RC Employee Tuition Reimbursement Program Participant FAQs

The Regional Center (RC) Employee Tuition Reimbursement Program provides tuition reimbursement for eligible RC employees to enhance RC services received through increasing subject matter expertise, career advancement options, and improving RC employee retention rates. Qualifying RC employees seeking a degree or certification in a health or human services-related field are eligible to receive up to $10,000 annually, for a maximum of three years. RC employees can maintain program eligibility if they are hired at a different regional center from the RC they originally started with.

More information can be found at: https://www.dds.ca.gov/initiatives/workforce-initiatives-4/rc-employee-tuition-reimbursement/

Please email workforce@dds.ca.gov with any further questions.

Q1. Who is eligible for tuition reimbursement?

A1. RC employees must have applied to the program prior to June 30, 2024, remain an active part-time or full-time employee and meet the regional center's performance standards. Regional centers may have additional eligibility requirements.

Q2. What degree or certificate qualifies for this program?

A2. Regional centers will review and approve programs that are from an accredited institution in a health or human services-related field or a certificate or degree that supports or expands the regional center staff's current employment and career advancement options at the regional center. Participants must maintain a passing score and/or be in good academic standing in the degree or certification program to continue to receive reimbursement payments. Regional centers may have additional degree or certificate qualifications for this program.

Q3. If I transfer to another regional center, can I keep my tuition reimbursement?

A3. Yes. Participants may transfer to another regional center and continue participation in the tuition reimbursement program. Participants should consult with the new regional center to discuss their transfer and continued eligibility.

Q4. When will I receive reimbursements after successfully submitting a claim?

A4. The regional center will issue reimbursements to participants as indicated in the regional center's program plan.

Q5. Can I still get reimbursed if I receive a grant or Scholarship?

A5. Yes. Participants are encouraged to apply for grants or other financial aid, such as the federal Public Service Loan Forgiveness program. The tuition reimbursement program can reimburse the remaining tuition costs not covered by other forms of financial aid.

Q6. Can I be reimbursed for a degree or certificate I already finished?

A6. Yes. Participants can apply for reimbursement to eligible programs or classes that were started on or after July 2, 2022. Any coursework starting prior to this date is not eligible. The participant must also have been an employee with the regional center at the time they finished their degree or certificate.

Q7. Can part-time employees get tuition reimbursement?

A7. Yes. Part-time and full-time employees can qualify if they meet performance standards. Employees on a leave of absence are not eligible for reimbursement payments.

Q8. What happens if I don't complete my degree or certificate program?

A8. Participants must stay enrolled and in good academic standing to continue receiving reimbursements. If you stop attending classes or fail your program, you will no longer receive reimbursement payments.

Q9. Will I have to pay taxes on my tuition reimbursement?

A9. Tax requirements can vary. Please check with your tax professional to confirm if your tuition reimbursement is taxable.

Q10. Do I have to return funds received if I leave school or don't finish the program?

A10. You may be required to pay back the funds. Please check with your regional center's Tuition Reimbursement Program coordinator for more details.

Q11. What happens if I fail or don't complete a class or certification program?

A11. Depending on the criteria set forth by a regional center, participants who did not complete or failed the class or certification program may not be eligible to submit for a tuition reimbursement claim. Participants should consult their regional centers program plan for more information.

Q12. How long can I receive tuition reimbursement?

A12. Each qualifying participant shall be eligible to receive up to ten thousand dollars ($10,000) annually for up to three years. Final requests for reimbursement must be made by the end of this 3 year period. For example, if you received your first reimbursement on January 23, 2023, you can continue receiving reimbursement until January 22, 2026. January 22, 2026 would also be your final date to submit for final reimbursement. Please refer to your regional center's Tuition Reimbursement Program coordinator for more information.

Keep in mind that all final reimbursements must be submitted by the regional center to the Department by May 15, 2027, please check with your Tuition Reimbursement Program coordinator if there are additional dates to consider when submitting your tuition reimbursement request.

Q13. When does the Tuition reimbursement program end?

A13. The last day for regional centers to submit reimbursement claims to the Department is **May 15, 2027.** Your regional center may set an earlier deadline to make sure all requests are processed in time.