



EARLY ACHIEVERS GRANT

2023-24 GRANT GUIDELINES

Workforce Education Department
Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges
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[SBCTC.edu](https://www.sbctc.edu)

The Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges reserves the right to make changes to this document due to, but not limited to, federal, state, or local legislation or policy changes.

Deadlines and Milestones

Milestone	Dates (subject to change)
Applications available in OGMS	March 9, 2023
Applications due in OGMS	April 20, 2023
Course Schedule and Credit Waiver Form Due to SBCTC	May 31, 2023
Grant Start Date	July 1, 2023

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Table of Contents

Deadlines and Milestones	2
Grant Contacts	2
Table of Contents	3
Overview	4
What Institutions May Apply	4
How Does the College Apply	4
Application Process	4
Disclaimer	5
Administering the Grant.....	5
Responsibilities of the College	5
Student Eligibility, Prioritization, and Requirements.....	7
Waivers.....	8
Funding.....	8
Assumptions	8
Additional Funding for an Associate Degree.....	9
College Awards	9
Student Support Budget Activity.....	9
Responsive Pathways Funding.....	10
General Budget Activity.....	11
Budget Revisions.....	11
Refunds.....	11
Reporting and Coding	11
Reports.....	11
Completions.....	12
Student Coding.....	12
Financial Aid Coding.....	13
Appendix A: Application Questions.....	14
Section 1: Grant Program Narrative.....	14
Section 2: Responsive Pathways Proposal.....	15
Section 3: Budget Narrative	15
Online Resources	16
DCYF Scholarship Program Guide	16

Overview

The Early Achievers Grant is a student financial aid program to help employed childcare providers and early learning educators complete certificates and associate degrees in early childhood education. The Early Achievers Grant is offered in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The funding is allocated by DCYF and administered by SBCTC.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) has also made funding available in Responsive Pathways funding.

What Institutions May Apply

This grant is open to all Washington State Community and Technical Colleges, as defined under [RCW 28B.50.030](#), offering the common Early Childhood Education courses and standardized statewide stackable certificates. Certificate and degree programs must have received approval from the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (see [Program Approval Policy and Forms](#)) and be listed on the college's program inventory.

How Does the College Apply

Access the 2023-24 Early Achievers Grant Application through the Online Grant Management System ([OGMS](#)).

Section 2 of the 2023-24 Early Achievers Grant Application is specific to Responsive Pathways Funding. [Do not submit a separate application for the Responsive Pathways Funding alone. The list of grant question can be found in Appendix A.](#)

If you do not have an account, contact your organization's [Security Contact](#) for access; you will also need your Security Contact to give you permission for FY24.

Submit completed grant applications, including attachments, to the SBCTC through OGMS no later than April 20, 2023, at 11:55 p.m. SBCTC staff is available for assistance until 4:00 p.m. on April 20, 2023.

Application Process

We suggest writing applications in a word processing program and pasting the application content into OGMS. This will help ensure you do not lose any content if the OGMS application times out. [The list of grant question can be found in Appendix A.](#)

Application Review

The Early Achievers Grant Application will be reviewed by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) staff. Feedback will be provided to colleges in order to refine or clarify application responses.

The Responsive Pathways portion of the application will be reviewed for alignment with the intent of this funding by a panel made up of staff from the SBCTC and DCYF.

Disclaimer

SBCTC reserves the right to refrain from granting to any or all applicants. Additionally, SBCTC reserves the right to add additional grant requirements to applicants meeting minimum criteria to receive funds, but that are deemed to be higher risk grantees. Additional requirements may include, but are not limited to, additional reporting requirements or additional monitoring to assess the applicant's ability to adhere to grant requirements. Any additional requirements will be outlined for individual applicants prior to applicants accepting any resulting grant funding.

Administering the Grant

The majority of the duties, though not all, within this grant fall under the responsibility of the Early Achievers Grant Point-of-Contact. In order to successfully complete those duties, the Point-of-Contact requires the support of the ECE faculty and dean, staff within the financial aid office and finance office, and others dependent upon the organizational structure of the college. The majority of the grant requirements are directly from the funder, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

If at any time throughout the execution of the grant uncertainties, questions, or concerns arise, contact the EAG Program Administrator at the State Board for support. If there are difficulties in administering the grant as described below, contact the Grant Manager to clarify a path forward.

