

# Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment Grant Opportunity Guidelines

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| Enquiries:                  | If you have any questions, contact the department via email: <a href="mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au">ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au</a> |
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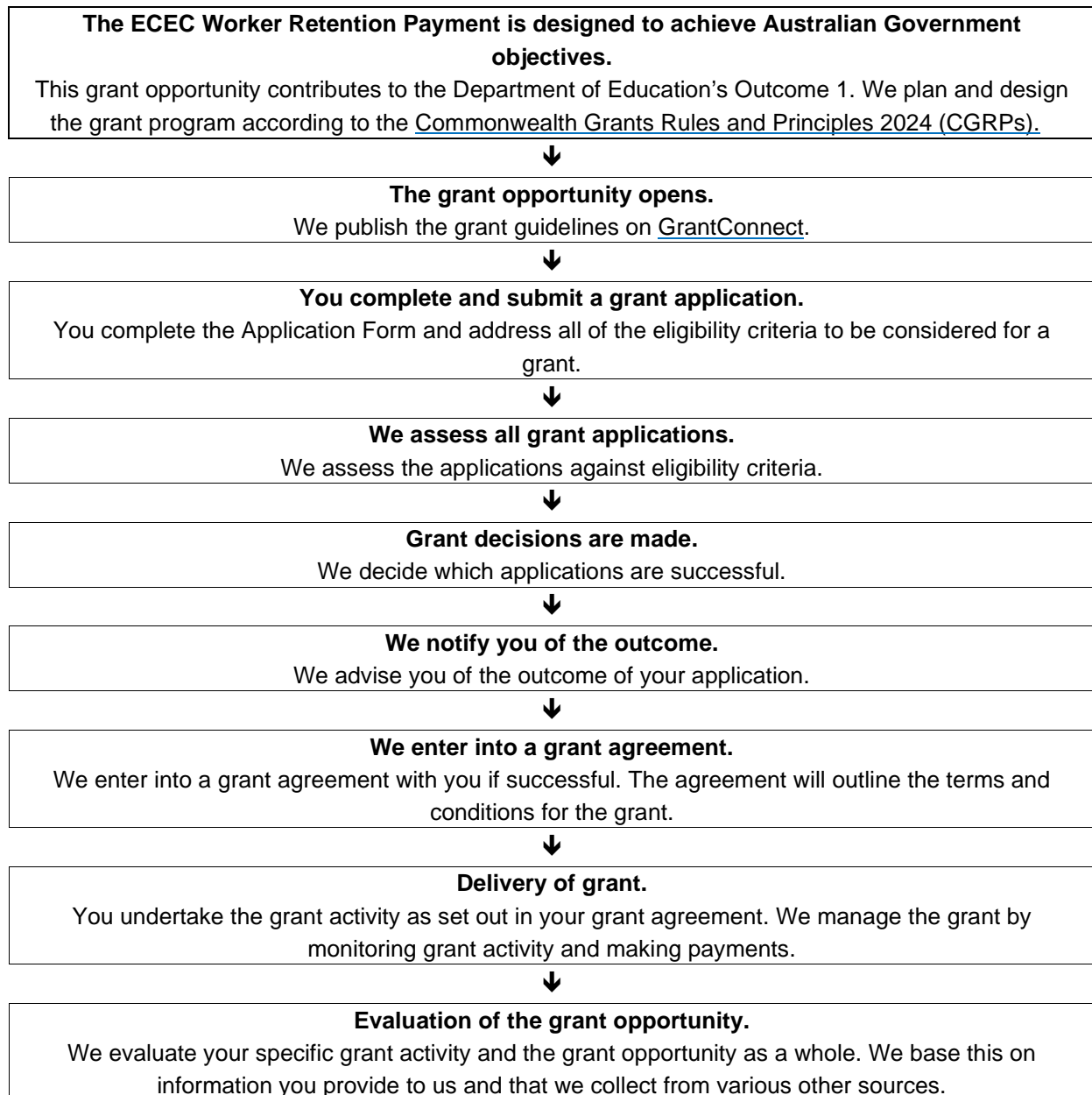
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# 1. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Worker Retention Payment grant opportunity processes



## 1.1 Introduction

These guidelines contain information for the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Worker Retention Payment grant opportunity.

You must read this document before applying for a grant.

This document sets out:

- the purpose of the grant opportunity;
- the eligibility criteria;
- how grant applications are considered;
- how grantees are notified and receive grant payments;
- how grantees will be monitored and evaluated; and
- responsibilities and expectations in relation to the opportunity.

## 2. About the grant program

The purpose of this grant is to provide Australian Government funding to support a wage increase for all eligible ECEC workers from December 2024.

Eligible ECEC workers include:

- workers covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* and working in a Child Care Subsidy (CCS) approved Centre-Based Day Care (CBDC) or Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) service;
- workers covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* and working in a CCS approved CBDC or OSHC service; and
- workers who are undertaking duties covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* and working in a CCS approved CBDC or OSHC service but are not covered by these awards (including workers covered by a state industrial instrument,<sup>1</sup> or working in a setting covered by a different award), and these duties constitute the majority of that workers role.

Trainees who are undertaking a registered traineeship and whose pay and conditions are not covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* are not included as eligible ECEC workers.

The Australian Government is committed to providing funding towards a wage increase for eligible ECEC workers to recognise the value of the workforce and support the Government's ambition of universal access to affordable, quality ECEC.

