

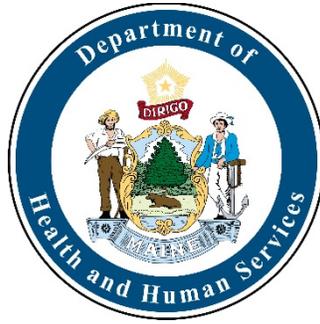


Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP)

December 20, 2021

Required by:
22 M.R.S.A. §4010-C(4)

Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Child and Family Services



The Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP)

2021 Annual Report



Prepared by:

Alumni Transition Grant Program Advisory Committee

and Respectfully Submitted by:

Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services

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Executive Summary

The Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP) is administered by the Department of Health and Human Service's Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS) and provides financial assistance and navigator support to eligible recipients for the purpose of helping individuals who have emancipated or "aged out" of Maine's foster care system complete their postsecondary education. The ATGP is governed by Maine law as set forth in statute (22 M.R.S.A. § 4010-C) (see Appendix A) and rule (10-144 C.M.R. Ch. 577) (see Appendix B).

ATGP grants are awarded on a first come, first served basis to eligible individuals within allocated resources. A maximum of 40 individuals may receive a grant award at any one time. To be eligible, an individual must be at least 21 years of age, but less than 27 years of age; *and* must have aged out of Maine's foster care system at age 18; *and* must have engaged in Maine's Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement; *and* must have exited the V9 Agreement in good standing at age 21; *and* must have been enrolled in a postsecondary education program making satisfactory progress at the time they exited the V9 Agreement. Eligible individuals may apply to the ATGP after their 20th birthday and up until their 27th birthday using the ATGP application available from OCFS. To become and remain eligible, recipients must be in good academic standing, or if on probation, have a formal plan to remediate academic probation, and must still be eligible for FAFSA funding. Recipients are eligible to receive ATGP funds only during semesters in which they are enrolled in classes, except during the summer 2020 semester in response to the COVID pandemic. No more than 40 individuals at any one time may participate in the ATGP Program.

The amount of financial support provided to each ATGP recipient is determined after free financial aid, scholarships, and wages/benefits are considered. The ATGP also factors in the recipient's expenses when determining the award amount. Provided the recipient remains eligible, ATGP assistance will be provided up to the completion of an undergraduate degree (not to exceed six years for the completion of a four-year undergraduate bachelor's degree, four years for the completion of a two-year undergraduate associate's degree, and four years for the completion of a postsecondary training program designed to prepare the individual for gainful employment in a recognized occupation).

The ATGP Administrator reviews the ATGP Budget Form (see Appendix F) with each eligible ATGP recipient to determine his or her ATGP award, based on the recipient's income and expenses. Recipients are required to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Scholarships, wages, and other sources of financial assistance are considered prior to the determination of the ATGP award. ATGP funds are provided to ATGP recipients to cover:

- **Direct College Costs** (Tuition, fees, books, supplies, tools, equipment, tutoring, campus housing, meal plans, and transportation).
- **Living Expenses** (Off-campus room and board, utilities, phone, laundry, childcare, extraordinary expenditures such as an emergency car repairs and medical expenses not covered by MaineCare, and a 5% allowance for unanticipated student costs).

OCFS has staff designated as Youth Transition Specialists, located in district offices across the state to serve as ATGP Navigators. Through this program, ATGP recipients receive supportive assistance (at their direction) while completing their post-secondary programs.

Summary of ATGP Implementation Activities

ATGP Promotion:

Now well established, the ATGP Program is primarily promoted to eligible students through the OCFS Youth Transition Specialists who are working with students exiting Maine's OCFS Voluntary Extended Care (V9) Program. Youth exiting the V9 Program primarily represent the pool of eligible youth. This process also allows for a smooth transition for students, who will continue to work with their Youth Transition Specialist as their ATGP Navigator.

In addition, the ATGP Program continues to be promoted through the Youth Leadership Advisory Team's (YLAT) website (www.ylat.org), YLAT's College Support Resource <https://www.ylat.org/college-supports>, ATGP Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AlumniTransitionGrantProgram>, Annual Teen Conference, ATGP Facebook, OCFS Youth Transition Specialists, and community partners.

