

The Arc

Lexington

New York

A family-based organization
for people with intellectual
and developmental disabilities

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January 28, 2022

Dear Lexington Staff Member,

Because of you, Lexington had a year filled with compassion, support, kindness and friendship and looks forward to continuing to successfully navigate through the adversities we are facing to help people we support live their best lives in 2022.

I had previously shared with you that as a result of our advocacy efforts on behalf of Direct Support Professionals (DSPs), OPWDD has been able to secure additional federal funding for DSPs. I would like to share additional information with you, so you fully understand what to expect. I apologize for the complexity of the information. We ask you to contact any member of the leadership team if you have any questions. We are also offering employee information meetings via Zoom to answer your questions.

There are four types of bonuses in this additional funding with different eligibility and payout rules. These funds are not expected to be received by agencies until sometime in the Spring after which agencies will have 90-180 days (depending on the type of bonus) to disburse it.

Employees must be actively employed on the date of each bonus payment in order to be eligible to receive that payment. Here are the relevant details as well as some preliminary information regarding how Lexington is disbursing these funds:

COVID Service Bonus: Lexington paid out this bonus on December 15, 2021. It provided for \$1,000 per full-time DSP (as defined by OPWDD) who worked at least a 90-day period during the period of 3/17/2020 to 9/1/2021 and continued to be actively employed on 12/15/21. While this funding has not been received, Lexington advanced the money to provide this bonus to all eligible employees on Dec. 15, 2021. Lexington supplemented this by \$550,000 to provide a bonus to employees who did not meet the eligibility criteria for the COVID service bonus and up to \$500 to recognize Senior employees. These amounts were pro-rated for employees who were not full-time.

Vaccination Bonus for DSPs: OPWDD will also issue an additional bonus to each of the staff who qualified for the COVID Service bonus who were fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by January 14, 2022 as follows: \$500 to full-time employees; \$250 to part-time employees with 20 or more scheduled hours/week; and \$125 to employees with less than 20 hours scheduled/week. Lexington has not received these funds yet but is working on compiling the list of eligible staff and will advance the money for distribution on March 11, 2022.

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Longevity Bonus: This bonus will be available to DSPs (as defined by OPWDD) who worked during the period of time between 4/1/2020 and 3/31/2021 and remain actively employed on the date that these bonuses are paid out. Sometime in the Spring, Lexington will receive one-time funding equal to 20% of the Direct Care costs (base salary only) it reported to OPWDD in 2019. That amount must be divided by the number of current eligible employees and distributed to them within 90 days of receiving these funds. Per OPWDD rules, all eligible DSPs must receive a payment which represents an identical percentage calculated relative to their annual base salary. We expect this percentage to be at least 20% of the base salary (which does not include overtime, premium or differential pay, or previous bonuses) you earned between 4/1/20 - 3/31/21. For example, if you earned a base salary of \$30,000 between 4/1/20 and 3/31/21, your longevity bonus will be at least 20% of \$30,000 or \$6,000. Lexington will calculate the bonus amount due each eligible employee and will disburse in three monthly installments after we receive the funds from OPWDD. More details and specific rules will be shared over the next couple of months.

Retention Bonus: – For the funds in this category only, OPWDD has provided an option to provider agencies to develop a distribution plan to address the agency’s unique recruitment and retention challenges. It can be used to provide bonuses and incentives to eligible DSPs, fund salary increases given to eligible DSPs after July 8, 2021, and fund recruitment incentives given to eligible DSPs, such as referral bonuses, sign-on bonuses, etc.

Based on our DSP coverage needs, Lexington has developed a distribution plan which is [linked here](#). There are three components:

- Fund the salary increase given on July 18, 2021, for eligible DSPs during the bonus period.
- Temporarily increase the **Employee Referral bonus** to \$1,500 to increase applicant referrals. Employees will earn \$1,500 per referral— \$450 after 30 days, \$600 after 90 days and \$450 after 180 days of the date of hire of the referred employee. The rules governing the current employee referral bonus will apply. This would invest in our current employees as ambassadors of Lexington rather than providing new employees a sign-on bonus.
- Use the majority of the funding to provide a Temporary Monthly Gratitude Bonus (TMGB) to our staff who are working as DSPs to recognize them for providing such critical supports. The guidelines governing this bonus are as follows:

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Effective January 30, 2022, a Temporary Monthly Gratitude Bonus (TMGB) will be given to any employee in the agency that works DSP hours either as a primary or secondary job.

The TMGB amount will be calculated based on the DSP hours worked during the previous two payroll periods according to the following chart:

Hours receiving 15% Bonus		Hours receiving 25% Bonus	
Monday - Thursday	7am – 11pm	Monday – Thursday	11pm – 7am
Friday	7am – 3pm	Friday 3pm – Monday 7am	

Bonus Period: The Bonus period will begin on January 30, 2022. It will be paid as a separate check on a monthly basis, with the first three check dates being February 25, March 22 and April 19. It will be paid each month until we reach the deadline for its use which is 180 days after receipt of the funds. We will announce the deadline (likely September-October) after we receive the funds from OPWDD.

