DCYF SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDE

Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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Early Learning | Approved for Distribution by Sharene Leek

Washington State Department of
CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES

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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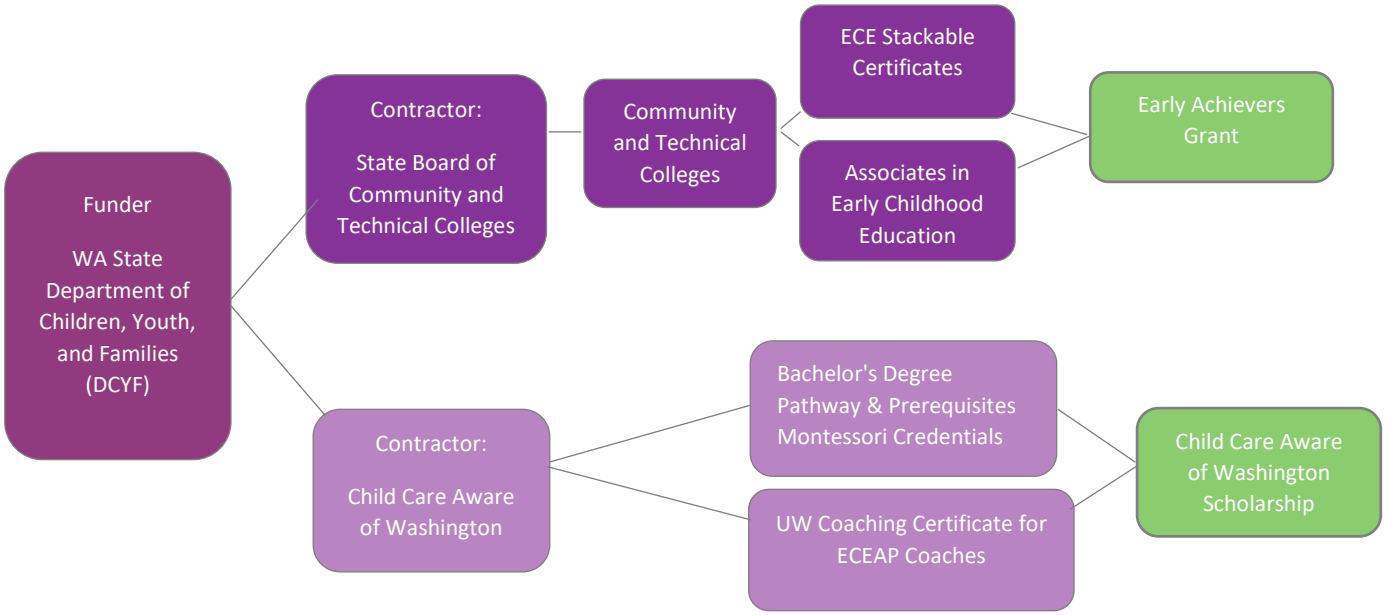
Purpose and Overview

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. For information about policies and procedures including education policies, please visit the **Workforce Growth, Quality, and Recognition Procedural Manual**. This guide does not provide advice on financial aid opportunities, including Federal or State Financial Aid.

DCYF Scholarship Program

The DCYF Scholarship Program is a non-traditional scholarship model, which allows funding to be delivered through grant opportunities outlined in this guide.

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 professionals pursuing:

- An Early Childhood Education (ECE) Stackable certificates
- An Associate 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 to be eligible for DCYF scholarship funding.

Employment Requirements	
Employment Site	Employed at an Early Achievers facility, verified each quarter
Employment Classroom	Employed in an Early Achievers participating classroom or ECEAP classroom and meets the role requirements listed below, verified each quarter
Employment Duration	Employed for three months prior to the start of the academic term
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.