ATGP Navigators:

OCFS staff continued to fulfill the role of ATGP Navigator, utilizing the existing seven (7) Youth Transition Specialists located in district offices across the State to serve as ATGP Navigators. Through this role, ATGP Navigators maintained contact with ATGP recipients during each semester to help students access various campus-based and community-based resources, based on their individual needs and desires for support.

ATGP Navigators continued to collaborate with student support services (both on and off campus), including College Transition Specialists through Jobs for Maine's Graduates and TRIO programs (which help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers).

ATGP Advisory Committee:

In 2021, Carleigh Boston continued in the role of Co-Chair, joining Dulcey Laberge, ATGP Administrator. There were some additional changes to ATGP Advisory Committee membership during 2021 (see Appendix C).

The ATGP Committee met four (4) times during 2021. The ATGP Committee continued its Facebook page to provide ATGP Participants with information, resources, and inspiration, as well as to provide a venue to celebrate their achievements.

In early Spring 2020, due to COVID-19 and the unanticipated closing of college campuses, the ATGP Committee decided by unanimous vote to provide funding to eligible students over the summer semester, if needed, whether eligible recipients were enrolled in classes or not. This was considered an emergency ATGP need due to the number of students who needed additional support due to their inability to find employment during the COVID-19

pandemic. This level of financial support was continued in 2021, since the pandemic continued through the year.

ATGP Facebook

There continues to be a steady level of activity, with over 100 individuals who have liked the page. We continued to use the ATGP Facebook page primarily to provide students with information and resources, promote the Program, and to inspire future ATGP participants.

ATGP Financial and Participant Data:

In 2021, a total of 15 eligible individuals participated in the Alumni Transition Grant Program (representing new and renewing ATGP recipients). ATGP funds are provided to students after free financial aid, scholarships, and wages/benefits are considered.

In 2021, ATGP funds totaling \$8,611 were provided (representing the spring 2020, summer 2020, and fall 2020 academic semesters). This represents a substantial decrease in the amount of funding provided. Typically, provide an average of \$45,000 per year is provided.

It should be noted that the significant decrease in funds used during this semester was primarily due to:

- Additional temporary federal funding made available to Maine through the Consolidated Appropriations Act for COVID relief; and
- Increased federal funding in 2020 and 2021 provided financial support to this population for living expenses. The amount of federal postsecondary education funding allotted to states also increased the per student limit from \$5,000 to \$12,000 and will be available until 9/30/22.

It is expected that post-COVID, the numbers of participants and the amount of funding provided each year will return to typical levels.

Of the funding provided to ATGP recipients during this year, 51% was provided to students to cover direct college costs. The remaining 49% was provided to students to cover expenses associated with daily living, as described above in the Executive Summary.

The following chart details the funding provided to ATGP recipients by type and semester:

Semester	Direct College Costs	Living Expenses	Total Funding
Spring 2021	\$ 2387	\$ 2294	\$ 4681
Summer 2021	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Fall 2021*	\$ 2004	\$ 1926	\$ 3930

*Data as of 11/20/21

Student Outcomes:

Of the total number of ATGP participants during 2021:

- Four (4) students graduated in May 2020 with postsecondary degrees:
 - Three (3) students graduated with a bachelor's degree; and
 - One (1) student graduated with an associate's degree.
- Three (3) students exited their postsecondary training program and ended their enrollment in the ATGP during 2021.
- Over the past 7 years, there were an average of 20 students involved at any one time.
- The established limit of 40 students reflected an aspirational limit. It appears that 20-25 students is a more accurate count of the number of former youth in care needing this support. Additional promotion is being planned with the hope that more youth will request support.
- With the COVID Pandemic, the following trendlines have been observed:
 - A lower number of active students, with some taking time off, citing the COVID-19 Pandemic as a major factor.
 - Currently there are around 15 students enrolled in ATGP; and
 - With additional temporary federal funding through the Consolidated Appropriations Act, the amount of ATGP funding required by students is lower. Many ATGP students are also eligible for federal funding designed to cover student costs.

It should be noted that to improve the Committee's understanding of student needs and the supports that helped them successfully graduate, the ATGP Committee voted unanimously to provide a small stipend to ATGP participants who complete a program survey at the end of each semester.

Appendix A:

<http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP1206&item=5&num=126>.

