

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 Mini-Grants to early childhood and out-of-school time programs in Maine. Programs that are pursuing OR maintaining national accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC), the Council on Accreditation (COA), the American Montessori Society (AMS), or meet all requirements assessed in all performance areas for Head Start AND maintained a Step 4 rating with *Quality for ME* are eligible to apply for these mini-grants. The purpose of these mini-grants is to fund improvements to early childhood and out-of-school time program environments. The mini-grant purchases must address accreditation standards and contribute to the program's overall quality.

### Is my program eligible for a Quality Improvement Mini-Grant (QIMG)?

A program is eligible for a Quality Improvement Mini-Grant (QIMG) if:

1. The program meets at least one of the following criteria:
  - Is an active participant in an MRTQ PDN Accreditation Cohort for a minimum of six months and has reached Step 3 with *Quality for ME* at any time between **July 1, 2019 and August 31, 2023**; OR
  - Has submitted for final accreditation observation at any time between **July 1, 2019 and August 31, 2023**; OR
  - Has maintained accreditation or met all requirements assessed in all performance areas (Head Start) AND a Step 4 at any time between **July 1, 2019 and August 31, 2023**
2. Each staff member has updated their MRTQ Registry information.
3. The program does not have a current conditional license. (Upon resolution of Conditional status, the participant may apply for the Quality Improvement Mini-Grant, if funding is still available.)

### How much QIMG funding can my program request?

QIMG funds cannot exceed \$1,500.

### Could my program be eligible for a Quality Improvement Award for moving up the Steps with *Quality for ME* and a QIMG?

Yes. If your program moves up the Steps with *Quality for ME* during the award period of July 1, 2019 to August 31, 2023 AND meets the criteria (listed above) for a QIMG, your program could apply for both a QIA and a QIMG. **Note that program must complete the QIA application in the Registry first.**

## Are there requirements for how the QIMG can be spent?

Yes. All purchases **must** align with an accreditation or Head Start standard and receive the approval of the program's accreditation facilitator at MRTQ PDN.

- **Tammy Dwyer** ([tammy.dwyer@maine.edu](mailto:tammy.dwyer@maine.edu)) is the contact for programs pursuing accreditation through the National Association for Family Child Care (**NAFCC**).
- **Diane Hancock** ([diane.hancock@maine.edu](mailto:diane.hancock@maine.edu)) is the contact for programs pursuing accreditation through the National Association for the Education of Young Children (**NAEYC**) or for out-of-school-time (OST) through the Council on Accreditation (**COA**).
- **Theresa Fisk** ([theresa.fisk@maine.edu](mailto:theresa.fisk@maine.edu)) is the contact for Head Start programs.
- Programs pursuing accreditation through the American Montessori Society (AMS) should contact **Pam Prevost** at [pamela.prevost@maine.edu](mailto:pamela.prevost@maine.edu).

QIMG funds may **NOT** be used to purchase consumable materials such as art supplies, ink, paper, etc.

All donations and in-kind support should be reported in the final documentation. This includes volunteer hours from families (e.g. for installing, constructing, or refurbishing program components), as well as other monetary or material donations made to the program as a result of the mini-grant funding.

## How can I apply for a QIMG?

1. If you are designated as the Program Owner/Director or Family Child Care Owner at your program, you can log in to your Registry account at <https://mrtq-registry.org>. If your program is eligible for a QIMG, you will see a green notification in the top-right corner of your login page.



**(Note: If your program is also eligible for a Quality Improvement Award, you will see the notification for that award FIRST.**

**Once you have completed that application, you will see the notification for the QIMG the next time you log in to the Registry.)**

2. Clicking on the "Award Opportunity" link will bring you to the application page. The page begins with QIMG information and you will scroll down to find the brief application:

3. The application requires agreeing to the Terms and Conditions and an electronic signature. Completion of these fields will bring a green "submit" button to the bottom of the screen.

Name of Child Care Program:\*

Another Center

☐ I have read the above and agree to these terms and conditions.

First Name\*

George

Middle Name/Initial

Last Name\*

Jetson

Title\*

Sign in the box below:\*

Reset

4. Once you have signed and submitted the application in the Registry, you will see the following screen:

**PLEASE NOTE:**

The first person from your program to access the application will be designated the administrator and be required to submit all documentation.

The designee can continue the application at any time either through the button below or by accessing their online training.

The application can be found in the navigation or front page course list of Moodle, MRTQ PDN's online learning platform.

To change your program's designated administrator, please contact Nicole English at [nicole.english@maine.edu](mailto:nicole.english@maine.edu).

[Go to Mini Grant Application](#)

5. Clicking on "Go to Mini-Grant Application" will bring you to Moodle, MRTQ PDN's online learning management program. From the list of courses, choose "Quality Improvement Mini-Grants, 2019-2021."



The screenshot shows the Moodle interface for the course "Quality Improvement Mini-Grants, 2019-2021". The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with the following items: "2019-2021Grants" (selected), "Participants", "Badges", "Competencies", "Introduction", "Please read first:", "Step 1: Planning Your Purchases", "Step 2: Completing the Mini-Grant Application", "Step 3: Submitting Your Final Documentation", "Home", and "Dashboard". The main content area has the title "Quality Improvement Mini-Grants, 2019-2021" and a breadcrumb trail "Home / My courses / 2019-2021Grants". Below the title is a section titled "Quality Improvement Mini-Grants 2019-2021" with the MRTQ logo. The "Introduction" section begins with a welcome message: "Welcome! This site is designed to guide you through the process of planning, applying for, and reporting on the Quality Improvement Mini-Grants available through MRTQ PDN." It continues with instructions to read all sections carefully and mentions that MRTQ PDN staff is a resource for questions. It also refers to a "Quality Improvement Mini-Grant Information" handout and states that the process is designed to be as easy as possible, with sections to guide the user through the mini grant process.



**Please read through the information in this course carefully.** The steps in the course outline the process for planning your purchases, having your plans approved, and documenting your use of the QIMG funds. You will have the guidance of the accreditation facilitator assigned to your setting (see list above).

### **What else is required of my program?**

**Before your purchases can be approved, you must confirm with Eric Norgaard, Registry Coordinator, that your program is a current vendor with the University of Southern Maine.** Contact Eric at [eric.norgaard@maine.edu](mailto:eric.norgaard@maine.edu) or 207-780-4367 to check your program's vendor status.

### **Checks cannot be processed until this step is complete!**

In addition, MRTQ PDN will send your program a short, 3-4 question survey upon completion of the process. The survey will help MRTQ PDN gather information about this process to share with our current funder and future funders. Only aggregate data will be shared; no program names will be included in the survey results and your participation will not affect your program's eligibility for the QIMG.

### **Is there a deadline to apply for a QIMG?**

The program period for the QIMGs ends on August 31, 2023. **However, these awards are first come, first-serve and will be award until funds are expended.**

### **I have another question not covered here. Who can I contact?**

The initial point of contact for QIMGs is Eric Norgaard, who can be reached at [eric.norgaard@maine.edu](mailto:eric.norgaard@maine.edu) or 207-780-4367.