

Evaluation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Minnesota's Child Care Workforce Retention Program

Final Report

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Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Background	2
R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Bonuses	3
Criteria	3
Evaluating R.E.E.T.A.I.N.	4
Organization of this Report	6
Characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Applicants and Recipients	6
Purpose	6
Methods	7
Results	7
Provider characteristics by applicant type	7
Applicant characteristics by year	10
Review of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Implementation	12
Purpose	12
Methods	12
Findings	12
Review of Similar Retention Programs	15
Purpose	15
Methods	15
Findings	15
Grant use restrictions	16
Program eligibility requirements	16
Similar program outcome studies	17
Perceptions of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Program Applicants and Recipients	19
Purpose	19
Survey Sample	20
Findings	21
Who took our survey?	21
Many recipients reported that the bonus influenced their decision to remain in the field.	23
Few recipients reported that the bonus helped them advance their education or professional development.....	24

Recipients used the funds for resources for themselves and their classrooms.....	24
Most respondents reported that applying for a bonus was worth their time and would recommend applying to a colleague.....	28
Center-based and family child care providers learned about the program from different sources.	29
Most respondents did not report challenges with applying for a bonus and did not receive help completing their application.	31
Key Findings and Implications.....	32
Applying for and receiving a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus.....	32
The number of applicants to the program has doubled.	32
Very few providers reported any challenges when applying for the bonus.....	33
Use of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses.....	33
More than half of bonus recipients felt the bonus influenced their decision to stay in the field.	33
The majority of bonus recipients used the funds for classroom resources.	33
R.E.E.T.A.I.N. compared to other workforce retention programs	34
Most other retention programs also provide salary supplements.....	34
There is little research exploring the effectiveness of retention programs.....	34
Study Limitations	34
Few survey respondents had left the child care field.	34
Administrative data from 2018 do not include family child care providers.....	34
Recommendations	35
Consider efforts to support providers who are less qualified.....	35
Maintain flexibility in how providers can use funds.	35
Continue efforts to improve administrative processes and limit barriers to the application process.....	35
Consider additional research exploring the impact of the program on workforce retention in Minnesota.	36
Appendix A: Child Care Aware Districts.....	37
Appendix B: Maps.....	38
Maps from evaluation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N.	38
Maps from a study of the supply of and demand for professional development statewide...	42
Appendix C: Review of Similar Retention Programs	44
References.....	54

Introduction

Child care programs struggle to retain qualified employees in Minnesota and nationwide.^{1,2} Frequent changes in program staff are associated with negative outcomes not only for programs, but also for remaining staff and the children they serve. For example, high teacher turnover is associated with lower program quality, which can negatively impact children's development and well-being.³ Additionally, programs that struggle to retain staff tend to have less positive working environments, and remaining staff report high stress levels.^{4,5} In addition to improving outcomes for children and working conditions for staff, stabilizing the child care workforce is a critical issue for the Minnesota economy since child care shortages can hinder economic development.⁶

Reflecting growing attention to the importance of staff retention, Minnesota and several other states have invested in public initiatives to enhance wages for child care professionals. This study presents findings from an evaluation of Retaining Early Educators through Attaining Incentives Now (R.E.E.T.A.I.N.), a financial bonus program designed to improve workforce retention among highly trained child care professionals in Minnesota. Results from the study help inform recommendations regarding how the program can better support the child care workforce.

Background

Turnover, often expressed as a percentage, refers to the rate at which teaching or caregiving staff leave their place of work or transition to non-teaching/caregiving roles.⁷ According to a 2012 report from the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, the average annual turnover rate for early childhood educators is between 25 and 40 percent.⁸ Data from the [2011 Minnesota Child Care Workforce Survey](#) suggest that provider turnover rates in Minnesota may be lower than the national average; according to the report, center-based programs experienced teacher turnover rates between 12 and 16 percent in the year preceding the study. Turnover rates were highest among center-based aides (22 percent) and assistant teachers (16 percent). Nearly half (47 percent) of preschoolsⁱ and approximately 70 percent of both center-based and school-aged child care programs in Minnesota reported at least some staff turnover in the year preceding the survey period.⁹

Research on the child care workforce shows that the interrelationship among turnover rates, program quality, and workplace climate is complex; however, the studies in this area have not been designed to determine how these three factors influence one another. For example, programs with higher rates of turnover are more likely to experience increased levels of staff stress,¹⁰ a less positive working environment,¹¹ and increased financial challenges.¹² Several studies have also found an inverse relationship between program quality and staff turnover rates; that is, programs with higher turnover rates tend to be of lower quality.¹³ Differences in program quality negatively affect important developmental outcomes for children, including their socio-emotional development.¹⁴ One study found that children in programs with lower staff turnover had more positive relationships with teachers and engaged more frequently in age-appropriate activities.¹⁵

Given the strong association between provider turnover and negative outcomes for children, staff, and programs, it is important to understand what factors influence child care providers' decisions to leave a specific position or the profession altogether. One significant factor is compensation. A recent study found that child care workers earn an average hourly wage of just \$10.60 per hour, among the lowest of any profession in the United States.¹⁶ Insufficient compensation can negatively impact child care professionals and also undermine efforts to improve quality and retain skilled teachers.^{17,18,19} Several studies have noted that low wages, in addition to other issues such as stressful conditions, highly demanding work, and an undervaluation of the profession by society, can diminish child care

ⁱ The 2011 Minnesota Child Care Workforce study defines preschools as licensed programs typically offering two to three daily sessions, a few days per week, to children ages 3 through 5. Preschools are differentiated from center-based programs, which may include licensed programs serving children birth through school-age in a private facility.

professionals' desire to stay in the field.^{20,21,22} Retention incentives, which offer child care providers additional wages or income, could therefore be an important factor in reducing turnover.

Although not an explicit goal of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, financial incentives might also support professional development participation and continuing education among child care professionals, particularly family child care providers. In Minnesota, both center-based and family child care providers are required to participate in annual trainings to complete a pre-determined number of professional development hours. However, child care providers frequently cite cost as a major barrier to participation. According to a recent study of the supply of and demand for professional development in Minnesota, providers most often describe time (32 percent), cost (21 percent), and location (21 percent) as barriers to attending professional development training.²³ More than half of surveyed providers reported that in the last 12 months they were interested in completing a training but did not do so because the cost was too high (54 percent). Other research has suggested that cost may be an even bigger barrier for family child care providers, who typically earn less and have fewer professional supports compared to center-based providers.²⁴

R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Bonuses

The Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS) has invested in multiple initiatives to strengthen the child care workforce in partnership with grantees such as Child Care Aware of Minnesota and Achieve, The Minnesota Center for Professional Development. In response to state legislation enacted in 2007, DHS was tasked with designing and implementing a professional development system to support child care providers. DHS has since rolled out several programs aimed at improving child care professionals' access to professional development opportunities and other resources, including financial assistance programs.

In 2003, Child Care Aware of Minnesota (formally known as the Minnesota Child Care Resource and Referral Network), raised funds to launch two programs to support the child care workforce: Teacher Education and Compensation Helps (T.E.A.C.H.), which provides tuition assistance and other financial benefits to qualifying child care professionals²⁵; and R.E.E.T.A.I.N., which provides bonuses to encourage well-trained child care professionals to remain in the field. A year later, DHS began funding both the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. and T.E.A.C.H. programs. R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses offer a financial incentive to providers with degrees who stay in the field and continually participate in professional development on their own time. In return, bonus recipients agree to remain in their current positions for at least one year after receiving the incentive. Providers can apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus every year as long as they did not receive the bonus during the previous year,ⁱⁱ and they are not allowed to receive both a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship and a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus in the same year.

Criteria

Applicants to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program must meet a number of eligibility requirements. Child Care Aware of Minnesota, the administering agency and a grantee of DHS, awards bonuses to the most qualified candidates based on their scores on factors such as length of service in current position, wages, and professional development activities. A full list of eligibility and scoring criteria is provided in Table 1. More details regarding the scoring criteria are provided in the Review of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Implementation section of this report (see Table 6).

Bonuses awarded annually range from \$500 to \$3,500 (depending on available funds), with higher awards given to recipients with higher education and professional development, as defined by their Career Lattice Step level.ⁱⁱⁱ With the goal of encouraging well-trained child care professionals to remain the field, R.E.E.T.A.I.N. funds can be used to cover personal or professional expenses, and recipients are not required to document how the funds were used. This flexibility in the use of funds was an intentional element of the program's design.

ⁱⁱ Providers can apply for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships annually.

ⁱⁱⁱ The Career Lattice assigns registered providers a step level from Foundational Awareness (less than 10 hours of approved training in the last year) to 12 (Doctoral degree or above) based on their education and professional development. The Career Lattice system is managed by Achieve, The Minnesota Center for Professional Development. A full description of the Career Lattice Step levels is provided on page 8 of this report.

Table 1. Eligibility and scoring criteria for R.E.E.T.A.I.N. grant program

Eligibility criteria	Scoring criteria
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Licensed to provide child care OR works for a licensed program ✓ Works with the same group of children for at least 30 hours/week ✓ Worked in current position for at least one year ✓ Willing to remaining in current position for at least one year after grant receipt ✓ Holds a MN Child Care Credential OR a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Length of service in current position ✓ Wages (lower wages receive higher scores) ✓ Career Lattice Step (higher Lattice is preferred) ✓ Training hours in past year ✓ Leadership activities (e.g., participation in Parent Aware, membership in a professional organization) ✓ Work with infants or toddlers (preferred) ✓ Prior receipt of grant (preference for first-time awardees)

Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota, [R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Bonuses webpage](#), 2018.

Although the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program has been in existence since 2003, the program underwent substantial changes in 2014, including the addition of the requirement that applicants hold either a Minnesota Child Care Credential or a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher. This change was made in an effort to increase participation in Develop–Minnesota’s Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, aligning requirements with Career Lattice Step criteria. In 2014, the program also changed the minimum grant amount from \$1000 to \$500 and implemented separate application periods for center-based and licensed family child care providers to accommodate their differing annual schedules. (Family child care providers are eligible to apply between October 1st and November 30th, and center-based child care providers are eligible to apply between April 1st and May 31st.) Equal funds are allocated each year for awards to center-based and family child care providers. However, center-based providers may benefit from additional funds as they become available during the spring application period.

Since changes to the program were implemented, there has been no systematic review of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program or of outcomes for the child care workforce, including whether receipt of a bonus is associated with child care professionals’ decisions to remain in the child care workforce. Given the recent emphasis on educational attainment (i.e., Career Lattice Step) in R.E.E.T.A.I.N.’s scoring criteria (see Table 6 below for additional details), it is also important to understand how receipt of a bonus might affect providers’ ability to access additional educational attainment over time.

A few similar retention programs in other states—such as the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center’s WAGE\$ program—collect information on their outcomes.²⁶ However, there is no comprehensive database of states with stipend programs, and most states do not collect or report data on the percentage of child care professionals participating in these initiatives, or their outcomes. Lack of data about those who apply for but who do not receive stipends also makes it difficult to assess the impact of the programs and identify potential barriers to or inequities in access. Moreover, past workforce retention studies have used a variety of research designs and examined different subsets of the child care workforce, making it difficult to draw conclusions about best practices in implementation.

Evaluating R.E.E.T.A.I.N.

Given the scarcity of research on other retention initiatives and the limitations of existing studies, it is important for state officials in Minnesota to gain an understanding of how R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses function as a workforce retention initiative, as well as the extent to which child care professionals can equitably access the grant.

To answer these and other questions, DHS contracted with Child Trends in 2018 to study the impact of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses on workforce retention. Before conducting any research activities, Child Trends convened two advisory groups to provide feedback on the proposed methods for the study. The first group, referred to as the administrative advisory group, was composed of child care and early education stakeholders from state agencies, contractors (e.g.,

Child Care Aware), and non-profit organizations. The second group, referred to as the applicant advisory group, was composed of early educators who applied for the bonus in the past. The two advisory groups were convened separately to accommodate scheduling needs, remove any conflicts of interest, and ensure that participants in each group felt comfortable sharing feedback with the study team. Each advisory group was convened twice: once at the beginning of the study to share feedback on the proposed study methods, and once at the end of the project to discuss the study findings and the draft of the final report.

After consulting with the advisory groups on the proposed study methods, the research team at Child Trends:

- Analyzed administrative data on child care providers who had applied for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus since 2013
- Conducted an online survey of past R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants, including both those who received a bonus (recipients) and those who did not (non-recipients)
- Collected information on current R.E.E.T.A.I.N. policies, procedures, and implementation
- Reviewed existing literature on other relevant early childhood workforce retention programs
- Conducted individual interviews with a subset of bonus applicants and recipients

Compiled with the use of multiple methods and data sources, findings from this research provide actionable information for policymakers and programs in Minnesota. Given the lack of research on retention initiatives overall, this study can also serve as resource for other states interested in or implementing child care workforce retention initiatives. The study focuses on questions in four key areas:

Retention

- Is receiving one or more R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses associated with providers' decisions to remain in the child care workforce?
- Are R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients more likely to remain in the workforce than non-recipients?

Educational Attainment

- Do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients achieve higher levels of education or professional development compared to applicants who did not receive the bonus?

Supports

- Do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients report that the bonus was useful? How do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. recipients report using the bonus? How do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients perceive the value of applying to R.E.E.T.A.I.N.?
- What role do other professional supports play in R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients' decisions to stay in the field?
- What best practices have been identified in research on similar workforce retention programs? How can Minnesota use these practices to improve the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program?

Barriers

- How difficult was it to apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus?
- Did applicants rely on any outside support (e.g., help from supervisors) to apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus?

This analysis also compares findings across key subgroups of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus applicants. Specifically, it examines differences across provider type (i.e., center-based or family child care providers), number of times the provider received the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus, geographic location, Career Lattice Step, and provider race/ethnicity. A full description of the analytic approach is described in the Technical Appendix of this report.

Examining the effectiveness of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program is key to helping Minnesota assess the range of strategies it is using to build a stable, highly qualified child care workforce. Based on analysis of a wide range of data

sources, this study's findings provide actionable information for Minnesota policymakers and programs and can serve as a resource for other states considering or currently implementing child care workforce retention initiatives. This study is a crucial first step toward more fully understanding and addressing challenges to professional development and retention that affect child care programs and their delivery of services to young children and families.

Organization of this Report

This report is organized in sections corresponding to each of the four data collection efforts. The Characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Applicants and Recipients section describes methods and findings from the administrative data analysis. The Review of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Implementation section examines findings from a review of existing documentation on the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program. The Review of Similar Retention Programs section presents findings from a literature scan of similar retention programs and any identified best practices for improving workforce retention. The Perceptions of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Program Applicants and Recipients section describes methods and key findings of an online survey of past applicants to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program. The final three sections of the report (Key Findings and Implications, Study Limitations, and Recommendations) synthesize findings from each data collection effort and make overall recommendations to the State for improving the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program.

Characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Applicants and Recipients

Purpose

An understanding of the characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants and recipients is the foundation of the evaluation activities described in this report. To learn more about the characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants and recipients from 2013-2018, Child Trends analyzed administrative data from the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database. First, the research team examined characteristics of awarded and denied applicants, by year, to track changes in the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant pool over time. Applicants were then sorted into three types:

- **Non-recipients**, or providers who had applied for but never received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus since 2013
- **One-time recipients**, or providers who had received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus once since 2013
- **Repeat recipients**, or providers who had received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus more than once since 2013

Researchers at Child Trends then examined the following characteristics among the three applicant types for each application year:

- Provider care type (center-based care versus family child care)^{iv}
- Career Lattice Step^v
- Race/ethnicity (non-Hispanic white versus Hispanic or another race^{vi})
- Location by Child Care Aware district (see Appendix A)

^{iv} At the time data were collected in 2018, the application for family child care providers was not open; thus, in 2018 we have applicant data only for center-based providers.

^v Data available only for years 2015-2018.

^{vi} Data available only for 2014-2018. Due to small sample sizes across race/ethnicity categories, all applicants who indicated they were Hispanic or a race/ethnicity other than white were combined for into one group for the purposes of comparison in these analyses. However, we report the precise makeup of the Hispanic or another race group in the results section of this report.

- R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus amount received (analyzed for recipients only)

Methods

Child Trends analyzed data from the Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, which includes 1,923 applications submitted by 1,362 unique applicants. The data include information on award status, provider care type, Career Lattice Step, race/ethnicity, and geographic location. Unique applicants were identified by cross-referencing duplicate email addresses, phone numbers, and physical home addresses. All unique applicants were then coded into one of the three applicant types based on their R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus receipt status. Significant differences between groups were calculated using analysis of variance (ANOVA) or chi-square goodness-of-fit tests using a threshold of $p < .05$. Using zip code data, Child Trends mapped the location of applicants by year (by Child Care Aware District;^{vii} see Appendix B), provider care type, and award status.

Results

The majority of the data presented in this section refer to those who applied for a bonus between 2013 and 2018. However, because this study was conducted in the fall of 2018 (during the application period for licensed family child care providers), data from 2018 include only center-based providers, who applied for the bonus in spring 2018. Additionally, because the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program underwent substantial revisions in 2014, some data (e.g., Career Lattice Step) were not collected until 2015. Each finding includes details regarding the years to which those data refer.

Provider characteristics by applicant type

Nearly half (49 percent) of applicants never received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus (non-recipients). Of those who did, 44 percent received a bonus only once (one-time recipients) and 7 percent received multiple bonuses (repeat recipients). According to a recent report by DHS, center-based care accounts for only 16 percent of licensed child care programs in the state, whereas family child care programs make up the remaining 84 percent.²⁷ However, there are more center-based care staff employed in Minnesota (22,700 staff) than family child care staff (12,800 staff) because center-based programs typically hire more employees.²⁸ Although the majority of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants across all years were center-based providers (66 percent), this finding is not surprising given that the number of center-based staff exceeds the total number of family child care staff in the state. Center-based applicants also represent the majority of providers in each of the three applicant types (see Table 4).

