2015-2016 SEEK Scholarship Handbook

for Palm Beach County Early Childhood Practitioners

Effective October 1, 2015
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The following section includes SEEK Announcements. These announcements indicate recent changes made to the policies and procedures contained within this handbook.

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<th>SEEK Announcement Number</th>
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| 1-102015                 | The Handbook was updated to reflect the following changes:  
|                          | - Added statements to indicate that practitioners should expect to receive their SEEK award/denial letters at least 1 week prior to course start dates.  
|                          | - If practitioners fail to meet the SEEK Deadline for ECPC/FCCPC courses at Palm Beach State College, they are encouraged to contact their Career Advisor for advisement on financial supports that may be available for future ECPC/FCCPC courses.  
|                          | - Removed the COMPASS test from the list of SEEK-eligible tests at Palm Beach State College because the COMPASS is no longer being offered. It has been replaced by the LOEP Test.  
|                          | - Previously, SEEK would only cover General Education coursework after the practitioner successfully completed 18 ECE credits. This requirement has been reduced to 12 ECE credits. In addition, Math and/or English credit courses that satisfy the General Education requirements for a degree are exempt from this requirement and SEEK will cover those courses at any time.  
|                          | - Added clarifying notes to indicate that student loans will be considered a form of personal payment as applicable for reimbursements and reinstatements. |
Introduction to the Basics

THE SEEK SCHOLARSHIP

*Seeking Excellence and Education through Knowledge,* commonly referred to as SEEK, is a scholarship program dedicated to improving the quality of Palm Beach County early childhood education environments through staff development. SEEK Scholarship is funded by the Children's Services Council and administered by Palm Beach State College (PBSC) through the Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education (IEECE).

There are a variety of SEEK scholarships available for professional development activities. Eligibility for each type of scholarship is dependent on the type of site a practitioner is employed at, all of which is outlined in this handbook.

Information regarding SEEK Scholarship recipients is maintained in a database and may be shared with *Strong Minds Network* system partners. This information is accessed to determine funding needs and track professional development. Copies of practitioner information are maintained in secure files.

Additional information regarding the SEEK Scholarship program can be found on the IEECE website at [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”).

**THE STRONG MINDS NETWORK**

The *Strong Minds Network* is a voluntary system that emphasizes achievement of child outcomes through more effective teacher-child interactions. The system provides resources that support child care providers, practitioners and families to ensure children receive high-quality care and effective teaching, and ultimately, be ready for kindergarten. The vision is that children will have quality early educational experiences that will increase their chances of achieving school success and becoming productive members of society.

Additional information regarding the Strong Minds Network can be found at [www.cscpbc.org](http://www.cscpbc.org)
Introduction to the Basics

THE TEACH SCHOLARSHIP

Teacher Education And Compensation Helps, commonly referred to as TEACH, is a scholarship program for practitioners who are working towards an Associates Degree or credentials in early childhood education.

TEACH is funded by the Florida Office of Early Learning and managed by the Florida Children’s Forum. The program involves a three-way partnership between TEACH, the practitioner, and the sponsoring childcare program, with the majority of tuition and books costs paid for by TEACH. To receive TEACH, the practitioner, child care center and the Children’s Forum enter into a financial contract. An eligible practitioner may also receive a per-semester stipend for travel and internet access, and/or a bonus for completing the scholarship contract. In addition, the early childhood program may be reimbursed for release time given to the participating practitioner.

The T.E.A.C.H. program works with 48 colleges, universities and vocational technical schools throughout the state as well as 14 community-based training institutions. Additional information regarding the TEACH Scholarship can be found at [www.teach-fl.com](http://www.teach-fl.com) or by calling 877-FL-TEACH.

THE PALM BEACH COUNTY EARLY CHILDHOOD REGISTRY
(Managed by the Children’s Forum)

The SEEK Scholarship program relies on information contained in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry (The Registry) when determining eligibility. Active Registry membership is a requirement for access to the SEEK scholarship program.

