

HealthForceOntario's Allied Health Professional Development Fund

Application Guide 2009-2010

The Allied Health Professional Development Fund is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care who would like to acknowledge the assistance of the following Regulatory Colleges and Professional Associations:

- College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario
- College of Dietitians of Ontario
- College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario
- College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario
- College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario
- College of Physiotherapists of Ontario
- College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario
- Ontario College of Pharmacists
- Dietitians of Canada
- Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Technologists
- Ontario Pharmacists' Association
- Ontario Physiotherapy Association
- Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists
- Ontario Society of Medical Technologists
- Respiratory Therapy Society of Ontario

Introduction

The Allied Health Professional Development Fund (AHPDF) is part of the province's health human resources strategy, HealthForceOntario. Investing in this innovative plan will help to ensure Ontario has the right supply and type of health care professionals.

Through HealthForceOntario, the government is reaching out for the fourth consecutive year and recognizing the contribution provided by allied health professionals to Ontario's health system by providing funds for professional development.

Implemented in 2006 AHPDF supported professional development opportunities for six allied health professionals. It was expanded in 2007 to provide support for professional development opportunities to three additional health professionals. Eligible professions included dietitians, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists, speech-language pathologists and audiologists. The fund was allocated based on the size of each profession's membership and continued in 2008.

Now in 2009, for a fourth consecutive year, the fund will continue to provide support for professional development opportunities to nine health professionals. Applicants must be registered at the time of participation in the PD activity with their regulatory college and practicing or eligible to practice in their profession.

HealthForceOntario's AHPDF is a fund that aims to provide professional development opportunities to allied health professionals. The objectives of the AHPDF are to:

- Enable more health care professionals to access professional development;
- Expand current skills and leadership capacity to improve health care service quality;
- Facilitate the retention of valued allied health professionals in Ontario;
- Assist allied health professionals to adapt to changing expectations and healthcare needs; and,
- Maintain and build Ontario's capacity as a competitive employer.

Professional development is beneficial in all workplace settings and all sectors, particularly in times of rapid technological and medical advances. An evaluation of the AHPDF conducted in May 2009 indicated that ongoing education or life-long learning enhances the delivery of health services, job satisfaction, staff motivation and morale. For those individuals who received funding in 2008-2009 and responded to the survey, 90% stated that the fund helped them adjust to changing expectations and health care needs.

For more information:

Monday to Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4.30 pm: / 905-602-6015 or 1-866-992-6015

By email: lsawaya@ahpdf.ca or rstas@ahpdf.ca

Website: www.ahpdf.ca

How To Apply

If you are currently registered as a member of the eligible allied health professions and are practicing or eligible to practice in Ontario, you may apply to receive a reimbursement for a completed professional development activity.

Eligible health professionals may apply for a maximum of \$1,500 for professional development (PD) opportunities¹ completed between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010. It is important to remember that while all reimbursement requests with appropriate documentation will be considered, funding is not guaranteed and the funding pool is limited. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit an application within 90 days of course completion date or by March 31, 2010 whichever comes first.

To apply you will need to include:

1. A completed signed application form. Incomplete applications will not be processed. This includes your SIN for T4A information as well as your signature declaring agreement to all terms of eligibility.

Please note: Employers are not eligible to submit applications for professional development activities that they have paid for on behalf of the candidate.

PD activity's tuition/registration fee must be paid for by the applicant and not by a private business, including an applicant's own business.

2. Proof of payment: An official receipt issued by the deliverer of the professional development activity is required. Invoices with outstanding balance and T2202A forms are not acceptable. The document must clearly state the professional activity name and fee paid. Proof of exchange rate is needed when submitting for fees paid for in foreign currency. Otherwise, the exchange rate that was valid on the day of transaction (date of payment /receipt) will be applied. PD activities must be paid for by the individual and not by an employer or through a private business, including an applicant's own business.

3. Evidence of successful completion of, or attendance at the professional development activity. This includes: a passing grade report, course certificate or transcripts from the educational facility, certificate of attendance at a conference/workshop, or a printout from a student based web service stating the student's name and course completion date. In the event that no proof of successful completion was provided, signing the declaration is certifying that the professional development activity was completed.

Please note: Self declaration applies only to PD activities where documentation has not and will not be provided to the applicant from the deliverer of the PD activity.