Responsibilities of the College

The responsibilities of the college include, but are not limited to:

- Establish and support an Early Achievers Grant Point-of-Contact (POC) to advise and support Early Achievers Grant recipients.
- Establish contact between the college's POC and the Grant Manager at the State Board. Maintain accurate grant contact information in OGMS/OBIS and with the State Board.
- Contact the Grant Manager to obtain access to the Secure Upload Engine (SUE). Reporting documents including the ECE course schedule, quarterly reports, and other grant related documentation will be uploaded in SUE for access by the State Board.
- Ensure accurate coding of students and student financial aid.
- Ensure monthly billing of the EAG to SBCTC.
- Maintain secure records including a copy of all reports, EAG student grant applications, employment verification, and other grant related documentation.
- Reach the FTES target equivalent to the funding amount.

Early Achievers Grant Point-of-Contact

College staff identified as the Point-of-Contact will:

- Implement practices that promote educational access, meeting the needs of BIPOC providers, providers of various learning languages, and geographical locations.
- Develop partnerships with provider organizations in the area to be aware of and responsive to community needs. Communicate those needs to relevant faculty, staff, and administrators at the college.
- Recruit a pool of potential grant recipients from family home childcare businesses, childcare centers, and ECEAP programs that reflects the diversity of the local provider community and the children they serve. Request the necessary supports from others at the college and provider organizations to accomplish that goal. For example, communicating the need for courses in additional languages to the faculty and dean.
- Provide accurate information to students about the Department of Children, Youth, and Families' initiatives such as the Early Achievers program - Washington's quality rating and improvement system (QRIS), the Career Portal, pertinent WACs, and the Managed Education and Registry Information Tool (MERIT).
- Provide accurate information about the college's grant application process, including student eligibility, student consent to data sharing, and waitlist status. Provide accurate information about the college's admission requirements and processes, financial aid forms, student placement assessments, registration procedures and student services provided to potential Early Achievers Grant recipients. Provide accurate information regarding updating residency status at the college.
- Provide information about financial aid, assist students with completion of forms, and coordinate the development of financial aid packages for each student according to their needs.
- Help students plan their college program and course schedule customized to the needs of each student.
- Coordinate prior learning assessments and the awarding of credit as requested by the student.
- Partner with ECE faculty, advisors, and members of the financial aid office to communicate openly about students' needs and support student success.
- Coordinate wrap-around support services such as tutoring, mentoring, study groups, eLearning workshops, or emergency assistance as needed.
- Contact all grant recipients each quarter. Track and discuss their progress, deploy support services as necessary, and assist with planning their course schedule for the following quarter.
- Verify student employment with annual employer signature and quarterly student self-attestation. Track student academic standing.
- Track student completions using transcript reports or other tools and assist students as they submit certificate and degree applications. Assist students in documenting their education in MERIT.

- Complete waivers and submit them to the EAG manager at the State Board as needed in order to support students' continued progress toward their goal. Maintain those records.
- Maintain a waitlist of potential EAG students not yet able to access the grant due to limited funding.
- Maintain a budget to ensure existing students will be able to continue progress towards their goals for the duration of the funding year.
- Assist students with any other issues that may arise related to the Early Achievers Grant program.
- By each due date, complete and submit reports to the Grant Manager. This includes the ECE Course Schedule.
- Prior to finals each quarter, consult with the registrar's office to ensure all EAG students are coded according to the SBCTC coding manual.
- Distribute and facilitate completion of quarterly EAG Student Survey.
- Attend regional meetings offered in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families. If unavailable, a representative from the college will be sent in their place.
- Attend quarterly Point-of-Contact meetings organized by the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. If unavailable, a representative from the college will be sent in their place.

