

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES**



SUBJECT: NURSING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

POLICY NO: 701.3

PURPOSE: To outline County and Department policy regarding nursing tuition reimbursement.

POLICY: Permanent employees may be entitled to obtain reimbursement for all or part of the tuition, which they've paid after successfully completing approved courses leading towards a position in the Nursing field. Approved courses include, but are not limited to the following:

- Courses required to obtain licensure as a Registered Nurse.
- Courses required to obtain a Bachelors Degree in Nursing.
- Courses required to obtain a Masters Degree in nursing or other healthcare related degree.
- Courses required to obtain a Doctoral Degree in Nursing Science or other doctoral program related to nursing.

To be eligible for reimbursement, the course must be taken at an accredited University or College and must meet the academic requirements of the Department's Training Plan, as well as the employee's training objectives. Accredited institutions are defined in the Los Angeles County Human Resources Management System Policies, Procedures, and Guidelines Manual under Section 123 titled "Accredited College Education". In addition, any courses taken to obtain a Registered Nurse license or advanced degree in Nursing (BSN or MSN) must be through a nursing program approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing.

Reimbursement will not be made for books, supplies or other incidental costs. Reimbursement will not be made for student activity fees and other special student assessments except at state schools where such charges are mandatory and no other tuition is charged.

A maximum of two (2) courses per employee which together total no more than eight (8) units of credit per semester/quarter will be considered for reimbursement. The facility Chief Nursing Officer (CNO), Nursing Director of Public Health, or DHS Human Resources-Nurse Recruitment Office will have the discretion to set the amount at which courses are reimbursed but will not exceed \$1,000 per semester/quarter and \$3,000 annually per Fiscal Year per employee based upon available funding. Courses costing \$5.00 or less per employee will not be eligible for reimbursement. A semester/quarter, for schools with class schedules more frequent than a 10 week quarter, is defined as two (2) classes covering a ten (10) week period.

Program Parameters

To qualify for reimbursement, the following requirements must be met:

- The employee must hold a permanent position within the Department of Health Services.

APPROVED BY:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. O. L. f.', written over a horizontal line.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 10, 2004

SUPERSEDES: December 13, 2002

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- The employee must have received a competent or better rating in all areas for their Performance Evaluation in the immediate past year, and maintain the same or higher rating for the current year.
- If an employee does not maintain their performance rating of competent in all areas while receiving tuition reimbursement, they risk being terminated from the program.
- The employees must have successfully passed their initial six (6) month probation period before application for Tuition Reimbursement can be considered.
- The employee must meet attendance requirements as specified by their facility and/or Public Health.
- The employee must meet competitive selection requirements, set by each facility or program office, in instances where the reimbursement can be made available only to a limited number of employees.
- The employee must receive a passing grade of "C" or better.
- If the employee is a veteran they are not eligible for tuition reimbursement from the County until he/she exhausts their eligibility for tuition reimbursement from the federal government and the State of California.
- The employee shall take course work outside assigned working hours and on the employee's own time. Those employees who are participating in either the Workforce Development Program or the Employee Incentive Program will not be eligible to receive tuition reimbursement simultaneously.
- The employee shall submit a completed application for tuition reimbursement four (4) weeks prior to the commencement of the course.
- Upon completion of the approved course, once the employee has received their final grade report, a claim for tuition reimbursement should be submitted. Reimbursement claim forms will not be processed without proper documentation including prior course approval, proof of payment and course grade.
- Reimbursement claim forms will not be processed if they are submitted later than three (3) months from the course completion date.
- Employees who do not meet all of the above requirements will have their application/claim form denied.

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- If the employee terminates his/her employment with the DHS within one year of the date of the completion of the course for which he/she has been reimbursed, he/she shall return the amount of such reimbursement to DHS (County Code Section 5.52.040).

Nursing Administration at each facility and Public Health is responsible for program administration, including appropriate determination of employee eligibility for reimbursement, financial management, and maintenance of all program related documents for a period of five (5) years.

Reports shall be submitted by the facilities and Public Health to DHS Human Resources on a quarterly basis.

DHS Human Resources will monitor each facility and Public Health overall program administration on a quarterly basis. Available money shall be pooled centrally and divided in proportion to the number of Registered Nurses in each facility. At the end of the 2nd quarter of each fiscal year, DHS HR will review tuition reimbursement funding usage and may reallocate to facilities or Public Health based on higher volume of employee participation.

Each Fiscal Year, DHS Human Resources will provide the allocation amounts and allow each facility to administer the Tuition Reimbursement Program under their own controls as stipulated above.

AUTHORITY: Los Angeles County Code, Title 5, Section 5.52.

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 10, 2004

SUPERSEDES: December 13, 2002

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NURSING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM PROCEDURES

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES:

Application for Tuition Reimbursement Form (Attachment A)

- 1) Completed application forms shall be submitted four (4) weeks prior to the commencement of the course.
- 2) Applicants must hold a permanent position in DHS and be in County service at the time of completion of the course.
- 3) For Veterans, attach proof that Veteran's Benefits have been exhausted.
- 4) Obtain your Supervisor's and Division Head's approval via signature on the application form and attach the following documents:
 - a. Most recent performance evaluation, and
 - b. List of required courses in the program and/or degree.
- 5) Submit the form to your facility/Public Health Nursing Administration. For nurses in Departments #110 and #120, submit completed form(s) to DHS Human Resources-Nurse Recruitment Office (DHS HR-NRO).

