

2023 General Operating Fund (GOF): Staff Wages and Benefits

Question and Answers for Licensed Child Care Providers (Centre Based)

This Q&A document provides information on the 2023 GOF approach on staff wages and benefits. Note: The Region is delaying the implementation of the new GOF approach previously communicated until further information about the new provincial funding formula is shared. Refer to the 2023 GOF Guideline for more information.

GENERAL

1. What are the components of the 2023 GOF?

The 2023 GOF supports staff wage and benefits enhancements through these components:

- Staff Wages and Benefits (SWB)
- Pay Equity (where applicable)
- Administration Funding

2. When will we receive our 2023 GOF payment?

- In 2023, GOF will be issued at the beginning of each month if you returned your signed EYCCS GOF Agreement through the Region's GovGrants technology by the due date.

3. What is changing with GOF and when?

- Beginning **January 1, 2023**, Historical Funding (applicable to eligible agencies only) is merged with Staff Wages and Benefits (SWB) allocation to streamline funding and reporting for you.
- As a reminder, the list of positions eligible for GOF also changed effective July 1, 2022 to align with the provincial Wage Enhancement Grant (WEG) and some non-program positions are no longer eligible for GOF.
- Please note that the previously communicated GOF caps of \$3 and \$1.50 for eligible staff have been removed.
- Providers are to distribute their GOF allocation to eligible staff based on eligible hours worked, capped at a maximum of 2060 hours.

4. Will agencies receive an increase to their allocations for 2023?

- At this time, your 2022 allocation will be rolled over for 2023.

5. Will agencies that do not receive GOF be eligible to receive it in 2023?

- At this time, funding is only available for licensed child care providers in Peel Region with a signed EYCCS Fee Subsidy Agreement dated on or before October 31, 2019.

GOF DISTRIBUTION TO ELIGIBLE STAFF

6. What staff positions are not eligible for 2023 GOF?

- Non-program staff positions (e.g. bus drivers, cooks, clerical) are not eligible for GOF (SWB) unless **at least 25 percent of their time is used to support ratio requirements** under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA).

7. How should GOF be distributed to enhance staff wages and benefits?

- You must distribute GOF to eligible staff for hours worked/paid as part of the regular payroll schedule/process.
- Where possible, distribute GOF to all eligible staff according to your most recent GOF Distribution Plan.
- You must also distribute GOF to eligible staff as part of the regular payroll process/schedule and include **‘General Operating Fund’** notation with associated amounts payable on paystubs.
- One time and/or cash payments are not permitted.
- You should enhance staff wages and benefits over and above regulatory requirements for minimum wage and mandatory benefits. Note: Effective October 1, 2022 the provincial government increased the minimum wage to \$15.50 per hour.

8. Do staff receive GOF if they are on vacation or sick?

- Yes, staff can receive GOF for hours worked/paid which includes time paid for statutory holidays, vacation time and paid sick days (if applicable).

9. Do staff receive GOF if they participate in professional learning/planning time/meetings?

- Yes, for 2023 we have clarified the definition of eligible program hours/days for eligible staff. To provide eligible staff with a consistent hourly rate, the definition of eligible program hours/days includes paid time worked in program, professional learning, planning time and time for participating in meetings mandated by your organization.

10. Can GOF cover the full employer and employee portion of the non-mandatory benefits (health and dental)?

- This is not covered 100%. If there is a plan in place and you have used GOF to support this expense last year, you can continue to do so at the same level.

11. Are Enhanced Program Supports (EPS) staff eligible to receive GOF?

- No, EPS staff hired by service providers using EPS funding are not eligible for GOF. These positions **cannot** be counted towards ratio for supervision under the CCEYA to access GOF. EPS hours **cannot** be used to meet ratios for supervision under the CCEYA
- If you have used EPS funding to extend the hours of existing program staff, only the hours the staff supported ratio under the CCEYA can be eligible for GOF.

- One staff person cannot fill both ratio and EPS hours at the same time however one staff persons hours of work in a day can comprise of both EPS hours & ratio hours.

CHANGES IN STAFF COMPLEMENT

12. My staff complement has changed. What do I have to do?

- New staff joining the program/site at any point during 2023 are entitled to receive GOF if the position is eligible and can be supported within your GOF funding allocation
- Increases in staff complement will **not** result in an increase in funding. If you run out of GOF you may choose to:
 - Stop GOF payments to all staff. If you choose this option, you are required to clearly communicate this decision to staff and your Early Years Specialist; or
 - Maintain salary and/or benefit enhancements. In this case, staffing costs over and above the approved GOF funding amount are your sole responsibility.

Please note the caps of \$3/hour for qualified positions and \$1.50/hour for non-program positions have been removed. Providers are to distribute funding based on eligible position based on the number of hours worked at a maximum of 2060 hours.

13. If there is a decrease in staffing will funding be adjusted?

- No. Surplus in GOF can be redistributed to eligible staff to further enhance their wages and benefits.

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