



DCYF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE



Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES



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This manual provides an understanding of how the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families Scholarship Program supports the early learning workforce

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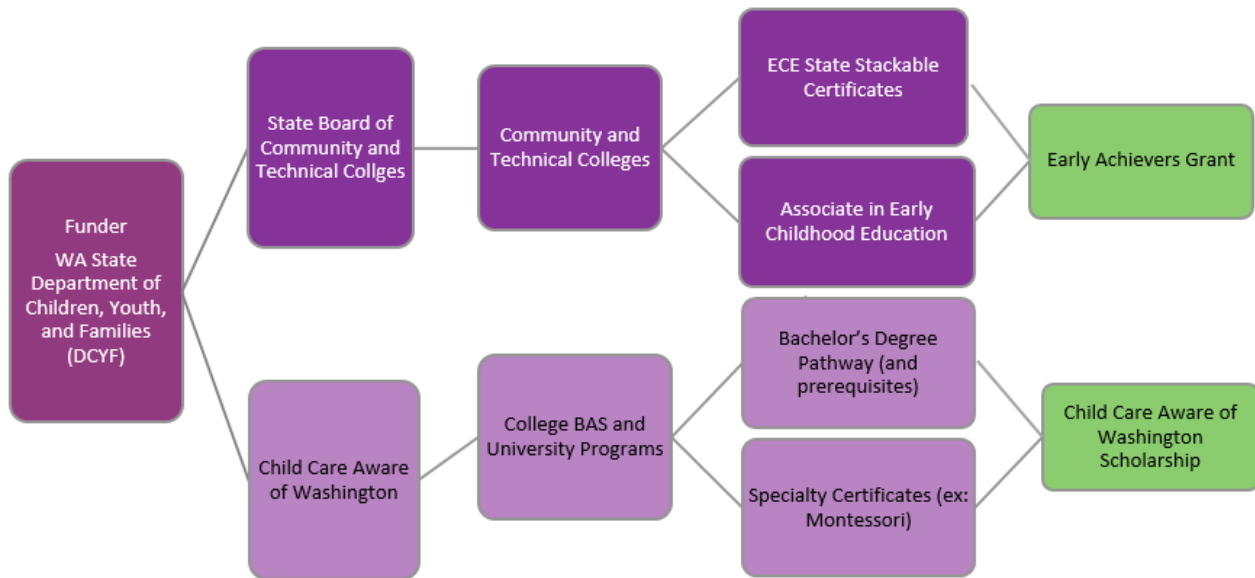
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Purpose and Overview

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) scholarship program is an educational support program that serves those that work on behalf of children and families. The DCYF early learning scholarship program supports the continuous quality improvement of Washington State’s early learning workforce by providing funding opportunities for individuals employed at programs participating in Early Achievers. Outcomes for children improve when early learning programs and professionals have access to specialized learning opportunities.



The purpose of this guide is to summarize DCYF’s **early learning scholarship program** for contractors or others who are curious about its basic principles. This guide does not provide advice on financial aid opportunities, including Federal or State Financial Aid. For information about policies and procedures, please visit the **Professional Development Policy and Procedures Manual**.

DCYF Scholarship Program

The DCYF Scholarship Program is a non-traditional scholarship model, which allows funding to be delivered through grant opportunities. The benefit to students is that this model does not require a student to pay back any funds regardless of their academic outcome.

Early Achievers Grant

The Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges administers a college grant, which is included in this scholarship program guide. It provides funding for early learning professional pursuing:

- An Early Childhood Education (ECE) Stackable certificates
- An Associate’s degree in ECE

Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships

The Child Care Aware of Washington organization administers this program. The program provides funding for early learning professionals pursuing:

- A Bachelor’s degree in ECE or a similar field
- A specialized certificate program (i.e., Montessori or University of Washington Coaching program)


Scholarship Recipient Requirements

Eligibility Criteria

Early learning professionals must meet the eligibility criteria described below to receive DCYF scholarship program funding, including employment and educational program requirements. DCYF awards scholarships on an objective and nondiscriminatory basis. There are no income-based eligibility requirements. Meeting eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding. Applicants may only receive funding from one DCYF scholarship source at a time.