Funding is calculated to support wages for workers who are either working in, or directly supporting, a CCS-approved setting. A CCS-approved setting is a setting in which CCS is claimable for the children who are receiving the ECEC.

The ECEC Worker Retention Payment (the program) will run over two years from 2 December 2024 to 30 November 2026.

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<sup>1</sup> State industrial instrument means an award, an agreement (whether individual or collective), or another industrial instrument or order, that:

- (a) is made under, or recognised by, a law of a State that is a State or Territory industrial law; and
- (b) determines terms and conditions of employment.

The objectives of the program are to:

- support a meaningful wage increase for a historically undervalued, highly feminised sector that provides an essential service;
- contribute to the ongoing professionalisation of the ECEC sector;
- ensure ECEC remains accessible and affordable to families; and
- address workforce shortages as the Government considers a pathway to universal ECEC.

The intended outcomes of the program are:

- improved attraction and retention of educators and early childhood teachers in the ECEC sector;
- improved access to high quality ECEC; and
- improved workplace instrument coverage in the ECEC sector.

We administer the program according to the CGRPs.

### 3. Grant amount and grant period

The Australian Government has announced a total investment of \$3.6 billion towards the ECEC Worker Retention Payment, of this up to \$3.5 billion has been made available for this grant opportunity. The grant funding awarded under this grant opportunity grant will be available from the first business day in December 2024 to 30 November 2026.

Funding provided is not capped but is dependent on a formula based on the labour costs for the charged hours of care provided by a service on a monthly basis and the Commonwealth contribution rate to support a wage increase. Charged hours of care is determined by administrative data held in the CCS system.

Labour costs are inclusive of salary-based allowances.

The formula has variations to account for differences in costs between different service types.

Providers may seek a review of their funding level where they can show, with evidence, they are not receiving adequate funding. In these circumstances, Providers need to contact [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

The average fees for each formula will be calculated from administrative data (average data from across the sector) prior to release of grant funding. The average fees will be updated on a six-monthly basis.

The grant opportunity will be open for applications from 8 October 2024 to 30 September 2026.

### 4. Eligibility Criteria

We cannot consider your application if it does not satisfy all of the eligibility criteria outlined below.

## 4.1 Who is eligible to apply for a grant?

To be eligible you must:

- be a legal entity that provides CBDC or OSHC services (a Provider). One Provider may apply in relation to one or multiple service locations (Services) that the Provider owns and operates.

The Provider must be:

- an incorporated or unincorporated body or association; or
- a private or public company; or
- a registered co-operative; or
- a state/territory government body, or
- a local council; or
- an Indigenous corporation; or
- a sole trader; or
- a partnership.

The Provider must for each service on the application:

- have a valid ABN;
- have a valid account registered with a recognised Australian financial institution;
- be approved by the Department of Education to administer CCS payments as evidenced by a valid and current CCS approval number;
- meet and maintain all eligibility requirements of continued CCS approval for the duration of your Grant Agreement under this Grant Opportunity;
- employ eligible ECEC workers under a workplace instrument that meets the conditions of Section 4.3; and
- not increase their Service fees by more than 4.4 per cent in the 12 months from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 and for each subsequent 12 month period, by more than the amount equivalent to the growth rate as specified in the new ABS input cost index which will be developed specifically for the ECEC sector or such other fee growth percentage caps as determined by the Department (see Section 9.1 for further detail) (**Fee Constraint Condition**).

## 4.2 Who is not eligible to apply for a grant?

You are not eligible to apply if you:

- are an organisation included on the National Redress Scheme's website on the list of 'Institutions that have not joined or signified their intent to join the Scheme' ([www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au)); or
- are a Commonwealth agency or body (including government business enterprises); or
- are an overseas resident; or
- are any organisation not included in Section 4.1.

### 4.3 Eligible workplace instruments

To be eligible for the grant, the Provider must engage eligible ECEC workers (see Section 2) under a legally enforceable workplace instrument that:

- includes an obligation to pay workers either at or above the relevant minimum rates set out at Schedule A and in accordance with this Section; and
- must be in effect for the full duration of the grant period.

#### Impact of the Annual Wage Review process

The amounts in Schedule A will increase in accordance with any increase in the award rates for each classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* as a result of an Annual Wage Review of the Fair Work Commission.

Accordingly, the workplace instrument must allow for this increase. Without being prescriptive as to how a workplace instrument might do so, one example might be the inclusion of a provision along the lines of the following:

- Effective from the first full pay period on or after 1 July 2025, there shall be an increase to the rates in columns four and five in Table 1 and columns three and four in Table 2 based on the Annual Wage Review Decision for the 2025/26 period.

The above example assumes that Schedule A will be set out in full in the workplace instrument. Providers are not required to demonstrate that their workplace instruments contain this precise wording and may demonstrate compliance with this Section 4.3 in other ways, provided that the workplace instrument addresses the substantive requirement to:

- pay workers either at or above the relevant minimum hourly rates set out at Schedule A;
- provide for an increase in accordance with any increase in the award rates for each classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* or the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* as a result of an Annual Wage Review of the Fair Work Commission; and
- provide for an increase of an additional 5 per cent from 1 December 2025 above the relevant minimum hourly rates set out at Schedule A and in accordance with any increase in the award rates as a result of the Annual Wage Review of the Fair Work Commission.

