CONNECTICUT Early Childhood

Scholarship Guidance and At-A-Glance: FY24-25

(Scholarship window tentatively covering requests May 15, 2024 to March 1, 2025)

✅ Please review this document AND ensure your Registry account contains **ALL** accurate, factual, and up-to-date information **_BEFORE_** you make a scholarship request.

🚫 Please *do NOT falsify information or edit your Registry profile in order to become eligible*. This constitutes fraud and has negative consequences.

Preliminary Eligibility: All applicants must meet the preliminary eligibility below **_PRIOR_** to requesting a scholarship:

1. All applicants must be **directly and currently working with children ages birth to preschool** located in one of the following settings: **Connecticut licensed family child care homes / centers or group homes / OEC-funded license exempt centers and school-based programs (see page 3 for eligible expenses by setting/role, and pages 4 on for detail by expense)**. *Note: School-age providers employed in licensed programs receiving OEC funds may be eligible.*

2. All applicants must **have a free Registry account** (http://www.oecregistry.org/), **with confirmed employment last updated within 60 days of application;** follow the setting-specific instructions under the login section to accurately create your account. **To ensure qualifications/documents are up to date,** verify which documents have already been uploaded and verified to your account. Log in and go to your Documents. Click to open and view the files to ensure that your qualifications are up to date and verify that the most recent copies are on file.

3. All applicants **must meet required eligibility details by eligible educational goal** (see pages 3+).

Scholarship Steps:
1. Read and review this entire scholarship document.
2. Ensure your Registry account is up to date; and that all required documents have been uploaded and you have received verification emails for each (check your Documents after logging in and view the status of your uploads).
3. Log in to your Registry account, go to My Scholarships, and follow prompts to apply for scholarship based on your goal (see page 3+).
4. Watch email for confirmation of application and then decision (copies of emails are also in your account: My Tools and Settings > My Messages).
5. **If awarded,** you must then register for your course / fee / etc. at your college / vendor within 60 days of the award. (Please note: Being awarded a scholarship is not a guarantee).
6. Report back success to your Registry education advisor.

What if my request is denied?

1. This document provides key information to avoid denials or delays, but sometimes denials happen. You will receive an email with the scholarship decision and any denial reason/s. Please monitor the email you use for your Registry login for scholarship application updates (copies are also in your account My Messages).
2. If your scholarship request is denied (i.e. missing documents, wrong course) you *MUST* reapply for scholarship again for consideration once the reason is corrected.
3. You may appeal a denial under certain circumstances. Follow this link (click blue underlined wording to open up link)→ Scholarship Use Policy and Appeal.

What do I do if I don't use my award?

1. **If you are unable to use your award, you must report this immediately to your Registry Education Advisor** so the funds can be released. Not notifying your Registry Education Advisor will result in needing to appeal scholarship use in the future.
   a. If you purchased textbooks as part of your award, you must return them immediately and within the return policy of the bookstore to avoid a charge for the books/materials against your award.

When does scholarship window open and close?

❖ Please use the **TENTATIVE** schedule below to plan your requests; All OEC scholarship assistance requests are dependent upon funding.

Terms /Timeframes	Apply during this time	Critical to Remember!
❖ Summer 2024	May 15, 2024 to June 30, 2024	**Plan your timing well:**
❖ Fall 2024	May 15, 2024 to September 22, 2024	• **Vouchers are non-transferable by individual, institution, term and course/fee, and are valid for 60 days from approval.**
❖ Winter 2024/25	October 16, 2024 to January 13, 2025	• **You MUST register for your event (Course, training, etc.) before the voucher expires.**
❖ Spring 2025	October 16, 2024 to March 1, 2025	• **If you cannot use your voucher, you must notify your Registry education advisor immediately.**
❖ Summer 2025	Beginning mid May 2025 (date TBD)	

Monitoring Notice:

- **Scholarship application and awards are monitored** for appropriate use, misuse, and fraud.
- Funds cannot be approved to pay for an event (course, exam, etc.) that has already incurred cost to the scholarship fund (i.e. Pathways Exam missed or did not pass; course dropped after the add/drop period or did not pass). Individuals may appeal scholarship request outcomes and probation / termination of eligibility status.
- Refer to the **Scholarship Use Policy and Appeal**.

