PROVIDING HELP / EMPOWERING RECOVERY

RIVERSIDE COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH

MHSA
Riverside County Mental Health Services Act

EDUCATION.

VOCATION.

TRANSFORMATION.

Are you thinking about starting Or going back to school?

Back To School !

Maybe we can help....

**Riverside County
Department of Mental Health
Tuition and Textbook
Reimbursement Program**

**Part A
and
Part B**

MHSA Workforce Education and Training
3801 University Ave, Suite 400
Riverside, CA 92501
951-955-7198

Going to school, while working, can be a difficult challenge, but one that has rewarding results! The Workforce Education and Training Unit (WET) was created to support employees in the public mental health service system. One of our goals is to help employees develop academic pathways for career advancement or toward an education that enhances their current work related abilities.

We recognize that we need good employees in all areas of our service system – not only employees who directly serve our consumers – but also administrative, technical, and office support staff as well.

The Riverside County Department of Mental Health Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement Program was developed to support staff who want to pursue an education that either benefits their current job performance or helps them obtain a certificate, Bachelor's degree, or Master's degree that will help them establish a career within our Department.

There are two parts to this Program. This booklet is designed to help you understand which is the best part for you and your goals, as well as, provide you with the steps for application.

The next couple of pages give you a brief overview of the full program, both Part A and Part B, which was encouraged and approved by RCDMH management. This is like a snap shot, or a reference page, that provides you a rundown of what to expect. This overview may provide you with enough information to know if this program is right for you! It also contains all the key points about the workings of the program. Some things to remember:

Part A

- ➢ You would apply for <u>Part A</u> if you are pursuing a degree or certificate that creates a promotional pathway into a RCDMH job classification. This can be within direct service, technical, administrative, or office support positions.

- ➢ You would apply for <u>Part A</u> if you are pursuing a certificate that will increase your knowledge in our current position, but that is not required for your job classification.

- ➢ <u>Part A</u> of the program is run by Riverside County Human Resources Educational Support Program (ESP). Your application, from the ESP website, would be sent directly to them.

Part B

- ➢ You would apply for <u>Part B</u> if you want to take one class/course that is NOT intended as a requirement for a certificate or degree. This class/course must be related to enhancing your knowledge necessary to perform your current work duties.

- ➢ <u>Part B</u> is an excellent opportunity to "test the waters" if you have thought about going to school but were unsure if school would fit into your schedule or life right now.

- ➢ You would apply for <u>Part B</u> if you need to complete some post degree coursework in order to meet the testing requirement for Certification or Licensure that RCDMH requires as a condition of your continued employment.

- ➢ <u>Part B</u> of the program is run by RCDMH Workforce Education and Training (WET) unit. Your application, attached to this booklet, would be sent directly to WET.

Riverside County Department of Mental Health

Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement
Administrative Guidelines
(Reference BOS Policy C-7)
12/2012

Objective: Provide Tuition and Textbook reimbursement to support education pathways to meet Department workforce development needs

Targeted Areas for Workforce Development

A. <u>Degree or Certification</u> - Through the Educational Support Program (ESP)

1. **College Degree or Certification:** Achieve BA/BS or MA/MS level degree or Certification that creates a promotional pathway into a RCDMH job classification that is hard-to-fill or retain.

2. **Job Enhancing Credential:** College or University courses leading to Certification in a work related subject that <u>would enhance job performance but is not required for the employee's job</u> classification.

Minimum Qualifications: RCDMH full time permanent employee in good standing.
(Some temporary positions may qualify. See ESP for details.)

Application Procedure:

a. Complete standard application for ESP.
b. Submit a one page letter of interest describing how identified degree or certification will lead to an academic promotional pathway into a RCDMH hard to fill or retain job classification or will enhance employee's ability to perform in current job classification.
c. Meet with an ESP counselor to formalize a Career Development Plan.
d. Upon ESP counselor approval, the Career Development Plan will be reviewed with RCDMH for suitability prior to admittance into the program.

Courses Eligible for Reimbursement:

a. Only coursework that meets the goals of the Career Development Plan.
b. Only upper division coursework or coursework specific to the major area of study.
c. Only coursework that has been completed after the approval of the Career Development plan. No retroactive coursework will qualify.
d. Reimbursement is prorated based on grade received. BA/BS/Certificate: Grade "C" reimbursed at 50%; Grade "B" reimbursed at 75%; Grade "A" reimbursed at 100%. MA/MS: Grade "B" reimbursed at 75%; Grade "A" reimbursed at 100%.

