



# Harvard University

## 2016-2017

### Ladder ACCESS Program

*Access to Child Care Excellence, Services, and Support*

### FAQ

*For Assistant and Associate Professors, full Professors (including HMS WLT tenured faculty), Assistant, Associate, and full Professors in Practice (GSD), Benjamin Peirce Fellows, and Convertible Instructors*

#### Part 1: The Scholarship Application

#### 1. How do I know if I am eligible to apply?

To be eligible for the Ladder ACCESS program you and your household must meet each of these five criteria:

To be eligible to apply, YOU must:

**1) Work in a benefits-eligible position. This means you must be:**

- working at least half-time (17.5 hours per week) at Harvard *and*
- paid by the President and Fellows of Harvard College on a regular Harvard payroll

AND

**2) Have a spouse/domestic partner who is:**

- formally employed at least 15 hours/wk (paid or unpaid), *or*
- a full-time or part-time student (at least 15 hours/wk), *or*
- disabled, or providing care for a disabled person (at least 15 hours/wk), *or*
- spouse/partner of a new faculty member (in the first six months of faculty member's appointment) who is looking for employment

OR

- be in a single-parent household

AND

**3) Be employed in one of the following capacities**

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Job Code</b>
University Professor	(000012)
HMS Professor	(000021, 000031)
Chaired Professor	(000022)
Professor	(000032)
Associate Professor	(000152, 000192, 000151, 000191)
Assistant Professor	(000202, 000263, 000201, 000264)
Professor in Practice, Chaired, GSD	(000035)
Professor in Practice, GSD	(000034)
Associate Professor in Practice, GSD	(000036)
Assistant Professor in Practice, GSD	(000037)
Benjamin Peirce Fellow	(000045)
Convertible Instructor	(000072)

AND

- 4) **Have a total Adjusted Gross Household Income of \$175,000 per year or less (see #3 below)**

AND

- 5) **Have at least one child under the age of 6**

For this cycle, families with at least one child born on or after July 1, 2010 are eligible to apply.

**Your child(ren) must:**

- 1) Be your legal dependent(s) verified by your tax return and you must be responsible for their child care costs (unborn, newborn, or newly-adopted children are exempted from the tax dependency verification requirement),

AND

- 2) Be cared for in one of the following child care settings:
- a licensed child care center
  - a licensed family child care provider
  - a licensed after school program
  - a daytime summer camp program
  - an in-home provider with a Social Security or Tax I.D. number.

## 2. What if I still do not know if I am eligible?

Please ask your administrator what your specific “Job Code” is. Compare it to the job codes listed above.

## 3. How is my Adjusted Gross Household Income calculated and what is the award matrix?

If your youngest child is under 6 years of age, your award is calculated using the following matrix:

Adjusted Gross Household Income for 1-child families*	Award** (before required tax withholding) <sup>a</sup>
<\$109,999	\$20,000
\$110,000 - \$129,999	\$15,000
\$130,000 - \$149,999	\$10,000
\$150,000 - \$174,999	\$ 5,000

*\*The Adjusted Family Gross Income is found by subtracting from your family’s gross income: (1) \$10,000 if you are a single-parent family (2) \$10,000 for each additional child after the first up to and including the fourth child aged under 13 years.*

*\*\*Families with additional children aged 0-6 will receive a supplement of \$1,000 per child, with a TOTAL maximum award of \$20,000.*

**a:** The Ladder ACCESS child care scholarship award is regarded as extra compensation under IRS rules and therefore subject to required supplemental tax withholding at the federally-established rate of around 40%. Please see #20 below for a more detailed explanation and examples.

## 4. What if my youngest child is over six years of age?

If your youngest child is over 6 years of age, your award is calculated based on the University Child Care Scholarship Program Guidelines. Your addition to this pool happens automatically at the application stage of the process. Please be aware that the adjusted Gross Household Income cap is lower (\$130,000 maximum) for the University-wide Faculty Child Care Scholarship Program.

## 5. Can I apply if my baby is not born yet?

Yes! As long as you will use and pay for child care before June 30, 2017, you can apply for the scholarship. You will be reimbursed for child care expenses, up to your award amount, after you demonstrate that you have paid them.

**6. Can I apply if my child is not yet formally enrolled in a program?**

Yes! The application asks for enrollment information and costs or your best estimate of what your costs will be from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017.

**7. Can I use the scholarship to pay my mother, father, or other family member?**

Yes! You can use scholarship money to pay any relative who cares for your children, as long as this person:

- 1) Does not live with you, and
- 2) Has a valid SSN or Tax ID number, and
- 3) Provides care while you or your spouse are at work.

**8. Can I use the scholarship to pay my babysitter or nanny?**

Yes! This is an eligible expense if the babysitter or nanny provides care while you or your spouse are at work. As mentioned above, your babysitter **MUST** have a Social Security or Tax I.D. number. The only exception to the “live-in” rules applies to formally-employed nannies, who may reside in your home.

