

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Community Health Retraining Fund?

Your union initially negotiated the Community Health Retraining Fund (CHRF) to support workers in the community health sector who have been laid-off, bumped, demoted or had their hours of work reduced due to downsizing, contracting out, cutbacks or closures. The CHRF may also support education and training that supports workers to maintain or enhance their skills to remain in the community health care sector.

2. Who is eligible to apply for CHRF funding?

Applicants must be a member of a union and covered by the Community Health Subsector collective agreement. It doesn't matter which union you belong to. You may be an employee of a health authority or an agency funded by a health authority. If you are a casual employee, you are eligible to apply for funding once you have past your probationary period and have been employed for one year.

3. What sorts of education and training are eligible for CHRF funding?

- ✓ Full-time studies
- ✓ Part-time studies
- ✓ Online courses
- ✓ Professional development

As well, the education or training must be:

- ✓ Relevant to your current or future work in the community health care sector. (Training funds are available for any jobs listed under "Schedule A" in the Community Health Subsector Collective Agreement).
- ✓ Offered at or through a public education institution or provider in British Columbia.

We may consider exceptions to any of these criteria on a case-by-case basis. You will need to make a reasonable case for us to consider your application. We are unable to fund full degree programs, but may be able to fund a limited number of relevant courses within a program. Workers who have been laid off or otherwise impacted by contracting out or downsizing may be considered for education or training leading to work outside of the community health care sector.

4. How do I know which post-secondary institutions are public?

A list of public post-secondary institutions is offered here: <https://www.bccat.ca/system/psec>
Courses at private institutions will only be considered in exceptional circumstances or when the course is not offered at a public institution.

5. How much funding is available?

An applicant is eligible for up to a lifetime maximum of \$10,000 in funding.

6. What does the funding cover?

- ✓ Tuition
- ✓ Textbooks
- ✓ Required fees
- ✓ Prerequisite courses and tests

7. What about other expenses?

The fund does not cover lost wages or leave from work to study, child or dependent care, parking, transit, meals, accommodation or travel. However, some expenses may be considered on a case-by-case basis involving compelling circumstances where we may be able to fund a stipend of up to \$100 per day. The stipend counts toward an applicant's lifetime maximum of \$10,000 and you will have to submit additional information.

8. Can I apply more than once?

Yes, but keep in mind that you are only eligible for \$10,000 in your lifetime.

9. There is a long waitlist for my retraining. Can I apply for funding now?

Yes, you can apply for preliminary approval now for education or training commencing within the next 12 months. Notify us once you are accepted and registered for your courses.

10. Can I apply for retraining funds if I am receiving Employment Insurance (EI), LTD or other financial support?

Yes. However, EI or LTD may reduce your payments by the amount of retraining funds you receive.

11. I have already started or finished my course? Can I still apply for funding?

Yes, if your course started within the last 12 months, you can still apply for funding.

12. I trained in another country and need to upgrade my certification or training or need to improve my English language skills. Can I apply for funding?

Yes.

13. My job is changing and I need to upgrade to remain employable. Can the CHRF help?

Yes.

14. How long does it take to hear about my application?

Once we receive your application, you should hear back from us within 30 days.

15. What are my options if you do not approve my application?

You have the right to appeal to the CHRF steering committee. You will need to make a reasonable case in writing.

16. Will the fund cover expenses for Drivers' License Training?

The fund does not generally provide funding for Drivers' License Training. Funding for Drivers' License Training will only be considered for members affected by contracting out or layoff; or when a license is a new requirement for a current position.