



SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program

Background

The Seattle Preschool Program (SPP) Action Plan requires all SPP staff members hired to work in an SPP classroom after an SPP provider agency's contract start date meet the following education standards:

- **Director and/or program supervisor:** Bachelor's Degree (BA) in Early Childhood Education or a BA with college-level coursework in Early Childhood Education. Expertise or coursework in educational leadership and business management is also required.
- **Lead teachers:** Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education or a BA plus a Washington State Teaching Credential with a Preschool through Grade 3 (P-3) Endorsement.
- **Assistant teachers:** Associate's Degree (AA) in Early Childhood Education or two years of coursework in early childhood education that meets Washington State Core Competencies for Early Care and Educational Professionals.

Staff hired prior to a programs' SPP contract start date have four years from the classroom's contract start date to meet SPP standards.

Purpose

The purpose of the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program is to provide support for eligible staff working in SPP classrooms to meet SPP education standards.

Eligibility

The SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program is open to SPP lead teachers, SPP assistant teachers, SPP program supervisors, and SPP directors.

Funding Priorities

If more people apply for this program than the budget allows, DEEL will prioritize tuition support in the following order:

1. Lead and assistant teachers who work in SPP classrooms and do not meet SPP education standards for their current job titles.
2. Directors and program supervisors who supervise SPP teachers and do not meet SPP education standards for their current job titles.





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SPP Staff who meet the following criteria should complete the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Application. Though they may not be funded by the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program because it is only open to those who do not meet SPP education standards, they are eligible for alternate DEEL funding if the budget allows:

1. Assistant teachers who work in SPP classrooms and meet SPP education standards for their current job titles, but want to earn a Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education.
2. Lead teachers who work in SPP classrooms and meet SPP education standards for their current job titles, but want to earn a Washington State Teaching Credential with a P-3 Endorsement.
3. Directors and program supervisors who supervise SPP teachers and currently meet SPP education standards for their current job titles, but want to earn an advanced degree related to their roles.

DEEL will analyze data generated through the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program to assess annually whether adjustments to the priorities listed above could help to meet the City's goal of ensuring racial equity in City programs and services. For more information on the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative, please see <http://www.seattle.gov/rsji/>.

Approved Early Learning Degrees

To receive tuition support, eligible staff must be matriculated (enrolled in a college or university as a candidate for a degree) or on a path leading toward becoming a matriculated student. DEEL, aligning with the Washington State Department of Early Learning (DEL),¹ recognizes the following approved early learning majors:²

- Early childhood education (ECE)
- Early childhood and family studies
- Human development with specialization in ECE
- Children's studies/childhood education
- Elementary education with one of the following endorsements:
 - Early childhood education
 - P-3
 - Early childhood special education
 - P-3 special education

¹ For more information, see DEL's definition of an ECE major at the following link: <http://www.del.wa.gov/requirements/professional/awards.aspx>

² Additional degree majors that meet DEL's requirements may be approved through a degree review and education verification process that can be accessed through the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT) accessed via the DEL website.





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DEEL welcomes early learning staff to enroll in an eligible degree program at a college of their choice. SPP Scholars seeking to complete a bachelor's degree are encouraged to consider the following options:

Seattle Colleges

Bachelors of Applied Science (BAS) in ECE

Anne Garrett, Manager, Early Childhood Education, BAS Degree

Phone: (206) 934-4587

Email: Anne.Garrett@seattlecolleges.edu

<https://northseattle.edu/programs/bas-early-childhood-education>

University of Washington—Seattle

Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood & Family Studies – Completion Program

Jenni Campbell, Academic Adviser, Early Childhood & Family Studies

Phone: 206-685-8936 or 888-469-6499

Email: info@pce.uw.edu

<http://www.earlychildhoodonline.uw.edu/>

For information on local ECE AA Programs: <http://www.sbctc.edu/our-colleges/explore-our-colleges/default.aspx?pid=68&rid=King%20County>