NOTE: SEE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT POLICY FOR LIST OF REQUIREMENTS

Claim for Tuition Reimbursement Form (Attachment B)

- 1) Completed claim forms will not be processed if they are submitted later than three (3) months from the course completion date.
- 2) Upon completion of the course(s) approved for reimbursement, the employee must complete the claim form and attach the following required documents:
 - a. Proof of payment (i.e., receipt of tuition payment, front and back of canceled check showing payment to the school, loan disbursement, or other payment document).
 - b. Grade report showing a "C" or better for each course on claim form.
- 3) Submit the completed form and the required documents to the facility/Public Health/DHS HR-NRO designee (hereafter "Designee").

FOR SCHOOLS WITH CLASS SCHEDULES MORE FREQUENT THAN A 10-WEEK QUARTER:

Employees attending this University are asked to submit one application and claim form covering two (2) five week classes. For purposes of this program, a semester/quarter is defined as two (2) classes covering a 10 week period, for a maximum of 4 applications and/or claims, not to exceed \$3,000.00, per Fiscal year.

DESIGNEE'S RESPONSIBILITIES:

Application for Tuition Reimbursement Form

- 1) Review the employee's application form to ensure that all required fields are completed.

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- 2) Verify the employee meets the requirements in the Department's Tuition Reimbursement Program policy.
- 3) Confirm expenditure is within the program budget allocation (Attachment E).
- 4) If employee does not meet policy requirements or the form is incomplete send a *Notification of Denial or Request for Documentation* letter (see instructions under Incomplete or Denied Tuition Reimbursement, pg. 3 of this document).
- 5) If employee meets policy requirements, sign and approve application form.
- 6) Obtain signature from the Chief Nursing Officer (or authorized personnel) approving employee's request.
- 7) Record application information on *Tuition Reimbursement Log* (Attachment F).
- 8) Reconcile number of approved applicants with budget allocation spreadsheet, ensuring the number of approved applicants does not exceed the budget allocation.
- 9) File employee's application form.
- 10) Each Designee is responsible for maintaining Tuition Reimbursement Program files including Tuition Reimbursement application forms, claim forms and Reimbursement Warrant Receipt signature logs for a minimum of five (5) Fiscal Years.
- 11) Each Designee is responsible for providing quarterly reports on the Tuition Reimbursement Program including number of employees who have participated and total funds dispersed to DHS Human Resources.

Claim for Tuition Reimbursement Form

- 1) Review the employee's claim form to ensure that all required fields are completed.
- 2) Verify that an application form is on file and attach it to the claim form.
- 3) Verify that the following documents are received with the claim form:
 - a. Proof of payment (i.e., receipt of tuition payment, front and back of canceled check showing payment to the school or other payment document).
 - b. Grade report showing a "C" or better for each course on the claim form.
- 4) If employee does not meet policy requirement(s) or form is incomplete send a *Notification of Denial or Request for Documentation* letter (see instructions under Incomplete or Denied Tuition Reimbursement, pg. 3 of this document).
- 5) If employee meets policy requirements, sign and approve the claim form.
- 6) Submit a copy of the claim form and the *Registered Nurse (RN) Tuition Reimbursement Program -Request For Warrant* memo (Attachment G) to HSA Finance Division to process the employee's reimbursement warrant.
- 7) Update *Tuition Reimbursement Log* (Attachment F).
- 8) File original documents.

NURSING TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Reimbursement Check (Warrant)

- 1) Auditor/Controller will mail the reimbursement warrant(s) to the employee's home address as it appears on the claim form.

Incomplete Application and/or Claim Forms

- 1) Hold form(s) and contact employee to complete missing field(s) or submit missing document(s).
- 2) If employee completes form(s) and submits missing documents, continue procedure as indicated above.
- 3) If employee does not respond within two weeks, prepare *Request for Documentation* cover memo (Attachment C), retain copy for records, and return document(s) to the employee.

Denied Application and/or Claim Forms

- 1) Prepare *Denial* cover memo (Attachment D).
- 2) Retain copy of memo, application, and claim for records.
- 3) Return document(s) to employee.

DHS HUMAN RESOURCES - NURSE RECRUITMENT OFFICE (DHS HR-NRO) RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 1) Each Fiscal Year, prepare spreadsheet of tuition reimbursement budget allocations for each facility and Public Health.
- 2) Semi-annually, review facility/PH overall program administration and reconcile all budget allocations. Report will be submitted to CEOs, CNOs and HSA Administration.
- 3) If DHS Human Resources identifies excess available funding at the end of the 2nd quarter of the Fiscal Year, DHS Human Resources may reallocate funds to facilities or Public Health that may have higher usage.
- 4) On a quarterly basis, ensure all facility/PH employee terminations have complied with Tuition Reimbursement Policy regarding repayment.
- 5) Prepare quantitative usage reports semi-annually.

HEALTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATION FINANCE (HSA-FINANCE) RESPONSIBILITIES:

313 Figueroa Street, Suite 505, Los Angeles, CA 90012, (213) 240-7875

- 1) Receive and review a copy of the tuition reimbursement claim(s) from designee.
- 2) Process the claim/request warrant through the Auditor/Controller.
- 3) Auditor Controller will mail reimbursement warrant(s) to the employee's home address