Submit Documents: All documents must be uploaded directly into the Registry user's account (check the detailed step by step screen shots in the Registry).

For Questions after reviewing this document: Contact your Regional Education Advisor. Information is located at the bottom of every Registry page.

CONNECTICUT Early Childhood

At-A-Glance: Proposed eligible groups, roles, and expenses 2024-2025 (see Guidance by expense section # and definitions p 4-9 for more information)

I have an up-to-date Registry account where it confirms I am employed at my program. I am a...	I may be eligible for this expense:				
	Section 1: Credit-Based Coursework (including credits for CDA Credential 120 content hours)	Section 2: Tuition-Related Fees	Section 3: Pathways Exam Fees	Section 4: Non Credit Online Instructor Supported CDA Credential Training (120 content hours only)	Section 5: CDA Credential fees
Teaching staff member or administrator in a licensed group home or licensed child care center	✅ Toward: 1. A CDA credential / renewal or 2. Associate / bachelor degree in early childhood education or 3. The 3 credit licensing requirement for directors or director competencies or 4. When part of a school age head teacher application: up to 12 school age credits	✅	✅ 1 .When part of an associate / bachelor degree in early childhood education plan of study 2. When part of a School Age Head Teacher Application	✅ Contact your Registry regional Education Advisor for steps after reviewing detail on page 6	✅ One-time for application fee; One-time for renewal fee
Teaching staff member in an OEC-funded license-exempt program working toward a bachelor degree in early childhood	✅ Toward bachelor degree in ECE	✅	✅ When part of an ECE bachelor degree plan of study		
Licensed family home provider	✅ Toward: 1. Family child care setting CDA credential / renewal; or 2. Associate / bachelor degree in early childhood education; or 3. Stand-alone courses supporting running a business, including ESL; or 4. Stand-alone course for NAFCC Accreditation PD for accreditation / renewal.	✅	✅	✅ Contact your Registry regional Education Advisor for steps after reviewing detail on page 6	✅ Must be Family Child Care Setting; One time for application fee; One time for renewal fee

CONNECTICUT Early Childhood

Sections 1-3: Guidance for Credit-Based Coursework, Tuition Related Fees, Pathways Exams:

Related Policy 1: Coursework must be completed at underlined regionally accredited colleges.

    a. The OEC does not have relationships with all colleges and universities, and reserves the right to deny any request for a relationship where the need may be fulfilled with a currently listed college or university.

    b. Contact your Registry Education Advisor if you have questions about the vendor or cannot find the course you wish to take from the application listing.

Related Policy 2: The OEC supports early childhood education (ECE) degree attainment and degree progression (i.e. an individual may request support moving from a CDA credential to an ECE associate degree program or from an associate degree to an ECE bachelor's degree program). ***The following are NOT eligible at this time:*** a secondary setting CDA credential, a second associate degree, a second bachelor's degree, state educator/administrator endorsements (aka teacher certification) and/or trainings, or work toward a Master's degree or higher.

Section 1: Credit-Based Expenses

For educational goal towards credit-based courses working toward a degree, applicants must upload the following to your OEC Registry account:

    For fall 2024 through summer 2025 DEGREE work (For summer 2024: 2023-2024 financial aid evidence – a and b below, plus current c and d):

        a. Evidence of application for *2024-2025 for your college or university's financial aid* (i.e. screen shot of portal) **AND**

        b. Evidence of application for *2024-2025* federal financial aid [such as page 1 of the FAFSA Submission Summary; www.fafsa.gov] if not specifically referenced in the institution financial aid document **AND**

        c. **Complete copy of CURRENT Plan of Study/Graduation Evaluation** (*from your college advisor; submit each year or when changes are made; indicating classes you have successfully completed and, when applicable, the courses and term you plan on taking your remaining classes*) **AND**

        d. *CURRENT* transcripts on file in your Registry account.

For educational goal towards CDA Credential:

You can meet the initial CDA Credential 120-content hour requirement via college coursework or noncredit training. Please contact your Education Advisor to discuss which option best meet your needs.

a. **For college coursework to meet the 120 content hours:**
   i. Upload transcripts for any college credits and degrees earned, and your high school diploma (non US high school diplomas require a www.NACES.org member equivalency report).
   ii. Apply for scholarship (College credit and indicate the goal is the CDA Credential).

