

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Early Education and Care

EEC Workforce Council

May 26, 2022



Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions & Agency Updates
- Items for Discussion and Feedback
 - Educator Qualifications & Credentialing
 - Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) - Update & Preliminary Outcomes

Operationalizing the EEC Strategic Action Plan Implementation Framework & Operational Focus



Human/user-centered restructuring of agency operations and business processes to modernize and improve the staff and user experience

Key User Groups

Children, Youth and Families

Maximize access, streamline procedures and expand early education and care options

Programs

Provide consistent, ongoing supports that promote stable financing, quality services and health and safety

Educators

Facilitate meaningful career pathways, professional advancement and retention of educators in the field

Enabling Mechanisms

Data-driven decision making



New and expanded technology



Staff expertise and engagement



On-going stakeholder engagement



Targeted Program Integrity

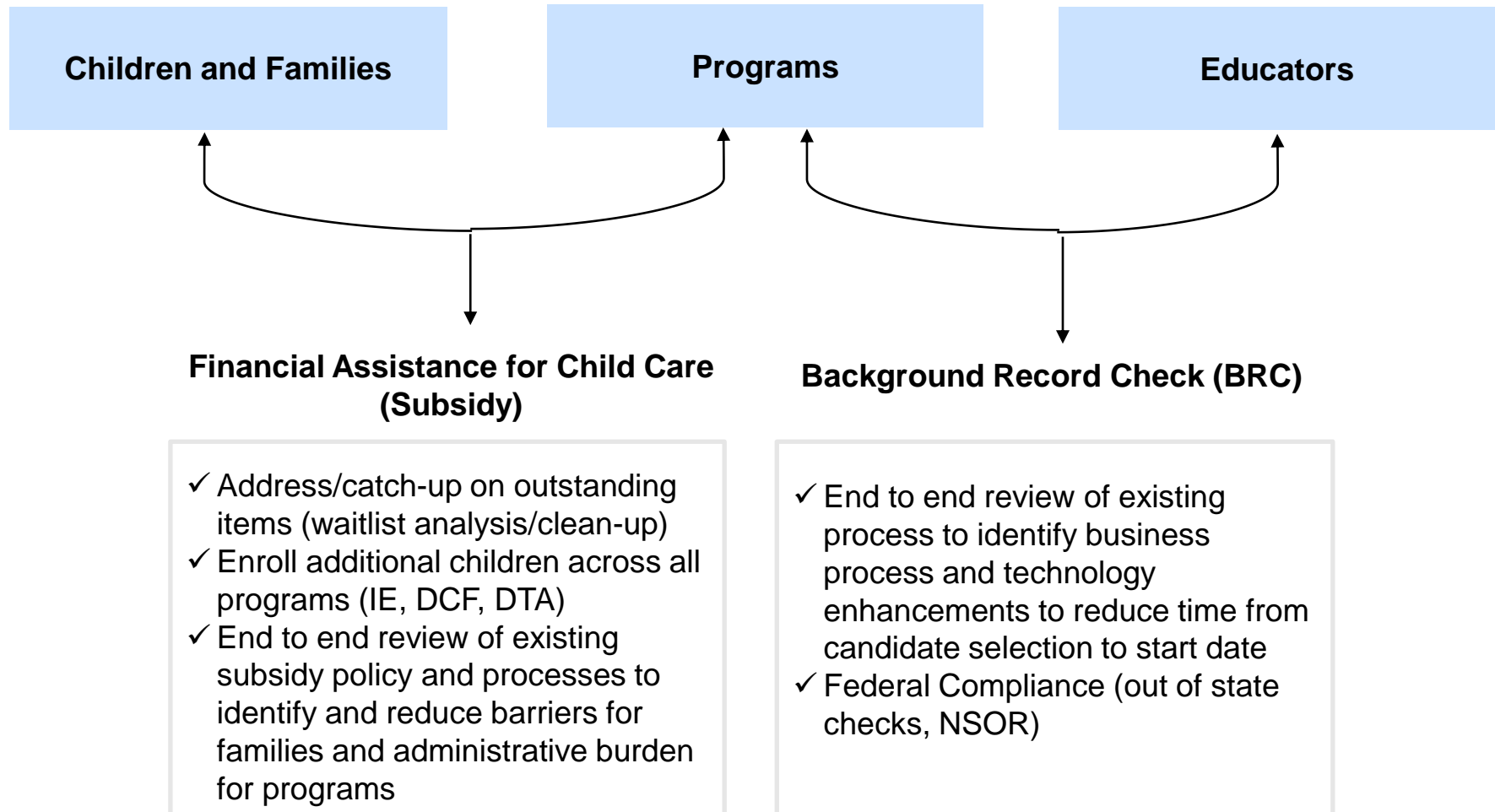


Operationalizing the EEC Strategic Action Plan

Immediate Priority Projects



Leveraging cross-secretariat resources to accelerate enhancements and improvements that will improve user experiences and increase access for families.



Educator Qualifications & Credentialing

Key Takeaways:

EEC has the foundation of a plan to facilitate meaningful career pathways and professional growth for the early education and care workforce

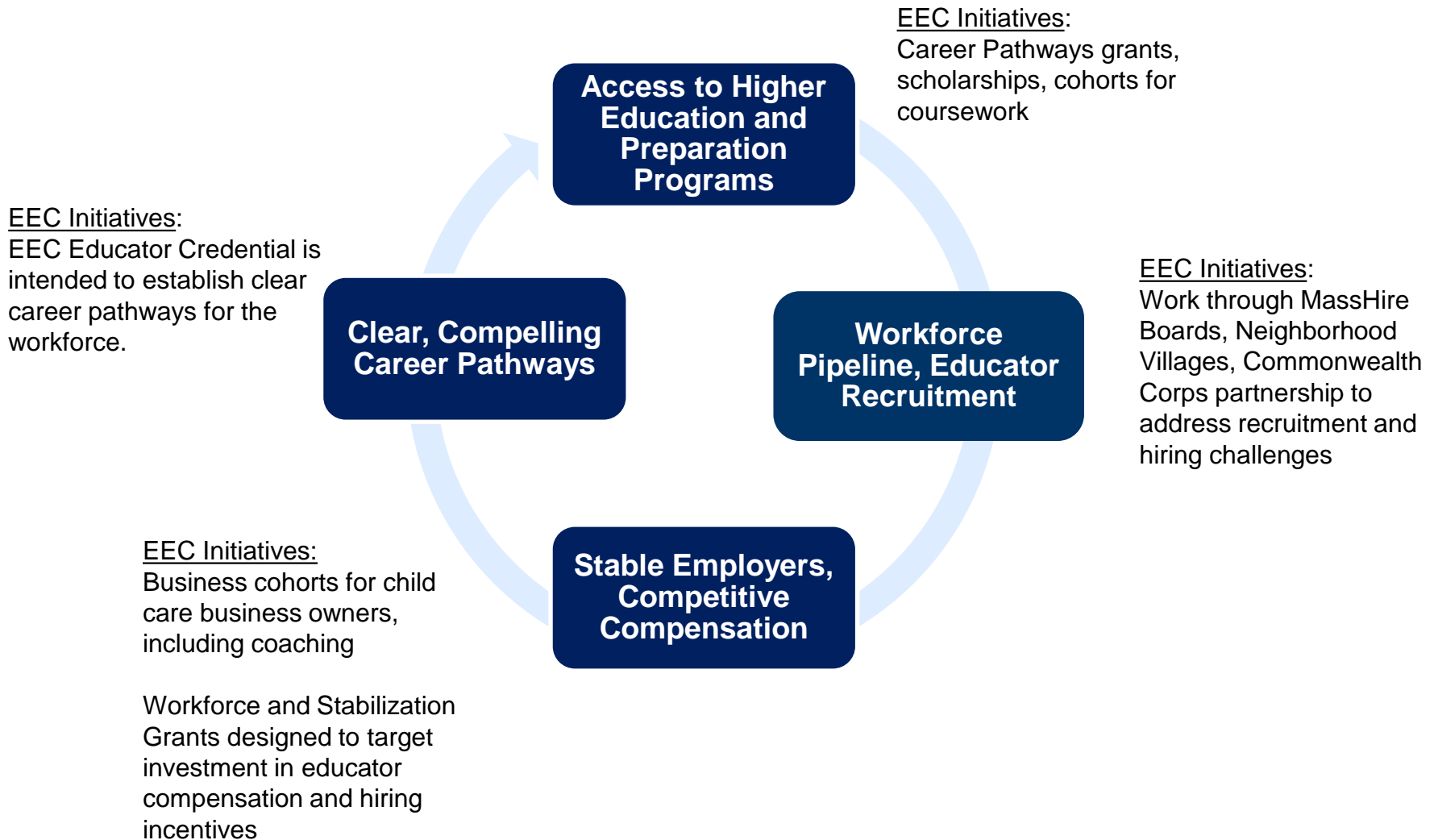
The urgency of the workforce crisis has required immediate intervention while maintaining a longer-term vision.

