

ILLINOIS STATE POLICE PER-041, TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

RESCINDS: PER-041, 2022-087, revised 02-28-2022.	REVISED: 06-06-2024 2024-024
RELATED DOCUMENTS: None	RELATED CALEA STANDARDS (6th Edition): 22.1.3, 33.1.3, 33.8.4

I. POLICY

The Illinois State Police (ISP) will provide tuition reimbursement, within the limits of fiscal resources, to any eligible employee who successfully completes a work-related course for which prior approval has been granted by that employee's supervisor, Deputy Director, or designee, and by the Director, or designee.

NOTE: This directive will not alter, replace, nor diminish the content or use of Federal Grant in Aid, agency sponsored stipend, or educational leave of absence programs. In administering this directive, other programs that provide financial aid for education should be distinguished from tuition reimbursement programs and treated separately.

II. DEFINITION

II.A. Tuition Reimbursement Program Administrator (Program Administrator) – the Deputy Director of the Division of Justice Services (DJS) will designate a Program Administrator. The Program Administrator is responsible for monitoring the Tuition Reimbursement Program.

II.B. Work-related – course work that is beneficial to departmental operations and/or directly related to specific job duties of the applicant.

III. AUTHORITY

III.A. 20 ILCS 415/8c, "Personnel Code, Jurisdiction C; conditions of employment"

III.B. 110 ILCS 947/15, "Illinois Student Assistance Commission"

III.C. ILL. ADMIN. CODE tit. 80 §303.390, "Tuition Reimbursement"

III.D. 20 USC 2301 *et. seq.*, Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006.

IV. PROCEDURES

IV.A. Employee Eligibility

Any full-time employee who has served for at least one year (not on leave of absence, disability leave, nor suspension) and who was not on any leave, nor suspension during the period when tuition costs were incurred, is eligible to apply for tuition reimbursement.

IV.A.1. No employee who has temporary, contractual, emergency, provisional, or trainee civil service status is eligible for tuition reimbursement.

IV.A.2. Each employee is granted equal opportunity for reimbursement of tuition costs. Tuition reimbursement is dependent on the availability of funds and is not to be considered a right or benefit to which an employee is entitled by employment.

IV.A.3. Because an employee is eligible to receive aid for education from another source does not necessarily make that employee ineligible to receive tuition reimbursement from the Department. However, some restrictions may apply. (See paragraph IV.B.4. of this directive.)

IV.B. Program Eligibility

IV.B.1. Tuition reimbursement may be approved for work-related courses where employees are:

IV.B.1.a. Working to improve skills needed by the employee to better perform assigned duties.

IV.B.1.b. Working to qualify for career advancement within the ISP.

IV.B.2. Satisfactory completion of a course by an employee must be measured and documented. Generally, reimbursement will only be given for those courses which classroom participation, or similar interactivity in a virtual classroom, is required on a regular basis and final grades are issued. (See paragraph IV.D.2.f. of this directive regarding passing grades.)

IV.B.3. Tuition reimbursement will not be granted for any workshop, seminar, conference, or other program for which a registration fee is required and that provides a certificate of attendance upon completion rather than any measure of the student's level of accomplishment (test grade, class rank, average, etc.). However, other divisional funds may be used to reimburse employees for such expenses if approved through the proper chain-of-command.

IV.B.4. Employees who are eligible for educational scholarship or grant assistance from the Illinois National Guard, as an Illinois veteran, from the Illinois State Scholarship Commission, or Perkin's assistance will exhaust these resources prior to becoming eligible for tuition assistance as outlined herein.

IV.C. Scheduling

IV.C.1. Academic courses will normally be scheduled as an off-duty activity.

IV.C.1.a. If the desired course is only offered during the employee's workday, the employee may use vacation or accumulated time for the hours spent in the classroom, provided this does not adversely affect workloads in the unit of assignment.