For educational goal towards 12 credits toward SCHOOL AGE (only) Head Teacher Certificate application for OEC Licensing:

This is an eligible expense for providers who have a verified School Age Head Teacher Experience Verification Form in their Registry account ***PRIOR*** to applying for scholarship AND have had a transcript review of all earned credits and degrees resulting in still needing to successfully complete more credits to meet the OEC licensing School Age Head Teacher Certificate. **Please contact your Registry Education Advisor to assist with this application.**

For educational goal towards family child care provider stand-alone (non degree) credit-based classes:

Licensed family child care providers may take non-degree classes in the categories below and do not need to upload evidence of financial aid or a plan of study, if non-degree seeking. If a degree is the goal, see above "toward a degree".

a. **For NAFCC professional development required for accreditation or accreditation renewal**. Please see www.nafcc.org for more detail about the competency areas that must be covered to include a stand-alone course to meet their requirement. Also note that NAFCC allows noncredit options. The OEC offers free unlimited training via your Registry account that can be used to meet noncredit requirements.
b. **For coursework related to running a family child care business, including ESL classes.**

For educational goal towards the OEC licensing 3 credit director course requirement or director competency coursework:

Applicant must be listed as an administrator of the program in the Registry and can apply without submitting financial aid/plan of study documents if non degree seeking; **if listed in another role: Applicants must *upload both a completed* Administrative Scholarship for Non-Administrators form, and upload a completed and signed copy of the** *Scholarship_Terms_of_Agreement_form_FY25.pdf (ccregistry.org)* **.** Director competencies include:

- Administration and supervision of early childhood programs
- Leadership in early childhood programs
- Finance in early childhood programs
- Human resources
- Family and community partnerships
- Adult learning theory

Section 2: Tuition Related Fees

CONNECTICUT Early Childhood

a. OEC Scholarship may cover course related fees in addition to tuition. Please Note: Each college charges different fee types. Ex. **Post University** requires "Technology Fees" for *EACH* module (1-6). **Charter Oak State College** requires "Student Services Fees & Technology Fees" *PER* semester (semesters include Term 1 and Term 2). Please inquire with your institutions Bursar/Business Office for correct fee type.

b. Only select the course related fees as required by your institution. Do not request all fee types. Check with your college academic advisor if unsure. Fee types may include:

- o Student Activities Fee
- o Degree Application Fee
- o Lab Fee
- o Student Services Fee
- o Technology Fee
- o College Fee
- o Transportation Fee
- o Registration Fee
- o Other Fee*

*Please Note: If selecting "Other Fee", contact your Registry Education Advisor to discuss the fee type and amount.

c. **Students are responsible to request course related fees at the time of scholarship application to avoid potential out-of-pocket expenses**. *Please contact your Bursar's Office regarding third-party payment policies and deadlines.*

Section 3: Pathways Exam Fees

Charter Oak State College's Pathways Exams allow the student to take an exam to "test out" of content rather than taking a traditional college course. **These are an eligible expense for degree seekers (The exact exam must be reflected on the current degree Plan of Study) and School-Age Head Teacher applicants as noted above.** When applying for scholarship, you must know and commit to the specific date and time of the exam.

Section 4: Non-Credit Instructor Supported Online CDA Credential Training

For Non-Credit Instructor Supported Online CDA Credential Training via your OEC Registry account (CCEI; English or Spanish): Note that successful completion of this program meets the 120 content hours required by the Council for Professional Recognition; all other requirements must still be met (see www.cdacouncil.org for all requirements). **Please contact your Registry Education Advisor if you are considering this option.**

a. Upload copies of highest level of education documentation (high school diploma/all college transcripts: non US high school diplomas require a www.NACES.org member equivalency report).

b. Log into your Registry account.

c. Apply for scholarship (select Non-Credit Training).

