



Cochise County Board of Supervisors

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Policy Title: Education Reimbursement

Policy Number: 2224

Effective: January 1, 2020

Supersedes: HR Policy 2224, effective February 1, 2017

Scope/Coverage: All benefits eligible classified and unclassified employees

Policy Contact: Director of Human Resources

I. Accredited Degree and Certificate Programs

A. Eligible applicants shall:

1. Complete a minimum of 12 months of continuous full-time employment;
2. Currently occupy a classified or unclassified benefits eligible position;
3. Not be under any type of performance improvement plan or other disciplinary action.
4. Earn less than \$100,000 per year.

B. Degree and Certificate Eligibility Requirements:

1. Course(s) shall be [regionally accredited](#) by one of the following:
 - a) Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) Western Association of Schools and Colleges
 - b) Higher Learning Commission (HLC)
 - c) Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE)
 - d) New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
 - e) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU)
 - f) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
 - g) WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)
2. Degree or certificate program shall relate to the employee's documented annual performance goals as approved by the supervisor, or current position and verified on the [Education Reimbursement Application form](#).
3. Individual course(s) shall be required for completion of a degree or certificate program as demonstrated in the institution's degree plan.
4. Whenever possible, class schedules and projects should not interfere with normally scheduled working hours. Any modified work schedule must have Department approval.



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5. All time spent completing course work for accredited degree or certificate programs shall not be reported or compensated as work time.

C. Conditions and Limitations on Reimbursement:

1. Employees pursuing reimbursement shall receive approval from their Elected Official/Department Head and Human Resources prior to the beginning of the course according to the [Education Reimbursement Procedure](#).
2. Reimbursement shall be used for tuition, lab, taxes, and other special fees. School supplies, books, late penalties/fees shall not be eligible for reimbursement.
3. Financial Aid received (except for loans) shall not be considered for reimbursement.
4. Reimbursement shall be based on available funds as determined by the Board of Supervisors during the annual budget process.
5. Reimbursement shall not exceed \$2,500.00 per fiscal year per employee, with no lifetime reimbursement cap.
6. Reimbursement percentage shall be inversely proportional to an employee's county salary at the time the application is submitted. For example, for an employee earning \$30,000 per year, the County shall reimburse 70% and the employee shall pay 30%. In comparison, for an employee earning \$70,000 per year the County shall reimburse 30% and the employee shall pay 70%. Salary shall be rounded to the nearest thousand to determine percentage (55,300 rounded to 55,000 = 45% County, 55% employee).
7. Within four (4) weeks after the course completion date, the employee shall provide Human Resources and Department Head with an official copy of course grades showing a "C" or better and copies of related receipts, including itemized financial aid, in order to receive reimbursement payment.

II. Professional Exams and Certifications

- A. A professional credential shall give the employee a higher level of proficiency to perform their work and demonstrates the employee has the knowledge, experience and skills to perform a specific job and tasks. The certification shall be issued by a state or federal agency or by a recognized professional organization.
- B. Certification costs shall be considered on an individual basis per Department Director or designee approval.



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- C. Certification training courses, the first exam attempt, and required certification renewal exams and fees shall be paid by the employee's Department if funding is available. Subsequent training and exams due to failure or lapse in renewal shall be at the employee's expense.
- D. Time spent in professional certification programs shall be compensated work time.

III. Department Training and Development

- A. Departments shall provide individual employees or groups of employees job-related training courses.
- B. Time spent in department sponsored training shall be compensated work time.
- C. Employees have an obligation to attend classes and seminars paid for by the Department.