



Illinois Department of Corrections

Administrative Directive

Number: 03.03.104	Title: Employee Tuition Reimbursement	Effective: 8/1/2020
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Authorized by:	<i>[Original Authorized Copy on File]</i> Rob Jeffreys Acting Director
Supersedes:	03.03.104 effective 10/1/2001

Authority: 730 ILCS 5/3-2-2	Related ACA Standards: 5-ACI-1D-22
Referenced Policies:	Referenced Forms: DOC 0060 – Employee Tuition Reimbursement Application

I. **POLICY**

Contingent upon the availability of funds, the Department shall establish a tuition reimbursement program for the purpose of assisting Department employees in their careers and professional development.

II. **PROCEDURE**

A. **Purpose**

The purpose of this directive is to provide written guidelines to staff regarding tuition reimbursement.

B. **Applicability**

This directive is applicable to any Department employee paid out of the Department's budget who has continuous service of at least six months and who is a full time employee.

C. **Facility Reviews**

A facility review of this directive shall be conducted at least annually by the Office of Staff Development and Training.

D. **Designees**

Individuals specified in this directive may delegate stated responsibilities to another person or persons unless otherwise directed.

E. **General Provisions**

1. Contingent upon availability of funds as directed by the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), the Manager of Staff Development and Training shall:
 - a. Designate a staff person to serve as Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator, who shall coordinate and process tuition reimbursements.
 - b. Appoint a Tuition Reimbursement Committee which shall:
 - (1) Each fiscal year, establish the limits to be applied to tuition reimbursement based on availability of funds for the program as directed by the CFO. The limits shall include the percentage of reimbursement and the maximum dollar amount allowed per fiscal year. The appropriate division heads and Chiefs shall be notified annually of the tuition reimbursement limits. Such notification shall state that the program will remain in effect until the reimbursement fund is depleted.

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- (2) Rule on all applications for tuition reimbursement.
 - (3) Submit a concise report of each meeting to the Director.
2. Full-time Department employees may be eligible for reimbursement of tuition and lab fees, less any outside financial assistance award or Upward Mobility funds, if the course is:
 - a. Related to current employment or prepares the individual for future employment opportunities within the Department; and
 - b. Taken from an accredited State-supported school or university; however, approval may be given for participation at private schools.
 3. Employees hired on a temporary, emergency or part-time basis shall not be eligible for consideration for tuition reimbursement.
 4. Priority shall be given to those courses in which full classroom participation is required and where final grades are issued.
 5. Reimbursement is not intended to apply to in-service training conducted within the agency or other short term programs including, but not limited to, workshops, professional conferences and seminars.
 6. Department employees shall not be eligible for reimbursement of amounts paid for additional costs for such items as books, matriculation, activity, health or proficiency testing fees.
 7. In those cases where facilities for full participation in classroom instructions are not available or where distance creates undue hardship, the Manager of Staff Development and Training may approve reimbursement of approved correspondence courses, telecourses, teleconference courses, or online learning or Internet courses provided the courses are:
 - a. Fully accredited courses; and
 - b. Related to current employment or prepares the individual for future employment opportunities within the Department.
 8. Department employees applying for tuition reimbursement shall be informed that acceptance of any reimbursement shall constitute a work commitment to the State of Illinois.
 - a. If State-paid training did not lead to a post-secondary degree or the State paid for less than 50% of the required credit hours for a post-secondary degree, the employee shall be obligated to continue in the employ of the State for a period of at least 18 months following completion of the most recent course.
 - b. If State-paid training did lead to a post-secondary degree and the State paid for 50% or more of the required credit hours, the employee shall be obligated to continue in the employ of the State for a minimum of four years after receiving the degree. Course work which began before January 1, 1992, shall not be counted as part of the 50% reimbursement.
 - c. The employee may be required to provide a written status report on his or her progress toward receiving a post-secondary degree.
 - d. If the employee voluntarily leaves State employment prior to fulfilling the work commitment, the State may recover payments in accordance with 80 Ill. Adm. Code 303 Subpart F.

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9. This directive does not affect current departmental policy with regard to paying the cost for employees to attend such things as work related seminars, workshops or conferences.

F. Requirements

1. The employee shall:
 - a. Properly complete the application section of an Employee Tuition Reimbursement Application, DOC 0060, including information regarding other financial assistance that he or she is or will be receiving. Failure to include such information shall result in denial of the request for tuition reimbursement. A separate application shall be completed for each class.
 - b. Submit the DOC 0060 to the Office of Staff Development and Training Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator during the fiscal year in which the course is completed.
 - (1) Initial applications may be submitted for approval as soon as the course has begun. However, reimbursement shall not be generated until the course is successfully completed and required documentation is received by the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator.
 - (2) Applications for reimbursement of courses scheduled for completion by June 30 shall be submitted to the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator by the last working day in May.
2. The Tuition Reimbursement Committee shall review and sign all applications and ensure applicants are notified of the Committee's decision.
 - a. Applications shall be accepted until the Tuition Reimbursement Funds are depleted.
 - b. Applications that are deemed ineligible or that are received after funds have been exhausted shall be returned to the employee.
 - c. Applications that are deemed eligible for reimbursement shall be maintained by the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator.
3. Upon successful completion of the course, the employee shall submit the following documentation to the Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator by June 30th.
 - a. Copy of the grade slip ("C" or better) or certification of course completion as evidence of satisfactory completion.
 - b. Copy of the receipt showing the amount of tuition and lab fees paid by the individual. A copy of a canceled check is not sufficient.
 - c. Documentation of the amount of other financial assistance, such as the GI Bill or Upward Mobility funds, received for tuition and lab fees.
4. The Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator shall:
 - a. Combine the documentation with the employee's DOC 0060.
 - b. If monies are available and necessary documentation is present:
 - (1) Prepare and process a standard invoice voucher for the amount of reimbursement upon receipt of all of the above documentation on a first come

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basis.

- (2) Document the voucher number, date of issuance, and amount of reimbursement in the Payment Information for Eligible Applicants section of the DOC 0060.
 - c. If monies are not available or documentation is inadequate, document the rationale for not making a payment in the Payment Information for Eligible Applicants section of the DOC 0060.
 - d. Forward a copy of the DOC 0060 to the employee and maintain the original and supporting documentation.
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