

CLA Professional Development Scholarship Program Policy Guidelines (Updated 12.19.2024)

ELIGIBILITY

1. To be eligible for this Scholarship Program employees must meet each criteria listed below:
 - 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 IF 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. "In 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, other than a special duty position, that is not represented by a union in the coalition, may only keep their award if the employee was provided with the official award letter prior to accepting the new position.
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.

SCHOLARSHIP DETAILS

5. Award recipients may receive a maximum of **\$3,000** per calendar year in which the scholarship program is funded.
6. The training must be related to paid work performed by King County.
7. 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.
8. ALLOWABLE EXPENSES: 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.
9. SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS **MAY NOT** BE USED FOR:
 - a. Travel, accommodations, food, or conference registration;
 - b. Repayment of loans;
 - c. The purchase, repair, or maintenance of technology hardware or peripheral equipment, software (unless required by the training program), or other IT supplies;
 - d. General office supplies, such as notebooks, pens, highlighters, staplers, etc.;
 - e. Classes that are "audited;"
 - f. Any training required by a business unit; OR
 - g. Obtaining or keeping a license or certification which is required for the position the employee currently occupies.
10. Scholarship awards must be spent on tuition and related expenses incurred the same year in which the scholarship was awarded.

PROCESS

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11. There are two application periods each year the program is offered. Each application period is budgeted half of the total available funds for that 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.
12. Employees may only apply for a scholarship during a scholarship application period. Scholarship applications must be received by the application period deadline to be considered.
13. Employees must first ask their organization if there are training funds available to pay for any part of their training expenses. 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 is able to pay for. 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.
14. If the training will take place during 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.
15. Department human resources staff will verify that each of their employees who apply for a scholarship meet each of the required eligibility criteria.
16. All applicants who meet the 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.

In cases where there are "ties" (employees make the same hourly pay rate), 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.
 - a. The applicant's request is for general work-related training or continuing education.
 - b. The applicant's request is to obtain a professional certification or license.
 - c. The applicant's request is to obtain a certificate for a program of study.
 - d. The applicant's request is to obtain a higher education degree (i.e., Associates, Bachelor's, Master's, etc.).
17. Scholarship applications must be complete and received by the deadline to be considered.
18. 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.
19. Employees must email scholarshipfund@kingcounty.gov written proof of completing their training. If there are extenuating circumstances as to why the training was not completed, employees must notify the Scholarship program using the email listed above.
20. Award decisions are final and may not be appealed by the employee or by a representative of the employee.
21. The Professional Development Scholarship Program Manager may not apply for a scholarship.

HOW TO ACCESS/USE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

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22. Employees have the choice to pay expenses directly and be reimbursed or have expenses paid directly to the training organization.
23. **The first Friday in December is the last date** department finance staff can use the scholarship POETA codes to reimburse the award recipient or to directly pay training expenses.
24. 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.
25. 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.
26. 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.
27. Training substitutions may be permitted the employee receives their award letter. The new training must be related to work performed at King County. To submit a change, employees must submit a form that addresses:
 - a. The reason for the change
 - b. The name of the new training program
 - c. A web link to the new training
 - d. The name of the training organization
 - e. Cost of allowable expenses as outlined aboveThe change request will be reviewed by the Scholarship manager to review the change requested and will determine if the change is permitted.
28. 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](#)