

## **GUIDELINES FOR TUITION REMISSION FOR EMPLOYEES OF ELIGIBLE HUMAN SERVICE PROVIDERS TO THE COMMONWEALTH**

These Guidelines have been developed by the Providers' Council and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (“the Board of Higher Education”). The Guidelines explain the rules for eligibility and the application process for 100% tuition remission for employees, of certain Human Service Providers, who are enrolled in **state-supported undergraduate** higher education courses. For further information, please visit the Council's website at [www.providers.org](http://www.providers.org) or contact the Council at (508) 598.9700.

### **A. Eligible Human Services Provider**

In order to be an “Eligible Human Services Provider” that may offer the tuition remission benefit to employees, the employer must be a provider of human services that holds a current contract or contracts with a Massachusetts department or agency with any of the Secretariats of Human Services, Elder Affairs or Administration and Finance to provide programs of services under state object codes M03 and MM3 (purchased human and social services for clients – medical and non-medical) and must be registered for tuition remission benefits with the Council.

“Human Services” means programs of services that assist, maintain or improve the personal, mental or physical well being of individuals or families, including social, habilitative, rehabilitative, health, mental health, mental retardation, vocational, employment and training and elder services, but specifically excluding special education services.

Qualification of an organization as an Eligible Human Services Provider will be determined on the basis of lists of providers under contract with the Commonwealth that are maintained by the Comptroller of the Commonwealth.

### **B. Eligible Employee**

In order to be an “Eligible Employee” who may receive tuition remission, an employee must meet the following requirements:

- 1) The employee must be currently employed 30 hours/week by an Eligible Human Services Provider as defined above (independent contractors are *not* eligible for tuition remission under this program);
- 2) The employee must be employed in a position where at least 60% of the employee's wages and benefits are funded by a contract(s) with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to provide Human Services;
- 3) The employee must have completed at least six months of employment with the Eligible Human Services Provider at the time of submission to the employer of the Certificate of Eligibility for Tuition Remission;

- 4) The employee must be eligible for tuition remission under any personnel or employer policy of the Eligible Human Services Provider covering tuition remission; and
- 5) The employee must have applied for and been admitted to an eligible state-supported course at a Massachusetts community college, state college, or University of Massachusetts.

Please note: If a person ceases to be an Eligible Employee employed by an Eligible Human Services Provider after approval of the Eligible Employee's Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission, as described below, the Eligible Employee will nonetheless be entitled to remission of tuition for the course to which that Certificate applies. However, eligibility for tuition remission will cease when that course ends.

**C. Public Higher Education Institutions**

Full, 100% tuition remission will be provided to an Eligible Employee who is enrolled in a Massachusetts **state-supported undergraduate course** at any community college, state college or state university, excluding the University of Massachusetts Medical Center. The Eligible Employee is responsible for all other educational expenses relating to the course (these include, but are not limited to, all fees charges by the state-supported school, program fees, application fees, laboratory fees, books and supplies). Tuition Remission will only be granted for courses of study with a direct correlation to the employee's current position. Certification of such shall be the responsibility of the employer.

Non-state-supported courses include those offered by a public institution's division of continuing education and any others identified by the institution as non-state-supported. There is no tuition remission for these non-state-supported courses or programs.

**D. Tuition Remission Limitations**

1. Admission to all state-supported courses is on a space-available basis.
2. A Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission must be submitted to and approved by the Council as described below. Claims for tuition remission will not be approved retroactively.
3. The Eligible Employee is responsible for submitting the approved Certificate to the public college or university at the time bills are to be paid in order to receive the tuition remission.

## E. Applying for Tuition Remission

- 1) Human Service Providers seeking eligible status must take the following steps:
  - a. Review and understand Guidelines for Tuition Remission Program.
  - b. Submit a completed and signed Registration form and any additional submissions to the Providers' Council.
  - c. Distribute copies of the Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission to interested employees. The Certificates will be provided to the Eligible Human Service Provider organization upon approval as an Eligible Human Service Provider.
- 2) In order to apply for tuition remission under this program, an Eligible Employee must take the following steps:
  - a. Apply for, and be admitted to, a Massachusetts state-supported **undergraduate** course at any community college, state college or state university (except the University of Massachusetts Medical Center).
  - b. Complete the attached Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission and submit it to the Eligible Human Services Provider's Human Resources representative (the employer's HR representative) for review and signature.
  - c. The Eligible Employee is responsible for submitting the approved Certificate to the public college or university at the time bills are to be paid in order to receive tuition remission.

*Note: A separate Certificate must be submitted for each course.*

- 3) Then, the Eligible Human Service Provider must take the following steps:
  - a. The employer's HR representative must complete the Certificate of Eligibility for Tuition Remission and forward the signed Certificate to the Eligible Human Service Provider's President or Chief Executive Officer for review and signature; and
  - b. After the President/Chief Executive Officer or Agency representative designee has reviewed and signed the Certificate, the Eligible Human Services Provider is responsible for sending the completed Certificate and for paying a \$10.00 processing fee per Certificate (no personal checks; Provider checks only, payable to the Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers, Inc.) by first-class mail to the Tuition Benefits Coordinator, Providers' Council, 100 Crossing Blvd., Suite 100, Framingham MA 01702. The processing fee is nonrefundable.

## F. Submission Deadlines

To allow sufficient time for processing of the Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission, the Certificate should be received by the Council from the Eligible Human Services Provider at least 30 days before the beginning of the course. Certificates received after this deadline may be returned by the Providers' Council to the Eligible Human Services Provider. In order to meet this deadline, Eligible Employees are encouraged to submit their Certificates to their employers' Human Resources Representative a month before the first day of the term for the course.

**G. Action by the Council**

Upon receipt of a Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission, the Providers' Council will determine whether the Certificate has been properly completed and whether the Human Services provider is registered as an Eligible Human Service Provider. The Certificate must be one page, double-sided with original signatures.

1. The Council will return the Certificate to the Eligible Human Service Provider if the Certificate is incomplete (missing information, signatures or the processing fee) or the Human Service Provider is not an Eligible Human Service Provider.
2. If the Certificate is in order the Council will mark it as approved and return it to the Eligible Human Services Provider to the attention of the Human Resources representative who signed the Certificate.

**H. Action by the Eligible Employee**

The Eligible Employee is responsible for submitting the approved Certificate of Employee Eligibility for Tuition Remission Program to the public college or university at the time bills are to be paid in order to receive the tuition remission.

Please note: **Approval of the Eligible Employee for tuition remission does not guarantee admission to any state-supported course; admission to all state-supported programs is on a space-available basis.**

**I. Periodic Updates**

The Providers' Council may periodically update or revise the Guidelines, Registration or Certificate process. Eligible Human Service Providers are expected to comply with revisions and advise their Eligible Employees.