
Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Bursary Program

Important Notice: The ECE Graduate Bursary Program will end on June 30, 2024

Policy No.: ELCD-BUR-001

Effective Date: April 1, 2017

Date Revised: September 1, 2023

Policy Cross References: ELCD-BUR-002

Legislative References: n/a

PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Early Childhood Education (ECE) Graduate Bursary Program is to improve recruitment and retention of qualified early childhood educators in regulated child care services. Well-trained early childhood educators are an essential component of regulated child care services and are the main determining factor in the level of quality provided by these services. The ultimate goal of this bursary program is to increase the number of qualified early childhood educators within the province, which will, in turn, improve the quality of child care services available to children and families in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The intent of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program is to provide assistance to candidates who have obtained a diploma in Early Childhood Education through a recognized post-secondary institution in Newfoundland and Labrador. Bursaries are available to graduates who meet the criteria set by the Department of Education (EDU). In return, bursary recipients must commit to work in a regulated child care service in this province for three years after graduation. The Association of Early Childhood Educators Newfoundland and Labrador (AECENL) will provide the ECE Graduate Bursary to those who qualify as per the policy below.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. **Definitions:** The following definitions will apply in interpretation of these policies:
 - i. **Date of Graduation:** The date noted on the parchment issued by the post-secondary institution.

- ii. **Early Childhood Education (ECE) Diploma program:** A post-secondary ECE program operating in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador that is recognized for the purposes of child care services certification as Level II.
- iii. **Fiscal Year:** April 1 to March 31.
- iv. **Full-time Equivalent (FTE):** Three years full-time equivalent is working 4,320 hours and minimally 27 months out of 36 months.
- v. **Quarter:** A quarter is a 3 month period, each covering one quarter of a fiscal year – April 1st to June 30th (1st Quarter), July 1st to September 30th (2nd Quarter), October 1st to December 31st (3rd Quarter) and January 1st to March 31st (4th Quarter).
- vi. **Regulated child care service:** A child care service which has been issued a valid Child Care Licence, or an approval certificate from a licensed family child care agency.
- vii. **Service Agreement:** A signed agreement between the applicant and AECENL, that outlines the terms and conditions of funding.

2. Bursary Amount:

- i. The eligible bursary amount is up to \$7,500 to graduates of an ECE Diploma program.
- ii. Funding received under the ECE Trainee Bursary Program (ELCD-BUR-002) will be deducted from the total eligible amount of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program.

3. Eligibility:

- i. To qualify for the ECE Graduate Bursary, eligible candidates must:
 - a. Graduate from a recognized two-year Early Childhood Education program in Newfoundland and Labrador;
 - b. Begin employment in a regulated child care service in Newfoundland and Labrador within six months of graduation, for a period of not less than three years full-time equivalent. Those working part time may require an extended period of service;
 - c. Sign a service agreement for three-year FTE return in service;
 - d. Submit a complete application package within six months of graduation; and
 - e. Graduate on or before June 30, 2024.

4. Application:

- i. Applications must be submitted to AECENL within six months of graduation and include:
 - a. A completed application form, available on the AECENL website at: www.aecenl.ca;
 - b. A copy of the applicants ECE Diploma;
 - c. A copy of official transcripts; and
 - d. Proof of employment in a regulated child care service in Newfoundland and Labrador in the form of:
 - i. Regulated Centre - Signed and dated letter from the employer indicating the following: start date, position as part of staff to child ratio (or administrator),

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- number of hours employed per week and confirming full-time or part-time status.
- ii. Regulated Family Child Care – Copy of the Child Care Licence or Approval Certificate (from the Agency) and documentation of the start date.
 - ii. Applications and supporting documentation must be submitted to AECENL by mail, email or in person.
 - a. If submitting information via e-mail:
 - b. Put your name and the name of the bursary you are applying for (ECE Graduate Bursary) in the subject line;
 - c. Attach all documents in the same email; and
 - d. Only PDF files will be accepted.
 - iii. Submit the following banking information (for first time applicants and when information has changed):
 - a. Direct deposit form or void cheque;
 - b. Copy of social insurance number (SIN) or confirmation of temporary SIN expiration date (if applicable);
 - c. TD1 – hand signed (no electronic signatures); and
 - d. TD1NL – hand signed (no electronic signatures).
 - iv. Application packages received outside the six-month eligibility period will be ineligible for the ECE Graduate Bursary.

5. Return Service Requirements:

- i. Bursaries will be awarded to individuals who sign a service agreement with AECENL agreeing to provide three years of service (full-time equivalent) as an early childhood educator in a regulated child care service in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- ii. This employment can be achieved in more than one regulated child care service congruently.
- iii. Applicants must begin working within six months of graduation (date of graduation is the date on the diploma).
- iv. Verification of Return Service Requirement:
 - a. To verify return in service, recipients will be required to submit to AECENL, a Verification of Employment form or copy of paystubs, within 10 business days following the quarter end.
- v. Break in Service: If a recipient has not worked in a regulated child care services during a quarter, notification must be sent in writing to AECENL within 10 days following the end of that quarter indicating the reason and the approximate timeframe of the break in service – for example, parental leave, extended sick leave.

6. Extension of Agreement:

- i. The Executive Director of AECENL, in consultation with the Department of Education may permit an extension of the time to fulfil the three-year employment requirement in extenuating circumstances, such as parental leave, if the recipient intends to return to work.
- ii. Conditions regarding an extension of agreement will be determined by individual circumstances on a case-by-case basis.
- iii. Extensions to the three-year agreement in order to meet the three-year FTE must be requested in writing to the Executive Director of AECENL outlining the reason(s) for the request. If granted, extensions will not exceed three years (six years total) to meet the required commitment.
 - a. Applicants will be required to submit documentation to support the reason for the requested extension e.g., doctor's note.
 - b. Extensions must be requested a minimum of 30 days prior to the expiry of the signed Service Agreement.

7. Decision/Notification:

- i. AECENL will assess the application and supporting documentation based on the information submitted.
- ii. Incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant within 10 business days of receipt of the application.
- iii. Once determined as eligible:
 - a. The amount of the bursary will be calculated (up to \$7, 500) based on the eligible amount – deductions will be made based on amounts received from the ECE Trainee Bursary Program; and
 - b. A service agreement will be sent to the applicant for signature and will indicate the amount of bursary approved.
- iv. Once the service agreement has been signed and returned to AECENL, the financial payment will be processed.
- v. An applicant will be advised in writing by AECENL within 10 business days of receipt of application if eligible or ineligible.

8. Non-Fulfillment of Service Agreement:

- i. Recipients who do not meet the service agreement requirements, must repay all or a portion of the bursary.

9. Application Submission:

By Email: ecebursary@aecenl.ca

By Mail: ECE Graduate Bursary
P.O. Box 8657, St. John's, NL
A1B 3T1

**By Courier or
by hand:** 59 Pippy Place, Suite 2A, St. John's, NL

ECE Graduate Bursary Inquiries: (709) 726-3044 or ecebursary@aecenl.ca

Please Note: *In accordance with the Financial Administration Act, payment of any obligation arising from the approval of the ECE Graduate Bursary Program is subject to there being available funding in the Government fiscal year in which the payment comes due.*