

CLA Professional Development Scholarship Program Policy Guidelines

1. There are two application periods per year with half of the Professional Development Scholarship Funds set aside each of these two application periods. Unused program 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.
2. Department training funds must be requested by the employee and used first based on applicable department guidelines.
3. 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.
4. Conference registration costs will NOT be allowed.
5. Employee may request and be approved for a multi-quarter/semester certificate or degree program up to the maximum allowed per calendar year.
6. Employees awarded a scholarship for a multi-quarter or semester program of study, which will result in a certificate of completion, license or certification and in which completion of the certificate, license or certification will go into the following year, will be given priority for a scholarship that following year, providing the employee applies the following year for a scholarship, to enable the employee to earn that certificate, license or certification as long as the CLA Scholarship Program remains funded and as long as the employee passes or maintains a grade of "C" or better in that program of study.
7. 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 has been submitted will not be permitted, except when the employee wants to switch from the on-line training version to classroom, or vice versa, and only when both training options are offered for the same training. If the switch results in an increase in cost, the increased cost may be allowed ONLY IF there are funds available.
8. If the specific training for which the scholarship was awarded is no longer available, the employee forfeits the award.
9. 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.
10. Scholarship funds may NOT be used for obtaining or keeping a license or certification which is required for the position the employee currently occupies.
11. Employees seeking to obtain or maintain a certification or license, which is not required for the position the employee currently occupies, is permissible if the certification or license is applicable to work performed by the County.
12. The process and criteria used to make awards, will be as follows:
 - a. All eligible applicants will be sorted from lowest to highest hourly pay. If employee is on special duty, their base pay will be used.
 - b. All candidates who earn a score of 2 or higher for each of the two dimensions will be considered as "passing" and are eligible for an award
 - c. Beginning from the lowest hourly pay to the highest hourly pay, those with a "passing" score will be granted an award until the amount budgeted for the application period is met
 - d. Once the limit of funds available for that application period will be exceeded by the next eligible 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.

CLA Professional Development Scholarship Program Policy Guidelines

- 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.
 - e. In cases where there are “ties” at the same hourly pay rate, then the award will go to the applicant with the highest application score. If the application 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
13. Award recipients may receive a maximum of **3,000** per calendar year.
14. Employees have the choice to pay costs directly and be reimbursed or have the funds paid directly to the training organization.
15. Employees must submit written proof of completing and passing the training, to include passing with a “C” or higher when grades are applicable.
16. Employees are responsible for repaying awards back to the county should the employee not complete the training or provide proof of completing and passing, when applicable, their training.
17. Employees who receive a refund from the training organization for any training funded by the Professional Development Scholarship Fund must repay the funds back to the Fund.
18. 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.
19. 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 PRIOR to a payment being made to the training organization and/or to the employee.
20. Funds awarded will only be for training relevant to paid work performed by the county.
21. Funds may be used for tuition, fees, textbooks, publications, lab fees, or fees for on-line class access that are required for the course, or any other costs deemed appropriate by the Application Review Committee. Funds may also be used for a software subscription if the software is specifically required for the training. Funds may not be used for travel, accommodations, or food. 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.
22. Funds may not be used to pay for classes taken that are “audited;” nor for any training required by business unit.

CLA Professional Development Scholarship Program Policy Guidelines

23. 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 date of submitting the Scholarship Fund application and throughout the duration of the approved award period.
24. 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.
25. Professional Development Scholarship Fund Applications must be complete and received by deadlines to be considered.
26. Award decisions are final and may not be appealed by the employee or by a representative of the employee.
27. Employees awarded scholarships must register and pay for their approved training within calendar 60 days of receiving their scholarship award letter OR within 60 days of the training institution accepting registration for the approved program of study. Failure to register within these stated timelines may result in the employee forfeiting their scholarship unless the employee provides mitigating reasons within the 60-day period for not meeting these timeframes.
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. Scholarship awards may not be used to reimburse employee for training already completed; awards are intended for training that is prospective.
30. Application Review Committee members and DHR Program Manager may not submit an application for Professional Development Scholarship funds.

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