

Frequently Asked Questions

Qualified Workforce Incentives (QWI)

What is “Qualified Workforce Incentives”?

Qualified Workforce Incentives (QWI) uses Preschool Development Grant (PDG) funds to help recruit and retain a qualified early childhood teaching workforce. OEC is awarding incentives through an application process via the [OEC Registry](#) where education and employment details are already verified.

Who is eligible?

Round 1 (January 2022) includes:

Teaching staff in OEC funded (School Readiness, Child Day Care contract, State Head Start) licensed centers and group homes (DCCC / DCGH) with confirmed employment in their program in the OEC Registry for at least 6 months, and who have completed the following:

1. One-time Care4Kids health and safety orientation AND
2. Highest level of early childhood education using the following benchmarks (highest to lowest):
 - a. Bachelor’s degree or higher in early childhood education (ECE) **OR** B level ECTC **OR** Bachelor’s degree or higher and state ECE teaching endorsement
 - b. Associate degree in ECE **OR** A level ECTC
 - c. Current CDA Credential

Round 2 (date to be announced) will add non OEC funded licensed center and group home teaching staff.

How much will I receive?

Your award has 2 parts: (a) the base award and (b) potential bonuses.

Base awards consider your employment status:

- Full time / full year: 30 hours or more per week **AND** 40 weeks or more per year
- Not full time / full year: 29 or fewer hours per week **AND/OR** 39 weeks or fewer per year (The award for applicants working less than full time / full year is **50%** of the full time / full year award.)

Bonuses of 10% of the eligible base amount are added for each of the following:

- Quality: Program has current NAEYC Accreditation or Head Start Approval
- Equity: Program is located in an area awarded a Social Vulnerability Index rating of 0.6 or higher
- Capacity: Applicant works directly with infants on a daily scheduled basis at least 30 hours per week **AND** at least 40 weeks per year.

Full time AND full year

Education level plus C4K H/S orientation	Base Amount	IT 10% Bonus	NAEYC 10% Bonus	SVI Bonus 10%	Lowest award / Highest award
Current CDA Credential	\$500	\$50	\$50	\$50	\$500 / \$650
Associate degree ECE, or A level ECTC	\$1,000	\$100	\$100	\$100	\$1,000 / \$1,300
Bachelor's degree or higher ECE, or B level ETCT, or Bachelor's degree or higher plus ece teacher certification	\$2,000	\$200	\$200	\$200	\$2,000 / \$2,600

Less than Full time and/or less than full year

Education level plus C4K H/S orientation	Base Amount: (50%)	IT 10% Bonus	NAEYC 10% Bonus	SVI Bonus 10%	Lowest award / Highest award
Current CDA Credential	\$250	\$0	\$25	\$25	\$250 / \$300
Associate degree ECE, or A level ECTC	\$500	\$0	\$50	\$50	\$500 / \$600
Bachelor's degree or higher ECE, or B level ETCT, or Bachelor's degree or higher plus ece teacher certification	\$1,000	\$0	\$100	\$100	\$1,000 / \$1,200

How do I know if my program meets the Quality (NAEYC Accreditation / Head Start Approval) or Equity (SVI rating) bonuses?

That information will automatically load into your application based on what your program administrator has uploaded to the Registry to show NAEYC Accreditation / Head Start Approval .

Applying

How do I apply?

The QWI application is available through [your free OEC Registry account](#).

What do I need to do BEFORE I apply?

Make sure your OEC Registry is up to date! Many things in this application come directly from what is in your account:

1. Check your Education and Training Report: is your degree listed? Is your one-time Care4Kids health and safety completion noted?
2. Ask your supervisor if the program's Registry administrative access user has updated the Staff Confirmation page within the past 60 days. This is where your job title, age group you work with, and hours per week / weeks per year are confirmed.

Apply only if your information is correct! Once you apply, you cannot reapply.

Eligibility

I have a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and an associate degree in early childhood. Do I get the bachelor's degree base amount?

No. This incentive is specific to formal early childhood education benchmarks. An associate degree ece verified in the OEC Registry would have the associate degree base amount.

What if I have 2 part time jobs at different OEC funded licensed programs that meet the full time / full year definition?

Contact your county's lead Registry staffer for assistance. [Check here if you are unsure who to contact](#).

