

Congregate Care for Pause Program

FAQs, updated 12/3/2020

General

What are the major differences between this program and the previous Workforce Stabilization Loan programs?

1. Funds can be used for workers making up to \$25/hour
2. Funds can be distributed as payroll supports at the employer's discretion, the program does not dictate amounts to be paid per worker
3. This is a grant and not a loan

Payment Timing and Distribution of Payments

Q. The guidance indicates that the funds need to be distributed by Dec 30th. Our last payroll/paydate of the year will be on December 31st. Is there some flexibility here depending on respective paydates for a company?

A. Payroll can be issued after 12/30, but payments must be for hours worked on or before 12/30. For providers who issue payroll checks to workers in arrears, checks may be issued to workers in January 2021 as long as the hours covered by that payroll check were worked prior to or on December 30, 2020.

Q. What is the time period that these funds need to be distributed?

Q. If we choose could we just do it over two weeks instead of the 3 weeks?

Q. The funds can be paid in a lump sum by the end of the year, correct?

Q. Does it have to be done weekly or a lump sum?

Q. Does the payout begin on the day we receive the funds?

Q. Can you clarify the eligible time period? Is it only for the 2 week pause period?

A. Funds must be distributed as payroll support for hours worked prior to 12/30. Timing is not specific to the pause period. Funds may be used for payroll supports for work performed during December. Funds may be paid in a lump sum.

Application Logistics

Q. If we applied for the first round and received money are we going to get the money for this round automatically? Or should we apply anyway

Q. When should we receive the subaward if we were previously approved back in this 1st round?

A. You should have received a prefilled subaward agreement sent to the email used for the previous program application. **You must sign that form and return to EOHHS** in order to receive these grant funds.

Q. We received funds previously, but have not received an email for the new funds, who would be the contact to check on our agency's status please?

A. Send an email to OHHS.LTSSWorkerSupportsPause@ohhs.ri.gov and EOHHS will send you the correct forms.

Award Amounts

Q. When would we expect to receive the money?

A. Our intention is to issue funds the week of December 14.

Q. For providers who received prefilled subawards, how was that amount calculated?

A. The award amount was calculated based on the number of eligible employees reported to EOHHS for the previous round of Workforce Stabilization Loan program funding times \$300 per employee.

Q. With the increase to hourly rate staff can make to be eligible, this increases our numbers here as well as hires we have made over the course of last few months but no ability to increase award amount

A. Unfortunately there is not an ability to increase the award amount at this time.

Q. Would you clarify? Thought I heard you say that you calculated the number of employees who make under \$20 an hour times \$300. If we are able to use this for those who make under \$25, was that considered in the calculation?

A. The award amount is calculated based on the # employees making under \$20/hour based on the number of eligible employees reported to EOHHS for the previous round of Workforce Stabilization Loan program funding. However employers have the flexibility to use this funding for payroll supports for employees making up to \$25/hour.

Q. Is it a forgivable grant? Or do we need to pay it back?

A. Yes this is a grant. It does not need to be paid back.

Q. We will receive a lump sum and we won't know the amount until we receive it, correct?

A. Previous applicants will have their amount listed in their subaward agreement that was sent via email. New applicants must fill out an application and will then be notified of their award amount. Applications should be requested by emailing OHHS.LTSSWorkerSupportsPause@ohhs.ri.gov.

Q. If we received the initial workforce stabilization loan reimbursement via paper check, will someone be reaching out to us for bank account/routing information to apply this grant electronically?

A. This award will also be sent as a paper check.

Provider Eligibility

Q. Would this program include any workers in HBTS, PASS, ABA or Respite workers or only the same direct support staff in residential setting and day program setting

A. This program covers the same workers as were eligible for the previous Workforce Stabilization Loan program. There is a separate program for home care workers who work for home health agencies – guidance available at <http://www.eohhs.ri.gov/Initiatives/WorkerSupportsPauseGrants.aspx>

Q. If the original award was flagged by the audit and is currently being appealed by the agency, will we be eligible for these funds?

