

**2023 Workforce Innovation Funding (WIF)
Questions and Answers (Q&As) for Centre-Based Service Providers
Released: February 9, 2023**

This Q&A document replaces the Q&A released September 2, 2022 and assists Service Providers in understanding 2023 WIF's eligible expenses and between Jan. 1, and Dec. 31, 2023. This document doesn't replace the [WIF guideline](#) and agreement.

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GENERAL- CONTRACT, FUNDING AND PAYMENTS

1. Do we have to spend all of the 2022 funds that we received in October 2022 by December 31st of 2022?

Providers can use unspent 2022 WIF funding to eligible expenses outlined in the 2023 WIF Guideline in 2023. This means you can carry over unspent 2022 funding into 2023 if it is spent on eligible expenses outlined in the WIF guideline.

2. Should we expect another payment for July to December? (2023 Guideline, p. 11)

At this time, your February 2023 payment covers your expenses from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

3. When compared to 2022 (three months), the 2023 WIF allocation seems low. Is there a reason?

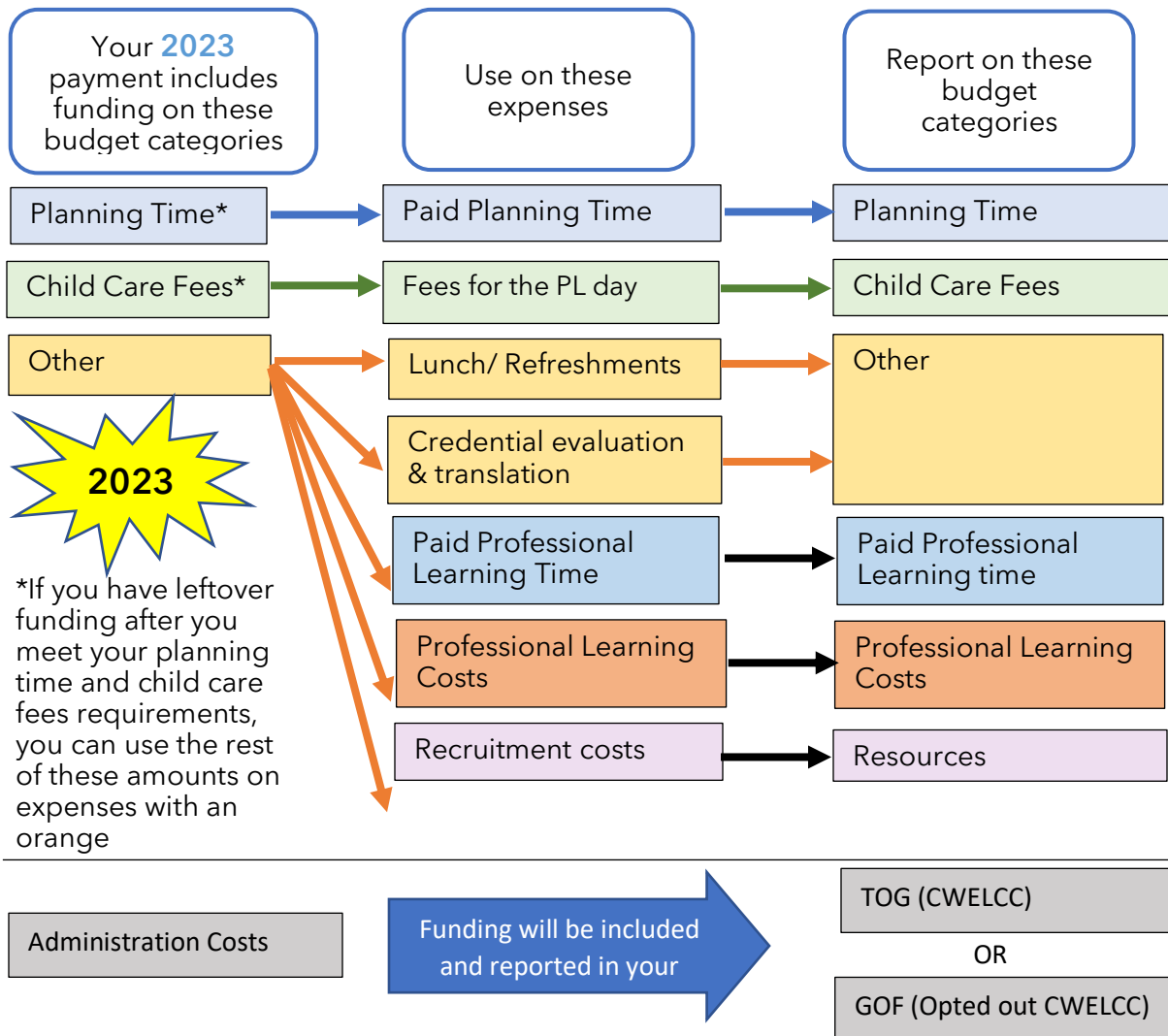
- In 2022, we let you know that we anticipated that the 2022 and the 2023 payments would be similar (2022 Q & A, Q6)
- To ensure the funding had the greatest impact in the system, in 2022 we reinvested savings into the system, which allowed slightly higher allocations.
- In 2022, your payment included administration costs. In 2023 we are including WIF administration costs in TOG (CWELCC participants) or GOF (not participating in CWELCC) which will be issued in March 2023
- To ensure you have enough funds to cover your mandatory expenses you can:
 - Email us at us at EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca with the subject line "WIF Funding Request" by July 30, 2023, if your total 2023 WIF payment is not enough to cover your 2023 WIF mandatory expenses.
- Refer to the table below for more information on the payment and expense periods:

