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Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) and Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG)

2024 Guideline

Peel Region Licensed Child Care Service Providers





Table of Contents

Section 1: Introduction	3
Section 2: 2024 WEG/HCCEG AmountsEligible Staff/Home Child Care Providers Wage/Daily Fee Cap	
Section 3: Eligibility Criteria	4
Wage Enhancement Grant	
Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG) - Home Child Care Providers	6
Reminder: CWELCC Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) and WEG	6
Section 4: Supplemental Grant	6
Section 5: Benefits Funding	7
Section 6: Administration Funding	8
Section 7: WEG/HCCEG Grant Distribution and Communications	8
Flexibility of Funding Use	
Section 8: Home Child Care Providers Contracted with Multiple Agencies	10
Section 9: Program Closures or Program Shares Transfer, Asset Sales, Amalgamations	10
Section 10: Reconciliation and Reporting Requirements	11
Section 11: Submissions	12
Section 12: Contact Us	12
Child Care/Home Child Care Staff Inquiries	
Appendix 1: Staff Position and Eligibility Chart	13
Appendix 2: Paid Planning, Set-Up, and Closure/Transition Time	15



Section 1: Introduction

This guideline provides licensed Child Care Service Providers and Licensed Home Child Care (LHCC) agencies with information about the 2024 Wage Enhancement Grant/Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (WEG/HCCEG).

The 2024 WEG/HCCEG supports a wage increase for eligible staff working in licensed child care centres/agencies and increased payments to eligible home child care providers. The funding is intended to:

- Close the wage gap between Registered Early Childhood Educators' (RECE) wages in the school board and the licensed child care sector;
- o Retain RECEs, child care staff, and home child care providers to support stable, high-quality child care programs for children; and
- o Support greater employment and income security.

This Guideline is subject to provincial updates.

- We will release details on the WEG/HCCEG Administration Funding component in the new year after we have reviewed provincial guidelines and our funding allocations.
- The Ministry of Education has communicated that they are implementing a new child care funding formula in September 2024. To minimize impacts to agencies, Peel will issue funding for the full 2024 calendar year (January to December). Once the Ministry confirms the date and details of the new funding formula or any other policy changes, we will make the necessary updates. This may include changes to these guidelines, allocations, and length of time of funding announcements.

Service Providers that Receive 2024 WEG/HCCEG Funding Updated

The 2024 WEG/HCCEG allocation will be based on the information you submit in your application.

Starting **December 5, 2023**, you will be notified that your WEG/HCCEG application is open in GovGrants. You must report any changes in eligible positions. The deadline for submission of applications is **December 20, 2023.**

New Service Providers/Sites that Open in 2024:

If you open a new head office in 2024, you can apply for WEG/HCCEG in the next application window anticipated in the Spring of 2024. Service Providers with an existing 2024 WEG allocation who open a new site in 2024 under their existing head office will receive an amendment once operations of the program are confirmed. Approvals will be based on your date of operations and will be back paid to the date of payment. Once available, you will be invited to apply through GovGrants. Approval is subject to funding availability.



GovGrants Technology:

You must apply for the 2024 WEG/HCCEG through the GovGrants technology. This technology will be used to complete applications, allocations, contracts and, if applicable, payments. Please refer to the GovGrants Wage Enhancement user guide for instructions on completing your application. The videos at the following links can support you in creating and submitting your WEG/HCCEG application:

- o WEG/HCCEG Application Link
- o **HCCEG Application Link**

Additional WEG/HCCEG support resources will be posted on Peel's website.

Section 2: 2024 WEG/HCCEG Amounts

The 2024 WEG supports an increase of up to \$2 per hour, plus 17.5% benefits for eligible program staff and home visitors. The 2024 HCCEG supports an increase of up to \$20 per day for eligible home child care providers contracted with a licensed home child care agency.

Eligible Staff/Home Child Care Providers Wage/Daily Fee Cap

For 2024, the wage maximum (wage cap) is **\$30.59** per hour for WEG, **\$305.90** per day for full HCCEG and **\$183.54** for partial HCCEG.

