

Wage Grid Supplement Increase to support the new 2023/24 Wage Grid (Centres)

Monday, May 15, 2023

-TRANSCRIPT-

00:36

Carmen Zubin

Hello everyone, my name is Carmen Zubin and I'm an acting policy analyst with the Early Learning and Child Care Division. Thank you for joining us for today's webinar on the Wage Grid Supplement to Operating Grant and the 2023/24 ELCC Wage grid, which was supported under the Canada Manitoba Canada Wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement. Today's webinar will be presented by Jennifer Faulder, Executive Director of Policy and Planning Branch.

After the webinar, we will have some time for questions, and you'll see at the bottom of your screen there is a chat speech bubble. This is where you can submit your questions. We will try to answer as many questions as we can.

And we have ELCC staff on site to document all questions that are submitted for review in the event that we do not have time to answer all questions today.

If you have any questions specific to your facility, you can send them to child care information services.

A full copy of the PowerPoint slide deck and transcript will be available on our website and you will receive an email informing you when it is posted online.

And with that, we'll turn it over to Sarah Whiteford, our Assistant Deputy Minister.

02:13

Sarah Whiteford

Thank you everyone for joining us today this afternoon. We're really excited to be having this webinar and discussing in a little more detail a really important support for the workforce.

I'd just like to open today with our treaty and land acknowledgement that we use here in the department. We recognize that Manitoba is on Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Ininiwak and Nehethowuk peoples. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and Treaty Making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration.

03:18

Jennifer Faulder

Thank you. So we're here today to talk about the wage grid supplement increase to support the new wage grid for 23/24.

Just a brief agenda for the webinar today. We're gonna just do a bit of backgrounder and reminder of the previous wage grid that was implemented in July, 2,022.

We will discuss the new wage grid coming into effect July 1, 2023. We will explain a bit about the wage grid supplement increase and the implementation plan for centers.

And then we have some common questions and some links and resources at the end. Next slide.

So, just for some background, as you're likely familiar now, all provinces and territories have a partnership with the federal government under the multilateral ELCC framework to build a Canada-wide publicly funded early learning and child care system.

Okay. Under the, Manitoba, Canada Wide Early Learning and Child Care Agreement, Manitoba committed to improving quality and supporting the recruitment, retention and growth of the early learning and child care workforce. Including implementing a wage grid in the nonprofit, early learning and child care sector.

And so, you know, of course this is important because we know that a well-compensated early learning and child care workforce is essential to deliver high quality early learning and child care services.

It's important to stabilize and strengthen the sector to address labor market shortages, to support retention of current staff and to support the recruitment of new individuals.

To a career in the early childhood sector. And you know, in addition to, increasing the wage grid, we're also currently working with our universities and colleges on plans for expanding training.

And you know we have a few other initiatives under way because we know that there's going to be it's going to have to be a multi-pronged approach to getting the workforce to the level we need to support our growing sector.

06:10

Jennifer Faulder

So just a further context, we recognize that there has been a large disparity in wages across the sector from facility to facility.

In part of course this is because child care facilities are independent businesses with a board of directors and as independent businesses, each facility is responsible for establishing wages for staff. Operating grant funding has been the primary source of funding for salary related costs in addition to the parent fees and the parent fee revenue grant.

And, the wage grid, in the, 2022 wage grid was established based on looking at similar public sector wages.

So the initial wage grid again implemented in July, 2022 was intended as a first step in the development of a more comprehensive wage scale to help narrow the gap between the highest and lowest wages in the sector across the province.

And it provides funded facilities with guidance on wages for child care assistance, early childhood educators, and other positions while also preserving the authority of the board or the owner operator.

In terms of establishing the wages for staff in that facility and the wage grid has been supported through a wage grade supplement to the operating grant that's based on the unit funding model.

And the initial wage grid as well as the new wage grid has both a starting point and a target wage for each position and classification.

So some of those considerations that were considered in the establishment of the 2023/2024 wage grid.

We had a commitment in the Speech from the Throne last fall to increase wages in the sector in 2023.

We also know that the minimum wage is increasing in 2023. And we also looked at lessons learned from the, initial wage grid.

So that included the need for more lead time for implementation. Partly why we're here talking to you today also to provide some clarification on terminology, which we have tried to do in this new wage grant.

We're also committed to hiring a consultant in the near future to support the development of a more comprehensive framework for wages in the sector that will be based on market research and consultation with the sector.

So the next two slides show, it helps to really demonstrate the discrepancy that has existed across the sector for different wages. So the minimum wage, hourly wages that were provided for each classification that's listed along the bottom is in blue.

