



Healthy Choices Reimbursement Program

Provisions and Guidelines

The Emerald Coast Utilities Authority is committed to promoting health, wellness, and disease prevention within the workplace and the community. In support of this commitment, the ECUA is offering a Healthy Choices Reimbursement Program (HCRP) to its employees.

Program Provisions

- I. The Healthy Choices Reimbursement Program provides reimbursement to employees who:
 - (a) participate in eligible activities for the purpose of health maintenance, health improvement, or overall fitness ;
 - (b) purchase eligible tobacco cessation aids
 - (c) complete eligible tobacco cessation programs (according to each program's requirements);
 - (d) join, register or enroll for participation in eligible weight management programs;
or
 - (e) any combination of the above.

See the "Eligible Activities and Programs" section for additional information.

- II. Reimbursement is for fees paid for eligible memberships, fitness activities, and tobacco cessation aids and programs.

Program Benefits

- A. Effective October 1, 2014, employees may be reimbursed up to \$250 in a fiscal year. Requests may be in the form of a single reimbursement or multiple reimbursements, not to exceed a total of \$250 in a fiscal year period (October 1 - September 30).
- B. Employees experience the benefits associated with making a range of healthy choices. These choices include completing a tobacco cessation program, electing to use tobacco cessation aids (prescription and over-the-counter), joining a weight management program, enrolling with a gym, joining a fitness class, and taking golf and tennis lessons.
- C. Effective October 1, 2014, the expanded program includes examples of additional weight management options and fitness activities. For more information, see the "Health and Fitness Activities" and "Weight Management" sections under "Eligible Activities and Programs."

- D. Employees may request reimbursement for up to two tobacco cessation program attempts in one fiscal year period.
- E. Employees may be reimbursed the cost of tobacco cessation aids (prescription and over-the-counter) without limitation on the number of requests.

Eligible Activities and Programs

Note: *If you have any question regarding the eligibility of an activity, program, or event, please contact the Human Resources and Administrative Services department.*

Health and Fitness Activities

- A. Reimbursement may be requested for costs associated with health and fitness activities, including the membership fee, enrollment fee, class fee, fee for lessons, event registration fee, or dues.
- B. Fitness activities include the following:
 - Membership with a gym or fitness center
 - Exercise class or sessions (e.g., Zumba, Spinning, Aquatic, Aerobic, Dance, Karate, Pilates, Yoga, or personal training sessions)
 - Golf lessons
 - Tennis lessons
 - Walk/Run Event (e.g., organized event; charitable fundraiser)
 - Other fitness activities which meet eligibility criteria under the HCRP guidelines
- C. Recommendations (*before starting a fitness or exercise program*):
 - a. An employee should obtain permission from his or her physician prior to starting any fitness or exercise program.
 - b. Each employee is encouraged to discuss the selected program with her or his health care provider.
 - c. Prior to joining, evaluate how the gym, fitness center, or related facility will help you meet your individual goals.

Tobacco Cessation

- A. Reimbursement may be requested for tobacco cessation programs and tobacco cessation aids.
- B. Prior to registering for a tobacco cessation program, ensure your choice of program meets the criteria listed below. If you have questions regarding eligibility, contact the Human Resources and Administrative Services department before you enroll. The tobacco cessation program must be:
 - hospital-based; or

- provided or certified by a national health organization (e.g., American Medical Association, American Lung Association, or American Cancer Society); or
 - provided by a state-licensed health professional (medical doctor, psychologist, psychiatrist, or nurse).
- C. Examples of eligible tobacco cessation aids include prescription medications, nicotine gum, and nicotine patches.

Weight Management

- A. Reimbursement may be requested for membership, registration, enrollment, dues and fees for participation in weight management programs.
- B. Eligible programs may include:
- a. Commercial weight management programs (e.g., *Weight Watchers*, *Jenny Craig* or *Nutri-System*)
 - b. Physician-directed weight management programs
 - c. Group programs offered by non-profit organizations (e.g., church or school-based programs)
 - d. Gym, hospital, or community center programs
 - e. National Health Organization sponsored programs (e.g., one that promotes a diet that is healthy for your heart)
 - f. Internet-based or online diets which meet eligibility criteria

If you have questions regarding a program's eligibility, contact the Human Resources and Administrative Services department.

- C. An eligible weight management program should encompass two or more of the following elements:
- a. Physician-directed or supervised by certified medical professional
 - b. Have a goal of weight management
 - c. Provide participants with a plan for weight management and maintenance
 - d. Include a balanced program (e.g., diet and exercise)
- D. Recommendations (*before starting a weight management program*):
- a. An employee should obtain permission from his or her physician prior to starting any weight management program.
 - b. Each employee is encouraged to discuss the selected program with her or his health care provider or a nutritionist to determine appropriateness.
 - c. Consult a health care professional to obtain information on recommended weight management methods.
 - d. Investigate commercial weight loss and online programs prior to registration.

Guidelines for Requesting Reimbursement

- A. Reimbursement can be for either one or a combination of Healthy Choices Reimbursement Program options.
- B. Retain your receipt(s) when paying fees and making purchases.
- C. An itemized receipt must accompany the completed Healthy Choices Reimbursement Form. The itemized receipt should be direct from the vendor or provider.

When reimbursement is requested for gym or fitness memberships, a membership contract can provide additional itemized information.

- D. The payment or transaction date on the itemized receipt is used to determine the fiscal year period for reimbursement.

Requests for reimbursement should be submitted to the Human Resources and Administrative Services department no later than September 30 of a fiscal year period.

- E. Sales tax is not reimbursable.
- F. The Human Resources and Administrative Services department will review the completed Healthy Choices Reimbursement Program Form and attached documents to determine eligibility for reimbursement.
- G. The reimbursement will be added to your paycheck, on an after-tax basis. If you have questions regarding personal tax liability for any reimbursed amount, please consult your tax advisor.