#### Impact of Gender Undervaluation Proceedings

The Fair Work Commission is undertaking a process to examine whether an adjustment to the *Children's Services Award 2010* is required on work value grounds. Should this process lift the minimum hourly rate payable for a classification under the *Children's Services Award 2010* above the minimum wage rates stipulated for that classification at Schedule A, for workers to whom the *Children's Services Award 2010* applies, the minimum hourly rate payable for a classification in Schedule A will be replaced by the minimum hourly rates payable for that classification in accordance with the *Children's Services Award 2010*.

Note: *The Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* is not being considered as part of the FWC proceedings. Therefore, the minimum rate requirements for eligible ECEC workers to whom the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or a state industrial instrument applies are unaffected by the FWC proceedings in relation to work value.



## 5. What the grant money can be used for

### 5.1 Eligible grant activities

The grant is to be used only for supplementing wages and eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).

### 5.2 Eligible expenditure

You can only spend the grant on eligible expenditure.

The only eligible expenditure items are:

1. Supplementing wages for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).
2. Paying eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s) including superannuation contributions, employee entitlements, leave loading, workers' compensation insurance and payroll tax.
3. Further eligible on-costs, as may be approved by the Department in accordance with the grant agreement.

Any funds provided by this grant must first be expended on supplementing wages for eligible ECEC workers. Only once all eligible ECEC workers have been paid at least the minimum rates specified at Schedule A (as increased or replaced from time to time, in accordance with Section 4.3 above) can any remaining funding be used for eligible on-costs.

There may also be opportunity for a Provider to apply for funding to cover historical leave liabilities. Consideration will be given on a case-by-case basis.

Funds cannot be used for any other purpose, even if funds are provided in excess of the minimum amount required to cover the mandatory payments.

### 5.3 What the grant money cannot be used for

You **cannot** use the grant funding:

- To subsidise the cost of your current wage expenditure, even if you currently pay workers above the minimum rates payable under the *Children's Services Award 2010*, *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or relevant state industrial instrument. Grant funding may only be used to supplement or fund the costs of an increase to rates at or above the relevant minimum rates in Schedule A, as increased or replaced from time to time in accordance with Section 4.3. You must not decrease your existing contribution towards wages for eligible ECEC workers and substitute this with the grant funding.
- For any purpose that is not supplementing wages and eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers at your Service(s).
- For costs incurred in the preparation of the grant application or related documentation.
- For costs associated with facilitating the increase such as administrative expenses, accounting, legal fees or financial advice.
- For costs associated with joining or developing a workplace instrument.

## 6. How to apply

Before applying, you must read and understand these guidelines. These guidelines do not constitute business, investment, legal or tax advice and you should seek independent professional advice in respect of all matters in connection with any application for grant funding.

These documents may be found on [GrantConnect](#). Any alterations and addenda<sup>2</sup> will be published on GrantConnect and by registering on this website you will be automatically notified of any changes. GrantConnect is the authoritative source for grants information.

To apply you must:

- meet all eligibility criteria;
- complete the online application form;
- provide all the information requested;
- include all necessary attachments; and
- submit your application/s to the Department of Education using the application form by 30 September 2026.

You are responsible for ensuring that your application is complete and accurate. Giving false or misleading information is a serious offence under the [Criminal Code 1995](#) and may also give rise to offences under the Family Assistance Law. We will also investigate any false or misleading information and may exclude your application from further consideration.

If you find an error in your application after submitting it, you should email us immediately at [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

If we find an error or information that is missing, we may ask for clarification or additional information from you that will not change the nature of your application but may delay the application process.

You should keep a copy of your application and any supporting documents.

We will acknowledge that we have received your application within five business days of receiving it.

### 6.1 Attachments to the application

The following document must be included with your application:

- a copy of your current in-force workplace instrument(s) that meets the requirements of Section 4.3 above, or a link to the workplace instrument(s) (on the Fair Work Commission website) if registered with the Fair Work Commission. A copy of the current in-force workplace instrument(s) must be provided with your application if not registered with the Fair Work Commission).

You must attach supporting documentation to the application form in line with the instructions provided within the form. You should only attach requested documents. We will not consider information in attachments that we do not request.

### 6.2 Timing of grant opportunity

You can submit an application at any time while the grant opportunity is open. The grant opportunity will run from 8 October 2024 to 30 September 2026. Applications submitted after

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<sup>2</sup> Alterations and addenda include but are not limited to: corrections to currently published documents, changes to close times for applications, Questions and Answers (Q&A) documents and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) documents

the opportunity end date cannot be accepted. Payments will be made from January 2025 to December 2026 covering the period from 2 December 2024 until 30 November 2026. Providers may be given an opportunity for a payment to support the costs of increases to or above the relevant minimum rates in Schedule A over the December 2024 period. Please note that this payment will be reconciled when the regular payment cycle commences in January 2025 (it is not an additional payment).

### 6.3 Backdating provision

Any complete application received by 30 June 2025 that is awarded grant funding will receive funding in arrears backdated to 2 December 2024 where:

- the Provider has a workplace instrument in place; and
- the workplace instrument stipulates workers will be paid either at or above the relevant minimum hourly rates set out at Schedule A from 2 December 2024.

### 6.4 Questions during the application process

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) register will be maintained and updated on GrantConnect and the Department of Education's website.

## 7. The grant selection process

Your application will be considered through a demand driven grant process.

We will check your application to ensure it meets the eligibility criteria in order of application receipt. Application does not guarantee you will be awarded grant funding.

Your application will be assessed for eligibility within two months of receipt of your complete application.

If the selection process identifies unintentional errors in your application, you may be contacted to correct or explain the information.

### 7.1 Who will approve grants?

The Secretary of the Department of Education (or their delegate) is the Program Delegate and decides which grant applications to approve for the purposes of the grant program.

