

## **Encouraging Financial Incentives for Head Start Programs**

Katie Hamm: Hi, my name is Katie Hamm, and I'm the acting director of the Office of Head Start. I want to talk to you today about something hugely important, and that is bonuses or financial incentives for Head Start staff. We have heard from grantees across the country that you are struggling to recruit and retain qualified staff.

That's why last month, the Office of Head Start put out guidance that affirms you can use your Head Start funds to create financial incentives or bonuses as a recruitment and a retention tool. A few points as you kind of think through this policy. It's really important that you think not only about using this for recruitment, but also as a reward and as a retention strategy for staff who've been working really hard through the pandemic.

The second thing you want to think about is probably spreading these bonuses out over time so that they can be an ongoing retention tool. If this is something you're interested in, you want to make sure that you update your written policies, and you have your governing board approve that before you give out financial incentives.

But I really want to affirm for all of our grant recipients out there, you can use your Head Start dollars to provide financial incentives for staff. We want you to. We want you to be able to get qualified staff into those classrooms and be ready to roll when the fall school year starts. If you have any questions as always, you can reach out to your regional program specialist.

Thank you for all you continue to do for children and families. And thank you for listening.