

1-page summary: Roles of CSPs and ETVs on College Persistence

Article Title Okpych, N. J., Park., S., Sayed, S., & Courtney, M. E. (2020). The roles of campus-support programs (CSPs) and Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) on college persistence for youth with foster care histories. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 111. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.104891>

Research Questions

1. Does receiving an Education and Training Voucher (ETV) receipt increase the odds that students persist through their first year in college? Youth who were in foster care after age 16 are eligible for a \$5,000 ETV each year to help pay for college expenses.
2. Does participating in a campus-based support program (CSP) increase the odds of first-year persistence? CSPs are on-campus programs that provide a variety of advising, logistical, resource linkage, and (sometimes) financial support to college students with foster care histories.

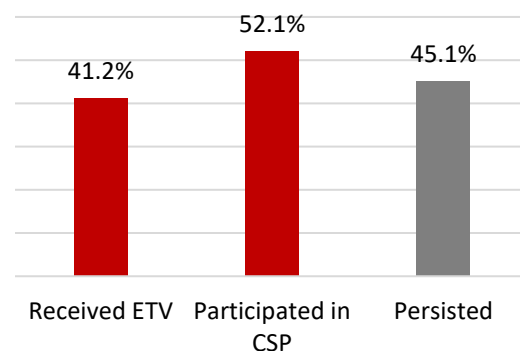
Data & Methods

Sample: The sample includes 401 youths participating in the CalYOUTH Study and who had enrolled in college for at least two semesters according to National Student Clearinghouse data obtained in 2019 (average age was 23.1 years old).

Analytic methods: The main outcome for this study was whether the youth persisted through their first two semesters in college (yes/no). In CalYOUTH interviews conducted at ages 19 and 21, youth reported if they had ever participated in a CSP specifically for students with foster care backgrounds (yes/no) and if they had received an ETV (yes/no). We assessed whether CSP participation and ETV receipt affected their odds of persisting in college using logistic regression. We statistically controlled for many aspects of youths' backgrounds (e.g., school and academic history, foster care history, behavioral health, parental status, social support, etc.), counties they were placed in (e.g., availability of postsecondary education services available for older youth in foster care), and the college they attended (e.g., selectivity, retention rate, % of part-time students) that could affect their use of CSPs/ETVs and the likelihood they persisted in college. This yielded more accurate estimates of the effects CSPs/ETVs.

Main Findings

- At the time of the study, CSPs were present at 122 college campuses in California (94% of public 4-year campuses and 78% of public 2-year campuses)
- Less than half (45%) of students persisted through their first year in college. More students attended 2-year colleges (89%) than 4-year colleges (11%).
- About two-fifths (41%) of youth received an ETV, and about half (52%) of youth participated in a CSP.
- The odds of persisting in college for youth who received an ETV were about 2.8 times the odds of students who did not receive an ETV ($p=.003$)
- The odds of persisting for youth who participated in a CSP were about 2.1 times the odds of students who did not participate in a CSP ($p=.041$)



Implications

- Receiving an ETV and participated in a CSP were found to increase the chances that students persisted through the first two college semesters. These findings were robust after account for many aspects of youths' backgrounds and characteristics of the college they attended that could have influenced the findings.
- Although the study is not causal, the findings are nevertheless promising. They suggest that investments in higher education for youth with care histories pay off, at least in the short run. Studies are needed to evaluate long-term postsecondary education outcomes (e.g., degree completion).
- The ETV amount of \$5,000 per year has not increased since 2002. The ETV amount should be increased to keep pace with the rising cost of college.
- CSPs are typically funded through a patchwork of funding sources that are not always stable. Federal funds should be earmarked to provide a stable source of fundings for CSPs (on campuses with many students with care histories) and community-based programs (to serve multiple campuses with fewer youth).