The maximum is in red and the mean is in green/yellow. So you can definitely see that for a lot of positions there's quite a range between wages.

The minimum and the maximum wages for each type of position. Last year so this would have been part of the year would have had the wage grid, the initial wage grade would have applied for part of 2022.

It started in July 1. So there is still a quite a range and discrepancy, but it is starting to be a little bit, narrowed.

Okay. So the wage grid for 23/24 that is effective July 1, 2023. We're providing a total of 56.1 million dollars to support increased wages across the sector, 3.3 million of which is provincial funding and the remainder is federal funding. So we are increasing the starting point wages on the wage grid.

And providing an increase to the wage grid supplement to support increasing those wages. So the increase to the starting point wages will help the sector employees get closer to the target wages that are remaining the same from the 2022/2023 wage rate. And so everyone all licensed not for profit child care centers, nursery schools, and family group homes will receive a wage grade supplement increase on July, the first to support increasing wages.

So similar to the 2022 wage grid, it's a 2023 wage grid includes a starting point and a target wage.

So the starting point provides the lowest wage that an employee of that position or classification should receive in a funded facility.

The target provides the average wage for each position classification. The facilities should be striving to achieve by July, 2024.

The 2023 wage grid is intended to support increases to wages for positions across the facilities salary scale. So in a facilities salary scale that is likely a lot more, detailed than the wage grid.

The levels and steps on a facility salary scale should not fall below starting point wage and over the next year should support their employees being paid on average at or above the target.

So that just for additional clarification, the target is not a maximum. The target is the targeted average wage for those classifications and higher wages can be paid based on an employee's position and classification as well as a facility salary scale if the operating budget permits.

So again, as mentioned, there will be a wage grid supplement. Again, it'll be increased, effective July 1, 2023 to support a further increase to wages across the sector.

The wage grid supplement is calculated by providing an increase to the overall revenue generated per space within the unit funding model.

And likely the folks on the call here are aware that the unit funding model is based on the regulated child staff ratios.

The unit being four for infant, eight for preschool or 15 for school-age spaces. And each type of unit generates the same daily revenue from combined parent fees and operating grant funding.

So this is what the, new annual grant, operating grant amounts will be with the increase to the wage grid supplement.

Added to them. So these are the amounts here. So it shows both the annual amount per approved funded, approved funded space effective July one for approved funded approved funded space effective July 1 for each of the different types of spaces and it shows, how much of an increase that is.

And it shows, how much of an increase that is over last year. And we will be distributing this, so I won't read you the numbers. Review them when you receive that.

So operating grant assessment updates. Current operating budget submissions will be reassessed in childcare online. To adjust upcoming quarterly payments based on the new operating grant rates with the increased wage grid supplement.

Included the quarterly payment for July to September will be issued on July 1, 2023.

For centers with a June year-end, the extension operating grant payment for July to September will be issued on July 1 as per usual practice.

The payment amount will be based on the facilities. 2022-2023 Operating budget submission. Which was assessed using the previous operating grant rates.

An adjustment to the extension payment to reflect the new operating grant rates will be made once the facilities. 2023/24 operating budget has been submitted and assessed.

The new operating grant rates will be used to calculate grant payments for center operating budgets, submitted on or after July 1.

Current nursery school operating grant submissions will be re-assessed in Child Care Online, reflecting the new operating grant rates, including the increased wage rate supplement amounts.

The quarterly payment for July to September will be issued July 1 for facilities that remain open in July and August. Operating grant payments for nursery schools that are closed during July and August will be calculated based on the 2023/24 rates once applications are received on or after July 1.

Here we have the wage grid and everyone should have had an opportunity to see this online. I believe that we distributed the circular with links to the wage grid as well as the FAQ.

And so this, version shows you. What the starting point was in 2022/23 so the initial wage grid.

Along with the new starting point. That will be effective July 1, 2023 and the target which is the same as it was in 2022/23.

And yeah, we again, this is available on line and is will be in the deck again that circulated.

18:04

Jennifer Faulder

So we're on to common questions. First being why is Manitoba increasing the existing wage grid?

And we know this might be a question for some because we have had feedback from stakeholders that there were some shortcomings with the initial wage grid that was implemented in July, 2022. That feedback is important to us and that's why we're hiring a consultant to do a more comprehensive review of sector wages that will include completing market research, consulting with stakeholders, and developing recommendations for something that can work for everyone across the sector.

But you know, recognizing the critical importance of continuing to improve recruitment and retention to the sector.

We did not want to wait for that more comprehensive review to be completed before moving forward with additional support to further increase wages.

