

Educational Financial Support

357.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines departmental policy and procedures related to financial support for educational expenses of all personnel as governed by Board of Supervisors policy C-7.

357.1.1 DEFINITIONS

The following defines the type of financial support under this program:

Loan Repayment - A repayment of loans accrued by employees while obtaining their associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in order to advance the employee to a higher level classification or a hard to fill position. Maximum loan repayment funds allotted per employee is \$10,500 for lifetime, not to exceed \$5,250 per fiscal year.

Tuition Assistance - A reimbursement of all or part of the costs of tuition or registration fees for employees who successfully complete a departmentally approved course of study, providing that such education is designed to advance the employee to a higher level classification or a hard to fill position. Tuition assistance is not to exceed the amount of tuition as set by the Riverside County Human Resources Education Support Program. Maximum tuition assistance funds allotted per employee is \$10,500 for lifetime, not to exceed \$5,250 per fiscal year.

357.2 AUTHORITY AND REFERENCES

- Executive Committee;
- Riverside County Board of Supervisors Policy C-7, Support for Employee Training and Education.

357.3 POLICY

The Riverside County Probation Department encourages its staff to pursue the goal of higher education to promote the development of staff with the goal of long term employment with the department. In addition, recognizing the need for well-trained professionals, the department has made a commitment to full time regular employees by supporting the acquisition of an associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree in a work-related field. To assist qualifying employees, the department will make available a limited amount of tuition assistance and loan repayment funds for staff. Staff wishing to pursue a higher education while maintaining full time employment with the Riverside County Probation Department are encouraged to apply.

357.4 TUITION ASSISTANCE

Candidates must be in good standing with the Riverside County Probation Department and may not be in a probationary period.

Applications will be considered for the following employees who are seeking to obtain their degree while employed with Riverside County Probation Department:

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- (a) Probation Department Managers and Executive Team members who are obtaining their master's degree to continue their educational and professional growth in support of the County's leadership initiative.
- (b) Probation Corrections Officers or non-sworn staff who are obtaining their bachelor's or associate's degree in an effort to become eligible for hard to fill positions, such as a Deputy Probation Officer or a Probation Corrections Officer.
- (c) Non-sworn staff who are obtaining their associate's degree or bachelor's degree in an administrative career path, as long as the degree is required to advance in a work-related classification.

Available funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis until all budgeted funds are exhausted through the Riverside County Probation Department.

Acceptance of an application by the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program does not guarantee the candidate a placement into an educational support program.

357.4.1 TUITION ASSISTANCE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Riverside County Probation Department employees who wish to apply for departmental tuition assistance shall forward their completed Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program Application (<http://esp.rc-hr.com/Portals/18/application.pdf>) through the chain of command to their Division Director, or if the employee is already a Division Director, the application would be forwarded to their Chief Deputy. Executive Team members shall forward their application to the Assistant Chief Probation Officer. Once it has been approved, then the application will be forwarded to the Division Director of Probation Human Resources Division, Stop #1470.

The Probation Human Resources Division Director will review the application. If the employee is in good standing and has completed their probationary period, the Probation Human Resources Division Director will sign the tuition assistance application. The application is then sent to the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program, Stop #1081, for processing and further review.

Once the employee meets with the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program liaison (Principal Human Resources Analyst), and all outside financial aid sources have been determined, the employee must submit the proof of financial documents reflecting the true financial need to the Probation Department Administrative Services Manager for final review and approval of available funds.

If funds are available by the Probation Department, the Administrative Services Manager will submit a confirmation of funds form to the liaison of the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program identifying the specific amount approved.

357.4.2 REIMBURSABLE COSTS FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE

Reimbursable costs for tuition assistance include: course work, tuition, textbooks and fees. Coursework must be pre-approved and required to obtain a degree, must be offered by a regionally accredited educational institution that has been approved by Riverside County Human

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Resources Director or designee, and must be satisfactorily completed with a minimum grade of “C” or above. The Riverside County Human Resources Department bases tuition reimbursement on annual fees published by the University of California, Riverside. All lower division courses that are required for the degree and available at a community college will be reimbursed at the annual California Community Colleges tuition rate, whether the course is taken at a community college or at a university. Required textbooks and laboratory fees will be reimbursed at cost with appropriate documentation.

