

## Workforce Initiative

# CARES 3.0 Frequently Asked Questions

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# Eligibility

## Who is eligible for CARES 3.0?

Educators working directly with children for **at least 20 hours** a week in an eligible Early Learning For All program. A list of eligible CARES 3.0 programs can be found [here](#). Educators must hold a position title that is in the classroom. The Workforce Initiatives Team asks employers to verify hours and position title by submitting payroll.

Programs in Early Learning For All may only participate in either CARES 3.0 or the Early Educator Salary Support Grant. For more information on this grant, please visit [this webpage](#).

## How do I join the Early Learning For All network?

For more information on the Early Learning For All network, please check out [our website here](#).

## If I just joined the Early Learning For All network and don't currently serve any subsidy-eligible children, am I still eligible for CARES?

Yes, all programs in the Early Learning For All network are eligible for CARES. New programs are automatically placed in the Orange Tier. It is not a requirement to have subsidy-eligible children enrolled in your program to be eligible for CARES.

## What are eligible job titles for CARES eligibility?

There are a variety of job titles that are eligible for CARES. If your exact title is not listed as an option on the Workforce Registry, please select the one that most closely matches. For the complete list of eligible titles, please visit the list [here](#).

## What is considered full-time?

30+ hours a week is considered full-time for CARES 3.0. Employers will be asked to verify these hours on the Workforce Registry and through payroll.

## How much am I eligible to receive?

The stipend amount you receive is based on your program's tier (the percentage of subsidy children served), your title/position, education/early education units, Child Development Permit level, and how many hours you work a week. [Click here](#) to view a table of the stipend ranges with some examples of educators. Your stipend amount is determined by what is verified on the Registry by the end of the stipend application (Last day of October for Fall and last day of April for Spring). It's the responsibility of the employer to verify employment including hours and position title by the application deadline.

## Are SFUSD employees eligible?

SFUSD employees are eligible for one final time for CARES in Spring 2025 if they fall into one of the following classifications in a PreK setting:

Paraprofessionals – C Series, A01 and S10

Substitute teachers and substitute paraeducators

Hours worked in Out-of-School Time and TK settings cannot be counted toward eligibility for CARES 3.0 Eligibility is verified by SFUSD administrators.

## Are substitute teachers eligible?

Substitute teachers must be on the payroll for the Early Learning For All program and be verified by their employer on the Workforce Registry. Substitute teachers employed by ECE STEP are eligible and follow a different verification process.

## What if I change my employment after I apply?

If your employment status changes (you leave your employer, your hours change, your role changes) during the processing period for the stipend round please notify the Workforce Initiatives team immediately ([ECEstipend@sfgov.org](mailto:ECEstipend@sfgov.org)). You must be employed at a CARES-eligible Early Learning For All site at the time of application and at the end of the application period.

## Can I apply to CARES 3.0 if I'm on leave?

Educators on leave may apply to CARES and are subject to the same payroll verification process as all employees. For educators on leave that are not on payroll, the employer may request an employee leave form from [ECEstipend@sfgov.org](mailto:ECEstipend@sfgov.org). For each form submitted, the outcome will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

We strongly suggest checking in with human resources and the California Employment Development Department (EDD) to ensure that the stipend won't negatively impact benefits received and check-in with a tax advisor to mitigate any negative tax implications.

## What is the last day an employee can start employment to be eligible for CARES?

The last day an employee can start at an eligible site and be eligible for CARES is the day the application opens (October 1 for fall, April 1 for spring). This to ensure that payroll can be verified for this employee. Additionally, employers must submit an offer letter for new employees not on payroll yet with their name, date of hire, job title, expected number of hours per week, and starting wage. This letter can be submitted to [ECEstipend@sfgov.org](mailto:ECEstipend@sfgov.org).

# Academic Units, Degrees, and Permits

## What if I don't have any ECE units? Am I still eligible?

Yes. All educators who meet the baseline of working in an eligible CARES 3.0 program for at least 20 hours a week in the classroom are still eligible for receiving stipends.

