



*Department of Health
and Human Services*

*Maine People Living
Safe, Healthy and Productive Lives*

John E. Baldacci, Governor

Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner

**Office of the Commissioner
Tuition Reimbursement Policy**

Policy # DHHS-29-06

Issue Date: 5/8/06

Revised Date: 5/18/09

I. SUBJECT

Tuition Reimbursement Policy

II. POLICY STATEMENT

It shall be the policy of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to encourage employees to further their self-development through participation in Tuition Reimbursement. With the approval of the Executive Management Team, funding will be made available in each fiscal year for post secondary course tuition reimbursement to DHHS staff, as funds are available.

This policy applies to courses DHHS employees have chosen to take for professional development purposes. It does not apply to course work DHHS employees are required to take. Tuition assistance for required courses is provided separately by the Department.

III. RATIONALE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a means whereby the Department's goals and objectives can be achieved and the quality of services sustained and improved through additional education provided to staff.

IV. PROCEDURE STATEMENT

1. Tuition reimbursement programs shall be available to all Departmental staff in accordance with:
 - a. The needs of the Department;
 - b. The limitations imposed by funding; and
2. Written requests for tuition reimbursement must be made prior to the beginning of the semester: late August for the Fall semester, late November for the Spring semester, and mid-April for the Summer semester. Direct Supervisors will review requests based on the availability of funds, make recommendations with respect to each request and forward the requests with endorsement to the appropriate Office Director, Facility Director or Deputy Commissioner for final approval. A copy of the approved request will be forwarded to the employee, the supervisor and the Human Resource Division.

3. **Eligibility Criteria:** Eligibility criteria for receiving tuition reimbursement have been established to ensure consistency in the application of this policy:
 - a. Applicant must be an employee of DHHS for at least one year prior to making application for assistance. Summer work experience in the Department may be included in the one-year requirement.
 - b. The course must be reasonably related to the applicant's current job duties or potential advancement opportunities within DHHS.
 - c. The content of the course must not be available through in-service training.
 - d. Applicant must have a satisfactory performance rating, as recorded on the most recent performance evaluation with no record of disciplinary action within the last three years.
 - e. Applicant must relate how the course will improve performance and/or prepare applicant for higher responsibility.
 - f. Applicant must be recommended for approval by their immediate supervisor and get final approval from their Regional Director, Office Director, Program Director, Facility Director or Deputy Commissioner.
 - g. Any and all time away from the job requires prior approval in accordance with existing guidelines.
 - h. Employees may receive a maximum tuition award of \$2,000 per semester and \$10,000 over the length of their tenure with the Department.
 - i. In the event that an employee leaves the Department's employ, for any reason, before the completion of a course to be reimbursed under this policy, the Department is not obligated to make the reimbursement.

4. **Tuition Awards**

- a. Awards will be made for the cost of one university level academic course to include tuition, course related fees, books, and other course related expenses.
- b. Tuition awards will be based upon University of Maine system tuition rates.
- c. Tuition awards will be made as a reimbursement of applicants based upon successful completion (grade C or better) of the course. Payment will be made by the Accounting Office upon receipt of a copy of the applicant's transcripts or grade.
- d. Tuition awards will be subject to repayment if the employee leaves state employment within one year after receiving the award.

V. **DEFINITION**

Tuition Reimbursement - is defined as partial repayment to Department employees for the cost of attending academic courses that are related to Department goals and are reasonably related to the employee's job or advancement.

VI. **DISTRIBUTION**

All employees will be notified via e-mail and provided the link to the website.

May 18, 2009

Revised Date

Brenda M. Harvey
Commissioner