

Child Care Workforce Bonus



Frequently Asked Questions | October 2021

General Questions

1. What is the Child Care Workforce Bonus?

The Child Care Workforce Bonus is a one-time bonus to recognize the efforts of child care staff who served and continue to serve children and families in person during the pandemic. This bonus is funded by federal pandemic relief funds and will be administered through the Illinois Department of Human Services and Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA).

2. Who is eligible to receive a Child Care Workforce Bonus?

Child Care Workforce Bonuses will be available to all staff in:

- **license-exempt relative home providers** who were caring for children on the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) in March 2021 and continue to care for children today,
- **license-exempt non-relative home providers** who were caring for children on CCAP in March 2021, continue to care for children today, and have completed all health and safety orientation requirements (including Mandated Reporter and First Aid/CPR) and reported them in Gateways,
- **license exempt centers** who were caring for children on CCAP in March 2021, continue to care for children today, and have 50% of staff who have completed all health and safety orientation requirements (including Mandated Reporter and First Aid/CPR) and reported them in Gateways, and
- **licensed centers and licensed home providers** who were caring for children in March 2021 and continue to care for children today.

3. Are programs required to be full time to apply for the child care workforce bonus?

No. Programs can be part time or full time.

4. Is there an application to receive a Bonus?

The process will be different based on which type of child care setting you work in.

License-exemptive relative home providers *do not need to apply* to receive a bonus. IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt relative providers. Providers do NOT need to contact their local CCR&R to determine if they qualify for the bonus. Please send all questions/comments/concerns to DHS.CCAP.Policy@Illinois.gov.

License-exempt non-relative homes *do not need to apply* to receive a bonus. IDHS will verify Gateways Registry and completion of trainings, prior to sending the bonus payment, between October 2021 through March of 2022. IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt non-relative providers. Providers do NOT need to contact their local CCR&R to determine if they qualify for the bonus. Please send all questions/comments/concerns to DHS.CCAP.Policy@Illinois.gov.

License-exempt centers *will need to apply through INCCRRA* to receive bonuses for their staff. Total payment will be based on the number of children enrolled in CCAP at the center. Providers have discretion to distribute bonuses to staff in the way that works best for their center. IDHS will verify Gateways Registry and completion of trainings, prior to distribution of funds, between October 2021 through March of 2022. IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt centers. Please send all questions/comments/concerns to bonuses@inccrra.org.

Licensed centers and licensed homes *will need to apply through INCCRRA* to receive bonuses for their staff INCCRRA will issue bonus payments directly to eligible licensed centers and licensed homes. Please send all questions/comments/concerns to bonuses@inccrra.org.

5. When will the application open for Bonuses?

The Application for the Child Care Workforce Bonus will open in the Gateways Registry Director Portal in October and be available through March 11, 2022. Programs will only be able to apply and be found eligible one time between October 2021–March 2022. Programs can be found ineligible and apply again before the deadline of March 11, 2022.

6. How is the bonus amount calculated for programs that employ multiple staff?

For **licensed programs** that employ multiple staff your bonus amount is calculated using the Gateways Registry Director Portal Staff Listing (see section below on Updating Information in the Registry for specifics on the staff roles). Based on the categorization of your staff within their Gateways Registry membership a bonus amount is applied. An additional 20% is added for support staff and additional funding is provided to cover payroll taxes. In the end a program is provided one lump sum. Programs can then use the lump sum to apply bonuses as they see appropriate within their programs.

For **license-exempt centers** the total payment will be based on the number of children enrolled in CCAP at the center. Providers have discretion to distribute bonuses to staff in the way that works best for their center.

7. How are the bonuses paid?

Licensed centers and licensed group homes bonus are paid by check from INCCRRA to the program, and the program then pays individual bonuses to the staff.

Licensed family child care homes, the bonus is paid by check from INCCRRA to the individual or program depending on what is reported on the W9.

License-exemptive relative home providers, IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt relative providers.

License-exempt non-relative homes IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt non-relative providers.

License-exempt centers IDHS will issue bonus payments directly to eligible license-exempt centers.

Preparing to Apply

1. What should programs (licensed centers, licensed family child care homes/group family child care homes and license-exempt centers) do to prepare to apply?

