



San Francisco Early Childhood Educator BA/MA Bonus Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What changes are there to the BA/MA Bonus this year (2009-10)?

A. The program will largely function as it did in 2008-09, with the following changes:

1. Due to the number of applicants this year, the maximum bonus will likely be \$3,700 for the year. Bonuses in the first, second, and third quarters will be \$1,000, and the fourth quarter bonus will likely be \$700. The SF CARES office at Wu Yee Children's Services will send notification of the final award amount with the fourth quarter applications.
2. Qualifying teachers at all Title 5 funded sites—centers and family child care networks—are now eligible to apply.
3. BA/MA Bonus recipients will no longer be eligible to receive stipends from SF CARES.
4. After the second quarter (deadline 1/8/2010), there will no longer be retroactive bonuses for previous applicants. In other words, if you have ever applied for and received the BA/MA Bonus, you will only be eligible to receive a bonus for the quarter that you submit an application or renewal form for. The second quarter will be the last time that a previous applicant can claim a bonus for any quarter other than the current one. With this new policy, it is especially important that you complete and submit your quarterly BA/MA Bonus forms on time.
5. The fourth quarter application deadline is now July 2, 2010; one week earlier than originally scheduled.
6. Bonus checks will now be mailed within 6 weeks after each quarter's deadline. If further documentation is needed to determine your eligibility, your bonus check may be delayed.
7. All applicants will be required—one time only—to bring an original social security card to the SF CARES office at Wu Yee Children's Services for verification in order to receive your bonus checks going forward. Wu Yee will not make or keep copies in your files—they will only visually verify that the information on your card matches your application. To avoid any delays in receiving your check, please plan to visit the SF CARES office with your documentation before the quarterly deadline.

Q: I received the BA/MA Bonus last year (2008-09). Do I need to reapply for 2009-10?

A: No. You will automatically receive a continuing eligibility form, asking for your current contact information and changes to your child development permit or degree attainment. You will need to have your employer certify that you continue to meet employment requirements. In addition, all applicants will be required—one time only—to bring an original social security card to the SF CARES office at Wu Yee Children's Services for verification in order to receive your bonus checks going forward. To avoid any delays in receiving your check, please plan to visit the SF CARES office with your documentation before the quarterly deadline.

Q: I previously received the BA/MA Bonus, but I am teaching a different site than before. Am I still eligible to receive the bonus?

A. Maybe. If your new site is a PFA or Title 5 site, and you continue to satisfy the program requirements, then you will simply need to complete the continuing eligibility form and have your new employer certify your employment to receive your bonus check. If your new site is not a PFA or Title 5 site, then you will no longer be eligible for the program.

Q: Can I qualify for the BA/MA Bonus if I am a program director?

A: Possibly. In order to qualify, like other applicants, program directors must directly supervise children ages 0-5 for at least 15 hours a week at a PFA or Title 5 site (during which the director's presence must count toward the required adult-child ratio), in addition to meeting the education and employment requirements. Program directors meeting these criteria must submit a letter from their supervisor (e.g., executive director, chief executive) certifying that they meet the 15-hour requirement.

Q: I meet all the eligibility requirements for the BA/MA Bonus, but I missed the last deadline. Can I still claim a bonus for the period I worked at my site?

A: After the second quarter (deadline 1/8/2010), there will no longer be retroactive bonuses for previous applicants. In other words, if you have ever applied for and received the BA/MA Bonus, you will only be eligible to receive a bonus for the quarter that you submit an application or renewal form for. The second quarter will be the last time that a previous applicant can claim a bonus for any quarter other than the current one. With this new policy, it is especially important that you complete and submit your quarterly BA/MA Bonus forms on time.

Q: I am currently taking classes toward earning my bachelor degree this year. Can I still qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. If you complete all necessary coursework for a bachelor degree on or before June 30, 2010, you can qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus for any quarter during which you

met the employment requirements and worked at a PFA or Title 5 site between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. You should apply for the BA/MA Bonus during the quarter in which you anticipate completing your coursework, as you will not receive any checks until you provide the necessary education verification.

