

2022-23 \$15 Hourly Wage for VPK Personnel Incentive

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How do providers opt into the 2022-23 \$15 Hourly Wage for VPK Personnel Incentive?

Providers with a certified VPK contract for program year 2022-2023 must complete an application in the Provider Portal. Providers can choose to opt in or out of participation in the \$15 hourly wage incentive. Each VPK provider will attest via affidavit that every VPK program employee's hourly rate is at least \$15 per hour for all time worked on the VPK program within 30 days of receiving funds (see question 11).

2. How do coalitions access VPK provider applications for the \$15 hourly wage incentive?

Coalitions access and acknowledge providers' applications for the wage incentive in the Coalition Portal.

3. Where can providers find additional information about the incentive?

Directions can be found in the \$15 Hourly Wage Incentive Guide.

4. Is there a deadline for opting in?

No, there is no deadline for opting in to the \$15 Hourly Wage Incentive for the 2022-23 program year. Providers must opt in on or before the last instructional day of their VPK program.

5. Can providers change their mind and opt in/opt out later in this program year?

Yes. See instructions in the \$15 Hourly Wage Incentive Guide to change your selection. See also question #4 above for the opt in/opt out deadline.

6. If providers offer one VPK program in the fall and another in the spring, can providers opt in for one program but not the other?

Yes. A provider can choose to opt in or out for different programs offered within the same program year. A provider's decision to opt in or out is valid throughout the program year, regardless of program start date, unless the provider makes a change in the Provider Portal.

7. Which VPK employees are eligible to receive the \$15 incentive?

All VPK program employees listed on Form OEL-VPK10 and OEL-VPK11A approved by the ELC, including the VPK Lead, Assistant and Substitute Instructors and VPK Directors and Principals.

8. Can providers opt in and offer \$15 an hour to some VPK employees, but not all?

No. Participating providers are to pay all VPK employees (see above question and answer) a minimum of \$15 per hour.

9. How many hours per day do providers pay the \$15 per hour?

VPK employees are to be paid a minimum of \$15 per hour for all VPK duties, including the VPK instructional hours listed on the schedule for each classroom on Form OEL-VPK11B approved by the early learning coalition (ELC). These hours can vary based on the employee's VPK related responsibilities.

10. Is the \$15 incentive available for 2023 summer programs?

Yes. The \$15 hourly wage incentive is available for the 2023 summer programs. Summer providers will opt in or out on the Provider Portal.

11. When should this \$15 incentive begin?

The provider's rate increase will begin on the first day of VPK classes, or on the date the affidavit affirming agreement is submitted to the ELC in the Provider Portal, whichever is later. A VPK provider is deemed to be in receipt of this additional funding on the date that the provider's VPK rates are increased through this allocation. Thus, for example, if a provider submits this affidavit and will be paid for VPK students at a rate that includes this incentive pay beginning on Wednesday, August 10, 2022, then all VPK employees must be paid at least \$15 per hour for VPK duties beginning no later than Friday, September 9, 2022, which is 30 days after the provider's rate increase.

12. How much of an increase should providers expect when planning budgets?

Refer to the Voluntary Prekindergarten \$15/hr Wage Incentive Program Differential Payment Rate Schedule for the 2022-23 fiscal year to aid in program budget planning.

13. Will the \$15 incentive be automatically updated in the Provider Portal invoice?

The \$15 hourly wage incentive monies will be automatically calculated in the Provider Portal once a provider opts in and completes the application in the Provider Portal and the coalition acknowledges the provider's application. Providers will receive these monies in conjunction with their monthly VPK reimbursement.

14. What documentation will providers need to maintain regarding the \$15 Hourly Wage Incentive?

Providers are to maintain adequate payroll records for staff that support the providers' attestation to participate in this incentive.

15. What should VPK personnel do if their provider opted into the incentive, but VPK personnel are NOT receiving \$15 an hour for VPK hours worked?

Beginning January 1, 2023, VPK personnel who believe their provider opted into the \$15 hourly wage incentive but are NOT receiving \$15/hour for hours worked on the VPK program should contact the Division of Early Learning (DEL) to file a dispute. DEL and the ELCs will partner with provider associations to communicate information regarding the dispute process to provider and educator networks.

16. Will the \$15 incentive be available next program year?

The \$15 hourly wage incentive is available for the 2022-23 program year only.