- o Eligible staff with a base wage of less than \$30.59 per hour may receive up to \$2 per hour of WEG.
- o Eligible home child care providers receiving a base daily fee of less than \$305.90 may receive up to a maximum of \$20 per day of HCCEG.
- Partially eligible home child care providers receiving a base daily fee of less than \$183.54 may receive up to a maximum of \$10 per day of HCCEG.

Section 3: Eligibility Criteria

Wage Enhancement Grant

Staff may qualify for full or partial WEG based on the following eligibility criteria:

Eligible Amount	Eligibility Criteria
Full wage	Be a child care supervisor, RECE, home child care visitor, or a position
enhancement of	otherwise counted toward adult-child ratios under the Child Care Early
\$2 an hour (plus	Years Act, 2014 (CCEYA) in a licensed child care centre or home child care
17.5% in benefits)	 agency. Earn less than \$28.59 per hour (\$2.00 or more below the wage cap of \$30.59) as a base wage, including any historical wage grants (i.e., former Historical Wage Subsidy and Pay Equity) but excluding prior year's WEG. Program staff positions in place to maintain higher adult-child ratios than required under the CCEYA, and meet the eligibility outlined in this quideline are also eligible for WEG.



	• Reminder: WEG funds used to fund overtime hours are not paid as time and a half. These funds are directed to licensed child care staff to increase wages (up to \$2.00 below the wage cap of \$30.59) and benefits. This includes all hours worked in program, including overtime hours.	
Partial wage	Partial WEG payments will be provided to increase the wage of the eligible	
enhancement of	ncement of position (as listed above) between \$28.60 and \$30.58 per hour without	
less than \$2 per	s than \$2 per exceeding the cap of \$30.59.	
hour (plus 17.5%	 For example, if an RECE position has a base wage rate, excluding the 	
in benefits)	previous year's WEG, of \$29.18 per hour, the position would be eligible for WEG of \$1.41 per hour for a combined wage of \$30.59 per hour.	

Ineligible Positions (Non-Program Staff)

The following positions are not eligible to receive WEG/HCCEG:

- o Cook*; Custodian*; Clerical*; Other non-program staff positions*;
- o Special Needs Resourcing funded resource teachers/consultants, and supplemental staff*; and
- o Individuals hired through a third party. A temporary staffing agency is considered a third party.

Home Child Care Enhancement Grant (HCCEG) - Home Child Care Providers

When determining eligibility and payments for HCCEG, information on privately placed children must be considered. Eligible Home Child Care Providers must provide services to one child or more, including privately placed children but excluding their own children.

Home Child Care Providers may qualify for full or partial HCCEG based on the following eligibility criteria:

Eligible Amount	Eligibility Criteria
Full HCCEG of	Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency;
\$20 per day	 Have one child or more enrolled (including privately placed children; excluding the provider's own children);
	 Provide full-time services on average (6 hours or more a day); and
	 Receive base daily fees, excluding the prior year's HCCEG, of less than \$285.90 (i.e., \$20 below the cap of \$305.90).
Partial HCCEG of	Hold a contract with a licensed home child care agency;
\$10 per day	 Have one child or more enrolled (including privately placed children; excluding the provider's own children);
	 Provide part-time services on average (less than 6 hours a day); and
	 Receive base daily fees, excluding the prior year's HCCEG of less than \$173.54 (i.e., \$10 below the cap of \$183.54).

^{*}However, if the position listed above spends at least 25% of the time supporting ratio requirements under the CCEYA, it is eligible for WEG/HCCEG for the hours they supported ratios.



Additional Eligibility Information

- If an eligible staff member or home child care provider receives an increase to their base hourly wage or daily fee and exceeds the cap in 2024, they will no longer be eligible to receive funding through WEG/HCCEG.
- o If a home child care provider has a child enrolled that does not temporarily require care, such as when a child is sick or absent, the provider should continue to be eligible for HCCEG payments if the licensed home child care agency provides payment for that day.
- o If a home child care provider stops serving children at any point, you must terminate the transfer of HCCEG funds to the provider.
- If you contract with home child care providers who work for more than one agency, refer to Section
 8: Home Child Care Providers Contracted with Multiple Agencies for further direction.