For information on other local bachelor's programs:

<http://www.childcarenet.org/providers/scholarships/ece/earning-your-bachelors/king>

Funding Levels and Allowable Expenses

Funding is contingent on availability and the SPP Scholar's progress. For the 2015–16 school year:

- **SPP lead teachers who currently do not meet SPP education standards** and are approved for tuition support are eligible for up to \$10,000 per year for tuition, books, parking, and other course-related materials and fees, such as technology/ lab fees, or other supplies associated with completing a Bachelor's Degree in ECE or an approved degree that meets SPP education standards.
- **SPP assistant teachers who currently do not meet SPP education standards** and are approved for tuition support will be eligible for up to \$10,000 per year for tuition, supplies, parking and other course-related materials and fees associated with completing an Associate's Degree in ECE or an approved degree that meets SPP standards.





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- **SPP staff who currently meet SPP standards** will be considered for support if the DEEL budget allows. Funding awards and amounts will be contingent on availability and demand.

Tuition support may be used for:

- Courses identified by SPP coaches in the Scholars' Professional Development Plan **if** courses satisfy degree requirements.
- Required prerequisite courses that are required prior to, or concurrent with, admission to an approved associate's or bachelor's degree program.

Tuition support may not be used for:

- Any educational program which includes or requires religious worship, affiliation, or instruction.
- Tuition at a college or university which requires a student, as a condition of attendance, to participate in religious worship, affiliation or instruction.
- Any classes that include religious worship, exercise or instruction.

Please note: The intent of the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program is that the City is the payer of last resort; that is, the City's support is intended to be drawn down only after other grants or scholarships the applicant has received are applied to the student's account. When possible, tuition will be paid by DEEL directly to the SPP Scholar's college or university. Costs associated with technology or lab fees, parking passes or other necessary supplies will also be paid directly to the college or university when possible. Requests for reimbursement for any fees, books, supplies, or parking paid directly by the SPP Scholar will require itemized and dated receipts and must be submitted to DEEL within one month of purchase date.

HOW TO APPLY

Step 1. Complete the Washington State Department of Early Learning's (DEL) MERIT Education Verification process through Centralia College. Please note: All SPP staff are required to complete the education/degree verification process through MERIT. For more information on the process, please see: <http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/PD/docs/FiveEasyStepsEnglish.pdf>

Step 2. Communicate your intent to apply for SPP tuition support to your DEEL coach and include the necessary steps to meet SPP's education requirements in your professional development plan.





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Please note: DEEL coaches may advise SPP staff to take courses as a non-matriculated student (a student who is not enrolled as a candidate for a degree). These courses are supported by a different fund within DEEL. SPP staff taking courses as non-matriculated students do not have to complete this application.

Step 3. Apply for the following scholarships if you are eligible:

- Child Care Aware of Washington: General Scholarship
<http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/scholarships/general-scholarship>
- Child Care Aware of Washington: Bachelor’s Degree Completion Scholarship
<http://wa.childcareaware.org/providers/scholarships/bachelors-degree/ba-scholarship-information-1>

Step 4. Submit your application. A complete application includes the following documents:

1. A completed *SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program Application*.
2. A printout of your MERIT “My Education” profile, which includes your DEL Education Verification Status, and a printout of the MERIT webpage that indicates whether or not you have received a professional development award through MERIT. For more information on verifying your education in MERIT, please see:
<http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/PD/docs/FiveEasyStepsEnglish.pdf>.
3. Printouts of the emailed confirmation notices of your applications for the scholarships listed in **Step 3** above. Confirmation notices are sent by Child Care Aware of Washington to your center director via “DocuSign.”
4. If available, please also include:
 - a. Your Professional Development Plan for the current school year, approved by your supervisor and DEEL coach.
 - b. Course schedules, tuition receipts, and other itemized receipts for any applicable expenses (including books, parking, and any course-related materials and fees).
 - c. Proof of matriculation in a DEL-approved degree program from your college advisor or registrar.

