

Youth in Care Tuition Bursary

Version 4

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On May 14, 2021, [Seneca launched a tuition bursary that will pay tuition for current or former youth in extended society care who are pursuing their first postsecondary credential](#). Thirty bursaries will be awarded starting in the Fall 2021 Term. In addition to financial support, interested youth can be matched with a Seneca staff member who will support them throughout their program and assist them in accessing resources such as mentoring, tutoring and academic advising.

Who can apply for this bursary?

There is no age cap for this bursary. The applicant must be a current or former youth in extended society care (Crown ward) or Customary Care (including Voluntary Youth Service Agreements), not adopted, who has been in the care of an Ontario Children's Aid Society for a minimum of 12 months (consecutive or cumulative) as defined by the Child, Youth and Family Services Act (CYFSA) of Ontario. The applicant must also demonstrate financial need and must be applying for their first postsecondary credential.

What is the value of the bursary? Is it renewable?

This bursary is valued at the total amount of tuition fees for any Seneca diploma, degree or certificate program. The bursary will be renewed each academic year until graduation, provided the recipient has fulfilled all program requirements (i.e. maintained a full-time course load, met the minimum grade requirements, etc.) and continues to demonstrate financial need.

What is a youth in extended society care?

A youth in extended society care (also referred to as a foster child or a Crown ward) is a youth who is placed in the care and custody of the Children's Aid Society when it has been

determined that they can no longer live with their birth parents, and that a better and less restrictive option (such as placing the child with relatives) is not available. The province accepts all rights and responsibilities for the youth until they turn 18, get married or are adopted.

What is the purpose of this bursary?

The purpose of this bursary is to help reduce financial barriers, enhance access to postsecondary education and provide additional social and community supports for youth. To that end, interested youth can be matched with a Seneca staff member who will support them throughout their program and assist them in accessing resources such as mentoring, tutoring and academic advising.

Common barriers a youth in care might experience include:

- disruption in education due to frequent moves during childhood
- learning gaps due to life experience, learning challenges, mental health conditions
- lack of consistent emotional, financial and social support
- adverse childhood experiences pre-care and possibly during care
- trauma and its repercussions
- pressures to live independently without supports such as consistent caregivers, financial assistance, etc.
- stigma surrounding educational expectations

When can current or prospective students apply for this bursary?

They can apply up until the first day of classes of each semester.

What are the criteria to apply?

The criteria to apply are as follows:

- must be a current or former youth in extended society care (Crown ward) or Customary Care (including Voluntary Youth Service Agreements), not adopted, who has been in care for a minimum of 12 months in the Ontario care system
- must apply to Seneca through the **Ontario College Application Service (OCAS)** and receive an offer of admission before applying for the bursary (prospective students

may contact Recruitment by email at YouthinCare@senecapolytechnic.ca to discuss program options)

- must be pursuing first postsecondary credential
- must be applying for full-time studies (at least 66 per cent course load) in a day program
- must submit an [Ontario Student Assistance Program \(OSAP\)](#) application every academic year
- must demonstrate financial need
- must apply for the bursary prior to the start of studies (current students are welcome to apply for the upcoming semester)

How would someone apply for this bursary?

Current Seneca students should email YouthinCare@senecapolytechnic.ca to indicate their intent to apply for the bursary, and Judy Pattison, Student Recruitment Liaison Officer, will help them through the process. Prospective students who are interested in the bursary must first apply to Seneca through [OCAS](#) and be accepted to a program before applying for the bursary (students may contact Recruitment by email at YouthinCare@senecapolytechnic.ca to discuss program options).

The Facts

- there are approximately 12,000 children in foster care in Ontario and approximately 100,000+ former youth in care
- each year, about 1,000 “age-out” of the system at 18 years old, with only 64 per cent being eligible for a Continued Care and Services allowance (approximately \$875/month)
- about 60 per cent of foster youth drop out of high school
- only 20 per cent of qualified foster youth pursue postsecondary education each year
- at age 21, foster youth are expected to be fully independent, credentialed and career-ready for life as contributing members of society (unrealistic expectations)
- the rate of post-traumatic stress for youth after care is almost double that of war veterans

Please visit the [Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada \(Child Welfare PAC\) website](#) for more information about this initiative.

Please email YouthinCare@senecapolytechnic.ca if you have any other questions about this bursary.