Reminder: CWELCC Workforce Compensation Funding (WCF) and WEG

If you are enrolled in the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) program, you must apply for WEG to qualify for the CWELCC Workforce Compensation Funding. For more information about WCF and to learn how WCF and WEG work together, refer to the CWELCC Funding Guideline.

Section 4: Supplemental Grant

In addition to the WEG/HCCEG funding, you will receive a Supplemental Grant. It provides an additional amount of:

- o \$150.00 for each eligible full-time equivalent (FTE) position at a centre or home visitor; and
- o \$50 for each eligible home child care provider.

For example, if a centre has 12 FTEs, they would receive \$1800 (12 x \$150) as their Supplemental Grant.

You may use your Supplemental Grant to support staff, home visitors' and home child care providers' hourly/daily wage/payments or benefits once all statutory benefits requirements are met.

You may use your Supplemental Grant to cover:

- Salary/payment shortfalls between the hours included in your application and actual hours/days worked (e.g., due to increased hours/days worked in program or for professional development, or new staff/home child care providers);
- o Additional employer mandatory benefits such as vacation time/pay or sick days associated with the payment of WEG; and
- o Other employer benefits/deductions included in your human resources policy, once employer mandatory benefits are covered (this excludes private and personal health and dental benefits).

Important: The Supplemental Grant cannot be:

- o Paid as a flat rate lump sum or
- o Used towards administrative expenses.



While the Supplemental Grant is funded based on FTEs, you can set priorities for using this grant. The Supplemental Grant for each eligible position must be calculated based on hours/days worked or a benefit percentage. Please ensure staff know about your agency's approach to distributing this funding. Any funds not used for these purposes will be recovered.

Section 5: Benefits Funding

Employer Mandatory Benefits are funded at of 17.5% to support you in meeting your statutory benefit requirements as listed below:

Statutory Contributions		
Employer	Canada Pension Plan (CPP)	
Contributions	Employment Insurance (EI)	
	Workers Safety Insurance Board (WSIB)	
	Employer Health Tax (EHT)	
Employee	Vacation Pay	
Benefits	Public Holiday Pay (nine statutory holidays):	
	 New Year's Day, Family Day, Good Friday, Victoria Day, Canada 	
	Day, Labour Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, and Boxing Day	

Note: You should seek professional financial guidance regarding mandatory benefit payments to staff.

Additional information is available on the Canada Revenue Agency website: <u>Employers' Guide - Payroll</u> Deductions and Remittances.

Once you have met statutory benefits requirements (including vacation and nine statutory holidays), any remaining funding within 17.5% can be used to fund other benefit expenses associated with WEG/HCCEG or \$2.00 per hour payments that the employer pays on behalf of the employees (i.e., staff that receive wages for paid days off such as vacation days or statutory holidays as outlined in your human resources policy are also eligible to receive WEG payments through remaining unallocated Supplemental Grant). You must be able to demonstrate the costs associated with such plans concerning how WEG/HCCEG funding is distributed.

For reconciliation purpose this means:

- The hours/days worked in program are expensed through the WEG/HCCEG.
- Incremental Benefits (as permitted above) are expensed through the Supplemental Grant
- Examples:
 - Staff A: Worked 7 program hours on December 1, they receive \$2/hour in WEG, you
 expense \$14 against WEG salary and claim the incremental employer portion of mandatory
 benefits associated with the wage enhancement against the Supplemental Grant.
 - Staff B: Had a paid statutory holiday on Thanksgiving, this is expensed as a benefit and not through salary budgets.
 - Staff C: Took a paid sick day on December 15, this is expensed as a benefit and not from WEG salary budgets.



In addition, you can use any unused benefit funds to pay salaries for hours worked associated with WEG/HCCEG. This is a one-way flexibility of funds as the salary budget cannot be used to cover benefits.

You must document mandatory and other benefits associated with the \$2.00 per hour paid to staff. Please ensure your payment records allow for this reporting expectation.

Section 6: Administration Funding

Administration funding must be used to support administration expenses associated with the implementation of WEG/HCCEG, such as:

- Additional costs associated with the internal payment processes required to provide WEG/HCCEG to staff and home child care providers;
- Upgrading payment systems;
- o Training for staff related to this initiative; and
- o Internal process to track data and expenditures to fulfill reporting requirements.

