

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
REQUEST FOR COMMITTEE AND BOARD ACTION

COMMITTEE: Fiscal Affairs and Administrative Policy **NO.:** FAAP 06-04
COMMITTEE DATE: November 10, 2005
BOARD DATE: November 17, 2005

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM GUIDELINES

MOVED: The Board of Higher Education hereby adopts the attached
Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship Program Guidelines.

Authority: MGL Chapter 15D Section 5 Clause (10)
 C. 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065
Contact: Dr. Clantha McCurdy, Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Financial
 Assistance

Background Information

The Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship Program was funded as a pilot initiative by the Massachusetts Legislature for the purpose of increasing the quality and availability of teachers and care providers to work with young children in inclusive settings including infant/toddler, preschool and child care programs. The scholarship program is designed to provide financial assistance for currently employed early childhood educators and providers who enroll in associate's, bachelor's and master's degree programs in Early Childhood Educators' or related programs.

Acting jointly with the Department of Early Education and Care, the Board of Higher Education is charged by the Massachusetts Legislature with developing guidelines and application criteria for the administration of the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program. The Board of Higher Education recognizes the significance of this program in promoting higher education and degree completion as a means of assisting the Commonwealth in bringing highly qualified teachers and providers into the developmental learning environments to provide educational services and care for children.

The Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship will provide much-needed financial assistance to employed instructors and providers who are encouraged to matriculate in degree programs at the associate's, bachelor's or master's level. This scholarship will facilitate a pathway for educators and providers who are financially unable to afford the cost of college tuition due to their overall low-income levels.

**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS' SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

DEFINITIONS

INSTITUTION:

Any regionally accredited public or independent (private) college or university in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts offering an Early Childhood Education program of study or program in a related field.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAM:

An undergraduate associate's, bachelor's or master's degree program offered by an eligible institution in either Early Childhood Education (infancy through pre-school) or a related field.

ELIGIBLE STUDENT:

A matriculated undergraduate student enrolled full- or part-time in an eligible program meeting the following requirements:

- a) Is a permanent legal resident of Massachusetts for at least one year prior to the start of the academic year.
- b) Is a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen eligible under Federal Title IV Regulations.
- c) Is employed or is a licensed family child care provider and continues to work as an early educator in an early education and care program in Massachusetts.
- d) Has maintained employment or has provided licensed family child care for at least one year prior to receipt of grant funds and has provided documentation of such employment.
- e) If enrolled in an undergraduate program, has not earned a prior bachelor's degree.
- f) Maintains satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional standards.
- g) Annually files the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.
- h) Signs an agreement to continue employment as an early educator or provider in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, with the expectation that the student will continue to be employed in the Early Childhood Education field as an educator or provider in Massachusetts for six months per semester of scholarship receipt, not to exceed a two year maximum commitment upon graduation from an associate's degree program and a four year maximum commitment upon graduation from a bachelor's degree program.

Priority consideration will be given to eligible applicants recommended by an individual qualified to speak to their commitment and dedication to the field of early education and care.

AWARD VALUE

The award for eligible applicants under this program shall be as follows:

- a) up to \$450 per credit at a public university or private college or university, not to exceed a maximum of \$4,050 per semester.
- b) up to \$325 per credit at a public four-year college, not to exceed a maximum of \$2,925 per semester.
- c) up to \$200 per credit at a public two-year college, not to exceed a maximum of \$1,800 per semester.

Grants may be awarded for a maximum of three courses per semester, and recipients must enroll in a minimum of three credits in a given academic semester to be awarded funds. Awards may not exceed the recipient's cost of attendance for any academic term.

The Board of Higher Education will annually review the tuition and fee charges at Massachusetts public colleges and the university and adjust the program award values, as it deems necessary.

INSTITUTIONAL DISBURSEMENT OF GRANTS

Each participating institution must certify that the recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship Program. Academic year awards will be disbursed in equal payments for the fall and spring semesters or as calculated based on enrolled credits within the established limits for the fall and spring semesters.

Grants may be awarded to eligible applicants for summer terms based on availability. All funds appropriated for this program must be expended by June 30 of each fiscal year or as otherwise determined by the Legislature.

PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions participating in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Early Childhood Educators' Scholarship Program must file a State Financial Aid Program Participation Agreement to be maintained on file in the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college and university to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility.
- b) The Chancellor shall require each campus to furnish to the Board of Higher Education a report detailing specific information regarding recipients. The Office of Student Financial Assistance will coordinate specification and procedures for this report.
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this program shall at all times be open to inspection, review and audit by the Chancellor, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives, who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records and documents are located. The institution shall retain such financial books, records and documents for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.

AUTHORITY

MGL Chapter 15D Section 5 Clause (10)
C. 45 of the Acts of 2005, Item 7070-0065