The Program Delegate's decision is final in all matters, including:

- the approval of the grant;
- the grant amount to be awarded; and
- the terms and conditions of the grant.

There is no appeal mechanism for decisions to approve or not approve a grant.

## 8. Notification of application outcomes

We will advise you of the outcome of your application in writing. If you are successful, we will advise you of any specific conditions attached to the grant.

## 9. Successful grant applications

Providers must enter into a legally binding agreement with the Commonwealth as represented by the Department of Education. The Department of Education will use a Grant Agreement to formalise the grant with general terms and conditions that cannot be changed.

The Department of Education must execute a Grant Agreement with a Provider before it can make any payments to that Provider. The Department of Education is not responsible for any expenditure committed by a Provider for wages paid as required under their workplace instrument (or other voluntary reason) prior to the execution of a Grant Agreement with the Department of Education. If a Provider chooses to pay workers amounts nominally covered by this grant before they have an executed Grant Agreement, they do so at their own risk.

A Grant Agreement may have specific conditions determined by the assessment process or other considerations made by the Program Delegate.

The Grant Agreement will state the:

- Service(s) that have been deemed eligible;
- eligibility requirements of the grant;
- conditions of the grant;
- obligations in relation to the grant, including reporting requirements.

### 9.1 The Grant Agreement

Grantees (Providers who have been awarded a grant) will be required to agree to certain conditions in order to receive grant payments. These include:

- limiting Service fee growth in accordance with the Fee Constraint Condition (see further detail below);
- passing on the full amount of grant funding by supplementing wages or eligible on-costs for eligible ECEC workers;
- complying with the terms of their workplace instrument(s);
- maintaining CCS approval; and
- complying with all applicable laws including the Family Assistance Law.

The Commonwealth may investigate or audit Providers to ensure compliance with the above conditions. Providers should be aware that provision of false, fraudulent or misleading information may be a criminal offence under the Criminal Code and Family Assistance Law and where the Commonwealth considers false or misleading information has been provided or fraudulent conduct has occurred, the Commonwealth may terminate the grant agreement and/or require repayment of grant funds to the Commonwealth.

#### *Fee Constraint Condition*

In addition to the eligibility criterion, all grantees must adhere to the Fee Constraint Condition, being annual fee growth percentage caps applicable from the date of announcement of the Grant Opportunity and for the duration of the term of the Grant Agreement.

Unless alternative fee growth percentage caps are determined by the Department of Education (see further details below), the fee growth percentage caps are as follows:

- a maximum 4.4 per cent increase to Service fees applies from 8 August 2024 to 7 August 2025 (12 months post announcement); and
- for subsequent 12-month periods until the conclusion of the grant, a maximum increase equivalent to the growth rate as specified in the new annual ABS input cost index which will be developed specifically for the ECEC sector.

### *Fee growth monitoring*

The Department of Education will review all hourly Service fees of every Service receiving grant funding, according to submitted session reports from the last CCS reporting fortnight before 8 August in each year of the term. The Service fees for this reference period will be used to measure Service fee growth against the Fee Constraint Condition. Additional information may be required to be reported or submitted by grantees during the term of the grant agreement to assist the Department to determine whether the relevant fee growth percentage cap has been complied with (see Section 11 below).

Service fees will be monitored by the Department for the length of the Grant Agreement. Where a Service is identified as having exceeded a growth percentage cap, the Department of Education will contact the relevant grantee and seek evidence to demonstrate they are not in breach of a fee growth cap.

New Services, and Services subject to change of ownership, face the same constraints on annual fee growth over the relevant period as existing Services participating in the grant. See Section 11 below for further detail regarding transfer of Services.

### *Alternative fee growth percentage caps*

In limited circumstances where a restriction on Service fee growth can be shown to seriously impact the financial viability of the Provider/grantee or a Service, Providers/grantees may request Departmental consideration of the impact of the fee growth percentage caps for specific Services covered by the Grant Agreement. Providers/grantees can seek guidance on applying for alternative fee growth percentage caps by emailing [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au) and can apply for an alternative fee growth cap by following the process specified in the Grant Application and Grant Agreement.

In such circumstances, the Department may determine that less restrictive fee growth percentage caps are to apply under the Fee Constraint Condition. Providers are required to comply with any alternative fee growth percentage caps under the Fee Constraint Condition and the Department will monitor compliance and may take grant management and compliance action in relation to any non-compliance with the applicable Fee Constraint Condition as set out in this Section 9.1.

The alternative fee growth percentage cap process will remain available throughout the grant period and may be streamlined should there be a sector-wide event impacting viability for a large number of Services.

### *Contravention of Fee Constraint Condition*

Where a Service is found to have contravened the Fee Constraint Condition, the grantee will not be entitled to receive further grant funding in relation to that Service unless the Service reduces their Service fees to a level below the allowable fee growth percentage cap. The

Department may also be entitled to exercise its contractual rights of repayment and other remedies under the Grant Agreement.

#### *Funding must be passed on to eligible ECEC workers*

All funds allocated to your Service(s) under the Grant Agreement must be passed on to eligible ECEC workers to supplement wages or must be applied to eligible on-costs (in accordance with Section 5.2 above). The Department may request evidence of compliance.

