

# **2024 Workforce Innovation Funding Guideline**

Peel Region Licensed Home Child Care  
Agencies

Early Years and Child Care Services

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## Highlight of Changes

- Agency eligibility has been revised to include CWELCC enrolment by August 31, 2024.
- Paid Planning Time Grant has increased to \$75/month.
- Paid Professional Learning Time Grant amounts have increased – see Section D.
- You must create (or update) your WIF Policy and submit it to the Region by April 5, 2024.
- Eligible expenses for recruitment costs and credential evaluation that were available in 2023 have not been included at this time. We are currently evaluating the impact of WIF activities and may make enhancements to WIF in 2024 based on outcome of the evaluation.
- Eligible expenses for child care fees/lunch related to a region-wide professional learning day have been removed as we continue to wait for provincial direction on their workforce strategy.
- Eligible expenses for start-up kits have been removed as these are covered through expansion funding.
- Owner/Operator eligibility amounts have changed. See [Owner/Operator Eligibility Section](#).

## Introduction

This Guideline provides licensed home child care agencies with information regarding the 2024 Workforce Innovation Funding (WIF) to support eligible activities between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024. The activities funded under WIF are part of a pilot to support staff recruitment and retention. We are evaluating the impact of WIF activities to inform future funding opportunities.

Please review this guideline to learn more about the 2024 WIF requirements.

## Section 1: Agency Eligibility

To qualify for WIF, you must **continuously meet** these conditions:

- Be a licensed home child care agency in Peel Region.
- Have a signed EYCCS Funding Agreement with Fee Subsidy and be enrolled into CWELCC on or before August 31, 2024.
- Be open and providing child care to at least one agency-placed child from Peel, unless otherwise directed to close by Peel Public Health (PPH) or the Province of Ontario.
- Be in compliance with the Region's [Deadlines Compliance Policy](#).

Please refer to the [Early Years and Child Care Service Provider Handbook](#) for more information about program closures, shares transfer, asset sales and amalgamations.

## Section 2: Funding Conditions

The following applies to all eligible expenses:

- You cannot use WIF to offset expenses that are included in your 2024 budget.
- When a HCC provider is enrolled with different agencies, WIF support must be provided by the agency that issues the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG).

By accepting the WIF, you agree to:

- Participate in the evaluation process as requested.
- Develop (or update) a WIF policy per Section 4.
- Share information with staff, HCC providers and families as requested by the Region including your policies and inviting them to participate in the evaluation process.

## **Section 3: Eligible Expenses (January 1 to December 31, 2024)**

WIF includes flexible expenses, which means you can use your WIF on the eligible expenses that best address your staff and HCC provider needs.

Your GovGrants Award (2024 WIF) includes allocations under the following budget categories for WIF:

1. Paid Planning Time
2. Other (for Paid Professional Learning Costs and Time)
3. Administration

If you do not use WIF to support Paid planning time or Professional Learning costs and time, we will recover the funding allocated to these expenses.

### **A: Paid Planning Time Grant**

Paid Planning Time improves program quality and HCC provider satisfaction which may lead to increased provider retention. You may use WIF to provide eligible HCC providers with a planning time grant of \$75 per month from January 1 to December 31, 2024.

### **Who is Eligible?**

HCC providers enrolled with an agency that uses WIF to offer Paid Planning Time grants are eligible in any given month if they:

- Actively care for at least one agency-placed child from Peel, and
- Provide services for at least 75% of the agency's business days during that month.

Review the [Distribution and Payment to Staff and HCC providers](#) section to learn about Paid Planning Time requirements.

### **What Activities Qualify?**

Meaningful planning time requires HCC providers to be out of the care environment. Under WIF, paid planning time is dedicated time outside of the HCC provider's regular business hours (off hours) used to:

- Engage in reflective practice, collaborative inquiry around pedagogical approaches (such as inclusive learning environments and experiences, planning and creating environments, use of pedagogical documentation). This includes applying learning from courses or training to improve their program.
- Prepare and document ongoing curriculum based on the four foundations of [How Does Learning Happen?](#) and observations of children's interests.
- Review documentation, identify interests and set goals for a child.
- Research and plan goal-oriented activities that support a child's well-being and create the best possible conditions for learning and development.
- Plan menus that meet the [Canada Food Guide](#) requirements.
- Reflect on and document the impact of current practices and approaches on children and families.