The expiration in July of the minimum hiring requirements necessitates a review of the effective of these changes and decisions on next steps.

Discussion Points:

What is currently working in our efforts to support the educator pipeline? What immediate and longer-term next steps should we consider?

Creating an Adequate Pipeline of Educators – Pathways for Educators



Framework: Working Draft*

**Framework is targeted for engagement and feedback in coming months prior to finalization.*



DRAFT MA ECE CREDENTIAL

Levels	Work Experience Path	Degree Path
Foundational	EEC Essentials HS Diploma/GED	
1	1 year + documented work assisting, helping, supporting	HS Diploma + CGD; Progress towards CDA/Cert.
2	3 years + documented work facilitating, instructing, coordinating care	Associate's Degree+ Relevant Experience
3	5 years + documented work assisting, guiding practice of others	Bachelor's Degree + Relevant Experience
4	7 years + documented work planning, designing, leading	Master's Degree +Relevant Experience
Work Activities		



DRAFT MA ECE CREDENTIAL

Levels

Foundational

1

2

3

4

Degree Path

- Leverages the capacity of higher education system to provide quality support for professional growth
- Includes expectations around content knowledge development (i.e. math and literacy skills) for the educator
- Does not clearly encompass recognition of the skills built through experience

Degree Path

entials

na/GED

HS Diploma + CGD; Progress towards CDA/Cert.

Associate's Degree+ Relevant Experience

Bachelor's Degree + Relevant Experience

Master's Degree +Relevant Experience

Work Activities

Neighborhood Villages & EEC: Professional Pathways



**Department of
Early Education and Care**

In partnership with



Start or advance a career in early education

Connect to courses and training to qualify for a role working with children; Neighborhood Villages will help identify courses that meet the needs of your schedule (online/hybrid/ or in-person), and with additional technology and wraparound supports to ensure success



Programs licensed with the Department of Early Education and Care

Connect a group of candidates to a training/ coursework cohort, or find qualified individuals who are ready for employment



Coursework providers

Find help enrolling students in a cohort, adapting your course schedules and formats to student needs, and build connections to employers so your students can take the next step once they've finished coursework

Based on a successful pilot in Boston, EEC and Neighborhood Villages are building state-wide navigation infrastructure connecting the EEC workforce with institutions of higher education.

- **Centralized point of information relevant to accessing coursework and student matching with higher education institutions**
- Opportunities for cohorts assembled by employers to enroll with institutions of higher education
- Gap and supply analysis to help target funding to coursework capacity - tailored to student feedback and need
- Identify areas for EEC to address non-academic barriers for the workforce to engage in higher education opportunities

Note: This will be built as a resource for programs, educators and job seekers. It will not be required for access to coursework or PD.

Framework: Working Draft*

*Framework is targeted for engagement and feedback in coming months prior to finalization.



