



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Child Welfare PAC Highlights the Work of Futures Forward to bring Tuition-Free Post-Secondary Opportunities to Manitoba's Youth in Care

WINNIPEG, MB: As organizations that seek to create accessible paths to post-secondary education for current and former crown wards, the [Child Welfare Political Action Committee Canada](#) applauds [Futures Forward](#)'s work in creating tuition-free opportunities for current and former Manitoba youth in care.

Futures Forward's [Tuition Waiver Program](#) was established in 2012 and has grown to include 10 colleges and universities in Manitoba. Participating post-secondary institutions include Assiniboine Community College, Booth University College, Brandon University, Canadian Mennonite University, Manitoba Institute of Trades & Technology, Red River College Polytechnic, University College of the North, Université de Saint-Boniface, the University of Manitoba, and the University of Winnipeg.

To many youth in care aspiring towards a post-secondary diploma, a Tuition Waiver can be a huge help. According to Chantelle Chernick, Futures Forward Employment Facilitator and Tuition Waiver recipient (2018-2021), "A Tuition Waiver allows youth from care to feel like they don't have to worry about money while going to school, which is such a blessing. For some youth, they wouldn't even be able to go to post-secondary school otherwise and this allows them the opportunity to go to school in the first place."

Comprised of three Winnipeg-based nonprofit agencies – [Youth Employment Services Manitoba \(YES\)](#), [Community Financial Counselling Services \(CFCS\)](#), and the [Canadian Mental Health Association of Manitoba and Winnipeg \(CMHA\)](#) – Futures Forward is a collaborative that aims to support Manitoba's community of youth in, from, and aging out of care. Futures Forward participants have access to low-barrier services and supports across domains such as mental health, housing, employment, education, and financial counselling to assist with successful transitions into adulthood.

These bursaries, which do not have an age cap, can cover up to the full cost of a recipient's certificate, diploma, or degree program. Tuition Waiver recipients can also receive living supports from the Manitoba government to help cover the cost of their living costs, supplies, books, transportation, childcare, and more. "It feels good to have that support from the Futures Forward team – not just the money for school, the other supports and the sense of community are very important too," says Chernick.

More information on [participating post-secondary institutions and eligibility criteria can be found online](#). Inquiries regarding the Tuition Waiver program can be made to Samantha Olea, Post-Secondary Education Advisor, at solea@yesmb.ca or 1-204-987-8661 ext. 672.

Prospective students seeking opportunities outside Manitoba can [learn more about other post-secondary institutes offering tuition-free programs for former youth in care online](#).

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Manitoba Foster Care Quick Facts:

- There are about 10,000 children in state care in Manitoba.
- Manitoba is an outlier in the child welfare sector with 33.2 children per 1000 in care compared to the national median of 7.9 children per 1000.
- About 65% of foster youth drop-out of high school.
- Close to 70% of the Winnipeg youth homeless population reported being involved in foster care.
- Youth leaving government care in Manitoba need additional support compared to their peers who have not been in care to achieve equivalent success in employment and education.

About [Child Welfare PAC](#):

The Child Welfare PAC is a federal charity that represents the interests of children raised by the government. The advisory committee consists of professionals from academia, law, business, advocacy & public service who have lived experience in child protection systems. The complete advocacy agenda may be reviewed here: www.childwelfarepac.com

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