

Tuition Assistance

The Head Start Act 2007 (as amended 12/12/07)

§ 1302.92 (b)

(b) A program must establish and implement a systematic approach to staff training and professional development designed to assist staff in acquiring or increasing the knowledge and skills needed to provide high-quality, comprehensive services within the scope of their job responsibilities, and attached to academic credit as appropriate, and integrated with employee engagement practices in accordance with § 1302.101(a)(2). At a minimum, the system must include:

(1) Staff completing a minimum of 15 clock hours of professional development per year. For teaching staff, such professional development must meet the requirements described in section 648A(a)(5)29 of the Act, and includes creating individual professional development plans as described in section 648A(f) of the Act.

Policy

To improve staff qualifications and enhance professional development, Community Action Early Head Start (EHS) and Head Start (HS) will ensure all staff meet required professional development based on job position federal and state regulations. Professional development is provided by a combination of grantee-provided training, training offered through community partners, offsite services, and by attendance at conferences.

The **Training and Technical Assistance Plan (T&TA Plan)** outlines the training and professional development used by the program with details on tuition assistance and training priorities for staff, Policy Council, Governing Board, and parents.

Community Action Head Start will offer financial assistance (contingent upon available funds) to employees who are of full-time equivalency status and have a **Professional Development Plan approved by their supervisor**.

A tiered approach is used with priority given to staff as listed in our T&TA Plan and below:

1. Staff who are in positions requiring only a high school diploma/GED who wish to obtain their CDA or to take classes that will enhance their professional development.
2. Family Services staff who do not meet the Head Start Program Performance Standards for their position.
3. Staff who wish to obtain their AA degree in ECE or obtain an ECE certificate in the field of Early Childhood.
4. Staff who wish to obtain their BS/BA degree in Early Childhood or related field.
5. Staff who request professional development to support their current position or who wish to increase their Oregon Registry Online (ORO) step.

Students who receive grants, scholarships, or a combination thereof sufficient to pay for tuition and fees **are not eligible for financial assistance through Community Action**. Community Action will provide financial assistance for tuition and fees, the net out of pocket cost to the student.

Students are required to provide an account statement which includes the student's name, institution, dates attended, and itemized accounting, including any financial aid applied to the student's account.

Community Action Head Start Washington County, Oregon

Staff who are on an active Coaching & Counseling notice (C&C) or who have submitted a notice of separation from employment (resignation) will not be eligible for reimbursement or tuition assistance.

Procedure

Pre-payment of Courses at Portland Community College *(leading to an Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education)*

Community Action Head Start (CAHS) will fund up to three courses per term and will pre-pay tuition/fees for employees in Academic Good Standing at Portland Community College (PCC) and are taking courses to obtain an AA degree in ECE. An ECE course must be taken each term. If there are only electives taken during the term, CA Head Start will not pre-pay tuition and the student will be responsible for those costs. If an employee receives an Academic Warning or Probation, they will be responsible for pre-paying tuition and fees until reinstated to Academic Good Standing.

To be eligible for tuition assistance, all required paperwork must be submitted at least **two weeks before** PCC's payment deadline. Failure to meet this requirement may result in denial of the tuition assistance request at CAHS's discretion.

Employee will:

- Meet with their supervisor to complete their **Professional Development Plan** as part of their employee evaluation, which indicates the goal of taking coursework, classes, or training.
- At least six weeks prior to the beginning of the term, make an appointment with an academic advisor and complete an **Education Development Plan** form.
- Complete an **Education Request Form**.
- At least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term, submit the following forms to their supervisor:
 - Completed and signed Education Development Plan
 - Completed and signed Education Request Form
 - Completed Payment Request Form (obtained from the commonly used forms section of the employee intranet). Instructions on how to complete the payment request form are below:
 - Date: Date of which the form is being completed
 - Requested By: Name of employee requesting the funds
 - Vendor Code: leave blank
 - Vendor Name: Portland Community College (address, city, state, zip can be left blank)
 - Hold Check: Mail to vendor
 - Description and Purpose: AA Tuition for Student Name and G#
 - Expense Account: 54950
 - Project Codes must be split: 106001 (32%), 107001 (68%)
 - A transcript and/or grade report from the previous term (if applicable)
 - Account statement showing total for the term and the breakdown of tuition fees
- After the term is completed, send transcripts or grade report showing the completed courses which were paid by the employer to the Professional Development Supervisor (PDS). ***If this step is not completed, the next term will not be prepaid.***

Community Action Head Start Washington County, Oregon

- **If paperwork is not submitted prior to the term starting and the deadline for payment for the term, CAHS has the right to reject the request.

Supervisor will:

- Review all documents submitted by the employee as outlined above for accuracy.
- Once reviewed and verified, supervisor will sign Education Request and Payment Request Forms.
- Attach a copy of the staff member's professional development plan with appropriate signatures.
- Supervisor will compile and email all paperwork to the PDS via email for review.