## I received an estimate for my stipend level but based on my current degree/units earned, and Child Development Permit level, I believe I am eligible for a higher stipend. How do I get a higher stipend amount?

The estimated and final stipend amounts are based on what is verified on the CA ECE Workforce Registry by the application deadline. It is critical to have the documents and information in your registry profile reflect the most up-to-date information by the deadline. It is the responsibility of each applicant to upload documentation and keep personal, education, and other information up to date. Any information updated after the stipend application deadline (Last day of October for Fall and last day of April for Spring) will NOT be used to determine the stipend amount. It takes about 2-4 weeks for the Registry to verify any documents uploaded. Please be mindful of the processing time.

There is a formal appeals process that is shared with the initial estimates email. Applicants can file an appeal. All appeals will be reviewed individually. No appeals will be considered outside the appeal window.

## I earned a degree outside of the United States, how can I have that degree counted toward my stipend?

Individuals who have completed college or university course work at an institution in a country other than the United States must obtain a complete course-by-course evaluation of foreign transcripts. This includes any early education units obtained outside of the United States. For more information on transcript evaluation visit the [Commission on Teaching Credentialing Website](#). Once the evaluation is complete, it must be uploaded to your Workforce Registry account to be verified. The verified units or degrees will then be eligible toward CARES.

## What if I have ECE units from an unaccredited institution?

It is the Workforce Registry's policy to be aligned with the CA Commission on Teacher Credentialing so we wouldn't be able to make exceptions for your units to be verified. It is CARES policy to only use verified information to determine stipend amounts, therefore since the registry does not verify units from an unaccredited institution, they will not be used to determine your stipend amount.

## How do I know if the institution I attended has the right accreditation?

It is the policy of the Workforce Initiatives team to align with the accreditation standards of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC). For more information on accepted accreditation, please check the [CTC website here](#).

## How do I apply for a Child Development Permit?

City College of San Francisco (CCSF) is available to help students and non-CCSF students with the ECE Permit process.

For information, workshops, and ECE permit appointments, please contact the CCSF Child Development and Family Studies Department at: (415) 452-5605 or [cdev@ccsf.edu](mailto:cdev@ccsf.edu). CCSF Ocean Campus, 50 Frida Kahlo Way, MUB 249, San Francisco, 94112 or visit [their website](#).

For the quickest response please call (415) 452-5605 or email [cdev@ccsf.edu](mailto:cdev@ccsf.edu) address.

## What is the difference between AA's, AS's and Transfer Degrees?

Whether it is an AA or an AS depends on the school issuing the degree. Both are Associate's Degrees one is issued from an Arts while the other is from Sciences. Sometimes they are called ASTs. The Associate's Degree for Transfer (AST) usually has fewer requirements than a standalone AA or AS.

The AA or AS degrees categorized by an institution as "for transfer" degrees hold the same "weight" as a degree in any other category. The only distinguishable difference is that the CSU system treats these a bit differently for students transferring from a community college to a university in the CSU system. Essentially, an AA or AS degree in ECE or Child Development would be fundamentally no different than an AA or AS for transfer in the same areas of study.

Additionally, as long as a participant uploads a transcript, once verified, that will show on the Education & Training Report.

## Does my degree need to be in a related field to be eligible?

Associates and Bachelors degrees do not need to be in a related field to count toward eligibility for CARES. Masters degrees are the only degrees that need to be in a related field to count toward eligibility.

# Tiering

## How are program tiers determined?

**FY 2024-2025:** Tiers are determined by the enrollment data average over a six-month period between October and March. Subsidy enrollment data is collected from Resource and Referral

agencies. The formulas can be found in the [Fall 2024 CARES 3.0 webinar recordings linked here](#). For family child care programs, school age children are defined in alignment with licensing.

Tiers will only be determined once per year in the fall. All programs that enter Early Learning For All after the tier determination process will be automatically designated to the orange tier until the next round of tier determination in the fall.

### **Will programs be able to provide feedback on the tiering formula?**

The Department of Early Childhood values community engagement and develops policies based on community feedback to the best of our ability. The current tier determination formula was developed in response to community feedback during listening sessions in spring 2024. We anticipate engaging with the community again in this or a similar manner, should there be a change in the current tiering formula.

### **Green Tier Centers**

Green Tier Centers are not eligible for CARES 3.0 stipends. Lead and Assistant Teachers in Green Tier centers will be receiving wage enhancements through the Early Educator Salary Support Grant awarded to their employer.

### **Will children in the new tuition credit program count toward subsidy-eligible enrollment?**

No, the tuition credit program is for families that are above the income threshold and do not qualify for subsidies. These enrollments will not count as part of the subsidy-eligible enrollment that determines tier levels.

## **PAYROLL VERIFICATION**

### **How is payroll defined and why is it needed?**

Payroll is defined as the system that an employer uses to pay their employees for their work. It includes keeping track of the hours worked by employees, calculating their wages, and issuing paychecks or direct deposits. In the context of receiving stipends funded by public funds, payroll is needed to ensure that all educators receiving the stipend are on the employer's official payroll and are paid through a formal payment system. This is necessary because the use of public funds for the stipends is subject to strict requirements and regular audits by the city, which require proper documentation and accountability. Eligible staff are those who are paid through a formal payment system and there is documentation to support it. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in disqualification from receiving the stipend.

For more details, please see the [current payroll policy update document](#) on our CARES webpage.



## What are acceptable payroll documents?

Acceptable payroll documents include payroll reports, payroll ledgers, payroll journals, or payroll summaries. These are typically available for employers that use either a payroll software or an accountant. These documents should include information from the previous fiscal quarter (quarter 1 for Fall, quarter 3 for Spring). For employers that do not use either a payroll software or an accountant, we will accept a completed and signed [DE9 form](#).

For the most up-to-date list of acceptable documents, please view our [current payroll policy](#).

# THE CA ECE WORKFORCE REGISTRY

## How do I apply to CARES 3.0 on the registry?

Application guides for how to apply for CARES 3.0 can be found here in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Chinese](#), and on the [CARES 3.0 webpage](#). You must apply and upload documents through the Registry. For Fall, we advise all documents be uploaded before October 1, and for Spring we advise all documents be uploaded before April 1 to ensure an accurate stipend amount is developed based on all verified information from the Registry. The application itself takes about 15-25 minutes to complete. The Registry takes about 2-4 weeks to verify any documents uploaded.

## How do I review and make updates to my registry profile?

Please visit the [CA ECE Workforce Registry Resource](#) page for a list of guides and tutorials on how to make updates to your profile and navigate the registry.

## How do I view what documents have been verified on the registry?

There are two ways to review verified documents on your account:

1. Login to your [CA Workforce Registry](#) profile
  - a. Option 1-From the "Home" page go to "My Documents" to view a list of all uploaded documents and their status.
  - b. Option 2- From the "Homepage" to "View Education and Training Report (PDF)" to obtain a record of verified degree, coursework, and permit information.

## What if I've applied for a Child Development Permit but it will take longer than the application to receive the official permit?

Pending Child Development Permits (proof application/submission) are not eligible. Due to the variability of documents received and the difficulty in confirming that the permit was awarded, pending Permit applications/submissions are not acceptable documentation.

## How can I gain administrative access on the registry to verify employees (for program administrators and FCC owners)?

Program administrators and FCC providers can gain administrative access to verify employment and review employee information by logging into their registry accounts and clicking “Employer Admin Request” and following the steps for their type of setting.

## Who do I contact for help to navigate the CA ECE Workforce Registry?

For support with navigating the registry please reach out to the Help Desk at Children’s Council.

[Support@childrenscouncil.org](mailto:Support@childrenscouncil.org) or 415.343.4669

Based on your inquiry the Help Desk staff can help you directly or support you to elevate your inquiry to the CA Registry staff.

## How do I update my position title and or working hours in the CA ECE Workforce Registry?

You can use this guide [here](#), to support you when updating your Registry profile.