The Registry is a data system that maintains information on its members documenting their professional development in the field of early childhood education, including credentials, college coursework, in-service/career pathway training, education and employment information. Once a practitioner becomes a Registry member, they are required to update their record with all changes to their name, address, phone number, email address, employment information, and professional development activities. It is the practitioner’s responsibility to submit all professional development documentation to the Registry.

To become a member of the Registry, learn how to update your personal and professional development information, and search the training calendar for current approved professional development events, visit the Registry website at [www.pbcregistry.org](http://www.pbcregistry.org). If you have additional questions for the Registry or about information contained in your Registry Record, contact the Children’s Forum at 561-740-7000 x4452 or pbregistry@thechildrensforum.com.
Chapter One
Eligibility, General Rules and Exclusions

ELIGIBILITY FOR SEEK SCHOLARSHIP

Eligibility* for a SEEK Scholarship award is based on the following:

- Employment in any early childhood program in Palm Beach County that receives some form of public funding, including but not limited to school readiness, VPK, Head Start.
- Eligible programs and employees include:
  - a family child care home or large family childcare home, to include the provider and one designated substitute and one designated employee (designated employee for large family childcare home only)
  - a child care center, to include all professional staff (director, assistant director, education coordinator/curriculum specialist, lead teacher, associate teacher, and floater)
  - a Palm Beach County School District program, to include instructional staff only
- Working with children ages birth-5 years of age (not school-age) for twenty (20) hours or more per week+
- Active membership in the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry (The Registry) with current name, address, phone number, email address and employment information. Registry membership status can be verified by logging in to your Registry record at www.pbcregistry.org and viewing your information for accuracy.
- Must be in good standing with SEEK (not on suspension or terminated status) at the time of SEEK deadline, if applicable.

*Eligibility requirements are verified by the IEECE staff and from information contained in the practitioner’s Registry record.
+ The designated substitute at a family child care home is exempt from the minimum work hour requirement. All other SEEK eligibility criteria must be met.

STRONG MINDS NETWORK VS. NON-NETWORK

SEEK Scholarship awards vary depending on the practitioner’s place of employment.

A practitioner employed in a Strong Minds Network program will have first priority for SEEK Scholarship funding. Also, the practitioner may be eligible for additional services and/or supplement awards.

Please refer to Chapter 3 - SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners for information on specific scholarship awards that may be available.
Chapter One

Eligibility, General Rules and Exclusions

A practitioner employed in an early childhood program that does not participate in Strong Minds Network (to be referred as Non-Network) but receives some form of public funding may be eligible for limited scholarship awards.

Please refer to Chapter 4 - SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners for information on specific scholarship awards that may be available.

NOTE: Early childhood classrooms within the School District are classified as Strong Minds or Non-Network and eligibility is dependent on the type of classroom the practitioner works in.

IMPORTANT SEEK SCHOLARSHIP POLICIES

- SEEK Scholarship applications must be submitted by fax (561-868-7042) or be emailed to an assigned Career Advisor or to iefaxes@palmbeachstate.edu. Hard copies of documents will not be accepted. It is recommended that the practitioner call 561-868-3695 to ensure all documents have been received.

- SEEK Scholarship reserves the right to review and award and/or refuse any request for funding.

- SEEK Scholarship awards are based on availability of funding.

- Successful completion (a grade of A, B, C, P or S) of all professional development events and courses for which a SEEK scholarship is awarded is required to maintain eligibility for future awards.

- Practitioners are responsible for submitting professional development documentation (transcripts and training certificates) to the Registry following completion of courses/training.

- SEEK Scholarship is considered the funding of last resort. If a practitioner is receiving tuition assistance from Federal Grants, TEACH, or other financial assistance programs, those funds must be utilized first.

- Practitioners receiving financial aid for college credit coursework are still eligible to apply for other SEEK Scholarship funded professional development events (non-college credit courses, community based trainings).

- SEEK Scholarship communications are sent via email. Hard copies of documents and letters will not be sent. Communications regarding scholarships for events at Palm Beach State College will be sent to a practitioner’s Palm Beach State College email address and the email address listed in the Registry.

