

Association of Ohio Health Commissioners, Inc. Tuition Reimbursement Initiative 2024-2025 Policy and Procedures

Purpose: This initiative serves to assist local health department (LHD) employees who wish to further their education in an effort to enhance current skills and prepare for future responsibilities and roles in public health by providing reimbursement for tuition and related course fees.

Policy/Procedure:

Qualification Criteria and Process

1. Any current Local Health Department (LHD) staff member who has successfully completed/successfully completes formal educational courses source in pursuit of developing their skills for their current or future role in public health is eligible to receive reimbursement. Course work includes:
 - Courses taken to fulfill an undergraduate, graduate, or post-graduate degree in public health or a related field. Elective-type courses required for completion of a degree are also eligible.
 - Course work towards professional certification e.g. in public health or a related field, including the required examination fees.
 - Successful completion means receiving a letter grade of “C” or above, or a ‘Complete’ or ‘Pass’ outcome for a given course.
2. To be eligible, courses must have been/be completed between December 1, 2022 through June 2025. Coursework must be completed or currently in progress. Applications for future courses will not be accepted.
3. Reimbursement may include tuition for the course, course fees, and required books.
4. Reimbursement across all AOHC Tuition Reimbursement Initiatives cannot exceed \$10,000.00.
5. Reimbursement must be requested for fees paid by the individual. Reimbursement cannot be made for costs paid by scholarship, grant, or other sources for which the student ultimately has no obligation for payment.
6. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted to AOHC **no later than June 10, 2025**.
7. Two years of service time at an Ohio local health department is required to be eligible for reimbursement under this program. The LHD staff member agrees to complete 2 years of service to their LHD or another Ohio LHD, as follows:

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, **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 next page for more detail about the required documentation required under this provision.

Failure to complete the service time requirement as stated in this policy may result in the loss of part or all of the reimbursement issued under this program, which may include the requirement to return all or part of any reimbursement funds already received by the applicant.

8. Any LHD staff member who requests tuition reimbursement in accordance with this program must submit the following to AOHC:
 - Documentation from the college or university or course provider that includes:
 - i. Itemized bills and receipts/proof of payment for the course, and any associated course fees and books, and any scholarships or grants or other reimbursement received,
 - ii. Classes included in the payment including semester/term or dates,
 - iii. Degree/certification being pursued,

- iv. Documentation of successful completion of the course (“C” grade or better, “Passed” or “Completed”; student grade card is sufficient, official transcripts *not* required
 - v. If requesting credit for previous time employed by a different local health department in Ohio, include verification documentation from the previous employer on their letterhead that includes the name of the employee and start and end dates of employment at the previous local health department.
 - Signed Application and Agreement Form from the employee that includes signature/approval of the Health Commissioner.
 - Any additional information as requested by AOHC that is needed to document eligibility.
9. The Health Commissioner will review the information provided, evaluate the potential benefit to the employee and the agency, and approve the request by signing the reimbursement application form. It is up to the local health department to monitor the employee’s 2-year commitment if the request is approved. Requests must be approved by the Health Commissioner in order to be considered for reimbursement.
 10. AOHC will review the request for completeness and compliance with qualification criteria, as listed above, within 14 days of receipt or within a reasonable time frame. AOHC will notify the applicant and Health Commissioner of approval or disapproval of the request.
 11. The completed Application and Agreement Form and all documentation must be submitted electronically:
 - [SurveyMonkey](#) application with file uploads (have files ready to upload before beginning application)
 - ****REDACT any Personal identifying information such as social security numbers prior to submittal.****
 12. Multiple semesters may be submitted on one application form if all courses are completed or currently in progress at the time of submission. A new application must be submitted for each reimbursement request.

Reimbursement Process:

1. Applications missing information will not be processed until all documentation is received and approved.
2. AOHC will issue payment to approved applicants at least quarterly, e.g. April, July, October, January.
3. The reimbursement program is subject to funding availability and can be ended without notice.
4. If the request is not approved, AOHC will notify the applicant in writing, including reason(s) for disapproval.

LHD Responsibility

All employee requests for reimbursement through this funding opportunity must be approved by the Health Commissioner prior to submission. The Health Commissioner must sign the Application and Agreement Form to attest that they approve the request and the coursework and/or degree/certification/designation pursued is of value to the individual and the agency and supports local public health workforce development. Approval may be rescinded at the request of the Health Commissioner at their discretion.

By accepting the reimbursement(s), employees agree to a 2-year service commitment to the same or another Ohio local health district, per #7 above. It is up to the local health department to track this commitment and notify AOHC if employment terminates prior to the end of the 2-year commitment.

In the event of employee separation during the 2-year employment commitment period:

1. The Health Commissioner will review the situation and determine if a reduction in the amount awarded or employee repayment is necessary.
2. If it is determined the reimbursement awarded should be reduced or repaid, LHD will determine the pro-rated amount based upon how much of the employment period has been worked and the amount of reimbursement received by the LHD employee. LHD will notify the employee of their decision and any adjustment to the amount awarded or the amount of repayment determined.
3. The LHD must notify AOHC in writing within 14 days of learning of employee separation and include repayment determination and amount to be repaid. LHD will also provide AOHC with the employee’s most current contact information.