

Tuition Assistance Program for Employees Working in Facilities Caring for Individuals with Special Needs

Guidelines:

1. Employers must be a health care facility serving adults with mental illness or intellectual disabilities (ICF/ID, ICF/PMI, RCF/ID, RCF/PMI, HCBS/ID, and Habilitation).
2. Students must be an employee of a participating health care facility, must have been employed by a designated health care facility for a period of at least 60 days or 240 hours prior to enrollment, and must be a resident of Iowa.
3. Half of the tuition of each student/employee is covered by the employer, half by state funding reimbursing the community college.
4. Participating employers may not charge employees for any portion of students' tuition costs.
5. Participating students may receive tuition assistance for up to six credits per semester.
6. Students may register for any credit courses within a course of study leading to a degree applicable to the health care workforce and employment by health care facilities providing services to adults with mental illness or intellectual disability.
7. The student may enroll at any Iowa community college partnering with the students' employer.
8. The students' coursework may include any college courses within a curriculum leading to an AAS, AS/CO, AS, or AA degree.

Funding:

The FY 2013 appropriation will be based on a first come, first serve basis per semester. Reimbursement eligibility will begin with the summer (after July 1st start)/fall 2012 semester and end with the summer (before July 1st start) 2013 semester, or as long as there are funds remaining for reimbursement. A deadline will be set for all tuition reimbursement submissions each semester, and then the amount of the appropriation that remains available for the next semester will be announced. In the event that more money is requested than is available for a semester, the reimbursement made to the colleges will be prorated based on the amount of funding still available.

Responsibilities:

Employers

- Identify and encourage eligible employees to become students and enroll in coursework that will assist the student and employer in providing an improved quality of care to residents.
- Enter into an agreement with one or more community colleges. The agreement must specify the method of payment for match.
- Pay partnering community colleges for half of participating employee's tuition costs.
- Provide documentation to participating students that can be provided to the partnering college(s) indicating the billing arrangement for the participating agency's match.

Community Colleges

- Enter into an agreement with one or more health care providers.
- Manage the tuition assistance program at the local level including utilizing state funds allocated to the college for the program and billing participating employers.
- Assign college staff to assist eligible students with the course registration process.
- Assign college staff to assist eligible students with applying for financial aid to cover fees, books and other non-tuition costs.
- Submit requested information to the Department and partnering agencies/employers following each term of enrollment.

Students

- Communicate an interest in the program to eligible employer.
- Provide to the college documentation from the employer indicating method of payment for the employer's match.
- Pay for other non-tuition costs including course fees and books (students may apply for financial aid, as eligible).
- Maintain employment of at least 20 hours per week while taking the college courses.