

## **GUIDELINES**

### **PURPOSE**

Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and other child care program staff play a key role during the critical years of a child's development. However, 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 2022 Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) supports an increase of up to \$2.00 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits for licensed program staff and home visitors. In addition, the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG) supports an increase of up to \$20.00 per day for home child care providers contracted with a licensed home child care agency.

### **FUNDING**

- Child Care Operators (Operators) do not have to have a Service Agreement with the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville to apply for WEG/HCCEG funding.
- Only licensed child care staff and/or licensed home child care providers are eligible for this funding.
- Operators are entitled to this funding regardless of auspice; non-profit or commercial may both make application.
- Funding is allocated to licensed Operators and home child care agencies to support eligible child care program staff, home visitors and eligible home child care providers.
- The Ministry has established an hourly wage maximum of \$28.59 per hour for centre-based staff or an equivalent rate of \$285.90 per day for home child care providers.

### **ALLOWABLE EXPENSES**

- 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 purpose by Operators will be recovered by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (Leeds Grenville).

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

To access this funding, licensed Operators and licensed home child care agencies must make application to Leeds Grenville using the forms provided.

The application form is available electronically for ease of completion.

To support accuracy, the form automatically calculates the total number of FTEs that qualify for the funding, as well as funding levels required and the necessary breakdown by salaries and benefits.

Any Operator that has not made application for the WEG/HCEG by the deadline, will not be allocated funding for 2022. Applications will be reviewed and approved as received.

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA – WAGE ENHANCEMENT GRANT (WEG)**

#### FULL WAGE ENHANCEMENT

To be eligible to receive the full 2022 WEG, RECEs, 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 Leeds and Grenville between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022;
- Has an associated wage of less than \$26.59 per hour (i.e. \$2.00 or more below the cap of \$28.59); and
- Is categorized as a child care supervisor as identified on the agency site licensing letter, RECE, home child care visitor, or can be otherwise counted toward the adult to child ratios under the *Child Care and Early Years Act (CCEYA)*.
- Supplementary program staff positions in place to maintain higher adult-child ratios than required under the CCEYA are also eligible for wage enhancement.

**Note:** Staff performing the duties of Enhanced Support are not eligible for Wage Enhancement for any hours worked in this role (see the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville, *Special Needs Resource Service Guidelines*). Additionally, staff are not eligible for this funding for hours worked as a Covid-19 screener or for enhanced cleaning.

#### PARTIAL WAGE ENHANCEMENT

Where an eligible centre-based or home visitor child care position has an associated base wage rate excluding prior year's wage enhancement between \$26.60 and \$28.58 per hour, the position is eligible for a partial wage enhancement. The partial wage enhancement will increase the wage of the qualifying position to \$28.59 per hour without exceeding the cap.

### INELIGIBLE POSITIONS

- Generally Executive Directors, Directors, cook, custodial and other non-program staff positions are not eligible for wage enhancement funding. The only exception to this provision is if at least 25% of the non-program staff position is used to support ratio requirements; in which case the staff would be eligible for partial wage enhancement for the hours worked in the eligible position supporting ratios.
- SNR funded resource teachers/consultants, enhanced support staff and supplemental staff are not eligible for wage enhancement funding.
- Staff hired through a third party (i.e. temp agency).

### **ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - HOME CHILD CARE ENHANCEMENT GRANT (HCCEG)**

In order to be eligible for HCCEG, home child care providers must:

- Be located and providing service within the geographical boundaries of Leeds and Grenville;
- Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency; and
- Provide services to one child or more (including privately placed children; excluding providers own children).

### FULL HCCEG

Eligibility for the full HCCEG 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 HCCEG

Eligibility for partial HCCEG of \$10.00 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 the HCCEG.

*If at any point the home child care provider stops serving agency placed children, the home child care agency must terminate the transfer of HCCEG funds to the licensed home provider.*

## **BENEFITS FUNDING AND FLEXIBILITY**

Benefits of 17.5% support operators in meeting their statutory employer benefit requirements (including up to 2 weeks of vacation and 9 statutory holidays). Once all statutory benefit requirements are met, any remaining funding within 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 per the above allowable expenses. This is one-way funding flexibility only, salary funding cannot be used for benefits.

## **SUPPLEMENTAL GRANT**

An additional supplemental grant of \$150.00 is allocated to operators for each eligible centre based FTE or home visitor FTE and \$50.00 for each eligible home child care provider is also being provided. The supplemental grant must be used to support staff, home visitors' and providers' hourly/daily wage or benefits. It provides operators flexibility to cover salary shortfalls due to increased hours in program or new staff/providers and additional benefits (i.e. vacation days, sick days, PD days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered.

