



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education

February 10, 2017

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: Steven R. Staples, Superintendent of Public Instruction

SUBJECT: Project Pathfinders Scholarships

The 2016 Appropriation Act (Chapter 780) provides funding to establish a scholarship program for early educators to improve their skills by accessing community college coursework and credentials. This scholarship program, known as Project Pathfinders, is available for individuals currently employed in a Virginia preschool or child care setting working directly with young children (infants-prekindergarten). Priority is given for individuals working with at-risk children based on socioeconomic factors (children qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch, participating in public preschool programs such as Head Start or Virginia Preschool Initiative, or benefiting from child care subsidies). Project Pathfinders is administered by the Virginia Early Childhood Foundation (VECF).

Project Pathfinders is a strategic opportunity for early educators in Virginia's public preschool programs (including VPI, Title I-funded preschools, and Head Start classrooms delivered in public schools) to access content-rich and credit-bearing early childhood coursework through the Virginia Community College System at no cost. Funding is available for scholarship recipients to enroll in up to two courses per semester and applicants may also request funds to cover additional costs such as books and fees, as needed.

Project Pathfinders will be accepting scholarship applications for summer semester 2017 from March 15 through April 20, 2017. Applications for fall semester 2017 will be accepted from June 15 through August 1, 2017.

For more information about Project Pathfinders, please visit the [VECF Project Pathfinder's website](#) or contact pathfinders@vecf.org.

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