We need to continue to support the sector. To make it an attractive field to work.

Can all employees expect their wages to increase in July, 2023? So all facilities are required to use the increased wage grid supplement to increase wages for staff.

This does not mean that everyone will necessarily receive an increase to the wages or that everyone will receive the same increase to wages.

It may vary from facility to facility based on current wages and what's you know what is feasible in terms of meeting or exceeding the starting point or the target wages within the facilities operating budget. So

if the facilities budget allows facilities can pay staff above the starting point and above the target wage if that works.

There is no maximum.

How can I calculate the wage grid supplement amount that the facility will receive? So to calculate the amount that the wage rate supplement is increasing.

On July 1, 2023. You can subtract the amount your facility previously received from the grant amount your facility will receive effective July 1. For example, for a school age space, the wage rate supplement amount was \$2,277 and the new amount is \$2,629 so the wage grid supplement on a school age space is \$352 per space.

Why are CCAs who have not yet completed the required 40 h of ECE related training not included on the wage grid. And what should we pay them? So the starting wage for a CCA without the 40 h training is at the discretion of the board. Facilities may pay more than provincial minimum wage if the operating budget permits.

Can the board establish a wage lever level for a CCA actively pursuing education to become an ECE that is higher than the wage grid wage for a CCA? So within the wage grid there's a Classification for a CCA and then it goes up to an ECE, but we know that there are lots of circumstances where CCA is in the process of completing their two-year diploma to become an ECE. And if a facility wishes, they can include a CCA in ECE training position and wage level between a CCA and an ECE if they wish and if their budget allows.

And if you don't have that kind of classification, it might be something to consider, to help encourage existing employees to pursue their ECE education.

How should a facility consider a CCA in the workplace program on the way to it? The ECE workplace program is an accelerated program that provides the specialized training and credentials needed to become an ECE 2.

A CCA in the ECE workplace program would fall under the CCA and ECE training level and sorry this is a typo here and it wouldn't be on the wage grid but on yours if you have that on your facilities salary scale, then that's where they would fall.

As is the case with all positions and classifications, decisions regarding wages are at the board's discretion and they can pay higher wages if the budget allows.

Why did the province not use the Manitoba Child Care Association Market competitive salary guidelines scale?

So the MCCA market competitive salary guidelines scale provides a suggested wage scale that facilities can use if it works for their facility.

Further analysis is required to. Review this more closely and determine if it would be effective or and what would be most effective and equitable.

For wages across Manitoba in all of our facilities. And the goal of our 2023 wage grid is to ensure that staff earn at least the starting point wage for each class and to support ongoing increases to wages in the sector

And this way trade is just another step towards something that will be more comprehensive.

Is there going to be an increase to the salaries covered by the inclusion support program staffing grant and the staff replacement grant?

Facilities do not need to submit new ISP staffing rent applications to increase the hourly wages for staff hired through this program.

Approved grant amounts will be adjusted by the department for staff whose hourly wage is less than \$17 and 4 cents effective July 1, 2023.

Funding to support ISP Enhancement staff is based on the CCA with a 40 h course position and facilities may pay higher wages if their budget allows and if they choose to do so.

Reporting requirements. All funded centers are required to submit annual audited financial statements to confirm the use of public funds towards intended purpose, including all operating costs and detailed wage information.

So that is not a new requirement, that is an ongoing existing requirement. Increased revenue from the operating grant and increased expenditures for staff wages must be demonstrated in the facilities next annual operating budget submission.

And your annual audited financial statements. These reports are required under the Canada wide agreement and will ensure accountability.

Facilities receiving increased funding and confirming that we, well, I don't think we meant targets here in terms of the target wage, but that the starting point wages are.

Roles of the board of directors at the employer.

26:00

Jennifer Faulder

I'm sorry, one moment. Having some technical difficulties.

Okay, I think we're back.

34:54

Jennifer Faulder

So sorry for these technical difficulties. We have been having some challenges with our system here and we thought they had been resolved and apparently not yet, but hopefully now with a headset on you'll be able to hear me okay for the remainder of webinar. So we were at the slide on the roles of the board of directors.

So as the employer of the board of directors is responsible for the development of the facilities salary scale for employees from frontline staff to directors.

So to implement the new wage grant, and this is included also in the circular that was distributed. Boards of directors should be reviewing position descriptions, roles and responsibilities to account for and include positions not specified on the wage grid, and to review and compare your current salary scale to the wages listed in the wage grid for the new starting point and the target and address the salary scale accordingly, and adjust the budget to reflect the increased operating grant revenue and increased costs for proposed staff wages.