Funding cannot be used to subsidise the cost of your current wage expenditure, even if you pay workers above the minimum hourly rates payable under the *Children's Services Award, Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020* or relevant state industrial instrument and may only be used to supplement or fund the costs of increases to or above the relevant minimum rates in Schedule A, as increased or replaced from time to time in accordance with Section 4.3. You must not decrease your existing contribution towards wages for eligible ECEC workers and substitute this with the grant funding.

Where a grantee fails to meet the obligations of the Grant Agreement, the Department or other relevant Commonwealth entity may issue a breach of agreement notice which may result in the termination of the agreement and/or require repayment of funds to the Commonwealth.

## 9.2 How we pay the grant

Payments will be made through the Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS).

Grant funds will be paid into the bank account currently nominated for each Service in the CCSS, that has been used to pay the CCS. Grantees should ensure that their bank account details in the CCSS are up to date. It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure that the payments are allocated correctly for each Service it manages. The Department will provide the Provider with a list of payments each month for their Service(s).

The grant will be paid two months in arrears every four weeks. The amount paid each month will be calculated based on the hours of care provided at the Service using CCS data.

## 9.3 Grant Payments and GST

There is no GST payable on the grant payments associated with this grant.

We recommend you seek independent professional advice on your taxation obligations or seek assistance from the [Australian Taxation Office](#).<sup>3</sup> We do not provide advice on your particular taxation circumstances.

# 10. Announcement of grants

If successful, your grant will be listed on the GrantConnect website within 21 days after the date of effect<sup>4</sup> as required by Section 5.4 of the *CGRPs*.

# 11. How we monitor your grant activity

Activity will be monitored through existing CCS monitoring and compliance systems as well as grant specific monitoring. Monitoring methodologies will vary and may involve the analysis of data, document reviews, quality assurance checks and internal audits.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ato.gov.au/>

<sup>4</sup> See glossary



The grantee has the responsibility to maintain grant related documentation and the administrative capacity to meet the required compliance and reporting standards. The Department may request relevant documentation for monitoring and compliance activities such as random audits and spot checks.

Compliance with the Fee Constraint Condition and requirement to maintain CCS approval will be monitored for the duration of the grant. Providers identified through monitoring will be contacted and asked to provide evidence to demonstrate they are not in breach of the fee growth conditions.

In accordance with the Family Assistance Law, non-compliance with the Grant conditions may be a matter the Secretary has regard to in assessing whether a Provider is a fit and proper person to be involved in the administration of Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy.

### 11.1 Reporting Requirements

It is the responsibility of the grantee to ensure all relevant information is provided to the Department and is kept up to date.

#### *Change of situation*

If any of the following change, it is the Provider/grantee's responsibility to notify the Commonwealth via the CCS helpdesk (1300 667 276 or [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au)) of:

- the addition of a new Service or the removal of an existing one from the Provider/grantee's management;
- a change in the director or owner of the Provider/grantee; and/or
- the transfer of one of your Services to or from another Provider, including the CRN of the new Provider and the date of transfer.

Changes of situation may necessitate submitting a Grant Variation or a new grant application. See also further detail below regarding transfer of Services.

Failing to keep information up to date may constitute non-compliance with the terms of your grant agreement and result in the Commonwealth recouping incorrect payments and/or terminating your grant agreement.

#### *Transfer of Services*

For Providers with multiple Services (receiving or losing a Service), a grant variation form will need to be submitted (available on [GrantConnect](#) alongside these Grant Opportunity Guidelines) to reflect any transfer of Services (receiving or losing Services). Additional information may be required to be reported or submitted by grantees in relation to a transfer as reasonably required by the Department. When a Provider loses a Service, the funding approval for that Service will be terminated (but the Provider can continue to be funded for retained Services provided they continue to meet eligibility criteria and the conditions of their grant agreement). If a Provider loses its only Service receiving grant funding, then the grant agreement as a whole will be terminated.

Providers already receiving grant funding who acquire a new Service will only be eligible to receive grant funding for the new Service provided they continue to meet the eligibility criteria and the conditions of their grant agreement (including regarding the Fee Constraint Condition). The Department reviews the hourly Service fees of each Service receiving grant funding, according to submitted session reports from the last CCS reporting fortnight before 8

August in each year of the term to measure Service fee growth against the Fee Constraint Condition (see Section 9.1 above).

If a Service is acquired by a Provider with no other Services receiving this grant, they will need to submit a new grant application and meet the eligibility criteria in order to be eligible for grant funding. If a Provider increased Service fees up to the fee growth cap prior to transferring that Service to the new Provider, the new Provider would not be able to increase Service fees any further for that Service.

### *Fraud*

The Commonwealth defines fraud as dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means. You must ensure your personnel and subcontractors do not engage in any fraud in relation to the grant activity, including CCS-related fraud.

If you become aware of fraud in relation to the performance of the grant activity or any other fraud that has had or may have an effect on the performance of the activity, then **within 5 business days you must report it to the Commonwealth** and all appropriate law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

You can report fraud or suspected fraud using the department's anonymous fraud tip-off line at Whispli: [Whispli report](#).

### *Annual declaration and financial statement*

Grantees must submit an annual declaration confirming that all expenditure aligns with eligible grant activities and expenditure outlined at Section 5 of the Grant Opportunity Guidelines. The declaration must be signed and submitted on behalf of the grantee by its board, the chief executive officer, or an authorised officer.

Grantees must submit an annual financial statement on a standardised template including total expenditure on wages and eligible on-costs.

Giving false or misleading information is a serious criminal offence. Persons who do so, may be prosecuted under Section 137.1 of the *Commonwealth Criminal Code Act 1995*.

