can submit up until September 2nd if they are attending community college.

TIP! **Take the time to help foster youth receive maximize financial aid. Individualized assistance is most effective. Keep in mind these specific considerations:**

Before the FAFSA:
❑ Ensure that FAFSA workshop materials are inclusive of foster youth. Students in foster care will not need to report their parent's financial information.
❑ Ask students if they have access to their social security number. If not, direct them to their Social Worker or Probation Officer for help.
❑ Make sure students have a personal email address (not a school-based email).

During the FAFSA:
❑ Be mindful that answering the challenge questions to create a FSA ID can be triggering and stressful for some students.
❑ Foster youth often lack home stability. Assist students to create a system to store their passwords and usernames in a safe location.
❑ Foster youth may qualify as an independent student on their FAFSA if they were in foster care as a dependent or ward of the court on or after their 13th birthday. Students who can answer yes to this question do not need to report information about their biological parents, foster parents (Resource Parents) or adoptive parents. Make sure eligible students qualify for independent status.
❑ Encourage foster youth to check off the box on the FAFSA that asks, *"Are you a foster youth or were you at any time in the foster care system?"* Answering yes may give students more access to on-campus resources and supports.
❑ Extended Foster Care (AB 12) benefits, such as Supervised Independent Living Placement (SILP) benefits, do not need to be reported as income on the FAFSA.

After the FAFSA:
❑ Complete the Chafee Grant Application at www.chafee.csac.ca.gov
❑ Create a WebGrants 4 Students Account at https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/
❑ Verify that their GPA has been received and matched to their account to receive Cal Grant
❑ Remind students to update their accounts if their address/phone number changes (e.g. WebGrants, FAFSA, etc.)
❑ Link students to campus-based foster youth support programs. Learn more at: student.cacollegepathways.org
❑ If verification of foster youth status is requested for financial aid or other resources, students should contact their social worker, Probation Office or Independent Living Program (ILP) Coordinator

Timing Your Support:
1. FAFSA/CA Dream Act Application: *30-45 minutes*
2. Chafee Grant Application: *10-15 minutes*
3. Creating a WebGrants Account: *10 minutes*
4. Verifying GPA has been received: *5 minutes*
Total: 55 - 75 minutes

Visit **www.jbay.org/fafsachallenge/** for a comprehensive list of resources, tools and trainings to help foster youth navigate college and financial aid!