Prior to 2014, the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program required that applicants have a Minnesota Child Care Credential.²⁹ After 2014, the program was revised to allow applicants with either a Minnesota Child Care Credential or a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher to apply for a bonus. The Career Lattice system assigns registered child care professionals a Step level of Foundational Awareness^{viii} or steps 1–12, with each level corresponding to different educational and professional development criteria, as defined by Achieve, The Minnesota Center for Professional Development. For a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher, applicants must hold either eight or more approved early care and education college credits, a Child Development Credential (CDA), or accreditation from the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC). For a full list of Career Lattice Step criteria, see Table 2.

On average, both one-time and repeat recipients had a higher Career Lattice Step (median = 10) compared to non-recipients (median = 8). This is likely due to the fact that Career Lattice Step is included in the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. scoring criteria, with those at a higher Career Lattice Step receiving more points toward a bonus. For example, a provider with a Career Lattice Step level of 8 would receive six points on their R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application, whereas a provider with a level of 10 would receive ten points. A full overview of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. scoring system can be found in Table 6 of the Review of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Implementation section of this report. Career Lattice Step level did not differ significantly by provider type.

^{vii} Child Care Aware districts were calculated using zip code information.

^{viii} Foundational Awareness is the first Career Lattice Step; providers in this step have less than 10 hours of non-credit training.

Table 2. Minnesota Career Lattice Step criteria

12	A. Doctoral degree with 6-23 approved credits	B. Doctoral degree with 24-35 approved credits	C. Doctoral degree with 36 approved credits	D. Doctoral degree in ECE OR a Doctoral degree with 37 approved credits in Infant & Toddler, ECE &/or SA
11	A. Master's degree with 6-23 approved credits	B. Master's degree with 24-35 approved credits	C. Master's degree with 36 approved credits	D. Master's degree in ECE OR a Master's degree with 37 approved credits in Infant & Toddler, ECE & /or SA
10	A. Bachelor's degree with 6-23 approved credits	B. Bachelor's degree with 24-35 approved credits	C. Bachelor's degree with 36 approved credits	D. Bachelor's degree in ECE OR a Bachelor's degree with 37 approved credits in Infant & Toddler ECE &/or SA
9	A. Associate degree with 6-23 approved credits OR 60 semester credits with 6-23 approved credits	B. Associate degree with 24-29 approved credits OR 60 semester credits with 24-29 approved credits	C. Associate degree with 30 approved credits OR 60 semester credits with 30 approved credits	D. Associate degree in ECE OR an Associate degree with 31 approved credits in Infant & Toddler, ECE &/or SA
8	30 approved credits OR A Diploma in ECE from an accredited college			
7	16 approved credits OR 2 approved credits and a diploma, preprimary credential or primary diploma from Association Montessori International OR A provisional certificate from the American Montessori Society OR A Certificate in CD or ECE from an accredited college			
6	8 approved credits OR A current CDA from the Council for Professional Recognition OR National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation			
5	120 clock hrs*			
4	90 clock hrs*			
3	55 clock hrs*			
2	25 clock hrs*			
1	10 clock hrs*			
	Foundational Awareness			



KEY

- College Credit** (Steps 8-12)
- Noncredit Credential and/or College Credits** (Steps 6-7)
- Noncredit Training** (Steps 1-5)
Require a verified High School Diploma or GED
- Foundational Awareness**
Open to anyone who works directly with or on behalf of young children in MN

*Achieve approved training within the last five years
**Approved credits are based on semester credits

Rev. Jan. 2018

Source: Achieve, The Minnesota Center for Professional Development (2018).

Since 2014, R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus amounts have ranged from \$500 - \$3,500.^{ix} From 2013 to 2018, the average bonus amount for recipients was \$2,357, but varied significantly by provider type. Center-based recipients received an average bonus of \$2,368, whereas family child care recipients received an average bonus of \$2,227 ($p < .05$; see Table 3).

^{ix} Prior to 2014, the minimum bonus amount was \$1,000.

The majority of applicants identified as white, non-Hispanic (75 percent), but small percentages of applicants identified as black/African American (5 percent), Hispanic/Latino (2 percent), Asian (2 percent), Native American or Alaska Native (1 percent), another unspecified race (1 percent), or multiracial (1 percent). Because a question about applicants' race/ethnicity was not added to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application until 2014, at which point it was added as an optional field, 12 percent of applications across all years were missing race/ethnicity data (N = 240). Due to small sample sizes in this analysis, all applicants who identified as Hispanic or another race (other than white) were combined into one comparison group making up 28 percent of unique applicants. Applicant race/ethnicity did not vary significantly by applicant type; non-Hispanic white applicants received R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses at a similar rate (51 percent) compared to applicants who were Hispanic or another race (50 percent).

Table 3. Average bonus amounts of recipients, by provider type

Provider type	Average bonus amount
Center-based providers	\$2,368*
Family child care providers	\$2,227
Total	\$2,357

Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2018.

Note. * indicates a significant difference at $p < .05$.

As expected due to population density, the majority of applicants and recipients reported a zip code in the metro district (representing the seven-county metropolitan area) in both the total provider applicant pool and within each of the three applicant types (for a map of Child Care Aware districts, see Appendix A). A higher percentage of providers from the Northwest district received the bonus two or more times compared to providers from other districts. A series of maps detailing the geographic locations of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants and recipients can be found in Appendix B. Additional maps from a recent Minnesota study examining the relative supply of and demand for professional development for the child care workforce are also included for context (see Figures B5-6, Appendix B).³⁰

Table 4. Characteristics of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants by applicant type

	Non-recipients (N = 673)	One-time recipients (N = 594)	Repeat recipients (N = 94)	Total (N = 1,362)
Provider type				1,362
Family child care	240 (52%)	184 (40%)	40 (9%)	464
Center-based care	434 (48%)	410 (46%)	54 (6%)	897
Average Career Lattice Step	8	10*	10*	598
Provider race				1,126
Non-Hispanic white	480 (49%)	449 (46%)	46 (5%)	975
Hispanic or another race	93 (62%)	56 (37%)	2 (1%)	151
Child Care Aware district				1,349
Metro	369 (54%)	278 (40%)	42 (6%)	689
Northeast	69 (43%)	84 (52%)	9 (6%)	162
Northwest	59 (42%)	59 (42%)	24 (17%)*	142
Southern	72 (46%)	80 (51%)	4 (3%)	156
West/Central	84 (46%)	83 (46%)	15 (8%)	182
Out-of-state respondents	9 (50%)	9 (50%)	0 (0%)	18
Bonus amount				
Average	n/a	\$2,262	\$2,243	\$2,283
Median	n/a	\$2,000	\$3,000	\$2,000

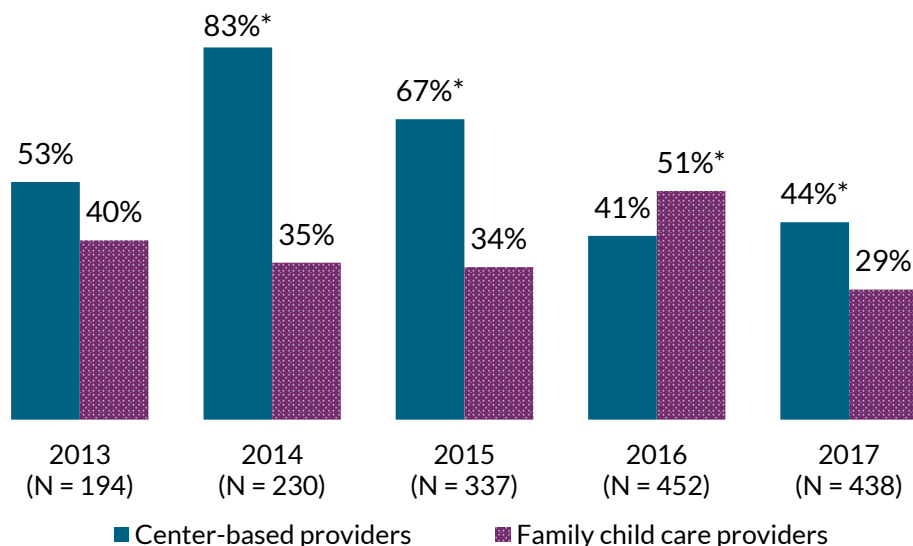
Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2018.

Note. Percentages across rows to total 100%; however, percentages may not sum due to rounding. * indicates a significant difference at $p < .05$.

Applicant characteristics by year

Since the program launched in 2013, the number of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applications has nearly doubled—from 194 applicants in 2013 to 438 applications in 2017.^{x,xi} Of all applicants since 2013, 51 percent received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus at least once from 2013 to 2018. The likelihood of receiving a bonus was higher for center-based providers in 2014, 2015, and 2017, whereas family child care providers were more likely to receive a bonus only in 2016 ($p < .05$; see Figure 1). This difference is most likely due to the additional funds allocated to center-based providers at the end of each fiscal year.

Figure 1. Percentage of providers awarded a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus from 2013-2017, by provider type



Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2018.

Note: Bars marked with asterisks indicate statistically significant comparisons between providers types ($p < .05$).

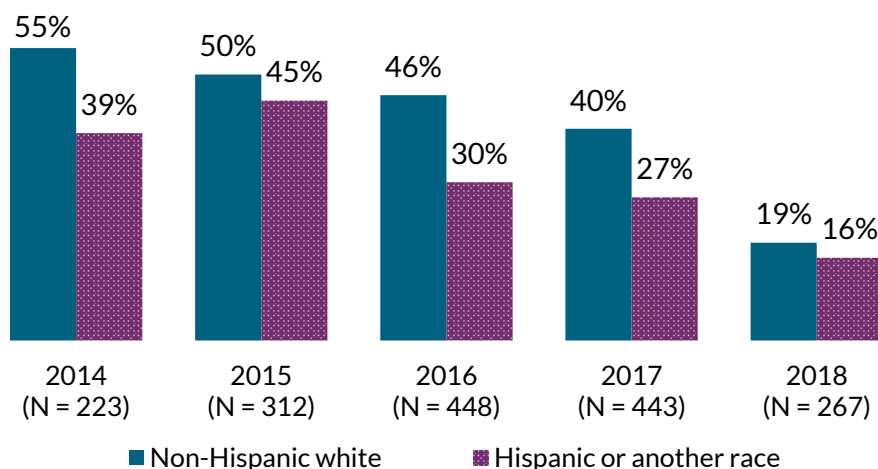
For each year Career Lattice data were available (2015-2018), there was a two-step difference between the median Career Lattice Step of awarded and denied applicants. In this time frame, awarded applicants had a median Career Lattice Step of 10, which requires a bachelor's degree; the median Career Lattice Step among denied applicants was 8, which does not require a college degree, but requires at least 30 credits or a diploma in early care and education from an accredited college. Notably, there were no significant differences between the Career Lattice Steps of center-based and family child care providers in any given year except for 2016. In 2016, center-based providers had a median Career Lattice Step of 10, whereas family child care providers had a median Career Lattice Step of 8. This finding is interesting given that recent research involving Minnesota providers found that center-based providers tend to have higher levels of education and credentials than family child care providers. For example, the Minnesota Training Availability Study found that center-based providers were significantly more likely to have a CDA or to have attended some college compared to family child care providers.³¹

The majority of applicants each year were from non-Hispanic white providers (87 percent). However, non-Hispanic white applicants were no more likely to receive a bonus in any given year than applicants who identified as Hispanic or another race (see Figure 2).

^x At the time these analyses were conducted, the 2018 application cycle was still in progress.

^{xi} During this time, there was a temporary increase in R.E.E.T.A.I.N. funding as a result of Minnesota's federal Race to the Top—Early Learning Challenge Grant, which may have influenced the number of applicants.

Figure 2. Percentage of providers awarded a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus from 2014-2018,* by race/ethnicity



Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2018.

Note: *Race/ethnicity data were not collected in 2013.

The average R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus amount varied each year from 2013 to 2018, as available funds for the program changed. The average annual bonus amount also varied by provider type (see Table 5). In 2016, center-based recipients received a higher average bonus amount (\$2,547) than family child care providers (\$2,130; $p < .05$). Further investigation found that this difference in 2016 was likely the driving factor behind overall differences between center-based and family child care providers (described in Table 3).

Table 5. Average bonus amounts of recipients, by year

Year	Average bonus amount		
	Overall	Center-based providers	Family child care providers
2013	\$2,564	\$2,564	n/a ^a
2014	\$2,430	\$2,403	\$2,478
2015	\$2,199	\$2,217	\$2,164
2016	\$2,395	\$2,547*	\$2,130
2017	\$2,231	\$2,237	\$2,216
2018	\$2,323	\$2,323	n/a ^b
Total	\$2,357	\$2,368	\$2,227

Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2018.

Note: ^a Data not available in R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database. ^b 2018 data include only center-based applicants. * indicates a significant difference at $p < .05$.

While there were no notable differences in the geographic representation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants (see Appendix B), there were geographic differences in award status among counties. The majority of applicants from the southern counties of Nobles, Jackson, Martin, Faribault, Freeborn, Mower and Fillmore received bonuses, as did the majority of applicants from the Twin Cities metro area. The average amount of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus also fluctuated each year based on available funds.

Review of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Implementation

Purpose

To broaden our understanding of how the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program was designed, implemented and changed over time, the research team conducted a systematic review of existing implementation policies and other relevant documentation related to the bonus program. This task also served as the foundation for a later review, discussed in a subsequent section of this report, in which the team analyzed similarities and differences among similar workforce retention programs across the country.

Methods

DHS and Child Care Aware provided Child Trends with 10 pieces of relevant documentation regarding the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program. The research team reviewed and coded this documentation by highlighting and categorizing factors that the retention literature identifies as important to program implementation or participant outcomes (see Table 6). Following this review, Child Trends met with DHS and Child Care Aware representatives in order to discuss the findings and gather additional information about the implementation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. from staff involved in or knowledgeable about the process.

Table 6. Key retention program considerations and definitions

Program consideration	Definition
Eligibility criteria	Requirements providers must meet to apply for the bonus
Application process	Provider steps and requirements to complete application; internal procedure of application scoring; application timeline
Bonus amount	Amount providers could receive; stipend amounts by career lattice level
Technical support	Whether the agency provides any support for completing the application, reapplying in subsequent years, locating professional development, etc.
Barriers to applying	Potential or known characteristics or policies that may make it difficult for providers to apply for the bonus
Accessibility of materials	Whether materials are available in many formats (e.g., online), in different languages, etc.
Outcomes/effectiveness	Results of past evaluations of the bonus

Findings

Table 7 includes a brief overview of the information gathered from the provided documentation. This table was used to compare R.E.E.T.A.I.N. to other programs across the country that provide financial incentives to child care professionals to support their work and/or keep them in the field.

Table 7. Key considerations of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program

Program consideration	Overview of documents provided
Eligibility criteria	<p>Documentation available to providers includes information on potential bonus amounts. Providers who are current T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients cannot apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus. Providers must have worked at their current location for at least one year to apply. There are no wage restrictions to apply.</p> <p>As part of the 2014 changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providers are eligible if they have achieved at least a level 6 on the Minnesota Career Lattice or hold a Minnesota Child Care Credential^{xii} (MNCCC). Previously, providers were required to have a CDA or higher degree to be eligible.
Application process	<p>Documentation available to providers includes the following information about the application process: application timeline, verification materials required for submission, instructions for applying, and general information on the scoring system. The scoring system is discussed in more detail in Table 8 below.</p> <p>As part of the 2014 changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The revised application submission timeline better accommodates provider schedules. The application must be submitted online, but required verification materials must be submitted by mail. Child Care Aware recently created an option to submit verification materials online.
Bonus amount	<p>Documentation available to providers includes information about potential bonus amounts. The bonus amount is given as a salary stipend with no restrictions on its use and is determined by the provider's level on the Minnesota Career Lattice.</p> <p>As a part of the 2014 changes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bonus amounts are awarded based on Career Lattice Step level. Previously, amounts were based on level of credential/degree-CDA, associate degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree. Bonuses range from \$500 to \$3,500, depending on the recipients' Career Lattice Step level.^{xiii} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Level 5: \$500 Levels 6-9a: \$1,000 Levels 9b-10a: \$2,000 Levels 10b-10c: \$3,000 Levels 11-12: \$3,500
Technical support	<p>Email scripts sent to applicants who submit incomplete information contain the reason the application was deemed incomplete and contact information the provider can use to</p>

^{xii} A Minnesota Child Care Credential is equivalent to a level 5 on the Minnesota Career Lattice.

^{xiii} Details on the Minnesota Career Lattice can be found in Table 2 or on the Achieve (The Minnesota Center for Professional Development) website: <https://www.mncpd.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/MN-Career-Lattice.pdf>

Program consideration	Overview of documents provided
	reach out for additional assistance. Although the email is sent in English, support is available in other languages if requested.
Barriers to applying	The 2014 changes to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program were made in response to a proposal submitted to an advisory committee convened by Child Care Aware. The changes proposed were informed by feedback from providers who faced challenges with meeting the application submission dates.
Accessibility of materials	Prior to the 2014 changes, the application was available in print and online. Currently, the application is available only for online submission. Until recently, required documents could only be submitted through the mail; however, since the start of the study, Child Care Aware added an option to submit documents online. The application is available only in English.

Table 8. R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant scoring*

Scoring Criteria	Point Allotments
Length of service in current position	
Less than 2 years	2 points
2-5 years	4 points
6-9 years	6 points
10-15 years	8 points
16-20 years	10 points
More than 20 years	15 points
Wages	
Less than \$10,000 per year	15 points
\$10,001 - \$20,000 per year	12 points
\$20,001 - \$30,000 per year	9 points
\$30,001 - \$40,000 per year	6 points
Over \$40,000 per year	0 points
Career Lattice Step	
Step 5	1 point
Step 6	2 points
Step 7	4 points
Step 8	6 points
Step 9	8 points
Step 10	10 points
Step 11	12 points
Step 12	15 points
Training hours in past year (as verified by Learning Record)	
16 – 20 hours	3 points

Scoring Criteria	Point Allotments
21-25 hours	8 points
26-30 hours	12 points
More than 30 hours	15 points
Leadership activities	
Parent Aware rated or accredited program	2 points
Trainer, mentor, or consultant	2 points
Member of professional organization	2 points
Works with infants and/or toddlers	2 points
Never received bonus before	5 points

Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota, 2018.