4. Proof of registration with your regulatory college. (A copy of current registration card is required, tax receipt stating payment of membership renewal fees is not sufficient on its own).
5. A void cheque for direct deposit purposes.

Keep a copy of your application, receipt and proof of completion for your records.

To submit by Mail: Allied Health Professional Development Fund
5025 Orbitor Drive, Building 4 Suite 200
Mississauga, ON L4W 4Y5

By Fax: 905-602-6012

¹ PD activities include courses, workshops, conferences, undergraduate and graduate education

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be taken into consideration when processing individual applications:

1. First applications, within the current funding year, from eligible applicants will be given priority; subsequent applications submitted by the same professional will be held, for consideration if funds are available, until the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2010). Applications will be processed as they are received until the quarterly funding allocation is spent. Unprocessed first applications from each quarter will be reconsidered at the end of the fiscal year and will receive priority if there is funding remaining.
2. A clear rationale to support how the PD activity is relevant to practice and will improve the quality of patient care or how it increases leadership skills.
3. The Professional Development Activity was delivered by a professionally recognized provider (e.g. post-secondary institution, professional association, employer, etc).
4. Applicants should be currently practicing or eligible to practice in their profession in Ontario.

Professional development activities must be completed between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 to be eligible for reimbursement. AHPDF applications must be faxed or postmarked by March 31, 2010. To facilitate reimbursement, applications should be submitted within 90 days of course completion date or by March 31, 2010 whichever comes first. **Funding is not guaranteed.**

All applications will be acknowledged upon receipt via e-mail; late applications will not be processed.

Please note: Applicants agree to participate, if requested, in an evaluation to facilitate ongoing development and demonstrate successful outcomes of this initiative.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is eligible to apply?

Health professionals in audiology, dietetics, medical laboratory technology, medical radiation technology, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physiotherapy, respiratory therapy and speech-language pathology, and who are registered and practicing or eligible to practice in Ontario can apply for funding.

2. Are professionals in private practice eligible to apply to the fund?

Professionals in private practice are eligible to apply to the fund. Employer applications are not considered thus, professionals in private practice must apply as an individual professional rather than from a business owner (employer) perspective.

PD activity's tuition/registration fee must be paid for by the applicant and not by a private business, including an applicant's own business. In other words, they have to have paid for the PD activity through a personal account and not through their business account.

3. What is considered to be a professional development activity relevant to practice?

A professional development activity may include workshops, courses, undergraduate, or graduate education if demonstrated to be relevant to practice resulting in increased knowledge, clinical and /or leadership skills. For a professional development activity to be clinically relevant to practice, the activity should directly result in acquired knowledge and skills that enhance patient care and/or the quality of health services. In the AHPDF application form, the applicant will be asked to identify the expected outcome and benefits, and how it supports improvement within his/her practice setting.

4. Can I check more than one employment setting?

No. Check off the primary setting in which you practice. Use the space provided to add any other area not specified.

5. Why do I have to provide a current copy of my registration card from the regulatory college?

Your registration card is needed as proof of registration which identifies you as practicing or eligible to practice in Ontario. Your registration number will be used as a Unique Identifier in order to track your application and provide you with information regarding your application.

Please note that if your registration card was up for renewal in the last few weeks and you have not received your new card; your most recent card can be submitted along with proof of membership renewal.

6. How does the application process work?

Once you submit your application, you will be notified by e-mail that your application has been received. Missing information will result in an incomplete application and it will not be processed.

All eligible applications will be considered and potentially reimbursed when assessed according to the criteria outlined on the application form. Once your application has been reviewed, a letter will be mailed out with a decision.

7. Can I get advanced funding for a course?

The course or other professional development activity must be completed prior to submitting an application. No advanced funding is provided.

8. How do I determine the individual course fee if my tuition fee was paid per term?

To determine the individual course fee, you need to divide the tuition fee per term by the number of courses (not number of credits) that term comprises. Please do not include non-tuition fees when performing this calculation. The fund reimburses tuition fees for completed PD activities; it does not reimburse continuous enrollment fees.

9. How do I submit for tuition fees paid for in foreign currency?

When submitting for tuition fees paid for in foreign currency, proof of exchange rate is required in order to receive the exact amount that you originally paid.

Proof of exchange rate can be provided through including a copy of credit card statement or an on-line banking print-out.

If proof of exchange rate is not provided with the application, the exchange rate that was valid on the day of transaction (date of payment/receipt) will be applied.