Review and approve your revised salary scale and budget according to your facilities bylaws, policies and procedures, and provide payment to employees at your facilities new salary levels effective July 1 2023.

We hope that by providing some more advanced notice that you will have the ability to implement this in advance of July 1. However, if necessary, retroactive pay to July 1, if is possible if you're not able to complete all these steps in advance.

And again, we have these implementation resources. So the circular, Frequently asked questions for facilities and the new wage grid are all available online at the link here.

And just as a reminder, the MCCA offers board governance training and that is available at no cost to boards and management.

There's a link here to the new wage grid and, as well the online toolkit for board of directors is noted as being available soon. So the one that is here now is the link here is, just needs some updates, to be current to have the new starting point wages included.

And after this webinar, if you continue to have questions, please reach out to the CDCInfo@gov.mb.ca and we will do our best to answer them. So we have, now time for some questions and I believe we've been receiving some questions as we've been going through the chat. Now that I have the sound going solely through my headset I might have to get Carmen to tell me the question and then I will just tell you out loud and try to answer as best I can.

Okay, so there's some questions about staff with the inclusion support program and the staffing grant.

So, funding to support the inclusion support program staffing grants will be based on the starting wage on the 2023/24 wage grid for a CCA with a 40 h course which will be \$17.04 cents on July 1, 2023.

For staff hired under this program who earn less than that starting point of \$17.04, facilities are expected to submit a new ISP staffing grant application.

To increase the wages to align with the 2023/24 wage grid. And updated applications are required to meet financial and reporting requirements for the ISP program. And again, you can pay higher wages if your budget allows.

39:57

Carmen Zubin

Question is from Cynthia. So she is asking. Your staff are earning higher...

40:07

Jennifer Faulder

So, I'm just gonna repeat the question, cause I don't think that people can hear when Carmen speaks.

So there's a question if staff are currently making wages that are above the target wage.

If there is a recommendation, for increases and we do not have a specific recommendation. The facilities need to look at the wages of staff across your facility and you know look at that in comparison to the wage grid and then make decisions.

I mean, again, the increased funding being provided through the wage grid supplement in the operating grant is required to be used for increasing wages.

So that, that decision is up to the board of directors. You know, with all of that context being considered. Okay, thank you.

41:24

Carmen Zubin

Yes, okay. So we have two similar questions from Donna and Susan. Well, to our boards guaranteeing that operating grant will support salaries ongoing. And that we're calling this the wage groups. Will it continue?

42:07

Jennifer Faulder

Okay. The, we're calling it the wage grid supplement in order to just provide clarification that the increase is being provided at this time to the operating grant is tied to supporting increased wages for staff across the sector. And, you know, at this time, the intention is to continue with the funding. Because we want wages to continue to increase. We are not wanting to see them decrease.

43:00

Carmen Zubin

Hey, thank you. We have again similar questions from Brenda, Colleen, and Carla. If we have any information on when other funding increases will occur to cover operational costs.

43:10

Jennifer Faulder

At this time there's been no, commitment to increasing the base operating grant. So the funding that's being committed right now is to increase the wage grid supplement to support increasing wages.

43:35

Carmen Zubin

Okay, thank you. Two questions about staff and years of service from Bertha and Kelly.

Just wondering about wages for long term staff if we use this money for new staff, but the long term staff is getting let up, getting left out. And can you please clarify?

43:54

Jennifer Faulder

Okay. So we understand and appreciate that facilities will have a more complex likely salary scale that they use within their facilities to address things like longer serving staff and that's part of why we're being very clear that there is no maximum being established by the province what we are really wanting to ensure is that the wages are being increased to support more recruitment and retention of staff working in facilities.

So how exactly a facility decides to increase these wages is up to the board of directors to determine you know how they will spend this money to most fairly and equitably.

Increase wages with, you know, an emphasis being put on ensuring that staff are making at least the amounts set out as starting point.

45:08

Carmen Zubin

Thank you. A question from Susanna in regards to salary scale. So how many levels on the salary scale are recommended?

45:20

Jennifer Faulder

At this time, we don't have a recommendation around a more comprehensive salary scale. What we're providing is a starting wage for some specific positions and then it is up to the board of directors of a facility or the owner operator to establish a salary scale and determine ultimately what the wages are in the facility.

45:51

Carmen Zubin

Thank you. From Carla. Carla is wondering if Nursery school programs will be required to have an audit.

They haven't had to in the past.

46:10

Jennifer Faulder

No, they will not be required to have an audit. I'm gonna let Carla answer this question.

46:19

Carla Kernsted

Carla Kernsted here. Yes, you're required to submit financial statements in a particular format, but they do not need to be for nursery schools.