Note: * Applicants must also meet all eligibility criteria (see Table 1 or the [R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Bonuses webpage](#) (Child Care Aware of Minnesota, 2018).

Review of Similar Retention Programs

Purpose

To better understand how the characteristics and implementation of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program compare to other workforce retention programs, Child Trends reviewed other early childhood workforce retention programs in the United States.

Methods

DHS provided the Child Trends team with a preliminary list of other early childhood workforce programs and potential resources for researching additional programs. The team examined these sources and reviewed the citation lists of the reports to identify additional programs or resources that could be included in the review.^{xiv}

To tailor the process, the team used the Early Childhood Workforce Index³² to focus the search on states identified as having wage supplement programs. For the identified states, the team conducted internet searches using each state's name coupled with "early childhood" and "wage supplement." In total, searches were conducted for 13 states, and 16 programs were identified in 11 states. Following the search, the characteristics of other states' programs were compared to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program.

The final step was an online search to identify outcome studies about the programs identified in this review. Search terms included the state name, program name and "report," "research," and "evaluation." For states whose annual reports were the most useful documents available, the most relevant report was selected.

Findings

Of the 16 identified programs, 15 were known to be currently active in their state.^{xv} The largest workforce retention program, the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood National Center's WAGE\$ salary supplement program (WAGE\$), is

^{xiv} Prior to the main search, the research team conducted an initial search for programs used in early discussions of retention programs with DHS. For this search, the search terms were "early childhood," "early care and education," "retention programs," and "wage supplement."

^{xv} Since being included in this review, New Mexico's INCENTIVE\$ program has become inactive. It will still be included in this review because the program was operating until very recently.

currently active in four states: Delaware, Florida, Iowa, and North Carolina.^{xvi} While it is a national program, WAGE\$ is administered by not-for-profit organizations within each participating state.³³ States are provided with support from the national T.E.A.C.H. center. All other programs identified in this review are active in only a single state. It should be noted that the funding mechanisms and the amount of available funding vary considerably across the 16 identified programs. A full summary of the 16 programs reviewed in this section can be found in Appendix C and in the Technical Appendix to this report.

Grant use restrictions

Most of the programs found through this review have an award structure similar to that of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program: They are salary supplement programs with no restrictions on how recipients use their stipend (Table 9). Most of these programs distribute stipends to recipients through two checks sent six months apart. All 11 salary supplement programs use a tiered grant amount system similar to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program's tiered system. Like the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, six of these programs tie the grant tiering system to their professional development career lattice.^{xvii} Of the five programs that do not tie grants to their career lattice, the four WAGE\$ programs use a lattice system separate from the state's professional development system, while California's AB212 Stipend program ties grant amounts to the number of college course units the recipient is taking.

Four of the identified programs restrict providers' use of funds to college tuition payments and associated costs of college attendance (i.e., specific course fees and textbook purchases). One program, Maryland's Family Child Care Provider Grant Program, reimburses family child care providers to help offset the costs of program upkeep. For this program, providers must submit receipts for all reimbursements they claim.

The Louisiana School Readiness Tax Credit for Staff and Directors, the first early childhood tax credit program in the nation, differs most from the other salary supplement programs. It is part of a larger state initiative that gives tax breaks not only to child care directors and staff, but also to families, child care centers, and businesses that support child care. For this particular component of the program, only center-based staff and directors are eligible; they receive their stipend through a refundable tax credit.

Table 9. Grant use restrictions and comparison to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program

Grant use restrictions	Number of programs	Applies to R.E.E.T.A.I.N.
Salary supplement with no restrictions	11	Yes
Grant amount tied to professional development system lattice level	6	Yes
Tuition and college materials (i.e., course fees, textbooks) only	4	No
Reimbursement program	1	No
Total number of programs	16	

Note: Rows with blue shading indicate commonalities with the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program.

Program eligibility requirements

The most common eligibility requirement (Table 10) across programs is a minimum length of employment at a single child care location prior to applying. Twelve programs and the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program identify this as a

^{xvi} In the FY2017, five states plus New Mexico's INCENTIVE\$ program were identified as WAGE\$ states on the T.E.A.C.H. website. Kansas' and New Mexico's programs are not currently active. The Kansas program is not included because it became inactive prior to the beginning of this review.

^{xvii} A career lattice aligns educational requirements, knowledge, competencies, and skills with corresponding career opportunities for employment in the early care and education field.

condition of grant receipt. Most programs with this requirement, including the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, also require recipients to remain at their current child care location or in their current position for a specified length of time after receiving a grant.

Unlike the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, many programs identify a maximum hourly wage or yearly salary for eligible providers. While the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program does not currently have eligibility requirements related to wage or salary, the point system for grant approval awards more points to providers with lower wages than to those with higher wages. The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program also differs from some other programs reviewed with respect to career lattice requirements. Seven of the programs reviewed require providers who receive a grant to advance their career lattice level within a specified amount of time, which is not a condition of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program. Additionally, only the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program restricts how often providers are eligible to receive a grant; providers are only eligible to receive a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. grant once every two years.

Table 10. Common program eligibility requirements and comparison to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program

Eligibility requirement	Number of programs	Applies to R.E.E.T.A.I.N.
Maximum wage/salary limit	11	No*
Minimum education requirement	11	Yes
Applicants must work for a licensed program participating in a QRIS program	3	No
Minimum length of employment at same child care location		
Prior to applying	12	Yes
After receiving	8	Yes
Minimum hours of employment per week	7	Yes
Must serve a proportion of children from specific populations	3	No
Must belong to state's professional development system	7	Yes
Must move up lattice levels within specified length of time	7	No

Note: * The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program does not have a wage limit, but applicants with lower wages do receive more points than those with higher wages when being considered for approval. Rows with blue shading indicate commonalities with the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program.

Similar program outcome studies

Very few child care workforce retention programs publish data on program outcomes; moreover, those programs that do so are geographically specific and often look at outcomes over a short period of time. Most published materials about the 16 programs identified for this review, for example, are annual reports or program reviews about one state, and they cover only certain program outcomes for a particular implementation year. While this approach gives states the information they need to understand and make decisions, it presents challenges for comparing outcomes across studies.

Of the 16 programs in this review, WAGE\$, the largest wage supplement effort in the country, provides the most comprehensive reporting on program outcomes. WAGE\$ also has the most similarities to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program. WAGE\$ provides salary supplements to child care professionals working in regulated early childhood settings, including teachers, directors, and family child care providers. It operates at the state level and can be financed through several mechanisms, including federal funding streams such as the Child Care and Development Fund

(CCDF), quality set-aside funds, and federal Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge (RTT-ELC) funds. It can also be funded through states' general and pre-kindergarten funds, local government funds, and foundation grants. Importantly, WAGE\$ offers salary supplements to support and reward teacher education and continuity of care.

We reviewed published materials available from two WAGE\$ programs:

- WAGE\$ Florida^{xviii}: A 2016-2017 annual report highlights results from a 2015 survey of WAGE\$ participants and their employees. In 2015, 1,240 WAGE\$ Florida participants received at least one six-month salary supplement check. Annual supplements ranged from \$200-3,000. The average six-month salary supplement was \$594.³⁴
- WAGE\$ North Carolina: A statewide report on fiscal year 2017 reports on a number of outcomes, such as teacher education, turnover and compensation. In fiscal year 2017, 3,299 WAGE\$ North Carolina participants received a salary supplement. Annual supplements ranged from \$450-3,000. The average six-month supplement statewide was \$1,000.³⁵

In terms of educational outcomes, 17 percent of active WAGE\$ recipients in Florida submitted documentation verifying their completion of additional coursework. Of those, 42 percent raised their education level enough to receive increased supplemental funding. In North Carolina, WAGE\$ implementation and policies vary by county. In general, however, the state reported that 90 percent of WAGE\$ participants—and 96 percent of participants working in pre-kindergarten classrooms—received funding for having at least an associate degree (or its equivalent in Early Childhood Education) or for pursuing additional coursework.

Reports suggested that the WAGE\$ programs in Florida and North Carolina also had positive impacts on turnover rates. Florida reported an 11 percent turnover rate (compared to the national average of 30 to 40 percent) for WAGE\$ recipients, and North Carolina reported a turnover rate of 16 percent, (compared to a 31 percent full-time teacher turnover rate in North Carolina prior to WAGE\$). The data used to calculate the WAGE\$ turnover rates in North Carolina differed slightly from those used to calculate statewide turnover; WAGE\$ data, for example, included part-time employees, but state data did not. The North Carolina report suggests that without the WAGE\$ supplement, the turnover rate would likely be much higher.³⁶

In addition to reports on WAGE\$, the research team examined a report of the Louisiana's School Readiness Tax Credit program³⁷ that focused on the first four years of implementation (2008-2011); this report was from The National Women's Law Center (NWLC). Louisiana's program differs from the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program in that it provides tax credits rather than salary supplements. Moreover, its overarching goal is to improve the overall quality of child care in the state of Louisiana rather than to increase retention of child care staff. The refundable state tax credits range from \$1,680-3,358 for eligible directors and teachers. Louisiana's program was still included in our review due to the lack of empirical studies on retention programs, but also because it is unique program that several states are looking to as a model.³⁸

The Louisiana program is a statewide initiative that gives child care professionals and other child care stakeholders, such as businesses and families, a refundable tax credit for pursuing education and training. To be eligible, participants must be enrolled in the state's early childhood registry and work in an early childhood program that participates in the Louisiana QRIS. This program is the first in the country that provides incentives through tax codes and does not rely on annual legislative appropriations.^{xix} It is also the first to offer incentives to the larger community of child care professionals and key stakeholders beyond child care providers.

Since Louisiana implemented the program, the number of early child care providers pursuing additional education and training has increased from 1,247 to 5,853. The NWLC report notes that the program has areas for improvement, but concludes that the School Readiness Tax Credit program has had a "strong and positive impact on childcare quality in Louisiana."

Review of these studies indicates that in general, programs are finding positive associations between wage incentives and desired outcomes. However, the limited number of outcome studies across programs and the state-specific focus of most of the studies make it difficult to compare the outcomes and features of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N.

^{xviii} WAGE\$ Florida is only active in Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

^{xix} Nebraska will be implementing a program modeled on Louisiana's this year.

program to those of other workforce retention efforts. This limitation emphasizes the importance of this work as a contribution to the larger field of research and also highlights the need for additional studies that not only document program outcomes, but also create common metrics and standards for evaluation across programs.

Perceptions of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Program Applicants and Recipients

Purpose

To better understand the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program's outcomes and effectiveness, Child Trends conducted an online survey of child care providers who applied to the program from 2013 to 2018. Both those who received a bonus (recipients) and those who did not receive a bonus (non-recipients) were invited to participate. The survey addressed the following research questions:

Retention

- Is receiving one or more R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses associated with providers' decisions to remain in the child care workforce?
- Are R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients more likely to remain in the workforce than non-recipients?

Educational Attainment

- Do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients achieve higher levels of education or professional development compared to applicants who did not receive the bonus?

Supports

- Do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients report that the bonus was useful? How do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. recipients report using the bonus? How do R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients perceive the value of applying to R.E.E.T.A.I.N.?
- What role do other professional supports play in R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients' decisions to stay in the field?
- What best practices have been identified in research on similar workforce retention programs? How can Minnesota use these practices to improve the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program?

Barriers

- How difficult was it to apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus?
- Did applicants rely on any outside support (e.g., help from supervisors) to apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus?

For each research question, the research team also examined whether experiences varied among key features of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants, including:

- Provider type (center-based versus family child care)
- Career Lattice Step^{xx}
- Race/ethnicity
- Location by Child Care Aware district (see Appendix A)

^{xx} Data only available from 2015-2018.

The analyses also examined the experiences of three distinct groups of providers who have applied to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program since 2013:

- **Non-recipients**, or providers who had applied but never received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus since 2013
- **One-time recipients**, or providers who had received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus once since 2013
- **Repeat recipients**, or providers who had received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus more than once since 2013

Child Trends also tested for and reported on statistically significant differences in outcomes for providers with different applicant-level factors and different recipient subgroups whenever possible. When subgroup sizes were too small, significant difference tests were not conducted. Throughout this section, any statistically significant subgroup differences are reported. Findings for each subgroup across all survey questions are presented in detail in the Technical Appendix.

Survey Sample

Child Trends used administrative data from the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database to identify and recruit child care professionals to participate in the survey.^{xxi} Any provider who applied to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program from 2013 to 2018 was eligible to participate. As described in the Administrative Data Analysis section of this report, the research team had varying levels of contact information for 1,362 unique applicants. Applicants were primarily recruited via email outreach; however, applicants with missing or invalid email addresses (N = 80) were recruited using phone outreach. In addition, members of an advisory council made up of stakeholders from around the state distributed recruitment materials to their networks (more details about the advisory group can be found in the Technical Appendix).

A total of 670 individuals responded to the 46-question online survey, providing information about their professional backgrounds and experiences with the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program. Of the 670 responses, there were 548 complete survey responses, 23 partial survey responses, and 99 disqualified survey responses. The majority of disqualified respondents were those who indicated that they had not applied for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus since 2013 (96 percent); the rest did not consent to taking the survey (4 percent). An additional 5 respondents were excluded from the analyses because they reported working in legal non-licensed settings or other settings that could not be categorized. The analyses presented in this report are based on the complete and partial survey responses of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants working in center-based or licensed family child care (FCC) settings, which provides a total sample size of 571 respondents, or 42 percent of all R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants in the 2013–2018 period.

Survey participants had the option to skip any question on the survey; consequently, each question had varying rates of missing responses. Additionally, some questions were only asked of a subset of respondents (e.g., only recipients of the bonus were asked about the usefulness of the funds). The tables and graphs presented in this report display percentages calculated based on the total number of respondents who answered each question. Because this varies, the total number of responses for each question (N) is listed in each table. Tables also identify questions for which respondents could select multiple response options, or responses to open-ended questions that were thematically coded into categories rather than reported out by individual response. Additional information regarding recruitment and missing data are available in the Technical Appendix.

To further contextualize the results of the online survey, the research team conducted interviews with six child care professionals who had applied to the program in the past. The interview questions covered topics similar to those addressed in the online survey but were all open-ended to allow respondents to answer in more detail and without being prompted by a specific set of response options.

To ensure interview representation from a full spectrum of providers and applicant types, Child Trends chose participants from each of the three applicant types by randomly selecting one center-based provider and one family child care provider who completed the online survey. These individuals were invited via email and phone to take part in the interviews; when providers did not respond, the research team selected another individual who fit the same

^{xxi} Data were collected by MN Child Care Aware, the agency that administers the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, and were provided to Child Trends by MN DHS in June 2018.

provider and applicant type criteria. Interviews took approximately 30 minutes each, and respondents received a \$25 gift card as a thank-you for their time. In total, the research team completed interviews with six applicants: one non-recipient, one one-time recipient, three repeat recipients, and one provider who received a partial bonus due to a mid-year position change. Half the interviewees worked in center-based care, and half worked in family child care.

Findings

Who took our survey?

Of respondents who reported the setting in which they provided care, 61 percent worked in center-based child care^{xxii} and 39 percent worked in family child care. Five providers reported working in legally non-licensed child care or another type of care; these five responses were excluded from all analyses due to the differences between licensed and non-licensed care providers in Minnesota. Most respondents reported receiving at least one R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus since 2013 (57 percent) and 14 percent reported receiving more than one bonus (repeat recipients). The majority of respondents identified as white/Caucasian, non-Hispanic (88 percent), and remaining respondents were categorized as black/African American, non-Hispanic (6 percent); Hispanic (3 percent); or other/multiracial, non-Hispanic^{xxiii} (4 percent). Although white/Caucasian, non-Hispanic applicants were somewhat over-represented in the survey sample (88 percent compared to 72 percent), the sample was otherwise fairly representative of the complete population of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicants since 2013 (detailed in Table 3 of this report).

When asked about their highest level of education, the providers' most common responses were a bachelor's degree in early care and education or a related field (32 percent), an associate degree in early care and education or a related field (26 percent), and a bachelor's in an unrelated field (14 percent). Education level was not associated with provider type, race, district, or applicant type. The majority of respondents reported a Career Lattice Step of 8 or higher (83 percent), which requires at least 30 approved college credits.³⁹

In terms of geography, over half of applicants were from the Metro district (57 percent), followed by the West/Central district (13 percent), and Northwest district (13 percent). A full summary of the providers who responded to the survey is provided in Table 11.

Table 11. Overall sample by provider type, race/ethnicity, Career Lattice Step, education, and district

	N	%
Provider type		
Family child care providers	199	39%
Center-based providers	315	61%
Total	514	100%
Race/ethnicity		
Black/African American, non-Hispanic	29	6%
Hispanic	14	3%
Other/multiracial, non-Hispanic	19	4%
White/Caucasian only, non-Hispanic	464	88%
Total	526	100%
Career Lattice Step		
Non-credit training (1-5)	14	3%
Non-credit credential or college credit (6-7)	72	14%
College credit (8-12)	418	83%
Total	504	100%

^{xxii} For the purposes of these analyses, a small number of providers who reported working in Head Start/Early Head Start, public school or charter school were categorized as center-based child care.

^{xxiii} Races/ethnicities categorized under "other/multiracial, non-Hispanic" include Asian/Asian American, Native American or Alaskan Native, and those who selected one or more races other than non-Hispanic white.

