

**BAY COUNTY BOARD
OF
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**



**Educational Assistance Program
And
Licensing/Certification Reimbursement Program**

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EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND LICENSING/ CERTIFICATION FEE REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

The education reimbursement program is available to full-time regular employees under the following policy and procedures.

DEFINITIONS

External Training - Refers to external training programs such as college courses, seminars, and workshops conducted by resources outside the county organization.

Internal Training - Refers to internal training programs such as County provided and/or conducted courses, seminars, and workshops presented by resources from within the county organization.

Training Course - A single course of instruction or single seminar that, when completed by the student, results in a performance grade, academic credit or certification of completion.

Training Program - A combination of presented courses of instruction, seminars or other training that when successfully completed by the student, results in a degree, designation, qualification, and/or certification of knowledge or skill in a work related discipline.

Conditional Repayment Agreement - An agreement between the eligible participant and the BCC presented upon application for reimbursement by agreeing not to terminate employment for a scheduled period of time set within the General Instructions.

1. Objective:

To provide the methods for fairly reimbursing employees of the Board of County Commissioners for tuition and fees that qualifies under the guidelines of the education reimbursement program policy and allows for continuing education of personnel.

2. Administration of Policy:

The Human Resources Director is responsible for administration of the education reimbursement program.

3. Eligibility:

a. Each full-time regular employee and volunteer firefighter (in compliance with F.S. 112.011) with a satisfactory job performance is eligible for benefits under this policy.

b. The course(s) must be job related to the employee's present job and must enhance the employee's knowledge, skills and abilities relating to official duties which an employee / volunteer firefighter performs.

c. If an employee is eligible for Veterans' (VA) benefits, grants, or scholarships, these must be utilized instead of the Board's education reimbursement program

4. Reimbursable Course Work:

- a. Reimbursement of admission, examination, tuition and/or fees is provided for degree and non-degree college curricula, certification and/or licensing relational or technical coursework. However, if an employee is not working toward a degree, the Board of County Commissioners will pay only the "audit" fee rather than the fee charged for "credit" courses.
- b. Seminars or private schools are not covered by tuition refund.
- c. Other costs, such as late fees, refundable deposits, books, and material or programs paid for from other sources, are **NOT** reimbursable.
- d. This policy does not apply to situations where an employee is required by the Board of County Commissioners to attend courses, in which case the Board will pay 100% of the cost.

5. Application Process:

- a. Employees must apply for education reimbursement by completing an official *Education Assistance Program and Licensing/Certification Fee Reimbursement Program* request form. Each individual course requires a separate application.
- b. Employees must be recommended by his/her supervisor for each course.
- c. The request should be submitted to the office of Human Resources for approval by the Human Resources Director **NO LATER** than (10) ten days prior to the course commencement.
- d. Failure to receive official approval, or failure to apply before the start of the class, will forfeit eligibility for tuition/fee refund.
- e. The employee must pay tuition costs directly to the accredited institution sponsoring the course(s).
- f. Employee must sign a Conditional Repayment Agreement agreeing to reimburse Bay County proportionately for program training costs if he/she terminates employment within designated period established for identified program.
- g. Official notice of grades and the original tuition/fee receipt must be submitted to the Human Resources Office within sixty (60) days of the completion of the approved course(s) for reimbursement consideration.

6. Reimbursement Schedule:

a. A grade of "C" or above must be maintained in order to receive tuition/fee reimbursement.

b. Tuition/fee costs will be reimbursed by the Board of County Commissioners at the following rates upon submitting proof of grades to the Human Resources Director.

A - 100%

B - 75%

C - 50%

D - or below – None

Pass (when used by accredited institution in lieu of a letter grade)-100%

Fail-None

7. Availability of Funds:

a. All reimbursements are contingent upon compliance with all requirements and in accordance with the Internal Revenue Code and current fiscal funds budgeted.

b. There may be instances where the education reimbursement cannot be provided due to budgetary constraints.

8. General Information and Limitations:

a. Classes, which do not receive approval from the Department Director and Human Resources Director in advance, will not be accepted for reimbursement processing.

b. Doctoral-level studies will not be approved for reimbursement.

c. The repayment obligation may be waived based on the recommendation of the Human Resource Director and approved by the County Manager or designee, if a termination is due to circumstances beyond the control of the employee.

9. Service Obligations:

a. Participants receiving tuition reimbursement must agree to remain in the employ of the County for at least one (1) year following course(s) completion. Employees who separate from employment for any reason other than disability within the time period applicable to course(s), certifications, license, or degree shall be required to repay the County for all tuition or fee benefits applicable to coursework completed during the affected period.

b. Participants who obtain certification or licensing that the County either pays for up front or receives reimbursement must agree to remain in the employ of the County for at least one (1) year for each certification or licensing obtained. Employees who separate from employment for any reason other than disability within the time period applicable to course(s), certifications, license, or degree shall be required to repay the County for all tuition or fee benefits applicable to coursework completed during the affected period.

- c. Participants receiving tuition reimbursement for course(s) needed to obtain a degree must agree to remain in the employ of the County for at least two (2) years following completion of degree. Employees who separate from employment for any reason other than disability within the time period applicable to course(s), certifications, license, or degree shall be required to repay the County for all tuition or fee benefits applicable to coursework completed during the affected period.
- d. Repayment shall be pro-rated for the remaining period of employment not completed, rounded to the nearest month.
- e. Repayment to the County may be withheld from any final pay to which employee or volunteer may be entitled.

10. Program Restrictions:

- a) The Board of County Commissioners reserves the rights to place limitation on or temporarily suspend the Reimbursement Programs based on any factor, which adversely affects the availability of funding. A suspension of funding will not stop payment for classes approved for reimbursement once classes have begun although the percentage of reimbursement may be reduced.

RESERVATION OF AUTHORITY

The County Manager and Bay County BOCC have the authority to revise these procedures at any time without prior notice.

Bay County Board of County Commissioners

Education Reimbursement Program

CONDITIONAL REPAYMENT AGREEMENT

Employee Printed Name:

Last

First

MI

Department/Division:

Job Classification

I have read and fully understand the Bay County Board of County Commissioners (BCC) Education Assistance Program and Licensing/Certification Fee Reimbursement Program Policy. I further understand that under the provisions of the policy, I agree to remain employed with the County for a period of one (1) year following completion of course(s), one year for each certification/license, two (2) years for each degree that I may receive.

If my service is terminated with the BCC, voluntary or involuntarily, within the time frame as outlined above, I understand and agree that I am subject to repay the County in accordance with the Service Obligation Section of the Education Reimbursement Program, and that it may be withheld from any final pay to which I may be entitled.

I further understand that if it is found that I knowingly falsified information provided on the Education Assistance Program and Licensing/Certification Fee Reimbursement Application Form, that I will be held liable for all costs associated with those classes taken, and be subject to disciplinary action.

Signature

Date

Original: Personnel File, Human Resources
Copy: Employee