

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Camp and Summit Applications Available for Youth in Foster Care

Nonprofit Student Assistance Foundation (SAF) and the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) are taking applications for youth in foster care interested in attending “A Step Ahead” College Prep Camp – Career and Life Readiness Summit.

Applications are available at smartaboutcollege.org/community/a-step-ahead and the priority deadline is May 3.

“A Step Ahead” College Prep Camp – Career and Life Readiness Summit is a free, five-day camp geared toward providing youth in foster care an opportunity to gain college, career and life skills, along with experiencing college life firsthand. This year, the event will take place at Carroll College in Helena June 17-21.

While at the camp, youth stay in the dorms and receive classroom instruction in areas including money management, relationship-building, finding and maintaining housing, and scholarship searches and applications. Plus, camp participants learn the purpose of Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) for youth in foster care and how to properly complete the application forms.

“In many cases, Montana youth in foster care are lacking the familial support that many young people have as they prepare for graduation from high school,” said SAF’s Rhonda Safford, one of the camp coordinators. “This camp and summit provide these youths with some of the basic skills to prepare to live independently, along with get ready for a college education if that’s in their plans. We want these youths to know that they aren’t alone.”

DPHHS Director Richard Opper said the camp gives youth a jumpstart as they begin this next chapter in their life.

“In many cases, youth aging out of foster care don’t have the same support system as youth growing up in their birth or adoptive families,” Opper said. “That is why this camp is so important. Youth who previously attended have told us the experience really helped them decide if college is right for them and, if so, how to make that dream a reality.”

For more information, contact Rhonda Safford at rsafford@safmt.org or (406) 495-7750, or Erin Kintop at ekintop@mt.gov or (406) 841-2421.

Student Assistance Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Montana corporation that provides students with knowledge and tools to finance and pursue their postsecondary education. Funds generated by SAF are returned to Montanans in the form of education grants and public benefit programs - to date more than \$25 million. For more information, visit www.safmt.org or www.SmartAboutCollege.org.

The mission of the Child and Family Services Division (CFSD) is: Keeping Children Safe and Families Strong. CFSD works three hundred and sixty five days a year, twenty-four hours a day, to fulfill its mission. CFSD is responsible for ensuring the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who have been victims of, or are at substantial risk of being victims of, child maltreatment.