



CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AWARD APPLICATION For Department of Human Services (DHS) Certified Child Care Providers

Please read the entire document and all appendices before completing and sending the *Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Award Application* to your Early Learning Resource Center (ELRC).

Overview

The Child Care Recruitment and Retention Program (CCSRR) is a new Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) initiative and part of the 2025-2026 state budget. The intent of the Program is to provide funding to qualified DHS-certified child care providers for the purpose of issuing staff retention bonuses (to qualified staff) and recruiting new employees. Child care providers must review [Announcement #25-05](#) for additional details, eligibility requirements, and restrictions.

General Information

- The application is due to your Early Learning Resource Center **no later than Thursday, January 29, 2026**.
- Qualified providers can refer to the [2025-2026 Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Award ELRC Submission Information](#) for details on how to submit a completed application.
- Applications received at your ELRC with a postmark date after January 29, 2026, will not be accepted.

Your regional ELRC should be contacted with any questions or assistance needed regarding the completion of the application.

- Inaccurate or incomplete applications will need to be corrected and resubmitted prior to the application deadline.
- All grants are contingent upon the availability of funding.

Provider Eligibility Requirements

Please refer to [Announcement #25-05](#) to ensure all provider eligibility requirements are met before submitting an application to your ELRC.



CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT & RETENTION PROGRAM - APPLICATION

All sections of the application must be completed, signed and dated by a representative of a qualified provider. **The completed application must be submitted to your ELRC on or before January 29, 2026.** If you have questions, please contact your ELRC.

SECTION 1: PROVIDER INFORMATION

Program Name: _____

Program MPI #: _____

Program Address: _____

Street Address

Apartment/Unit #

Program City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Program Director Name: _____

Program Contact Name: _____

Program Contact Phone #: _____

Program Contact Email Address: _____

SECTION 2: PROGRAM FUNDING DETERMINATION

1. What is your provider type as identified on your DHS-issued Regular Certificate of Compliance?

Child Care Center

Group Child Care Home

Family Child Care Home

2. If you are a Child Care Center, what is your licensed capacity as listed on your DHS-issued Regular Certificate of Compliance? _____



SECTION 3: RETENTION BONUSES

3. How many **qualified** staff are employed at this program location? _____

See [Policy Announcement #25-05](#) for additional qualifications.

SECTION 3A: RETENTION BONUSES - QUALIFIED STAFF DETAIL

4. List the name, job title (AGS, GS, AIDE, etc.), minimum hours worked per week directly supervising children (at least 15 hours minimum) and hire date of all **qualified** staff included in your answer to question #3. Staff who are NOT eligible to receive a Retention Bonus should not be included in this section. *If more space is needed, include additional qualified staff in Appendix III.*

Staff Name	Job Title	Hours Worked per Week (Supervising Children)	Date Hired	Do they work at any other DHS certified child care program(s)? <small>(Staff may only be included on ONE program application)</small>
1				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):
2				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):



3				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):
4				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):
5				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):
6				Yes No Other Location(s) Names <u>and</u> MPI(s):
7				Yes No Other Location(s) Names and MPI(s):



SECTION 4: RECRUITMENT BONUSES

5. If available, would your program want to receive Recruitment Bonus funds?

Yes

No

RECRUITMENT BONUSES – MAXIMUM AWARDS

Provider Type	License Capacity	Maximum Number of New Staff Hired with Recruitment Bonuses	Maximum Recruitment Bonus Amount (\$450 Per New Hire)
FAMILY		1	\$450
GROUP		2	\$900
CENTERS	6-77	2	\$900
	78-180	3	\$1,350
	181 +	4	\$1,800
	School Age Only	2	\$900

SECTION 4A: RECRUITMENT BONUSES – VACANT POSITION DETAIL

6. If you answered “yes” to question 5 above, list the titles for each vacant position(s) you plan to hire for that will receive Recruitment Bonus(es). Refer to the Recruitment Bonuses – Maximum Awards chart in Section 4 to determine the maximum number of positions your program may recruit based on provider type and/or license capacity.

STAFF TITLE	STAFF TITLE
1.	3.
2.	4.



SECTION 5. FUNDING REQUEST

In the table below list the total amount requested for each funding category.

	TOTAL NUMBER OF QUALIFIED STAFF	TOTAL
RETENTION BONUSES	_____ x \$450	\$
	TOTAL NUMBER OF RECRUITMENT SLOTS	
RECRUITMENT BONUSES	_____ x \$450	\$
	TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED	\$

SECTION 6: ATTESTATION

I understand by selecting “Yes” or “No” to the following questions, I am attesting that my answers are true.

Have you completely reviewed Announcement #25-05 and understand that by accepting funds, I must follow ALL CCSRR program requirements?	Yes	No
Does your program hold a DHS-issued Regular Certificate of Compliance at the time of application submission?	Yes	No
Is your program open and actively providing care to one or more child(ren) in attendance at your program location at the time you submit this application?	Yes	No
Is your program's regular DHS-issued Certificate of Compliance in a Revocation or Refuse to Renew status with OCDEL's Bureau of Certification Services at the time you submit this application?	Yes	No
At the time you submit this application: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Has your program's Child Care Works provider agreement been revoked due to fraud?Has your program completed reporting on all previous OCDEL grants/awards?Does your program have an open referral to the Office of Attorney General (OAG) or an ongoing repayment plan with an ELRC for previous OCDEL grants/awards?Does the Legal Entity and/or owner of your program owe tax liens/liabilities to the Commonwealth?	Yes	No



