

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Bonus Payments Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

NOTE: If you have questions that are not included in this document, please send them to the appropriate agency contact and we will include them on future updates to this document.

Additionally, any worker who would like to know if they qualify for a bonus payment should reach out to their current employer.

General Information:

- **ARPA Bonus Payment questions** should be sent to the following emails:

Questions regarding:	Email address:
Office of Aging and Adult Services (OAAS) services (Community Choices Waiver (CCW), ADHC Waiver, Long Term-Personal Care Services (LT-PCS), Self-Directed (SD) CCW Personal Assistance Services)	OAAS.ProviderRelations@LA.gov
OAAS Support Coordination	Cheryl.Dickerson@LA.gov
Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities (OCDD) services (NOW, Children’s Choice Waiver, ROW, Supports Waiver) or OCDD Support Coordination	OCDD-HCBS@LA.gov

- For additional information regarding OAAS and OCDD Bonus Payments you can watch the recording of the Bonus Payment Webinars at the following links:
 - [OAAS & OCDD Home and Community-Based \(HCBS\)/ Long Term-Personal Care \(LT-PCS\) Direct Service Providers Bonus Payment Webinar](#)
 - [OAAS & OCDD Support Coordination Agencies \(SCAs\) Bonus Payment Webinar](#)
 - [Self-Direction Employers Bonus Payment Webinar](#)
 - [OAAS & OCDD Adult Day Health Care \(ADHC\) Waiver/ Adult Day Care \(ADC\)/Respite Center Providers Bonus Payment Webinar](#)

Bonus Payment Questions:

- 1. What programs/services were approved for these bonus payments and what programs/services were not approved for these bonus payments?**

The following programs/services **were** approved for these bonus payments:

- Community Choices Waiver – Personal Assistance Services (PAS)
- Self-Direction Personal Assistance Services (PAS)
- Long Term-Personal Care Services (LT-PCS)
- Support Coordination Agencies (SCAs)

- Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) Providers
- New Opportunities Waiver (NOW)
- Children's Choice Waiver
- Residential Options Waiver (ROW)
- Supports Waiver

The following programs **were not** approved for these bonus payments:

- EPSDT
- Home Health Agencies
- Nursing Facilities
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual / Developmental Disabilities (ICF/IIDs)
- Assisted Living Facilities
- Veteran's Affairs (VA)
- Companion Care Waiver Service
- Monitored In-Home Caregiving (MIHC) Waiver Service

2. What is the eligibility criteria to receive a bonus payment?

- **A Direct Support/Service Worker/Professional (DSW) will be eligible for a bonus payment if they:**
 - Worked directly with a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)/Long Term-Personal Care Services (LT-PCS) participant during the period from April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 (a worker may qualify for a bonus in each month during this time);
 - Provided direct care services for at least 16 hours in a month (using service data for the months stated above reported in LaSRS®); and
 - Are currently employed and an active worker with your provider agency (according to LaSRS® Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) entries for the month of May 2023).
- **A Support Coordination Agency (SCA) staff member will be eligible for a bonus payment if they:**
 - Worked directly with an HCBS participant during the period from April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 (an SC may qualify for a bonus in each month during this time);
 - Had at least 10 documented contacts with waiver participants in a month (using service data for the months stated above reported in LaSRS®); and
 - Are currently employed and an active worker with your Support Coordination Agency (SCA) (according to LaSRS® EVV entries for the month of May 2023).
- **Self-Direction (SD) DSWs will receive a bonus payment if they:**
 - Worked directly with a HCBS participant during the period from April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 (a worker may qualify for a bonus in each month during this time);
 - Provided direct care services for at least 16 hours in a month (using service data for the months stated above reported in LaSRS®);
 - Are currently employed and an active worker (according to services reported by the Fiscal Employer Agent (FEA) in LaSRS® for the month of May 2023).

- **ADHC/ADC/Respite Centers Direct Support Workers/Staff will be eligible for a bonus payment if they:**
 - Worked directly with a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) participant during the period April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022;
 - Provided direct care services of at least 16 hours in a month (only within the months stated above); and
 - Are both currently employed and an active worker with your provider agency (according to LaSRS® Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) entries).

