

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.

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 ICF/IDD) 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](#)

NOTE: The Adult Day Health Care (ADHC)/Adult Day Care (ADC)/Respite Bonus Payment Memo and informational webinar details will be released at a later date.

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).

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.

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. .

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.

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.

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.

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.