NOTE: All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
Chapter One
Eligibility, General Rules and Exclusions

- Many SEEK Scholarships have specific application deadline dates. Applications received after the posted deadline date may not be processed, resulting in denial of scholarship. All relevant deadlines are noted in this handbook and specific dates are posted on the IEECE website: www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE/ (“Financial Support”).

- Reimbursement for college courses taken at a college or university other than PBSC, Florida Atlantic University (FAU) or Florida International University (FIU) must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of the event and be taken at a regionally accredited institution of higher learning.

  Accreditation must be one of the following: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

- Falsification of documents is grounds for permanent termination from SEEK Scholarship eligibility.

SEEK SCHOLARSHIP EXCLUSIONS

- SEEK will not pay for non-resident tuition. Any costs above SEEK approved tuition rates will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

- SEEK does not fund any of the Department of Child and Families (DCF) Child Care Training.

- SEEK does not fund the Department of Child and Families (DCF) competency exam testing fee(s).

- SEEK does not fund First Aid/CPR training.

- SEEK does not fund the National Child Development Associate (CDA) assessment fee or any material associated with obtaining the credential.

- SEEK does not fund the ECPC/FCCPC/NCDA renewal fee or any material associated with renewing the credential.

- SEEK does not fund school-age courses/trainings.

- SEEK does not fund conferences.

- SEEK does not fund the costs associated with online textbook membership fees, including but not limited to “Live Text”.

NOTE: All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
Chapter Two
The SEEK Scholarship Application

THE SEEK SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION

The practitioner’s eligibility and professional development history is verified by information in the Registry. The practitioner is responsible for ensuring their Registry record is accurate and current prior to submitting a SEEK application.

The most current SEEK Scholarship application is available on the Palm Beach State College IEECE website: www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”)

The most current SEEK scholarship application must be submitted by the applicable deadline date via fax or email each time a SEEK Scholarship award is requested. Registration/class schedule information for credit and non-credit college coursework, community based training, or other required documentation must also be submitted, based on the award.

The scholarship application must be completed in its entirety and signed by the practitioner. Submission of a signed SEEK Scholarship application indicates that the practitioner has read and agrees to abide by the Participation Agreement and Responsibilities stated on the application.

If the employment listed on the SEEK application does not match the employment listed in the Registry, the practitioner must update their information in the Registry before the SEEK application can be processed.

Incomplete applications will delay processing and may affect the awarding of a scholarship.

For each application submitted, the practitioner will receive a letter regarding the status of the SEEK Scholarship award. All letters will be sent via email to a practitioner’s Palm Beach State College email address (if applicable) and the email address listed in the Registry. In most cases, practitioners should receive letters concerning awards for courses at least one week prior to the course start date.

A SEEK Scholarship application cannot be completed by another party on behalf of a practitioner.
Chapter Three
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) TEST FEE

SEEK Scholarship may be available to reimburse the cost of the GED test fee based upon successful completion.
- A Strong Minds Network practitioner submits documentation of successful completion of the GED test to the Registry.
- Once the GED completion is noted in a practitioner’s Registry record, the practitioner may submit a completed scholarship application, proof of payment, Vendor Application and W9 form to their Career Advisor by fax or email.
- The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request via email. If approved, the reimbursement payment will be sent to the address supplied on the Vendor Application/W9 form within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (ECPC)/THE FLORIDA CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (FCCPC)

- At Palm Beach State College
SEEK scholarship may be available for the ECPC/FCCPC coursework and required book(s). A practitioner must first meet the requirements necessary to register for the course. For more information on the course’s pre-registration requirements, contact the Institute for Early Care and Afterschool programs at 561-868-4049 or visit their webpage at www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/childcare/.
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).
- Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. If the posted SEEK deadline has passed, practitioners should contact their Career Advisor to learn of financial supports that may be available for future ECPC/FCCPC courses.

- At Other State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Approved Birth-Five ECPC or FCCPC programs
SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner for tuition and required books/materials associated with a State of Florida DCF approved Birth-Five FCCPC or ECPC program.
Chapter Three
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College ECPC/FCCPC tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement

CREDIT COURSEWORK LEADING TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF) DIRECTOR CREDENTIAL

- At Palm Beach State College
SEEK scholarship may be available for college credit coursework and required books/materials leading to any level of the FL Director Credential. SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application by fax or email and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).

- Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.

- At Other Accredited institutions*
SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner for tuition and required books/materials associated with State of FL DCF Approved college credit coursework leading to any level of the Director Credential. SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement

NOTE: All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
Chapter Three

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners


NON-COLLEGE CREDIT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COURSEWORK/TRAINING

- **At Palm Beach State College**
  SEEK Scholarship may be available for select non-credit college courses in early childhood education.

  - An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the established SEEK Scholarship deadline date by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).
  - Please visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline dates.

- **At Community Based Training Agencies**
  SEEK scholarship may be available for IEECE approved trainings posted in the Registry.

  - An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course/training registration by the established SEEK Scholarship deadline date by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to the training agency.
  - Please visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline dates.
Chapter Three

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for **Strong Minds Network Practitioners**

**THE ASSOCIATES DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

- At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for the following towards obtaining an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Education at Palm Beach State College:
  - Admission and registration fees
  - Testing fees - a voucher for test fees will be provided and must be brought to the test center
    - PERT (Postsecondary Education Readiness Test)
    - TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)
    - LOEP (Level of English Proficiency)
  - College Preparatory/Developmental Education courses
  - ESOL courses
  - Required textbooks and materials
  - Credit coursework
    - A Strong Minds Network practitioner must have completed at least twelve (12) credits in early childhood education specific coursework and have a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education in order to receive SEEK scholarship for General Education coursework. Math and/or English credit courses that satisfy the General Education requirements for a degree are exempt from this restriction and SEEK scholarship is available for these courses at any time.
    - To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses at one time, a practitioner must have:
      - a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better,
      - a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education,
      - successfully completed any SEEK funded event over the last year,
      - successfully completed at least 18 credits with a ‘C’ or better.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).

- Please visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.

**NOTE:** All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
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SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

- **At Other Accredited Institutions***
SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner the cost of tuition and required books/materials for a variety of credit courses that lead to an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development taken at a regionally accredited institution.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days **prior** to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

*The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement


THE BACHELORS DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- **At Florida Atlantic University (FAU)**
SEEK scholarship may be available for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) program within the College of Education at FAU. A Strong Minds Network practitioner must be admitted as a degree-seeking student to qualify for the SEEK scholarship for all coursework associated with the BECE degree, and required textbooks and materials at the FAU bookstore.

SEEK scholarship does not pay for FAU application fees, parking fees, Owl Card fees or orientation fees.

- To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses at one time, a practitioner must have:
  - a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better
  - successfully completed any SEEK funded event over the last year

- An eligible Strong Minds Network practitioner submits the **SEEK Application for FAU BECE Degree/ECE Master Level Courses** and a copy of course registration/class schedule by the scholarship deadline indicated on the application by fax or email. The application is available on the Palm Beach State College IEECE website: [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”).
- Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to FAU. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required
Chapter Three

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the FAU bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).

- **At Florida International University (FIU)**

SEEK scholarship may be available for the online Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECE) program within the College of Education at FIU. A Strong Minds Network practitioner must be admitted as a degree-seeking student to qualify for the SEEK scholarship for all coursework associated with the BECE degree, and required textbooks and materials at the FIU bookstore.

SEEK scholarship does not pay for FIU application fees, parking fees, Student Card fees or orientation fees.

- To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses at one time, a practitioner must have:
  - a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better
  - successfully completed any SEEK funded event over the last year

- An eligible Strong Minds Network practitioner submits the **SEEK Application for FIU BECE Online Degree Courses** and a copy of course registration/class schedule by the scholarship deadline indicated on the application by fax or email. The application is available on the Palm Beach State College IEECE website: www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”).

- Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to FIU. SEEK has arranged for the FIU Barnes and Noble bookstore to ship required books and materials directly to the student. SEEK will send payment for the books and materials directly to the bookstore.