Q: I have a BA/MA degree already, and I am currently taking classes toward earning my Teacher permit or completing my 24 units in child development/early care and education this year. Can I still qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. If you complete all necessary coursework for a Teacher permit or complete your 24 units in CD/ECE or before June 30, 2010, you can qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus for any quarter during which you met the degree and employment requirements and worked at a PFA or Title 5 site between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. You should apply for the BA/MA Bonus during the quarter in which you anticipate completing your coursework, as you will not receive any checks until you provide the necessary education verification.

Q: My site will become a PFA site in the middle of the year. Can I still qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. If your site joins PFA in the middle of the fiscal year, you can qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus for any quarter during which you met the employment requirements and worked between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010.

Q: I have finished all my coursework toward a bachelor degree/Teacher permit/24 units in ECE/CD, but I am still waiting on transcripts from my college/university. Can I still qualify to receive a BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. If you complete all necessary coursework and otherwise meet the employment requirements and worked at a PFA or Title 5 site for the relevant quarter, you are eligible to receive a bonus check for that quarter. However, your check will **not** be mailed until your transcripts are received and reviewed.

Q: Do SFUSD Child Development Program site managers qualify for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: No. SFUSD Child Development Program site managers are not eligible.

Q: Do I have to apply for SF CARES to qualify for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: No. BA/MA Bonus recipients will no longer be eligible to receive stipends from SF CARES.

Q: Can I still receive an SF CARES stipend if I receive a BA/MA Bonus?

A: No. BA/MA Bonus recipients will no longer be eligible to receive stipends from SF CARES.

Q: What positions are eligible for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: Qualifying educators at PFA and Title 5 sites must work in the position of Assistant Teacher, Associate Teacher, Teacher, Lead Teacher, Master Teacher, or Site Supervisor in center-based programs, or Owner or Assistant Teacher for family child care homes.

Q: My job title is not Assistant Teacher, Associate Teacher, Teacher, Lead Teacher, Master Teacher, or Site Supervisor in center-based programs, or Owner or Assistant Teacher for family child care homes. If I perform the same functions, can I still qualify for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. Your director or other agency personnel authorized to verify employment will be asked to identify the job title from the list above that most closely matches your job responsibilities.

Q: Can San Francisco Unified School District teachers qualify for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: Yes. As long as you meet the requirements related to educational attainment, position held and employment at a PFA or Title 5 site.

Q: Is there a cap on how much I can earn before I am no longer eligible for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: No. There are no income restrictions for the BA/MA Bonus. The only requirements are related to educational attainment, position held and employment at a PFA or Title 5 site.

Q: Do I have to teach four-year-olds to qualify for a BA/MA Bonus?

A: No. Any Assistant Teacher, Associate Teacher, Teacher, Lead Teacher, Master Teacher, or Site Supervisor in center-based programs, or Owner or Assistant Teacher for family child care homes, is eligible if he/she meets the educational requirements, is employed at a PFA or Title 5 site, and serves children ages 0-5.

Q: Where can I get a copy of the BA/MA Bonus application?

A: Applications for the BA/MA Bonus program are available at the SF CARES office at 706 Mission Street, 6th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94103 or by calling (415) 856-8140. You may also download the BA/MA Bonus application from First 5 San Francisco's Web site at www.first5sf.org.

Q: I earned my BA/MA degree in another country. Can I still qualify for the BA/MA Bonus?

A: Possibly. If your transcript/degree is from a foreign university, the transcript/degree must be evaluated by an agency accepted by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing. You may submit a copy of the equivalency documentation from an approved agency to SF CARES for review and approval. Contact SF CARES for a list of approved agencies.

Q: I'm taking Fall 2009 semester classes that will make me eligible for the BA/MA Bonus, but I will not have my grades by the January 8, 2010 deadline. Will I still be able to get the bonus for the second quarter?

A: Yes. If all work eligibility requirements are met, you will be able to get the bonus. You should submit your application by January 8, 2010. Your bonus (application) will be held until you submit official transcripts with verification of your successfully completed coursework. Please note that you will have had to work during that quarter *after* your coursework was completed.