

Grow Your Own: Program Guidelines

Trainee scholarships in early childhood education and care service subsidy

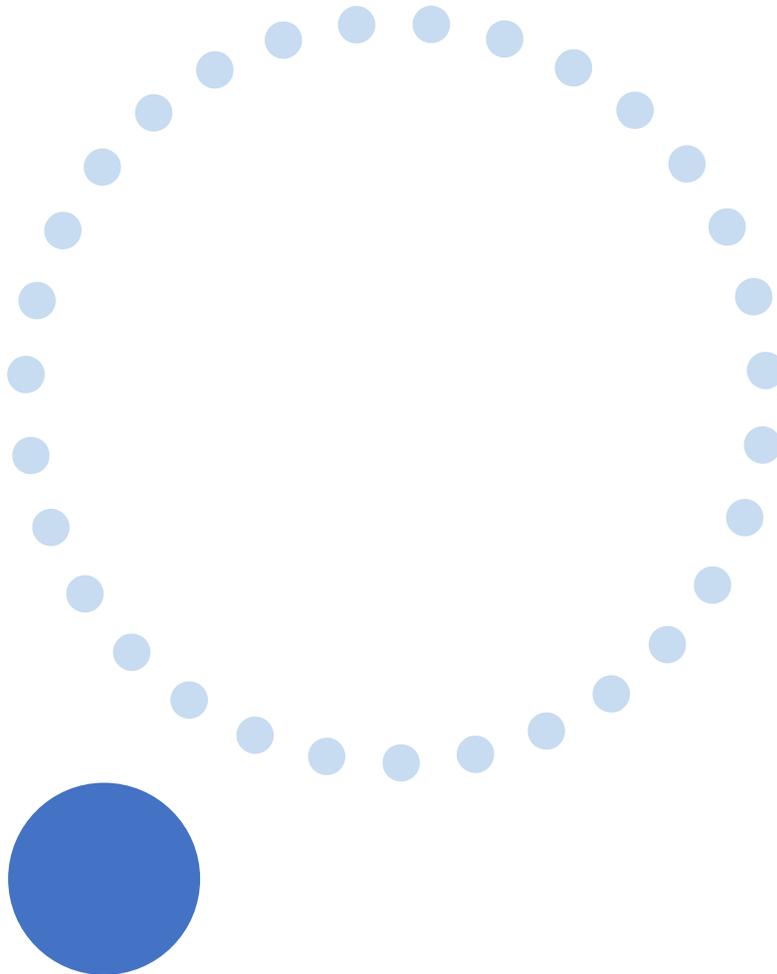
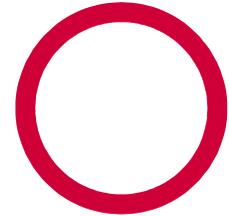


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About the Program Guidelines

These Program Guidelines set out the process for selection of Trainees and early childhood education and care services for the NSW Department of Education's Grow Your Own Program. The Guidelines are set out as follows:

- Part A - Information about the application process for Trainees
- Part B - Information about the application process for ECEC Services

Definitions and acronyms

- **Certificate III** means a CHC30113 Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care
- **Department** means the NSW Department of Education
- **Diploma** means a CHC50113 Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care
- **ECEC** refers to early childhood education and care
- **ECEC Services** means a service licensed to provide early childhood education and care, for example, a preschool or long day care service
- **ECTARC** refers to Illawarra Area Child Care
- **Illawarra region** refers to the local government areas of Kiama, Shellharbour and Wollongong
- **IWAAC** refers to the Illawarra Wingecarribee Aboriginal Alliance Corporation
- **Mentoring** means individual and group support provided by ECTARC to program participants and services to assist the retention of trainees
- **Program participant** means a person who meets the eligibility criteria and who has been approved by the Department for participation in any of the program components (including Traineeship, mentoring or where the Department will pay a service subsidy in line with these program guidelines)
- **Trainee** is a person undertaking a Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care
- **Traineeship** is a Certificate III or Diploma in Early Childhood Education and Care
- **Wingecarribee region** refers to the local government area of Wingecarribee

Program overview

From 1 May 2021, the Department will run a Grow Your Own program. The aim of the Program will be to increase the number of Aboriginal early childhood educators in the Illawarra and Wingecarribee regions. The Program will be managed by the Aboriginal Engagement and Policy Team within the Department and will be delivered by ECTARC.

The program is a direct result of a Local Decision Making accord between IWAAC and the Department.