WIF Budget Periods

	Eligible Period	You may use WIF to cover the following eligible expenses
October 2022 payment Unspent 2022 funding may be carried forward to 2023	Jan. 1, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning costs Paid professional learning time Credential evaluation and translation
	Oct. 3, 2022, to Dec. 31, 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid planning time - mandatory
February 2023 payment To be spent by December 31, 2023	Jan 1, 2023, to at least Jun. 30, 2023	
	Jan. 1, 2023, to Dec. 31, 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional learning costs Paid professional learning time Credential evaluation and translation Recruitment costs Child care fees for Region's professional learning day (February 17) - mandatory Lunch and refreshments - mandatory

4. What is included in our February 2023 payment? (2023 Guideline, p. 12)

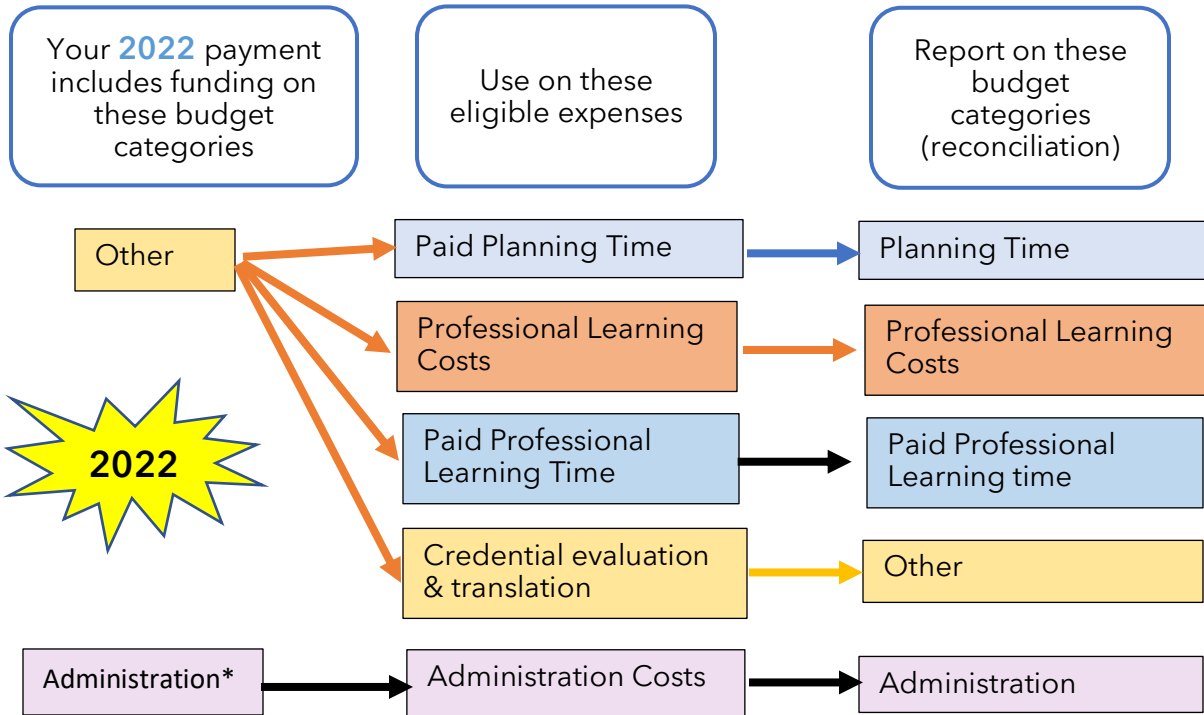
[Question 3](#) details what is included in your 2023 payment. The diagram below explains how to use and report the funding:



