

NYS Healthcare Worker Bonus Program

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Last Updated 7/27/2022

General

Q. What is the Healthcare Worker Bonus (HWB) Program?

A. As part of the 2022-2023 enacted New York State Budget, Governor Hochul and the State Legislature allocated \$1.2 billion in funding to the NYS **Healthcare Worker Bonus (HWB)** program for the payment of bonuses for certain frontline healthcare workers as [Part ZZ of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022](#).

The HWB provision allows for the payment of bonuses to “*recruit, retain, and reward health care and mental hygiene workers*” meeting certain eligibility requirements.

Q. Where can I find the details of the HWB Program?

A. Please see [Part ZZ of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2022](#).

Q: Who is eligible for a health care worker bonus?

A. *Health care and mental hygiene workers that meet each of the following criteria will be eligible for the bonus:*

- The employee works for a qualified employer. A qualified employer is defined in SOS § 367-w(2)(b) and (c).
- Assuming an employee works for a qualified employer, the eligible employee must:
 - Be in an eligible title listed in SOS §367-w(2)(a)(i)-(iii).
 - Receive an annual base salary of \$125,000 or less (excluding any bonus or overtime pay paid by the employer).
 - Be employed by an eligible provider during the entire “vesting period.”
 - Not be suspended or excluded from participation in the Medicaid program.
 - Work for a qualified employer for the required number of hours during the vesting period to be eligible for the bonus.

The **employer** must evaluate and attest to whether they and/or any of their employees meet the eligibility criteria.

Q. What is the Employer attestation process?

A. The bonus claim process requires all qualified employers to electronically sign an attestation that acknowledges they understand and have determined that each employee the employer included in the claiming process is eligible to receive the Healthcare Worker Bonus. Those

requirements are found in section 367-w of the Social Services Law, and other guidance pertaining to the HWB.

Employers must download a copy of the [HWB Employer Attestation](#), which can also be found on the [HWB Program Portal](#).

Q. What is the Employee Attestation Process?

A. The bonus claim process requires all qualified employees to sign an attestation that confirms their wages from all sources in connection with their eligibility for the workforce bonus.

Employers must download a copy of the [HWB Employee Attestation](#), which can also be found on the [HWB Program Portal](#).

An employee attestation for each employee must be signed by the employee and maintained by the employer.

Q. I am an Employer with eligible employees, what should I do next?

A. You will need to utilize the following web portal to make the claim. Please go to www.NYSWorkerBonus.com and begin reviewing important instructional information.

Providers enrolled in the NYS Medicaid (eMedNY) system:

Before you do so, please verify that you have an active Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS ID). You can verify your MMIS is active by calling the eMedNY Call Center at (800) 343-9000. Call center representatives are available from 8:00AM to 5:00PM, Monday through Friday.

Providers who are NOT enrolled in the NYS Medicaid (eMedNY) system:

If you do not have an MMIS ID, meaning you are not enrolled in the NYS Medicaid system, you will need to verify that you have a Statewide Financial System (SFS) ID.

The agencies with providers who may not be in NYS Medicaid (eMedNY) system may include: Office of Mental Health, Office for People With Developmental Disabilities, Office of Children and Family Services, Office of Addiction Services and Supports and the New York State Education Department. Once you have confirmed that you are actively enrolled or your SFS ID is active, you can prepare information for submission of reimbursement for eligible employees. More details, including a *Technical User Guide*, can be found within the [HWB Program Portal](#).

Education Sector Employers:

The healthcare worker bonus portal will open for education sector employers on October 1, 2022.

NOTE: Qualified employers that employ workers paid by the State **should not** claim through the HWB Portal and should instead work through their respective State agency for more details.

Q. What should an eligible Medicaid employer do when they can't register with their Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS ID), or do not have an MMIS ID?

A. Please call the HWB Call Center at 1-866-682-0077. The operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

Q. I am a qualified employer, what is the timeline for submitting for bonus payments for eligible employees?

A. Employers must submit claims for bonus payments within 30-days after the completion of each vesting period as defined by the schedule published by the Department. For the first vesting period, the 30-day claim filing deadline begins on the date the vesting schedule is published. Employers are required to pay bonuses within 30-days of receipt of payment on a claim for each qualified employee. Although employees may be eligible for vesting periods worked in the past (e.g. 10/1/21 to 3/31/22), the bonuses are not payable until the employer claims and receives payment. Advance payments are not permitted.

Q: I am a qualified employer. How will I be issued the bonus payments?

A: Bonuses will be paid to the employer on behalf of their qualified employees as part of their weekly Medicaid payment from eMedNY. Payments made on behalf of employees for the HWB project can be identified by the code HWB-HW Bonus.

Bonuses for non-Medicaid services will be paid to the employer via the State Financial System.

