

# Early Childhood Education Professionals Scholarship Now Accepting Applications to Cover 100% Tuition

*Scholarship covers 100% tuition for ECE professionals pursuing degrees and credentials. Applications close Feb. 18.*

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, February 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship](#) (CELWS) is open for all Chicagoans looking to advance or kickstart their early childhood education careers.

Professionals currently working in the industry will now be able to apply for this scholarship to continue professional development and career advancement at no cost to them.

This scholarship isn't just for teachers.

The Workforce Scholarship is also for any Chicago resident who wants to enter the early childhood workforce. Whether someone is starting their degree, finishing one, or looking to level up their career, this scholarship helps individuals earn credentials to support their success.

The Workforce Scholarship meets current and aspiring ECE professionals where they're at to further their careers and education journey. With higher education partners consisting of City Colleges of Chicago, University of Illinois Chicago, National Louis University, and Roosevelt University, the Workforce Scholarship team will work with recipients to match them with the right higher education program to pursue one of the following:

Basic & Advanced Certificates

Associates Degree

Bachelor's Degree with Licensure option (Associates to Bachelor pathway)

Alternative Licensure for current ECE professionals with earned Bachelor's



Sandy De León, Executive Director of Education Strategy, Planning & Development at City Colleges of Chicago leads the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship program — a citywide initiative and partnership

## Coursework to earn Endorsement or Gateways Credentials

The scholarship will serve as a “last dollar” scholarship, meaning it will cover 100% of the tuition costs that students’ federal grants and other scholarships do not cover. The scholarship will also cover the cost of books for up to \$250/course.

The Workforce Scholarship is awarded to qualified applicants on a first-come, first-served basis by degree/program sought, so interested applicants are encouraged not to wait to apply. Since the scholarship is intended to increase the number of early childhood education professionals in the city, Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship recipients must be willing to commit to a three-year service term of working in a Chicago Early Learning program following their graduation or coursework completion.

“Chicago’s early education system depends on the people who show up every day for children and families. This scholarship exists to make sure those professionals have access to education, guidance, and long-term career pathways. Even beyond financial support, we’re here to provide a real investment in their futures,” says Sandy De León, the Executive Director of the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship.

“The Workforce Scholarship helped me move forward in my education while continuing to work in the classroom,” said Latrice Reddick, an early childhood educator at Truman College’s Child Development Lab School and a recipient of the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship. “I was able to complete coursework to complete my Bachelor’s and take meaningful steps toward advancing my career in early childhood education.”

Applications will close February 18.

Apply online at [ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships](https://ChicagoEarlyLearning.org/Scholarships)

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## About the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship

The Mayor’s Office, City Colleges of Chicago (CCC)- Harry S. Truman College, Chicago Public Schools (CPS), and the Department of Family & Support Services (DFSS) collaborated to launch the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship (CELWS) initiative. CELWS aims to support Chicagoans and the current Chicago Early Learning workforce as they pursue coursework to earn a credential, degree, endorsement, or licensure to work with young children (birth through Pre-K) and families in Chicago Early Learning programs.

The scholarship serves an important role in Chicago’s efforts to expand access to early learning across the city and build a more robust workforce that can help Chicago expand high-quality early learning programs. CELWS provides recipients with meaningful career pathways through

partnerships with Institutions of Higher Education, which also offer students personalized support as they navigate their desired course of study.

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