DEEL will notify you of the status of your application within two weeks. There are three possible outcomes:

Approved: You are conditionally approved to move forward. You must sign a contract accepting the terms of tuition support and matriculate into an approved program—see Next Steps below.





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Waitlisted: You currently “meet” the education requirements and may receive support if the budget allows.

Denied: A detailed justification will be provided.

Next Steps. Work with DEEL staff to identify the right program for your needs and complete monthly status updates. DEEL will email you monthly with a link to a status update questionnaire to be completed and returned within five business days of receipt. Failure to reply within the time allotted will delay the disbursement of funds for the following quarter. Additional documentation may be requested with the status updates and may include: registration receipts, academic plans, unofficial transcripts, grade reports, matriculation forms, and other documents.

Important: Additional Requirements and Commonly Asked Questions

- **What about SPP staff who exceed SPP standards?** SPP staff who currently “exceed” standards *will not* be considered for the SPP Scholars Tuition Support Program at this time.
- **What’s my SPP status?** SPP Staff who are unsure whether they exceed, meet, or do not meet SPP standards should contact Suzette Espinoza-Cruz, Senior Early Learning Policy Specialist, at suzette.espinoza-cruz@seattle.gov or 206-386-1020.
- **What if my program costs more than \$10,000 per calendar year?** The maximum amount of tuition support that an SPP Scholar is allocated per academic year may not be enough to cover the full cost of tuition fees, especially if the Scholar has not been a resident of Washington State for more than a year or is a non-resident. Any fees incurred above the SPP tuition support limits are the responsibility of the Scholar.
- **What does it mean that the City is the “payer of last resort?”** Prospective SPP Scholars must apply, if eligible, for scholarships through Child Care Aware® of Washington and other grants or scholarships that are available through the government, colleges and universities, or their employer. SPP Scholars are not expected to take loans to cover costs unless the program they select exceeds the funding limit for the Tuition Support Program.
- **What do I have to do to maintain eligibility?** SPP Scholars must maintain a minimum overall grade point average of 2.5 or provide evidence that they are in good standing with their degree program.





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- **What's required of me if I become an SPP Scholar?** You must agree to teach or work in an SPP classroom (or with a DEEL contracted early learning program, if SPP is defunct) for a minimum of three years after completing your degree. If you do not meet this requirement, you will be responsible for repaying DEEL a prorated amount of the funding that DEEL paid on your behalf. Exceptions to this policy may be made by DEEL in situations where the SPP Scholar is not in control of his or her employment status (e.g., illness, agency contract termination). Requests for exceptions must be made to DEEL in writing. DEEL responses will be sent within 15 business days.
- **What if I can't complete the degree in four years?** SPP Scholars making clear progress toward the SPP education standards who are unable to meet the four-year deadline may request an extension of no more than two years. This request must include the Scholar's reasons for requesting the extension and a plan for completing the degree within two additional years.
- **What if I need to drop a class?** Scholars who drop a class after their college's tuition reimbursement deadline are required to reimburse DEEL for 100% of the class tuition and any fees associated with the class. All reimbursements will be returned to DEEL.
- **What if I fail a class?** Scholars who fail a class or need to repeat a class for any reason must repeat that class when it is next offered by the college, or as soon as possible. In most cases, courses are offered the next quarter. DEEL will cover the cost of the first failed class, but if same class is failed twice, the Scholar must reimburse DEEL for the second class. No additional tuition funds will be dispersed for the Scholar until the amount is paid in full.
- **How do I get my international transcript verified?** Please contact Suzette Espinoza-Cruz, Senior Early Learning Policy Specialist, at suzette.espinoza-cruz@seattle.gov or 206-386-1020.

For more information on anything in this policy, please contact Suzette Espinoza-Cruz, Senior Early Learning Policy Specialist, at suzette.espinoza-cruz@seattle.gov or at 206-386-1020.