IV.C.1.b. In some cases, with supervisor's approval, the employee may use a flexible work schedule to take classes during the normal workday, provided this does not adversely affect workloads in the unit of assignment.

IV.C.1.c. The Department will not alter an employee's work schedule so the employee is unable to complete the course.

IV.C.2. The employee and the employee's supervisor should agree upon the course load. Ordinarily, the employee should take no more than two courses simultaneously.

IV.D. Program Administration

IV.D.1. The Program Administrator will monitor the Tuition Reimbursement Program for the entire Department.

IV.D.1.a. In the annual appropriation process, funds will be set aside in the DJS for the Tuition Reimbursement Program in accordance with applicable union agreements.

IV.D.1.b. Employees who are outside of the unions that the Agency is contractually required to reimburse for tuition expenses will be eligible for reimbursement only if there are funds remaining from the original allocation after all contractually eligible employees are reimbursed.

IV.D.2. Reimbursement will be made for tuition and lab fees only.

IV.D.2.a. The Department encourages the use of Illinois state supported schools. Employees who choose to attend a private school will explain why they wish to enroll in a private school rather than a public school (on the Tuition Reimbursement Application, ISP 2-90, Part II.C). Some examples could be lower semester rates at a private school versus the nearest state supported school or unavailability of the course at a state supported school.

- IV.D.2.a.1) Employees are limited to two courses per semester for reimbursement.
 - IV.D.2.a.2) For state supported schools, reimbursement will not exceed 100 percent of the actual cost of the first course and 80 percent of the actual cost of the second course.
 - IV.D.2.a.3) For privately supported schools, reimbursement will not exceed 100 percent of the actual cost of the first course and 80 percent of the highest state supported school semester hour cost for the second course (undergraduate and graduate school costs will differ) as determined by the Illinois Board of Higher Education by July 1 of each year.
- IV.D.2.b. Each employee will be reimbursed for a single class if funds are available.
- IV.D.2.b.1) If funds are not available to cover all requests, the number of requests will be divided by the allotted amount and equally distributed.
 - IV.D.2.b.2) The amount each individual receives will not exceed the percent listed in paragraphs IV.D.2.a.2 and IV.D.2.a.3 of this directive.
 - IV.D.2.b.3) If there are any remaining funds, the balance will be divided equally among those individuals not receiving 100 percent reimbursement.
- IV.D.2.c. After each employee has been reimbursed for a single course, a second course will be considered.
- IV.D.2.c.1) If funds are not available to cover all requests for a second course, the number of requests will be divided by the allotted amount and equally distributed.
 - IV.D.2.c.2) The amount each individual receives will not exceed the percent listed in paragraphs IV.D.2.a.2 and IV.D.2.a.3 of this directive.
 - IV.D.2.c.3) If there are any remaining funds, the balance will be divided equally among those individuals not receiving 80 percent reimbursement.
- IV.D.2.d. Expenses incurred for books, enrollment, activity fees and health fees are not reimbursable.
- IV.D.2.e. If an employee is eligible to receive aid for education from another source, the tuition reimbursement will be made only for the balance of the tuition expense incurred after such aid has been awarded, and proof of aid submitted.
- IV.D.2.f. Any employee who fails to receive, at a minimum, a "C" grade upon completion of a course is ineligible to receive reimbursement for the tuition expense of that course.
- IV.E. Application Process
- IV.E.1. The employee will submit a request for tuition reimbursement on a Tuition Reimbursement Application, through the chain-of-command to the appropriate division Deputy Director, or designee, one month prior to the cut-off dates.
- IV.E.1.a. Cut-off dates for submitting reimbursement applications to the Program Administrator are as follows:
- IV.E.1.a.1) Summer – July 1
 - IV.E.1.a.2) Fall semester – October 1
 - IV.E.1.a.3) Winter semester – December 1
 - IV.E.1.a.4) Spring semester – March 1
- IV.E.1.b. If the Deputy Director denies the request prior to submission to the Program Administrator, the Deputy Director will notify the applicant by the appropriate cut-off date. A copy of the denial will be forwarded to the Program Administrator.
- IV.E.1.c. Late applications will not be considered.

