# RC Employee Tuition Reimbursement
# RC Administrator 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. When does a participant's required service period begin?**

A1. According to Welfare and Institutions Code section 4699.4 (d), participants in the Tuition Reimbursement Program will "be required to work at the regional center for no less than one year for each year of tuition reimbursement following completion of their degree or certification." Therefore, the regional center should begin counting the service period after the participant completes their degree or certification program.

**Q2. What is the procedure when a participant transfers from one regional center to another?**

A2. The original regional center must notify the Department within 30 days of the participant's transfer request. The new regional center then becomes responsible for and administering the participants future requirements.

**Q3. What happens if a participant leaves for a non-regional center job and later returns?**

A3. Follow the repayment or service requirement policy in your regional center's approved Tuition Reimbursement Program plan. These terms determine whether the participant must repay funds or complete additional service time.

**Q4. Can tuition reimbursement funds be used for licensure (ex. CNA, RN) or continuing education units (CEUs)?**

A4. Reimbursement is only for degree or certificate programs an accredited institution in a health or human services-related field, or another program approved by the regional center to support provision of services or employee career growth. Please refer to your regional center's program plan submitted and approved by the Department for further direction.

**Q5. How much funding is available for each regional center?**

A5. Each regional center's Tuition Reimbursement Program allocation would vary. This information was provided via the D-2 Allocation for Fiscal Year 2022-23 letter dated May 19, 2023. Please contact the Department at workforce@dds.ca.gov or your regional centers budgets team for more information.

**Q6. Can participants use other funding sources such as grants or scholarships in addition to the funds utilized for the Tuition Reimbursement Program?**

A6. Yes. Regional center guidance does not prohibit the use of other funding sources which may augment the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

**Q7. Will the Tuition Reimbursement Program reimburse program or certification fees (ex. Exams)?**

A7. The program shall be from an accredited institution in a health or human services-related field or a degree or certificate that the regional center determines will support or expand their employee's current employment and career advancement options at the regional center. Please refer to the regional center plan submitted and approved by the Department for further direction.

**Q8. Can an employee receive reimbursement if they started their degree or program before being hired?**

A8. No. Tuition can only be reimbursed for classes taken during regional center employment. Coursework completed before employment began is not eligible.

**Q9. How should a regional center collect repayment if a participant does not meet the post-education service requirements?**

A9. The collection of payments process is at the discretion of each regional center and outlined in the approved regional center plan submitted to the Department.

**Q10. What are the "other" field of study that regional centers may approve for tuition reimbursement that are not certificates or degrees in health or human services related field?**

A10. Regional centers may approve programs that improve services for individuals served by the regional center, increase staff expertise, or support employee career advancement and retention even if they are not strictly health or human services programs.

**Q11. Can study materials, books, or tutors be reimbursable expenses through the Tuition Reimbursement Program?**

A11. No. reimbursements are limited to tuition costs only, as defined by the educational institution.

**Q12. Can ongoing tests to retain licenses as part of their continued employment be reimbursable through the Tuition Reimbursement Program?**

A12. No. Welfare and Institutions Code section 4699.4 (a) and (d) indicates that the participant in the program must be working towards their degree or certification, not those that are solely seeking tests/exams to retain their license.

**Q13. Is there still funding available for the Tuition Reimbursement Program?**

A13. The Tuition Reimbursement Program funding was allocated in the regional center D-Series (SFY 22/23) contracts in a one-time allocation. July 5th 2024 guidance to regional centers notes allocated funding has an extended claiming period to May 15, 2027, and will revert on June 30, 2027. This means funding for the Tuition Reimbursement Program will effectively remain available for reimbursement requests through May 15, 2027. Additionally. Technical Bulletin (TB) #530 issued April 19, 2023, established new ledger accounts for the Tuition Reimbursement Program. Due to the extended claiming period, the claiming period may go beyond the standard claiming period typically established in UFS (CY, PY, 2PY). Regional centers should use the existing 3PY/98200 GL code after 2PY closes (Rollover Rollback) to continue to claim for the Tuition Reimbursement Program through the extended claiming period of May 15, 2027.