

# ELCC Quality Enhancement Grants Webinar

Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023

-TRANSCRIPT-

00:01:50

## Lauren Bresch

Good evening, everybody. My name is Lauren Bresch, Policy Analyst with the early learning and child care division. Thank you for joining us this for this evening's webinar on the Quality Enhancement Grants.

This evening's webinar will be presented by Sarah Whiteford, Assistant Deputy Minister, and Susan Emerson, Executive Director of Provincial Operations, and will include information regarding the three- Quality Enhancement Grants, Quality Early Learning and Environment Grant, the Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion. Grant, and the Innovative Recruitment and Retention Grant, we will also be discussing the Retirement and Enhancement and Retention Benefit.

We'll have a time for questions at the bottom of your screen you will see a chat option, and this is where you can submit your questions. We'll try to answer as many questions as we can, and even questions that are not answered during this live session will be reviewed and considered.

00:02:55

## Sarah Whiteford

My name is Sarah Whiteford. So thank you everyone for making the time today. I know it's an evening, and it's after a probably really busy day. So I really appreciate that you could make the time to attend today.

I just wanted to start with our land and treaty acknowledgement that we use here in the Department of Education and early childhood learning. So we recognize that Manitoba is on Treaties 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10 Territories and the ancestral lands of the Anishinaabe, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline, Ininiwak and Nehethowuk peoples. We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis. We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit. We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and Treaty Making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation, and collaboration.

This evening session is around the Quality Enhancement Grants that were announced last week. Today we're going to be covering just an overview of those grants, summary of the funding streams, and really elaborating a little bit more in terms of the details that were distributed. Then talking a little bit more about the eligibility, and how you go about accepting those grants through the opt-in and our reporting process. That's going to follow in terms of what we can cover today.

Obviously in this kind of format we are going to be speaking at a sort of higher level, in terms of our ability to get very granular in this forum.

If you have specific questions, please do feel free to include them in the chat. If we can't address some of them, because they are quite specific, we will follow up, but we also recommend that you reach out to [cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:cdcinfo@gov.mb.ca), and we'll follow up with that contact. If you have very particular questions that are unique to your facility, because we do want to work with you in ensuring that all facilities take up this funding and are able to use it in accordance with the criteria.

So what are the Quality Enhancement Grants? This is a series of three grants that were designed very much in response to feedback that we have been receiving, and that sector has been sharing for some time about the particular pressures faced particularly by existing facilities around their infrastructure and equipment, renewal needs, diversity and inclusion, programming and training, and as well the recruitment and retention of staff.

So really recognizing those particular priorities that we also share looking at a different way of approaching our granting it. Given the opportunity of these one-time grants in terms of the approach, and I imagine some of the questions around process are going to be related to this.

This is a bit of a different way of issuing grants than this program has typically done in the past, which is to say that it's not an application-based process. The kinds of measures that tend to be put in at the front end around application-based processes. We've tried to flip, which is to say, with this funding of 60 million dollars, we want all facilities that are eligible to uptake this funding and not have that application at the front end. But knowing that we still have to ensure accountability for that funding, so both on the outcomes and the financial accounting side. And so that's really why there is this reporting piece on the back end of these graphs.

In terms of the Grants themselves, we'll get into some of the details about the particular funding streams, who is eligible, and some of the criteria by which those grants are being issued on the whole, the intent of those grants are really around supporting the quality of the programming and environments for early learning and childcare, and really facilitating those outcomes for children.

In terms of the funding itself, it's actually coming from two different sources. The agreement between Canada-Manitoba, we are leveraging and prioritizing \$46 million dollars of funding under that agreement for infant preschool and nursery programs.

So, children under seven. And then the provincial government is providing an additional \$14 million dollars on top of that to ensure that we could deliver this programming consistently to include our school-age programs, which are not scoped in under our Federal agreement.

In terms of the funding streams. I believe this table is also distributed in the materials and is available online. It's really trying to capture, because we're talking about these different programs. It can get a bit confusing, because they're all under one umbrella. But there are distinct streams under the Quality Enhancement Grants.

