



DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees Grant Program

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

The DC Leading Educators toward Advanced Degrees (DC LEAD) scholarship 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. Upon program completion, scholars will earn either an associate or bachelor's degree in early childhood education (ECE) to meet the minimum education requirements set by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) for the early childhood workforce in DC. The DC LEAD program is administered by Southeast Children's Fund (SCF) on behalf of OSSE.

1. What is the DC LEAD scholarship program?

The DC LEAD scholarship program is a scholarship opportunity that will cover the cost of tuition and books for child care educators who work in licensed child development facilities in DC to support staff in meeting the child care facility [minimum education requirements set by OSSE](#).

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

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 for the DC LEAD scholarship?

See eligibility information [here](#).

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

Eligibility is determined on an individual basis for both the scholarship and incentive program. Child care educators enrolled in a CDA, associate or bachelor's degree program may be eligible for the incentive. Additional information on eligibility can be found [here](#).

5. What if a child care educator is interested applying for the DC LEAD scholarship program but is not enrolled in an IHE?

A child care educator who is not enrolled in an IHE but wishes to pursue postsecondary studies in early childhood can still complete the DC LEAD application. A DC LEAD program advisor will

follow-up within seven-14 days of the submission of the application. If the educator is found eligible, a DC LEAD program advisor will support the applicant in applying to a partner IHE (see question 5).

6. Which IHEs are currently participating in the DC LEAD program?

- Bowie State University
- Central Texas College
- Montgomery College
- Northern Virginia Community College
- Prince George’s Community College
- Trinity Washington University
- University of the District of Columbia
- University of the District of Columbia Community College
- University of the Potomac

For more information regarding partner IHEs, please visit SCF’s [website](#).

7. Will eligible applicants receive scholarship payments?

No, the funds will be dispersed every semester directly to the IHE that the scholar attends.

8. Will a scholar be reimbursed for the money paid out of pocket prior to receiving the DC LEAD scholarship?

No, scholars will only be funded after their application has been approved and they have signed an annual scholarship agreement.

9. Are teachers and assistant teachers in the Pre-K Enhancement and Expansion Program (PKEEP) eligible?

Yes, PKEEP teachers and assistant teachers are eligible for the DC LEAD scholarship program, provided they meet other program eligibility criteria.

10. Are group leaders and assistant group leaders in the out-of-school time (OST) program eligible?

Yes, group leaders and assistant group leaders in OST programs may apply if they are in a child development facility licensed by OSSE and are interested in meeting credential requirements to become a lead or assistant teacher of infants, toddlers or preschool-aged children in licensed child development facilities in the District.

11. Are teachers and assistant teachers in OSSE-licensed Montessori programs eligible?

Yes, Montessori teachers in OSSE-licensed facilities are eligible for the scholarship program.

Note: Scholarships may only be used at partnering IHEs (see question 5) for programs of study leading to an associate or bachelor's degree. At this time, DC LEAD cannot support Montessori studies outside an associate or bachelor's degree program at a partner institution.

12. When will eligible applicants receive the scholarship?

Eligible applicants will receive scholarship funding following DC LEAD program acceptance, completion of a signed annual scholarship agreement and enrolment in pre-approved classes. Please note, payment for tuition and fees will be dispersed directly to the IHE.

13. How will applicants know that their DC LEAD scholarship application is approved?

Applicants will receive a decision letter via email and mail.

14. Who should applicants contact for questions about the DC LEAD program?

For questions about the DC LEAD program, please email DCLEAD@sechildrensfund.org.