



FAQ for the Rising STARS Support Grant Application: 2017/2018

KEYSTONE STARS RISING STARS IS AN INITIATIVE OF PENNSYLVANIA'S OFFICE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND EARLY LEARNING TO TARGET FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION PROVIDERS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY CHILD CARE TO HIGH NEED POPULATIONS IN HARD-TO-SERVE COMMUNITIES.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE? All active Keystone STAR 1 child care certified early care providers who are actively working on a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) plan that includes moving up to a STAR 2 in a reasonable amount of time. Also eligible are active STAR 2 providers who received the Rising STARS Support Grant and successfully moved from STAR 1 to STAR 2 as well as STAR 2 providers who have received the maximum amount of Merit Awards (three) but who now are positioned to move to a STAR 3 or 4. Finally, SACC only certified providers WILL also be included as an eligible program. To be eligible, providers may not receive more than two previous support grants (including the previous Rising STARS Support Grants) unless they successfully moved from STAR 1 to STAR 2 using the Rising STARS Support Grant. Eligibility exclusions include STARS Head Start, PA Pre-K Counts, Private Academic Schools (PDE licensed preschool) and School District Pre-K. SAC programs using After School Quality (ASQ) as an Alternate Pathways for STAR 2 will not be eligible for the Rising STARS Support Grant.

HOW MUCH GRANT FUNDING IS AVAILABLE? In order to maximize financial support of as many providers as possible, Rising STARS Grant Funds are available in the following amounts based on Provider Type:

CENTERS & GROUPS: UP TO \$5,000

FAMILY: \$2,000

HOW DO I APPLY? Print the document titled 'Rising STARS Support Grant Application: 2017/18 located on the PA Key website or your Regional Key website. Carefully read all instructions and complete the application in full. There will be no consideration of partial or illegible applications.

WHAT IF I AM UNSURE OF HOW BEST TO USE THESE GRANTS FUNDS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF CARE AND SERVICES IN MY FACILITY? Please contact your Keystone STARS Specialist/Quality Coach who can help you identify how to maximize usage of this support grant. Examples of best practice include classroom materials, curriculum, ERS training and materials, authentic assessment training and materials as well as other ideas that will target grants funds to help your program move to higher STARS. Rising STARS Support Grant funds are not to be used for staff salary.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED TO SUBMIT FOR CONSIDERATION: 1.) A completed Enrollment Calculation Tool (ECT) form, also sometimes referred to as the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) form, for the current Fiscal Year; 2.) Keystone STAR 2 or STAR 3 Standard Status worksheet; 3.) The application completed in full.

Please note that all three documents must be submitted together or application will be invalid.

WHEN IS MY APPLICATION DUE? All Rising STARS Support Grant Applications must be postmarked no later than Thursday, **October 5, 2017** for eligibility and consideration.

HOW WILL MY APPLICATION BE SCORED? In cooperation with representatives from a variety of advocacy groups, OCDEL partners, and program and Regional Key staff, an objective rubric was created that awards points based on information and factors that demonstrate the provider's service to high need, hard-to-serve populations as well as the provider's commitment to using a CQI plan to move up to a STAR 2 or STAR 3. The scoring rubric is standardized and will be implemented statewide.

WHO WILL BE READING AND SCORING MY RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION? The Regional Key associated with the location of the applying child care provider will be responsible for issuing, collecting, scoring, awarding, managing and monitoring the Rising STARS Support Grant initiative. Regional Keys may elect to enlist the assistance of Regional Leadership Councils. OCDEL retains ultimate approval and authority and maintains the right to target funds to high need, hard-to-serve areas of the commonwealth.

WHEN WILL I FIND OUT IF I WILL RECEIVE A RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT? All notifications will be made by the Regional Key in which the facility/home is located on or around **October 27, 2017**. Successful applicants will be contacted directly and provided with Rising STARS support grant paperwork. Please do not contact the Regional Key as this will misdirect resources and potentially delay the notification process.

WHAT IF I FAIL TO COMPLETE THE RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT PAPERWORK BY THE DEADLINE MY REGIONAL KEY GAVE ME? Failure to complete required paperwork in a timely manner will result in forfeiture of eligibility. The Regional Key will rescind the award and offer it to the next highest-scoring applicant.

WHEN DO I HAVE TO SPEND THE RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT IF I RECEIVE ONE? All purchases must be made within a reasonable timeframe and the grant must be closed (which includes completion of all grant paperwork along with Final Expense Report no later than **March 2, 2018**).

WHAT IF I FAIL TO SPEND MY GRANT FUNDS OR FAIL TO SUBMIT THE PAPERWORK TO CLOSE MY GRANT BY MARCH 2, 2018? Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the Rising STARS support grant as identified in the Rising STARS support grant paperwork will result in future ineligibility of all Keystone STARS grants and awards until such time as correction, submission, or restitution has been made.

WHAT IF I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MY RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION RUBRIC? You may contact your associated Regional Key after all Rising STARS support grant notifications have been made and request a copy of the rubric or rubrics associated with your application. The Regional Key will scan/email or mail a hard copy of the rubric or rubrics associated with your application. [Please note; reviewers will not be writing comments on applications nor rubrics. All scores are point-based and data-driven based on objective competencies. Due to time constraints and resource limitations, no feedback for program improvement or enhancement will be provided.]

WHAT IF I WANT TO APPEAL THE DECISION? All appeals must be made in writing to the associated Regional Key no later than **November 3, 2017**. The Regional Key will forward the appeal along with the application and scoring rubric to OCDEL who will act as mediator.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA, COMPLETION OF THE RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT APPLICATION, OR THE RISING STARS INITIATIVE, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL REGIONAL KEY.

STATE LEVEL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT REGARDING OCDEL'S RISING STARS SUPPORT GRANT INITIATIVE MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE BUREAU OF EARLY LEARNING SERVICES EMAIL ACCOUNT AT:
ra-ocdearlylearning@pa.gov