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Quality Incentive Program (QIP) Employment Capacity Focus Area Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Q: What is the desired outcome of the Quality Incentive Program (QIP) Employment Capacity measure?**

A: The desired outcome of this measure is to increase the number of service provider employees who are certified and working as trained employment specialists through the Association of Community Rehabilitation Educators (ACRE) Basic Employment Services, ACRE Basic Customized Employment Services, or as Certified Employment Support Professionals (CESP) in order to expand systemwide capacity to support individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) in achieving competitive integrated employment (CIE).

2. **Q: What is the definition of CIE?**

A: CIE means full or part-time work:

1. **Compensated at or above minimum wage,**
 2. **Offering an individual with a disability benefits and opportunities for advancement comparable to those offered to employees in similar positions,**
- and**
3. **Performed in a setting where the individual with a disability interacts with persons without disabilities to the same extent that employees who are not individuals with disabilities and who are in comparable positions, interact with these persons.**

([34 CFR 361.5\(c\)\(9\)](#))

3. **Q: Where can I find information on available ACRE and CESP trainings?**

A: Information on the trainings can be found at the following websites:

1. **Information on ACRE training can be found at: <https://www.acreducators.org/find-training.html>**
2. **Information on CESP certification can be found at: <https://cesp.helpscoutdocs.com/>**

INCENTIVE PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY - GENERAL

4. Q: What are the eligibility requirements for the incentive?

A: Participating service providers must meet eligibility criteria for vendorization under Subchapter 2, Chapter 3, Division 2 of Title 17 of Code of California Regulations, as evidenced by being a current regional center service provider. Participating service providers who support an employee to become certified as a trained employment specialist are eligible for one of the four incentive payment options for each employee between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2024.

The service provider must meet the following criteria for each incentive payment, per employee:

- a) The employee was employed by the service provider when the certification or recertification was successfully completed.
- b) The service provider supported the employee to obtain ACRE or CESP certification or recertification. Service provider support may include paying fees associated with certification or recertification.

5. Q: Can a service provider who is not an employment vendor be eligible for an incentive payment?

A: Yes, if the service provider assisted the employee to become certified and the employee will work as a trained employment specialist, then the objective of the QIP measure is being met and the service provider may be eligible for an incentive payment.

6. Q: If the employee attended a free training, can the service provider qualify for the incentive payment?

A: Yes, if the service provider continued to pay the employee's salary or gave the employee paid time off to participate in the training, and this support can be documented through payroll documents, then the service provider may be eligible for an incentive payment.

7. Q: Does a service provider qualify for an incentive if they reimburse their employee for expenses to obtain a certification?

A: Yes, reimbursing the employee for training expenses meets the eligibility requirement of supporting the employee to obtain ACRE or CESP certification if the employee was employed by the service provider when the certification was completed, and the certification occurred between July 1, 2022 and June 30, 2024.

8. **Q: Can a service provider qualify for an incentive for an employee or manager who becomes certified if the employee does not work directly with consumers (i.e., director, administrative staff, etc.)?**

A: No, if the employee will not work as a trained employment specialist, then the objective of the QIP measure is not being met.

The desired outcome of the QIP measure is to increase the number of service provider employees who are certified and work as trained employment specialists in order to expand systemwide capacity to support individuals with I/DD.

INCENTIVE PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY - SERVICE PROVIDER EMPLOYEES

9. **Q: Can the service provider get an incentive for each employee who gets certified or recertified?**

A: Yes, for the QIP Employment Capacity measure, the service provider can get an incentive payment for each employee who gets certified or recertified, meets the eligibility requirements, and works as a trained employment specialist, assisting individuals with I/DD to achieve CIE.

However, the service provider is only eligible for one incentive per employee.

10. **Q: Is there a maximum number of service provider employees that can be certified or recertified?**

A: No, there is not a maximum number. Each employee must meet the eligibility requirements and work as a trained employment specialist, assisting individuals with I/DD to achieve CIE.

However, the service provider is only eligible for one incentive per employee.

11. **Q: If the service provider assisted the employee to obtain certification, can the service provider qualify for the incentive payment even if the employee is no longer employed by the service provider?**

A: Yes, if the service provider assisted the employee to become certified or recertified as a trained employment specialist. The service provider who paid for the employee's certification or recertification is the only service provider eligible to receive the incentive payment. All other service providers for whom the employee works, if any, are not eligible to receive the incentive payment.

12. **Q: Does the service provider need to provide any documents to the Department prior to an employee's participation in a training?**

A: No documentation is required prior to completion of the training.

The service provider needs to complete and submit the Incentive Certification and Payment Form after their employee becomes certified.

13. Q: If an employee who completes a certification works for more than one service provider, can each service provider request the incentive?

A: No, the service provider who paid for the employee's certification or recertification is the only service provider eligible to receive the incentive payment. All other service providers for whom the employee works, if any, are not eligible to receive the incentive payment.

INCENTIVE PAYMENT ELIGIBILITY – PROVIDERS WITH MULTIPLE REGIONAL CENTERS

14. Q: Can a service provider get an incentive payment for an employee from each of the regional centers with whom they are vendored?