Important for 2024

Peel will release details on WEG/HCCEG administration funding in spring of 2024 after reviewing provincial guidelines and funding allocations.

Section 7: WEG/HCCEG Grant Distribution and Communications

You must provide payments to all eligible staff/providers, as per your approved application or as amended by Peel, once your WEG/HCCEG funding has been received from Peel. Payment is for hours/days worked from **January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024**.

Payments to Eligible Staff and Home Child Care Providers

Grant Type	Payment Information
WEG/HCCEG	 WEG payments should be provided to eligible staff for each hour worked in 2024. See Appendix 1 and 2 for details. HCCEG payments should be provided to eligible providers for each day paid in 2024. If you open in 2024, applications will be calculated based on the actual or estimated number of hours/days worked. Payments to staff/home providers are based on actual hours/days worked in 2024. WEG/HCCEG payments are over and above provincially legislated minimum wage. Payments to staff/providers are in addition to planned salary/payment increases.



	 Hourly/daily wage cap includes salary from Historical Wage Grants (i.e. any historical wage grants that are part of regular salary to staff) but excludes WEG salary from prior years. Surplus funding for salaries cannot be used for benefits. If more than one person is filling an eligible position in 2024, payment for hours/days worked by each staff/provider from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, will be paid. You are required to demonstrate due diligence when making payments to former staff/home child care providers.
HCCEG only	 Daily increases for HCCEG cannot exceed \$20.00 per day or the daily cap of \$305.90. HCCEG payments are paid to eligible home child care providers for each day worked in 2024.
WEG only	 Salary increases for WEG cannot exceed \$2.00 per hour or the wage cap of \$30.59 per hour. Benefits may exceed 17.5% if the supplemental grant is used to support additional benefits once mandatory requirements are met. You should pay WEG for statutory holidays, vacation time and paid sick days (if applicable). Employer mandatory benefits are funded at a rate of up to 17.5%.

Flexibility of Funding Use

Staff/providers working in approved positions are prioritized to access WEG/HCCEG. Eligible positions not included in the application may be funded at the discretion of the Service Provider. For example, unused benefit funding and the Supplemental Grant may support additional hours/days worked once mandatory requirements are met.

You can redistribute surplus WEG/HCCEG funding to offset shortfalls in other eligible positions, provided commitments to approved positions have been met.

If WEG/HCCEG funding is exhausted, notify impacted positions that their 2024 WEG/HCCEG payment will cease and provide an as-of-date. Please notify Peel before notifying staff/providers to ensure you have utilized your funding flexibility options within your approved budget.

You can use WEG/HCCEG funding to cover enhancements for hours/days worked in program (in ratio), paid professional learning time, paid planning time, set-up time, closure/transition time, and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by the organization. Refer to Appendix 1 for details on eligible hours/days worked for each position and Appendix 2 for details on paid planning, set-up and closure/transition time.

Payment Frequency and Communication to Staff and Home Child Care Providers

You must issue WEG or HCCEG payments to staff/home child care providers on each pay cheque/payment.



Payment to staff/home child care providers must be recorded:

- o On each staff pay cheques and home child care fee transfers, labelled as "Provincial Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant" or "Provincial Home Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant"; or
- o In a separate letter, labelled as the "Provincial Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant" or "Provincial Home Child Care Wage Enhancement Grant," indicating the portion of funding provided to them through the 2024 WEG/HCCEG.

You are required to develop an updated distribution policy for WEG/HCCEG. The policy must cover the following:

- Salary and benefit rates funded for staff/providers;
- o Payment frequency and funding amounts; or
- o Priorities and approach to using the Supplemental Grant (i.e. shortfalls, additional positions, sick hours, etc.).

Your distribution policy must be shared with all staff/home child care providers. You are not required to submit this policy, but you may be required to demonstrate that communication has been shared upon request by Peel. You should also ensure staff have access to current WEG/HCCEG resources.