A. The following providers are not eligible for this program: 1. Any provider who was required to repay the full amount of the loan of the previous workforce stabilization program. 2. Any provider who did not respond to an EOHHS request to participate in an audit of the previous workforce stabilization program.

Q. Define congregate care setting. DSPs serve clients living independently on the front lines. ^[P]_[SEP]

Q. Are homeless shelters considered congregate care?

Q. Does this include homeless shelters either for families with children or individuals?

Qualifying Providers are those that meet the following definition.

Qualifying Providers: Medicaid and other providers that deliver care and other services in a residential facility are eligible to participate in this program. Providers that support aging adults, people with mental health diagnoses, individuals with substance use disorder, people with developmental disabilities, and at-risk youth are eligible to participate in the program. This includes nursing facilities (aka nursing homes or skilled nursing facilities), assisted living facilities, DCYF congregate care facilities (including group homes and residential treatment facilities), and licensed community residences for behavioral health, substance abuse disorder, developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injury (including DD group homes, group homes for the mentally ill, and substance use disorder facilities).

Q. Does this include Adult Day Centers?

A. No it does not.

Eligible Uses of Funds

Q. Are the funds intended to be used as bonus's as the stabilization funds were used for. I know that the funds are more flexible this time around, can they be used for overtime that is accrued during this pause period? ^[P]_[SEP]

A. Yes these funds can be used for additional payroll support at the discretion of the employer, including for overtime.

Q. Are we distributing the funds according to the number of hours worked per week as we did with the work force loan?

Q. As far as hours worked, are we able to look back over a few month period, compute hours employees worked, use the total hours worked as a baseline. Come up with a percentage each employee would receive and then pay in a lump sum?

Q. Can these funds cover the additional payroll and payroll tax cost due to paying an direct support staff at a hazard pay hourly rate instead of their current hourly rate?

Q. Is there a specific way of how these funds will be used as before we had to do it \$200 per week per employees

A. Employers have the discretion to distribute funds to workers as needed to best meet the needs of their employees as long as the methods meet the guidelines listed in the program guidance.

Q. Is there an allocation to cover taxes on the bonuses paid? What is the percent that is allowed?

A. Employers may use funds to cover any increased payroll taxes or UI or similar contributions that are a function of the increase in the payroll amount. The guidance does not specify a specific percentage.

Q. The guidance says not to be used for vacation hours. What about for staff who are out with covid?

A. The intention is that this is for payroll support for employees in the building working with patients and residents.

Q. Are there specific criteria on which staff are eligible. Is it only direct care workers in the settings or does it include directors in the program or nursing assistants, etc

Q. If you were > \$25/hour due to covid hazard pay already are you eligible?

Q. Is there a date on which they need to be making less than \$25/hour?

Q. If an employee is currently making less than \$25.00/ hour, but temporarily making double time because they are working a COVID unit, are they still eligible to receive a bonus through this program?

A. Eligible staff are those making less than \$25 per hour based on a baseline average of wages paid to the individual employee or class of employees as of October 2020.

This funding is targeted to support frontline workers earning under \$25 an hour in institutional settings and congregate care group homes. Frontline workers include any employee who is not able to work remotely and who engages in essential services – including but not limited to, certified nursing assistants, direct support professionals, food service workers, laundry, housekeeping, maintenance, and custodian staff can all be considered frontline workers. Qualifying employees must be on staff at the facility or work primarily in the facility. Case managers or caseworkers who travel to multiple residential sites earning under \$25 are not eligible. Also no state employees are eligible.

Q. Does this need to be applied by employee or can it be applied towards a total payroll amount ...i.e. hours paid for staff covering quarantine totals \$ 50,000...can I apply total amount to the total cost of quarantine?

A. Payments must be made directly to employees and should be an increase from the baseline average of wages paid to the individual employee or class of employees as of October 2020.

Reporting and Auditing

Q. How will these funds be audited by EOHHS?

Q. What are the reporting requirements ?

A. EOHHS will be requiring reporting to show how funding was used, to whom payroll supports were allotted, and how much was received. A template for this report will be distributed to all grant recipients at a later date.

There will be an audit process similar to previous WFS programs as auditing is required by federal CRF guidelines.