



Dear Early Learning Professional,

We are pleased to announce that the application for the Jeannette Watson Wage Supplement Project is now open.

This project is funded by the City of Austin, Travis County, and the Workforce Solutions Capital Area Workforce Board. It is designed to supplement the wages of qualifying Early Childhood Education (ECE) professionals who have advanced their education and/or work with children from low-income families in high-quality early learning programs.

Please read this letter in full to ensure you understand the **application process, eligibility requirements, and important dates**.

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## Key Information

### Award Amounts

The wage supplement amount will be determined based on available funding once all applications have been processed.

**Please note: Receiving an award in previous years does not guarantee future payments.**

### Application Deadline

All required materials must be submitted by **Friday, February 27, 2026, at noon**.

You will receive a confirmation email once your application has been processed. Please monitor your email regularly for updates or requests for missing documentation.

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## How to Apply

- 1. Review the Required Documents Checklist** (*located at the end of this letter*)  
Review the checklist carefully to ensure you have all required documents before beginning your application.
- 2. Upload Documents to TECPDS**  
Log in to your **Texas Early Childhood Professional Development System (TECPDS)** account and upload all required materials *before* submitting your application.
- 3. Complete the Online Application**  
Access the application by clicking [here](#).
- 4. Submit by the Deadline**  
Applications must be submitted by **Friday, February 27, 2026, at noon**.



## 5. Watch for Confirmation

Within **five (5) business days** of submitting your application, you will receive an email confirming whether your application is complete or if additional information is needed. Please use an email address you check regularly (personal email recommended) and respond promptly to avoid delays.

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## TECPDS Assistance Office Hours

Need help with TECPDS? We're here to support you.

We are offering TECPDS Assistance Office Hours during the application period. You may join at any time to ask questions, receive assistance with logging in, troubleshoot uploads, or get help reviewing your TECPDS account.

### Office Hours Schedule

- **Wednesday and Thursday**
- **12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.**

👉 **TECPDS Office Hours Link:** <https://wfscapitalarea.zoomgov.com/j/16080292237>

You do not need to stay for the entire hour—feel free to come and go as needed.

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## Payment Information

Applicants selected to receive an award must submit the following to process payment:

- A completed **W-9 Form**
- A completed **Direct Deposit Authorization Form**
- **One of the following:**
  - A voided check (*preferred*), **or**
  - A direct deposit authorization letter from your financial institution

### Please note:

- ✓ Payments are made **by direct deposit only**
- ✗ Checks will **not** be issued

Additional instructions will be provided to selected recipients.

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**Eligibility Requirements:** *Review the criteria below to determine which program you qualify for.*

## **Program 1: Premium Pay Wage Stipend for ECE Professionals with Credentials**

To qualify, applicants must:

1. Work at least **32 hours per week** in a childcare program.
2. Hold **one** of the following:
  - A **master's, bachelor's, or associate's degree** in child development, early childhood education, or a related field, **or**
  - A current **Child Development Associate (CDA)** credential  
(See the checklist for a list of related degrees.)
3. Be employed at a **licensed early learning program within Travis County**.
4. Earn **\$22.17 per hour or less**.
5. Have worked at their **current center since August 1, 2025**.
6. Please note: **Priority will be given** to providers who care for a higher percentage of CCS children.

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## **Program 2: Premium Pay Wage Stipend for ECE Professionals Without Credentials**

To qualify, applicants must:

1. Work in a **Texas Rising Star 4-star or nationally accredited** childcare program.
2. Work at least **32 hours per week** in a childcare program.
3. **Not** hold a master's, bachelor's, or associate's degree in child development, early childhood education, or a related field, and **not** possess a current CDA credential.
4. Be employed at a **licensed early learning program within Travis County**.
5. Earn **\$22.17 per hour or less**.
6. Have worked at their **current center since August 1, 2025**.
7. All staff, including **support staff**, are eligible to apply if they meet the above criteria.

**Priority consideration** will be given to programs that:

- Serve a higher percentage of CCS children, and
- Have staff with longer tenure in the ECE field



## Important Dates

Application Open	Application Deadline	Award Letters Sent	Payments Released
February 9, 2026	February 27, 2026 @ noon	April 2026	Summer 2026

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## Important Reminder

- Submitting an application **does not guarantee** an award.
- **Incomplete applications will not be considered.**
- Award recipients will be notified by email by the **end of April 2026**.
- To receive payment, recipients must submit a completed **W-9 and Direct Deposit Authorization Form**.
- Payments will be distributed in **Summer 2026**.

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If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact us at [CCSJW@wfscapitalarea.com](mailto:CCSJW@wfscapitalarea.com). Thank you for your ongoing dedication to early childhood education!

Warm regards,

Heather Pate  
Child Development and Early Education Supervisor  
Workforce Solutions Capital Area Child Care Services



## **Program 1: Premium Pay Wage Stipend for ECE Professionals with Credentials**

### **Complete the Application** (**after** uploading documents to TECPDS)

- Answer all questions completely
- [CLICK HERE](#) to access the application.

### **Create a TECPDS Account**

- [How Do I Create a Texas Workforce Registry \(TECPDS\) Account?](#)
- **Note:** If you already have an account, do not create a new one.

### **Connect with Your Center**

- [How Educators Connect to their Centers.](#)

## **Upload Required Documents to TECPDS**

**Before** submitting your application, ensure that all required documents are uploaded.

### [Director Verification Form](#)

- [Click here for director verification form.](#)
- Have your director fill out AND sign this form (applicants **cannot** sign their own form).
- Upload the signed form in the “Miscellaneous” section of TECPDS.
- [How Do I Add Miscellaneous Documents to My TECPDS Account?](#)

### **Experience in Early Learning Programs**

- Add your experience in Early Learning Programs to your “Professional Development Profile - Employment.”
- [How Do I Add Work Experience to My TECPDS Account?](#)

### **Transcripts and CDA Certificate**

- Upload these documents if applicable.
- [How Do I Upload Education and Credential to My TECPDS Account?](#)
- **Note:** If already uploaded, you do not need to submit them again.

## **Proof of Continuing Education**

- **Acceptable Documents:**
  - Official or unofficial college/university transcripts (must include your name).
  - [Current](#) CDA certificate (does not need to be college credit-based).
  - Graduation documentation from foreign institutions, with an [official](#) translation.
- **Not Accepted:**
  - Certificates of completion, clock hours, training certificates, orientation documents, or training plans.
  - Untranslated transcripts.
  - Expired CDA.
- **Related Fields of Study:** Acceptable degrees include early childhood education, child or youth development, child psychology, elementary or special education (related to pre-kindergarten through third grade), family child and school social work, speech pathology, and child family studies.



## **Program 2: Premium Pay Wage Stipend for ECE Professionals Without Credentials**

### **Complete the Application**

- Ensure that all questions are answered.
- [CLICK HERE](#) to access the application.

### **Create a TECPDS Account**

- [How Do I Create a Texas Workforce Registry \(TECPDS\) Account?](#)
- **Note:** If you already have an account, do not create a new one.

### **Affiliate with Your Center**

- [How practitioners connect to their center.](#)

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### **Final Submission Deadline**

All applications and documents must be submitted by  
**Friday, February 27, 2026, at noon.**

→ All required documents must be uploaded to TECPDS *before* submitting your application.