Professional Development Supervisor will:

- Review all paperwork for accuracy and submit all paperwork via DocuSign to the appropriate manager for approval request.
- Once approved, the PDS will inform the employee and supervisor that the request has been approved, and they may proceed with taking the courses.
- The PDS will email the contact at PCC to inform them that CAHS will pay the tuition for the employee, and PCC will waive the holds on the employee's account.
- The PDS will wait to receive the invoice from PCC at the end of the term. Once the invoice is received, the PDS will resubmit the following for final approval from appropriate manager and director:
 - Final Payment Request Form
 - Invoice from PCC
 - All paperwork submitted from staff member prior to enrolling in courses
 - Once approved, a copy of all documents will be sent to fiscal for payment to PCC.

Reimbursement of Courses

Community Action will reimburse for one approved early childhood education, a related field course, or a course for professional development related to current position, per staff per quarter at any institution. If the employee completes the coursework in the current term with grades of "C" or better, funds for that term will be reimbursed. Tuition reimbursement is as follows:

- Professional Development (Non-Degree)
 - CAHS will reimburse 100% of tuition and fees for one approved course per term related to early childhood education, a related field, or relevant to the employee's current position.
- Associate Degree in Early Childhood Education
 - CAHS will reimburse 100% of tuition and fees for one ECE course per term for employees pursuing an Associate Degree.
- Baccalaureate Degree in Early Childhood Education
 - CAHS will reimburse 50% of tuition and fees for one ECE course per term for employees pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in early childhood education.
- Graduate-Level Education (Master's or Doctoral)
 - CAHS does not reimburse tuition or fees for Master's or Doctoral degree programs.

To be eligible for tuition assistance, all required paperwork must be submitted at least **two weeks before** PCC's payment deadline. Failure to meet this requirement may result in denial of the tuition assistance request at CAHS's discretion.

Community Action Head Start Washington County, Oregon

Employee will:

- Meet with their supervisor to complete their Professional Development Plan as part of their employee evaluation, which indicates the goal of taking coursework, classes, or training.
- At least six weeks prior to the beginning of the term, make an appointment with an academic advisor and complete an Education Development Plan form.
- Complete an Education Reimbursement Request Form.
- At least two weeks prior to the beginning of the term, submit the following forms to their supervisor:
 - Completed and signed Education Development Plan
 - Completed and signed Education Reimbursement Request Form
 - Completed Payment Request Form (obtained from the commonly used forms section of the employee intranet). Instructions on how to complete the payment request form are below:
 - Date: Date the form is being completed
 - Requested By: Name of employee requesting the funds
 - Vendor Code: leave blank
 - Vendor Name: Employees' name and address on the appropriate sections
 - There are 2 methods for reimbursement that will prompt fiscal on how the employee will obtain their check (Hold Check box):
 - Option 1 - Employee can pick up the check at the Hillsboro Multi-Service Center (HMSC). Type "Will pick up at front desk"
 - Option 2 – Employee can receive the check via postal mail to the address on the Payment Request Form. Type "mail to address on form"
 - Description and Purpose: Tuition for Student Name (student ID#), Term, Course name.
 - Example: Tuition for Minnie Mouse (G0123456), Spring term, Basics of Leadership
 - Expense Account: 54950
 - Project Codes must be split: 106001 (32%), 107001 (68%)
 - Account statement showing total for the term and the breakdown of tuition fees
- After the term is completed, send transcripts or grade report showing the completed courses which were paid by the employer to the Professional Development Supervisor (PDS). **If this step is not completed, tuition will not be reimbursed.**
- **If paperwork is not submitted prior to the term starting and the deadline for payment for the term, CAHS has the right to reject the request.

Supervisor will:

- Review all documents submitted by the employee as outlined above for accuracy.
- Once reviewed and verified, supervisor will sign Education Request and Payment Request Forms.
- Supervisor will compile and email all paperwork to the PDS via email for review.

**Community Action Head Start
Washington County, Oregon**

Professional Development Supervisor will:

- Review all paperwork for accuracy and submit all paperwork via DocuSign to the appropriate manager for approval request.
- Once approved, the PDS will inform the employee and supervisor that the request has been approved and they may proceed with taking the course.
- Once receipt and grades are received by employee, the PDS will send a copy of all documents to fiscal for check issuance.

Course Withdrawal, Failure & Repayment

If an employee needs to withdraw from classes for any reason, they must immediately withdraw through PCC and notify the Professional Development Specialist (PDS). CAHS is not responsible for any tuition or associated costs if:

- The employee withdraws after the official deadline, or
- The employee is terminated before the end of the academic term.

If an employee fails a course, they must also notify the PDS as soon as possible. CAHS will allow only one failed course under the tuition assistance program. Any additional failed courses will result in denial of pre-payment for future courses.

In the case of termination or resignation, the PDS will notify PCC. PCC will transfer any unpaid tuition charges to the student's account, and the student will be responsible for those costs.

Staff who are laid off in the summer

Staff who are laid off in the summer and wish to be reimbursed for training may request reimbursement upon their return in the fall.