Q: I am a qualified employer may I keep any portion of the bonus payment?

A: No. A qualified employer shall not keep any portion of the bonus and any bonus amount not paid to an employee must be returned to the department.

Q: I am a qualified employer and have applied for health care worker bonuses on behalf of my qualified employee(s). I should have received the bonus payment for distribution, who can I call to check on the status of my payment?

A: You may log onto the [HWB Program Portal](#) and review the status of the claims submitted. If additional information is necessary, please call the HWB Call Center at 1-866-682-0077.

Q. I am a qualified employer. When will I be able to claim a bonus for my qualified employee(s)?

A. Please refer to the vesting schedule posted [here](#).

Q: Can you elaborate more on the vesting periods? Is it just any 6-month time period?

A: The “vesting period” is defined in SOS section 367-w(2)(d) as a six-month period between the dates of October 1, 2021 and March 31, 2024 included in a vesting schedule published by the Commissioner. Upon completion of six-months of consecutive employment by an employee with a qualified employer that ends within a vesting period established in the Vesting Schedule, the

employer has thirty-days from the end of the vesting period to submit a claim for the bonus payment. See [Vesting Schedule](#).

Q: How much is the bonus to which eligible employees are entitled?

A: Employers will pay bonus amounts to qualified employees based on the number of hours worked during the vesting period.

- Qualified employees who work at least 20 hours but no more than 30 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$500.
- Qualified employees who work at least 30 hours but no more than 35 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$1,000.
- Qualified employees who work at least 35 hours per week are eligible for a bonus of \$1,500.

A qualified employee is eligible for only two vesting periods per employer in an amount equal but not greater than \$3,000 across all employers.

Q: Would a provider enrolled in the medical assistance program (e.g. hospital, nursing home) (“provider”), who enters into a contract with the supplemental staffing agency (“staffing agency”), be considered an Employer (under the statute), with respect to those front-line healthcare workers (agency staff) who are assigned by the staffing agency to work at the provider’s facility on a temporary basis?

A: No. Employers should submit claims for bonuses only for individuals they employ directly. If employed or contracted by a staffing agency or other intermediary entity, contracted and temporary staff are not eligible for the HWB program.

Q. I am an employee of a qualified employer and I have not received my bonus, what can I do?

A. To be eligible for the health care worker bonus you must work for a qualified employer during a vesting period and be a qualified employee.

You should first contact your employer, to determine if you are qualified.

If you are qualified for a health care worker bonus and if you have checked with your employer and they have not or refuse to apply on your behalf you should contact the Office of Medicaid Inspector General Call OMIG’s Fraud Hotline at 1-877-87 FRAUD (1-877-873-7283) or file a claim electronically. Please note, you should allow for sufficient time for your employer to apply for and receive the bonus prior to the bonus being distributed.

Eligibility

Q: Who is a qualified employer?

A: Please refer to the [Qualified Employer Section](#) of the Department of Health HWB Program website for additional information.

Q. What employees working for qualified employers are eligible to receive the bonus?

A. A list of qualified employees and worker titles has been posted [here](#).

Q. If an employee lives outside of New York State, are they eligible for the bonus?

A. A qualified employee who works for a qualified employer is eligible for the bonus regardless of state residency.

Q: Is the Bonus for the Home Attendants/Aides? Are any staff for CHHAs, LHCSAs and FIs included?

A: Homecare aides are not an eligible title for the Bonus Program as they will be eligible for increased minimum wage payments pursuant to PHL 3614-f. As such, employees of Article 36 entities that fall under such titles (e.g., home health Aide, Personal Care assistant, home maker, etc.) are not eligible for the Bonus. However, certain Article 36 entities, such as Certified Home Health Agencies (CHHAs) and Licensed Home Care Services Agencies (LHCSAs), may employ eligible titles (e.g., Nurses, PT/OT Therapists, Speech Pathologists, etc.) that provide hands-on services, and may be eligible for the bonus if they meet all of the employee eligibility requirements.

Fiscal Intermediaries under SOS section 365-f do not employ eligible titles that provide hands-on services, and so are not subject to the requirements under the Bonus program.

Q: What impact will the HWB Program have on qualified employer taxes?

A: A qualified employer should inquire with the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance for tax implications.

Q. I am an employee, what are the tax implications of the bonus? Is the bonus considered taxable income?

A. Bonus payments paid to a NYS resident are not subject to NYS personal income tax. To determine how the bonus payment may affect your specific situation, please consult with a tax professional.

Q: Would health care worker bonus payments impact an employee's public benefits or other public assistance?

A: No.

Q. Are employees who were out on disability, FMLA, COVID Leave, etc. during the vesting period, but still an active employee, still eligible for the bonus?

