

Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Office of Human Resources
Training Services Division

Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines

Summer/Fall 2009 – Winter/Spring 2010



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- Instructions for Tuition Reimbursement, Career Development Plans and Work Study/Release Programs
 - Guidelines pertain to the **Summer/Fall 2009 and Winter/Spring 2010 Semesters**, (Short Term Training starts July 1, 2009)
 - These guidelines can be found at **<http://www.dhmf.state.md.us/tsd/guidelines09.pdf>**.

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Tuition Reimbursement Highlights For College/University Courses

DATES TO SUBMIT APPLICATIONS ARE:

**Summer/Fall semesters – the first working day of April, and
Winter/Spring semesters – the first working day of September.**

Applications received prior to these dates will be held and date stamped on those dates.

Work study is hours requested and must be approved by the appointing authority of the agency/facility. The Application Form (4575), a work study schedule, and a Obligated Service Agreement must be submitted by each applicant requesting any work study/release, with a copy going to TSD for documentation and data tracking.

Work release is full-time (40 Hrs.) and is paid back at a 3 to 1 ratio of obligated State service, and must be approved by the appointing authority of the agency/facility.

All participating colleges and universities must be accredited by the U.S. Department of Education. Courses may be traditional on-site, satellite, distance, correspondence and/or web-based. **If you are seeking a degree or certification to be recognized by a Board or Commission, it is YOUR responsibility to verify that the college/university is recognized by the Board or Commission.**

Reimbursement – you must be a DHMH employee on the date that you submit documents for payment.

Eligibility – You have satisfactorily completed an original probationary period or equivalent by the starting date of training, and you are a permanent full-time or part-time (50% or more) State Merit System employee.

All **Headquarters** employees (those not employed at DHMH facilities, hospital centers, local health department, or regional offices) must have a Career Development Plan (CDP).

Reimbursement is for **tuition only**. Books, fees, and other related expenses are the responsibility of employee. Remember the word *reimbursement* - there is no pre-payment associated with this program. You must provide proof of payment and successful course completion documentation before reimbursement is issued.

Rate of reimbursement – Up to the University of Maryland College Park rates. As of Summer 2008 semester, undergraduate rate is \$273 per credit; graduate rate is \$471 per credit. Part-time employees reimbursement rates are pro-rated. **A maximum of 18 credits can be taken per Fiscal Year.**

Priority for tuition reimbursement will be given to the hard to fill classifications within DHMH (see page 3). Nursing, Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Psychology. Only these classifications can receive both time and money, because of their high vacancy rates.

All course reimbursement and/or work study/release requests must be pre-approved (prior to the start date of the class) by the supervisor or appointing authority. Applicant must adhere to the deadlines in these Guidelines.

Prorated schedule of Work Study/Release (Appendix A). All Work Study/Release time will be monitored by the facility/agency in conjunction with employee's registration coordinator and timekeeper.

Each DHMH "unit" (defined as a hospital center, residential facility, local health department, regional office and/or headquarters administration) should have a designated **Out-Service Training Coordinator**. Your respective Out-Service Training Coordinator should have all the forms necessary for you to apply for reimbursement and/or work release/study, and will forward your paperwork to Training Services.

Forms required for all requests: Application Form (4575) completely filled out with proper signatures, course description/s. Career Development Plan, Obligated Service Agreement, and Work Study Schedule as required, (see detailed instructions).

Reimbursement will not be approved for any program sponsored, in full or in part, by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) or any other Maryland State agency or department.

All Tuition Reimbursement approvals are based on projected State budget funds. Therefore, all approvals are pending program funding

Overview of the Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines

A. Introduction

The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) supports and encourages employees to continue their learning and education throughout their careers in the Department. The Employee Development Program provides employees the opportunity to obtain the knowledge and skills required of highly demanded jobs within the Department. It is also a way for the Department to meet essential recruitment and retention needs.

To assist every employee to succeed in the goal of professional development, the Employee Development Program provides the employee with financial reimbursement (for college credit or non-credit courses and continuing education programs) and/or time to participate in the courses (also known as work study/release).

The Employee Development Program has four (4) major components:

1. Tuition Reimbursement for Courses Leading to a Specific Academic Degree

This component (which requires an approved *Career Development Plan*) provides tuition reimbursement for courses leading to a degree that will help qualify the employee for a job classification in which DHMH has a significant retention and/or recruitment difficulty (such as providing tuition reimbursement for an employee to obtain a Master's Degree in Social Work to help qualify for the Social Worker classification).