Student Eligibility, Prioritization, and Requirements

Please refer to the [DCYF Scholarship Program Guide](#) for guidance on:

- Student Eligibility
- Prioritizing Grant Recipients
- Academic Requirements

This guide can be found on [DCYF's website](#). (link: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/earlylearning-profdev/scholarships-incentives-awards>)

Leveraging Funding Options

Colleges are encouraged to explore and utilize other financial aid options for eligible students. Because EAG is not income-based, we serve students who may be just above the income requirements of need-based financial aid options. For those who qualify for need-based aid, we encourage braiding those additional sources of funding into the student's financial aid package. Other funding sources that may be applicable include: Pell Grants, Washington College Grant, BFET, WorkFirst, and Worker Retraining, among others.

Please refer waitlisted or not eligible providers to other sources of aid.

Waivers

Permission may be granted for eligible grant recipients to enroll in additional credits if they meet the following criteria:

1. Must complete one or more developmental courses in math and/or English to complete the one-year Early Childhood Education State Certificate and said courses exceed the 52-credit limit.
2. Are within a few courses of completing their Early Childhood Education one-year State Certificate, but could benefit from enrolling in one or two courses required for an Early Childhood Education Associate's degree as they complete their State Certificate.
3. Have at least an Associate's degree in Early Childhood Education or related degree as defined by DCYF, but need specific courses to retain employment. Communication from employer or DCYF requiring needed courses must be documented.

Colleges must submit a completed waiver form to the Grant Manager for processing. In the event the college has a student who may need a credit waiver, but does not fully meet the above criteria, please contact the Grant Manager for additional guidance.

Funding

The Early Achievers Grant is offered in partnership with the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). The funding is allocated by DCYF and administered by SBCTC. Many of the grant requirements are directly from DCYF. Please reference the preceding section on waivers as they impact funding. Please see Fiscal Guidelines for more information.

The Early Achievers Grant funds must be expended no later than June 30, 2024.

Assumptions

The 2023-24 award recommendation assumes the following distribution of funds:

1. Early Achievers Grant (EAG) funds will be distributed to community and technical colleges that apply and are selected to participate in the financial aid program during the 2023-24 academic year.
2. One FTES is equivalent to 45 credits. For example, a student who enrolls for 18 credits fall quarter, 12 credits winter quarter and 15 credits spring quarter results in 1.0 FTES ($18 + 12 + 15 = 45$). The enrollment of several part-time students may be added together to determine FTES. For example, nine students who enroll in a five-credit course would total 45 credits or 1.0 FTES.
3. The EAG funding will be granted to the colleges in whole FTES increments (5, 7, 12, etc.) not partial FTES increments (3.4, 7.2, 15.7, etc.).

The contract with DCYF sets forth the requirements for Early Achievers Grant (EAG) funding. A student may receive EAG funding for up to 52 credits of eligibility.

Additional Funding for an Associate Degree

Students who successfully complete a one-year Early Childhood Education State Certificate are eligible to receive EAG funding supporting an additional 45 credits for coursework required for an Early Childhood Education Associate degree.

College Awards

The college must apply for the full amount of funds per the following table. For example, if requesting 10 FTES, the college must apply for exactly \$83,000. Once funding is determined, the college is expected to reach the FTES target equivalent to the funding amount. The chart below shows examples of how FTES and funding categories must correspond.

EAG Funding	1 FTES	2 FTES	3 FTES	4 FTES	5 FTES	6 FTES	10 FTES
Tuition & Fees	\$5,040	\$10,080	\$15,120	\$20,160	\$25,200	\$30,240	\$50,400
Required Books and Instructional Materials	\$1,000	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$10,000
Student Support & Wrap-Around Services	\$560	\$1,120	\$1,680	\$2,240	\$2,800	\$3,360	\$5,600
College Point-of-Contact	\$1,700	\$3,400	\$5,100	\$6,800	\$8,500	\$10,200	\$17,000
<i>Total</i>	\$8,300	\$16,600	\$24,900	\$33,200	\$41,500	\$49,800	\$83,000

Please see Fiscal Guidelines for information on how funds may be budgeted and how funds may be moved between budget categories.

The Early Achievers Grant funds must be expended no later than June 30, 2024.

Student Support Budget Activity

Three budget categories fall under Student Supports activity: Tuition and Fees, Textbooks and Instructional Materials, and Wrap-Around Student Services (budgeted in the “Misc.” cell). See Early Achievers Grant Fiscal Guidelines for further information on these categories.