APPROVED: APRIL 28, 2014
BY GOVERNOR
CHAPTER 577, PUBLIC LAW

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN

H.P. 1206 - L.D. 1683

An Act To Improve Degree and Career Attainment for Former Foster Children
Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 22 MRSA §4010-C is enacted to read:

§4010-C. Transition grant program

The Department of Health and Human Services shall establish a transition grant program to provide financial support to eligible individuals to pay for postsecondary education.

1. Age; enrollment in postsecondary education institution. In order to be eligible to participate in the program, an individual must be at least 21 years of age but less than 27 years of age, must have exited the voluntary extended care and support agreement with the State under section 4037-A at 21 years of age and must be enrolled in a postsecondary education institution.

2. Level of financial support. The transition grant is for postsecondary support up to the completion of an undergraduate degree. The level of financial support must be equivalent to the current voluntary extended foster care supports pursuant to section 4037-A. The department shall set duration limits, including a 6-year maximum for a 4-year degree, a 4-year maximum for a 2-year degree and other duration limits for other types of postsecondary education.

3. Postsecondary education navigator services. The program must include postsecondary education navigator services that provide transitional services and college support. The department shall determine the specifics of those services.

4. Advisory committee. The department shall establish an advisory committee to provide oversight of the implementation of the transition grant program. The advisory committee must include stakeholders in the postsecondary education field, the department's postsecondary education navigator under subsection 6, professionals who work with transitional foster youth, employers, representatives of the department and other interested parties. The department shall adopt rules to determine the membership, terms of office and voting procedures of the advisory committee and other specifics of the advisory committee's governance structure. The advisory committee shall provide an annual report to the department and the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over health and human services matters.

5. Limit on number of individuals receiving transition grants. No more than 40 individuals at any one time may receive transition grants under this section.

6. Postsecondary education navigator. The department shall develop the roles and responsibilities for the postsecondary education navigator to provide transitional services and college student support for individuals pursuant to this section. The postsecondary education navigator shall provide data to the advisory committee. The department shall adopt rules to implement this section. Rules

adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Appendix B:

10-148 DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES OFFICE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES (OCFS)

Chapter 577: ALUMNI TRANSITION GRANT PROGRAM (ATGP)

SECTION I: Statutory Reference

The Department of Health and Human Services shall establish a transition grant program to provide financial support to eligible individuals to support their postsecondary education.
22 M.R.S. §4010-C

SECTION II: Definitions

1. **Alumni.** A young person who turned 18 while in Maine’s foster care system and was on Maine DHHS’s Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement that ended at age 21.
2. **ATGP Navigator.** A person employed by a community-based organization or DHHS to support the ATGP recipients by providing information about on- and off-campus services, brokering resources, providing coordination and advocacy, and meeting with ATGP students to assist in their successful completion of postsecondary education, degree, or apprenticeship attainment.
3. **DHHS.** The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS or the Department), Office of Child and Family Services (OCFS), with statutory authority to provide custodial and extended care support to eligible individuals.
4. **Financial Support.** Funding provided by DHHS to the ATGP recipient is to be applied toward postsecondary education and living expenses equivalent to the level of financial support provided to students through the Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement.
5. **Student.** An alumni at least 21 years of age, but less than 27 years of age who exited the Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement and is enrolled in postsecondary education.
6. **Postsecondary Education.** A program of study that takes place at any college or university that leads to an associate’s degree or bachelor’s degree or a postsecondary training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation. This does not include a course of study, outside of a postsecondary institution, through Adult Education, informal internship, or informal apprenticeship.
7. **Postsecondary Educational Institution.** An educational institution in or out of state that is recognized by Maine’s Department of Education as an institute of postsecondary education or a formal training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation and that provides a credential generally accepted by employers.
8. **Undergraduate degree.** A two-year associate’s degree or a four-year Bachelor’s degree. Does not include a postgraduate (i.e. Master’s) degree.
9. **Voluntary Extended Care and Support Agreement.** Also known as the V9 Agreement. A voluntary agreement between a young adult, aged 18 to 21 years, who was in Maine DHHS’s foster care on his or her 18th birthday, for the purpose of providing financial and other supports from DHHS to the young adult until his or her 21st birthday.