	N	%
Education		
Less than high school	1	< 1%
High school, GED, or equivalent	61	11%
Associate degree in early care and education or related field	139	26%
Associate degree in unrelated field	43	8%
Bachelor's degree in early care and education or related field	173	32%
Bachelor's degree in unrelated field	74	14%
Graduate degree in early care and education or related field	41	8%
Graduate degree in unrelated field	13	2%
Total	545	100%
District		
Metro	277	57%
Northeast	54	11%
Northwest	61	12%
South	34	7%
West/Central	63	13%
Total	489	100%

Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Respondents were also asked whether they had any ECE-related credentials such as a Child Development Associate (CDA) or a Minnesota Child Care Credential. These credentials are an optional pathway for providers to obtain higher qualifications—either instead of or in addition to a degree. When asked about their credentials, 20 percent of respondents indicated they had a CDA credential, and over half reported they had no credentials (60 percent). A small number of respondents reported having a Minnesota Child Care Credential (5 percent), Infant/Toddler Credential (3 percent), or Director's Credential (3 percent). Responses differed significantly by provider type. Center-based providers were more likely to report having no credentials (66 percent) than family child care providers (51 percent). Further, family child care providers were significantly more likely to report having a Minnesota Child Care Credential (8 percent) relative to center-based providers (3 percent).

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (66 percent) reported working as either a lead teacher or teacher; however, this varied by provider type (see Table 12). Most center-based providers reported holding the position of lead teacher or teacher (90 percent). Family child care providers, on the other hand, most often reported their position as owner (71 percent) with a smaller number reporting their position as lead teacher or teacher (27 percent).

Table 12. Position held when first applied for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus by provider type

	Total sample		Center-based providers		Family child care providers	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Lead teacher/teacher	370	66%	282	90%*	53	27%
Owner	154	27%	4	1%	141	71%*
Director	11	2%	10	3%	1	< 1%
Assistant teacher/teacher aide	9	2%	8	3%	1	< 1%
Multiple positions	7	1%	4	1%	3	2%
Assistant director	6	1%	5	2%	0	0%
Other	3	< 1%	2	< 1%	0	0%
Substitute	1	< 1%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	561	100%	315	100%	199	100%

Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

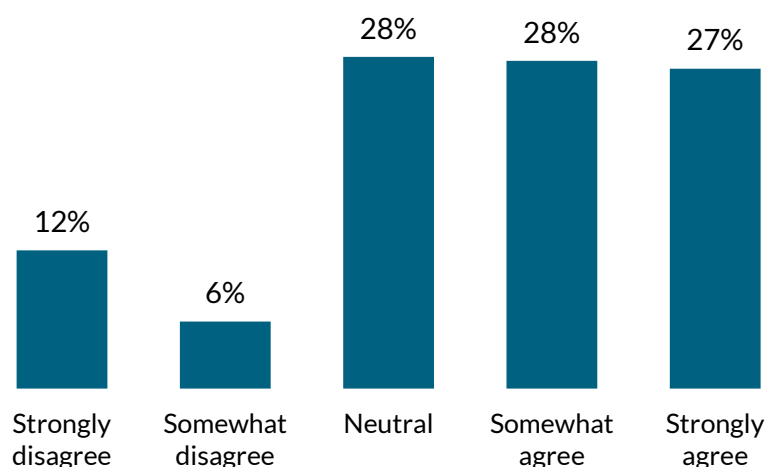
Note. Percentages may not sum due to rounding. * indicates a significant difference between center-based and family child care providers ($p < .05$).

Key findings from the survey and interviews are highlighted below, and full responses can be found in the Technical Appendix.

Many recipients reported that the bonus influenced their decision to remain in the field.

About half (55 percent) of respondents who received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus agreed either somewhat or strongly with the statement that receiving a bonus influenced their decision to stay in the child care field. This finding was consistent regardless of number of bonuses received, provider care type, Career Lattice Step, and Child Care Aware district.

Figure 3. Respondents' level of agreement that receiving a bonus influenced their decision to stay in the workforce (N = 300)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

The majority of survey respondents (95 percent) reported that they still work in the child care field, regardless of the receipt of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus. Among those who left the field (N = 28), the most commonly cited reasons were low compensation (56 percent), followed by family/child-related reasons (41 percent), lack of paid time off (30 percent), and lack of health insurance or other benefits (30 percent; respondents could select more than one option). When asked whether anything would have kept them in the field, nearly all respondents who had left identified higher salary/compensation (92 percent). Other commonly cited factors included paid time off and more respect for the child care profession (42 percent and 38 percent, respectively; respondents could select more than one option).

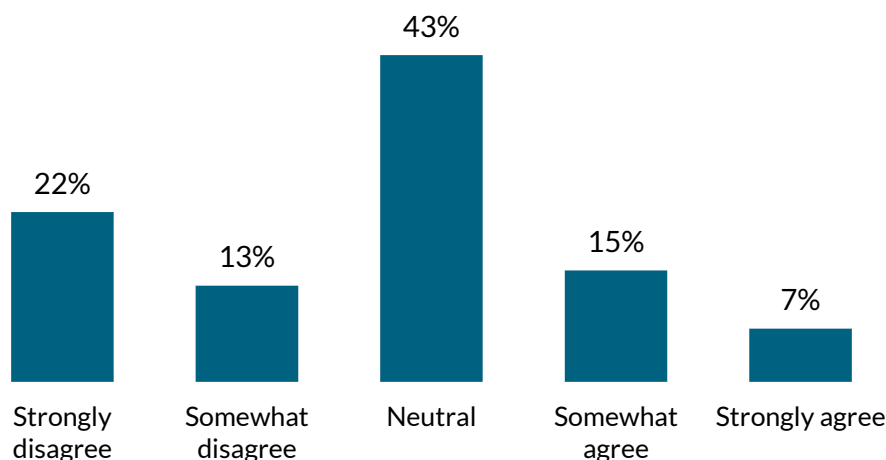
The small sample of providers interviewed,^{xxiv} who had worked in the child care field anywhere from six to 30 years, did not report that the bonus influenced their decision to stay in the profession. They reported that they were happy with their profession and had no desire to change fields, and they viewed the bonus as an extra resource to help them with expenses, particularly personal bills. The general perception was that while the bonus helped with some expenses, it did not provide enough money to influence decision making. As one provider noted, *"The money I have received from. . . R.E.E.T.A.I.N. has been helpful, but would not be enough to cover me if I was going to lose [my child care program], which is the only reason I would stop being a child care provider."* Another said, *"I already had my associate degree in early childcare. I considered using [the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. grant] for... continuing education requirements. I wouldn't use the grant for a masters. I like my job and don't plan on changing or going further in education because it wouldn't help in my current situation."*

^{xxiv} In total, there were six child care providers interviewed; therefore, these findings are based on a small sample of providers and are not generalizable to the entire Minnesota child care workforce.

Few recipients reported that the bonus helped them advance their education or professional development.

Approximately one in five respondents (22 percent) either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement that because they received the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus, they were able to reach a higher Career Lattice Step. A similar proportion (22 percent) strongly disagreed with the same statement, and another 13 percent somewhat disagreed with the statement (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Respondents' perceptions of whether receiving a bonus helped them reach a higher Career Lattice Step (N = 299)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

The survey also asked participants who received one or more bonuses to respond to a series of questions about the extent to which receiving a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus helped them personally or professionally (see Table 13). Those who indicated that the bonus helped to support either their education or professional development were also asked follow-up questions about how the bonus specifically helped them.

Table 13. Respondents' perceptions of how helpful the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was personally and professionally

	Really helped		Somewhat helped		Did not help	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Purchasing goods/resources for yourself (N = 293)	165	56%	95	32%	33	11%
Purchasing goods/resources for your child care (N = 293)	122	42%	97	33%	74	25%
Taking paid time off (N = 286)	59	21%	62	22%	165	58%
Supporting your professional development (N = 287)	51	18%	81	28%	155	54%
Supporting your education (N = 287)	44	15%	56	20%	187	65%

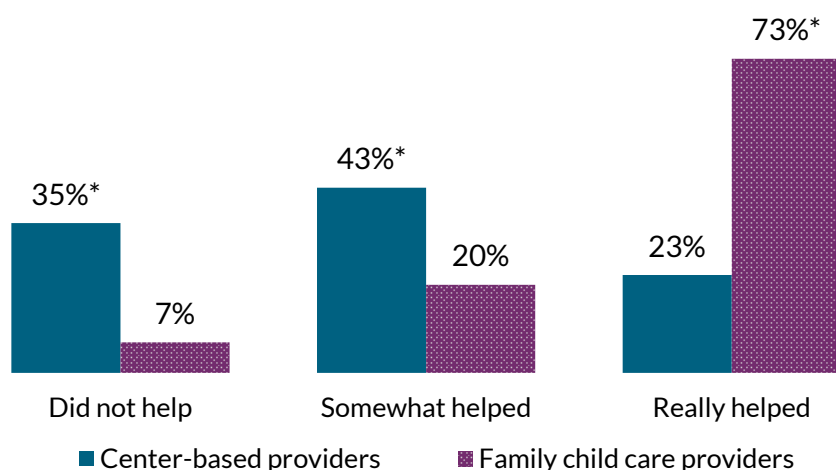
Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Recipients used the funds for resources for themselves and their classrooms.

Similar to many other workforce retention programs, the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program does not restrict recipients' use of the funds to materials or resources related to child care. Despite this fact, the majority of respondents (75 percent) reported that the bonus either really or somewhat helped them to purchase goods or resources for their classrooms or child care. Family child care providers were more likely to report the bonus was really helpful in this way (73 percent) than were center-based providers (23 percent), whereas center-based providers were more likely to report

the funds were only somewhat helpful (43 percent) or not helpful (35 percent) for purchasing materials or resources related to child care.

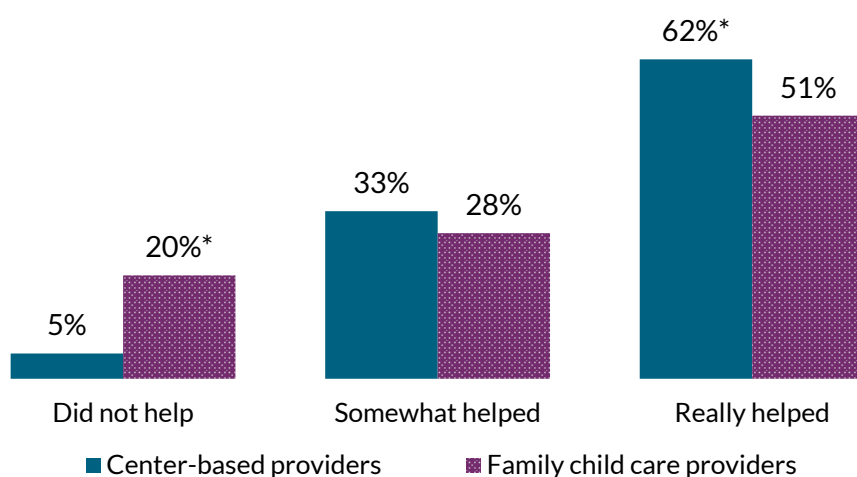
Figure 5. Respondents' perceptions of how helpful the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was for purchasing goods and resources for child care (N = 272)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.
Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$.

In addition, 88 percent of respondents reported that the bonus either really helped or somewhat helped them purchase goods or resources they needed for themselves. In contrast to findings about purchasing goods or resources for classrooms, center-based providers were significantly more likely to report the bonus was really helpful for purchasing personal goods or resources (62 percent) than were family child care providers (51 percent). Similarly, family child care providers were significantly more likely to report the bonus did not help with purchasing personal goods or resources (21 percent) compared to center-based providers (5 percent; see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Respondents' perceptions of how helpful the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was for purchasing personal goods and resources for themselves (N=271)



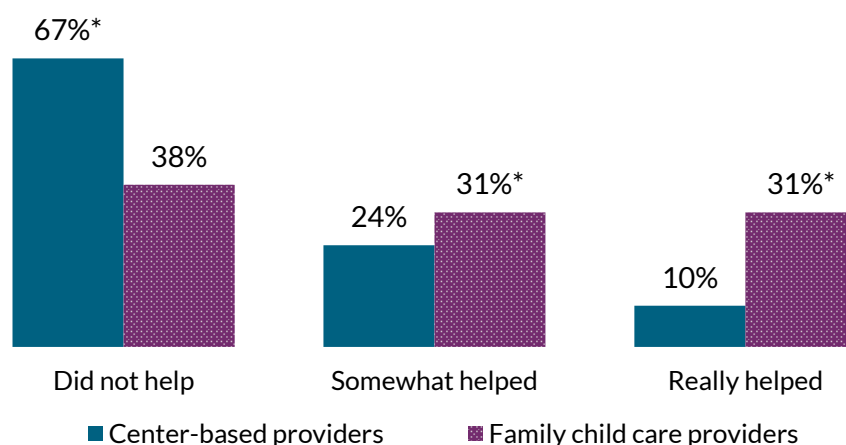
Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.
Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$.

In addition to asking about providers' ability to purchase goods and resources, the survey asked about the helpfulness of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus with respect to taking paid time off. Fewer than half of respondents (43 percent) who received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus reported that the bonus either really helped or somewhat helped them take paid time off, a finding that did not differ by provider type.

Providers expressed a range of feelings about whether the bonus was helpful in supporting their educational attainment. Approximately one third (35 percent) of respondents reported that the bonus either really or somewhat helped support their education, while over half (65 percent) reported the bonus did not help. Among providers who reported that the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus helped support their education, the reasons cited most frequently were that the bonus helped offset the costs of a college course (38 percent) or a certificate or credential program (25 percent), and that it provided financial resources that allowed providers to take time off to advance their education (21 percent). Center-based providers who found the bonus helpful in supporting their education were significantly more likely to report that the funds helped offset the costs of college course (49 percent) than were family child care providers (23 percent).

Just under half of respondents (46 percent) reported that the bonus really or somewhat helped support their professional development, which includes taking a training or working with a coach/mentor. When broken down by provider type, however, differences emerged. Family child care providers were more likely to report that the bonus really or somewhat helped with their professional development (62 percent) compared to center-based providers (34 percent; see Figure 7). Among respondents who said that the bonus was helpful in supporting their professional development, the most commonly reported use of the funds was to help offset the costs of a professional development training (84 percent). However, family child care providers were significantly more likely to report using the bonus to offset costs of a training (92 percent) compared to center-based providers (75 percent).

Figure 7. Respondents' perceptions of how helpful the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was in supporting their professional development (N = 266)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.
Note: * indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$.

Only one of the six providers interviewed reported using the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus to advance her education or credentials. This provider stated, *"It's hard to find help to go back to school for early childhood [because there is] not a lot of financial support. [I] used R.E.E.T.A.I.N. money to go back to school and job money to pay bills."* While the majority of the providers interviewed did not use the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus for this purpose, their reasons varied. For example, one noted, *"I have my two-year degree, and I don't plan on going back for anything else...I like being home with my kids and being my own boss. I have no urge to further my education, and I don't really have the time."*

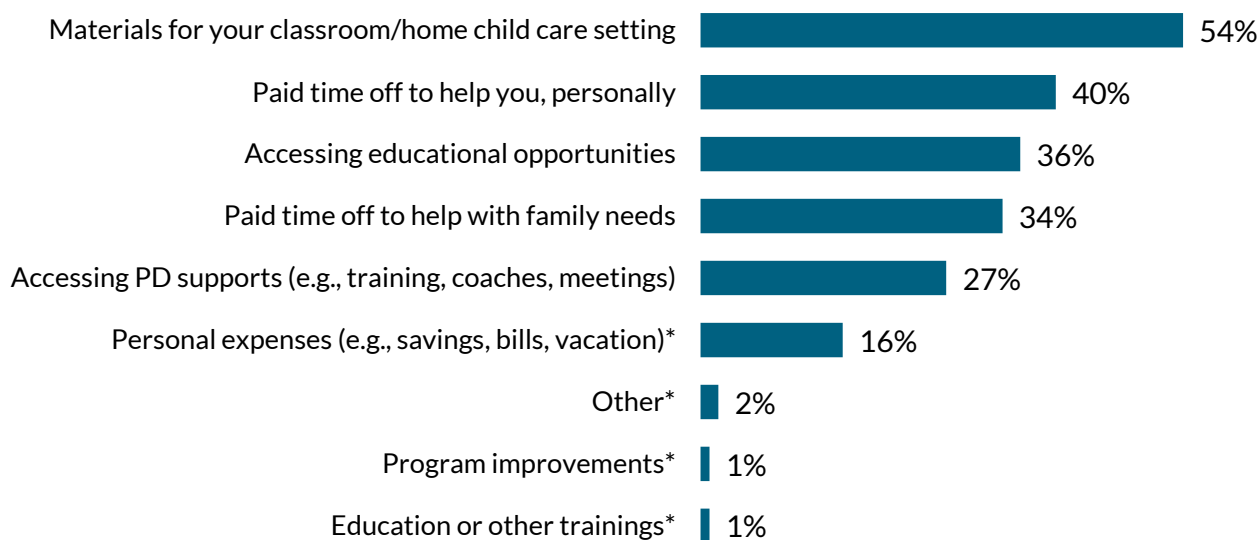
Another provider, despite reporting that she did not use the bonus to further her education, indicated that it played an indirect role in helping her to return to school: *"I did go back to school, but that didn't really have to do with the grant...I haven't used the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. grant to pay for college, but I have used it to build a savings account, and that gives me a cushion and knowledge that when I do take on my loan payments, I don't have to panic."*

Notably, the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program was not specifically designed to help providers with the cost of higher education or professional development. Other programs such as T.E.A.C.H., a scholarship program that provides financial support to child care professionals taking courses towards an associate or bachelor's degree in Child Development or Early Childhood Education, were implemented for this purpose. To better understand how R.E.E.T.A.I.N. and T.E.A.C.H. intersect, the survey also asked respondents whether they had received a T.E.A.C.H.

scholarship since 2013. A small percentage of providers (7 percent) reported having received this scholarship since 2013. Among those providers, just over half reported also receiving a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus (53 percent). However, this percentage was not statistically significantly different from the percentage of T.E.A.C.H. scholarship recipients who had not received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus, indicating that there was not an association between receiving the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus and the T.E.A.C.H. scholarship. Slightly more family child care providers reported receiving a T.E.A.C.H. scholarship (10 percent) compared to center-based providers (5 percent), although the difference was not significant. Providers are not eligible to receive both awards in a given year.