A. The use of accruals or other leave, including but not limited to sick, vacation, or time used under the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), shall be credited towards and included in the calculation of the average number of hours worked per week over the course of the vesting period.

Q: I am an Employer, what obligation do I have to pay former employees who were otherwise eligible for a bonus and vested while in my employment?

A: Employers may be obligated to pay former employees that are eligible and vested while in their employment *provided that* the employee did not terminate his or her employment with the employer prior to the due date for payment of the bonus. In other words, if the Employer fails to pay the bonus within 30 days of receipt of payment on the bonus claim, the Employee may leave the Employer but the Employer will still be obligated to pay the bonus to the Employee.

Q: Are Medical Residents and Medical Fellows eligible titles for the bonus?

A: Yes, Medical Residents and Medical Fellows have been determined to be eligible titles under the authority provided by SOS § 367-w(2)(a)(iii).

Q: What does “all other health care support workers” mean?

A: “**All Other Health Care Support Workers**” refers to workers that support the provision of health care services to patients in front-line settings for these titles. Such workers must support the provision of patient-facing care provided within a patient care unit of a hospital or other institutional medical setting in support of treating and caring for patients. These titles are included below:

All Other Patient Facing Care Support Workers in Article 28 Facilities:

Admitting Clerk
Admitting Clerk Cashier
Ward Clerk
Critical Care Clerk
Discharge Control Clerk
Emergency Services Clerk
Front Desk Clerk
Lead Intake Specialist
Operating Room Clerk
Unit Clerk
Ward Clerk
Admitting Clerk
Registration Clerk
Unit Secretary
Unit Associate
Unit Coordinator

Unit Receptionist
Unit Secretary
Unit Assistant
Unit Associate
Ward Clerk
Dietary Aide
Food Prep/Service Worker
Dietary Worker
Dining Assistant
Dining Aide
Dietary Worker
Food & Nutrition Aide
Food Prep/Service Worker
Building Attendant
Building Service Aide
Building Service Worker
Custodian
Environmental Services Worker
Floor Maintenance Worker
Maintenance/Physical Plant workers
Sanitation Worker
Service Worker
Environmental Service Aide/Tech
Maintenance/Physical Plant workers
Support Services Worker
Floor Maintenance Worker
Housekeeping Worker and Maids

Q: What does “various mental hygiene workers” mean?

A: The Mental Hygiene titles listed in the statute at SOS § 367-w(2)(a)(ii) are taken from the title series in the Consolidated Fiscal Reporting and Claiming Manual (CFR), which includes additional descriptions of the referenced titles. The relevant description for titles under the CFR can be found in [Appendix R](#).

Data Submission/Claiming

Q. I am an Employer with multiple MMIS IDs, which should I use to submit for the health care worker bonus?

A. Within the [HWPB Program Portal](#), a provider will have the ability to link an MMIS ID to a user account, the provider can then link other associated MMIS IDs to that user account. A provider will then have the ability to submit employees for the bonus based on the associated MMIS ID

that best fits the employee's situation. Employers with multiple MMIS IDs should only use one MMIS ID on the HWB Portal system to claim bonus payments.

Q. Will I receive a remittance advice or information on approved payments?

A. Providers/Employers will see the HWB bonus as a Lump Sum (HWB-HW Bonus) line item on their Medicaid remittance at the same time they normally receive their remittance for an eMedNY claim cycle, whether it's an electronic or a paper remittance. If they receive electronic remittances, they will see the remittance prior to receiving payment. If they receive a paper remit, the paper will accompany the remittance.

In addition, there may be information about the payment on the [HWB Program Portal](#).

Q. I am a qualified employer, do we need to submit additional documents from employees to receive healthcare worker bonus (HWB)?

A. Employers are required to submit their qualified employees' data in a specified data format that will be provided by the department. All qualified Medicaid employers must maintain contemporaneous records tracking all claims submitted for no less than six (6) years. An employer must furnish such records upon request to the department, the Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG), the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the deputy attorney general for Medicaid Fraud.

Help and Support

Q. How do I contact the State if I have any questions or concerns on the HWB Program?

A. Please call the HWB Call Center at 1-866-682-0077. The operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM.

Q. How do I stay informed of changes or updates to this and other programs? And how do I sign up for Provider ListServ to ensure I have up to date information?

A. The [HWB Program Portal](#) will be updated regularly with program updates and/or the most up to date information for employers. Please visit the [eMedNY ListServ page](#) to subscribe to applicable Listservs.

Q. How can I find more information regarding the Healthcare Worker Bonus (HWB) Program and Claim Portal?

A. Please visit the [HWB Program Portal](#). For additional questions please contact the HWB Program Call Center at 1-866-682-0077. The operating hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM. Additional information is also provided on the [Department of Health HWB Program website](#).