SECTION III: ATGP Eligibility

1. An individual must be at least 21 years of age, but less than 27 years of age; and
2. Must have aged out of Maine's foster care system at age 18 and exited Maine's Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement with the Department under Title 22 M.R.S. §4037-A at 21 years of age, in accordance with DHHS *Office of Child and Family Services Policy Manual*, Section V.T. Youth Transition Services
This policy section can be found at:
http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/cw/policy/v_t_maine_title_iv-e_indepen.htm
and
3. Must show proof of enrollment in a postsecondary education undergraduate program and documentation (i.e. grades) to demonstrate continuing satisfactory progress (with at least a 2.0 GPA); or if on probation, must provide a formal plan to exit probation that has been accepted by the postsecondary institution.

SECTION IV: ATGP Level of Support

1. No more than 40 individuals at any one time may receive the Alumni Transition Grant.
2. Alumni Transition Grants will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.
3. Eligible individuals may apply after their 20th birthday up to their 27th birthday using the DHHS OCFS' Alumni Transition Grant Application.
4. A transition grant will not be provided prior to the individual's 21st birthday or after the individual's 27th birthday.
5. The level of Financial Support must be equivalent to the current Voluntary Extended Care and Support (V9) Agreement pursuant to section 22 M.R.S. §4037-A and in accordance with DHHS, Office of Child and Family Services, VT Youth Transition Policy.
6. The DHHS Transition Grant will provide Financial Support to eligible students for postsecondary support up to the completion of an undergraduate degree and:
 - a. Financial Support will not exceed six (6) years for the completion of a four-year undergraduate bachelor's degree.
 - b. Financial Support will not exceed four (4) years for the completion of a two-year undergraduate associate's degree.
 - c. Financial Support for training programs will not exceed four (4) years for the completion of a postsecondary training program designed to prepare students for gainful employment in a recognized occupation.

SECTION V: ATGP Navigator Services

1. The ATGP Navigator will provide postsecondary education support to all ATGP recipients by:
 - a. Coordinating support with each student within the parameters of the ATGP.
 - b. Contacting each ATGP recipient prior to, in the middle of, and before the end of each semester to assist the student in planning and to coordinate assistance as needed.
 - c. Working with students, mental health professionals, and other treatment providers to support students in the development of their treatment plans, as needed.
 - d. Helping students develop relational skills for building their own informal supports and connections to their community.

- e. Securing proper releases and providing information to assist with accessing on- and off-campus supports, services, and resources as coordinated with the student.
- f. Working with students to provide case coordination, resources, and advocacy for student goal achievement and success.
- g. Assisting ATGP students as needed in establishing safe and stable housing.
- h. Collecting grade and progress reports at the end of each semester to ensure continued ATGP eligibility and student success.
- i. Maintaining records with relevant documentation.
- j. Attending ATGP Advisory Committee meetings.
- k. Assisting with data collection and annual reporting to the Maine Legislative Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the DHHS OCFS Director.
- l. Coordinating with the DHHS OCFS Youth Transition Specialist.
- m. Checking in with ATGP graduates to explore additional resources and complete follow-up data collection.

SECTION VI: ATGP Advisory Committee

- 1. The ATGP Advisory Committee will be comprised of a maximum of fifteen (15) members, as appointed by the DHHS, OCFS Director, who are representative of:
 - a. DHHS OCFS Youth Transition Specialist
 - b. DHHS OCFS district staff
 - c. The ATGP Navigator
 - d. Postsecondary educational institutions
 - e. Community-based organizations focused on postsecondary education for youth in transition
 - f. Community-based employers
 - g. Community-based or public organizations focused on employment for youth in transition
 - h. Alumni Transition Grant Program participants (at least two (2))
 - i. Youth Leadership Advisory Team contracted provider
 - j. Community-based organizations focused on youth in transition
- 2. **Governance Structure**
 - a. **Meetings/Chair:** The OCFS Youth Transition Specialist will call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee. At the first meeting, the committee shall select, by majority vote, co-chairs (including one ATGP participant) from among its members to serve a term of one year. Co-chairs may be re-elected to subsequent one-year terms. Co-chairs shall call subsequent meetings and will identify a note-taker from the attendees who is responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. The Advisory Committee must meet at least four (4) times per year.
 - b. **Notice of Meetings/Agenda:** The chair shall send a notice of meeting to each advisory committee member at least three (3) weeks in advance. A notice of meetings must contain the date, time, place, and agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting. Special meetings must have at least ten (10) days' notification prior to meetings.