Section 8: Home Child Care Providers Contracted with Multiple Agencies

If a home child care provider is contracted with two or more agencies, you must work together to determine how payments will be made to the home child care provider. Please refer to the table below for further information on payment distribution.

	Scenario	Payment Distribution
1	The home child care provider	The combined payments shall not exceed the following:
	receives HCCEG payments from	 \$20 per day for providers eligible to receive the full
	two or more agencies.	payment; or
		 \$10 per day for providers eligible to receive partial
		payment.
2	A home child care provider is contracted with more than one agency in 2024.	The agency with the higher HCCEG payment eligibility (e.g. higher number of eligible days and full-time vs. part-time eligibility) will pay the home child care provider.
3	If two agencies are both eligible to pay the provider with equal service levels.	The agency with the earlier licence date will pay the provider in 2024 (i.e., agency "A" was licensed in 1995, and agency "B" was licensed in 1975; agency "B" will pay the provider).

Section 9: Program Closures or Program Shares Transfer, Asset Sales, Amalgamations

Please refer to the <u>Early Years and Child Care Service Provider Handbook</u> for more information about program closures, shares transfers, asset sales, and amalgamations.



Section 10: Reconciliation and Reporting Requirements

Peel monitors WEG/HCCEG expenses through the reconciliation and reporting process.

The final reconciliation and reporting package will be due to Peel in the first quarter of 2024.

Area	Requirement
Reporting	Complete and submit the Reconciliation on time. Late submissions will be
Requirements	subject to the Hold Policy and Deadline Compliance Policy.
-	 Provide a statement from the Owner or Board of Directors which attests that
	100% of:
	 WEG was provided to eligible staff and/or
	 HCCEG was provided directly to eligible providers and eligible home visitors.
	 You must keep appropriate records verifying the amount of WEG/HCCEG funding received per your contract and documentation of payments and distribution of funds to staff/providers.
	 You must report funding used by position category (i.e. RECE/Non-RECE/Supervisor/Home Visitor) by eligibility (i.e. full/partial) and must be entered by wage component (i.e. salary/benefits).
	 Payments to Home Child Care Providers must be reported by eligibility (i.e. full/partial). All WEG/HCCEG must be used to support the funding conditions outlined in your Service Agreement. Peel will recover any unspent funding.
Audit	You are required to keep all original expenditure documentation, including
Approach	financial records, in accordance with the requirements of the Canada Revenue Agency for a minimum of 7 years to ensure funding was used as per Regional requirements.
	 You may be selected for a review of the WEG/HCCEG expenses identified in your annual Reconciliation Report through Peel's WEG/HCCEG Distribution Review process.
	 Peel may conduct site visits to confirm that funding was used for the approved purpose(s). If deemed necessary, an accountability review may be completed.

If Peel determines that you have failed to meet the funding conditions outlined in this Guideline, we will recover all misused funds and/or request enhanced reporting and applicable documentation. Additionally, non-compliant Service Providers may be deemed ineligible for future WEG/HCCEG funding. We reserve the right to recover any unused funds that would be required to be refunded to Peel from your future payments.

If you receive a reduction of funds due to a past recovery, you are still required to maintain the same level of quality service provisions as your overall allocation is not impacted (i.e. you have funding from the past recovery to offset the reduction in payment).



Section 11: Submissions

Non-compliance occurs when you fail to submit required information, documents, or reporting in the time or manner prescribed in this Guideline, your EYCCS Funding Agreement, or as requested by Peel. When non-compliance is identified, we will follow Peel's <u>Hold Policy and Deadline Compliance policies</u>.

Section 12: Contact Us

Child Care/Home Child Care Staff Inquiries

You are required to provide payment(s) to all eligible staff once funding has been received. If Peel is contacted by your staff member/home visitor/provider regarding the funding they were eligible for, the staff/provider will be asked to direct their question to you. If the centre staff/home visitor/provider does not feel that their question is being addressed, Peel will contact you on their behalf.

Contact Information

Please direct general WEG/HCCEG inquiries to EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca.