Eligible 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 who can fund a Head Start role)

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	
• Family Home Owner/Licensee • Center Director • Assistant Director • Program Supervisor • Lead Teacher • Assistant Teacher	• Early Achievers Grant • Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarship
DCYF Required Support Roles	
• ECEAP Coach • ECEAP Family Support Staff • Infant/Toddler Mental Health Consultants	• 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 and signed release forms.
4. Notify the Early Achievers Grant Program 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

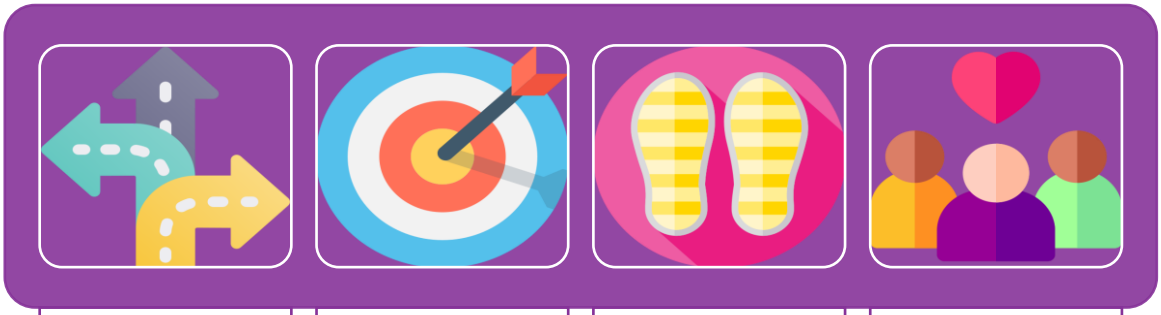
Applications must be completed and received by the priority dates listed below to be considered for the corresponding term and based on the priority scale below. Applications received before the priority deadline dates are guaranteed to be reviewed. Applications received after these dates may still be eligible for funding if funding permits. Contact Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships for final submission dates or application submission questions.

- Fall: August 15
- Winter: November 15
- Spring: February 15
- Summer: April 15

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. For Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships, a scholarship manager may reach out to an employer to verify a person's employment and role for eligibility purposes.

Advising and Recruitment

Scholarship programs use a Relationship-Based advising model that consists of academic advising elements, but built on a relationship foundation, that includes sharing information through trust, communication, and connectedness. Relationship-Based advising engages both student and program contact or scholarship coordinators, which leads to higher success rates for students.



Create clear curricular pathways to employment and further education	Help students choose and enter their pathway	Help students stay on their path	Ensure that learning is happening with intentional outcomes

Funding: Priority, Award, and Fees

Priority Criteria

Scholarship funding is awarded based on eligibility and available funding. Braiding funding is highly recommended so that all applicants can assess the education they need to meet DCYF education requirements. Academic programs authorized for DCYF funding are found on the **Scholarship Funded Guide** document.

The program contact or scholarship program coordinators will implement the following priority levels.

Priority	
Early Achievers Grant (EAG)	Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships
1st: Eligible EAG recipients who need to meet DCYF staff qualifications to maintain employment. **2nd:** Continuing eligible EAG recipients who have met DCYF staff qualifications but maintain continuous enrollment while working to complete an additional ECE degree or certificate beyond required staff qualifications. **3rd:** All other eligible EAG students	**1st:** Current scholarship recipients receiving DCYF scholarship funding **2nd:** Applicants seeking an approved Montessori credential to meet DCYF staff qualifications **3rd:** New applicants working toward a BA/BAS in ECE or similar or approved academic programs **4th:** New applicants working toward a BA/BAS in ECE with teacher certification

Additional Priority: Primary Language: Students whose primary language is not English receive priority.

- Example: Two students in priority 1 in the table above, *a student whose primary language is Spanish would have priority over a student whose primary language is English.*

Recruitment

Scholarship recruitment will implement strategies to recruit potential students onto a grant, even if it means adding students to the wait list. Recruitment should prioritize family home providers, childcare centers, and programs that serve ECEAP.

Some of those strategies may include:

- ☐ Attend meetings (program staff meetings, community director meetings, etc.)
- ☐ Go to programs in the community to talk about your program offerings
- ☐ Career Fairs
- ☐ Outreach to potential students
- ☐ Provide Outreach materials such as: RAC cards, brochures (Example in Appendix), and flyers

- Personal outreach based on DCYF provided data

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 or are no longer waiting for funding from a DCYF scholarship option. Providers are not included on the waitlist if there is funding available, but they are choosing to start in a future quarter.

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 tuition and fees awarded
- Assisting applicants with understanding additional funding opportunities (i.e., financial aid, state grants, etc.)

