



OSC PARAEDUCATOR SUBSIDY PROGRAM

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PARA STATISTICS

Q: When did the paraeducator role originate?

A: The concept of teacher aides began in the 1950s, driven by post-war teacher shortages. The role expanded significantly in the 1960s and 1970s with the passage of federal programs like Title I and the Education for All Handicapped Children's Act (P.L. 94-142) in 1975. This legislation created the need for more support staff, especially for students with disabilities, solidifying the role of the paraeducator.

Q: How many paraeducators are employed in the state of Connecticut?

A: It is estimated that over 14,000 paraeducators are employed in this state alone

Q: What is the average salary of paraeducators in Connecticut?

A: The average salary of paraeducators in the state ranges from \$32,600 to \$42,300 which equates to approximately \$16 - \$20 an hour.

Q: What is the split of female to male paraeducators?

A: A 2023 CEA (Connecticut Education Association) Study showed that 79% of paraeducators were female and 21% were male.

ESTABLISHED 2023

- Paraeducator Healthcare Subsidy Program was established in 2023 through House Bill 6941 and was included in the 2023 – 2024 biennial state budget.
 - ❖ Provided a \$5 million subsidy to paraeducators enrolled in a traditional HDHP (High Deductible Health Plan) such as an H S A or H R A through their district's plan offerings
 - ❖ Measure came after sustained advocacy by unions like AFT Connecticut and CSEA SEIU Local 2001, who highlighted the struggle of high health insurance costs for paraeducators
 - ❖ Program has been administrated by the Office of the State Comptroller (Sean Scanlon) since that time to help with the recruitment and retention of essential paraeducators as well as address the financial burden of high health costs

CONTINUED IN 2024

- Paraeducator Healthcare Subsidy Program was expanded in 2024
 - ❖ Provided the same \$5 million subsidy to paraeducators enrolled in a traditional HDHP (High Deductible Health Plan) such as an H S A or H R A and an additional \$5 million to those enrolled in a traditional PPO Plan (Like CT Partnership Plan)
- 7,236 paraeducators received assistance
- 157 school districts
- Subsidies from this program averaged \$884 for single coverage and \$1,570 for family for HDHP plans. Average premiums for PPO's were \$1,053 for single coverage and \$2,830 for family.

2025 IN PROCESS

- Public Act 25-168 allocates a total of \$10 million to OSC to continue last year's stipend program:
- A continuation of the current subsidy to paraeducators' Health Savings Accounts that covers approximately 70% of out-of-pocket costs. Also, those enrolled in traditional PPO plans save an average of 43% from their healthcare premium costs.
- Funds were released to districts on Friday 10/24 and were directed to release funds in the next payroll cycle
- This year we had 160 districts respond with more than 7,300 paraeducators enrolled

2025 FIGURES

Top 10 Districts: Paraeducators Receiving Assistance

District	Number of Paraeducators
Stamford Public Schools	385
ACES	320
Hartford Public Schools	278
Bridgeport Public Schools	202
New Haven Public Schools	190
Fairfield Public Schools	188
Southington Public Schools	165
CREC	152
Danbury Public Schools	143
Waterbury Public Schools	141

Top 10 Districts: Funds Received

District	Amount Received
Stamford Public Schools	\$553,878.06
New Haven Public Schools	\$375,509.94
Bridgeport Public Schools	\$369,370.51
Fairfield Public Schools	\$357,330.23
Hartford Public Schools	\$266,692.67
Trumbull Board of Education	\$266,358.11
ACES	\$257,339.58
West Hartford Public Schools	\$254,835.51
Greenwich Board of Education	\$241,427.48
Westport Board of Education	\$218,820.14

HOW DOES IT WORK

- In August 2025, OSC (Office of the State Comptroller) sends out a survey to school districts to respond based on how many paraeducators are enrolled in their medical insurance plan(s)
 - ❖ **Paras must accept coverage offered through their employer to be eligible. Those that waive coverage or are not offered coverage are ineligible for assistance.**
- In October, OSC calculates a subsidy based on the amount of paraeducators enrolled in these plans, the costs of the plans, employer/employee splits, and tier enrolled (*single, double, or family*)
- Once these figures are confirmed, OSC emails a letter to each district illustrating how much money they will be receiving and it is wired into their bank accounts
 - ❖ Districts are then instructed to release these funds to their eligible paraeducators starting with the next pay cycle. This subsidy can be prorated throughout the school year.

SUBSIDY EXAMPLES

Town A offers a HDHP with a deductible of \$2,000 and makes a \$1,000 contribution to a para's health savings account. OSC provides a stipend of \$700 to the employer that is made as an additional contribution to the HSA which covers 70% of the remaining out-of-pocket costs before individual meets deductible.

Premium Subsidy:

Town B offers health insurance at an annual premium rate of \$20,000 per plan. The current collective bargaining agreement splits premium costs 80/20 between the town and paras, leaving employees \$4,000 in annual premiums. The subsidy covers 10% of the aggregate premium cost (\$20,000*10%), saving each para \$2,000 or 50% on their annual premium. *Note: Subsidy will be pro-rated to appropriation, so actual percentages may be lower if \$5 million is not sufficient.*

The payment is made directly to the town; therefore, OSC does not anticipate any tax implications for employees.

FAQ'S FOR DISTRICTS

Q: How do you define a paraeducator?

A: A paraeducator (also commonly known as a paraprofessional, instructional assistant, or teacher's aide) is a school employee who works under the direct supervision of a certified teacher or other licensed professional. The primary role of a paraeducator is to provide instructional support and other direct services to students, helping them to succeed and meet their educational goals

Q: Who is eligible to receive the funds?

A: Districts receiving this communication employ paraeducators that have been deemed eligible based on the legislation—they are employed by a local or regional school district or Regional Educational Service Center and either have a high deductible health plan with an HSA or HRA or have a traditional co-pay plan.

If a paraeducator was not reported to us, they have not been included in this round of funding. If we were not able to connect with your district since the survey, the only paraeducators that are eligible for the stipend are those you reported in the original survey.

Q: What if I couldn't connect with the Comptroller's Office with updated numbers?

A: Unfortunately, if we did not receive the changes before the money was distributed, only those paraeducators that were reported should receive the funds. There is an exception if the paraeducators you reported have left the district or dropped their health benefits

FAQ'S CONTINUED

Q: What do I do if reported paraeducators have since quit or cancelled their health benefits?

A: Our office understands that there is high turnover with these positions and payroll changes frequently. If a reported paraeducator has quit or cancelled health benefits, please return the funds you allocated to that paraeducator back to our office by January 1, 2026.

Q: What do I do if I have additional eligible paraeducators that were not reported or were brought on after reporting and we do not have additional funds from turnover?

A: The dollars appropriated for the stipend program were a fixed, one-time amount that were allocated based on survey responses from districts. If there are paraeducators that were brought on after the survey and no reported paraeducators left or dropped health benefits, unfortunately they have missed being included in this year's funding.

Q: What do I do if I still have leftover funds at the end of the school year?

A: If there are still funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2026), please return the funds to our office.

QUESTIONS?