



FLORIDA CLERKS OF COURT OPERATIONS CORPORATION

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CCOC EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Approved by the CCOC Executive Council on December 16, 2022.

I. OVERVIEW:

This policy describes the financial assistance available to eligible employees who wish to continue their education at an accredited college or university to secure increased responsibility and growth within their professional careers either in their current position or through possible future promotional opportunities. Also provides assistance for the State's Certified Public Management (CPM) Program.

II. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Regular Full-Time: Employees who work 40 hours per week on a regular basis.
- B. Cost per credit hour: An overall category used by certain colleges/universities that include enrollment and other college fees.
- C. Good standing: Have not received written counselling within the last six (6) months or placed on a performance improvement plan and are meeting the expectations of their current position, especially in the critical areas of the position.
- D. Reasonable credit hours per term: eight (8) credit hours per academic session
- E. Pre-approval: Certifies that coursework is eligible for reimbursement and is not a guarantee of payment. Final reimbursement is subject to the employee meeting all the requirements outlined within this policy.

III. POLICY STATEMENT:

The CCOC:

- A. Encourages employees to pursue professional development through academic studies at accredited colleges and universities. Encourages participation in CPM program.
- B. Offers financial assistance to eligible employees who wish to further their education by obtaining a degree in a course of study that will enhance their contribution to the CCOC office.
- C. Educational assistance is paid on a fiscal year schedule (10/1 – 9/30) when funding is available and is paid directly to the employee upon completion of pre-approved coursework.
- D. Requires employees to successfully complete six (6) months of continuous full-time service prior to applying for educational assistance, hold a regular full-time employment status with the CCOC both at the time of the reimbursement request

and at the time of completion of the approved program, meet all job performance requirements in a satisfactory manner, and be in good standing with the Corporation to be eligible for educational assistance. Employees cannot have received a written counseling notice within the last six (6) months or been placed on a performance improvement plan and are meeting the expectations of their current position, especially in the critical areas of the position.

- E. Requires employee to successfully complete the approved educational courses on the employee's time and not during work hours unless provided approved flextime hours by the Executive Director.
- F. Requires employee to successfully complete the approved educational courses with a grade of "C" (or pass) or the institution's numerical percentile equivalent or better.
- G. Commits that degree completion does not guarantee advancement and/or an increase in salary.
- H. Certifies that submission of a request form does not automatically denote approval for educational assistance.
- I. Reserves the right to refuse payment for all or a portion of an employee's request for educational assistance.

IV. PROCEDURE:

- A. Educational assistance is limited to courses that lead to a degree from an accredited college or university or for the Florida Certified Public Manager Program.
- B. Education assistance will not be approved for the following types of courses or programs:
 - 1. College Entrance Exams (such as LSAT, GRE, GMAT, SAT).
 - 2. Testing Preparation Courses.
 - 3. Coursework unrelated to the business of the CCOC office.
- C. Documentation of satisfactory completion of a course is required. All courses must have a grade of "C" (or pass) or the institution's numerical percentile equivalent or better.
- D. The CCOC will pay 100% for reasonable credit hours per term. This amount covers tuition, fees, books, and related lab fees only. The educational assistance amount paid per fiscal year (10/1 - 9/30) will not exceed:
 - 1. \$1,500 per fiscal year for undergraduate study that leads to a degree.
 - 2. \$4,500 per fiscal year for graduate-level programs that lead to a degree.
 - 3. This cap is intended to prevent the employee from overextending in a program and balance the increasing demands of the job.
- E. Application Procedure:
 - 1. Employees who wish to apply for educational assistance must meet all the requirements outlined within this policy and submit an Educational Assistance Reimbursement Request form along with proof of the classes in which they are enrolled to ensure coursework qualifies.
 - 2. The preapproval section will be completed by the CCOC Executive Director to indicate whether the request is pre-approved or denied and the original form

will be returned to the employee to retain until he or she has completed the course.

F. Reimbursement Procedure:

1. Within forty-five (45) calendar days of successful completion of pre-approved coursework, eligible employees shall re-submit the original reimbursement request form signed by their manager along with proof of successful course completion to the CCOC Executive Director. Proof documentation should include a receipt for tuition paid, fee schedule showing courses taken, and proof of final grade.
 2. CCOC Executive Director will review all forms and notify the employee of their approval or denial status. If the request is denied, the CCOC Executive Director will follow up with the employee.
 3. Tuition assistance, if approved, is reimbursed directly to the employee through payroll. It is the intent of the Educational Assistance Program to comply with the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service for the exclusion of reimbursements from the employee's taxable wages. This is in no way a guarantee that reimbursements are tax exempt, and each employee-participant is advised to seek the opinion of their own tax preparer, as the Internal Revenue Code changes from time to time.
 4. Failure to provide any of the above within the required timeframe may result in denial of reimbursement.
- G. Any exceptions to this policy must have the approval of the CCOC Executive Director.

V. **DOCUMENTATION:**

- A. Educational Assistance Reimbursement Request Form submitted and signed by their manager along with fee schedule showing courses taken, proof of final grade and receipt for paid tuition, fees, books, etc.
 - B. Copy of degree once program is completed to CCOC Executive Director to update level of education in personnel file.
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