2. Tuition Reimbursement for Job-Related College Credit Courses

This component provides tuition reimbursement for those college credit courses that have a direct correlation to job duties. For example, a nurse who provides care in a Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) facility may not be seeking a full degree program, but may request reimbursement for a "PSYC 301 – Advanced Theories of Psychology" course so that s/he might better assist his/her patients. This option of seeking reimbursement for specific job-related college credit courses *without* seeking a full degree is available to facility, hospital, and local health department employees only (headquarter employees are excluded).

3. Approval for Work Study/Release

The appointing authority of agency/facility must first approve work study/release. All original forms: Application Form (4575), a Work Study/Release schedule and the Obligated Service Agreement must be submitted by each applicant requesting any Work Study/Release to their Registration Coordinator with a copy to TSD for documentation and data tracking.

Note: Work Release refers only to full-time (40 hours), which must be paid back through an Obligated Service in state service at a rate of 3 to 1.

Only employees seeking Nursing Degrees, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, or Psychology will be allowed both Work Study and Tuition Reimbursement.

Refer to Appendix A for the rate of reimbursement of time rate under Obligation Service Agreement.

4. Reimbursement for Short-Term Training

This component provides reimbursement for one job-related, non-college credit course during the fiscal year for each eligible employee. This reimbursement is for documented tuition or registration fees only, and can be used for conferences, continuing education courses, workshops, seminars or classes. Reimbursement is limited to a one-time maximum amount of \$150.00.

B. Overview of the Career Development Plan

A **Career Development Plan (CDP)** is an understanding between the Secretary of DHMH and the employee regarding a degree or certification goal the employee needs to achieve so that the employee can meet a specific career goal. The approved degree or certification goals will help prepare the employee for those classifications with significant recruitment and retention difficulties, as determined by this Department's Office of Human Resources.

An approved CDP is required if a DHMH employee is seeking a specific academic degree or certification in order to enter or advance in one of the fields listed below. All **Headquarters employees** (See Page A) must have an approved Career Development Plan (CDP) to participate in the tuition reimbursement and/or Work Study/Release programs. However, a CDP is not required if the employee (from a facility, hospital, or local health department) is applying for tuition reimbursement and/or Work Study/Release for courses that are **directly related** to current or anticipated job duties and responsibilities, and is not seeking a specific academic degree or certification.

1. Career Development Plan and Tuition Reimbursement Coverage

With an approved CDP, all core curriculum and required courses will be approved for reimbursement. Once you have an approved CDP, you still must follow all of the rules for tuition reimbursement and/or work study/release, including the forms to be submitted, deadlines for application and payment, reimbursement rates, and release-time limits. All workstudy/release must be applied for each semester.

2. Approved Degree or Certification Goals

Look at the chart below. In the left column, are all the classifications currently identified as most needed by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. In the right column, are the corresponding degree and certifications. Other careers will be considered **after** the classifications listed below.

THE CLASSIFICATION YOU WISH TO ENTER OR ADVANCE	TRAINING SERVICES DIVISION WILL APPROVE THE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATION GOAL(S) OF
Nursing	
All classifications and levels	LPN thru Doctorate & certain health-related degrees (contact us for details)
Health Care Professionals	
Alcohol & Drug Abuse Counselors	Associates, Bachelor's, Masters degrees (Acceptable to the Maryland Board of Professional Counselors and Therapists)
Nutritionists	Bachelor's thru Masters, Degree in Nutritional Sciences, Human Nutrition, Food & Nutrition, Community Nutrition, or Public Health
Occupational Therapist	Associate thru Master's degree in Occupational therapy
Pharmacist	Bachelor's thru Doctorate in Pharmacology
Physical Therapist	Associate thru Master's degree in Physical Therapy
Psychologist	Bachelor's thru Doctorate in Psychology (Acceptable to the Maryland Board of Psychologists)
Registered Dietician	Bachelor's (which includes completion of an accredited American Dietetic Association program.)
Respiratory Care Practitioner	Associate Degree in Respiratory Therapy and/or Certification by National Board of Respiratory Therapists
Social Worker (all categories)	Bachelor's thru Doctorate Degree in Social Work
Speech Pathologists/Audiologists	Bachelor's thru Master's Degree in Speech Pathology or Audiology

