

**Announcement  
ELRC #26-01**



**Pennsylvania  
Office of Child Development  
and Early Learning**

## **Pennsylvania Office of Child Development and Early Learning Bureau of Policy and Professional Development**

**Issue Date:** 03/23/2026

**Effective Date:** 03/23/2026

**Expiration Date:** 06/30/2026

**Subject:** Updates to Announcement ELRC #25-05

**To:** All DHS Certified Child Care Providers; Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRCs); and The Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) ELRC Program Representatives

**From:** Shante' Brown  
Deputy Secretary, Office of Child Development and Early Learning

### **PURPOSE**

To provide an update to Announcement ELRC #25-05 regarding the 2025-26 Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention (CCSRR) Program. The amount per recruitment/retention bonus will increase from \$450 to \$645. Updated bonus amounts will be issued to qualified child care providers whose applications were submitted by the January 29, 2026, deadline, met all eligibility criteria, and were approved. Providers will need to sign and submit back to the ELRCs a CCSRR Award Agreement Amendment (Attachment B) to be eligible for the increased bonus amount of \$645 for eligible staff. The original timeline for this program has been updated to accommodate the increase in bonus amounts. **No additional, new applications will be accepted.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The 2025-26 enacted state budget includes \$25 million for retention and recruitment funding to qualified DHS certified providers. Announcement ELRC #25-05 detailed the launch of the CCSRR Program along with eligibility requirements, the application process (which concluded on January 29, 2026), Final Expense Report (FER) submission instructions and other pertinent details about the funding opportunity.

Per Announcement ELRC #25-05, Early Learning Resource Centers (ELRC) have begun releasing Retention Bonus payments to qualified providers and were scheduled to start releasing Recruitment Bonus payments on February 16, 2026. Qualified providers have until June 30, 2026, to spend or return CCSRR funds.

## DISCUSSION

To reflect the importance of the early learning workforce and maximize all available funding, OCDEL has increased the Retention and Recruitment Bonus amounts for qualified staff from \$450 to \$645; a \$195 increase. As a result, the timeline described in Announcement ELRC #25-05 has been modified. The information below details relevant updates to the payment schedule, based on the type of award and payment status.

### CCSRR Award Agreement Amendment

Completed and signed Award Agreement Amendments will need to be submitted to the ELRCs, by the deadline written on the form to receive the increased amount of \$645. Between March 20, 2026 and April 10, 2026, your local ELRC will send the prepared Award Agreement Amendment with provider information included to each provider with an approved application. If a provider does not submit a signed amendment by the deadline given on the amendment form, the provider forfeits the increased bonus amount and the previous award agreement amount of \$450 will be final.

### Qualified Providers Who Have Received A Retention Bonus Payment

Based on the original timeline, ELRCs have from January 21, 2026 – March 15, 2026, to issue Retention Bonus payments to qualified providers. If a qualified provider with an approved application has already received a Retention Bonus payment from their ELRC, they will receive a second payment by April 15, 2026. The qualified provider must have a signed amendment prior to receiving payment from the ELRC. Qualified providers that receive a second Retention Bonus payment will have 45 days from receipt to pay qualified staff an additional \$195.

### Qualified Providers Who Have Not Received A Retention Bonus Payment

If a qualified provider with an approved application has yet to receive a Retention Bonus payment from their ELRC, the payment will be issued by April 15, 2026. The amount received from the ELRC will reflect a \$645 Retention Bonus for each qualified staff member listed in the approved application. The qualified provider must have a signed amendment prior to receiving payment from the ELRC. Qualified providers will have 45 days from receipt of payment from the ELRC to issue Retention Bonuses to qualified staff.

### Recruitment Bonus Payments for Qualified Providers

Recruitment Bonuses for newly employed qualified staff will now be issued by ELRCs from April 21, 2026 – May 15, 2026. This is a modification from the original timeline. The payment will be calculated based on the number of recruitment slots requested on the qualified provider's approved application with an updated payment amount of \$645 per slot. The qualified provider must have a signed amendment prior to receiving payment from the ELRC.

### Recruitment Efforts

Please note, qualified providers with an approved application who have requested Recruitment Bonus funds are encouraged to continue with recruitment efforts while awaiting payment from their ELRC. In other words, if the provider included funding for

recruitment in their application and a qualified staff member is hired after the application submission date, they are eligible to receive a Recruitment Bonus from May 15, 2026 – June 30, 2026. Examples of how a Recruitment Bonus could be issued by a qualified provider are below:

Example 1: Early Learning ABC submitted a 2025-26 Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Award Application on January 3, 2026. The application requested \$450 for one recruitment slot and was approved. On February 5, 2026, Early Learning ABC hired a new group supervisor with the understanding that they would receive a Recruitment Bonus. On April 29, 2026, Early Learning ABC received \$645 for their requested recruitment slot. During the first pay period in May 2026, Early Learning ABC issues a \$645 Recruitment Bonus to the staff member hired on February 5, 2026.

Example 2: Little Tots 123 submitted a 2025-26 Child Care Staff Recruitment and Retention Award Application on December 28, 2025. The application requested two recruitment slots at \$450 per slot. The provider continuously tried to recruit two new group supervisors between February 2026 – April 30, 2026, but was not successful. Little Tots 123 received their Recruitment Bonus payment from their ELRC on May 2, 2026, at \$645 per slot. On May 23, 2026, Little Tots 123 successfully hires two new group supervisors. Each new hire receives \$645 as a Recruitment Bonus on their June 5, 2026, paycheck.

### Prior Guidance

Prior guidance issued in Announcement ELRC #25-05 that is not specifically mentioned or changed in this document remains valid through June 30, 2026. ELRCs will issue a revised Final Expense Report (FER) to qualified providers with an approved application.

### TIMELINE

Changes from the timeline detailed in ELRC #25-05 are emphasized in **red text** directly below.

**December 15, 2025:** CCSRR Application posted to the DHS and PA Key websites.

**December 15, 2025 – January 29, 2026:** CCSRR Application submission period.

**January 21, 2026 – April 15, 2026:** ELRC timeframe to release Retention Bonus payments to qualified providers.<sup>1</sup>

**January 29, 2026 – March 15, 2026:** ELRC processes applications to verify eligibility requirements are met by both the qualified provider and qualified staff.

**January 29, 2026:** Last day applications will be accepted by the ELRC. Any application postmarked after this date will not be eligible.

**March 20, 2026 – April 10, 2026:** Timeframe for ELRCs to release CCSRR Award Agreement Amendment document to providers with an approved application.

**April 21, 2026 – May 15, 2026:** ELRC timeframe to release Recruitment Bonus payments to qualified providers.

**April 21, 2026 – June 30, 2026:** Provider timeframe to release Recruitment Bonus payments to newly hired, qualified staff.

**June 30, 2026:** Last day for providers to spend or return CCSRR funds.

**July 31, 2026:** Last day for Final Expense Report (FER) forms to be submitted by qualified providers to their ELRC.

## **NEXT STEPS**

1. Read this document in its entirety.
2. Contact your regional ELRC with any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> Original timeline in Announcement ELRC #25-05 set the date for ELRCs to release Retention Bonus payments to qualified providers by March 15, 2026. The modified timeline detailed above extends the deadline to April 15, 2026.