

HCBS AGENCY DIRECT CAREGIVER WORKFORCE RETENTION & RECRUITMENT INCENTIVE

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. My agency works under multiple Medicaid 1915(c) waivers. Can I apply for more than one retention incentive for my employees?

A. No. Each agency is eligible to access retention incentive funds once for their employees.

Q. I have an employee that works part-time for another agency that provides services under a Medicaid 1915(c) waiver. I'm not sure if they are also going to offer the incentive. Does their decision limit mine? In other words, can I still offer a retention incentive to my employee, even if they are also employed somewhere else?

A. Yes, you can still offer the retention incentive to your employee. The decision about your retention incentive program is yours to make. There are no program limitations that prohibit an individual employee from receiving a retention incentive from multiple employers as long as they meet the overall program eligibility criteria.

Q. Can a single employee receive both a recruitment and a retention incentive?

A. Yes. There is no programmatic prohibition on an employer participating in both incentive programs. Nor is there a prohibition on an employee benefitting from both incentive programs. The specific design of the program is left to the discretion of the employer.

Q. Is the Retention Incentive considered income to the employee who receives it?

A. This incentive is an employer-delivered incentive. As such, your normal policies regarding income and reporting should apply.

Q. Can the provider deduct payroll taxes from the incentive money?

A. Yes, all payroll related taxes can be deducted from the incentive allotment. However, providers are not allowed to assess an administrative fee.

Q. My company is trying to decide how we want to utilize the retention incentive dollars. We are considering a couple of options, including a twice-yearly payment or a monthly payment to our employees? Is there any reason for us to choose one over the other?

A. The only program limitations to consider are that DHS will accept requests for reimbursement no more than monthly, and that the capped incentive amount of \$2,100

can be spread over a period of 12 months per employee. Each employer is being granted discretion as to how you want to target these retention incentives to best meet your business need.

There are a variety of studies that have been conducted in recent years that offer insight as to the efficacy of various types of retention incentives. As the goal of this initiative is to help stabilize and strengthen the home and community-based services sector by reducing employee turnover, DHS encourages employers to design their own implementation with effectiveness in mind.

Q. The program description says that an individual who has worked for another eligible agency in the 90 days prior to hire, is NOT eligible for the recruitment incentive. How will I know this?

A. It is the responsibility of you as the employer to verify adherence to this program expectation. If a recruitment incentive has been made to another agency for that employee within 90 days, your agency will not receive reimbursement.

Q. Which state or federally funded services qualify for the recruitment incentive?

A. A Medicaid-enrolled agency that is providing services to a person(s) who is receiving services under the DD waiver, HCBS waiver, Autism Waiver, Medically Fragile Children's Waiver, 1915(i), Service Payments for the Aged and Disabled (SPED) and Expanded SPED, Medicaid State Plan personal care services delivered in community. Some service restrictions apply within certain programs; see Program Description documents for more detail.

Q. I am a family caregiver and receive some payment through the HCBS 1915(c) waiver. Do I qualify for a retention incentive?

A. Family caregivers are not eligible for the retention incentive. However, if a family caregiver is interested in offering services to non-family members, they should contact provider enrollment and inquire how to be included on the list of available QSPs for their area.

Q. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) can mean a lot of things. What does HCBS mean in the context of these incentive?

A. Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) are services that are delivered to people who need some type of support for daily living in a living environment that meets the definition of an integrated setting under the CMS Integrated Settings rule.

Q. I am a direct care provider in a basic care facility. Can I qualify?

A. Regular Basic Care facilities do not qualify as HCBS. Specialized Basic Care facilities providing adult residential services through the HCBS Medicaid waiver are eligible for

the HCBS incentive. A caregiver who is delivering a service that is reimbursed by the state HCBS 1915(c) waiver in a specialized basic care facility can be eligible to receive the incentive.

Q. Can this funding be used for early intervention staff?

A. The program is intended to offer retention incentives for staff who offer direct care services. This means that a staff person is responsible for the care of the HCBS participant. Because early intervention staff are there primarily to coach and support the primary caregiver, they do not meet the definition of direct caregiver.

Q. Do we have to pay the money we receive back at any point?

A. No. As long as the Agency implements the program and uses funds according to program guidelines, there is no requirement for repayment.

Q. Do we consider private pay clients when figuring the percent of paid time providing direct care, or do we just clients who are Medicaid beneficiaries?

A. The direct caregiver must be working no less than 25% of their paid time providing direct care supports to an individual who receives services via a state or federally funding HCBS service. Time spent providing direct care to private pay clients should not be included in this calculation.

Q. Do I have to pay the incentive to the employee before I receive reimbursement from the State?

A. Yes, the Agency must have incurred the expense prior to requesting reimbursement. Sending in a reimbursement request with a projected payment date will result in the request being returned to the agency and the agency will be responsible for resubmission once the incentive has been paid to the direct caregiver.

Q. If I choose to offer the incentive in increments to my employees, how will the State ensure they have enough funds to fulfill the full amount of the incentive.

A. When an Agency submits their request for reimbursement, the state will hold as obligated, the full incentive amount for each employee included in the reimbursement request. This will ensure there are enough funds for each employee should the agency wish to distribute the incentive at different times rather than the full amount at once.

Q. Is there a timeline for when the funds must be distributed to the direct caregiver?

A. The recruitment incentive can be paid any time from date of hire through the first 90 days of employment. Request for payments after the 90 days will be denied even if the employee did not receive the full \$750.

The **retention** incentive can be paid any time from the date the employer is approved to participate in the program and can be extended over a period of up to 12 months.

Q. What is the process for requesting reimbursement?

A. Once an Agency has received program approval from the Department, a reimbursement spreadsheet will be sent to them. This spreadsheet must be used for reimbursement requests. Reimbursement requests will be processed once per month. If the spreadsheet is not completed, the request will be returned to the agency and the agency will be responsible for resubmission once the errors have been corrected.