SECTION 7. AFFIDAVIT, SIGNATURE, AND APPENDICES I, II, AND III

Affidavit: An affidavit is a sworn statement of fact. By signing this affidavit, you are saying that the information you entered in this form is true. The affidavit is the legal way to swear that your statements are fact. Your signature below validates the information you entered on the form as true, correct, and complete to the best of your ability, knowledge, and belief. You also agree that you understand that your information may be shared with the Office of the State Inspector General or other local, state and federal agencies. Further, you agree that you understand that the penalty for false swearing (affirming false information to mislead a public servant) is a misdemeanor of the third degree pursuant to Section 4903(b) of the Criminal Code and that you can be penalized by fine, jail, prison, subsidized child care ineligibility, or a mixture of these four for making any false statements.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Full Name (Printed): _____

Position Title: _____

By accepting Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program funds and signing this document, you understand the penalty for misleading a public servant or falsifying information is a misdemeanor of the third degree pursuant to Title 18, Section 4903(b) of the PA Crimes Code and you can be penalized by fine, jail, prison, subsidized child care ineligibility, or a mixture of these four options for making any false statements.

Additionally, by accepting Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Program funds you are agreeing to accept the requirements of the award, including the completion and submission (to the ELRC) of the one-page Final Expense Report (FER), and following all other legal requirements in Appendix I.



APPENDIX I

2025-26 CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- I. When the CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT and RETENTION APPLICATION is signed and returned to the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER it becomes official and legally binding, and the signee (and the child care program) is the AWARDEE.
- II. The CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT and RETENTION Program requirements are effective December 15, 2025, through June 30, 2026.
- III. The EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER may disburse funds to the AWARDEE in multiple installments. Retention Bonus funds will be issued to the AWARDEE between January 21, 2026, and March 15, 2026. If funding is available, Recruitment Bonus funds may be issued between February 16, 2026, and April 17, 2026.
- IV. The AWARDEE agrees to:
 - A. Follow all requirements specified in [Announcement ELRC #25-05](#).
 - B. Issue Retention Bonuses to qualified staff within 45 days of receiving payment from the ELRC and by no later than June 30, 2026.
 - C. Return unspent funds as directed by the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER.
 - D. A Final Expense Report will be sent by the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER to each AWARDEE. The AWARDEE must complete and return to the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER by July 31, 2026.
 - E. On the Final Expense Report, the AWARDEE must report any unspent funds. The AWARDEE must make a check payable for this amount and send to the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER no later than July 31, 2026. The EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER will enforce the [Keystone STARS Status Review, Reduction, Suspension, & Removal Process](#) to recoup outstanding funds owed by the AWARDEE. This can include reporting the provider to the Office of State Attorney General (OAG).
 - F. Obtain and keep records of how the AWARDEE spent the funds. If the AWARDEE is selected for onsite and/or virtual monitoring by the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER or DEPARTMENT, the AWARDEE must provide original, unaltered documents for review. The AWARDEE must keep these records for auditing/monitoring purposes at a location accessible to representatives of the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER, the DEPARTMENT, other authorized state representatives or authorized federal agency representatives for a minimum of seven years.
 - G. Return all funds determined by the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER or the DEPARTMENT to be improperly spent. If a financial review by the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER or any state or federal agency determines funds were not properly spent, the AWARDEE must return to the EARLY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER all funds spent that do not meet the



requirements of the program. If the Awardee does not return the funds, the Early Learning Resource Center may suspend the Keystone STARS designation of the Awardee and refer the Awardee to OAG.

- H. Allow the Early Learning Resource Center, Department, or other authorized state or federal agency representatives access to the site where the Awardee's financial records are kept and allow representatives of these agencies to examine all financial records.
- I. Cooperate and participate in monitoring activities by representatives of the Early Learning Resource Center, the Department, other authorized state representatives, and authorized federal representatives.
- J. Adhere to and maintain all local, state, and federal requirements applicable to the operations of the Awardee.
- K. If the Early Learning Resource Center or the Department suspects or is made aware of potential fraud, the Department may refer the Awardee to the Office of State Inspector General (OSIG) for criminal or civil investigation.



2025-26 CHILD CARE STAFF RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PROGRAM LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Monitoring

Monitoring activities by the ELRC and OCDEL will occur in Fall/Winter 2026. A provider chosen for monitoring will be given advanced notice. Providers must submit original, unaltered documents for review. Providers must keep these records at a location accessible to representatives of the ELRC, DHS/OCDEL, authorized state representatives and authorized federal agency representatives for a minimum of seven years after the expiration of the Award. Monitoring by other state or federal agencies may not give advanced notice.

Failure to Submit a Final Expense Report (FER) or Return Unspent Funds

Providers issued an Award must submit a FER and return unspent Award funds to their ELRC by the deadline (July 31, 2026). Providers who fail to meet the requirements will be subject to the Dunning Cycle as detailed in [Commonwealth Management Directive 310.10](#). OCDEL's Dunning Cycle will consist of three letters informing providers of the spending and reporting requirements they agreed to in the Award Eligibility and Acceptance Letter. Failure to respond to the Dunning Cycle will result in an additional letter informing providers of referral to OAG and their Keystone STARS suspension*. OAG is statutorily authorized to collect delinquent debt for state agencies pursuant to 71 P.S. § 204(c).

Returning Funds - Repayment Plans

If a provider is required to return award funds, repayment plans may be available. To initiate this process, the provider must submit a written request to their ELRC.

Allowable Expenses

Retention Bonus funds may only be used to pay a one-time \$450 retention bonus per current, qualified staff member.

Recruitment Bonus funds may only be used to pay a one-time \$450 recruitment bonus to newly hired staff.

* Suspension of Keystone STARS tiered reimbursement for Child Care Works (CCW) enrollments and ineligibility for future grants/awards.