Budget:

a. $5,250 (IRS non-taxable limit) maximum per applicant per fiscal year.
b. If funding is exhausted during fiscal year, no more applications will be approved until onset of new fiscal year.

B.   <u>Individual Coursework</u> - Through RCDMH Workforce Education and Training (WET)

1. **Individual Coursework**: Coursework that would enhance knowledge necessary to perform the duties of current job classification; or individual coursework that creates expertise in an area benefiting RCDMH operations based on current or anticipated work demand

2. **Requisite Coursework for Employment Credential Testing:**   Post Degree Coursework necessary   to meet the testing requirements for Certification or Licensure in a job classification that <u>RCDMH</u>   <u>requires as a condition of continued employment</u> within that job class (excludes examination   preparation courses)

Minimum Qualifications: RCDMH full time permanent (off probation) employees in good standing

Application Procedure:

a.   Complete WET application for course reimbursement
b.   Submit a one page letter of interest:

   i.   **Individual Coursework**: Describe how identified course will enhance knowledge necessary to perform current job duties or will create an expertise benefiting RCDMH operations or anticipated work demands; includes reference to conversation with supervisor/manager regarding benefit of study area on meeting program need.
   ii.   **Requisite Coursework:** Describe how this course meets the testing requirements for a license or certification required by RCDMH as a condition of employment; provide reference material from governing body that has testing oversight.

c.   Upon course completion, submit copy of transcript, report card, or certificate demonstrating successful course completion within 30 days of grade posting

Courses Eligible for Reimbursement:

a.   Only coursework approved by WET. No retroactive coursework will qualify.
b.   Coursework must be satisfactorily completed. Reimbursement is prorated based on grade received: Grade "C" reimbursed at 50%; Grade "B" reimbursed at 75%; Grade "A" reimbursed at 100%.
c.   Tuition reimbursement per course cannot exceed $500.00.
d.   Only one course will be eligible per application. Maximum of 2 consecutive applications per qualifying employee per fiscal year. No concurrent applications will be accepted.
e.   Subsequent tuition assistance is contingent on a minimum 2.0 GPA on any coursework previously qualified for reimbursement.
f.   Multiple requests for reimbursement will be reviewed to determine if applicant should be referred to ESP for the Degree or Certificate attainment.

Budget:
a. $1,000 maximum per applicant per fiscal year.
b.   If funding is exhausted during fiscal year, no more applications will be approved until onset of new fiscal year.

Part A: I Want a Degree or Certificate

The following page is an example of the ESP application. (It's pretty simple, right?) The ESP program is located on the Riverside County intranet – accessible by most Department computers.

The Riverside County intranet can be found at:

Now click on the Education Support Program Icon (4 rows down, first square/icon with the young lady looking off into the distance – reveling in her dreams of advancing her education!).

Click on "How To Get Started" from the top menu. Then click the "Apply Now" button at the bottom of the page and the application should appear.

Home	About Us & Program Goals	Program Components	How To Get Started	Resources	Career Spotlights	Contact Us

In addition to this application, you need to write and submit a one page (not a lot!) letter of interest. This letter would include:

➢ Why you decided to pursue this particular degree or certificate.

➢ How this degree or certificate will help you perform better at your current job or how it prepares you to advance into another RCDMH job classification.

➢ You career or job goals within the RCDMH.

Don't forget to have your supervisor sign the ESP application. Your ESP application can be signed by your immediate supervisor (where is says "Department Head or Designee Name"). They are NOT approving or dedicating funding. All funds have already been allocated through WET. They are just indicating that you are off probation and are in good standing (no current disciplinary action or HR actions).

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM - APPLICATION

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This application is to be completed in its entirety by County of Riverside employees that are interested in any of the programs or services offered by the Educational Support Program excluding Educational Loan Repayment. Once a completed application is received employees will be contacted by Educational Support Program staff within one week. Please note completing this application does not guarantee future placement in the Educational Support Program.

ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES

Regular full-time County employees who have successfully completed their initial probationary period. Any TAP and Per Diem employee working full-time in a Certified Nursing Assistant or Nursing classification, in any County Department, who works a minimum of 520 hours in any fiscal year is also eligible. Please refer to the Educational Support Program Policies and Procedures for additional information on eligibility.