Program components

The Grow Your Own program has three components:

1. Scholarships for Trainees to undertake a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education and Care and/or a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care (**scholarships**).
2. Subsidy to ECEC Services to support ongoing employment of program participants for a minimum of 18 months post Traineeship completion at or above award rates (service subsidy).
3. Mentoring provided by ECTARC to both program participants and services to increase retention rates.
 - a Mentoring for program participants will include fortnightly individual sessions, monthly learning support sessions (both group and individual) and phone and email support.
 - b Support for services will include cultural awareness professional development training.

Timing

Funding for Trainee scholarships is available until 31 December 2023.

Funding for service subsidies is available until 1 March 2025.

Trainee scholarship

Trainees will commence from July 2021. Traineeships may be completed on a full-time or part-time basis but must be completed within two years from the date of the letter of offer. To be eligible for the final instalment of the scholarship payment, Trainees must successfully complete their Traineeship by 31 December 2023.

For Trainees who complete a Certificate III through the program and, wish to undertake a Diploma, a further scholarship of \$3,000 may be available. Part A provides further details.

Service subsidy

The intention of the service subsidy is to support the retention of program participants during, and following the completion of, the Traineeship. The subsidy recognises the increased cost to the ECEC Service associated with increased wages.

Successful services will be paid a total of \$20,000 to assist with the costs of employing a program participant. It is dependent on the ongoing employment of a program participant for a minimum of 18 months following the completion of the program participant's Traineeship.

Program objectives

The objectives of the Grow Your Own Program are to:

- Increase the number of Aboriginal early childhood educators in the Illawarra and Wingecarribee regions
- Support the ongoing development of the early childhood education workforce in line with the Department's Workforce Strategy
- Improve the quality of early childhood education services in NSW
- Build the capacity of local people and people from diverse backgrounds in obtaining early childhood education qualifications and employment

Program evaluation

The program will be evaluated to assess the extent to which the program delivers the objectives. ECEC Services and program participants will be expected to participate in the evaluation process. Program evaluation will involve qualitative and quantitative measures including:

- Feedback from program participants and ECEC Services on the value of the program
- Regular monitoring of the program, including the number of program participants and successful Traineeship completion.

Information to be publicly shared

As a NSW Government funding program, the scholarships and service subsidies may be published in departmental reports on expenditure performance, and publicised on the departmental website and in the media. Additionally, the NSW Government may also make public announcements regarding the program and details of program participants and ECEC Services.

Communication with ECEC Services and Trainees

ECTARC have been contracted to provide project coordination and will be the primary point of contact for ECEC Services and Trainees once accepted into the program. Contact details will be provided to successful applicants as part of their welcome pack.

From time to time the Department may contact the applicants and program participants for the following purposes:

- to advise of the progress of applications
- notification to successful and unsuccessful applicants
- provision of documents for successful applicants to complete
- reminders regarding documentation required for payments
- requests for participation in program evaluation

Part A: Trainee scholarship

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet all Eligibility Criteria:

- Be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent
- Identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person
- Be accepted as such by the community in which you live or have lived
- Be a resident of the Illawarra or Wingecarribee regions or committed to working in those regions
- Intend to pursue a career in early childhood education and care
- Be genuinely committed to undertaking the practical and theoretical components of a Traineeship

Evidence to support eligibility

Applicants will be asked to submit evidence to support their eligibility for the program this includes:

- A statement addressing the selection criteria (more details below)
- Proof of identity (for example, a driver's licence)
- Confirmation of Aboriginality
- Two documents to support residential address

Proof of residential address

Documents to support proof of your residential address must have been issued by a government authority, utility company or financial institution. The document must have your first and last name, your current address, a date and a unique reference number (for example an account number, invoice number or customer number). Utility bills older than three months will not be accepted. Examples of the types of documents that will be accepted include:

- Electricity or gas bill
- Bank statement
- Driver's licence
- Centrelink correspondence
- Mortgage statement
- Lease agreement

Where these cannot be provided, a statutory declaration which states your current address, how long you have lived there and any other supporting information will be accepted.

Scholarship application process

The application process consists of:

1. Online application through *SmartyGrants*;
2. Interview with ECTARC for shortlisted applicants;
3. Interview with ECEC Service for nominated applicants.

Online application

Online applications must be made via SmartyGrants. Applicants will be requested to provide the following information:

- Evidence to support eligibility (as set out above)
- A brief (maximum 2 pages) motivating statement that details their motivation to engage in early childhood education as a career and their commitment to undertaking the practical and theoretical components of the program
- Preferred ECEC Service to work for, based on the list of participating services

Interviews

Shortlisted applicants will be called for an interview with ECTARC.