**9. Can I use the scholarship to pay for my children’s care even if my spouse is not working?**

While there may be compelling reasons to place a child into care even though there is an adult at home capable of providing care, such families will generally not be eligible for assistance. The exception is for newly appointed faculty members whose spouses are seeking work: These families may apply to the program and, if eligible, will receive support during the first six months of the faculty member’s appointment.

**10. Can I apply if I don’t know what kind of child care I’m going to use?**

That’s fine! You can still apply. Scholarships are “reserved funds”, and are based on your adjusted gross household income. You will receive a letter that confirms the award tier (ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000) for which you have been verified. You will be reimbursed for child care expenses, up to your award amount, after you demonstrate that you have paid them. Further, changing the type of care you use later will not affect your award as long as it remains ‘qualifying care’ (see #11 for the definition).

**11. What kinds of child care can I use the scholarship for?**

You can use the scholarship to pay for the costs of:

- A licensed child care center,
- A licensed family child care provider,
- A licensed after-school program
- A licensed summer/vacation day camp, or
- An in-home caregiver, such as a nanny or babysitter, with a Social Security number.

**12. What if my spouse also works at Harvard?**

Scholarship awards are per family. The Ladder ACCESS Program will supersede all other scholarship programs offered by Harvard for which your spouse may be eligible. Your spouse’s application will not be considered by other scholarship programs, and your family will automatically be included in the Ladder ACCESS program.

**13. How do I access the online application?**

Please log in to PeopleSoft with your HarvardKey (you can access PeopleSoft via [hr.harvard.edu](http://hr.harvard.edu)). Select the PeopleSoft link and navigate to Self-Service and select “*Child Care Scholarship App*”. Complete the pre-questions and then select “Begin Application”.

#### 14. When is the deadline?

This smaller round is open from **Wednesday February 1 through Wednesday February 15, 2017**.

- This means that the application must be submitted online (via PeopleSoft>Self-Service) by 11:59pm AND the supporting paperwork sent to the Office of Work/Life and postmarked by this date.

#### 15. What if I miss the deadline?

Please contact the Natalie Beaumont-Smith in the Office of Work/Life (childcare\_scholarships@harvard.edu).

### Part 2: The Award Process

#### 16. What happens to my award if the actual cost of my childcare ends up being less than what I estimate on the application?

The Ladder ACCESS program is a reimbursement program. You are only reimbursed for what you spend. If you spend less than what you were awarded, the program will reimburse you up to the total qualified child care costs you submitted. Please see #20 below for a detailed explanation of the reimbursement process with examples and the required tax withholding.

#### 17. When will I hear whether or not I have received an award?

Once applications are received and incomes are verified, you will receive notification via email in early October, 2016. Please see the timeline in #18.

#### 18. What is the program timeline?

Please remember that this cycle applies to all child care expenses from the July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 OR for those child care expenses after your hire date if this was after the beginning of July, 2016.

February 1, 2017	Application opens in PeopleSoft>Self-Service for this smaller second round
February 15, 2017	Completed applications due (paperwork and online submission)
February 16– February 23, 2017	Verification and processing period (eligibility, income)
February 24, 2017	Award notification emailed with 'Instructions to Claim Award'
Tuesday, March 6, 2017	<u>Online claim forms due</u> for any child care costs already paid for (or expected to be paid for) during this fiscal year (7/1/16-6/30/17).
Friday, March 31, 2017	Reimbursement payment made, delivered via paycheck, if you've submitted claim forms by the deadline. Maximum payment is up to three quarters of award less any earlier payments, <b>less required supplemental tax withholding (see #20 for more details)</b> .
Tuesday, May 15, 2017	<b>FINAL</b> <u>online claim forms due</u> for any remaining unclaimed child care costs already paid (or expected to be paid) for this fiscal year (7/1/16-6/30/17)
Friday, June 30, 2017	Final payment made, delivered via paycheck, if you've submitted claim forms by the deadline. Maximum payment is whole award less any earlier payments, <b>less required supplemental tax withholding (see #20 for more details)</b> .

If you do not submit an online claim form for your child care expenses by the first or second deadlines (for example, you may have missed the deadline OR you may not have started paying for child care yet) you DO NOT forfeit the funds. You will be able to submit unclaimed expenses by **May 15, 2017**. This is the **FINAL** deadline.

### **Part 3: Verifying Your Costs and Claiming Your Award**

#### **19. How do I claim my child care expenses:**

Full instructions for claiming your child care expenses are detailed in the award email. To summarize — child care expenses are documented in two ways:

1. Online claim form submission  
Please log in to PeopleSoft>Self-Service with your Harvard ID and PIN and select “Child Care Claim Form” and enter in the required information. Hit the “Save” button.
2. Completed and signed Provider Signature Form (attached to the award email or downloaded from the online claim form site)  
Have your child care provider complete their section of the paper form and sign it, you complete your section and sign it. Keep this for your records — it can be requested at any time for verification or clarification purposes.