- **At Other Accredited Institutions**

SEEK Scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner the cost of tuition and required books/materials for a variety of credit courses that lead to a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development taken at a regionally accredited institution.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days **prior** to the start of class and will be based on the current FAU Bachelor degree tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

*Regional Accrediting Bodies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and

The procedure for reimbursement can be found in **Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement**
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SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

GRADUATE LEVEL EARLY CHILDHOOD COURSEWORK

- At Florida Atlantic University (FAU)
  A student enrolled as a Masters degree seeking student may be eligible to receive SEEK scholarship for up to 12 credits in Early Childhood Education specific Masters degree classes and required books and materials at the FAU bookstore.

SEEK scholarship does not pay for application fees, parking fees, Owl Card fees or orientation fees at FAU.

- An eligible Strong Minds Network practitioner submits the SEEK Application for FAU BECE Degree/ECE Master Level Courses and a copy of course registration/class schedule by the scholarship deadline indicated on the application by fax or email. The application is available on the Palm Beach State College IEECE website and via the following link: www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”).

- Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to FAU. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the FAU bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).

- At Other Accredited Institutions*
  SEEK Scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner the cost of tuition and required books/materials for up to 12 credits in Early Childhood Education/Child Development specific Masters degree classes taken at a regionally accredited institution.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current FAU graduate degree tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement

*Regional Accrediting Bodies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges

NOTE: All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
Chapter Three
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Strong Minds Network Practitioners

TRANSLATION AND EVALUATION OF FOREIGN DEGREES/COURSEWORK

SEEK scholarship may be available for the translation and/or evaluation of foreign college coursework/degrees for equivalent coursework and degrees in the United States. The service is provided by Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.

SEEK will pay for translations, evaluations, and for two copies of the report, up to a maximum amount of five hundred dollars ($500.00). One copy of the report is sent to the practitioner; the other copy is sent to the Palm Beach State College Admissions office. Payment for any additional services, fees and copies will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

To be considered, a practitioner must:
- Be an active member of the Registry
- Have at least six (6) months of continuous employment at the same Strong Minds Network program
- Completion of the required State of FL DCF state mandated training must appear on the practitioner’s Registry record

Applications for translation and/or evaluation service are available on a year round basis and must be requested from a Career Advisor. To contact a Career Advisor, call the IEECE at 561-868-3662.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed Seek Scholarship Application for Translation/Evaluation Service along with any required documentation by fax or email. The application is reviewed and the practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request through email.
- If approved, a voucher for services, an award letter and application for Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. will be sent to the practitioner. Vouchers for this service expire 30 calendar days from the approval date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. application and send it along with the voucher and award letter to Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. before the expiration date. If the voucher expires, the practitioner will have to request a new application from a Career Advisor.
- When the translated documents and/or evaluation report are received, the practitioner should submit the documents to the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry.
Chapter Four
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

THE GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) TEST FEE

SEEK Scholarship may be available to reimburse the cost of the GED test fee based upon successful completion.
- A Non-Network practitioner submits documentation of successful completion of the GED test to the Registry.
- Once the GED completion is noted in a practitioner’s Registry record, the practitioner may submit a completed scholarship application, proof of payment, Vendor Application and W9 form to their Career Advisor by fax or email.
- The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the request via email. If approved, the reimbursement payment will be sent to the address supplied on the Vendor Application/W9 form within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (ECPC)/THE FLORIDA CHILD CARE PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE (FCCPC)

- At Palm Beach State College
SEEK scholarship may be available for the ECPC/FCCPC coursework and required book(s). A practitioner must first meet the requirements necessary to register for the course. For more information on the course’s pre-registration requirements, contact the Institute for Early Care and Afterschool programs at 561-868-4049 or visit their webpage at www.palmbeachstate.edu/programs/childcare/.
- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).
- Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term. If the posted SEEK deadline has passed, practitioners should contact their Career Advisor to learn of financial supports that may be available for future ECPC/FCCPC courses.
Chapter Four
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

- At Other State of Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) Approved Birth-Five ECPC or FCCPC programs

SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner for tuition and required books/materials associated with a State of Florida DCF approved Birth-Five FCCPC or ECPC program.

