

# SANILAC COUNTY COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

## ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY

**NUMBER: BA164**

**NAME: STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENT AND TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM**

INITIAL APPROVAL DATE:	03/04/2022	BY: Human Resources Manager
(LAST) REVISION DATE:	01/17/2024	BY: HR Manager
(LAST) REVIEW DATE:	01/18/2024	BY: Policy Committee
DISCONTINUED DATE:	N/A	REPLACED BY: N/A

### I. **PURPOSE**

This policy outlines the types of degrees and certifications that are eligible when applying to Sanilac County Community Mental Health's (Sanilac CMH) Tuition Reimbursement and Student Loan Repayment Program. Further it outlines the requirements that must be included when applying, the approval process, and the acknowledgments/requirements of the program that must be considered when applying.

### II. **APPLICATION**

Populations: **ALL**  
Programs: **Direct - ALL**  
**Contracted - ALL**

### III. **POLICY:**

Student Loan and tuition reimbursements may be made to those that qualify and are approved through the Agency for difficult to fill positions, up to \$5,250.00 annually. Loan reimbursement is currently allowable through December 31, 2025. Payments may be made directly to the employee or lender for principal and interest on a qualified educational loan for the employee's education.

Tuition reimbursement and student loan repayments are governed by the Internal Revenue Code and related tax rules and regulations. Sanilac CMH reserves the right to take all actions necessary to maintain compliance with the Internal Revenue Code and related rules and regulations.

#### **A. ELIGIBILITY:**

College tuition reimbursements may be requested for approved Bachelor, Master, and certificate-level programs.

##### Benefit to the Agency

To apply, an employee must be working toward a degree/certification which will not only benefit the employee, but also benefit the Agency. Degrees/certification types that benefit the Agency will be determined by the department Officers, CEO, and HR Manager. Preference will be given to employees that are enrolled in a master level clinical program that benefits the Agency and any position identified by the CEO. In August, all remaining applications will be considered, based on programs that aid in staffing positions that have been historically difficult to fill and for positions that require succession planning.

##### Applications

Staff that are interested in student loan or tuition reimbursement must apply each calendar year using the "Student Loan Repayment/Tuition Reimbursement Application" form (Form #0555) for consideration. First consideration will be given to staff requesting tuition reimbursements that are enrolled in a master

level clinical program and any position identified by the CEO. Staff that are enrolled in a master level clinician program should apply to this program immediately upon enrollment into the program to request approval.

All other applications, including loan reimbursements and other types of tuition/certification reimbursement program majors, may apply throughout the year, however, these applications will be held and considered together in August, and will be approved based on Agency need and funding available at fiscal year-end. If an applicant does not receive a response to their application by August 31, they will need to reach out to the HR Manager immediately to ensure their application was received and considered.

Any new applications received after August 10th will be processed for the following year.

#### Application Denial

If an employee disagrees with an application denial, they may request a review of such denial to the HR Manager. They should submit comments in writing and submit additional information with the request for review. A decision will be made within fifteen (15) calendar days following receipt of the request.

#### Benefit Not Guaranteed

Tuition reimbursements and student loan reimbursements are not a guaranteed benefit. Approval will be at the Agency's discretion, based on current and expected future Agency need and available funding. Employees are eligible to apply for either tuition reimbursement or student loan repayments each year. An employee will not be eligible for both programs.

#### Employment Status to be Eligible

To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, employees must have successfully completed six months of employment. The employee must maintain satisfactory performance evaluations and shall have no record of improvement plans/disciplines, in force, during the consideration of, or when, reimbursement is made.

For both programs, the employee must be actively employed with the Agency, full time (minimum of 30 hours worked weekly) and not on an unpaid or non-agency paid leave to be eligible for these reimbursements. Note - employees who are part-time as a result of taking educational courses during working hours are eligible for this program.

#### Right to Modify or Terminate Program

Sanilac CMH reserves the right to terminate, modify, amend, or change the Student Loan Repayment and Tuition Reimbursement Program at any time and for any reason without the prior consent or agreement of employees.

### **B. REQUIREMENTS:**

#### Employee Contributions

Employees are not required to make contributions to receive benefits from this plan.

#### Reimbursements

A one-time payment will be made each year to staff that qualify for student loan or tuition reimbursements. Failure to complete a purchase requisition as outlined below, by the deadline of September 10 will result in non-payment for the approved year.

#### Tuition Reimbursement

The College/University and the program must be approved through the application process in order for the staff to be eligible for reimbursement.

Tuition reimbursement will be reimbursed, up to \$5,250.00 each calendar year for books and tuition. Payments may be made directly to the school once the semester has closed or to the staff directly.

The employee must present the receipt(s) or a bill for tuition/books, including proof of course completion with a B grade, or better, when submitting a purchase requisition for payment. ...

If you receive financial assistance, a fellowship or scholarship in connection with any educational course, you will receive benefits from this plan only to the extent that your costs are not paid by the financial assistance, fellowship, or scholarship. If a staff receives financial assistance, they are required to disclose this to the Agency. Failure to do so will result in required repayment to the Agency and ineligibility for this program.

#### Student Loan Repayment

Loan repayment must be approved through the application process, in advance, in order for staff to be eligible for reimbursement. Applications must include proof of balance on the loan or proof of payments made during the current calendar year to the loan provider. If an employee would like payments made directly to their loan provider, this must be stated on the application and details to process this must be included, otherwise payments will be made directly to the employee.

#### Payments for Tuition Reimbursements and Loans Reimbursement

In order to receive payments from the Agency for this program, approved staff must submit an electronic purchase requisition directly to the HR Manager by selecting "I report to an officer" and selecting the HR Manager's name.

- Proof of payment to the loan provider or school must be attached when requesting reimbursements directly to the staff.
- Proof of the current balance of the loan must be submitted when payments are made directly to the loan provider. This may include banking statements or screenshots/statements from the loan provider. The Employee's name and loan provider must be included on supporting documents.
- Tuition reimbursement requests must include a breakdown of the invoice for the semester, the grade received, and receipts for books purchased.

The vendor within the purchase requisition is who the payment should be made to, either the staff, college, or loan provider.

#### **C. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONSIDERATIONS:**

Staff that participate in this program are required to acknowledge and adhere to the following agreements. Also, when an employee submits an application for consideration, it will be understood by the Agency that the employee agrees to these requirements.

1. Employees are required to continue their employment with Sanilac CMH for a minimum of twenty-four (24) months following the date the last reimbursed class ended or the last student loan repayment was made. If this expectation is not upheld, it will be the employee's responsibility to reimburse Sanilac CMH the full amount of the tuition/student loan reimbursement.
2. Any amount owed to the Agency under this program will be deducted from the employee's accrued time and last paycheck, in the event other arrangements are not made, prior to exiting. By participating in the Program, the employee gives free and full consent to the employer to collect/withhold the amount owed under the terms of the agreement.
3. Repayment methods may include, but are not limited to, allowing for the ability to withhold from their final pay, accrual payouts, and other financial reimbursements owed by the Agency to the exiting staff (i.e., mileage). Further, they must consent to repaying the Agency for the remainder owed.
4. If an employee leaves employment due to an action taken by Sanilac CMH (without just cause), the employee is not responsible for repaying the tuition/student loan reimbursement. The CEO has the discretion to wave repayment, when deemed necessary.

#### **D. EXCEPTION:**

If an employee is requesting an exception to this policy, a request must be made in writing to the HR Manager. This will be brought to the CEO for consideration.

#### **IV. DEFINITIONS**

#### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

#### **VI. REFERENCES:** Student Loan Repayment/Tuition Reimbursement Application, Form # 0555