

SREB | Regional Contract Program

2026-2027

RCP Guideline Manual

- *State Coordinators*
- *Institution Coordinators*

Regional Contract Program Coordinators' Guide

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Regional Contract Program (RCP) is one of SREB's first programs. Beginning in 1949, RCP serves as a model through its simple concept: sharing institutional resources. The program enables SREB states to share costly health profession programs and thus postpone — or even avoid — creating programs for a select number of students. The health programs include Dentistry, Optometry, Osteopathy, Podiatry and Veterinary Medicine. SREB states benefit by ensuring opportunities for their residents in high-need professional program areas and save money by eliminating the high costs of creating their own programs in these specialized fields.

SREB's long experience suggests that when states contract for available openings for students in out-of-state professional programs, they lower their health care training costs significantly. States that set aside spaces in their professional programs also benefit. Institutions keep high standards for admission because there is a large pool of high-quality applicants. Students have broader educational options and do not have to pay the higher costs of out-of-state tuition.

II. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

SREB member states and contracting institutions operate the contracts-for-services program, which allows the states to share established professional programs.

The president or designee of the contracting institution signs the institutional contract. The institution agrees to reserve space and certify students in the RCP program based on the number of students the contracting states will fund.

The governor or designee of each state signs the contract for the state. The state must appropriate sufficient funds to meet state obligations, establish and modify reserved spaces, certify students as residents of the state, and pay invoices under the terms of each contract. The governor must recommend the proper appropriation to the legislature. Normally, the governor and/or the legislature designate a person or agency to administer the contract. In some states, a single agency handles these duties, typically the state board for institutions of higher learning. In other states, several officers share these responsibilities. SREB works with the person responsible for the overall administration of the state contracts in the participating states.

III. CONTRACTS

Southern Regional Education Board has two distinct sets of contracts in Dentistry, Optometry, Podiatry and Veterinary — one set with participating states and another set with the contracting institutions.

SREB member states benefit by ensuring opportunities for their residents in high-need professional program areas and save money by eliminating the high costs of creating their own programs in these specialized fields. Each institution participating in RCP attempts to meet each state's allotted slots for such students and each state attempts to supply enough qualified applicants for such slots.

The participating state desires for SREB to, and SREB is willing to, contract with regionally accredited institutions offering degree programs in one or more of these disciplines, and to have such institutions reserve a fixed number of seats for students from the participating state.

Institutions participating in SREB's Regional Contract Program, the degree programs for which they provide contracts, and contracting states can be found in Appendix A on page 6. States participating in the SREB Regional Contract Program, the fields in which they have contracts, and the institutions providing the contracts are listed in Appendix B on page 7.

Appropriations are made in advance by the state legislature, annually and/or biennially. The state appropriation is made based upon the total number of students in all classes in all program areas. After consultation with institutions and states, SREB sets the rates annually for all programs—usually two years in advance.

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IV. RESERVED SPACES

States contracting with SREB request a specific number of reserved places in the health profession fields for the educational needs of their residents. In turn, SREB contracts with regionally accredited institutions capable of supplying such spaces.

More specifically, the RCP contract administrator of each state, in consultation with appropriate persons in the state and with SREB, requests a specific number of student spaces. After receiving the request, SREB contracts with contracting institutions for the number of spaces in the program area. Two contracts are then executed — one between the state and SREB and one between SREB and the institution. The contracts establish the number of reserved spaces, in terms of entering students, and the total students enrolled in all classes and/or some combination of the two. SREB must receive notification of all adjustments in student numbers or seats to ensure the proper amendments are issued. Adjustments in the number of students/seats should be made at least nine (9) months before the start of the affected academic year. Should a state need to reduce the financial commitment to the program, a reduction in the entering class is acceptable, provided sufficient notice is given.

If a student repeating course work continues enrollment as a regional contract student, this may result in the RCP enrollment places exceeding state appropriations. The institution must work with the State and SREB to determine the student's eligibility for RCP funds. Tuition payments for students terminate the year the student would normally graduate (if work had not been repeated), unless additional or unused funds are available. These provisions are necessary so that the number of students enrolled in a specific RCP program will not exceed the reserved spaces and available state appropriations. When student substitutions are made in these cases, the state and institution concerned must have a discussion with the replacement student about the likelihood of subsequent funding adjustments, as well as notify SREB of such arrangements and adjustments.

V. TUITION CHARGES

Students accepted at public institutions under contract are charged tuition in the same amount as students who are residents of the state in which the institution is located. Private/Independent institutions (which have no in-state or out-of-state fee structure) will reduce tuition for each Dentistry, Optometry, Osteopathy, Podiatry and Veterinary student by an amount determined and approved by SREB (the RCP Program rate).

VI. STUDENT SUBSTITUTIONS

Occasionally, a contract student must temporarily withdraw from the program for non-academic reasons. Should a student withdraw from the program, the contracting institution, with approval from the state and SREB, may substitute another certified student from the same state, provided one is available, to use the remaining eligibility of the original student. Substitution is possible only within the same class (year) to ensure the number of reserved spaces is not exceeded in the years to follow. The state and institution concerned must discuss and agree to the substitution, determine the options for the withdrawing student and subsequent adjustment if the student returns to the program, and notify SREB of such substitutions. Some states do not allow student substitutions.

VII. CERTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Certification is the procedure by which state officers verify and certify the legal residency of applicants. States should certify students before admission. In some cases, it may be necessary to certify during the admission process, or after a student is formally admitted. However, this generally slows down the invoicing timeline as invoices should not be submitted until all students have been certified. State residency requirements for participation are determined by each state. State certification officers screen applicants for residency requirements and certify students who are eligible for participation in the RCP program based upon their state requirements.