- Programs must have access to the Gateways Registry Director Portal. To access the Gateways Registry Director Portal, you must complete an [Authorized Program Contact Access Request Form](#). Please note Director Portal access must be renewed annually (separate for your Registry membership). If your access expired, simply complete the Access Request Form and resubmit.
- Review and update your staff listing in the Director Portal and encourage your staff to update their Gateways Registry information so award amounts can be as accurate as possible. It is always good to check and update your staff listing at least once a month. Remove individuals that no longer work at your program, and make sure the current staff are listed in your portal. See this [Help Center article](#) for more information.
- License-exempt centers must complete health and safety training to care for children on the Child Care Assistance Program. Details on the required training can be found [here](#). License-exempt centers and license-exempt non-relative homes must have completed this training to be eligible to receive Child Care Workforce Bonuses.

2. What documentation will be required to apply?

Programs will be required to upload the following documents as part of the application within the Gateways Director Portal. W-9 (for licensed programs only), Certificate of Good Standing (with 2021 or 2022 date), and Child Care Workforce Bonus attestation. Programs will also be required to provide a DUNS number. More information on how to access these documents can be found online at www.ilgateways.com/financial-opportunities/child-care-workforce-bonus.

3. When should a program apply?

Programs can apply at any time while the application is open. However, programs can only be found eligible once and receive one bonus payment. Licensed programs bonus payment is calculated using your staff listing within the Gateways Registry Director Portal. Consider at what point in time it is best for your program to apply during the application period. We would encourage programs to apply when they are as close as possible to fully staffed to receive the highest bonus payment. For your programs this may mean waiting to apply in January after the holidays for other programs it could mean applying in October.

All programs with eligible applications between October 2021 and March 2022 will be paid bonuses. There is no need to rush to apply.

Eligible Staff

1. When it says all staff does that even include the office staff that does not work directly with the children? Do they get the bonus also?

Programs that employ multiple staff can provide bonuses as they see appropriate using the lump sum bonus amount, they are eligible for. The award amount includes an added 20% for support staff (assistant, office, cook, bus driver, etc..). If those staff continued to work through the pandemic to ensure your center was able to stay open, they deserve recognition as well.

2. Which staff will be eligible for the bonus at each of our centers? Only classroom staff? Or is it for all staff working for the centers including management?

Programs that employ multiple staff can provide bonuses as they see appropriate using the lump sum bonus amount, they are eligible for. The award amount includes an added 20% for support staff (assistant, office, cook, bus driver, etc..). If those staff continued to work through the pandemic to ensure your center was able to stay open, they deserve recognition as well.

3. Are part-time staff eligible for a bonus?

The bonus amount is calculated based on staff roles in the Registry and does not look specifically at full-time or part-time. Programs that employ multiple staff can provide bonuses as they see appropriate using the lump sum bonus amount, they are eligible for. The award amount includes an added 20% for support staff (assistant, office, cook, bus driver, etc..).

4. What if a staff member was unable to work in person intermittently or was out due to a health-related reason?

Programs can distribute Child Care Workforce Bonuses to any staff member currently employed at the program.

5. If a staff person retired within the award period, am I still able to give them an award?

No. Programs can distribute Child Care Workforce Bonuses to any staff member currently employed at the program.

6. I have had new staff join since I applied for the program. Can they receive a Child Care Workforce Bonus?

Yes. Staff who were hired after application may receive a Child Care Workforce Bonus. However, staff hired between the date of application and receipt of award will not be included in a program's total number of staff as shown in the Gateways to Opportunity Registry. Programs will be responsible for determining how to distribute funds across all staff employed by the program.

For example, a program applies in October with 6 teaching staff, 1 director and support staff. A bonus amount is calculated at the point in time of application. The check is then mailed in November and the program hires two new teaching staff. The programs bonus check amount does not change. The program instead uses the bonus amount sum and provides bonuses across all staff employed at the time of receipt. See bonus examples below.

7. I have had staff leave since I applied for the program. Do I need to ensure they receive a Child Care Workforce Bonus?

No, programs should not distribute funding to staff who have left the program after the program applied for funding but before the funding was received. Funding should be redistributed amongst current employees.

8. Are administrators eligible for Child Care Workforce Bonuses?

All individuals who are critical to program operations are eligible for a Child Care Workforce Bonus. Site-based administrators are included within the award calculation for programs.