REQUIRED INFORMATION

Employee Name: First MI Last	Current Position (title)	Employee ID	Union
Current Department	Current Supervisor	Work Location (city)	Initial Hire Date
Work Contact Number	Other Contact Number	E-mail Address (county e-mail preferred)	

CURRENT EDUCATION – Check the highest level of education completed

☐ Professional Degree (including Doctoral)   ☐ Master's Degree   ☐ Bachelor's Degree   ☐ Associate's Degree

☐ Some College   ☐ Certificate/License   ☐ High School Diploma/GED   ☐ Less than High School

_____
Please specify major if you checked a college degree

REASON FOR APPLYING – Check all that apply

☐ **CAREER COUNSELING** – Interested in meeting with a Career Counselor
   ☐ Exploring county career options   ☐ Career / Educational guidance   ☐ Help with building a better resume

☐ **TEXTBOOK & TUITION ASSISTANCE OPTIONS** – Interested in pursuing further education
   ☐ I know the county position I am interested in pursuing (please specify)_____

   ☐ I know what degree/certificate I am interested in (please specify)_____

   ☐ I am interested in exploring financial assistance options

REQUIRED SIGNATURES

Employee Name (please print)	Employee Signature – by signing this application you are acknowledging that you have read and agree to the Educational Support Program policies and procedures.
Department Head or Designee Name (please print)	Department Head or Designee Signature - by signing this application for the above employee you are attesting that they have completed their initial probationary period with the County of Riverside and are in good standing in their current position.

ONCE COMPLETED PLEASE RETURN THIS APPLICATION TO MAIL STOP #1081 OR MAIL TO EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM, 4080 LEMON STREET, RIVERSIDE, CA 92501. If you have any questions while completing this application please contact the Educational Support Program at (951) 955-2572. You can access Educational Support Program policies and procedures at WWW.RC-HR.COM/ESP.

RIVERSIDE COUNTY: BEYOND YOUR EXPECTATIONS
THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

Part A: FAQ

1. **Can I qualify for this program if I want to get an Associates or Doctoral degree?**
    No. These degrees are NOT covered by this program at this time.

2. **Do I have to go through ESP? Can't I just submit my coursework for reimbursement?**
    No. You have to have your coursework pre-approved by ESP in order to apply for reimbursement.

3. **Does every course I take qualify for reimbursement?**
    No. Only upper division coursework or coursework that focuses on your major area of study will qualify. ESP will help you identify the coursework and put them on the official forms that will authorize reimbursement. Also, the amount you are reimbursed is dependent on how well you do in the class; the higher your grade, the higher your reimbursement.

4. **Would I qualify if I study for a degree that will lead to a job classification NOT used by RCDMH, but is used by another county department?**
    No. You would not qualify for funding provided by RCDMH. Remember, this is workforce strategy for the development and retention of the public <u>mental health</u> workforce.

5. **How do I know what degrees and certificates are available through local colleges and universities?**

    This is a good question for the ESP staff; they will provide you with vocational testing and counseling. You can also get a good idea of some the local degrees by looking at the College and University Data Base through the Southern Counties Regional Partnership. Follow this link: <u>http://www.scrpcalifornia.org/CollegeUniversityDB.aspx</u>

6. **How do I know if they degree that I am interested in will meet the minimum requirement for a job classification used by RCDMH?**

    Your ESP job counselor is a great resource here! If there is job you are interested in, you can start by talking to employees who hold that job to get a better understanding of how they qualified and what their current job duties are. You can also search job descriptions through the search engine located at the Riverside County Human Resources website: <u>http://rc-hr.com/</u>

7. **School is harder than I thought. What if I need some extra support to help get me through?**

    WET wants everyone to succeed! Though we still want you to achieve the quality standards that make you a good employee, we can help you problem solve academic decisions, advise you on what other employees have done to successfully meet the demands, or just listen and offer their resources. Unless you tell us something that violates Department policy, everything will be kept confidential. You don't have to do this alone!

Part B: I Just Want to Take One Class

Great! Your whole packet of information is located right here!

You will need to complete the attached Part B (Individual Coursework) application. (Pretty simple, right?) This will serve as the cover sheet for your application packet.

At the bottom of the application is a checklist to help remind you of the documents that you need to submit. You need to apply for reimbursement <u>before</u> you take the class!

