

Early Achievers Needs-Based Grant Overview and Frequently Asked Questions

Needs-Based Grants are available to support early learning programs participating in Early Achievers to assist with purchasing curriculum development, instructional materials, supplies, focused infant-toddler items, environmental improvements, and equipment to improve program quality. Before applying, please thoroughly review this Needs-Based Grant Overview and Frequently Asked Questions to ensure you are eligible. A program may receive one Needs-Based Grant each state fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

Licensed family home and center providers participating in Early Achievers may be eligible to receive a Needs-Based Grant of \$1,000.

Eligibility Criteria

Early Achievers participants may be eligible for a grant if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Are enrolled in the Tier 1 USDA food program
- Are located within a school district that serves at least 20% low-income children based on Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) data. For more information on how to determine if your school district meets these criteria, please read the Frequently Asked Questions section

Prioritization

The Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) may prioritize applications for those participants who provide services to non-school-age children accessing Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) subsidies by the estimated percentage of children accessing services in a center or licensed family home, and for those who demonstrate a culturally diverse program.

Needs-Based Grants can be used to purchase the following types of items:

- Curriculum development and instructional materials
- Supplies and equipment
- Focused infant-toddler improvements
- Environmental improvements/minor renovations to the child care facility
- Supports, materials, or services for children with special needs
- Materials to improve scores on the Environment Rating Scale (ERS) or Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Substitute time
- Training/professional development
- Other supplies or equipment to improve program quality, as identified by the coach and approved based on information in the application spend plan

Expenditures may not be used for capital improvements, gift cards, salary increases, bonuses of any kind, or religious activities. Please reference the [Early Achievers Operating Guidelines, Section 8: Supports and Incentives](#), for more information on disallowed costs.

Application Process

Applications must be completed and submitted through [WA Compass](#) unless your primary language is Spanish or Somali. For instructions and to access the application on a computer or mobile device, visit: <https://wacompass.force.com/login>.



Or

Translated application materials are available in Spanish and Somali on the DCYF website: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/early-achievers/pre-rating>. Completed Spanish and Somali applications can be mailed or emailed to DCYF:

Mailing Address:

Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Attn: Early Achievers Needs-Based Grants
P.O. Box 40970
Olympia, WA 98504-0970

Email Address:

dcyf.needsbasedgrants@dcyf.wa.gov

To receive Needs-Based Grant funds, participants need to have a Statewide Vendor Payee (SWV) number. SWV forms and instructions on how to submit them can be found on the DCYF website: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/licensed-provider/vendor-number>.

Frequently Asked Questions

How does a participant know if they are in an eligible school district?

Eligible school districts include those where at least 20% of students receive free or reduced-price meals. To determine if a school district is eligible, visit the Washington Public School Data for Area Eligibility Data Report on the OSPI website: <https://www.k12.wa.us/data-reporting/reporting/child-nutrition-program-reports>.

Can any eligible Early Achievers participant apply for a Needs-Based Grant, even if they do not work with a Child Care Aware of Washington representative?

Yes.

Can an Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) on the Early Achievers licensed pathway apply for a grant?

Yes.

Can a participant apply for a Needs-Based Grant, even if they don't serve children accessing subsidies?

Yes.

Can a grant be used to reimburse a participant for purchases already made?

No, this funding may only be used for resources identified in the Needs-Based Grant application once the grant is approved and the funds are received by the provider.

Can a participant request more than the allowable amount?

No. The Needs-Based Grant amount is \$1,000 for all grantees. A grant will not be issued for higher than \$1,000.

Can a facility be rated and receive a Needs-Based Grant?

Yes, a facility that is a finalized Quality Level 2, 3, 3+, 4, or 5 may apply for a Needs-Based Grant.

How long does an awardee have to spend the grant funds?

As outlined in the Terms and Conditions, Needs-Based Grant funds must be spent on allowable purchases within one year of receiving the money.

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Eligibility and Provider Supports | Approved for Distribution by Amy Russell, Operations Administrator

Do providers need to save receipts?

Yes. As outlined in the Terms and Conditions on the Needs-Based Grant application, the recipient facility must keep all receipts documenting purchases related to the grant funds for seven years and agrees to provide receipts and documentation to DCYF for any/all items purchased associated with this grant, upon request. Failure to comply with these requirements will result in the facility having to repay part, or all, of the grant to DCYF.

Why do the Statewide Vendor Payee and W-9 forms need to be completed and submitted?

Needs-Based Grants are paid to grantees directly from the state. The state of Washington requires that anyone receiving payments from the state register as a vendor.

What if I already have an SWV number?

If you have a number but it is not showing up on your grant application in WA Compass, contact dcyf.statewidevendorregistration@dcyf.wa.gov and provide your SWV number and your Licensed Provider ID number.

If you don't have a number, one can be generated for you by filling out and submitting the [Washington Statewide Vendor Payee form and the W-9 form](#) with your grant application.

I filled out my Statewide Vendor Payee paperwork. Why don't I have a number yet?

Due to the sensitive nature of these forms, scratching out, white-out, or any type of edits made to these forms will prevent them from being processed. Please ensure that the forms are filled out completely and accurately, without any crossing out or white-out. If you do not receive a SWV number or any information within 10 business days after submitting your Statewide Vendor Payee paperwork, contact dcyf.statewidevendorregistration@dcyf.wa.gov.

Can a provider receive more than one Needs-Based Grant?

An eligible program may apply for a Needs-Based Grant one time each fiscal year (July 1 – June 30).

What can a participant expect once a Needs-Based Grant application is submitted?

When a Needs-Based Grant application is submitted in WA Compass, the status will change from "new" to "in progress." DCYF will review submitted applications for completeness.

If the application is missing an SWV number, the status will be changed to "pending SWV." If the application has an SWV number that is inactive or invalid, the status will be changed to "pending SWV" and DCYF will notify the participant with instructions on how to obtain an active, valid SWV number.

Completed applications are processed for approval and payment. Generally, this process takes 4-6 weeks. Once an application is approved and processed for payment, the status will change to "accepted," and an additional notification is sent to the participant. Notifications are sent by email.

Whom can I contact if I have questions?

For questions about grant eligibility/spending, email dcyf.needsbasedgrants@dcyf.wa.gov.

For questions about WA Compass access, email dcyf.providerportal@dcyf.wa.gov.

For questions about your SWV number, email dcyf.statewidevendorregistration@dcyf.wa.gov.