

Health Care Worker Bonus Program – NYSNA FAQs

1. Who is eligible for a bonus?

Frontline healthcare and mental hygiene workers who provided hands-on assistance with health or care services may be eligible for New York’s health care worker bonus program.

To receive a bonus, an employee must

- Work for a qualified employer for the duration of a six-month “vesting period”
- Earn less than gross annual wages of \$125,000 (including any differentials, but excluding any bonus or overtime pay)
- Not be suspended or excluded from the Medicaid program during the vesting period

Many types of healthcare workers and support workers are eligible for the bonus; the full list of eligible job titles is [here](#), and includes titles like Nurse Anesthetists, Nurse Midwives, Nursing Assistants, and Registered Nurses.

2. I am a nurse at an educational facility, not a medical facility. Am I still eligible?

You may be eligible for a bonus payment. Education employers will have a different timeline for submission of eligible employees, which has not yet been announced. NYSNA will update members when more information is available.

3. What about RNs who work in job titles that may not be directly assigned to hospital floors?

The law requires that to be eligible, RNs must provide “provide hands on health or care services.” NYSNA’s position is that all RNs who care for patients, regardless of your role at the facility, should receive the bonus and we will advocate for this at each NYSNA facility.

4. What is a “vesting period”?

The vesting period is the six-month period that employers will use to determine eligibility for each round of bonus payments. The first period runs from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022. The second period runs from April 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022. Eligibility is based on whether you worked during the vesting period and the average weekly hours worked.

5. How do I know if I meet the salary requirements?

The salary requirement of gross annual wages of \$125,000 or less (including differentials, but excluding any bonus or overtime pay) is based on what an employee earns during the vesting period. Gross wages does *not* include bonus payments, hazard pay, or overtime payments. Gross wages *does* include components of pay like education differentials or shift differentials. Income from all qualified employers is included in this calculation.

6. Is there anything I can do to receive a bonus if my gross annual wages exceed \$125,000?

While employers will not get reimbursed from the state for paying you the bonus, there is nothing prohibiting employers from including you. NYSNA plans to advocate at each facility to include RNs in this situation and to propose this to employers at the bargaining table.

7. What if I work for multiple employers?

Income from all qualified employers is included in the wage calculation for eligibility. For example, if you work part-time positions at two different hospitals simultaneously, your incomes from both positions will be included in the calculation.

8. How much money will I receive?

A qualified employee is eligible for a bonus for up to two vesting periods per employer. The amount of the bonus depends on the average weekly hours worked over the course of the vesting period. If an employee worked full time during a vesting period, the bonus payment will be \$1,500. Each employee can receive a maximum of \$3,000 in bonus payments in total.

Qualified employees who work

- at least 20 hours but no more than 30 hours/week are eligible for a \$500 bonus;
- at least 30 hours but no more than 35 hours/week are eligible for a \$1,000 bonus;
- at least 35 hours per week are eligible for a \$1,500 bonus.

9. Can I choose which vesting periods are counted for my bonus payments?

No. There is no ability for an employee or an employer to choose which vesting periods are used to calculate bonus payments. You will receive a bonus payment for the first two vesting periods in which you are eligible.

10. When will I receive my bonus payment?

Employers must submit information about employees who are eligible for the first bonus payment by September 2, 2022. Employers must then pay employees within 30 days of receipt of money from the state. It is not yet clear how long it will take for the state to pay employers, so we cannot yet predict exactly when bonus payments will be paid.

11. I did not work during the first vesting period. Will I still be able to get a bonus payment at some point?

Yes. If you are not eligible for the first round of payments, you still may be eligible for later payments. There will be five vesting periods under this bonus program. The second period is from April 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022. Employers will submit the list of eligible employees for that period by October 31, 2022. The full list of vesting periods is [here](#).

12. I took leave through the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) during the vesting period. How will this affect my bonus?

Use of FMLA time, or other accrued sick or vacation time, is credited towards the average hours worked per week. For example, if an employee was out sick for two weeks and used accrued sick time that was the hourly equivalent of normal workweeks, the average hours worked should not be affected.

13. Do I need to take any action to ensure that I receive my bonus?

Your employer will ask you to sign an attestation form about the appropriate vesting period. It is important that employees review this form carefully before signing, as it asks about income from all employers during the vesting period, not just the employer who is giving you the form. You can review the form [here](#).

14. Will I still receive my bonus payment if I resign from my job?

Generally, an employee must still be employed at the time of payment to receive the bonus. Even if you worked for the full vesting period, you will not be paid the bonus if you resign, quit, or leave your employment prior to the bonus payment distribution to employees.

15. Will I receive my bonus payment if I am terminated by my employer?

You may be still eligible to receive a bonus payment if you worked for your employer for a full vesting period, but your employer terminates your employment before the bonus payment is distributed to employees.

16. I believe I am eligible, but my employer says I am not. What should I do?

NYSNA will monitor this program closely to ensure all eligible NYSNA members are included. Members with additional questions concerning eligibility should reach out to their NYSNA representative.

17. What happens if my employer refuses to give eligible employees the bonus?

If an employer does not comply with the bonus program requirements, a complaint may be made to the Office of Medicaid Inspector General (OMIG) by calling OMIG's Fraud Hotline at 1-877-87 FRAUD (1-877-873-7283) or [filing a claim online](#).