Planning activities can be carried out individually or in groups with providers based on your agency's operational needs.

Paid Planning Time **cannot** be used for:

- Communications with parents.

- Activities that can be done during quiet time.

## **B: Professional Learning Costs**

You can use WIF to reimburse staff and HCC providers (or cover the cost of registering eligible staff) to attend eligible professional learning sessions, courses, and training opportunities.

Professional learning activities organized by your agency qualify if they are not part of your agency's budget and/or regular operations. WIF cannot be used to offset already budgeted professional learning expenses.

Professional learning sessions must be attended and completed between January 1 and December 31, 2024. Graded courses must be passed to be completed. Courses must not be eligible for other bursaries or financial supports, with the exception of professional learning offered through Child Development Resource Connection Peel (CDRCP). You must use WIF first to cover the costs of professional learnings before applying for the CDRCP [Professional Learning Reimbursement](#), where applicable.

### **Who is Eligible?**

The following individuals are eligible:

- HCC providers; and
- Agency staff (full-time or part-time) including:
  - Home visitors
  - Other staff enrolled in an ECE Diploma or Child Development Practitioner Apprenticeship.

Review the [Distribution and payment to staff and HCC providers](#) section to learn about professional learning costs requirements.



## What Courses or Training Qualify?

Training, courses, and professional learning sessions on the following topics qualify:

- years and child care pedagogical practices aligned with [How Does Learning Happen?](#)
- Supporting children with special needs and strategies that support the inclusion of all children.
- Health, safety, and well-being of children (nutrition, first aid, environmental health, communicable diseases, duty to report).
- Mental health and well-being of staff and HCC providers (e.g., Compassion Fatigue, Personal Resilience, Addressing Burnout, Emotional Intelligence).
- Diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Business administration such as business practices, budgeting, leadership, human resource management, policy development and business software Early skills.
- The [CCEYA](#), its regulations and ministry policy.
- Training requirements under the [Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005](#).
- **Newly hired staff or newly contracted HCC providers:** certification in standard first aid, including infant and child CPR, issued by a training agency recognized by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board **only if** the new staff/contracted HCC provider is not certified and courses offered by CDRCPC are not available at the time of hiring.

## Examples of eligible Courses/Training:

- Introduction to Home Based Child Care Certificate and/or Operating a Home Child Care Business course.
- Training recommended by your Early Years Specialist, Quality Initiatives Mentor and/or Resource Consultant feedback.
- Training aligned with your Raising the Bar goals.

- Courses offered through specialized organization, such as the [Geneva Centre for Autism](#) and the [Hanan Centre](#).
- ECE diploma, Child Development Practitioner Apprenticeship, or Micro-Credential college courses (if paid out of pocket and not eligible for other grants such as the [Qualifications Upgrade Program](#)).

**\*Important! Access Other Supports:**

You must require staff and HCC providers to exhaust any other available bursaries and financial supports before accessing WIF. Some of these may include:

- ECE diploma and Leadership Certification courses may qualify for the provincial [Qualifications Upgrade Program](#). This program provides financial support to individuals who work in Early Years settings to obtain an ECE diploma and/or Leadership Certification to become eligible to apply for membership with the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE).
- [Canada-Ontario Job Grant](#) - contact the [Employment Ontario contact Centre](#) to learn more.
- The [Ontario's Small Business Health and Safety Training Program](#) may reimburse eligible employers for a health and safety representative training.

**C: Paid Professional Learning Time (for Agency Staff)**

You can use WIF to encourage eligible staff participation in professional learning activities by using WIF to pay for:

- Base wages and mandatory benefits for extra hours worked to participate in professional learning activities **outside** of a staff's regular hours. For example, a course from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm for a staff who works between 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.
- Travel time: Up to one hour of travel time (round-trip) for each in-person professional learning opportunity outside of regular working hours.