Section 5: CDA Credential Fees

ONE-TIME **CDA Online Assessment Fee (Requires completion of all CDA Credential requirements: 120 clock hours in the 8 CDA Credential subject areas; 480 experience hours ; Professional Portfolio; Pediatric first aid and CPR; etc. See www.cdacouncil.org for full details.)**

a. Contact the Council for Professional Recognition (www.cdacouncil.org) for details and confirm your 7-digit Council Customer ID number.

b. Upload copies of any education transcripts (credits or evidence of 120 content hour training completion and your high school diploma: non US high school diplomas require a www.NACES.org member equivalency report) to support your application.

a. Note: do NOT upload CCEI certificates as these completions are automatically uploaded to your Education and Training Report.

c. Upload copies of your pediatric first aid and CPR certificates.

d. Apply for scholarship: Select appropriate setting and age group; attest to completion of all requirements; enter your 7-digit Council Customer ID number.

ONE-TIME **CDA Online Renewal Fee (Requires completion of all CDA Credential renewal requirements: 45 professional education hours, national organization membership, 80 experience hours; ECE Reviewer Recommendation; Pediatric first aid and CPR. See www.cdacouncil.org for full details.)**

a. Contact the Council for Professional Recognition (www.cdacouncil.org) for details about renewal and confirm your 7-digit Council Customer ID number.

b. Upload copies of your professional education hours (transcript for 3 college credit course or final training transcript for evidence of 45 training hours).

c. Upload copies of your current CDA credential, and pediatric first aid and CPR certificates.

d. Apply for scholarship: Select appropriate setting; attest to completion of all requirements; enter your 7-digit Council Customer ID number.

Glossary of Terms/Definitions:

- **"Academic Advisor" or "College Advisor"** refers to college personnel that will help the students set and achieve their educational goals by working closely with them to select courses, identify strengths, choose a major and act as resource until the student graduates.

- **"Administrator"** refers to a leadership-level staff member tagged as such within the program's OEC Registry Staff Confirmation details.

- **"College Transcript" (also called an academic transcript or academic record)** is your school's documentation of your academic performance. Your transcript must **reflect the name of the college/university as well as your name and** list all courses taken semester-by-semester, and grades received (regardless of whether or not the grade is included in the GPA computation), credit hours, major(s), minor(s), and other academic information, depending on what your institution decides is most important. The OEC requires a complete transcript including the **"transcript key". The transcript key** is the **data on the back of a transcript**, also called a legend, which communicates grading types, course numbering schemes, accreditation of institution, and other useful information.

- **"Confirmed Employment"** refers to participant status at their worksite noted in the OEC Registry (see Registry instructions for Participants). Confirmed employment is required to request OEC scholarship assistance.

- **"FAFSA"** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is a form completed annually by current and prospective college students in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid. Preferred proof of FAFSA application is page 1 of the FAFSA Submission Summary may be submitted as evidence. Alternately, confirmation email (must include to, from, date, subject and body of email). OEC scholarship intended to be used *AFTER* any other grants but BEFORE any student loans. If student loans are offered, the individual does NOT have to accept them. We hope you will weigh the offer seriously and consider what will work for you.

- **"Institution's Financial Aid"** refers to a funding award that is available exclusively to students through the financial aid office. By applying for financial aid, the individual can find out about other funding opportunities that may save OEC scholarship for others. Please upload a copy of your institution's aid evidence that indicates either the acceptance or denial of your financial aid package.

- **"OEC-Funded program"** refers to a program receiving any combination of these OEC funds: School Readiness, Child Day Care contract, State Head Start, Smart Start.

- **"Plan of Study"** *(also called a Degree Evaluation or Advising Worksheet)* refers to a document from your college or university that outlines the classes that must be completed in order to graduate in your planned Early Childhood Education/Child Studies major. This plan is developed with your college advisor. It is required to ensure that scholarship funds are used to help you attain your early childhood education goals. When uploading your plan of study, your document should contain what classes you have successfully completed so far and what term you plan on taking future courses. (The course you are looking to have covered by scholarship, must be listed on your plan of study). You will need to update your plan of study each school year or whenever any changes to your plan of study take place.

- **"Teacher"** refers to an individual with primary responsibility for a group of children. This person should be designated as a Teacher on the Staff Confirmation page and should be designated as a Teacher to a specific classroom under Building / Managing Staff within the OEC's Registry.

- **"Teaching staff members"** refers to all direct teaching roles including, but not limited to, the following OEC Registry's Staff Confirmation page roles: lead teacher, classroom teacher, assistant teacher. These individuals should show as assigned to either Teacher or Assistant Teacher / Aide in the OEC Registry's program profile under Building / Managing Rooms and Staff.

