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## Workforce Retention Grant - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

### Eligibility

What are the eligibility requirements for providers?

To receive Workforce Retention Grant payments, providers must be able to confirm the following eligibility criteria:

- They have an active license, registration, or permit at the time of issuance of the grant,
- They are currently open\* and “in good standing,” and
- Programs must also have at least one child in care who is not related to the provider or their employees on the date of application and on dates of future disbursements to maintain eligibility.

*\*Except for SACCs as explained in next answer.*

Are school age child care programs (SACCS) eligible to apply for the Workforce Retention grant?

Yes. SACC programs that meet eligibility criteria may apply for the grant when the application portal opens even if they are not operating due to a planned school break as long as they anticipate serving at least one child on the first full week of school instruction, or no later than 9/20/23 and have a current cleared staff list and at least one staff is expected to resume their position on the first full week of school instruction, but no later than 9/20/23.

Are staff members such as cooks, janitors, receptionists, bookkeepers or directors eligible to receive staff retention bonuses?

Staff eligible for the retention bonus must:

- be employed at the physical location,
- have an active child care role (provide direct supervision to unrelated children)
- Be paid through employer’s payroll with state/federal taxes withheld from paycheck
- have worked an average of 15 hours per week at minimum (average of 10 hours at minimum for SACC) between 1/1/23 or start of employment and 6/26/23
- have been fingerprinted with complete background information for at least provisional employment (if applicable) on or before 6/26/23

Eligible staff must meet ALL requirements on day of program application and at the time of grant payment.



Are after school and summer camp programs eligible to apply for a Workforce Retention Grant?

To receive Workforce Retention Grant payments, providers must have an active OCFS or NYC DOHMH license, registration, or permit to provide child care at the time of grant issuance, and meet all other eligibility criteria.

Is it possible for a provider to add their own additional requirements in order for their staff to receive a staff retention bonus?

No. Providers cannot add additional requirements for their program. For Component A, all funds received must go to *all* staff who meet the eligibility requirements.

Does a staff member need to have a comprehensive background check (CBC) clearance status of "Approved" to be eligible to receive a workforce retention bonus?

To be eligible to receive a workforce retention grant bonus staff must have a CBC clearance status of "Approved" or "Provisionally Approved."

Does the eligibility for SACC programs also apply to any program that closes during the summer, such as DCC/Head Start programs?

No. Modalities other than SACCs must be open/operating and caring for at least one child on the day of application and at the time of grant payment.

For home-based programs (FDC and GFDC), is the provider eligible to receive the workforce retention bonus?

Providers are eligible to receive a workforce retention bonus as long as they have an active child caring role (provide direct supervision to unrelated children) have worked an average of 15 hours per week at minimum between 1/1/23, or start of employment, and 06/26/23 and meet other eligibility criteria.

How do I know if my staff have worked an average of 10 or 15 hours?

Add up all the hours they have worked between the applicable dates. Then, take that number and divide it by how many weeks they were employed during that time period.

For example, they worked: 20 hours, 10 hours, 26, hours, and 18 hours. That adds up to 74 hours. Now divide 74 by the 4 weeks they were employed prior to 6/26/23. This gives you 18.5 hours. They worked more than the required average hours per week, which means they meet the hours requirement to receive a staff retention bonus.

Our program was granted a Stabilization 2.0 grant and used some of the funds for retention bonuses. Would we still be able to apply for the Workforce Retention Grant?

A program that received Stabilization 2.0 and used those funds for staff retention bonuses can still apply for the Workforce Retention grant so long as they meet all eligibility criteria. Additional retention bonuses would need to be paid upon award of a Workforce Retention Grant.