## Who is Eligible?

Full-time or part-time staff including:

- Home Visitors
- Other staff enrolled in an ECE Diploma or Child Development Practitioner Apprenticeship.

Review the [distribution and payment to staff and HCC providers](#) section below to learn about paid professional learning time requirements.

## What Activities Qualify?

Funding for extra hours worked may be used if eligible staff participate in:

- The professional learning opportunities listed above in [Section B \(Professional Learning Costs\)](#).
- Completing the [Continuous Professional Learning \(CPL\)](#) program of the College of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (CECE) for RECEs only.
- [CDRCP professional learning](#) opportunities.
- Completing field placements required to complete an ECE diploma. You may use WIF to pay supply staff's wages and mandatory benefits.
- Meeting with Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) staff on Individual Program Plans (IPP).
- Adapting activities and materials to support goals or strategies outlined in a child's PIRS Individual Program Plan (IPP).

## D. Professional Learning Incentive Grant (for HCC Providers)

The professional learning incentive grant encourages HCC providers to pursue professional learning opportunities. The grant is in addition to the paid professional learning costs and recognizes HCC providers' time to participate in professional learning up to the maximum amounts listed below.

## **Who is Eligible?**

Where an agency provides professional learning incentive grants, HCC providers under contract with the agency qualify if they are caring for at least one agency-placed child from Peel at the start of the professional learning opportunity and meet the agency's definition of an active home for the duration of the course/training.

## **What Activities/Trainings Qualify?**

Trainings, courses and activities listed within [Section B \(Professional Learning costs\)](#) and [Section C \(Paid Professional Learning Time\)](#) qualify.

Review the section [Distribution and Payment to Staff and HCC providers](#) to learn about the professional learning incentive grant requirements.

## **Professional Learning Incentive Grant Amounts**

You may distribute the following amounts to eligible providers for professional learning courses with a duration of:

- 2 hours or less receives \$31.50 per course.
- More than 2 and up to 4 hours receives \$52.50 per course.
- More than 4 and up to 7 hours (maximum for a single day) receives \$105 per course.
- Series of courses with certificate that are more than 7 cumulative hours receives \$210 per course.
- College courses towards ECE diploma - full period (12 weeks) if not eligible for [other supports](#) or introduction to home base child care certificate receives \$378 per course.
- HCC providers pursuing an ECE diploma who must temporarily reduce their child care services to complete a field placement would receive regular provider payment that HCC provider would have received for the day(s).

Amounts are subject to the availability of agency funds.

## **E. HCC Incentive Grants**

We want to help you grow the number of HCC providers enrolled with your agency and providing care to children. You may use WIF to provide HCC providers with a one-time HCC Incentive Grant. HCC Incentive Grants help with the costs of starting (or re-starting) a home child care business and/or meeting the requirements to enroll with an LHCC agency.

### **Who is Eligible?**

HCC providers that are new to your agency or re-enrolling your agency may qualify for the HCC Incentive Grants. Returning HCC providers that are re-enrolling with your agency qualify if they have not been enrolled with your agency since January 1, 2022.

HCC providers already enrolled with the LHCC agency as of December 31, 2023 do not qualify for HCC Incentive Grants unless it is for a second payment committed in 2023.

### **What are the grants for?**

HCC Incentive Grants may be used to help with the cost of starting a home child care, such as:

- Required health and safety training.
- Consumable supplies required to start operations e.g. paper, paint, etc.
- Business plan development, tax and bookkeeping advice and other fees needed to start their business.
- Meeting with home visitor and the first visit observations.

You may provide eligible HCC providers with the following grant amounts:

- **Initial Amount** (at signing time with the agency): \$700
- **Second Amount** (after 6 months):
  - \$400 - if HCC provider has one, or up to three agency- placed children from Peel.
  - \$800 - if HCC provider has four or more agency-placed children from Peel.
    - **Important:** If the second payment for a HCC Incentive Grant will need to be paid after December 31, 2024 (e.g., a HCC provider reaches their 6 month milestone in April 2025), then you must provide a written communication committing to the HCC provider that a second payment will be paid in 2025 based on the number of children enrolled as of December 31, 2024. This communication must be issued to applicable HCC providers by December 31, 2024.