3. How will employers know which employees are eligible for a bonus payment?

- **HCBS Personal Care Service/Attendant Providers** - The State's contractor, Statistical Resources, Inc. (SRI) will make a report available to PCS/PCA providers in LaSRS® that identifies the eligible DSWs/DSPs, and each month that the DSW/DSP met the eligibility criteria identified above. The report will also provide the total amount of bonus payments to be paid to each DSW/DSP. SRI will send a spreadsheet of all bonus payments for your provider agency (by provider number) to the claims/billing contractor (Gainwell). Gainwell will issue the payments to each provider agency, and will appear on your remittance advice. No action from the PCS/PCA provider is needed to receive payment.

NOTE: If you have a negative balance (due to recoupment, etc.) in the Gainwell system, the amount issued for bonus payments will be less this negative amount. However, you are still responsible for paying the DSWs/SCA staff members that SRI identifies on the Bonus Payment spreadsheet.

- **SCAs** – SRI will make a report available to you in LaSRS® that identifies eligible SCA staff, and each month they met the eligibility criteria identified above. SRI will also send a spreadsheet of the total bonus payments for your agency (by provider number) to the claims/billing contractor (Gainwell). No action from the SCA is needed to receive payment.
- **SD Employers** – SRI will make a report available to your FEA in LaSRS® that identifies eligible DSWs/DSPs, and each month that the DSW/DSP met the eligibility criteria identified above. Your FEA will send your DSWs/DSPs one check for their bonus payments. No action from the Self-Direction Employer is needed to receive payment. Each FEA will send a notification to their employers with the date the bonus payments will be issued. Payments will be issued by the end of August. You may contact SelfDirection@LA.GOV if you have questions after payments have been issued.
- **HCBS ADHC/ADC/Respite Center Providers** - The State's contractor, Statistical Resources, Inc. (SRI) has developed and released a form in LaSRS® for these providers. Each provider agency will be required to enter worker information into the LaSRS® form for ADC (NOW only), ADHC, and Respite for the applicable months, including the amount of time the worker provided direct ADC/ADHC/Respite care each month, by **8/19/23**. The workers entered must be current workers. Based on this information, the State's contractor, SRI, will make a report available to you in LaSRS® that identifies the eligible Direct Support Workers/Staff and each month that they met the criteria identified above. The report will also provide the gross amount of bonus payments to be paid to each ADC/ADHC/Respite Center staff. SRI will send the claims/billing contractor, Gainwell, a spreadsheet of the total bonus payments to be made to your agency, by provider number.

4. How much are the bonus payments?

LDH will pay \$300 per month bonus payments to **HCBS PCS/PCA providers, LT-PCS providers, ADHCs, ADCs, Respite and SCAs** for each of their employees that meet the bonus payment eligibility criteria. Of this \$300 per month, \$250 goes directly to the employee. Each provider/SC agency will keep \$50 to assist provider agencies with employer related taxes on this money. The \$250 bonus payment is the gross amount for each eligible month and will be subject to taxes and employee withholds similar to normal wages.

LDH will pay a \$250 per month bonus payment to **Self-Direction (SD) DSWs** if they meet the identified eligibility criteria. The \$250 bonus payment is the gross amount for each eligible month and will be subject to taxes and employee withholds similar to normal wages.

5. When will the \$300 bonus payments be received and paid to each group?

- **HCBS Personal Care Service/Attendant Providers** – The first round of bonus payments from Gainwell were released to PCS/PCS service providers on July 25, 2023. SRI will run reports and check for additional eligible DSWs/DSPs using June and July service data and those payments will be released in August and September 2023. SRI will make a report available in LaSRS® identifying which of your DSWs/DSPs qualified for payments and the amounts owed to each. When your provider agency receives bonus payments for a DSW/DSP, you **MUST** pay the DSWs/DSPs identified on the spreadsheet the “**total worker payment**” amount, less employee taxes, on their next scheduled payroll payment, but no later than 21 calendar days from the date you received the payment from Gainwell.
- **SCAs** – The first round of bonus payments from Gainwell were released to SCAs on July 25, 2023. SRI will run reports and check for additional eligible staff using June and July service data and those payments will be released in August and September 2023. When you receive these Bonus Payments, you **MUST** pay the eligible SC staff identified on the spreadsheet the “**total worker payment**” amount, less employee taxes, on their next scheduled payroll payment, but no later than 21 calendar days from the date you received the payment from Gainwell.
- **Self-Direction Employers** - Your FEA will send your DSWs one check for their bonus payments. When the FEA receives the bonus payment, they **MUST** pay the eligible SD DSWs/DSPs within 30 calendar days from the date they received the payment. The FEAs will send a notification to SD employers when the payment date is scheduled.
- **HCBS ADHC/ADC/Respite Providers** – All employees who have met the required criteria and have time entered into LaSRS® by **August 19, 2023** will receive these bonus payments from Gainwell on **August 29, 2023**. When the ADHC/ADC/Respite provider receives the bonus payment money from Gainwell for a direct support worker/staff, they **MUST** pay the employee identified on the spreadsheet on their next scheduled payroll payment, but no later than 21 calendar days from the date the provider received the payment from Gainwell.