Further information regarding the compliance checks that will be used by the Department will be outlined in the Grant Agreement.

## **11.2 Evaluation**

We will evaluate the ECEC Worker Retention Payment program to measure how well the outcomes and objectives have been achieved. We may use information from your application for this purpose. We may also interview you or ask you for more information to help us understand how the grant impacted you and to evaluate how effective the program was in achieving its outcomes.

We may contact you up to one year after you finish your grant for more information to assist with this evaluation.

## **11.3 Acknowledgement**

All materials related to grants under the program must acknowledge the Commonwealth as follows:

'Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment – an Australian Government initiative'.



If you make a public statement about the grant activity funded under the program, we require you to acknowledge the grant by using the following:

'This [Service/Provider] received grant funding from the Australian Government under the Early Childhood Education and Care Worker Retention Payment grant program.'

## 12. Probity

The Australian Government will make sure that the grant opportunity process is fair, according to the published guidelines, incorporates appropriate safeguards against fraud, unlawful activities and other inappropriate conduct and is consistent with the CGRPs.

These guidelines may be changed by the Department of Education. When this happens, the revised guidelines will be published on GrantConnect.

### 12.1 Enquiries and feedback

The Department of Education's [complaints procedures](#) apply to complaints about this grant opportunity. All complaints about a grant process must be provided in writing.

Any questions you have about grant decisions for this grant opportunity should be sent to [ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au](mailto:ccshelpdesk@education.gov.au).

If you do not agree with the way the Department of Education has handled your complaint, you may complain to the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#). The Ombudsman will not usually look into a complaint unless the matter has first been raised directly with the Department of Education.

The Commonwealth Ombudsman can be contacted on:

Phone (Toll free): 1300 362 072  
Email: [ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au](mailto:ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au)  
Website: [www.ombudsman.gov.au](http://www.ombudsman.gov.au)

### 12.2 Conflicts of interest

Any conflicts of interest could affect the performance of the grant opportunity or program. There may be a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, if the Department of Education's staff, any member of a committee or advisor and/or you or any of your personnel:

- has a professional, commercial or personal relationship with a party who is able to influence the application selection process, such as an Australian Government officer or member of an external panel;
- has a relationship with or interest in, an organisation, which is likely to interfere with or restrict the applicants from carrying out the proposed activities fairly and independently; and/or
- has a relationship with, or interest in, an organisation from which they will receive personal gain because the organisation receives a grant under the grant program/grant opportunity.

You will be asked to declare, as part of your application, any perceived or existing conflicts of interests or that, to the best of your knowledge, there is no conflict of interest.

If you later identify an actual, apparent, or perceived conflict of interest, you must inform the Department of Education in writing immediately.

Conflicts of interest for Australian Government staff will be handled as set out in the [Australian Public Service Code of Conduct \(Section 13 \(7\)\)](#) of the [Public Service Act 1999](#). Committee members and other officials including the decision maker must also declare any conflicts of interest.

### 12.3 Privacy

We treat your personal information according to the [Privacy Act 1988](#) and the [Australian Privacy Principles](#). This includes letting you know:

- what personal information we collect
- why we collect your personal information
- who we give your personal information to.

Your personal information can only be disclosed to someone for the primary purpose for which it was collected unless an exemption applies.

The Australian Government may also use and disclose information about grant applicants and grant recipients under this grant opportunity in any other Australian Government business or function. This includes disclosing grant information on GrantConnect as required for reporting purposes and giving information to the Australian Taxation Office for compliance purposes.

We may share the information you give us with other Commonwealth entities for purposes including government administration, research or service delivery, according to Australian laws.

As part of your application, you declare your ability to comply with the *Privacy Act 1988* and the Australian Privacy Principles and impose the same privacy obligations on officers, employees, agents and subcontractors that you engage to assist with the activity, in respect of personal information you collect, use, store, or disclose in connection with the activity. Accordingly, you must not do anything which, if done by the Department of Education, would breach an Australian Privacy Principle as defined in the Act.

### 12.4 Confidential Information

Other than information available in the public domain, you agree not to disclose to any person, other than us, any confidential information relating to the grant application and/or agreement, without prior written approval. The obligation will not be breached where you are required by law, Parliament or a stock exchange to disclose the relevant information or where the relevant information is publicly available (other than through breach of a confidentiality or non-disclosure obligation).

We may at any time, require you to arrange for you; or your employees, agents or subcontractors to give a written undertaking relating to nondisclosure of our confidential information in a form we consider acceptable.

We will keep any information in connection with the grant agreement confidential to the extent that it meets all the three conditions below:

- you clearly identify the information as confidential and explain why we should treat it as confidential
- the information is commercially sensitive
- revealing the information would cause unreasonable harm to you or someone else.

We will not be in breach of any confidentiality agreement if the information is disclosed to:

- the program delegate and other Commonwealth employees and contractors to help us manage the program effectively
- employees and contractors of our department so we can research, assess, monitor and analyse our programs and activities
- employees and contractors of other Commonwealth agencies for any purposes, including government administration, research or service delivery
- other Commonwealth, State, Territory or local government agencies in program reports and consultations
- the Auditor-General, Ombudsman or Privacy Commissioner
- the responsible Minister or Parliamentary Secretary
- a House or a Committee of the Australian Parliament.

The grant agreement may also include any specific requirements about special categories of information collected, created or held under the grant agreement.

## 12.5 Freedom of information

All documents in the possession of the Australian Government, including those about this grant opportunity, are subject to the [\*Freedom of Information Act 1982\*](#) (FOI Act).