THE CLASSIFICATION YOU WISH TO ENTER OR ADVANCE	TRAINING SERVICES DIVISION WILL APPROVE THE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATION GOAL(S) OF
Sciences	
Sanitarian (Registered)	Bachelor's thru Master's Degree in the Biological, Environmental or Physical Sciences with a Certificate of Eligibility for license as a Registered Environmental Sanitarian from the MD State Board of Environmental Sanitarians
Public Health Lab Scientists (all categories)	Bachelor's degree thru Doctorate with a minimum of 30 semester credits in Biological, Environmental, or Physical Sciences

Please Note: If the hospital center, residential center, local health department, laboratory, or headquarters unit where you are employed is experiencing *unique recruitment/retention difficulties* in a classification(s) *not listed* in the table above, you may be eligible for a CDP to assist you in meeting the qualifications for the classification(s) with unique recruitment/retention difficulties. See your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator for further information.

C. Documentation Required in the Career Development Plan (CDP)

The CDP application (available via the unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator or the TSD website) must include:

1. A completed *Career Development Plan form*, which details:
 - Employee information
 - Employee's desired career goal - that is, a specific State classification from the list above (e.g., Registered Nurse II)
 - Employee's chosen degree or certification goal that will help qualify the employee for the desired career goal (Using the above example, an appropriate degree goal for Registered Nurse II would be A.A.R.N.)
 - The accredited community college, college, or university where the employee will be pursuing the degree or certification goal.
 - The employee's signature and the signature of the "unit" appointing authority or designee
 - If you are seeking a degree or certification to be recognized by a Board or Commission, it is YOUR responsibility to verify that the college/university is recognized by the Board or Commission.**

2. A *letter of acknowledgement/recommendation from the employee's supervisor* indicating support for the proposed Career Development Plan.

3. A copy of the *acceptance letter from the college, community college or university* into the degree or certification program to which the employee has applied (Note: If the employee hasn't been admitted into the degree or certification program because s/he does not meet all of the admission requirements, the employee is eligible for a "provisional CDP". In lieu of the acceptance letter, a written statement from your chosen community college, college or university, preferably from your academic advisor or counselor, must be submitted documenting the specific prerequisite courses required in order to be eligible for admission. This documentation, together with the rest of the CDP application, becomes the "provisional CDP". Each "provisional CDP" and respective tuition reimbursement and work study applications will be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis.)

4. The *sequence or listing of courses* needed to complete degree requirements. List classes by course number and title (such as Math 101: Introduction to Algebra). The listing of the course requirements can be copied from the college/university catalog or developed with an academic advisor.

D. Monitoring of the Approved Career Development Plan

Each unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, with the Training Services Division's Employee Development Coordinator, will monitor and evaluate the employee's academic progress and status each semester. Training Services Division, in consultation with the respective Out-Service Training Coordinator or Appointing Authority, may discontinue a CDP if, after a fair review, the employee is not making satisfactory academic progress (based

on GPA and/or the number of credits completed), the employee's job performance has significantly deteriorated or, an employee's history routinely shows a pattern of incomplete courses, course changes, or grades below a "C".

Any significant changes in the employee's work or educational status must be immediately reported by the employee in writing to the unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, who will forward it to the Training Services Division's Employee Development Coordinator. Examples of such changes include transfer, resignation, termination, extended sick leave, or demotion. Reimbursement will be processed ONLY if you are an active DHMH employee at the time reimbursement documents are submitted.

Tuition Reimbursement

A. Courses That Qualify for Reimbursement

If you are a "field unit" employee (See Page A), we will reimburse you for academic (that is, "for credit") courses that are directly related to your current or anticipated patient/client care or support duties and responsibilities, whether or not you are seeking a specific academic degree. And, regardless of your work site, we will reimburse you for courses that are part of an ongoing or new Career Development Plan.