## **Funding Requirements**

If you provide the incentive grants, you must:

1. Decide how to administer them:
  - Who qualifies (for example, HCC providers new to the business/agency, or those re-starting their business, etc.).
  - When the qualifying HCC providers get the grants.
  - How they will receive their incentive grants.
2. Develop a policy for the HCC Incentive Grants. See Section 4 - policy requirement.
3. Issue HCC Incentive Grants as per your policy.

## **F. Administration Costs**

You may use **up to a maximum of 10%** of your WIF (unless the Region notifies you otherwise) for increased costs associated with implementing the funding. Unspent administration funding can be used to support other WIF eligible expenses.

# Section 4: Funding: Distribution, Payments, and Budget

## Payments to Agencies

You will get your WIF for January to December through monthly payments starting on March 6, 2024. You must spend your 2024 WIF by **December 31, 2024**. WIF cannot be carried over from one year to another.

## Distribution and Payment to Staff and HCC Providers:

You **must provide eligible staff and HCC providers with equitable access** to WIF supports with your funding, which means that all eligible staff and HCC providers should have the same opportunity to access WIF supports. We may ask for proof of equitable access at any time.

We encourage you to develop a transparent distribution approach that meets your agency's operational priorities and include it in your policies (as applicable).

## Payments to Staff:

- You must pay staff their regular wage when completing program related functions such as professional learning activities and applicable grants (i.e., WEG, Base Funding and WCF).
- You must pay staff wages for paid professional learning with each applicable pay (i.e., you cannot wait until year-end to pay it out).
- We recommend that a "WIF" notation be included on paystubs for transparency in distribution and for reconciliation/audit purposes.
- You must maintain monthly logs for WIF activity expenses, which include: type of activity/expense, when it was used (date), name of staff, indicate their position, and if the activity is completed during or after regular hours, and

amount. The expectation will be that monthly logs will support the Reconciliation amounts and KPI's. These logs will be subject to audits.

- Cash payments or gift cards are not permitted.

### **Payments to HCC Providers:**

- You must pay HCC providers' planning time and professional learning incentive grants (as applicable to your agency) with each applicable provider payment ((i.e., you cannot wait until year-end to pay it out). You must also pay the Home Child Care Enhancement Grant as applicable.
- We recommend that a "WIF" notation be included on paystubs for transparency in distribution and for reconciliation/audit purposes.
- You must maintain monthly logs for WIF activity expenses, which include: type of activity/expenses, when it was used (date), name of HCC provider, and if the activity is completed during or after regular hours and amount. The expectation will be that monthly logs will support the Reconciliation amounts and KPI's. These logs will be subject to audits.
- Cash payments or gift cards are not permitted.

### **Policy Requirement**

You must develop a written WIF policy that meets your operational needs, the requirements of this guideline, and provides equitable access to WIF funded initiatives. For each WIF-funded activity, your policy should include who qualifies for the payments, what activities qualify, when they get paid, and how they get paid.

- By April 5, 2024, send a copy of your policy(ies) to:
  - i. [earlyyearssystemdivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:earlyyearssystemdivision@peelregion.ca)
  - ii. Your HCC providers and eligible staff
- Pay eligible HCC providers and staff their grants, reimbursements and/or wages and mandatory benefits, as applicable.



- You must notify the region and your HCC providers and eligible staff within 15 calendar days if you change your policy.

**Tip:** You are encouraged to include your approach on your staff training and development policy ([Home Child Care Licensing Manual](#) page 138).

We reserve the right to inform your policy to ensure it achieves the objectives intended.

## Owner/Operator Eligibility

Owner/operators employed by the licensed home child care agency in an eligible position and who receive a T4 for this work are eligible to receive WIF supports up to an amount equal to \$3,100. For example: the owner at Agency "A" is employed as a home visitor. In this case, the owner of agency "A" qualifies for supports up to \$3,100.