Looking at the different grants and their intended purpose, the amount of funding available per space. And you'll see there on the recruitment retention side, there's a bit of a split. Just recognizing that the experience for homes and for centers may be different. We want to ensure that the program covered

both types of providers just in ways that would make more sense for them. You can see the amount summarized there, and we'll get into more detail about each of the streams in the subsequent slides. But if you're ever looking for something that captures it altogether in one picture, this table may prove helpful for you as you're considering the grants and what you may be leveraging them for.

The intent of the grants is really to ensure flexibility for facilities, just recognizing that your needs and the needs of the grants and communities may be different. You may be in different stages in terms of the lifecycle of the facility that you are find yourself. You may be in an older facility, or in a newer facility and so we did not want to be too restrictive in the parameters of the grants, such that it wouldn't apply to your facility.

We do want all facilities that are eligible to opt into these grants.

In general, in terms of the overarching considerations across the three streams, we're really looking at the eligible expenses, including services, equipment, material professional development costs to some extent construction costs, and then, in terms, of you know, the accepting of

The grants, though all of the expenditures have to follow the criteria and the policies that are set out in the guidelines that were distributed to all facilities that were eligible last year. You'll have additional layers of consideration in terms of your own organization's policies and the bylaws of your governing board. It's really important as well that as you're determining those expenditures, and where you might want to use this funding, it also has to adhere to those internal policies and bylaws that you may have.

This list of excluded expenditures is within the guideline documents that were distributed.

I won't go through in detail just reading these out, but I will draw your attention to a couple here.

One is around staff salaries and bonus compensation that's not specifically noted in the eligibility criteria, and as well, anything that's not on the list of eligible items, or where you may have additional questions about whether something is eligible whether it qualifies really encouraging and requiring that facilities reach out to us at the department, just so that we can help with that clarification.

00:12:20

### **Susan Emerson**

We're going to start with the Quality Early Learning and Environments Grant as Sarah had mentioned, the main purpose of these grants was in response to feedback you have been receiving from the sector, and this particular stream of funding was to support childcare facilities infrastructure, equipment materials and supplies that they may require to provide quality of care.

This can be realized in number of different ways. We know that the sector is committed to providing healthy, safe learning environments, providing rich experiences for children, but also ensuring that they are welcoming spaces for your families and for your staff this particular grant as you can see on the screen is \$875 per space, and it's eligible for the non-profit centers, including infant preschool, school age, as well as your home based providers and we'll talk a little bit more about how to accept her the grants further on in the presentation. So with this particular grant, we want to make sure that you're taking into consideration, where your facility is at.

So, whether you're rural, whether you're urban, whether you've only been open for a year or much longer than that. Everyone has needs that they're going to be looking at. You want to make sure that whatever you're considering takes into consideration different legislations and standards. This could be accessibility standards. It could be a licensing standards, building codes.

You'll also want to make sure you take into consideration whatever policies and bylaws you might have in your facility that might indicate what sort of requirements you're going to have to go through in order to make some of these changes. We're also making this broad enough to include things like delivery fees, consulting or design, particularly if you're looking at doing a small renovation.

You can definitely use this funding for improving aesthetics. That could be things like painting, replacing, flooring, and other things.

You can also consider whether your space is setup to support the children's development, or whether you want to make any changes to anything that supports the children's safety. Healthy, active engagement, and their learning can be part of this.

I also want to make two notes about outdoor learning environments and tech things that we were talking about could be considered. In addition to loose parts, or putting in natural structures, is possibly building shaded areas for the children and the staff in your facility, and adding that into your planning when you're looking at outdoors. The other piece, when it comes to technology, is just to consider that the technology might be purchasing, is really about communications with families and documenting the children's growth and development. In your facility, however, there is room that you can consider technology that might support the administration of your facility as well.

We talked about some of the eligible expenses, but I do want to go ahead to a little bit of detail about some things we considered might come up for questions, so, knowing that child care for facilities can be thrifty. Second, hand expenses are allowed. But we do have requirements that I encourage you to read in the guidelines of the minimum of which is ensuring that you have an itemize your seat that would include the name of the individual that it came from an address, or what was purchased and the amount of that purchase. If you're a home provider, it's important to know that only 50% of project costs can be claimed under this grant. If you're doing a renovation, for example, if you're replacing carpeting and a space, and that's all to be considered if the children are present in your closing hours, and that's space.

If you have questions about that, please don't hesitate to reach out to info services.

