

CLA Professional Development Scholarship Program Policy Guidelines (Updated 4/6/23)

ELIGIBILITY RELATED

1. To be eligible for this Scholarship Program employees must:
 - A. Be a comprehensive leave benefited employee (excluding TLT's); AND
 - B. Be represented by one of the unions in the Coalition, which will include employees who are in special duty positions that are represented by a union in the Coalition, AND the employee's special duty hire letter states that the duration of the assignment will be for six months or longer; AND
 - C. Have completed a probationary period in a comprehensive leave benefited position; AND
 - D. Have completed at least one year of full or part time KC employment in a comprehensive leave benefited position. This includes time spent in a Term-Limited Temporary position IF there is no break in service between positions; AND
 - E. Have no documented performance or discipline issues for at least one year from the date applying for a scholarship
2. Employees must remain in regular pay status, and "in good standing," during the entire time for which the award is requested and approved. "Good standing" means no documented performance or discipline issues for at least one year from the submittal date of the Scholarship application and throughout the duration of the approved award period.
3. Employees who accept a new county position, which is not a special duty position, and the new position is not represented by a union in the coalition, may keep their award only if the employee was provided with the official award letter PDF prior to accepting the new position. Should an employee accept a new position, which is not a special duty position, and which is not represented by a union in the coalition, prior to receiving the official award letter, would no longer be eligible for the award.
4. Employees who are involuntary laid off, have their hours reduced, or are on medical leave will continue to have their training course funded for whatever time remains in the current approved quarter/semester.

PROCESS RELATED

5. Employees must first ask their organization if there are training funds available to pay any part of their training expenses based on the organization's training policy, practices, and budget. Employees may then apply for a scholarship for training programs or courses that do not fall within the parameters of the organization's training policy or to supplement the difference of what the organization has budget to cover. Employees pursuing courses towards completion of a college degree are exempt from asking their organization for training funds since county organizations do not pay for college degrees.
6. If the training will interfere with the employee's normal work schedule, the employee must obtain pre-approval from their supervisor for any schedule modifications at the time the employee applies for a scholarship
7. There are two application periods each year the program is offered. Each application period is budgeted half of the total funds available per year. Unused scholarship funds from the year's first application period will be added to the year's second application period. Unused scholarship funds from one year are not carried over to the following year.
8. For each year the scholarship is offered:
 - a. The FIRST application period pays for training courses or programs that BEGIN between January – June, OR, for those in a self-paced, online degree program, are taking courses which occur between January - June. Employees may also use remaining scholarship funds to continue paying for their program of study for the rest of the current year not to exceed the total amount of their current year's scholarship award.
 - b. The SECOND application period pays for training courses or programs that BEGIN between July – December, OR, for those in a self-paced, online degree program, are taking courses which occur between July – December of the current year. Employees may use remaining scholarship funds to continue their program of study and pay the following year's first quarter training expenses using the balance of their current year's scholarship award.
9. Scholarship funds may be used to obtain or keep a certification or license which is not required for the position the employee currently occupies as long as it is applicable to work performed by the County.

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10. Criteria will be used to rate scholarship applications. There will be a minimum of two raters for each application period. At least one of the two raters must score each rating criteria as “meets standard” or higher for an application to “pass.” When both raters score the application as “below standard” for the same rating criteria, then the application does not pass.
11. All applicants who pass and meet eligibility requirements will be sorted from lowest to highest hourly pay. If the employee is on special duty, their base pay will be used. Starting with the lowest hourly pay, awards will be made until the amount budgeted for the application period is met.
12. When there are more individuals eligible for an award than there are funds available then the process and criteria below will be used to make awards.
 - a. In cases where there are “ties” at the same hourly pay rate, then the award will go to the applicant with the highest score based on the rating criteria.
 - b. If the rating score does not resolve the tie, then the purpose of the scholarship request will be used to make the award, based on the order listed below. If the purpose still does not resolve the “tie,” then a lottery will be used.
 - i. The applicant’s request is to obtain a certificate for a program of study,
 - ii. The applicant’s request is to obtain a professional certification,
 - iii. The applicant’s request is to obtain a two-year Associates or Vocational/Technical degree,
 - iv. The applicant’s request is to obtain a four-year Bachelor’s degree,
 - v. The applicant’s request is to obtain a professional license,
 - vi. The applicant’s request is to obtain a Masters/Professional degree (i.e. M.P.A., J.D.)
 - vii. The applicant’s request is to obtain a Doctorate degree
 - viii. The applicant’s request is for general work-related learning or continuing education
 - c. Once the budget available for that application period will be exceeded by the next passing applicant’s request, then:
 - i. If it is the first application period of the year, the Program Manager will use funds from the second application period of that year to fully fund the applicant’s request.
 - ii. If it is the second application period of the year, then the Program Manager will reach out to the applicant to let them know the amount of scholarship funds that are available and whether the applicant still wants the scholarship. If the applicant says “yes,” then they will be granted the award for the amount available. If the applicant says, “no,” then the program manager will go to the next person on the list and repeat the process until all funds are awarded for that application period.
13. Scholarship applications must be complete and received by deadline to be considered.
14. Award recipients must register and pay for their training within 60 calendar days of receipt of their award letter, or within 60 days of the training organization accepting registration, or risk losing their award.
15. Employees must email scholarshipfund@kingcounty.gov written proof of completing and passing their training, to include passing with a “C” or higher when grades are given. Failure to send this proof may disqualify the person from receiving future scholarships and may also result in the employee being required to repay the award back to the county.
16. Award decisions are final and may not be appealed by the employee or by a representative of the employee.
17. Application raters and DHR Program Manager may not apply for a scholarship.