- c. **Attendance at Meetings:** Each advisory committee member is expected to attend all meetings, either in person or remotely.
 - d. Within three (3) months of resignation or removal of a committee member, the committee will make a recommendation to the OCFS Director regarding a new membership appointment.
3. **Decision Making:** The Advisory Committee will make all decisions based on consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, the Committee will make decisions based on majority rule. A quorum is required. A quorum is defined as 50 percent plus one, of the current membership. The Advisory Committee will also follow *Robert's Rules of Order*, 11th Edition, or any subsequent edition.
4. Responsibilities and duties of the Advisory Committee are as follows:
- a. Establishes and follows Committee bylaws;
 - b. Identifies in collaboration with OCFS and the ATGP Navigator aggregated data regarding ATGP participants and graduates;
 - c. Reviews data and waitlist numbers to ensure that the program is working as intended;
 - d. Reviews the ATGP rules on a bi-annual basis;
 - e. Advises DHHS OCFS Director regarding identified barriers, unmet needs, and suggested improvements to the ATGP within the context of these rules; and
 - f. Provides an annual report each January to Maine's Legislative Joint Standing committee on Health and Human Services and the OCFS Director regarding utilization of this program, overall outcomes, and other needs of youth in transition that cannot be met by this program.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 22 M.R.S. §4010-C

EFFECTIVE DATE:

August 12, 2015 – filing 2015-145

Appendix C:

Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP) Advisory Committee Members:

Dulcey Laberge, DHHS OCFS Youth Transition Team Leader, Program Administrator, *Co-Chair*

Carleigh Boston, Representative: Alumni Transition Grant Program Participant, *Co-Chair*

Amie Howard, OCFS Youth Transition Specialist, Representative: DHHS OCFS District Staff

Christina Hunninghaus, OCFS Youth Transition Specialist, Representative: ATGP Navigators

Laurie Davis, University of Southern Maine, TRIO Programs (retired)

Lisa Sandy, Good Will-Hinckley, Representative: Community-based Organizations Focused on Postsecondary Education for Youth (*resigned*)

Jessica Whittier, Finance Authority of Maine, Representative: Community-based Organizations Focused on Youth in Transition

Debbie Bechard, Jobs for Maine's Graduates, Representative: Community-based Organizations Focused on Postsecondary Education for Youth in Transition

Tia Knowlton-Basford, Representative: Alumni Transition Grant Program Participant

Shannon Saxby, University of Southern Maine, Cutler Institute, Representative: Maine Youth Leadership Advisory Team (*replaced by Lily Mass*)

Sara Flowers, Student Support Services, University of Maine at Augusta, Representative: Postsecondary Educational Institutions

Lily Maass, Policy Assistant, University of Southern Maine, Cutler Institute, Representative: Maine Youth Leadership Advisory Team (*replaced Shannon Saxby in 2021*)

Appendix D:

Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP) Advisory Committee Bylaws

1. Purpose:

The Department of Health and Human Services established a transition grant program to provide financial support to eligible individuals to support their postsecondary education. 22 M.R.S. § 4010-C.

The Purpose of the ATGP Advisory Committee, as authorized by 10-148, Chapter 577, is to ensure the ATGP program is meeting the needs of ATGP recipients as intended by Rule.

2. Membership and Structure:

The ATGP Advisory Committee will be comprised of a maximum of fifteen (15) members, as appointed by the DHHS, OCFS Director, who are representative of:

1. DHHS OCFS Youth Transition Specialist
2. DHHS OCFS district staff
3. The ATGP Navigator
4. Postsecondary educational institutions
5. Community-based organizations focused on postsecondary education for youth in transition
6. Community-based employers
7. Community-based or public organizations focused on employment for youth in transition
8. Alumni Transition Grant Program participants (at least two [2])
9. Youth Leadership Advisory Team contracted provider
10. Community-based organizations focused on youth in transition

3. Governance Structure

A. Responsibilities and Duties:

- a. Develops and follows Committee bylaws;
- b. Approves forms and procedures;
- c. Develops promotional materials;
- d. Identifies and reviews relevant aggregated data and to ensure that the program is working, as intended;
- e. Reviews ATGP rules and relevant policies at least annually or sooner if determined necessary;
- f. Advises OCFS Director regarding identified barriers, unmet needs, and suggested improvements to the ATGP within the context of these rules;
- g. Reviews bylaws on an annual basis; and
- h. Provides an annual report each January to Maine's Legislative Joint Standing committee on Health and Human Services and the OCFS Director regarding utilization of this program, overall outcomes, and other needs of youth in transition that cannot be met by this program.

