



Classified Employee Tuition Assistance Program

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION GUIDE

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Purpose

The purpose of the tuition assistance program for classified personnel is to provide employees with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge, skills and abilities related to the District's vision, mission, and goals. A skilled workforce leads to improved working, teaching, and learning conditions for staff and students.

Description

Courses must lead to a certification, degree, licensure or increase the employee's knowledge in an area that will enhance the employee's contribution to the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Priority will be given to those who complete licensure or certification programs that are North Carolina state endorsed. Professional Development may include courses, workshops, or examinations. The district may also secure professional development and provide district-wide opportunities to all classified employees within the district.

Eligibility

Any full or part-time classified employee of Guilford County Schools in good standing may apply. A classified employee is one whose job does not require a North Carolina Professional Educator's license. Employees must achieve a 2.0 GPA or a passing score/grade to be eligible to receive reimbursement for courses or examinations taken. Courses/examinations must be taken between July 1, 2022 through June 2024.

Parameters

Employees may only request up to a total of \$3000.00 reimbursement per calendar year. Funds will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. Funds will not be used if the employee has secured financial aid, grants or other scholarships to cover the same expense. The district reserves the right to confirm out-of-pocket payment by the employee and to deny reimbursement. The district also reserves the right to confirm organizational accreditation and legitimacy.

Information

The tuition reimbursement plan is not an employee benefit, right or entitlement. Denial of participation in the tuition assistance program is not grievable, except on grounds of discrimination. Tuition reimbursement will be considered for employees if funds are available and courses are approved by supervisors and Human Resources.

Agreement

Employee agrees to remain employed by the district for 2 years following any reimbursement provided. The two years will begin the start of the next month after the District has reimbursed the employee. Failure to maintain employment in the District for any reason will result in the employee being required to repay funds (prorated based on completion of employment eligibility).

Pre-Qualification

Employees must submit a pre-qualification request prior to beginning the class to confirm fund availability and approval status. By doing so, employees may receive notice of reimbursement approval or denial prior to paying for the class.

The pre-qualification application, once submitted, may take up to 14 business days for approval. Reimbursement will also be based on successfully completing the course.

Exception

Supervisors may recommend professional development activities and/or require employees to participate in professional development activities that may be funded through this program that will contribute to the effectiveness of the employee and organization.

Final Payment

Employees must submit receipts, transcripts, final grades within 30 days of completing the course. Upon receipt and approval by Human Resources, the employee will be notified that payment is being processed and will receive reimbursement within 45 days of approval to pay. Approval to pay is based on having a pre-qualification approval and submitting all appropriate documentation for reimbursement.

Prepay

Prepayment may be possible in extenuating circumstances. Prepayment requests must be directly tied to the employee's current role. The District must be able to confirm the actual payment(s) being made on behalf of the employee (financial aid, scholarships, grants, monetary relief provided to participant, etc). Prepayments are more likely in situations where multiple GCS employees are participating in the professional development activity.

Reimbursement Deadlines

2022 – 2024 School Classified Employee Tuition Reimbursement Deadlines		
Pre-qualification Application	Final Reimbursement Request	Employee Reimbursement payment
At least two weeks prior to professional development beginning.	*Within 30 days of completing approved professional development activity.	Within 45 days of final pay approval from HR

All requests for reimbursements must be submitted no later than June 1 of the current school year.

Budget

Year 1 Budget (7/1/2022-6/30/2023)	Year 2 Budget (7/1/2023-6/30/2024)	Total	Codes
420,000	300,000	720,000	PRC-352

Funding

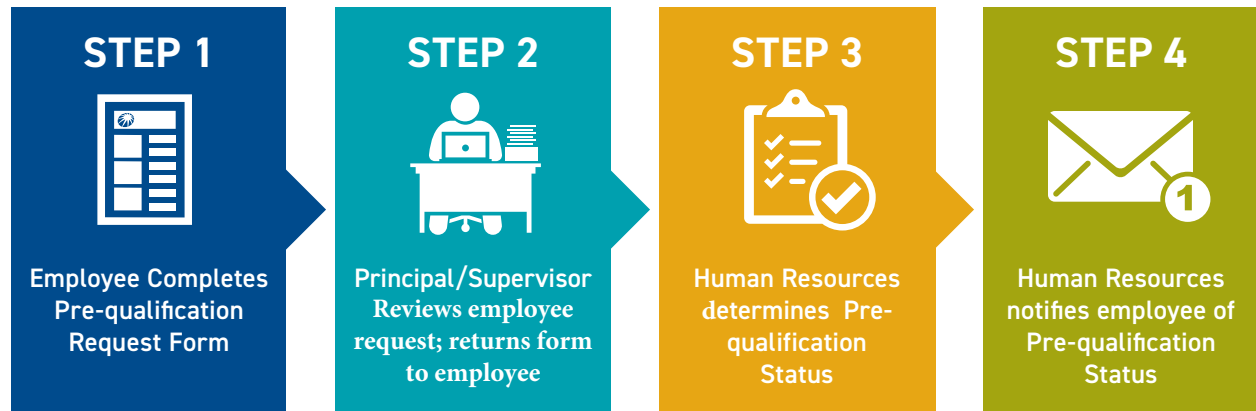
ESSER

Tuition Assistance Reimbursement Program Process

Employees must complete the Tuition Assistance Pre-qualification request form ([click here](#)) prior to taking the course, exam, certification for which s/he will be requesting reimbursement. Failure to complete the Pre-qualification process may result in denial of reimbursement requests.

Pre-qualification Process

Overview



Full Details of the pre-qualification process are listed on the next pages.