10. What if I wasn't provided with a proof of successful completion of the professional development activity?

Some deliverers of professional development do not issue documentation related to proof of successful completion or attendance. In lieu of this documentation, by signing page 4 of the application form, applicants are signing a self-declaration that they have successfully completed or fully attended the professional development activity applied for.

Please note that self declaration applies only to PD activities where documentation has not and will not be provided to the applicant from the provider of the PD activity.

Applicants, as professionals, are entrusted with the responsibility of providing correct information. Failing to do so will result in the invalidation of their application.

11. What is the maximum funding amount per AHPDF applicant?

The fund will provide up to \$1,500 per applicant per funding year to allied health professionals for professional development. First applications will be given priority; subsequent applications will be held until March 31, 2010 and will be reimbursed if funding is available.

12. Only one course or professional development activity per application can be submitted. Can I apply to the AHPDF more than once?

Yes, multiple applications can be submitted however, an entire program cannot be submitted through one application form; each course or unit has to be submitted through a separate application form, provided they do not exceed the limit of \$1,500. It should be noted that priority will be given to first applications, within the current funding year, to ensure equity among health professionals in this group.

13. Is funding guaranteed for applicants who meet all eligibility criteria?

Meeting all eligibility criteria does not guarantee funding; funds will be granted to eligible applicants on a first come first serve basis. Quarterly funds will be allocated for each eligible profession based on its membership size.

14. What is the fund allocation mechanism?

The AHPDF is to be split proportionally among the nine health professions, and will correlate with the number of registered members in each profession.

Quarterly funds will be allocated for each eligible profession based on its membership size. Applications will be processed as they are received. In the event the request for funds in a quarter exceeds allocated funds, eligible applications will be held until the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2010); these requests will be considered if there are unallocated funds.

15. What is not eligible for reimbursement?

The professional development activity must be relevant to practice or will increase the leadership capacity of the professional. The fund reimburses tuition/registration fees only.

Any books or course material that is paid for in addition to the tuition/course/program fee are not eligible nor is salary replacement, administrative or activity fees, travel, meals and/or accommodation. Exam/membership/subscription/recertification fees also are not included.

16. What are the timelines for the professional development activity and application submission?

Professional development activities must be completed between April 1, 2009 and March 31, 2010 to be eligible for reimbursement. AHPDF applications must be faxed or postmarked by March 31, 2010. **Late applications will not be processed.**

17. Am I eligible to receive reimbursement from multiple sources?

If you have received full reimbursement from another source for the same professional development activity, or if you have an application pending from another organization or funding source, you are not eligible to apply to the AHPDF. If you only received partial reimbursement from another source, please state the partial amount you received on your application.

18. How will I be reimbursed?

Funds will be paid through direct deposit only. Upon approval of your application, the reimbursed amount will be directly deposited into your account using the banking information obtained from your void cheque. Please ensure that you include a void cheque from your bank, with your application.

19. Why do I have to provide my Social Insurance Number?

Reimbursement funding totaling under \$499 in each tax year is tax exempt, while funding totaling over \$499 in each tax year is considered a taxable benefit, as per federal legislation. The applicant's Social Insurance Number must be provided to comply with federal and provincial income tax laws. Irrespective of the amount, T4A information will be sent to all individuals who have received funding from this program. For more information check Paragraph 56.1.n of the Income Tax Act or visit www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/it75r4/it75r4-e.pdf

20. What is the purpose of the Allied Health Professional Development Fund Steering Committee?

The Steering Committee was created to guide the development, implementation and the eligibility criteria of the AHPDF. The Steering Committee has representatives from the College of Occupational Therapists of Ontario, Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists, College of Audiologists and Speech-Language Pathologists of Ontario, College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Ontario, Ontario Society of Medical Technologists, College of Medical Radiation Technologists of Ontario, Ontario Association of Medical Radiation Technologists, College of Dietitians of Ontario, Dietitians of Canada, College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario, Respiratory Therapy Society of Ontario, Ontario College of Pharmacists, Ontario Pharmacists' Association, College of Physiotherapists of Ontario and the Ontario Physiotherapy Association. Applications that fall outside the boundaries of the established criteria will be reviewed by the Steering Committee for a final determination to ensure fairness in the application process. Appeals on any decisions will also be considered by the Steering Committee.

For more information:

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