

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES POLICY AND PROCEDURES		
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EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE		
<p>RATIONALE: The Department of Health and Human Services establishes an educational assistance program that benefits the state through improved employee performance and increased career potential.</p> <p><i>Related Policies, Applicable Standards, Statutes: DHRM Rule, Section R477-10 and FIACCT 05-03.04.</i></p>		
Original Effective: July 1, 2022	Revision: July 11, 2024	Next Review Due: June 30, 2029

I. DESCRIPTION

This policy guides how DHHS may offer educational assistance to eligible department employees. This policy supersedes any previous department policy governing this subject matter. It does not supplant any existing federal, state, or department laws/policies to which the department shall adhere.

II. DEFINITIONS

The following terms are defined for this policy as:

- A. **DHHS or department:** The Utah Department of Health and Human Services and any operational unit within.
- B. **OU:** Operational units within DHHS, including divisions, offices, or standalone operations whose director reports to the executive director, a deputy director, or an assistant deputy director. The Utah State Hospital and Utah State Developmental Center are considered OUs.

III. POLICY

- A. Some or all costs may be reimbursed for DHHS employees to further their education if it benefits the state and funds are available.
- B. The department's educational assistance program is not an employee right. The program is established and maintained consistent with the Department of Government Operations, Division of Human Resource Management Rule R477-10-6 and Section 127 of the Internal Revenue Service Code.
- C. The educational assistance policy applies to accredited institutions or organizations.
- D. Approval for participation in the program shall be determined by the following:
 - 1. Availability of funds to reimburse employees, which shall come from the OU where the employee is employed;
 - 2. Number of employees requesting to participate in the program; and
 - 3. The job-relatedness and benefits of coursework to the department.
- E. The OU director shall make the decision to approve or deny an employee's application. The approval or denial of participation in educational assistance shall not be delegated.
- F. Full-time benefit-eligible employees who are not currently on a performance improvement plan (PIP) or the subject of disciplinary action, and have been employed by the state of Utah for a minimum of 12 consecutive months are eligible to apply for education assistance.
- G. At the discretion of the OU director, an employee approved for educational assistance under this policy shall be granted reimbursement of tuition, fees related to tuition, and textbooks up to an amount not to exceed \$5,250 per calendar year.
- H. Administrative leave shall not be granted to employees to attend coursework or related assignments.
- I. Time and travel associated with the employee's coursework shall not be reimbursed or incurred during working hours.
- J. An educational assistance agreement does not obligate the department to provide a computer, related equipment, or internet access for coursework. However, with the written approval of OU management, the employee may use state equipment for their coursework during non-work time.
- K. Educational assistance shall not duplicate other financial assistance that an employee receives. Employees shall disclose all scholarships, subsidies, and grant monies received for coursework when the employee requests educational assistance from DHHS. Such financial assistance shall be deducted from the educational assistance provided by DHHS.

- L. An employee receiving educational assistance shall remain employed by DHHS for at least 12 months after completing the coursework.
 - 1. Employees terminating employment before the 12 months shall repay the educational assistance on a prorated percentage basis. The prorated amount shall be calculated by the number of months worked after the completion of coursework.
 - 2. DHHS may withhold wages owed to the employee or request repayment from the employee when repayment is required.
- M. An employee approved for educational assistance is responsible for any state or federal tax implications from this program.
- N. DHHS Division of Finance and Administration (DFA) is responsible for processing educational assistance reimbursements.
- O. Supervisors requiring the employee to obtain training and certification for a specific job responsibility shall use the state procurement process.
- P. An employee who is required to complete a practicum shall complete a DHHS Conflict of Interest Form (02-28) stipulating any stipends they shall receive and the hours to be worked as part of the practicum. The form shall be approved prior to participation in the practicum.
- Q. OU management shall:
 - 1. Make sure an employee approved for educational assistance meets all conditions of this policy;
 - 2. Not submit a reimbursement request before coursework is completed or before the employee has provided the OU with proof of passing the course(s). For classes using a letter grading system, passing means "C" or better;
 - 3. Track an employee's 12-month commitment to make sure the employee remains employed by DHHS for at least 12 months after receiving the completion of coursework. If an employee terminates before the end of the commitment, OU management shall obtain repayment from the employee in accordance with this policy and in coordination with DFA; and
 - 4. Keep documentation for audit purposes.

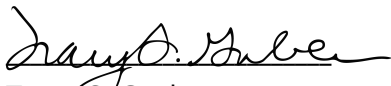
IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Employees wishing to participate in the educational assistance program shall seek approval from their supervisor and OU director.

- B. After gaining supervisor and OU director approval, the employee shall complete the Educational Assistance Agreement (EAA) form, which is available through the Forms icon on employee desktops.
- C. The employee's supervisor and OU director shall review and approve the EAA.
- D. The EAA shall be completed and approved, consistent with this policy, before the start date of the course(s) for which reimbursement is requested.
- E. The employee shall submit the EAA, receipts for tuition and other allowable costs, other applicable financial assistance, and documentation supporting the passing grades within 60 days of the completion of coursework.
- F. OU finance staff shall submit a completed FI48 form with the supporting documentation described in Section IV.C. to DFA at dhhsfinance@utah.gov.

V. EXCEPTIONS

- A. The executive director may make exceptions to this policy, in accordance with procedures outlined in DHHS Policy 01-01.
- B. Employees who receive a stipend provided by a university through a Title IV-E grant administered through the Division of Child and Family Services are not eligible to participate in the Department of Health and Human Services educational assistance program.


Tracy S. Gruber
Executive Director

July 11, 2024

Date