

U.S. IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT

ICE Directive 2011.2: Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

Issue Date: April 28, 2021

Superseded: ICE Directive 2-1.0, *Tuition Assistance Program* (TAP) (Jun. 6, 2007).

Federal Enterprise Architecture Number: 306-112-002b

1. **Purpose/Background.** This Directive implements the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) at U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). TAP provides financial assistance to ICE employees for academic, professional, or technical courses taken through accredited institutions during non-duty hours. The purpose of TAP is to improve an employee's ability to perform current job skills and/or enhance an employee's career development in support of the ICE mission. This Directive applies to all ICE Directorates and Program Offices.
2. **Policy.** Eligible employees may be reimbursed for all or part of the costs of relevant training or education expenses from an accredited institution up to \$5,000 per fiscal year. Courses taken toward an academic degree that contribute significantly to meet an identified agency training need, resolving an identified agency staffing problem, or accomplishing goals in the strategic plan of the agency may be eligible for reimbursement. Employees must submit a TAP application package for tuition reimbursement at least two weeks prior to the course start date to be considered for reimbursement. An employee must receive a final grade of "C," earn a "Pass" (if the course taken was Pass/Fail), or receive a "Certificate of Completion" for each course in order to receive reimbursement. An employee whose employment with ICE ends before completion of pre-approved course(s) or an employee who attends a "Diploma Mill" is not entitled to reimbursement. Additionally, an employee is not eligible to receive assistance under TAP if the employee is attending training paid by another federal agency.¹ TAP expenses paid shall be from the fiscal year appropriation that the obligation was incurred.
3. **Definitions.** The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Directive only.
 - 3.1. **Diploma Mills.** Non-traditional schools that are not accredited by institutions recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.²
 - 3.2. **Eligible Employees.** Permanent career or career-conditional ICE employees and seasonal or temporary employees who have worked a minimum of one year (2,080 hours) before applying for TAP.

¹ See 38 U.S.C. § 3681.

² As defined by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) in "Strengthening Oversight of the Use of Diploma Mill Credentials in Federal Employment," (May 13, 2004).

3.3. Tuition Assistance. Reimbursement of 100 percent of the total course expenses that are prepaid not to exceed \$5,000 per fiscal year for educational expenses associated with the cost of tuition, fees, books, and other related materials. Tuition assistance under TAP does not include travel expenses, parking, late registration fees, and student activity fees (e.g., health fees and library fees).

4. Responsibilities.

4.1. The Office of Leadership and Career Development (OLCD) is responsible for processing TAP application packages and managing implementation of this program, including coordinating the employee's reimbursement.

5. Procedures/Requirements.

5.1. Compiling a TAP Application Package. ICE employees applying for tuition reimbursement must create and save the electronic SF-182 Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training in PALMS. OLCD reviews and submits the electronic SF-182 in PALMS on behalf of employee. A TAP application package includes:

- 1) A completed *Tuition Assistance Program Application Form with Justification Page* for each course explaining how the course(s) relates to the ICE mission;
- 2) A copy of the course description and schedule of fees, and;
- 3) A copy of the receipt from the school confirming the amount and type of assistance to be received by the employee (e.g., grant, loan, or scholarship), if a school provided financial assistance.

5.2. Submitting a TAP Application Package. Employees must submit a completed TAP Application Package to OLCD at least two weeks prior to the start date of the course. Within ten days of receipt of the application package, OLCD will track all incoming TAP application packages, confirm the availability of funds, and advise the employee of any issues with the application package.

5.3. Approving a TAP Application Package. OLCD will manage a waiting list if funds are unavailable and inform the employee if the employee is placed on this list.

5.4. Post-Course Requirements. OLCD will review the course completion items, perform tracking and processing functions, and ensure payment. After completing the course, the employee must submit the following to OLCD:

- 1) A copy of all receipts for tuition and books;
- 2) A copy of the employee's receipt of any financial assistance provided in excess of the amount permitted;


- 3) An official copy of the final course grade, and;
- 4) A properly complete SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business.

7. Authorities/References.

- 7.1. *Homeland Security Act of 2002, H.R. 5005.*
- 7.2. Title 5, United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 4107(a).
- 7.3. Title 5, U.S.C. Section 4109(a)(2).
- 7.4. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, DHS Directive 258-05, Employee Learning and Development (Sep. 12, 2016).
- 7.5. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, DHS Instruction 258-05-001, Employee Learning and Development (Sep. 14, 2016).

8. Attachments.

- 8.1. *SF-182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training.*
 - 8.2. *Tuition Assistance Program Application Form with Justification Page.*
 - 8.3. *SF-1164, Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business; and*
 - 8.4. *Standard Operating Procedures for ICE Tuition Assistance Program.*
9. **No Private Right.** This document provides only internal ICE policy guidance, which may be modified, rescinded, or superseded at any time without notice. It is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil, or criminal matter. Likewise, no limitations are placed by this guidance on the otherwise lawful enforcement or litigative prerogatives of ICE.



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