46:35

Carmen Zubin

Okay, great. Thank you. From Tamara. Why is there no level one to level 5 with these new wages?

Will the government increase it annually?

46:55

Jennifer Faulder

So. I think this is similar to a previous question and that we are not establishing a salary scale.

We're providing a wage bridge that primarily establishes the starting wage for a variety of positions and it also provides the target that we are asking for facilities to try to achieve over the next year. There we are not providing, a scale with steps. So that is up to the individual facilities.

If you don't already have one, you may want to consider having one. The toolkit does provide samples of potential salary scales that you could use to assist in developing a salary scale if you don't already have one at your facility.

47:55

Carmen Zubin

Hey, thank you. This question from Brenda may be related to that also Jennifer. Brenda's asking about receiving definitions for a supervisor assistant director and director positions.

Is there any advice we can give?

48:16

Jennifer Faulder

We did, in the new, wage grid that is posted online. We did provide definitions for, some of the positions, that we had received questions about previously based on the initial wage grid.

And I'm not sure if those positions were specifically defined there. In part because we hadn't received questions about that before but that's something we can take back for consideration and clarification.

48:52

Carmen Zubin

Thank you. So related questions from Jen and Dawn. In regards to regulated staffing ratios.

Jen is asking, am I to understand that the wage grid only covers the regulated staffing ratio?

So Dawn expands on that as in additional staff throughout the day that cover breaks, etc.

How would this increase funding reflect this?

49:29

Jennifer Faulder

Yeah, the increased funding can be used to provide increased wages for any staff working in the facilities.

49:42

Carmen Zubin

Thank you. Question from Tammy. What is the amount to pay a staff who does not yet have the CCA course?

49:54

Jennifer Faulder

A CCA who has not yet completed the, 40 h training well obviously would need to be paid at least the provincial minimum wage and if the facility operating budget allows you can certainly choose to pay higher than the minimum wage.

We do not have that position on the wage grid.

50:21

Carmen Zubin

Hey. A question from Tammy. If a nursery school teacher has to be on the floor 100% of the time and do the same admin as a Preschool director, will they be receiving higher wages?

50:42

Jennifer Faulder

It's up to the board of directors for each facility to determine what the appropriate wage is for each of the employees within the facility. So the wage grid provides guidance around what the minimum amounts are that should be paid per type of position classification, but does not set any kind of maximum. So, each facility needs to review their positions and decide what an appropriate wage would be.

51:20

Carmen Zubin

Thank you. Question from Rhonda. Will consideration ever be made taking into account the higher overhead fixed expenses of certain centers, making it harder for them to compete with the higher wages paid by other centers with lower operational costs?

51:48

Jennifer Faulder

There's a, you know, a variety of factors that impact the operating expenses of each facility. We recognize there's a wide range of types of facilities with significant differences in the number and type of spaces that they have, the costs associated with just basic operating around rent and other materials, and the operating the unit funding model was developed in part to try to address and provide as equitable of a funding model as possible.

And you know, certainly we're open to continuing to receive feedback on how our funding could be, provided in a equitable way.

52:55

Sarah Whiteford

Hi, this is, Sarah. Can you hear me okay? Yeah. So I don't want to over promise in terms of the consultants work but that particular issue of the varying cost pressures that we recognize that expenditures are felt very differently across our sector and the size and scale of our facilities very so

wisely. That part of what we're hoping to explore with assistance of the vendor that might come on board is that question of implementation.

So it's one thing to build a scale, really understanding the impacts of implementation with that sector as varied as ours is something that we know we're gonna have to devote some real effort in into trying to reconcile.

Not a full answer to your question, but it's something that we're, extremely live to and that's also based on the feedback that we have been receiving over this past year.

53:58

Carmen Zubin

Thank you, Sarah. And our last question for today is coming from Natalie. Just wondering if there was an error that the ECE 3 supervisor is at a higher target wage than an ECE 3 director?

Can we just clarify.

54:25

Jennifer Faulder

The starting points are in part looking at the size of the program. So that's one of the considerations that was made in establishing the starting point.

Again, the wages that a facility pays are up to the board of directors of that facility and the wage grid is a guide that is intended to provide the minimum that should be paid for a particular classification.

54:59

Carmen Zubin

Thank you.

55:03

Jennifer Faulder

Thank you everyone for joining us today and for all of your engagement and questions. We really appreciate you taking the time.

To be with us today and I hope we have answered many of your questions. We will, you know, continue to review the questions that have come in if we missed them.

And we'll work on addressing them as best we can as we Move forward. Thank you very much.