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College ECPC/FCCPC tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

*The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement.*

CREDIT COURSEWORK LEADING TO THE STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES (DCF) DIRECTOR CREDENTIAL

- At Palm Beach State College

SEEK scholarship may be available for college credit coursework and required books/materials leading to any level of the FL Director Credential. SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application by fax or email and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available). Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived.

- Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.

- At Other Accredited institutions*

SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner for tuition and required books/materials associated with State of FL DCF Approved college credit coursework leading to any level of the Director Credential. SEEK scholarship will not pay for education exemption tests for the Director Credential.
Chapter Four

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved (14) days prior to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.


**NON-COLLEGE CREDIT EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION COURSEWORK/TRAINING**

- **At Palm Beach State College**
  SEEK Scholarship may be available for select non-college credit courses in early childhood education.
  - An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the established SEEK Scholarship deadline date by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).
  - Please visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline dates.

- **At Community Based Training Agencies**
  SEEK scholarship may be available for IEECE approved trainings posted in the Registry.
  - An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course/training registration by the established SEEK Scholarship deadline date by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to the training agency.
  - Please visit [www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE](http://www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE) (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline dates.

**NOTE:** All SEEK policies and procedures are subject to change.
Chapter Four

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

THE ASSOCIATES DEGREE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

- At Palm Beach State College
  SEEK scholarship may be available for the following towards obtaining an Associate’s Degree in Early Childhood Education at Palm Beach State College:
  - Admission and registration fees
  - Testing fees - a voucher for test fees will be provided to the practitioner to bring to the testing center
    - PERT (Postsecondary Education Readiness Test)
    - TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education)
    - LOEP (Level of English Proficiency)
  - College Preparatory/Developmental Education courses
  - ESOL courses
  - Required textbooks and materials
  - Credit coursework
  - A Non-Network practitioner must have completed at least twelve (12) credits in early childhood education specific coursework and have a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education in order to receive SEEK scholarship for General Education coursework. Math and/or English credit courses that satisfy the General Education requirements for a degree are exempt from this restriction and SEEK scholarship is available for these courses at any time.
  - To be eligible for approval of three (3) or more courses at one time, a practitioner must have:
    - a grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or better,
    - a primary program objective code (POC) that aligns with the AS degree in Early Childhood Education,
    - successfully completed any SEEK funded event over the last year,
    - successfully completed at least 18 credits with a ‘C’ or better.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed scholarship application and a copy of the course registration/class schedule by the SEEK Scholarship application deadline date for the fall, spring, and/or summer term at the college by fax or email. Do not pay for the course(s) or books at the time of registration; if a SEEK scholarship is awarded, payment will be sent directly to PBSC. A letter will be emailed to the practitioner for required books/materials. In most cases, practitioners should receive the letter one week prior to the course start date. The practitioner must bring the letter to the PBSC bookstore when purchasing the books (NOTE: Books may not be immediately available. Before going to the bookstore, the practitioner should verify with the bookstore that the book has arrived).

- Please visit www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”) for information regarding the SEEK Scholarship application deadline for the current term.
Chapter Four
SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

- **At Other Accredited Institutions***
  SEEK scholarship may be available to reimburse the practitioner the cost of tuition and required books/materials for a variety of credit courses that lead to an Associate degree in Early Childhood Education or Child Development taken at a regionally accredited institution.

  The reimbursement request must be **pre-approved** (14) days **prior** to the start of class and will be based on the current Palm Beach State College tuition rate. Any costs incurred above the current tuition rate will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

*The procedure for reimbursement can be found in Chapter Five - SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement*

*Regional Accrediting Bodies: Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Higher Education, New England Association of Schools and Colleges Technical and Career Institutions, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Schools and Colleges*

### TRANSLATION AND EVALUATION OF FOREIGN DEGREES/COURSEWORK

SEEK scholarship may be available for the translation and/or evaluation of foreign college coursework/degrees for equivalent coursework and degrees in the United States. The service is provided by Josef Silny & Associates, Inc.

