

GUIDING LIGHT PROGRAM

Guiding Light is a student services program under the purview of Extended Opportunities Programs and Services (EOPS) with funding support through NextUp and a Student Success Fund with the MSJC Foundation. The mission of Guiding Light is to provide a pathway to a brighter future through innovative, transformative, support services, above and beyond, and in addition to the scope of the college and EOPS for current and alumni foster youth students attending Mt. San Jacinto Community College District.

Service Area Outcomes

Guiding Light will expand the goals established by the Foster Youth Services Initiative and MSJC Call to Action through the following;

- Increase student self-efficacy
- Increase student access to jobs in the community
- Increase student success and persistence
- Improve student advocacy for self and community
- Create community and nurture atmospheres of belonging for foster youth students
- Center the voices of our foster youth students and acknowledge the intersectionality of their various identities
- Education of the campus community (students, faculty, staff, administrators) on key legislation, resources, and experiences of foster youth students.

Services

Guiding Light provides eligible students with specialized services which extend "above and beyond" college services and in addition to EOPS services, including:

- Academic, vocational and personal counseling
- Book grants*
- Priority registration
- Fees not covered by the California College Promise Grant (CCPG) - Student Health Fee, Transportation, SGA and parking fees*
- Meal grants/vouchers*
- Educational Supplies*
- Required and suggested course materials*
- Referrals to campus and community based support services
- UC/CSU application waivers
- Graduation packs*

*= Please note that these specialized services are based on availability of funds, your eligibility for NextUp funds, your unmet need, and are subject to change.

Contact Information

Visit us on the web at MSJC Guidinglight (<https://www.msjc.edu/guidinglight/>), for more information about the program and our office hours. You may also contact Guiding Light staff by calling (951) 487-3295 or via email at guidinglight@msjc.edu.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify for Guiding Light, you must meet all the following requirements:

- Have completed the application for MSJC via CCCApply
- Be 18 years or older¹
- Be a current or alumni foster youth (Program eligibility is not based on when you entered or exited the foster care system or how old you are today.)
- Be enrolled in at least 3 units with an educational plan leading to a certificate and/or associate degree.^{2,3}

¹ Students under 18 and participating in dual enrollment may be eligible on a case by case basis given they meet all other eligibility criteria.

² Students receiving services through ASC may be waived from this criterion.

³ Students enrolled in less than 9 units may be waived from this criterion if they an educational plan developed leading to an associates degree or certificate showing progress to being enrolled in at least 9-12 units in a future term. Unit waivers may be granted at the discretion of the Program Director and/or Guiding Light Counselor.

How Can I Apply for Guiding Light?

The application process for Guiding Light begins when you apply to MSJC. The process is as follows:

1. Apply to MSJC
2. Report Foster Youth Status on CCC Open Application
3. A Guiding Light Counselor will contact you to complete the onboarding process for the college and Guiding Light.

How to Report Foster Youth Status on CCCApply:

Under the "Residency" tab of the CCCApply application there are "Special Residency" questions specific to Foster Youth Status:

1. Foster Youth Status {Have you ever been in court-ordered foster care?}
 - You will answer (Yes or No) to this question.
2. When did you exit foster care?
 - You will select which option below best applies to you.
 - I am currently in foster care (including extended foster care after age 18).
 - I aged out/emancipated from foster care or exited voluntarily on or after my 18th birthday.
 - I exited the foster care system before my 18th birthday.
 - I am not sure at what age I exited foster care.

Note: If you did not, indicate that you were in foster care on your CCCApply application, for whatever reason, and feel that you are eligible for Guiding Light please see the Guiding Light Counselors for further assistance.

Once you have applied to MSJC, you will need to meet with the Guiding Light Counselor to complete the onboarding process. If possible, you will want to bring your dependency verification form to your first meeting with the Guiding Light Counselor. You can obtain the dependency verification form one of three ways:

1. Contact your County Social Worker
2. Contact the ILP Hotline 951-358-6748. Contact the Office of the Ombudsman at 1-877-846-1602 or fosteryouthhelp@dss.ca.gov

3. If you do not have a dependency verification letter and/or do not know how to get one. It is okay, the Guiding Light Counselor can help you with this step.