This includes:

1. A one page (not a lot!) letter of interest.

   What you write in the letter depends on why you are applying.

   If you are applying because the class will enhance your knowledge to do your current job, then your letter would say:

   ➢ Why you picked this course and how it will enhance your knowledge or help you perform your current duties. It helps if you have had a conversation with your supervisor or manager about how they see this course supporting your job duties. You would write about this conversation in your letter.

   If you are applying because you need to take this class to meet the testing requirement for a license or certificate required for your job classification, then your letter would say:

   ➢ How this course meets this need. You would also include documentation from the related governing board showing that you need the course as a requirement to test.

2. A GA-15 form (exampled included) completed and signed by your program Manager/Administrator. Ask your clerical staff about where to get one of these forms. (They are in triplicate!) Instructions on how to fill out the GA-15 are included in this packet.

3. Proof of the cost of the course (such as your receipt of payment).

Then you submit your whole application packet to:

Workforce Education and Training
ATTN: David Schoelen, Mail Stop # 3810

4. After you finish your class, you will need to submit to WET a copy of your transcript, report card, or certificate demonstrating successful course completion within 30 days of grade posting.

Riverside County Department of Mental Health
Tuition and Textbook Reimbursement (Part B) Application
Individual Coursework

IF YOU ARE SEEKING REIMBURSEMENT FOR A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE (Part A), PLEASE APPLY USING AN EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM (ESP) APPLICATION TO THE ESP OFFICE

B. **Individual Coursework Reimbursement:** Apply **BEFORE** you take the class.

1. **Individual Coursework**: Coursework that would enhance knowledge necessary to perform the duties of current job classification; or individual coursework that creates expertise in an area benefiting RCDMH operations based on current or anticipated work demand.

2. **Requisite Coursework for Employment Credential Testing:** Post Degree Coursework necessary to meet the testing requirements for Certification or Licensure in a job classification that RCDMH requires as a condition of continued employment within that job class (excludes examination preparation courses).

Minimum Qualifications: Full time, permanent employee in good standing

_____   _____   _____
Employee Name   Title   CEID

_____   _____   _____
Clinic/Program Name   Supervisor   Manager/Administrator

_____   _____   _____
Course Title   Dates   Course Cost   University/School

I understand that I am requesting reimbursement ONLY for the coursework listed above and that reimbursement is contingent on pre-approval by RCDMH and is pro-rated based on my grade received.

_____
Employee Signature and Date: by signing this application, you are acknowledging that you have read and understand the RCDMH Tuition Reimbursement guidelines and procedures.
_____

Application Submission Checklist (Please include this form as your cover sheet)

☐ One page letter of interest, either: 1.) Describe how coursework will enhance performance - include reference to conversation with program supervisor or manager; or 2) Describe how this coursework meets the testing requirement for a license or certificate required by RCDMH – include documentation from related governing organization.

☐ A GA-15 signed by your Manager/Administrator authorizing payment upon completion of the course (Funded by designated WET funds).

☐ Proof of the cost of the coursework (such as your receipt of payment).

Submit application packet to:
RCDMH Workforce Education and Training, ATTN: David Schoelen, Mail Stop # 3810.

Tuition Reimbursement Example

RIVERSIDE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
AUTHORIZATION TO ATTEND MEETING, CONFERENCE, CONVENTION OR SEMINAR

(1)   DATE__June 6, 2013_____(2)

PROGRAM__Tyler Village Mature Adults____PROGRAM MANAGER APPROVAL_____(3)

Request authorization for____Alice Smarts_____(4)_____, _BHS II_____
                                          (name)   (position)
to attend_Gerontology 101_____(5)_____ on ___6/3/13 – 8/31/13____(6)_____
                                      (meeting, conference, etc.)   (date)
to be held in_Riverside, CA___(7)_____ sponsored by_UCR Extension___(8)_____

JUSTIFICATION:

(9)

All of the consumers that I work with are age 60 years or older. Learning more about the specific needs of the mature adult population will enhance both my case management evaluations and my service delivery.

(10)
There are sufficient funds in budget #_____ travel sub-object to cover costs.