The purpose of the FOI Act is to give members of the public rights of access to information held by the Australian Government and its entities. Under the FOI Act, members of the public can seek access to documents held by the Australian Government. This right of access is limited only by the exceptions and exemptions necessary to protect essential public interests and private and business affairs of persons in respect of whom the information relates.

All Freedom of Information requests must be referred to the Freedom of Information Coordinator in writing.

By mail:            Freedom of Information Coordinator  
                          50 Marcus Clarke Street  
                          Canberra ACT 2601

By email:        [FOI@education.gov.au](mailto:FOI@education.gov.au)

## 13. Glossary

| Term  | Definition   |
|---|--|
| accountable authority                           | see subsection 12(2) of the <i>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013</i> (PGPA Act)   |
| administering entity                            | when an entity that is not responsible for the policy, is responsible for the administration of part or all of the grant administration processes  |
| authorised representative                       | Person with provider management and control  |
| date of effect                                  | can be the date on which a grant agreement is signed or a specified starting date. Where there is no grant agreement, entities must publish information on individual grants as soon as practicable.   |
| decision maker                                  | the person who makes a decision to award a grant.  |
| eligibility criteria                            | refer to the mandatory criteria which must be met to qualify for a grant. Assessment criteria may apply in addition to eligibility criteria.   |
| Commonwealth entity                             | a Department of State, or a Parliamentary Department, or a listed entity or a body corporate established by a law of the Commonwealth. See subsections 10(1) and (2) of the PGPA Act.  |
| <i>Commonwealth Grants Rules and Principles</i> | the overarching Commonwealth grants policy framework applicable from 1 October 2024.   |
| <i>Family Assistance Law</i>                    | has the same meaning as it has in the <i>A New Tax System (Family Assistance) (Administration) Act 1999</i> (Cth)  |
| grant   | for the purposes of the CGRPs, a 'grant' is an arrangement for the provision of financial assistance by the Commonwealth or on behalf of the Commonwealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. under which relevant money<sup>5</sup> or other Consolidated Revenue Fund (CRF) money<sup>6</sup> is to be paid to a grantee other than the Commonwealth; and</li> <li>b. which is intended to help address one or more of the Australian Government's policy outcomes while assisting the grantee achieve its objectives.</li> </ul> |
| grant activity/activities                       | refers to the project /tasks /services that the grantee is required to undertake   |
| grant agreement                                 | sets out the relationship between the parties to the agreement, and specifies the details of the grant   |
| <u>GrantConnect</u>                             | is the Australian Government's whole-of-government grants information system, which centralises the publication and reporting of Commonwealth grants in accordance with the CGRPs  |

<sup>5</sup> Relevant money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 8, Dictionary.

<sup>6</sup> Other CRF money is defined in the PGPA Act. See section 105, Rules in relation to other CRF money.

| Term              | Definition   |
|-------------------|--|
| grant opportunity | refers to the specific grant round or process where a Commonwealth grant is made available to potential grantees. Grant opportunities may be open or targeted, and will reflect the relevant grant selection process   |
| grant program     | a 'program' carries its natural meaning and is intended to cover a potentially wide range of related activities aimed at achieving government policy outcomes. A grant program is a group of one or more grant opportunities under a single Department of Education PBS Program.   |
| grantee           | the individual/organisation which has been selected to receive a grant   |
| PBS Program       | described within the entity's <a href="#">Portfolio Budget Statement</a> , PBS programs each link to a single outcome and provide transparency for funding decisions. These high level PBS programs often comprise a number of lower level, more publicly recognised programs, some of which will be Grant Programs. A PBS Program may have more than one Grant Program associated with it, and each of these may have one or more grant opportunities |
| selection process | the method used to select potential grantees. This process may involve comparative assessment of applications or the assessment of applications against the eligibility criteria and/or the assessment criteria  |
| Service fees      | the hourly fees charged by the Service, by care type and sub-cohort (e.g. age groups).   |

## Schedule A – Minimum Rates

Table 1

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Children's Services Award 2010*

| Classification                          |                 | Column 3<br>Current minimum hourly<br>rate 2 Dec 2024 – 30 Nov<br>2025 | Column 4<br>New minimum hourly<br>rate 2 Dec 2024 – 30 Nov<br>2025 | Column 5<br>Additional minimum<br>hourly amount payable<br>to staff 2 Dec 2024-30<br>Nov 2025 |
|---|-----------------|--|--|---|
|   |                 | \$   | \$   | \$  |
| <b>Support Worker</b>                   |                 |  |  |   |
| Level 1.1                               | On commencement | 23.97  | 26.37  | 2.40  |
| Level 2.1                               | On commencement | 24.84  | 27.32  | 2.48  |
| Level 2.2                               | After 1 year*   | 25.66  | 28.23  | 2.57  |
| Level 3.1                               | On commencement | 27.17  | 29.89  | 2.72  |
| <b>Children's Services<br/>Employee</b> |                 |  |  |   |

