



Dear Early Learning Program Professional,

We are excited to announce that applications are now being accepted for the Capital Area Retention and Elevation (CARE) Program, an initiative designed to reward and recognize the essential role your staff plays in providing high-quality childcare. This program offers financial incentives to eligible providers, with the goal of strengthening staff retention, motivation, and overall caregiver satisfaction—ultimately benefiting the children and families you serve.

Please read this letter in its entirety to fully understand the program details, eligibility requirements, and next steps for application.

Purpose of the Program

The Capital Area Retention and Elevation (CARE) Program is more than just financial support. It is a strategic investment in the quality of care your team provides. The initiative aims to:

- Recognize and reward staff for their dedication to early childhood education and the positive impact they have on children’s development.
- Improve retention and motivation by offering financial incentives that encourage staff to remain in their roles and grow in their careers.
- Foster a nurturing, supportive work environment for both caregivers and children, contributing to the long-term well-being of families in our community by ensuring access to consistent, high-quality childcare.

This program is **not** intended to replace wages or bonuses that your program already provides.

Provider Eligibility Requirements

To qualify for bonus payments, providers must meet the following criteria:

- **Contracted Provider:** Must be a contracted provider with WFS Capital Area.
- **Location:** Must operate within Travis County.
- **Enrollment Requirements:** Must have at least one Capital Area CCS child in care as of February 10, 2025.

Priority Consideration

If funding exceeds the number of eligible applicants, priority will be given to providers that:

- Serve a higher number or percentage of CCS children.
- Care for children aged 0-5.
- Are located in childcare deserts. [View childcare desert data.](#)

Please note that the amount requested for each staff member is not guaranteed and will be awarded based on the distribution of available funds.

Application Link

To submit your application, please [click here](#).

Site Data Form Requirement

When submitting your application, you will be required to upload your [site data form](#) as part of the application process. If you have any questions about this requirement or need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to your mentor for guidance.

Work Environment Survey Requirement

Recipients of the grant will be required to complete a work environment survey with their staff. Further details will be provided in the award letter.

Payment Details

- **Direct Deposit:** Bonus payments will be directly deposited into the provider's bank account.
- **Discretionary Allocation:** Providers can allocate funds to staff based on individual contributions, including directors, administrative personnel, and support staff. **Note: All funds, except for the 10% administrative fee, must be used exclusively for staff bonuses.**
- **Bonus Distribution:** Not all staff members need to receive a bonus, and the amounts can vary between individuals.
- **Considerations for Allocation:** Providers may consider factors such as tenure, education, and performance when determining the amount for each staff member.
- **Grant Details:** The grant amount for this program ranges from **\$1,000 to \$3,000 per staff member**, as indicated on the application. The amount requested is not guaranteed and will be awarded based on the distribution of available funds
- **Administrative Fee:** Providers will receive an additional 10% of the total awarded funds to cover administrative expenses.

Distribution Timeline

- **Payment Distribution:** Providers must distribute bonus payments within **60 days** after receiving funds.
- **Proof of Payments Submission:** Documentation verifying the distribution of payments must be submitted by **August 29, 2025**.

Tax Considerations

We strongly recommend consulting with a tax professional to understand how receiving this grant may impact the tax obligations of your early learning program.

Additionally, please inform your staff that bonus payments may impact eligibility for government programs or assistance. We encourage them to consult a tax professional to

understand how these payments may affect their overall income or benefits. [For more information, click here to share this resource with your staff.](#)

Acceptable Proof of Payments

Providers must submit one of the following as proof of payment:

- Paycheck stubs reflecting the bonus payments.
- Bank statements showing direct deposits to staff accounts.
- Payroll reports detailing issued bonuses.
- Other documentation may be accepted with prior approval from program administrators.

Nonacceptable Proof of Payments

The following will not be accepted:

- Unverifiable Word documents or text files.
- Spreadsheets or Excel files without supporting documentation.
- Handwritten notes or informal records.
- Invoices or billing statements lacking clear payment detail

Failure to submit timely documentation may result in recoupment of funds.

Application Disclaimer

Submitting an application does not guarantee funding. Eligibility will be verified, and awards will be distributed based on available funds and compliance with program requirements.

Workforce Solutions Capital Area reserves the right to make adjustments to the program in future years, including but not limited to changes in funding, program requirements, and eligibility criteria.

Additional Information

- **Record Keeping:** Providers are encouraged to maintain accurate records of all bonus allocations to streamline the submission process.
- **Audit Compliance:** This funding is subject to State and Federal audit requirements. Providers must comply with all necessary audits.
- **Follow-Up Survey:** A follow-up survey will be sent six months after payment distribution. Providers must complete this survey as part of the program's accountability process.
- **Contact Information:** For questions or clarifications, please contact wfs.trs@wfscapitalarea.com.

Important Dates

Application Open	Application Deadline	Award Letters Sent	Funding Released	Reporting Documents Due
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February 10, 2025	February 28, 2025	April 2025	June 2025	August 29, 2025
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Thank you for your continued commitment to providing quality care to children and supporting your dedicated staff. We are honored to be part of this important initiative, which enhances both the wellbeing of caregivers and the children they nurture.

Warm regards,

Heather Pate
Child Development and Early Education Supervisor
Workforce Solutions Child Care Services

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

Q: If a home provider doesn't have additional staff, do they still need to submit proof of payment?

A: Yes, we still require some form of documentation or proof. This could be a printout of their bank statement or transfer history showing the funds were deposited into their account. It's important that the account receiving the payment matches the name of the program or the "Owner/Director" listed with the program.

Q: If a staff member leaves after the provider has submitted their funding request, can they reallocate those funds to other staff members?

A: Yes, providers have the flexibility to reallocate funds to other staff members, as long as the amount per person remains between \$1,000 and \$3,000. For example, funds can be redistributed to a more experienced staff member or to adjust for staffing changes. However, if the provider loses all staff and cannot stay within the \$3,000 limit, we may need to request a partial refund of the funds. To avoid overpayments, we may ask providers to confirm their total funding amount just before we process the payment.

Q: Does the awarded amount go to staff at the specific center, or can it be shared across multiple locations within the same organization?

A: The award is designated for employees at the specific location where the money was awarded. Employees must be employed at that location to receive the award.

Q: Which positions in a program are eligible for a bonus?

A: All positions are eligible, including teachers, administrators, and support staff.

Q: What is the maximum number of teachers at a program who can receive a bonus?

A: There is no maximum limit; the number of bonuses awarded will depend on available funding.

Q: What are the restrictions on this funding?

A: All funds, except for 10% admin fee, must be used exclusively for staff bonuses.

Q: Are part-time staff eligible for this bonus?

A: Yes, part-time staff may be eligible. The decision is at the discretion of the director or owner, who determines the individuals to be awarded the bonus.