Service matching

As part of the online application form, applicants will be asked to nominate their preferred ECEC Service based on a list of participating services.

ECTARC will notify participating ECEC Services of nominated applicants and facilitate a meeting between the ECEC Service and nominated applicants to ensure compatibility before a final decision is made on the application.

Every effort will be made to match applicants with their preferred ECEC Service, however, to avoid disappointment applicants are strongly encouraged to nominate more than one preference.

Further scholarship

Depending on availability of funds, a further scholarship of \$3,000 may be available for program participants who complete a Certificate III and go on to enrol in a Diploma (further scholarship).

To apply for a further scholarship, the applicant will need to email the Department:

- Notice of intent to pursue a Diploma
- Proof of completion of their Certificate III
- Proof of ongoing program eligibility
- Statement from employer that they will support the program participant to complete a Diploma

The Department will confirm the program participant's eligibility and suitability for a further scholarship in writing and new agreement will be entered into with the Department.

The program participant must enrol in the Diploma within three months of completing their Certificate III.

Key dates 2021

Table 1 - scholarship application key dates

24 May	Applications for Trainee scholarships – open 9 am
13 June	Applications for Trainee scholarships – close 11:59 pm
15 June	Shortlisting of applications by selection panel Shortlisted applicants contacted to book interviews
21 and 22 June	Interviews with ECTARC and shortlisted applicants
23 June	Applications and interview notes assessed by selection panel
28 and 29 June	Interview with ECEC Services and nominated applicants
15 July	Successful applicants notified in writing

Agreement

If your application is successful, you will be required to enter into an agreement with the Department.

Part B: Service subsidy

Eligibility criteria

The ECEC Service must:

- Be a licensed service run by an approved provider
- Have a current Australian Business Number (ABN)
- Commit to employing a program participant for a minimum of 18 months following the completion of their Traineeship at or above award wages

The service must not be an Australian, state or territory government agency.

Evidence to support eligibility

The ECEC Service applicant must provide the following:

- Service identification number
- Provider identification number
- ABN
- A statement confirming commitment to employ a program participant for a minimum of 18 months following the completion of their traineeship at or above award wages
- A statement confirming that the service is not an Australian, state or territory government agency

Service subsidy application process

ECEC Service applicants must complete an online application through *SmartyGrants* and provide the following information:

- Evidence to support eligibility (as set out above)
- A brief (maximum 2 pages) statement that demonstrates how the applicant will meet the program objectives and the applicant's commitment and approach to improving employment outcomes for Aboriginal people undertaking traineeships in the early childhood sector.

Ongoing employment

The service subsidy is dependent on the ongoing employment of a program participant for a minimum of 18 months following the end of their traineeship. Services will be required to show proof of the trainee's ongoing employment at each payment milestone.

Program participant employment ends during the service subsidy period

If the program participant's employment with the ECEC Service ends during the service subsidy period (the term of the subsidy funding agreement), the Department may, in its absolute discretion, continue the service subsidy for a new program participant or cease the service subsidy. It is the responsibility of the ECEC Service to notify the Department as soon as the program participant's employment ends.

Program participant leaves before completing Traineeship

If the program participant leaves employment before completing their Traineeship, the ECEC Service may recruit a new Trainee who meets the eligibility criteria.

Program participant leaves after completing Traineeship

If the program participant's employment ends after completing their Traineeship, the ECEC Service may recruit a new program participant who meets the eligibility criteria and has completed a traineeship within the previous six months.

ECEC Service obligations when recruiting a new program participant

The ECEC Service must notify the Department in writing of their intention to recruit a new Program participant. The Department will provide written confirmation regarding:

- what, if any, program components may be offered to the new program participant,
- whether the new program participant meets the eligibility criteria, and
- the Department's decision to continue or cease the service subsidy.

The ECEC Service will be responsible for providing the Department with evidence that the new program participant meets the eligibility criteria at Part A. Where the new program participant is not a Trainee, the ECEC Service must also provide proof of completion of a relevant traineeship in the previous six months.

Where the new program participant is a Trainee, the ECEC Service will be responsible for coordinating the Traineeship.

The ECEC Service may be required to enter into a new or varied agreement with the Department.

Key dates 2021

Table 2 - service subsidy application key dates

4 May	Applications for service subsidy – open 12 pm (Smarty Grants portal)
17 May	Applications for service subsidy – close 11:59 pm
19 and 20 May	Applications assessed by selection panel
21 May	Successful applicants notified in writing

Funding agreement

If the application is successful, the ECEC Service will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the Department.