

subject TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

memorandum

date May 13, 2013

to ALL EMPLOYEES

from Vicki Arpin
Human Resources Administrator

PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM NO. 78-4A

This is a re-issue of Personnel Memorandum No. 78-4A dated January 8, 2007 which is also captioned "Tuition Reimbursement".

The following Collective Bargaining Contracts covering DOT employees currently have provisions for Tuition Reimbursement: P-4 (Engineering, Scientific and Technical), P-5 (A&R), NP-2 (Maintenance), NP-3 (Administrative Clerical) and NP-5 (Protective Services).

Please note that specific contract dates, funding terms, reimbursement amounts and credit maximums vary for each individual contract. This information is available through your union representative or the Office of Training & Staff Development and should be determined by the employee *before* he or she commits to any tuition expenditures.

The following general guidelines will apply:

1. Courses must be one of the following:

- a) Job Related - the course will result in increased knowledge and skill, is aimed primarily at improving the employee's performance on his/her job, or will enable the employee to keep up with changing concepts or development in their assigned occupational field; -OR-
- b) Upward Mobility Related - the course will enable the employee through Upward Mobility and development to qualify for other positions elsewhere in State service (this may be within their present job class or in another job series); -OR-
- c) An elective that is a part of a degree program that is upward mobility related.

2. Courses may be taken at the undergraduate or graduate level, for credit or non-credit.

3. Only courses taken outside of regularly scheduled hours of work will be considered for reimbursement. The exception is courses taken on approved leave time (a letter of verification stating that approved leave time was used should be attached to the application). Work hours may also be adjusted to allow attendance consistent with agency operating needs. Refer to General Letter No. 28. Work hours may also be adjusted to allow attendance consistent with agency operating needs and with supervisor's approval.

Paid educational leave is granted with the provision that tuition will be the responsibility of the employee. Therefore, tuition reimbursement will **not** be applicable in these instances. Employees on an unpaid educational leave or an educational leave with partial pay are eligible for tuition reimbursement. (Contact your Human Resources designee regarding the educational leave process.)

4. All courses must be taken at fully accredited colleges or universities. Other schools providing trade instructions or special occupational training that are approved by the Department of Higher Education will be accepted. Correspondence courses, on-line courses, or "colleges without walls", preparation or self-development programs may be taken but are subject to review by the Agency Tuition Reimbursement Officer or the State Reimbursement Coordinator prior to the employee beginning the course of study.*

*Some contracts preclude reimbursement for on-line courses. Check with your agency Tuition Reimbursement Officer before registering (i.e. NP-5).

Non-credit courses and seminars may **not** be taken during work hours while using tuition reimbursement funds. Non-credit courses will be converted to equivalent number of credit(s) for the purpose of computing reimbursement. This includes courses taken through an Adult Education Program or similar program on an employee's own time.

| Length of Course, in hours | Equivalent Number of Credits |
|----------------------------|---|
| Less than 6 hours | Not eligible for reimbursement under this Program |
| 6 – 14 hours | 1 |
| 15 – 29 hours | 2 |
| 30 – 44 hours | 3 |
| Each additional 12 hours | 1 additional credit |

5. Reimbursement is computed on the cost of tuition, and community college fees actually paid, up to established maximums. No other fees such, as registration, insurance, breakage, student activity fees, lab fees, or purchase of textbooks will be reimbursed unless specified in your union contract. (Information regarding current rates and maximums by bargaining unit is available from the Office of Training & Staff Development).
6. Employee must have permanent status at time of application, two weeks prior to start of class.
7. Payment will be made only if the employee is still in State service upon completion of the courses.
8. Participation will be limited to the maximum of the individual funds established by each negotiated contract. If necessary, priority for payment will be established in accordance with the date of employee's initial application.
9. If a union contract expires without a new contract in place, all the listed procedures should still be followed in case there is retroactive reimbursement. Retroactive reimbursement is determined through contract negotiations. Applicants should be aware that the new contract may not authorize retroactive reimbursement. Strong consideration should be given *before* taking a course as to whether an individual can afford to take the course should reimbursement not be available.
10. Tuition reimbursement will be paid when the employee provides evidence of completion of the authorized course(s) with a passing grade shown by a college grade report or by a letter from the instructor on institutional letterhead. A cost breakdown should be included with the application, indicating paid in full or zero balance. Contact the Office of Training & Staff Development for verification of what is acceptable for receipts.
11. All changes in classes being taken must be reported immediately to the Office of Training & Staff Development to assess the impact on eligibility. Particularly important are changes in the number of credits, incomplete courses, withdrawal, and failures that can preclude payment. A change of school will require a new form to be completed.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

The *Application for Tuition Reimbursement* [CO-101] form must be completed and signed by the applicant at least **two (2) weeks** prior to the start of classes. (Employees in Bargaining Unit NP-5, Protective Services have a separate application procedure.) Any applications received after the class start date, is considered late, and requires approval and may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Note: For non-traditional (including out-of-state and on-line courses) employees are strongly advised to submit this material at least **one (1) month** prior to the first day of class as these requests require approval before processing.

Electronic Application forms [CO-101] are available on DOT's intranet web site home page under "*Documents and Forms*" under Training.

Send the completed application to the Office of Training & Staff Development, using the inter-office mail, fax (860) 594-3611 or e-mail, where it will be reviewed and processed. The applicant will be notified of the action taken and will receive further instructions. When the course(s) have been completed, submit one (1) copy of an official grade report for each class and one (1) copy of an official itemized college receipt indicating full payment.

Supervisors are strongly urged to bring the contents of this memorandum to the attention of all employees. Questions regarding the Tuition Reimbursement program may be directed to the Office of Training & Staff Development at (860) 594-3600.

LIST #1