Respondents generally agreed that the current R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus amount was useful; however, the survey also asked respondents about how they would use funds if the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus amount were doubled. Respondents reported that they would use the additional funds for program materials (54 percent) or paid time off (40 percent). Family child care providers were significantly more likely than center-based providers to report they would use the additional funds for child care materials (77 percent), accessing professional development supports (38 percent), and educational opportunities (44 percent). A full summary of how respondents reported they would use the funds if the bonus amount were doubled is presented in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Respondents' reports of how they would use the bonus if the amount were doubled (N = 302)

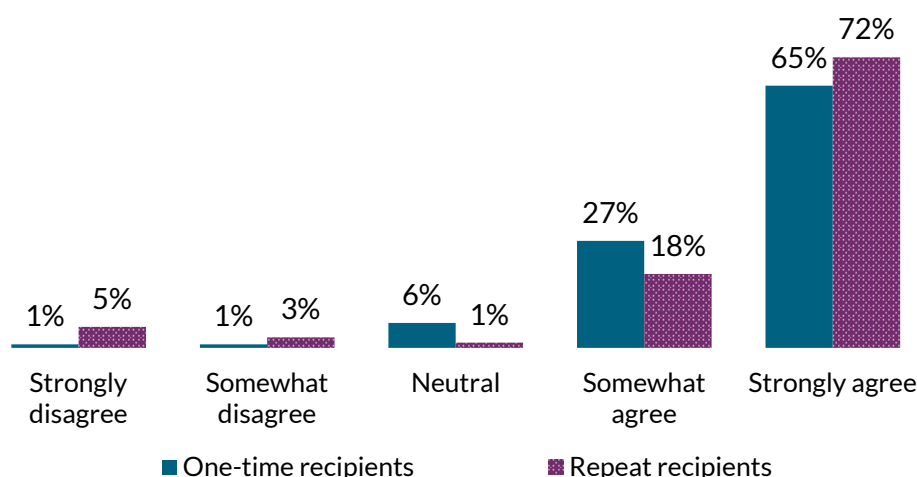


Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100. Items with a * were thematically coded based on open-ended responses to the "Other" category.

Two thirds of respondents who received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus strongly agreed that the bonus amount was enough to be helpful, if even in a small way. Another 25 percent somewhat agreed with the same statement. These findings differed slightly among one-time and repeat recipients (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Recipients' reported level of agreement that the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was enough to help them, even in a small way (N = 301)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

We interviewed two family child care providers who have received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus at least once. Both reported that they used the money to pay for materials for their home child care center. One provider reported, *"Making ends meet can be difficult...[my] computer crashed, microwave crashed—things I need as a family provider. Having the [bonus] helped bail me out."*

The center-based providers we interviewed who have received a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus did not report using the funds to pay for materials for their center. One reported using the bonus to pay for additional education and the other used it to start a savings account. Another noted, *"I used my own money to pay for the semester and then reimbursed myself.... I still had to pay \$400 out of pocket but [it] was much more manageable than having to pay all [school expenses] out of pocket."*

Most respondents reported that applying for a bonus was worth their time and would recommend applying to a colleague.

The majority of respondents (78 percent) strongly agreed that applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was worth their time, and another 9 percent somewhat agreed. Additionally, almost all respondents (93 percent) either somewhat or strongly agreed they would recommend applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus to other child care providers. These findings did not vary by provider type, district, Career Lattice Step, or award type, indicating that providers with a range of different characteristics view their participation in the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application process positively.

Three in four respondents (74 percent) reported they would apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus in the future, and an additional 20 percent said they were not sure. Regardless of their response to this question, providers also had the opportunity to respond to an open-ended question about why they would or would not apply to for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus again. The research team coded these responses into categories and found that responses differed substantially between providers who said they would apply for the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus again and those who either said they would not or were not sure (see Table 14). For those who said they would apply again, the most commonly cited reasons were the benefits of the bonus money (45 percent) and appreciation for the program and the recognition it brings to the profession (25 percent). Several of these respondents also indicated that they planned to apply to the program again even though they had not been awarded a bonus in the past (15 percent). Among those who said they would not apply again or they weren't sure, the most commonly cited reasons were career change or retirement (25 percent), not qualifying for the bonus (24 percent), and discouragement from not receiving a bonus in the past (22 percent).

Table 14. Reasons for applying or not applying to R.E.E.T.A.I.N. in the future

	Would apply again		Would not apply again or unsure	
	N	%	N	%
Benefits of grant money	129	45%	1	1%
Great incentive/program, appreciate recognition	73	25%	0	0%
Has not received but will reapply	44	15%	1	1%
Ease of application	42	15%	0	0%
Will reapply if eligible	27	9%	2	2%
Other reason (un-codable)	11	4%	10	8%
Application requirements and timeline are discouraging	9	3%	16	12%
It is worth trying/ "Why wouldn't I?"	9	3%	0	0%
Enjoy unrestricted use of bonus funds	9	3%	0	0%
Discouragement from not receiving bonus in past	6	2%	28	22%
Does not qualify for bonus	6	2%	31	24%
Perceived lack of transparency or communication in system, seems unfair	5	2%	13	10%
Acceptance criteria are unreasonable or unfair	4	1%	10	8%
Dislike taxes on bonus	2	1%	7	5%
Dislike changes to the program	2	1%	3	2%
Technical difficulties or problems completing the application	2	1%	3	2%
Career change/exit	0	0%	32	25%
Total	288	100%	130	100%

Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100 and responses total more than the N. All response categories were coded based on open-ended responses to the question.

The providers interviewed unanimously agreed that they would apply again. Specifically, providers made the following comments:

"Yes, definitely. The money is worth it."

"Yes, I have it on my calendar to reapply again this year. It helps to update and improve my setting for the kids."

"Yes, I would apply again. It is a gift. You get this money, and it's very simple to apply, and there's very little expectation for you in the contract."

Center-based and family child care providers learned about the program from different sources.

The most commonly reported sources for learning about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program were a supervisor or director (47 percent) or Child Care Aware Agencies^{xxv} (35 percent). Responses differed by provider care type. Center-based respondents more often reported hearing about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program from their supervisor or director (74 percent) compared to family child care providers. Family child care providers more often reported hearing about the program from Child Care Aware (59 percent) or other child care providers (20 percent). Few providers across provider types reported hearing about the program from DHS (3 percent). Table 15 provides a breakdown of sources from which applicants reported hearing about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program by provider care type.

^{xxv} Child Care Aware Agencies includes local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (CCR&Rs), which provide services such as trainings and technical assistance for families and child care providers.

Table 15. Where applicants heard about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program by provider type

	Center-based providers		Family child care providers	
	N	%	N	%
A supervisor or director	233	74%*	12	6%
Child Care Aware (including local CCR&R agencies)	54	17%	117	59%*
Another child care provider	32	10%	39	20%*
An early childhood association	14	4%	13	7%
An online search	11	4%	11	6%
Other	11	4%	10	5%
Parent Aware Coach	10	3%	39	20%
DHS	3	1%	7	4%
Total	314	100%	199	100%

Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100 and responses total more than the N. * indicates a statistically significant difference at $p < .05$.

Sources from which respondents reported hearing about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program also differed significantly by applicant type. Repeat recipients of the bonus were less likely to report hearing about the program from a supervisor or director (25 percent) compared to one-time recipients (49 percent) or non-recipients (53 percent). However, repeat recipients were more likely to report hearing about the program from Child Care Aware (51 percent) compared to one-time recipients (31 percent) or non-recipients (33 percent; see Table 16).

Table 16. Where applicants heard about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program by applicant type

	Non-recipient		One-time recipient		Repeat recipient	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
A supervisor or director	125	53% ^a	115	49% ^b	19	25% ^{ab}
Child Care Aware (including local CCR&R agencies)	78	33% ^a	72	31% ^b	39	51% ^{ab}
Another child care provider	30	13%	31	13%	14	18%
Parent Aware Coach	24	10%	22	9%	7	9%
An early childhood association	12	5%	13	6%	5	6%
An online search	8	3%	12	5%	2	3%
DHS	6	3%	5	2%	1	1%
Other	6	3%	11	5%	5	6%
Total	235	100%	233	100%	77	100%

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100 and responses total more than the N. Matching superscripts denote a statistically significant difference between subgroups ($p < .05$).

Providers from the Metro district (i.e., the seven-county metropolitan area) most often heard about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program from their supervisors; this is likely due to the fact that more center-based providers work in the Metro district, and center-based providers were more likely to hear about the program from their supervisors. Providers in the South district were also most likely to hear about the program from their supervisors (59 percent). Providers in the Northeast, Northwest, and West/Central districts were most likely to report hearing about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program from Child Care Aware (46-70 percent). For a full breakdown of responses by district, see Table 17.

Table 17. Where applicants heard about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program by district

	Metro		Northeast		Northwest		South		West/Central	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
A supervisor or director	171	62% ^a	9	17% ^{ab}	13	21% ^{ab}	20	59% ^b	21	33% ^a

	Metro		Northeast		Northwest		South		West/ Central	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Child Care Aware (including local CCR&R agencies)	56	20% ^c	28	52% ^c	38	62% ^c	13	38%	25	40% ^c
Another child care provider	39	14%	12	22%	8	13%	2	6%	9	14%
An early childhood association	16	6%	3	6%	4	7%	3	9%	0	0%
Parent Aware Coach	9	3%	6	11%	9	15%	2	6%	15	24%
An online search	9	3%	2	4%	5	8%	1	3%	2	3%
MN Department of Human Services	4	1%	4	7%	0	0%	0	0%	3	5%
Other	14	5%	1	2%	4	7%	1	3%	0	0%
Total	276	100%	54	100%	61	100%	34	100%	63	100%

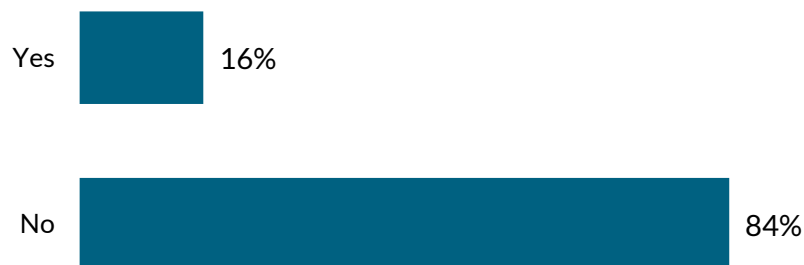
Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100 and responses total more than the N. Matching superscripts denote a statistically significant difference between subgroups ($p < .05$).

Most respondents did not report challenges with applying for a bonus and did not receive help completing their application.

Only 16 percent of respondents (N = 87) reported experiencing challenges when applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus (see Figure 10). R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus applicants who participated in interviews reiterated these findings. One child care provider commented, “*The whole thing [application process] was pretty easy, and the steps were laid out clearly. [There was a] ...very specific timeline for turning things in and what documents were needed....Sending information online is easier for me than through mail, but the paper information was fine.*” Another provider provided insight into the issue of difficulty finding and mailing in the required documents: “[*The*] hardest part was digging up certificates of classes—which is getting easier with Develop. Digging out certificates from several years back and [making] copies of the documents to send in was the hardest.”

Figure 10. Applicants’ responses to whether they experienced any challenges when applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus (N = 552)



Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Among those who reported specific challenges (N = 85), respondents most commonly cited difficulty mailing in or uploading required forms (40 percent), finding questions on the application difficult to answer or confusing (28 percent), or another reason (29 percent; see Table 18). These challenges did not vary by program type (center-based versus family child care) or applicant type.

Table 18. Applicants' reported challenges to applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus

	Total sample	
	N	%
Difficulty mailing in or uploading required forms	35	41%
Questions on the application were difficult to answer or confusing	24	28%
Difficulty accessing my Learning Record	16	19%
Limited time/availability to complete the application	14	16%
Difficulty with registering for Develop	13	15%
Application was too long	7	8%
Difficulty with completing the application due to technology, such as limited access to a computer or internet	7	8%
<i>Lack of support completing application</i>	7	8%
<i>Technical difficulties that were out of my control</i>	7	8%
<i>Other</i>	6	7%
<i>Did not qualify for the bonus</i>	6	7%
Difficulty obtaining my paystub or tax form	5	6%
<i>Problems with lack of transparency and changes in scoring system</i>	3	4%
Application was not in my preferred language	1	1%
Total	85	100%

Source: Child Trends R.E.E.T.A.I.N. online survey data 2018.

Note: Respondents could select multiple response options, so percentages total more than 100 and responses total more than the N. Items in italics were coded based on open-ended responses to the "other" category.

Only 12 percent of survey respondents (N = 64) reported that someone helped them fill out their R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application. However, center-based providers were more likely to say they received help with the application (17 percent) than family child care providers (4 percent). In addition, R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus recipients were equally likely as non-recipients to report receiving help filling out their application. Of those who reported receiving help filling out their application, the majority (75 percent) reported receiving assistance from their supervisor, and some reported receiving assistance from a colleague (16 percent). Those who reported receiving help most commonly reported receiving help with clarifying definitions of application materials (58 percent) and mailing in or uploading the required forms (42 percent).

Key Findings and Implications

Analysis of administrative data, surveys, and interview data from R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program applicants provided insight into how the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program supports the child care workforce retention in Minnesota. The following section highlights key findings from the evaluation.

Applying for and receiving a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus

The number of applicants to the program has doubled.

Since 2013, the number of applicants to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program has more than doubled, even without a coordinated marketing effort to raise awareness. The majority of center-based respondents reported hearing about the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program from their supervisor or director, while family child care providers reported hearing about the program from a variety of sources, including Child Care Aware and other child care providers. Center-based providers are more likely to apply for and receive a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus than family child care providers. Currently, the application process allows only family child care applicants to apply in the fall application period, while only child care center staff may apply in the spring application period. At the beginning of the funding

year in July, equal amounts of the allocation for R.E.E.T.A.I.N. are set aside for each provider type. However, child care center staff may benefit in the spring application period from a larger allocation because funds are added during the spring period from other sources in years when they are available, thus increasing the original allotment amount. As the popularity of the program increases, DHS could examine current efforts to market the program to providers and consider how awareness of the program influences decisions to apply. DHS could pay special attention to the issues of how to market and equitably distribute the bonus to family child care providers.

Very few providers reported any challenges when applying for the bonus.

In general, providers indicated that applying for the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus was simple. Just 15 percent of respondents reported experiencing challenges when applying. One of the most commonly cited challenges was difficulty with submitting required documentation. However, because the survey reached only those providers who had successfully submitted R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus applications, it is possible that there are additional barriers preventing other child care providers from applying in the first place. For example, the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application is available only in English and requires internet access to complete; these limitations may exclude non-English speaking providers or providers who live in areas without reliable internet access. In addition, center-based providers were more likely to have received help on the application (17 percent) compared to family child care providers (4 percent), suggesting that family child care providers may have less access to support when applying for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus. Child Care Aware may consider advertising the existing language support resources available through the organization to applicants needing such support.

Use of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonuses

More than half of bonus recipients felt the bonus influenced their decision to stay in the field.

Just over half of recipients who responded to the survey (55 percent) agreed that the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus made it more likely they would stay in the child care field. Among those providers who completed the survey and did leave the field, low compensation was the most commonly cited reason for their decision. It should be noted, however, that a small group of providers (N = 6) who participated in individual interviews indicated that the bonus did not influence their decision to stay in the field. These providers reported that they were happy with their profession and had no interest in leaving the field regardless of bonus receipt status. Furthermore, interview responses also indicated that funds from the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program relieved considerable stress for providers by helping them pay bills and other expenses and allowing them to focus more easily on their work.

The majority of bonus recipients used the funds for classroom resources.

Providers most commonly indicated that the bonus helped them purchase goods or resources for their classrooms (75 percent) or for their personal needs (89 percent). However, these results differed significantly for center-based and family child care providers. Family child care providers were more likely to report the bonus funds were really helpful for purchasing goods and resources for the classroom (73 percent) compared to center-based providers (23 percent). Conversely, center-based providers were more likely to say the funds were really helpful for purchasing good or resources for themselves (62 percent) compared to family child care providers (51 percent). This finding is not surprising given that center-based providers are more likely to have access to classroom resources through their programs.

Although it is not an explicit goal of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program to advance providers' education and professional development, one third of respondents indicated that the bonus helped support their education (35 percent) or professional development (46 percent). Of those who used the bonus for their education, providers most frequently indicated that it helped to offset the cost of college (38 percent) or credentialing program courses (25 percent). Of those who used the bonus for professional development, most reported that the funds offset the costs of a professional development course or training (84 percent).

R.E.E.T.A.I.N. compared to other workforce retention programs

Most other retention programs also provide salary supplements.

Out of the 16 similar programs reviewed, 11 (including R.E.E.T.A.I.N.) provide salary supplements as their primary workforce retention activity. In each of these salary supplement programs, participants receive supplements based on a tiered system that assesses scores on measures such as wages, professional development participation, and career history. Recipients with higher scores on these measures receive larger grant or bonus amounts. A major difference between the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program and some other salary supplement programs identified in this review concerns the requirement that providers who receive funds advance their career lattice level within a specified amount of time in order to receive all the funds. Of the 16 similar salary supplement programs reviewed, seven included this requirement. Although R.E.E.T.A.I.N. considers providers' Career Lattice Step both during scoring and when determining each provider's bonus award amount, R.E.E.T.A.I.N. does not require providers to advance their level in order to receive the bonus funds. Despite this difference, however, the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program shares key similarities with a majority of other workforce retention programs reviewed.

There is little research exploring the effectiveness of retention programs.

Programs that did report outcomes demonstrated positive effects on workforce retention rates; however, due to the small size of each study, additional research is needed to understand those effects within the broader national context of child care. This lack of research underscores the opportunity that the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program evaluation has to contribute to the field's understanding of how workforce retention programs support child care providers; however, it also limits our ability to compare findings from the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program to other similar workforce retention programs.

Study Limitations

While this study provides important insight into the effectiveness of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program, the following limitations should be considered when interpreting findings.

Few survey respondents had left the child care field.

