

Tuition Reimbursement Program for NYSCOPBA-Represented Employees

Guidelines for the April 30, 2009 Award Period

Agency/Facility Information

PURPOSE

The purpose of the New York State/New York State Correctional Officers & Police Benevolent Association (NYSCOPBA) Tuition Reimbursement Program is to encourage career development and advancement for state employees whose positions are assigned to the Security Services Unit represented by NYSCOPBA.

FUNDING

The NYS/NYSCOPBA Tuition Reimbursement Program is funded by the April 30, 2009 Interest Arbitration Award and the negotiated agreement between the State of New York and NYSCOPBA. Program funding is subject to the availability of funds.

ELIGIBILITY

All full-time employees whose positions are assigned to the Security Services Unit and who have had six months of continuous state service immediately prior to the beginning date of the course work are eligible. Employees must be working half time or more to be eligible for reimbursement. Employees working less than half time or who are on unpaid leave of absence are not eligible.

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

The NYS/NYSCOPBA Tuition Reimbursement Program provides financial support to Security Services Unit employees for approved educational activities on a reimbursement basis. The program is designed to assist with the achievement of reasonable career goals within state government.

Below are the key elements of the program:

- The program is based on approval of individual courses. Each course must be approved for reimbursement upon enrollment.
- The program is designed to reimburse applicants for covered tuition expenses up to \$1,200, the maximum annual fiscal year allowance.
- Reimbursement is based on the satisfactory completion of the course. Satisfactory completion of the course is the attainment of a grade of at least C.
- Reimbursement is for actual out-of-pocket expenses including tuition, registration fees, required books, all mandatory fees including Distant Learners Portfolio, and Evaluation Fees.

SELECTION STANDARDS

Tuition expenses from an approved educational organization for credit or non-credit course work categorized as either job-related or career-related are eligible for reimbursement.

Job-Related Course Work Criteria

- The course directly supports or improves skills required for current job assignments, duties, or responsibilities.

Career-Related Course Work Criteria

- The course work will prepare the employee for advancement within the employee's current title series or occupation.
- The course work develops the administrative or management capacity of the employee.
- The course work is necessary to obtain an undergraduate degree to qualify for job opportunities within state service.

APPROVED EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The NYS/NYSCOPBA Tuition Reimbursement Program is intended to support the educational activities for credit or non-credit courses. The educational organization offering the course must meet the academic standards of the New York State Education Department or the U.S. Office of Education.

For courses provided by educational organizations not listed by the New York State Education Department, verification of accreditation or affiliation must be submitted for review and approval at time of application.

REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

Covered Expenses

Reimbursable expenses are those costs that relate to the pursuit of an educational activity. These expenses include tuition for approved credit or non-credit course work, individual course registration, and all mandatory fees.

Annual fiscal year allowance per applicant for:

April 1, 2007-March 31, 2008 = 100% of the covered tuition expense up to \$1,200

April 1, 2008-March 31, 2009 = 100% of the covered tuition expense up to \$1,200

April 1, 2009-March 31, 2010 = 100% of the covered tuition expense up to \$1,200

April 1, 2010-March 31, 2011 = 100% of the covered tuition expense up to \$1,200

Reimbursement within a fiscal year is determined by the start date of the course. The State fiscal year begins on April 1 and ends on March 31.

Beginning April 1, 2010 applicants may be reimbursed for book expenses up to a maximum of \$250 per course. To be eligible, the applicant must provide proof from the educational organization that the reading material is mandatory for the related course. Shipping fees and taxes on mandatory reading material will be paid up to the \$250 maximum.

Total funds assigned to the program may be limited and are subject to availability.

Alternate Sources of Tuition Support

Alternate sources of financial aid from agency/facility tuition support programs, the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Pell Grants, the Aid for Part-time Study (APTS) Program, New York State Veterans Tuition Awards, Veterans Administration Educational Benefits (GI Bill), and college stipends must be reported on the application. This amount will be deducted before computing the allowable reimbursement.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION PROCESS

Applicant Responsibility

Once registered for course work, the applicant must complete a separate Tuition Reimbursement Application (SSU-004 form) for each course for which reimbursement is requested. The SSU-004 form must be submitted to the agency personnel office or facility staff development for review and approval within 10 working days after the start date of the course.

