

Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program

Teacher Quality and Higher Education

Research shows that teachers' education, training and compensation levels are the main determinants of early education program quality, which has a direct and positive effect on children's healthy development. The most effective preschool teachers have bachelor's degrees with specialized training in early childhood education or child development.¹

History of the Early Childhood Educators Scholarship Program

In the fiscal year 2006 budget, the Massachusetts Legislature created the Early Childhood Educators (ECE) Scholarship program and allocated \$1 million in pilot funding. This scholarship program, administered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance at the Department of Higher Education (DHE) in cooperation with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC), provides financial assistance to currently employed early childhood educators and providers working with children from birth through school-age.² The initiative is intended to increase the number of early educators with college degrees, and thus improve the quality of early education and care programs.

Demand for Early Childhood Educators Scholarships

In the program's first year, more than 1,000 educators applied for funding, and 614 scholarships were awarded. Due to strong demand, the state tripled program funding in FY07 and granted 743 awards. Despite a difficult fiscal climate, the state allocated \$3.2 million in FY10 - FY13, with an additional \$1 million in federal Early Learning Challenge funding allocated in FY12 to meet high demand. Since its inception, the state has allocated \$24.8 million in cumulative funding, and more than 6,600 scholarships, including 1,190 in FY13, have been awarded.

Impact of Early Childhood Educators Scholarships

Recipients have used scholarship funds to attend 48 public and private colleges and universities across the commonwealth.³ Overall, 59% attend public institutions of higher education, and 41% attend private institutions.

Early Educators in Massachusetts:

- Number of early educators (including center-based teachers, Head Start, family child care providers, public school preschool): 10,823
- Average salary, preschool teacher: \$33,220
- Average salary, child care worker: \$26,200
- Turnover rate: 29%
- Early educators with bachelor's degrees
 - Center-based: 30%
 - Family child care: 18%
 - National average: 50%

Sources: Early Education for All. (2006). A Report on the Cost of Universal, High-Quality Early Education in Massachusetts; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2012). May 2011 mean annual wage for preschool teachers and child care workers in Massachusetts; Massachusetts Child Care Resource and Referral Network. (2000). Massachusetts Child Care Center and School-Age Program Salary and Benefits Report; Marshall, N. L., Denney, J., Johnson-Slaub, C., Robeson, W. (2005). Massachusetts Capacity Study Research Brief: Characteristics of the Current Early Education and Care Workforce Serving 3-5 Year-olds. Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College.; Massachusetts Child Care Resource & Referral Network, Inc. (January, 2009) Data Report 2008.

College	Total ECE Scholarship Recipients Enrolled, FY12
AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE	2
AMHERST COLLEGE	1
ANNA MARIA COLLEGE	12
BAY PATH COLLEGE	32
BECKER COLLEGE/WORCESTER	66
BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	15
BOSTON UNIVERSITY	2
BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY	27
BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	28
BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	24
CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE	41
CAPE COD COMMUNITY COLLEGE	6
COLLEGE OF OUR LADY OF ELMS	10
CURRY COLLEGE	4
DEAN COLLEGE	5
EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE	29
ENDICOTT COLLEGE	2
FISHER COLLEGE	37
FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY	9
FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY	3
GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE	9
HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	25
LESLEY UNIVERSITY	39
MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	34
MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS	4

College	Total ECE Scholarship Recipients Enrolled, FY12
MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE-BROCKTON	33
MERRIMACK COLLEGE	4
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY- BEDFORD, MASS.	11
MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY- LOWELL, MASS.	12
MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE	13
NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE	20
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY	3
NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE	12
QUINCY COLLEGE	16
QUINSIGAMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE	39
ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE	10
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY	21
SIMMONS COLLEGE	1
SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE	22
SPRINGFLD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE	4
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-AMHERST	68
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-BOSTON	52
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-DARTMOUTH	4
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-LOWELL	4
URBAN COLLEGE OF BOSTON	76
WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY	6
WHEELOCK COLLEGE	21
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY	11
TOTALS	1,004

Scholarship Recipients

Scholarship recipients are currently employed in the early education and care field where, according to the most recent data available from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average salary for a preschool teacher is \$33,220 per year in Massachusetts. This is 42% less than the average kindergarten teacher's salary of \$57,630 and 26% more than a child care worker's salary of \$26,200.⁴ The average age of scholarship recipients is 39 and reflects a non-traditional college-going population of mid-career adults.

A diverse range of early educators utilize the scholarship. Among 2011-2012 scholarship recipients, 54% were white, 16% were Hispanic/Latino, 11% were African-American, 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, 1% were multi-racial, 1% were Cape Verdean, less than 1% identified as American Indian/Alaska Native (14% not reporting).⁵

Scholarship recipients represent the commonwealth's many early education and care settings: group child care centers, including center-based programs and Head Start (86%); family child care providers (7%); public school preschool programs (5%); and school-age child care programs (2%). In addition, recipients represent the various employment roles and positions that make up the field of early education and care: assistant teacher, lead teacher, program director, family child care provider, and others.