- B. Committee Meetings/Co-Chairs: The OCFS Youth Transition Specialist will call the first meeting of the Advisory Committee. At the first meeting, the committee shall select, by majority vote, co-chairs (including one ATGP participant) from among its members to serve a term of one year. Co-chairs may be re-elected to subsequent one-year terms. Co-chairs shall call subsequent meetings and will identify a note-taker from the attendees who is responsible for recording the minutes of the meeting. The Advisory Committee must meet at least four (4) times per year.

- C. Notice of Meetings/Agendas: The chair shall send a notice of meeting to each advisory committee member at least three (3) weeks in advance. A notice of meetings must contain the date, time, place, and agenda of the meeting and the minutes of the previous meeting. Special meetings must have at least ten (10) days' notification prior to meetings:
 - a. Attendance at Meetings: Each advisory committee member is expected to attend all meetings, either in person or remotely.

 - b. Within three (3) months of resignation or removal of a committee member, the committee will make a recommendation to the OCFS Director regarding a new membership appointment.

- D. Committee Decision Making: The Advisory Committee will make all decisions based on consensus. When consensus cannot be reached, the Committee will make decisions based on majority rule. A quorum is required. A quorum is defined as 50 percent plus one, of the current membership. The Advisory Committee will also follow *Robert's Rules of Order*, 11th Edition, or any subsequent edition.

Bylaws adopted by the ATGP Committee on December 18, 2015

Appendix E:

ATGP Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes April 26, 2021

Present:

Dulcey Laberge, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Program Manager/ATGP Manager/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Shannon Saxby, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Lily Maass, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Amie Howard, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Christina Hunninghaus, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Laurie Davis, Retired TRIO Director, University of Southern Maine

Debbie Bechard, Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG)

Sara Flowers, University of Maine at Augusta, TRIO Programs

Jessica Whittier, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

Tia Basford, Former ATGP Recipient

Absent:

Carleigh Boston, Former ATGP Participant/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Lisa Sandy, Good Will-Hinckley, College Step Up Program

Review December Meeting Minutes:

The December 2020 minutes were unanimously accepted.

Review ATGP Bylaws:

We reviewed the Bylaws and unanimously agreed no changes are needed at this time.

We also discussed Committee membership and decided it would be good to have an education/work link

- Action Item: Present the ATGP Program and Committee at the next Maine Youth Transition Collaborative (MYTC) meeting seeking an employment representative to join the ATGP Committee

Facebook Updates:

There has been a steady increase. Now at: 103 Likes and 107 Followers

There have been posts to the Facebook page for other programs (such as Tuition Wavier, scholarships, surveys)

TRIO information was posted in January

There were motivational posts as well with resource information

FAME has been providing information to add to the Facebook page

Committee Member Updates:

- The AGTP Flyer will be provided at Teen Conference in June 2021
- FAME is developing and Adulting Services aimed at providing information to young people aged 8-25
- OCFS will be implementing a new temporary COVID-relief program that provides federal funding to young people aged 21-27 who had been in foster care at age 16 or older. OCFS is calling this program the VESPPA (Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Program Application) and funding will be available to eligible young people from April 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2021
- Trio Programs are off during the summer

ATGP Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes July 26, 2021

Present:

Dulcey Laberge, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Program Manager/ATGP Manager/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Shannon Saxby, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Lily Maass, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Amie Howard, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Christina Hunninghaus, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Laurie Davis, Retired TRIO Director, University of Southern Maine

Debbie Bechard, Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG)
Sara Flowers, University of Maine at Augusta, TRIO Programs

Absent:

Carleigh Boston, Former ATGP Participant/ATGP Committee Co-Chair
Jessica Whittier, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)
Lisa Sandy, Good Will-Hinckley, College Step Up Program
Tia Basford, Former ATGP Recipient
Amie Howard, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Review April Meeting Minutes:

The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Review ATGP Student Participation Numbers:

- Over the past 7 years, there has been an average of 20 students involved at any one time.
- Our established limit of 40 students was just an estimate at the time, and it appears that 20-25 students seems generally the number that needs this support.
- With the COVID Pandemic, we have seen a lowering of the numbers of students, with some taking time off.
 - Currently there are around 15 students enrolled in ATGP
 - Also have temporary federal funding through the Consolidated Appropriations Act (VESPPA) that supports eligible youth, and these youth may also be enrolled in ATGP

Facebook Updates:

There has been a steady increase in participation: There are now 107 Likes and 111 Followers
Have been promoting the VESPPA program on the ATGP Facebook page
Have continued posting information and links
At our September meeting we will discuss Facebook postings

Committee Member Updates:

TRIO: Nov 8 has been designated as a new holiday: *First Gen Student Day*. The ATGP Committee thought it would be a good way to inspire other students and celebrate successes for our ATGP participants.

Sara F provided some materials: <https://coenet.org/first-generation.shtml>
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YyJrhoHmxlwAoEByCA5-gPKaQxCamx3g>

Action Item: Chris and Dulcey will talk with YTS to see if ATGP participants might want to post something inspirational to celebrate *First Gen Student Day*.

Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG):

- Was selected as the beneficiary of virtual Beach to Beacon funds.
- 25 students who work with JMG earned a finance credit through Thomas College over the Summer
- JMG is working on developing stackable badges (to show learning)

OCFS:

- Implemented the new temporary COVID-relief program Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Program Application (VESPPA) that provides federal funding to young people aged 21-27 who were in foster care at age 16 or older. Funding is available to eligible young people from April 1, 2021 to Sept. 30, 2021. The VESPPA program was designed based on ATGP program design and young adult feedback.
 - As a VESPPA Navigator, Chris H. has been pleased to see how well some VESPPA youth are doing (i.e. working, living independently, having connections, raising their children without DHHS involvement)
- Debbie B: JMG has reconnected with some past Opportunity Passport participants because of VESPPA outreach, which has been positive.

Lisa Sandy, Good Will-Hinckley, College Step Up Program informed Dulcey Laberge she must step down from the ATGP Committee due to work commitments.

ATGP Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes September 13, 2021

Present:

Dulcey Laberge, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Program Manager/ATGP Manager/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Lily Maass, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Christina Hunninghaus, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Laurie Davis, Retired TRIO Director, University of Southern Maine

Debbie Bechard, Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG)

Sara Flowers, University of Maine at Augusta, TRIO Programs

Jessica Whittier, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

Jessica McCaffrey, Student Intern, USM, Cutler Institute

Absent:

Carleigh Boston, Former ATGP Participant/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Tia Basford, Former ATGP Recipient

Amie Howard, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Review July Meeting Minutes:

The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Facebook Updates:

Lily Maass has taken over the role updating ATGP Facebook from Shannon Saxby.

We discussed the continued posting of information and providing links.

ATGP Committee Membership:

We will continue to look for representation from the work sector.

Dulcey will review the list of youth participants to ask if there are young people who would like to join the ATGP Committee.

ATGP Program Evaluation/Student Needs Survey:

We reviewed the ATGP Exit Survey that was drafted by a past ATGP student participant/Committee Member and agreed upon by the ATGP Committee addresses the information the ATGP Committee would like to have. We decided to look at what would need to be changed so that it would move from an Exit Survey to an on-going Semester Survey and decided that completion of the Exit Survey should be written into the Participant Agreement.

Dulcey Laberge will also ask about the ability to provide a stipend to participants who complete the Survey.

Update: OCFS agreed with this plan as recommended by the ATGP Advisory Committee.

Committee Member Updates:

Finance Authority of Maine (FAME):

- Financial Aid events a continuing this Fall using a virtual format and some in-person meetings.
- Beginning in January 2022, FAME will be presenting virtual workshops in banking, taxes, etc.