DRAFT MA ECE CREDENTIAL

Levels	Work Experience Path	Work Experience Path <ul style="list-style-type: none">Validates expertise built through combination of on-the- job experience and supported professional developmentShared definitions of expectations that can be verified to demonstrate competency is needed to build consistency across professional experiences in an equitable manner
Foundational	EEC Ess HS Diplon	
1	1 year + documented work assisting, helping, supporting	
2	3 years + documented work facilitating, instructing, coordinating care	
3	5 years + documented work assisting, guiding practice of others	
4	7 years + documented work planning, designing, leading	
Work Activities		



Educator Qualifications – 606 CMR 7.00

Operations and Qualification requirements defined in licensing regulations (606 CMR 7.00), with the exception of BRC requirements which are codified in BRC regulations

Operations

- **Review of qualifications centralized to the teacher qualifications unit.**
 - Small unit reviewed every application, often requiring substantial back and forth with candidates
 - Process caused bureaucratic delays and substantial backlogs that delayed hiring.

Qualifications

- **Defines experience and coursework requirements by program type and role:** different requirements for each program type and qualifications not transferable
- **Requires courses in defined courses of study and credits** (CEUs allowed in limited circumstances)
 - Child Growth and Development the primary course requirement for teachers must be credit bearing (no CEUs)
 - More flexibility for lead teacher and director courses supported by a listing of available courses and the course of study that they support, with limited relevance to school age only care
- **Restricts prior work experience to specific settings and age groups**
 - Educators in center-based programs must have certified direct sign off on experience, for example.
 - Qualifying experience for FCCs is broader and includes experience as a parent

Educator Qualifications: Temporary COVID Policies & Procedures December 2021 - Present



Policy Goal: Increased flexibility for programs to confirm qualifications and hire; broadened definitions for qualifying educator preparation; updated criteria to demonstrate competency. Policy replaced 606 CMR 7.09 16(a-b), 7.09 18(a-c), 7.09 19(a). **BRC requirements and EEC Essentials training requirement remain in place.**

Operational Changes

- Process of sending teacher qualifications to EEC is eliminated
- **Program leaders will validate teacher qualifications at program level** to expedite hiring times, and will be required to maintain documentation to demonstrate their staff meet specified qualifications—this documentation will be reviewed by licensors during monitoring visits and collected through the online professional registry when implemented

Qualification Changes

- **Broadens the ways that programs can determine requirements** are met for new hires, including accepting DESE licenses; provisional acceptance of 'unofficial' transcripts due to college backlogs; out of state equivalencies; increased range of content and titles for coursework
- **Less restrictive, more responsive ways** for educators **to engage in preparation and coursework** such as allowing educators to complete most coursework prior to hire but to complete some coursework within a few months of hire
- **Expand the specific common courses** that qualify for 'rapid hire'
- **Increase flexibility** considering the ways that **work experience** qualifies an educator for providing unsupervised care for children:
 - For example: allowing programs to count all direct work with children and in programmatic leadership positions, in a variety of settings and roles, towards work experience requirements

Feedback & Lessons Learned Temporary Policies & Procedures



Continued support for a quick hiring process is essential

- Some programs appreciate flexibility provided and ability to expedite hiring.
- Cannot return to backlogs associated with a centralized qualification review process.
- Need to understand the extent to which the flexibility of the minimum hiring requirements were well utilized for effective hiring or created confusion and frustration.

Extensive technical assistance is necessary

- Frustration from many program directors about the complex decisions required suggests that more extensive TA support is necessary, particularly around required courses and experience.
- Additional information is needed about how to identify courses that meet particular courses of study requirements, and how to review experience.
- Educators need guidance in selecting coursework and training to understand how decisions will affect their professional growth, both in the current but also future system.

Educators need a clear pathway to advancement

- Uncertainty about how to build professional qualifications, leaving educators concerned that different directors might make different decisions.
- Breadth of courses that might support qualifications creates uncertainty as to how to identify what counts for different courses of study.
- Concern from the field about losing the efficiency and professionalization associated with a portable credential.
- Educators need access to a qualification path that is portable across programs.

