



YoungStar

Frequently Asked Questions: Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

March 3, 2017

Note: Almost all questions have been revised since June 10, 2013; questions that have been substantially revised or added since the last update are highlighted.

YoungStar is a 5 Star quality rating and improvement system that supports child care and school-age care providers in the areas of education, learning environment & curriculum, business & professional practices and the health & well-being of children. Through this rating system the state addresses several key issues in Wisconsin's child care system. YoungStar:

- Focuses on improving outcomes for children by improving the overall quality of care
- Creates multiple pathways to professional development opportunities and better quality for child care and school-age programs
- Creates a clear, understandable tool for parents to choose quality child care
- Creates incentives and provides support for programs to improve services, particularly for low-income children
- Improves accountability for the Wisconsin Shares system

Questions: Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

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Answers: Incentives, Technical Assistance & Consultation, and Micro-Grants

INCTV-1. What are the incentives for participation in YoungStar?

Of course, the most important incentive for participation in YoungStar is the opportunity to improve program quality and thus improve the outcomes for the children enrolled in your program.

Other benefits available to programs participating in YoungStar are:

- On-site training and technical assistance, upon request

- Local training opportunities
- Micro-grants to support the goals outlined in programs' Quality Improvement Plans
- Professional development counseling and supports for credit- and noncredit-based growth opportunities, through Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) Professional Development Consultants and YoungStar Technical Consultants:
 - T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin scholarships are available to support program staff in accessing credit-based instruction:

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/>
 - Colleges throughout the state offer Credit for Prior Learning (CPL) opportunities that recognize your current knowledge and skills:

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/CPL/>
 - WECA Professional Development Counselors will help you explore your options free of charge and can be reached at:

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/youngstar/PDcounseling/>, or 1.800.783.9322 (When prompted, select Option 3.)

INCTV-2. What supports are available to help a child care, school-age, or day camp program move from one star level to the next?

YoungStar uses a regional and community-wide support emphasis to provide free technical assistance and consultation to programs actively participating in YoungStar.

Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards (WMELS) and School-Age Curricular Framework (SACF) trainings are YoungStar-supported and made widely available and accessible for providers. Additional training emphasis has been placed on the Wisconsin Pyramid Model and other models for social-emotional competence, as well as training for the establishment and delivery of developmentally appropriate curriculum and assessment practices.

These training opportunities are made available through collaboration among the local YoungStar offices and other key partners representing different disciplines. To find training information on the WMELS, SACF, the Wisconsin Pyramid Model, Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Tribes® TLC, and Guiding Children's Behavior in School-Age Programs, check out the following websites:

Local Child Care Resource and Referral: <http://supportingfamiliesogether.org/member-directory/>

WMELS: <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wmels-about.php>

Wisconsin Pyramid Model: <http://www.collaboratingpartners.com/wi-pyramid-model-about.php>

The YoungStar training webpage: <https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/training>

The Registry Statewide Training Calendar/Trainer and Consultant Directory: <https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/>

T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarships for those interested in credit-based education are available to many workers in the early care and education workforce:

<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/>

Programs that demonstrate quality improvement efforts may also be eligible for a YoungStar micro-grant to support their established Quality Improvement Plans:

<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/microgrant-handbook.pdf>

INCTV-3. How can I find high-quality consulting services?

To find training and consulting that meets YoungStar quality criteria, it is necessary to find trainers and consultants who are approved by The Registry.

- Go to <http://www.the-registry.org/>
- Click “Search For Training.”
- Click “Trainers/Consultants.”
- Click on either the “Trainer” or the “Consultant” button to highlight it.
- You may use any of the Search Criteria to narrow your search:
 - For Trainers, the Search Criteria are:
 - Trainer Name/ID
 - Trainer Type
 - Core Knowledge Area
 - Approved to Teach
 - Additional Endorsements
 - Training Language
 - Region
 - For Consultants, the Search Criteria are:
 - Consultant Name/ID
 - Assessments
 - Endorsements
 - Region
- You may add Keywords if you are searching for services in a particular topic area. Some *examples* of keywords you can use are “autism,” “music,” “environment,” “taxes,” “personnel,” “poverty,” etc.
- Click “Search Trainers” or “Search Consultants.”
- Based on the Search Criteria and/or Keywords you use, the results will be posted, and you can click on the name(s) to see contact information.
- If your search yields no results, you have the opportunity to revise your criteria and try again.

INCTV-4. How do programs access YoungStar technical assistance, consultation, and rating? Is there a cost for these YoungStar services?

Accessing Services

To access YoungStar technical assistance and consultation, programs must complete and submit a YoungStar Contract, available on the DCF website at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers>.