OCFS:

- The temporary COVID-relief program: Voluntary Extended Support Pandemic Program Application (VESPPA) ended 9/30/21. It provided federal funds to young people aged 21-27 who were in foster care at age 16 or older.
 - There were 119 participants
 - As a VESPPA Navigator, Chris H. has been pleased to see how well some VESPPA youth are doing (i.e. working, living independently, having connections, raising their children without DHHS involvement)
 - Debbie B: JMG has reconnected with some past Opportunity Passport participants because of VESPPA outreach, which has been positive.

ATGP Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes December 6, 2021

Present:

Dulcey Laberge, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Program Manager/ATGP Manager/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Lily Maass, YLAT Facilitator, USM, Cutler Institute

Christina Hunninghaus, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Laurie Davis, Retired TRIO Director, University of Southern Maine

Debbie Bechard, Jobs for Maine's Graduates (JMG)

Jessica Whittier, Finance Authority of Maine (FAME)

Amie Howard, DHHS—OCFS Youth Transition Specialist/ATGP Navigator

Absent:

Carleigh Boston, Former ATGP Participant/ATGP Committee Co-Chair

Tia Basford, Former ATGP Recipient

Sara Flowers, University of Maine at Augusta, TRIO Programs

Review September Meeting Minutes:

The minutes were unanimously accepted.

Facebook Updates:

Lily Maass has been updating and adding posts to the ATGP Facebook when provided. It is seen by the Committee as a valuable way to provide resources and information for participants.

ATGP Committee Membership:

We will continue to look for representation from the work sector.

Dulcey will seek two (2) new youth participants and a Youth Transition Specialist (Navigator) to replace Chris Hunninghaus who is retiring December 2021.

ATGP Program Evaluation/Student Needs Survey:

We reviewed the ATGP Exit Survey that was drafted by a past ATGP student participant/ Committee Member and made changes to allow us to begin administering the Survey at the end of each semester. Participants who complete the Survey will be provided a \$50 stipend. Expectations for participant completion of the ATGP Survey will also be written into the Participant Agreement.

ATGP Annual Legislative Report:

The report was reviewed and will be forwarded for submission to the HHS Committee, as outlined in the ATGP Rules.

Appendix F:

**Alumni Transition Grant Program (ATGP)
ATGP Budget Form**

To be completed each semester to determine level of ATGP financial support DHHS will provide to eligible ATGP recipients. Awards are determined based on current semester (fall, spring, summer).

Name: _____

Semester: _____ # of months in Semester: _____

Date Completed: _____

A. Income for the Semester:

Total Financial Aid (not including loans):

FAFSA Award \$

Scholarships \$

ETV \$

Other (explain): \$

Total Financial Aid \$ _____

Funds provided by a 3rd party (i.e. relatives):

Monthly \$

One Time \$

Total Private Aid for Education \$ _____

Monthly Individual Income:

Employment Wages \$

Food Stamps \$

Social Security Payment \$

TANF \$

Other Monthly Income (explain): \$

Total Monthly Income \$

Total Semester Income \$ _____

B. School Expenses for the Semester:

Tuition \$

Fees \$

Health Insurance \$

Food Plan \$

Campus Housing \$

Parking \$

Books \$

School Supplies \$

Required Tools/Equipment \$
Transportation (to and from school) \$
Laptop/maintenance \$
Tutoring \$
Other school related expenses (explain): \$
Total School Related Expenses \$ _____

C. Monthly Living Expenses:

Rent/Mortgage (Individual cost only) \$
Utilities (Individual cost only):
Electricity \$
Heat \$
Cell Phone or Home Phone \$
Internet \$
Food Cost \$
Laundry \$
Childcare \$
Other monthly expenses (explain below): \$
Total Monthly Living Expenses \$ _____
Total Living Expenses per Semester \$ _____

D. Additional Expenses for the Semester:

Extraordinary Factors (explain): \$
Modifications or Repairs (explain): \$
Special Equipment needs (explain): \$
Medical expenses not covered by MaineCare \$
Driver Education Costs \$
Other (explain): \$
Total Additional Expenses \$ _____
Total Expenses \$ _____

Level of ATGP Financial Need for Semester: \$ _____

Financial Aid-Expenses: $A - (B + C + D)$

Additional 5% added for unanticipated costs: \$ _____

Total ATGP Award: \$ _____