



Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, Inc.
Tuition Reimbursement Initiative 2024-2025
Frequently Asked Questions

1. Is the tuition reimbursement considered income and taxable?

Generally, reimbursements for expenses are not considered income, e.g. mileage or cell phone expenses, however, it is best to check with your own tax advisor. There may be tax implications depending on if/how you reported the expense and if you received any tax benefits in the past.

2. Can continuing education programs/conferences be considered for this reimbursement?

No, continuing education programs are outside the scope of this funding.

3. How do we calculate the 2-year service requirement?

The 2-year commitment begins at **the employment date** at the local health department where the applicant is employed at the time of application, **OR the date of completion of the first course paid for** under this program in 2023, 2024, or 2025, **whichever is later**. If the applicant has work time at another LHD in Ohio, prior to their start date at the current LHD employer, the applicant may receive credit for employment time served at the previous local health department, with appropriate documentation. See Policy & Procedure for details.

4. Can LHDs implement their own service agreement/tuition reimbursement policies over and above the AOHC agreement and 2-year commitment timeline?

Yes. Some health departments may already have tuition reimbursement at some level within their agency. If your agency has their own policy and guidelines to follow and/or service requirements, we are not trying to pre-empt those. Any local agency policies would still apply on top of this AOHC requirement.

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Also, employees should specify on their application if they receive any reimbursement through their health department. Since they are not responsible for repayment of those funds, they would not be eligible to receive reimbursement through this initiative for that amount. Below is a sample chart that could be used when submitting an application to reflect any local support received.

Course Number	Course Title	Grade	Semester		Tuition Paid		LHD Support		Reimbursement Requested
			Term	Dates	Date	Amount	Date	Amount	Amount

A print-out from your LHD showing the dates and amount of tuition support an employee received is also acceptable documentation.

6. Are the OSU Summer Program courses eligible for this reimbursement initiative?

No. Because the OSU Summer program courses do not qualify for college credit or count towards a professional certification, the summer program courses are not eligible for reimbursement through this funding opportunity.

7. Can college science courses be reimbursed if an employee needs additional college credit hours in science to qualify to become an REHSIT?

Yes, employees can apply to have this type of coursework covered, with Health Commissioner approval.

8. Are exam fees with a course reimbursable?

Yes, college course exam fees are a reimbursable expense. Professional/certification applications, exam fees, and cost of study review guides/materials, books, and/or course work required to take the exams can also qualify for reimbursement with approval from your Health Commissioner and successful completion of the courses. Please save and turn in dated and itemized bills/receipts. Review courses require documentation that they were successfully completed in order to receive reimbursement. Examples include CHES, MCHES, REHS, Certification in Public Health, Plumbing, Certified Lactation Counselor, and other Advanced or professional certifications.

9. Would reimbursement of REHS exam course fees or the cost of the exam to move from EHS-IT to REHS be covered?

Yes. Professional registration exams and review courses to become REHS can be reimbursed with approval of your Health Commissioner. Advancement fees for registration are considered a professional licensure expense and not eligible for reimbursement.

10. If the Health Commissioner is applying for tuition reimbursement, who signs the "Health Commissioner Approval Section"?

A Health Commissioner may sign off on his/her own application. If your agency has an internal process for approving Health Commissioner reimbursements, please follow your standard process. Please add the title of the person signing the form if they are not the Health Commissioner.

11. Can a health department suspend their current tuition reimbursement policy and utilize this program while it is available?

As these are federal dollars, these funds are not intended to replace local support for workforce development. Please consider how local funds can expand and extend your assistance/support for workforce development, e.g. consider courses/opportunities that do not fall under this funding opportunity and timeframes outside of this grant (December 1, 2022 – June 30, 2025). The cost of pursuing additional education often exceeds the \$10,000 maximum under this grant; local support can still be valuable to employees if available.

12. Is there a limit as to how many employees from a particular health department can apply/be reimbursed?

No. There is no per health department limit. All who are eligible are encouraged to apply with approval from their Health Commissioner.

13. Can part time employees apply for tuition reimbursement?

Yes. This funding opportunity does not differentiate between part-time and full-time employees.

14. Are other college/university fees besides tuition eligible for reimbursement?

Many fees that are required to be paid as part of attending college/university are eligible for reimbursement. Examples include graduation fees, payment plan fees, parking permits, required books, lab fees, exam fees, and taxes charged by the university. Late fees are NOT eligible for reimbursement.

15. Are renewal fees for certifications covered, like for REHS's?

No. On-going fees are NOT covered through this funding. Once someone receives their professional credentials, they will have to maintain them with CEUs and renewal fees on their own - or local health department funds if available/per local policy.

16. If I am submitting an application for courses as part of more than one degree or certification, how should I answer the question about what degree or certification I am pursuing?

Please check all certifications and/or degrees that apply on the paper Application and Agreement form. When completing the application on Survey Monkey, only one response can be entered – please enter the highest degree being pursued.

17. Can public health students at Ohio universities apply for this tuition reimbursement if they work in public health departments outside of Ohio?

No. These funds are only for employees at Ohio local health departments.

18. Can I submit an application for courses I am currently taking?

Yes. You can submit copies of bills and receipts that show what semesters you are including in your reimbursement request and the dates billed and paid. Your paperwork will be held until you complete your course(s) and submit your transcript showing that you successfully completed the course(s).

19. If I use student loans to pay for some or all of my college courses, can I still apply for reimbursement?

Yes. You can be reimbursed for any eligible fees you are responsible for paying/repaying.

20. What do I need to submit to be reimbursed for books?

To request reimbursement for books, please submit documentation that shows that the text/materials were required for the courses you are including for reimbursement. For example, a course syllabus that lists the required texts would suffice. You must also submit receipts/copies of invoices showing that payment was made for the books.

21. Can I apply for reimbursement for a professional certification program?

Yes. Coursework that applies for college credit or leads to a professional certification can qualify for reimbursement. If you have questions before you being a program, or if you have completed a program since December 1, 2022 and wonder if it qualifies, you can always check with Kathy Luhn at aohctuition@gmail.com or 567-242-4838. Some examples include certified lactation counselors, plumbing inspector certification, CHES, and HR specialist certification.

22. The application form only has 6 lines for me to list the courses I am submitting for reimbursement. Can I request reimbursement for more than 6 courses?

Yes. Please list all the courses you are submitting for reimbursement and add an additional page if needed. If you are submitting for only some of your courses that are on your bill, please provide an explanation as to why just those courses are being submitted, e.g. received reimbursement from my health department for other courses. While these funds are public health focused, we realize that there are usually other courses/prerequisites needed to fulfill degree requirements, so please list all courses

included in your request for reimbursement. If you list only some of your courses, your reimbursement for that semester(s) will be pro-rated to match the courses you requested.

23. If I received reimbursement from my health department and there is still a balance I am responsible for paying, would that be eligible for reimbursement through this program?

Yes. Local health departments reimburse employees in a variety of ways. You may add additional documents to your application to explain which courses or fees were reimbursed by your health department and what courses/funds remain where you have not received any reimbursement. Please include documentation of your health department reimbursement, e.g. approval forms.

24. How do grants and scholarships figure into the amount of reimbursement for which I can apply?

Since you are not responsible for repaying grants and scholarships, those amounts are subtracted from the total tuition and fees for the semester they were received. This includes HEERF and CARES funds you may have received as a student.

For Reference:

The Policy and Procedures and Application form are available on the [AOHC website](#) and outline the process in more detail. Applications can be submitted via [SurveyMonkey](#). For more information, contact Kathy Luhn at: aohctuition@gmail.com or 567-242-4838.