

## **Professional Development Incentive Awards (PDIA)**

### **1 General Information**

- 1.1 The Professional Development Incentive Award (formerly Merit Pay I) has been developed with the goal of improving the quality of early care and education for young children and families through high quality intentional, informal education (not for college credit).
- 1.2 All applications are reviewed independently and will be considered for the incentive award if eligible.
- 1.3 The Early Childhood Project administers marketing, posting applications, notifying applicants of their application status, and submitting all final paperwork for payment to the Early Childhood Services Bureau (ECSB).

### **2 Professional Development Incentive Award Eligibility**

- 2.1 Early Childhood Professionals must be working a minimum of 15 hours a week in:
  - A state registered group or family child care home,
  - A state licensed child care center
  - A licensed Head Start or Early Head Start
  - A tribal child care or tribal Head Start whose tribe has an MOU specified by the state
- 2.2 Applicants must be a current on the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry to apply for any Professional Development Incentive Awards.
  - 2.2.1 There will be a onetime only pay out to individuals that are at the Pre Professional level on the Career Path.
    - 2.2.1.1 Once an individual has moved up past the Pre Professional level they may be eligible for the Professional Development Incentive Award annually.
- 2.3 Applicants must also be current on the Montana Early Care and Education Practitioner Registry at the time of application and when they submit paperwork to collect their award money.
- 2.4 Qualifying individuals who are in the process of applying for state child care licensure or registration may apply for Professional Development Incentive Awards; however, award funds will not be released unless the regular licensure /registration process is completed. (The establishment of a PV and PS number in CCUBS provides the necessary verification). Provisional, Probationary and Permissive licenses are not eligible.

- 2.4.1 The ECP will verify PS#s and associations with current PVs through their database employment records prior to sending final paperwork to ECSB.
- 2.4.2 The ECP will verify employment from their database for programs without PV#s such as Tribal Programs with MOUs.

2.5 Professional Development Incentive Awards will be awarded to approved applicants in one of two tracks :

- 2.5.1 A 25 hour track, participants completing and verifying 25 hours of approved early childhood training will receive an award amount of \$200.00.
- 2.5.2 A 50 hour track, participants completing and verifying 50 hours of approved early childhood training will receive an award of \$400.00.
- 2.5.3 Applicants MUST specify what track they wish to participate in, failure to do so will result in a denied application.

2.6 The training hours completed for this incentive will count toward the eight hours of annual training required for state child care licensing.

2.7 Application forms must be complete and include all required information and signatures in order to be considered.

2.8 A complete application must include the following:

- 2.8.1 Signature and PV number from the owner/director/program administrator attesting that the applicant is employed at the facility at least 15 hours a week;
- 2.8.2 An applicant signature.

### **3 Professional Development Incentive Award Application Process**

- 3.1.1 Professional Development Incentive applications are posted the second week in June with a application due date the third week in August.
- 3.1.2 Applications will be available at The Early Childhood Project website ([www.mtecp.org](http://www.mtecp.org)) and notification will be sent to all partners.

3.2 Professional Development Incentive Awards applications are due in The Early Childhood Project office no later than 4:00 pm on the date specified on the current application.

- 3.2.1 Applicants will be informed no more than 10 business days from the application deadline regarding the approval or denial of their application.
  - 3.2.1.1 Formal letters will be sent to the address specified by the individual on the application.

3.3 Individuals may only be approved for one Professional Development Incentive Award.

3.3.1 If an individual applied for the incorrect PDIA the ECP will arrange for the necessary switch to the correct award on a case by case basis in collaboration with the ECSB.

3.4 Applications must be completed in full.

3.4.1.1 Failure to complete the application with required signatures will result in denial.

#### 4 **Priority for Professional Development Incentive Awards**

4.1 There are five priorities for awarding Professional Development Incentive Awards for non-college credit training.

4.2 Priorities:

Priority 1: Early childhood professionals who have not previously received the incentive award and are participating in non college credit training that leads to the completion of a CDA credential or NAFCC accreditation.

Priority 2: Early childhood professionals who have previously received the award and are participating in non college credit training that leads to the completion of a CDA credential or NAFCC accreditation.

Priority 3: Early childhood professionals who have not previously received the award and are participating in non college credit training, but does not lead to the completion of a CDA credential or NAFCC accreditation.

Priority 4: Early childhood professionals who have previously received the award and are participating in non college credit training, which does not lead to the completion of a CDA credential or NAFCC accreditation.

Priority 5: Early childhood professionals who have completed a credential in early childhood education or a related field and are a Level 3 or higher on the Career Path.

**Note:** Priority will be given to any applicant who has a current regular license (or is employed by a licensed facility). A current PS number is also required.

4.3 Approved training/education must be completed within the program year, which is August 1 through August 31 of the following year. Beginning in 2012-13 these dates will be changed to August 1 – July 31. Extensions will not be granted.

## **5 Submitting for Payment**

5.1 The following documents must be submitted to The Early Childhood Project for payment of the Professional Development Incentives:

5.1.1 W-9 form

5.1.2 Employment, Practitioner Registry and Training Verification Form

5.2 If the paperwork is complete The Early Childhood Project will sign off and send the Verification Form and W-9 Form to the ECSB for payment of the award.

5.3 The Early Childhood Project will submit batches of final paperwork for payment to the ECSB on a quarterly basis on Feb 1, April 1, June 1, Sept 1 with payments made within 30 days of ECSB receipt. Awardees final paperwork must be postmarked by August 31 and sent to the ECP.