

IMPORTANT

*information about
stipend applications*



**Step Up to
WAGES**
Arkansas

Step Up to WAGES

**is an education-based stipend
for teaching staff, directors,
and family child care providers
in licensed centers and family homes.**

Our stipends encourage

**higher education for the early childhood educator
AND ongoing employment with the same licensed program.**



To be eligible you must

- Be a teacher, assistant teacher, floater, director, assistant director, or family child care provider in a licensed child care center or family child care home in Arkansas. Direct care professionals working with the HIPPIY program are also eligible.
- Have a CDA (or 12 credit hours of birth to 5 formal coursework) or other higher formal education. (See scale for more details.)
- Work at least 10 hours per week with children ages birth – 5.
- Earn at or below \$20 per hour.
- Have worked in your licensed child care program during the preceding 6 months.

**Please read
carefully**



**AECA must document that grant money is being used as intended.
For that reason, applicants must complete an application and provide
documentation related to education and employment.**

Please read
carefully

Application Requirements

*An application has 3 main components,
and a list of requirements within each component.*

1 The Step Up to WAGE\$ Application Form

When filling out the application, please make sure you complete the *entire* form *legibly*.

Your employer is also responsible for filling out and signing a portion of the application. Signatures must be completed with ink or using a verified signature software.

X Cursive computer fonts are not accepted.

2 Income Verification

Provide a copy of a current paystub that accurately reflects your normal schedule. We only need 1 paystub. If you regularly work 80 hours in 2 weeks, your paystub should reflect that.

If you are a **Family Child Care Educator**: Submit your Schedule C from the most recent tax year.

If you are a **Facility Owner**: Please supply your most recent 1040 tax form, all supporting schedules, and the W-2 form. If you file jointly, the W-2 forms from both parties must be submitted.

Additional tax documentation may be requested if necessary.

3 Transcripts

Participants must submit official transcripts by mail or email *directly from the school* for ALL college coursework completed at a regionally accredited college or university.

Official transcripts are generally printed on special school paper for security purposes and may also feature a stamped school seal and registrar's signature.

X Copied or faxed transcripts cannot be accepted.

X Workshops and PDR training hours are not accepted.

FAQ!

Can you please start processing my application though I haven't turned everything in yet?

