



Tuition Reimbursement Program

Overview

Milwaukee County encourages all employees to seek out learning opportunities that enhance their skills and provide career development. The Tuition Reimbursement Program was established to provide an opportunity for employees to obtain additional education in order to increase their knowledge and abilities and prepare for future opportunities within the County.

Eligibility

All benefits-eligible regular appointment employees in good standing are eligible for this program upon completion of one year of service to Milwaukee County. For the purpose of this program, an employee in good standing is defined as an employee who at the time of submitting a pre-approval request has had no corrective action in the past 12 months, and who meets the performance expectations of his or her current position.

All other employees, including Temporary, Seasonal, Hourly, Interns, and Contract employees are ineligible.

Plan Reimbursement Level

Tuition reimbursement will be provided up to an annual maximum of \$2,500 for employees with annual earnings less than \$75,000. Employees who earn \$75,000 per year or more are limited to \$1,500 per year. For this program, annual earnings are defined as the employee's base hourly pay rate multiplied by the full-time standard of 2,080 hours. Overtime, bonuses, or other compensation will not be considered when applying this limit.

Reimbursement is limited to tuition only. Other expenses, such as textbooks and lab fees are not eligible.

The annual maximum is based on the calendar year, from January through December. Reimbursement will be applied to the calendar year in which the class was successfully completed. For example, if a class is successfully completed in December, but the reimbursement is not paid until January, the reimbursement is considered part of the prior year annual maximum allowable amount.

Approved Programs & Courses

Tuition reimbursement is available for individual courses related to the employee's job at Milwaukee County, or for coursework that is part of an associate, bachelor or graduate degree program related to any position within Milwaukee County. Courses must be provided by technical colleges, colleges, or universities accredited by an accrediting agency that is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. A list of accrediting agencies is available on the U.S. Department of Education's web site. <http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/>

Individual classes outside of a degree program will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and are restricted to courses that are directly related to the employee's present position, prepare the employee for another specific position in the organization, or earn certified continuing education credits for licensure or certification related to the employee's position. Courses that meet this criteria, but are not consistent with the intent of this program, will not be approved for reimbursement. Conference and seminar registrations and related travel are not eligible under this program.

Audit Courses (classes taken for personal enrichment that do not result in earned degree credits or continuing education credits) are not eligible for reimbursement under this program. Similarly, preparatory classes intended solely to prepare the student for an examination or certification will not be covered under the tuition reimbursement program.

High school equivalency or GED:

High school equivalency or GED programs will be reviewed for approval on a case-by-case basis. In general, the requested course must be offered through an accredited institution and result in the successful completion of a high school equivalency exam to be eligible for reimbursement under this program.

Successful Completion of Courses

Undergraduate coursework: grade of C or above, or a "pass" in a pass/fail class where no grade is reported.

Graduate coursework: grade of B- or above, or a "pass" in a pass/fail class where no grade is reported.

Employee Responsibility

Pre-Approval:

ALL COURSES MUST BE PRE-APPROVED BY HUMAN RESOURCES IN ORDER TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR REIMBURSEMENT. Any tuition reimbursement request submitted to Employee Benefits after the class has started will be denied. To have classes pre-approved, employees must send a completed Tuition Reimbursement Course Approval Request Form (available online at <http://county.milwaukee.gov/TuitionReimbursement.htm>) to the Department of Human Resources – Employee Benefits Division.

You will be notified whether your request has been approved or denied, usually within ten (10) working days of receipt of your form. Note: the notice of approval must be returned with proof of payment to initiate the reimbursement.

Submitting Claims for Reimbursement of Your Tuition:

Employees may submit requests for reimbursement at any time by submitting a reimbursement request form along with the approval notice and a verified statement of cost of tuition or adequate receipts. Following submission of all required documentation to the Benefits Division, allow at least two pay periods for reimbursement.

Proof of Successful Completion:

All reimbursed courses must be successfully completed. After you have successfully completed the class, you must return evidence of the grade earned (an official grade report or transcript) to the Department of Human Resources – Employee Benefits Division within 6 weeks of end date for the class. FAILURE TO PROVIDE PROOF OF SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION WILL RESULT IN THE EMPLOYEE BEING REQUIRED TO RE-PAY ANY FUNDS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED FOR THE COURSE.

Appeals:

A denial may be appealed to the Director of Employee Benefits by submitting your rationale for the course in writing at Courthouse Rm 210, 901 N. 9th St, Milwaukee, WI 53233, or via e-mail at benefits@milwaukeecountywi.gov. Appeals of denial for failure to obtain pre-approval will not be considered.

Agreement for Continued Employment

By accepting tuition reimbursement under this program, the employee is agreeing to continue employment with Milwaukee County for a period of no less than 12 months following the reimbursement. Employees who do not complete 12 months of service following reimbursement will be required to repay the full reimbursement amount.

Voluntary Termination:

If an employee resigns his or her employment with Milwaukee County for any reason (including retirement) before an approved course has been completed, eligibility for reimbursement ends immediately. If the employee has already been reimbursed, but has not met the requirement for 12 months of service, Milwaukee County will withhold the previously reimbursed amount from the employee's final paycheck(s). If that is not possible, Milwaukee County will make reasonable efforts to collect the debt.

The repayment requirement may be waived under exigent circumstances at the discretion of the Director of Employee Benefits.

Involuntary Termination:

If an employee is involuntarily terminated by the County before the approved course is complete, eligibility for reimbursement ends immediately. If the employee has already

been reimbursed for an approved course, the repayment provision under the agreement for continued employment will be waived.

Tax Status

The rules of this program are governed by the Internal Revenue Code. As such, certain reimbursements may be subject to income taxes. All reimbursements are processed through the County payroll system on a pre-tax basis, regardless of whether they are subject to income tax or not. The payment of any taxes due remains the responsibility of the employee. Finally, the rules of this program may be modified at any time without notice to keep the program in compliance with the Internal Revenue Code.