Step 1

- **Employee completes pre-qualification request form, including the following.**
 - Course, examination, certification, workshop, program name and description from sponsoring organization.
 - Documentation indicating cost of activity from sponsoring organization.
 - Total cost requested for reimbursement.
 - Dates/Times of offering; date of anticipated completion.
 - Statement on how work will be impacted/improved.
 - Submits to Human Resources.
 - Human Resources shares request with employee's immediate supervisor.

Step 2

- **Principal/Supervisor determines pre-qualification status by examining/confirming the following criteria ([click here for the supervisor form to be completed by the supervisor](#)):**
 - The professional development activity aligns with the employee's position, job description, duties of the department, responsibilities of the district; or the mission, vision, goals of the district.
 - The professional development activity's schedule does not interfere, disrupt, cause undue hardship on others or does not otherwise interfere with the school or workday or with the needs of district.

- The employee's statement regarding the purpose of the class and the benefit aligns with organizational goals.
- The cost of the professional development activity is reasonable based on initial research and review of similar activity cost.
- The employee's performance, attendance and official evaluations meet expectations.
- The Principal/supervisor will provide a statement regarding the decision to support or deny request.
- The principal/supervisor submits approval/denial to Human Resources.

Step 3

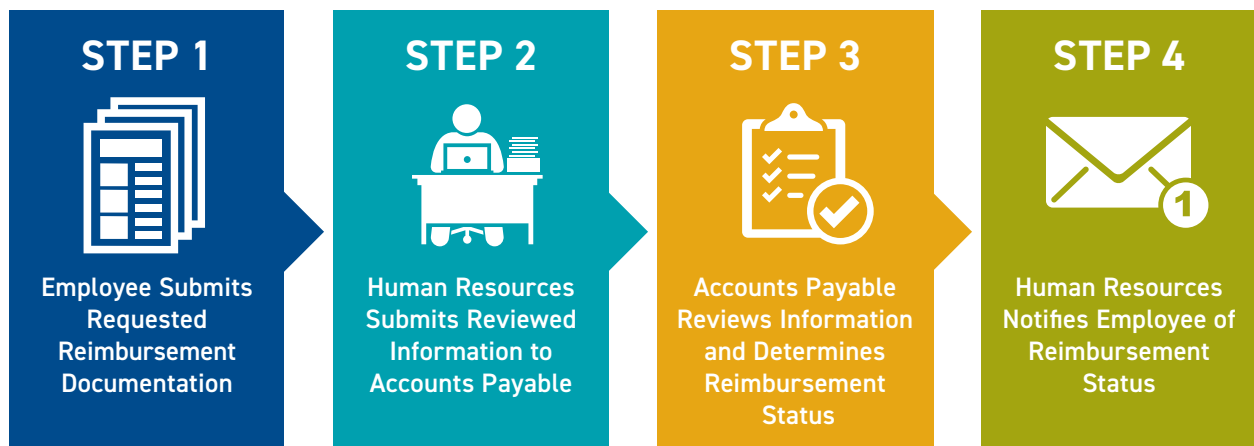
- **Human Resources determines pre-qualification status by examining the following criteria:**
 - Are funds available to support the request?
 - Did the Principal/Supervisor statement support or deny the request?
 - Does the request align with district current or anticipated needs?
 - Does the employee have satisfactory or higher performance evaluations?
 - Does the employee have any performance, behavior or conduct concerns on record?
 - Did the employee submit sufficient, official documentation to support request?
 - To the extent possible, can the district confirm no other financial aid was awarded to the employee to cover the same costs?

Step 4

- **Human Resources notifies employee of pre-qualification status**
 - Includes the amount the employee is pre-qualified to be reimbursed and a reminder of the documentation that will be required upon completion.
 - Includes approval/denial status and reason for denial.

Reimbursement Process

Overview



Full Details of the reimbursement process are listed on the next page.

Step 1

- **Employee completes the CETA Reimbursement Request Form and submits the following upon completion of professional development activity (Click here for access to the Reimbursement Request Form)**
 - Official transcripts, grades, score report showing proof of passing grade
 - Documentation of a 2.0 GPA or a passing score/grade
 - Copy of test/examination/assessment results with proof of passing scores
 - Professional Development activity taken between July 1, 2022 through June 2024.
 - Copy of payment confirmation (receipt from sponsoring organization)
 - Payment confirmation must clearly confirm the cost, date and method of payment; District must confirm payment was made by the employee.
 - A copy of the certification or licensure obtained

Step 2

- **Human Resources submits the following information to Accounts Payable**
 - Submit appropriate form to Accounts Payable and include documentation of transcripts, invoice, receipt, description, and approvals.
 - Human Resources notifies accounts payable to pay employee

Step 3

- Accounts Payable confirms employee is approved/denied for reimbursement.
- Accounts Payable notifies Human Resources
- Accounts Payable reimburses employee

Step 4

- Human Resources notifies employee of reimbursement status

Question/Answers

- **Is there an unlimited amount of money available for staff to take courses or professional development opportunities? No. There is a limited amount of funds available for a specific time period. Employees must take advantage of the opportunity during the specified time period and may not receive funding based on availability.**
- **Is it awarded on a first come, first served basis? Yes. Other factors are also taken into consideration, such as costs, impact on the organization, and district needs.**
- **Will the district reimburse if we also received financial aid? No. You cannot receive financial aid and reimbursement for the same expense.**
- **Can I take a graduate level course? Yes.**
- **Will the tuition assistance funds cover travel expenses? No.**
- **Can I take courses during the work day? No.**
- **Is there a pre-pay option available if I don't have money to pay? Pre-pay options may be available on a limited basis in exceptional circumstances; please speak with your supervisor.**
- **Does this pay for conferences? The cost of registration may be paid with ESSER Funds.**

*Click Here for the Classified Employee Tuition Assistance Program Web page
(<https://www.gcsnc.com/Page/81240>)*



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