6. Are there any billing requirements that providers/SCAs must complete in order to receive the bonus payments?

No, there is no action that providers/SCAs have to take in order to receive bonus payments. Payments will automatically be issued to providers for each eligible DSW/SC staff and no billing or claim submission is required.

However, when SRI generates your worker payment report, in LaSRS®, there may be information that your agency needs to provide or correct for individual workers (e.g. DSW's/DSP's Social Security

Number (SSN)). If the LaSRS® report indicates that the bonus payments were not paid due to a SSN discrepancy, you must review and verify the SSN information and provide the correct information to SRI within 14 calendar days of the date the report is issued.

For ADHC/ADC/Respite providers, when SRI runs their reports, there may be some information that the provider agency needs to clean up (e.g. Direct Support Workers'/Staffs' Social Security Number). If the SRI spreadsheet indicates that the bonus payments were not paid due to a SSN discrepancy, you need to review and verify the SSN information and you **MUST** respond back to SRI within 14 calendar days.

NOTE: Bonus payments associated with a SSN discrepancy will not be issued for any month(s) until the discrepancy is resolved.

7. What are the options for issuing payments to DSWs/SC staff?

You have the following options when paying DSWs/DSPs/SC staff:

- Issue a separate check for these bonus payments; or
- Include the bonus payments with their regular payroll checks. If you choose this option, you **MUST** separate their regular pay from their bonus payments on their check stubs.
- For Self-Direction DSWs, your Fiscal Employer Agent (FEA) will send one check with the bonus payments to each eligible DSW.

8. If a worker/staff member works with more than one HCBS participant within OAAS; working with OAAS and OCDD participants; or working for 2 different providers, can that worker/staff member get 2 bonus payments in a month?

- No, each worker/staff member will only be counted once, and will only receive one bonus payment. The number of participants they serve or the population they serve is not a determinant factor in the number or amount of bonus payments.
- If workers delivered services under multiple agencies and qualified for a bonus payment, agencies may refer to the ARPA Payments report in LaSRS® to determine which agency is responsible for issuing the bonus payment to the worker.
- **If an employee for ADHC/ADC/Respite services has already received a bonus payment for a given month, the employee will not receive another bonus payment for that same month.**

9. If the worker/staff member works for multiple agencies, which agency will issue their bonus payment?

The worker/staff member will receive the bonus payment from whichever agency the EVV service data shows they worked more hours.

10. Are the bonus payments taxable?

Yes, the bonus payments are taxable.

NOTE: The amount of taxes deducted depends on your tax liability and will not be the same for everyone. Each employee's tax withholding is determined by their W-4 form that they completed at the time of hire. If a worker/staff member has questions about the tax withholdings from their bonus payment, they should speak with their employer/payroll representative.

11. If a provider uses a third party EVV system, will SRI be able to pull the necessary information to determine which DSWs earned bonuses for that month?

Yes, SRI receives the necessary information from the third party EVV contractors to determine if a DSW qualifies for bonus payments.

12. Will DSW supervisors be able to receive bonus payments?

Each DSW/DSP that works directly with a participant(s) for at least 16 hours in that month qualifies for the bonus. Therefore, any staff that has provided direct care services of at least 16 hours in the month to any participants within that month will receive a bonus payment for that month.

13. What should providers/SCAs do with the bonus payment money for workers that are no longer employed with their agency?

