

Education and Training Vouchers in Pennsylvania

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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 Pennsylvania’s ETV program uses data from 2008–15.² 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 Florida 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 Pennsylvania’s ETV Program

- Between 2008 and 2015, Pennsylvania paid 4,287 awards to 2,328 young people (an average of 536 awards a year).³
- Five 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 Pennsylvania in 2011 and 2012

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



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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 Use an ETV?

In Pennsylvania, our data include 16,095 young people currently or formerly in care who were eligible for their first ETV award between 2011 and 2012. **Of those young people, 2,924 (18 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. Young people who used an ETV were, on average, 19.0 years old when they were first awarded a voucher. In Pennsylvania, eligible young women were more likely to attend college with an ETV than young men.⁵ Of all eligible women attending college, 32 percent went to college with an ETV compared with 24 percent of men (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 Pennsylvania can be found in the full ETV report.

TABLE 1

Likelihood of Attending College by Age 21 with an ETV

Examining ETV use 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	2,924	28%	72%
Gender			
Female	1,592	32%	68%
Male	1,284	24%	76%
Race/ethnicity^a			
Asian	-	-	-
Hispanic	266	23%	77%
Black	1,498	29%	71%
White	1,067	28%	72%
All other	-	0%	0%
Last discharge reason^b			
Reunification	991	12%	88%
Emancipation	1,352	41%	59%

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 two 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 Pennsylvania received ETVs for an average of 2 years. Fifty-three percent received ETVs for 2 years or more.
- Fifty-seven percent of ETV recipients received a voucher in their first year in college.
- Fifty-eight percent of ETV recipients first received an ETV while they were still in care.

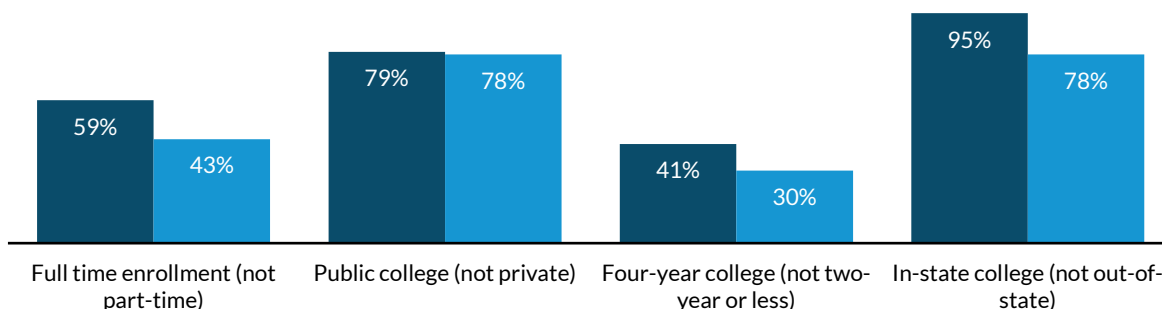
Figure 2 shows the types of colleges ETV-eligible young people attended, comparing the first admissions of young people who used a voucher with those who did not receive a voucher. Although many young people enroll in multiple colleges, this figure only includes the first college in which a young person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



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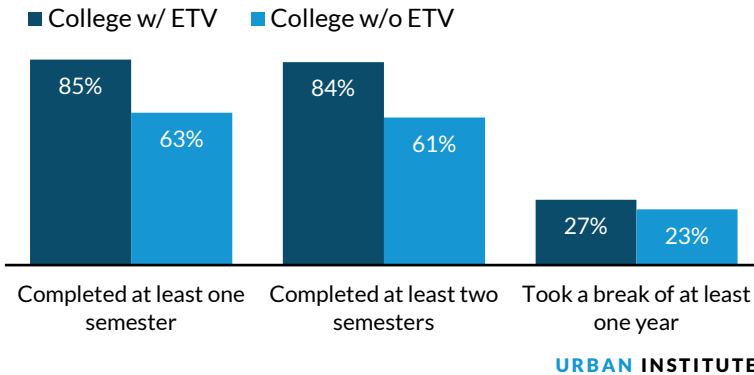
Do Young People Who Use ETVs Stay in College?

Figures 3 and 4 display college persistence and graduation rates for two groups of ETV-eligible young people in Pennsylvania: 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 (822 enrolled with an ETV; 2,102 enrolled without). More data on college enrollment can be found in the full ETV report.

FIGURE 3

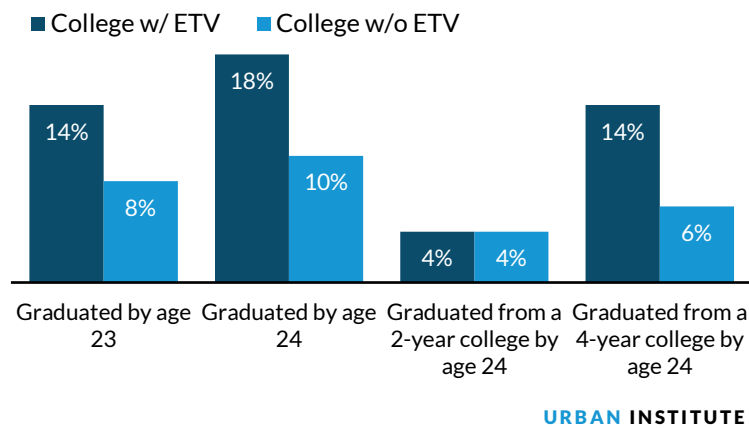
College Persistence among ETV-Eligible Young People Who Attended College



- 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



- 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 Pennsylvania 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

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