## **WEG/HCCEG ADMINISTRATION FUNDING**

WEG/HCCEG Administration funding is allocated to operators to fund administrative processes associated with implementing the WEG/HCCEG. The amount allocated to operators is calculated based on the agencies total number of staff/providers eligible for WEG/HCCEG on their 2022 application.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS**

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

- Operators are required to have an existing Service Agreement with Leeds Grenville or are required to sign a Funding Agreement with Leeds Grenville prior to any eligible monies being flowed.
- Operators must clearly indicate on staff pay cheques and home child care provider fee statements, the portion of remittance that is being provided through the WEG/HCCEG initiative by distinctly and separately labelling these monies as:
  - Provincial child care wage enhancement; or
  - Provincial home child care enhancement grant



**Community and Social Services  
2022 Wage Enhancement/  
Home Child Care Enhancement Grant  
Guidelines and Q&A  
Children’s Services Department**

- At year-end, Operators will reconcile the use of monies received.
- Funds not utilized in accordance with the eligible expenditures outlined in the funding agreement, will be recovered by Leeds Grenville.
- Operators are required to cooperate with any audit of payroll records undertaken by or for Leeds Grenville for the purpose of confirming compliance with the funding agreement and guidelines. Non-compliant operators may be deemed ineligible to receive future wage enhancement funding.

**DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS**

The WEG/HCCEG funding is retro-active to January 1, 2022. Therefore, staff, home visitors and licensed home child care providers are to be issued a retro-active lump sum payment within 30 days of agencies receiving their entitlement from Leeds Grenville. Thereafter, WEG/HCCEG is to be flowed to staff, home visitors and licensed home child care providers at the same time and with the same frequency as usual payroll or fee payment.

**Payment of WEG/HCCEG funding will be provided in four (4) installments as follows:**

<b>Q1</b>	25% - Following approval of WEG/HCCEG application
<b>Q2</b>	25% - March 28, 2022
<b>Q3</b>	25% - June 27, 2022
<b>Q4</b>	25% - September 26, 2022

**QUESTIONS**

Questions, concerns, advice or assistance regarding completion of the application forms or advice regarding the funding/eligibility criteria, please contact:

**Teresa Jansman, Financial Analyst**

Phone: 613-342-3840, ext. 2339

Email: [teresa.jansman@uclg.on.ca](mailto:teresa.jansman@uclg.on.ca)

**APPLICATIONS**

Applications are to be submitted in electronic format **as well as** a signed hard copy no later than **March 1, 2022** to the attention of **Danielle Lauzon** [danielle.lauzon@uclg.on.ca](mailto:danielle.lauzon@uclg.on.ca)

The United Counties of Leeds and Grenville  
Community and Social Services Division, Children’s Services  
200 - 25 Central Avenue, West, Brockville, ON K6V 4N6

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## QUESTION AND ANSWER

**Q1. What is the supplemental grant and what can it be used for?**

In addition to wage enhancement, in 2022 the Ministry will provide a supplemental grant for operators, equal to \$150 for each eligible centre based FTE or home visitor FTE. This grant will be automatically calculated on the application forms based on the information provided by operators.

The supplemental grant must be used to support staff, home visitors and providers' hourly/daily wage or benefits. It provides operators flexibility to cover salary shortfalls due to increased hours or staffing, and additional benefits (i.e. additional time in program, new staff or home child care providers, vacation days, sick days or professional development days and/or other benefits) once mandatory benefits are covered. Any funding that is not used for these purposes will be recovered.

**Q2. Are Supervisors eligible for Wage Enhancement?**

Only Supervisors who are named in the agencies' Ministry of Education licensing letter, as a site Supervisor, are eligible for Wage Enhancement Funding. Supervisors who meet this criteria, are eligible to receive wage enhancement for 100% of the time they are working in a licensed child care setting, regardless of the amount of time they are working directly with children.

**Q3. Are Assistant Supervisors/Team Leaders eligible for wage enhancement?**

Assistant Supervisors/Team Leaders may be eligible for wage enhancement if they work in a position that can be counted towards ratio for at least 25% of the day and meet the other eligibility criteria. Yes, however, the position would only receive wage enhancement for hours worked in the eligible position to support ratio and not time in an administrative or other positions.

**Q4. Are casual staff, supply staff and/or part-time employees eligible for wage enhancement?**

Yes, casual staff, supply staff and part-time employees are eligible for wage enhancement, so long as they meet the other eligibility requirements and are required for ratios.

**Q5. Are student positions eligible for wage enhancement?**

Yes, student positions are eligible for wage enhancement if they are required for ratios and meet the other eligibility requirements. Otherwise, student positions are not eligible for wage enhancement.

**Q6. Are non-program staff eligible for wage enhancement (e.g. cook, custodial staff, administrator, etc.)?**

Non-program staff positions may be eligible for wage enhancement funding where at least 25% of the non-program staff position is used to support CCEYA ratio requirements. In these instances, the position would only receive wage enhancement for hours worked in the eligible position to support ratio.

**Q7. Is it the position or the individual staff that is eligible?**

Wage enhancement is based on positions, not staff/employees.

**Q8. Why do I have to include all staff that work for my agency in the application even if they are not eligible for wage enhancement?**

Leeds Grenville continues to collect employee and wage information for the licensed child care system to determine average wages by position, system wage trends, etc. Operators are required to enter all positions employed by their agency regardless of whether these positions work directly with children and/or are counted towards adult/child ratios (e.g. Executive Director, bookkeeper, cook, cleaner, etc.) and/or if the position is eligible for WEG/HCCCEG.

