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STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Lori A. Stibbinette
Commissioner

Lori A. Weaver
Deputy Commissioner

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August 11, 2021

His Excellency, Governor Christopher T. Sununu
and the Honorable Council
State House
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

REQUESTED ACTION

Authorize the Department of Health and Human Services, to enter into an educational tuition agreement and to pay said costs in an amount of \$3,000.00 as follows:

Institution:	University of New Hampshire- Graduate School .180 Garrison Avenue Durham, NH 03824
Course Title(s):	Social Welfare Policy; Implications of Race, Culture, and Oppression for SW Practice; Human Behavior and the Social Environment; Research Methods in Social Work
Course Date(s):	Begin: 09/01/2021 End: 12/14/2021
Employee:	Melissa Vermette
Funding Source:	05-95-95-953010-56770000-066-500544
Total Cost of Course(s):	\$9,420.00
State Share:	\$3,000.00
Source of Funds:	Employee Training, 20% Federal, 80% General

EXPLANATION

These courses, Social Welfare Policy; Implications of Race, Culture, and Oppression for Social Work Practice; Human Behavior and the Social Environment; and Research Methods in Social Work, are all part of the Masters in Social Work (MSW) program at the University of New Hampshire. Completion of this program will assist Ms. Vermette in furthering the skills necessary for direct communication with DCYF families, providing support through trauma focused communication, and allowing families and those impacted by DCYF to feel heard. The formal tools and direct exposure to social work guiding practices will allow for a more robust response through the Constituent Relations Program, with allowances for more precise cultural acknowledgment and sensitivity toward the Department's service population.

Melissa Vermette has been with the Department of Health and Human Services, Division for Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) for fourteen (14) years. Her current position is within a relatively new program within DCYF known as Constituent Relations. Ms. Vermette is responsible for responding to calls and requests for contact from constituents; individuals who are either unhappy with the work DCYF has done, have questions, or are from professional entities who are reaching out on behalf of individuals, such as the Governor's Office or Commissioner of DHHS's office. She listens to these concerns and conducts research to try to assist in resolution. There are many difficult conversations with people who are desperate for an alternate outcome. Ms. Vermette's interaction with them must be at a level that allows them to feel satisfied with the response. She would like to continue in her role with Constituent Relations, working to build a strong, responsive program, and restoring the trust and confidence that the citizens of New Hampshire should have with the work being done to protect the children and families in this state.

The Department of Health and Human Services encourages and supports employees who wish to further their professional growth through continuing education in disciplines that are mutually advantageous. Successful completion of the courses will add to the overall strength of the Department to perform its mission to the residents of New Hampshire.

This course will not be taken on State time.

Attached is a fully executed Tuition Agreement for your review.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Weaver
Deputy Commissioner



THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
EDUCATIONAL TUITION AGREEMENT

Agreement dated this 11th day of August 2021 by and through the Department of Health and Human Services (hereinafter referred to as the "State") and Melissa Vermette (hereinafter referred to as the "Recipient"). The State and the Recipient do hereby mutually agree as follows:

1. The State shall pay to the named institution the sum of \$3,000, which monies shall be used for the purpose of enrolling the Recipient in: Social Welfare Policy; Implications of Race, Culture, and Oppression for SW Practice; Human Behavior and the Social Environment; and Research Methods in SW (course name), which course(s) is being offered by University of New Hampshire and which course(s) shall commence on September 1, 2021 and terminate on December 14, 2021.
2. The Recipient shall complete and achieve a passing grade in each course named in paragraph 1.
3. Should the Recipient fail to complete or achieve a passing grade in each course named in paragraph 1, the Recipient shall pay to the State the sum set forth in paragraph 1, provided, however, that if more than one course is named in paragraph 1, the amount which shall be paid to the State shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.
4. Upon the satisfactory completion of the courses named in paragraph 1, the Recipient shall continue in the employ of the State in his/her current position (or in such other position, at equal or greater compensation, to which he/she may be assigned) for a period of six (6) months.
5. The Recipient shall work in any area of the State to which he/she may be assigned, provided that such assignment will not constitute a severe hardship to said Recipient.
6. Should the Recipient breach any of the conditions set forth in paragraphs 4 and 5, the Recipient shall pay to the State a sum equal to all monies previously paid by the State for the Recipient pursuant to the Agreement, provided, however, that the Recipient shall receive a credit for each month in which he/she is employed by the State subsequent to the date upon which the named course(s) are satisfactorily completed, the value of said credit to be calculated on a pro rata basis.
7. The Recipient shall not raise any setoff or counterclaim against the State in any action brought by the State to collect any amount due under this agreement.
8. Should any amount be found to be due the State in any action brought against the Recipient pursuant to this Agreement, the State shall, in addition to said amount, be entitled to an award of costs and a reasonable amount in "attorney" fees.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the representatives of the State, in his/her official capacity only, and without personal liability, and the Recipient, have hereunto set their hands on the date first above written.

RECIPIENT
(signature) Melissa Vermette (printed name) Melissa Vermette

NOTARY State of New Hampshire, County of Merrimack:

On this the 11th day of August, 2021; before me, Mari A. Jbirandanis the undersigned officer, personally appeared, Melissa Vermette (recipient) known to me (or satisfactorily proven) to be the person whose name is subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that he/she executed the same for the purposes herein contained.

In witness whereof I hereunto set my hand and official seal.
Mari A. Jbirandanis
Notary Public/Justice of the Peace

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
(signature) Lori Weaver (date) 8.18.21
(printed name, title) Lori Weaver, Deputy Commissioner

MARI A. JBIRANDANIS
Notary Public - New Hampshire
My Commission Expires September 7, 2021
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