Taking the feedback that we've heard from the sector, we've also built in an administration window of 10% of the total granting funds and there's a number of ways that that can be utilized for some of the centers. The scope of the funding is going to be significant. You might decide to hire somebody to administer this grant for you. You may also incur additional funding costs with your auditor or your financial planner or individual, and costs can be used towards that as well. If you are a multi-site center, this 5%, this funding can be used across your sites. It's not specific to each individual facility.

So you can pool those funds.

The other thing that comes up, you might come across a project where you're going to choose to blend that funding together. For example, you might decide to make your entrance more accessible with ramps, and expanding the size of the doors, and making sure that hallways might be a wider space.

If you need to, you can utilize funding from both the Environments Grant and the Diversity and Inclusion Grant, but you will need to be very particular about how you report that back, and we'll talk about a little about that in a little while.

The second grant that is available for the centers as well as home based providers is the Enhancing Diversity and Inclusion Grant. The main goal here is to improve the children's experiences, and taking diversity and inclusion into consideration as you're planning your environments as well as your curriculum, we want to make sure that all the children and your staff and families have an improved sense of belonging in the facility. And we want to make sure that your environments are meeting the needs of your children and your staff.

So regardless of what community you're serving, you're really going to want to take a step back, consider who your staff are, who your families are, and how you can represent them in your curriculum and your spaces. Under this grant again, we have the same parameters in terms of equipment, material supplies, delivery, fees, and consulting. But we want you to look at this through a lens of accessibility and cultural diversity. You again need to take consideration to building codes, accessibility, legislation standards.

You might decide to add, ramps. You might make your bathrooms or spaces more accessible. You might even choose to make modifications, to outdoor playgrounds. Other considerations in this area might be assistive for taking care of initiatives, like changing your lighting out of from florescent lighting to something that's more soothing for the children. You might consider sound dampening materials on your ceilings, around your walls.

Or you might want to create sensory spaces that might include a common combination of equipment, such as shelving as well as the materials that go on to that shoving. So there's a wide variety of ways you can use this money. Keep in mind that in this grant you also have the opportunity to look at professional development. So we want to make sure that the staff who are serving those families have a good understanding of trust, have a good understanding of attachment, and whatever other needs there might be in your particular community and facilities.

The same reminders as we talked about on the last grant. If you have questions about, or what would be eligible for your facility, reach out to info services, and the administrative cost would be the same here.

The third stream that we have is the Innovative Recruitment and Retention Grant. We know that it's difficult in the sector to attract and retain staff, and we're hoping that this will be something that will support your efforts in the sector. We want to make sure that people are advancing initiatives at your center to maintain and continue building a high quality workforce one thing to note on this Recruitment and Retention Grant is that this is only for the centers so non-for-profit centers of all age create all age ranges, including your nursery.

We have a different benefit from home providers. Some of the things to keep in mind. Here is how you're recruiting your staff. How are you retaining them, and how you are recognizing them? Some things that might be considered might be innovative recruitment efforts. If people are using social media, there's ways to use that to your advantage through targeted ads. Sometimes there may be costs associated with that. This grant is a little bit more prescriptive in terms of how it can be used.

A couple of very particular ways that this funding can be put to use for your facility is through required training for staff.

This might be your First Aid, CPR, Food handlers, or any other training that is required in your facility. You can pay for those registration fees or enrollment fees with this grant, you can also use this to cover registration fees for staff professional development. So you might decide to bring someone in to host or to do training on wellness or managing stress behavior management.

You could use it to support your staff, to attend training through the Manitoba Child Care Association, or other organizations and associations that are providing training, such as if you chose to do mentorship training through Red River College. There is quite a range that you can consider.

The one thing that is new to this, we want to make sure people understand the difference is that you can pay for staff, cover wages for staff to attend the training and development, and or to replace, to bring staff, and to replace those staff while they're on training.

We want to make sure that when you're looking at staff replacement costs, this does not apply to staff, who are in the workplace program. We already have funding that is in place to support that. The other thing to keep in mind is that we also have the tuition reimbursement of \$450, and if someone's taking a course through Red River, that should be your first to go to in terms of reimbursing staff for that sort of a training.