Early Achievers Grant recipients must be informed that their certificate and degree completion will be sent to DCYF automatically. They do not need to complete the education application in MERIT unless they are requesting in-service hours for their completed courses.

Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships must receive a copy of the recipient's course schedule and tuition statement 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 costs and fees to the scholarship/grant program.

Award Limits

Scholarship Program	Award Limits for Tuition
Early Achievers Grant	• 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	• Up to $9,000 per contract year for tuition and tuition related fees • Head Start **only** employees are not eligible for Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships. If a person has a dual role they may qualify under the second employment role.

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. When available leveraged funding must be used first or shared with DCYF funding. When there is additional funding available, DCYF scholarships are not first pay.

College Fees

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

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

Book Expenses

Scholarship Program	Award Funding for Book Expenses
Early Achievers Grant	• Book expenses up to $1,000 for a full-time student per academic year (this averages to $22.22 per credit for textbooks) ○ Book expenses that exceed this limit can be approved by the Program Contact by using Early Achievers Grant wraparound funds • Book purchases can be made at the college bookstore using a student account. • Scholarship program 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 contact for reimbursement. • Or Program Contacts can purchase books from a third party and deliver to students.

Child Care Aware of Washington Scholarships	• Up to $500 in stipend award per contract year. Book and course material stipend is awarded on a quarter or semester basis in the following amounts.
	  ○ Quarter stipend not to exceed: $125.00
	  ○ Semester stipend not to exceed: $250.00

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 (CCA of 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.

The CCA of Washington Scholars program 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/scholarships/**.

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 Scholarship Funding Guide**.

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 program 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 program contact or scholarship program coordinator. 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

Scholarship Program	Actions Taken if Student Drops or Withdraws from Course
	• 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 Program Contact • The student is not responsible for refunding books or instructional materials, but those materials will be asked to be returned to the Program Contact • 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	• 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 and fees. • Scholars will not be eligible for the next enrolled quarter/semester book and course materials stipend.

Scholar Experience Survey

The survey is to be provided to scholars based on funding source agreement with DCYF at least once each fiscal year.

Resources

Where to go for answers:

- ☐ ECE Pathways – Career Planning Portal or DCYF Professional Development page
- ☐ EAG CANVAS page SBCTC – Contact Megan Harper (mharper@sbctc.edu) at SBCTC for access

Appendix A

Purpose

The purpose of Appendix A is to support the Early Achievers Program Contacts. As a Program Contact, your role focuses on the recruitment, advisement, and supports necessary for student completion of their ECE credential.

All Program Contacts have the same expectations and are required to follow the guidance provided in this appendix regardless of the office where the Program Contact is housed. Program Contacts are usually housed in two different offices depending on the college. Some Program Contacts are housed specifically in the ECE program, while others work within the Workforce Department.

Help students with College Admissions & Resources

- ☐ Support students to complete admissions forms and paperwork.
- ☐ Walk students through the process of getting a student ID and parking pass if needed.
- ☐ If needed: assist with residency status.
    - Assist in residency documentation.
    - Submit residency questionnaire form through your admissions department.

- Handwritten or typed statements will need to be notarized.

- ☐ Provide technical assistance resources for the following:
  - Laptops, hot spots, or other equipment needed that student could loan.
  - Student support services for computer skills support
- ☐ Provide student learning supports:
  - Advise the I-BEST supported classes.
  - Offer required courses in first languages.
  - Develop a guide or network of tutoring supports for ECE and general academic courses.
  - ADA connections
- ☐ Provide assistance to students facing emergencies or crisis, which prohibit them from fully being successful in classes.
  - Assess the need.
  - Look for supports within the college that may be available: food bank, counseling, legal aid assistance, etc.
  - Award emergency funds through the EA Grant, as needed, based on the college policy.

Discuss FASFA information, application requirements and other funding sources available

Program Contacts work with students to understand each unique circumstance. When working with students, review other potential funding sources and leverage resources to meet the needs of the student, and address the wait list as much as possible – do not supplant resources.

- ☐ Inform students they may be eligible for additional funding regardless of residency status.
- ☐ Support student through FAFSA/WASFA process (campus supports, submission information and how to complete the forms).
- ☐ Work with WA College Grant, WA Opportunity Grant, Worker Retraining, State Needs Grant, and DSHS Basic Food Employment & Training (BFET) program to maximize opportunities.

