

Education and Training Vouchers in Illinois

Devlin Hanson, Michael Pergamit, Katherine Thomas, and Laura Packard Tucker
August 2022

The Chafee Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program is a key financial support for young people currently or formerly in foster care to attend college or participate in vocational training programs.¹ Historically, students could receive up to \$5,000 a year to pursue postsecondary education or vocational training. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, federal legislation raised the annual maximum to \$12,000 from October 2021 through September 2022.

This snapshot of Illinois’s ETV program uses data from 2007–17.² Findings include the annual number and amount of ETV awards, characteristics of recipients and their chosen schools, and preliminary statistics on postsecondary education persistence. For more information about the ETV program in Illinois and other states, please see the full report: *Do Education and Training Vouchers Make a Difference for Young Adults in Foster Care? A Study of Ten States* (<https://urban.is/3PF89XL>).

Overview of Illinois’s ETV Program

- Between 2007 and 2017, Illinois awarded \$8.2 million in ETV awards.³
- This included 2,978 awards to 1,844 young people (an average of 271 awards a year).
- On average, each young person received \$2,758 per year of schooling.
- Nine percent of all ETV-eligible young people attended college with an ETV voucher.

FIGURE 1

ETV Awards and College Enrollment among ETV-Eligible Young People in Illinois in 2011 and 2012

■ Enrolled with an ETV ■ Enrolled without an ETV ■ Didn't enroll in college



URBAN INSTITUTE

¹ Many states provide funding through other programs, making ETV funding less necessary (e.g., through state-funded tuition waivers, grants, and scholarships, etc.).

² This analysis uses data from three main data sources: (1) child welfare placement data for young people who were in out-of-home placements at or after age 16; (2) National Student Clearinghouse data on enrollment and graduation for these young people; and (3) data on ETV receipt and use. This analysis is descriptive, and statistics presented here should not be interpreted as program impacts. It is part of a broader evaluation of the ETV program in California, Colorado, Illinois, Florida, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee.

³ We use the term “award” throughout, but not all states have award data. Four states (Colorado, Illinois, Missouri, and Ohio) only provided data on all ETVs awarded, regardless of whether they were used or not. Four states (Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee) only provided data on the ETV awards used. Two states provided data on both used and awarded ETVs. In those states, 75 percent and 89 percent of the ETVs awarded were used. This means that states providing only data on used ETVs will have a lower count of ETVs.

Who Is More Likely to Receive an ETV?

In Illinois, our data include 6,264 young people currently or formerly in care who were eligible for their first ETV award between 2011 and 2012. **Of those young people, 2,372 (38 percent) went to college by age 21.**⁴ Table 1 shows which young people who attended college by age 21 were most likely to do so with an ETV. ETV recipients were, on average, 20.4 years old when they were first awarded a voucher. In Illinois, eligible young women were more likely to attend college with an ETV than young men.⁵ Of all eligible women attending college, 28 percent went to college with an ETV compared with 18 percent of men (table 1). Young people who identify as Black were more likely to have attended college with an ETV (28 percent) than young people in any other racial or ethnic group (table 1).

Young people emancipated from care attended college with ETVs at higher rates than those who were discharged through reunification (table 1). More data on the child welfare characteristics of young people who receive ETVs in Illinois can be found in the full ETV report.

TABLE 1

Likelihood of Attending College by Age 21 with an ETV

Examining ETV award for ETV-eligible young people attending college

Characteristic	Total ETV-eligible young people who attended college by age 21 (n)	College w/ ETV	College w/o ETV
All students	2,372	24%	76%
Gender			
Female	1,325	28%	72%
Male	1,062	18%	82%
Race/ethnicity^a			
Asian	-	-	-
Hispanic	125	22%	78%
Black	1,595	28%	72%
White	649	15%	85%
All other	-	-	-
Last discharge reason^b			
Reunification	43	5%	95%
Emancipation	2,029	27%	73%

Note: To match the terminology present in the child welfare administrative data, this fact sheet uses the term Hispanic to describe people of Latin American descent.

^a Counts and metrics for racial and ethnic subgroups with fewer than 50 young people are not shown.

^b Reunification and emancipation reflect the two most common discharge reasons for this population, but young people may also discharge to other exits not included here, such as guardianship or adoption. Data on all exit types can be found in the supplementary notebook.

⁴ The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data may undercount enrollment for a couple reasons. In some cases, there are mismatches between the NSC and child welfare data. Also, NSC does not include many technical schools, so some enrollments in technical schools will not be counted.

⁵ All findings discussed in this fact sheet are statistically significant at least at the 90 percent confidence level. Analysis details including *p*-values can be found in the full ETV report.

How, When, and Where Are ETVs Used?

- Young people in Illinois received ETVs for an average of 1.8 years. Forty percent received ETVs for 2 years or more.
- Six percent of ETV recipients received a voucher in their first year in college.
- Eighty-two percent of ETV recipients first received an ETV while they were still in care.