## Budget Surplus and Shortfall

You should continuously review your WIF budget and forecast how much you expect to spend in 2024. A [budget tool](#) is available to help you plan your WIF spending. As you implement your funding, you may be in one of the following situations:

- **Balanced Budget** - if you expect to be fully spent, then no action is required.
- **Budget Surplus** - if you expect to have unspent WIF funding by December 31, 2024, then you may increase WIF opportunities for eligible staff and HCC providers, such as offer more access to professional learning.
- **Budget Shortfall** - if you expect to be overspent on your WIF budget by December 31, 2024, then you must take the following action:

- stop covering flexible expenses or continue to support them through your own budget. Expenses over and above the approved WIF amount are your sole responsibility.

## Section 5: Reporting and Accountability

WIF must be used for its intended purpose and cannot be used to generate revenue. This means that the funding cannot be used (directly or indirectly) for an agency's reserves, surplus, profit, and/or retained earnings, etc. WIF must be invested into the program in alignment with the outcomes and requirements in this Guideline and your EYCC Funding Agreement.

- All eligible expenses must be used to support licensed home child care spaces / operations in Peel only.
- All expenses should be claimed only once. If you claim the eligible expense through more than one Early Years and Child Care funding stream, we reserve the right to deem all funding categories ineligible and recover funding in whole or in part.
- Additional reporting or audit requirements may be implemented on a case-by-case basis.

### Reconciliation Reports

You must submit a final 2024 WIF Reconciliation as instructed by the region. A due date will be shared later this year. You must follow the Records and Reports section in your EYCCS Funding Agreement and the Accountability Framework sections of the EYCC [Service Provider Handbook](#).

In your reconciliation, you will report actual expenditures on the following budget categories in GovGrants:

- Paid Planning Time Grant
- Professional Learning Costs
- Paid Professional Learning Time (staff)
- Professional Learning Incentive grant (HCC providers)
- HCC Incentive Grants
- Administration

Key Performance Indicators listed in Appendix 1 will be collected through your reconciliation.

## **Audit and Recoveries**

You must meet all requirements and responsibilities as outlined in the EYCCS [Service Provider Handbook](#).

In addition to these requirements, you must **participate in WIF evaluation activities**. As we pilot this program, we need to understand the impact that each WIF initiative had on staff recruitment and retention.

- You may be required to participate in evaluation activities such as in-person visits, staff, and voluntary parent surveys, focus group sessions, etc.
- Knowing the impact of these WIF activities can help us to inform which initiatives should be extended beyond 2024.

## **Section 6: Contact Us:**

If you have questions, e-mail your EYS or [EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca](mailto:EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca).

## Section 7: Key Terms

- **Base Hourly Wage:** Hourly rate paid to the position by the agency (employer) before regional grants. If the position is paid an annual salary, use an online salary calculator to convert to hourly rate.
- **Mandatory Benefits:** The benefits that you are required to provide to your staff by the law such as: up to 2 weeks of vacation days, 9 statutory holidays, Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Employment Insurance (EI), Employer Health Tax (EHT) if applicable, Workforce Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) if applicable, etc.
- **Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE):** A member in good standing of the [College of Early Childhood Educators](#) (CECE) as outlined on the [Early Childhood Educators Act, 2007](#). Review this link to [learn more about the use of the title](#).

# Appendix 1: Key Performance Indicators (KPI's)

All KPIs should be reported for January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024.

Key Performance Indicator	Description
# of individuals supported with paid planning time	The number of home child care providers who were supported with paid planning time. Count each individual once.
# of individuals supported with professional learning costs	The number of individuals (staff and home child care providers) whose professional learning costs were supported. Count each individual once.
# of individuals supported with paid professional learning time or a professional learning incentive grant	The number of individuals who received funded paid professional learning time (staff) or professional learning incentive grant (home child care providers). Count each individual once.
# of individuals supported with first HCC incentive grant	The number of home child care providers who received the first HCC incentive grant. Count each individual once.
# of individuals supported with second HCC incentive grant	The number of home child care providers who received the second HCC incentive grant. Count each individual once.