Although we were interested in learning why providers choose to leave the child care field, few of the survey respondents indicated they had left the field. Consequently, our ability to draw conclusions about this group of providers was limited. Although findings from this small group are included in this report, additional research is needed to comprehensively explore the different reasons providers leave the child care workforce. In addition, while we know Minnesota's staff turnover rate is lower than the national average,⁴⁰ we have a limited understanding of the full demographic breakdown of the state's child care workforce. Therefore, we are uncertain of how well our sample represents the child care workforce in Minnesota.

Administrative data from 2018 do not include family child care providers.

Family child care providers submit their R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus applications at a different time of the year than do center-based providers. Consequently, administrative data for the most recent year, 2018, are available only for center-based child care providers. To examine as much information as possible, we did include the data available from this applicant pool in our analyses; however, it is important to note that we may not have fully captured information from 2018 about family child care providers.

Recommendations

Consider efforts to support providers who are less qualified.

The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program currently incentivizes providers with higher Career Lattice Steps as well as providers who enroll in a higher number of professional development hours. As such, the program's design aligns well with its goal of retaining highly trained professionals. However, provider turnover is pervasive in early childhood education systems and impacts child care providers at all career levels. Therefore, additional efforts may be needed to provide wage supports and ensure positive working conditions for providers with lower Career Lattice Steps, as well as for those with limited access to professional development opportunities. Additionally, it is possible that certain populations of providers are less likely to meet R.E.E.T.A.I.N.'s eligibility requirements (e.g., the requirement that the provider holds a Career Lattice Step of 6 or higher). Although such requirements did not pose obstacles for providers who participated in this study, past research in Minnesota has found that family child care providers, on average, have lower levels of education than center-based providers.⁴¹ Future research should consider whether any of the eligibility criteria, particularly those relating to professional qualifications and education, disproportionately affect any group(s) of providers.

Maintain flexibility in how providers can use funds.

Like the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program, most other similar retention programs (N = 11) allow for unrestricted use of funds. Survey results reflected this flexibility: respondents reported using funds for a wide variety of purposes. In addition, when asked how they would use bonus funds if the amount were doubled, providers had a range of responses: 54 percent said they would use the funds to buy materials for their classrooms, 40 percent reported they would use the funds for paid time off that would help them personally, and 36 percent said they would use the funds for educational attainment. These responses indicate that child care providers have many financial needs, and the flexibility for using the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus allows providers to address their unique circumstances.

Continue efforts to improve administrative processes and limit barriers to the application process.

While few survey respondents reported barriers to the application (N = 87), there were some notable barriers that could be addressed through minor administrative improvements to the bonus program.

Continue to address technology needs to allow for online submission of documents. Of those respondents who reported a barrier to the application, 40 percent noted that they had difficulty mailing or uploading forms. Child Care Aware has begun investing in technology to make the application more accessible. For example, an option to upload documents online was recently made available. DHS should continue to collect feedback on barriers and make efforts to address these barriers through technological improvements when possible.

Make the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. application available in multiple languages. The R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus application is currently available only in English, but Minnesotans speak a diverse range of languages. Some of the most common are Spanish, Somali, and Hmong. Translating the application into commonly used languages will increase the accessibility of the bonus program to non-native English speakers.

Continue efforts to distribute funds equitably among center-based and family child care providers. Since the 2014 changes to the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program, center-based and family child care providers are eligible to apply for bonuses in separate application cycles to accommodate their differing annual schedules. Because center-based providers are eligible in the spring, they may benefit from additional bonus funds that result from an influx of available funding at the end of the fiscal year. Our analysis of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database found that center-based providers who apply to R.E.E.T.A.I.N. are more likely to receive a bonus than are family child care providers. Given that center-based providers also tend to receive higher bonus award amounts compared to family child care providers, this finding suggests that center-based providers disproportionately benefit from these additional funds. DHS should consider a systematic review of these additional funds to determine whether they can be distributed more equitably to family child care providers.

Consider additional research exploring the impact of the program on workforce retention in Minnesota.

While the current evaluation provides insight into the utility of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus program, DHS may wish to consider future research to gain greater understanding of how the program influences workforce retention in Minnesota and inform future policy changes.

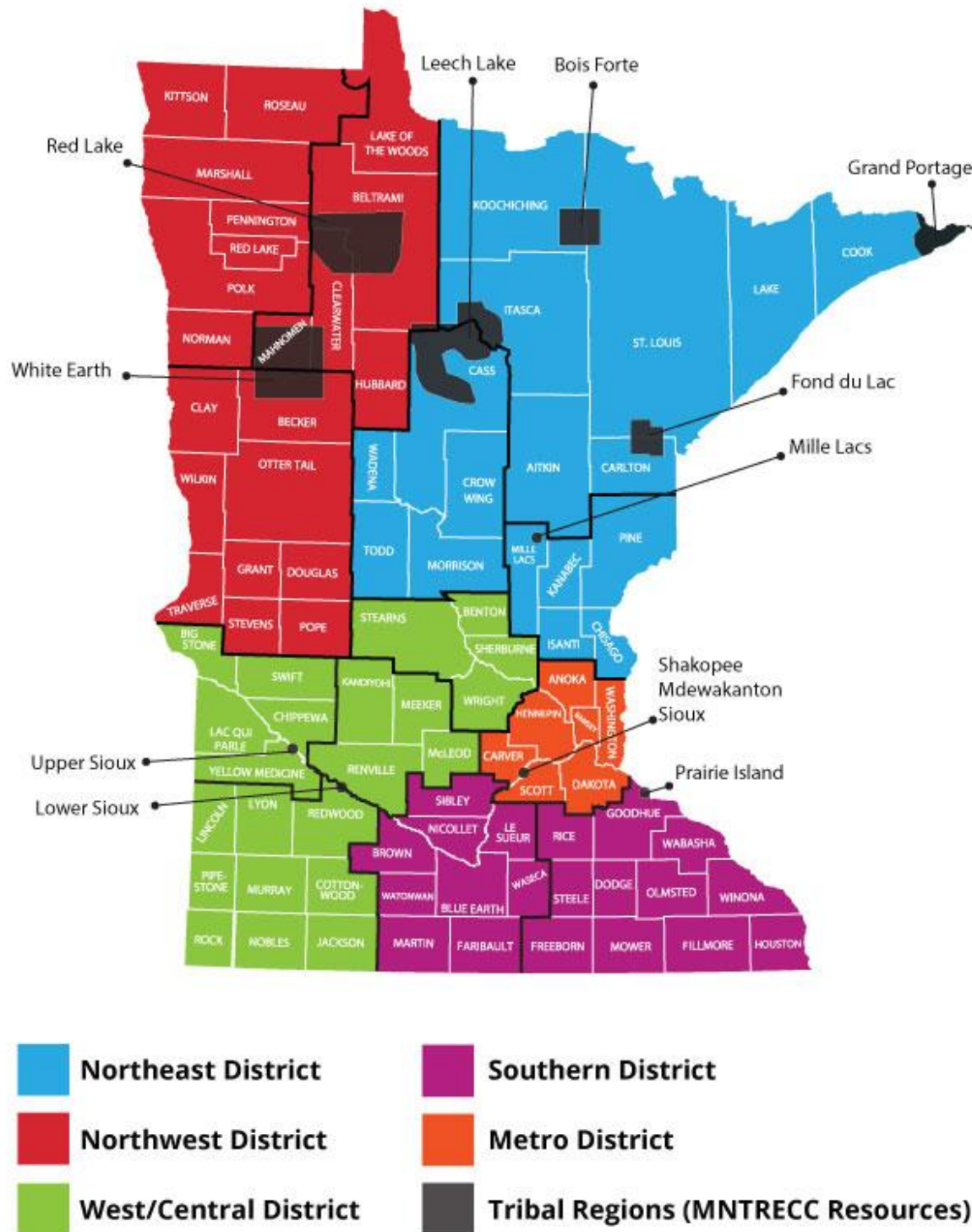
Future research should also survey providers who have never applied for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus. The present study surveyed only providers who had applied for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus from 2013 to 2018. In future research, it may be helpful to survey providers who have not applied to the program in order to explore whether information about the program is equitably shared, and whether there are additional barriers to applying that the current evaluation has not thoroughly examined.

Explore how points are allocated to applicants and consider increasing transparency around the scoring system. In future work, DHS may also wish to explore in more depth how points are allocated to applicants and whether the current scoring system adequately targets populations of providers most likely to leave the child care workforce. Increased transparency around how points are allocated may also improve perceptions of fairness among providers who apply but are not awarded a bonus. Future research should also examine existing data on applicant wages to determine whether the scoring system equitably accounts for this factor.

Continue efforts to integrate R.E.E.T.A.I.N. and its application process with other Minnesota programs. Although providers must be registered in Develop, Minnesota's Quality Improvement and Registry Tool, to apply for a R.E.E.T.A.I.N. bonus, providers' Develop IDs are collected but not included in the applicant dataset maintained by Child Care Aware of Minnesota; therefore, administrative data cannot be linked between the two programs. By linking the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database with administrative data from Develop, the State could gain a more complete and ongoing understanding of whom the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. program is reaching over time as well as program participants' longer-term outcomes.

Appendix A: Child Care Aware Districts

Figure A1. Map of Minnesota's Child Care Aware districts

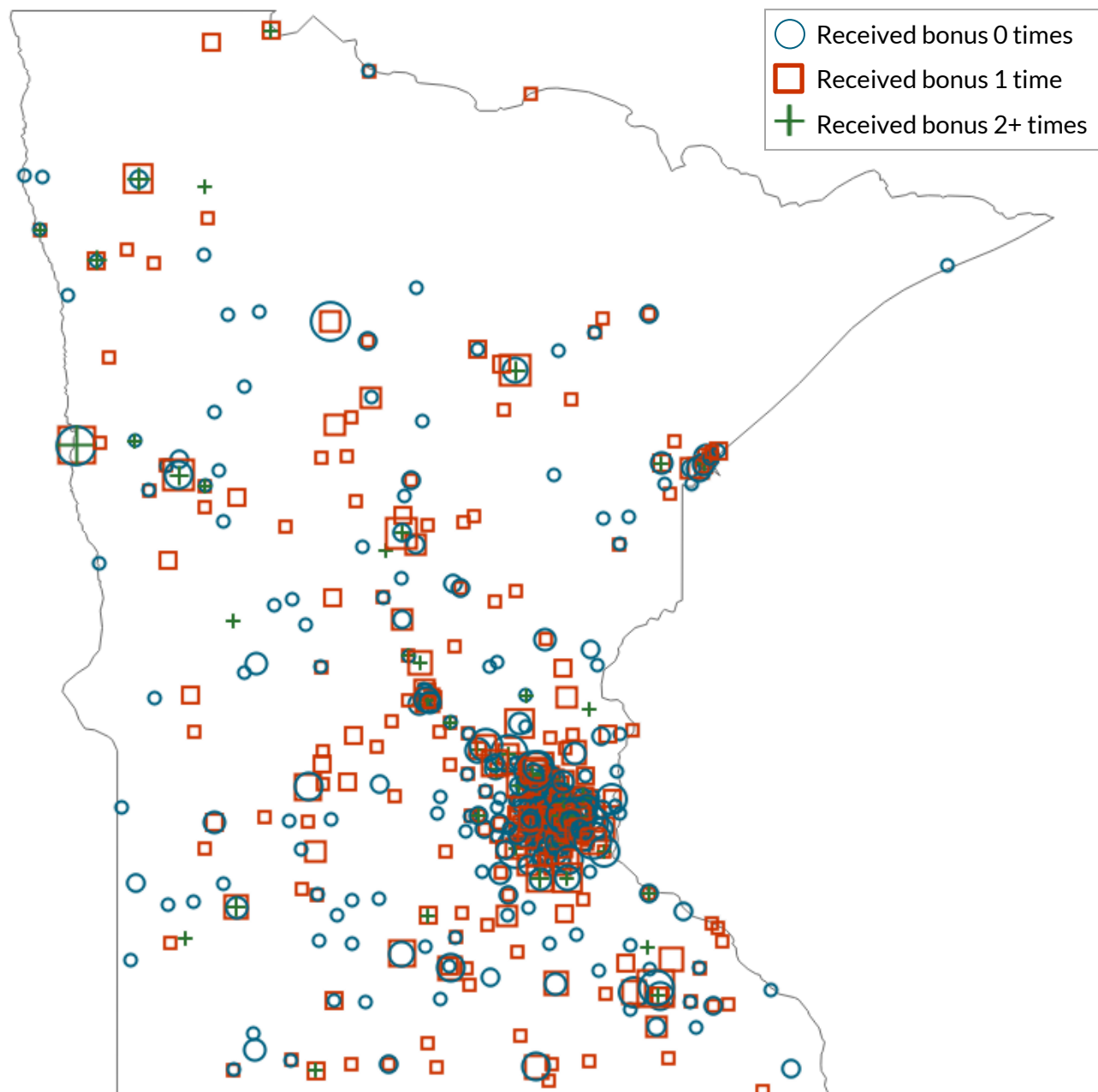


Source: Child Care Aware of Minnesota. Map of Child Care Aware districts in Minnesota. <https://www.childcareawaremn.org>

Appendix B: Maps

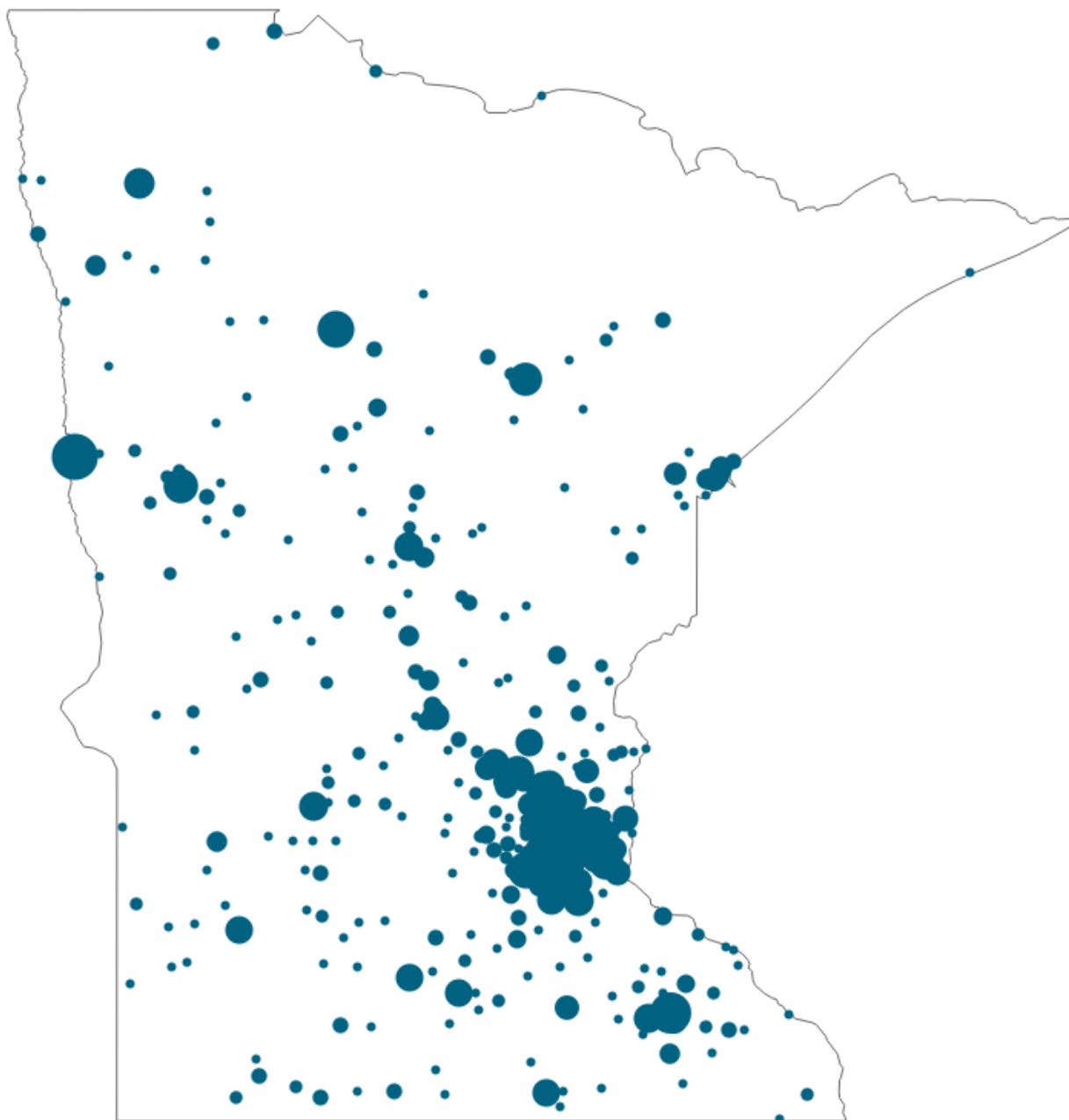
Maps from evaluation of R.E.E.T.A.I.N.

