

FAQs - Hospital Frontline Workers Retention Plan Webinar



Q: Is a support worker a clinical employee only

A: Per the definition of qualified worker established by the SPARK Committee, support workers would be eligible so long as the hospital considers them critical resources necessary for the maintenance of staffed beds.

Q: How do we communicate to you our organization's needs?

A: In the application document you will be asked to provide a program narrative where you can communicate the specific needs and programmatic goals of your organization.

Q: Can this funding be used to recruit additional staff?

A: No. This funding can only go to frontline employees that were already on the payroll as of September 1, 2021. This premium pay is meant for retention of existing staff members. The only exceptions are for the conversion of existing nursing students to full-time and the re-hiring of retired nursing resources.

Q: Can this funding be used to provide premium pay to frontline workers that have been contracted to work at the hospital through another company?

A: We encourage you to submit a custom retention plan to the Office of Recovery that details a contract modification that could provide an equivalent to premium pay for these employees.

Q: Can this funding be used for a one-time incentive bonus?

A: No, funding must be used to provide premium pay to employees. The funding can be backdated to September 1, 2021. So backpay could be used as a bonus-type scenario if it is delivered in one lump sum.

Q: Can premium pay only be used to increase salaries?

A: Premium pay is required to be additive and thus will increase total compensation.

Q: Are nurses in leadership positions or staff that have been pulled from normal duties to support in other capacities still eligible for premium pay.

A: Yes, in this situation please provide a custom retention plan that details how these employees have supported the service of the patients and why they deserve premium pay.

Q: Can this funding be used to pay existing wages?

A: No, this funding must be used to provide extra pay in addition to benefits they were already receiving as of August 31, 2021.

Q: Are dual-role employees eligible for premium pay (ex. home health nurses, part time working in patients' homes, part-time working at the hospital)?

A: If all or even a portion of an employee's time goes to supporting hospital beds, they can be eligible for premium pay.

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Q: Can we pay the amount contingent upon staff remaining employed until the close of the program on February 18, 2022?

A: There are no rules stated in the plan that state that you cannot make premium contingent on employment during the duration of the program. Hospitals can use their own discretion to decide to implement this condition.

If the contingent period ends after February 28, 2022, and an employee quits before the contingent period ends, the money set aside for their premium pay would have to be returned to the state as the window for reallocation would have closed.

Q: Will there be any funds allocated to nursing homes for retention?

A: As of now this is the only program that has been funded through the SPARK Executive Committee. SPARK is currently building working groups that will consider proposals for future programs.

Q: Can the funding be used to buy apparel items or lunches/meals for employees?

A: Potentially, if these items can be proven to retain employees and would be worn or used for work purposes. Food and beverages are prohibited unless directly related to the work environment.

Q: Can this funding be used to pay for a portion of the employee's benefits?

A: The funding can be used to increase the employees benefits in addition to what they were already receiving as of September 1, 2021, or to pay the employee's portion of the payment.

Q: Can these funds be used to pay for an existing Premium Pay program that hospital has already established?

A: Yes, this can be used to cover expenses of a premium pay program that has already been implemented but only if the programs started after September 1, 2021, and only up to \$13 per hour. If the program started prior to August 31, 2021, that would not qualify as an eligible use of funds.

Q: When will I receive my allocation amount?

A: Allocations were released on October 8, 2021. You can view the allocation amount for each participating hospital [here](#).

Q: Can funding be used for premium pay for EMTs?

A: In this situation, please provide a custom retention plan and provide additional information that shows a connection to supporting beds and demonstrating that it is a reasonable use of funds.