Scholarship Criteria

Criteria set by the Board of Higher Education require that applicants: (1) be employed for at least one year in an EEC-licensed or license-exempt early education and care program in Massachusetts and have demonstrated a commitment to early childhood education; (2) be enrolled in an eligible undergraduate program in early childhood education or a related field (i.e. elementary education, sociology, psychology, etc.) at a two- or four-year college or university in Massachusetts and not have a prior bachelor's degree; (3) be willing to continue employment as an early educator in Massachusetts for at least six months for every semester of scholarship aid, not to exceed two years for an associate degree and four years for a bachelor's degree; (4) be eligible under Title IV and not in default of a state or federal student loan or owe a refund on any state or federal grant; and (5) file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form. In addition, recipients of the ECE Scholarship are expected to remain employed in an early childhood education and care program in Massachusetts while completing the requirements for the degree program, maintain satisfactory academic progress in accordance with institutional policy on all college work, enroll in a minimum of three credits in a given academic semester, and complete the educational program within a reasonable timeframe.⁶

Current Award Amounts

The amount of a recipient's scholarship award depends upon the number of credits s/he pursues and the type of institution of higher education s/he attends. Award amounts range from \$150 per credit for a maximum of \$1,350 per semester at a community college to \$400 per credit for a maximum of \$3,600 per semester at a public or private college or university. Scholarship awards fund tuition and fees and include some related expenses, such as textbooks. Grants may be awarded for a maximum of three courses per semester during the fall, spring and summer semesters. The new application is available at: <http://www.osfa.mass.edu/default.asp?page=ecescholarship>.

Moving Forward

Investments in early educators are paying off as scholarship recipients are currently distributed throughout each academic year: 26% freshmen, 29% sophomores, 30% juniors, 19% seniors and 3% in their fifth undergraduate year. The majority of recipients (58%) are enrolled in four-year bachelor's degree programs.⁷ The scholarship program is supporting many early educators in their pursuit of higher education degrees. However, many more would like to participate. To better serve scholarship applicants and meet rising demand, a scholarship workgroup has been formed comprised of staff from EEC, DHE and additional representatives of higher education. Increasing the number of participants in the ECE Scholarship program would help to ensure a better educated workforce, ultimately helping to improve children's outcomes by achieving high-quality early education and care in the commonwealth.

For more information, visit www.earlyeducationforall.org or contact Titus DosRemedios at 617-330-7386 or tdosremedios@earlyeducationforall.org

¹ Kelley, P. & Camilli, G. (2007). The impact of teacher education on outcomes in center-based education programs: A meta-analysis. *NIEER Working Papers*; Campbell, F. A., et al. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6(1), p. 42-57, and Peisner-Feinberg, E. S., et al. (1999). *The Children of the Cost, Quality, and Child Outcomes Study Go To School*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Porter Graham Center Child Development Center. Retrieved October 29, 2008, from: <http://www.fpg.unc.edu/~ncedl/PDFs/COO-es.pdf>; Bowman, B., Donovan, M. S., & Burns, M. S. (Eds.). (2000). *Eager to Learn: Educating Our Preschoolers*. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press; Barton, A. (2001). *Securing Our Future: Planning What We Want for Our Youngest Children, Future Trends, Volume VI*. Malden, MA: Early Learning Services, Massachusetts Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED453954); Whitebook, M. (2003). *Bachelor's Degrees Are Best: Higher Qualifications for Pre-Kindergarten Teachers Lead to Better Learning Environments for Children*. Washington D.C.: The Trust for Early Education. Retrieved October 29, 2008, from <http://www.trustforearlyed.org/docs/whitebookfinal.pdf>

² The Department of Early Education and Care serves children from birth through age 14 (or up to age 16 if the child has a documented disability).

³ FY12 data on Early Childhood Educators Scholarship recipients by school, grade, county, race/ethnicity, provider-type, and position, as well as the amount of scholarships by school-type provided by the Department of Early Education and Care: <http://www.eec.state.ma.us/>

⁴ U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2012. Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Mean annual wage for preschool teachers in Massachusetts. The job description for the OES survey for the preschool teacher occupation is as follows: Instruct children (normally up to 5 years of age) in activities designed to promote social, physical, and intellectual growth in primary school in preschool, day care center, or other child development facility. May be required to hold State certification. Exclude "Child Care Workers" (39-9011) and "Special Education Teachers" (25-2041 through 25-2043). Available: <http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes252011.htm>

⁵ One estimate of the racial composition of the field is 11% Hispanic/Latino, 8% African-American, 75% White, 2% Asian, 3% multi-racial as reported by Marshall, N.L., et al. (2005). Preparing the Early Education and Care Workforce: The Capacity of Massachusetts' Institutions of Higher Education. Wellesley, MA: Center for Research on Women, Wellesley College. Retrieved from: <http://www.wcwoonline.org/proj/earlycare/capacityfullreport.pdf>

⁶ Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance. Available: http://www.osfa.mass.edu/pdfs/guidelines/2006-2007_EarlyChildhood.pdf; <https://secure.osfa.mass.edu/ecea/TermsAndConditions.htm>

⁷ Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance. FY12 ECE Scholarship data summary. Provided by Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care.

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