

HealthForceOntario's Allied Health Professional Development Fund Application Guide 2011 - 2012

The Allied Health Professional Development Fund is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The following Regulatory Colleges and Professional Associations participate as a committee to provide recommendations on processes and policy regarding the fund:

- 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 Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists of Ontario
- 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 mix of health care professionals, now and in the future.

Through HealthForceOntario, the government continues to recognize the contribution provided by allied health professionals to Ontario's health system. Implemented in 2006, the 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 include audiologists, dietitians, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists and speech-language pathologists.

HealthForceOntario's AHPDF is a fund that aims to provide support to participate in ongoing professional development opportunities to eligible 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.

How To Apply

If you are a registered audiologist, dietitian, medical laboratory technologist, medical radiation technologist, occupational therapist, pharmacist, physiotherapist, respiratory therapist or speech-language pathologist and are practicing or eligible to practice in Ontario, you may apply to receive 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, 2011 and March 31, 2012. 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, 2012 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.
2. Proof of payment. An official receipt issued by the deliverer of the professional development activity is required. Invoices with outstanding balance and/or 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.

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

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

3. Evidence of successful completion of, or attendance at, the professional development activity. This includes: a passing grade report, course certificate or transcript 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 your current registration card is required - tax receipt stating payment of membership renewal fees is sufficient only if accompanied by a copy of your most recent card.
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: 905-602-6012/905-602-6078

By E-mail: info@ahpdf.ca Ensure you have scanned and attached all required documents

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 until the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2012) and will be considered should funding allow. Applications are processed in the order in which they are received.
2. A clear rationale to support how the PD activity is relevant to your particular area of practice and how the activity will improve the quality of patient care/services or how it increases your leadership skills is required.
3. The Professional Development Activity was delivered by a professionally recognized provider (e.g. post-secondary institution, professional association, employer, etc).
4. Applicants must be currently practicing or eligible to practice in their profession in Ontario. Applicants currently employed are evaluated with higher priority.

Professional development activities must be completed between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 to be eligible for reimbursement. AHPDF applications must be faxed, e-mailed or postmarked by March 31, 2012. To facilitate reimbursement, **applications should be submitted within 90 days of course completion date or by March 31, 2012 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?

Eligible health professionals include audiologists, dietitians, medical laboratory technologists, medical radiation technologists, occupational therapists, pharmacists, physiotherapists, respiratory therapists and speech-language pathologists who are registered and practicing or eligible to practice in Ontario.

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

Professionals in private practice are eligible to apply to the fund. However, since employer applications are not considered, 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.

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, applicants should identify the expected outcome and benefits of the PD activity and how it supports improvement within his/her practice setting.

4. Can PhD studies be submitted to the AHPDF?

PhD students who have completed course work between April 1st and March 31st can submit these courses to the AHPDF along with proof of tuition payment and proof of successful completion (transcript).

However, individuals who are currently involved with data collection or writing of dissertation need to wait until their thesis is accepted and proof of completion is reflected on their transcript.

Please note that a signed progress report from the thesis advisor does not meet the eligibility requirement of proof of successful completion and cannot be considered in lieu of a transcript.

5. 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.

6. 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 a copy of **either** your current registration card or the card that was valid while the PD activity was pursued is acceptable. 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.

7. 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 assessed according to the criteria outlined on the application form. Once your application has been reviewed, an e-mail / letter will be sent with a decision.

8. 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.

9. 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.**

10. 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 a 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.

11. What is considered to be an adequate proof of successful completion?

A passing grade report, a course certificate, a certificate of attendance, a transcript from the professional development deliverer or a printout from a student based web service stating the student's name and course completion date is needed. Documentation **MUST** be included with the application. Official transcripts are not necessary.

12. 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.

13. Do I have to send originals?

Originals are not required; photocopies are acceptable. Please keep a copy of your application and supporting documents for your records.

14. 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, 2012 and will be considered for reimbursement if funding is available.

15. 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.

16. 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 served basis. Quarterly funds will be allocated for each eligible profession based on its membership size.

17. What is the fund allocation mechanism?

The AHPDF is split proportionally among the nine eligible health professions, and correlates with the number of registered members in each profession.

Funds are then divided quarterly. Applications will be processed in the order they are received. If at any time, the amount of eligible requests for funds exceeds the amount available in that quarter, applications will be held until the end of the fiscal year (March 31, 2012) at which point these requests will be considered if there are unallocated funds.

18. 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.**

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

Regardless of the start date, professional development activities must be completed between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012 to be eligible for reimbursement. AHPDF applications must be faxed, e-mailed or postmarked by March 31, 2012. **Late applications will not be processed. Applicants are strongly encouraged to submit applications within 90 days of completing a PD activity.**

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. Will you respond to requests for confirmation of faxed information?

Due to increased volume, we are not able to confirm the receipt of faxed information over the phone or in email. Please keep a copy of your fax transmittal as proof that your application was successfully sent.

All applications will be responded to, by email, within 5 - 6 business days.

If you are attempting to fax information during the last two weeks of March in advance of the March 31 deadline and our fax lines are busy, your options are to either scan and email your application or, have it posted in the mail dated no later than March 31. All applications post marked April 1 or later will not be accepted.

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

The applicant's Social Insurance Number must be provided to comply with federal and provincial income tax laws. 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

24. Why do I get a T4A?

Recipients of funding often ask, "I have paid taxes on the money used to pay for my ongoing professional development. Why do I have to declare/claim this on my income tax as other income? Am I being taxed again?"

Consulting with our auditor, we have learned that the taxation to the individual taking training courses and then submitting an application through a reimbursement program has two components.

The first is the deductibility of the training course. CRA's interpretation bulletin IT-357R2 discusses the costs of training. If training costs are considered capital in nature, they are not deductible. If the training is taken to learn a new skill or obtain a new qualification, the training is considered capital in nature and is therefore not deductible. An example given is that of a general medical practitioner training to qualify as a specialist. However, if the training is taken in order to maintain, update or upgrade an existing skill or qualification, the training is not considered capital in nature and the expense paid is deductible for personal income tax purposes. An example given is a professional development course taken as required or recommended by a professional body to maintain standards. Thus, while the purpose of the course is specific to each individual, it is probable that most courses maintain, update or upgrade their professional qualifications and are thus deductible for personal income tax purposes.

The second aspect is the receipt of monies from the reimbursement program. The receipt of any monies by an individual by virtue of their office or employment, which includes self-employment, must be included in their income for tax purposes under section 6(1) of the Income Tax Act. This is regardless of whether the course taken is deductible or not.

Please note that AHPDF funding year runs from April 1st to March 31st of any given funding year. The tax year runs from January 1st to December 31st of any given tax year.

As a result, if you happen to receive funding through two different funding cycles, but in the same calendar year, you might receive a T4A for the total amount received in that calendar/tax year.

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

The Steering Committee was created to guide the development, implementation and eligibility criteria of the AHPDF. The Steering Committee has representatives from each eligible profession's regulatory college and professional 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. Each representative provides advice and guidance on project design and evaluation.

For more information:

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Website: www.ahpdf.ca