Tuition and Fees

The Early Achievers Grant funding provides up to \$5,040 per FTES for tuition and fees. The grant covers tuition and mandatory fees for eligible students up to 52 credits for an Early Childhood Education one-year State Certificate. If the student earns a one-year State Certificate in Early Childhood Education, they are then eligible for further Early Achievers Grant funding to support enrollment in an Early Childhood Education Associate degree program up to 45 additional credits. College Boards of Trustees approve college fees charged to students, therefore; each college shall determine the cost of full-time enrollment, not to exceed \$5,040 per FTES. No additional application is needed for students who wish to pursue an Associate degree after completing the one-year State Certificate.

Example: 45 credits of tuition for 2021-22 was approximately \$4,343. The college may also use

grant funds for mandatory fees, such as lab or technology fees. The Early Achievers Grant funding will cover tuition and fees up to \$5,040 for 52 credits.

Tuition funds may be moved to other budget categories within the Student Support budget activity if financial assistance from different programs (Pell, BFET, Worker Retraining, etc.) is used to backfill the funding that is being moved.

Example: The student receives tuition support for \$2,000 from another financial aid program. The college may move \$2,000 in Early Achievers Grant tuition funding to other budget categories such as textbooks or miscellaneous.

Textbooks and Instructional Materials

Each college will receive \$1,000 for each FTES funded through the Early Achievers Grant program to reimburse students for the purchase of required textbooks and other instructional materials.

Early Achievers Grant students may receive up to \$1,000 per FTE for books and other instructional materials (printed materials used in place of in addition to textbooks). To prorate the textbook and instructional materials maximum funding, divide \$1,000 by 45 credits (1 FTE). Students may be granted \$22.00 per credit for textbook and instructional materials purchases. This disbursement may be made directly to the student upon receipt of documentation the payment made was for eligible costs.

Grant funds may not be used to purchase computers, laptops, scientific calculators, etc. for students. Grant funds may not be used to purchase paper, notebooks, pens or other types of supplies.

If needed, these dollars may be moved to other budget categories within the Student Support budget activity to support additional FTES.

Wrap-around Student Services

Each college will receive \$560 for each FTES funded through the Early Achievers Grant program. The college may use this funding for wrap-around support services including, but not limited to; purchasing loaner laptops or textbooks, student success workshops, tutoring, advising, retention strategies, and funding to mitigate student emergency conditions that if resolved will help students continue in the program.

In the event the college purchases laptops, textbooks, etc. for loan to students, the college must have a policy in place regarding the duration and conditions of the loan and consequences for damaging or not returning these materials. This policy must be communicated to students prior to their acceptance of the loaned item.

If needed, these dollars may be moved to other budget categories within the Student Support budget activity to support additional FTES.

Responsive Pathways Funding

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) is not able to fund Responsive Pathways projects for FY24.

General Budget Activity

Five budget categories fall under General budget activity: Salary and Wages, Employee Benefits, Goods and Services, Travel, and Contracts. See Early Achievers Grant Fiscal Guidelines for a breakdown of these categories.

Staff Point-of-Contact

The college will receive \$1,700 for every FTES to support an Early Childhood Education Point-of-Contact. The Point-of-Contact will recruit, advise, and support Early Achievers Grant recipients. Please see the Early Childhood Education Point-of-Contact section of these guidelines. The college may utilize this funding for the salary, benefits, goods & services, and travel for one or more staff performing Point-of-Contact duties.

Budget Revisions

With SBCTC approval, funds may be transferred from General activity to Student Support Activity. With SBCTC approval, funds may be transferred from the Textbook category to the Tuition category, and funds in the Wrap-around Student Services category may be transferred to either Textbooks or Tuition categories. Budget revision requests must be submitted via the Online Budget and Invoicing System ([OBIS](#)). See Early Achievers Grant Fiscal Guidelines for further information.

The Early Achievers Grant - State funds must be expended no later than June 30, 2024.

Refunds

Any student receiving Early Achievers Grant funding who officially or unofficially withdraws will have funds returned to the Early Achievers Grant institutional account based on the college refund policy. All Early Achievers Grant funds collected from student refunds may be re-awarded to other Early Achievers Grant eligible students if refunds are received in the same fiscal year as disbursed. If returned after the close of the fiscal year, they must be returned to SBCTC to be returned to DCYF. Please follow your college's standard refund policy.

