



State of Florida
Department of Children and Families

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Chad Poppell
Secretary

DATE: October 17, 2019

TO: Regional Managing Directors
Community-Based Care Lead Agency CEOs *Patricia Babcock*

THROUGH: Patricia Babcock, Deputy Secretary

FROM: Patricia Medlock, Assistant Secretary for Child Welfare *PM*

SUBJECT: Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Waiver Program

PURPOSE: This memorandum provides information regarding the Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program and addresses how to request the exemption.

BACKGROUND: During the 2014 session, the Legislature created section 402.403, F.S., (<http://flsenate.gov/Laws/Statutes/2019/402.403>) to establish 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. Personnel who meet the requirements are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees and may enroll for up to six credit hours of courses per term at a State University accredited by the body.

Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel, for the purpose of the tuition exemption program, are defined as the following:

- Child Protective Investigators;
- Senior Child Protective Investigators;
- Child Protective Investigator Supervisors;
- Case Managers; and
- Case Manager Supervisors.

Program requirements include:

- Child protection personnel must be employed with the Department;
- Child welfare personnel must be employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency;
- The employee must be performing at a high level as established by their personnel evaluation. State employees must have a 3.5 or higher on their latest performance evaluation. Case managers and case manager supervisors must achieve at least seventy percent of expectations on their latest performance evaluation.
- Be admitted 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 (CSWE); and
- Shall take the courses online should the social work program be offered through online courses.

1317 Winewood Boulevard, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0700

Mission: Work in Partnership with Local Communities to Protect the Vulnerable, Promote Strong and Economically Self-Sufficient Families, and Advance Personal and Family Recovery and Resiliency

The CSWE website indicates that Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, Florida Atlantic University, Florida Gulf Coast University, Florida International University, Florida State University, University of Central Florida, University of North Florida, University of South Florida, and the University of West Florida are all State University System institutions that are currently accredited by the body.

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 five years after completion of the graduate level social work program. If employment terminates before the five-year period is fulfilled, the benefit shall be repaid to the university according to a pro rata calculation based on the number of years of service.

The application for the Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program can be located at <http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/policymemos/Tuition%20Exemption%20Request%20Form.pdf>.

Note: The Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program is separate from the State Employee Tuition Waiver Program.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please disseminate this memorandum to all child protection investigators and supervisors employed by the Department and all case managers and supervisors employed by community-based care lead agencies and their subcontractors.

CONTACT INFORMATION: For questions or clarification regarding this memorandum, please contact Vanessa Snoddy, Case Management & Well Being Manager, via email at Vanessa.Snoddy@myflfamilies.com or via phone at 850-717-4769.

cc: Regional Family and Community Services Directors
Office of General Counsel
Center for Child Welfare, University of South Florida
Lynda Page, Director of Articulation, Board of Governors, State University System of Florida