



April 1, 2004

To: Directors Public Children Services Agencies
Directors Private Child Placing Agencies
Directors Private Non Custodial Agencies

From: Rick Smith

Subject: Education and Training Voucher Program for Young People Who Have Emancipated or Been Adopted from Foster Care after age 16.

The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services is pleased to announce the launch of its Education and Training Voucher Program (OH ETV) for foster teens and youth adopted from foster care after their 16th birthday. The program will help address the critical financial needs these young people have when pursuing post-secondary education and training.

The Orphan Foundation of America (OFA) has been contracted to administer the OH ETV Program. OFA has 23 years of experience working with youth transitioning from foster care and since 1986 has been awarding them post secondary scholarships. They have the expertise, infrastructure and commitment to youth and the community necessary to administer the OH ETV Program.

Please join ODJFS and the OH ETV Program in our outreach efforts to identify and serve as many eligible youth as possible. It is important that we reach out to youth who have left state care but are under 21 and may be most in need of education and training now that they are in the workforce.

OFA will work closely with your agency throughout the year on the OH ETV Program and related issues/services to increase post secondary participation and success for Ohio youth. Feel free to contact OFA with questions or concerns you have regarding the ETV Program. Additionally, in the coming days OFA will be mailing your agency a package of materials for distribution, including information cards for youth and brochures for staff, foster and adoptive parents and others who work with eligible youth. The OH ETV Program will have a presence at teen conferences and other appropriate venues throughout the year and OFA is working with high school guidance counselors and college financial aid offices to make them aware of the program.

Now that funds are available to address the financial hurdles that have prevented some foster youth and adoptees from pursuing post secondary education and training, it is important that these young people also receive support services to help them succeed. Students participating in the OH ETV Program will receive online mentoring and care packages throughout the year, and we know your agency will continue to provide emotional support and education guidance as part of your commitment to them.

We look forward to working with your agency to better serve the youth you know and care deeply about. Once you have reviewed the specifics of the program, please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or suggestions. The OH ETV Program is in partnership with you. For the youth to succeed we must all work together to engage them in planning for their future and help them make education and training choices that best meet their strengths, talents and dreams.

OFA Contact Information

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