

Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program

1. What is the statutory language?

- a. The statutory language is found in Chapter 402, Section 403 of the Florida Statutes.
- b. There is established within the department 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. For purposes of this section, “child protection and child welfare personnel” includes child protective investigators and child protective investigation supervisors employed by the department and case managers and case manager supervisors employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency who do not possess a master’s degree in social work.
- c. Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees at a state university.
- d. The department may approve child protection and child welfare personnel for the tuition and fee exemption if such personnel:
 - i. Are employed as child protection and child welfare personnel and are determined by their employers to perform at a high level as established by their personnel evaluations; and
 - ii. Are accepted in a graduate-level social work program or a certificate program related to child welfare which is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.
- e. Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) may enroll for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term.
- f. Child protection and child welfare personnel who are accepted 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 shall take courses associated with the degree or certificate program online if such courses are offered online.
- g. All child protection and child welfare personnel who participate in the tuition exemption program established under this section must remain employed by the department, a state agency, or a contracted provider for 5 years after completion of a graduate level social work program. If

employment ends before the 5-year period, the benefit shall be repaid according to a pro rata calculation based on the number of years of service.

2. Who is eligible for the program?

- a. Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel as defined below are eligible.

3. Who are Child Protection personnel?

- a. Child Protection personnel are defined as holding the following job titles: Child Protective Investigator, Senior Child Protective Investigator, or Child Protective Investigator Supervisor.

4. Who are Child Welfare personnel?

- a. Child Welfare personnel are defined as holding the following job titles: Case Manager or Case Manager Supervisor.

5. What are the requirements for child protection and child welfare personnel to be eligible for the program?

- a. Child Protection personnel must be employed with the Department of Children and Families.
- b. Child Welfare personnel must be employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency.
 - i. Lead agency regions and information can be found online here and must be contacted directly to inquire about subcontractors. The lead agency information can be found here – <https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/community-based-care/lead-agency-map.shtml>
- c. Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel must be a high performing employee, completing job duties and responsibilities at an achievement rate established by their employer and reflected on their latest performance evaluation.
- d. Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel must be admitted into a graduate-level social work program or graduate certificate related to child welfare which is certified by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).
- e. Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel must take courses online, if such courses are offered online
- f. Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel must maintain at least a “B” (3.0) in all courses for which tuition and fees are exempted.

- i. When a “B” is not achieved, the individual must reimburse the University for the cost of the course.

6. What does it mean to be a “high performing employee”?

- a. A “high performing employee” is defined as achieving a minimum score of at least 70% of an employer’s overall performance evaluation total.
 - i. However, individual employers may set standards that exceed the 70% minimum requirement based on the agency’s minimal “meets expectation” designation.
 - ii. For those individuals employed by the state, a minimum overall score of 3.5 must have been achieved on the employee’s last performance evaluation to be eligible to participate in the Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program.

7. Can the program be used for dependents of those who are Child Protection and Child Welfare personnel?

- a. No.

8. Do I have to turn in additional documentation with the form?

- a. No.

9. Does the University have to accept my application for the program?

- a. Yes; if you qualify and apply prior to the end of the first week of classes in the semester.

10. Do I have to resubmit the Tuition Exemption request form each academic term?

- a. Yes; you have to qualify for the waiver each term.

11. What are the qualifying Child Welfare/Child Protection agencies?

- a. Lakeview Center Inc., Big Bend Community Based Care Inc., Partnership for Strong Families Inc., Family Support Services of North Florida Inc., KidsFirst of Florida Inc., Community Partnership for Children Inc., St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners, Eckerd community Alternatives Inc., Sarasota Family YMCA Inc.

12. What happens if I qualify for the program but stop working in child protection/child welfare?

- a. 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 5 years after completion of the graduate level social work program. If employment ends before the 5-year period is fulfilled, the

benefit shall be repaid to the university according a pro rate calculation based on the number of years of service.

Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program Form

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EMPLOYEE (PLEASE TYPE OR PRINT)

Last Name:	First Name:	MI:
University ID#:	Date of Birth:	
Phone #:	Alternate Phone #:	
Email Address:	Child Welfare Agency:	
Position:	Work Address:	
Semester of enrollment: <input type="checkbox"/> Fall <input type="checkbox"/> Spring <input type="checkbox"/> Summer_____ (A, B, C, or D) Year: 20_____		

List course(s) for which you are requesting use of the tuition exemption. The exemption may only be utilized for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term. Only courses that are applicable to the student's graduate-level social work program or certificate are eligible for the tuition exemption. The courses listed below must be signed-off by an appropriate Social Work faculty or advisor in order to be considered for the exemption.

Course Prefix and Number	Course Section (Required)	Course Title	Credit Hours	Dean/Faculty/Advisor Approval (Required)

I understand the following requirements:

- I must complete this form and turn it in with appropriate signatures each term for which I am seeking a tuition and fee exemption;
- If I make below a "B" (i.e. 3.0) in any of the classes for which the tuition/fees are waived, I will be required to reimburse the postsecondary institution the tuition and fees for the credit hours of the class less than a "B." This means that I will not be able to register for any classes until the debt is repaid.
- I must maintain employment with a child welfare agency pursuant to s. 402.403, F.S. while receiving the exemption and for five (5) years after the completion of the graduate level social work program. If I end my employment prior to the 5-year period, the exemption benefit will be required to be repaid according to a pro rata calculation based on the number of years of service. I will be unable to receive a copy of my postsecondary transcript until the debt is repaid.
- I will allow the postsecondary institution and my employer to communicate with one another in order to verify my continued eligibility.

Employee Signature _____

Date _____

As authorized by (specify agency) _____, I certify that this applicant is employed by a child welfare agency in one of the specified positions pursuant to s. 402.403, F.S, and has been approved by the agency as meeting the necessary employment qualifications required for participation in this program.

Supervisor or Agency Head _____

Phone Number (XXX) XXX-XXX _____

Date _____

ACTION BY REGISTRAR:

Approve Disapproved (Reason: _____) Registrar: _____ Date: _____

402.403 Child Protection and Child Welfare Personnel Tuition Exemption Program.—

(1) There is established within the department 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. For purposes of this section, “child protection and child welfare personnel” includes child protective investigators and child protective investigation supervisors employed by the department and case managers and case manager supervisors employed by a community-based care lead agency or a subcontractor of a community-based care lead agency who do not possess a master’s degree in social work.

(2) Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) are exempt from the payment of tuition and fees at a state university.

(3) The department may approve child protection and child welfare personnel for the tuition and fee exemption if such personnel:

(a) Are employed as child protection and child welfare personnel and are determined by their employers to perform at a high level as established by their personnel evaluations; and

(b) Are accepted in a graduate-level social work program or a certificate program related to child welfare which is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education.

(4) Child protection and child welfare personnel who meet the requirements specified in subsection (3) may enroll for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term.

(5) Child protection and child welfare personnel who are accepted 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 shall take courses associated with the degree or certificate program online if such courses are offered online.

(6) All child protection and child welfare personnel who participate in the tuition exemption program established under this section must remain employed by the department, a state agency, or a contracted provider for 5 years after completion of a graduate level social work program. If employment ends before the 5-year period, the benefit shall be repaid according to a pro rata calculation based on the number of years of service.