Should the student re-enroll at a later date, those funds surrendered will apply and count toward the Early Achievers Grant tuition/fees funding maximum.

Typically, there are no refunds for books/instructional materials that have been purchased.

Reporting and Coding

Reports

The data within ctLink is used to complete a portion of the reporting by the State Board to the funder, the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Because data is shared with DCYF, students must complete a consent to data sharing at intake. It is essential to code students per the guidelines below in a timely manner in order for enrollments and completions to be recorded accurately.

To collect narrative information or data not available through ctLink, a quarterly report will be due

on the following schedule. SBCTC will provide reporting templates after college grant applications are approved. SBCTC reserves the right to adjust information requested on reporting templates quarter-to-quarter.

- September 29, 2023
- January 5, 2024
- March 29, 2024
- June 28, 2024

The data collected will assist the State Board to report information on student participation to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families.

Completions

As student retention is measured by continued enrollment and/or program completion, it is essential that all students completing one or more credentials be coded with the appropriate exit code. The most common exit codes for Early Achievers Grant students are as follows:

1. Associate Degree
2. Long Certificate + 90 credits
3. Long Certificate 45-89 credits
4. Short Certificate 20 to 44 credits
5. Short Certificate 1 to 19 credits

The full listing of exit codes can be found under “Completions” on the [Guidelines for Reporting Degrees and Certificates](#) web page or check with your college registrar.

Student Coding

Students receiving financial assistance, academic support, *or* other services from an Early Achievers Point-of-Contact, are to be coded as Early Achievers Grant students, using the appropriate student attribute (PeopleSoft). The coding is outlined below.

The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requires the colleges, through SBCTC, to report student enrollments, persistence and completions disaggregated by the grant recipients' employment categories. At in-take, potential grant recipients must identify the employment category that best describes their current employment situation: Family Home Childcare owner or employee, Childcare Center owner or employee, ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) employee, or Head Start employee.

Student Attribute Codes in PeopleSoft

Student Plan Stacks are coded with one of three Student Attribute Codes. This code should be term activated each quarter. If multiple apply, use highest as listed below.

"SE02" for students working at a family home childcare business.

"SE01" for students working at a childcare center.

"SE03" for students working at an ECEAP program.

"SE04" for students working at a Head Start program.

These Student Attribute Codes will be coupled with a Student Group Code of "SEAG" coded to the student. This code should be verified each quarter, before finals. The student should not be coded for the Early Achievers Grant after departure from the ECE program.

Financial Aid Coding

An eligible student may receive Early Achievers Grant for tuition and mandatory fees up to 52 credits, not including credits documented on approved waivers. If the student has completed a one-year certificate in Early Childhood Education, and meets eligibility requirements, they may receive Early Achievers Grant funding for an additional 45 credits when enrolled in an Associate degree program in Early Childhood Education.

Early Achievers Grant students may receive up to \$1,000 for books and other instructional materials per FTE (45 credits), not to exceed \$1,000 per year. To prorate the textbook and instructional materials maximum funding, divide \$1,000 by 45 credits (1 FTE). Students may be granted up to \$22.00 per credit for textbook and instructional materials purchases. This disbursement may be made directly to the student upon receipt of documentation the payment made was for eligible costs.

Financial Aid Program Codes in ctcLink

FA Item Type	Description	Short Description
912000000700	Early Achievers Grant-Tuition	EAGTUITION
912000000710	Early Achievers Grant-Books	EAGBOOKS
912000000720	Early Achievers Grant-Chldcare	EAGCHLDCAR
912000000730	Early Achievers Grant-Transp	EAGTRANSP
912000000740	Early Achievers Grant-Other	EAGOTHER

Entering STARS IDs

Colleges are required to enter students' MERIT System's STARS IDs into ctcLink. For step-by-step instructions please visit the [ctcLink Reference Center](#). If college policies do not allow for Points of Contact to access the External System ID fields, please work with your Registrar's Office to establish a local process for timely entry of STARS IDs by staff with appropriate security roles.