Eligibility for the TMGB: OPWDD was expecting to be able to provide this funding last Fall and only included DSPs (as defined by OPWDD) who worked during the period of time between 4/1/2021 and 3/31/2022 as being eligible. Lexington's internal budget will cover any DSP's that are hired after 3/31/2022. This will expand the pool of employees that may be willing to cover our critical needs.

DSP Positions – We have attached a list of positions that OPWDD classifies as a DSP position. Please review it carefully as some positions have been added. OPWDD has specific date criteria in their eligibility guidelines. With the exception of the expanded eligibility for the TMGB and Referral bonus, funded through Lexington's budget, Lexington has attested that it will strictly follow OPWDD's criteria for eligibility. **Employees must be actively employed on the date of each bonus payment in order to be eligible to receive that payment.**

Non-DSPs who work DSP hours as a Secondary job – Per OPWDD's rules, all positions that work DSP hours as a secondary job are included in these bonuses. Their eligibility and bonus amounts will be based on their DSP hours only and their Secondary base wage earnings.

Reconciliation – At the end of the disbursement deadline for each bonus (likely around September), our Finance department will do a final reconciliation to determine if there are any funds remaining from this program. We will distribute any remaining funds to eligible DSPs as a final bonus at that time.

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Non-DSPs – In the words of OPWDD, “OPWDD selected a focus on DSPs to address the critical staffing shortage stemming from the COVID-19 emergency; this decision was further influenced by a universal consensus amongst stakeholders that supporting these staff was the priority to ensure continued availability of supports and services.” Along with our DSPs, Lexington appreciates everything you do. Without your support, whether directly or indirectly, our DSPs would not be as successful as they are in helping people achieve their best lives. We would love to have funding that covers all our employees and have continued to advocate for that. But I hope you will join me in being grateful that the Government is finally recognizing the extremely critical role our DSPs play in supporting the people we serve and the sacrifices they make in being there 24/7.

Lexington committed to a **wage initiative** in 2019 and has since distributed millions of dollars to our employees in the form of raises and bonuses. We continue to be committed to that and will be announcing a bonus for all employees soon.

I realize that this communication has been very complicated. The guidelines surrounding these bonuses are extremely complex. We are still reviewing them to ensure that we understand all the rules and nuances. We will keep you informed as we learn more. We have scheduled Employee Information meetings via Zoom to answer your questions. Here are the links:

- 1) Option 1: Tuesday, Feb 8, 2022 04:00 PM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88327643691>
By Phone: (646) 558 8656 or (646) 518 9805
Meeting ID: 883 2764 3691
- 2) Option 2: Wednesday, Feb 9, 2022 10:30 AM
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82760388107>
By Phone: (646) 558 8656 or (646) 518 9805
Meeting ID: 827 6038 8107

I am also pleased to share that Governor Hochul specifically mentioned strengthening our field with additional financial commitments in her State of State address earlier this month. This is the first time a Governor has included us when speaking of “Healthcare.” I’m optimistic of the financial supports that might be included in this year’s state budget for agencies like Lexington.

We will keep you informed. Thank you for all you do.

With gratitude,



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**Positions that are considered a DSP according to OPWDD's rules:
Please know that these rules are determined by OPWDD, not Lexington. If you
don't see your position listed here but believe that you are a DSP, please contact
HR.**

In Fulton and Albany counties

Albany Assistant Manager
Appointment Clerk
Appointment Clerk Coordinator
Appointment Clerk Manager
At Home Waiver Service Program Manager
Curator, Arts Center
Coordinator DOH Day Program Services
Coordinator of Employment Opportunities
Coordinator of Self Advocacy
Coordinator of Comm Supports
Coordinator of Creative Expressions
Coordinator of Employment Opportunities
Coordinator of Self Advocacy
Creative Arts & Activities Coordinator
Day Program DSC
Day Program Manager
Day Hab Direct Support Staff
Direct Support Aide
Direct Support Coordinator
Direct Support Relief Specialist
Direct Support Specialist
Direct Support Staff
Employment Specialist/Job Coach
Enclave Supervisor
Family Services DSC
Family Services DSS
Family Services Habilitation Aide
Habilitation Specialist
Human Services Intern
Job Developer
Job Trainer
LPN/DSS – assigned DSS shifts
Mobile Crew Supervisor
Peer Mentor
Peer Mentor Coordinator
PNC/Flame Manager
Quality and Support Coordinator
Recreation Activity Coordinator
Recreation Instructor

In Schoharie County

Program Aide
Res/Dayhab DSP 1
Res/Dayhab DSP 2
Res/Dayhab DSP Charge 2
Dayhab DSP 4
Residential Manager
Assistant Manager
Employment Specialist
Employment Service Professional
LPN/DSS – assigned DSS shifts

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Residence Manager
Residential Cook/DSS
Residential Direct Support Specialist OMH
Residential Weekend Q&S specialist
Respite Aide
Self Directed Habilitation Aide
Self Directed Respite Aide
Specialized Employment Specialist
Student Life Coordinator
Transition Coordinator
Transitions Manager