

2024 Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) Questions and Answers for Licensed Child Care Providers (Centre Based)

Released: March 5, 2024

This Q&A provides information about the 2024 WIF for Centre Based Licensed Child Care Providers.

Refer to the [WIF Guideline](#) for full details.

The answers in this document do not constitute legal advice. You are encouraged to obtain specific financial/legal advice as applicable.

General

1. I thought WIF was cancelled. Why am I getting WIF in 2024?

Recruitment and retention continue to be a priority under our Early Years and Child Care Workforce Strategy. As part of this strategy, we will continue to fund the activities under WIF that have had the highest impact on recruitment and retention.

As a reminder, WIF is part of a pilot to support workforce recruitment and retention and the program is being evaluated. Once the evaluation is complete, we may make enhancements to the WIF based on the results.

2. When will we receive our 2024 WIF payments?

You will receive monthly payments starting in March. Your first payment will include your funding for January and February.

3. Can GOF and WEG be applied to WIF supported hours for planning time and professional learning?

Yes. Refer to the GOF and WEG guidelines for more details.

4. What is the deadline to spend our WIF?

You must spend your WIF by December 31, 2024. Any unspent funding will be recovered.

5. Will there be a tool to track eligible WIF expense?

Yes, a tool is available to help you track your expenses in the appropriate budget categories and maintain details of your reporting requirements. It can be found [online](#).

6. Why were the eligible expenses for recruitment and credential evaluation excluded this year?

We are currently reviewing eligible expenses for recruitment costs and credential evaluation based on the feedback from the evaluation. These have not been included at this time while we wait for the results of the WIF evaluation.

7. Why can't I use WIF to support budgeted expenses?

As a pilot program, we are measuring the impact of the funding. We are interested in understanding the positive benefit this funding has for activities that are new or greater to existing levels. This will inform future funding initiatives.

In addition, supporting existing expenses may result in double funding and would result in a recovery during reconciliation. Your existing expenses are already covered by your fees, and we are covering 52.75% of fees for eligible CWELCC children.

8. Is the funding I received flexible? Can the funding I received for paid planning time be spent on professional learning activities?

You must use your funding for Paid Planning Time to cover the mandatory planning time requirements between April 1 and December 31. If you have funding leftover in your Paid Planning Time budget once you meet this requirement, you may spend it on professional learning activities.

If you do not meet the mandatory requirements for Paid Planning Time, funding will be recovered.

Planning Time

9. Can I use WIF to cover planning time between January 2024 and March 2024?

Yes, you may use your WIF to cover planning time during this time, but it is not mandatory.

10. We already do 1.5 hours a week of planning for our staff. Can I use WIF to offset these costs?

If planning time is already funded through your 2024 CWELCC base fee, you may choose to increase the planning time hours you offer or offset your existing planning time costs up to a maximum of one hour per week.

You must ensure all eligible staff are receiving the minimum of 1 hour of planning time per week.

11. Does WIF cover the cost to hire supply staff to cover planning time?

Yes, if there is a need for supply staff to cover regular staff's planning time (i.e., to meet ratios). In this case, WIF covers the wages and benefits of supply staff. The

wages of staff participating in planning activities during regular hours are covered by your fees.

12. Can we use WIF to have one staff do the planning time for the whole centre?

You cannot use WIF to have one staff do the planning time for the whole centre. Eligibility for planning time is determined per staff and not per agency or site and must be equitably accessed by all eligible staff.

WIF supports increased staff recruitment and retention and enhanced program quality by ensuring that each educator has the opportunity to plan for the individual needs, goals, and interests of children enrolled in their group.

Professional Learning Costs

13. Is there a maximum or minimum we should spend on professional learning for staff?

No. There are a few things to consider when planning your professional learning expenses:

- You must ensure you use WIF to meet your mandatory requirements for planning time.
- You must provide all eligible staff with the same opportunity to access WIF supports, including professional learning. This could be achieved through a written policy or communication to staff about how they can access the funding. We may ask for proof of equitable access at any time.

Refer to the guidelines for more details.

14. Will there be another region-wide professional learning day?

No decisions have been made as we continue to wait for further details on the Ministry of Education's Workforce Strategy announced on November 16, 2023. We will share more information once it is available.

15. Is first aid training eligible for WIF professional learning costs?

Yes. Refer to the guidelines for more details, including for newly hired staff.

16. Can I use WIF for eligible trainings that begin in 2024 but end after December 31, 2024?

No, professional learning opportunities must begin and be successfully complete between January 2024 to December 2024.

17. My staff enrolled in an eligible training in February 2024 and covered the cost from their own pocket. Can I use WIF to reimburse them?

Yes. You can use WIF – professional learning costs to reimburse eligible staff for the cost of eligible courses/training that were/are taken between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024.

18. Can I use WIF to pay a facilitator to come to my centre to do a professional learning session with my staff on a specific topic?

Yes. You can use professional learning costs funding to bring your staff together to participate in a paid session with a facilitator if:

- The topic of the session aligns with the eligible topics listed in the WIF guideline; and
- The session is an enhancement to what you were planning to offer this year. Sessions planned/budgeted by you already for 2024 do not qualify (e.g., agency organized sessions offered yearly).

19. Can I use WIF to support Montessori courses?

Yes, WIF can be used to cover Montessori courses if they align with the professional learning priorities in the WIF guideline.

Education and training outside of these priorities may qualify for the Canada-Ontario Job Grant. Please contact the Employment Ontario Contact Centre at EmploymentHotlineInquiries@ontario.ca to learn more.

20. Can I use WIF to support the Montessori Diploma Training?

No. As the priority is to support the recruitment and retention of RECEs, only diplomas / diploma courses that meet the education requirements for registration with the College of ECEs (CECE) qualify for WIF.

21. Can I use WIF to do a paid group training with all my staff?

Yes, you can with eligible staff. WIF will cover either:

- release time for supply staff base wages and mandatory benefits; or
- base wages and mandatory benefits for extra hours worked to participate in eligible professional learning activities outside of a staff's regular hours.

Refer to the guidelines for more details.

Administration

22. Did we receive administration funding to help with the costs of administering this funding?

You have received a budget for administration, which is 10% of your WIF funding. Your administration funding amount is available in GovGrants in 2024 WIF.

Please contact your Early Years Specialists or EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca if you have additional questions.