5. In my GovGrants, I have a Budget Category with an amount for Administration and Other.

Can you explain what these are for in 2022? (2022 Guideline, p. 13)

Your 2022 payment included funds for the budget category Other and Administration. The diagram below outlines what eligible expenses you can use under these budget categories in 2022.



* Unspent administration funding may be used to support paid planning time, professional learning costs, paid professional learning time and credential evaluation and translation.

6. Can I use WIF to cover the GOF and WEG portion of staff wages for WIF supported hours?

- No. Use WIF to cover eligible staff base wages and mandatory benefits. Use GOF and WEG funding to cover the GOF and WEG portion of staff wages (respectively).
- Review the GOF, WEG, and WIF guidelines to confirm requirements and eligibility.

PLANNING TIME

7. Are only RECE staff eligible for planning time? (2023 Guideline, p. 6)

No. For the period January 1 to at least June 30, 2023, **all program staff** (RECE or non-RECE) who work at least 20 hours supporting CCEYA ratio requirements in any one-week period (Monday to Sunday) are eligible for the additional hour of paid planning time for that week.

8. If we have three staff in one classroom, can each staff get 1 hour per week for planning time? (2023 Guideline, p. 6)

Yes. From January 1 to at least June 30, 2023, program staff who work a minimum of 20 hours supporting ratio requirements as outlined in the CCEYA in any one-week period (Monday to Sunday) are eligible for the additional hour of paid planning time for that week.

9. How can I use WIF to support planning time? What if I cannot find supply staff? (2023 Guideline, p. 7)

Paid planning time supports educators to be out of the classroom or the care environment to do meaningful planning for their programs. Planning time can be done:

- Outside a staff's regular hours - you can use WIF to pay for a staff's regular base salary for one additional hour per week and increased mandatory benefits where applicable
- During a staff's regular hours (where other staff must temporarily take their place to meet ratios) - you can use WIF to pay for a supply staff's base wages and mandatory benefits for hours worked covering eligible staff planning time.

In addition, if paying for one hour per week of planning time is not operationally feasible, you may provide two paid planning time hours every two weeks or four paid planning time hours every four weeks. Paid planning hours cannot be accumulated for more than four weeks.

10. Is the one hour of planning time per week a maximum or a minimum? (2023 Guideline, p. 12)

One hour of planning time per week from January 1 to June 30, 2023 is the minimum mandatory time required by the guideline. A standard time is needed to be able to assess the impact of the pilot.

If you have unspent WIF funding, you may choose to:

- Continue to cover planning time after June 30, 2023.
- Increase eligible staff's weekly paid planning time or the number of paid professional learning hours.

11. Can I use WIF to cover planning time after June 30, 2023? (2023 Guideline, p. 12)

If you have a WIF surplus (unspent funding) you may use it to continue to cover planning time after June 30, 2023.

12. I provided all eligible staff 1.5 hours of planning time per week before WIF. Can I use WIF to offset 1.5 hours a week if I have a surplus? (2023 Guideline, p. 6)

If prior to WIF you were providing 1.5 hours per week of paid planning time for all eligible staff, we prefer that you increase the planning time hours you offer (to 2 or 2.5 hours), if that is not feasible you can offset your existing costs up to a **maximum** of one hour per week.

13. Does WIF cover the cost to hire supply staff to cover planning time? (2023 Guideline, p. 7)

Yes, if there is need for supply staff to cover regular staff's planning time (to meet ratios). In this case WIF covers the wages and benefits of supply staff. The wages of staff participating on planning activities during regular hours are covered by your fees.

14. Can we use WIF to cover planning team meetings? (2023 Guideline, p. 6)

No. Staff meetings don't qualify for planning time. Eligible planning activities can be carried out individually or as a room based on your existing practices.