|                     |                 |       |       |      |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Level 1.1           | On commencement | 23.97 | 26.37 | 2.40 |
| Level 2.1           | On commencement | 24.84 | 27.32 | 2.48 |
| Level 2.2           | After 1 year*   | 25.66 | 28.23 | 2.57 |
| Level 3A.1**        | On commencement | 26.75 | 29.43 | 2.68 |
| Level 3A.2**        | After 1 year    | 27.17 | 29.89 | 2.72 |
| Level 3.1           | On commencement | 27.17 | 29.89 | 2.72 |
| Level 3.2           | After 1 year*   | 28.1  | 30.91 | 2.81 |
| Level 3.3           | After 2 years*  | 28.99 | 31.89 | 2.90 |
| Level 3.4 (Diploma) |                 | 30.59 | 33.65 | 3.06 |
| Level 4A.1          | On commencement | 28.99 | 31.89 | 2.90 |
| Level 4A.2          | After 1 year*   | 29.39 | 32.33 | 2.94 |
| Level 4A.3          | After 2 years*  | 29.79 | 32.77 | 2.98 |
| Level 4A.4          | After 3 years*  | 30.21 | 33.23 | 3.02 |
| Level 4A.5          | After 4 years*  | 30.61 | 33.67 | 3.06 |
| Level 4.1           | On commencement | 32    | 35.20 | 3.20 |
| Level 4.2           | After 1 year*   | 32.49 | 35.74 | 3.25 |

|  |                 |       |       |      |
|--|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Level 4.3  | After 2 years*  | 32.97 | 36.27 | 3.30 |
| Level 5A.1                                       | On commencement | 33.46 | 36.81 | 3.35 |
| Level 5A.2                                       | After 1 year*   | 33.95 | 37.35 | 3.40 |
| Level 5A.3                                       | After 2 years*  | 34.43 | 37.87 | 3.44 |
| Level 5.1  | On commencement | 33.46 | 36.81 | 3.35 |
| Level 5.2  | After 1 year*   | 33.95 | 37.35 | 3.40 |
| Level 5.3  | After 2 years*  | 34.43 | 37.87 | 3.44 |
| Level 5.4***                                     |                 | 34.55 | 38.01 | 3.46 |
| Level 6A.1                                       | On commencement | 38.59 | 42.45 | 3.86 |
| Level 6A.2                                       | After 1 year*   | 39.07 | 42.98 | 3.91 |
| Level 6A.3                                       | After 2 years*  | 39.55 | 43.51 | 3.96 |
| <b>Children's Services<br/>Employee—Director</b> |                 |       |       |      |
| Level 6.1  | On commencement | 38.59 | 42.45 | 3.86 |
| Level 6.2  | After 1 year*   | 39.07 | 42.98 | 3.91 |
| Level 6.3  | After 2 years*  | 39.55 | 43.51 | 3.96 |
| Level 6.4  | On commencement | 41.02 | 45.12 | 4.10 |



|           |                 |       |       |      |
|-----------|-----------------|-------|-------|------|
| Level 6.5 | After 1 year*   | 41.4  | 45.54 | 4.14 |
| Level 6.6 | After 2 years*  | 41.89 | 46.08 | 4.19 |
| Level 6.7 | On commencement | 42.39 | 46.63 | 4.24 |
| Level 6.8 | After 1 year *  | 42.88 | 47.17 | 4.29 |
| Level 6.9 | After 2 years*  | 43.36 | 47.70 | 4.34 |

\*Reference to a year or years of service is to service in the industry

\*\*Former Western Australian 'E' worker classification

\*\*\*An Assistant Director who holds an Advanced Diploma (AQF 6/3 year qualified) must be paid no less than Level 5.4

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must contain an obligation to pay workers at or above the award rate on the first full pay period from 1 July 2025 incorporating the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review decisions, and then 5 per cent more from 1 December 2025.

Column 5 is the difference between the current minimum hourly rate and the new hourly rate required to be specified in the workplace instrument to become eligible for funding. This is the minimum dollar amount that all workers are entitled to (even those currently paid above award).

Table 2

For Eligible ECEC Workers covered by or undertaking duties covered by the *Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2020*

| <b>Classification</b>                        | <b>Column 2<br/>Current minimum hourly rate 2<br/>Dec 2024 – 30 Nov 2025</b> | <b>Column 3<br/>New minimum hourly rate 2 Dec<br/>2024 – 30 Nov 2025</b> | <b>Column 4<br/>Additional minimum hourly<br/>amount payable to staff 2 Dec<br/>2024-30 Nov 2025</b> |
|--|--|--|--|
|  |  | \$   | \$   |
| <b>Teachers – Long day care<br/>centres</b>  |  |  |  |
| Level 1                                      | 36.74  | 40.41  | 3.67   |
| Level 2                                      | 40.16  | 44.17  | 4.02   |
| Level 3                                      | 43.72  | 48.09  | 4.37   |
| Level 4                                      | 47.28  | 52.00  | 4.73   |
| Level 5                                      | 50.83  | 55.92  | 5.08   |
| <b>Teachers – Preschools and<br/>Schools</b> |  |  |  |
| Level 1                                      | 35.33  | 38.86  | 3.53   |
| Level 2                                      | 38.61  | 42.47  | 3.86   |
| Level 3                                      | 42.03  | 46.24  | 4.20   |

|         |       |       |      |
|---------|-------|-------|------|
| Level 4 | 45.46 | 50.00 | 4.55 |
| Level 5 | 48.88 | 53.77 | 4.89 |

In accordance with Section 4.3 above, in order to be eligible for funding, a Provider's workplace instrument must contain an obligation to pay workers at or above the award rate on the first full pay period from 1 July 2025 incorporating the Fair Work Commission's Annual Wage Review decisions, and then 5 per cent more from 1 December 2025.

Column 4 is the difference between the current minimum hourly rate and the new hourly rate required to be specified in the workplace instrument to become eligible for funding. This is the minimum dollar amount that all workers are entitled to (even those currently paid above award).