The other way that this training can be used is for financial recognition, for CCAs and ECEs. We've used the terminology 'long service' employment. However, we want to, make sure that everyone understands this is available for all staff in your facility, all your classified CCAs and ECEs, regardless of the length of their service. This is something that if the board of directors chooses to pursue, they will decide the methodology in terms of how to distribute the funds to the staff, what is expected on our side is that it is done equitably. It is done fair, and it's done in a transparent means. It is expected that it would be disclosed to all staff in terms of what the framework was for, providing that that type of recognition to the staff, and then again, at this point, there is the 10% administrative costs so just to reiterate that 10% total administrative is for all three grants. So once you accept all three grants, that will be available to you.

The one thing that's different with this particular grant for centers is that it is not eligible for combined or pooled funding. This is separate from the funding that's available for the early learning environment grant, or the diversity and inclusion grant. Though you can choose to connect with another provider and pool your money together that way. So you can't pool across grants, but you may choose to work with another provider and pool your money together that way. You can't pool across grants, but you may choose to work with other facilities. You'll just have to be very mindful of how you're reporting that pack, and who's being accountable for that funding.

The last one we wanted to cover with you today is the Retirement Enhancement and Retention Benefit. This one is specifically for home-based licensed holders and the criteria is that they will have contributed to an RRSP in the 2022 tax season. The benefit is a \$500 one-time RRSP contribution top up that will be provided by the department. We want to make sure that if you have not done this before, or if you've provided your RRSP receipts in the past, there is a form for you to fill out. An application form that is

available on our website and through the link that you see and that will be to be completed with your tax receipts sent in to the office by March 15 of 2023.

We talked about this a little bit just in terms of the home license providers being eligible for that \$500 one-time RRSP contribution. The form is being submitted by March 15, and one thing to note if there is a family care provider who was on parental leave, and that tax year they are still eligible to receive this benefit as long as they submit by the timeline of March 15.

00:29:30

### **Sarah Whiteford**

Now we're going to talk a little bit more about the acceptance process, because we haven't used this kind of process for grants before, because we've typically done application based grants.

This really was to address some concerns from this year in terms of what we heard from the sector in issuing out funding, and really wanting to create an opportunity for eligible facilities to opt into this funding really understanding what the parameters are and its intent and then selecting that option to opt-in.

It's pretty straightforward. It's not a very complicated list of questions, really. What we need you to do for all of the funding streams, except for the RRSP contribution top up for homes, which again, has that separate application form. But for all the other funding streams we need you to log on to MCCS and complete the opt-in questions before March 13, so that we can finalize the grant allocations and issue that funding by the end of the fiscal year. So it is a bit of a constrained timeframe. That said, what I really want to emphasize is at this stage you do not have to have all of your planned expenditures, you know, confirmed, and all set out. It really is just ensuring that you understand the parameters of each grant and the reporting conditions, and that you agree to follow those parameters, and then we're here to also support.

We can talk a little bit about the timeframes involved as well, which may also provide you some comfort in terms of you know what this program looks like. I think, already been sent out in our instructions, but also we will share around this deck, but it's just giving you more details of exactly the steps to take once you've clicked on that if we move to the next slide.

Look at this, and hopefully, you're able to see this to some level of detail.

These are really the questions you're going to see when you get into the MCCS tool.

And for each of those funding streams for which you're eligible, it will really just be asking you whether you accept and decline that funding and there is a link to the guidelines under each.

Look at those again, and remind yourself as to those guidelines, and then, if you accept, an additional question will come up asking "if additional funding becomes available, would you be able to make use of a larger grant within the parameters of the grant?" And that's really in view of, if we do see a slightly lower uptake on the grant, it is possible that it could be additional funding available.

So really just wanting to understand which facilities might be interested if that ends up occurring.

And really those are the questions at this stage.

You're not going to be asked to write anything in there about your planned use of that funding, really, just that you understand the parameters.

Okay, reporting. So we are currently working on the process and templates for reporting. But we can share with you a bit about the expected process. We're going to be working on really trying to ensure that it is as streamlined as possible. However, we do have to ensure financial and program outcome for the funding. And so really, it's going to be two reports that you're going to be asked to complete.

An interim report and a final report, and at the point of the interim report is, it's a good check-in point for us to again through this program.

If you ever have questions or concerns, please do reach out, but it's a point in time as well for us to just check in on how the expenditures are going. If you're facing any challenges, if there's any support we can offer. And so really, that's why it's that interim piece, because we do want to make sure that everybody is able to expend the funding in the time period of this program.