Transitioning From Temporary Policies & Procedures to Future State



Moving towards a career pathway and credentials that are:

Inclusive- All educators and program types

Stackable- A career path that build towards and recognizes certificates and degrees

Transferable- Educators carry their credential record across jobs and roles

Skill Building- Structured professional learning with concrete activities building expertise

Considerations/Options for next steps while designing the future state:

Understand extent to which flexibilities in current minimum hiring requirements have been effective

- Ensure future state is reflective of lessons learned from transitional period
- Identify concrete steps to support transition with temporary changes
- Identify policy changes that could be immediately implemented
 - Clarity on how different activities will count for both systems
 - Defining qualifying experiences by content rather than location
- Identify future regulation changes to support transition

Questions for Considerations

- Have the flexibilities in the minimum hiring requirements been useful to programs? Or have they created a different set of challenges?
- What next steps should EEC be considering around the minimum hiring and certification requirements and processes?
- What is currently working in our efforts to support the educator pipeline? What next steps should we consider?

(C3) - Update & Preliminary Outcomes

Key Takeaways:

- Stabilization grants provided an historic investment in foundational funding for programs.
- A year of monthly, program level grants, demonstrated that such funding could be effective at stabilizing program finances during a year of fluctuating revenue.
- Challenges recruiting and retaining educators remain, suggesting ongoing attention to ways in which grant funds can be targeted to solutions.

Discussion Points:

- What have we learned from the C3 grant program that can inform future strategies for supporting recruitment and retention of educators?
- What additional information is needed to determine future directions?

Nearly a year of C3 funding has effectively supported programs through enrollment and staffing challenges.



6,626 programs submitted at least one application for funding in FY22



~\$320 million paid to programs to date

July 2021

Launch of monthly grants

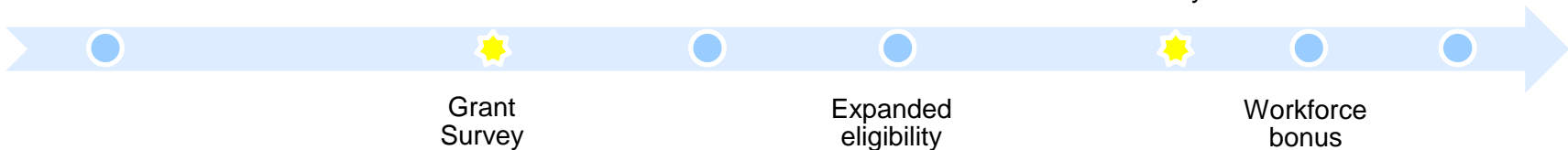
December 2021

Extension of grants through June 2022

June 2022

Grant Survey

Final funding month FY22



Grant application data allows EEC to track key contextual factors, such as enrollment and staffing, while periodic surveys provide deeper insight into how these factors affect programs and the resulting investment decisions.

- During FY22, enrollment improved while staffing challenges have continued, despite increases in salaries.
- Programs largely reported using grant funds for operational expenses in the fall. April survey data will allow us to understand how spending trends have evolved.
- May bonus funding will support additional investments in educators and quality.