Total estimated expenditures are $____500.00____, which includes: (11)

(12) $___500.00_____ tuition $____0.00_____ registration fee
       $____0.00_____ travel $____0.00_____ private mileage
       $____0.00_____ lodging $____0.00_____ meals
       $____0.00_____ for _____

_____ % of this travel request is funded by _____
_____
_____

Your request for travel is:
    [ ] Approved as Requested
    [ ] Approved as Amended
    [ ] Not Approved

DOMH-GA015 (revised 4/2013)   Director of Mental Health   DATE
                                                 Distribution: HR
                                                                      Fiscal
                                                                      Program Manager / Administrator

Riverside County Department of Mental Health
Tuition Reimbursement (Part B)
Individual Coursework

Instructions:
Completing the GA-15 – Authorization to Attend

1.   **PROGRAM: The name of your worksite.**

2.   **DATE: The date you complete this form.**

3.   **PROGRAM MANAGER APPROVAL: (Leave Blank). After you complete your full application, you will submit it to your Program Manager of Administrator. His or Her signature goes on this line.**

4.   **"Request authorization for": Fill in your name and position title.**

5.   **"to attend": Course Title as indicated on your Tuition Reimbursement Application.**

6.   **"on" / "date": Dates of course as indicated on your Tuition Reimbursement Application.**

7.   **"to be held in": City where course is being taught.**

8.   **"sponsored by": Name of school, university, or teaching organization.**

9.   **JUSTIFICATION: describe either: 1) How this coursework will enhance performance in current job position, or 2) How this course meets the testing requirement for a license or certificate required by RCDMH.**

10.   **"There are sufficient funds": Leave Blank. This will be coded by the Administrative Services Analyst in the WET unit. Funds are appropriated specifically for the Tuition Reimbursement Program and will not come out of your clinic's or region's budget.**

11.   **"Total estimated expenditures are": Fill in the cost of the course. The reimbursement request cannot exceed $500.00.**

12.   **"Tuition": Fill in the cost of the course. Leave all other line item expenses blank as they are NOT reimbursable under this program and will not be considered.**

13.   **Leave the rest of the form BLANK.**

14.   **After it is signed by your Manager/Administrator, the entire Tuition Reimbursement Part B Application is sent to the WET Program.**

Part B: FAQ

1. **Can I get reimbursement for more than one class at a time?**
   No. You are only eligible for 1 reimbursed class at a time. You can request reimbursement for a total of 2 classes during the same fiscal year (June to May). Multiple requests to reimburse individual coursework will result in a review of your application to determine if you are a better candidate for Part A of this program. You have to get at least a "C" grade in your first class in order to qualify for reimbursement for the second class.

2. **Can I get paid up front, before I take the class?**
   No. You will need to pay for the class first. Reimbursement will only take place after you have finished the class. Only classes that were preapproved by WET will be reimbursed. You will need to submit your grade to WET within 30 days of grade posting.

3. **Do I get reimbursed for the full cost of my class?**
   It depends. By policy, the Department can only reimburse up to $500 per class. If this does not cover the full cost of your class, you can still submit an application to reimburse $500 of the full amount. Reimbursement is also based on your class grade; the higher your grade the higher the reimbursement.

4. **If I really like going to school, can I get reimbursed toward a degree or certificate?**
   Yes! Please review Part A of this booklet. You would simply follow the directions to apply for degree or certificate reimbursement through the Educational Support Program.

5. **Can I get reimbursement for taking an exam preparation course?**
   No. Exam preparation courses are not covered.

6. **Where can I learn about mental health or health care administration courses in the area?**
   The Southern Counties Regional Partnership has a College and Universities Data Base that can give you some idea of potential coursework that could benefit your current job duties. You are not limited to the courses listed, but this can be a good resource to learn more about areas of interest. The data base can be located at:
   http://www.scrpcalifornia.org/CollegeUniversityDB.aspx

7. **Can administrative or technical courses be reimbursed?**
   Yes! If you are in an administrative, technical, or office support job classification and you are aware of a class that can help you do better on the job, then you can apply for reimbursement as well!

8. **Do I have to talk to my supervisor or manager about my class?**
   It is in your best interest to do so. If you are interested in a particular class and are unsure how it might help you on the job, your supervisor is a great resource to better understand what courses can really enhance your knowledge. Ultimately, a manager/administrator will need to sign the GA15 that accompanies your application, so it is a good idea to start the dialogue early and demonstrate your interest in attending school. Documenting this conversation on your application also expedites your reimbursement process.

More questions?

If you have any questions, please email:

David Schoelen

Workforce Education and Training Coordinator

at: DSchoelen@rcmhd.org

or call: 951-955-7106