Answer

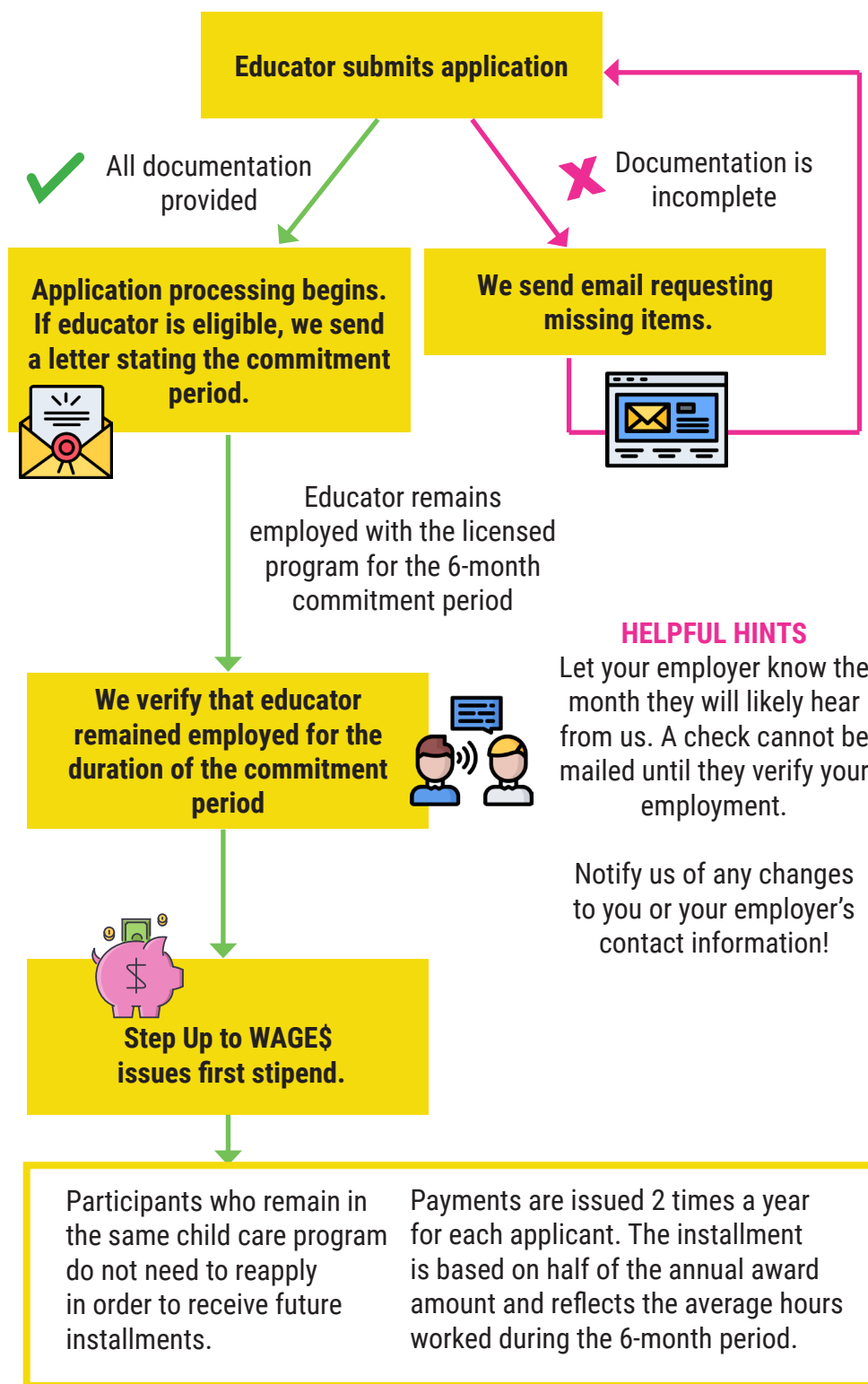
We know information is sometimes difficult to track down. But remember, Step Up to WAGE\$ staff have to be VERY responsible in distributing stipends and reporting to our funders.

Thus, we require that ALL information is submitted in the format specified BEFORE we can begin processing your application.



PROCESS for Application Review & Payment

We are processing thousands of applications, and the review process takes time. Please be patient. Applicants enter the process in the order that a COMPLETE APPLICATION was received including accurate paystub and official transcript/s.



FAQ!

What is a "commitment period"?

Answer

Commitment Period = the amount of time required to work in the same program before a stipend will be issued. Periods run from mid-month to mid-month. They are established for each participant based on the date that their application is marked complete (in other words, when WAGES has verified that all required documentation is turned in.)

If you work year-round and have already completed 6 months of employment at your current location, you can use the commitment period stated on your eligibility letter and the following schedule:

Commitment Period	Payment Issued
Jan - Jul	Aug
Feb - Aug	Sep
Mar - Sept	Oct
Apr - Oct	Nov
May - Nov	Dec
June - Dec	Jan

Employees working in a program that do not work a full year may look different to due to months of service.

Funding for Step Up to WAGES Arkansas comes from The American Rescue Plan Act. All payments are contingent upon funding availability.

Eligibility and Payment Amounts

are based on your direct care hours

FAQ!

Do I get the same stipend amount regardless of how many hours I work each week?

Answer

Full-time is considered working an average of at least 30 hours per week. If you work less than an average of 30 hours, payments are adjusted. Payments will be based on a percentage of the total award amount at each education level as shown here:



Weekly average number of hours worked in direct care

Percentage of payment



10-20 hours	50%
21-29 hours	75%
30 or more hours	100%



The participant must average at least 10 hours per week to be eligible, and 9.5 hours cannot be rounded up.

However, in the other categories, rounding can occur. For example, if someone is confirmed to work 30 hours per week, and her pay stub shows 29.5, that can be accepted. Otherwise, pay stubs **MUST** be within the range to receive that percentage of payment.

EXAMPLE

Elisa works 6 months per year. Based on her level of education, she is eligible for a \$1,200 stipend if she works full-time. If during the past 6 months she has worked fewer hours than 30 hours per week, her stipend would be adjusted:

10-20 hours per week average = \$500

21-29 hours per week average = \$750

