

Chapter 222

(Senate Bill 500)

AN ACT concerning

**Education – Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund –
Alterations**

FOR the purpose of altering the qualifications for an award from the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund to include a certain service obligation; requiring the Office of Child Care to prioritize grant awards to certain applicants; requiring certain award recipients to repay certain award funding except under certain circumstances; and generally relating to the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
 Article – Education
 Section 9.5–905
 Annotated Code of Maryland
 (2022 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Education

9.5–905.

- (a) There is a Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund.
- (b) The Office may award funding from the Fund to an individual who has:
 - (1) Obtained at least a level 2 in the Maryland Child Care Credential Program under § 9.5–904 of this subtitle;
 - (2) Documented at least 1 year of experience working with groups of children in an approved setting; [and]
 - (3) Been accepted by an accredited college or university for enrollment in at least one course for credit toward a degree in early childhood education or A related field;
AND
 - (4) **COMMITTED TO WORK IN AN APPROVED CHILD CARE SETTING FOR AT LEAST 20 HOURS PER WEEK FOR A PERIOD OF TIME DETERMINED BY THE**

OFFICE AFTER COMPLETING THE COURSE OF STUDY UNDER SUBSECTION (D)(2) OF THIS SECTION.

(C) TO CARRY OUT THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM, AWARDS SHALL BE PRIORITIZED TO THE FOLLOWING APPLICANTS:

(1) AN APPLICANT WHO HAS NOT COMPLETED ANY COLLEGE COURSES FOR CREDIT FROM AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY; AND

(2) AN APPLICANT WHO ATTENDS OR HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY AN ACCREDITED COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY THAT OFFERS NATIVE LANGUAGE OR BILINGUAL COURSEWORK IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OR A RELATED FIELD.

[(c)] (D) An award under this section may only be:

(1) Applied toward the cost of:

(i) Tuition and fees; or

(ii) Textbooks required by a course in which the awardee is enrolled;

and

(2) Used by the awardee for the actual expense of college coursework incurred subsequent to an award toward the completion of:

(i) A college degree in early childhood education or a related field;

or

(ii) Developmental coursework required to meet prerequisites for a degree program in early childhood education or a related field.

(E) (1) EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATIONS ADOPTED BY THE DEPARTMENT, AN AWARD RECIPIENT SHALL REPAY THE OFFICE THE FUNDS RECEIVED UNDER THIS SECTION IF THE RECIPIENT DOES NOT PERFORM THE SERVICE OBLIGATION REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(4) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) THE OFFICE MAY WAIVE OR DEFER PAYMENT IF THE RECIPIENT PROVIDES TO THE OFFICE SATISFACTORY EVIDENCE OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING ILLNESS OR DISABILITY, THAT PREVENT THE RECIPIENT FROM FULFILLING THE SERVICE OBLIGATION REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(4) OF THIS SECTION.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall be construed to apply only prospectively and may not be applied or interpreted to have any effect on the requirements for the receipt, retention, or repayment of an award from the Child Care Career and Professional Development Fund under § 9.5–905 of the Education Article for which an applicant applied or was awarded funding before the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.