Please verify via MERIT that the STARS ID provided by the student is correct.

Appendix A: Application Questions

Below are the application questions as they appear in the 2023-24 Early Achievers Grant Application, accessible through the Online Grant Management System (OGMS).

Section 1: Grant Program Narrative

Please review the program and fiscal guidelines documents, which are located in the Grant Info section of OGMS, prior to completing this section of the application. Additionally, please be sure to work with your grants/budget office when developing your grant budget.

1A. How many FTES is your college requesting? Please list only whole FTES, not partial FTES such as 3.3 or 5.6.

1A.1 Explain how you arrived at the number of FTE being requested. See Program Guidelines for information on calculating FTES.

1A.2 Number of students currently on the waitlist for this grant:

1B. What is the college's capacity to meet the growing demand for enrollment in the stackable ECE credentials and respond to community needs? Consider the current fill rate of classes, the ability to add additional sections, and the lead time required to do so. Consider the variety of modalities, locations, and languages in which courses could be offered.

1C. Approximate percentage of grant recipients for whom English is not their primary language. Enter as a decimal.

1D. What steps will the Point of Contact take to foster an EAG student population that is representative of the cultural identities of the children in the communities the college serves?

1E. What are the ways a new student is directed to the Point of Contact? Once they are connected, how will the Point of Contact help them navigate the college system/offices (financial aid, bookstore, registration, advising, etc.) in order to set them up for success?

1F. How will the Point of Contact be knowledgeable about students' progress? How will the Point of Contact track students' progress in their classes as indicated on their academic plans?

1G. What student advising model do you use? How many times per quarter will the Point of Contact reach out to each grant recipient to check in? What modalities will be used? (Email, phone, video call, office appointments, worksite visits)

1H. What are some strategies the Point of Contact will employ to identify challenges individual students are experiencing before they become barriers? How will the Point of Contact build a strong connection with grant recipients?

1I. Above and beyond services open to all students at the college, what services are specifically made available to support grant recipients? (For example, access to an ECE lending library.)

1J. How is your course schedule organized to promote timely access to classes needed to produce

the highest number of completions?

1K. Do students have access to WAOL Early Childhood Education classes at your college? If not, please explain why this is not an option for your students.

Section 2: Responsive Pathways Proposal

This section is no longer applicable, but it is not possible to remove it from OGMS for FY24 applications. This section should be left blank by all colleges, but a response is required for the first question in OGMS to proceed to Section 3: Budget Narrative.

2A. Does your college want to apply for optional Responsive Pathways funding? **Please answer “No”**

Section 3: Budget Narrative

This grant has parameters regarding exactly how much funding may be requested and parameters on how much is budgeted in several individual budget cells. Please review the program and fiscal guidelines documents, which are located in the Grant Info section of OGMS, prior to completing this section of the application. Additionally, please be sure to work with your grants/budget office when developing your grant budget.

3A. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for TUITION.

3B. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for BOOKS.

3C. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for MISC. See program guidelines for information on allowable expenses.

3D. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for SALARY, WAGES, AND BENEFITS for the point-of-contact. For the position funded from this grant, include the position title and percentage of effort that will be paid from this grant (or hourly wage information). Duties that can be paid from this grant are detailed in the Early Achievers Opportunity Grant Program Guidelines and are not required to be included in your budget narrative.

3E. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for GOODS AND SERVICES to be used by the point-of-contact.

3F. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for TRAVEL for the point-of-contact.

3G. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for Responsive Pathways – SALARY, WAGES, AND BENEFITS. Include all position titles, percent of effort or FTEF that will be funded, and a brief description of duties by position as they relate to this grant activity. See the fiscal guidelines for examples.

3H. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for Responsive Pathways – GOODS AND SERVICES.

3I. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for Responsive Pathways – TRAVEL.

3J. Describe how your college will use funds from this grant for Responsive Pathways – CONTRACTS.

Online Resources

DCYF Scholarship Program Guide

The Scholarship Program Guide is provided by Department of Children, Youth, and Families. This guide can also be found on DCYF's website or via [this link](#).

Please refer to this guide for guidance on student eligibility, academic requirements, and prioritizing grant recipients.



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Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges