

2024



**Greater Twin Cities
United Way**

**EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIP
INVOICING HANDBOOK**

GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY (GTCUW)

**EARLY LEARNING SCHOLARSHIPS ADMINISTRATION (ELSA) PROGRAM
THE MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES**



*Early Learning Scholarships are provided through a grant from the Minnesota Department of Education
with funds from Minnesota State Appropriation 124D.165*



Table of Contents

Helpful Links	3
Acronyms and Definitions.....	3
Dedicated Support Teams	4
Billing Specialist Assignments	4
Meet the Greater Twin Cities United Way ELSA Team!	4
ELSA Program Overview.....	7
Early Learning Scholarships: The Administrative Process Overview	1
Technology Systems in place to manage ELS	1
Why the Change to Central Payer?	1
New Administrative Process Roles and Responsibilities	1
Central Payment Administrator – Invoice and Payment Management for Providers (Greater Twin Cities United Way)	2
Guidelines for Provider Use of Scholarship Funds.....	2
Overview of Scholarship Process.....	4
Scholarship Award and Program Selection Process Overview	4
Invoicing Process Overview	5
Invoice Remittance	6
Invoice Best Practices.....	7
Naming your Invoice File	7
Saving Your Invoices	7
Saving an Invoice - Excel File - PC	7
Saving an Invoice – PDF File – PC	11
Follow these steps to turn your EXCEL file into a PDF	11
Uploading an Invoice Walk-Through	17
Filling Out an Invoice Walk-Through	22
Cover Page	23
2) Invoice Details	24
2a) Invoice Details – Final Invoice and Scheduled to Attend	24
2b) Invoice Details – Closures and Absences	25
2c) Invoice Details – Program Tuition	26
2d) Invoice Details – Fees	26
2e) Invoice Details: Payments and Scholarship Payment Amount Requested	27
Common Invoice Submission Errors	28
Children without an SSID	28



Children Not In ELSA.....	28
Children Switching Programs and Area Administrators	29
Payment Adjustments	29



Helpful Links

- **Recorded Session: Pathway I and Pathway II Child Care Invoicing**
 - Recording of the September Pathway I & II Invoicing Webinar
 - [Invoicing Recording Link](#)
 - Passcode: ELSInvoicing25!
- **Greater Twin Cities United Way SharePoint File Drop Link**
 - For invoice submissions and to send W9 and/or ACH forms
 - This is available on our landing page as well
 - [File Drop Link](#)
- **Greater Twin Cities United Way Early Learning Scholarship Landing Page**
 - [Landing Page Link](#)
- **Department of Children Youth and Families (DCYF) Early Learning Scholarships Hub**
 - Information and Application for families interested in Early Learning Scholarships
 - [DCYF Scholarships Hub Link](#)

Acronyms and Definitions

AA	Area Administrator
ACH	Automatic Clearing House (direct deposit information)
AP	Accounts Payable
APA	Award Planning Agreement
DCYF	Department of Children, Youth and Families
ELSA System	Early Learning Scholarship Administration System (State System)
ELS ID	Unique ID assigned to each site by GTCUW for provider/program invoice and payment tracking
GTCUW	Greater Twin Cities United Way
Invoice Cover Page	Invoice packet page that includes program/provider contact information and billing period details
Invoice Detail Page	Invoice packet page that includes the specific scholarship payment request information for each child
Invoice Packet	The entire invoice file that includes the cover page and the invoice details Page that includes provider contact information and billing period details
PPA	Program Participation Agreement
PW I	Pathway I Scholarships – scholarships awarded to families to help pay for childcare costs. This is transferable to a new eligible program if the family leaves the current program (more information in next section).
PW II	Pathway II Scholarships – scholarships awarded to programs/providers to administer to families/children who meet eligibility criteria in their programs. These are not transferable if a child leaves the awarded program (more information in next section).



Remittance Sent to providers/programs via email after invoice payment has processed

Dedicated Support Teams

Billing Specialist Assignments

We have assigned billing specialists to the regions that are managed by the Area Administrators. Your billing specialist will be the assigned person based on your Program location. Please see the chart in the appendix for your assigned billing specialist.

This will build rapport and trust, while also giving each of you a single point of contact for all invoicing related items.

If you have questions that have not yet been answered, or if you think of any new questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your billing specialist!

If you don't receive a response from your billing specialist within 2 business days, please reach out to **Krystal Shatek**: krystal.shatek@gtcuw.org

Meet the Greater Twin Cities United Way ELSA Team!

Billing Specialist	Email	Assignment	Counties
Patience Anderson	patience.anderson@gtcuw.org	All KinderCare owned sites	
Leyla Bakir	leyla.bakir@gtcuw.org	Community Action Partnership of Ramsey & Washington Counties Region 11 - Anoka County Community Action Program YMCA - Early Childhood Learning Centers	Washington Anoka
Brooke Schaefer	brooke.schaefer@gtcuw.org	Region 10 - Child Care Resource and Referral (Families First)	Olmsted Goodhue Rice Wabasha Steele Dodge Winona Freeborn Mower Fillmore Houston
Tricia Christensen	tricia.christensen@gtcuw.org	All New Creations Sites	
Kaitlin Knott	kaitlin.knott@gtcuw.org	All New Horizon Owned Sites	



Billing Specialist	Email	Assignment	Counties
PaDer (Pa) Her	pader.her@gtcuw.org	Region 7W - Milestones Region 8 - Southwest MN Opportunity Council	Benton Sherburne Stearns Wright Cottonwood Jackson Lincoln Lyon Murray Nobles Pipestone Redwood Rock
Lisa Stommes	lisa.stommes@gtcuw.org	All Pathway II Scholarships (excluding Public, Charter and Head Start Preschool Programs)	
Kelsey Russell	kelsey.russell@gtcuw.org	Region 11 - Think Small	Ramsey Hennepin
Kayla Knott	kayla.knott@gtcuw.org	Region 11 - Think Small	Ramsey Hennepin
Jamie Wandzel	jamie.wandzel@gtcuw.org	Region 7E & 9 - Child Care Resource and Referral (Families First) Region 11 - Child Care Resource and Referral (Families First)	Chisago Isanti Kanabec Mille Lacs Pine Blue Earth Brown Faribault Le Sueur Martin Nicollet Sibley Waseca Watsonwan Carver Scott Dakota



Billing Specialist	Email	Assignment	Counties
MaiNyua Lee	mainyua.lee@gtcuw.org	Region 4 - Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership Regions 2 & 5 - Mahube-OTWA Community Action Partnership	Becker Clay Douglas Grant Otter Tail Pope Stevens Traverse Wilkin Beltrami Clearwater Hubbard Lake of the Woods Mahnomen Cass Crow Wing Morrison Todd Wadena
Tina Saue	tina.saue@gtcuw.org	Region 3 - Northland Foundation Region 6E - United Community Action Partnership (UCAP) Region 6W – Prairie Five Community Action Council Region 1 - Tri-Valley Opportunity Council	Aitkin Carlton Cook Itasca Koochiching Lake St. Louis Kandiyohi McLeod Meeker Renville Big Stone Chippewa Lac Qui Parle Swift Yellow Medicine Kittson Marshall Norman Pennington Polk Red Lake Roseau



Early Learning Scholarships Program Overview

Early learning scholarships support access to quality early education and care programs by bridging funding gaps and decreasing barriers. Awarded families use the early learning scholarships to access a high-quality early childhood program for their child. Scholarship funds are used to cover the cost of serving additional children, extending a child's time in a high-quality program, parent fees, and charges for the child's attendance and/or enhanced services. Early learning scholarships are administered by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Scholarships must be used in programs that are participating in Parent Aware. Parent Aware, administered by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), is Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System for early childhood programs. Parent Aware Star Ratings, which are based on research, help families identify programs that prepare children for kindergarten. Any program participating in Parent Aware is eligible to accept scholarships.

Families can access early learning scholarships in one of two ways:

- Pathway I
 - Scholarships are awarded to eligible children through Area Administrators.
 - Scholarships may be used for allowable costs and services provided by an eligible program selected by the family.
 - Scholarships can follow the child to a different eligible program in the event of a program change.
 - Childcare providers submit Invoices to the Central Payment Administrator who will then disburse the funds from DCYF.
- Pathway II
 - Awarded to eligible children through a Parent Aware Four-Star Rated program that has been funded with Pathway II dollars.
 - Used only for allowable costs and services provided by the Pathway II program that made the award.
 - Ends when a child leaves the Pathway II program that made the award.
 - Pathway II funded childcare programs submit Invoices to the Central Payment Administrator who will then disburse the funds from DCYF.

Area Administrators are organizations which administer scholarships throughout Minnesota. They do outreach, process applications, and verify eligibility. Area Administrators award scholarships directly to eligible children.



Early Learning Scholarships (ELS): The Administrative Process Overview

Review the following to familiarize yourself with the ELS Administrative Process:

Technology Systems in place to manage ELS

There are multiple state systems in place that support the case management and payment processes for the Early Learning Scholarship Program. These systems are called the Early Learning Scholarship Online Application Hub and The Early Learning Scholarship Administration System (ELSA). These are both secure web applications (systems) that were created and are managed by the Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to support implementation and oversight of the Early Learning Scholarships Program.

Both systems are used by the GTCUW and all Area Administrators and serve as the data and payment systems for the real-time management of allocated scholarship funds, administration of child records and scholarship awards, and processing of scholarship and administrative payment requests.

Why the Change to a Central Payment Administrator?

After two years of seeking provider and stakeholder feedback, MDE learned:

- Scholarship funds were not equitably distributed statewide
- Wait lists were too high in parts of state while there was no waitlist in others
- Moving funds from one part of the state to the other was administratively time consuming
- Requesting payment from different Area Administrators was administratively burdensome for programs serving children from multiple regions
- Move to Central Payment Administrator reduces these barriers
 - Allows the state to hold Pathway I dollars in one pot to move where the need is
 - Payment abilities and processing is the primary focus for the Central Payment Administrator
- The State was required to do a competitive request for proposal (RFP) in order to select the most qualified organization to be the Central Payment Administrator
- Due to delay in funds being set up for FY25, the State had a 2-3 week delay in communication with Greater Twin Cities United Way, which cause there to be only a short window of preparation time for GTCUW to train and prepare for the role of central payer.

New Administrative Process Roles and Responsibilities

Area Administrator – Case Management for Children and Families

- Organizations across the state that provide case management to scholarship eligible children in their region
- Conduct outreach to families for early learning scholarship awareness



- Process scholarship applications and verify the child’s eligibility
- Award Pathway I Scholarships to Eligible Children in their Region
- Award Pathway II Scholarships to children in Pathway II Funded Child Care Programs
- Manage child records in State System (ELSA), including Award Planning Agreements (APA) and assigning children to their chosen early learning program in state systems
- Communicate with childcare and early education programs about needed information to ensure a child is ready for payment

Central Payment Administrator – Invoice and Payment Management for Providers (Greater Twin Cities United Way)

- Works with programs to ensure programs are ready for payments, including all required forms are completed.
- Receives invoice forms from childcare and early education providers
- Processes invoice forms from childcare and early education providers and enters them into the state system
- Ensure that child records are up-to-date (e.g. the child is ready for payment) prior to making payment (requires coordination with AA if records need updating)
- Facilitates payments from DCYF to childcare and early education providers
- Supports providers when invoice issues arise

Guidelines for Provider Use of Scholarship Funds

(taken from the State Early Learning Scholarships Program Policy Manual, pg 25-27)

The following sections provide guidance for the charges that are allowed to be billed to a child’s scholarship, and charges that are nonallowable uses of scholarship funds:

Approved Uses for Programs to use Scholarship Funds

- Serve additional children.
- Cover the cost or tuition of the early childhood program for the child’s regularly scheduled full- or part-time attendance.
- Cover any payment required for a child to receive services such as private pay charges, co-payments and parent fees.
- Cover additional fees to families that are required for a child’s attendance in the program, such as uniforms or activity fees, and curriculum, if charged to all families.
- Cover required fees in the program’s contract up to two-week notice (these days should be documented as absent days).
- Cover up to the maximum 25 absent days in child care programs.
 - School-based and Head Start programs should view the guidance described previously in the 25 Absent Day Policy section of this manual.
- Cover up to 10 planned closure days (e.g., staff development, vacation days), and up to 11 holidays, if part of the early childhood program’s contract or public calendar.



- Unplanned days that meet the expanded criteria may be covered if the Program Closure Request Form is completed.
- Cover basic transportation to and from the program, if it is provided by an employee of the program and uses a licensed commercial transportation vehicle for transporting children. (The vehicle must meet federal standards for school transportation and federal manufacturing standards that provide appropriate public safety for children).
- Contracts with licensed transportation companies and bus passes are allowable. Note: This is an allowable cost that may be charged to scholarships in order for a child to access the program without this being a required fee for all children.
- Meals when provided by the program for an additional fee and at family choice.\

Unallowable uses of scholarship funds include:

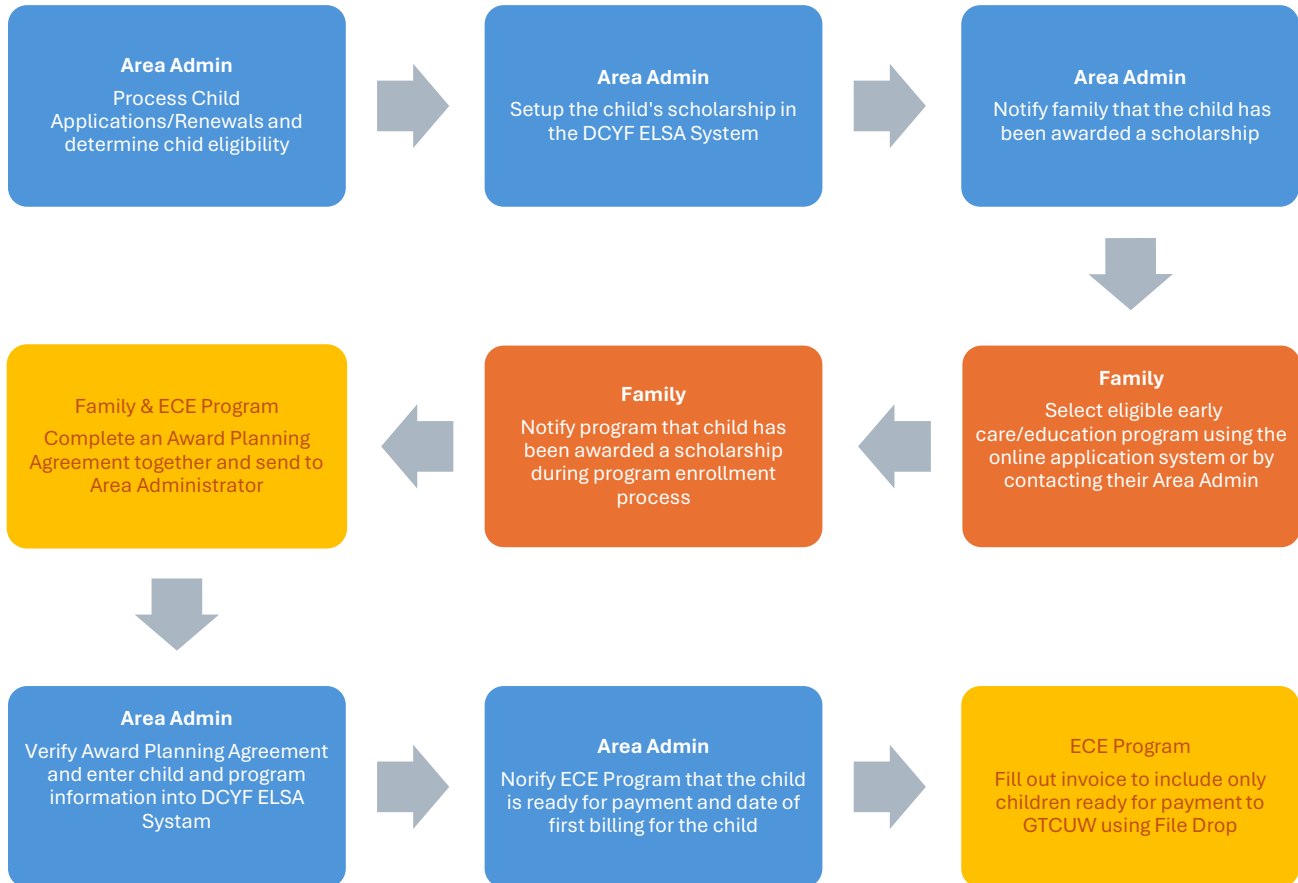
- Capital improvements/assets (repair or improve physical structure of the building)
- Purchase of a bus, vehicle, gas cards and/or stipends to an individual to transport a family (such as Uber, Lyft or other ride sharing services).
- Fees for late payment or late pickup (ex: 15-minute late fee after business hours, outstanding balances, or fees incurred prior to the awarding of the scholarship)
- Registration fees, deposits, or other fees to hold a spot for a program the child is not yet attending.
- Fees to hold a spot while a child is temporarily not attending the program.
- Paying for more than one program for the same period of time (service period).
- Back-up child care, or other release days from the child's primary program.
- Overnight child care.
- Optional additional fees to families that are not required for a child's attendance in the program, such as private tutoring, lessons, or consumables.
- Charging families with scholarships more than the private pay full-paying rate for like services or, for publicly funded programs, more than the actual cost of the program.
- Spending down scholarship balances on any items or costs as enhancements that have not been pre-approved as needed for the child to successfully attend the program.



Overview of Scholarship Process

The following flowcharts explain the steps and processes that are part of the Early Learning Scholarship Program.

Scholarship Award and Program Selection Process Overview



Greater Twin Cities United Way is not responsible for these steps and cannot process payment until all these steps are completed.



Invoice Remittance

- You will receive a remittance via email that lists the amount that was paid – this amount SHOULD match the amount you requested in your invoice.
- GTCUW only processes partial payments of invoices for special circumstances, so there should be no discrepancies between your invoice and your actual payment.
- If there are children listed on the invoice that are not ready for payment (there are several reasons this may be true, including that child records may need to be updated in state systems) you will be asked to remove those children from the invoice and resubmit with only children who are ready for payment.
- If child records require updating in the system, the Central Payment Administrator will inform the appropriate Area Administrator of this, and the AA will work to make necessary updates.
- Once you receive confirmation from your Area Administrator that the child is ready for payment, you may submit a NEW invoice for the service periods that you have not received payment for those specific children.
- If your remittance does not reflect the amount you submitted for payment on your invoice, you should have received communication from your billing specialist with instructions to resubmit an invoice that is fully payable.
- If you did NOT hear from your billing specialist regarding any issues on your invoice, please email your billing specialist directly and copy **Krystal Shatek – Senior Manager of ELSA Scholarship Department** (krystal.Shatek@gtcuw.org) so that we can provide you with the details explaining why there is a difference.



Invoice Best Practices

Naming your Invoice File

When saving your invoices before uploading them to our Portal File Drop, please use the following file naming rules which are also posted on our website landing page.

- **For programs with ONE location/site:**
 - ELS ID – Program Name - Service period
 - (i.e., 123456 – Hallie Q Brown Invoice - 7.8-7.24)
- **For Programs with multiple locations/sites**
 - ELS ID - Program Name – Site Name - Service period
 - (i.e., 234567 - Primrose School - Apple Valley Invoice - 7.8 - 7.21.24)
- **If you have BOTH Pathway I and Pathway II, please add PWI or PWII after the program/location name.**
 - ELS ID – Program Name - Service period – PWI
 - (i.e., 123456 – Hallie Q Brown Invoice - 7.8-7.24 - PWI)

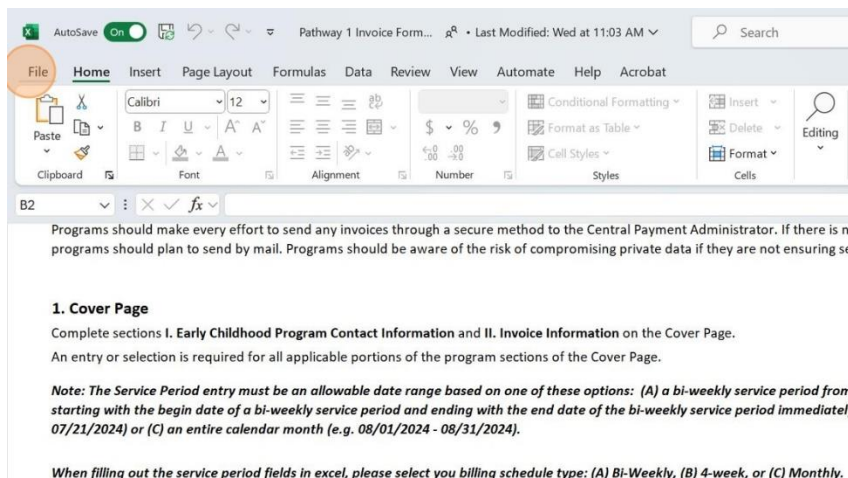
ELS ID is your Early Learning Scholarship ID that is used to track ECE programs through the year.

Helpful Tip: Use your previous invoice as a template and change the file name to the current service period when you save the new invoice.

Saving Your Invoices

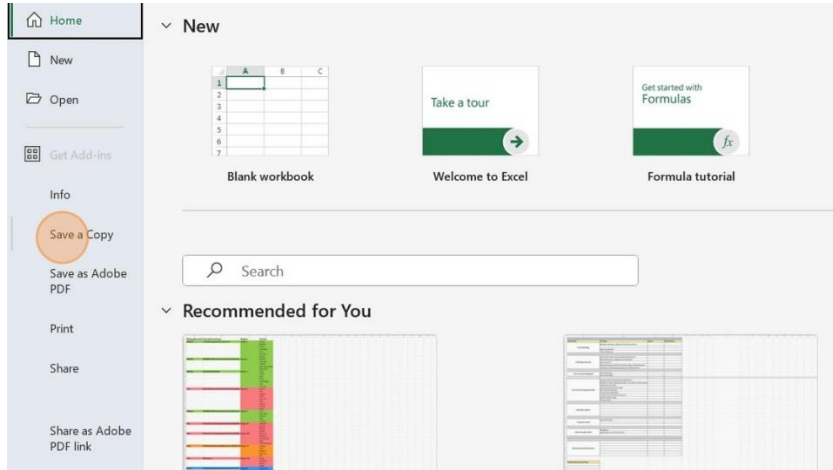
Saving an Invoice - Excel File - PC [View Scribe Tutorial](#)

1. Click "File Tab"

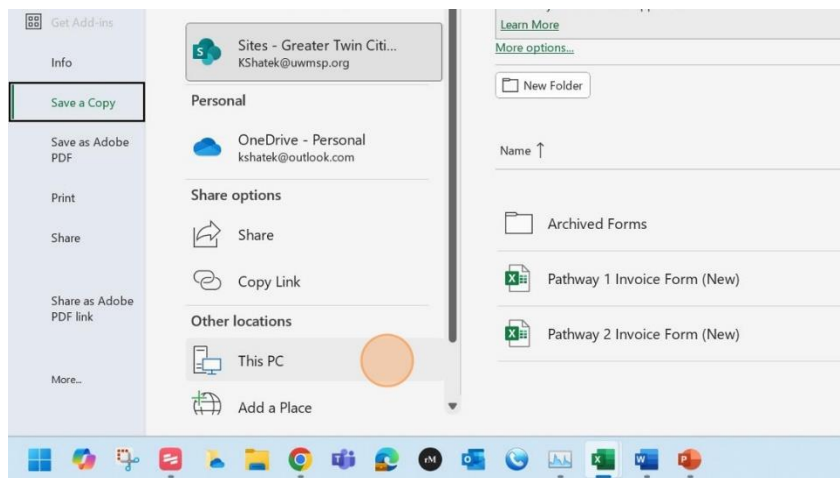




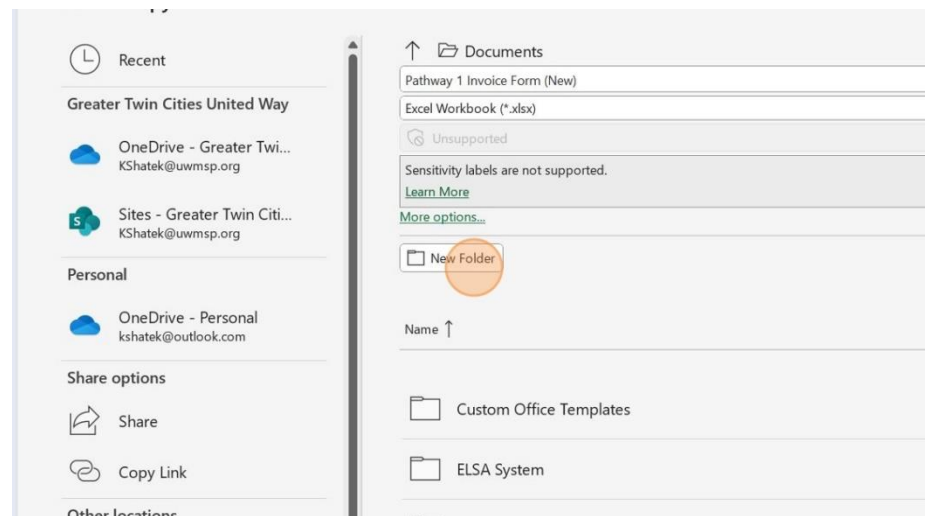
2. Click "Save a Copy"



3. Click the folder location on your PC where you would like to store your invoices

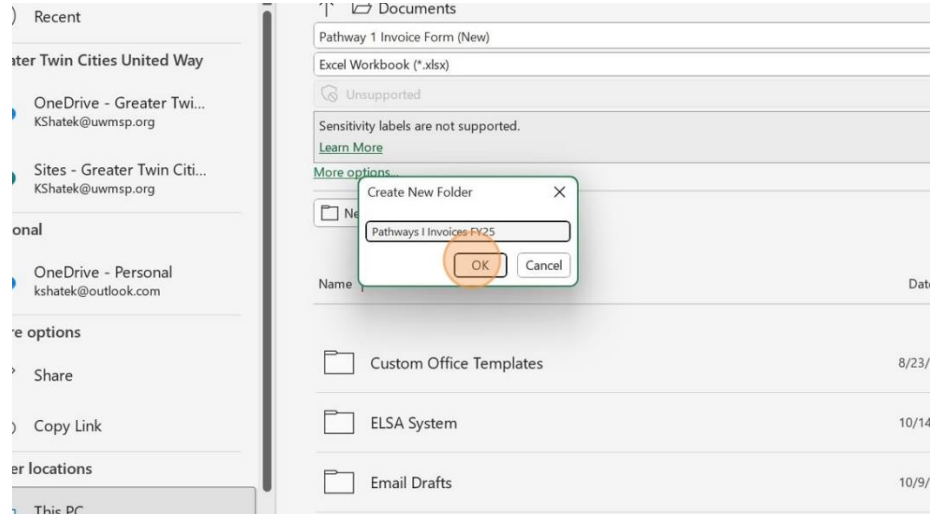


4. Click "New Folder"

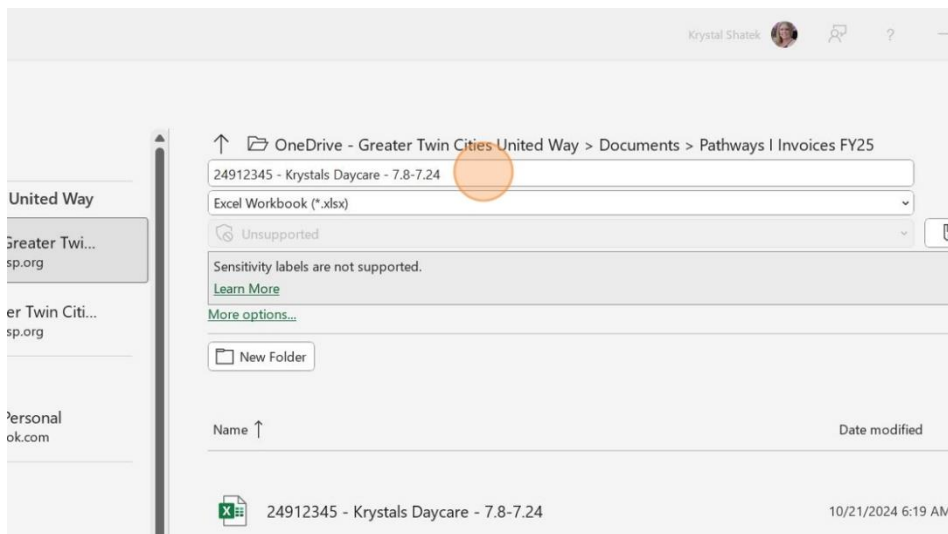




5. Name your folder in a way that is easy for you to identify as your invoice folder

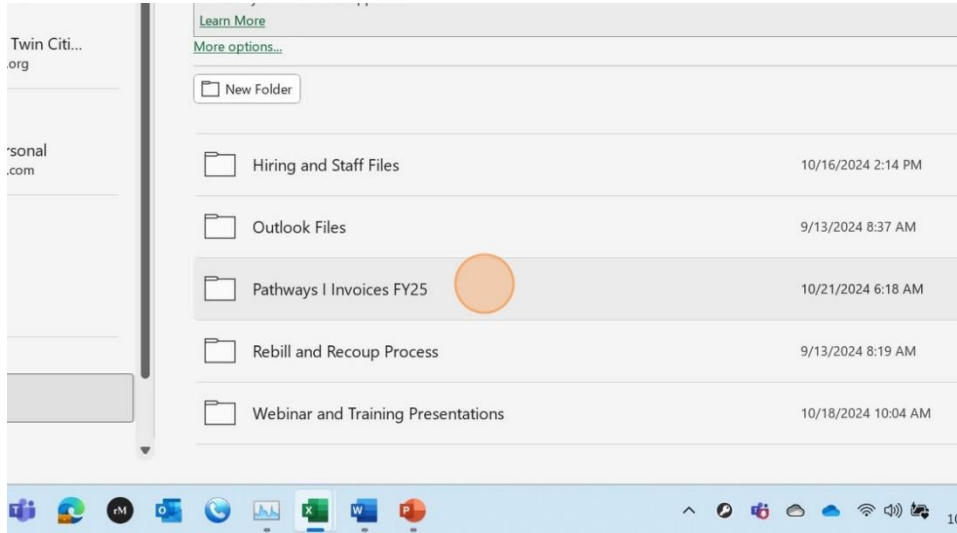


6. Name your file using the File Naming Rules

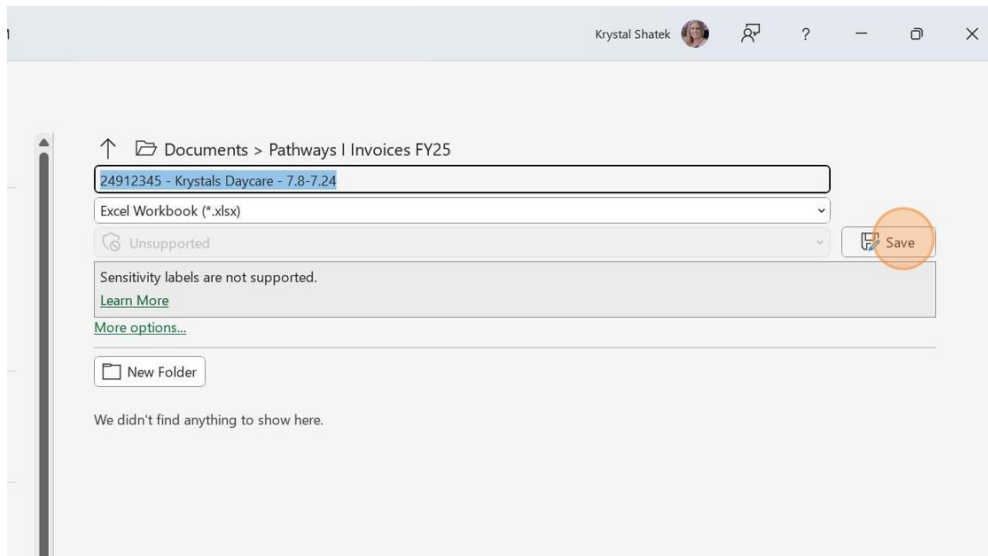




7. Click the folder you created for invoice storage



8. Click "Save"

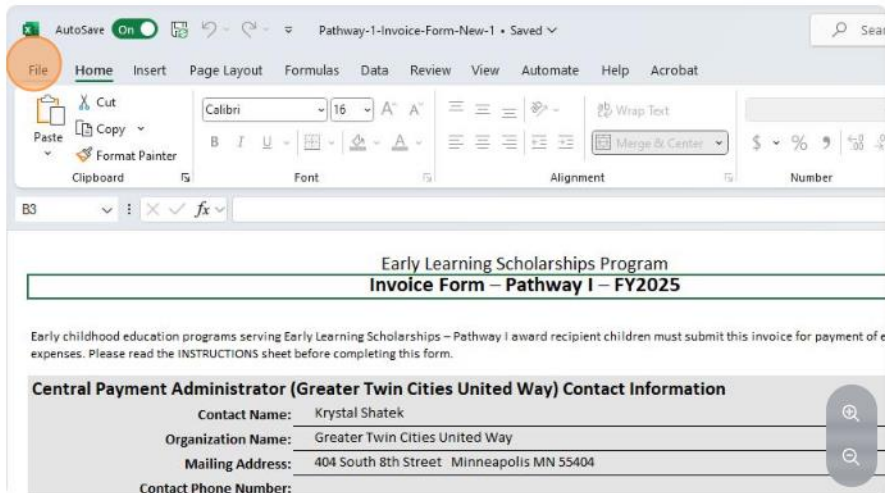




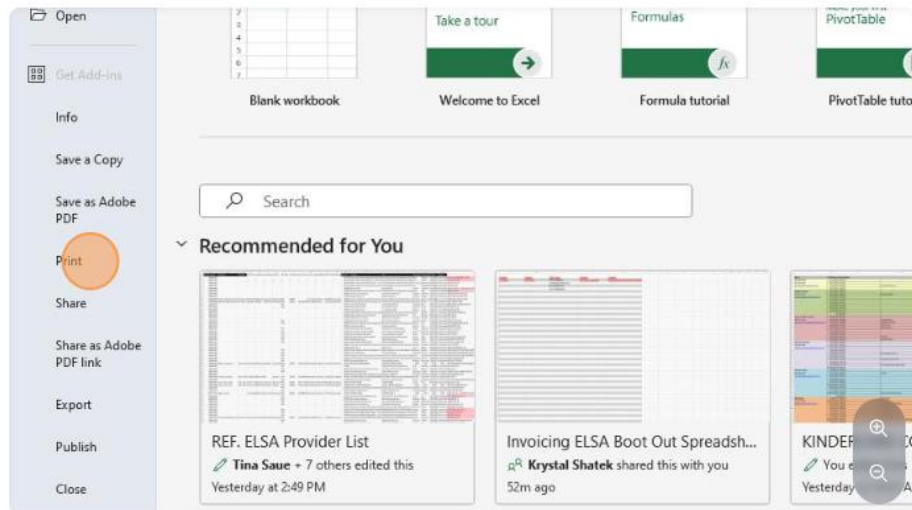
Saving an Invoice – PDF File – PC

Follow these steps to turn your EXCEL file into a PDF

- 1 Click "File Tab"

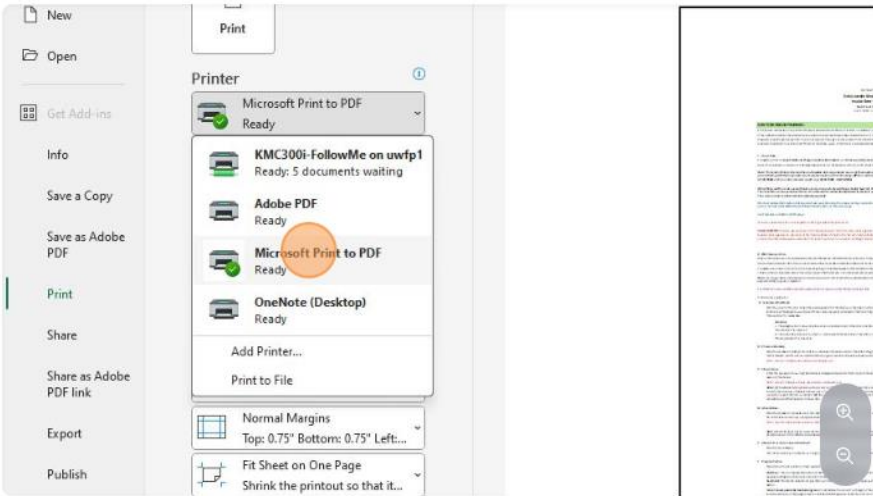


- 2 Click "Print"

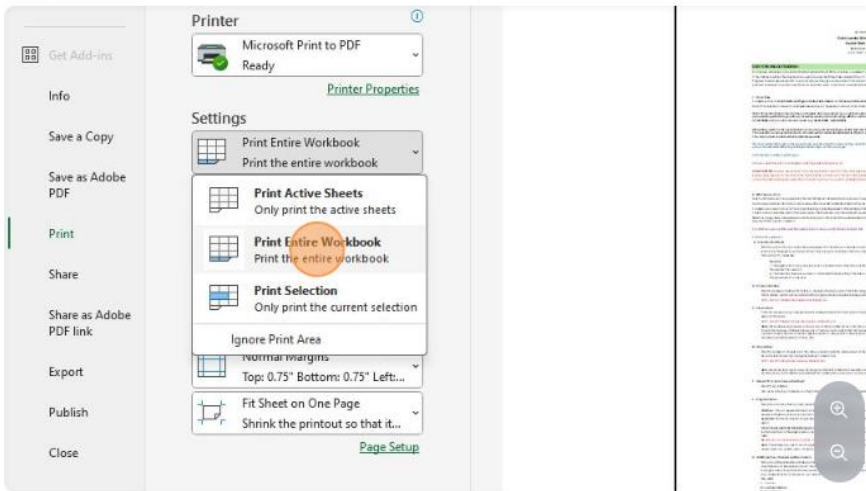




3 Click "Microsoft Print to PDF"



4 Click "Print Entire Workbook"





5 Click "Orientation"

Microsoft Print to PDF
Ready

[Printer Properties](#)

Settings

Print Entire Workbook
Print the entire workbook

Pages: 2 to 4

Collated
1,2,3 1,2,3 1,2,3

Landscape Orientation

Letter
8.5" x 11"

Normal Margins
Top: 0.75" Bottom: 0.75" Left: ...

Fit Sheet on One Page
Shrink the printout so that it...

[Page Setup](#)

6 Click "Landscape Orientation"

Print Entire Workbook
Print the entire workbook

Pages: 2 to 4

Collated
1,2,3 1,2,3 1,2,3

Landscape Orientation

Portrait Orientation

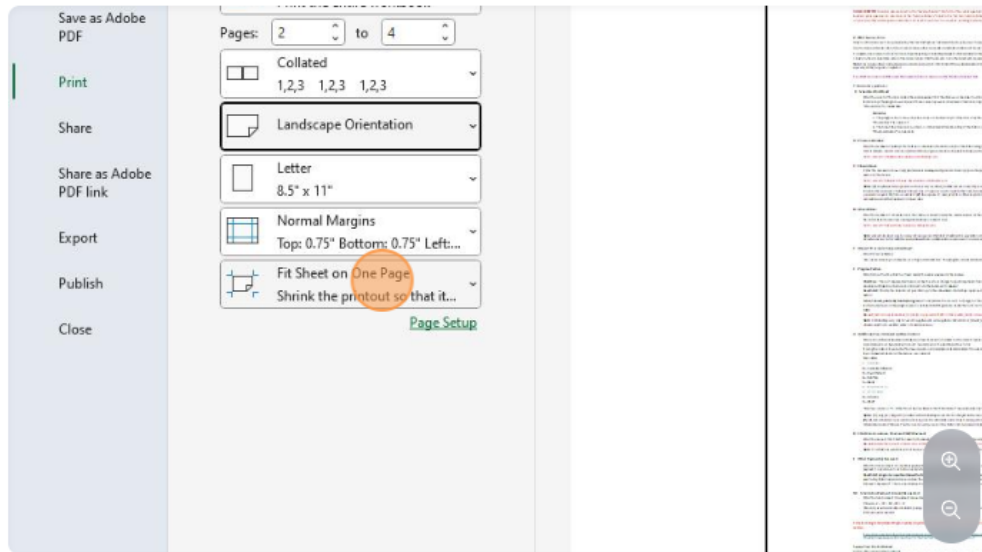
Landscape Orientation

Fit Sheet on One Page
Shrink the printout so that it...

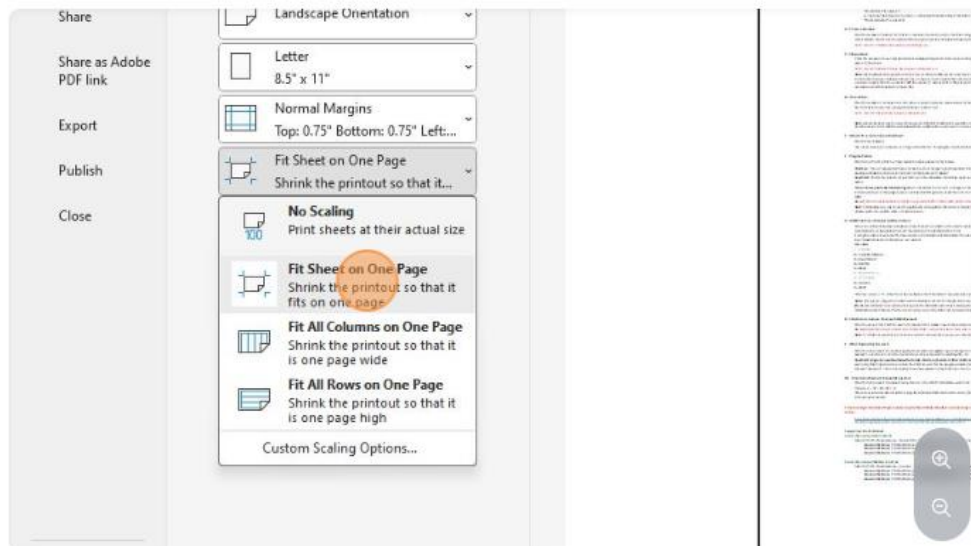
[Page Setup](#)



7 Click "Scale to Fit"

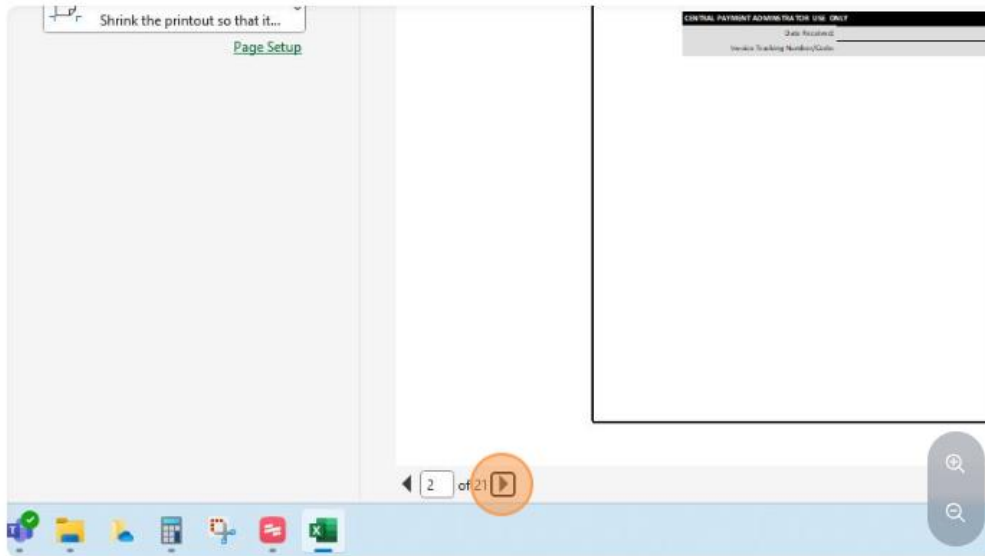


8 Click "Fit Sheet on One Page" -use this scale for the COVER PAGE

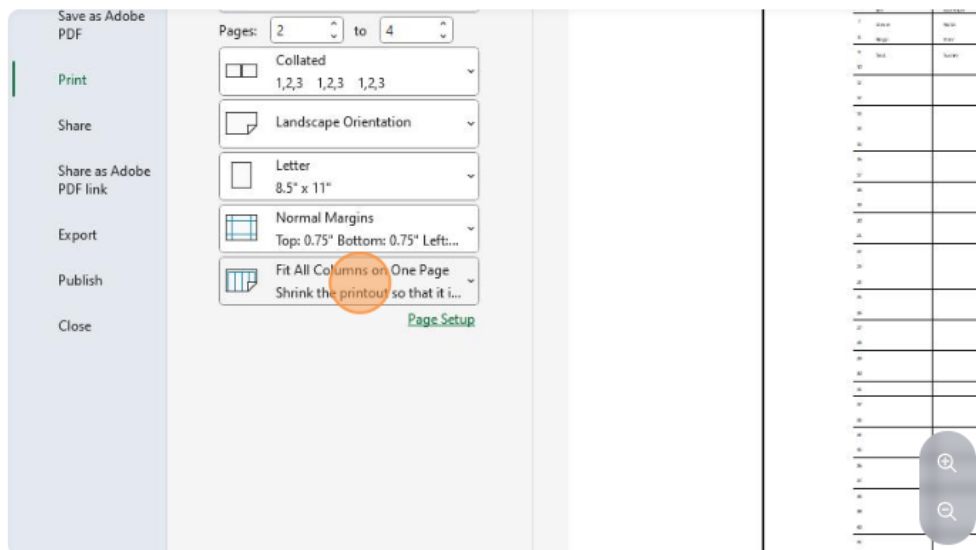




9 Click "Next Page"



10 Click "Scale to Fit"





11 Click "Fit All Columns on One Page" - use this scale for the INVOICE PAGE(S)

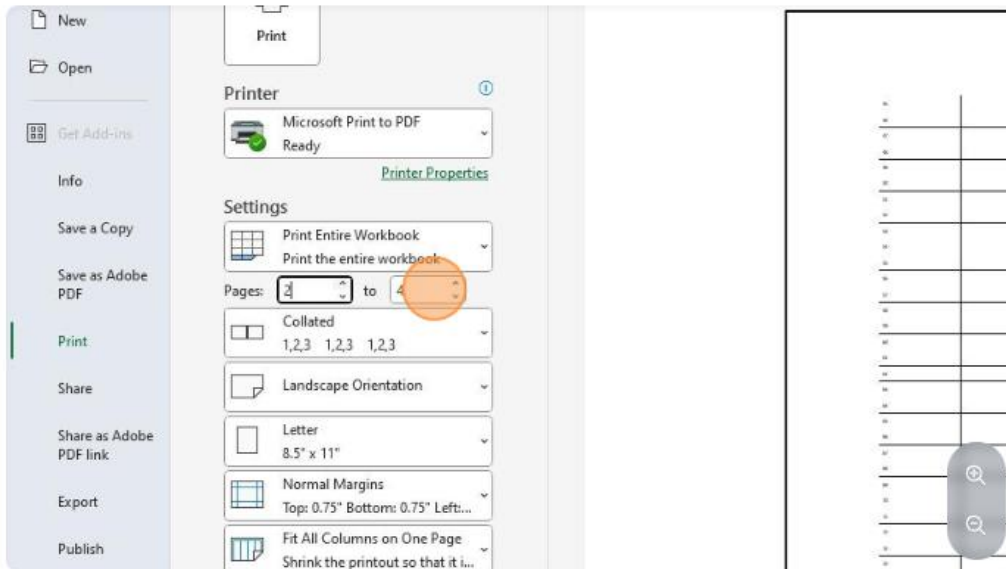
The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel Print menu. The 'Fit All Columns on One Page' option is highlighted with an orange circle. The menu includes options for 'No Scaling', 'Fit Sheet on One Page', 'Fit All Columns on One Page', and 'Fit All Rows on One Page'. The background shows a grid representing the invoice page.

12 Click "Pages" - select only the COVER PAGE and INVOICE PAGE(S)

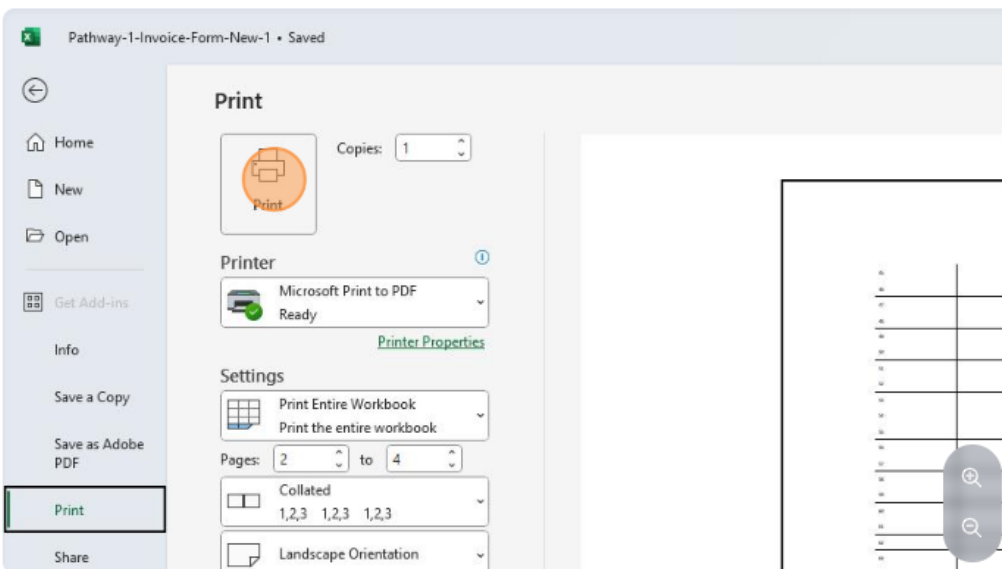
The screenshot shows the Microsoft Excel Print dialog box. The 'Pages' field is set to '2' to '4', with the number '2' highlighted by an orange circle. The 'Printer' is set to 'Microsoft Print to PDF'. The background shows a grid representing the invoice page.



13 Click "to"

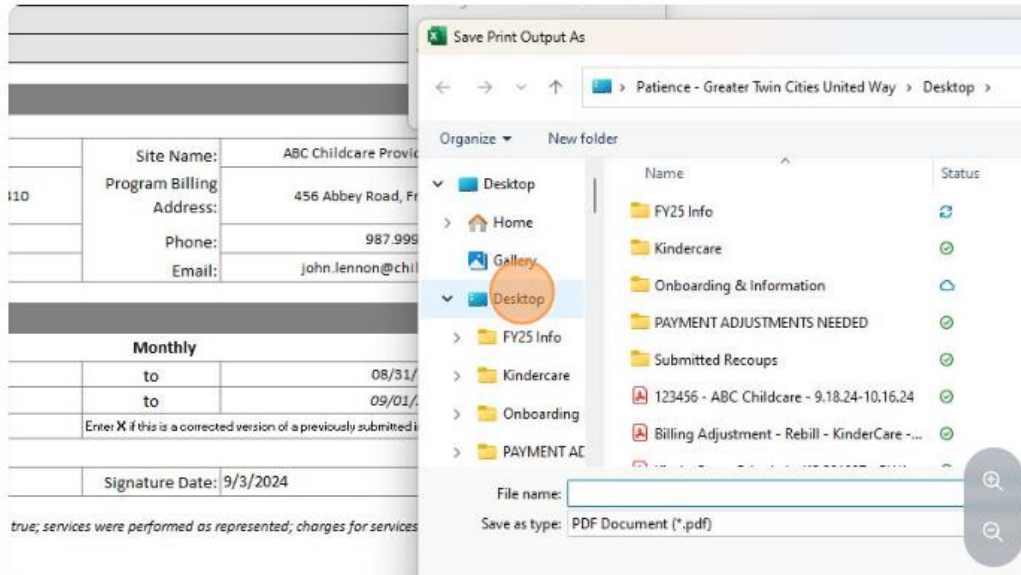


14 Click "Print"

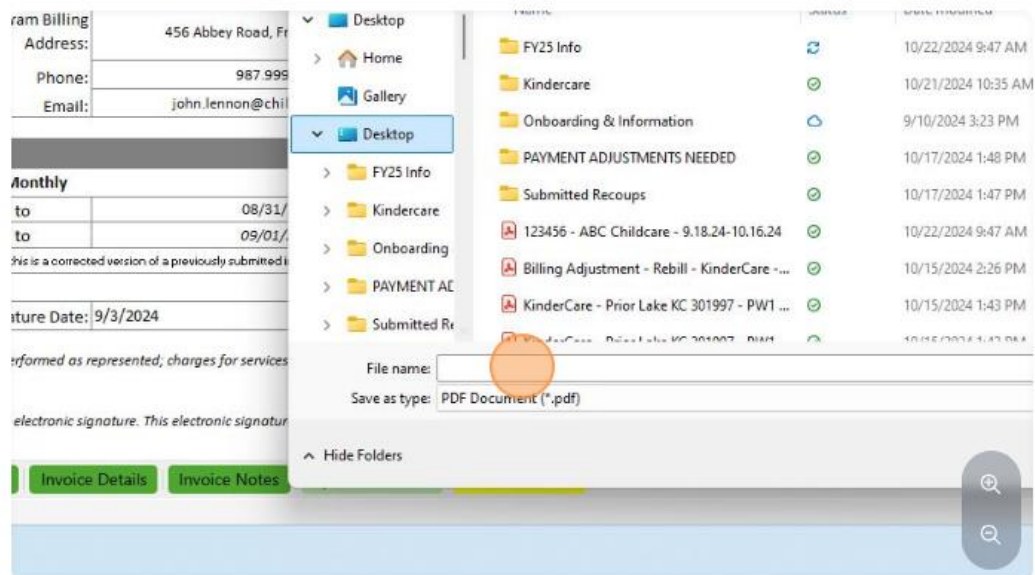




15 Save the PDF File where you store your completed invoice documents



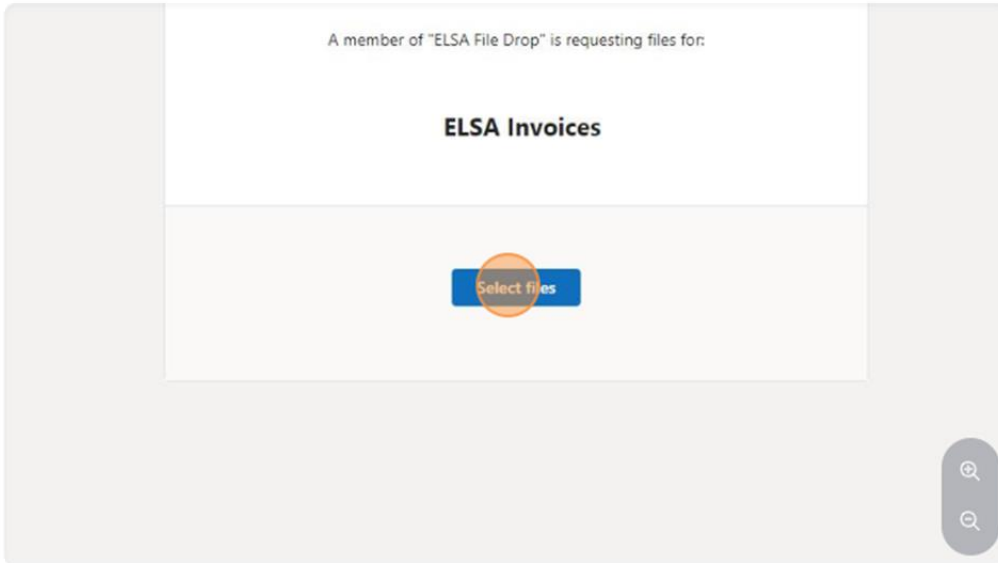
16 Click "File name:" Label the file using the correct file naming conventions



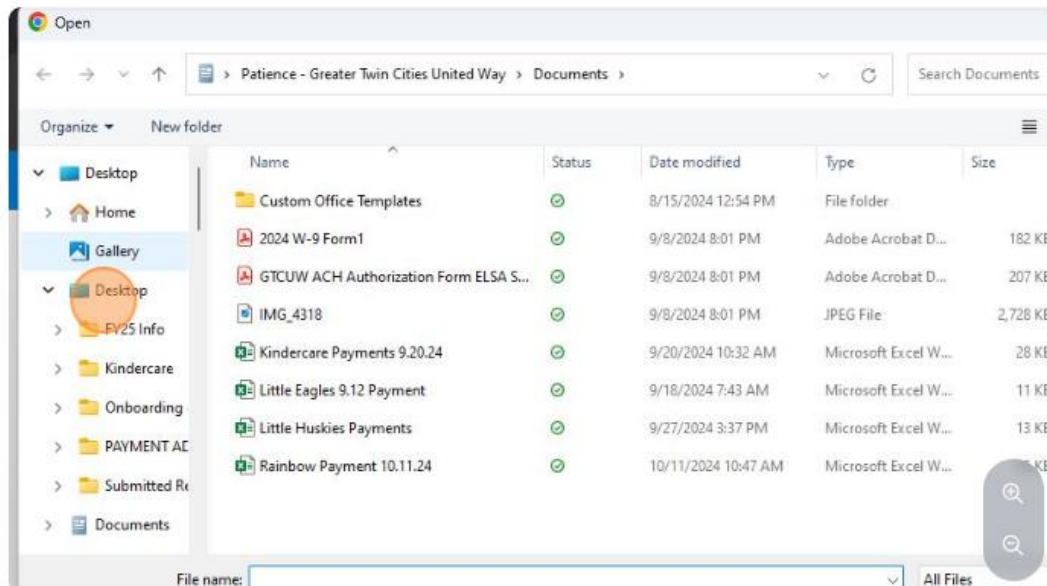


Uploading an Invoice Walk-Through

- 1 Open the GTCUW ELSA Drop Box page in your browser; click "Select Files"

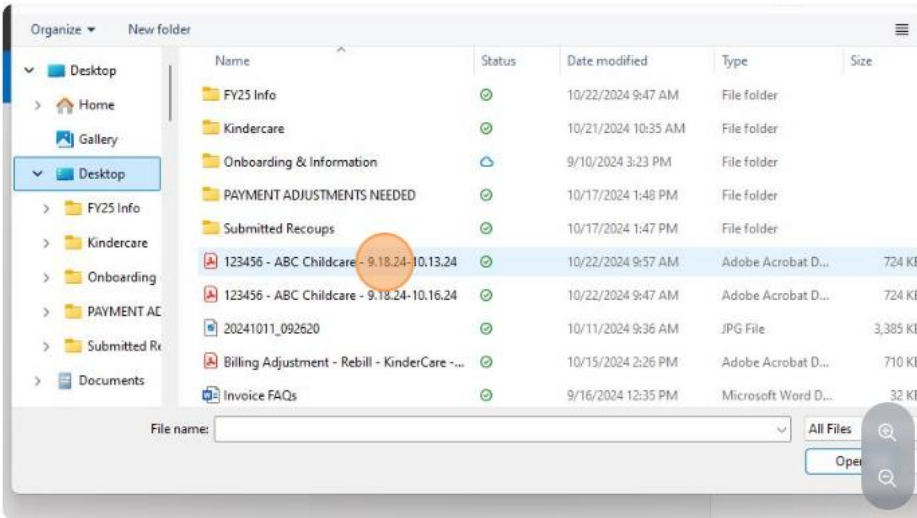


- 2 In your files, navigate to where you store completed invoices

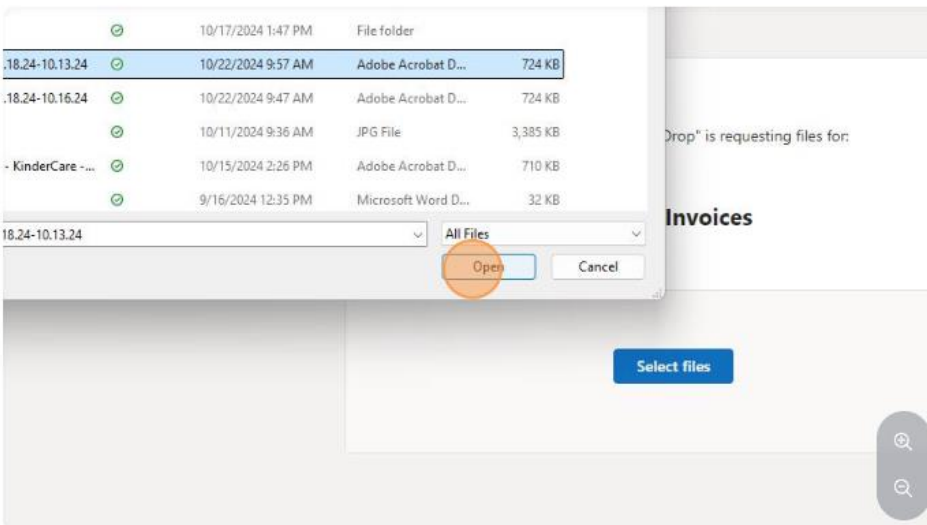




3 Select the invoice you want to upload



4 Click "Open"





- 5 Complete the form by adding your name

A member of "ELSA File Drop" is requesting files for:

ELSA Invoices

123456 - ABC Childcare - 9.18.24-10.13.2... X

+ Add more files Total 1 file 723 KB

First name * Last name *

Upload

- 7 Click "Upload"

123456 - ABC Childcare - 9.18.24-10.13.2... X

+ Add more files Total 1 file 723 KB

First name * Last name *

Patience Anderson

Upload

- 8 If you are finished, you may close the window. If you have additional invoices to upload you can add more before leaving the page.



Filling Out an Invoice Walk-Through

[CLICK HERE for a Scribe Tutorial on How to Fill Out an Invoice](#)

Below are the steps to fill out an Invoice:

- Open the **Pathway 1 Invoice Form** file OR the **Handwritten – Pathway 1 Invoice Form**
 - Print the **Handwritten** invoice
- Complete the **Cover Page** of the Invoice
- Complete the **Invoice Details** tab / page
 - Review each column and fill out the information required
- Add notes on the **Invoice Notes** tab / page if applicable



Cover Page

Example:

Invoices submitted with an incomplete Cover Page will not be processed and you will be required to resubmit, which could result in delayed payment!

I. Early Childhood Program Contact Information

Central Invoicing ID:	123456		
Program Name:	ABC Childcare Provider	Site Name:	ABC Childcare Provider - North Campus
Program Address:	123 ELSA Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55410	Program Billing Address:	456 Abbey Road, Fridley, MN 55421
Program Contact Name:	John Lennon	Phone:	987.999.8590
Program Contact Role/Title:	Director of Operations	Email:	john.lennon@childcarecenter.org

II. Invoice Information

Billing Schedule Type:	Monthly		
Service Period:	08/01/2024	to	08/31/2024
<i>System Service Period for Monthly ONLY:</i>	08/19/2024	to	09/01/2024
Date of Invoice Submission:	9/3/2024	Enter X if this is a corrected version of a previously submitted invoice for the same period:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Authorized Individual's Position/Title:	Director of Operations		
Authorized Signature*:	<i>John Lennon</i>	Signature Date:	9/3/2024

The Central Invoicing ID will be sent to you individually through email. Please store it in a secure location where you can easily find it for future invoices. You do NOT need to include this number until you have received it.

HAND-WRITTEN Invoices, please refer to the 'Service Periods' tab to find the service period start and end dates.
If you are using 'Monthly' then you must ALSO input one of the bolded service periods in column A of the 'Service Periods' tab into the 'System Service Period for Monthly ONLY' section of the cover page.
This service period covers the end date of your monthly service period selection and is what we must use when entering invoices into the state system as there is no monthly range dates in that system.



2) Invoice Details

- **Columns: Child Last and First Names**
 - Please type or print the child's **full** first name and **full** last name.
 - If there is a name change due to adoption, the child will first need a new SSID number assigned by the school district, please contact your Area Administrator to get this new number.
- **Column: Birthdate**
 - Please double check accuracy of the child's birthdate. Incorrect birthdates will require resubmission of the invoice.
- **Column: Award Date**
 - This is the date that the child was awarded a scholarship. This date is on the Award Letter received by the family.
- **Column: Attendance Start Date**
 - This is the first date AFTER the award date that the child attended your program. This is the first day you are allowed to bill for tuition, and this date must be on or after the award date on the invoice.

2a) Invoice Details – Final Invoice and Scheduled to Attend

- **Column: Final Invoice**
 - IMPORTANT – Please select YES if this is the final invoice for this child.
 - This means that the child is no longer attending your program.
 - Indicates to the billing specialist that they need to alert the Area Administrator to remove the child from your program.
 - The Area Administrator will then reach out to the family to find out what program the child is moving to, if any, and assign the child in the ELSA system to the new program.
- **Column A: Scheduled to Attend**
 - Enter the number of the days during the service period that the child was scheduled to attend the program.
 - Include days the program was closed if those same days were scheduled attendance days for the child.



2b) Invoice Details – Closures and Absences

- **Column B: Program Holidays - Not to exceed 11 holidays days during a scholarship year**
 - Enter the number of holidays that fell on a scheduled attendance day for the child during the service period of the invoice.
 - School districts, charter schools, and Head Start programs should not include holidays in their attendance counts.
- **Column C: Closure Days - Not to exceed 10 planned closure days during a scholarship year.**
 - Enter the number of snow days/professional development/paid vacation days (or other payable closure days) that fell on a scheduled attendance day for the child during the service period of the invoice.
 - Notes: Unplanned emergencies such as severe weather, facilities issues caused by severe weather (such as flooding or power outage), or public health-related closures do not count towards the maximum 10 planned closure days.
 - Programs must complete the Early Learning Scholarship Program Closure Request Form to document unplanned closure days.
 - Contact your AA to request the form as needed.
- **Column D: Absent Days - Not to exceed 25 absent days during a scholarship year**
 - Enter the number of scheduled days the child was absent during the service period of the invoice.
 - Do not include closure days or program holidays as absent days.
 - Note: Absent day limit may be waived if an approved Medical Condition Documentation Form or an Exemption Request Form for Teen Parents and Children in Families Experiencing Homelessness is on file with the Area Administrator.
 - The family must reach out to the Area Administrator to request this exemption and that without an exemption, the additional absent days are the family's responsibility.
 - Additionally, in response to a crisis period or other impacts, the state may establish an exemption period that applies to absences.
- **Column E: Absent 10 or more Consecutive Days?**
 - Enter Y (Yes) or N (No).
 - Ten consecutive days of absences is a flag for intervention.
 - The program and/or AA should reach out to the family.



2c) Invoice Details – Program Tuition

- **Column F: Program Tuition**

- Enter full cost for the child to attend during the service period of the invoice.
 - Child Care: The amount here must be the actual charges for participation/attendance in the early childhood program during this period before any discount or other payment is applied.
 - Head Start: Prorate the federal cost per child, up to the allowable scholarship cap amount, for the program year slot to determine the amount to request for the invoice service period.
 - School-based/Publicly-funded programs: To determine the amount to charge for the invoice service period, prorate based on (a) the tiered slot cost based on number of instructional hours in the program year as detailed in MDE guidance or (b) the total cost to serve a child for the program year as determined by your school district and approved by MDE.
- Note: Early Learning Scholarships Program funds cannot pay for a service already paid for by another state or federal program.

2d) Invoice Details – Fees

- **Column G: Additional Fees (Amount and Description)**

- Enter any additional program fees charged to families for the current service period in addition to the amount represented in column F. A description must be provided for each fee included in the Additional Fees total.
- If using a hand-written version of the form, enter the fee amounts and descriptions individually in the columns provided.
- If using the form in Excel, enter the fee amounts and descriptions individually in the columns provided. Select each description from the built-in drop-down menu. If more than two fees are being included in the invoice, use column I
- Fee codes:
 - 1 – Activity Fee
 - 2 – Curriculum Materials
 - 3 – Down Payment
 - 4 – Field Trip
 - 5 – Meals
 - 6 – Registration Fees
 - 7 – Transportation
 - 8 – Uniforms
 - 9 – Other* - Any fees coded as "9 – Other" must be described in the "Child Notes" space provided on the Invoice Form



2e) Invoice Details: Payments and Scholarship Payment Amount Requested

- **Column K: Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) Payment**
 - Enter the amount that CCAP has paid to the program that applies toward the services provided in the invoice service period.
 - Do not include the amount a family pays as their CCAP co-payment in this column. All co-payments are to be included in column I.
 - Note: If a CCAP payment has not yet been received/confirmed, the program may enter the amount provided in the CCAP Authorization.
- **Column L: Other Payment(s) Received**
 - Enter the total amount of any other payments received and applied toward charges for services for the child in the invoice service period, such as family co-payments/out-of-pocket payments, any discounts on tuition or reductions on fees required for participation, etc.
 - Head Start programs in partnership with a family childcare provider or other childcare program: If the child is in a Head Start slot and a portion of the tuition and/or fees are being paid for by Child Care Assistance, include the CCAP amount that the program provider has received (or expects to receive) for the invoice service period in the total of "Other Payments Received". The fee description should be explained in the child notes. Reach out to the AA with any questions.
- **Column M: Scholarship Payment Amount Requested**
 - Enter the total amount of payment requested out of the child's scholarship award funds.
 - Formula: $J = (F + G) - (H + I)$

This entry is automatically calculated if using the Invoice Form in Excel. If using the A Hand Write version, you will use the formula to enter the total amount requested.



Common Invoice Submission Errors

- Incomplete cover page
- Child on invoice has not been processed for scholarship by an Area Administrator and therefore cannot be entered into the ELSA system for payment
- There is an issue with the child's information (missing or incomplete) and therefore cannot be entered into the state system for scholarship tracking
- Uploaded file is not saved with the proper naming convention/scheme
- Uploaded file is a JPG or photo image
- Uploaded EXCEL file has been saved as locked
- Cover Page and Invoice Page have been sent separately
 - Cover page and invoice page need to be saved and uploaded as one single file, not multiple uploads.
- Incorrect service period dates
- Billing children for random numbers of days within a service period
- Billing multiple service periods on one invoice (listing the child multiple times and billing 20 days for each row),
- Splitting a 2-week period so the child is listed twice with 5 days on each row.
- Sending a separate invoice for each child
 - All children in the program for that service period need to be on the SAME invoice
- Pathways I and Pathway II children need to be on separate invoices.

Children without an SSID

If you receive an email from your billing specialist that there is a child on your invoice that does not have an SSID assigned to them, this means that the school district that the child lives in needs to assign their Statewide Student Identifier (SSID).

Your billing specialist will reach out to the appropriate Area Administrator, and the Area Administrator will reach out to the MARSS Coordinator to get an SSID assigned to the child. Once the SSID is assigned and the Area Administrator has entered the child's information into the ELSA system, you will be notified via email by the AA as to when you can begin billing for the child.

Children Not In ELSA

If you receive communication that a child is not listed in ELSA under your program, this means that the Award Planning Agreement needs to be received and processed by the child's Area Administrator.

Please ensure the following steps have been taken for this process to happen as efficiently as possible:

1. Work with the family to fill out the Award Planning Agreement (APA)
2. Either the family or the program/provider can submit the completed APA to the family's Area Administrator (AA).
3. When the AA receives the APA, please allow at least 5 business days for the AA to update the ELSA system with the child's new program information.



4. Once the AA has entered the APA into the system, they will send a confirmation email to the program/provider and GTCUW with the first day that the program/provider can start billing for the child
5. Use this date on the next invoice packet and add the child to the invoice for billing. Do not add the child to an invoice prior to receiving confirmation from the AA.

Children Switching Programs and Area Administrators

When a child leaves your program, it is important that you indicate “FINAL INVOICE” on the Invoice Details page in the Invoice Packet. This alerts the billing specialist to let the Area Administrator know that this child is no longer in your program, and to reach out to the family about their next steps.

If you still have contact with the family, please instruct them to inform their Area Administrator immediately that their child is no longer attending your program.

If the family has chosen a new program, the Area Administrator will communicate with both providers/programs to confirm the last day of billing for the previous program, and the first day of billing for the new program. This allows for the previous program to bill for a 2 week notice period, if applicable.

Scholarships can only pay for one program at a time, so it's important that the new program does not attempt to bill for any time period that the first program is still allowed to bill for, even if the child has already started in the new program.

Please give families a friendly reminder that if they have not given proper notice to their previous provider, they may incur out of pocket costs at the new program because the previous program may be charging a two-week notice.

Payment Adjustments

If you have payments that need to be adjusted for any reason, please reach out to your billing specialist and follow the procedure outlined below:

- Submit a new invoice for the service period with the correct information that should have been on the first invoice.
 - On the Cover Page of the invoice, enter X in the box "Enter X if this is a corrected version of a previously submitted invoice for the same period."
 - For example: if you originally requested \$1000 but it should have been \$700, submit the invoice for \$700
- This goes for all adjustments, including for CCAP payments after the invoice has been paid.
 - This way GTCUW has both invoices for comparison and tracking
- Do not apply your own adjustments to future payments – this makes it very difficult for our Accounts Payable team to track adjustments.

You will receive communication from our Sr. Accounts Payable Specialist on how this adjustment will show up for you.



Late Payment Requests – 90+ Days Late

Programs are required to submit for payment within 30 days of the last date of service included on an invoice. If it has been more than 90 days, this is considered a late payment request.

- Programs may be asked to provide attendance documentation for a child(ren) when it is more than 90 days from the last date of service on an invoice.
- Failure to provide documentation, or discrepancies in attendance documentation and the invoice may result in a decrease or no payment for that service period until provided or clarified.
- Depending on the situation, review before payment may be elevated to DCYF before payment can be made.