

2024-2025 Quality Improvement Awards

Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network (MRTQ PDN) is partnering with the Maine Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Child and Family Services (DHHS, OCFS) to offer Quality Improvement Awards to Maine early childhood and out-of-school time programs.

Purpose

To support and reward programs in increasing their Star rating in *Rising Stars for ME*. To receive an award, programs moving from Star 2 to 3, Star 3 to 4, Star 4 to 5, or maintaining a Star 5 will:

- Use the *Rising Stars for ME* Recommendations to create a Quality Improvement Plan and identify steps and resources needed to meet *Rising Stars for ME* Standards.
- Meet with MRTQ PDN staff to review the Quality Improvement Plan and be connected to training offerings, technical assistance, and financial resources.
- Estimate reasonable and necessary funding based on the Quality Improvement Plan and submit a Funding Request.
- Be approved and receive initial funding to support the identified steps in the Quality Improvement Plan.
- Commit to working toward meeting the *Rising Stars for ME* Standards.
- Reapply for a new Star rating and, if successful, receive a cash payment.

Funding

- Based on the *Rising Stars for ME* Standards, initial funding may cover
 - Cost of MRTQ PDN or State-Approved training.
 - Personal or substitute time to participate in training or Technical Assistance offerings.
 - Purchases of materials and equipment.
 - Minor changes and upgrades to the program's physical space.

2024-2025 Quality Improvement Awards

- An administrative stipend to plan and implement changes.
- Once the Quality Improvement Plan is complete and the Star rating has increased, programs receive a cash payment of:
 - \$3500, for an increase from Star 2 to 3.
 - \$3000, for an increase from Star 3 to 4.
 - \$2500, for an increase from 4 to 5 or for maintaining Star 5.
- Awards are provided on a first come, first served basis starting April 1, 2024, until funds are exhausted or until October 31, 2025.
- An award cannot exceed \$10,000. However, programs can apply for additional awards for movement to the next Star rating.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a Quality Improvement Award, programs will:

- Have an unexpired Star 2 rating or above on *Rising Stars for ME*, Maine's Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS).
- Have completed a *Rising Stars for ME* application and E-Portfolio, including uploaded documents that reflect current work.
- Ensure there is time for the program to meet all Standards for the desired Star rating by October 31, 2025.
- Be enrolled in the DHHS OCFS Salary Supplement Program.
- Not have a current Conditional License. If your program becomes Conditional during this process, you may continue to participate in the Quality Improvement Plan process but would not be eligible for further funding. Upon resolution of Conditional status, the program may receive the remainder of the award if funding is available.
- Have or will create a vendor account for the University of Maine System.

How to get started

- Program Owner or Director will complete and manage a Quality Improvement Plan for each child care license.
- Download the [Facilities - Quality Improvement Plan Spreadsheet](#) or [Family Child Care - Quality Improvement Plan Spreadsheet](#). Save the document to your computer.
- Consider downloading and printing the [Quality Improvement Plan Worksheet](#). This will allow you to write out the plan on paper before entering it on the Spreadsheet.

2024-2025 Quality Improvement Awards

- Access the [Instructions - Quality Improvement Plan and Funding Request](#).
- View your *Rising Stars for ME* Recommendation Page by visiting [Rising Stars for ME](#) and logging in to your account, going to "Your Rising Stars Application" and clicking on the most recent application.
- For programs working toward or maintaining a Star 5 rating, be familiar with the standards for the accrediting body or Head Start program.

Deadlines

To allow time to complete the *Rising Stars for ME* requirements and increase the Star rating,

- Programs working toward a Star 3 or 4 must submit the Quality Improvement Plan no later than May 1, 2025
- Programs working on Star 5 must anticipate meeting all *Rising Stars for ME* Star 5 standards and complete the accreditation application by October 31, 2025

For more details, including [Frequently Asked Questions](#), visit the [Quality Initiatives](#) web page.

MRTQ PDN provides individual support for individuals having difficulty with accessing or completing any portion of the Quality Improvement Award process due to an individualized need such as a disability, language barriers, etc., If interested, contact Karen Bergeron at mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu or 207-653-5090

Please contact Karen Bergeron, Quality Initiatives Manager, at 207-653-5090 or mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu with any questions or if you are having difficulty accessing or completing the Quality Improvement Plan spreadsheet due to technology barriers.