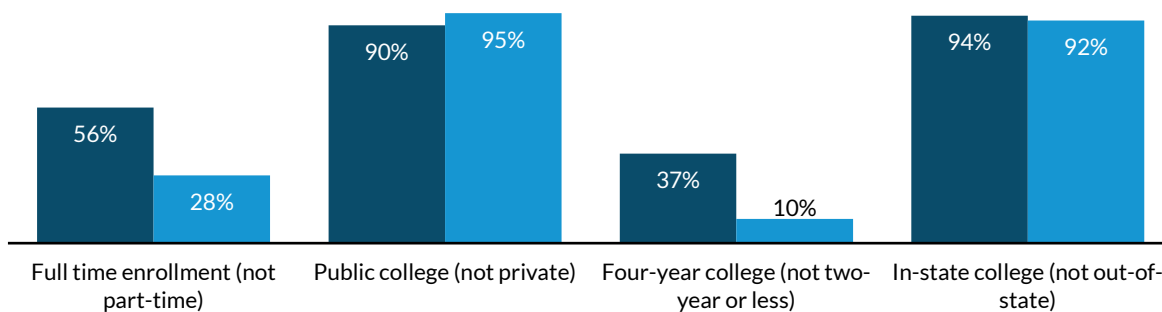
Figure 2 shows the types of colleges ETV-eligible young people attended, comparing the first admissions of young people who received a voucher with those who did not receive a voucher. Although many young people enroll in multiple colleges, this figure only includes the first college in which a young person ever enrolled.⁶ Compared with young people who attended college but did not receive ETVs, young people who received vouchers were less likely to enroll in public schools and in four-year schools. Young people who received ETVs enrolled in in-state schools at slightly higher rates. ETV recipients enrolled in college full time at higher rates.

FIGURE 2

Types of Colleges ETV Recipients Attended

Comparing first enrollments by ETV-eligible young people who did and did not receive an ETV

■ College w/ ETV ■ College w/o ETV



URBAN INSTITUTE

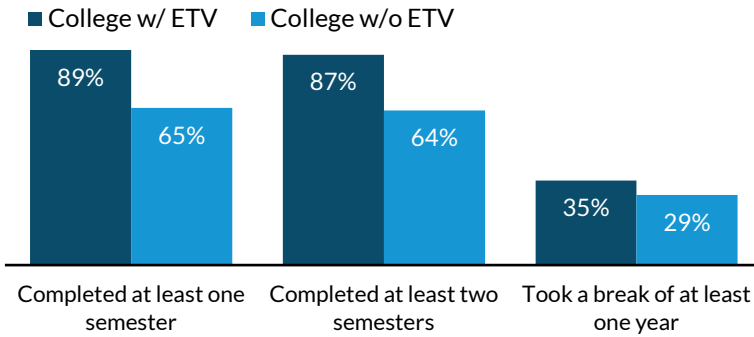
Do Young People Who Receive ETVs Stay in College?

Figures 3 and 4 display college persistence and graduation rates for two groups of ETV-eligible young people in Illinois: those who attended college with ETVs and those who attended college without ETVs. All young people are observed in the National Student Clearinghouse (NSC) data through age 24.

⁶ This analysis is limited to young people who enrolled in college by age 21 (563 enrolled with an ETV; 1,809 enrolled without). More data on college enrollment can be found in the full ETV report.

FIGURE 3

College Persistence among ETV-Eligible Young People Who Attended College

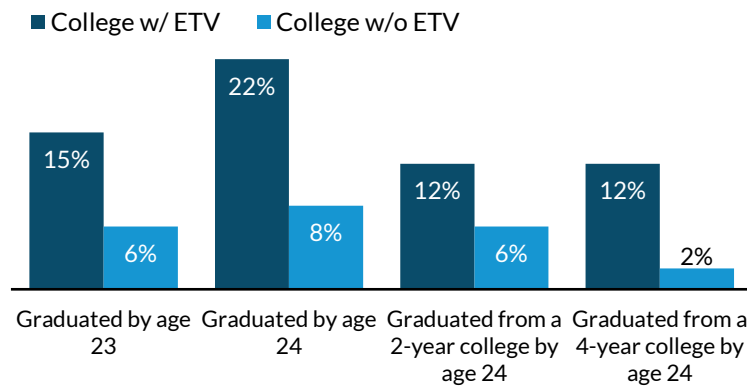


URBAN INSTITUTE

- ETV receipt was correlated with increased college persistence.
- Young people who received ETVs enrolled in college for at least two semesters more often than young people who did not receive ETVs.

FIGURE 4

Graduation Rates for Young People Eligible for ETVs



URBAN INSTITUTE

- ETV receipt is also correlated with increased college graduation rates.
- Compared with young people who did not receive ETVs, young people who received ETVs in Illinois had higher graduation rates by ages 23 and 24.

More data on college persistence and graduation can be found in the full ETV report.

Acknowledgments

This snapshot was funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE). The Urban Institute and its partner, Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago, are conducting this and other analyses for OPRE as part of the “Phase II Evaluation Activities for Implementing a Next Generation Evaluation Agenda for the John H. Chafee Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood” project. We thank OPRE for their support but acknowledge that the findings and conclusions presented in this brief are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of OPRE, ACF, or the Urban Institute.

This fact sheet is in the public domain. Permission to reproduce is not necessary. Suggested citation: Hanson, Devlin, Michael Pergamit, Katherine Thomas, and Laura Packard Tucker. 2022. “Education and Training Vouchers in Illinois.” OPRE Report #2022-219. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

The views expressed are those of the author and should not be attributed to the Urban Institute, its trustees, or its funders. Funders do not determine research findings or the insights and recommendations of Urban experts. Further information on the Urban Institute’s funding principles is available at www.urban.org/fundingprinciples.