Once you have submitted enough child care expenses online to cover your award amount, you do not need to submit any more. Your reimbursement payments will happen automatically.

#### **20. How is the scholarship money disbursed?**

The Ladder ACCESS child care scholarship is a reimbursement program — you will only be reimbursed up to your award amount OR your total costs if these are less than your award.

Once you have paid for your child care and submitted an online claim form, funds are delivered to you via your paycheck according to the schedule outlined in #18. **Program reimbursement payments are considered additional compensation according to IRS rules and are subject to federally-established required supplemental tax withholding (typically around 40%).**

**These awards are not grossed-up for tax purposes.** Please see the following generalized examples:

*Your award is \$10,000 and you submit one online claim expense of \$11,000 by the final deadline. It is approved and a payment of \$10,000 is sent to payroll for processing. Your net amount, provided after required supplemental tax withholding of about 40%, will be approximately \$6,000 in your paycheck.*

*Your award is \$10,000 and you submit one online claim expense of \$7,500 by the final deadline. It is approved and a payment of \$7,500 is sent to payroll for processing. Your net amount, provided after required supplemental tax withholding of about 40%, will be approximately \$4,500 in your paycheck. No more funds are reimbursed to you — you forfeit the unclaimed funds.*

*Your award is \$10,000 and you submit one online claim expense of \$5,000 by the first deadline. It is approved and a payment of \$5,000 is sent to payroll for processing. Your net amount, provided after required supplemental tax withholding of about 40% in the first paycheck is approximately \$3,000. You do not submit any more child care expense claims. No more funds are reimbursed to you – you forfeit the unclaimed funds.*

## **21. When will I receive my reimbursement payments?**

The program schedule is outlined in #18. If you submit your expenses online by the claim form deadlines then you will receive up to three reimbursements: December 22, 2016, March 31, 2017, and June 30, 2017. If you only submit one claim by the FINAL deadline of **May 15, 2017** then you will receive one reimbursement in your June paycheck for the whole award amount, or the total of your costs (whichever is the smaller value). Remember that the reimbursement is subject to required tax withholdings.

## **22. What if I have not yet spent any money on child care?**

If you will not begin to incur child care expenses until a time later in the fiscal year (7/1/16-6/30/17), you can submit your first online claim after you begin incurring expenses. You will not forfeit any funds unless you do not submit an online claim form by the FINAL deadline of **May 15, 2017**.

## **23. What if I only have receipts or it is difficult for me to obtain signatures for the Provider Signature Form?**

If you only have receipts for payments made, you can enter these online in lieu of a signed Provider Signature Form. Just keep them for your records and note that we can request this information for clarification at any time.

## **24. What if I have expenses for my older children as well?**

You must have a child under age 6 to be eligible for the Ladder ACCESS program, but funds from your Ladder ACCESS award can also be used for eligible expenses (see #11 above) for all of your children up to when they turn 13 years of age (as per IRS guidelines). Just collect the completed Provider Signature Forms for all of your care providers for your different children's care situations.

## **25. What if I miss a deadline?**

As long as you submit all of your claims by **May 15, 2017**, you will not lose any scholarship funds that have been awarded to you; you will simply delay the receipt of your funds. Payments cannot be made beyond the end of the fiscal year. You will forfeit any remaining unclaimed funds. An email reminder will be sent in early May, 2017.

## **26. Can I submit forms in advance of making payments?**

Generally you must submit claims after making payments. If you have an annual contract with your provider, however, you are welcome to claim for the whole academic/fiscal year in advance to ensure that you do not miss payment deadlines. You will need to have them complete the Provider Signature Form for the whole year. You will still receive your payments based on the schedule outlined above in #18.

## **27. How do I submit my online claim forms?**

Login to PeopleSoft using your HUID and PIN. Navigate to Self-Service and select "Child Care Claim". Complete the fields and add new claim lines as needed. Save your entered claims before logging out.

## **28. What happens if I leave the University or my eligibility changes? Will I still be eligible to receive the award?**

If during the scholarship period, there is a change in your situation such that you no longer meet the eligibility criteria, the scholarship will be discontinued. Examples of a change in status include the termination of Harvard employment, or the change to a job code that is no longer one which is part of the Ladder ACCESS program (see #1 above). Pro-rated payments will be made in both cases.

**29. Can I use the funds set aside in my Dependent Care FSA and the award from the child care scholarships together to pay for my child care?**

Yes, the two programs complement one another and can be used together. The ladder ACCESS childcare scholarship provides you with additional income, and the FSA provides you with a way to protect it from taxes. In both cases, you are submitting receipts to demonstrate that you have child care expenses, but in one case you are claiming extra income and in the other you are claiming the tax protection that is available to you. The same receipts can be submitted to each program.

**Additional Questions?** Please contact Natalie (Office of Work/Life): (617) 495-5933, or [childcare\\_scholarships@harvard.edu](mailto:childcare_scholarships@harvard.edu).