**Q9. What if a position existed in 2021 but doesn't exist now? What happens to that wage enhancement amount?**

If the position no longer exists, the operator is not entitled to receive wage enhancement for that position and should not apply for it through the application process. Leeds Grenville will recover any unused wage enhancement funds and return it to the Ministry of Education.

**Q10. Can the operator/licensed home child care agency decide when to give WEG/HCCCEG funding to the eligible staff/home providers, for example once a year or quarterly?**

No, Operators/licensed home child care agencies must issue wage enhancement funding to staff/home providers in each pay cheque or payment. In addition, operators/home child care agencies must notify staff or home child care providers of the amount provided to them through this initiative on staff pay cheques/home child care provider fee

transfers or through a separate letter. This amount must be labelled either WEG or HCCEG on the payment.

**Q11. Are for-profit child care owners eligible for wage enhancement?**

For-profit child care centre owners who are identified as the "approved supervisor" on their site license for the purpose of the CCEYA are eligible to apply for wage enhancement. If the owner is not the supervisor as per the CCEYA, they may still be eligible for the wage enhancement if they spend at least 25% of their day in a position that can be counted towards ratio. In these instances, the position would only receive wage enhancement for hours worked in the eligible position to support ratio.

Unincorporated for-profit child care centre owners (including partnerships) are required to use information from their T1-2125 to demonstrate their earnings from the business and to calculate their hourly wage. These owners (and partners) will be required to submit this information as part of the application process.

**Q12. I am experiencing a shortfall in wage enhancement funding for the year. How should I handle this? Am I obligated to cover the shortfall?**

Both the supplemental grant and any residual benefits funding (for operators with benefits less than 17.5%) can be used to offset any potential in year WEG/HCCEG shortfalls. However, there may be some situations where due to expansion, addition of new positions, or other unforeseen circumstances, an operator will run out of funding before the end of the year. Should this situation occur, Operators should contact the Children's Services Department.

**Q13. Do operators automatically apply for 17.5% for the benefit component or do we calculate based on individual percentage for different benefits?**

Benefits are automatically calculated at 17.5% in the Wage Enhancement application.

**Q14. My centre provides benefits in addition to mandatory benefits (i.e. more vacation days, dental, etc.), is there additional funding to support this cost?**

Operators are provided with a supplemental grant to support shortfalls related to wage enhancement. The funding can be used to provide wage enhancement for benefits that are in addition to the Operators required mandatory benefits including additional days/hours worked, sick time, off-site professional development days, and/or additional benefits.



**Q15. Our centre does not track sick days separately. Is it possible to use an average number of sick days rather than the actual number?**

Actual number of sick days must be recorded. If this is a problem for your centre, please contact Children's Services.

**Q16. What hours can I include on the application for my program staff?**

For program staff (RECE's, non-RECE's) positions submit:

- Time spent in program during hours of operation;
- Prep time or planning time during hours of operation;
- Case conferences during hours of operation; and
- Any other meetings/commitments where staff are still required to be on-site to maintain ratios during hours of operation.

Hours **not** to be submitted and that are not eligible for WEG/HCCCEG include:

- Training;
- Professional development;
- Covid-19 Screening;
- Enhanced cleaning (i.e. Covid-19 Protocols)
- Off-site meetings or functions; and
- After-hours meetings or functions.

**Q17. Are over-time hours eligible for wage enhancement?**

Yes, over-time hours are eligible for wage enhancement funding.

**Q18. My organization has already committed to a salary/pay increase for 2022; can the wage enhancement be used to address this commitment?**

No, wage enhancement cannot be used to address salary/pay increases committed to by your agency including those committed to by way of negotiated collective agreement increases. Wage enhancement is intended to increase salaries over and above their regular pay entitlement.

**Q19. Staff within my organization have pay grids for each staffing position. Can wage enhancement be used to address salary/pay increases resulting from a staff moving along the pay grid?**

No, wage enhancement cannot be used to address pay grid salary/pay increases. Wage enhancement is intended to increase salaries over and above their regular pay entitlement.

**Q20. If an employee leaves an organization in 2022, is the employee eligible for wage enhancement for the period that they worked in 2022?**

Yes, if the former employee was in a position that was deemed eligible for wage enhancement grant funding then he/she would be eligible to receive wage enhancement from January 1, 2022 to the date of separation. Appropriate effort would need to be made to contact/locate the former employee.

**Q21. We operate a licensed home child care agency that is located within Leeds and Grenville. Some of the providers with our agency are located outside of the geographical boundaries of Leeds and Grenville. Do I apply for all the operators that have a contract with my agency or only the ones located within Leeds and Grenville?**

Licensed child care agencies should only apply to the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville for HCCEG for the home child care providers located within the geographical boundaries of Leeds and Grenville.

**Q22. If a staff is laid off, are they eligible for WEG for this period?**

No, staff that are laid off are not being paid by the employer and therefore are not eligible for WEG during the lay off period.