



# Harvard University

**2020-2021**

## **ACCESS Program**

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

### **FAQ**

*Assistant and Associate Professors, full Professors, Assistant, Associate, and full Professors in/of Practice, Assistant and full Clinical Professors of Law, Senior Lecturers and Associate Senior Lecturers, and Senior Preceptors*

#### **A: Priority Enrollment**

All ACCESS-eligible faculty (paid by Harvard, eligible for benefits, and in one of the eligible ranks/job codes below) are prioritized for enrollment at [campus child care centers](#). Faculty can apply to campus child care centers through the [Campus Child Care, Inc](#) website. During the application process, ACCESS-eligible families are considered Tier 1A for enrollment. These faculty categories have preference on up to half of the slots in the child care center system operating on Harvard's Cambridge and Allston campuses.

#### **B: ACCESS Child Care Scholarships**

##### **Part 1: The Scholarship Application**

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

To be eligible for the 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 actively looking for work), **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 (dual-career couples who maintain two separate households will be regarded as 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)         |
| Chaired Professor                   | (000022)         |
| Professor                           | (000032)         |
| Associate Professor                 | (000152, 000192) |
| Assistant Professor                 | (000202, 000263) |
| Professor in Practice, Chaired, GSD | (000035)         |
| Professor in Practice, GSD          | (000034)         |
| Associate Professor in Practice     | (000036)         |
| Assistant Professor in Practice     | (000037)         |
| Professor of Practice               | (000052)         |
| Professor of Practice, Chaired      | (000054)         |
| Clinical Professor of Law           | (000063)         |
| Assistant Clinical Professor of Law | (000261)         |
| Senior Lecturer                     | (000300)         |
| Associate Senior Lecturer           | (000393)         |
| Senior Preceptor                    | (000741)         |

AND

**4) Have a total adjusted Gross Household Income of \$200,000 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, 2014 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:

| <b>Adjusted Gross Household Income for 1-child families*</b> | <b>Award** (before required tax withholding)<sup>a</sup></b> |
|--|--|
| <\$109,999   | \$24,000   |
| \$110,000 - \$129,999  | \$18,000   |
| \$130,000 - \$149,999  | \$12,000   |
| \$150,000 - \$174,999  | \$ 8,000   |
| \$175,000 - \$199,999  | \$ 4,000   |

*\*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 \$24,000.*

a: The 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, 2021, 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, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

#### **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. Agency placement fees are also eligible for reimbursement under the ACCESS program.

#### **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. In response to COVID-19, faculty with spouse/partners who are furloughed or actively looking for work may also apply.

#### **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 \$4,000 to \$24,000) 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 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 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, click on the "My Benefits" tile, choose the "Child Care Scholarships" drop-down menu on the left-hand side and select "Application". Complete the pre-questions and then select "Begin Application."

## **14. When is the deadline?**

The online application is open from **Wednesday July 15 through Wednesday August 12, 2020**.

- This means that the application must be submitted online (via PeopleSoft) by 11:59pm AND the supporting documentation submitted electronically to the Office of Work/Life. Specific instructions are emailed upon submission and are also found in the application.
- A smaller second round for newly-hired eligible faculty will be open online in PeopleSoft from **Wednesday August 26 through Wednesday September 9, 2020**.

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

Please contact the Natalie Beaumont-Smith in the Office of Work/Life ([childcare\\_scholarships@harvard.edu](mailto: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 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, 2020. 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, 2020 through June 30, 2021 OR for those child care expenses after your hire date if this was after the beginning of July, 2020.

|                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| July 15, 2020                    | Application opens in PeopleSoft>Self-Service   |
| August 12, 2020                  | Completed applications due (supporting documents and online submission) for those already employed before August 1, 2020   |
| September 9, 2020                | Completed applications due (supporting documents and online submission) for those hired on or after August 1, 2020   |
| September 10– September 28, 2020 | Verification and processing period (eligibility, income)   |
| Early October, 2020              | Award notification emailed with 'Instructions to Claim Award'  |
| Tuesday, November 10, 2020       | <u>First online claim forms due</u> for any child care costs already paid for (or expected to be paid for) during this fiscal year (7/1/20-6/30/21).   |
| Wednesday, December 23, 2020     | First payment made, delivered via paycheck, if you've submitted claim forms by the deadline. Maximum payment is half of award, <b>less required supplemental tax withholding (see #20 for more details).</b>   |
| Tuesday, March 9, 2021           | <u>Second online claim forms due</u> for any child care costs already paid for (or expected to be paid for) during this fiscal year (7/1/20-6/30/21).  |
| Wednesday, March 31, 2021        | 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 11, 2021            | <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 (7/1/20-6/30/21)  |
| Wednesday, June 30, 2021         | 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 11, 2021**. 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 login to PeopleSoft through the HARVie homepage with your HarvardKey ([hr.harvard.edu](http://hr.harvard.edu)), click on the “My Benefits” tile, choose the “Child Care Scholarships” drop-down menu on the left-hand side and select “Claim Form”. Enter in the required information and hit the “Save & Submit” 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.

In order to have a better idea of the costs of child care for Harvard faculty families, please make sure to enter in ALL of your child care expenses online, even if they exceed your award amount. This is a requirement of the program; more complete data enables the Offices of Faculty Development & Diversity and Work/Life to continually advocate for program enhancements.

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

The 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 your 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 23, 2020, March 31, 2021, and June 30, 2021. If you only submit one claim by the FINAL deadline of **May 11, 2021** 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 (7/1/20-6/30/21), 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 11, 2021**.

## **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 ACCESS program, but funds from your 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 and enter them online in PeopleSoft.

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

As long as you submit all of your claims by **May 11, 2021**, 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, 2021.

## **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 through the HARVie homepage with your HarvardKey (hr.harvard.edu), click on the "My Benefits" tile, choose the "Child Care Scholarships" drop-down menu on the left-hand side and select "Claim Form". 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 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 Childcare Scholarship provides you with additional income, and the FSA provides you with a way to protect part of your overall salary from taxes with a self-funded reserve that can be set aside for dependent care expenses. 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 paying taxes on it at around 40%) 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).