We will also reimburse you for the cost of "CLEP" and other challenge examinations. But remember, the challenge examination must be given for a course that is either directly related to your current or anticipated patient/client care or service duties or part of your approved Career Development Plan. Your application for approval and reimbursement for the exam is made just like all other applications for tuition reimbursement. However, we'll reimburse you for a challenge exam only if the credits to be awarded together with the other credits you'll be earning in the semester you're taking the exam don't exceed nine (9) credits per semester. We'll reimburse you for the cost of the challenge exam only after we receive written notice from your school that you have actually been awarded academic credits. **State Boards and/or exams do not qualify for tuition reimbursement.**

B. Reimbursement Limits

Each employee is eligible to be reimbursed for a **maximum of 18 credit hours** for a full 12-month period. In addition, no more than nine (9) credit hours may be approved in any one academic semester.

The maximum reimbursement rate is **\$273 per credit at the undergraduate level** and **\$471 per credit at the graduate level**. No books, fees, or other expenses will be reimbursed in this program. The reimbursement rate is based on the University of Maryland College Park rates. If and when the University of Maryland College Park changes its rates, the Employee Development Program will do so as well, pending DHMH budget authorization. Part-time employees (working 50% or more) will be reimbursed on a pro-rated basis.

If you receive tuition assistance (such as Veterans Education Benefits, scholarships, grants, etc.), that amount will be deducted from your approved reimbursement amount, (for example, the amount approved by TSD is \$2,000; the student receives a scholarship for \$1,000; the balance that TSD would reimburse is \$1,000.)

C. Eligibility for Work Study/Release

All requests for Work Study/Release must be approved through the employees' Appointing Authority for the facility/unit and coordinated with the employee's supervisor and their Registration coordinator. All Work Study/Release must have a work study schedule and an obligated service agreement. These forms are still available through Training Services Division, or your facility/unit can custom design their own form. Attached (Appendix A) is a chart from OHR Timekeeping, which your Registration Coordinator, along with your timekeeping unit, must use to calculate any obligated service time. A copy of all documentation for Work Study/Release must be submitted to Training Services Division for each semester of each request.

D. Applying for Tuition Reimbursement

Working directly with your respective unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, the application package must include:

1. An Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575) completed in full (instructions are on the reverse side of the Application; or go to TSD website to download form)
2. A photocopy of the official *catalogue course description(s)* (via the internet or by traditional course catalog)
3. If requesting work study/release: a *course schedule* detailing all times when the course is offered during the semester, and a *current work schedule*, including days and times you work, and an Obligated Service Agreement.

E. Deadlines for Applying for Reimbursement

DATES FOR SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS ARE:

*Winter/Spring semesters – the first working day of September, and
Summer/Fall semesters – the first working day of April.*

Any applications received prior to these dates will be held and date stamped on those dates.

Semesters <i>(Reminder: funds may be exhausted, so apply as early as possible)</i>	Application submission cut-off dates:
Summer/Fall (regular semester)	30 days prior to beginning semester date
Winter/Spring (regular semester)	30 days prior to beginning semester date
Online, Mini-semesters	21 days prior to beginning semester date

Because of these deadlines, employees may need to apply for tuition reimbursement before the school conducts its official course registration. Employees should only apply for tuition reimbursement for the course(s) they actually need or intend to take.

If for any reason an employee registers for different course(s) than the ones approved on the Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575), the employee **must apply for any changes in writing through the unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator**, who will notify Training Services Division. This should be done no later than one week after the start of the new course(s). Reimbursement will occur only for those courses approved in advance. Generally, if procedures are followed, course changes will be approved. Also, if the employee drops or withdraws from a course(s) identified on an approved Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575), the employee must advise their units' Out Service Training Coordinator and TSD in writing.

NOTE: Students with a history of dropping out of courses and not notifying their Registration Coordinator will be considered "at risk", and their applications will not be given priority by date stamp.

If the Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575) is approved, a letter of approval along with a copy of your Application for Out-Service Training listing the classes and amount approved will be sent to you, through your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator. You must check with your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, to inquire if you have been approved or denied. The approval letter will include procedures for filing for reimbursement once courses are successfully completed.

F. Disapprovals

There are times that Applications for Out-Service Training are not approved. The most frequent reasons for disapproval are:

- Employee has not completed probationary period
- Class has no relation to employee's job duties
- No Career Development Plan on file (see page 2)
- Late (submitted past deadline)
- Lacking proper signatures
- No funds available

If DHMH funds become exhausted before cutoff date, a notice will be sent to the Out-Service Training Coordinators.