SEEK will pay for translations, evaluations, and for two copies of the report, up to a maximum amount of five hundred dollars ($500.00). One copy of the report is sent to the practitioner; the other copy is sent to the Palm Beach State College Admissions office. Payment for any additional services and fees will be the responsibility of the practitioner.

To be considered, a practitioner must:

- Be an active member of the Registry
- Have at least six (6) months of continuous employment at the same Non-Network program
- Completion of the required State of FL DCF state mandated training must appear on the practitioner’s Registry record.

Applications for translation and/or evaluation service are available on a year round basis and must be requested from a Career Advisor. To contact a Career Advisor, call the IEECE at 561-868-3662.

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed **Seek Scholarship Application for Translation/Evaluation Service** along with any required documentation by **fax or email**. The application is reviewed and the practitioner will receive notification as to the status of...
Chapter Four

SEEK Scholarship Awards and Processes for Non-Network Practitioners

the request through email.

➢ If approved, a voucher for services, an award letter and application for Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. will be sent to the practitioner. Vouchers for this service expire 30 calendar days from the approval date. It is the responsibility of the applicant to complete the Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. application and send it along with the voucher and award letter to Josef Silny & Associates, Inc. before the expiration date. If the voucher expires, the practitioner will have to request a new application from a Career Advisor.

➢ When the translated documents and/or evaluation report are received, the practitioner should submit the documents to the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry.
Chapter Five

SEEK Scholarship Reimbursement

REIMBURSEMENTS

Reimbursement may be available for a professional development event for which SEEK scholarship cannot provide direct payment (coursework taken at a regionally accredited institution).

The reimbursement request must be pre-approved 14 days prior to the start of the event.

The SEEK scholarship application is available on the Institute of Excellence website: www.palmbeachstate.edu/IEECE (“Financial Support”).

- An eligible practitioner submits a completed SEEK scholarship application for pre-approval of the reimbursement by fax or email, along with information regarding the professional development event for which the reimbursement is being requested. The practitioner will receive notification as to the status of the pre-approval request. If pre-approval is granted, the practitioner must pay all costs up front and SEEK will reimburse approved costs.
- When the practitioner completes the event, the practitioner must first submit documentation of successful completion to the PBC Early Childhood Registry. Successful completion is defined as:
  - receiving a grade of A, B, C, P, or S for coursework or
  - receiving a certificate of completion from the training agency
- Once the documentation appears in a practitioner’s Registry record, the practitioner submits proof of personal payment, Vendor Application and W9 Form to SEEK Scholarship. This documentation is required within four (4) weeks of completion of the event. Payments made by other grant/scholarship funding, such as PELL, TEACH or financial aid, will not be reimbursed. Payments made by loans are accepted as a form of personal payment and will be reimbursed.
- Practitioner will receive a second approval letter noting the amount of reimbursement awarded by SEEK. The reimbursement will be processed and payment will be sent to the address supplied on the Vendor Application/W9 form within six (6) to eight (8) weeks.
Chapter Six
SEEK Suspension/Termination/Reinstatement

SUSPENSION/TERMINATION POLICY

If a SEEK Scholarship award was provided to cover costs associated with any type of college credit or non-credit college coursework (including community based training), the practitioner must attend and successfully complete that coursework/training in order to maintain eligibility for additional SEEK Scholarships. Successful completion is determined by the course instructor and is confirmed by IEECE staff upon course/training completion.

Any practitioner (Strong Minds Network or Non-Network) that does not successfully complete a course/event that was funded by SEEK Scholarship will be suspended from SEEK and must follow the policy below for reinstatement. Practitioners will have two opportunities to become reinstated. If the practitioner is unsuccessful in a SEEK funded event a third time, their SEEK benefits will be terminated for a period of one year from the termination date. Suspension and termination effective dates will be included in the notice of suspension/termination. When terminated, a practitioner can apply for reinstatement at any time during their termination year but they will not be reinstated nor eligible for SEEK Scholarship until one year from their termination date.

Successful completion is defined by a grade of A, B, C, P or S. Unsuccessful completion is defined as receiving a grade of D, F, U, or W.