Updating Information in the Registry

1. How do we make sure we are updating our staff listing in the Registry correctly?

For licensed centers the bonus is calculated based on the staff listing and the job role code that is chosen by the individual within their Gateways Registry membership. The following categories/job role codes within the Registry are included in the licensed center calculation.

- Director/Assistant Director – Includes the following Job Role Codes
 - 1 – Director/Administrator (one site)
 - 2 – Assistant Director
 - 3 – Director/Teacher
 - 11.5 – School-Age Site Coordinator
 - 16 – Director/Administrator (multi-site)
- Regular Teaching Staff - Includes the following Job Role Codes
 - 4 – Teacher
 - 5 – Assistant Teacher
 - 6 – Teacher Aide (Preschool for All)
 - 12 – School-Age Child Care Teacher
 - 13 – School-Age Child Care Assistant
 - 14 – Youth Development Practitioner
- Floating/Substitute – Includes the following Job Role Codes
 - 7 – Substitute/Floater
- Family Support/Home Visitor – Includes the following Job Role Codes
 - 23 – Home Visitor
 - 24 – Home Visitor Supervisor
 - 26 – Family Engagement/Support Worker

The award amount includes an added 20% for support staff (assistant, office, cook, bus driver, etc..). In the end a program is provided one lump sum. Programs can then use the lump sum to apply bonuses as they see appropriate within their programs.

2. If I am a licensed family child care or licensed group family child care how do I make sure my assistants are listed correctly in the Registry?

For licensed family child care, in order for the system to correctly calculate your bonus amount, the main provider/owner must be listed with a role of “8 – Family Child Care Provider”. Any assistants should be listed with a role of “9 – Family Child Care Assistant”

For licensed group family child care, in order for the system to correctly calculate your bonus amount, the main provider/owner must be listed with a role of “10 – Group Family Child Care Provider”. Any assistants should be listed with a role of “11 – Group Family Child Care Assistant”.

Bonus Amount

1. Will everyone receive a \$1000 bonus?

No. Programs that employ multiple staff can provide bonuses as they see appropriate using the lump sum bonus amount, they are eligible for at time of application. The award amount includes an added 20% for support staff (assistant, office, cook, bus driver, etc..).

Family Child Care will receive \$2200 and Group Family Child Care will receive \$3300.

2. Can I use the Child Care Workforce Bonus to enhance wages or break it into multiple bonuses?

Yes – programs are strongly encouraged to break up the child care workforce bonus into multiple payments to staff between the date of award and June 30, 2021.

3. Can I vary the size of the Child Care Workforce Bonus for different staff in my program?

Yes. The Child Care Workforce Bonus is designed to acknowledge the hard work and sacrifice made by child care staff throughout the pandemic, and programs should reflect this when determining the size of bonus to give to staff. Programs are also encouraged to distribute some bonus to every staff member.

4. Can I use funding from my Child Care Restoration Grant (CCRG) to offer additional bonuses?

Yes, a program may use CCRG funds to enhance bonuses.

5. If I am concerned about the amount of the bonus I received or I did not receive a bonus, what should I do?

If you work for a program that employs multiple staff you will want to check first with your program director to see if they have applied for and received the Child Care Workforce Bonus.

Taxes & Benefits

1. Will taxes be withheld from bonuses, and can recipients be notified of that ahead of time?

For programs that employ multiple staff an additional amount is being added to the bonus calculation to account for needed taxes.

2. Will the \$1000 bonus include any type of add-on for benefits (FICA, workers comp, etc.)?

Yes. An additional \$100 is being added to the calculated bonus payment to offset the taxes.

3. Can I require staff to pay back a bonus if they leave within a certain time frame?

No. Bonuses are designed to recognize past service within your program during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reporting

1. Will there be reporting required for the bonus payment?

Yes, licensed programs and license-exempt centers will be required to complete a narrative report once bonus amounts are expended, or by May 31, 2021. The narrative report will include questions specific to bonus amounts paid, date on which bonuses were paid, smallest bonus/largest bonus, how many staff received bonuses, etc.

Programs may be randomly chosen for an audit and would need to provide documentation of how the bonus award was used, including payroll documentation of bonuses paid. This will only be required if the child care program is chosen for an audit.