

Frequently Asked Questions – Quality Improvement Awards

Eligibility

I am from a license-exempt program, are we eligible for a Quality Improvement Award?

- No. Programs must be licensed and have a Star 2 Rating with *Rising Stars for ME*.

The program I manage has multiple sites, Is each site eligible for a Quality Improvement Award?

- Yes. Each licensed program can qualify for a Quality Improvement Award if it meets all eligibility criteria.

I am working toward a Star 5 Rating and National Accreditation. Can I receive a Quality Improvement Award?

- If programs working toward or maintaining a Star 5 are scheduled to complete the Accreditation process by 10/31/25, the program is eligible for a Quality Improvement Award. The program will use the Standards for its accrediting body or Head Start program when completing the Quality Improvement Plan.

I have not completed my first *Rising Stars for ME* application. How do I receive a Quality Improvement Award?

- The first step is to complete your *Rising Stars for ME* application and E-Portfolio. Please visit the [Rising Stars for ME website](#) to access your application. If you have any questions about this process, contact risingstarsforme@maine.edu

Frequently Asked Questions Quality Improvement Awards

When I completed my first *Rising Stars for ME* application, I did not upload any documents to my E-Portfolio. Can I receive a Quality improvement Award?

- See previous answer.

To be eligible for the Quality Improvement Award, it says I need to be on the Salary Supplement Program. How do I join that program?

- Please visit the [Early Childhood Educator Workforce Salary Supplement System webpage](#), to learn more and contact ECEWageProgram.DHHS@maine.gov with questions.

We have several Star 5 child care licensed programs and will be opening a new one soon. Do we qualify for a Quality Improvement Award?

- Please reach to Karen Bergeron, mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu to discuss your eligibility.

Quality Improvement Plan

I am filling out my Quality Improvement Plan and I am not sure what resources are available to help me meet this requirement. What do I do?

- Do the best you can. It's okay if you don't know all the resources available. You'll be meeting with MRTQ PDN staff and they will help fill in the gaps.

I do not have any requirements showing on your *Rising Stars for ME* Recommendations page, What does this mean?

- This indicates that you have not completed the *Rising Stars for ME* application and E-portfolio, including uploading documents that reflect your program. To learn more, visit [Quality Rating and Improvement System \(QRIS\), Rising Stars for ME](#).

I'm having difficulty working on the spreadsheet on my device, what can I do?

- If you have limited access to the spreadsheet, please reach out to Karen Bergeron, mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu

Frequently Asked Questions Quality Improvement Awards

I am not comfortable working on a computer, how can I fill out the Quality Improvement Plan Spreadsheet?

- If you are having difficulty accessing the spreadsheet, please reach to Karen Bergeron, mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu

I work on a Mac computer; will I have any issues emailing the spreadsheet to you?

- As Mac computers often use a program a Personal Computer (PC) cannot open, please export your document to an Excel file (.xlsx) before attaching it to an email. Look for "export to" near where you typically find "save." Find more details [here](#).

Can I work toward increasing my Star rating by two Stars?

- The Quality Improvement Awards are for increasing ratings one Star at a time. Once a program has increased its first Star rating, it may begin the process again and receive an additional Quality Improvement Award for reaching the next Star rating.

Funding

Can I submit my funding request before I have determined estimates for all my purchases?

- Programs must determine all estimates before submitting a funding request so MRTQ PDN can budget for your award.

When will I receive the funds for the Quality Improvement Plan?

- The first payment will begin 2-4 weeks after the Quality Improvement Plan is completed and the funding request is approved. The amount of the payment is based on the first three months of work planned. Additional payments will be made every three months and after programs update their Quality

Frequently Asked Questions Quality Improvement Awards

Improvement Plan. Final payment will be sent out 2-4 weeks after the program has met all requirements and has increased its Star rating,

What should I do if I have received approval for my funding requests but have changed my mind?

- If the change increases the total funding amount, there is no guarantee this request can be met.
- If the change reduces the total funding amount, adjustments may be made to a future payment or you may be asked to return unused funds.
- Please contact Karen Bergeron, mrtq.qiawards@maine.edu