

RC-23 Tuition Policy

A. Purpose

1. Effective July 1, 2004 the Employer establish a fund of \$60,000 which shall be used to pay tuition at accredited institutions. This amount shall be increased to \$65,000 beginning July 1, 2005. This amount shall be increased to \$70,000 beginning July 1, 2006. This amount shall be increased to \$75,000 beginning July 1, 2007. This fund shall reimburse RC-23 bargaining unit employees for tuition paid by the Department of Central Management Services for approved job related courses taken at an accredited post secondary institutions.
2. Approval will not be unreasonably withheld if (1) application is appropriately made, (2) the course is job related, (3) there are funds remaining for the fiscal year in which the course is taken, and (4) the courses are taken at an accredited institution.
3. Applications will be approved on a first come, first served basis until all funding for the fiscal year is exhausted. No nurse shall receive more than \$3000.00 per semester while participating in the program.
4. Employees attending public, in-state, accredited institutions shall receive 100% payment for tuition costs only. Employees attending private, accredited, Illinois institutions or out-of-state institutions will receive 80% payment for tuition. Other fees and expenses for books will be the responsibility of the student.

B. Class Enrollment

1. In order to participate in the INA Tuition Program, nurses must submit the following:
 - a. RC-23 Tuition Application
 - b. Education Plan (upon first enrolling in the program)
 - c. Signed Work Commitment (upon first enrolling in the program)
2. The following items must be included with the Tuition Application each semester:
 - a. Tuition cost per semester hour/ a copy of an itemized bill
 - b. Class Registration/Copy of Class Schedule
 - c. Course justification -- e.g. "Core course for completion of BA."
 - d. Copy of the course description as outlined in school catalogue
 - e. List any Federal, State or Agency funding provided to the student

3. The Education Plan must include the following information:
 - a. Number of hours required for the degree
 - b. What degree the employee is pursuing and declaration of major
 - c. Expected date of graduation
 - d. An Action Plan which outlines the courses that will be taken until graduation, distinguishing between core and elective classes, the semester/quarter in which the classes will be taken, and a photocopy of the degree program as presented in the school's academic catalogue
4. Once the above information has been submitted, the INA Coordinator will return a copy of the Work Commitment Form to the student. The original will remain in the employee's INA Tuition file.
5. Employees must submit a completed RC-23 Tuition Application prior to the start of the semester/quarter. The INA Coordinator will process applications and approve each on a first come first served basis until all funding for the fiscal year is exhausted.
6. Each student must retain a copy of all documents submitted each semester.
7. An employee's Work Commitment Form and Education Plan needs to be submitted only once when the employee first enters the INA Tuition Program.

C. Class Progression

1. Employees who drop or do not receive a "C" grade or better, must advise CMS, in writing, explaining the reason the class was dropped or did not receive a "C" grade. Future participation in the tuition program requires that the employee reimburse the State of Illinois for all tuition paid for any class, which a "C" was not received, or the class was dropped.
2. Employees who have graduated and received a diploma must notify the INA Coordinator of his/her graduation date and type of degree received.

D. Class Progression:

1. CMS will pay for tuition costs once. The following items must be submitted to the INA Coordinator:
 - a. Itemized tuition invoice from the institution
 - b. Copy of the grade received

2. Students are required to submit grade(s) for each semester and fails to submit the grade(s) to the INA Coordinator, future ability to participate in the program may be jeopardized. If not submitted within the required timeframe, the nurse will no longer be able to participate in the tuition reimbursement program, until grades are received.
3. Employees must earn a grade of “C” or higher, (2.0 on a 4.0 scale, 1.0 on a 3.0 scale) in order to receive tuition reimbursement.

E. Work Commitment

1. CMS will require a work commitment in accordance with Illinois Public Act 87-279, which states: *“Employees whose State paid training has not led to a post secondary degree shall be obligated to continue in the employment of the State, but not necessarily in the same agency, for a period of at least 18 months following completion of the most recent course. Employees whose State paid training has led to a post-secondary degree and whose State payments have paid for 50 % or more of the required credit hours shall be obligated to continue in the employ of the State, but not necessarily in the same agency, for a minimum of four (4) years after receiving the degree.”*

F. Financial Responsibility

1. Any such employees who leave state employment prior to fulfilling the work commitment requirement, will be responsible at the time of state separation for repaying the program any amounts paid for tuition reimbursement. Repayment of such amounts shall be prorated on a monthly basis according to the state service time concluded after completion of their degrees or the most recent course taken as part of their degree programs.
2. The State of Illinois can withhold funds, including, but not limited to, retirement distribution of tax refunds, if payment is not made and will refer accounts past ninety (90) days overdue to a private collection agency.