

The Montgomery County Board of County Commissioner Tuition Reimbursement Policy and Procedure

The Board of County Commissioners offers tuition reimbursement to eligible employees. The Learning and Performance Department administers the tuition reimbursement program and reserves the right to deny reimbursement for courses deemed not to be consistent with this policy.

Other elected officials offer tuition reimbursement to their employees following the guidelines presented within this policy. Employees in these departments should check with their elected official to see if the tuition reimbursement program is a benefit and for details regarding that elected official's procedures.

Policy

Eligibility

Full-time employees who have completed their probation are eligible for tuition reimbursement. Exceptions are outlined in negotiated agreements/contracts of the various bargaining units within Montgomery County and affect only those individuals represented by that bargaining unit.

Courses Reimbursed at 100%

Employees will be reimbursed 100% up to \$2400 per calendar year, for the cost of tuition, lab fees and required books(s) for approved courses taken on the employee's own time.

The course must directly apply to the employee's current position or prepare the employee for advancement opportunities within the County. Audited classes will not be reimbursed.

Courses must be taken at a college, university, or joint vocational school accredited through either the "U.S. Department of Education" (www.ed.gov), "The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools" (www.ncahigherlearningcommission.org) or the "North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement" (www.ncacasi.org).

The employee must receive a passing grade as follows:

- "C" or above in undergraduate work
- "B" or above for graduate work
- "P" (pass) for pass/fail courses

Courses Reimbursed at 50%:

Employees may be reimbursed 50% up to \$2400 for **wellness classes** completed at an accredited college (see above.) Wellness classes are defined as physical fitness classes. Aerobics, weight lifting, tennis, stress management, racquetball, volleyball and swimming are acceptable courses.

Employees must obtain a Passing (P) grade to be reimbursed for a wellness class.

Procedure

Applying for Tuition Reimbursement

- 1) Prior to enrolling in a course, the employee completes the **Application for Tuition Reimbursement Form***.
- 2) The employee's supervisor reviews and approves the Application and returns it to the liaison (unsigned applications will be returned for completion).
- 3) The liaison forwards the Application, via interoffice mail, to the Learning and Performance Department located at the Madison Lakes Learning and Conference Center.
- 4) The Learning and Performance Department keeps the original Application on file and sends a copy of the Application to the department liaison.
- 5) The employee takes and completes the class.

If the Application process is not followed, the Reimbursement Request submitted at the end of the course may not be approved.

Procedures to Request Tuition Reimbursement

The "Request for Tuition Reimbursement Form" must be submitted within 60 days after the course is completed.

- 1) The employee completes the **Request for Tuition Reimbursement Form***, attaching grades, fee bill, receipt of payment and receipt for any required books for which reimbursement is requested. All information must be printed on an official document.
- 2) The employee sends the Request, proof of final grade, a copy of your fee bill, receipt of payment and receipt for required books to his/her supervisor.

- 3) The employee's supervisor verifies and approves the information by signing the Request and sends all documentation to the liaison. Requests for Reimbursement will be returned if they are unsigned.
- 4) The department liaison forwards the Request with proof of grades, fee bill and receipt of payment to the Learning and Performance Department for final approval.
- 5) The Learning and Performance Department will return a copy of the form to the department liaison for payroll processing and record keeping.

If an employee voluntarily terminates his/her employment with Montgomery County within **one year** (12 months) of the completion date of his/her last class, he/she will pay back 100% of the reimbursement received during that year.

*Forms may be obtained by contacting the Learning and Performance Department, printing the document from the County Intranet or by contacting the employee's Department Liaison, usually located in the Human Resources or Payroll area.

Educational Assistance and Tuition Reimbursement

Participation in Montgomery County's Tuition Reimbursement program does not preclude participation in any other educational financial assistance program. However, employees can submit for reimbursement **only** the amount not paid for by other programs.

Special Considerations

Evidence of falsifying any information on either reimbursement form will be construed as dishonesty and/or stealing and will result in immediate dismissal.

In the event that an employee leaves Montgomery County, either voluntarily or involuntarily, while enrolled in an approved course, he/she will no longer be eligible for reimbursement.

If an employee is laid-off while enrolled in a course that has been approved, the employee is entitled to reimbursement of that approved course pending the satisfactory completion of the requirements as stated in this policy.

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