G. Filing for Reimbursement

After you have completed your courses (those approved for reimbursement) and received your grades, please forward the following items:

1. **A Completed Statement/Invoice Form** (DHMH 4512) in full (Note: your home address is required for payment.). No P.O. Box addresses accepted;
2. **A copy of the approved Application** for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575);
3. **Sealed Official Transcript**, sent directly from the university/college to the Training Services Division, requested by employee and at employee's expense;
4. **Original Grade report** (either printed from the Internet or original documents) must show that you received a final passing grade for the course(s) we approved for reimbursement. (Note: Teacher-prepared grades, notes, or exam results are not acceptable.) A passing grade is a "C" or better for undergraduate courses, and a "B" or better for graduate courses is required. State regulations require proof of a final passing grade in order for reimbursement to occur; and
5. **Original proof of payment**, which includes an original receipt, marked "paid", from the college or university, a canceled check, a credit card receipt, or statement from college denoting payment and respective method of payment. Only the amount you show as paid will be reimbursed to you. **All proofs of payment must be identified with the applicant's name.**

Please assemble invoice packages with the Invoice/Statement on top, followed by the copy of the approved Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575), then your grades, and lastly, the proof of payment. *Two (2) additional packages, exactly like the first only containing copies, must accompany it.* Submit these packages to your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator who will send them to TSD. **You must be a DHMH employee on the date that you submit your paperwork for reimbursement.**

Once you have submitted your paperwork for actual reimbursement either a check will be sent to your home, or a direct deposit into your account, usually within 4-6 weeks. Make sure to check your bank statements for the deposits. If you have not received your check or a direct deposit after six (6) weeks, please contact your unit's Out-Service Coordinator.

H. Deadlines for Filing Invoices (4512 form) for Reimbursement

The invoice form (4512) for reimbursement must be submitted within 45 days of the conclusion of your course/s. Each invoice packet (the original and two (2) copies) must include your grade/s, receipt of payment/s, and a copy of your approved TSD Application Form (4575).

If you cannot adhere to these deadlines due to unforeseen circumstances, please send documentation requesting an extension of the deadline give a date when you intend to file for reimbursement. You must make this request through your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, who will notify TSD. **If you don't file by the deadline dates above, TSD will cancel your request for reimbursement and no payment will be provided.**

I. Failure to Complete Courses

If any of the following three (3) conditions occur reimbursement will be forfeited: 1. Employee leaves the DHMH before completing their courses, 2. Employee fails to pass with a grade of "C" or better for the Undergraduate courses, and a grade of "B" or better at the Graduate level, and 3. Drops course before completion.

NOTE: Students with a history of dropping out of courses and not notifying their Registration Coordinator will be considered "at risk", and their applications will not be given priority.

Work Study/Release Programs

A. Overview of Work Study/Release Programs

Work Study/Release programs are out-service training degree or certificate programs for which our Department approves time off with pay on a part-time or full-time basis to meet essential departmental needs for direct patient/client care personnel with the degree or certification you are seeking. There are two (2) general types of work study programs (full-time release and work study).

The work study program is an out-service training program which requires you to be released from duty on a part-time basis.

Full-time release program is an out-service training program **which requires your total release from duty (40 hours)**, and will be monitored by the Out-Service Training Coordinator in conjunction with the unit/facility timekeepers (see Appendix A, Timekeeping Conversion Chart). State regulations require that we limit such full-time release to a maximum of 18 months in any 3-year period. These hours are obligated service to be paid back in state service at a rate of 3 to 1. If for any reason, the employee leaves state service, the time owed must be paid back to the state for its full monetary value.

Generally, the employee will pay all expenses related to their work study/release program -- tuition, all fees, purchase of books and supplies, travel, and any other costs. There are some exceptions (see Section H of Special Work release Programs).

B. Eligibility for Work Release (Full-time) Program

The employee's appointing authority must approve all full-time release programs. A work release (full-time) program will only be considered for the employee participating in a degree or certificate program that requires them to be a full-time student and does not allow them to take courses on a part-time basis. They must carry a full-time course load (generally, a minimum of 12 credits per semester at the undergraduate level and a minimum of nine (9) credits per semester at the graduate level) to be eligible for full-time release program. Exceptions to these required credit minimums may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any exceptions must be clearly documented by the Director of the degree or certificate program in which they're enrolled. You must have a Career Development Plan to participate in this program.