REINSTATEMENT POLICY
(FOR ALL PRACTITIONERS)

Practitioners who are suspended/terminated due to the unsuccessful completion of a SEEK funded course/event may request reinstatement upon achievement of the following since the date of suspension/termination:

- Practitioner must pay for and successfully complete an approved, SEEK eligible event(s) that equals or exceeds the dollar amount of the unsuccessfully completed event(s) related to the suspension. Payments made by other grant/scholarship funding, such as PELL, TEACH or financial aid, will not be considered as payment for reinstatement. Payments made by loans are accepted as a form of personal payment.

OR

- Practitioner must pay for and successfully complete an approved, SEEK eligible course/training equivalent to or in excess of the same number of completion/credit hours of the unsuccessfully completed event(s) related to the suspension. The suspension event(s) and the reinstatement event(s) must be equivalent in nature. For example, to be reinstated following unsuccessful completion of a 3 credit class, the practitioner must take
Chapter Six
SEEK Suspension/Termination/Reinstatement

another 3 credit class; to be reinstated following unsuccessful completion of a 12 hour training, the practitioner must successfully complete a minimum of 12 training hours.

- Practitioner must submit verification of successful completion to the Palm Beach County Early Childhood Registry and the documentation must appear in the practitioner record prior to making the request for reinstatement.
- Practitioner must request a Request for Reinstatement of SEEK form from a Career Advisor. The completed form must be submitted along with proof of personal payment to the Career Advisor. The Career Advisor will verify that the successful completion is recorded in the practitioner’s Registry record.

The SEEK Department will make the final determination of approval or denial of the reinstatement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of Reinstatement Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example #1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECE credit course</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To meet reinstatement requirements, this practitioner could:

A. Pay for and successfully complete any type of approved, SEEK eligible credit courses costing at least $300

**OR**

B. Pay for and successfully complete a SEEK eligible 3 credit course (the cost of the course does not have to equal $300)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example #2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unsuccessful Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-credit training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

To meet reinstatement requirements, this practitioner could:

A. Pay for and successfully complete any type of approved, SEEK eligible non-credit trainings/courses in the amount of at least $180

**OR**

B. Pay for and successfully complete 28 hours of SEEK eligible non-credit trainings/courses (the cost of the trainings/courses does not have to equal $180)
Chapter Seven
Grievances and Appeals

GRIEVANCES AND APPEALS

SEEK Scholarship provides an informal and formal grievance process open to all individuals facing a dispute regarding policies and procedures of the program.

Informal Resolutions:
SEEK Scholarship encourages applicants to pursue informal resolutions. As such, SEEK Scholarship staff is available personally to discuss the appeal and to review all pertinent documentation to work toward resolving the problem, informally. Response to applicants will be provided within 10 business days of receipt of the request for informal discussion for resolution.
SEEK Scholarship phone: (561) 868-3828
SEEK Scholarship email: scuderiz@palmbeachstate.edu

Formal Resolutions:
If a resolution cannot be met after the informal path has been exhausted, an applicant may submit a formal petition to SEEK Scholarship in writing.

Any applicant seeking a formal resolution is required to submit the request in writing to SEEK Scholarship Appeal Committee within 10 business days following the receipt of a denial or incident that has occurred. The request must include a letter of appeal and documentation detailing concerns. All written appeals must be submitted via certified mail to:
Palm Beach State College-Institute of Excellence in Early Care and Education
SEEK Scholarship Appeal Committee
812 Fern Street
West Palm Beach, FL 33401

Throughout the review, which can take place face-to-face or through electronic means, the Appeal Committee may request, in writing, additional information from the applicant in order to make a decision on the appeal. This additional documentation is to be received within 5 business days of the request. If the additional documentation is not received within that time period, the appeal will automatically be denied. SEEK Scholarship Appeal Committee will meet within 20 business days of receipt of all required materials to review the appeal and make a decision. Possible outcomes are:
• Grant the appeal. SEEK Scholarship staff will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.
• Grant the appeal with specific requirements. SEEK Scholarship staff will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.
• Deny the appeal. SEEK Scholarship staff will notify the applicant, in writing, within 20 business days of review.