We have a small program and I work full time and full year, but split my time between being an administrator and teaching mornings (20 hours/week) in our 4s room as the designated teacher. Can I get the full time / full year award?

This award strictly applies to teaching staff time. In your example, you would qualify for the less than full time / full year award if you are regularly scheduled in a specific classroom. An administrator who randomly helps in and out of rooms is not eligible under these specific funds.

Can I apply if I am working on my degree but have not finished yet?

Keep working on it! The OEC plans to have QWI awards ongoing. When you finish your degree, upload your final transcripts in your OEC Registry account. Once verified, apply! Make sure you are also requesting OEC scholarship for your ece degree work.

How do I complete the one-time Care4Kids health and safety orientation?

You can read more about the one-time health and safety orientation [here](#). Remember you can access the free online training at any time through your OEC Registry account.

Which Connecticut teaching endorsements are considered ECE by the OEC?

- 112 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., Birth - K
- 113 Integrated Early Childhood/Special Ed., N/K through grade 3
- 01 PreK-Grade 8
- 02 PreK-Grade 6
- 03 PreK-Grade 3
- 08 PreK-K
- 065 Comprehensive Special Education PreK-Grade 12

Can I apply for the QWI if I already am getting a bonus from my program through the Stabilization Funds?

Yes! These funds are part of the OEC's Preschool Development Grant (PDG), not pandemic related. As part of the OEC's PDG plan, they are specific to supporting Connecticut's early childhood teaching workforce in licensed centers and group homes.

I have my bachelor's degree in ece, have met the Care4Kids one-time health and safety orientation, and work in a licensed family child care home (DCFH). Can I apply?

No. This award is specific to licensed center and group home teaching staff. Licensed family home providers receiving Care4Kids are eligible for incentives as part of the CSEA/SEIU family child care contract. Be sure all of your transcripts are uploaded to your Registry account so you can get awarded the right incentives through your Care4Kids payments.

Getting Paid and Tracking Payment**How will I get paid my incentive?**

Once your application has been approved, you will receive an email from Checkissuing Information <noreply@checkissuing.com>. For verification, you can check that the amount noted in the email matches the incentive amount in the Registry.

The email will have a link that says "Click here to accept your payment." Once you click, you'll be prompted for your bank's routing number and your account number. The funds will automatically be deposited in your account.

How will the award show up in my bank account?

Within 10 business days of entering your bank's routing number and your account number, you should see the incentive amount deposited into your account.

Can I get a paper check?

No. Awards are deposited electronically to a bank account.

What if I don't have a bank account / can't open a bank account?

Please contact the Women's Business Development Council for assistance: 203-751-9550 x113, childcarebusiness@ctwbdc.org

Does the bank account have to be in my name? Can I have it deposited in my friend's account?

The bank account does not have to be in your name but you will definitely want to take safeguards to be sure the award goes to you. Please protect your hard-earned incentive. If you need help to open a bank account, please contact the Women's Business Development Council for assistance: 203-751-9550 x113, childcarebusiness@ctwbdc.org

What if I only use a check cashing and bill paying service? Or I don't have my own bank account? Can my director use OEC Stabilization Funds to cover bank account fees?

OEC Stabilization Funds (regular base or the 25% staff compensation) can be used to cover bank account fees during the life of the Stabilization Funds. The use of check cashing and bill paying services costs you hard earned money with each transaction. Your program may be able to offer assistance with Stabilization Funds. Please also contact the Women's Business Development Council for assistance: 203-751-9550 x113, childcarebusiness@ctwbdc.org. WBDC offers personal financial health support free of charge to OEC licensed programs and staff. We would love to help you get more from your money!

How can I use the money?

This is a compensation award. Please use it the way you would use your paycheck.

Do I have to report how I used the money?

No. You do not have to report how you used your incentive.

Why do I have to provide a Social Security #?

The OEC Registry began requiring the SS# to link to the Background Check Information System (BCIS) and to have the one true unique identifier across systems. You must submit your SS# or ITIN as part of the application because these funds are taxable income. You will receive the proper tax form to use in filing your taxes for the award year.

What if I do not have a Social Security #?

You can apply for QWI after you have your Social Security # or ITIN, as it is required for tax purposes.

How does my SS# stay safe in this process?

Social Security #s are stored in encrypted format. In this process, the information is only used securely for tax reporting.