Appendix 1: Staff Position and Eligibility Chart

Positions in a Licensed Child Care Centre or Home Child Care Program	Eligibility Criteria
Non-Program Staff: • Administrator/ Director/Owner • Housekeeper/ custodial Staff • Cook • Other	 Not eligible to receive the WEG unless the following requirements are met: The position spends at least 25% of their time working in a position that supports ratio requirements. The Staff would be eligible for only the hours/days worked in the eligible position supporting ratios and the supervision of children in program.
RECE/Non-RECE Program Staff	 in an eligible program position. Eligible hours/days worked in program, paid professional learning, paid planning time, paid set-up time and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization.
Ratio/Float Support Program Staff	Eligible hours/days worked in program, paid professional learning, paid planning time, paid set up time, and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization.
Casual or Supply Program Staff	 Eligible for hours/days worked in the program, paid professional learning, paid planning time, paid set-up time, and paid time spent in meetings mandated by your organization. Please note it may not be necessary to apply for these staff as the casual staff/supply staff would access the WEG/HCCEG budget requested for the eligible position they are working in. For example, if a Toddler Staff is away sick, then the 8 hours would be paid to the staff working in the Toddler program that day. Casual or supply staff hired through a third party (i.e., a temp agency) are not eligible to receive WEG/HCCEG.
Summer Program Staff	 Eligible for hours/days worked in program, paid professional learning, paid planning time, paid set up time, and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization, provided other eligibility requirements are met. Must be employed and working in a permanent full or part-time position. Contracted positions for the summer are eligible, provided the positions are part of regular payroll and meet the definitions outlined under the Employment Standards Act.



Supervisor	 Eligible to receive the WEG for time working in a licensed child care program, paid professional learning, paid set up time, and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization, if hourly wage is eligible. Staff working in the Supervisor position must have Director's approval and meet licensing requirements outlined by the Ministry of Education. Service Providers must be able to demonstrate eligible hours/days worked in an eligible program position.
Home Child Care Visitor	 Eligible to receive the WEG for time working to support the supervision of home child care providers, including paid professional learning and paid time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization, if hourly wage is eligible. Staff working in the Home Visitor position must have director's approval and meet licensing requirements outlined by the Ministry of Education.
Home Child Care Provider	 Eligible to receive the HCCEG for days worked providing care to one or more children (including privately placed children, excluding the provider's own children). Eligible for days worked in paid planning time. Must be actively contracted by a licensed home child care agency and meet the base daily fee eligible rates. Note: Fees collected for privately placed children are to be included when determining eligibility rates for the HCCEG.
Resource Teacher /Consultants	Not eligible for WEG/HCCEG as their positions may not be counted towards the required ratio for supervision under the CCEYA.
Owner/Operator	Not generally eligible for WEG/HCCEG unless they fill an eligible position set out above and meet all other eligible requirements (e.g., hourly wage). The Owner/operator would be eligible for only the hours/days worked in the eligible position.



Appendix 2: Paid Planning, Set-Up, and Closure/Transition Time

For added clarity, paid planning, set-up and closure/transition time include the following:

Paid Planning Time:

Paid Planning Time is dedicated time outside of supporting ratio by eligible program staff to do the following activities:

- Engage in reflective practice and collaborative inquiry around pedagogical approaches (for example, inclusive learning environments and experiences, planning and creating environments, use of pedagogical documentation). This includes applying learning from courses or training in the classroom.
- o 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 group or 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.
- Reflect on and document the impact of current practices and approaches on children, families, and others.
- o Provide coaching and mentoring for any staff supporting ratio.

Paid Set-Up Time:

Paid set-up time is dedicated time outside of ratio by eligible program staff to support classroom transition and set-up.

Up to **30 minutes per day** for eligible staff for set-up and transitions of programs (e.g. before, after, and in-between) programs) and includes the following activities:

- o Snack and food preparation,
- o Classroom set-up,
- o Paperwork and filling out forms, and
- Parent communications.

Paid Program Closures/Transition Times:

Up to **five days per year** to support with transitions and set-up between programs that are closed and includes the following activities:

- o Classroom set-up,
- o Program and curriculum development,
- o Parent communications,
- o Professional development,
- o Paperwork and filling out forms, and
- o Organizational meetings.