

ECACE Scholarship FAQs

Q. What are the eligibility requirements for this scholarship?

A. You may qualify for the ECACE Scholarship if you currently work or have ever worked in early childhood education. The full list of eligibility requirements may be found at isac.org/ecacescholarship.

Q. How long must I have worked in an early childhood program to be eligible?

A. There is no minimum length of time you must have worked in an early childhood program to be eligible.

Q. If I am currently attending college, am I eligible for financial support?

A. Yes, individuals currently enrolled in college are eligible if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Q. Can I use this scholarship at any college or university?

A. No. The college you select must participate in the Early Childhood Access Consortium for Equity, be accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and maintain Gateway® entitlement. See the full list of participating schools at isac.org/ecacescholarship.

Q. Can I use this scholarship for graduate-level courses?

A. No. This scholarship only applies to undergraduate studies.

Q. What costs are covered by the scholarship?

A. The scholarship will help pay the applicant's total cost of attendance for an academic year after other financial aid is received, up to \$7,500.

Q. When can I apply for the 2025-26 academic year?

A. The application period for the 2025-26 academic year opens March 31, 2025. You are encouraged to apply by the priority application deadline of May 19, 2025 to have the best chance of receiving funding.

Q. What documentation do I need to start my application?

A. You will need to complete an Eligibility Verification Form from the Gateways to Opportunity® Registry to verify your employment, an ECACE scholarship application from the Illinois Student Assistance Commission Student Portal, and either a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or an Alternative Application for Illinois Financial Aid.

Q. Is there a work commitment required for this scholarship?

A. Yes, recipients of this scholarship are expected to continue or return to teaching or direct services in early childhood care in Illinois.