A: No, the service provider may get an incentive payment from only one of the regional centers.

15. Q: Which regional center does the service provider get the incentive from if they are vendored with multiple regional centers?

A: If the service provider is vendored with multiple regional centers, the service provider may request the incentive payment from the regional center from whom they are vendored for the location where the employee is employed. The service provider cannot request the incentive payment from any other regional centers with whom it is vendored.

ACRE CERTIFICATION

16. Q: If the employee becomes employed by the service provider while taking the ACRE training, does the service provider qualify for the incentive?

A: If the service provider paid for the employee's ACRE training, then the employer may be eligible for the incentive payment. If the prior employer paid for the employee's ACRE training, then the prior employer will qualify for the incentive payment.

17. Q: Can the service provider get two incentives if an employee becomes certified in one of the ACRE options and also the CESP?

A: No, the service provider is eligible for an incentive for one of the certifications but not both.

18. Q: Can the service provider get two incentive payments if an employee becomes certified in both the ACRE Basic Employment Services and the ACRE Basic Customized Employment Services?

A: No, for the QIP Employment Capacity measure the service provider can only get one incentive payment for certification or recertification in either the ACRE Basic Employment Services or the ACRE Basic Customized Employment Services but not both.

19. Q: Can the service provider get two incentives if an employee obtained certification in both ACRE Basic Customized Employment and ACRE Basic Employment Services?

A: No, only one incentive will be paid using QIP funds per employee regardless of the number of certifications or recertifications the employee may receive.

20. Q: Can some of the service provider employees become certified in ACRE Basic Employment Services and other employees become certified in ACRE Basic Customize Employment Services?

A: Yes, the service provider is not required to have all employees complete the same certification. The certification completed should support the needs of individuals with I/DD to achieve CIE.

However, only one incentive will be paid per employee, even if the employee completes more than one certification.

CESP CERTIFICATION

21. Q: Can the service provider get two incentive payments if an employee becomes certified in one of the ACRE options and also the CESP?

A: No, the service provider could get an incentive for one of the certifications but not both.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

22. Q: How do I request an incentive payment?

A: After the employee completes a training/certification, the service provider completes and submits the Incentive Payment Certification Form to the Department at: QIPEmpCapacity@dds.ca.gov

23. Q: Where can I find the Incentive Payment Certification Form?

A: The Incentive Payment Certification Form can be downloaded from the Department website on Quality Incentive Program page at: <https://www.dds.ca.gov/rc/vendor-provider/quality-incentive-program/>. The form is located on the right side of the page under the Resources section.

24. Q: When should I submit the Incentive Payment Certification Form?

A: Service providers may submit the form to request incentive payments as soon as an employee obtains the certification or recertification. However, the incentive payments will be paid on a quarterly basis.

25. Q: Will service providers be notified if there are issues with the Incentive Payment Certification Form?

A: Yes, the Department will reach out to service providers if additional information is required or if the service provider is not eligible for an incentive payment.

26. Q: What information is needed on the Incentive Payment Certification Form?

A: Service provider information (service provider name and contact information, contact person information (name and contact information), vendor ID, regional center, period covered by form, and employee information (name, date of certification, certification type, training type), and certification statement. Consumer information is not required.

27. Q: If the service provider submitted the Incentive Certification Payment Certification Form prior to the August 2023 trainings, does the form need to be resubmitted?

A: No, the form does not need to be resubmitted. The Department will reach out if additional information is required or if the service provider is not eligible for an incentive payment.

28. Q: Does the service provider need to provide any documentation when submitting the Incentive Certification Payment Certification Form?

A: No, the service provider does not need to submit the supporting documentation but the service provider does need to maintain a copy of the certification that includes the employee's name and date; and documentation that the service provider supported the employee to obtain the certification, such as training receipts or payroll records.

The supporting documentation must be maintained for at least two years in the event of an audit by the Department.

29. Q: Does the service provider also submit the Certification Payment Certification Form to the regional center?

A: No, the service provider will only submit the form directly to the Department.

30. Q: What if the service provider already submitted the Certification Payment Certification Form to the regional center?

A: The service provider needs to resubmit the incentive request form to the Department at QIPEmpCapacity@dds.ca.gov in order to be considered for an incentive payment.

ISSUANCE OF INCENTIVE PAYMENTS

31. Q: How often will incentive payments be made?

A: Incentive payments will be calculated quarterly by the Department as follows:

- 1. Quarter 1 (period covered: July, August, September 2023)**
- 2. Quarter 2 (period covered: October, November, December 2023)**
- 3. Quarter 3 (period covered: January, February, March 2024)**
- 4. Quarter 4 (period covered: April, May, June 2024)**

32. Q: Will the incentive payments come from the Department?

A: No. Quarterly, the Department will send instructions to the regional centers on incentive amounts to be paid by vendor identification number to qualifying service providers.

33. Q: To whom at the regional center will the Department send the incentive payment instructions?

A: The Department sends the incentive payment instructions to the regional center executive director and their staff.

34. Q: Does the service provider need to have an addendum added to their existing program design to be eligible for the QIP employment capacity incentive?

A: No, an addendum is not required for participation in the QIP employment capacity measure.