Residency Requirements


Funding is available to scholarship recipients regardless of citizenship or Washington State residency status. Tuition rates are dependent on residency and citizenship status.

 **TIP:** If an applicant lives in a neighboring state, they are eligible for scholarship funding as long as they meet employment requirements.

Employment Requirements

Applicants must work at a program participating in DCYF Early Achievers. All applicants must meet the criteria in the following table for employment.


Employment Requirements	
Employment Site	Employed at an Early Achievers facility, verified each quarter
Employment Classroom	Employed in an Early Achievers participating classroom and meets the role requirements listed below, verified each quarter
Employment Duration	Three months
Hours	Minimum of 10 per week or 40 per month

 **TIP:** Hours are averaged for the academic year. If an applicant has active employment at more than one facility or changes facilities, all hours worked in qualifying roles contribute to the total work hours needed. If an applicant is no longer employed at a program participating in Early Achievers or a facility does not renew participation in Early Achievers, the individual may complete the current quarter or semester.

Role Requirements

Applicants must work in a qualifying role, in a licensed classroom, or Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) classroom. All qualifying roles are included in the following table.

Qualifying Roles	Available Scholarships
Licensed Center or Family Home Roles, As Recorded in MERIT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Home Owner/Licensee • Center Director • Assistant Director • Program Supervisor • Lead Teacher • Assistant Teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Achievers Grant • Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarship
DCYF Required Support Roles	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Achievers Coach • ECEAP Family Support Staff • Infant/Toddler Mental Health Consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarship

 **TIP:** Licensed early learning roles that do not have education requirements per [WAC 300-0100](#) are not eligible for DCYF scholarship funding. Any role not listed in the table above is not eligible to receive DCYF scholarship funding.

Scholarship Application Instructions

All applicants interested in participating in the DCYF scholarship program will need to complete a scholarship application. Scholarship application information is available on the DCYF [early learning scholarship program](#) webpage.

Applicants must:

1. Review and meet all of the eligibility requirements for the scholarship funding
2. Apply for admissions to the approved academic program at the college or university of choice
3. Complete the scholarship application form
4. Verify employment and sign release form
5. Notify the Early Achievers Grant point of contact or Child Care Aware scholarship contact of any changes to their academic program, institution, employment, or personal information

Application Deadlines

All potential scholarship recipients are responsible for meeting application timelines for their program of choice. It is important to express interest early – scholarship funding is awarded based on priority and a first-come, first-served basis. Applicants should apply at least one quarter before the intended program start date.


Early Achievers Grant

Early Achievers Grant applications are accepted by colleges throughout the year, however, applicants will only be granted funding for upcoming quarters, not a current running quarter. Applications must be completed before funding is awarded.

Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships

Applications must be completed and received by the dates listed below to be considered for the corresponding term. Applications received after these dates may still be eligible for funding if funding permits.



 **TIP:** Each scholarship or grant program determines renewal for the funding. An updated application may be requested if there is a change in employment, job role, or other personal information.

Funding: Priority, Award, and Fees

Priority Criteria

Scholarship funding is awarded based on eligibility, priority criteria determined by DCYF, and available funding. When implementing priority levels in the table below, program type is considered within each priority. Academic programs authorized for DCYF funding are found on the [Scholarship Funded Programs](#) document.

Program type:

1. Licensed Family Home Providers
2. ECEAP Educator (center role, serving ECEAP classroom)
3. Licensed Centers (not serving ECEAP)
4. Head Start (see Award Limits for more information about Head Start)

The point of contact or scholarship program coordinators will implement the following priority levels at their earliest convenience but no later than the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