C. Applying for a Work study Program

Working directly with your respective unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator and with the approval of the Appointing Authority, the application package must include:

1. An Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575) completed in full (instructions are on the reverse side of the Application);
2. A photocopy of the official *catalogue course description(s)*;
3. Two (2) originally *signed Obligated Service Agreements* (DHMH 4576);
4. A completed Work study Schedule (DHMH 4510) completed in full (instructions are on the reverse side) showing your work and study schedule; and
5. Career Development Plan (see page 3), only required once for initial application.

The facility/unit will be responsible for monitoring all work study/release programs. TSD only needs to receive a copy of all work study/release packets for each applicant for documentation purposes. The deadlines for submission of the paperwork are the same as Tuition Reimbursement (see page 6).

The employee must reapply each semester for work study/release. The applicant must make certain that each subsequent semester's application includes the same documents as mentioned above, except there is no need for a new CDP for each semester.

D. Salary, Benefits, and Leave While Participating in an Approved Work study/Release Program

While participating in an approved work study/release program, you're entitled to full salary and you'll retain your membership in the Retirement System and Employees Health Insurance Program. Further, you'll continue to accumulate sick leave and annual leave while you're participating in an approved work study/release program. You must report to your appointing authority any training time you lose due to sick leave or accident leave. Your appointing authority will indicate your use of sick leave or accident leave on your leave record. Holidays, including floating holidays, are administered as if you were not on work study. You must report for duty during all school recesses; you have the option of requesting the approval of your appointing authority to use your available leave during any school recess.

E. The Obligated Service Agreement

If you're approved for a work study/release program, State regulations require you to enter into an obligated service agreement with DHMH at the start of the program. The agreement obligates you to work for DHMH for the following periods after you've successfully completed your approved work study/release program:

1. If you'll be participating in full-time work release, Appendix A (timekeeping conversion chart) which shows the time required to payback to DHMH. Your Registration Coordinator and Timekeeper will calculate all time to be paid back.
2. If you'll be participating in a work study program, Appendix A (timekeeping conversion chart) which shows the time required to payback to DHMH. (Part-time release 20/20 works out to about one and one half (1½) hours of service for each one hour of training after completing the program).

The obligated service agreement states that the salary you receive while you're participating in a work study/release program is a loan paid to you by DHMH. If you resign from the DHMH before you complete your obligated service period, you'll have to pay the State the "unpaid" balance of your "loan." For example, if you had 12 more weeks that you still owed the DHMH, that time would be converted to 12 weeks of you salary, which would be paid back in full to the DHMH.

However, if the Secretary decides that your separation from State service is the result of adverse, unforeseen, or extenuating circumstances that impose undue personal hardship, the DHMH Secretary may release you from the obligated service agreement.

F. Promotional Opportunity

There is no guarantee for a promotion once you have completed your courses and have obtained your degree. The educational experience you have acquired will provide you the opportunity to apply for a new position department-wide and allow you to strive for a new and exciting career.

G. Monitoring of the Work Study/Release Program

Your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator will report to TSD on the status of how you are doing in your work study/release program. Each semester, we will review your grade reports and the number of courses and credits that you have completed. Your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator will also let us know if you're experiencing any serious problems on the job that would warrant our discontinuing your work study/release program.

In fact, we may discontinue your work study/release program if you are not making sufficient academic progress, based on your grade point average or the number of credits that you've completed. Also, we may stop your work study/release program if, according to your appointing authority, your work performance deteriorates to an unsatisfactory level.

When you complete the final semester of your work study/release program, your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, in conjunction with your timekeeping unit, will submit a final "Work Study/Release Follow-Up Form" documenting that you have successfully completed your program, a statement to your appointing authority and TSD showing the total length of your obligated service period.

H. Special Work Study/Release Programs

In response to the continuing recruitment and retention crisis in the fields of nursing, occupational therapy,

physical therapy, and psychology, we have **combined tuition reimbursement with work study/release** in the following ways:

1. If you're on work study/release to earn an LPN Certificate or AARN, BSN or MSN degree from an accredited community college nursing degree program, you'll also be eligible for tuition reimbursement.
2. If you're on work study/release to earn an Associate through a Master's Degree in Physical, Occupational Therapy, or Psychology, you'll also be eligible for tuition reimbursement.

