

Policy: Educational Assistance	Effective Date: July 1, 2017
Number: 710-3-004	Reviewed/Revised: July 2022
Authorized By: Jill Remington Love, Executive Director	
Authority: DHRM Rule, R477-10-4, and the Internal Revenue Code – Section 127	

Purpose:

The Department of Cultural and Community Engagement (CCE) is committed to maintaining a work environment that is safe and empowering for employees, and that promotes the individual value of each Department employee.

CCE has developed this policy to further this commitment and assist employees by offering tuition reimbursement to employees who qualify for educational assistance and who are interested in improving or enhancing their knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) through job-related education and/or training courses.

Eligibility:

Benefitted employees in all Divisions within the Department who are either full-time or part-time after completion of the probationary period and who are successfully performing their job duties are eligible for tuition reimbursement.

Policy:

The Educational Assistance Program is not a right, and approval is contingent on availability of funds not to exceed \$5,250 per full-time employee and \$2,690 per part-time employee in any one calendar year. It is a benefit the Department, through approval of the Division Director, may grant at management’s discretion when there is a clear mutual benefit to both the employee and the Department.

The Division will reimburse the student/employee up to 100 percent of the cost of tuition and required materials and books cost for all courses that are specifically related to the employee's current duties, and that result in demonstrated benefit to the Department. The Division will not reimburse the employee more than the employee pays out of pocket for tuition and required materials and books (i.e. the impact of scholarships, grants and subsidies will be considered when determining the total amount eligible for reimbursement.)

The Division will reimburse the employee up to 50 percent of the cost of tuition for courses that are related to the general business of the Department and that result in a demonstrated benefit to the Department.

Tuition reimbursement is contingent upon the employee successfully completing the contracted course with a “C” grade or better. Pass/fail grading will be allowed only if the training establishment does not offer a letter grade. Participating employee shall submit a copy of the transcript with the grade as documentation for the reimbursement request.

Courses must be taken at times that do not interfere with the employee's work schedule. In the event that a required course for graduation is offered only at a time conflicting with the work schedule, the worker may utilize the Department's policy on flex time with supervisory approval.

All tuition reimbursement payments will be made in compliance with the DHA Tuition Reimbursement Contract.

An employee who is reimbursed for a course taken under the Educational Assistance Program must remain working for the Department of Cultural and Community Engagement for one year following the course completion and reimbursement. If the employee voluntarily leaves their employment before the one year period is up, the employee must reimburse the Division for the prorated amount that was contributed to their tuition reimbursement during that year. (For example, if the employee quits six months after completion of the course, the employee must pay back 50% of the Division's contribution). Amounts reimbursed may be withheld as a garnished indebtedness from the employee's final check if the debt hasn't been repaid prior to the employees last day.

Those terminating employees who do not fully repay such assistance may not be eligible for rehire in the Department.

Procedure:

1. An employee should consult with his/her supervisor to discuss the following:
 - a. How will this assistance benefit the employee in his/her current job?
 - b. Does taking the course(s) increase the employee's career ladder potential?
 - c. Will the educational program or training provide a benefit to the State?
2. The Educational Assistance Contract shall be used for all tuition reimbursement requests.
3. The contract shall be completed and signed by the employee, direct supervisor, division director, and executive director or designee at least two weeks prior to the beginning of the courses.
4. The Department shall not reimburse tuition that did not receive approval prior to the beginning of the courses.
5. The employee receiving tuition reimbursement shall declare all scholarships, subsidies and grant monies provided to the employee prior to receiving any reimbursement.
6. Scholarships, subsidies, and/or grant monies provided to the employee for educational purposes during the educational assistance contract period shall be deducted from the employee's tuition reimbursement.
7. Upon approval, the employee will be notified and receive a copy of the contract. The original contract will be maintained in the Division of Finance and a copy given to the employee.
8. Within one month after successful course completion, the employee will submit receipts for tuition and fees and a copy of his or her final grade report or proof of satisfactory course completion to the designated person in finance. The Finance office will review the information along with the receipts and original contract for compliance before payment is issued to employee.