## General Grant Questions

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| <p>What are eligible expenses for Component A?</p>                         | <p>For Component A, Staff Retention Bonuses, the entire grant payment must go directly to all eligible staff who are still eligible at the time of grant payment. If a staff rejects the bonus or is no longer eligible at the time of grant payment, the funds can be used for recruitment expenses.</p>  |
| <p>What are eligible expenses for Component B, Payroll Tax Assistance?</p> | <p>Component B Payroll Tax Assistance can be used by the organization towards the employer portion of payroll taxes incurred while issuing retention bonus payments to their staff</p>   |
| <p>What are eligible expenses for Component B, Staff Recruitment?</p>      | <p>Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide recruitment sign-on bonuses for new staff who began after June 26, 2023 and are not eligible for the workforce retention grant payments</li> <li>• Provide bonuses for staff who are otherwise not eligible for the retention bonus</li> <li>• Provide referral incentives for existing staff who recruit new staff</li> <li>• Pay for advertisement and marketing costs for staff vacancies</li> <li>• Pay for recently hired (since June 26, 2023) staff benefit package costs (such as, healthcare, paid time off, 401K)</li> <li>• Pay for or reimburse costs for recently hired (since June 26, 2023) staff medical, criminal and child abuse clearances</li> <li>• Pay for staffing services or ‘headhunter’</li> <li>• Pay a bonus for staff in a non-caregiving role who are recruited to a caregiving role</li> <li>• Pay a bonus for Part-Time staff who transition to a Full-Time role</li> <li>• Supplementing a retention payment to include a longevity bonus to existing staff who have been with the program 6 months or more.</li> </ul> |
| <p>Is the grant competitive?</p>   | <p>No, the grant is not competitive. There are sufficient funds for all eligible programs. Programs must complete the application during the application period in order to be awarded funds.</p>  |
| <p>What are the two components of the grant?</p>                           | <p>Component A is Staff Retention Bonuses. Component B is Staff Recruitment Expenses and Payroll Tax Assistance</p>  |



If an eligible staff member leaves before they receive their workforce retention bonus, what happens to those funds?

If a staff person was employed by the organization at the time of application but leaves before they receive some or all of their workforce retention bonus, funds can be reallocated to Component B- Staff Recruitment Expenses.

Please note: A program must provide at least 50% of the staff retention bonus payments to all eligible staff within 45 days of receiving the staff bonus payment from the grant. The entire bonus must be distributed to all eligible staff within 90 days of the program receiving that payment.

Do programs need to be open/licensed for at least a year to be eligible for this grant?

No, the program needs to be licensed /registered/ permitted prior to issuance of the grant.

Can programs with an "Expired in Renewal" status, apply for the grant?

Yes, programs that otherwise meet eligibility can apply if they are not in an active enforcement status listed in the SOI.

For providers who are the sole employee at their program, are they applying the payroll tax to their normal taxes since they don't have anyone else on their payroll?

All providers are encouraged to talk to their tax professional for guidance.

Which modalities can apply for the grant?

The following modalities are eligible for the Workforce Retention Grant:

- Day Care Centers (DCC)
- Family Day Care Homes (FDC)
- Group Family Day Care Homes (GFDC)
- School-Age Child Care Programs (SACC)
- Small Day Care Centers (SDCC)
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) permitted Article 47 Group Day Care Centers (GDC)

Is there a date that programs had to be open by in order to apply for the grant?

Programs must be licensed/ registered/permitted prior to issuance of the grant.

If a provider is open and providing care for their grandchild only, would they be eligible to apply for the grant?

No, there must be at least one child they are providing care to who is not related to the provider or their employees on the date of application and at the time of grant payment.



For FDC/GFDC is the provider considered “staff”?

Yes. FDC or GFDC providers may be considered staff. They are eligible to receive a workforce retention bonus as long as they meet the requirements of the SOI.

What if program does not want the recruitment money but only wants the payroll tax of component B?

If your program applies for the Workforce Retention Grant you will receive both Component A and Component B funds. Component A and Component B cannot be split or separated.

To be eligible does the program have to currently be accepting child care assistance (CCAP)?

They must attest at the time of application that they agree to accept families with child care assistance (CCAP).

How do we handle someone out of work for a medical leave? If they are still employed, on the FAMS list but not on the schedule at the time of the application do they qualify?