IV.E.1.d. Employees are responsible for verifying their application has been received by the Program Administrator no later than the first week following the appropriate cut-off dates above.

IV.E.2. Any department employee applying for tuition reimbursement must complete Parts I through IV of the Tuition Reimbursement Application as indicated in the instructions on the back of the form. Employees must also complete the comments section of the form.

IV.E.2.a. Indicate the number of credits for each course and the cost per credit hour on the line marked "Total Credit Hours." Employees must submit applications with a copy of the registration form indicating course name, cost per semester hour and associated lab fees, if any.

IV.E.2.b. Indicate the total cost(s) for the course(s) by completing Part III of the application.

NOTE: When applying for tuition reimbursement, employees must indicate if they are eligible to receive aid for education from another source, e.g., G.I. Bill, Perkin's loans, federal grant, scholarship, etc.

IV.E.2.c. The employee must submit the completed Tuition Reimbursement Application to the employee's supervisor for recommendation and signature.

IV.E.2.d. The applicant's supervisor will forward the completed forms through the chain-of-command to the appropriate Deputy Director, or designee, for recommendations and signature.

IV.E.2.d.1) Supervisors may attach their recommendation for approval or disapproval.

IV.E.2.d.2) Deputy Directors, or designee, will make a decision and forward the application to the Program Administrator.

IV.E.2.e. The Program Administrator will:

IV.E.2.e.1) Review and approve/deny the application.

IV.E.2.e.2) Notify the applicant of approval or denial.

IV.E.2.e.3) Provide the appropriate Deputy Director and the Office of Human Resources (OHR) (for placement in the employee's personnel file) with a copy of the approval/denial.

IV.F. Enrollment Status Changes

IV.F.1. If changes in course work occur after initial submission, the applicant will forward a memorandum with this information through the chain-of-command to the Program Administrator immediately.

IV.F.2. The individual must notify the Program Administrator through the chain-of-command if reimbursement for courses already approved will not be necessary due to dropping course, failure to begin the course, failure to complete a course, etc.

IV.F.3. Failure to provide notification to the Program Administrator as provided in this section will result in the individual being ineligible for tuition reimbursement for a period of one year.

IV.G. Work Commitment/Pay Back

IV.G.1. In accordance with 20 ILCS 415/8c, an employee whose tuition and fees are paid by the state will incur a work commitment of:

IV.G.1.a. Eighteen months following completion of the most recent course, if that course did not lead to a post-secondary degree.

IV.G.1.b. Four years following the completion of a post-secondary degree where state payments have paid for 50% or more of the required credit hours.

- IV.G.2. If an employee voluntarily separates from state employment before fulfilling the work commitment, the employee will be liable for tuition reimbursement repayment plus interest.
- IV.G.3. The work commitment/pay back does not apply to training below the college level; specialized training in the form of a conference, seminar, workshop, or similar training offered by public or private organizations; training provided under the Upward Mobility Program; or training that is a condition of continued state employment.
- IV.G.4. Developing and implementing procedures for pay back from separated employees is the responsibility of DJS.
- IV.H. Reimbursement Application
 - IV.H.1. Upon successful completion of a course for which tuition reimbursement has been approved, the employee must submit the following documentation through the chain-of-command to the Program Administrator:
 - IV.H.1.a. A copy of the approved Tuition Reimbursement Application
 - IV.H.1.b. A copy of the employee's final grade(s) must also be forwarded to the OHR for placement in the employee's personnel file.
 - IV.H.1.c. A receipt from the institution verifying payment in full for the course(s) taken
 - IV.H.2. After the documents listed in paragraph IV.H.1. of this directive have been received and approved, the Program Administrator will prepare a voucher for payment to the employee.

| Indicates new or revised items.

-End of Directive-