

Program Overview and Application Instructions for Customs and Border Protection Tuition Assistance Program (CBP-TAP)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

1. **SUMMARY.** This package contains a program description and instructions to apply for the Customs and Border Protection Tuition Assistance Program (CBP-TAP). CBP-TAP is a means for CBP to invest in the continued education of employees who are committed to improving their contributions to CBP. CBP-TAP provides employees the opportunity to apply for tuition assistance at accredited college, universities, or other institutions. The Assistant Commissioner, Office of Training and Development (OTD), is responsible for administering CBP-TAP.
2. **WHO MAY APPLY.** Subject to the restrictions and conditions listed, all permanent, full-time, career personnel throughout CBP who are at an acceptable level of performance may apply for CBP-TAP.
3. **COMPLETION REQUIREMENT.** Employees awarded tuition assistance are required to complete the course and achieve a passing grade to successfully fulfill their commitment in accepting tuition assistance. CBP reserves the right to recover the cost of a course should an employee not maintain a passing grade, drop the course, or depart from CBP. Recipients are required to sign a Standard Form 182, "Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training" (available on this site), signed by their supervisor.
4. **APPLICATION DEADLINES.** Applications must be received by the Operations Support Branch at CBP-TAP@dhs.gov by the deadlines listed in the program announcement and on the CBP-TAP website. It is strongly suggested that applications are scanned and emailed. If scanning is unavailable, applications may also be received by fax at (202) 344-2660. Postal mail and hand delivery may be used to submit applications. Applications by mail should be sent to CPB-TAP, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Room 5.3-57, Washington DC 20229.
5. **LIMITATIONS.** An employee may receive assistance for one course per CBP-TAP announcement and no more than three courses per calendar year. CBP-TAP funding will only be applied to courses taken at accredited institutions. Distance learning is acceptable as long as it is from an accredited institution. See the link to accredited institutions on the CBP-TAP website.

Tuition assistance may be used in conjunction with another award as long as the total amount of awards received for one class does not exceed the class total cost. In no instance may an employee receive CBP-TAP assistance in lieu of another award to make a financial gain. For example; a course costs \$2000 and you already have an award from your institution that pays for \$1500 of the course. You would only be eligible for \$500 of CBP-TAP assistance. Additional award disclosure is mandatory for the program.

Federal law prohibits the use of funds for the purpose of obtaining an academic degree pursuant to Title 5 U.S.C. Section 4107(a). Course(s) taken toward an academic degree that contribute significantly to meet an identified agency training need, resolving an identified agency staffing problem, or accomplishing goals in the strategic plan of the agency may be entitled to reimbursement. Similarly, courses toward a degree where the degree fits into part of a coordinated agency employee development program may also be entitled to reimbursement as long as it is linked to accomplishing the strategic goals of the agency. In no instance will the last course leading directly to a degree be funded by CBP-TAP, regardless of applicability to one's job.

6. **SELECTION.** The Assistant Commissioner, OTD, is responsible for ensuring that the policy aspects of this program are implemented. A CBP-TAP Review Board, appointed by the Assistant Commissioner, OTD, will review and evaluate all applications. Evaluation criteria will include course applicability to the employee's current position, the employee's career progression, requirements and priorities of CBP, completeness of application package, and the narrative response justifying the request. The results and recommendations will be given to the Assistant Commissioner, OTD, who will make the final selections.
7. **PERSONAL TIME.** Recipients are to attend classes on personal time. Employees participating must still be available for overtime. Approval will be contingent upon a determination that participation will not negatively impact mission accomplishment and operational needs, including the scheduling of work and overtime assignments of the employee or other employees in his/her work location.
8. **SUPERVISOR'S ENDORSEMENT.** Supervisors must review the employee's application and indicate whether they would/would not recommend the training, whether the training is related to the employee's position, and whether it would be beneficial to the employee and the agency. In addition, supervisors are responsible for obtaining documentation from selected employees demonstrating that they passed the course.
9. **USE OF FUNDS.** CBP-TAP funds may be used toward the recipient's tuition costs only. Books, fees, travel or travel-related expenses will not be funded.
10. **DOCUMENTATION.** Recipients must provide in their application materials a copy of the course description. Upon completion of the course, recipients must provide their supervisors with documentation of successful completion within six weeks after completion of the course. Documentation is an official notification of a passing grade. Recipients must also have their office's TRAEN registrar enter the course in the TRAEN system.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS:

1. To apply, employees must submit a completed application package, which will include the following:
 - Application for CBP Tuition Assistance Program (found on CBP-TAP website)
 - Standard Form (SF) 182 “Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification”
Instructions for filling out the SF-182 are on the website.
 - Employees should complete course information and cost of tuition
 - Only signature of first line supervisor is required
 - Course description documentation
 - Material from institution that describes the course to be taken
2. Submit the application package online to CBP-TAP@dhs.gov ensuring the signed pages of the application are scanned and sent as pdf formatted documents. Fax of signature pages is acceptable to (202) 344-2660. We will accept postal mailed applications as long as the entire application package is in the Operations Support Branch by the closing date, or hand-delivered to the Operations Support Branch at the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington DC, Room 5.3-57. CBP-TAP cannot be responsible for late/incomplete submissions. Applicants should follow up after submission to ensure receipt. Surface mail address is: CBP Tuition Assistance Program, 1300 Pennsylvania Ave. Room 5.3-57, Washington DC 20229. If sending applications by mail, it is advisable to apply early.
3. Evaluation criteria will include course applicability to the employee’s current position, career progression, requirements and priorities of CBP, completeness of application package, and the narrative response justifying the request. The results and recommendations will be given to the Assistant Commissioner, OTD, who will make the final selections.
4. Once the Assistant Commissioner, OTD, has selected the CBP-TAP recipients, response letters will be sent to all applicants. Recipients will receive their signed SF-182 with budget codes and a response letter. If for any reason, a recipient becomes unable to register for the semester/quarter, please notify OTD immediately.
5. Recipients must provide their supervisors with evidence of successful completion within six weeks after completion of the course. Evidence is an official notification of a passing grade.
6. Recipients are required to have their office’s TRAEN registrar enter the course into the TRAEN system.