All staff must meet the eligibility requirements as outlined in the SOI. Programs can use the staff average hours worked calculator available on the OCFS website to determine if the staff meets the eligibility requirement for the average hours worked. You can find the calculator at <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/grants/workforce-grant/assets/docs/Workforce-Staff-Eligibility-Calculator.en.xlsx> re:

Are staff eligible if they began working in February or March 2023?

If they meet the average hours per week requirement from start of employment to June 26, 2023, and all other eligibility criteria, yes.

Can I prepay the bonus before I receive the grant money?

Any pre-paid bonuses being claimed under the workforce retention grant must be made on or after the SOI issuance date of July 13, 2023.

### Staff Retention & Recruitment Questions

Could a child care center give their cook and receptionist a Component B longevity bonus?

Yes, eligible expenses for Competent B Staff Recruitment include paying a longevity bonus to existing staff who have been with the program 6 months or more. Unlike the staff retention bonuses given for Component A, those staff do not need to be in a direct child caring role.

If a program has staff that work at multiple locations, will the staff receive a bonus for each location?

No, staff will only receive one bonus. The organization will determine which program to apply for the staff under.





If a staff member works for more than one agency, will the staff receive a bonus for each agency?

No, staff will only receive one bonus no matter how many different child care programs, sites, or agencies they work for. They will receive the bonus from the first program that applies for the grant and claims them as an active eligible employee.

Do child care center directors receive the bonus or do they only receive the bonus if they are active in the classrooms full time?

Directors would have to have an active child caring role, providing direct supervision to unrelated children an average of 15 hours per week at minimum (average of 10 hours at minimum for SACC programs) between 1/1/23 or start of employment and 6/26/23

Could a provider use Component B for advertising open staff positions?

Yes. Eligible expenses for Component B/Staff Recruitment include, paying for advertisement and marketing costs for staff vacancies.

Will programs be required to document how they spend the funds they receive?

All expenses must be documented carefully as outlined in the SOI, and programs must retain all documentation for five years and be provided upon request of OCFS.

How does this grant affect any kind of public assistance benefits that staff receive or apply for?

Receipt of a bonus will not result in reduction of public assistance benefits that staff receive or apply for. To assist in accomplishing the goal of this grant, the NYS 2023-2024 Enacted Budget included language stating that bonuses received through this grant “shall be exempt and disregarded as income in determining the need for aid provided pursuant to the public assistance programs.”

If someone is trying to open a day care, can such a person benefit from this grant?

No, this grant is for existing programs that are licensed at the time of grant issuance.

Is there a limit to the amount of money a program can receive?

There is no maximum cap for funding. The limit is based only on the number of eligible staff and their modality. For more information, please review the statement of grant opportunity (SOI).



## Grant Application Process

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| How long is the application period?  | The application period begins on 7/26/23 and ends on 9/15/23 at 11:59 PM EST.  |
| Is the application available in Spanish?   | <p>The application portal is available in the following languages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> <li>• Spanish</li> <li>• Traditional Chinese</li> <li>• Russian</li> <li>• Yiddish</li> <li>• Bengali</li> <li>• Korean</li> <li>• Haitian Creole</li> <li>• French</li> <li>• Italian</li> <li>• Arabic</li> <li>• Polish</li> <li>• Urdu</li> </ul> |
| Can an entity with multiple programs, apply for more than one program at time?   | No. Each licensed, registered, or permitted program must apply separately.   |
| Do I need to register for a My.NY.gov account in order to apply?   | <p>Yes, you need a NY.gov account to apply. If you already have an NY.gov account, you can use your existing account and don't need to create a new one. If you need to create an NY.gov account, you can do so by going here: <a href="https://my.ny.gov">https://my.ny.gov</a> and clicking Create an Account</p>  |
| Should I register for a personal or business My.NY.gov account? If I already have a business account, can I just use that? | You will need a personal account in order to complete your application.  |
| Where can I go for guidance on registering for a My.NY.gov account?  | For more information on registering for a My.NY.gov account you can view the video here: <a href="#">How to create a My Ny.gov ID</a>  |



I already have a My.NY.gov account. Where can I go to login?

