# FSIS NOTICE	34-22	6/16/22

CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM: COLLEGE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM OPEN TO ALL EMPLOYEES

I. PURPOSE

This notice announces that the FSIS Continuing Education Program (CEP) is open to all FSIS employees. The CEP college tuition reimbursement program provides employees an opportunity to develop and enhance core competencies, further their education, better perform in their role or qualify for other roles. Those interested in qualifying for tuition reimbursement are to submit a CEP application. The requirements are detailed in Sections III and IV.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Under the CEP College Tuition Reimbursement Program, FSIS employees may qualify for up to $5,000 per fiscal year (FY) for tuition reimbursement funds towards graduate or undergraduate college-level courses from nationally accredited colleges or universities.

B. The CEP is not a degree program but can be used to support degree program goals and assist with career development goals.

C. Each FY, there will be three opportunities to enroll in the CEP since there are three semesters (spring, summer, fall) offered by academic institutions. All CEP participants may be reimbursed up to a maximum of $5,000 per FY, with no life-time maximum.

III. REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CEP COLLEGE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

A. Employee Eligibility Requirement to Participate:

1. Participants are to be permanent full-time employees with a minimum of 1 year of service with FSIS at the time of application;

2. Participants are to be in good standing, which requires a fully successful rating on their most recent performance review and no disciplinary actions occurring within 1 year prior to applying; and

3. Participants are to remain employed with FSIS for the duration of the course.

B. Training Requirements to Participate:

1. Participants are to be enrolled in graduate or undergraduate college courses from an accredited college (including community colleges) or university;

2. Participants are not required to earn a degree or certificate; and,

3. Participants are to take the college courses on personal time.

C. Reimbursement Requirements to be provided to the CEP Manager:

1. Participants are to be pre-approved for reimbursement by submitting a CEP Application and Approval Form (FSIS Form 4410-25) (see Section IV. A. for access to the form) with proof of enrollment in the courses for which reimbursement is being requested;

2. Participants are to pay college tuition costs "out-of-pocket" and provide proof of course cost and payment with a billing statement and proper receipt;

3. Participants are to pass the course with a C grade or better and provide an official transcript;

4. Participants are to submit a signed OF 1164, *Claim for Reimbursement for Expenditures on Official Business* (see Section IV. A. for access to the form); and

5. Participants are to submit a proper receipt, official transcript, and a signed OF 1164 Claim for Reimbursement within 45 days of completing the approved courses. All forms and supporting documents are to be emailed to: ContinuingEducationProgram@usda.gov.

NOTE: Reimbursements are contingent upon compliance with the requirements outlined in Section III. and upon the terms acknowledged by approved participants in the CEP Application (FSIS Form 4410-25).

IV. HOW TO APPLY FOR THE CEP COLLEGE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM:

A. Employees can obtain the CEP Application and Approval Form (FSIS Form 4410-25) from Help Resources at:

1. IPP Help: https://fsishelp.fsis.usda.gov/ipphelp/cep/csicep/csicep.htm;

2. Employee Help: https://fsishelp.fsis.usda.gov/res/ecep/; or

3. E-mail: ContinuingEducationProgram@usda.gov.

B. Employees are to complete the CEP Application and Approval Form (FSIS Form 4410-25) according to the instructions. The application is to include all the requested college course data to be considered complete and to be processed.

C. Employees are to enroll in the courses for which reimbursement is being requested. Proof of enrollment is to be submitted with the CEP Application and Approval Form (FSIS Form 4410-25). Proof of enrollment documents are to demonstrate course start/end dates and tuition cost of the courses. (i.e., course schedule with a billing or registration statement).

D. Employees are to submit the CEP Application and Approval Form with proof of enrollment during the semester enrollment period. There are three semester enrollment periods: Spring, Summer and Fall Semesters. Applications are to be e-mailed to: ContinuingEducationProgram@usda.gov.

E. The 2022 and 2023 Semester enrollment periods are as follows:

1. Fall 2022 Semester Enrollment: Submit application from July 1 – July 31, 2022. Includes courses that begin August 8 – Dec 31, 2022.

2. Spring 2023 Semester Enrollment: Submit application from November 1 – November 30, 2022. Includes courses that begin January 1 – May 7, 2023.

3. Summer 2023 Semester Enrollment: Submit application from April 1 - April 30, 2023. Includes courses that start anytime between May 8 – August 6, 2023.

4. Fall 2023 Semester Enrollment: Submit application between July 1 – July 31, 2023. Includes courses that start anytime between August 7 – December 31, 2023.

F.   OEED will return application packets that are not complete to the applicant for resubmission.

G. Employees are to wait to pay for the courses until they are notified of Approval Status. Employees will be notified of their status prior to the course start date.

H. If the number of applicants exceeds allocated funds, a lottery system will be used.

V. QUESTIONS

The CEP is coordinated and administered by OEED. Refer questions to ContinuingEducationProgram@usda.gov or 202-836-0434. Questions may also be referred to OEED Training Transformation and Distance Learning Staff at 1-833-ASK-OEED or 1-833-275-6333.

Assistant Administrator
Office of Policy and Program Development