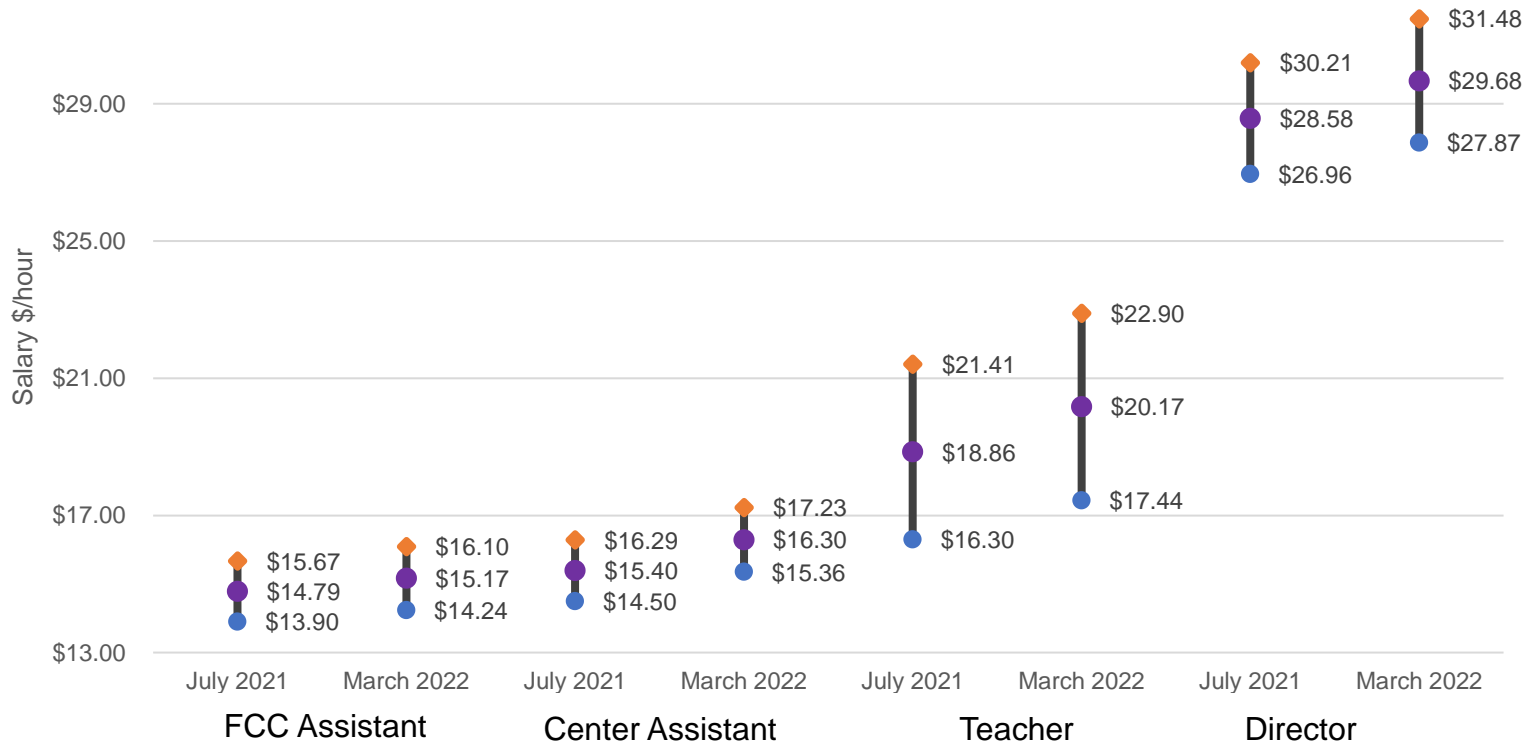


C3 Stabilization Grants: Workforce Bonus Funds

EEC has made a one-time workforce bonus available to all programs receiving grant funding as of May 6, 2022. This funding will further support program investments in efforts to recruit and retain educators and sustain program quality.

- Payments being made at \$32.50/slot calculated with the same formula as regular grant payments (with a staffing and equity adjustment).
- Programs are using a separate application for the bonus payment that is available all eligible programs on the LEAD grant page.
- Programs will receive a separate bonus payment in the next payment cycle following the approval of their bonus application, starting in the current payment cycle.
- Programs will be expected to use the bonus funds on workforce compensation investments, including stipends and bonuses, and other quality investments, including improvements to family access, such as extended hours.

Programs' average high and low salaries across all roles have increased since the grant began in July 2021.



- Spring survey data indicated that 65% of center-based programs currently have educator openings (similar to fall number of 69%). Among those programs with openings, the average program continues to have 3 open positions on average (unchanged from fall).
- Application data indicates that staffing levels system wide have held constant.

(C3) - Update & Preliminary Outcomes

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- What additional information is needed to determine future directions?