



## **POWER Ohio Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

More POWER Ohio information including eligibility, benefits, wage supplements and accepted Associate degrees is available at <https://ocrra.org/power-ohio-brochure/>

### **What is the purpose of the program?**

*The "POWER" in POWER Ohio stands for Powering Optimal Wages and Encouraging Retention. This investment in professionals while they are furthering their education helps programs retain qualified staff members.*

### **Is there a prioritization process for POWER Ohio applications?**

*Applications will be processed in the order in which they are received for all eligible professionals. OCCRRA will continue to accept professionals for POWER Ohio until funds have been exhausted. A waitlist will be instituted if funding is exceeded.*

### **What is a wage supplement?**

*A wage supplement is additional monies issued to the professional to increase their current wages while the professional achieving or is furthering their education. Tied to educational achievements, payments are based upon the professional's role, education and retention milestones.*

### **What program changes occurred as of July 1, 2022?**

*As of July 1, 2022 there were eligibility and program changes. The wage caps were removed from eligibility. The other eligibility including role, ODJFS program and hours per week working with birth to age five children remain the same. Applying for wage supplements should occur once a level is achieved, not before. Finally, levels were added included wage supplements for Trauma Informed Care Certificate, Bachelors and Master degrees.*

### **How do I apply for POWER Ohio wage supplements?**

*Applying is simple. Log into the Ohio Professional Registry (OPR) <https://registry.ocrra.org/> and review your employment and account information in your profile to make sure it is up-to-date. Then click on applications and select the POWER Ohio application. Upload your wage documentation and click submit.*

### **How do I move to a new level or 'level up'?**

*Complete a new POWER Ohio application once the next level is achieved. Professionals will be paid at the highest level earned.*



**How many payments may I receive if I continue to receive Trauma Informed Care Certificates?**

*The Trauma Informed Care Certificate level is considered a temporary level. Regardless of Trauma Informed Care level, professionals will only receive up to 4 payments.*

**I am a family child care provider and the lead teacher for my program. Do I qualify for the teacher payments or the director/administrator payments?**

*You qualify for the director/administrator wage supplement. Teachers who work at your family child care home qualify for the Teacher/Family Child Care Educators wage supplement.*

**I am currently working on the steps to obtain a CDA. Can I still receive POWER Ohio wage supplements?**

*No, once a professional receives their CDA Credential, they may apply for that level.*

**Do all courses to obtain the Associates degree count toward POWER Ohio wage supplements?**

*Yes, all courses to obtain an Associate degrees count toward the wage supplement. Please note that there are total and ECE credit hour requirements for the various levels.*

**What, if anything, is required from my employer to participate?**

*A monetary commitment from employers is not required to participate in POWER Ohio wage supplements. Employers need to confirm continued employment for the professional's role of at least working 20 hours per week at multiple points throughout the program. This may consist of a letter on letterhead for retention payments.*

**How will I receive payments?**

*Once you have achieved a level, upload your documentation (transcript, credential, continued employment verification) in the appropriate section (credential, education or employment) in your OPR profile. Once verified, the payment will be processed and a check will be sent to the address provided by the professional. The professional will be notified every 6 months to upload proof of employment to receive the next payment until the professional levels up or that approved level is exhausted.*

**What happens if I receive all the payments from a level and I do not apply for the next level?**

*The professional's application will be closed and no additional payments will be paid. A professional may apply again once the next level is achieved.*

**What happens if I am approved for POWER Ohio but I leave my employer?**

*POWER Ohio wage supplements are a retention tool for programs to retain qualified staff. As*



*such, if a professional leaves employment, wage supplements will stop at that level. A professional may reapply at a new employer once the next level has been achieved.*

**My application has a status of waitlist. What does that mean and what are the next steps?**

*POWER Ohio wage supplements are processed as funding is available. Levels 8 and 9 have limited availability. If your application receives a waitlist status, when there is availability for that level, the status will change. Depending on the amount of time from the initial submission, updated information may be requested. Upon receipt, OCCRRRA will process the application and proceed with your wage supplement level.*

**I was approved for POWER Ohio before the July 1, 2022 program changes, what does that mean for my application?**

*Please note the following circumstances that will transition prior approved POWER Ohio applications. Please follow up with your counselor with any questions.*

- *Those that were approved but did not reach a milestone, the application will be closed and please apply when a level is achieved.*
- *Those that achieved the 120 hours, the application will be closed and please apply for the CDA level once your CDA credential has been uploaded and verified.*
- *Those that achieved the CDA, 6 or 12 month milestones, these payments will be counted toward the 4 payments in the new level. The professional will receive any remaining payments under the new as long as they remain eligible.*
- *Those that achieved credit hour payments, the application will be closed and please apply when the next level is achieved.*
- *Those that achieved Associate degree, 6 or 12 milestones, these payments will be counted toward the 6 payments in the new level. The professional will receive any remaining payments under the new as long as they remain eligible.*

*Professionals that participated in POWER Ohio prior to July 1, 2022 cannot apply again and be approved for the same level that they received prior payments.*

**Do I have to pay taxes on the supplement I receive?**

*The wage supplement is considered income for IRS purposes. Participants will receive an IRS-1099 form at the end of the year if they received \$600 or more during the calendar year. Recipients are responsible for reporting and paying any personal income taxes due.*

**I have an active CDA but it is due to expire during the timeframe I am due to receive POWER Ohio Wage Supplements. How will this be handled?**

*The CDA must remain active during the time when wage supplements are paid. It is the professional's responsibility to renew the CDA or Level Up in POWER Ohio to continue payments.*