SUPPORTS FOR THE REGION'S PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DAY (YOU ARE THE REASON)

15. Can we offer credits to parents for the Region's professional learning day? (2023 Guideline, p. 5)

As required on the 2022 WIF guideline, families should not be charged fees on February 17, 2023. Not charging fees eliminates provider's administrative burden to apply refunds or credits and improves affordability for families who do not have to make a payment.

If families were already charged due to your billing practices, you can choose to either provide a reimbursement or a credit by the following billing period.

16. Is it OK if I don't charge parents for February 17 on their monthly invoice? (2023 Guideline, p. 5)

Yes. As required on the 2022 WIF guideline, families should not be charged fees on February 17, 2023.

17. How do I get paid for children in receipt of fee subsidy? (2023 Guideline, p. 5)

- You must mark "N" on your February 17 fee subsidy attendance.
- You may not charge families in receipt of fee subsidy the parental contribution for February 17.
- For CWELCC eligible children you can expense a 52.75% of your fees from CWELCC and the remainder 47.25% from WIF. As a reminder, CWELCC was funded at your full licensed capacity.
- For non-CWELCC eligible children, you can expense 100% of your fees from WIF.

For example: If your fee is \$50.00 per day with a fee subsidy's parent contribution of \$5.00 and the subsidy portion is \$45.00.

If opted...	Then your \$50 daily fee will be paid as follows:
in to CWELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 52.75% from CWELCC funding (\$26.40) • 47.25% from WIF funding (\$26.60) • Parent contribution \$0.00 • Fee subsidy \$0.00
out of CWELCC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% WIF funding (\$50) • Parent contribution \$0.00 • Fee subsidy \$0.00

18. How do we pay staff who would have worked more than or less than 6 hours on February 17, 2023? (2023 Guideline, p. 5-6)

Consider the following principles when determining staff wages for the day:

- Staff should not lose pay for participating in the day.
- Your fees cover the salary and mandatory benefit expenses that you would have typically incurred on the day.
- When we offset your February 17, 2023 child care fees (through WIF and CWELCC), we are replacing the revenue you would have used to pay for your staff's wages and benefits for the day. That means that we are indirectly paying for your staff wages and benefits.
- If you incur salary and mandatory benefit expenses on February 17 that are not typically covered by your fees (for example, wages for staff who typically work less than 6 hours or do not work at all on Fridays/PD Days), you may use "paid professional learning time" to cover the salaries for the **extra** hours worked while participating on the event.

Examples:

# of hours staff would have worked on Feb. 17	You pay from your child care fees revenue offset by WIF and CWELCC	Covered through "paid professional learning time" (in addition to child care fees)
8 hours	8 hours	N/A (No additional cost to you)
6 hours	6 hours	N/A
4 hours	4 hours	2 hours (actual additional cost to you)
0 hours (e.g. staff does not work on Fridays or does not work on school board professional learning days)	0 hours	6 hours (actual additional cost to you)

* This also applies to non-program staff who participates on the event.

19. Is the Region's professional learning day only for RECEs? Can assisting staff, supply staff or non-program staff join and get paid for the day? (2023 Guideline, p. 5-6)

- The Region's professional learning day is available for all early years and child care staff.
- We acknowledge that you may have different HR and professional learning and development policies. You have the flexibility to determine who is considered staff for the purposes of the Region's professional learning day.
- At a minimum, regular program staff (including RECE's, Director approved staff and assistant educators) and supervisors should attend.
- The sections related to the professional learning day (offsetting child care fees and lunch and refreshments) do not distinguish between program and not-program staff regular and supply staff.
- Based on your business decision, supply/part-time staff and non-program staff who register and attend can receive the same supports as regular program staff on February 17, 2023 (wages and benefits as explained in question 18, and lunch).

20. If staff (hourly or regular) does not show up for the day, do we have to pay their salaries? (2023 Guideline, p. 5)

- Paying staff who do not show up for the day is your business decision. We encourage you to follow your existing HR policies.
- WIF's requirement is to pay regular wages and mandatory benefits to staff who enroll and attend the Region's professional learning day.

21. Do I have to provide lunch and refreshments for the Region's professional learning day? (2023 Guideline, p. 7)

Yes. Lunch and refreshments is a WIF mandatory expense. You must use your WIF to provide lunch and refreshments for staff participating in the Region's professional learning day up to a cap of \$30/per participating staff.

