



## Child Support Awareness Month: Funding Multiyear Scholarships for College-Bound Students from New York City Shelters

As part of its commitment to supporting New York City youth and breaking cycles of poverty, OCSS is providing college scholarship money to seven students currently residing in a New York City shelter through the Department of Homeless Services (DHS) Future Leaders College Scholarship Program. The scholarship funds are the result of a partnership between OCSS, the New York City Office of Public Private Partnerships, and the Thompson Family Benevolent Fund.

Each awardee will receive \$2,000 per year for four years, provided they remain enrolled in college. These seven college-bound high school graduates can use this total of \$8,000 each for textbooks and incidentals.

The students will receive their first annual gift card before the start of school. In August they will be acknowledged at a breakfast event hosted by OCSS and the Office of Public Private Partnerships.

## Families Forward: Successes and New Beginnings

For more than four years, OCSS has participated in a national project to improve long-term career outcomes for noncustodial parents called [Families Forward](#). Now that the program has come to its planned end, we want to talk about what it accomplished and share our hope of continuing to build on its success.

In New York City, Families Forward provided free, high-quality vocational training to more than 300 parents. That training focused on jobs that had been shown to be in especially high demand, such as hospitality services, construction, and IT support.

Alongside this intensive training, Families Forward provided wraparound services intended to address common barriers to employment, including help navigating the child support program, financial counseling, and additional support for finding and maintaining employment.

### Contact OCSS

Email us at [dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us](mailto:dcse.cseweb@dfa.state.ny.us)

## One's Parent Experience

The research organization MDRC has already published a [detailed analysis](#) of the project and some of its initial outcomes. But perhaps the best way to understand why we undertook this work is by looking at the experience of one parent: [Michael Dickerson](#).

Like many noncustodial parents, Mr. Dickerson spent years working at a variety of different jobs, often for minimum wage, to support his children and keep financially afloat. Knowing that he wanted more for himself and his family, Mr. Dickerson took the leap to participate in Families Forward's hospitality training program.

The training required five-day weeks over two months, but in the end, Mr. Dickerson got a job on the banquet staff at an expensive hotel in Brooklyn Bridge Park, making \$18 an hour. After using his training and skills to get an even better job at a banquet company, he found himself suddenly out of work when COVID-19 essentially brought tourism and in-person events to a halt.

A [recent report](#) from our partners at CUNY tells the story of what happened next: he got a job with a different events company and now earns \$38 an hour. "Families Forward helped me a lot," Dickerson is quoted as saying. "It was a lifesaver. If it wasn't for that program, I didn't know what I was going to do with myself."

These kinds of two-generation effects show our program working at its best. This is why, now that Families Forward has formally ended, we are trying to keep the Families Forward approach alive by seeking information from training programs that might allow us to reproduce some of the core services



## In the Know

### Child Support App

More than 2000 people have now used our free NYC Child Support – ACCESS HRA Mobile app to apply for services. Go to [nyc.gov/childsupportmobile](https://nyc.gov/childsupportmobile) to download the app or visit the [App Store](#) (Apple) or [Google Play](#) (Android).