If you're applying for tuition reimbursement under one of the special work study/release programs described above, you still must follow all the rules for tuition reimbursement (covered under the section "*Tuition Reimbursement*"). Also, the limit of nine credit hours in any one semester for reimbursement (also explained in the section "Tuition Reimbursement") does not apply. But, State regulations do not allow us to approve more than 18 credit hours for reimbursement during the one-year academic period covered by these Guidelines.

Short-Term Training

A. Courses That Qualify for Reimbursement

Short-term training refers to formally organized "not-for-credit" instructional programs that last at least half a day and no longer than six (6) weeks. They have as their main purpose to improve your skills and/or knowledge related to your current or anticipated job responsibilities. DHMH provides reimbursement and may approve work release time so that you can participate in short-term training that directly relates to your direct patient/client care or support duties and responsibilities. Short-term training programs:

1. Are programs that academic organizations or other public or private training agencies conduct or sponsor; or
2. Are professional meetings, conferences, workshops, seminars, and conventions that provide you with significant training and education; or
3. Are programs that may award you "Continuing Education Units" (CEUs) and/or "Continuing Medical Education Units" (CMEUs); but
4. Are not meetings or programs conducted or sponsored by our Department or any other Maryland State agency; or
5. Are not meetings or programs conducted or sponsored by a Federal agency to review changes in or introduce new regulations.

B. Reimbursement Limits

We will approve only **one request for up to \$150** from you each fiscal year (that is, the ending date of the requested program occurs between July 1 and June 30). If you're a part-time employee, working 50% or more, we'll reimburse you on a pro-rated basis. We reimburse you only for registration and/or tuition expenses that you've incurred. Also, we'll reimburse no more than four (4) employees from the same hospital, residential center, laboratory unit, local health department, or a Headquarters administration unit/agency attending the same program in the same fiscal year.

C. Eligibility for Work Study/Release Time

Your appointing authority must approve work release time requests for Short Term Training. A memo or statement from the Appointing Authority must state the hours the employee is approved for leave.

Part-time employees (working 50% or more) will be obligated on a pro-rated basis.

For employees in the automated time keeping system, your absence would be coded "79" (Out-Service Training). Your appointing authority or designee must first approve your request for any work study/release time.

D. Applying for Short-Term Training Reimbursement

Working directly with your respective unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator, the application package must include:

1. An Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575) completed in full (instructions are on the reverse side of the Application)
2. A photocopy of the *brochure/training program description* that clearly shows:
 - The title of the training program
 - The dates(s), times(s), and location
 - The cost of registration/tuition to you
 - The instructional objectives
 - The presenter(s) and sponsor(s)
 - Continuing Education Units awarded
3. If requesting work study/release: a *current work schedule*, including days and times you work

E. Deadlines for Applying for Short-Term Training Reimbursement

Training Services Division (TSD) can approve only complete and accurate applications that are received to the TSD office at least fifteen (15) days before the starting date of the training.

F. Approvals

If the Application for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575) is approved, a letter of approval along with a copy of your Application for Out-Service Training listing the program and amount approved will be sent to you, through your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator.

G. Filing for Reimbursement

Within 45 days after you have completed the short-term training program we've approved for reimbursement, please forward the following items:

1. A **Completed Statement/Invoice Form** (DHMH 4512) in full (note: your home address is required for payment.);
2. A **copy of the approved Application** for Out-Service Training (DHMH 4575);
3. An original or copy of the **certificate** presented by your program or other documentation showing proof of attendance; and
4. **Original proof of payment**, which includes an original receipt, marked "paid" from the program provider, a canceled check, a credit card receipt, or statement from program provider denoting payment and respective method of payment. Only the amount verified as paid will be reimbursed to you.

Submit an original and two copies of these packets to your unit's Out-Service Training Coordinator who in turn will send them to TSD. You must be a DHMH employee on the date that you submit your paperwork for reimbursement. If you cannot adhere to the 45-day deadline due to unforeseen circumstances, please send documentation requesting an extension (Form 4511) of the deadline.

Once you have submitted your paperwork for actual reimbursement, a check will be directly deposited into your checking account usually within 4-6 weeks. If you have not received your deposit after six (6) weeks, please contact your Out-Service Coordinator.

Appendix A

Timekeeping Conversion Chart

Up to 10 hours per week of release time = hour per hour payback

Any release time over 10 hours through 20 hours per week = 1.5 times per hour payback

Any release time over 20 hours through 40 hours per week = 3 times per hour payback