



State of South Carolina

Department of Social Services

Policies and Procedures: Human Resources

Subject:	139 Tuition Reimbursement
Authority:	DSS Human Resources
Standards:	
Application:	All DSS Staff
Purpose:	<p>The purpose of the Tuition Reimbursement Program is to build a stronger workforce in support of DSS's mission and aid in the recruitment and retention of qualified employees. DSS may pay eligible employees up to \$3,500 per calendar year or the balance of the cost of tuition, whichever is lower. Payments will be made directly to the employee at the end of each calendar year subject to annual review and availability of funding. Payments received from the Tuition Reimbursement Program may be taxable as income, and applicants should consult their tax advisor before applying.</p>
Policy Statement:	<p>DSS is pleased to promote and encourage employee career development. In addition to participating in agency provided staff development and training, employees should also consider the pursuit of other relevant coursework and degrees leading to best practices and the accomplishment of our mission and vision.</p> <p>This policy sets forth which DSS employees are eligible along with the Form 1880 Tuition Reimbursement Form procedures. Access will be granted based on available budget with priority given to eligible frontline case management and supervisory positions. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is equal opportunity compliant in accordance with State and Federal law.</p> <p>Coursework must be taken for academic credit toward the completion of a DSS programmatically relevant human services degree including degrees in Social Work, Human Services, Children and Family Studies, Sociology, or Psychology. Undergraduate and graduate courses are both eligible for reimbursement through this program. Courses of study may include web-based courses and programs from any state as long as the institution is accredited.</p> <p>DSS will assist with the reimbursement for the cost of tuition and required course lab fees only. Books, housing, and supplies are NOT reimbursed. Payments may be issued to the employee up to \$3,500 per calendar year. Payments cannot exceed \$3,500 or the balance of the cost of tuition, whichever is lower. Payments received from the Tuition Reimbursement Program may be taxable as income and applicants should consult their tax advisor before applying.</p>

Policy Administration:	
DSS Human Resources is the owner of this policy. The Director, or the Director's designee, shall review this policy at least annually from the date published in the HR Manual, or as needed due to changes in law or practice.	
Procedures:	
A. Eligibility	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Employees currently enrolled in an accredited college or university with the goal of completing a DSS programmatically relevant human services degree in Social Work, Human Services, Children and Family Studies, Sociology, or Psychology may be eligible for reimbursement of tuition and course lab fees. The DSS Tuition Reimbursement Program is contingent upon the availability of funds each fiscal year.2. Only employees in full time equivalent, time limited, or temporary grant positions with at least one year of successful service with DSS, and who do not have any formal level of discipline in the preceding twelve-month period will be eligible. Employees who are actively in progressive discipline, on a warning notice of substandard performance, or similar circumstances are not eligible to participate in this program.3. Employees who participate in the program are required to work the normal number of hours in their regular work week. However, supervisors should work with employees to allow them, when feasible, to work flexible schedules and/or allow them to use annual leave to accommodate class schedules, when possible. All flex schedules are subject to management's discretion.4. Tuition reimbursement will only be provided to employees who attend accredited institutions of higher learning recognized by the U.S. Department of Education (DAPIP Homepage (ed.gov)) The institution must offer courses within South Carolina, including online courses taken in state from out-of-state institutions. DSS has the sole discretion to determine whether a course is job related or enhances the performance or promotional potential of an applicant.5. Employees who are in or enter into a leave without pay (LWOP) status due to a disability, Family Medical Leave, Military duty, or Worker's Compensation are eligible to participate in the Tuition Reimbursement Program.6. Tuition reimbursement must not result in a surplus of funds exceeding the cost of the course and lab fees. (e.g. when the employee is receiving other grants or scholarships that do not require repayment)

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B. Reimbursement Form Procedures	<p>The DSS Form 1880 Tuition Reimbursement Form with required accompanying grades, receipts, and financial aid award letter if applicable, should be submitted no later than 30 days after the end of the academic term.</p> <p>The employee must provide the following with their DSS Form 1880 submission:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A detailed justification as to how the coursework directly relates to their career development with DSS.2. An official grade report or transcript showing an earned grade of "C" or above for undergraduate courses and "B" or above for graduate courses. Courses taken on a pass/fail basis must be passed. The DSS Form 1880 and the accompanying grades, receipts, and financial aid award letter, if any financial aid is received should be sent to HRHelpdesk@dss.sc.gov3. If an employee leaves DSS for any reason, voluntarily or involuntarily, before the end of their currently enrolled semester, and before reimbursement is paid, they forfeit any potential reimbursement of tuition and lab fees for that semester. <p>Denial of participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program will not be subject to grievance or appeal in accordance with the South Carolina State Employee Grievance Procedure Act.</p>

Forms:	DSS Form 1880: Tuition Reimbursement Form
Related Management Reports:	N/A

Glossary:
N/A