Figure B1. Map of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant types – non-recipients, one-time recipients, repeat recipients



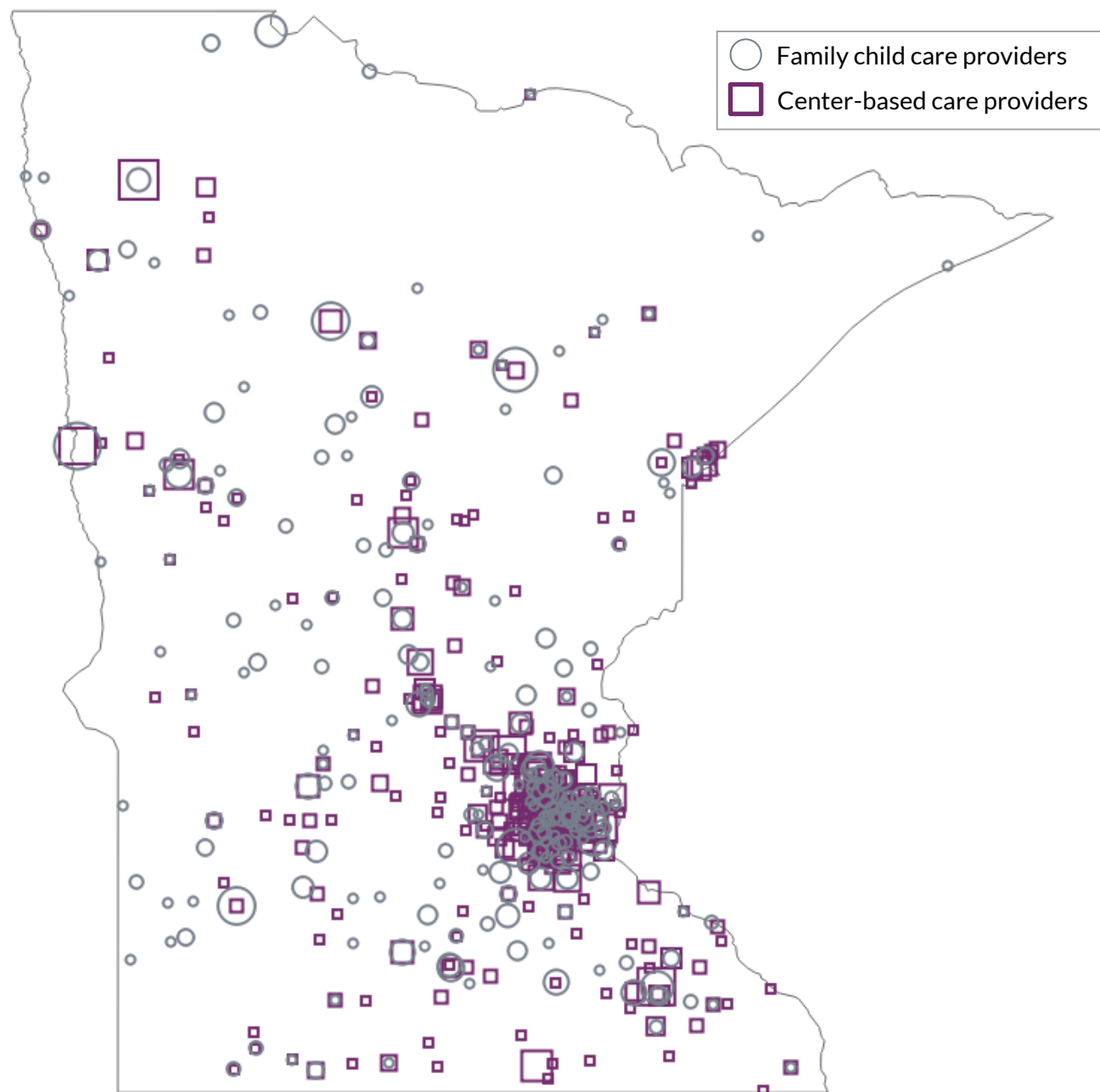
Note. Shapes are scaled with the smallest sizes representing 1 applicant, and the largest sizes representing 10 applicants.
Source data: Child Trends' R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant survey, 2018.

Figure B2. Map of unique R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applications



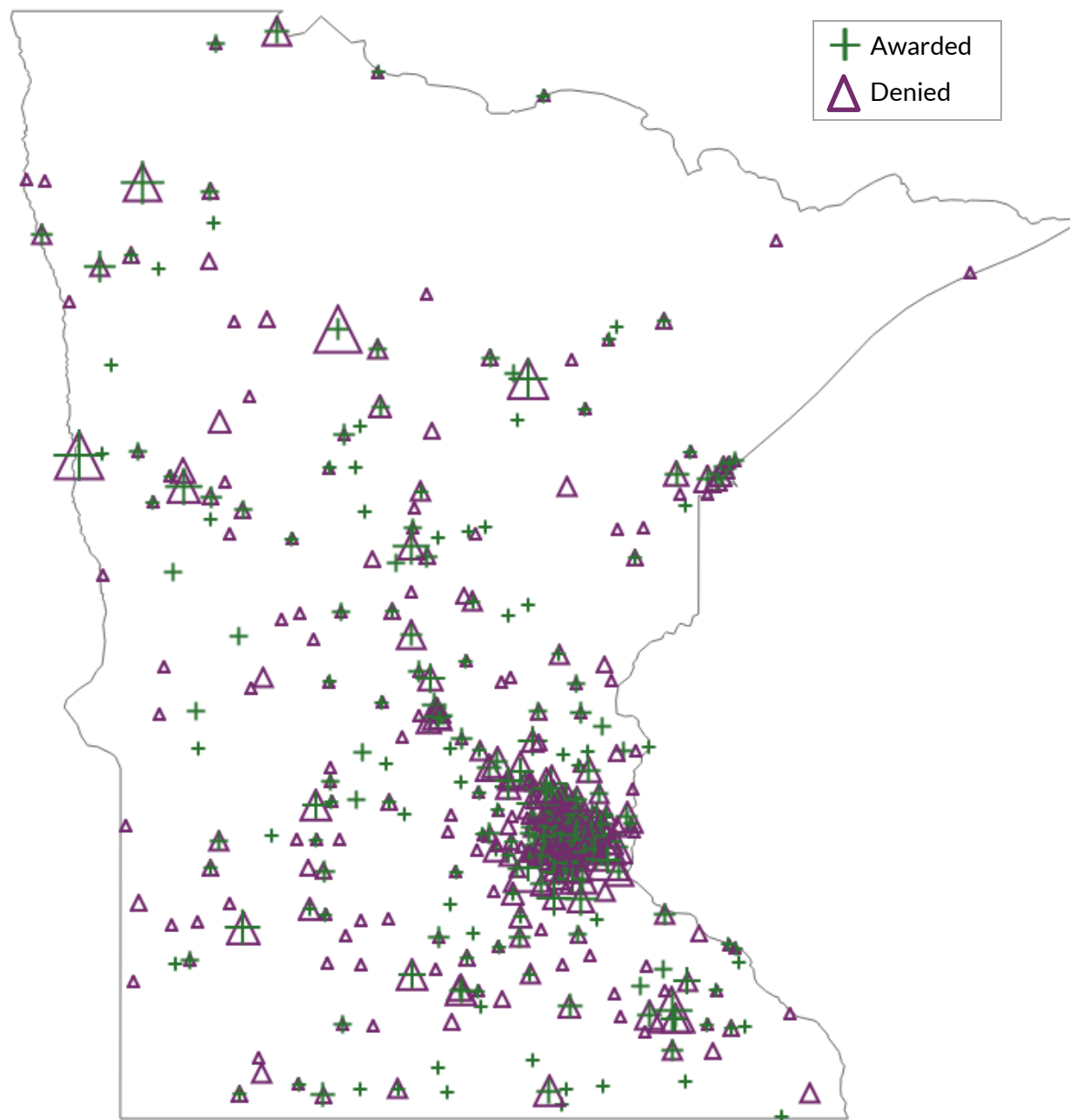
Note. Shapes are scaled with the smallest sizes representing 1 application, and the largest sizes representing 25 applications.
Source data: R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2013-2018.

Figure B3. Map of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applications by provider care type



Note. Shapes are scaled with the smallest sizes representing 1 application, and the largest sizes representing 25 applications.
Source data: R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2013-2018.

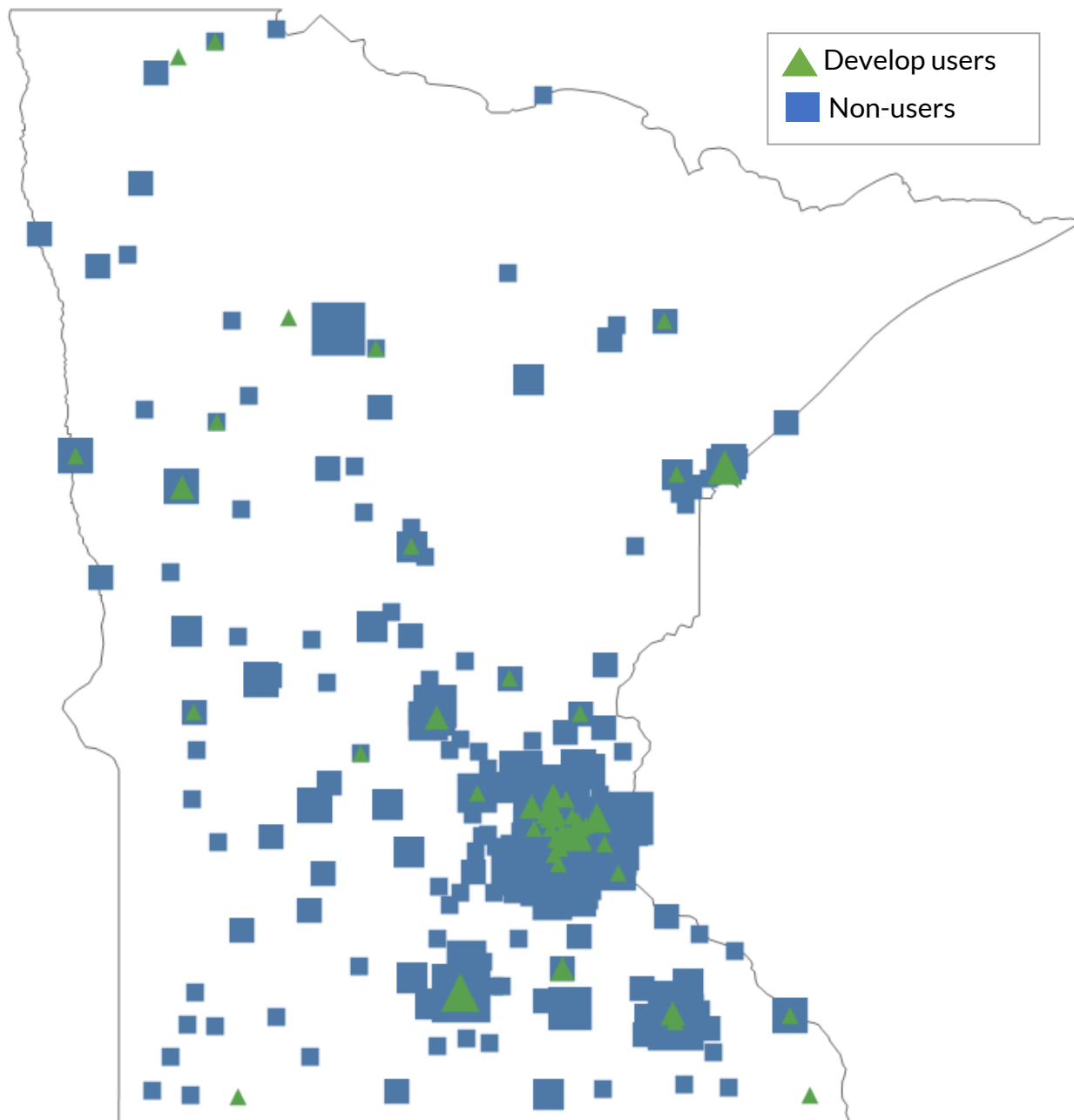
Figure B4. Map of R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applications by award status



Note. Shapes are scaled with the smallest sizes representing 1 application, and the largest sizes representing 25 applications.
Source data: R.E.E.T.A.I.N. applicant database, 2013-2018.

Maps from a study of the supply of and demand for professional development statewide

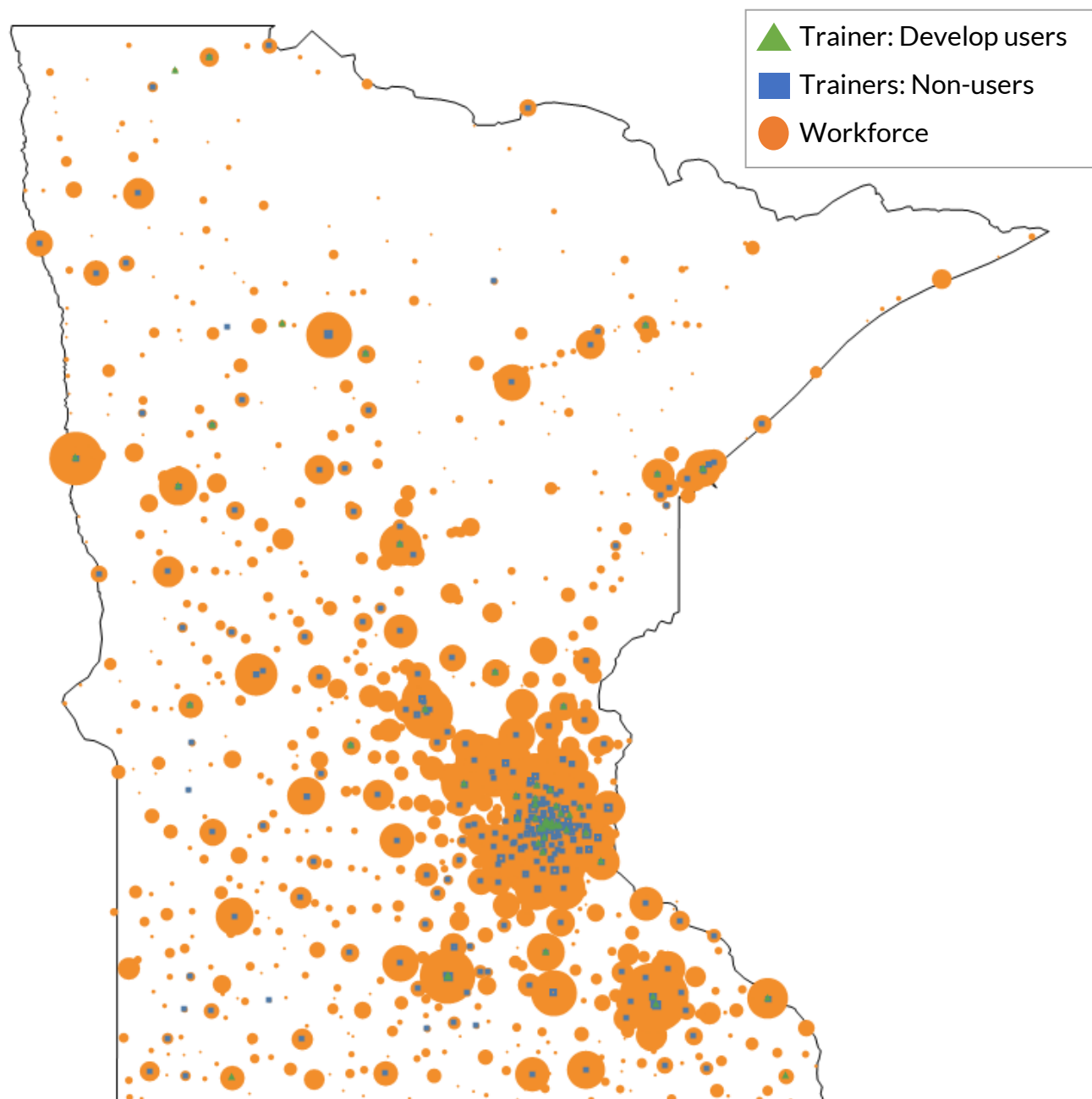
Figure B5. The supply of professional development trainings: Locations of trainers



Source: Professional development for Minnesota's child care and early education workforce: A study of the supply of and demand for training (Child Trends, 2018).

Note: Larger shapes correspond with larger populations.

Figure B6. The supply of and demand for professional development: Locations of the child care workforce and trainers



Source: Professional development for Minnesota's child care and early education workforce: A study of the supply of and demand for training (Child Trends, 2018).

Note: Larger shapes correspond with larger populations.