22. Do I have to provide lunch and refreshments if staff are participating remotely?

Yes. Lunch and refreshments for the Region's professional learning day is a mandatory expense. We encourage you to explore the multiple options available to provide lunch and refreshments to remote workers (e.g. delivery orders, uber eats and others).

23. My staff are participating remotely. Can I provide lunch and refreshments on another day?

No. WIF supports lunch and refreshments for the Region's professional learning day on February 17, 2023 only. For options on how to provide lunch to eligible staff, refer to question 21.

24. Can I use WIF to pay for lunch and refreshments for non-participating staff?

No. WIF supports the lunch and refreshments of staff actively participating on the Region's professional learning day.

25. Can we buy food gift cards for staff to use on February 17th?

Yes. You have the flexibility to determine the best way to provide lunch and refreshments to your staff (such as delivery order, catering, or gift cards. etc.) based on your needs and staff preferences. Please note that:

- Your total lunch and refreshment expenses for the day cannot exceed \$30 per participating staff.
- The only expense that can be supported using gift cards is lunch and afternoon refreshments.

26. Can I use WIF to purchase audiovisual equipment to support the Region's professional learning day?

No. In 2022 we encouraged you to purchase projectors, projector screens, conference speakers, and/or and other audio/video equipment needed to support the Region's professional learning using your 2022 COVID-19 Funding which includes Special Purpose Funding.

To accommodate service providers who did not purchase the necessary items in 2022, these items will be eligible again in 2023 using your CWELCC TOG which will include Special Purpose Funding. Flat screen TVs don't qualify.

27. Would the Region's Professional Learning Day training hours on February 17th count towards our Raising the Bar PL requirements?

- No, the Peel Professional Learning Day hours cannot be counted towards your Raising the Bar in Peel (RTBP) Professional Learning requirements.
- Access to continuous professional learning opportunities can support higher levels of staff engagement, growth, recognition, professional efficacy, improve satisfaction and promote more meaningful relationships and experiences for children, educators and families in child care and early years settings.
- Peel's professional learning day is intended to enhance (not replace) staff access to continuous professional learning opportunities. As such, it complements existing capacity building initiatives such as RTBP, by providing supports that exceed RTBP's minimum requirements.
- Professional learning activities attended as part of participation in RTBP may qualify for WIF paid professional learning time through release time and extra hours payment (pg. 9 of the Guideline).

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COSTS AND PAID PROFESSIONAL LEARNING TIME

28. Can I use WIF to cover the salaries of future professional learning and development days not organized by the Region? (2023 Guideline, p. 9)

You may use *WIF paid professional learning time* to cover the salaries and mandatory benefits of agency-organized professional learning days if you are in one of the following situations:

- You make the business decision to close, and families are not charged for the day.
- You continue to provide child care services on the professional development by hiring supply staff: In this case, the fees charged to children pay for the salaries of staff attending the professional learning day, and you may use WIF- paid professional learning day to cover the salaries and benefits for supply staff.
- WIF does not cover child care fees for agency-organized professional learning days.

29. Is first aid training eligible for WIF professional learning costs? (2023 Guideline, p. 8-9)

First aid training is an eligible course listed on the guideline. Please note that:

- Both the course and staff must qualify for professional learning costs.
- The 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 is not certified, and courses offered by CDRCP are not available at the time of hiring.
- WIF covers enhancements. You cannot use WIF to cover professional learning costs already budgeted by your agency.

30. Is the food handler certification eligible for professional learning costs? (2023 Guideline, p. 8-9)

The food handler certification aligns with one of the eligible topics for professional learning costs: Health, safety and well-being of children (nutrition, first aid, environmental health, communicable diseases, duty to report) and staff. Please note that:

Food handler certification training is an eligible course listed on the guideline. Please note that:

- Both the course and staff must qualify for professional learning costs.
- WIF covers enhancements. You cannot use WIF to cover professional learning costs already budgeted by your agency.

