

## HEALTH SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS HSPBA Professional Development Fund

The Ministry of Health has allocated monies as a professional development fund for the HSPBA to administer. As a member of CUPE covered by the HSPBA/HEABC Provincial Agreement (the health sector contract covering health science professionals), you are eligible to apply. The following questions will provide information about this fund and the application process.

### Frequently Asked Questions

**1. When will I be able to apply for funding to support my education/training?**

You may apply now. Applications will be accepted up until August 31, 2024.

**2. Will the fund cover expenses related to education/training already underway?**

The fund is designed to cover education/training that commences between September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024. So, if your education/training is already underway, you will be eligible to apply for funding, provided it did not commence before September 1, 2023.

**3. How are applications prioritized? Is it first-come, first-served?**

Applications will be processed in the order they are received, and any approved application will have satisfied the eligibility criteria and funding guidelines. A successful applicant must submit satisfactory expense receipts in accordance with instructions contained in the application approval letter in order to receive reimbursement of approved expenses. To avoid disappointment, you should plan to apply well before the August 31, 2024, deadline.

**4. The application form states that the funding is to be allocated to training and upgrading skills for HSPBA members working in professions experiencing shortages or rural and remote locations, as well as ongoing required professional development for all HSPBA members. **Should I apply even if I can't say for certain that one of these criteria would be satisfied with my application? What type of actual costs are considered for reimbursement?****

Tuition fees, registration fees, the cost of required books/materials, and other reasonable education/training-related expenses are considered to a maximum of \$500.00.

**Costs that are NOT eligible for reimbursement include:**

- Criminal records check
- Professional association or regulatory college fees
- Immunizations or immunization reports
- Technology costs such as software, hardware and any mandatory technology fees
- Materials such as yoga mats or needles
- Any optional school/student fees
- meals

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**5. What types of education/training are considered professional development?**

Professional development includes various events/instruction, such as workshops, seminars, conferences, courses, or programs. It might require in-person attendance, distance learning, or clinical placement. It might be of relatively short duration or a lengthier pursuit of credentials such as a diploma, advanced certification, or degree. What type of actual costs are considered for reimbursement?

Tuition fees, registration fees, the cost of required books/materials, and other reasonable education/training-related expenses are considered to a maximum of \$500.00. "Other reasonable education/training related expenses" includes reasonable costs of travel.

**6. Can members apply to have wages paid from the fund?**

No. In order to support professional development for as many members as possible, the fund will not pay for wage replacement associated with an application.

**7. Is this fund a substitute for any collective agreement provisions?**

No. The professional development fund is over and above the collective agreement. All provisions of the HSPBA/HEABC Provincial Agreement continue to apply, including Education Leave as per Article 17.01 and Unpaid leave as per Article 22.

**8. What is the definition of "rural and remote"?**

The following criteria cover rural and remote sites/locations:

- All communities in the Northern Health Authority
- All communities listed in the HSPBA Collective Agreement article 37.02 – Isolation Allowance
- All communities defined as rural, small rural or remote on page 46 of the Ministry of Health's 2015 policy paper "Rural Health Services in BC: A Policy Framework to Provide a System of Quality Care."

**9. Is there an appeal process to access if my application is not approved in part or whole?**

No. Every effort will be made to process applications fairly and in accordance with the eligibility and funding guidelines.

**10. Are my professional dues or association membership fees eligible for this funding?**

No. This funding is intended for tuition and course-related expenses such as books, travel, etc.

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**11. How are the funds received?**

After you receive your approval letter, you will submit your paid receipts and banking information to your Local CUPE contact. Your reimbursement information will be reviewed and forwarded for processing and payment via direct deposit. You do not have to complete your education before submitting receipts for payment. Expenses can be reimbursed in installments during your education period, within reason, but we will expect receipts to be batched as much as possible.

**12. How do I get any other questions about this Professional Development Fund answered?**

To most efficiently handle enquiries, please direct your question to your CUPE local.

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