Appendix C: Review of Similar Retention Programs

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
Program Name: WAGE\$ Delaware Location: Delaware Funder: Delaware Office of Early Learning Program Goals: Child Care WAGE\$® DELAWARE is an education-based salary supplement program for early child care professionals. It is designed to increase stability and improve the quality of child care. The program also aims to increase retention, education, and compensation for the educators working directly in the classroom.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work directly with children under 5 at least 10 hours/week (administrators are only eligible for time worked in the classroom) • Earn a wage of \$17.00/hour or less • Have at least 6 credits of ECE, earned from regionally accredited school • Work for a licensed program participating in Delaware Stars (level 2 or above) • Have transcripts sent through Delaware First • Work at least 6 months in the same program before receiving payment • Be employed at same child care program during employment verification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must remain at same child care program for 6-month commitment period • Levels 1-5 of WAGE\$ scale are temporary levels. Teachers at these levels must move up to a higher level within two years to retain eligibility. (Deadlines are reestablished every time teacher moves up a temporary level.) • If provider moves to a new program, they will lose their WAGE\$ grant and must reapply to WAGE\$ after 6 months at the new site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide employment verification • Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Income verification ○ Official transcripts ○ Completed direct deposit form ○ Voided check or bank note ○ Completed W9 tax form 	Annual supplement based on education level: Level 1: \$200 Level 2: \$700 Level 3: \$1,200 Level 4: \$1,700 Level 5: \$2,000 Level 6: \$2,300 Level 7: \$2,500 Level 8: \$5,000	Salary supplement, no restrictions
Program Name: WAGE\$ Florida Location: Florida, Broward County & Miami-Dade County Funder: Local contributors such as early learning coalitions and children services councils Program Goals: The Child Care WAGE\$® Florida Program is designed to increase stability and improve child care quality by reducing turnover and encouraging continued education of child care practitioners.				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in a county that funds the Child Care WAGE\$® FLORIDA Project Work in a licensed or licensed-exempt ECE program Earn less than \$17.50/hour as a child care practitioner (teacher or assistant) Have a minimum of 6 credit hours in ECE from a regionally accredited college and a Florida Staff Credential Work at least 6 months in the same eligible ECE program Be employed at this same program at the time of employment confirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must remain at same child care program for 6-month commitment period Levels 1-5 of WAGE\$ scale are temporary levels. Teachers at these levels must move up to a higher level within two years to retain eligibility. (Deadlines are reestablished every time teacher moves up a temporary level.) If provider moves to a new program, they will lose their WAGE\$ grant and must reapply to WAGE\$ after 6 months at the new site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide employment verification Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ownership form Education Documentation Income worksheet (family child care and small facility owners only) Income Verification Tax documentation (Center owners only) 	Annual supplement based on education level Level 1: \$200 Level 2: \$450 Level 3: \$600 Level 4: \$750 Level 5: \$1,125 Level 6: \$1,500 Level 7: \$2,250 Level 8: \$3,000	Salary supplement, no restrictions
<p>Program Name: WAGE\$ Iowa</p> <p>Location: Iowa</p> <p>Funder: Multiple funding sources from public and private sources</p> <p>Program Goals: Child Care WAGE\$® IOWA provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid early care and education providers working with children ages birth to 5 in regulated settings in Iowa. The project is designed to increase retention, education, and compensation.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work in an eligible ECE program in a funded county Earn below the income cap (varies by county, standard cap is \$15/hour) Have minimum of 12 ECE credits from a regionally accredited school Work at least 6 months in the same child care program Be employed at same child care program for final confirmation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Levels 3-7 are temporary levels. Teachers at these levels must move to a higher level within 2 years to retain eligibility Must remain at same child care program for a 6-month commitment period If provider moves to a new program, they will lose their WAGE\$ grant and must reapply to WAGE\$ after 6 months at the new site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide employment verification Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copy of DHS license or registration Copy of QRS certificate (if applicable) Copy of NAEYC/NAFCC (if applicable) Child Care Assistance verification (if applicable) Income verification Official transcripts 	Annual supplement based on education level Level 1: N/A Level 2: N/A Level 3: \$500 Level 4: \$800 Level 5: \$1,100 Level 6: \$1,400 Level 7: \$1,800 Level 8: \$2,300 Level 9: \$2,900 Level 10: \$3,500	Salary supplement, no restrictions

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<p>Program Name: WAGE\$ North Carolina</p> <p>Location: North Carolina</p> <p>Funder: Local Smart Start partnerships and the Division of Child Development and Early Education</p> <p>Program Goals: The Child Care WAGE\$® Program provides education-based salary supplements to low-paid teachers, directors and family child care providers working with children birth to 5. The program aims to provide preschool children stable relationships with well-educated teachers by rewarding teacher education and continuity of care.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in a participating/funding county • Earn at or below the hourly income cap (\$14, \$16, \$18) selected by your local Smart Start partnership • Work with children under 5 for at least 10 hours per week • Work in a licensed child care program • Have a level of education appearing on the Child Care WAGE\$ Supplement Scale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Levels 2-7 are temporary levels. Teachers at these levels must move to a higher level within 2 years to retain eligibility • Must remain at same child care program for a 6-month commitment period • If provider moves to a new program, they will lose their WAGE\$ grant and must reapply to WAGE\$ after 6 months at the new site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete application and send to WAGE\$ North Carolina by mail • Provide employment verification • Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Official transcripts ○ Income verification 	<p>Annual stipend based on education level</p> <p>Level 1: N/A</p> <p>Level 2: \$450</p> <p>Level 3: \$600</p> <p>Level 4: \$750</p> <p>Level 5: \$950</p> <p>Level 6: \$1,125</p> <p>Level 7: \$1,325</p> <p>Level 8: \$1,500</p> <p>Level 9: \$1,875</p> <p>Level 10: \$2,250</p> <p>Level 11-13: \$3,000</p>	Salary supplement, no restrictions
<p>Program Name: INCENTIVE\$*</p> <p>Location: New Mexico</p> <p>Funder: unknown</p> <p>Program Goals: The supplements encourage early childhood educators to take more college classes to gain expertise about young children and to commit to continue working with children ages birth to 5.</p> <p><i>*Note that this program was discontinued during the course of the R.E.E.T.A.I.N. Evaluation. INCENTIVE\$ is no longer active.</i></p>				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work for a licensed ECE center, a registered or licensed family child care, or an Early Head Start Program (Santa Fe only) Currently earn less than \$16 an hour Work 10+ hours/week with children under 5 OR be a director-employee (centers only) Must have taken at least 5 credit hours of ECE courses or 70 hours of well-rounded college coursework In a center, the program must serve at least 1 child on state child care subsidy In a family child care, candidate must work with 1 non-relative under 5 AND the home must be listed on NewMexicoKids CCR&R as open to serving children under 5, including those on subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Education levels 1-7 are temporary levels. Teachers at these levels must move to a higher level within 2 years to retain eligibility Must remain at same child care program for a 6-month commitment period If provider moves to a new program, they will lose their WAGE\$ grant and must reapply to WAGE\$ after 6 months at the new site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail completed application to INCENTIVE\$ New Mexico Must have Director, owner, or other authorized individual provide employment verification Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Official transcripts Income verification Family child care form (required for FCC providers) 	<p>Annual stipend based on education level</p> <p>Level 1: \$300 Level 2: \$600 Level 3: \$900 Level 4: \$1,200 Level 5: \$1,700 Level 6: \$2,100 Level 7: \$2,500 Level 8: \$3,400 Level 9: \$4,500 Level 10: \$5,000</p>	Salary supplement, no restrictions
<p>Program Name: Professional REWARD\$ Program</p> <p>Location: Arizona</p> <p>Funder: First Things First Regional Partnership Councils (each region's council determines funding amount in their region)</p> <p>Program Goals: First Things First aims to build a skilled and prepared early childhood workforce. The Professional REWARD\$ Program was designed to increase workforce retention by recognizing providers for educational attainment and continuity of care.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registry Career Lattice Level is "B" or above (Diploma/GED and at least 6 credits in ECE or related field) Lawful U.S. resident over age 18 Employed at a child care program or family home provider regulated by a federal, state, or tribal authority in a First Things First Region Working at least 30 hours a week (directly with children under 5) Employed at current place of work for 12 consecutive months Earn \$20 or less per hour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must reapply every year. Cannot receive REWARD\$ incentive and an FTF College Scholarship Bonus in the same year REWARD\$ is offered twice each fiscal year (fall and spring), but individuals who receive an award in the first enrollment period (fall) are not eligible in the second enrollment period (spring). Applicants must move up career lattice levels within a specified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a Registry account with azearlychildhood.org Send official transcripts to Registry to verify credits earned. (Process takes several weeks) Have employer verify employment information with Registry Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> W-9 Form 	<p>Level B: \$500 Level C: \$700 Level D: \$900 Level E: \$1,200 Level F: \$1,500 Level G: \$2,000 Based on education level</p>	Salary supplement, no restrictions

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer meets one of the following criteria: Enrolled in/on wait list for Quality First OR Accredited by a national organization which is recognized by the Department of Education or Department of Economic Security 	<p>amount of time when at levels B-F. This varies based on lattice level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Development and Education Report Valid form of identification 		
<p>Program Name: Professional Career Pathways Project Location: Arizona Funder: AZ Department of Economic Security Child Care Administration through Federal Child Care Development Block Grant Funds (CCDBG) Program Goals: The Professional Career Pathways Project is a scholarship program aimed at helping early education providers achieve specific career goals including but not limited to obtaining the CDA credential, the Certificate of Completion and Associate of Applied Science degree in Early Childhood Education.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must work in a preschool, childcare center, or as a family child care provider. Volunteers may be eligible. Must identify an educational goal (Pathway) and pursue Early Childhood Education coursework to accomplish goal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must complete all courses paid for by the PCPP with a grade of C or above to maintain eligibility 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact the ECE Department at a collaborating community college (listed on the website) Meet with an ECE advisor and identify educational Pathway Complete PCPP Application Form online Enroll in approved courses and purchase textbooks (after receiving grant) PCPP Course Pathway form 	<p>Tuition for approved ECE courses (18 credits per school year; ECE courses only) and textbook vouchers (\$20 per credit) at college bookstore.</p>	<p>Can only be used for tuition and textbooks</p>
<p>Program Name: First Things First College Scholarships Location: Arizona Funder: unknown Program Goals: The First Things First College Scholarship provides the early childhood workforce working directly with or on behalf of young children birth through age 5 access to education and training to achieve degrees, credentials, and specialized skills to promote children's development.</p>				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be a member of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry Meet minimum age defined by the college acceptance policy If employed, earn \$20.00 or less per hour Lawfully present in the US <p>Info from: http://news.coconinokids.org/first-things-first-college-scholarship/</p>	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be a member of the Arizona Early Childhood Workforce Registry Select the scholarship you are applying for (listed in notes section) Required documentation is outlined in Scholarship Request Confirmation, but not available in pre-application materials 	Tuition, course, and college fees, and books for coursework leading to an approved degree or credential	Can only be used for tuition, books, and assessment fees
<p>Program Name: Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers)</p> <p>Location: Illinois</p> <p>Funder: Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) Bureau of Child Care and Development</p> <p>Program Goals: Great START (Strategy to Attract and Retain Teachers) is a wage supplement program that rewards child care providers for remaining at their current place of employment and for college coursework obtained.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must work at a full-day, full-year child care facility licensed by the IL Department of Children and Family Services (IDCFS) If family child care, must work as family child care provider, family child care assistant, group home provider, or group home assistant If center-based program, must work as director, assistant director, teacher, or assistant teacher Care for Illinois children Employed by current center/home for minimum of one year Earn \$15 per hour or less and \$31,200 per year or less Citizen of United States or legal resident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renewals occur every 6 months following initial eligibility Recipients will receive courtesy email reminder prior to renewal month Confirm contact and employment information is up to date Online: Renew Application Paper: Complete the Great Start Application and Information Update Form Mail required documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateways Registry member Complete Great Start application online or on paper Mail required documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registry Membership Form Signed W-9 Official transcripts Income verification (including tax forms) Verification of children currently being served and IDHS child care assistance billing certificates/ program verification OR Proof of Care Form (family child care only) Most recent Form 8829 OR updated parent handbook with hours/days of operation (family child care only) 	Level 1: \$150 Level 2: \$225 Level 3: \$375 Level 4: \$525 Level 5: \$625 Level 6: \$825 Level 7: \$975 Level 8: \$1200 Level 9: \$1,575 Level 10: \$1,950 Applicants working less than 30 hrs a week will receive wage supplement at a prorated amount	Salary supplement, no restrictions

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<p>Program Name: Gateways Scholarship Program Location: Illinois Funder: Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Program Name: The Gateways Scholarship Program is an individual-based scholarship opportunity, for practitioners working in early care and education. The program provides financial assistance for early childhood education and child development (ECE/CD) coursework and degrees offered through participating colleges and universities, dependent on available funding.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care for Illinois children in an IDCFS licensed program or ISBE funded Preschool for All program Have been employed at your current program for at least 1 year Work an average of 15 hours per week Meet wage requirements (maximum hourly wage: \$24) Citizen of US or a legal resident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commit to future work in early care and education or school-age care for a period, based on scholarship type Submit grade reports at the end of every term. If you do not submit grade reports for two consecutive terms, you will not be allowed to register for next term. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gateways Registry member Complete the Gateways Scholarship Program application online or on paper Mail required documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Registry Membership Form Signed W-9 Official transcripts Income verification (including tax forms) Verification of children currently being served and IDHS child care assistance billing certificates/ program verification OR Proof of Care Form (family child care only) Most recent Form 8829 OR updated parent handbook with hours/days of operation (family child care only) 	<p>Tuition supplement based on hourly wage</p> <p><\$12.50 : 100% tuition \$12.51-\$15.00 : 90% \$15.01-\$18.00 : 80% \$18.01-\$21.00 : 70% \$21.01-\$24.00 : 60%</p>	<p>Tuition supplement</p>
<p>Program Name: AB 212 Stipend Program Location: Calaveras County, California* Funder: unknown Program Goals: Improve the retention of qualified child development employees who work directly with children in California Department of Education (CDE) contracted Title 5 Child Care and Development programs, including State Preschools.</p> <p><i>*Note that this program is active in 55 counties in California. Calaveras County is outlined here as an example.</i></p>				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide ECE services for pay to children under 13 in the same state subsidized center for at least 9 months (before applying) Work at least 15 hours per week (directly with children) Demonstrate you have an Assistant level Child Development Permit or higher issued by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Earn less than \$60,000 annually in child care Apply for an AB212 stipend from only one county in California 	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> W-9 Child Development Permit (or pending permit) Professional Growth Plan and Record Professional Growth certificates Unofficial transcript or printout from college 	\$200 per semester unit up to 12 units, maximum stipend amount per program year is \$2400 (from Riverside County because Calaveras County does not include this information)	Salary reimbursement for tuition credits
<p>Program Name: Louisiana's School Readiness Tax Credit for Staff and Directors</p> <p>Location: Louisiana</p> <p>Funder: State Tax Refund</p> <p>Program Goals: This program aims to encourage continuity of care for Louisiana children and reduce staff turnover. A secondary goal is to increase center-based providers' participation in QRIS.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work for at least 6 months at a licensed, center-based type III ECE program that participates in Louisiana's QRIS program Enrolled in Louisiana pathways *Not dependent on whether the teacher or director owes taxes* 	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All directors/staff members registered with Louisiana Pathways will receive a form in January to complete if they would like to be eligible (form is filed with taxes) Certificate of SRTC training/education level 	Refundable Tax Credit (2017 amount) Director I/Child Care Teacher I: \$1,680 II: \$2,239 III: \$2,798 IV: \$3,358	No restrictions, refundable tax credit
<p>Program Names: The Family Child Care Provider Grant Program</p> <p>Location: Maryland</p> <p>Funder: State Board of Education</p> <p>Program Goals: The Family Child Care Provider Grant Program exists to help registered family child care providers offset some of the costs of opening their child care programs.</p>				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannot have received the Family Child Care Provider Grant before Applicant's annual income must not exceed 60% of Maryland's current State Median Income for the applicant's family size 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must continue to provide child care services at this location for a minimum of one year Must provide child care for at least one child from one of the priority groups (Special Needs, Purchase of Care, Infants, Toddlers) for at least one year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mail in application and documentation 	Up to \$500	Reimbursement for upkeep expenses
<p>Program Name: Child Care Credential Program Training Vouchers and Reimbursements</p> <p>Location: Maryland</p> <p>Funder: unknown</p> <p>Program Goals: The goals of the Child Care Credential Program are to produce a well-qualified workforce, to increase the quality of child care, and to improve the status and compensation of child care providers. Depending upon available funding, child care providers participating in the Credential Program at Level two or higher are eligible for training vouchers or reimbursement for approved training.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Child Care Credential Program and meet the requirements for level two or higher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete approved training annually, in accordance with training plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit Training Voucher and Reimbursement Application (online option available) Upload required documents 	Up to \$400 annually	Reimbursement for conferences, pre-service and college coursework only
<p>Program Name: Child Care Credential Program Achievement Bonus</p> <p>Location: Maryland</p> <p>Funder: unknown</p> <p>Program Goals: The goals of the Child Care Credential Program are to produce a well-qualified workforce, to increase the quality of child care, and to improve the status and compensation of child care providers. The Achievement Bonus is designed to provide a bonus to child care providers who achieve higher levels within the Maryland Child Care Credential Program.</p>				

Eligibility Requirements	Continuing Eligibility Requirements	Application Process	Amount of Stipend	Stipend Restrictions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in the Child Care Credential Program and meet the requirements for level two or higher Employed at a licensed child care program for at least one year continuously Complete continued training and professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-time achievement bonus upon completion of staff levels two through four and administrator level one Annual award at staff levels four plus, five, and six Annual award at administrator levels two, three, and four 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit application for renewal Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proof of continued training Proof of professional training Proof of employment 	One-time bonus (Staff) Level 2: \$200 Level 3: \$300 Level 4: \$500 Yearly bonus (Staff) Level 4+: \$600 Level 5: \$750 Level 6: \$1,000 Administrative Level 1: \$600 (one time) Level 2: \$750 (yearly) Level 3: \$1,000 (yearly) Level 4: \$1,500 (yearly)	Salary supplement, no restrictions
<p>Program Name: REWARD Wisconsin</p> <p>Location: Wisconsin</p> <p>Funder: The Wisconsin State Legislature determines how grant monies are allocated (every two years).</p> <p>Program Goals: The goals of REGARD Wisconsin are to increase compensation of early childhood professionals, reward and retain professionals who have attained education specific to the field, encourage continued education, reduce turnover, and improve the quality of care received by Wisconsin children.</p>				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employed by a certified or licensed family child care program, licensed child care center, or any Head Start program Work at least 20 hours per week Work at least 5% of time in an ECE classroom, either directly with children or in supervision and support Live and/or work in Wisconsin earning \$16.50 an hour or less Have worked at present employer for 3 current and continuous years OR have 6 years of experience in regulated child care programs as documented by the registry Registry level 7 or above on the Registry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants at Registry Level 7, 8, 9, and 10 must complete 3 ECE credits over the course of two 6-month agreements to continue participating in REWARD. Participants at level 11 or above do not need to meet this requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submit application for your provider type (family child care or group/center child care) through email, mail, or fax Submit required documentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Income verification 1040 W2 for child care business Schedule C for child care business Schedule E and K-1 for child care business 	6 Month Stipend Amount Level 7: \$50 Level 8: \$75 Level 9: \$100 Level 10: \$125 Level 11: \$150 Level 12: \$250 Level 13: \$300 Level 14: \$400 Level 15,16,17: \$450	Salary supplement, no restrictions

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

သတိ။ ဤစာရွက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ပါဖုန်းနံပါတ်ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

កំណត់សំគាល់ ។ បើអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយក្នុងការបកប្រែឯកសារនេះដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ សូមហៅទូរស័ព្ទតាមលេខខាងលើ ។

請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

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Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

ဟ်သုဉ်ဟ်သးဘဉ်တက့ၢ်. ဖဲနမ့ၢ်လိဉ်ဘဉ်တၢ်မၤစၢၤကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒဉ်လံာ် တိလံာ်မိတခါအံၤန့ဉ်, ကိးဘဉ်လိတဲစိနီၢ်ဂံၢ်လၢထးအံၤန့ဉ်တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

ໂປຣດຊາບ. ຖ້າຫາກ ທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປເອກະສານນີ້ພຣີ, ຈົ່ງໂທໂປທີ່ໝາຍເລກຂ້າງເທິງນີ້.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

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Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la'aan ah ee tarjumaadda qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

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Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.