

# REAP Rural Skills Upgrade Program

## Policies & Guidelines

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The Rural Skills Upgrade Program provides funding for upfront skills enhancement training of physicians who are new or returning to rural practice or members of [Locums for Rural BC](#) looking to prepare for the challenges of rural practice in BC. Training may be obtained prior to commencing work in an [RSA Community](#) or prior to providing service to Locums for Rural BC.

Training opportunities available under this program are flexible in timing and may be up to 20 days in length per fiscal year and are usually in the form of one-on-one preceptorships. Funding for courses and conferences is not available through the Rural Skills Upgrade. Locum Physicians may access funding for selected courses through the [Rural Locum CME Program](#). New rural physicians may access funding for selected courses through the [New Rural Physician CME Program](#).

### ELIGIBILITY

New physicians are eligible for this program prior to or during the first nine months of rural practice. Physicians who are returning to practice after a leave such as parental leave, long-term illness or disability may access the program if they were in their first nine months of practice prior to the leave.

New or Returning Rural Physicians must have:

- a formal commitment to practice in an RSA community;
- a letter of support from the local Chief of Staff that confirms community commitment and their support of the intended training; and
- a letter of support from the health authority regional medical director (or equivalent)

Physicians who have been practicing in an RSA Community for nine months or longer should apply through the [Advanced Skills and Training Program](#).

Locum physicians must:

- be accepted by Locums for Rural BC prior to applying for funding; and
- complete a return of service to Locums for Rural BC within one year of completion of training. The return of service commitment must be twice as long as the training commitment

To learn more about joining one of the Rural Locum Programs, please contact [Locums for Rural BC](#).

### BENEFITS

- \$950/day stipend to cover income loss
- \$90/day is to be paid to the primary preceptor, from the daily stipend
- Travel costs up to \$2000 for the duration of the training period
- Up to \$200/training day for accommodation

Funds for the Rural Skills Upgrade Program will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis. REAP will not provide funding for courses or conferences, training received outside of BC unless previously approved, or training not relevant to the REAP-approved training plan even in cases where other funding sources have been exhausted.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

The application form and all supporting documents must be submitted [online](#) before training but *may* be accepted up to one week before the end of the fiscal year in which the training began. The fiscal year runs from April 1 – March 31. The application and supporting documentation will be reviewed upon submission and a letter of acceptance will be issued by the REAP office upon approval.

### CLAIM PROCESS

Claims may be submitted only after attendance at the training with an approved Claim Form. Along with the claim, the participant must complete and submit the REAP Trainee Evaluation, Site Evaluation and Preceptor Payment Receipt.

Claims and all supporting documentation must be submitted [online](#) no later than December 31 following the fiscal year in which approval was granted – i.e., for approvals granted during the 2022/23 fiscal year, training must be completed and funding claimed by December 31, 2023.

### EXPENSE POLICIES

Eligible expenses directly incurred by the physician will be reimbursed. Reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses is based on a cost recovery basis. The claim submission must include itemized receipts for all expenses except distance travelled by personal vehicle. Credit card receipts will not be accepted. Participants are expected to choose the most economical travel/accommodation options that are practical for their circumstances. All other sources of funding must be declared on the claim.

STIPEND AND PRECEPTOR PAYMENT – the program will provide a stipend of \$950/day that may be applied to cover income loss, overhead, tuition and preceptor payments. The participant will be responsible to pay their primary preceptor \$90/day from the stipend. No patient billings may occur during the REAP training periods.

TRAVEL – Travel costs will be reimbursed up to \$2,000 for the entire training period. Travel occurring outside of BC will not be reimbursed in excess of the equivalent cost of travel within BC.

LAND TRAVEL – If travelling by personal vehicle, roundtrip mileage between the home community and the training location will be reimbursed at a rate of \$0.63/km. If a rental car is required to reach the training location, reimbursement will be based on the most economical vehicle available plus fuel. Local mileage will not be reimbursed (the course/training site must be >25km from the residence).

AIR TRAVEL – Airfare will be reimbursed based on the most economical fare available. Excess baggage, seat selection or change fees will not be reimbursed.

ACCOMMODATION – Reimbursed to a maximum of \$200 per day, based on the total number of days of training approved (i.e. if approved for 20 days of training, the maximum allowable for accommodations for the entire duration of training will be \$4,000). For accommodations with family/friends, a maximum of \$75/day may be claimed. No receipts are required for staying with family/friends.

MEALS & OTHER EXPENSES – Reimbursement of meals or other expenses will not be provided.

### PAYMENT PROCESS

All REAP payments are issued by Doctors of BC via electronic funds transfer. Banking information must be submitted to Doctors of BC by visiting: <https://www.doctorsofbc.ca/account/member/banking/add>.

### INCOME TAX

REAP payments are considered to be a taxable benefit and as such, a T4A will be issued. Educational costs may be claimed as a deduction for income tax purposes. Please contact a tax advisor for further details. If requested on the claim form, payment can be made to a corporation and no T4A will be issued.

### RESOURCES

For information regarding Program eligibility, email [REAP.Physicians@ubc.ca](mailto:REAP.Physicians@ubc.ca) or phone 604-827-1504. For information regarding claims, email [benefits@doctorsofbc.ca](mailto:benefits@doctorsofbc.ca) or phone 604-638-2929.