31. Can I use paid professional learning time to cover time spent on information sharing (a staff attends a training and then presents it back to the team)? (2023 Guideline, p. 9)

Yes, you can. Please note that WIF covers either:

- Release time: Supply staff base wages and mandatory benefits for hours worked covering eligible staff while they participate in eligible professional learning activities during their regular hours (e.g., covers the staff time spent at the training and/or information sharing session)
- Base wages and mandatory benefits for extra hours worked to participate in eligible professional learning activities outside of a staff's regular hours. For example, a course from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm for a staff who works between 7:00 am to 6:00 pm. (e.g., covers staff time spent on shared professional learning outside regular hours)

32. Please clarify what courses and trainings are covered by WIF (2023 Guideline, p. 7-9)

- To be able to meet the system's wide range of needs, we did not provide an exhaustive list of courses and/or trainings. Examples of courses include training recommended by or based on your EYS and/or Resource consultant feedback; training aligned with your Raising the Bar goals; courses offered through the Training - Geneva Centre for Autism and the Hanen Centre (such as Learning Language and Loving it, More than Words) among others.
- Please review the professional learning costs and paid professional learning time sections of the guideline. You will find information on eligible staff, qualifying training (by topic), and qualifying activities.

33. Can we use WIF to cover online learning and certification costs for one or more staff while employed at our centre?

Yes. You can use WIF to cover online courses if they meet the criteria for professional learning costs and/or paid professional learning and the courses are not budgeted expenses.

34. Can we use the WIF for professional development workshops that we organize on our own? (2023 Guideline, p. 3-4, 8)

Yes. You can use WIF to cover professional development workshops that you organize, if they meet the criteria for professional learning costs and/or paid professional learning and the courses are not budgeted expenses.

35. For staff who are attending night school, can I use WIF to pay supply staff so that my regular staff have time to study?

This is your business decision. You may use paid professional learning time to pay supply staff to cover staff that needs time to study if you have the budget and:

- The expense meets the paid professional learning time criteria (2023 guideline, p. 9), and
- You are making this option available to all your staff (per requirement to provide equitable access). (2023 guideline, p. 11)

RECRUITMENT COSTS

36. Can I use WIF to pay for advertisement to hire staff (e.g. paying or sponsoring job on Indeed) [2023 Guideline, p. 10]

- You may use WIF to support "job posting ads with an external company or post-secondary institution."
- Marketing for the purposes of recruitment is an eligible special purposes expense, that will be supported through your 2023 CWELCC TOG.
- Expense the cost to the right funding stream and don't use more than one funding stream to cover recruitment costs. Claiming the same costs under different eligible expenses or funding streams will make your costs ineligible and result in recoveries.

37. Does WIF cover owner/operators hours spent holding interviews? (2023 Guideline, p. 10)

WIF recruitment costs covers regular wages and associated benefits for hours spent conducting interviews for owner/operators of single site agencies on payroll as of Jan. 1, 2023.

38. Is there a cap on the number of hours that providers can claim for owner/operator hours spent in recruitment activities? (2023 Guideline, p. 4, 10-11)

There is no set cap on the number of hours that providers can claim for owner/operator hours spent on recruitment activities. However, you must consider the following:

- Recruitment costs are a flexible expense. As such, you can only use WIF to support recruitment costs after all mandatory expenses (offsetting child care fees for the Region's professional learning day, paid planning time and lunch and refreshments for the Region's professional learning day) have been fulfilled.
- You are required to provide eligible staff equitable access to WIF supports within your funding amount. This means that every eligible staff must have the same opportunity to access funding supports.
- Owner/operators employed by the child care agency in an eligible position and who receive a T4 for this work, are eligible to receive overall WIF supports up to an amount equal to the average supports provided to eligible staff.

ADMINISTRATION FUNDING

39. What percentage of my WIF allocation will be issued to cover admin costs through TOG/GOF?

Acknowledging that WIF is a new program and the administration and evaluation requirements, we will issue 10% of your total WIF allocation. This will be provided as part of either your TOG/GOF allocation so you will have the ability to spend more or less than 10% depending on your business needs.

GENERAL - INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

40. Can we use WIF to cover expenses not listed on the guideline but align with my recruitment and retention needs? (2023 Guideline, p. 4-5)

No. You can only use WIF to support eligible expenses which are listed in the guideline. You have the flexibility to determine which eligible expenses best address your needs. The expenses included in the guideline were the result of an extensive sector consultation conducted in 2021 and 2022.

We are always looking for ways to improve our funding supports year over year. If there is an initiative that you believe should be supported because it will improve the sector's workforce recruitment and retention, we encourage you to share it with us at EarlyYearsSystemDivision@peelregion.ca.