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS - HOW TO ACCESS - APPROVED EXPENSES

18. Award recipients may receive a maximum of **\$3,000** per calendar year in which the scholarship program is funded.
19. Training must be from an accredited school or institution, or an organization that offers their learning programs through an accredited school or institution, or from a not-for-profit professional organization that develops recognized industry standards, certifications and/or in-person or online courses.

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20. Scholarships may be used for tuition, fees, textbooks, publications, lab fees, or fees for online class access that are required for the course, or any other costs deemed appropriate by the Program Manager. Scholarship funds may also be used for a software subscription if the software is specifically required for the training.
21. Scholarships may NOT be used for travel, accommodations, food, conference registration or repayment of loans. Funds may not be used to purchase, repair, or maintain technology hardware or peripheral equipment, software, or other IT supplies. Funds may not be used for general office supplies, such as notebooks, pens, highlighters, staplers, etc. Funds may not be used to pay for classes that are "audited;" nor for any training required by a business unit. Scholarship funds may NOT be used for obtaining or keeping a license or certification which is required for the position the employee currently occupies.
22. Scholarship awards must be spent on tuition and related expenses incurred the same year in which the scholarship was awarded AND can only be for training related to paid work performed by the county.
23. Employees have the choice to pay expenses directly and be reimbursed or have expenses paid directly to the training organization.
24. Costs must BEGIN to be incurred during the time period stated in the application process, OR, for those in a self-paced, online degree program, courses are taken, and a payment is due during the time period. Training expenses can continue to be incurred and paid using the balance of their award for the rest of the current calendar year. **The first Friday in December is the last date** department finance staff can use the scholarship POETA codes to pay training expenses though direct pay or process for reimbursement.
25. Employees who receive a refund from the training organization for any training funded by the Scholarship Program must repay the funds back to the county.
26. Costs to take a specific training/course or to sit for an exam for a professional certification or license will be allowed only once per year.
27. Employees must disclose if receiving other financial assistance, including from their department. The Program will allow for coordinated financial assistance; however, total assistance cannot exceed training costs incurred.
28. Employees who are awarded a scholarship and then later decide they are not able to attend the training for whatever reason, must notify the Scholarship Program Manager as soon as possible and no later than 60 calendar days after receipt of scholarship award to remain eligible to reapply for another scholarship during the same year.
29. Scholarships will only be given for the specific training and from the specific training organization outlined in the employee's scholarship application form. Training substitutions after the application period has closed will not be permitted, unless there are valid extenuating circumstances for the change. Changes must remain consistent with the employee's original training request. For example, the original request is to take a project management certificate at one school, but the program is full, so the employee asks to switch to a project management certificate at another school. If the change results in an increase in cost, the increased cost may be allowed ONLY IF there are funds available.
30. Employees awarded a scholarship for a multi-quarter or semester program of study for a certificate of completion, license or certification with a projected completion date that extends into the following year will be given priority for a scholarship that following year providing that: the CLA Scholarship Program remains funded, and the employee passes or maintains a grade of "C" or better in that program of study, if grades are given.

This scholarship program is developed in accordance with the following references: [IRS Tax Benefits for Education: Information Center](#)