Upon determining a student's residency status, state certification officers will inform students of their status.

Contracting institutions make student selections from the certified students based upon each student's academic qualifications.

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VIII. INVOICE PROCEDURES

Contracting institutions complete the invoicing process within one month of the start of the Fall and Spring terms.

The contracting institution representative completes the invoice by state, alphabetically listing certified students enrolled as participants in the Regional Contract Program by classes (years), also providing the permanent state of each student and the field of study (see Appendix C on page 8).

Invoices will consist of only students previously certified by states.

SREB mails the participating institution's invoice(s) to the RCP member state(s) for their residents participating in the RCP program. All funds shall be paid to SREB within 30 days of the invoice date. By approving the invoices for payment, the state payment officer indicates the state's approval of the students as certified.

The state makes payment to SREB within one month of receipt of invoice. All funds received from the state shall be paid to the institution within 30 days of the date SREB receives the funds from the participating state. SREB issues payment from the member state to the contracting institution and no funds are withheld by SREB for administrative purposes.

IX. Regional Contract Program Fees

Below is a 5-year history of the contract rate paid per student per year in each of the fields of study:

Regional Contract Program Approved Contract Fees from AY 2021-2022 to AY 2025-26					
	Contract Fee AY 2021-22	Contract Fee AY 2022-23	Contract Fee AY 2023-24	Contract Fee AY 2024-25	Contract Fee AY 2025-26
Dentistry	\$21,900	\$21,900	\$22,557	\$23,234	\$24,163
Medicine	\$21,800	\$21,800	\$22,454	\$23,128	\$24,053
Optometry	\$19,200	\$19,200	\$19,776	\$20,369	\$21,184
Osteopathy	\$19,200	\$19,200	\$19,776	\$20,369	\$21,184
Podiatry	\$13,000	\$13,000	\$13,390	\$13,792	\$14,344
Veterinary	\$33,500	\$33,500	\$34,505	\$35,540	\$36,962
Anticipated/Actual Institutional Increase	0%	0%	3%	3%	4%

X. Credit or Refund

When a student does not complete a term, any refund or credit due to the participating state for such student shall be made solely in accordance with the institution's refunds and/or credits policy.

If the institution does not substitute another certified student (with the state's prior approval), the institution will inquire of the state whether it prefers either (1) a credit to be applied against the amount due for the next year, or (2) a refund of the money by the institution. All refunds are made to SREB, and upon receipt of the funds, SREB reimburses the state.

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Appendix A

2025-26 Participating Institutions, Degree Programs, and Contract States

Field of Study	Institution	Contracting States
Dentistry	Louisiana State University Health Science Center	Arkansas
	Meharry Medical College	Arkansas
	Texas A & M University College of Dentistry	Arkansas
	University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center	Arkansas
Optometry	Northeastern State University	Arkansas, Louisiana
	Southern College of Optometry	Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina
	University of Alabama at Birmingham	Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina
	University of Houston	Louisiana
	University of Pikeville	South Carolina
Veterinary	Auburn University	Kentucky
	Louisiana State University	Arkansas
	Mississippi State University	South Carolina
	Oklahoma State University	Delaware
	Tuskegee University	Kentucky, South Carolina
	University of Georgia	Delaware, South Carolina

Appendix B

2025-26 Participating States, Programs, and Institutions

Participating State	Field of Study	Institution(s)
Arkansas	Dentistry	Louisiana State University, Meharry Medical College, Texas A & M University College of Dentistry, University of Tennessee Health Sciences Center
	Optometry	Northeastern State University, Southern College of Optometry
	Veterinary	Louisiana State University
Delaware	Veterinary	Oklahoma State University, University of Georgia
Georgia	Optometry	Southern College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham
Kentucky	Veterinary	Auburn University, Tuskegee University
Louisiana	Optometry	Northeastern State University, Southern College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Houston
Mississippi	Optometry	Southern College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham
South Carolina	Optometry	Southern College of Optometry, University of Alabama at Birmingham, University of Pikeville
	Veterinary	Mississippi State University, Tuskegee University, University of Georgia

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Appendix C

Student Invoice Template

SREB Regional Contract Program Invoice

Attn: Jimikea Wilson

592 Tenth Street NW

Atlanta, Georgia 30318-5790

Institution Contact Name: _____
 Contact Title: _____
 Institution Name: _____
 Institution Mailing Address: _____
 City, State Zip: _____
 Contact e-mail address: _____

Invoice Date: _____

Term: _____
 Fall _____ or Spring _____

Year: AY _____

Invoice Number: _____

Name	Address	Program Name	Amount
1st year – Class of [insert year]			
Student's Name	Address 1 (permanent) City, State, Zip Code Address 2 (local) City, State, Zip Code	_____	
2nd year – Class of [insert year]			
Student's Name	Address 1 (permanent) City, State, Zip Code Address 2 (local) City, State, Zip Code	_____	\$ -
3rd year – Class of [insert year]			
Student's Name	Address 1 (permanent) City, State, Zip Code Address 2 (local) City, State, Zip Code	_____	
4th year – Class of [insert year]			
Student's Name	Address 1 (permanent) City, State, Zip Code Address 2 (local) City, State, Zip Code	_____	\$ -
		Total	\$0.00

The above-named students have been certified as residents of _____
 STATE

Program AY 2025-26

Dentistry \$24,163
 Medicine \$24,053
 Optometry \$21,184
 Osteopathic Medicine \$21,184
 Podiatry \$14,344
 Veterinary Medicine \$36,962

Signature _____
 By: _____
 Name: _____
 Title: _____
 Date: _____

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