41. Can I use WIF to offset my existing / budgeted expenses? (2023 Guideline, p. 3-4)

No. You cannot use WIF to offset previously budgeted expenses. If you already support WIF eligible expenses, you can only use WIF to expenses over and above what you provided before WIF.

In 2023 only, there are two exceptions to this rule:

- Planning time: If before WIF you were providing one hour or more per week of paid planning time for all eligible staff, you may choose to increase the planning time hours you offer or offset your existing costs up to a maximum of one hour per week.

- Recruitment costs: You may use WIF to cover enhancements or offset budgeted recruitment costs.

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

- As a pilot program, we will measure the impact of the one-time 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 funding initiatives in the future.
- In addition to that, 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.

43. What are budgeted expenses?

For the purposes of WIF, budgeted expenses are the expenses that you incur, or were planning to incur with or without receiving WIF. For example:

- If your policy or practice before WIF was to cover the costs of a given course or seminar (e.g. food handler certificate), that cost was already planned and supported by your fees. It does not provide additional supports to staff, so it's not covered.
- If your policy or practice before WIF was to provide your staff with 5 hours of paid professional learning you may choose to increase the number of hours to 15. In this case, you can use WIF to cover the additional 10 hours.

44. Can we use WIF to cover staff time for parent-teacher meetings? (2023 Guideline, p. 3-4)

No. Parent-teacher meetings are part of your regular business operations, and, thus are also considered budgeted expenses. WIF cannot be used to cover this budgeted expense.

45. Can I use WIF to refund/credit families for parent-teacher meetings? We close for these meetings? (2023 Guideline, p. 5)

No. WIF only covers child care fees for the February 17, 2023 Region's professional learning day.

46. Does WIF cover meetings to improve the implementation of the new system?

WIF does not cover regular team meetings. If a particular meeting meets all the criteria (eligible costs, eligible staff and eligible topics, etc.) for paid planning time or paid professional learning time sections, and is not a budgeted expense, you may be able to support it. Contact your EYS if you have questions.

47. Will a venue for a professional learning day be covered by any EYCCS funding?

There is no requirement as to how you bring your staff together. You can participate at each of your sites, or you can decide to bring all of your staff together at one location. We recommend that you do not incur venue costs and use your centre(s) instead to maximize your funding. If you chose to incur this cost, please report it under "other".

RECONCILIATION

48. What months am I accounting for at reconciliation?

You must account for the budget periods below at reconciliation.

	\$ issued using this budget category	Eligible Expense	Budget Period	Report under this budget category	
2022 WIF Payment	Other	Paid planning time	Oct. 3-Dec. 31/22	Planning time	2022 WIF Recon.
		Professional learning costs	Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2022	Professional learning costs	
		Paid professional learning time		Paid professional learning time	
		Credential evaluation & translation		Other	
	Admin	Administration costs		Administration	
2023 WIF Payment	Child Care Fees	Fees for Region's Professional learning Day	Feb. 17, 2023	Child Care Fees	2023 WIF Reconciliation
	Planning time	Paid planning time	Jan. 1 to at least Jun. 30, 2023	Planning time	
	Other	Staff lunch and refreshments for Region's professional learning day	Feb. 17, 2023	Other	
		Professional learning costs	Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023	Professional learning costs	
		Paid professional learning time		Paid professional learning time	
		Credential evaluation & translation		Other	
		Recruitment costs.		Resources	
		Admin costs	Jan. 1-Dec. 31, 2023	report through TOG or GOF (as applicable)	

Please note, you can only claim and report WIF for expenses incurred during the applicable budget period.

49. When do we have to submit our WIF 2022 Reconciliation? GovGrants' due date is January 31, 2023.

- As communicated in the memo ["January 2023 Payment and 2022 Reconciliations"](#) the 2022 WIF reconciliation is currently due on March 10, 2023.
- Please note that this and other reconciliation deadlines may be revised to allow child care providers more time to complete the Ministry of Education's Child Care Survey.
- The Region will send a communication on or before Monday, February 13, 2023 to provide an update on reconciliation deadlines.
- Please note that GovGrants will continue to show a due date January 31, 2023 because we were not able to change the due date at the time of the announcement.

50. Where can I find the template for WIF reconciliation that needs to be sent on, January 31st?

As communicated on the memo [“January 2023 Payment and 2022 Reconciliations”](#) WIF reconciliation is to be completed directly in GovGrants. No template is required.