To begin your application, click here: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/workforce-grant/>

I have watched the videos and reviewed the reference guides. Where can I go if I still have questions about the application process?

You can contact your CCR&R, the UFT or CSEA Unions or the Workforce Retention Grant Help Line. The list of CCR&Rs can be found here: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/referral-agencies.php>

The UFT and CSEA contact info, can be found here: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/providers/unions.php>

To reach the Workforce Retention Help Line by phone, call: 1-833-791-2743 Helpline staff are available Monday – Friday, 8:30AM- 4:30PM

When applying, I noticed that one or more of my staff were not included on my staff roster for Step 2 – Staff Retention Bonus Certification. What should I do?

If any of your staff are missing from the staff roster and you believe they fit the criteria of eligibility, please submit your application, and then refer to our website under “Staff Eligibility” section for additional steps on how to report an error on your staff roster [Staff Roster Changes](#)

I think I may have answered question 3 incorrectly when I was completing Step 2 – Staff Retention Bonus Certification. Can I edit my application?

If you think you may have incorrectly answered questions on the Staff Retention Bonus Certification, reach out to your CCR&R to report the issue. OCFS may be in contact with you or will modify your application to correct the error. You can find your CCR&R here: <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/referral-agencies.php>

Is there a place where I can download my staff list?

If you are a OCFS licensed or registered program you can view your active staff roster in FAMS. For NYC DOHMH permitted programs please reach out to your local Bureau office to confirm your current staff list.

When you complete your application for the Workforce Retention Grant you will also have the option to download your staff roster. We encourage you to do so in order to track your staff who are eligible to receive retention bonuses.



For some of our staff, the birthdates are missing. Should we add their birthdates back into the portal or leave it blank?

You must enter the birthdays in the application for those staff who are not auto filled.

If there is a birthdate missing for staff on the staff roster you must fill in that information prior to submitting your application.

What happens if we don't know if one of our staff has been claimed by another program? Will we be penalized?

Staff can only be claimed on one application for one licensed/registered/ permitted child care program. If a staff appears on multiple staff rosters the staff can only be claimed by one program and will be greyed out for all other programs where the staff appears on the roster. Your program is attesting, to the best of your knowledge you are not aware of this staff being claimed by another program.

I entered my Legally Exempt enrollment ID and the application couldn't find me. How can I proceed in applying?

Legally exempt programs are not eligible for the Workforce Retention Grant.

I am completing the application on behalf of my director. When I sign the application in Step 7, should I use my name or the director's name?

If you are authorized to submit the application on behalf of the program, you should attest to that and enter your own name in the signature panel. If you are not authorized, you should not be the person completing the application.

## School Aged Child Care (SACC) Programs

Do SACC programs that only operate during summer qualify for this grant opportunity?

School Age Child Care Programs are eligible to apply and receive grant funds even if not currently operating at the time of application due to planned school break so long as they meet the following criteria:

- Anticipate being operational and serving at least one child in person on the first full week of school instruction, but in no instance later than 9/20/23
- Have a current staff roster cleared with OCFS with eligible roles (see Section IX. Eligible Child Care Program Roles) and at least one of those staff are expected to resume their positions in the first full week of school instruction, but in no instance later than 9/20/23.



If my organization has both an Early Childhood Program and a School Age Child Care Program, should we submit applications for each program or one application for both together?

Applicants must submit one application for each program with an active OCFS or NYC DOHMH license, registration, or permit to provide child care at the time of grant issuance.

Are SACC volunteers eligible to receive a retention bonus if they have been background cleared and volunteer in a child caring role for an average of ten or more hours per week?

Volunteers are not eligible for the retention bonus (Component A).

Programs can choose to use recruitment bonus funds (Component B) to encourage volunteers to take on a paid caregiving role.