Priority	
Early Achievers Grant (EAG)	Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships
<p>1st: Current EAG recipients receiving DCYF scholarship funding and working on meeting DCYF staff qualifications*</p> <p>2nd: Eligible applicants (new students) who need to meet DCYF staff qualification requirements</p> <p>3rd: Current EAG recipients continuing their academic program and already receiving funding but have met DCYF staff qualifications for their role (going beyond the minimum required for their role)</p> <p>4th: Eligible providers who received scholarship funding in the past and need to meet DCYF staff qualifications</p>	<p>1st: Current scholarship recipients receiving DCYF scholarship funding</p> <p>2nd: Applicants seeking an approved Montessori certificate to meet DCYF staff qualifications</p> <p>3rd: New applicants working toward a BA/BAS in ECE or similar or approved academic programs</p> <p>4th: New applicants working toward a BA/BAS in ECE with teacher certification</p>
<p><i>*This includes military service students who previously received EAG funding and are now returning from deployment.</i></p>	

Funding Waitlist

Providers are placed on a waitlist if the number of applicants exceeds the amount of available funding. Applicants remain on the waitlist until they request to be removed from the list.

Awarding Funding

Scholarship programs are responsible for the following:

- Notifying applicants of the status of their scholarship funding
- Working with the institution to cover the cost of tuitions and fees awarded
- Assisting applicants with understanding additional funding opportunities (i.e., financial aid, state grants, etc.)

Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships must receive a copy of the recipient’s course schedule before funding can be dispersed.



TIP: The amount of time between submitting a scholarship application and receiving an award varies on a case-by-case basis. If, for any reason, the college or university cancels a course, the college or university will refund tuition cost and fees to the scholarship/grant program.

Award Limits

Scholarship Program	Award Limits for Tuition
Early Achievers Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition funding covers up to 97 credits. Students must complete a state certificate before progressing to associate year two courses • EAG funding can be used to cover the classes required by the college to earn a certificate or degree • Note: Students employed in a Head Start classroom can be awarded no more than a maximum of 15 credits total per student working toward licensing education requirements.
Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$9,000 per contract year for tuition and tuition related fees



TIP: Early Achievers Grant recipients may request a waiver to enroll in additional credits if they meet the following criteria:

- Recipient is pursuing the WA ECE State certificate and needs to complete one or more developmental classes in math and/or English
- Recipient is completing a WA ECE State certificate, and courses are available that would help work toward an ECE associate degree

Leveraging Funding Options

DCYF Scholarship Programs support scholars through all eligible funding options such as the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) or [Washington Application for State Financial Aid \(WASFA\)](#). U.S. Citizens and eligible non-citizens (as determined by the U.S. Department of Education) may file the FAFSA to receive federal financial aid, such as Pell Grants and federal student loans. DACA students or undocumented students can apply for WASFA safely to determine eligibility for state financial aid. These applications are encouraged but not required to receive DCYF scholarship supports.

College Fees

Scholarship program funding covers the most college fees. The following fees are not covered at any time:

- Admission/application fees
- Late registration fees
- Copies of official transcripts
- Dropped class fees

Book Expenses

Scholarship Program	Award Funding for Book Expenses
Early Achievers Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Book expenses up to \$1,000 for a full-time student per academic year (this averages to \$22.22 per credit for textbooks) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Book expenses that exceed this limit can be approved by the point of contact by using Early Achievers Grant wraparound funds • Book purchases can be made at the college bookstore using a student account • Scholarship program point of contact can establish an account at the college bookstore for recipients to purchase books • Students may purchase books and submit a receipt to the scholarship program’s point of contact for reimbursement • Or POC’s can purchase books from a third party and deliver to students.
Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to \$500 in reimbursement per contract year • Recipients must submit a Reimbursement Claim form by the required deadline each quarter. Forms are available here: https://childcareawarewa.org/providers • Note: If a facility purchases books on behalf of the recipient, the recipient must complete a Reimbursement Claim form on behalf of the facility

Emergency Funds (Early Achievers Grant Only)

Emergency Funds are available to students based on need. Students may request emergency funds more than once. Each college sets a policy for the request and use of emergency funds. Grantees must be currently enrolled in an active quarter to request funds

Release Time (Washington Scholars Only)

Release Time is a voluntary benefit used to compensate child care facilities for supporting scholars while they are enrolled in coursework. Scholars may use the paid time off to study, meet with advisors, attend classes, or address any matters regarding their coursework. The scholar’s child care facility still pays the scholar for this time at their regular pay rate.