After completing your YoungStar Contract, you would then submit your contract to your local YoungStar office. To find the local YoungStar office in your area, go to the YoungStar website at:

<https://dcf.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/program/localoffice>.

The local YoungStar office will process your application and assign a Technical Consultant to your program. The Technical Consultant will guide your program through the process of getting training and technical assistance and then the program will complete a YoungStar rating.

Cost Considerations

There is **no** cost for YoungStar participation, including YoungStar technical assistance, consultation, or rating services. In fact, YoungStar helps programs by providing training, technical assistance, and small, targeted micro-grants to help programs get the things they need to improve and help children learn even more effectively.

Programs may choose to request additional training and technical assistance beyond the current scope of YoungStar, and technical assistance providers may charge for services above and beyond those supported directly through YoungStar. If you do hire a technical assistance provider, make sure you hire a YoungStar-approved Trainer or Technical Consultant who has had her or his education and experience evaluated and approved by The Registry's Professional Development Approval System (PDAS). You may search for approved Trainers and Technical Consultants at:

<https://www.the-registry.org/PDAS/Consultants.aspx>

<https://www.the-registry.org/myregistry/>

Programs choosing to invest in higher education for their staff can access the Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA) for financial support through the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Wisconsin Scholarship Program (<http://wisconsinearlychildhood.org/programs/teach/>).

INCTV-5. When do I have access to technical assistance? Before or after being rated?

Programs can choose to have their technical assistance **before and/or after** being rated. Before your program is rated, a Technical Consultant can work with you to help you decide what areas you could focus on for your technical assistance.

Additionally, you can help your Technical Consultant by completing a self-assessment of your program prior to receiving technical assistance. Some examples of self-assessments are available on the YoungStar website:

<https://def.wisconsin.gov/youngstar/providers/resources>

INCTV-6. Is there a “minimum number of children served” eligibility requirement for a program to request technical consultation and a micro-grant from YoungStar?

In order for a child care program to request technical consultation and remain eligible to receive a micro-grant, a program must be serving at least one child.

INCTV-7. Who is eligible for micro-grants, and what is the application process?

Every program that actively participates in technical consultation and creates a Quality Improvement Plan based on a self-assessment can apply to receive a YoungStar micro-grant. Family and group centers, school-age and day camp sites, and non-profit and for-profit agencies are eligible.

YoungStar requires that all micro-grant purchases are directly linked to the program's Quality Improvement Plan. Micro-grant purchase plans are submitted with the Quality Improvement Plan and are approved and submitted by the Technical Consultant during the technical consultation process.

To receive a micro-grant, a program agrees to:

- Participate actively in Technical Consultation. Active participation goes beyond allowing a Technical Consultant to visit the program. The program must take part in reflection, work to identify strengths and goals, and then take actions to implement the identified solutions. As long as the Technical Consultant is satisfied that this is occurring, the program will have access to a micro-grant.
- Prepare a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and make micro-grant purchase choices to support the implementation of that QIP. Programs should review the *YoungStar Micro-Grant Program Handbook* to learn how the YoungStar micro-grant may be used. There are specific rules and limitations for use of the micro-grant.
- Submit all micro-grant related requests to the Technical Consultant in a timely matter. For more information on timelines, review the *YoungStar Technical Consultation and Micro-Grant Participation Agreement*.

Micro-grant eligibility will be affected if the participation guidelines cannot be met.

To learn more about micro-grants:

Contact: Supporting Families Together Association
microgrants@supportingfamilies.together.org
Phone: 608-443-4310

Read the *YoungStar Micro-Grant Program Handbook*:
<http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/files/youngstar/pdf/microgrant-handbook.pdf>

INCTV-8. What are some examples of how micro-grants could be used?

YoungStar micro-grants are tied to the provider's Quality Improvement Plan. Programs may choose to use micro-grant funding toward; accreditation cost reimbursement, training and education for professional development, staff or substitute time to support quality improvement work, services such as contractors/builders or additional technical consultation hours, the purchase of equipment and/or materials that strengthen the learning environment and curriculum in key areas identified as needing improvement in a program's Quality Improvement Plan, and more.

Registry Fees

At this point, there is no specific funding pool to support Registry application fees before a program applies to YoungStar. To receive a rating above a 2 Star, the Lead Teacher/Group Leader for each classroom/group must be on The Registry in order to have his or her educational qualifications counted for that classroom/group.

However, YoungStar programs that actively participate in technical assistance can have access to micro-grants to support Registry fees. A child care program might use a portion of its micro-grant for Registry application fees if professional development is a focus of the Quality Improvement Plan.