We are going to be requiring that receipts are kept for purchases and made available for review or audit purposes, as with, you know, general requirements for licensed facilities.

And then, once we have those reporting guidelines, as soon as we have them, we will be sharing that just so that you can get a view of exactly what questions are going to be asked, and how, and so that as you're starting down some of your initiatives, that you really understand what the recording requirements are going to be in more detail again.

Just sort of reflecting a little bit on how this program may differ from previous programs, because we don't have the application at the front end. And we're not approving every single initiative and every single expenditure. It's really important for the use of these public dollars. You know, 60 million dollars of funding that we have available.

We really want to ensure that we are following those processes for financial accountability and the rigor around that. And really wanting to understand what the impact of this funding is.

You know what kind of difference has that made for your program for your staff or the children within the program?

You know, we're really wanting to be able to understand that and also be able to share those successes as well across.

Got to our sector, but also more broadly, and of course, with our Federal partners and other jurisdictions, I think you know, there's a lot of really excitement around what these graphs might be able to accomplish.

And so that's when we're talking about those outcomes.

It's also really in view of that, what kind of difference and impact is this making?



And so that's the end of the formal presentation deck. We did include some general FAQs just based on some of the questions that have been trickling in since last week, and some of the questions we're just anticipating may be coming up for you and your facility. So we'll just go through some of those to start.

And then I know there's been some questions in the chat and we'll get to those as many as we can.

So one of the questions is likely to be around. What happens if you missed the deadline?

We really want to emphasize, it is really important that you complete the MCCS opt in by March 13. We need to understand the extent to which facilities have opted in and the amount of available funding that can be confirmed, and in order to be able to issue that funding based on our fiscal year end so if you are running into any challenges, either technological hopefully not, or in terms of really understanding the initiatives, please do reach out prior to that date so we can provide whatever assistance you may need.

But again, it's really important that that deadline be met, and we're really encouraging all eligible facilities to opt in.

So questions about how much am I going to receive? It's a straight per space grant for most of the streams of funding, except for the RRSP top up for homes. It's really as a straightforward calculation. Your number of licensed spaces, multiplied by the amount of grants per space, and you can see those summarized in the table. There, we've given, you know, just a basic example involving a 100 spaces.

You could see what that would look like across those three funding streams if you were a center. And so if you're looking to just do that calculation yourself, you should be able to identify how much you would be eligible for under this program. So this is a bit about the timeframe that I was referencing earlier. All the eligible expenses for these streams actually go back to April 1 of last year, and then forward until March 31 of next year. So it's actually 2 years.

If you have incurred expenses in this past year that qualify for the grants that you're receiving, those are eligible. You can identify those within the reporting. And that would be perfectly in line with what we're intending. I think we're trying to also ensure that those facilities who've made those investments this year are not, you know, penalized for that. And this funding does come in this fiscal year. So, it's really in view of what we're trying to accomplish. And again give the greatest degree of flexibility that we can to facilities.

I think Susan touched on this before. Yes, you can combine not across all of them, but the enhancing diversity, inclusion, grant, and the quality learning environments grants. We're just really giving an example there of where you might see that combination right?

There are certain kinds of environments and infrastructure type initiatives that may also serve inclusion purposes or diversity purposes. So we didn't want to make it restrictive like that.

Every initiative has to be discretely in a certain bucket, because we do want to also allow facilities to make some of those larger upgrades that really will benefit the children at the facility. So for multi site organizations. Again, I think, Susan, discussed this in the overviews.

We are again trying to create a flexibility. So you can pool funds across those multi sites. And again just in line with the parameters. The criteria of the different grants, just ensuring that those are being met.

However, the recruitment retention grant is not eligible for that pooled funding. That is a separate administrative cost. We absolutely have heard the need for additional supports when it comes to our funding and the kinds of pressures that places on facilities.

And so we're including within these grants that up to 10% can be used against the administrative costs associated with implementing the grants themselves.

That can be a variety of things. It could be, for you know, additional accounting bookkeeping, auditing type expenses you're incurring. It could be the kinds of stuff that you that you may need to allocate to this work, and the time that they may have off of the floor in order to develop and implement the initiatives that you have under the grants. It could be a variety of things that we're really just wanting to include that flexibility. You don't have to allocate 10% of the grant to admin costs. It's just something you're eligible to do up to that 10%.

And again, if there are additional questions, we do encourage you to review the guidelines that were provided. They are quite extensive. If something remains confusing, please do reach out to us. And if there are questions in the chat, we can move, maybe to that piece now, and there may be a variety of people responding to these questions just depending on what they are.

00:44:40

#### **Lauren Bresch**

I will be reading off some of the questions that have been coming in.

One of the first questions that we've received is in reference to eligibility. We'd like some clarification on what could be considered eligible items or expenses.

00:45:00

#### **Sarah Whiteford**

In general, some of the guidance really is to look to the guidelines that have been provided, which stipulate not only the broad parameters. These kinds, types of expenditures that are quite general.

And then I think we covered here today and might be of materials as well. Some specific examples, it could be X. It could be Y. To give you greater clarity on what that might look like, and then, as well the guidelines do you clearly clarify on what that might look like, and then as well the guidelines do? You clearly stipulate? What is excluded what cannot be an eligible expense. If through that it's you know you have an initiative, an idea that really isn't covered either by those broad parameters or by the exclusion list of expenditures. Please do contact us at [CDInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDInfo@gov.mb.ca) , and we can follow up on that.

It's really hard to speak to specifics on individual line items, and that is going to be a challenge right off this program. It's a different way than we have operated. So it's new for you, and it's new for us.

I really would direct you as well back to the broad parameters and the goal and intent of each of the grants. It's really important that the expenditures that you're making are really to achieve those goals. Quality learning environments for children, that those expenditures are really leading to that, you know, improved diversity and inclusion programming, curriculum training. Those are the kinds of initiatives that we would be expecting to see and to achieve those goals.

But yes again, if you have something specific, and it really is unclear, please do reach out.

00:47:00

**Susan Emerson**

When you're seeing the grants for the first time, there might be an inclination, I think, that they have to be large ticket items, but if your furniture and your tables, and your chairs and your shelves are all in good order, because you've recently replaced them, then start to look at your materials and your supplies.

Think about, you know, play-based learning. Think about the needs of your children, think about your entry way for your families. Is there a place for them to sit there and talk about the needs of your children? Are there materials for them to engage with? It could be something as basic as replacing all of your First Aid bags with current up to date materials that aren't ratty and falling out of their packaging anymore. So it can be as broad as that larger furniture renovation items.

It could also be something much simpler when you're looking at diversity and inclusion. If you have children in your facility, for example, who might have inclusion supports, or you've had a support worker out, and they've made recommendations that you haven't been able to afford before for specific materials or equipment, that might be something to sit down talk with your staff have that conversation about.

The last thing I would suggest is, if you're part of a directors group of any sort or you have a neighboring facility close by, take a walk over. Reach out to your peers in the sector. They may give you an example of something that will encourage your thinking on what you might be able to do in your facility as well.

00:48:30

**Lauren Bresch**

So we have another question from Karen. She would just like some clarification on the funding for the quality Learning Grant per space - clarify it.

00:48:50

**Susan Emerson**

The Quality Early Learning Environment Grant, is \$875 per license space so, for example, if you have a 32 space center, regardless of whether they are funded or unfunded, is \$875, per licensed space, so for example, if you have a 32 space center you are eligible for 32 spaces times the 875. And when you see the deck later, you can look at the example that Sarah had shared.

00:49:30

**Lauren Bresch**

We have another question in relation to homes and home based providers.

And just some clarification on funded versus unfunded if they're eligible.

00:49:50

**Susan Emerson**

That's a great question. I don't think we went into too much detail about that.

But yes, whether your spaces are funded or unfunded. If you're not for profit, or you're a licensed home based provider, you are eligible for the grant, for the number of spaces that you have.

00:50:10

**Lauren Bresch**

We also have a few more questions from home based providers wondering about the 50%. So for an example, group day care of the spaces. You said children, 100% and they're looking to replace the flooring, are we only allowed to claim the 50%.

00:50:30

**Susan Emerson**

If that spaces use only for the purposes of the childcare facility, or offering the childcare services, and you can claim the 100%. If it happens to be in a space where the individuals in the home are utilizing it when the children are not in care then it would be at a 50% rate.

00:50:50

**Lauren Bresch**

We have a question regarding technology. What about technology that supports learning outcomes of teachable moments, such as a smart board? Or I guess anything like an iPad, etc.

00:51:15

**Susan Emerson**

I think you have to look back at the philosophy of your center, and how your center is using technology in your curriculum and with your children. If it's something that supports the children's play-based learning and your center director, and your board of directors are in support of that then that would be eligible.

00:51:50

**Lauren Bresch**

Can you please elaborate on what you mean by combined or pooled funding?

00:52:00

**Susan Emerson**

We have two different ways that we're looking at it. Combined funding might be if you're taking money from one grant and combining it with another. In this case, it's really only the Early Learning and Environment Grant and the diversity grant that could be combined.

Again, if you're renovating that entrance to the facility, and you're putting in a ramp and widening the doors and creating a better opening or a better landing space that's larger for individuals to come in but you don't have enough money under one of the grants to the other expenses that you're incurring that you can utilize some of the funding from the Early Learning and Environment Grant, as well as the Diversity and Inclusion Grant. You just have to make sure that you're able to differentiate your expenses once you're reporting. Pooled funding is more if you are in a multi-site center or you want to work with another facility to expand or extend the amount of money that you have.

So you might be doing a professional development training around diversity and inclusion, and you might decide to combine a number of facilities, that will be one way.

Another way we would consider that pool is if you're in a multi-site center, and you're looking to stretch the money between the number of facilities.

00:53:40

**Lauren Bresch**

Question regarding surplus--if we have an accumulated surplus, are we expected to use those funds before accessing funds through the quality and enhancement grants?

00:54:12

**Susan Emerson**

So with these particular grants, there is no expectation on utilizing any surplus that you currently have for your center. These grants are for you to look at what's happening in your facility now, and to meet the needs of your children.

00:54:45

**Lauren Bresch**

The last question that we have here is regarding the staff bonuses. So they just want clarification, as whether staff bonuses are eligible or ineligible under the recruitment or retention?

00:55:05

**Susan Emerson**

So in the Recruitment and Retention grant, the board of directors can choose to do what we're calling a long service award. We're not necessarily categorizing it as a bonus, only because we want there to be

parameters around fairness in terms of how the money is being distributed to the educators in that facility. As a reminder for directors and board of directors, if you are providing a long service retention award to your staff, it does need to go through your payroll system as well, as that is taxable. So that's something for you to take into consideration.

I want to remind everyone. If we didn't get to your question today, we do have a team of people who have been dedicated to answer questions over the next few weeks and beyond. So please do not hesitate to go to [CDInfo@gov.mb.ca](mailto:CDInfo@gov.mb.ca)

I've seen some of the questions come in this week already, and I know that they've been getting responded to within the same day that the questions have been coming in.

So I think we have a good system to respond. If we haven't been able to get to your inquiries today.

00:56:30

### **Sarah Whiteford**

In closing, I hope this session has been helpful in clarifying things. And again, it's more just to set the stage about what this program is, how you can opt in, and what the broad parameters are.

I want to end a little bit on some of the considerations that we have in terms of these grants and really the opportunity that they present. A lot of work kind of went into the design of these grants, and in in engagement, as well with the ministers' consultation table, and in trying to address, feedback that you have shared, that the spectrum has shared with the department around those priority needs.

While there is that challenge of the flexibility of the grants in terms of the specificity that you may be seeking, the design was really intended that way. Recognizing that we have so many facilities, and that their needs are going to be diverse. But under those main priority areas that you've all identified.

We're really excited about this program. I hope that similarly centers and homes are excited and see the opportunity that it presents.

If you have questions, please do reach out.

I am really encouraging you to opt in as soon as possible, and certainly before March thirteenth, and really, just want to thank you as well for the feedback that you have been providing to the department.

It has been really helpful to understand where your priorities are, and the challenges that you're facing, and the ways in which we can incorporate that into the design of our initiatives going forward to try to meet those needs that you're expressing. It may seem sometimes that the Government is sort of off here on the side and not listening, and I just I really want to emphasize we are listening. We're really, really wanting to move forward and set that foundation for all of the expansion and growth and strengthening of the early learning and childcare system in Manitoba and really recognizing the facilities that are here now and that they have needs as well so again, thank you very much for taking the time tonight, and really look forward to working with you on this and other initiatives going forward.

Thank you very much.