Providers/SCAs should not receive bonus payments for past months for workers/staff members that are no longer employed with their agency. Providers may receive a payment for a worker/staff member who worked in May, June, or July, but has recently separated. Providers are expected to mail a paper check to these workers/staff members at their last known address.

Bonus payments will be released for workers/staff members that are considered “active” based on the EVV records and who meet the eligibility criteria for payment. Agencies will be able to access a list of their staff members in LaSRS® that indicates which staff are eligible to receive a bonus payment(s), which are not and the reason why.

14. Can a DSP agency office staff person (that previously worked as a DSW during the PHE timeframe 4/1/21 – 10/31/22) work sometime this month (July 2023) to register as an active employee in LaSRS®?

In order to receive a Bonus Payment as a DSW, the DSP worker must have:

- Worked directly with a Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS)/Long Term-Personal Care Services (LT-PCS) participant during the period from April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 (a worker may qualify for a payment in each month during this time); and
- Provided direct care services for at least 16 hours in a month (using service data reported in LaSRS® for the months stated above); and
- Are currently employed and an active worker with your provider agency (according to LaSRS® Electronic Visit Verification (EVV) entries for the month of May 2023). A subsequent review for current workers will occur in June 2023 and July 2023 in the event a current worker was on leave but currently employed with your agency in May 2023.

15. What Adult Day Health Care (ADHC) staff members qualify for a bonus payment?

ADHC staff members that provided **direct care** to a participant for at least 16 hours in a specified month will qualify for a bonus payment.

Direct care means hands-on assistance provided to participants, including, but not limited to feeding, toileting, dressing, transferring, walking around (with or without a cane or walker), cooking for participants, pushing a wheelchair, and medication administration.

Staff that qualify as providing direct care includes the following:

- Direct Care Workers/Staff;
- Transportation Drivers;

- Kitchen Staff;
- Staff that completed ADHC Health Status Monitoring calls; and
- Staff that delivered Home Delivered Meals.

NOTE: ADHC providers must attest that the information provided meets the eligibility criteria before any bonus payment money is distributed.

16. What Adult Day Care (ADC) staff members qualify for a for a bonus payment?

ADC staff members that provided **direct care** to individuals in the Day Hab for at least 16 hours in a specified month will qualify for a bonus. Staff members are those individuals that were designated to work in the Day Hab program.

Direct care means hands-on assistance to participants, including, but not limited to assisting with Day Hab activities, transporting to community activities as part of the Day Hab program, or assisting with toileting, feeding, transferring, etc. while at the Day Hab program.

NOTE: Adult Day Care providers must attest that the information provided meets the eligibility criteria before any bonus payment money is distributed.

17. What Respite staff members qualify for a bonus payment?

Staff members that provided **direct care** to individuals in the Respite center for at least 16 hours in a specified month will qualify for a bonus. Staff members are those individuals that were designated to work in the Respite center and provide direct care to the participants.

Direct care means hands-on assistance to participants, including, but not limited to, transporting to community activities, or assisting with toileting, feeding, transferring, etc. while at the Respite center.

NOTE: Respite providers must attest that the information provided meets the eligibility criteria before any bonus payment money is distributed.

18. Can a worker/staff member who worked for an approved waiver service during the time from April 1, 2021 through October 31, 2022 but no longer works for an HCBS waiver service receive a bonus payment?

In order to receive a bonus payment, a worker/staff member must be a current and active employee with an HCBS provider agency.

19. Are DSWs that work in community group homes eligible for ARPA bonus payments?

No. The funding for the bonus payments came from ARPA funds, and these funds are only allowed to be used for Home and Community Based Services. ICFs / group homes are not considered home and community based services.

20. What should providers/SCAs do with the bonus payment money for workers that are deceased?

Providers/SCAs should mail the bonus payment to the deceased worker's/staff member's last known address.

- 21.** Can a worker/staff member reject their bonus payment so that the increased income does not affect their income-based benefits (i.e. Social Security Income, food stamps, WIC, etc.)?

Yes, workers/staff members may refuse their bonus payments so their income-based benefits aren't affected. The provider must get the worker/staff member to sign and date a document stating that they are refusing/rejecting their bonus payments. This shall be kept in the individual's record and shall be made available to the agency for audits concerning bonus payments. Additional information on this process will be communicated at a later date.