



Workforce
Development Board
Contra Costa County

Community Fact Sheet



Wage Enhancement Stipend Program

The Wage Enhancement Stipends Program provides financial stipends to early childhood educators to supplement wages, improve job retention, and strengthen workforce stability. In addition to supporting the early learning workforce, this initiative also enhances inclusive practices, ensuring that childcare providers have the resources and training needed to support children with disabilities in high-quality learning environments.

What are the specifics of the program?

Project partners will be responsible for determining eligibility and disbursement of stipends to early childhood teachers and family childcare providers in Contra Costa County to support the stability of the childcare sector. The aim is to improve professional growth and retention within the early childhood care workforce, focusing on addressing underserved geographic locations within Contra Costa County.

The program will operate in two cohorts over an 18-month cycle, with the second cohort starting in Spring 2025. To ensure equitable distribution to the stipends, participants will be selected via a lottery system. A weighted rubric scoring system will be used to evaluate and select childcare teachers and family childcare providers serving children from infancy to kindergarten based on the following criteria:

- Location. Location of the childcare program. (Antioch, Concord, Bay Point/Pittsburg, Richmond, San Pablo).
- Hours of Operation. Offering after-hours care and weekend hours.
- Special Needs. Services offered to families of children with special needs.
- Language. Services offered in multiple languages.
- Staff Education. Teacher education.
- Staff Experience. Teacher experience.
- Professional Development. Professional growth participation.
- Longevity. Overall experience in childcare industry and in specialized service areas.
- Staff Full-Time Eguivalency (FTE). Full or part-time employment of staff.

Why is the program important?

Fifteen percent (15%) of Early Childhood Educators (ECE) in California are at the poverty level, while 21% are near poverty level (under 150% threshold). Many work part-time jobs or are enrolled in school, making the available worker pool low since many cannot afford to work in this space. Boosting the number of full-time workers could help meet growing labor demand, but workers report family obligations and other considerations as impediments.

[Source](#)

Who are the community partners for the program?

Coco Kids, Inc. and the Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department are partners in this program.

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