- **"Voucher"** refers to the payment commitment document emailed directly from OEC Scholarship to the institution's relevant office (and related bookstore for OEC participating vendors ONLY). Note that vouchers are good for 60 days. Vouchers have no cash value / may not be reimbursed to the student.

Terms of Agreement for the OEC Scholarship Assistance Fund (accessible in and agreed to in your online application)

Scholarship applicants must agree to the following in order to request and receive Scholarship Assistance from the Office of Early Childhood:

1. I understand there is **no on-going guarantee of funds.** The approval of my scholarship request is based on the availability of funds and the priorities set by the funding agencies and organizations.
2. I understand that all communication regarding the status of my scholarship assistance will go to the **email address I provided and assigned to my Registry account upon log in.** It is **my responsibility** to check that address for receipt of **_ALL_** information regarding my request for assistance. Email may come from Cfmail@oecregistry.org or another similar address.
3. I understand **I must keep my Registry profile information current** including but not limited to my mailing address, my email address, my telephone numbers (*home or work*) and my employment by logging in to my Registry account and editing My Profile.
4. I understand that **I must make each specific request directly through my account online**.
5. I understand that prior to applying to the OEC for aid for <u>degree-based college credit coursework</u>, **I must complete and/or submit the following paperwork** including but not limited to:
   a. Evidence of federal financial aid application (FAFSA; www.fafsa.ed.gov)
   b. Evidence of application for my college or university's financial aid
   c. Updated Planned Program of Study **in early childhood education or child study** (See your academic advisor at your college / university for the list of specific coursework you need to complete your degree and a schedule of when you plan to take them / have taken them).
6. I understand that **if offered grant funds (via #5) I must accept those before utilizing any OEC funds**. OEC scholarship funds are to be used AFTER any grants but **before** student loans which DO require repayment. The exception is if your early care and education employer has contributed grant funds, in which case OEC assistance precedes the program's funds.
7. Funds are paid directly to the college / university after the OEC is invoiced. Funds cannot be paid to the student nor to their program.
8. **I understand the commitment voucher is the guarantee that payment will be made on my behalf.** My commitment voucher will be sent to the institution I indicate and an email confirmation will be sent to me. I can view my commitment voucher information when logged into my Registry account under **"My Scholarship Requests"**.
9. I understand that **I must notify my OEC regional education advisor** by email (for info go to http://www.oecregistry.org/ - Contact Us), alerting any **changes to my scholarship award, including but not limited to:**
   a. *inability to use a commitment voucher*
   b. *dropping or adding an activity or course*
   c. *not registering for or canceling an activity or course*

10. I understand that **if I do not successfully complete the coursework or activity for which I requested scholarship,** I will not be eligible to receive further scholarship assistance without a thorough review of my circumstances, and may permanently lose eligibility. **The full Scholarship Use Policy and appeal Process documentation is located under My Resources – Resource Documents after log in.**

11. I understand that **I am responsible for purchasing training and/or non-textbook course materials** and supplies not covered by the commitment voucher, and that the OEC does not guarantee textbook expenses with all vendors. It is my responsibility to return books purchased using OEC Scholarship if for any reason, I do not/cannot attend the course/s as schedule.

12. **I agree to the terms of the OEC FERPA policy as stated below:**

One of the mandates of the Office of Early Childhood ("OEC") is to "develop and implement…a coordinated and comprehensive state-wide early childhood care and education system of professional development for providers and staff of early childhood care and education programs, including child day care centers, group day care homes and family day care homes that provide child day care services, that makes available to such providers and their staff, within available appropriations, scholarship assistance, career counseling and training and advancement in career ladders…." Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17b-733. Pursuant to that mandate, the OEC has created the Early Childhood Professional Registry ("Registry").

In order to determine whether a particular scholarship fund applicant qualifies for funds, staff members of the Registry may request information from the applicant's institutions of higher education. Such requests are made pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) which allows schools to disclose records, without consent, to appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student. In return, in accordance with OEC's scholarship use policy, the OEC may also share information regarding the scholarship fund applicant's scholarship status with the institution of higher education.