



# Tuition Reimbursement Policy

Texas Government Code, Chapter 656, State Employees Training Act, authorizes state agencies to use public funds to provide training and education to employees when such programs are related to the employee's duties or prospective duties.

If funds are available, an eligible employee may receive tuition reimbursement for courses (including online courses) completed while attending an accredited vocational school, technical school, college, or university.

Reimbursement for tuition charged by a private college or university must not exceed the tuition amount charged by a comparable public college or university for the same courses.

The courses must:

- relate to current or prospective job duties; and
- benefit HHS by increasing employee knowledge, understanding and skills needed to achieve HHS goals and objectives.

**Note:** Tuition reimbursement does **not** cover the cost of:

- elective fees;
- books;
- materials;
- supplies;
- late fees;
- deposits;
- parking fees; or
- travel.

At-will employees are not eligible to receive tuition reimbursement. In addition, this policy does not apply to the:

- Adult Protective Services Professional Education Program;
- Title IV-E Training Program;
- DSHS Preventive Medicine – Public Health Residency Program (DSHS only); and
- Other courses taken that are not part of a degree track leading to a degree.

For additional information, see *Human Resources Guidance Handbook*, Chapter 2, A.6., Tuition Reimbursement.

For additional policy on academic stipend that applies to state hospital and state supported living center employees, see Appendix A, Facilities, Academic Stipend.

---

Related Policies:

- Eligibility and Reimbursement

## **Eligibility and Reimbursement**

Effective February 5, 2018

If funds are available, an employee may receive tuition reimbursement for courses completed while attending a vocational school, technical school, college, or university if the employee:

- has successfully completed his or her probationary period;
- is not on an active written warning in the Performance and Conduct Management System;
- has not received a disciplinary action in the last 12 months; and
- is performing the job at a level that is at least what is normally expected or required, as reflected on his or her most recent performance evaluation.

An employee may be reimbursed upon providing proof of satisfactory course completion. Satisfactory course completion must be documented by an official grade slip or transcript that shows either:

- a final grade of:
  - "C" or above for undergraduate work; or
  - "B" or above for graduate work; or
- a "pass" grade (only for schools with a pass/fail system that do not provide a letter grade).

An employee should request tuition reimbursement as far in advance as possible, but no later than 20 working days before the course is scheduled to begin. An employee requests tuition reimbursement by completing Form HR0809, Request for Educational Financial Assistance, and signing Form HR0810, Tuition Obligation Agreement.

**Note:** For each semester of classes, an employee must submit a new Form HR0809 and sign a new Form HR0810.

Form HR0810 includes the following conditions:

- the employee will only be reimbursed after presenting evidence of successful completion of his or her course(s) for the semester;
- the employee will be reimbursed for 100 percent of the tuition, up to a total of \$5,000 in a fiscal year. **Beyond that**, the employee will be responsible for half of the total amount that exceeds \$5,000. For example, if an employee requests tuition reimbursement of \$10,000 during a fiscal year, the most he or she may receive is \$7,500 (\$5,000 + 2,500 [half of the remaining \$5,000]);
- the employee must continue to meet tuition reimbursement eligibility criteria and remain at an HHS agency after he or she completes the courses covered by the obligation agreement for an amount of time equal to the completed semester; and
- if the employee fails to continue to meet tuition reimbursement criteria or to remain with an HHS agency for the required time, he or she forfeits all rights to reimbursement under this program and will be required to pay the HHS agency that approves this agreement an amount equal to the amount of tuition reimbursed to the employee.

These obligations may be waived if the HHS Executive Commissioner finds that a waiver is:

- in the best interest of HHS; or

- warranted because of an extreme personal hardship suffered by the employee. Extreme personal hardship may include changes to employment status outside the employee's control, such as a reduction-in-force.

**Note:** An employee requesting tuition reimbursement and educational leave (see Chapter 2, B.8., Other Leave Types) must also complete Form HR0514, Employment Obligation Agreement, if he or she is requesting three or more months of educational leave.

All requests for tuition reimbursement are reviewed by the Tuition Reimbursement Committee, which includes the:

- HHS Chief Deputy Executive Commissioner;
- HHS Chief of Staff;
- HHSC Chief Operating Officer;
- HHS Deputy Executive Commissioner for System Support Services;
- HHS Director of Human Resources; and
- a representative from the agency that employs the requester.

The HHS Executive Commissioner considers the Committee's recommendation and decides whether to partially or fully authorize the tuition reimbursement payment.

#### Tuition Reimbursement and Transfers

If an employee approved for tuition reimbursement transfers within an HHS agency or to another HHS agency before completing the approved semester of classes, the tuition reimbursement approval will remain in effect. Upon providing proof of satisfactory course completion, the HHS agency that originally approved the tuition reimbursement is responsible for reimbursing the employee.

**Note:** If an employee is transferred from one HHS agency to another HHS agency by legislative directive, the receiving agency is responsible for reimbursing the employee.

For additional information, see *Human Resources Guidance Handbook*, Chapter 2, A.6., Tuition Reimbursement.