Are substitute staff eligible for the staff retention bonuses?

Substitute staff are eligible if they otherwise meet all staff eligibility requirements to receive the retention bonus.

Programs can also choose to use recruitment bonus funds (Component B) to provide longevity bonuses to any staff member who has worked for the program for six months or longer.

If I have a summer program but not all staff work during the summer, can I apply now and all my staff are eligible? Or should I wait until they are back to work in September to apply?

Staff must, along with meeting other eligibility criteria, be employed at the physical child care location and in an active child-caring role both at the time of application and grant payment. The only exception is for SACC staff not working during the summer at the time of application due to a planned school break.

### Payment & Award Questions

The allowance for payroll taxes is equal to 7.65% of the bonus amount which does not account for SUI, workers comp, or MTA taxes that we have to pay. Is there any way to be able to pay for these additional, required amounts from grant funds?

The provider must adhere to IRS guidelines for employers and be responsible for any employer portion of taxes as awards are distributed. Providers are encouraged consult a tax professional for specific recommendations regarding the appropriate tax filing for their legal entity type



Is the staff recruitment bonus (Component B) the amount that will be awarded per Program or per organization?

The Component B - Recruitment Bonus funds are awarded per Program. An organization with multiple programs will receive Component B funds for each eligible program.

Will providers need an SFS vendor number to get their payments?

All providers will need an SFS vendor ID to receive their funds. If a provider does not have an SFS ID, they will be required to complete a W-9 form during the grant application process.

Will staff retention bonuses be considered income, and subject to income tax?

Yes. The workforce retention bonus will be processed through payroll and therefore the program does need to pay payroll income tax on it. As part of the Workforce Retention Grant, programs will receive Payroll Tax Assistance, Component B, to assist covering the payroll tax on the retention bonus payments.

When do all funds need to be spent by?

All funds must be spent by 9/1/2024

Will programs be paid all at once or over multiple payments?

Grant awards will be paid in two installments. The second payment will be processed as soon as possible after the first payment.

Where can I find out if I already have an SFS ID?

Programs who have previously received certain OCFS Child Care Grants, including Deserts RFA 1 or RFA 2, Stabilization 2.0, or Retroactive Absences grant will already have an SFS Vendor ID on file with OCFS and will see the number in their application. If you need additional info, please see the SFS tip sheet on the OCFS workforce retention grant site. <https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/grants/workforce-grant/assets/docs/CCRA-SFSID-Tips-Vendor-ID.en.pdf>

Approximately how long does it take to get an SFS vendor ID?

Once the Substitute W-9 form has been submitted it should take approximately 2-3 weeks to be notified that an SFS ID has been created.



Are there guidelines available for the expense reporting?

Starting thirty days after the second payment, the program will be required to complete Expense reporting that will identify the total payments made to eligible staff or retained for staff not on payroll as well as the date the payment was made to the staff and the payment method. Additional reports may be required by OCFS to document usage of Workforce Retention Grant funds.

Review the Solicitation of Interest (SOI) for complete expense reporting guidelines.

<https://ocfs.ny.gov/programs/childcare/grants/workforce-grant/assets/docs/Workforce-Retention-Grant-Solicitation-of-Interest.en.pdf>

Do we need to pay the Staff Retention Bonus out all at once or can we spread over time - and if we can do over time is there a date funds have to be spent by?

A program must provide at least 50% of the staff retention payments to all eligible staff within 45 days of receiving the first payment from the grant. The remaining funds must be distributed to eligible staff within 90 days of receiving that first payment from the grant.

If a SACC program applies during a planned school break, staff bonus payments must be made to eligible SACC program staff within 45 days after resuming operations during the school calendar year.

Are owner/onsite providers in home based programs who operate as sole proprietors eligible for this grant opportunity?

FDC and GFDC providers who do not have themselves on payroll are eligible for the retention bonus if they file their taxes as required by the IRS at the end of the year and otherwise meet other eligibility criteria. All providers are encouraged to talk to their tax professional for guidance.