

2022 FUNDING GUIDELINES

WAGE ENHANCEMENT / HOME CHILD CARE ENHANCEMENT GRANT

The Ontario government recognizes that although Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other child care program staff play a key role during the critical years of a child's development, there is a significant wage gap between RECEs working in the publicly funded education system and those in the licensed child care sector. This wage gap creates challenges in retaining qualified pedagogical professionals to deliver affordable, high quality services. The wage enhancement/HCCCEG will help retain RECEs, and support access to stable, high-quality child care programs for children in Ontario.

The 2022 Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) will continue to support an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits for eligible centre-based staff and home visitors. In addition, the 2022 Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCWEG) continues to support an increase of up to \$20 per day for home child care providers contracted with a licensed home child care agency.

FUNDING DETAILS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS DOCUMENT FOR YOUR REFERENCE.

- All licensed child care centres and home child care agencies are eligible to apply for wage enhancement funding.
- Funding is allocated to licensed child care centres and home child care agencies to support eligible child care program staff, home visitors and eligible home child care providers.
- To align with the top of the existing school board Educator Salary Matrix, the Ministry has established an hourly maximum of \$28.59 per hour for centre based staff or an equivalent of \$285.90 per day for home child care providers.
- Enhancement funding must be directed solely to licensed child care staff and home visitors to increase wages and to home child care providers to increase daily income.
- Any funding not used for the intended purposes by operators will be recovered by the County of Hastings.
- Operators are required to continue to apply and maximize all federal supports available, and funding received will be reported as offsetting revenue.

Wage Enhancement - Centre Based and Home Visitors:

To be eligible to receive the 2022 wage enhancement; RECE's, home visitors and other child care program staff must be employed in a licensed child care position that:

- Exists in a licensed child care centre or home child care agency providing service in the County of Hastings between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.
- Be in a position categorized as a child care supervisor, RECE, home child care visitor, or otherwise counted toward adult to child ratios under the *Child Care Early Years Act, 2014*.
- Staff working in the Supervisor position must have Director's approval and meet licensing requirements as outlined by the Ministry of Education.

- Supplementary program staff positions in place to maintain higher employee-child ratios than required under the CCEYA, and meet the eligibility criteria above, are also eligible for wage enhancement.
- Due to the pandemic, existing staff performing health and safety related functions continue to be eligible for 2022 WEG/HCCG, whereas new staff hired exclusively to conduct functions related to performing health and safety functions are not.

Note: Regular staff performing the duties of Enhanced Support and whose hours are funded via Special Needs Resource service funding, are not eligible for any Wage Enhancement for any hours worked in this role.

Full Wage Enhancement

- Have an associated base wage excluding prior year's wage enhancement of less than \$26.59 per hour (i.e. \$2 below the wage cap of \$28.59).

Partial Wage Enhancement

- Have an associated base wage rate excluding prior year's wage enhancement between \$26.59 and \$28.58 per hour, the position is eligible for a partial wage enhancement.

The wage enhancement will increase the wage of the qualifying position to \$28.59 per hour without exceeding the cap.

Ineligible Positions (Non-Program Staff)

- Generally, Executive Directors, Directors, cooks, custodial and other non-program staff positions are not eligible for wage enhancement funding.
- Special Needs Resourcing teachers/consultants, enhanced support staff and supplemental staff are ineligible for wage enhancement.
 - The only exception to the noted positions above is if the position spends at least 25% of their time to support ratio requirements, in which case the staff would be eligible for wage enhancement for the hours worked in the eligible position supporting ratio.
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency) are not eligible for wage enhancement.

Home Child Care Enhancement Grant:

To be eligible to receive HCCG; home child care providers must:

- Be located and providing service within the geographical boundaries of the County of Hastings
- Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency;
- Provide services to one child or more (including privately placed children*; excluding the provider's own children);

Full Home Child Care Enhancement Grant

Eligibility for the full HCCG of \$20 per day, home child care providers must:

- Provide full time services on average (6 hours or more a day); and

- Receive base daily fees, excluding prior year's HCCEG, of less than \$265.90 (i.e. \$20 below the cap of \$285.90).

Partial Home Child Care Enhancement Grant

To be eligible to receive the partial HCCEG of \$10 per day, home child care providers must:

- Provide part time services on average (less than 6 hours a day); and
- Receive base daily fees, excluding prior year's HCCEG, of less than \$161.54 (i.e. \$10 below the cap of \$171.54).

Note: Information on privately placed children must be considered when determining eligibility and payments for HCCEG.

Benefits Funding and Flexibility

Benefits funding of 17.5% support operators in meeting their statutory benefit requirements. (including up to 2 weeks of vacation and 9 statutory days). Once all statutory benefits requirements are met, any remaining funding within the 17.5% can be used to fund other benefit expenses paid by the employer on behalf of the employee.

Any residual benefits funding can be used to support wage enhancement salaries allowable expenses. This is one-way funding flexibility only, that is, salary funding cannot be used for benefits.

Supplemental Grant

An additional supplemental grant of \$150 is allocated to operators for each eligible centre based on home visitor FTE and \$50.00 for each eligible home child care provider. The supplemental grant must be used to support staff and home visitors' hourly / daily wage or benefits. It provides operators flexibility to cover salary shortfalls due to increased hours in program or new staff or providers or additional benefits (e.g. vacation days above the minimum of up to 2 weeks, sick days, PA days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered.

Administrative Funding

WEG/HCCEG administration funding is allocated to operators to fund administrative processes associated with implementing wage enhancement /HCCEG. The amount allocated to operators is calculated based on the agencies wage enhancement entitlement for the year.

Accountability Requirements

To ensure accountability and the appropriate use of WEG/HCCEG provincial monies:

- Operators are required to have an existing Service Agreement with the County of Hastings.
- At year end, operators will reconcile the use of monies received.
- Operators are required to continue to apply and maximize all federal supports available.
 - Funding received will be reported as offsetting revenue with year end reconciliation.
- Funds not utilized in accordance with the eligible expenditures outlined in the funding agreement, will be recovered by the County of Hastings.

- Operators must clearly indicate on staff pay cheques and home child care provider fee statements, the portion of the remittance that is being provided through the WEG/HCCCEG initiative by distinctly and separately labelling these monies as
 - ✓ Provincial child care wage enhancement; or
 - ✓ Provincial home child care enhancement grant.

Distribution of Funds

The WEG/HCCCEG funding is cash flowed monthly. The 2022 eligible funding is calculated retroactive to January 1, 2022. Future cash flows will be adjusted to meet the current years entitlement for funding.

Program Closures

Operators must inform the County of Hastings Children’s Services immediately in writing their intentions to close, merge or transfer ownership.

Where a centre or agency applied for WEG/HCCCEG and closes mid-year, the County of Hastings will work with the operator to meet the accountability requirements and support payments to eligible staff and/or home child care providers for hours worked before the closure.

A reconciliation of funds form must be completed and any surplus or remainder of the grant for the year must be returned.

Application and Questions

- Please direct any questions to the Child Care Co-Ordinator via e-mail at: CSfunding@hastingscounty.com
- Application forms, guidance and supporting information are available on The County of Hastings website at: <http://www.hastingscounty.com/services/social-services/childrens-services>
- Applications must be submitted in electronic format to the attention of Sheri-Lynn Collyer, Child Care Coordinator no later than April 22, 2022.
- Applications received after this date will not be eligible for wage enhancement funding in 2022.
- If operations begin in 2022, the Service Provider may apply for wage enhancement funding in 2022.