



# WETCC Head Start Pathways Program Guidelines

*Summer 2025*

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

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The Head Start Pathways Program (HSPP) is an initiative to increase the number of highly qualified early childhood classroom staff with Indigenous knowledge and cultural understanding in and around the White Earth Reservation in Northwest Minnesota. It offers scholarships and other support to those seeking a degree in Early Childhood Education.

HSPP is a collaborative between White Earth Tribal & Community College (WETCC), the University of Minnesota Crookston (UMN CROOKSTON) and White Earth Head Start (WEHS). It is made available through a Tribal Colleges and Universities Head Start Partnership grant from the US Department of Health & Human Services Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start.

## DEGREE PATHWAYS

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There are two HSPP degree pathways:

1. Associate degree (AA) Pathway through WETCC
  - For those who are new to college or have some college credits
  - Most courses taught in-person, many in the evening, with a few available online
2. Bachelor of Science Degree (BS) Pathway through UMN Crookston
  - For those with a two-year degree or equivalent college credits, or those with a Bachelor's in a different field, who wish to pursue a BS in Early Childhood Education
  - Program courses delivered online

## ELIGIBILITY

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Applicants must have a high school diploma or GED.

Program spaces are limited to twenty (20) students in each pathway. Therefore, priority is assigned as follows:

1. White Earth Head Start staff & parents
2. White Earth Child Care staff
3. Staff of other Head Start programs on or near the White Earth Reservation
4. Staff of other childcare programs on or near the White Earth Reservation
5. WETCC graduates
6. Area high school graduates and other community members

**No Tribal affiliation is required. HSPP is open to both Native & non-Native students.**



## SCHOLARSHIPS

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HSPP scholarships cover the cost of any required tuition, books, and fees that are not covered by other federal financial aid. For instance, a PELL grant is applied to a student's bill first, then HSPP scholarship funds are used to cover the balance.

All scholarships are awarded on a per-semester basis and students must remain in *good standing* to qualify for future scholarship awards.

- **Good Standing Requirements:**

1. **Attendance** – Regular course attendance is required. Absences must be pre-excused with the instructor whenever possible. Institutional attendance policies must be followed.
2. **Grades** - Minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 (Grades received prior to entering HSPP are not included in the calculation.)
3. **Completion Rate** – Minimum completion rate of 67% of attempted credits
4. **Indigenous Knowledge** – Participation in a minimum of one HSPP-sponsored cultural activity per term
5. **Other** - Declare Early Childhood Education as major (UMN Crookston students only)

Students who fail to meet these requirements will be placed on program probation for the following semester. Students who fail to meet these requirements in two consecutive semesters will be disqualified from future HSPP scholarships.

Disqualified students may also be put on academic warning or suspension, which may impact other future financial aid.

## CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

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Because the goal of HSPP is to increase the number of highly qualified early childhood classroom staff with Indigenous knowledge and cultural understanding, HSPP offers several cultural activities throughout the year. These activities are led by Indigenous presenters who share their knowledge by speaking, demonstrating, and/or teaching. HSPP students are required to attend at least one cultural activity each term. Upcoming events will be posted on the HSPP webpage: [wetcc.edu/hspp](http://wetcc.edu/hspp).

## TUTORING

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WETCC and UMC both have free tutoring and advising resources that are also available to HSPP students.



## TECHNOLOGY & ACCESS

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- **Computers & Accessories**

Each HSPP participant is eligible to receive a laptop computer with carrying case/backpack and must sign a Computer Agreement Form when they enter the program. Additional computer accessories may be requested, e.g. mouse, headset, etc.

**UMN Crookston Pathway:** Laptop computers are issued at the beginning of each semester to new and returning degree seeking students. HSPP Students must take a minimum of six (6) semester credits to qualify for a UMN Crookston-issued laptop. The related student technology fees are covered by the HSPP scholarship. Note: Students who fall below the six-credit minimum may request a laptop from the HSPP Coordinator.

Upon successful completion of the program, the laptop and accessories become the property of the student. **If a student does not complete the program, they must return the laptop and any accessories in good condition or be billed and held responsible for the cost of the items.**

- **Internet Access**

Students with poor or limited internet access at home may request a mobile hotspot device. Data cards are also available, one per month when classes are in session.

## STIPENDS

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- **Merit-Based Stipends**

HSPP students have the opportunity to earn up to four (2) merit-based stipends during Summer 2024. Student status will be checked at various points throughout the semester and those in good standing (as defined on p.2) will earn stipends according to the following schedule.

Check Point	Stipend Amount
Mid-Term (Week 4)	\$250
After Final Grades	\$350

Stipends take one to two weeks or more to process following each check point. They will be deposited directly into WETCC students' bank accounts, while UMN Crookston students will receive stipend checks in the mail.

- **Need-Based Stipends and Emergency Assistance**

Need-based stipends of up to \$2,000 are available to each HSPP student during each Spring or Fall Term (or \$1,000 each Summer Term.) Once a student reaches the maximum amount for the term, they may not receive another need-based stipend until the next term, except in extraordinary circumstances. Examples of qualifying expenses include, but are not limited to; heating, car repairs, medical expenses, exam/testing fees, and conference attendance. The online application for need-based stipends is available on the HSPP webpage: [wetcc.edu/hspp](http://wetcc.edu/hspp).

Both WETCC and UMN Crookston also offer emergency assistance to students who encounter unforeseen financial emergencies that could negatively impact their academic success. (Separate institutional qualifications apply.)



## HEAD START PATHWAYS PROGRAM

Summer 2025

- **Practicum and Student Teaching Stipends**

Students may request a stipend to help defray the costs related to completing any practicum hours required for UMN Crookston classes each term. These stipends are intended to supplement (not replace) a student's financial aid package. These stipends will be granted at the rate of \$30 per practicum hour required. (15 practicum hours x \$30 = \$450 stipend)

As of Spring 2025, students may request stipends of up to \$10,000 total for the term(s) in which they are completing the required 12+ weeks of student teaching to attain their initial licensure. Stipends will be disbursed at the beginning of the first term in which student teaching is to be undertaken.

The online applications for these stipends are available on the HSPP webpage: [wetcc.edu/hspp](http://wetcc.edu/hspp).

## HSPP WEBPAGE

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Current and prospective students can access current HSPP documents and program information on the HSPP webpage: [wetcc.edu/hspp](http://wetcc.edu/hspp).

## TO APPLY TO HSPP

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Interested individuals must work through the Admissions Department and WETCC HSPP Coordinator, and complete the following prior to acceptance into the program:

- Review these HSPP Guidelines and sign the Certificate of Agreement
- Transcripts – unofficial initially accepted; official transcripts required for admission
- Commitment to either the AA or BS pathway
- Application to pathway institution (WETCC or UMC)
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – NOTE: HSPP funding requires a FAFSA even if you do not believe you qualify for federal financial aid.