Washington Scholars will pay the child care facility \$15 per hour, for up to three hours each week of enrollment, for the time away from the scholar’s work duties. Facility directors and scholars must complete the Release Time Claim Form during the term and submit the request for payment according to the deadlines

for each calendar quarter. Payments are made to the child care facility. The Release Time claim form is available online at <https://childcareawarewa.org/providers>.

Substitute Coverage

Licensed child care providers have access to the statewide **Substitute Pool**, which may support professional development or other purposes. This may include time off to study, meet with advisors, attend classes, or address any matters regarding their coursework.

Role requirements may be in place to request the time off, and substitute time is only available as funding and allowable day allotment is available.

Academic Program Enrollment

Academic Programs Covered

For a complete list of eligible programs, please review the [DCYF Funded Scholarship Programs](#).

Ineligible Colleges, Universities, and Degree Programs

DCYF has guidelines for funding to support the early learning workforce and focuses on growing all levels of workforce preparation. It is our goal to build state capacity and responsiveness for early learning preparation programs.

Scholarship funding is dedicated to credit-bearing opportunities for the early learning workforce and does not go toward training reimbursement for state-approved training – other resources are available for training.

Institutions ineligible for scholarship funding include:

- For-profit colleges
- Out-of-state colleges: Colleges outside of Washington State are not eligible for scholarship funding. This includes colleges that have satellite campuses within Washington, but the primary location is outside of Washington State
- Colleges that choose not to participate in the Early Achievers Grant
- Program majors not covered by DCYF scholarship funding

Maintaining Scholarship Criteria

Satisfactory Academic Progress

All scholarship recipients must maintain the college or university Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) policy. This may include a minimum grade point average and also any specified requirements for the academic program they are enrolled in. Scholarship recipients who fail to maintain satisfactory academic progress are at risk of losing their scholarship coverage. DCYF reserves the right to seek reimbursement for tuition that does not result in satisfactory academic progress.



TIP: If a scholarship recipient struggles to maintain satisfactory academic progress, they're encouraged to work with their Early Achievers grant point of contact or Child Care Aware scholarship program coordinator.

Attendance

Scholarship recipients must maintain regular attendance in the academic program. Scholarship recipients are responsible for communicating any changes to academic enrollment to the scholarship program coordinator

or point of contact. If a scholarship recipient misses more than one consecutive quarter due to non-enrollment, they are at risk of not having their scholarship renewed.

Course Completion

Scholarship recipients must complete all enrolled courses.

Scholarship Program	Actions Taken if Student Fails Course
Early Achievers Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholarship recipient must repeat the course the following quarter or as soon as the course is next available Scholarship recipient may be able to retake a failed course by asking for a waiver. If the waiver is approved, the tuition will pull from the student's overall scholarship funding and credit limits A course can be repeated one time, and no more than four courses can be retaken on the scholarship through their associate degree
Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first failed course can be covered. If failed a second time, the scholar is responsible to reimburse the cost of tuition and fees Reimbursement payment arrangements or balance paid off must happen before the scholar can continue with the scholarship program If reimbursement arrangements are not made, the scholar will not receive further awards Scholars can fail a maximum of three courses a scholarship contract

Scholarship Program	Actions Taken if Student Drops or Withdraws from Course
Early Achievers Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All reimbursed funds will be returned to the Early Achievers Grant institutional account for any official or unofficial withdraw The funds lost from a drop or withdrawal will count toward the students' Early Achievers Grant tuition/fees funding maximum If a student drops the program completely, then chooses to re-enroll later, they will be placed in the last priority group for unsatisfactory completion unless prior arrangements have been made with the POC The student is not responsible for refunding books or instructional materials, but those materials will be asked to be returned to the POC There are no refunds for books/instructional materials that have been purchased if a student drops or withdraws from a course
Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scholars who drop a course after the 100% refund deadline (i.e., add/drop date) will be responsible for refunding Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships the full balance of tuition, fees, and books Scholarships will not provide payment for any books purchased for dropped courses

Scholar Experience Survey

The survey is to be provided to scholars quarterly through the fiscal year.

If you would like copies of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact DCYF Constituent Relations (1-800-723-4831 | 360-902-8060, ConstRelations@dcyf.wa.gov)