

HCBS AGENCY DIRECT CAREGIVER WORKFORCE RETENTION INCENTIVE

North Dakota retention incentive for direct caregivers who provide home and community-based services as an employee of an agency

Purpose: Stabilize and strengthen the network of direct caregivers who offer home and community-based services designed to help individuals with disabilities and chronic health conditions continue to live in non-institutional settings.

Description: A person who delivers direct caregiving supports within an eligible agency as of December 1, 2021, is eligible, at the discretion of their employer, to receive a **retention** incentive of up to \$2,100.

Who is eligible to participate: For the purpose of this initiative, an “**eligible agency**” is:

- Medicaid-enrolled
- Has staff who provide HCBS services in non-institutional settings under either a state or federally funded home and community-based program, which include:
 - DD 1915(c) waiver;
 - HCBS 1915(c) waiver;
 - Autism 1915(c) waiver;
 - Medically Fragile Children’s 1915(c) waiver;
 - Children’s Hospice 1915(c) waiver 1915(i) service types of: training and support for unpaid caregivers, respite, family peer support, and non-medical transportation;
 - Service Payments for the Aged and Disabled (SPED);
 - Expanded SPED; and;
 - Medicaid State Plan personal care services that are delivered in community.
- Is actively serving public-pay clients as demonstrated by active billing in the period for which the incentives are being requested.
- Can be either a for-profit or not-for-profit private agency, or a Human Service Zone that is providing direct HCBS services as a QSP.
- Note: As this incentive is designed to support direct caregiving in the HCBS sector, the following service types are excluded from consideration when determining eligibility to participate:
 - HCBS service types of emergency response, home delivered meals, equipment and supplies, environmental modifications, and behavior modification planning; and
 - Any service delivered in an institutional setting, basic care, or assisted living.

Note: If an eligible provider becomes ineligible during the performance period (ex., self-terminates or is terminated from participation in the Medicaid program), the State may pursue recoupment of retention funds that had been distributed.

Documentation of individual employee eligibility:

Participating employer must be able to demonstrate that the employee who is receiving the incentive, during the period the incentive is being offered:

- Works no less than 25% of their paid time providing direct care supports or services to an individual who receives services via a state or federally funded home and community-based service program.
- Works no less than 51% of their paid time in a non-institutional setting during the period for which the incentive is being requested.

Amount of Incentive:

The employer can set the exact amount of the retention incentive up to the established max amount (up to \$2,100 per person), factoring in number of hours a person is hired to work (i.e., part time / full time), nature of work to be done, location of work to be done, etc.

Employers are **not** allowed to take an admin percentage on the retention incentive; the full amount of retention incentive requested must be passed on to the employee for whom it is being requested.

Incentive parameters:

The retention incentive can be paid any time from the date the employer is approved to participate in the program and can be extended over a period of up to 12 months.

Reimbursement Process:

Once approved, the eligible agency can submit for reimbursement to DHS on a monthly basis.

DHS will establish specific reporting criteria which will include documentation that verifies the incentive dollars were passed through to the awarded employees (ex. number of employees providing eligible service, employee hire date).

Program Evaluation:

To help the state learn from this workforce stabilization effort, participating employers will be expected to provide information that describes their approach to utilizing the funds that are being made available for retention incentives, including information that can help describe the efficacy of the incentive.

Estimated Beneficiaries:

Approximately 4,600 existing caregiving staff working in a variety of settings (combined agency and individual)

Projected Expenditure:

\$9,675,000 (combined for agency and non-agency retention incentives)
Equivalent of approximately 4,600 incentives at up to \$2,100 each

DHS will approve requests as per program criteria until funds have been fully expended, with a program end date set no later than June 30, 2024.