Completing & Submitting EAG Application

All Program Contacts are required to ensure Early Achiever Grant Applications are completed in **full and meet eligibility criteria**.

Help students directly by:

- ☐ Help student complete EAG application, including the employment and role verification in MERIT.
  - verify STARS ID, employment, role, and Early Achievers status information in MERIT.
- ☐ Have student complete the student information release form.
- ☐ Develop an individualized education plan with the student – meet with the student to understand and document a plan to help them work towards their professional goal.
- ☐ Help map out financial support the EA grant will provide and any gaps.
- ☐ Assist and support with the registration for classes, seeking priority enrollment when possible.

Help students navigate the college and payment options by:

- ☐ Pay for approved classes directly from the EA grant. The EA Grant does not reimburse tuition.

- ☐ Work directly with your Business Office, financial aid office, and others as needed to make braided tuition funding seamless.
- ☐ Ensure the student is not dropped for lack of payment (explore protective hold options for grant recipients).
- ☐ Address barriers for students if college policy is inconsistent with grant guidelines (ex: residency, FASFA requirements, etc.).

Determining Priority & Award

The Program Contact will review the DCYF program guide to determine priority and will work with their institution to cover the cost of tuition and fees.

The Program Contact should support students by:

- ☐ Determining priority
- ☐ Leverage funding
- ☐ Send tuition awards to cashier
- ☐ Send book awards to the bookstore
- ☐ Administer book vouchers with the college bookstore or reimbursements with valid receipts
- ☐ Establish a textbook lending library (EAG funding purchases text then loans out to scholars)
- ☐ Notify Student of award

Tip: Priority 1

- If in their MERIT account they are applying for a director role or have documentation that the owner/director would like to promote them to supervisor or higher you can fund for the State Cert at this priority.
- DCYF will provide SBCTC a set of data that will allow colleges to identify who in their area has "opted" to go back to school and still needs to meet their staff qualifications.
- Colleges will contact individuals to register them with an appropriate program
- Note: Often time's individuals have not started their academic journey due to a lack of understanding or fear. As a Program Contact, you are required to use Relationship-Based advising when establishing a relationship with your student.

Monitoring and Tracking

Program Contacts are required to ensure student progress is **tracked** and course failure does not exceed the allotted amount. See "Lack of Academic Progress". Data collected in the following areas will be required for the quarterly and annual reports.

The Program Contact supports students through monitoring the following:

- ☐ Monitor employment verification (this must be verified each quarter).
- ☐ Monitoring records for wait-list, enrolled students, and scholarship status.
- ☐ Monitoring a student's mid-term and final grade.
- ☐ Monitor grant recipient once during each quarter to track registration and discuss outcomes from mid-term progress report.
- ☐ Document challenges, lessons learned, and success stories.
- ☐ Monitor support needs based on student request **or** mid-term progress report.

Program Contacts are responsible for tracking the following items:

- ☐ All required application documents.
- ☐ Quarterly employment verification.
- ☐ Registration (courses taken and completed).
    - Approval for additional credits can be awarded through a waiver provided by SBCTC Grant Manager if:

- Student is pursuing one or more developmental classes in math and/or English to complete the one-year Early Childhood Education State Certificate.
- Working towards an Early Childhood Education Associate degree as they complete their State Certificate and have additional courses available that will build towards the Associate in ECE.

- ☐ Quarter credits (completed and uncompleted)
- ☐ Number of credits used by each student (see credit limits in Scholarship Guide)
- ☐ Reasons for uncompleted quarter credits
- ☐ Completions of certificates and degree
- ☐ Tuition expenses including any use of funding from other sources.
- ☐ All waivers from the beginning of the program. This ensures that a student remains eligible.
  - If a student has failed the same class more than once, they would need to obtain other funding to cover the class when taken again.
  - If a student has failed 4 classes they will need to follow the colleges Academic Progress policy and will move to the 3rd priority. They also risk losing funding if the colleges EAG does not have funding for students..
- ☐ Book expenditures to ensure a scholar does not exceed $1,000 per fiscal year for a full-time student. (Grant covers $22.22 per credit not to exceed $1,000 FTE).
- ☐ Any use of wrap around/support funding

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