# APPLICATION PROCESS

## How do I know if my application was successfully submitted?

There are a few ways to confirm you’ve successfully completed the CARES 3.0 application:

1. You will receive a confirmation email from the CA Registry confirming your application
2. If your email blocks these messages from the registry you can view them on your registry account by logging in and clicking the notifications button to the left of your name in the top right corner of your screen.
3. After logging in to the registry you can view the status of your submitted stipend by going to “Stipends & Pathways” in the left side navigation bar, and then clicking “My Stipends,” then confirm that the correct request date and stipend period are reflected in that list.

If you still are unsure if your application was submitted, please contact the Workforce Initiatives team via email ([ECEstipend@sfgov.org](mailto:ECEstipend@sfgov.org)) and share your full name and registry ID so we can review our records for you.

## How do I know how much I will get in the stipend?

Please review your program’s [Tier level](#) and the appropriate stipend scale to determine your stipend amount. Note that the stipend amount is based on the information verified on your CA ECE Workforce Registry. It is each applicant’s responsibility to ensure that documents pertaining to Child

Development Permit level, transcripts, and other education are uploaded to the registry and verified by CA Registry staff.

### **Can I still apply after the deadline?**

We are unable to accept late applications and there are no exceptions to the deadline.

The City follows strict procurement rules that determine policy for funding opportunities. This new iteration of CARES is extremely time sensitive which unfortunately does not give any flexibility for those that missed the deadline. We advise all administrators and past CARES applicants to be mindful of the deadline and to remind friends and colleagues.

If you have not received a confirmation email that states a successful application has been submitted within 24 hours and the email is not in your spam/junk inbox, please reach out to the Workforce Initiatives Team as soon as possible. We recommend saving your confirmation email and/or taking a screenshot of the confirmation webpage on the Registry for your records.

## **RECEIVING THE STIPEND**

### **When will my stipend arrive?**

Our current timeline for stipends to be sent via mail is by mid-December for fall and mid-June for spring. The stipends are sent to the preferred mailing address indicated in your registry profile. The estimated arrival date for your stipend will be shared via email. Our goal is to send out stipends all at once, but we can't guarantee arrival dates as post office delivery times vary, especially around the holidays.

Delays in mailing the stipend may occur if there are issues with your W9 or payroll verification. Please be sure to check your email for information and updates.

### **What if I don't receive my stipend within 30 days of the payment window?**

The Workforce Initiative team will send out a re-issue request link to all approved applicants after the 30-day payment window has passed and applicants who have not received their stipend are encouraged to complete the form to have their stipends reissued.

If you have a complex situation that you feel warrants direct communication with our fiscal intermediary, please contact Children's Council Help Desk at [Support@childrenscouncil.org](mailto:Support@childrenscouncil.org) or 415.343.4669.

### **What if I am moving or have a new mailing address?**

Update your Registry profile information as soon as possible. Stipend checks will be sent to the mailing address on your Registry profile. W-9s must match your residential address and be the address you use to file taxes. Be sure to notify the Workforce Initiatives Team

([ECestipend@sfgov.org](mailto:ECestipend@sfgov.org)) and Children's Council ([support@childrenscouncil.org](mailto:support@childrenscouncil.org)) as soon as possible with the address you would like to receive your check and with an updated W-9 (If applicable).

## TAX IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL RESOURCES AND ADVISING)

### **Do I have to claim my stipend in my taxes?**

Yes. Children's Council will send 1099 tax forms for you to submit with your taxes. The stipends are untaxed income funds and are required to be claimed each year.

### **Can taxes be removed from my stipend before it is administered to me?**

We are not your employer of record, so we are not able to remove taxes from your stipend.

### **I received my 1099 from Children's Council but it's missing my Fall 2024 CARES stipend. What do I do?**

Due to delayed payroll verification submissions, some checks for the Fall 2024 round were sent after January 1, 2025 and are dated for 2025. This means that this stipend will not affect your 2024 taxes, but will show up for your 2025 taxes.

Please note that if you apply for CARES in Spring and Fall 2025, and SEEPD 2025, there may be a greater impact on your 2025 taxes.

### **How do I get support with filing taxes and better understanding of how accepting the stipend impacts my taxes?**

We encourage you to reach out to a tax expert or financial advising office for more information about plans for tax season. [Linked here](#) is a document with community-based resources.