

Program Guide

What is the Early Childhood Educator Wage Subsidy Program?

This program helps strengthen the ECE workforce by providing a \$2 per hour wage subsidy to enhance the wages of eligible ECEs employed by licensed child care facilities in the Columbia Basin Trust [region](#) (Basin).

The program aims to address the shortage of qualified ECEs in the Basin, and helps Basin residents access safe and affordable child care to enable their employment, which is identified in the Columbia Basin Management Plan (2020-2023) as a desired outcome of the strategic priority, *Support for Business Renewal*. Learn more about the Columbia Basin Management Plan [here](#).

For more information, call toll free 1.877.489.2687 ext. 3689 or email ecewagesubsidy@ourtrust.org. This program is administered by College of the Rockies.

Who can apply?

Eligible Applicants include non-profit and for-profit providers of licensed child care in the Columbia Basin Trust region (ourtrust.org/map) with the following designations:

- Group Child Care
- Multi-Age Child Care
- Preschools
- In-Home Multi-Age Child Care

Facilities designated as Family Child Care, School Age Care, Occasional Child Care, Registered License-Not-Required Care, License-Not-Required Care and In-Child's-Own-Home Care are not eligible.

Please refer to the [Childcare BC Webpage](#) for clarification on licensing designations.

Is there an application deadline and when will I know if my application is approved?

Applications will be considered on a first-received, first served basis until all funds are dispersed. The review process may take up to eight weeks. Employers seeking to have wages subsidized for the year 2024 should apply by **the first week of November** to ensure that their applications are reviewed in time for the new year.

Contribution Agreements will be entered into with approved Employers for up to a 12-month period for the calendar year in which they apply. Separate applications are required for the year 2023 and 2024.

If you intend to open a licensed facility in 2024, contact us at 1.877.489.2687 ext. 3689 or email ecewagesubsidy@ourtrust.org.

What are the eligibility Requirements?

Employee Criteria

Eligible ECEs must:

- be a resident of the Columbia Basin Trust [region](#);
- hold a valid Early Childhood Educator, Infant and Toddler Educator, and/or Special Needs Educator certificate issued by the BC ECE Registry;
- be in good standing with the BC ECE Registry; and
- be employed or self-employed on a full-time, part-time or casual basis by an eligible licensed child care facility.

Employer Criteria

Eligible employers must:

- be a licensed child care facility (eligible designations listed above) in good standing with the Ministry of Children and Family Development;
- be in good standing with the BC Corporate Registry (if the Employer is a non-profit society or registered business);
- be located in the Columbia Basin Trust [region](#);
- have a WorkSafeBC account in good standing (WorkSafeBC coverage is required for all Employers with employees and is recommended for Employers that do not have employees):
 - if you currently have WorkSafeBC coverage, you must provide a clearance letter with your application. Get the form [here](#); and
 - if you don't have WorkSafeBC coverage and have employees, you must obtain and send proof of coverage before receiving the Wage Subsidy. Register [here](#).
- be receiving a wage subsidy of at least \$2/hour from a source other than the Trust; and
- continue paying ECEs their previously received wage, plus the \$2 wage subsidy, to enhance the ECE's existing wage.

What costs are ineligible?

Wage Subsidies cannot be applied to the following:

- sick time, unpaid or paid leaves from the facility, vacation time, or any other non-worked time;
- ECEs that only care for their own children;
- ECEs working as Supported Child Development consultants or support workers;
- ECE Assistants (ECEAs) and Responsible Adults.

ECEAs looking to complete their ECE qualifications should apply for funding through the Trust's [ECE Training Wage Program](#).

How much can I apply for?

Eligible Applicants can apply for a one-year subsidy to enhance ECE wages by \$2 per hour, plus 19.56 per cent mandatory employment related costs (MERCs). The one-year subsidy will be estimated based on each ECE's expected hours per week (which, for full-time employees, should not typically exceed 40 hours/week) multiplied by the number of weeks worked per year (less vacation and facility closure times).

Quarterly online reports will be required to verify actual hours worked each month. The wage subsidy cannot be applied to paid or unpaid leave, sick time, vacation time, or other non-worked time.

How many ECEs per facility are eligible?

The program will prioritize providing wage subsidies for the number of ECEs required by licensing and will consider additional ECEs employed by the facility on a case-by-case basis. The program also considers geographic distribution of wage subsidies in its funding decisions.

Mandatory Employment Related Costs calculation

Employers must pay MERCs with the \$2/hour wage subsidy, including Employment Insurance, Canada Pension Plan, WorkSafeBC and other mandatory benefits, including statutory holiday pay. MERCs will be calculated using a maximum flat rate of 19.56 per cent (for a total wage subsidy of \$2.77/hour).

Reporting and Monitoring

- If your application is successful, you will enter into a contribution agreement with College of the Rockies and receive a wage subsidy for eligible ECE hours for up to a 12-month period, for the calendar year in which you apply.
- Eligible ECEs will submit a signed declaration form confirming participation in the program.
- We will monitor Employers through scheduled in-person meetings where possible, or by phone or video call.
- Employers must keep accurate payroll records for all participating ECEs.
- Quarterly online reports will be required to verify the number of eligible hours worked during the reporting period and to ensure ECE certifications continue to be in good standing with BC ECE Registry.
- Final claims and reporting requirements must be submitted by the dates found in your contribution agreement.

If your application is successful, we will provide you with further details on claims, payment and reporting processes.

What if my staff or staffing needs change throughout the contract period?

ECEs approved to receive the wage subsidy, including new ECEs hired to fill vacancies or create new child care spaces during the funding term, will be required to submit a declaration form confirming participation in the program.

Submission of online quarterly reports will be required by each Employer to:

1. confirm the number of eligible hours worked during the reporting period; and
2. verify that participating ECE certifications remain in good standing with BC ECE Registry.

Should staffing or operational changes occur throughout the funding term that may result in hours exceeding the approved wage subsidy (such as an increase in operating hours or an unexpected creation of new child care spaces), Employers will be required to notify the College of the Rockies and an increase may be considered to ensure the subsidy is reflective of actual eligible hours worked.

How do I apply?

For all eligible, licensed facilities:

1. Use the [worksheet](#) to develop your application offline if you so choose.
2. Complete online application from at [ECE Wage Subsidy Program \(ourtrust.org\)](#)

For new facilities expected to open in 2024:

1. Email ecewagesubsidy@ourtrust.org to indicate when you expect to meet all eligibility requirements outlined above and open your facility.
2. Depending on the date of your facility's expected opening, you may be provided access to the application form and invited to apply once all eligibility requirements can be met.

When will I know when my application is approved?

You will receive an e-mail confirming approval/decline of your application approximately eight weeks following the deadline.

Note:

- College of the Rockies, Columbia Basin Trust and their agents shall not be obligated in any manner to any applicant whatsoever.
- College of the Rockies and Columbia Basin Trust reserve the right to fund all or none of any

- application submitted.
- Approved Employers must enter into an agreement with College of the Rockies and commit to submitting quarterly reports and maintaining accurate payroll records for submission to the College of the Rockies if requested.
 - Registered societies and companies must be in good standing with BC Corporate Registry and Online Services.

Reminders:

- Don't forget to upload an electronic copy your WorkSafeBC Clearance Letter with your online application (unless not yet covered by WorkSafeBC).