

**Department of Health and Human Services
Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP)**

SECTION 1: Statutory Reference

The Department of Health and Human Services shall establish a transition grant program to provide financial support to eligible individuals to support their postsecondary education.

22 M.R.S. § 4010-C

SECTION II: Definitions

1. **Alumni** A young person who turned 18 while in Maine’s foster care system and was on Maine DHHS’s Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement that ended at age 21.
2. **DHHS** Refers to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS or the Department), Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS), with statutory authority to provide custodial and extended care support to eligible individuals.
3. **Financial Support** Funding provided by DHHS to the ATGP recipient is to be applied toward postsecondary education and living expenses equivalent to the level of financial support provided to students through the Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement.
4. **Student** An alumni at least 21 years of age, but less than 27 years of age who exited the Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement and is enrolled in postsecondary education.
5. **Postsecondary Education** A program of study that takes place at any college or university that leads to an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree or a postsecondary training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. This does not include a course of study through Adult Education, informal internship, or informal apprenticeship outside of a postsecondary institution.
6. **Postsecondary Educational Institution** An educational institution in or out of state that is recognized by Maine’s Department of Education as an institute of postsecondary education or a formal training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that provides a credential generally accepted by employers.
7. **Undergraduate degree** A two-year Associate’s degree or a four-year Bachelor’s degree. Does not include a postgraduate (i.e. Master’s) degree.

8. **Postsecondary Navigator** A person employed by a community-based organization or DHHS to support the ATGP recipients by providing information about on- and off- campus services, brokering resources, providing coordination and advocacy, and meeting with ATGP students to assist in their successful completion of postsecondary education, degree, or apprenticeship attainment.
9. **Voluntary Extended Care and Support Agreement** Also known as the V9 Agreement. A voluntary agreement between a young adult, aged 18 to 21 years, who was in Maine DHHS's foster care on his or her 18th birthday for the purpose of providing financial and other supports to the young adult until his or her 21st birthday.

SECTION III: ATGP Eligibility

1. An individual must be at least 21 years of age, but less than 27 years of age; and
2. Must have aged out of Maine's foster care system at age 18 and exited Maine's Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement with the Department under Title 22 M.R.S. § 4037-A at 21 years of age, in accordance with DHHS Office of Child and Family Services Policy Manual, Section V.T. Youth Transition Services; and
http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/cw/policy/v t_maine_title_iv-e_indepen.htm
3. Must show proof of enrollment in a postsecondary education undergraduate program and documentation (i.e. grades) to demonstrate continuing satisfactory progress (with at least a 2.0 GPA); or if on probation, must provide a formal plan to exit probation that has been accepted by the postsecondary institution.

SECTION IV: ATGP Level of Support

1. No more than 40 individuals at any one time may receive the Alumni Transition Grant.
2. Alumni Transition Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.
3. Eligible individuals may apply after their 20th birthday up to their 27th birthday using the DHHS OCFS' Alumni Transition Grant Application.
4. A transition grant will not be provided prior to the individual's 21st birthday or after the individual's 27th birthday.
5. The level of financial support must be equivalent to the current voluntary extended care and support (V9) agreement pursuant to section 4037-A and in accordance with DHHS, Office of Child and Family Services, VT Youth Transition Policy.

6. The DHHS Transition Grant will provide financial support to eligible students for postsecondary support up to the completion of an undergraduate degree and:
 - a. Financial support will not exceed six (6) years for the completion of a four- year undergraduate Bachelor's Degree.
 - b. Financial support will not exceed four (4) years for the completion of a two-year undergraduate Associate's Degree.
 - c. Financial support for training programs will not exceed four (4) years for the completion of a postsecondary training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

SECTION V: ATGP Navigator Services

1. The ATGP Navigator will provide postsecondary education support to ATGP recipients by:
 - a. Providing support to all ATGP recipients as coordinated with the student and within the parameters of the ATGP.
 - b. Contacting each ATGP recipient prior to, in the middle of, and before the end of each semester, to assist the student in planning and to coordinate assistance as needed.
 - c. Working with students, mental health professionals, and other treatment providers to support students in the development of their treatment plans, as needed.
 - d. Helping students develop relational skills for building their own informal supports and connections to their community.
 - e. Securing proper releases and providing information to assist with accessing on and off campus supports, services, and resources as coordinated with the student.
 - f. Working with students to provide case coordination, resources, and advocacy for student goal achievement and success.
 - g. Assisting ATGP students as needed in establishing safe and stable housing.
 - h. Collecting grade and progress reports at the end of each semester to ensure continued ATGP eligibility and student success.
 - i. Maintaining records with relevant documentation.

- j. Attending ATGP Advisory Committee meetings.
- k. Assisting with data collection and annual reporting to the Maine Legislative Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the DHHS, OCFS Director.
- l. Coordinating with the DHHS, OCFS Youth Transition Specialist.
- m. Checking in with ATGP graduates to explore additional resources and complete follow up data collection.

SECTION VI: ATGP Advisory Committee

1. The ATGP Advisory Committee will be comprised of a maximum of fifteen (15) members, as appointed by the DHHS, OCFS Director, who are representative of:
 - a. DHHS OCFS Youth Transition Specialist
 - b. DHHS OCFS district staff
 - c. The ATGP Navigator
 - d. Postsecondary educational institutions
 - e. Community-based organizations focused on postsecondary education for youth in transition
 - f. Community-based employers
 - g. Community-based or public organizations focused on employment for youth in transition
 - h. Alumni Transition Grant Program participants (at least two (2))
 - i. Youth Leadership Advisory Team contracted provider
 - j. Community-based organizations focused on youth in transition
2. Governance Structure
 - a. Meetings/Chair: The OCFS Youth Transition Specialist will call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee. At the first meeting, the committee shall select, by majority vote, co-chairs (including one ATGP participant) from among its members to serve a term of one year. A chair may be re-elected to subsequent terms. The chairs shall call subsequent meetings and will identify a note taker from the attendees who is responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. The Advisory Committee must meet at least four (4) times per year.
 - b. Notice of Meetings/Agenda: The chair shall send a notice of meeting to each advisory committee member at least three (3) weeks in advance. A notice of meetings must contain the date, time, place, and agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting. Special meetings must have at least ten (10) days' notification prior to meetings.

- c. Attendance at Meetings: Each advisory committee member is expected to attend all meetings, either in person or remotely.
 - d. Within three (3) months of resignation or removal of a committee member, the committee will make a recommendation to the OCFS Director regarding new membership appointment.
- 3. Decision Making: The Advisory Committee will make all decisions based on consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, the Committee will make decisions based on majority rule. A quorum is required. A quorum is defined as 50 percent plus one, of the current membership. The Advisory Committee will also follow the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*.
- 4. Responsibilities and duties of the Advisory Committee:
 - a. Establish and follow Committee bi-laws;
 - b. Identifies in collaboration with OCFS and the ATGP Navigator aggregated data regarding ATGP participants and graduates;
 - c. Reviews data and waitlist numbers to ensure that the program is working as intended;
 - d. Reviews the ATGP rules on a bi-annual basis;
 - e. Advises DHHS OCFS Director regarding identified barriers, unmet needs, and suggested improvements to the ATGP within the context of these rules; and
 - f. Provides an annual report each January to Maine's Legislative Joint Standing committee on Health and Human Services and the OCFS Director regarding utilization of this program, overall outcomes, and identifying other needs of youth in transition that cannot be met by this program.