



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 13, 2019

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

**MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES 165 NEW SCHOLARSHIPS FOR EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS**

CHICAGO – The City of Chicago today announced 165 new scholarships will be awarded this fall to support Chicagoans interested in pursuing coursework in early care and education to earn a credential, degree, or licensure needed to work with children birth through five in a Chicago Early Learning Program. In collaboration with City Colleges of Chicago, the Department of Family and Support Services and Chicago Public Schools, the City is furthering its commitment to developing high-quality staff members who care for and educate children through these scholarships.

“As a city, we must ensure every child, regardless of their neighborhood, receives a high-quality early education, providing them the tools and opportunities they need to succeed, and that starts with a strong workforce,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “The Chicago Early Learning Workforce Scholarship is an investment in both our educators and children, which will ensure Chicago's students are growing in their youngest years and preparing to achieve greater academic success for years to come.”

These scholarships serve an important role in the City's efforts to expand access to early learning programs across Chicago and build a more robust workforce that can adequately support the high-quality early learning programs. After scholarship recipients complete their degree or coursework, they commit to working in a Chicago Early Learning program in either a community-based organization or Chicago Public School for three years.

“From partnerships with community-based organizations to the city's early learning workforce scholarships, we are expanding Chicagoans' access to high-quality early childhood education programs,” said City Colleges of Chicago Chancellor Juan Salgado. “We thank Mayor Lightfoot for her leadership in helping us build a strong pipeline of diverse educators to serve our communities.”



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



The City of Chicago currently supports more than 425 active scholarship recipients pursuing a basic certificate, an associate degree, a bachelor's degree, a Professional Educator License or a master's degree in early childhood education. Scholarship recipients are enrolled at the following universities:

- 250 students at City Colleges of Chicago;
- 112 students at National Louis University;
- 56 students at University of Illinois at Chicago; and
- 12 students at Roosevelt University.

“We are very excited to partner with the City to support this innovative model that aligns with our commitment to provide a pipeline of talented early childhood educators,” said National Louis University President Dr. Nivine Megahed. “Early childhood education has been a core strength for National Louis since our inception in 1886. We look forward to partnering on other opportunities to serve the city and foster community engagement.”

The City is not only investing in growing the early learning workforce, but also supporting the current workforce who are interested in securing higher degrees and positions. Of the more than 425 active scholarship recipients, over 70% of them currently work in a Chicago Early Learning Program.

“I believe that education is the key to success in life,” said Melisa Sanchez, a scholarship recipient currently pursuing her bachelor's degree at Roosevelt University. “This scholarship is giving me the opportunity to continue my education in the career of my dreams – early childhood education – without worrying about tuition and books. There are no words to describe how thankful I am to be one of the recipients, and most importantly, being able to give back to my city once I complete my degree.”

Those interested in applying for this scholarship may complete the interest form found at www.chicagoeearlylearning.org/scholarships , and the Chicago Early Learning Workforce Team will follow up with applicants as opportunities become available. Both current Chicago Early Learning program staff pursuing additional education credentials and Chicago residents interested in launching a career in early childhood education are eligible for the scholarship.

###