



DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees Grant Program

**DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees (DC LEAD) Incentive Program
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)**

The DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees (DC LEAD) program aims to provide child care educators with the knowledge, skills and education to support DC’s youngest learners and increase the number of high-quality early childhood professionals in the District. DC LEAD program is administered by Southeast Children’s Fund (SCF) on behalf of the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE).

1. What is DC LEAD incentive program?

The DC LEAD incentive program offers a financial incentive of up to \$3,000, based on funding availability, to child care educators who are enrolled in a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential program or degree **program to meet the OSSE [minimum education requirements](#) or already meet the minimum education requirements for their current position.**

- a. See Table 1 for minimum education requirements.

Table 1: Minimum Education requirements

Position	Minimum Education Credential Required	Effective Date
Center Director	Bachelor’s degree (BA) in ECE (including early childhood development, elementary education or early special education) or a bachelor’s degree in any subject area with at least 15 semester credit hours in ECE.	December 2022
Teacher	Associate degree (AA) in ECE (or early childhood development, child and family studies or a closely related field) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood.	December 2023
Assistant Teacher	Child Development Associate (CDA) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area.	December 2023
Expanded Home Caregiver	Associate degree in ECE (or early childhood development, child and family studies or a closely related field) or an associate degree (or higher) in any subject area with at least 24 semester credit hours in early childhood.	December 2023
Home Caregiver and Associate Home Caregiver	CDA	December 2023

2. How do child care educators apply for the DC LEAD incentive program?

Child care educators can apply through the [SCF website](#) or complete a hard copy of the application. Hard copies of the DC LEAD application form will be distributed to child development facilities, DC Child Care Connections (DC CCC) service centers and partnering institutions of higher education (IHEs). Child care educators may also request a hard copy of the application via email at DCLEAD@sechildrensfund.org.

3. Who is eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive?

A child care educator employed in an eligible position in a child development facility licensed by OSSE. For more information of eligibility requirements, please visit the [SCF website](#).

4. Is a child care educator eligible to receive the DC LEAD scholarship if they are found eligible for the incentive?

Eligibility is determined on an individual basis for both the scholarship and incentive program. A child care educator interested in the DC LEAD scholarship who is found eligible for the incentive, may be eligible for the scholarship. Additional information on eligibility can be found [here](#).

5. Who is NOT eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive?

The following positions are not eligible:

- a. Out-of-school time only program group leaders and assistants
- b. Aides and substitutes
- c. Teachers in District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) and public charter schools

6. Will eligible applicants receive their incentive payment in one or multiple disbursements?

The incentive payment will be distributed as up to two payments of \$1,500 each, based on funding availability. Each approved participant will receive a total of up to \$3,000, based on funding availability.

7. Will taxes be taken out of the payment(s) to the eligible candidate?

No, taxes will not be taken of the payment(s). Incentive recipients will be issued a 1099 tax document at the end of the year. Recipients will need to report the income when filing their state or federal taxes and may need to pay additional tax on these funds when filing their 2022/2023 taxes. Individuals who receive an incentive payment may wish to consult with an accountant or other tax expert, and/or to save a portion of funds received to cover potential future tax liabilities.

8. Are teachers and assistant teachers in the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive?

Yes, PKEEP teachers and assistant teachers who meet the minimum education requirements for PKEEP are eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive.

9. Are teachers and assistant teachers in OSSE-licensed Montessori programs eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive?

Yes, teachers and assistant teachers in OSSE-licensed Montessori programs who meet the minimum education requirements or currently enrolled in a credential program or college/university working to meet the minimum education requirements are eligible to receive the DC LEAD incentive.

10. When will eligible applicants receive the financial incentive?

Eligible applicants will receive the first financial incentive six months after DC LEAD incentive application approval, completion of the DC LEAD incentive payment process and signed DC LEAD incentive agreement. All payments are contingent upon verification of continued employment as verified through the Division of Early Learning Licensing Tool (DELLT).

11. Do applicants need to remain employed in their current position to receive funds?

As specified in the DC LEAD incentive agreement, approved eligible applicants must remain employed with their current employer in order to receive incentive payments. Those who remain employed six months after approval will receive \$1,500 and those who remain employed 12 months after approval will receive an additional \$1,500 payment, contingent on the availability of funds.

12. How will applicants know if their DC LEAD application is approved or denied?

Applicants will receive a decision letter via email and mail.

13. Who should interested applicants contact if they have questions about DC LEAD?

If you have questions about the DC LEAD program, please email DCLEAD@sechildrensfund.org.