Tuition assistance payments will cease when the employee graduates, quits school, or is no longer employed by the Riverside County Probation Department, whichever occurs first.

The maximum distributed funds for tuition assistance per employee will be \$10,500 for lifetime, not to exceed \$5,250 per fiscal year.

357.5 LOAN REPAYMENT

Candidates must be in good standing with the Riverside County Probation Department and may not be in a probationary period.

Applicants must be full time employees in a difficult to fill position of the Riverside County Probation Department and have maintained a 2.5 overall GPA during completion of an associate’s, bachelor’s degree, or master’s degree for which the loan repayment is being requested.

Applications will be considered for the following employees who obtained their degree while employed with Riverside County Probation Department:

- (a) Probation Department Managers and Executive Team members who obtained their master’s degree to continue their educational and professional growth in support of the County’s leadership initiative.
- (b) Deputy Probation Officers, Probation Corrections Officers, and non-sworn staff who obtained their bachelor’s or associate’s degree in an effort to become eligible for hard to fill positions, such as a Deputy Probation Officer or a Probation Corrections Officer.
- (c) Non-sworn staff who obtained their associate’s or bachelor’s degree in an administrative career path, as long as the degree is required to advance in a work-related classification.

Available funds will be distributed on a first come, first served basis until all budgeted funds are exhausted through the Riverside County Probation Department.

Acceptance of application by the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program does not guarantee candidate a placement into an educational support program.

357.5.1 LOAN REPAYMENT APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Employees who wish to apply for loan repayment will forward their Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program Loan Repayment Request Form and Checklist (<http://www.workforceexchange.net/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=pJwy7YbSXtw%3D&tabid=1188&mid=2356>) through their chain of command to their Division Director, or if the employee is already a Division Director, the application would be forwarded to their Chief

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Deputy. Executive Team members shall forward their application to the Assistant Chief Probation Officer. Once it has been approved, the application will be forwarded to the Division Director of Probation Human Resources Division, Stop #1470. The packet must include:

- (a) Official sealed transcripts, depicting degree received and GPA.
- (b) Financial statement of loan amount and monthly payments due.

The Probation Human Resources Division Director will review the application. If the employee is in good standing and has completed their probationary period, the Probation Human Resources Division Director will sign the request for the loan repayment form. The application is then sent to the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program, Stop #1081, for processing and further review.

357.5.2 REIMBURSABLE COSTS FOR LOAN REPAYMENT

Reimbursable costs for loan repayment include textbook and tuition expenses only.

Loan repayment will cease after the qualifying education loan is paid in full or the employee is no longer employed by the Riverside County Probation Department, whichever occurs first.

The maximum distributed funds for loan repayment per employee will be \$10,500 for lifetime, not to exceed \$5,250 per fiscal year.

357.6 AGREEMENTS

Employees selected for tuition assistance or loan repayment for a work-related associate's, bachelor's, or master's degree must abide by the written regulations of the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program.

Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program monitors college enrollment, attendance, and grades for continued participation in the tuition assistance program.

All employees must maintain good standing with the Riverside County Probation Department and the educational institution.

Failure to meet the criteria set forth by the Riverside County Probation Department and the Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program will result in removal from the program.

The Probation Department will create a line-item budget amount for the Loan Repayment program and the Tuition Reimbursement program. Once that funding has been exhausted, no new participants will be admitted into either program. Eligible applicants who have submitted completed paperwork may be placed on a waiting list. When additional funds become available, the Riverside County Probation Department will reopen the program to applicants beginning with the individuals on waiting list first.

The Probation Department Administrative Services Manager will monitor funds allotted for the Educational Support Program and will report to Executive staff.

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Staff currently in either the Loan Repayment program or the Tuition Reimbursement program will continue to receive payments as stipulated in their contract. This policy will pertain to staff that enroll in either program after the effective date of this policy.

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