

Tuition Exemption Program for Child protection Welfare Personnel

1. What is the statutory language?

- a. There is established within the department the Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program for the purpose of recruiting and retaining high-performing individuals who are employed as child protection and child welfare personnel. For purposes of this section, "child protection and child welfare personnel" includes child protective investigators and child protective investigation supervisors employed by the department and case managers and case manager supervisors employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency who do not possess a master's degree in social work.
- b. Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees at a state university.
- c. The department may approve child protection and child welfare personnel for the tuition and fee exemption if such personnel:
 - i. Are employed as child protection and child welfare personnel and are determined by their employers to perform at a high level as established by their personnel evaluations; and
 - ii. Are accepted in a graduate-level social work program or a certificate program related to child welfare which is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
- d. Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) may enroll for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term.
- e. Child protection and child welfare personnel who are accepted into a graduate-level social work program or a certificate program related to child welfare which is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education shall take courses associated with the degree or certificate program online if such courses are offered online.
- f. All child protection and child welfare personnel who participate in the tuition exemption program established under this section must remain employed by the department, a state agency, or a contracted provider for 5 years after completion of a graduate level social work program. If employment ends before the 5-year period, the benefit shall be repaid according to a pro rata calculation based on the number of years of service.

2. Who is eligible for the program?

- a. Child protection and Child welfare personnel

3. Who are child protection personnel?

- a. Child Protective Investigators, Sr. CPIs, and CPI Supervisors

4. Who are child welfare personnel?

- a. Case Managers and Case Manager Supervisors

5. What are the requirements for child protection and child welfare personnel to be eligible for the program?

- a. Child protection personnel must be employed with the department of Children and Families

- b. Child welfare personnel must be employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency.
- c. Either personnel must be a high performing employee, completing job duties and responsibilities at an achievement rate established by their employer and reflected on their latest performance evaluation.
- d. Personnel must be admitted into a graduate-level social work program or graduate certificate related to child welfare which is certified by the Council on Social Work Education.
- e. Personnel must take courses online if such courses are offered online
- f. Personnel must maintain at least a "B" (3.0) in all courses for which tuition and fees are exempted, and when a "B" is not achieved, must reimburse the University for the Cost of the course.

6. What does it mean to be a "high performing employee"

- a. A "high performing employee" is defined as achieving a minimum score of at least 70% of an employer's overall performance evaluation total. However, individual employers may set standards that exceed the 70% minimum requirement based on the agency's minimal "meets expectation" designation. For those individuals employed by the state, a minimum overall score of 3.5 must have been achieved on the employee's last performance evaluation to be eligible to participate in the Child Protection and child Welfare personnel Tuition Exemption program.

7. Can the program be used for dependents of those who are Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel?

- a. No.

8. Do I have to turn in additional documentation with the form?

- a. No.

9. Does the University have to accept my application for the program?

- a. Yes; if you qualify and apply prior to the end of the first week of classes in the semester.

10. Do I have to resubmit the Tuition Exemption request form each academic term?

- a. Yes; you have to qualify for the waiver each term.

11. What are the qualifying Child Welfare/Child Protection agencies?

- a. Lakeview Center Inc., Big Bend Community Based Care Inc., Partnership for Strong Families Inc., Family Support Services of North Florida Inc., Kids First of Florida Inc., Community Partnership for Children Inc., St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners, Eckerd community Alternatives Inc., Sarasota Family YMCA Inc.

12. What happens if I qualify for the program but stop working in child protection/child welfare?

- a. For those individuals who participate in the tuition exemption program, the individual must remain employed by the department, a state agency, or a contracted provider for 5 years after completion of the graduate level social work program. If employment ends before the 5 year period is fulfilled, the benefit shall be repaid to the university according a pro rate calculation based on the number of years of service.