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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF ECONOMIC STABILITY

BUREAU OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT & HEAD START COLLABORATION

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September 4, 2024

Dear Child Care Providers,

The Department of Health and Human Services, Bureau of Child Development & Head Start Collaboration (BCDHSC) is pleased to announce the availability of one-time awards of quality incentive funding to eligible NH child care programs. The purpose of these funds is to recognize and support continuous improvement in the quality of New Hampshire child care programs. Funds are available from the ARPA Discretionary Program and the CCDF discretionary funds for quality. There are different eligibility criteria for each source of funds. Eligible providers will receive funds from at least one of the sources, although, some providers may be eligible for both.

- The CCDF Discretionary Funds will be distributed to licensed and licensed exempt providers who accept and have children enrolled in the NH Scholarship Program as of August 1, 2024.
- The ARPA-Discretionary Funds will be distributed to all licensed and licensed-exempt child care providers.

As often occurs with discretionary funding, DHHS is able to document the amount of unspent funds in a given fiscal year after year-end reports are completed. DHHS must act quickly to ensure that funds are allocated in a timely manner. Therefore, we appreciate your understanding of the quick response time for these quality improvement incentives.

To accept and receive the funds, you must “opt In” by updating your provider information in NH Connections, **no later than September 11, 2024 by 11:59 PM**. If you do not update your provider information, DHHS will conclude that you do not want these funds. **There will be no exceptions to the deadline.**

Beginning 8:00 am on September 12, 2024, BCDHSC will determine how much each program will receive in funding.

What child care programs are eligible?

- Granite Steps for Quality (GSQ)-enrolled child care programs;
- Licensed Plus (LP) programs;
- Non-GSQ or LP licensed family child care; and
- License-exempt facilities and family, friend and neighbor care.

For GSQ enrolled and Licensed Plus programs, this award will serve as the Annual Quality Incentive award for calendar year 2024.

Are there any other eligibility criteria for programs to receive funds?

Yes. You are eligible for these funds if your program meets all the following criteria:

- You are currently open and provide care during the regular school year (not summer only programs).
- You are a fully licensed center or family child care provider or a license-exempt facility or family/friend/neighbor provider in operation.
- You plan to remain open through spring 2025.
- You do not sell or transfer your business to a new owner before the awards are issued.
- Your program is in New Hampshire.
- You agree to expend the funds within one year of receipt, submit a financial report on the amount spent in each category of expenses by August 31, 2025, and keep on file in your program any receipts or invoices for these funds in case of audit. The report template will be available by September 30, 2024, on NH Connections.

If you accept these funds and BCDHSC learns that you do not meet the criteria outlined above, the BCDHSC will recoup the funds from your program.

How can programs use the funds?

Programs can use the funds in any of the following ways:

- Personnel Costs: Benefits, Recruitment and Retention (e.g., health insurance, premium pay, bonuses, employee child care, family leave, etc.) or costs of recruitment or retention
- Program Evaluation, Child Screening and Assessment
- Implementation of Program Standards, Guidelines, etc.
- Accreditation
- Mental Health and Wellness for Children, Families and Staff
- Health-related program Standards
- Professional Development and Support
- Use of Outcome Measures for Program Improvement
- Program Supply, Availability and Access
- Minor Renovations and Environmental Improvements
- Communication and Public Awareness

What must my program do to accept these quality funds, and what if we want to decline?

To accept Quality funds, please update your program information in NH Connections. Required sections to update include, staff roster and roles, operating hours and rates, ages served and capacity and other information. If you have multiple sites, you will need to update your information for each site. Here is the link to the location in NH Connections [NH-Connection.org](https://www.nhconnections.org) This is how BCDHSC will calculate the formula for the award as well as be your acceptance of the funds. If you do not update the entire section (staff roster and roles, operating hours and rates, ages served, capacity, other information and the market rate survey section), you are forfeiting your opportunity to accepting the funds and no funds will be issued to your site.

To decline the Quality funds, imply do nothing. By not updating the sections listed above in NH Connections, BCDHSC will conclude that you do not want the funds.

How much money will my program receive?

Your program's award will vary by several factors, including type of program, program quality designation, number of children served, number of children enrolled in NH Scholarship, number of program applications received, and remaining ARPA Discretionary funds. Awards for GSQ programs will be based on license capacity.

What is the timeline for my program to receive the funds?

Programs approved to receive an award may expect to receive funds no later than the last week of September 2024. These quality awards will be distributed through the BCDHSC payment system.

What if I have questions about the application?

If you have questions about updating your program information and opting in to receive this funding, please email us at the following address dhhs.childdevelopment@dhhs.nh.gov . We will get back to you just as soon as possible.

Child Care Aware of New Hampshire is available to provide technical assistance to support you with updating your program information. For technical assistance you may call (603) 578-1386 Ext 2526 or 2532 or email: ccrta@snhs.org.

BCDHSC is excited about supporting your efforts to enhance the quality of your program and hope you will update your program information **no later than September 11, 2024, by 11:59 PM** and access the funds!

Best,



Jessie L. Davis