Agency/Facility Responsibility

Each agency/facility is expected to inform eligible employees about the NYS/ NYSCOPBA Tuition Reimbursement Program.

Within 10 working days of receipt of application, the designated agency/facility rating officer is to:

1. Review the application for accuracy of the information provided by the employee.
2. Determine whether the application meets the criteria for reimbursement under the NYS/NYSCOPBA Tuition Reimbursement Program. Consideration of employee eligibility, qualification of course work, and acceptability of the educational organization is used for this determination.
3. Record Tuition Reimbursement Applications in report form. Information for each applicant must include: Fiscal Year, Applicant's Name, Title and Salary Grade, Educational Organization, Course Title, Starting Date, Ending Date, Course and Book Expense, Amount Approved for Course Reimbursement, and Amount Approved for Book Expense. This report must be sent to the New York State/SSU Labor-Management Committees (LMC) every year on April 1. At any time during the program year the LMC may request the report.

Note: All applications must be recorded in the report even if Tuition Reimbursement funds are exhausted. This information may be required for future negotiations and program funding consideration.

4. Determine whether the course work is job-related or career-related as defined in the program guidelines.
5. Complete the Agency/Facility Action section on the application, sign, and date the form.
6. Notify the employee of the determination by returning a copy of SSU-004 form.
7. Process employee payment voucher with the cost center provided by the NYS/NYSCOPBA LMC.

APPLICANT REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must complete a New York State Standard or Quick Pay Voucher within 30 working days following the receipt of a satisfactory course completion document. These forms should be available in the finance, business, or steward's office.

- The applicant must submit a payment voucher to the agency/facility staff development or personnel office for the cost center coding provided by the NYS/NYSCOPBA LMC.

The rating officer will forward the payment voucher to the agency/facility finance office for payment to be processed from the Office of the State Comptroller in accordance with the rules and regulations concerning the expenditure of state funds.

- Attachments to the payment voucher must include:
 1. The original itemized paid receipt from the education organization.
 2. A copy of the Tuition Reimbursement Application SSU-004 form indicating approval of the course.
 3. A course completion document.

Note: The satisfactory course completion document must be the original grade, report, or a letter from the educational organization stating that the employee satisfactorily completed the course work. The letter must indicate the date of course completion.

4. Proof of mandatory reading material from the educational organization for book expense reimbursement. The receipt must indicate book title.

EFFECTIVE DATE

These guidelines apply to course work beginning April 1, 2007 through March 31, 2011.

COMMITTEE CONTACT INFORMATION

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**Tuition Reimbursement Application (SSU-004 Form) for NYSCOPBA-Represented Employees
For the April 30, 2009 Award Period**

Name of Applicant _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Number of Years in State Service _____ Number of Years in Current Position _____

Title and Salary Grade _____

Agency/Facility _____

Work Location _____ Work Phone _____

Explain how this training will assist you in progressing toward reasonable career goals within state service.

Course Work & Financial Information

Educational Institution _____

Address _____

Course Title _____ Course # _____

Start Date _____ End Date _____ Number of Credits _____ or Non-Credit _____

Expense Category

Course Tuition: _____

Other Mandatory Fees: _____

Tuition and Mandatory Fees Total: _____

Less Other Sources of _____

Financial Aid (TAP, PELL, _____

Veteran's Benefits): _____

Less Other Sources of Financial Aid: - _____

Book Expense: + _____

Total Reimbursement Requested: _____

I affirm that all the above information is accurate and complete.

Employee Signature

Date

AGENCY/FACILITY ACTION: Job-Related Course Career-Related Course Disapproved

Amount approved for course work \$ _____

Amount approved for book expense \$ _____ Date Applicant Notified _____

Authorizing Signature Title Date